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Epiphanius of Salamis and the Antiquarian's Bible

ANDREW S. JACOBS

Compared to more philosophical biblical interpreters such as Origen, Epiphanius of Salamis often appears to modern scholars as plodding, literalist, reactionary, meandering, and unsophisticated. In this article I argue that Epiphanius's eclectic and seemingly disorganized treatment of the Bible actually draws on a common, imperial style of antiquarianism. Through an examination of four major treatises of Epiphanius—his *Panarion* and *Ancoratus*, as well as his lesser-studied biblical treatises, *On Weights and Measures* and *On Gems*—I trace this antiquarian style and suggest that perhaps Epiphanius's antiquarian Bible might have resonated more broadly than the high-flown intellectual Bible of thinkers like Origen.

INTRODUCTION: THE ANTIQUARIAN BIBLE

In the mid-nineteenth century, a London print-seller named John Gibbs cut apart a two-volume illustrated Bible and began reassembling it. He inserted close to 30,000 prints, etchings, and woodcuts to illustrate the biblical passages, and then rebound the results. By the time he finished, his Bible had ballooned to sixty extra-large volumes, known today as the “Kitto Bible.”¹ Gibbs's extra-illustrated Bible was one of many so-called “Grangerized” volumes that circulated in the mid-eighteenth to early-twentieth centuries, books on various topics elaborately reconstituted as part gentlemanly past-time, part obsessive one-upmanship, part strange bibliomania.² Gibbs's extra-illustrated Bible borders on the excessive: one

1. Lori Anne Ferrell, *The Bible and the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 173–91; the Kitto Bible is housed in the Huntington Library.

2. The term *grangerized* comes from one of the earliest extra-illustrated volumes, a version of James Granger's *Biographical History of England*, produced by Richard Bull in 1769; see Robert R. Wark, “The Gentle Pastime of Extra-Illustrating Books,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 46 (1993): 151–65; Ferrell, *Bible and the People*, 170–73; and Robert A. Shaddy, “Grangerizing: ‘One of the Unfortunate Stages of

biblical passage might be illustrated by as many as fifty pictures, combining interpretive expansion with technical dazzle.

Early Christian Scriptures were also the site of technical innovation and interpretive expansion. Just as Gibbs disassembled the two volumes of John Kitto's *Illustrated Bible* and reconstructed them into sixty massive volumes, so too Origen disassembled the text of Septuagint and reassembled it into the massive, and technically complicated, volumes of the Hexapla.³ Just as Gibbs inserted dozens of images of Adam and Eve into the text of Genesis, so Origen inserts dozens of chapters on the titles of Christ in his commentary on the first half of John 1.1 ("In the beginning was the *Word*").⁴ Yet the differences between the two projects seem more profound than their similarities. Whereas in Origen's hands the Bible became a source of philosophical contemplation, under Gibbs's knife it becomes seemingly little more than a curiosity or—perhaps more accurately—a *curio*, a container of tangentially related oddities.⁵

Even in its disjunction and sprawl, however, the Kitto Bible resonates with the late-ancient Christian Bible. For Gibbs, Scriptures were a site for antiquarian expansion, participating in an early modern desire to study, collect, and display:⁶ the rise of the museum and the encyclopedia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bears witness to an imperial regime of knowledge and mastery.⁷ The Roman Empire, like its distant Victorian

Bibliomania," *The Book Collector* 49 (2000): 535–46. Ferrell, *Bible and the People*, 172, notes of the Kitto Bible: "collecting, like all hobbies, walks a thin line between gentle pastime and fierce obsession."

3. Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2008).

4. Catherine M. Chin, "Textual Exhaustion and the Boundaries of Gentility in *Commentary on John 1*," *J ECS* 14 (2006): 407–36.

5. See Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*, Material Texts (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). My thanks to Catherine Chin for drawing my attention to this helpful volume.

6. Swann, *Curiosities and Texts*, 1–54, defines the modern sense of "collecting" and surveys its cultural contexts in the early modern British context. But see now also Steven H. Rutledge, *Ancient Rome As a Museum: Power, Identity, and the Culture of Collecting*, Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

7. On the museum: Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995); Jeffrey Abt, "The Origins of the Public Museum," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, Companions to Cultural Studies 12, ed. Sharon MacDonald Blackwell (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 115–34. On encyclopedias: Richard R. Yeo, *Encyclopaedic Visions: Scientific Dictionaries and Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

cousin, was also a distinctly epistemological regime.⁸ From Pliny the Elder down to John Lydus we possess antiquarian treatises that made claims to totalized mastery.⁹ This Roman imperial “habit of compilation” had political overtones,¹⁰ producing from its collected trivia and ephemera powerful images of Roman identity and authority.¹¹

Some of these sprawling antiquarian texts, like Aulus Gellius’s *Noctes atticae*, lack any self-evident organizing principle. Indeed, their lack of a central argument—their lack of thesis—often repels modern readers.¹² It is incorrect, however, to say such texts lack order, as they are very clearly ordered by their authors.¹³ This ability to bring even incoherent order to a mass of otherwise unconnected bits of knowledge reveals the political edge of Roman antiquarianism. These texts participated in an imperial way of knowing, made visible in their vastness and totalization.¹⁴ To delve into such texts, and explore their orders of knowledge, is to contemplate the way empires thought and worked.

8. See Clifford Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 44 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008).

9. Trevor Murphy, *Pliny the Elder’s “Natural History”: The Empire in the Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13–14. On antiquarianism generally, see Arnaldo Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285–315 and “The Rise of Antiquarian Research,” in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, Sather Lectures 54 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 54–79, discussed in Peter N. Miller, “Introduction” in *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 8–25.

10. Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh, “Introduction: Ordering Knowledge,” in their *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3–4.

11. König and Whitmarsh, “Introduction,” 29. See also G. Maslakov, “The Roman Antiquarian Tradition in Late Antiquity,” in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity*, ed. Brian Croke and Alanna M. Emmett (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1983), 100–106 and Catherine M. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World*, Divinations (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

12. König and Whitmarsh, “Introduction,” 3: antiquarian texts “may look unwieldy or purely functional to modern eyes, but . . . in the ancient world clearly had a much higher prestige than modern criticism has allowed them.”

13. On this “antiquarian logic,” see Erik Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae: Aulus Gellius and the Fantasy of the Roman Library*, Wisconsin Studies in Classics (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

14. König and Whitmarsh, “Introduction,” 29. On 38, they also note that “‘imperial,’ of course, does not necessarily mean ‘pro-imperial.’” Michael Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London: Routledge, 1992), argues that John Lydus’s early Byzantine antiquarian texts resisted Justinian’s Christian Roman Empire.

I suggest that we, as scholars of late antiquity, have not given due attention to this kind of antiquarian impulse in early Christian reading of the Bible. We prefer Origen's orderly, theoretical Bible, with its clear (if complex) philosophical *skopos*.¹⁵ Antiquarianism is messier than philosophy, as Seneca the Younger scornfully noted,¹⁶ and we have internalized such prejudices.¹⁷ Yet what if the ancient Bible, like the Kitto Bible, was also an antiquarian Bible: stuffed with (seeming) irrelevancies, taken apart and reconstituted without any central argument, ordered but not orderly? To be sure, such a Bible would not be Origen's Bible; it would, however, be the Bible of Epiphanius of Salamis and, perhaps, a Bible that speaks to an early Christian imperial sense of knowing.¹⁸

EPIPHANIUS AND HIS BIBLE

Epiphanius is a thoroughly reviled figure in modern scholarship: narrow, intransigent, prurient, and intolerant, prevaricating heresiologist and tireless controversialist.¹⁹ Frank Williams, who has translated Epiphanius's best-known work (the *Panarion*) remarks: "Of all the church fathers,

15. R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (1959; repr. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002); Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Exegetical Method in Origen's Exegesis*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 28 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986); J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Blossom Stefaniw, *Mind, Text, and Commentary: Noetic Exegesis in Origen of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, and Evagrius Ponticus*, *Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity* 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010).

16. Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 88.36–39, cited (along with *Epistulae morales* 108.23) by Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae*, 17, who notes: "Moral philosophy scoffs at pedantry."

17. Although we do not mind, it seems, producing our own antiquarian fare out of Roman antiquarianism: see J. C. McKeown, *A Cabinet of Roman Curiosities: Strange Tales and Surprising Facts from the World's Greatest Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

18. Richard Flower, "Genealogies of Unbelief: Epiphanius of Salamis and Heresiological Authority," in *Unclassical Traditions*, vol. 2: *Perspectives from East and West in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Classical Journal Supplement 35, ed. Christopher Kelly, Richard Flower, and Michael Stuart Williams (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70–87, analyzes Epiphanius's *Panarion* in light of classical knowledge strategies. Flower's essay complements my own, although his focus is more narrowly on the totalizing nature of knowledge in the *Panarion*.

19. See discussion of Jon Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, PMS 13 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 26–27 and Pierre Nautin, "Épiphanie (Saint), de Salamine," *DHGE* 15 (1963): 617–31.

Epiphanius is the most generally disliked,” a signal achievement, indeed, adding, as his worst offense: “Above all he vehemently opposed the teachings of the great commentator Origen, the first Christian systematic theologian and as a thinker far superior to Epiphanius.”²⁰ Epiphanius’s vehement opposition to Origen has framed many modern studies of the Cypriot bishop,²¹ not least because of what the contrast between the two fathers seems to convey: intellect versus ignorance, spirituality versus earthliness, enlightenment versus demagoguery.²² All of these contrasts are visible in their respective Bibles: whereas Origen’s use of the Bible is sophisticated, philosophical, and allegorical, Epiphanius’s (it is claimed) is “literal,” uneducated, and flat.²³

One famous example, which appears already in Epiphanius’s early theological treatise, the *Ancoratus*, concerns Origen’s allegorical interpretation of the Garden of Eden and his spiritualized understanding of “paradise.”²⁴ Epiphanius’s fulminations against Origen seem almost comical: how can Origen claim that the rivers flowing out of paradise are an allegory when Epiphanius has “seen” the rivers “real (αἰσθητόν) and not allegorical”?²⁵ If

20. Frank Williams, ed., *The Panarion of Epiphanius, Book I (Sects 1–46)*, 2nd revd. ed., NHS 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), xxxi.

21. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 86–104; J. Rebecca Lyman, “The Making of a Heretic: The Life of Origen in Epiphanius *Panarion* 64,” *SP* 31 (1997): 445–51; J. Rebecca Lyman, “Origen as Ascetic Theologian: Orthodoxy and Authority in the Fourth-Century Church,” in *Origeniana Septima*, ed. Wolfgang Bienert and Uwe Kühneweg (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 187–94; J. Rebecca Lyman, “Ascetics and Bishops: Epiphanius on Orthodoxy,” in *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, Histoire/Orthodoxy, Christianity, and History*, Collections de l’École Française de Rome 270, ed. Susanna Elm, Éric Rébillard, and Antonella Romano (Paris: de Boccard, 2000), 149–61.

22. Aline Pourkier, *L’hérésiologie chez Épiphane de Salamine*, *Christianisme antique* 4 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1992), 29.

23. Josef Lössl, “‘Apocalypse? No.’—The Power of Millennialism and its Transformation in Late Antique Christianity,” in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 31–44, describes Epiphanius as an “anti-Origenist literalist” (39). Mark Elliott describes Epiphanius’s *de gemmis* as “hyperbaric in its literalism” (*The Song of Songs and Christology in the Early Church, 381–451*, *Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity* 7 [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000], 27).

24. The *Ancoratus* was probably composed around 374; see Oliver Kösters, *Die Trinitätslehre des Epiphanius von Salamis: Ein Kommentar zum “Ancoratus”* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 77–116.

25. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 58.3 (GCS 25:68). We have no surviving interpretation of Genesis 2 by Origen, so it is unclear to what extent Epiphanius is responding directly to some Origenist exegesis.

the rivers are not “real,” Epiphanius worries, then none of Genesis is real, but “the rest of the truth is myth and everything is allegorical (ἀλληγορεῖται τὰ πάντα).”²⁶ The narrative of Genesis is like a carefully laid out chain of dominoes: if one falls, the rest must fall as well, and salvation itself is lost.²⁷

Epiphanius must have found this argument compelling; it reappears in his *Panarion*²⁸ and again in his polemical anti-Origenist letter to Bishop John of Jerusalem decades later; there he claims not only to have “seen” the river of Gihon, but have “drunk” from the waters of the Euphrates.²⁹ As modern scholars point out, it is highly unlikely that Origen denied the existence, or potability, of the Euphrates River, or the existence of trees, sin, or bodily salvation.³⁰ So we imagine Epiphanius trapped in a simplistic (indeed, embarrassing) biblical literalism.³¹ Yet Epiphanius was not some lone voice crying out in the wilderness against Origen.³² While we may deride Epiphanius as simple-minded or uneducated he was—in his day and time—highly influential and sought out for his expertise.³³

If we take Epiphanius’s biblical interpretation on its own terms, I suggest we find an alternative model of scriptural knowledge. A closer look at the chain of dominoes Epiphanius first lays out in the *Ancoratus*—from the rivers of paradise to the fall and redemption of humanity—reveals much more than inept, literalist bible-thumping. His initial salvo against Origenist allegory comes in the context of distinguishing the ways in which the Son can “see” the Father from the ways that prophets claimed to “see” God:

26. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 58.6–8 (GCS 25:68–69); he repeats this fear in *Ancoratus* 55.1–2 and 61.1–2 (GCS 25:64, 73).

27. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 336, also refers to this (somewhat impatiently) as a “domino theory,” characterizing Epiphanius’s insistence on earthly paradise as indulging in “absurdity.”

28. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.4.11 (GCS 31:413): “The rest he allegorizes, whatever he is able: paradise and the waters over the heavens and the water under the earth.” Translations of the *Panarion* are modified from Williams, *Panarion, Book I* (cited above) and his second, still unrevised volume, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book II and III (Sects 47–80, De Fide)*, NHS 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

29. Epiphanius, *ep. ad Iohannem episcopum* (= Jerome, *ep.* 51) 5.6 (CSEL 54:404–5). Epiphanius’s letter to John survives only in Jerome’s Latin translation.

30. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 333–47: “Epiphanius does not appreciate the richness of Origen’s thought on paradise” (at 342).

31. Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 88, ascribes Epiphanius’s anti-allegorism as much to rhetorical strategy as to intellectual simplicity.

32. On Epiphanius’s influence, see Young Richard Kim, “The Imagined Worlds of Epiphanius of Cyprus,” Ph.D. Dissertation (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2006), 5–8.

33. Williams, *Panarion*, xv, who cites Jerome, *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum* 4 (PL 23:359): “He was of such great honor (*veneratio*), that heretics when they ruled considered how disgraced they would be if they persecuted such a man.”

not “allegorically” or “as if they were lying,” but perhaps only partially, as when people say they have “seen the ocean,” but (of course) have only seen it in part.³⁴

Here theological propositions pile upon geographic observations folded into doctrinal polemic. I summarize as briefly as I can: The reference to “allegory” recalls Origen’s “fantasy” that Paradise does not exist on earth. Consideration of Paradise leads to discussion of “the image” in which Adam was created, which leads to assertion of Christ’s uniqueness, which leads to discussion of Paradise and its rivers, which flows into a list of Adam’s descendants all the way down to Joseph the “old widower” who cast lots to become Mary’s guardian before she gave birth to Christ in the fortieth (or forty-second) year of Augustus’s reign. This dating leads to a recitation of the number of years of the reign of every Roman emperor from Augustus down to the present day, “the ninetieth year after Diocletian, ten since Valentinian and Valens, six years of Gratian, in the third consulship of Gratian Augustus and the illustrious Equitius, in the second indiction.”³⁵ The argument then twists back: Christ’s incarnation is affirmed, as is Adam’s creation as body-and-soul (here Epiphanius rejects Origen’s understanding of the “tunics of skin” as allegory for the bodies granted to Adam and Eve after their fall). Origen’s theology is condemned, along with other heretics: Gnostics, Valentinians, Manicheans, Marcionites, Arians, Anomoians, Sabellians, Pneumatomachoi, and Dimoirites. All of this—from the first discussion of “seeing God” to the condemnation of heresy—Epiphanius has squeezed into ten chapters of the *Ancoratus*.³⁶

A central theological core animates this meandering section of the *Ancoratus*: a defense of God’s unity and humanity’s dual nature. Yet how do we account for the list of emperors, the geographic details on the rivers of Eden, the list of Adam’s descendants from Seth through Christ, and the (not quite coherent) collection of heresiarchs? As clear forensic argumentation, these ten chapters fall sadly short. Yet they do resonate with the aesthetics of antiquarian writing, which “prizes metaphor and associative drift, variety of content and arrangement.”³⁷ Antiquarian compositions bring an ostentatiously fragmented order to knowledge. Classicist Erik Gunderson writes that antiquarians

34. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 54.1–7 (GCS 25:63–64); Epiphanius repeats this argument in *Panarion* 70.7.6–8.4 (GCS 37:239–40).

35. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 60.5 (GCS 25:72–73).

36. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 55.1–63.7 (GCS 25:64–76).

37. Murphy, *Pliny the Elder*, 24–45; see also 37–38 and Flower, “Genealogies of Unbelief,” 77.

sift and arrange the past. But they do so less as critics of power than as gay scientists luxuriating within it. The archive animates them. The radical possibility of reassembling different orders of things, different *mots et choses*, is for them only the radical possibility of being shot through with word-power and wielding the same among and against one's peers.³⁸

For an antiquarian, "the distinction between raw material and result can be indistinct."³⁹ The effect of Epiphanius's rhetoric is in the display of all the bits and pieces (*les mots et choses*), not in their careful arrangement according to rhetorical or philosophical principles.

When we look at Epiphanius through the lens of rhetoric and philosophy, we find bizarre appeals to literalism ("I have tasted the waters of the Euphrates!") and unexpected digressions, lists, numbers, and logical gaps. Yet we are also astounded at the sheer number of *things* Epiphanius can invoke in the course of an argument: geography, history, politics, doctrine, dates, names, citations, assertions, predictions. This aesthetic pattern of compilation and assemblage persists throughout Epiphanius's *oeuvre* and, I suggest, provides a means for understanding his approach to the Bible.

In the rest of this article I address Epiphanius's antiquarian Bible. First, I look at how the Bible in Epiphanius's two major surviving theological treatises, the *Ancoratus* and the *Panarion*, becomes one of many tools of antiquarian compilation, both a source of and an occasion for the display of recondite knowledge. Epiphanius disarticulates and distributes bits of biblical knowledge into the fabric of his theological treatises, and in turn embeds his esoterica into the biblical text. This display of a Bible that is fragmented yet unified creates a productive tension in Epiphanius's works. I then turn to Epiphanius's two surviving biblical treatises: a treatise *On Weights and Measures* and another *On Gems*. In these explicitly scriptural writings we see how Epiphanius's Bible becomes part of the thick network of imperial knowledge, disassembled and reaggregated in the composition of Christian culture.

THE BIBLE IN THE *ANCORATUS* AND *PANARION*

The Bible, of course, permeates Epiphanius's theological treatises, as we might expect from his opening statement to the *Ancoratus*. There he describes Scriptures as "the firm foundation (στερεὸν θεμέλιον) of the faith concerning the Father and Son and Holy Spirit and everything else about

38. Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae*, 16.

39. Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae*, 119.

salvation in Christ.”⁴⁰ In his biblical interpretation in these texts, Epiphanius deploys various interpretive tools, including figurative and allegorical interpretation.⁴¹ In the *Ancoratus*, Epiphanius is particularly fond of stringing together theological proof-texts.⁴² To be sure, this tendency to disaggregate and reassemble the Bible into chains of proof-texts is not unique to Epiphanius.⁴³ Indeed, in the *Panarion* he complains that Origen “slathers on proof-texts (μαρτυρίαζ) according to his own opinion, not how they really are or are perceived.”⁴⁴ Within the larger framework of Epiphanius’s hermeneutical style, however, we might see such proof-texting differently: as part and parcel of Roman literary antiquarian aesthetics.⁴⁵

Throughout his theological treatises, Epiphanius treats the Bible as an occasion for historical and geographic antiquarian expansions. To take one example: A defense of God’s benevolence in the *Ancoratus* leads Epiphanius to count out the 430 years from Abraham to Moses, in order to prove that the “spoiling of the Egyptians” was no more than the Israelites collecting their just wages.⁴⁶ On something of an antiquarian roll, Epiphanius defends the Israelite seizure of land from the Canaanites, which entails his listing the 137 distinct lands of the world (and 39 islands) according to their descent from the sons of Noah, as well as the generations from the flood to the fall of Jericho.⁴⁷ From a rhetorical perspective, the lists of

40. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 1.3 (GCS 25:6); see similarly *Panarion* 69.62.8 and 55.1.9 (GCS 37:211 and 31:325).

41. A few examples: *Ancoratus* 45.4–46.2, 48.1–5, 102.2–3; *Panarion* 51.32.5–6, 59.9.1–10, 77.36.6; *de fide* 3.4, 7.5 (GCS 25:55–56, 57–58, 122; 31:305–6, 373; 37:449, 499, 503). Of course, Epiphanius also rails against allegory at times in a way that is almost comically literalist: in *Panarion* 66.38/39.1–4 (GCS 37:77) Epiphanius insists that the “gnashing of teeth” in the afterlife must be literal, so there must be some kind of food for the resurrection body to chew on.

42. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 18.3–5, 72.1–9, 94.3–97.8, 98.3–99.5, 108.1–109.6 (GCS 25:26–27, 89–91, 115–18, 132–33).

43. See James D. Ernest, *The Bible in Athanasius of Alexandria* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Sara Parvis, “Τὰ τινῶν ἄρα ῥήματα θεολογεῖ?": The Exegetical Relationship between Athanasius’ *Orationes Contra Arianos I–III* and Marcellus of Ancyra’s *Contra Asterium*,” in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 6, ed. Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 337–67; Martin C. Albl, “*And Scripture Cannot Be Broken*”: *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 96 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

44. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.4.7 (GCS 31:412).

45. Of course, the *Panarion* is explicitly modeled on naturalist antiquarian literature about poisons and antidotes: Epiphanius, *Panarion* proem 2.3 (GCS 25:171).

46. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 109.1–111.1 (GCS 25:133–35).

47. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 111.4–114.5 (GCS 25:135–42).

names of people and places at best distracts from his main topic (God's benevolence); as a performance of arcane knowledge, extracted and collected and displayed, however, it is exemplary.⁴⁸

Likewise, Epiphanius's Bible allows for displays of recondite topographic and ethnographic knowledge; this rhetorical move from text to material remains is also a common trope of antiquarian literature, linking the imperial acquisitions of knowledge and territory more tightly together.⁴⁹ Against the Jewish sect of the Nasareans, Epiphanius explains that the sites of Genesis (including Noah's ark) can still be viewed today, and that the Egyptians still "smear their lambs" with "red lead," even though they don't remember why.⁵⁰ When Tatian denies the salvation of Adam,⁵¹ Epiphanius feels compelled to explain that Golgotha (the place of the skull) must be Adam's burial site, based on his comparative knowledge of hills in the vicinity of Jerusalem.⁵² Cultural details also abound: while refuting the teetotaling Encratites, Epiphanius explains what Esau's "porridge" was likely made of.⁵³ Clearly Epiphanius finds such (seeming) ephemera materially significant. Even Epiphanius's arch-heretic Origen is to be admired for his antiquarian displays ("for what he said . . . on customs and the natures of animals and other things, a modest report is given about him").⁵⁴ Had Origen not left the genial field of "customs and animals" and drifted into doctrinal speculation, he might not have drawn the antiquarian's wrath.

Epiphanius's mastery of biblical trivia leads him into seemingly pointless digressions in his heresiological refutations. While noting that the heresiarch Basilides immigrated to Egypt, to "the nome of Saïtes," Epiphanius interjects:

48. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity*, 34–35 and 73, explains how lists function to suggest unity, completeness, community, and control.

49. Murphy, *Pliny*, 154–64, evokes the parallel of the triumphal procession—which also integrates land, *spolia*, and knowledge in a procession before the viewer: "The world is summoned up and sent on a slow procession, name by name, under the scrutiny of its ruler" (164).

50. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 18.2.4–3.4 (GCS 25:216–17).

51. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 46.2.1 (GCS 31:205).

52. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 46.5.1–5 (GCS 31:208–9). The hill is not shaped like a skull, nor is it set high up (like the head on a body), as several hills nearby stand even higher.

53. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 47.2.8 (GCS 31:218).

54. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.5.5 (GCS 31:414); Epiphanius continues: "for the doctrines he made, about faith and higher interpretation, he is found to be the weirdest (ἀτοπώτατος) of all those who came before and after him!"

For the Egyptians call the neighborhood or environs of each city a “nome.” You may find even this of use to you, scholarly reader (φιλόλογε), for love of learning and clarity (πρὸς φιλομάθειαν καὶ σαφήνειαν), as a pious confirmation and explanation of the points of sacred Scripture that cast some into confusion on account of inexperience. Whenever in the holy prophet Isaiah you find it written about the “nomes” of Egyptian cities, like Tanis or Memphis, or the “nome” of Bubastis, it signifies the perimeter of the city in question. And there, let it be translated for you for the sake of the love of learning (φιλομαθείας ἕνεκεν)!⁵⁵

Epiphanius’s tone here is both instructional and condescending, the tone of the polymathic antiquarian, for whom every bit of knowledge is both relevant and in need of explanation.

Not only does the Bible provide Epiphanius with multiple opportunities for antiquarian display, but in his theological treatises the Bible itself is an object of antiquarian contemplation. As an antiquarian object, Epiphanius’s Bible straddles a curious boundary between integral whole and fragmented parts. Although Epiphanius frequently chastises heretics for disregarding the Bible’s integrity,⁵⁶ he is himself willing to disrupt Biblical coherence in the name of antiquarian research. We see this contradictory treatment of the antiquarian Bible in Epiphanius’s attitudes toward canon. In his chapter on “Judaism” in the *Panarion*, he lists the Old Testament canon in full,⁵⁷ and again, toward the end of the *Panarion*, writing against the Anomoians, he refers to the entire Christian Scriptures.⁵⁸ Yet Epiphanius is not bound by Old or New Testament canon in his theological treatises. His early chapters of the *Panarion* rely heavily on the book of Jubilees;⁵⁹ he quotes one of the beatitudes from the *Acts of Thecla* as “Scripture”;⁶⁰

55. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 24.1.2–3 (GCS 25:256). Momigliano, “Rise of Antiquarian Research,” 60, notes φιλόλογος as one several Greek and Latin terms used to approach the semantic field of our “antiquarian.”

56. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 42.13.7–8, 57.6.2 (GCS 31:183, 351).

57. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 8.6.1–3 (GCS 25:191–92).

58. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 76.22.5 (GCS 37:369). Epiphanius’s point here is both philological and theological: nowhere in the canon can the word ἀγεννητός be found in reference to God (see Mark DelCogliano, “The Influence of Athanasius and the Homoiousians on Basil of Caesarea’s Decentralization of ‘Unbegotten,’” *J ECS* 19 [2011]: 197–223).

59. William Alder, “The Origins of the Proto-Heresies: Fragments from a Chronicle in the First Book of Epiphanius’ *Panarion*,” *JTS* n.s. 41 (1990): 472–501. Although not explicitly named in these early chapters, Epiphanius refers to Jubilees (“which is also called ‘The Little Genesis’”) in his chapter on the Sethians (*Panarion* 39.6.1–5 [GCS 31:76–77]).

60. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 77.27.7 (GCS 37:440); he refers to Thecla again in 78.16.7 (GCS 37:467), but does not quote from the *Acts of Thecla* there.

he draws on the *Protoevangelium of James* in his two chapters on Marian heresy;⁶¹ and he explicitly cites a parable from an *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* on the relation of the body and soul.⁶²

Epiphanius's antiquarian mentality reconciles his dedication to canonical boundaries with his willingness to incorporate noncanonical works. On the one hand, Epiphanius's discussions of canon are themselves an antiquarian device: another authoritative list he can rattle off in the service of knowledgeable display.⁶³ We learn about the Hebrew numbering of the Old Testament and, in another place, the Hebrew names of the books of the Pentateuch.⁶⁴ Yet when it suits Epiphanius's theological interests, a parable from the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* or a beatitude from the *Acts of Thecla* will suit. Likewise, Epiphanius's antiquarian interests will allow him to refer as unproblematically to pseudepigraphic texts as to Scripture: What was the name of Seth's wife? When did idolatry begin? Where is Noah's ark? If these answers can't be found in Genesis, they may be found in Jubilees.

Much like Origen, Epiphanius also evinces interest in the textual integrity of the Bible and its translation history. He chastises heretics for "mutilating" or altering the biblical text.⁶⁵ Yet his own display of linguistic prowess often has the paradoxical effect of splitting and dislocating the Bible's textual cohesion. Epiphanius insists on the singular primacy of the Septuagint, but the heresiologist celebrated as *pentaglóssos* authoritatively

61. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 78–79 (GCS 37:452–84); he doesn't cite or name the *Protoevangelium Iacobi* directly here but relies multiple times on its narrative.

62. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.70.5–15 (GCS 31:515–17). See Marc Bregman, "The Parable of the Lame and the Blind: Epiphanius' Quotation From An Apocryphon of Ezekiel," *JTS* n.s. 42 (1991): 125–38; James Mueller, *The Five Fragments of the Apocryphon of Ezekiel: A Critical Study*, *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); and Richard Bauckham, "The Parable of the Royal Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1–14) and the Parable of the Lame Man and the Blind Man (*Apocryphon of Ezekiel*)," *JBL* 115 (1996): 471–88.

63. Epiphanius will, at times, note that heretics use noncanonical texts: so the Gnostics "have lots of books" (καὶ τὰ μὲν βιβλία αὐτῶν πολλὰ) (*Panarion* 26.8.1 [GCS 25:284]) and Encratites use "principally the so-called Acts of Andrew, John, Thomas, and certain apocrypha" as Scriptures (*Panarion* 47.1.5 [GCS 31:216]). Presumably he means to chastise them for their noncanonical Scriptures, but he is much more interested in (and angered by) their misuse of canonical texts: so the Gnostics "use both Old and New Testaments" but "twist it into their own desire" (τοῦτον μετασκευάζοντες εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐπιθυμίαν) (*Panarion* 26.6.1–2 [GCS 25:282]) and the Encratites pick and choose texts that support their excessive asceticism (*Panarion* 47.2.3–4 [GCS 31:217]).

64. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 9.2.1. (GCS 25:198).

65. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.22.3–5, 42.11.1–16.14 (GCS 25:363; 31:107–86).

cites the Hebrew and multiple Greek versions.⁶⁶ His antiquarian display of Hebrew serves his heresiological ends. He mocks the Nicolaitans and Gnostics for mistaking Hebrew phrases for proper names, and then worshipping them as gods.⁶⁷ In one instance he lists and translates ten Hebrew names for God used in the Old Testament.⁶⁸ Many of these translations are incorrect, but this is to be expected in antiquarian etymology, which was more interested in the “force” (δύναμις) of a word than its precise linguistic origins.⁶⁹

Close attention to Epiphanius’s use of biblical philology makes it clear that it is not the content of his arguments that is meant to persuade, but rather their antiquarian contours. He assails the Arian interpretation of Proverbs 8.22 as indicating that the Son was a “creature.” Not so fast, Epiphanius warns: these heretics “have not tackled the Hebrew phrases (τὰς λέξεις τὰς Ἑβραϊκὰς οὐτε ψηλαφήσαντες) or learned about them or what their meaning (δύναμις) is!”⁷⁰ After citing Aquila’s alternate translation,⁷¹ he provides his own idiosyncratic translation: “The Lord *hatched* (ἐνδύσσευσέ) me.” This image, Epiphanius claims, leaves no doubt as to the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son; of course, it also makes little sense.⁷² Likewise there seems little reason elsewhere for Epiphanius

66. Jerome, *Adversus Rufinum* 2.22, 3.6 (SC 303:164, 230). Jürgen Drummer, “Die Sprachkenntnisse des Epiphanius,” in *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, ed. F. Altheim and R. Stiehl (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968), 392–435 (repr. in *Philologia sacra et profana: Ausgewählte Beiträge zur Antike und zu ihrer Wirkungsgeschichte*, Altertumswissenschaft Kolloquium 16, ed. Meinolf Vielberg [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006], 29–72), lays out the skeptical case that Jerome exaggerated Epiphanius’s linguistic prowess in order to score points against Rufinus in the heat of the Origenist controversy.

67. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 25.4.3–5 (GCS 25:270–71): the Nicolaitans mistake the Hebrew phrase *qav l’qav* (“hope upon hope”: Isa 28.10) for an archon named Kaulakau; *Panarion* 26.10.11–13 (GCS 25:288): the Gnostics think *Sabaoth* is a proper name, when it is a title (“Lord of Hosts”).

68. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 40.5.8–11 (GCS 31:86): El, Elohim, Eli, Shaddai, Rabboni, Jah, Adonai, Jahweh, Elyon, Sabaoth.

69. Helen Peraki-Kyriakido, “Aspects of Ancient Etymologizing,” *CQ* n.s. 52 (2002): 478–93. See also Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae*, 115 n.33.

70. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.25.1 (GCS 37:174).

71. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.25.1–2 (GCS 37:175). See Mark DelCogliano, “Basil of Caesarea on Proverbs 8:22 and the Sources of Pro-Nicene Theology,” *JTS* n.s. 59 (2008): 183–90.

72. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 69.25.6–7, 26.1–2 (GCS 37:175–76). It’s not clear what Hebrew verb Epiphanius is reading here: Williams (*Panarion*, 2:345 n.78) plausibly suggests the Hebrew נָסַב (“to nest”), which is similar for the roots “to create” and “to acquire” (both נָסַב). Epiphanius introduced this translation of Prov 8.22 already in *Ancoratus* 44.1–2 (GCS 25:54) without discussion.

to cite multiple versions of Ps 109.3, even translating the Hebrew word-for-word, only to arrive at the same meaning as the original verse in the Septuagint.⁷³ What rhetorical purpose does this reference to multiple versions serve? Perhaps no rhetorical purpose, but a clear antiquarian one: Epiphanius's theological authority is established through collation and citation, not rhetoric and argumentation.

Given his own likely use of Origen's Hexapla,⁷⁴ and his praise for Origen's text critical work,⁷⁵ we might be surprised to find Epiphanius balking at Origen's citation of multiple Greek translations: "Next he says, 'Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus agree'—he is fond of using the versions to astonish (φαντάζειν)!"⁷⁶ It is a curious statement from Epiphanius, who not only praised Origen's textual prowess but is himself fond of citing multiple versions of a biblical passage primarily, it seems, for effect. This ploy too is common to the antiquarian: the offended accusation of pedantry leveled even in the middle of the most pedantic of texts.⁷⁷

Even as his own antiquarian interventions disrupted the surface of the biblical text, Epiphanius remained above all committed to the absolute continuity of scriptural truth. The Bible must signify consistently and coherently across the entire sacred canon. Yet, ironically, Epiphanius's own antiquarian sensibilities often serve to disrupt a sense of biblical flow and continuity even as he argues for it. We can see how his digressive tendencies disrupt biblical coherence when Epiphanius attempts to reconcile and harmonize the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, particularly in his chapter against the so-called Alogi.⁷⁸ These heretics reject the writings of John—the gospel and Revelation—"because his books do not agree with the other apostles."⁷⁹ Epiphanius launches into an exhaustive discussion of the agreement between the four gospels, particularly the historical circumstances under which each evangelist operated, even providing details not evident from the text.⁸⁰ None of Epiphanius's harmonizing efforts are

73. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 65.4.4–7 (GCS 37:6–7).

74. See Williams, *Panarion*, 2:212 nn.26–27, but also the skeptical remarks of Grafton and Williams, *Christianity*, 92–94.

75. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.3.5–8 (GCS 31:407–9).

76. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.10.1 (GCS 31:419)

77. Gunderson, *Nox Philologiae*, 17: "Gellius too rails against pedantry. This text can argue against itself while nevertheless remaining distinctly itself. Antiquarianism scoffs at logic where it does not feel inclined to merely archive it."

78. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51.3.1–3 (GCS 31:250) coins the name himself, both because these heretics reject John's account of the "Word" and also because they are stupid (ἄλογοι).

79. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51.4.5 (GCS 31:251–52).

80. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51.9.9–13 (GCS 31:260–61).

especially novel, although he certainly scores some points for thoroughness: his chapter on the Alogi (a “heresy” constituted almost entirely by a single canonical quirk) is one of the longer in the *Panarion*.

Part of the length is due to the numerous digressions and interruptions. When Epiphanius notes that “the Savior was born during the forty-second year of the Roman emperor Augustus,” a veritable mini-treatise on calendars, dates, and Christian festivals ensues: pagan festivals, consul-lists, and Christ’s birth according to ten different calendars (Roman, Egyptian, Syrian, Cypriot, Paphian, Arabian, Macedonian, Cappadocian, Athenian, and Hebrew). We might ask which is foreground and which is background: Is the invocation of biblical harmony merely an excuse to discuss arcane calendars and pagan festivals, or do the antiquarian details function as footnotes or cross-references in support of the larger biblical argument? Antiquarian literature resists this kind of textual hierarchalization. Biblical passages, lists of consuls, calendrical trivia, theological argument are all flattened into a potentially endless display of totalizing knowledge.

When we look at the ways Epiphanius invokes, defines, explains, and even disrupts the Christian Bible in his theological treatises, we see a consistent pattern. Not only is the Bible a source of antiquarian knowledge (lists of names, histories, peoples, and places), it is also an object of antiquarian thinking: disaggregated and supplemented and reassembled with bits of historical, linguistic, and ethnographic knowledge. The result (Biblical coherence, Christian orthodoxy) and the process (antiquarian exegesis) cannot be separated out, but together form the nexus of Epiphanius’s imperial Christian culture.

THE BIBLE IN *DE MENSURIS ET PONDERIBUS* AND *DE XII GEMMIS*

Epiphanius probably wrote his two surviving biblical treatises toward the end of his life: a treatise traditionally titled *On Weights and Measures* and another *On Gems*.⁸¹ Neither of these texts constitutes a biblical

81. *De mensuris et ponderibus* was written in 392: see *De mensuris* 20. I cite the translation (by page number) and Syriac text (by folio number) of James Elmer Dean, *Epiphanius’ Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 11 (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1935), here at 39 (Eng.) and 56c–d (Syr.). When available, I also cite the Greek text of E. Moutsoulas, “Τὸ Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν ἔργον Ἐπιφανίου τοῦ Σαλαμίνοϋ,” *Θεολογία* 44 (1973): 157–98, by line numbers (here ll. 581–83). Most modern studies assert that *De gemmis* was written shortly before 394, when Epiphanius visited Palestine and (it seems) gave a copy to Jerome (see Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 394) but Nautin, “Épiphane,” 628, is agnostic on this point.

commentary in the traditional sense: Epiphanius does not move, verse by verse, through a book of the Bible, providing commentary as he proceeds. Both texts bear the obvious mark of antiquarianism: comprehensive lists, definitions and etymologies, historical and ethnographic trivia, tangential anecdotes, and folklore. Both texts are also very much about the Bible. In the first treatise, *On Weight and Measures*, the Bible is configured as a source of antiquarian knowledge, supplementing and in some sense displacing classical knowledge; in the second treatise, *On Gems*, the Bible becomes a receptacle for, and a reconfiguration of, classical antiquarian knowledge. Taken together, we see the Bible becoming the complex surface upon which an antiquarian bishop might reimagine the contours of Christian culture.

On Weights and Measures

The treatise *De mensuris et ponderibus* survives in Greek fragments and a more complete Syriac version. According to a preface appended to the Syriac translation, Epiphanius composed the treatise following the request of a Persian priest he met at the court in Constantinople: “he devoted himself to the task of collecting from all the divine Scriptures and a multitude of histories.”⁸² Whether this story is authentic is unknowable, but the image of a Christian bishop importing and exporting biblical knowledge in the imperial capital is, nonetheless, evocative. On the one hand, the use of the Bible as a primary source of historical authority—on all manner of natural and cultural phenomena, as we shall see—calls into question the naturalized authority of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, Epiphanius, the authoritative orthodox bishop in the imperial capital, by re-presenting this ancient wisdom, produces a new, Christianized empire.

While the treatise is preserved as “On Weights and Measures,” perhaps a better title might be “On the Parts of the Bible.” The treatise actually begins on the surface of Epiphanius’s biblical text, in a discussion of punctuation and diacritical marks. After listing the marks of Greek punctuation, Epiphanius explains the text critical marks in his manuscript.⁸³ The asterisk, obelus, lemniscus, and hypolemniscus all indicate places where the Septuagint differs from other Hebrew and Greek versions. He gives not only examples of the use of each, but even history and etymology.⁸⁴ The discussion of the obelus is especially detailed and digressive.

82. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* i (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 11 [Eng.] and 45a [Syr]).

83. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 2 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 16 [Eng.] and 47b–c [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 12–15).

84. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 2–8 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 16–23 [Eng.] and 47b–51c [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 12–227).

Epiphanius notes that the obelus indicates words included in the Septuagint but not in other Greek versions. This observation leads him to explain how the seventy-two translators of the Septuagint worked: in pairs, in thirty-six cells, each pair receiving one book at a time. How many books were there? Twenty-seven, “but twenty-two when counted according to the letters of the alphabet of the Hebrews.”⁸⁵ How can there be twenty-seven and twenty-two? Just as five of the twenty-two Hebrew letters have two forms (medial and final), so five books are joined to companion volumes in the canon. What are the books of that canon? There are “four penta-teuchs” and two leftover books, which Epiphanius lists in order, followed by the two books of Wisdom. But the book of Psalms is also a Pentateuch, since it is divided into five sections (Epiphanius precisely notes where the breaks take place). And these are the books the seventy-two translated, while the king of Egypt supervised, and their translations were in perfect accord. To conclude his discussion of the asterisk and obelus, Epiphanius introduces Origen’s construction of the Hexapla—“if only other things he had done as well!”⁸⁶—and, finally, moves on to the third diacritical mark, the lemniscus.

The obelus contains multitudes: information historical, geographic, linguistic, numerological, literary, and ethnographic. The rest of this section on the marks of punctuation—indeed, the rest of the treatise as a whole—is similarly expansive, marked by the antiquarian’s “associative drift.”⁸⁷ It is not accurate to say it is unorganized or disorderly: everything returns, eventually, to the main topic at hand (the parts of the Bible). Yet from the outset the text of the Bible has been disrupted. Shadows of other versions, missing words, extra phrases, alternate translations now hover over Epiphanius’s Bible: already the unitary Bible is visible also in its disaggregate parts.⁸⁸

The unity of the Bible is also shadowed and interrupted by the flow of history. As Epiphanius moves on to describe the history of the major translations of the Old Testament—from the Septuagint to the later Greek versions and the creation of the Hexapla—he also provides a running

85. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 3 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 18 [Eng.] and 49a [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 92–95).

86. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 7 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 21 [Eng.] and 50c [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 175–76).

87. So Epiphanius explains in some detail the medical origins of the lemniscus before explaining its text-critical significance (marking a variant translation): *De mensuris* 8 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 22–23 [Eng.] and 50d–51c [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 193–227).

88. See Chin, *Grammar and Christianity*, 93–96, for a similar discussion of Origen’s Hexapla.

chronology of the monarchs in whose reigns the translations took place, listing all of the Ptolemies (from Ptolemy I to Cleopatra) and the Roman emperors (from Augustus down to his own day).⁸⁹ This careful listing of *all* Egyptian and Roman rulers is surely more than a simple chronological correlation requires. It is, in fact, not particularly useful as a historical device, as the lists of translators and emperors become difficult to disentangle. The flow of empire seems to be subordinated to the traditions of the Bible: emperors (indeed, entire empires) pass in between the work of biblical translators, collators, and interpreters. Yet the work of biblical transmission is, at every step, enabled by empire. Ultimately, in this first section, Empire and Bible are flattened into each other—even as both remain, of course, controlled by the hand of the bishop.

Epiphanius then proceeds to list and describe all manner of measurements found in the entire Bible: measure of volume,⁹⁰ weight,⁹¹ “local measures” not in the Bible,⁹² and area measures.⁹³ Some descriptions are brief and occasion little commentary: the “handful” of 1 Kings 17.12, Epiphanius remarks, is “simple and known to all.”⁹⁴ More often Epiphanius provides some basic etymology and equivalencies, where available, as in this example:

The *bath* (βάδων; *bâdâ*), so called, is also from the Hebrew language, the oil press being synonymously called *bith*, for *bath* means “oil press.” It consists of 50 *xestai*, and is the measure of the craft of the oil press. The *mnasis* and *medimnos* are taken, I think, from the language of the Romans, for in that language *medium* is interpreted “middle.” The *mnasis*, however, is used as a measure among the Cyprians and other people; and it is 10 *modii* of wheat or barley by the *modius* of 17 *xestai* among the Cyprians. But the *medimnos* varies among the Cyprians; for the people of Salamis, that is to

89. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 12, 13, 16, 18–20 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 28–29, 32, 34–39 [Eng.] and 53c–54a, 55b–c, 56c–58d [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 330–56, 424–29, 483–589).

90. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 21–31, 32–43 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 40–56 [Eng.] and 59b–67a [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 606–770; the Greek grows much sparser throughout this section).

91. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 45–53 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 56–63 [Eng.] and 67a–70a [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 771–810).

92. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 54–56 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 63–66 [Eng.] and 70a–71d [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 811–23; the Greek ends at this point). Epiphanius defends his description of these non-biblical measures at *De mensuris* 57 (Dean, *Weights and measures*, 66 [Eng.] and 71d [Syr.]).

93. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 58–60 (Dean, *Weights and Measures* 67–70 [Eng.] and 71d–73b [Syr.]).

94. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 27 (Dean, *Weights and Measures* 47 [Eng.] and 62c [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” l. 733).

say, of Constantia, have a *medimnos* of five *modii*, while those of Paphos and the Sicilians measure it as $4\frac{1}{2}$ *modii*.⁹⁵

Multiple forms of measurement collide here, in multiple languages. The *bath* is mentioned in only two prophetic passages (Isa 5.10 and Ezek 45.10–14), but seems to be equated here (or merely compared?) by Epiphanius with the contemporary dry measurements of *mnasis* and *medimnos*, which he then explains in their particular linguistic and geographic contexts. Various systems of measurement (including “Roman”) are thereby subordinated to an esoteric biblical term.

In his discussion of the *modius*, which follows soon after, we see most clearly how Epiphanius corrals arcane expertise to place imperial power and biblical knowledge in a tensile relationship. First, he asserts that the term *modius* comes from the Hebrew word for “confession”;⁹⁶ the sacred measurement of the *modius* stands for the benevolent acts of God in creation and throughout sacred history. Epiphanius knows this because the “just” *modius*—that is, the correct *modius* indicated by the Old Testament—contains exactly twenty-two *xestai*, which figuratively indicate: the twenty-two acts of God during the seven days of creation; the twenty-two “heads of the people” from Adam to Jacob; the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet; and the twenty-two books of the Old Testament. Each of these is listed in turn, and the books of the Bible (a fitting culmination for this series of lists) are recorded with their Greek and Hebrew names.⁹⁷ Epiphanius has concocted a numerical and figurative interpretation of the *modius* that connects sacred history, divine order, and the form of the Hebrew Bible, a *tour de force* even Origen would likely appreciate.⁹⁸ His figurative exegesis is also thoroughly antiquarian, thick with historical, textual, and linguistic detail.

95. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 21 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 40–41 [Eng.] and 59c–d [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 616–26).

96. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 21, 23, 24 (Dean, *Weights and Measures* 41, 45 [Eng.] and 59d, 61c–d [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 632–36, 701–6). Epiphanius seems to be thinking of the Hebrew/Aramaic root *htr*.

97. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 22–24 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 41–45 [Eng.] and 59d–61d [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 632–715).

98. See also Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 30 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 49 [Eng.] and 63c [Syr.]), where the “three measures of fine flour” of Gen 18.6 represent the Trinity; and *De mensuris* 35 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 52–53 [Eng.] and 64c–65d [Syr.]), where the “four *xestai*” of the *stamos* lead from a recitation of “fours” (books in the Ark, rivers of Eden, quarters of the world, seasons, night watches, times for prayer, creatures representing the gospels), to an interpretation of the *stamos* (which contained the manna) as the Virgin Mary (also an Ark containing God’s Word).

What's more, Epiphanius has also subordinated imperial order to his antiquarian parade:

Also among the Romans, it happens that the measure is called by a similar name, *modium* (μοδίουμ); just as among the Hebrews a child is admonished to “learn *aleph*” and among the Greeks it happens to be called “to seek to make alpha” (τὸ ἀλφεῖν ζητεῖν). Whence it has come to be known that from the Hebrew it has been transferred to other languages.⁹⁹

Most readers (ancient and modern), especially those who know Latin, would likely find Epiphanius's etymology suspicious. Yet as I noted above, specious etymology is par for the antiquarian course, indicating not so much a lack of scientific linguistic rigor but rather the cultural priorities of the etymologue.¹⁰⁰ The effect of this etymological sleight of hand here seems to be to displace Greece and Rome in favor of “ancient” Hebrew wisdom. Yet, at the same time, this ancient Hebrew *modius*, and the deeper biblical wisdom it symbolizes, belong to Greece and Rome, just like the Hebrew *aleph* has been transformed into the Greek *alpha*, the base unit of literary knowledge. Epiphanius, the Greco-Roman bishop learned in Hebrew, embodies and masters this cultural and historical tension.

The discussion of weights provides endless opportunities for antiquarian display as Epiphanius converts talents into lepta into staters into shekels. From weights and land measures Epiphanius moves, somewhat inexplicably, to a discussion of biblical places, mainly drawn from Eusebius's *Onomastikon*.¹⁰¹ Tired of place-names (apparently), Epiphanius suddenly begins to zoom outward: he describes “the four quarters of the world,” that is, the origins of the terms for the cardinal directions.¹⁰² The final chapters become increasingly disjointed: from the four winds to the borders of Palestine to the major constellations to the types of mountains, hills, and ridges, until finally Epiphanius peters out: “Here we arrive at the end of our writing for you.”¹⁰³ Has the elderly bishop lost his train of

99. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 24 (Dean, *Weights and Measures*, 46 [Eng.] and 62a [Syr.]; Moutsoulas, “Περὶ μέτρων,” ll. 718–22).

100. Davide Del Bello, *Forgotten Paths: Etymology and the Allegorical Mindset* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), suggests that premodern etymology (from the Alexandrians through Isidore of Seville) was precisely not “scientific” in a modern linguistics sense but rather aimed for metaphysical truth in a manner analogous to allegorical interpretation.

101. See my discussion of the *Onomastikon* in *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity*, *Divinations* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 34–36.

102. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 80 (Dean, *Weights and Measures* 78 [Eng.] and 76a [Syr.]).

103. Epiphanius, *De mensuris* 84 (Dean, *Weights and Measures* 83 [Eng.] and 78a [Syr.]).

thought, and begun merely piling on bits of wisdom connected—even at some remove—to the pages of Scripture? Is the transmitter or translator of the treatise at fault, inserting pages out of order, forgetting to copy out segues, losing track of the original text? Any of these explanations are possible, of course, but all derive from the simple fact that the text itself is only ever loosely held together by Epiphanius's antiquarian disposition. There is no argument, thesis, or even scriptural order structuring these *mots et choses*, only the mind of the author. Antiquarian literature is, by nature, a constellation of fragments loosely and contingently united: here, at the deteriorating end of Epiphanius's biblical treatise, we sense how truly fragile the masterful collection of knowledge can be.

On Gems

Epiphanius's treatise *On Gems* is his most antiquarian and his most thoroughly scriptural—indeed, we see how fully the two impulses are intertwined in Epiphanius's interpretive process.¹⁰⁴ This treatise, like all of his other extant writings, was composed at the request of a fellow ecclesiastic, to explain the meanings of the twelve gems set into the high priest's breastplate (Exod 28.15–21).¹⁰⁵ The image of the breastplate with shining gems inset, with names then etched into those gems, provides a rather apt image for the treatise itself. Like the breastplate, the treatise becomes a framework into which Epiphanius can insert an array of bits of knowledge, inscribed with biblical information. Like so much of Epiphanius's biblical interpretation, the treatise as a whole is marked by associative leaps and long, meandering digressions.

Drawing on the classical tradition of lapidarian literature,¹⁰⁶ Epiphanius

104. The fullest version of the *De gemmis* is the Georgian version transcribed and translated by Robert Blake, *Epiphanius De Gemmis: The Old Georgian Version and the Fragments of the Armenian Version* (London: Christophers, 1934). I cite the text by the page number of the English translation, which I have modified only to update the English and regularize ancient names. An abbreviated Latin version (which, nonetheless, preserves some parts not extant in the Georgian) was preserved with the *Collectio Avellana* and edited by Otto Günther, in CSEL 35:743–73.

105. The addressee is Diodore. The editors of the Latin fragments and the Georgian text believe it is lesser-known Diodore of Tyre; Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 394, and Nautin, “Épiphane,” 628, assent without comment. Others have posited the more famous Diodore of Tarsus (e.g., Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* [Utrecht: Spectrum, 1966], 3:389; Williams, *Panarion*, 1:xx; Elliott, *Song of Songs*, 27).

106. Blake, *Epiphanius*, xc–xcvii; it is possible that Epiphanius's lapidarian knowledge (like his other naturalist learning) has been mediated through handbooks or other digests (see Jürgen Dummer, “Ein naturwissenschaftliches Handbuch als Quelle für Epiphanius von Constantia,” *Klio* 55 [1973]: 289–99, repr. in *Philologia Sacra*, 82–950). On gemmological treatises, see Christel Meier, *Gemma Spiritualis: Methode und Gebrauch der Edelsteinallegorese vom frühen Christentum bis ins 18. Jahrhundert*,

begins by explaining the origins and properties of the twelve stones found on the high priest's breastplate. He describes each stone's physical properties, usually comparing it to other, similar stones. Epiphanius also surveys each stone's medicinal or alchemical uses. Sardion has "healing power";¹⁰⁷ topaz "has a beneficial working in disorders of the eyes";¹⁰⁸ sapphire "heals scabs, swellings, and tumors";¹⁰⁹ those who look upon amethyst "become drunk and are cognizant beforehand of winter and rain."¹¹⁰ Other bits of esoteric knowledge appear, textual as well as naturalist: we hear of the time Nero painted a mountainside green and how ligure is harvested from a bottomless abyss by eagles devouring carrion.¹¹¹ We learn that Aquila does not translate "emerald" the same as the Septuagint,¹¹² and that the river Pishon, which flows from Eden, is the source of the stone chalcedony.¹¹³

Next Epiphanius turns to spiritual interpretations of the stones, matching up sons of Jacob with the stones onto which their names are etched. Epiphanius goes by birth order, assigning each son in turn to a stone based on his age (Reuben first, Benjamin last).¹¹⁴ He also finds more significant reasons to attach a son of Jacob to a particular stone. Sometimes the properties of the stone are related (even tangentially) to qualities of a son of Jacob. For instance, sardion comes from Babylon; at Babylon, the Tower was built that led to the "first division" of the family of humanity; Reuben by his "passions" had a "divided mind" and was cursed by his father. Sardion also heals with its dust; likewise, Reuben "healed" his sins when he intervened to save Joseph's life from his brothers.¹¹⁵ The tribe of Asher "was acquainted with work and labor on the land," and the color of agate is yellow and tawny, "the color of the earth." Of course, "tawny" is also the color of a lion, a royal animal, befitting the son of Jacob whose name means "riches."¹¹⁶ Even the tribal allotments of the sons are rele-

vol. 1, *Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften*, 34.1 (Munich: Fink, 1977), 56–67 (on classical lithologies) and 99–111 (on Epiphanius).

107. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 103.

108. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 105.

109. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 112.

110. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 120.

111. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 106, 118.

112. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 107–8.

113. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 107.

114. Josephus also made this assumption (*Antiquitates* 3.162–67), but the Targum Ps.-Jonathan places the sons in a different order (sons of Leah, the sons of the handmaids, and the sons of Rachel). See Josiah Derby, "Rashi's Conjectures," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 32 (2004): 125–29.

115. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 123.

116. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 148–49.

vant: Zebulon's allotment is "near the sea" and "there come to him all the riches of the sea," including the bloodstone, which comes "on ships" from "remote districts."¹¹⁷

While Epiphanius frequently returns to certain passages having to do with Jacob's sons—the blessing of Jacob (Gen 49), the allotment of tribal lands (Num 2, Josh 13–19), Moses' farewell speech (Deut 33)—he also ranges far and wide across the biblical canon, creating connections between passages based on his own antiquarian expertise. After a long, digressive discussion of the bloodstone, Epiphanius reflects upon the gem's intertextuality:

Let us now look at Zebulon, who is inscribed upon the gem bloodstone. The lot of the heritage of Zebulon was Nazareth, where there was graciously given to the Virgin the conception of our Lord Jesus Christ, like to whom is the gem bloodstone. On it is inscribed the name of Zebulon, who had many riches from the sea. Truly, gifts were offered from all the quarters of heaven to our Lord Jesus Christ, who himself is the precious cornerstone and heals all wounds and ailments.¹¹⁸

From the Old Testament tribal allotments to the annunciation, from the "riches" of Zebulon to the gifts of the magi, from the rejected cornerstone to the stone that heals wounds, visible and invisible, Epiphanius tangles together threads of natural and biblical wisdom into a great knot of learning.

Several of Epiphanius's spiritual interpretations of the stones permit him to reflect upon the interconnectedness of the Bible's diverse components. In discussing the jacinth, Epiphanius ranges from Isaiah to the dual natures of Christ, the biblical river Pishon, the prophet Nahum, and the "saints" Moses, Elijah, and Stephen.¹¹⁹ The stone ligure similarly conjures up a bewildering host of biblical characters, connected to each other by multiple associations.¹²⁰ First geographic: Because the ligure is assigned the name of Gad on the priestly breastplate, Epiphanius calls to mind the territory of Gilead (near the tribal lands of Gad), and so naturally thinks of Elijah, as well as other priestly figures associated with the area (Abiathar, Samuel, and Eli).¹²¹ Next, mineralogical: Because the stone is resistant to fire, it evokes Elijah again, who rode to heaven in a fiery chariot and,

117. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 153.

118. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 155.

119. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 129–32. See the brief discussion of Meier, *Gemma Spiritalis*, 104–6.

120. Meier, *Gemma Spiritalis*, 106–7.

121. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 139–40.

before that, called down fire upon the altar on Mount Carmel.¹²² Now we are thinking of holy biblical figures resistant to fire: so we also speak of the “three youths” in the book of Daniel who survived the furnace, and, for good measure, Thecla, who also survived her own fiery punishment.¹²³ After getting briefly lost in a digression on the story of Susanna and the elders,¹²⁴ Epiphanius returns to the medical properties of the ligure: this greenish, glowing stone eases conception and birth. How fitting it should be attached to Gad, who was born from Leah’s maidservant Zilpah but reared with the other sons of Jacob. Now we are thinking of the blessing of children, which has been secured by other prophets: Elijah (a third time), who restored the widow’s son to her (1 Kgs 17.17–23), as did Elisha (2 Kgs 4.18–37), who additionally blessed the waters of Jericho with “fruitfulness” (2 Kgs 2.19–23). The life-giving power of the ligure is brought forward into the time of the New Testament, as well, for the apostles “give birth” to the pagans who convert to Christianity.¹²⁵

Several stones are linked, through historical, mineralogical, and allegorical association to figures from both the Old and New Testaments. Topaz, the stone of Simeon, is associated with commercial trickery and betrayal, and so evokes (in a somewhat confused manner) Judas Iscariot and his betrayal of Christ.¹²⁶ The bright, shining emerald is the stone of Levi and also of “priestly” John the Baptist.¹²⁷ The onyx, the stone of Benjamin, also represents Paul, “of the tribe of Benjamin,” last of the apostles to be called. One function of this thick intertextuality is, of course, to emphasize the harmony and unity of the Bible. The particular mode of intertextuality at play in Epiphanius’s commentary, however—knotty with interruptions, associations, and digressions—has a flip-side, as well. To see these passages knitted together through the interpretation of the stones is also to become aware of the ways in which the Scriptures are multiple and disjointed. The antiquarian Bible is harmonious and unitary only insofar as the antiquarian himself holds it together, and therefore also liable to dissolution in the wrong hands.

122. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 140.

123. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 140–41.

124. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 143–45.

125. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 147–48.

126. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 104 and 124–25. This story about the origins of topaz may go back to the classic (but lost) *Lithognomion* of Xenocrates (first century C.E.). Whether Epiphanius knew the text of Xenocrates, or learned this story through an intermediary source (as, for instance, Origen: see Alan Scott, “Origen’s Use of Xenocrates of Ephesus,” *VC* 45 [1991]: 278–85) remains unclear (see Meier, *Gemma Spiritualis*, 101 n.239).

127. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 127–28.

The final section of the treatise is itself a meditation on the multiple ways the Bible is prone to reconfiguration and reordering. Returning to the original question that seems to impel the treatise—which names of Jacob’s sons are inscribed on which stones, and why?—Epiphanius decides to examine fourteen places where the sons of Jacob are listed (thirteen in the Hebrew Bible, one in Revelation) and considers whether any of these orderings suit the stones better than the ordering he has chosen. After listing the various passages, he considers whether their orderings are appropriate to the order of stones on the breastplate.¹²⁸ Epiphanius finds all of the other orderings lacking for a variety of reasons: this one is missing Simeon, that one joins two sons together, this one lists Joseph’s sons instead of Joseph, that one leaves no place for Levi at all.¹²⁹

This orderly meditation on ordering is supremely antiquarian: it adds nothing substantive to Epiphanius’s discussion of the stones and the sons of Jacob; it exists purely for edification, a display of Epiphanius’s bounty of knowledge. It demonstrates the multifarious ways in which the Bible can be dissected and re-indexed. It also gives Epiphanius an opportunity for his final digression, which comes in his discussion of the eleventh ordering of the sons of Israel. Moses had commanded the tribes of Israel to divide themselves upon entering into the Land, with six tribes on Mount Gerizim and six tribes on Mount Ebal (Deut 27.12–13).¹³⁰ Epiphanius describes the location of these two mountains (“over against Jericho on the eastern side near Gilgal”¹³¹) and then remarks that “certain people . . . think that Mount Gerizim is elsewhere.”¹³² These “certain people,” he goes on to explain, are the Samaritans, who believe that Mount Gerizim is located near Shechem (“now called Neapolis”).

Suddenly, we find ourselves the midst of a history and ethnography of the Samaritans, stitched together out of bits and pieces already recounted by Epiphanius in the *Panarion*.¹³³ Epiphanius describes their origins, their

128. Most of this section does not survive in the more complete Georgian version, but is extant in the Latin translation.

129. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 179, 181–82.

130. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 177 and 183–84.

131. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 184, citing Deut 11.29–30. In locating “Gerizim and Ebal” near Jericho, and not near Shechem in Samaria, Epiphanius is probably following Eusebius (*Onomastikon* [GCS 11.3:64]), who may, in turn, be drawing on local rabbinic interpretation (which may, in turn, like Epiphanius’s account, have a distinctly anti-Samaritan tone): see Reinhard Pummer, *Early Christian Authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 92 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2002), 86.

132. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 185.

133. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 8.8.5–10 and 9.1.2–2.6 (GCS 25:195–96, 198–99); and Pummer, *Early Christian Authors*, 121–83 (on all of Epiphanius’s writings on Samaria).

discovery of the Jewish Law (which they keep imperfectly), what idols they have concealed in their ersatz Temple, only then circling back to his point of departure: their mistaken identification of their holy mountain with the Mount Gerizim mentioned in Deuteronomy.¹³⁴ From ethnography we move to geography: Epiphanius describes *their* Mount Gerizim, its enormity, and the 1500 steps incised in its slope that rise a mile or more. Its height, he explains, makes it impossible that this is the mountain Moses intended in Deuteronomy.¹³⁵ After explaining (once more!) the distance between the Gerizim of the Pentateuch and the “mighty Gerizim” of the Samaritans, Epiphanius suddenly, and abruptly, concludes the entire treatise: “let this be sufficient for the relation and understanding of all this.”¹³⁶

Has Epiphanius simply lost steam? Or is this a question of faulty transmission, copying, translation? The end of this treatise, breaking off from a digression into an abrupt conclusion, is similar enough to the end of the treatise *On Weights and Measures* that we might suspect that this is part of Epiphanius’s commentarial style:¹³⁷ he twists around and around his subject, spinning out facts and information, bits of knowledge scriptural, historical, ethnographic, mineralogical, weaving it all together until he has exhausted the material, the reader, and himself.¹³⁸ We remember that, for the antiquarian, “the distinction between raw material and result can be indistinct.”

Throughout *De Gemmis* we see how the antiquarian elements—stones, mountains, emperors, histories, languages, medicinal properties—are indistinguishable from the religious elements—Scriptures, theology, orthodoxy. As in *De mensuris et ponderibus*, we might initially suspect Epiphanius of performing a kind of baptism on classical knowledge and subordinating it to biblical truth. But antiquarian composition resists such stratification: “classical” and “Christian” are intertwined and reinforcing. Christian culture emerges out of individual bits of knowledge, harnessed and brought together in totalized order. The location of Mount Gerizim, the properties of the emerald, the nature of the resurrection body, the Greek text of Aquila, all line up together like items in an index, creating by their sheer

134. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 185–91.

135. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 192–93.

136. Blake, *Epiphanius*, 193.

137. It is also how the extant Latin version ends (CSEL 35:773); on the “abrupt” ending, see Meier, *Gemma Spiritualis*, 109 n.361.

138. Meier, *Gemma Spiritualis*, 109, remarks that, even considering the possibility of problems in transmission, “Das Werk ist . . . gekennzeichnet durch einen hohen Schwierigkeitsgrad und mangelnde Zugänglichkeit.”

juxtaposition a snapshot of “Christianity” that encompasses all aspects of life but still remains atomized and prone to rearrangement.¹³⁹

CONCLUSIONS: THE JEWELLED BIBLE

When classicist Michael Roberts wrote about the “jeweled style” in late antiquity, he too began with a late-ancient contemplation of the jeweled breastplate of Aaron, as both example and metaphor.¹⁴⁰ For Roberts, these verses on jewels signaled a particular poetic sensibility in late antiquity, one that emphasized variation, arrangement, and pattern over simple artistic sense and meaning. The work of the poet, visible in the dazzling juxtaposition of elements, comes ostentatiously into view, for it is only the poet’s art that holds these “jewels” together. Roberts’s insight into this “aesthetics of discontinuity” has been drawn productively in the study of late-ancient Christianity by Patricia Cox Miller and Catherine Chin.¹⁴¹ I, too, find many significant resonances with the antiquarian aesthetic I have been investigating here: the highly visible assemblage, the privileging of learned display over rhetorical or philosophical theory, the way these variegated parts—without losing their “partness”—create a new and unitary cultural entity (“Christianity”).¹⁴²

The Bible that emerges from Epiphanius’s interpretation partakes in this discontinuous-yet-unifying aesthetic, drawing on the imperial Roman tradition of antiquarian erudition. His Bible is unwieldy: its surface has become wrinkly with handling, bumpy, clotted, weighed down with innumerable bits of information stuck between its lines, like so many etchings slotted into a grangerized book. It is full of lists, dates, highly tangential (if not, indeed, irrelevant) data and assertions, and it doesn’t seem to lead us anywhere concrete. It is not how we imagine the intellectual, philosophical Bible of the great minds of early Christianity: smooth, untangled, heavy with meaning, certainly, but clear, bright, and continuous. That is,

139. On the malleable cultural properties of the index, see F. Allan Hanson, *The Trouble With Culture: How Computers are Calming the Culture Wars* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), 83–87.

140. Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 9–13; the text under consideration is Cyprianus Gallus’s *Heptateuchos*.

141. Patricia Cox Miller, “1997 NAPS Presidential Address: ‘Differential Networks’: Relics and Other Fragments of Late Antiquity,” *J ECS* 6 (1998): 113–38; Chin, *Grammar and Christianity*.

142. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity*, 170, on “subjective disassembly and reconstitution.”

perhaps, how we imagine Origen's Bible. Of course, even Origen was not immune to the lure of antiquarian display: lists, proof-texts, ethnographic and historiographic digressions. Nor are Epiphanius's interpretive maneuvers unique to the Cypriot bishop: other biblical commentaries have their antiquarian moments, where unexpected associations and digressions interrupt the commentarial flow.¹⁴³

My point is that Epiphanius is not unique, and not performing a new or unusual biblical literary act. I do think, when we read Epiphanius, the marks of antiquarian sensibility are more pronounced. Epiphanius's Bible, glittering with shining bits of knowledge, nonetheless must have resonated with his contemporaries. In the *Ancoratus* and *Panarion*, the Bible functions as both a source of knowledge and an object of antiquarian speculation. In the treatises *On Weights and Measures* and *On Gems*, the Bible confronts and absorbs the "classical" systems of knowledge that seemed (to other Christians, at least) so problematic.¹⁴⁴ The result, for Epiphanius, is a Bible that (I would argue) is eminently suited to his late fourth-century context: as Christianity and Empire came to become increasingly identified, as Christian religion signaled Roman power. To be sure, intellectual titans of the time were constructing complex theological edifices out of the sacred Scriptures. Equally appealing, it seems, was a bishop who could demonstrate the power of Christian culture to contain and display perfectly, in tiny bits and morsels, all the knowledge of the world.

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143. John O'Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretations of the Bible* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 1–3.

144. Epiphanius certainly registers his own complaints about *paideia*, as throughout *Panarion* 64, on Origen (see Kim, "Imagined Worlds," 144–48; Lyman, "Making of a Heretic"; Lyman, "Ascetics and Bishops"); but *Panarion* 42.12.3 (GCS 31:168–69), praises the apostle Paul for his ἑλληνικὴ παιδεία and his references to the extensive educations of Hieracas and Apollinarius are, at worst, neutral (*Panarion* 67.1.1–3, 77.24.7–8 [GCS 37:132–33, 437]).