

Porphyry and the Motif of Christianity as
παράνομος

Ilaria Ramelli

This article was originally published in

Platonism and its Legacy

*Selected Papers from the Fifteenth Annual Conference
of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies*

Edited John F. Finamore and Tomáš Nejeschleba

ISBN 978 1 898910 886

Published in 2019 by

The Prometheus Trust, Lydney.

This article is published under the terms of **Creative Commons
Licence BY 4.0**

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

The Prometheus Trust is a registered UK charity, no. 299648

www.prometheustrust.co.uk

Porphyry and the Motif of Christianity as παράνομος¹

Ilaria Ramelli

1. Porphyry and the Description of Christianity as παράνομος

Porphyry, the Neoplatonist disciple of Plotinus, had frequented the Christian Origen in his youth—as he himself declares (*C.Chr.* F39)—and might have been a Christian when young, as stated by Socrates HE 3.23;² we shall discuss this below. But later, unlike Plotinus, Porphyry became the harshest anti-Christian polemicist, although nowhere does he overtly advocate a violent persecution of Christians. Indeed, Augustine—who has the merit to have preserved parts of Porphyry’s lost but very important *De regressu animae*, although probably in a distorted way—described Porphyry as “the most illustrious philosopher among the pagans” and “the most learned of the philosophers, though the most bitter enemy of the Christians” in *CD* 22.3 and 19.22 respectively. In this connection, Porphyry seems to have insisted to an extraordinary degree on the nature of Christianity as intrinsically opposed to the Roman laws, meaning the laws of the Roman Empire; but at the same time he also implied that Christianity was against the divine laws. This motif of Christianity as παράνομος in the former sense stemmed from the pre-Constantinian age. Whether Christianity was outlawed and the legal basis for anti-Christian persecutions in the Roman Empire is an issue that has been hotly debated among scholars,³ and to which Porphyry himself, or a

¹ Warmest thanks to the editors and to the reader, whose comments helped much to strengthen the arguments of this paper.

² Simmons (2015), with my review in *CJ* 2017.05.02, thinks that Porphyry was a Christian for some time (when he also was a disciple of Origen), a position also supported by Kinzig (1998).

³ E.g., Sherwin-White (1952); Wlosok (1959); Ste. Croix (1963). According to Timothy Barnes, since the basis of Roman law was the *mos maiorum*, what Christianity was perceived to threaten was precisely the *mos maiorum*. Barnes (1968) 50 does not think that there was a specific pronouncement either of the senate or of some emperors; Rome had no uniform legal code pertaining to foreign cults.

Porphyrian polemicist, as we shall see, could contribute some clarification.⁴

In Porphyry's judgment on Origen in the third book of his work *Against the Christians*, F39 von Harnack, reported word for word by Eusebius (*HE* 6.19.4-8), Origen is said to have begun to live *παρὰ νόμῳ* only after he “inclined towards the barbarian daring crime” (πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα) and began to read and comment allegorically on the Bible. Thus, his relation to Christianity comes to the fore here: Porphyry states that Origen began to live *παρὰ νόμῳ* after he embraced Christianity. This is the same move, in the opposite sense, that Porphyry ascribes to Ammonius, Origen's master, as we shall see in the next paragraphs.

In the same fragment, Porphyry appreciated Origen's status as a Hellene philosopher, especially in metaphysics and theology, but sharply criticized his being a Christian and, as such, “living *παρὰ νόμῳ*”.⁵ The adverb means “illegally” (LSJ s.v. *παρὰ νόμῳ*, as in Antipho 5.94 and Thucydides 3.65), that is, “against the laws” as opposed to “according to the law(s)” (κατὰ νόμους), as in Plato's *Politicus* 302E. In legal documents, *παράνομα* γραφεῖν or εἰπεῖν means to propose a “illegal” or “unconstitutional” measure,⁶ and τὸ παράνομον means “illegality, what is illegal” in Aeschines 3.197. Consistently, the first meaning of *παρὰ νομῶ* is “transgression of the law, illegality” (even personified in Polybius 18.54.10), and secondary meanings are “transgression of decency or order”. In Christian authors, from Origen—well known to Porphyry—onwards, virtually all uses of *παρὰ νομῶ* refer to behaving against the law of God, e.g. Origen *Cels.* 8.33 referring to demons, just like Cyril of Jerusalem *Catech.* 19.4 and Athanasius *Ep. encycl.* 2.225C on heresy as transgressing God's law; or else *παρὰ νομῶ* refers to humans transgressing the law of God and piety towards God (ἀσέβεια ἢ εἰς θεὸν καὶ παρὰ νομῶ, *Const. Apost.* 6.27.8). It also refers to breaking

⁴ See Ramelli (2014).

⁵ On this passage see, among much scholarship, Böhm (2002) 7-23; Zambon (2003); full analysis in Ramelli (2009; forthcoming, Ch.1); see also Grafton and Williams (2006) 63-65; Ramelli (2006); on Porphyry's attitude toward Christianity Schott (2005). For a *status quaestionis* on Porphyry's work *Against the Christians* see Berchman (2005); Johnson (2013), also on the whole of Porphyry's attitude towards religions and Hellenism; Morlet (2001); Männlein-Robert (2017).

⁶ *Dig.* 21.182-183; 18.13, but already Aeschines 3.197: *παρὰ νόμων* γραφή, and similar expressions *ibid.* 3.31; Lysias 18.14; see also LSJ s.v. *παράνομος*.

both human and divine law, such as in Cain's murdering of his brother (John Chrysostom *Paralyt.* 5.3.42C).

Παρανόμως, therefore, in Porphyry's passage may refer both to the divine law and to the legislation of the Roman Empire, which aimed at the preservation of *pax deorum*. Through the ideal of *pax deorum*, the laws of the Empire and the divine laws tended to converge: the close relation between religion and the Roman Empire has been the object of a number of studies from different angles; most recently, for instance, by Clifford Ando.⁷ The notion of *pax deorum* is the gist of the relation between religion and politics in the Roman universal empire. Libanius, *Or.* 30.33, expressed very well the idea that the Roman Empire was based on *pax deorum*, when he stressed that the stability of the empire depended on the religious sacrifices performed in Rome. This is further confirmed by a somewhat earlier historical source, Cassius Dio in the Severan age, who clearly connected ancestral religious practices, that is, "pagan" traditional cults, with the political stability of the Roman Empire (Dio Cass. 52.36). Confirming the interconnection of religious and political in the concept of *pax deorum*, Jeremy Schott can remark that "the notion that the safety and success of the empire depended on the traditional worship of the gods was shared by emperors and intellectuals."⁸ This is why Tertullian at the beginning of the third century complained that Christians were deemed responsible for the breaking of the *pax deorum*.

Porphyry, after disapproving the application of philosophical allegoresis to Scripture—which according to him could not conceal deep philosophical truths to be discovered by means of philosophical allegoresis, contrary to what Origen (but also Amelius) maintained⁹—states that the initiator of this absurd method (ἀτοπία) was Origen, whom he describes as illustrious for his writings still in Porphyry's own day. Porphyry states that he met Origen when he was young, probably in Caesarea: Porphyry was born in 232/3, and Origen died around 255, as a result of the tortures inflicted on him during Decius' persecution.¹⁰ Therefore, Porphyry was twenty-two or younger when

⁷ Ando (2016).

⁸ Schott (2005) 312.

⁹ A whole controversy arose about this point among "pagan" and Christian Middle and Neoplatonists: see Ramelli (2001; 2018).

¹⁰ Full discussion of the chronology of Origen's death, which could have occurred as late as 255-56, is found in Ramelli (2009).

he met Origen. We cannot know whether he was a Christian at that time, as may be suggested by Socrates *HE* 3.23¹¹ and by Porphyry's good knowledge of Scripture—reflected in his polemic in *Against the Christians* and elsewhere—but he is not mistaken when identifying Origen with a disciple (ἀκροατής, *HE* 6.19.6) of Ammonius Saccas, the inspirer of Neoplatonism as “the Socrates of Neoplatonism,”¹² and teacher of Plotinus as well, in Alexandria.¹³

Porphyry in the same fragment remarks that Ammonius, the teacher of Origen, was a Christian, but, after studying philosophy, he changed his way of life conformably to the laws. The parable is the opposite of that which he depicts for Origen: whereas Ammonius had Christian parents and was brought up as a Christian, but when he received philosophical instruction he changed his way of life, Origen was a Greek and received Greek education, but converted to Christianity. Porphyry does not say that Ammonius became a “pagan” or rejected Christianity, but that “when he became wise and devoted himself to philosophy, he immediately began to *behave according to the laws*” (πρὸς τὴν κατὰ νόμους πολιτείαν μετεβάλετο). As mentioned above, κατὰ νόμους was regularly used as the opposite of παρανόμως, and Porphyry also uses these expressions as the opposite of one another: παρανόμως with reference to Origen after “inclining” towards Christianity and devoting himself to the allegorisation of the Bible, and κατὰ νόμους with reference to Ammonius once he embraced philosophy. Ammonius then began to behave “according to the laws”—legally as opposed to illegally; in conformity with both the laws of the Empire and, related to the former by means of the concept of *pax deorum*, also the laws of the gods. This double connotation has been argued by Ilaria Ramelli for Porphyry himself,¹⁴ and seems true in the case of Celsus as well, Porphyry's inspirer, who depicted

¹¹ In *HE* 3.23 Socrates relates the anecdotic account that Porphyry was beaten by some Christians in Caesarea, as a consequence of which he abandoned Christianity and wrote his work against the Christians, where he displayed a thorough knowledge of Scripture. Socrates indicates to have drawn his information from Eusebius' refutation of Porphyry (*Against Porphyry*). So also Kofsky (2000) 71-72.

¹² So Dodds and Dillon (2016).

¹³ Ramelli (2009; 2017). Virtually all scholars agree that Ammonius Saccas was the common teacher of both Plotinus and Origen, which is strongly supported by Porphyry, Nemesius, and other ancient sources.

¹⁴ Ramelli (2009).

Christianity as a threat both to Hellenism and to the Roman Empire, as Michael Frede rightly noted.¹⁵ The idea of opposition to the laws of the Empire (παράνομία) is strong in both Celsus and Porphyry, and Celsus repeatedly and overtly alludes to the persecutions the Christians were suffering at the hands of the Empire—in his case, during Marcus Aurelius' persecution. Both Celsus and Porphyry clearly speak of a political concept of παράνομία, which in turn was immediately linked to its religious notion.

For Porphyry wrote when Christianity was illegal in the Empire and Christians could be executed qua Christians; therefore, Christianity was παράνομος, against the law of the Roman Empire. Indeed, it is no accident that it is precisely Porphyry, or an author closely inspired by him, who attests, together with Tertullian, to the *senatusconsultum* that made Christianity an illegal *superstitio* (*superstitio nova et malefica* in Suetonius' description, *Nero* 6.2) instead of a legal *religio* in the Roman Empire, as we shall see below.¹⁶ The distinction between *religio* and *superstitio* was defined already by Varro: *religio* implies revering the deities as parents without fearing them as enemies; *superstitio*, negatively connoted, implies fearing them as enemies.¹⁷

Here I am not concerned with the historicity of this *senatusconsultum*, which is very much debated, but with how it was construed and utilised by both “pagan” and Christian sources in their definitions of religious and philosophical identities and allegiances.

The idea that Christianity was “against the law” (παράνομος) and therefore the Church was incompatible with the Empire appears clearly in Porphyry's intellectual profile of Origen in the same fragment

¹⁵ Frede (1997) 220.

¹⁶ The expression *religio licita* is by Tertullian, who refers it to the Jewish religion in *Apol.* 21.1, and according to some scholars was even coined by him. See Rajak (1984); others think that Judaism was indeed recognised as legal religion (*religio licita*) from Julius Caesar onwards, unlike Christianity: see Josephus *AJ* 14.2111-28; Smallwood (2001) 539; Sordi (2004). Zollschan 2016, 107-133, thinks there was no *foedus*, but only *amicitia* between the Jews and Rome. The category *religio licita* is translated as “approved religion” by Rüpke (2007) 35. According to Frend (1967) 106, “a *religio* was *licita* for a particular group on the basis of tribe or nationality and traditional practices, coupled with the proviso that its rites were not offensive to the Roman people or its gods.”

¹⁷ *A superstitioso dicat timeri deos, a religioso autem tantum uereri ut parentes, non ut hostes timeri* (ap. Augustine *CD* 6.9.2).

(F39): Origen, we are told, had Greek parents¹⁸ and was trained ἐν “Ἑλλησιν λόγοις, but then “he inclined towards the barbarian crime” (πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα). Note the designation of Christianity as a shameful crime (τόλμημα) and the distinction introduced by Porphyry at this point between Origen’s way of life, which was against the law in that it was Christian, and Origen’s philosophy, which was Greek: Κατὰ μὲν τὸν βίον Χριστιανῶς ζῶν καὶ παρανόμως, κατὰ δὲ τὰς περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ δόξας ἑλληνίζων τε καὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων τοῖς ὀθνείοις ὑποβαλλόμενος μύθοις. Porphyry is claiming that in metaphysics and theology Origen was a Greek philosopher, and indeed he studied these disciplines at Ammonius Saccas,” and he interpreted Scripture in the light of philosophy—which Porphyry represents as an absurdity, but in fact was what Philo had already done (although neither Porphyry nor Celsus acknowledged this antecedent, since they wanted to construe Christianity as a reaction against Judaism, from which it issued). The list of Origen’s favorite readings in philosophy offered by Porphyry in the continuation of this fragment¹⁹ corresponds to the authors read by Plotinus and his disciples. There are Plato, Middle Platonists and Neopythagoreans, and Stoic allegorists, from whom Porphyry says that Origen inherited his allegorical hermeneutics and illegitimately applied it to the Bible. Note that Porphyry distinguishes Origen’s theology or philosophy concerning the Deity and things divine, which he deems “Greek” and good, and Origen’s lived religion, which he deems παράνομος: this had nothing to do with what Origen thought concerning God, which was the same as “pagan” Neoplatonists thought according to Porphyry, but with how Origen behaved; probably his abstention from sacrifices and public ceremonies was the main element considered to be παράνομος, against the law of the gods and of the Empire.

Given Porphyry’s insistence on the representation of Christianity as illegal and clashing with the laws of the Roman Empire as well as with the laws of the gods—who, through the *pax deorum*, guaranteed the very existence and prosperity of the Roman Empire—scholars such as Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and Michael Simmons think that Porphyry

¹⁸ This does not necessarily contradict Eusebius’ account on Leonides the martyr as Origen’s “so-called” (λεγόμενος) πατήρ, although Eusebius soon after insists that Origen’s parents were Christian (*HE* 6.19.10).

¹⁹ All analysed and related to their reception in Origen and Plotinus by Ramelli (2009).

played some role in the imperial anti-Christian persecution of Diocletian and likely took part in the 302 CE imperial conference at Nicomedia that prepared this persecution. For Porphyry, “the presence of so many polluted people [i.e. Christians] within Rome’s cities endangered the empire.”²⁰ The Nicomedia meeting with Diocletian, which was an important premise for the persecution, was attended by a philosopher, preacher of abstinence, pamphleter, and priest of the highest God (Lactantius *Inst.* 5.2.12), identified by Robert Louis Wilken and Elizabeth Digeser with Porphyry, while Barnes and Udo Hartmann reject this identification.²¹

On Timothy Barnes’ interpretation, followed by Michael Simmons, “Porphyry argued that the profession of Christianity ought to be a capital crime,”²² precisely going against the Roman laws (and this is why Simmons, like Digeser, but unlike Johnson and Matthias Becker, thinks that Porphyry somehow promoted Diocletian’s anti-Christian persecution: “There is little doubt that Porphyry, who by this time had gained the reputation as the leading anti-Christian philosopher in the empire, was called to the imperial conference in AD 302, whose distinct purpose was to discuss what the imperial government must do with the Christians.”²³ Indeed, in *Against the Christians* F39—a rather

²⁰ Digeser (2016) 23; see also Digeser (2012) 146–63, 173–88; Simmons (2015). I treated this point at a lecture at Cambridge University, January 2017: many thanks to the audience and discussants, especially Rosamund McKitterick, Tom Hieron, and Isidoros Katsos.

²¹ Wilken (1984) 134-137; Digeser (2000) 93-107; Barnes (1973) 438-439; (1994) 59; Hartmann in Männlein-Robert (2017) 208-215.

²² Simmons (2015) 65; cf. Barnes (1981) 21-22.

²³ Simmons (2015) 137 (from which I drew the quotation) and *passim*; vs Johnson (2013). Becker (2016) 57 thinks Porphyry had a political agenda, but never helped plan the Great Persecution. Becker usefully provides a new edition of Porphyry’s fragments from *Against the Christians*, but his decision to leave out Macarius’ fragments is heavily contested e.g. by Goulet in his review (2016): “it is with Porphyry’s otherwise well attested fragments that they offer the most exact parallels, sometimes in the very wording they use, as Becker must often acknowledge, since he quotes extensively and translates in his commentary at least twenty-two of Macarius’ objections as close parallels to the fragments of his edition, and refers to many others. In fact, most of the other objections of the *Apocriticus* offer similarities with authenticated fragments, and it is difficult to find a better source for them than Porphyry.” Likewise the review by Granger Cook (2017) 2: Becker’s decision to drop Macarius’ fragments “detracts from the value of the book.” Another recent translation, but based on Harnack’s edition, with Greek, Latin and German facing texts and some fragments added, is by

“safe” fragment, cited verbally by Eusebius—Porphyry called Christianity a “shameful crime,” as I pointed out, and in a non-fragmentary work of indisputable paternity as well, the *Letter to Marcella*, he stated that the most important fruit of piety consisted in honoring the divinity “according to the ancestral customs,” namely “pagan” religious traditions (κατὰ τὰ πάτρια, *Ep. ad Marc.* 18). The religious and the political ambits are clearly interconnected here, as they also are in the aforementioned Roman notion of *pax deorum*, and as they must have been in Porphyry’s characterisation of Christianity as παράνομος. However, an explicit exhortation to persecute the Christians or have recourse to violence against them is nowhere to be found in Porphyry’s extant corpus—as well as in Plotinus’ *Enneads* or in reports about Plotinus. (This, indeed, would square well with the consideration that both Plotinus and Porphyry were probably disciples of Christians: Plotinus of Ammonius Saccas, and Porphyry of Origen, besides Plotinus himself. But we cannot examine here the probability and the implications of such a hypothesis.)

Shortly afterwards, Eusebius—a great admirer of Origen and the very source that reports Porphyry’s fragment on Christianity παράνομος—responded to the argument that Christianity was against the law. For example, in *Theophania* 5.17 he contended that the law of Christ had converted all peoples from every lawless kind of life. So the good law is the Christian law, while all other laws, and especially “pagan” laws, are the real lawlessness. The accusation of παρανομία leveled against Christianity is here turned upside down. Notably, here as elsewhere (*Theoph.* 2.76, *PE* 6.10), Eusebius was relying on Bardaisan’s treatise against Fate, whose arguments are also known in the form of the *Book of the Laws of Countries*, among which the Christian law is prominent—and Bardaisan’s thought was likely known to Origen, and surely to his followers, including Eusebius, Didymus, and Gregory of Nyssa, as well as to Porphyry, who quoted word for word a theologico-cosmological fragment from a work by Bardaisan.²⁴ But of course

Muscolino (2009). Richard Goulet and Michael Simmons agree that the parallels between Macarius’ Hellene and Porphyry are more numerous and significant than those with any other ‘pagan’ polemicist: Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie Le Monogénès I* (Paris, 2003), 139; Simmons (2015), 83-8. Digeser (2002) suggests the identification of Macarius’ Hellene with Sossianus Hierocles, but she also maintains that the Hellene’s arguments draw substantially on Porphyry’s anti-Christian writings.

²⁴ Analysis and arguments in Ramelli (2009a).

Eusebius was writing when Christianity had just ceased to be against the Roman law—a very different situation from that in which both Bardaisan and Porphyry themselves were writing.

Origen might even have suggested the inclusion of Christ in his *lararium* to Elagabalus through Julia Mamaea, who supervised the education of Alexander Severus (Herodian 5.7.5). Mamaea esteemed and invited Origen to philosophical discussions with her,²⁵ and was the niece of Julia Domna, described by Philostratus as “philosopher,” surrounded by a “circle” of intellectuals (*Soph.* 622; *Apoll.* 1.3). Origen might have exerted some influence on the emperor and his positive attitude towards Christianity through Mamaea. According to the *Historia Augusta*, in his *lararium* Severus even worshipped Christ, Abraham, Orpheus, and Apollonius of Tyana, and wished “to have a temple dedicated to Christ and receive him among the deities,” but was prevented by people, possibly haruspices, “who, consulting a sacrifice, found out that, if he had done so, all people would become Christians and the other temples would be abandoned” (*HA Al.Sev.* 22.4;43.7). Origen was aware that the time of absence of persecutions under Alexander, Elagabalus, and Philip the Arab would come to an end soon (*Cels.* 3.15), and indeed he died as a martyr or at least a confessor, but also envisaged a farther future in which both the Romans and the barbarians would become Christians and be protected by God—and lastly an eschatological landscape in which the Logos will conquer all souls, including “pagans” and barbarians (*Cels.* 8.68-70). The Logos at a certain point—at the eventual apokatastasis or restoration of all rational beings to the Good, the Deity, a theory of which Origen was the main exponent along with other Christian Platonists such as Gregory of Nyssa and Eriugena²⁶—will overcome the whole rational nature, when each *logikon* will voluntarily adhere to it (*Cels.* 8.72).

As Eusebius knew well, indeed, Origen had already envisaged, against Celsus' line, the conversion of the empire to Christianity and the cessation of the Christians' παράνομία (their being “against the law” of the Empire). In *Cels.* 8.70, Origen claims that, if all the Romans were persuaded by the Christian preaching and prayed to the true God, then the Roman Empire would not come to an end, as

²⁵ See Ramelli, (2009) received, e.g., by Marksches (2012), 119, 138; Tzamalikos (2012) 288, 486, 505; Scott (2012) 180; Urbano (2013) 71; Karamanolis (2013) 286, 307; Martens (2015) 599, 619; Digeser (2016) 29 n.2, 31 n.42; Karamanolis (2016).

²⁶ Critical study in Ramelli (2013).

Celsus maintained, but the Romans “would overcome their enemies, or would not even have any reason for fighting, because the power of God would protect them.”²⁷ In *Cels.* 2.20, indeed, Origen adopted the rhetoric of the apologist Melito concerning the providential nature of the Roman Empire demonstrated by the birth of Christ under Augustus: “God was preparing the nations for his teaching, that they might be under one Roman emperor.” On the other hand, too, Origen was keenly aware of the fallible and imperfect nature not only of the Empire, even once Christianized, but even of the Church on earth.²⁸

Porphyry’s insistence on Christianity as παράνομος, “against the law” not only of the gods but specifically of the Empire, matches his underscoring of Jesus’ condemnation to death by the Empire by “right sentencing” (*iudicibus recta sentientibus*, Porphyry *ap.* Augustine *CD* 19.23). Celsus already noted that Christians made “secret associations contrary to the law” and “death penalty” threatened them (Origen *Cels.* 1.1-3); the last remark clearly refers to the Roman law, not to that of the gods. Now Celsus’ treatise and arguments closely inspired Porphyry. It seems also significant to me that the anti-Christian charge of “being against the law” (παρανομία) was recognized by the Origenian historian Socrates as a polemical motif that was typical of Porphyry. This is why Socrates turned this accusation against Porphyry himself, saying that he wrote συντάγματα παράνομα against the Christians, which were condemned by Constantine to destruction (*HE* 1.9.30). Socrates could do so because he was writing in a Christianised empire, in which, earlier on, Constantine, the first Christian emperor, had ordered the destruction of Porphyry’s *Against the Christians*.

2. Macarius’ Hellene and the Reference to the Outlawing of Christianity in the Empire

Von Harnack included in his collection of fragments from Porphyry’s *Against the Christians* a passage from Macarius, *Apocriticus* 2.25(14), as F64.²⁹ Its attribution to Porphyry himself is more doubtful than that of F39, analyzed above: Macarius’ Hellene may be Porphyry or another anti-Christian polemicist inspired by him. Richard Goulet and Michael Simmons agree that the parallels between Macarius’ Hellene and Porphyry are more numerous and significant than those with any

²⁷ See Duda (2014).

²⁸ See Ramelli (forthcoming), Ch. 6.

²⁹ Berchman (2005) 192-219 includes Macarius’ passages as fr. 165-210.

other “pagan” polemicist.³⁰ Elizabeth DePalma Digeser suggests the identification of Macarius’ Hellene with Sossianus Hierocles, but she also maintains that the Hellene’s arguments draw substantially on Porphyry’s anti-Christian writings.³¹ Ariane Magny shows that Porphyry’s fragments from Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine are shaped by their Christian sources; she has no treatment of Macarius, though; only a brief status quaestionis.³² As Goulet notes, there are close correspondences between the arguments brought forward by Macarius’ Hellene (such as that in 3.22.4) and those by advanced by Porphyry, as cited nominally by Jerome.³³

At any rate, Macarius’ Hellene deploys exactly the same motif as Porphyry (and, as I shall show in section 3, closely parallels a report by Tertullian). After his resurrection (AD 30)—the Hellene maintains—Jesus should not have appeared to obscure people, but to politically authoritative and trustworthy people, contemporary with the facts, such as Pilate, Herod, the high priests, and especially “the Roman senate and people.” Jesus’ failure to appear to the senators resulted in the impossibility for them to verify his divine nature and, therefore, in a unanimous *senatusconsultum*³⁴ that outlawed Christians on the basis of an accusation of impiety. Macarius’ Hellene clearly refers to the age of Tiberius—since he speaks of people contemporary with Jesus’ resurrection and mentions Pilate and Herod—and more specifically to the years after Jesus’ death and resurrection:

Why is it that Jesus, after his passion and resurrection—according to what you (Christians) recount—did not appear to Pilate, who had condemned him, even though he said that Jesus had committed nothing worthy of death penalty, or to Herod, the king of the Jews, or to the Jewish high priest or to many trustworthy people, contemporary with the event, and especially to *the Senate and the people of Rome*? In this way they would have been astonished by his miracles and would not have emitted, *with a unanimous senatusconsultum* [δόγματι κοινῶ], *a sentence of death under accusation of impiety against his followers*. [...] For, if he had manifested himself to notable

³⁰ Goulet (2003) 139; Simmons (2015) 83-84. Differently Barnes (1973).

³¹ Digeser (2002; 2012).

³² Magny (2014) 11.

³³ Goulet (2003) 93-94, 144 and *passim*.

³⁴ On Roman *senatusconsulta* see Peppe (2012) 627-705.

people, thanks to them all would have believed and no judge would have condemned them as inventors of absurd tales.

The δόγμα κοινόν of the Senate is a *senatusconsultum*; δόγμα (τῆς συγκλήτου) was a technical term for Latin *senatusconsultum*,³⁵ while ψήφισμα indicated a decision of the people in assembly. This *senatusconsultum*, according to Macarius' Hellene, accused of impiety and condemned to death the Christians shortly after 30 CE. This corresponds to the *senatusconsultum* under Tiberius mentioned by Tertullian, which I shall analyze in the next section. The very expression that in this passage designates the *senatusconsultum* corresponds to that used in the *Acta Apollonii* (on which see below) presumably in reference to the same *senatusconsultum*: δόγμα τῆς συγκλήτου. In *Martyrium Beati Petri Apostoli a Lino episcopo conscriptum*, the Senators are depicted as those who most countered the Christians from the beginning: “Some of the Senators arose in the assembly of the Senate and exhorted the others, too, to arouse confusion.”³⁶ This might be a faint echo of the *senatusconsultum* of the year 35; at any rate it reflects the hostility of the Senate to Christianity from the beginning. Likewise, Origen's remark in a homily is too vague to be taken as a specific reference to the *senatusconsultum* from the age of Tiberius, but it is nevertheless interesting: “the kings of the earth have gathered together, *the Senate* and people and chiefs of Rome, to cancel the name of Jesus.”³⁷ Indeed, the *senatusconsultum*, at least as represented by Tertullian and in the *Acta Apollonii*, did not allow Christians to exist qua tales, and endeavored to suppress the *nomen Christianum*, as Tertullian called it.

Shortly before Porphyry, Origen, whose works Porphyry knew and studied (from *Against Celsus* to *First Principles* to his allegorical commentaries, which he criticised in F39—likewise Amelius probably knew Origen's Commentary on John³⁸), in his Commentary on the

³⁵ Polybius *Hist.* 6.13.2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Antiquitates Romanae* 8.87.

³⁶ *Martyrium Beati Petri Apostoli a Lino episcopo conscriptum* 3: *Surrexerunt quidam ex senatoribus in conventu senatus et [...] incitabant etiam alios ad tumultum.*

³⁷ Origen, *Homiliae in Iesum Nave* 9.10: *Convenerunt enim reges terrae, senatus, populusque et principes Romani, ut expugnent nomen Iesu.*

³⁸ This was recently argued by Ilaria Ramelli, “Origen's Commentary on John and Its Possible Influence on Plotinus' Circle: Intersections between “Pagan” and Christian Platonism in Late Antiquity,” lecture at the NAPS Annual Meeting, Chicago, 2017, and at a seminar at Oxford, Classics, 2019, forthcoming.

Song of Songs had also observed that Jesus just after his resurrection did not appear to Pilate, Herod, or the high priests, because these lacked the spiritual capacity to discern his divinity. This responded to a criticism that was partially present already in Celsus' *True Logos*, which Origen knew very well and refuted:³⁹ Celsus blames Jesus for having appeared to a “hysteric woman,” Mary Magdalene (*Contra Celsum* 2.59). Later, Lactantius reports “pagan” criticisms of Jesus for not manifesting himself in power (*Divinae Institutiones* 4.2), and emperor Julian criticized Jesus for not performing miracles before Herod (*Adversus Galilaeos* fr. 104). The same criticism was also addressed by Tertullian, a contemporary of Origen: “Jesus (after his resurrection) did not appear to everybody, that the impious may not be freed from their error, and that faith, which is destined to receive the most outstanding reward, might be achieved only with difficulty.”⁴⁰

Porphyry and Macarius' Hellene added to this lore the definition of Christianity as *paranomos* based on its outlawing by “the Senate and the people of Rome,” obviously with the intention to introduce the theme of the condemnation of Christianity on the part of the Roman Empire, through the reference to the *senatusconsultum* of the Tiberian age. It is not accidental that Porphyry, in his portrait of Origen examined at the beginning, deplored his adhesion to Christianity by saying that he lived “against the law” (παρὰ νόμῳ, *HE* 6.19.4-8). This sounds like another echo of the *senatusconsultum* that outlawed Christianity. It would be unsurprising if it should come from the same work, *Against the Christians*, as (directly or indirectly) F64, which refers to the *senatusconsultum* rather clearly.

Very interestingly, Porphyry's insistence on Christianity as “against the law(s)” of the Roman Empire and of the gods is reflected at another point of the critique of Macarius' Hellene. In *Apocr.* 3.31.4, he remarks that Paul behaved “at one time like an ἄνομος, but at another like a Hellene.” Notably, this is also the same opposition as is found in Porphyry's judgment on Origen (F39).

There was a debate at the time of Porphyry and Macarius on who was behaving like an ἄνομος. The Christians were accused of doing so, but also turned this charge back against ‘pagans’. The *Acts of Andrew*,

³⁹ See on Celsus' work Arnold (2016) and my review *JTS* 68.1 (2017) 348-350, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/flx081>.

⁴⁰ *Apologeticum* 21.22: *Nec se in vulgus eduxit, ne inpii errore liberarentur, ut et fides, non mediocri praemio destinata, difficultate constaret.*

from the third century according to Hans-Joseph Klauck,⁴¹ calls Aegeates, the ‘pagan’ husband of a newly converted Christian, a man who lives a πολιτείαν ἄνομον (64.3). This is the reversal of Porphyry’s accusation against Origen after his ‘conversion’. The *Acts of Andrew’s* expression, πολιτείαν ἄνομον, is the perfect opposite to that used by Porphyry about Ammonius, who, as seen, was brought up as a Christian, but, after studying philosophy, embraced τὴν κατὰ νόμους πολιτείαν, “the way of life according to the laws”.

3. Tertullian’s Testimony on the *Senatusconsultum* against the Christians: Convergences with Porphyry and Macarius’ Hellene

Commentators note not even a slight connection between, on the one side, the Porphyrian fragments and Macarius’ Hellene’s passages about Christianity as παράνομος as a result of an ancient decision of the Senate and, on the other side, Tertullian’s report about the *senatusconsultum* of 35 CE, which outlawed the Jesus movement (*Apol.* 5.2). At most they only draw a connection with the above-mentioned Origen, *Cels.* 2.63: “he should have appeared to those who treated him with despise, to the one who condemned him, and to everyone everywhere.”⁴² It is not Celsus, but Origen who identifies “the Roman Senate” as opposing the spread of Christ’s teaching (2.79; 4.32). Celsus does not mention the Senate’s unanimous decision to condemn to death Jesus’ worshippers as impious, which Macarius’ Hellene mentions.⁴³ This clearly refers to the (historical or not) *senatusconsultum* from the year 35 of which Tertullian speaks.⁴⁴ It is not Celsus, but Origen who identifies “the Roman Senate” as opposing the spread of Christ’s teaching (*Cels.* 2.79; 4.32).

According to Tertullian’s account, in 35 CE, Tiberius proposed to the Senate to recognize the Jesus movement as a licit religion. The Senate

⁴¹ Klauck (2008) 116.

⁴² E.g. Schott (2015) 83-84; Boulnois (2016) 235 on Macarius’ passage at stake.

⁴³ The same omission is found in Julian’s criticism of the resurrection of Jesus. See Cook (2016): Julian, in a Syriac fragment of his *Contra Galilaeos*, attacked the resurrection narratives in Matthew and Mark, because they were inconsistent with each other concerning the time of the arrival of the women to the tomb, the nature of the being they met in the tomb, and the women’s behaviour. Other Syriac and Latin texts suggest that Julian was also inspired by Porphyry.

⁴⁴ On this see Ramelli (2004), referred to by Sordi (2004) 28; by Navarra (2014) 789; Goulet (2004).

refused to do so; as a consequence, Christianity turned out to be a *superstitio illicita* or “illegal superstition” in the Empire, and the Christians were liable to death. Tiberius, however, did not change his mind and prevented accusations against the Christians by threatening their accusers with death (and indeed the *senatusconsultum* remained ineffective until 62 CE). Tertullian narrates as follows:

Tiberius ergo, cuius tempore nomen Christianum in saeculum introivit, adnuntiatum sibi ex Syria Palaestina quod illic veritatem ipsius divinitatis revelaverat, detulit ad Senatum cum praerogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit; Caesar in sententia mansit, comminans periculum accusatoribus Christianorum. Consulite commentarios vestros: illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse.

Tiberius, under whose reign the Christian name entered the world, received a report from Syria Palestine about what had revealed there the truth of the divinity itself. Then he reported this in turn to the Senate with the favor of his own imperial vote. The Senate, however, since it had not verified the matter personally, rejected this proposal. But the emperor remained of his opinion and threatened the accusers of the Christians with death penalty. Please, consult your historical documents: there you will find that Nero was the first to cruelly use the imperial sword against this sect, which at that time was growing especially in Rome. (*Apologeticum* 5.2)

The denomination *Syria Palaestina* comes from Tertullian’s own time, being posterior to the Bar Kochba revolt. In the time of Jesus and Tiberius, it was *Iudaea*. Tertullian states not only that the Senate refuses to recognize Christ’s divinity, but also implies that this made Christianity automatically illegal, since immediately afterwards he mentions Tiberius’ reaction of threatening the accusers of the Christians with death penalty. Without an outlawing of Christianity there could not be any accuser of Christians and the emperor would not have needed to threaten them with death penalty. The reliability of Tertullian’s passage has been accepted by a scanty minority of historians⁴⁵ and here I am not directly concerned with its historicity,

⁴⁵Sordi (1957; 1964); Bourgeaud (2004), 123-124: “il paraît certain que Tibère entendit parler de la mort du Christ, c’est-à-dire d’un homme accusé de se prétendre roi, et que certains considéraient comme un dieu, exécuté en Judée sous

but primarily with the use that Porphyry and his followers, Tertullian, Macarius' Hellene, and others made of this motif of the outlawing of Christianity in the Empire by the Senate around 35 CE.

Tertullian, at any rate, would have had little advantage in inventing that the Senate, the most prestigious political order of Rome, outlawed Christianity if this was not the case. Moreover, his addressees, *Romani imperii antistites*, could probably check the acts of the Senate under Tiberius—as Tertullian invites them to do: *consulite commentarios vestros*—and give him the lie. Tertullian's report corresponds to Tiberius' politics of using “astute reflection” (*consiliis et astu*, Tacitus *Ann.* 6.32).⁴⁶ If he was informed that the Jewish followers of Jesus were not against Rome, it was in his and the Empire's interest to recognise their religion as licit in the Empire, for the sake of an alliance in the delicate situation of the Near East. Indeed, when the Senate refused to admit the followers of Jesus as members of a religion recognized by the laws of the Empire,⁴⁷ Tiberius, by means of his *legatus* Lucius Vitellius, in the years 36-37 deposed those responsible for the condemnation of Jesus, Caiaphas and Pilate, as is attested by Josephus *AJ* 18.89-90;122. Precisely Vitellius' memories (*commentarii*)⁴⁸ may have been the source of Tertullian's report on the *senatusconsultum* of the year 35.

The information provided by Tertullian perfectly corresponds to the historical situation of the Julio-Claudian age, when it was indeed up to the Senate to decide whether to receive new deities.⁴⁹ In the age of Tiberius, the Senate was the organ responsible for religious decisions, as recent investigations by Szuszanna Várhelyi and others have

le mandat du procureur Pilate; ce dernier, magistrat désigné par l'empereur, devait nécessairement se trouver en rapport avec lui. Une tradition rapportée par Tertullien veut que Pilate ait envoyé à Tibère un dossier sur la religion des chrétiens de Palestine, peu après la mort du Christ (Eusèbe date cette relation de 35 ap. J.-C.). Il se peut que Tacite (*Annales* 15.44) tire la connaissance qu'il a du procès du Christ de ce rapport officiel”; Pouderon (2016) 103.

⁴⁶ See also Suetonius *Tiberius* 37: *hostiles motus nulla postea expeditione suscepta per legatos compescuit...reges infestos suspectosque comminationibus magis et querelis quam vi repressit*.

⁴⁷ For this category see e.g. Sordi (2004); Hasselhoff–Strothmann (2016).

⁴⁸ Cf. Galimberti (1999). On Vitellius also Thiede (2004) 199, 214, 230, 309-311, 333.

⁴⁹ Cf. Giovannini (1984). Tacitus *Ann.* 3.60-64 attests that Tiberius left authority to the Senate in religious matters. See Griffin (1997).

confirmed.⁵⁰ Religious honors, temple buildings, supplications, and the like had to be authorized by the Senate.⁵¹ Quintilian *Inst.* 12.2.21 clearly attests that religious matters were discussed in the Senate, as their supreme venue, until the end of the first century CE: according to him, the most important decisions concerning augurs, responses, and all matters of religion were frequently discussed in the Senate. Indeed, religion was the main area in which the Senate maintained its authority.⁵² Speaking of Tiberius, Tacitus remarks that in matters of religion the emperor wanted to leave to the Senate at least “a shade of its ancient authority” (*imago antiquitatis*, *Ann.* 3.60). This is why he wanted the Senate to decide, for instance, about provincial temples. Tiberius denied official cult for himself in the provinces.⁵³

Suetonius remarks on Tiberius’ deference to the Senate and he states that Tiberius used to submit any question to the Senate (*Tiberius* 29-30). However, he also notes that “he annulled some of the decisions of the Senate” (*et constitutiones Senatus quasdam rescidit*, *Tiberius* 33). One of these rare cases took place in 35 CE. It is very significant that, just three years before the *senatusconsultum* of the year 35 of which Tertullian speaks, in the year 32 another *senatusconsultum* took place about the admission of a new volume into the Sibylline books (Tacitus *Ann.* 6.12). In 35 CE, very similarly, a *senatus consultum* took place about the admission of a new religion into the cults recognized by the Romans. Unlike three years later, in 32 CE the Senate voted in favor of the admission, and Tiberius sent a letter with which he referred the issue to the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*. Three years later, he intervened as well, but against the decision of the Senate. According to Tertullian, Tiberius did not formally abrogate the *senatusconsultum*, but by means of his own veto, he prevented its effects, that is, the

⁵⁰ Várhely (2011), 48-9. On the Senate’s authority in religious matters under Tiberius and in the early empire, see also Buongiorno (2016); Santangelo (2016). The detailed review of imperial discussions by the Senate in religious matters, examined by Várhely and others, limit somewhat the import of Esler’s (1996), 211 denial “that Rome had some process for licensing foreign religions. There is no historical support for this whatsoever... there never was a juridical category of *religio licita*” (cf. 215).

⁵¹ Cf. Tolbert (1984) note K.

⁵² Talbert (1984) 391.

⁵³ Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.37-38; *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 11.922-3. See D.S. Levene, “Defining the Divine in Rome,” *TAPA* 142 (2012) 41-81, at 76-7.

condemnation of Christians to death. Tiberius threatened death penalty to those who would accuse the Christians (*comminans periculum accusatoribus Christianorum*). Those accusers obviously could have accused Christians *qua tales* and caused them to be put on trial only if the *senatusconsultum* had indeed outlawed Christianity.

4. Christian and “Pagan” Uses of the παράνομος Motif

Speaking of a decision of the Senate in the ‘30s and of Tiberius’ ensuing reaction against potential accusers of Christians, as pointed out above, Tertullian implies that a *senatusconsultum* outlawed Christianity. The same account seems to underlie the passages by Porphyry and Macarius’ Hellene analyzed above, but also by the *Acts of Apollonius*, a senator who died as a martyr under Commodus.⁵⁴ In the *Acta martyris Apollonii*, preserved in Greek and Armenian, the praetorian prefect Tigidius Perennis (180-182/5) refers to a *senatusconsultum* which outlawed the Christians as such: “The *senatusconsultum* [τὸ δόγμα τῆς συγκλήτου] established that it is illicit to be Christians.”⁵⁵ In the Latin version, *non licet esse vos*. This is the *senatusconsultum* on the basis of which Apollonius was sentenced to death, as Eusebius and his translator Rufinus further attest: Apollonius “was beheaded on the basis of a *senatusconsultum*”: ἀπὸ δόγματος συγκλήτου, *secundum senatusconsultum capite plexus est* (HE 5.21.4/5). This corresponds to the *senatusconsultum* that took place under Tiberius and made Christianity a *superstitio illicita*, to which Tertullian, Porphyry, and Macarius’ Hellene refer. But the Christian senator Apollonius in *Acta Martyris Apollonii* 37 claims exactly the opposite as Porphyry: namely, that Christianity is not at all against the law of the Empire, but that “Christians obey any law passed by the emperor.” This point was made by most Christian apologists.

In the above-mentioned *Martyrdom of Peter* ascribed to Linus (*Martyrium beati Petri apostoli a Lino episcopo conscriptum*), 8, Peter is said to be put to death under Nero by the prefect Agrippa on the charge of *superstitio* or illicit religion: *praetendens superstitionis accusationem, crucifigi iussit apostolum*. In the Greek *Martyrdom of Peter*, 36, the key charge is ἀθεότης. Still Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* 2.29, echoes the legal prohibition of Christianity by the Empire, on the basis of which Paul and Peter were put to death in the

⁵⁴ Cf. Sordi (1964) 169-88; Saxer (1982-84).

⁵⁵ “Sancti Apollonii Romani Acta graeca,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 14 (1895) 13-14, 23-24.

Sixties of the first century: *post etiam datis legibus religio vetabatur, palamque edictis propositis Christianum esse non licebat*. Being a Christian was illegal.

Again in the *Martyrdom of Peter* attributed to Linus, 3, the senators are depicted as those who most opposed the Christians from the beginning. Likewise, Origen remarks in *Hom. Jes.Nav.* 9.10: “the kings of the earth have gathered together, *the senate and people and chiefs of Rome*, to cancel the name of Jesus.” Indeed the outlawing of Christianity did not allow Christians to exist as such in the Empire, so Origen too—like his contemporary Tertullian, Porphyry, Macarius' Hellene, the *Acta Apollonii*, Sulpicius and perhaps the other texts mentioned—may have referred to the *senatusconsultum* that outlawed the Christians.

Origen, whose works Porphyry knew well, and with whom Porphyry was personally acquainted, in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* also explained that Jesus just after his resurrection did not appear to Pilate, Herod, or the high priests, because these lacked the spiritual capacity to discern his divinity. Porphyry or a follower of his, whose arguments are reflected in Macarius' Hellene, added the mention of “the Senate and people of Rome,” obviously wanting to emphasize the theme of the condemnation of Christianity by Rome, through the reference to the *senatusconsultum* from the year 35. This event, therefore, seems to have been known to Christian authors, from Tertullian to Origen to the *Acta Apollonii*, but it was especially deployed by “pagan” polemicists, in order to underscore the alleged incompatibility between the Church and the Roman Empire—and in turn the law of the gods on which the Empire was thought to rest.

5. The Question of Porphyry's Interest in Universalism

The relation between religion and the Roman Empire has been the object of a number of studies from different angles, most recently by Clifford Ando, Jörg Rüpke, and Michael Scott.⁵⁶ Michael Simmons even suggests that in the third century in particular religion, focussed on the imperial cult, was the real unifying factor in the Roman Empire: “The emperors increasingly relied upon Roman religion as an agent of unification.”⁵⁷ This is why Simmons also surmises that “Christianity

⁵⁶ Ando (2016); Rüpke (2014); Scott (2016), Part III.

⁵⁷ Simmons (2015) 187 and *passim*.

was the only genuine universal salvation cult in the Roman Empire, and one of the main causes of its eventual triumph was its distinct universalist soteriology, which was successfully used by Constantine as an agent of political and cultural unification.”⁵⁸ This is an important point and deserves a separate study—which will be developed—on Porphyry’s soteriology and interest in universalism (which is the focus of Augustine’s accurate or inaccurate account of Porphyry’s *De regressu animae*), against the background of a detailed study of Platonist soteriology and eschatology, and in Origen’s doctrine of apokatastasis.

Though, one must determine what “universalistic” means here: Simmons takes it in a minimalistic sense, implying a religion that offered salvation to people of all races and classes, and all walks of life. But in fact there was a remarkable strand within Christianity in late antiquity, which could be identified as the Origenian strand, which taught that salvation was not only *offered* to all, but would eventually be actually *achieved* by all (apokatastasis).⁵⁹ This is a stronger sense of “universalism,” which is even likely to have influenced also Zoroastrianism in late antiquity.⁶⁰

Contrary to Porphyry’s drift, the apologists, in an age in which Christianity was outlawed, insisted on the loyalty of the Christians and their respect for the Empire’s laws, and advocated a separation of Church and State, by rejecting the worship of the emperor and distinguishing the honor and obedience due to the emperor and civil authorities and the worship due exclusively to God. “They demanded religious freedom and thus the separation of Church and State from the Roman government, where no such separation existed: a brilliant and radical innovation in the ancient world.”⁶¹ This separation, however, was very much limited later, in the Christian empire—think of Justinian, who in 553 CE even opened and held an ecumenical council against the will of the Pope, and deported Pope Vigilius to Constantinople. This is the same emperor who wanted the “condemnation” of Origen qua more of a philosopher than of a Christian, and who likewise shut down the Platonic School in Athens.

⁵⁸ Simmons (2015) 201.

⁵⁹ Full study in Ramelli (2013).

⁶⁰ See Ramelli (2017a).

⁶¹ Rhee (2005) 171.

Matters changed concerning *παρανομία* with the advent of the Christian Roman Empire and the turning upside down of the relation between Church and Empire. Still in the late fifth century, when there were imperial laws no longer against Christianity but rather against “pagan” sacrifices, for Proclus and his biographer Marinus, *Vita Procli* 15, the “lawful way of life,” against which “monstrous winds were blowing,” was the “pagan” one—as it was earlier for Porphyry. This was probably one of the reasons why Proclus, who criticized Origen but also knew and esteemed him, and followed him in several respects,⁶² never overtly admitted that Origen was a Christian, although in at least some cases it is certain that he was referring to Origen the Christian.⁶³ For Proclus and Marinus, Christianity was still against the law, but this law was that of the “pagan” deities, and not any more that of the Roman Empire, which by that time—for better or for worse—had become an ally to the Church.

Bibliography

- Ando, Clifford. *Religion et gouvernement dans l'Empire romain*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2016.
- Arnold, Johannes. *Der Wahre Logos des Kelsos: Eine Strukturanalyse*. Münster: Aschendorff, 2016.
- Barnes, Timothy. “Legislation against the Christians.” *JRS* 58 (1968), 32-50.
- “Porphyry against the Christians.” *JTS* 24 (1973) 424-442.
- *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981.
- “Scholarship or Propaganda?” *BICS* 39 (1994) 53-65.

⁶² Ramelli (2017a; 2017; 2017b). Review of 2017b by Lloyd Gerson, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2018.03.32: <http://bmcr.brynmaur.edu/2018/2018-03-32.html>.

⁶³ Ramelli (2017). I do not enter here the issue of the identity or distinction of the two Origenes, which would require a long and detailed treatment (some arguments for the possibility—although not the necessity—of the identification in Ramelli (2009; 2017; in preparation) and further literature cited there; most recently, Tarrant (2017) 324 also assumes that it is possible that there was only one Origen: “it is not certain that they are distinct”, and Tzamalikos (2016) 2-4 asserts this for sure, rejecting “the convenient folly about ‘two Origenes’—which recently has resulted in ‘two Ammonii’!—...this Origen and the Christian one being the selfsame person”). At any rate, Proclus very likely referred to the Christian one when criticizing his metaphysics, and probably also when reporting his exegesis of Plato, besides being inspired by him in the concept of *apokatastasis* and in the notion of perpetual bodies (see references in the preceding note).

- Becker, Matthias. *Porphyrios, "Contra Christianos."* Berlin: deGruyter, 2016.
- Berchman, Robert. *Porphyry Against the Christians.* Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Böhm, Thomas. "Origenes—Theologe und (Neu-)Platoniker? Oder: Wem soll man misstrauen: Eusebius oder Porphyrius?," *Adamantius* 8 (2002), 7-23.
- Boulnois, Marie-Odile. "Ne me touche pas: Une lecture originale de la rencontre du Christ et de Marie-Madeleine chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie." In *Pascha nostrum Christus. FS Raniero Cantalamessa*, eds Pier Franco Beatrice – Bernard Pouderon, Paris: Beauchesne, 2016, 233-261.
- Bourgeaud, Philippe. *Exercices de mythologie.* Genève, 2004.
- Buongiorno, P. "Pronunce senatorie in materia di divinazione dall'età repubblicana all'età giulio-claudia," in Peter Funke *et alii*, eds, *Rechtliche Verfahren und religiöse Sanktionieren in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 2016, 245-255.
- Cook, John Granger. "Julian and Porphyry on the Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospels." *JPT* 10 (2016) 193–207.
- Review of Becker (2016): *RBL* 12/2017, https://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/10962_12184.pdf.
- Digester, Elizabeth DePalma. *The Making of a Christian Empire.* Ithaca: Cornell, 2000.
- 'Porphyry, Julian, or Hierokles? The Anonymous Hellene in Makarios Magnes' *Apocriticus*," *JThS* 53 (2002) 466-502.
- *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution.* Ithaca: Cornell, 2012.
- "The Usefulness of Borderlands Concepts in Ancient History: The Case of Origen as Monster." In Michael North and John Lee, eds, *Globalizing Borderland Studies in Europe and North America.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2016, 15-32.
- Dodds Erik Robertson, and John Dillon. "Ammonius (2) Saccas." In *Oxford Classical Dictionary.* Oxford:OUP, online 2016. DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.364.
- Duda, J. "A Mystic's Utopian Dream of Christian Rome. The Political Theology of Origen." *Vox Patrum* 34 (2014) 179-194.
- Esler, Philip Francis. *Community and Gospel in Luke–Acts.* Cambridge: CUP, 1989; 1996.

- Frede, Michael. "Celsus' Attack on the Christians." In *Philosophia Togata* 2, eds Jonathan Barnes and Miriam Griffin, Oxford: OUP, 1997, 218-40.
- Frend, W. H. C. *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967.
- Galimberti, Alessandro. "I commentarii di Lucio Vitellio e la fonte romana del XVIII libro delle *Antichità Giudaiche* di Flavio Giuseppe." *Historia* 48 (1999) 224-234.
- Giovannini, Adalberto. "Tacite, l'*incendium Neronis* et les chrétiens," *REA* 30 (1984) 3-34.
- Goulet, Richard. *Macarios de Magnésie Le Monogénès I*. Paris: Vrin, 2003.
- "Hypothèses récentes sur le traité de Porphyre Contre les chrétiens." In Michel Narcy – Éric Rebillard, eds, *Hellénisme et christianisme*, Villeneuve d'Ascq: Septentrion, 2004, 61-109.
- Review of Becker (2016): *Sehepunkte* 2016: <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2016/04/28354.html>.
- Grafton, Anthony, and Megan Williams. *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*. Cambridge, MA–London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Griffin, Miriam. "The Senate's Story." *JRS* 87 (1997) 249-253.
- Hasselhoff, Görgé , and Meret Strothmann (eds). *Religio licita? Rom und die Juden*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016.
- Johnson, Aaron. "Rethinking the Authenticity of Porphyry, *c. Chr.* fr. 1," *StPatr* 46 (2010) 53-58.
- *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre*. Cambridge: CUP, 2013.
- Karamanolis, George. *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*. Durham: Acumen, 2013.
- *Early Christian Philosophers on Aristotle*, in Andrea Falcon, ed., *The Brill Companion to Aristotle's Reception*. Leiden: Brill, 2016, ch. 23.
- Kinzig, Wolfram. "War der Neuplatoniker Porphyrios ursprünglich Christ?," in *Mousopoulos Stephanos: FS Herwig Görgemanns*, ed. Adolf-Martin Ritter et Alii, Heidelberg: Winter, 1998, 320-332.
- Klauck, Hans-Joseph, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*. Waco: Baylor, 2008.
- Kofsky, Arieh. *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*, Leiden: Brill, 2000.

- Labahn, Michael and Outi Lehtipuu, eds. *People under Power: Early Jewish and Christian Responses to the Roman Empire*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University, 2015.
- Magny, Ariane. *Porphyry in Fragments*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014.
- Männlein-Robert, Irmgard (ed.). *Die Christen als Bedrohung?: Text, Kontext und Wirkung von Porphyrios*. Roma Aeterna, 5. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017.
- Markschies, Christoph. *Hellenisierung des Christentums: Sinn und Unsinn einer historischen Deutungskategorie*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012.
- Martens, Peter. "Embodiment, Heresy, and the Hellenization of Christianity: The Descent of the Soul in Plato and Origen." *HTR* 108 (2015) 594-620.
- Morlet, Sebastien (ed.) *Le traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens: un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions*. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2011.
- Muscolino, Giuseppe (tr.). *Porfirio, Contro i Cristiani*. Milan: Bompiani, 2009.
- Navarra, I. "Tiberius, emperor." In *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014, 788-789.
- Peppe, Leo. "I *senatusconsulta* come alternativa alla legge comiziale." In *Leges publicae*, ed. Jean-Louis Ferrary, Pavia, 2012, 627-705.
- Pouderon, Bernard. "Quelques pistes nouvelles pour la compréhension de la construction de l'Apologie de Justin," in *Pascha nostrum Christus: Essays in Honour of Raniero Cantalamessa*, eds. Pier Franco Beatrice – Bernard Pouderon, Paris: Beauchesne, 2016, 85-107.
- Rajak, Tessa. "Was There a Roman Charter for the Jews?" *JRS* 74 (1984), 107-123.
- Ramelli, Ilaria. "Il senatoconsulto del 35 contro i Cristiani in un frammento porfiriano," prefaced by Marta Sordi, *Aevum* 78 (2004) 59-67.
- "Origen and the Stoic Allegorical Tradition: Continuity and Innovation," *InvLuc* 28 (2006), 195-226.
- "Origen, Patristic Philosophy, and Christian Platonism: Re-Thinking the Christianization of Hellenism," *VigChr* 63 (2009), 217-63.

- Ramelli, Ilaria. *Bardaisan of Edessa: A Reassessment of the Evidence and a New Interpretation, also in the Light of Origen and the Fragments from Porphyry*. Piscataway: Gorgias, 2009a.
- “The Philosophical Stance of Allegory in Stoicism and its Reception in Platonism, “Pagan” and Christian: Origen in Dialogue with the Stoics and Plato.” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 18,3 (2011) 335-371.
- *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- “Constantine and the Legal Recognition of Christianity: What Changed, and Some Historical Forerunners” *Vox Patrum* 34 (2014) t. 61, 55-72.
- “Origen and the Platonic Tradition.” In *Plato and Christ: Platonism in Early Christian Theology*, special issue of *Religions*, ed. J. Warren Smith, 2017, 8(2), 21, doi:10.3390/rel8020021.
- Christian Apokatastasis and Zoroastrian Frashgird: The Birth of Eschatological Universalism, «Religion and Theology» 24, 3-4 (2017a) 350-406. DOI: 10.1163/15743012-02403007
- “Proclus of Constantinople and Apokatastasis.” In *Proclus and his Legacy*, eds David Butorac and Danielle Layne, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017b, 95-122.
- “Allegorising and Philosophising.” In *Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Mythography*, eds. R. Scott Smith and Stephen M. Trzaskoma, Oxford: OUP, 2020.
- *Origen of Alexandria Philosopher and Theologian*. In preparation.
- Rhee, Helen. *Early Christian Literature: Christ and Culture in the Second and Third Centuries*. Oxford: OUP, 2005.
- Rüpke, Jörg. *Religion of the Romans*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.
- . *From Jupiter to Christ*. Oxford: OUP, 2014.
- Santangelo, Federico. “Enduring Arguments: Priestly Expertise in the Early Principate.” *TAPA* 146 (2016) 349-76.
- Saxer, Victor. “Martyrium Apollonii Romani.” *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia* 55-56 (1982-84) 265-298.
- Schott, Jeremy. “Porphyry on Christians and Others: Barbarian Wisdom, Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution.” *JECS* 13 (2005) 277-314.
- “The Hellene.” In *Macarius, Apocriticus*, trans. Jeremy Schott and Mark Edwards. Liverpool: University, 2015.
- Scott, Mark. *Journey Back to God: Origen on the Problem of Evil*. Oxford: OUP, 2012.

- Scott, Michael. *Ancient Worlds: A Global History of Antiquity*. New York: Basic, 2016.
- Sherwin-White, Adrian Nicholas. "The Early Persecutions and Roman Law Again." *JTS* 3 (1952), 199-215.
- Simmons, Michael. *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity: Porphyry of Tyre and the Pagan-Christian Debate*. Oxford: OUP, 2015.
- Smallwood, E. Mary. *The Jews Under Roman Rule. From Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Sordi, Marta. "I primi rapporti tra lo Stato romano e il Cristianesimo." *RAL* 12 (1957) 58-93.
- "L'apologia del martire Apollonio," *RSCI* 18 (1964) 169-88.
- *I Cristiani e l'Impero romano*. Milan: Jaca Book, 2004.
- Ste. Croix, Geoffrey E.M. de. "Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?" *Past and Present* 26 (1963), 6-38.
- Talbert, Richard. *The Senate of Imperial Rome*. Princeton: University Press, 1984.
- Tarrant, Harold. "Plotinus, Origenes and Ammonius on the King," in *Religio-Philosophical Discourses Within the Greco-Roman, Jewish and Early Christian World*, eds Anders Klostergaard Petersen, George van Kooten, Leiden: Brill, 2017, 323-337.
- Thiede, Carsten. *Jesus und Tiberius: Zwei Söhne Gottes*. München: Lüchtherhand, 2004.
- Tzamalikos, Panayiotis. *The Real Cassian Revisited*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- *Anaxagoras, Origen, and Neoplatonism*, vols. 1-2. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2016.
- Urbano, Arthur. *The Philosophical Life: Biography and the Crafting of Intellectual Identity in Late Antiquity*. Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2013.
- Várhelyi, Szusanna. *The Religion of Senators in the Roman Empire: Power and Beyond*. Cambridge: CUP, 2011.
- Wilken, Robert Louis. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven: Yale, 1984.
- Wlosok, Antonie. "Die Rechtsgrundlagen der Christenverfolgungen der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte." *Gymnasium* 66 (1959), 14-30.
- Zambon, Mario. "Παρανόμως ζῆν: la critica di Porfirio a Origene," in *Origeniana VIII*, ed. Lorenzo Perrone, Leuven : Peeters, 2003, 553-63.s
- Zollschan, Linda. *Rome and Judaea: International Law Relations, 162-100 BCE*, London; New York: Routledge, 2016.