

EASTERN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY AND AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Theological, Historical, and
Contemporary Reflections

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University of Notre Dame Press

Notre Dame, Indiana

2017

CHAPTER FIVE

PLUNDERING THE EGYPTIANS

The Use of Classical *Paideia*
in the Early Church

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The issue of the place of learning in Christianity is both contentious and old. Christianity is a religion of revelation: Jesus Christ has come into the world to make known his Father by the Spirit; and this has from the beginning, for some, been taken to imply that Christians need have nothing to do with learning, with the disciplines of human knowledge, with culture—with what the world has to offer. Christianity is not of this world, and should have nothing to do with it: don't think, just repeat—preserve!

A number of figures in early Christianity adopted this posture of protest against worldly learning. The most famous must be Tertullian (c. 160–c. 225), at the end of the second century, who asked: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" He then continues:

What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? what between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from "the porch of Solomon" [cf. Acts 3:5], who had himself taught that "the

Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart" [Wis. 1:1]. Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectical composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire no further belief.¹

We encounter this attitude all too often today. Many voices clamor against Athens—against learning, diligent scholarship, studying secular disciplines; don't think, just repeat—preserve!

But there is also a world of difference between the ancient figures such as Tertullian and many of those who adopt this posture today. When Tertullian, and others like him, make such comments, they do so as highly educated intellectuals, who know, intimately, the culture—especially the philosophical and rhetorical culture—in which they live.

And, for all their posturing, they continue to use it. The very statement of Tertullian—"What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"—by its rhetorical elegance, betrays the fact that Tertullian's own thinking still runs along classical lines. In fact, one need not look far in Tertullian's writings to see that he is heavily influenced by all sorts of philosophical thinking—especially Stoicism.

Similarly, a little later on in the same treatise, Tertullian claims there is no point in discussing the interpretation of scripture with the heretics, as it will only produce an upset stomach and brain (unless one has shared first principles, no real discussion can actually occur). But this doesn't stop him from spending most of his life writing pamphlets against the various heretics, in which the interpretation of scripture is the key point. Such language is hyperbolic polemic (exaggeration) to make a point, but not to be taken straightforwardly.

PLUNDERING THE EGYPTIANS

However, an alternative approach to learning and culture is found in the early church that, I would argue, represents the central tradition of the church throughout the ages. This position *states* explicitly what Tertullian *does*, even if he speaks polemically otherwise.

We first see this position laid out with Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215). In his works, we see a massive appropriation of pagan Greek learning. Clement is a man steeped in classical culture—in *paideia*—the full education, enculturation, and civilization of the whole person. In many ways, he presents Christianity in similar terms—as the education of the whole person. He has left us a trilogy: beginning with the *Protrepticus*—an exhortation addressed to the Greeks (pagans), using their own mythology and rhetoric to encourage them to convert to Christianity; this was followed by the *Pedagogue*—three books of instruction, detailing every aspect of proper behavior for a gentleperson in the late-ancient world (everything from how to walk and to speak to servants, to tips on how to avoid belching at table!); and, finally, his seven books of miscellaneous notes called the *Stromata*—written for the more educated Christian—which argued various points of philosophy (in dialogue with practically every philosopher from the ancient world) and utilized every other aspect of knowledge, from astronomy to zoology.

The next main figure in Alexandria, and the one who left the greatest fingerprint on later Christianity—despite being condemned several centuries after his death—is Origen (c. 184–c. 253). We have a unique insight into the education provided by Origen, as we have a letter from Origen to Gregory (later Gregory the Wonderworker—the Thaumaturgus [c. 213–c. 270]) before the latter became a pupil of Origen and, from a few years later, an oration of thanks from Saint Gregory to Origen. The letter of Origen to Gregory the Wonderworker was preserved for us by Saints Basil the Great (c. 329–379) and Gregory the Theologian (c. 329–c. 389) in the compilation they made of their favorite passages from Origen, called the *Philocalia* (to be distinguished from Nicodemus the Hagiorite's work of the same title).

In this letter, Origen provides the scriptural image that thereafter became the classic reference point for justifying this use of pagan Greek culture—the image of the Israelites plundering the Egyptians. Origen begins by encouraging the young Gregory to study; he has enough natural ability, Origen asserts, to become an expert in Roman law or a philosopher in a Greek school. But, Origen continues:

I am very desirous that you should accept such parts even of Greek philosophy as may serve for the ordinary elementary instruction of

our schools, and be a kind of preparation for Christianity: also those portions of geometry and astronomy likely to be of use in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, so that, what the pupils of the philosophers say about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric and astronomy, that is, that they are the handmaidens of philosophy, we may say of philosophy itself in relation to Christianity.²

That is, all human learning is to be brought to whatever use it may offer to theology; just as the basic disciplines of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, astronomy, and music are there to prepare the student to study philosophy, so all these disciplines, including philosophy itself, are there to serve theology. Theology is, as the Middle Ages would put it, the queen of the sciences. Origen then suggests a scriptural warrant for this:

Perhaps something of this kind is hinted at in the command from the mouth of God himself that the children of Israel be told to ask their neighbors and companions for vessels of silver and gold (Exod. 11.2; 12.35ff), and for clothing, so that by spoiling [plundering] the Egyptians they might find materials to make the things, of which they were told, for the divine service. For out of the spoils which the children of Israel took from the Egyptians came the contents of the Holy of Holies, the ark with its cover, and the Cherubim, and the mercy-seat, and the golden pot wherein was treasured up the manna, the angels' bread. These things were made from the best of the Egyptian gold.³

Origen then carries on, suggesting that the second-best gold was used to make the candlesticks, the third- and fourth-best gold other items, and so on—the point is clear. This image of plundering the Egyptians thereafter becomes the standard for the way in which Christians were to use the best of what the world has to offer—the *paideia* by which we are educated to understand more abstract matters and have our character formed into a suitable form—taking all this and appropriating it for Christianity (a cultural takeover bid).⁴

In the *Oration of Thanksgiving to Origen* by Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, we are given a very touching picture of Origen as a teacher, and also of the entire curriculum of studies that he offered his students.

It encompassed the whole range of human knowledge and learning: mathematics, geometry, astronomy, cosmology, physiology, and especially philosophy and literature. He assigned them to study all the philosophers (he didn't simply present those parts of the ones he agreed with) and, likewise, the full range of literature—all the while, making sure his students could navigate their way through the material, discerning right from wrong, truth from error, and through all of this sharpening their critical acumen, their skills of thinking and discernment.

Origen made sure that his students studied the original sources. Rather than simply imparting information to his students, or answering their questions, his goal was to teach them to think. There was to his students, Gregory says, "no forbidden subject of speech; for there was no matter of knowledge hidden or inaccessible to us, but we had it in our power to learn every kind of discourse, both foreign and Greek, both spiritual and political, both divine and human."⁵

Having pursued all these studies, Origen's students then turned to the scriptures, now knowing how to read and understand literature, knowing what kind of disciplines one needs in order to be able to encounter the Word of God in the often obscure and enigmatic words of scripture. This education was not simply an intellectual affair—Origen was concerned with their spiritual formation. It would have been inconceivable to separate these two aspects of *paideia*. It was not enough to be able to speak about a subject: the student had to strive, Gregory recalled, to attain "the practical accomplishment of the thing expressed."

He educated us to prudence none the less—teaching us to be at home with ourselves, and to desire and endeavor to know ourselves, which indeed is the most excellent achievement of philosophy, the thing that is ascribed also to the most prophetic of spirits as the highest argument of wisdom—the precept *Know thyself*. And that this is the genuine function of prudence is affirmed well by the ancients; for in this there is one virtue common to God and man; while the soul is exercised in beholding itself as in a mirror, and reflects the divine mind in itself (if it is worthy of such a relation) and traces out a certain inexpressible method for the attaining of a kind of [deification].⁶

This emphasis on literature and words is not accidental. Origen formed his students by his words, such that his students became keenly aware of the power of words: it is *logos* that differentiates us from brute animals; it is by logos that we become human (and as Saint Irenaeus [c. 130–c. 202] reminds us, we must first become human before we can be deified); it is logos that we have in common with God; it is through *logoi* that we communicate with each other; it is with his words that a teacher teaches and a spiritual guide guides, words that are demonstrated to be trustworthy by the manner of life of the speaker—yet words that also persuade us of his trustworthiness.

Given this importance of words, our greatest task as human beings is to study the art of words. As Gregory puts it, "For a mighty and energetic thing is the discourse of man"; it enters through the ears and molds the mind, impressing or shaping us by what it conveys, so that it takes possession of us and wins us over to the love of truth.⁷

Saint Gregory the Wonderworker brought Christianity to Cappadocia and instructed the grandparents of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395). Saint Basil, in his turn, also wrote a treatise on this topic: *An Address to the Young on How They Might Derive Benefit from Reading Pagan Literature*. Saint Basil studied extensively in Cappadocia and in Athens, where he met Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, both of them devoted to their studies. Even when they returned home (after a number of years in Athens—it wasn't a year abroad!), they did what all cultured gentlemen of the time would have done: they went on retreat together, to devote themselves to more study. Here they read Origen, who inspired them with a more sophisticated understanding of Christianity than they had known, and they made a compilation of their favorite passages of his works—the *Philocalia*.

After the death of Saint Basil, Saint Gregory the Theologian delivered a long oration (well worth reading), in which he described their life together. Near the beginning of this oration—in order to preempt any objections to his warm recollections of their golden days together in Athens—he put his case in no uncertain terms:

I take it as admitted by men of sense, that the first of our advantages is education (*παιδευσις* [*paideusis*])); and not only this our more

noble form of it, which disregards rhetorical ornaments and glory, and holds to salvation, and beauty in the objects of our contemplation: but even that external culture which many Christians ill-judgingly abhor, as treacherous and dangerous, and keeping us afar from God. For we ought not to neglect the heavens, and earth, and air, and all such things, because some have wrongly seized upon them, and honor God's works instead of God: but instead [we ought] to reap what advantage we can from them for our life and enjoyment, while avoiding their dangers; not raising creation, as foolish men do, in revolt against the Creator, but from the works of nature apprehending the Worker, and, as the divine apostle says, bringing into captivity every thought to Christ: and again, as we know that neither fire, nor food, nor iron, nor any other of the elements, is of itself most useful, or most harmful, except according to the will of those who use it; and as we have mixed healthful drugs from certain of the reptiles, so from secular literature we have received principles of enquiry and contemplation (*tὸ μὲν ἔξεταστικόν τε καὶ θεωρητικὸν ἐδεξάμεθα [to men exetastikon te kai theōrētikon edexametha]*), while we have rejected their idolatry, terror, and pit of destruction. Even these have aided us in our religion, by our perception of the contrast between what is worse and what is better, and by gaining strength for our doctrine from the weakness of theirs. We must not then dishonor education, because some men are pleased to do so, but rather suppose such men to be boorish and uneducated, desiring all men to be as they themselves are, in order to hide themselves in the general, and escape the detection of their want of culture.⁸

This is one of the most powerful statements from a church father regarding culture and the utility of learning, one which has much to say to a certain portion of the church today! (In orthodoxy we talk a lot about *theoria* in quasi-magical terms; but we must never forget that *theoria* is primarily a literary term.)

Clearly, then, intensive study of pagan literature and philosophy was deemed necessary, to be properly human, supplying tools which were then to be employed in the study of God—in theology. The importance of this is shown by an intriguing episode from the fourth century. Julian

the Apostate (c. 331–c. 363) was a fellow student of Gregory the Theologian in Athens. When he came to the throne, one of his means of attempting to undermine Christianity was to deny the right of Christians to use pagan literature in their education, effectively denying them an education—a *paideia*—that made one a cultivated member of society. In response to this, Apollinarius of Laodicea (d. 390) and his father (also Apollinarius [fourth century], a teacher of grammar) set about rendering the scriptures in classical form; the father reportedly translated the books of Moses into heroic verse and paraphrased the historical books into dactylic and tragic meter, while the son rendered the Gospels and apostolic writings in the form of Platonic dialogues.

After Julian died and his edict was reversed, however, these classicized scriptures were abandoned; there was no attempt to create a purely Christian world and education (indeed, there were probably none until the various Puritan communities). The monastic communities were always a treasury of learning; the Pachomian communities, in fourth-century Egypt, for instance, while requiring every novice to learn to read, and to memorize the Psalms, probably had in their libraries the collection of gnostic and pagan literature found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. This emphasis on *paideia*, on letters and learning, continued throughout later Byzantine history.

It is noteworthy how and why it was that Gregory and Basil, along with John Chrysostom (c. 347–407), came to be celebrated as the Three Hierarchs. They began to be celebrated, after the iconoclastic period, as the models of true rhetoric—part of a flourishing or renaissance of interest in rhetoric, that is, in the power of words. The feast dates to the eleventh century and was conceived as a feast of oratory/rhetoric—of words. The Three Hierarchs exemplify a true rhetoric, not only one of style, but of content. They found human words capable of expressing the Word of God and embodied it in their own lives. Rhetoric was understood by the Byzantines to be a sacred art, part of the sacred cosmos of man. They even called it a *μυστήριον* (*mystērion*)—a sacrament in which we are to be its celebrants—finding words for the Word, conveying the Logos of God in the logos of man.⁹

To be able to use words in such a manner that they convey not only our own thoughts but the Word of God requires a very disciplined mind and a particularly formed person—a complete *paideia*.

CHRISTIANS AS DISCIPLES OF THE BOOK

So, as we have seen, learning is not only valued, but emphasized. But we should go further than simply giving examples of the importance ascribed to learning, to try to understand why letters and learning should be important for us as Christians. We should not forget that Christians are called “disciples” ($\mu\alpha\thetaηται$; *mathētai*)—more literally “student” or “pupil,” one engaged in study—and that Christ instructed his apostles to make such students of all people.

The first Christian churches appeared, in one sense, as philosophical schools, with disciples gathered around a teacher, instructing them in the oral traditions and sacred text as interpreted to them by their founder. And this character continued with monasticism; one can say that Christianity is intrinsically a scholarly tradition. To understand why this should be so, it is worth returning to the point I made at the beginning: that Christianity is a revealed religion. Why, we might ask, would a revealed religion need learning, scholarship, an inquiring mind? We have seen that Christianity has consistently valued such *pаideia*; perhaps we should consider again the structure of revelation at work in Christianity.

One of the most striking aspects of the Gospels is that—whatever the disciples heard about Jesus’ birth from his mother, or about his baptism from others, whatever divine teachings they themselves heard from his lips or miracles they saw him doing with their own eyes, even seeing him transfigured on the mountain in glory—they still abandoned him at the time of the passion, and Peter even denied him three times: “I do not know the man” (Matt. 26:72, 74 NRSV; cf. v. 70).

Apart from the confession of Peter on the road to Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16), “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”—a confession that Peter did not really understand, as he then attempted to prevent Christ from going to Jerusalem to suffer (and so gets called “Satan”)—the disciples are remarkably slow in coming to know that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. Neither did the empty tomb of itself persuade them; when the women turn up to the tomb, they are amazed and don’t know what to make of it (it requires the angels to provide an explanation). Similarly with the resurrection appearances: when Jesus ap-

pears, disciples don’t recognize him, but instead tell him about the tomb having been found empty (Luke 24:22–24)!

Only when the crucified and risen Christ opens the scriptures—to show how it was necessary for him to have gone to his passion to enter his glory—do the disciples’ hearts begin to burn, so that they are prepared to recognize him in the breaking of bread. But once he is recognized, the crucified and risen Lord disappears from their sight (Luke 24:31). At the very moment that the disciples finally encounter Christ *knowingly*, he passes out of their sight! And so, from the beginning, we are left in anticipation of his coming; the one of whom we previously had no comprehension appears and disappears, or appears in his disappearance, creating in us a desire for his coming, a trace of his presence. As Augustine (354–430) put it in the *Confessions*: “Through him you sought us when we were not seeking you, but you sought us that we might begin to seek you.”¹⁰

And so, as the apostle Paul puts it, we now “[forget] what lies behind and [strain] forward to what lies ahead,” responding to “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13–14), knowing that our “citizenship” is not here on earth, but “in heaven,” from which “we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20–21). Jesus is always the “coming one”—even within the Gospel narratives: “Are you the coming one, or should we look for another?” the disciples of John the Baptist ask (Matt. 11:2–5, my translation) (and he doesn’t give an answer).

In all of this, what is important for us now is *how* it was that the disciples came to know that Jesus is the Lord, the Son of God. They did not come to this knowledge through hearing reports about his birth nor by accompanying him for a period of time. Yet neither was it merely seeing Christ on the cross that prompted the disciples, finally, to know the Lord, nor even was the report about the empty tomb or the encounter with the risen Christ enough to persuade the disciples; the tomb was empty, but this in itself was ambiguous, and when he appeared, he was not immediately recognized. *Rather, it was in the breaking of bread that the disciples encountered the Lord and came to recognize him as the one whose Passion is spoken of by the scriptures.*

When the Spirit descends at Pentecost, he comes as the one promised by Christ, the one who will remind us of all things about Christ, and so lead us into all truth (John 16:13). It is only after the event, as the Gospel

of John says (cf. John 12:16), that the disciples will realize that the scriptures were fulfilled in Christ, now that they turn again to the scriptures to find them full of references to Christ.

The engagement with the scriptures (1 Cor. 15) and the sharing in the Lord's meal, "proclaiming his death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26)—these are what Paul received (from the Lord himself in the case of the eucharistic meal) and then handed down, or "traditioned," to later generations (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23; 15:3). They constitute, as it were, the matrix and the sustenance of the Christian tradition. With these, we can now look back to the cross, the last publicly visible image (the tomb, after all, was empty and seen only by a few, and the risen Christ disappears from our sight when he is recognized), as the sign of victory, as we await the return of the Lord. As the apostle Paul said, he would preach nothing else but Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).

So, Christians are those who read the scriptures to encounter Christ—our encounter is, in a broad sense, literary: we come to know God through his Word. In a sense, this is what we do in church, where we use the language and imagery of scripture—in the poetry of hymnography and the artistry of iconography—to praise God for what he has wrought in Christ by the Spirit, thus making the church the matrix, the womb, in which we come to put on the identity of Christ, and by receiving his body, becoming his body.

SEEDS OF THE WORD AND THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

This scriptural dimension of our encounter with Christ requires of us a knowledge of the working of letters, and that we, as Saint Gregory put it, learn the principles of inquiry and contemplation. We have seen this expressed in terms of plundering the Egyptians, but there is a reverse side, which the early Christians spoke about in terms of the seeds of the Word being implanted into all.

Clement of Alexandria spoke of this, and before him, Saint Justin Martyr, the Philosopher (c. 100–c. 165). Clement held that the Word of God is in all creation, as the *logos spermatikos* (λόγος σπερματικός)—the

"sowing Word" spreading "seeds of the Word" (σπέρμα τοῦ λόγου; *sperma tou logou*) in all. The Word of God, as the *Logos spermatikos*, implants in human beings a seed, a *sperma*, which enables them to think and live in accordance with the Logos. Such a seed of the Word gives them a dim perception of "the whole Word," the Son, so that some, like Plato and Socrates, were enabled to live and think according to the Word (or at least attempt to do so). Therefore, Justin can claim that Christ was partially known even by Socrates:

For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Word. But since they did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves. . . . For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic word, seeing what was related to it. But they who contradict themselves on the more important points appear not to have possessed the heavenly wisdom, and the knowledge which cannot be spoken against. Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians. . . . For all the writers were able to see realities darkly through *the presence in them of an implanted seed of the Word*.¹¹

As Christians began to turn outward to address the wider world, such a position clearly had tremendous apologetic value and hermeneutical power—enabling Justin to discern in creation and culture that to which he could appeal as a point of contact, and claim it for his own, as manifesting the workings of the same God revealed in the Word, Jesus Christ.

This kind of openness to the world (and Justin and Clement take it much further than we would generally do) is something that many find very attractive and appealing—it allows us to see God at work in all things, and allows us to take whatever is good, wherever it may be—following Paul's words in Philippians 4:8: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." However, Justin is not simply saying that God has been at work in all things independently from what he has done in Christ as revealed through the scriptures. For Justin, in fact, if the

philosophers and poets have received seeds of the Word, have received some insight into truth, it is because they have read Moses. "And whatever both philosophers and poets said about the immortality of the soul or punishments after death or of the contemplation of the heavens or other such doctrines, they have been able to know and have expounded by beginning from the prophets (*παρὰ τῶν προφητῶν τὰς ἀφορμὰς λαβόντες [para tōn prophētōn tas aphormas labontes]*); hence there appear to be seeds of truth among all."¹² Whatever one thinks of the possibility of the Greek philosophers or poets actually having read the Hebrew scriptures, it was a point of importance for Justin; it might be described as what we would today call a "cultural takeover bid." It was a battle between Moses and Homer; Justin and others argue that Moses was older than all the philosophers and poets, and so he is in fact the source of whatever the philosophers or poets might have said that is true. Clement quotes Numenius, the Pythagorean philosopher: "What is Plato but Moses speaking in Attic Greek?"¹³

The point of importance here is really an evangelical (or missionary) one. I think it is safe to say that Socrates and Plato, and the philosophers following him, would most assuredly not have been convinced by Justin's attempt to see them as forebearers of Christ. But the action of plundering the Egyptians (in this case the Greeks) in turn enables the presence of the Word of God to be extended even to those prior to Christ. This backward extension of the light of Christ follows the basic fact that we only ever understand backwards, as Kierkegaard pointed out. We can see the same thing at work in the case of the apostles and the scriptures (what we now call the Old Testament): the disciples and apostles most assuredly knew these scriptures, but they were not thereby ready to accept a crucified messiah. Only when the risen Lord opened the books of scripture—to show how they all speak of him, and how he had to suffer before entering his glory—could they turn back to see him already having been spoken about by Isaiah or prefigured by Moses. As Origen, in the third century, put it: "Before the sojourn of Christ, the Law and the Prophets did not contain the proclamation which belongs to the definition of the Gospel, since he who explained the mysteries in them had not yet come. But since the Savior has come and has caused the Gospel to be embodied, he has by the Gospel made all things as Gospel."¹⁴ A little later he qualifies his

statement that they did not contain the proclamation; they did, but they veiled the message, so that it would not anticipate the time of the Lord.

We understand only retrospectively. By standing on the truth of the gospel, the proclamation of Christ as proclaimed by the apostles according to scripture, we are able now to read the scriptures as an open book, to understand what was written by the prophets. And then, we can look further afield, and see the same light of Christ shining on and through the whole of God's creation. Further, the medium through which this divine light shines is ourselves; we are called not simply to behold the light, but to become beacons ourselves, whereby God's light can shine further afield.

* * *

Plundering the Egyptians, honing our intellectual skills, is the indispensable means (along with the whole formation entailed by a proper paideia) whereby we learn how to use words, so that we can in fact use words to convey the Word of God.

NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, all translations of scripture passages are from the Revised Standard Version.

1. Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics* 7, trans. in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* [ANF], ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 vols. (1885–87; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), vol. 3.
2. Origen, *Philocalia* 13.1, trans. G. Lewis (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911).
3. Ibid., 13.2.
4. The idea of a "cultural takeover bid" is used by Frances M. Young in her book *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 51–57, drawing upon Arthur J. Droege, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretation of the History of Culture*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 26 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989). The image of plundering the Egyptians has a long apologetic history thereafter, at least until David Bentley Hart's book *The Beauty of the Infinite* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), which reverses the image to indicate there is nothing good in the world left that is not Christian.

5. Gregory the Wonderworker, *The Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen*, argument [arg.] 15, trans. in *ANF*, vol. 6.
6. Ibid., arg. 11.
7. Ibid., arg. 13.
8. Gregory Nazianzus [the Theologian], *Oration 43*, 11, trans. in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers [NPNF]*, second series (1894; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), vol. 7.
9. Cf. George L. Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric* (Thessalonika: Patriarchikon Hidryma Paterikōn, 1973).
10. Augustine, *Confessions* 11.2.4, trans. M. Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997).
11. Justin Martyr, *Second Apology* 10; 13.4–5, trans. in *ANF*, vol. 2 (emphasis added).
12. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 44.9–10.
13. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.22.150.4, trans. in *ANF*, vol. 2.
14. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.[8].33, trans. R. E. Heine (Washington, DC: Catholic University of American Press, 1989).

CHAPTER SIX

ORTHODOX MONASTICISM
AND HIGHER EDUCATION

ANDREW LOUTH

It might seem that the relationship between Orthodox monasticism and higher education is at best non-existent and at worst antagonistic. Furthermore, this might appear to be true both in itself and in contrast with the West. For in the West, one can track a route through monasticism to the ideals of the medieval university, which are still among the roots of the modern concept of higher education, though increasingly overgrown, indeed choked, by more recent perceptions of the purpose of higher education.

Such a route might look like this: Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, which incorporated the ideals of classical *paideia* into the educational structures necessary for the reading, writing, and preaching needed in the church; Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*—the education provided for novices in Benedictine monasticism; and on this foundation, the establishment of first the cathedral schools and then the medieval university. The importance of the route is that there was little other access to education, certainly very little outside the church (there must have been something similar in the Lateran Chancery), since, by the end of the fifth century,