

CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH TRADITION BEHIND TYCONIUS'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AS *CORPUS BIPERTITUM*

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Tyconius, a fourth-century Donatist, believed that the Bible showed the church as composed of two parts, the righteous and the sinners, who will be clearly separated only at the final judgment. This doctrine belongs to a shared Jewish and Christian tradition attested to in Romans, the third-century Christian Jewish Didascalia apostolorum, Tyconius's Christian contemporaries in the East and the West, and talmudic and midrashic traditions attributed to fourth-century rabbis. Recognizing the exegetical tradition behind this doctrine brings a deeper understanding of it and its application to ecclesiology through the ages.

TYCONIUS'S *BOOK OF RULES* presents seven rules to guide the reader of Scripture into a deeper understanding of, and commitment to, the Christian way of life.¹ Probably dating from the last third of the fourth century, this Donatist work survived perhaps in large part because of the

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¹ See Tyconius, *Le livre des règles*, ed. and trans. Jean-Marc Vercruyse, Sources chrétiennes (hereafter SC) 488 (Paris: Cerf, 2004). No more precise dating than that given here can be achieved for this work—see *ibid.* 13–15, 24–26. I refer to this edition of Tyconius's text as *Rules* followed by rule and chapter numbers. Because Vercruyse's edition changes some of the chapter divisions in Burkitt's edition, which is the basis for Babcock's English translation, I also add, to each reference to Tyconius's *Rules*, the page and line numbers of Burkitt's edition after the letter "B." See F. C. Burkitt, ed., *The Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1894); William S. Babcock, trans., *Tyconius: The Book of Rules* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989). For an overall interpretation of Tyconius's *Rules*, see Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Inner Purpose and Logic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1988).

esteem in which Augustine held it.² Augustine adapted several of the seven rules, in particular the one of interest here, namely, the second rule on the church as the bipartite body of Christ, the *Domini corpus bipertitum* composed of good Christians (one part) and of bad Christians (the second part). Augustine's version of the distinction between good and bad Christians, which had him thinking of the church as a *corpus permixtum*, became a key component of his anti-Donatist polemic.³ This adapted doctrine went on to become a constant, if not always uncontested, possession of Western ecclesiology, and discussion of the effects of sinful members on the church's structure or situation still has its place on the ecumenical agenda.⁴ In service of a better understanding of this doctrine for contemporary ecclesiology, I propose to examine a tradition from which Tyconius's doctrine of the bipartite ecclesial body seems to have sprung.

As to Tyconius's life, ancient sources provide no details apart from sparse references to him in Augustine's works and a short paragraph by the late-fifth-century priest Gennadius of Marseilles.⁵ Probably from a family of Greek origin, Tyconius was a Donatist Christian layman who lived in Africa in the second half of the fourth century.⁶ Since Optatus of Milevis does not mention him in the *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam*, Tyconius's literary activity probably did not start until after 367, and scholars put his death in the 390s. Augustine believed him endowed with eloquence and a keen mind, while Gennadius underlines his good education, his knowledge of the Bible, and his zeal for ecclesiastical affairs.⁷

Two of Tyconius's works, *De bello intestine* and *Expositiones diversarum causarum*, have not survived. This loss is unfortunate because, again according to Gennadius, one or both works cited certain synods in defense of Tyconius's own position. Augustine's *Contra epistulam Parmeniani*

² He first mentions it in Letter 41.2 (ca. 396) and devotes a section at the end of *De doctrina christiana* (3.30.42–3.37.56) to a discussion of Tyconius's rules.

³ See, e.g., *De doctrina christiana* 3.32.45; Letter 53.3; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 51.4; 51.6; *Sermones* 73A; 248; 249; 251. In addition to the works cited in n. 2 above, see also these places where Augustine treats the issues discussed by this rule while invoking Tyconius by name: *Contra epistulam Parmeniani* 1.1.1; 2.21.40; 2.22.42; 3.3.17; *Epistulae* 93.10; 249; *Retractationum libri duo* 2.18. On the influence Tyconius's second rule had on Augustine, see Vercauysse, introduction to *Le livre des règles* 91–94, and his second and third “notes complémentaires” 382–89.

⁴ See, e.g., World Council of Churches (WCC), *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Geneva: WCC, 2005) sections II.A and B; Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission, *Church and Justification: Understanding the Church in the Light of the Doctrine of Justification* ([Geneva]: Lutheran World Federation, 1994) nos. 141, 145, 148–65.

⁵ See the sources given in n. 3 above.

⁶ I take most of this paragraph from Vercauysse, *Le livre des règles* 11–34.

⁷ Augustine, *Contra epistulam Parmeniani* 1.1.1; Gennadius, *Liber de viris illustribus* 18.

(ca. 400) responds to a letter from Parmenian, Donatist primate of Carthage, that addressed to Tyconius strong criticism of his ecclesiology, in particular the claims that the church was universal and should therefore have room enough for sinners as well as for saints. There may be reason to doubt the truth of Augustine's assertion that Tyconius was later condemned by a Donatist council.⁸ However, we find ample witness to both of these ecclesiological claims in Tyconius's rule book, which Vercruysse believes was probably composed after the two works of Tyconius already mentioned and before his commentary on the Apocalypse of John.⁹ The Donatist background of its author explains the merely fragmentary survival of this commentary, but Tyconius's spiritual reading of the Apocalypse and his application of its prophecies to the church's present life indelibly marked the succeeding exegetical tradition.

In his preface to his 1894 edition of Tyconius's *Rules*, F. C. Burkitt wrote: "The work of Tyconius seems entirely original; there are hardly any traces of influence of previous writers in it."¹⁰ Vercruysse's paper read at the 2007 Oxford conference on patristics rendered a more nuanced judgment. According to Vercruysse, the study of the sources of the *Rules* remains a field still barely tilled, in part because Tyconius cites no author or work outside the Bible. Vercruysse's brief study of the modes of reading and interpretation that Tyconius and Origen respectively recommended left him able to say that Tyconius might have known Origen's works, although their exegetical approaches differed appreciably from each other. He left for later a longer study of the possible similarities in Origen's and Tyconius's respective interpretations of similar passages.¹¹ It is just this sort of study that I propose here, but I have not chosen Origen as my point of comparison to Tyconius. I hope to show instead the similarity between Tyconius's second rule and his application of it, on the one hand, and a tradition of Jewish exegesis in evidence in both ancient Christian and rabbinic sources, on the other hand.

⁸ Augustine, *Contra epistolam Parmeniani* 1.1.1. See Vercruysse's arguments at *Le livre des règles* 23–24.

⁹ *Le livre des règles* 24–25, 26–27; see also 22–24 for bibliography on the Apocalypse commentary. The universality of the church comes up at the beginning and near the end of Tyconius's *Rules* (1.4.1; 7.4.3; B 2,15–3,2; 74,10–75,6). His treatment of the fourth rule, which calls for distinguishing references to specific scriptural persons, places, and events (*species*) and to the more widespread realities that fulfill them (*genus*), portrays the universality of the church as the fulfillment of numerous OT passages referring only to Israel.

¹⁰ *Rules of Tyconius* vii.

¹¹ Jean-Marc Vercruysse, "Tyconius a-t-il lu Origène?" in *Papers Presented at the Fifteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2007*, *Studia patristica* 46, ed. J. Baun et al. (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010) 155–60.

My argument for rooting Tyconius's rule on the bipartite body of the Lord in this tradition consists of several steps. First, I present the manner in which Tyconius explains his second rule. Next, I show the way his rule reorients the interpretation of scriptural texts traditionally made to serve the cause of Christian anti-Jewish polemic, in particular, to show how the OT prophesied that Jews would wickedly reject the Messiah, while many Gentiles would embrace him. Third, I argue that the third-century *Didascalia apostolorum* represents a precursor to this reorientation, since it distinguishes two or three groups within the people of God in an exegesis of prophetic texts that supports a polemic carried on by a Christian Jew against some Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah. A fourth step in the argument shows that exegetical sources contemporary to Tyconius resemble in various ways this exegesis of the *Didascalia's* and Tyconius's second rule. Here I discuss the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Gregory of Elvira, and Nilus of Ancyra. The last phase of my argument shows how a number of interpretations from ancient Jewish sources resemble the exegetical moves characteristic of Tyconius's explanation and application of his second rule on the bipartite ecclesial body of the Lord. Here I examine Paul's use of Isaiah 65 in Romans 9–11 and some passages from the midrash and the Talmud. In this last step of my argument, I address the questions of whether Tyconius consciously adverted to Jewish traditions in presenting or applying his second rule and of whether he got the idea for this rule from the rabbis. By these steps I aim to establish that Tyconius's second rule, which led to an ecclesiological principle of fundamental importance for the West, forms part of a tradition that precedes him, that is alive around him in his day, and that shares some of its most characteristic exegetical logic with interpretive traditions of late antique Judaism. The whole argument of this article should thus lead to a better understanding of the second rule, which is a crucial element of the Western ecclesiological heritage. Some concluding reflections present how that theological understanding comes from the historical case my argument makes.

TYCONIUS'S DOCTRINE OF THE BIPARTITE BODY OF THE LORD

Tyconius's prologue calls his work a "rule book" (*libellum regularem*) or key or lamp of the secrets of the Law.¹² The mystical rules he will present make the Bible's treasure of truth invisible to some. He aims to uncover this hidden truth by presenting the *ratio*, the logic—or, more simply, the account—of these rules. It thus seems clear that Tyconius believes his rules provide seven ways of finding the spiritual, peculiarly

¹² Charles Kannengiesser prefers to translate *libellum regularem* as "regulating essay" (*Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 2 vols. [Boston: Brill, 2004] 1:1141).

Christian, interpretation of the OT. The seven rules deal, in order, with the following issues: distinguishing references to Christ the head and to his ecclesial body; distinguishing the good and wicked parts of the ecclesial body of Christ; the relationship between law and promise in the Bible; distinguishing references to specific scriptural persons, places, and events (*species*) and to the more widespread realities that fulfill them (*genus*); the interpretation of references to time; the biblical device of recapitulation; and distinguishing the devil and his body. Tyconius first introduces the term “bipartite” (*bipertitum*) at the end of his presentation of his first rule, the rule on how the Bible speaks of the body of Christ and of its head.¹³ Here he asserts that the holy temple of God referred to in Ephesians 2:21 has two parts, one of which is on its way to the total destruction Jesus predicted for the Jerusalem Temple.

As he opens his treatment of what he calls the “rule of the bipartite body of the Lord,” he notes that we can tell how Scripture functions according to this rule by noticing the way the sacred text goes back and forth between references to the right part, then to the left part, of the Lord’s body. To illustrate this point Tyconius goes first to Isaiah, the biblical book he cites most often in this work. He analyzes the tenses of verbs in Isaiah 45:3–5, which, in my translation of Tyconius’s quotation, runs thus:

I will open invisible treasures to you so that you might know that I am the Lord [or God, as Tyconius has it elsewhere in this passage] on account of my servant Jacob, and I will take you up. You, however, have not known me, that I am God and apart from me there is no God, and you were not knowing me.¹⁴

Tyconius grants that this whole passage is addressed to one and the same body of the Lord. But he asks a series of rhetorical questions to convince his reader that the text could not address this whole quotation to the same mind.

First Tyconius asks whether God could address to one and the same mind (*in unam mentem convenit . . . in eadem*) the following parts of the quotations: on the one hand, “I will open invisible treasures to you so that you might know that I am God on account of my servant Jacob,” and, on the other hand, “you, however, have not known me.” Tyconius prefaces this question with *numquid*, which signals that he thinks the reader should answer negatively. Then he asks whether Jacob did indeed receive what God promised, that is, the invisible treasures of divine revelation. Tyconius expects the reader to affirm that God has made good on his promise and to

¹³ *Rules* 1.13; B 7,26.

¹⁴ *Thesaurus invisibiles aperiam tibi, ut scias quoniam ego sum Dominus, et assumam te. . . . Tu autem me non cognovisti quoniam ego sum Deus et non est absque me Deus, et nesciebas me (Rules 2.2; B 8,11–14).*

conclude, therefore, that the one who has not known God has to be of a mind different from that of the one for whom God delivered on his promise to open invisible treasures of divine knowledge. Tyconius moves to a confirmation of this bipartite character of the addressee by asking further whether the perfect-tense expression “you have not known me” could be addressed to the same mind as the imperfect “you were not knowing me.” He leads the reader to answer no by explaining that “you have not known me” implies present ignorance, while “you were not knowing me” can be said only of a mind that has already come out of that ignorance into knowledge, that is, the mind that has actually taken in the invisible treasures God has shown to it. This prophetic text thus presents two minds, both visible in the same body: one now knows God, whereas the heart of the other, though called to that same knowledge, is far from him. Tyconius concludes that the Bible here speaks of two sorts of souls existing in the same visible body of the church, a body, therefore, with two parts.

Tyconius constructs most of the rest of his exposition on this rule from similar analyses of eight other OT passages and three NT texts.¹⁵ All the OT texts are from Isaiah, except one that comes from the Canticle, while the NT texts come from Revelation, Matthew, and Romans. His analyses of these eleven texts are similar to the one I just detailed. They proceed by citation of a scriptural text typically followed by one or more rhetorical questions about parts of the text. The commentary after the text shows that different parts of a text addressed to Israel or to the church refer to different addressees within the same Israel or church. The case for this distinction functions by pointing out various qualities or actions that are attributed to the one Israel or church and yet contrast with each other enough to resist simultaneous attribution to the same person or group. In Isaiah 42:16–17, for example, God could not address his “I will not abandon you” to the same people who he says have turned away from him.¹⁶

Near the end of his treatment of the rule of the Lord’s bipartite body, Tyconius calls this aspect of the church a mystery that we are to gather from any passage of Scripture in which God criticizes or condemns Israel.¹⁷ He claims that Paul himself often, especially in Romans, applies what is said of the whole of the Lord’s body to one part of it. After quoting from Romans 10–11, Tyconius concludes: “Thus, does the Lord attest in all the Scriptures that one body of the seed of Abraham in all things grows and flourishes and also perishes.”¹⁸ According to Tyconius,

¹⁵ OT passages at *Rules* 2.3–10; B 9,1–11,1; NT texts at *Rules* 2.11–13; B 11,1–28.

¹⁶ *Rules* 2.3; B 9,1–6.

¹⁷ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,12–14.

¹⁸ *Rules* 2.14; B 11,26–28. Here we see a reference to Paul’s identification of the Lord Jesus with Abraham’s seed in Galatians 3.

God's people has always had, since its inception, two parts: one that dies and one that flourishes. The mystery of the bipartite character of the church, as Tyconius sees it, has an eschatological dimension. Who belongs to which part of the church is not clearly discernible until the end of the world when the judgment separates the wheat from the tares.¹⁹

Tyconius's exposition of the third rule, that on promises and the Law, shows that he can see that the bipartite nature of God's people goes back throughout the history of Israel.²⁰ He uses this fact to support his own theory on the relation between OT law and promise. In the rest of his book, he uses the rule of the Lord's bipartite body, more frequently than any of the other rules, in the construction of arguments showing how readers should apply one or more of his other rules to a given scriptural passage. We can, therefore, understand why he begins his *ex professo* treatment of the rule on the bipartite body of the Lord by writing that it is by far more necessary and more diligently to be examined and looked for throughout the Bible than the first rule, which draws the distinction between the head and the body of the church.²¹

THE LINK TO ANTI-JEWISH POLEMIC

At the beginning of chapter 13 of his discussion of the second rule (B 11,12–14), Tyconius seems to have left us a clue about where he found this rule for interpreting the Bible in a peculiarly Christian way. He states: "And thus by this mystery [of the two parts of the Lord's body] is the meaning to be taken through all the Scriptures wherever God says that Israel is to perish according to its merits or that its inheritance is accursed." Here Tyconius is referring to the vast stock of Bible passages, especially from the OT, progressively built up since at least the time of Pseudo-Barnabas and Justin Martyr for use in Christian polemic against non-Christian Jews and against Christians practicing some Jewish observances.

In fact, most of the OT passages that Tyconius uses to present his second rule appear in the tradition of this sort of anti-Jewish polemic. The typical reading of these passages finds in them a dichotomy between believing Christians or Gentiles and unbelieving Jews, between the new people of God and the former people of God. Tyconius begins his explanation of the second rule by treating Isaiah 45:3–5, and he also uses Isaiah 63:9–10 for

¹⁹ On the eschatological disentangling of the two parts of the Lord's body, see *Rules* 2.9; 2.12; 3.28; 7.16.2; B 10,6–12; 11,5–11; 29,29–30,19; 83,23–30.

²⁰ *Rules* 3.17–29; B 22,7–31,5. Here Tyconius does not say that Israel and the church constitute two parts of one body or one system. He does show that OT Israel is bipartite, that the church is bipartite, and that the former prefigures the latter. The two peoples he mentions in this section of his work are not Israel and the church, but the just and the unjust, whether they be in Israel or in the church.

²¹ *Rules* 2.1; B 8,5–7.

this purpose.²² He starts to bring that explanation to a close by citing Paul's quotation of Isaiah 65:2 in Romans 10:20–21.²³ Pseudo-Barnabas uses Isaiah 45:2–3a as part of his case that Scripture foretold that Jews would not accept the baptism brought by Christ.²⁴ Both Cyprian's and Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa's collections of *testimonia* put Isaiah 45:1 and 65:1 among the prophecies foretelling that the Gentiles would believe in Christ more than the Jews would, and Cyprian includes Isaiah 63:9 among those passages foretelling that the Christ would save the whole human race.²⁵

In explaining his second rule, Tyconius interprets Isaiah 29:13 as referring to the sinful part of the church, while before him Justin Martyr already uses this same verse in his case against the Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah; in the fourth century Aphrahat repeats Justin's move.²⁶ Tyconius uses Isaiah 42:16 to refer to the good part of the church, whereas Justin takes it to refer to those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah in contradistinction to the Jews who do not.²⁷ Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa takes Isaiah 48:8 ("You did not know, nor did you realize, nor did I open your ears from the beginning, for I knew that, not obeying, you would not obey.") as his first *testimonium* that the Jews are faithless.²⁸ But Tyconius sees in this verse a prophecy of the sinful part of the church, while the next verse ("On account of my name I will show to you my dignity, and by my glory I will bring it upon you.") he takes to indicate the righteous part.²⁹ Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome take Isaiah 33:20–22 to prophesy the coming blessings of the church, but they interpret the next two verses as a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews' Jerusalem by God's judgment working through idolatrous pagans.³⁰ Tyconius, again, takes these two

²² For Isaiah 45:3–5, see *Rules* 2.2; B 8,11–24. For Isaiah 63:9–10, see *Rules* 2.8; B 9,31–10,5.

²³ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,14–18.

²⁴ Letter of Barnabas 11.4–5.

²⁵ Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.21; 2.7; Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Delecta testimonia adversus Judaeos ex Vetero Testamento*, PG 46.225b, 228d–229b. At PG 46.201b, Pseudo-Gregory uses Isaiah 65:1 as an OT witness that the Lord would come in a fleshly appearance; and at PG 46.233a, he takes Isaiah 63:10 as scriptural proof of Christian claims about the Holy Spirit.

²⁶ *Rules* 2.2; B 8,20–23; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 78.11; Aphrahat, *Demonstration* 16.3.

²⁷ *Rules* 2.3; B 9,1–6; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 122.1.

²⁸ Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonia adversus Judaeos*, PG 46.224b–c.

²⁹ *Rules* 2.7; B 9,27–30.

³⁰ Eusebius, *Commentarius in Isaiam* 2.6; Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 10.33.20ff. The fourth-century Isaiah Targum on this very passage provides evidence of Jewish involvement in a polemic with Christians in the land of Israel. It interprets Isaiah 33:20, the "positive" part of the passage, as applying to Israel, but it also sees v. 23 in a negative light, but as applying to the Gentiles. See Bruce D. Chilton, trans., *The Isaiah Targum*, The Aramaic Bible 11 (Edinburgh: T. &

halves of the passage in question to refer, respectively, to the just and unjust parts of the Lord's body.³¹ Jerome takes Isaiah 43:5–7 to convey the prophet's consolation to the apostles, the Jews who first heard Jesus' message and believed in him as the savior, but he sees the blind people of verse 8 as referring to the Jews who do not so believe and oppose the apostles' bringing salvation to the nations.³² Here, too, Tyconius sees the Bible presenting the reality of the bipartite church.³³ He uses Isaiah 65:2 to refer to the wicked part of the Lord's body.³⁴ Justin interprets this verse as applying to Gentiles who will be admitted to salvation if they, unlike many Jews, accept Jesus as the Messiah, while other Christians use this text as a proof against the Jews that the Messiah has already come and suffered their rejection.³⁵

As I have mentioned, Tyconius often has recourse to his second rule in order to explain the ways in which the other rules illumine Scripture. A few of the OT passages to which he applies the second rule in this context already have their place in the tradition of Christian anti-Jewish polemic. This tradition used some of these texts to differentiate between Christians and non-Christian Jews. Cyprian takes Isaiah 1:19 ("should you wish and should you hear me, you will eat the good things of the land; if, however, you wish not and hear me not, a sword will consume you") as applying to two sorts of Jews, those believing and those not believing in Jesus as the Messiah, while Tyconius sees here another case of the bipartite church.³⁶ The classic anti-Jewish topos of the two peoples coming from Jacob and Esau—one Gentile and just, the other Jewish and condemned—becomes in Tyconius's hands an indication of the dichotomy between groups of just and unjust people in the same church.³⁷ Tyconius interprets Isaiah 66:20 to

T. Clark, 1987) xx–xv, 67; and Michael A. Signer and Susan L. Graham, "Rabbinic Literature," in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* 1:120–44, at 129.

³¹ *Rules* 2.9; B 10,6–12.

³² Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 12.43. Jerome here recognizes that his exegesis of v. 8 disagrees with both Jewish interpretations and that of many Christians. See, e.g., Eusebius, *Commentarius in Isaiam* 2.24.

³³ *Rules* 2.4; B 9,7–15.

³⁴ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,14–26.

³⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 24.1–4; 119.4; *First Apology* 49; Letter of Barnabas 12.4; Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 13.10 (likely not a part of the work directly by Tertullian, but by someone who knew his *Adversus Marcionem*); Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonia adversus Iudaeos*, PG 46.213d.

³⁶ Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.24: Et si uolueritis et audieritis me, bona terrae edetis: si autem nolueritis et non audieritis me, gladius uos consumet; Tyconius, *Rules* 3.20.1; B 24,7–20.

³⁷ *Rules* 3.25–27 ; B 28,6–29,28. Witnesses to the classic topos include Letter of Barnabas 13.1–3; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4.21.2; Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 1; *De pudicitia* 8; Rufinus's translation of Origen, *In epistolam Pauli ad Romanos* 7.13; Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.19; Commodian, *Carmen de duobus populis* vv. 249–56;

refer to the just part of the church, which is on its way to heaven, while Cyprian had interpreted this passage to be about the Gentiles who, unlike so many Jews, would believe in Christ unto their salvation.³⁸ Justin sees in Isaiah 59:7–8 part of the reason why God continued to tell his sinful people to observe the Sabbath as part of their repentance, even though the law of the Sabbath did not apply to Christians made righteous through Jesus the Messiah.³⁹ Tyconius uses the next two verses as part of his case that the church has a wicked part along with a just one.⁴⁰ Tertullian sees the sacrifices of Cain and Abel as showing the difference between the earthly sacrifices of the Jews and the spiritual offerings of the Christians.⁴¹ Tyconius sees the differences between Cain and Abel as illustrating the two parts into which Adam is divided, and who in this way mystically represents the church.⁴² He sees the righteous part of the church enjoying the promises of Isaiah 65:2–4, while Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa sees in the first of these three verses a prophecy that the members of the Gentile church would have the new name of “Christians.”⁴³ We know that the parallel between the appearance of these texts in Tyconius and their use in the Christian tradition of anti-Jewish polemic is not just a coincidence, because Tyconius himself tells us that it is in texts in which God points out Israel’s faults or curses Israel that the bipartite character of the Lord’s body is to be seen.⁴⁴ We can therefore conclude that Tyconius chose to interpret these texts as he did because he knew that all the texts we have just examined were interpreted by Christian tradition to be of this sort.

Tyconius uses his second rule to interpret some texts earlier used in Christian anti-Jewish polemic to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. Justin Martyr, for example, applies 2 Samuel 7:14–16 to Jesus as Christ.⁴⁵ But Tyconius uses these verses to show that Solomon mystically represents the

Ambrose, *Expositio Psalmi cxviii* litt. 20, cap. 6; *De Iacob et beata vita* 2.2.6–9. See also Marcel Simon, *Verus Israël: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et Juifs dans l’Empire romain (135–425)* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1983; reprint, with postscript added, of the 2nd ed. of 1964, itself a reprint of the 1948 ed.) 203–5, 224.

³⁸ Tyconius, *Rules* 5.7.2; B 63,3–12; Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 1.21.

³⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 27.

⁴⁰ *Rules* 7.4.2; B 73,16–74,9.

⁴¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* 5.1–3.

⁴² *Rules* 7.14.1; B 80,26–81,23.

⁴³ Tyconius, *Rules* 7.14.1; B 80,26–81,23; Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonia adversus Iudaeos*, PG 46.229b.

⁴⁴ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,12–14.

⁴⁵ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 118.1–2. Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa takes this text as a biblical proof for the hypostatic existence of the Son as God (*Testimonia adversus Iudaeos*, PG 46.197b). He takes its companion verses, 1 Chronicles 17:11, 13, to show that the Lord would come in a fleshly appearance (*Testimonia adversus Iudaeos*, PG 46.205a).

bipartite body of the Lord because, while the kingdom is not taken from him, he is also an idolater.⁴⁶ As Justin uses the idolatry of Solomon in 1 Kings 11 to show that Psalm 71 is not about him but about Jesus the Messiah, so Tyconius uses this idolatry to show the evil part in Solomon, which represents the evil part of the church.⁴⁷ While Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa sees in Isaiah 19:1, 21 a prophecy of the Lord's going down to Egypt as a child, Tyconius sees the Egypt mentioned in Isaiah 19:1–3, 19–20 as representing the bipartite body of the Lord.⁴⁸ Cyprian takes the reference in Amos 8:9 to the sun going down at midday as a prophecy of what happened during Jesus' crucifixion.⁴⁹ But Tyconius, understanding Jesus as the sun of just judgment, interprets this verse as prophesying the judgment against the unjust part of the church.⁵⁰

Tyconius applies to just and unjust parts of the Christian church scriptural texts used in the tradition of Christian polemic against non-Christian Jews, and he does this without referring to the relationship of the church to the Jews outside it. I note especially that he applies his second rule to texts used in this polemical tradition to depict the dichotomy between believing Christians or Gentiles and unbelieving Jews, between the new people of God and the former people of God.⁵¹ Where did Tyconius find this idea? Very likely in a tradition of exegesis shared by Jews and Christians long before his own day.

THE PEOPLE OF BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS IN THE *DIDASCALIA*

Elsewhere I have discussed evidence to show that Greek and Latin speakers who handed on Christian doctrine about the church in the fourth century—people, in other words, like Tyconius—tended to do so by calling upon a whole tradition of OT exegesis much indebted to Jewish forms of interpretation. The Greek *Didascalia apostolorum*, written in Syria in the third century, translated into Latin and Syriac in the fourth century, and reworked in Greek by the redactor of the *Apostolic Constitutions* around 380 near Antioch,

⁴⁶ *Rules* 4.9.3; B 38,12–39,1.

⁴⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 34.8; Tyconius, *Rules* 4.9.3; B 38,12–39,1.

⁴⁸ Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonia adversus Judaeos*, PG 46.232b; Tyconius, *Rules* 4.14.1; B 43,1–17.

⁴⁹ Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.23; see also Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonia adversus Judaeos*, PG 46.213c.

⁵⁰ *Rules* 7.4.2; B 73,16–74,7.

⁵¹ In Augustine we see something of the same sort of move. Without making any reference to Jews, the Bishop of Hippo uses a trope of anti-Jewish polemic—in this case, that of the disinherited heritage of the Lord that still possesses the Bible but to no avail for salvation—for the purpose of anti-Donatist polemic (Letter 43.9). For the wider context of this transfer of anti-Jewish polemic to anti-Donatist polemic, see Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (New York: Cambridge University, 2011) 260–306.

represents a prime witness to this tradition.⁵² The *Didascalia* attests to anti-Jewish polemic locating the dichotomy between believer and unbeliever *within* the people of God and not *between* the new people and the former people.⁵³

In the Syriac version of the *Didascalia*, chapter 21, the pseudoapostolic author shows how Scripture distinguishes between those in Israel who would believe in Jesus as the Messiah and those in Israel who would not.⁵⁴ This section tells Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles to fast and to sorrow for the Jews who reject Jesus as the Messiah. Prayer for these unfortunates should ask God to spare them on the day of judgment.⁵⁵ The *Didascalia* notes that the Gentiles received the gospel because of the unbelief of these Jews. This document here teaches that Jesus said that all this would happen through the prophet Isaiah. To support this claim the author interprets Isaiah 65:1 as a reference to the future Christian Gentiles, and Isaiah 65:2–3 as a reference to future Jews who would not accept Jesus as the Messiah. A surface reading of these verses might say that all three verses are mentioning the same people, Israel, which has both failed to call on the Lord and sinfully resisted his saving overtures. But the author of the *Didascalia* takes these two postures—not calling on God and resisting his call—as different characteristics of different groups of people within the same people of God, namely, Christian Gentiles on one hand and Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah on the other.

The *Didascalia* makes here a hermeneutical move similar to Tyconius's second rule. The Christian meaning of Isaiah is that Jesus speaks through

⁵² See my "The Ancient Church Order Literature: Genre or Tradition?" *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007) 337–80. The reworking of the *Didascalia* in the *Apostolic Constitutions* takes up all of Books 1–6 of the latter document.

⁵³ Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert has made a good case for considering the *Didascalia*'s anti-Jewish polemic to be an example of polemic among Jews, directed by some who are Christian against some who are not ("The *Didascalia Apostolorum*: A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 [2001] 483–509).

⁵⁴ See *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac, I (Chapters I–X) and II (Chapters XI–XXVI)*, ed. A. Vööbus, CSCO 401, 407, *Scriptores Syri*, 175, 179 (Leuven: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1979). I will cite Vööbus's English translation of the same title appearing in the same year in the same series: CSCO, 402, 408, *Scriptores Syri*, 176, 180. The pagination of the two volumes is continuous, so I will give only the page numbers. Here I refer to pp. 191–95. For the Latin text, which has a lacuna in this place, see *Didascaliae apostolorum canonum ecclesiasticorum traditionis apostolicae versiones latinae*, ed. Erik Tidner (Berlin: Akademie, 1963), including Greek fragments, pp. 50–52. I will refer to this edition by page number. For the most recent extensive treatment of the *Didascalia*, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Didascalia Apostolorum: An English Version* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009). In this book Stewart-Sykes develops a theory that extends the redaction history of the *Didascalia* from the first half until the end of the third century.

⁵⁵ *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 192–93, 196, 199.

him to show that God's people is made up of believers and unbelievers. But this hermeneutical move is not strictly identical to what Tyconius does in his explicit discussion of his second rule. Indeed, while according to the Donatist, the mystical meaning of prophecy indicates that Christians are sorted out into good and bad parts of the Lord's body, the Didascalist shows that what Jesus says through his prophets is that God's people is composed of two groups, those Jews and Gentiles who accept Jesus as the Messiah and those Jews who do not. The third-century Syrian author of the *Didascalia* includes unbelieving Jews as one of the two constituent groups in God's people, a people that he therefore still sees as extending beyond the mass of those who believe in Jesus. Commenting on this same text of Isaiah, as quoted in Romans 10:21,⁵⁶ the fourth-century African Tyconius now sees the dividing line between good and bad parts prophetically drawn only within the group of those who claim to accept Jesus as the Messiah and Lord. Tyconius does not consider contemporary unbelieving Jews when he mentions the two parts of God's people.

The same similarity and difference can be seen in the *Didascalia's* and Tyconius's respective interpretations of Isaiah 63:10, 42:19, and 43:8. Right after its treatment of Isaiah 65:1–3, the *Didascalia* sees in Isaiah 63:10 (“they provoked the Holy Spirit to anger”) a reference to the members of God's people who do not accept the Messiah, while, in his treatment of the second rule, Tyconius applies this sentence to sinful Christians.⁵⁷ Again, in his polemic against Jews, Christian or not, who recommend observance of the OT laws on clean foods, purification, and sacrifice, the Didascalist cites Isaiah 42:19 and 43:8, one after another.⁵⁸ He does this to show that this group within God's people becomes blind by maintaining these observances, a blindness that is part and parcel of a rejection of Jesus. However, other Jews and some Gentiles have accepted the light of Christ and left these observances aside, as Jesus teaches them to do.⁵⁹ Tyconius quotes Isaiah 42:16–17 and 43:5–8 back to back, that is, the same passages quoted by the Didascalist. But Tyconius does so to contrast virtuous Christians, whom the Lord will not abandon (Isa 42:16; 43:5–7), with Christians who have turned away from God, blinded by their own sin (Isa 42:17; 43:8).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,14–26.

⁵⁷ *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 194–95; Tyconius, *Rules* 2.8; B 9,31–10,5.

⁵⁸ The issue with sacrifices could well be the abstention from meat and wine in mourning for the end of sacrifices and libations after the destruction of the Temple. See Fonrobert, “A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus” 491–95.

⁵⁹ *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 232 (again no Latin text here) and, for the whole development leading to this point: *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 223–32, and *Didascaliae apostolorum* 78–85.

⁶⁰ *Rules* 2.3–4; B 9,1–15.

In its reading of Isaiah 8:23–9:1, the *Didascalia* shows us yet another way to demonstrate a reference to two distinct groups within God’s people in a text that seems on the surface only to discuss the single Israel. The author quotes what Jesus says through the prophet: “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations, a people that sits (in) darkness—you have seen a great light, and those who sit in darkness and in the shadows of death, light has dawned upon them.” The *Didascalia* tells us that “those who sit in darkness” is said of those Jews who would come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the light that dawns on them. But the “people that sits (in) darkness” refers to the people of Israel insofar as it refused to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. They see the light that is Jesus, but it does not dawn on them. The unbelief of these Jews surrounded in darkness the Jews who would believe. Here we see a different way of cutting God’s people into two groups. Whereas we have some Jews who accept Jesus as the Messiah, we also see some Jews who do not. But the apparent principles of the exegesis are the same as Tyconius’s. The passage uses two distinct expressions: “people that sits in darkness” and “those who sit in darkness.” It must therefore be discussing two distinct groups of people.⁶¹ While this might not be what the text says on the surface, it is what Jesus says through it, what Tyconius calls the text’s “invisible treasure of truth” or its “mystery.” Finally, the *Didascalia* distinguishes in this same text of Isaiah the group of Gentiles who have become Christians. They are those whose idolatry had them sitting “in the shadow of death.” Upon them the light of the Messiah dawned, along with those who sit in darkness, i.e., Jews who have accepted Jesus as that Messiah.

Looking back through Tyconius’s day to the third-century *Didascalia apostolorum*, we can conceive of this latter as representing a precursor to Tyconius’s reorientation of OT texts traditionally used in anti-Jewish polemic. Indeed, the *Didascalia*’s close attention to vocabulary and grammar in prophetic texts distinguishes two or three groups within the people of God in a way similar to Tyconius’s *modus operandi*. However, putting this exegesis to use in arguments against Jews who do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the *Didascalia* maintains a closer link to anti-Jewish polemic than does Tyconius. But the Christian Jew behind the *Didascalia* adopts a position that keeps his Jewish opponents within the same people as his Christian brothers and sisters, whether Jew or Gentile.⁶² He thus presents a dichotomy within the people of God analogous to Tyconius’s

⁶¹ *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 195–96.

⁶² The author gives away his Jewish identity; see *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 230; *Didascalie apostolorum* 83–84. On the Jewish character of the concerns and biblical argumentation of the *Didascalia*, see Fonrobert, “A Mishnah for the Disciples of Jesus.”

bipartite vision of the church. One of the limits of the analogy consists in the fact that the *Didascalia* does not employ explicit notions of parts and of the Lord's body to develop its dichotomous ecclesiology.⁶³ But both the *Didascalia* and Tyconius's rule book develop their dichotomies in the context of an eschatological vision. The *Didascalia's* interpretation is in the service of an exhortation to pray that the Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah might come to this faith and thus be saved from eternal punishment, while according to Tyconius we will not know who really belongs to which part of the Lord's body until the end of the world.

CHRISTIAN WITNESSES CONTEMPORARY WITH TYCONIUS

Texts from the second half of the fourth century show that various aspects of the *Didascalia's* dichotomous view of the people of God survived among authors who were Tyconius's contemporaries. In this regard three authors merit attention: the pseudoapostolic redactor of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Gregory of Elvira, and Nilus of Ancyra.

The *Apostolic Constitutions* give evidence that by Tyconius's time the *Didascalia's* rich three-way division of the people of God—good Christian Jews, bad unbelieving Jews, and good Christian Gentiles—had, at least for some, shrunk into a binary distinction between believing Gentiles and unbelieving Jews. I have argued elsewhere that the *Apostolic Constitutions* include a text of the *Didascalia* that refuses to attribute to Jews membership in God's people and plays down the solidarity between Jews and Christians on a number of points, notably by dropping references to Christian Jews.⁶⁴ In fact, the *Apostolic Constitutions* 5.16 no longer includes in its version of the *Didascalia* the three-way distinction in Isaiah 8:23–9:1, the quotation and interpretation of which have dropped out of the text.⁶⁵ Tyconius's binary distinction between good and bad Christians in prophetic texts is not identical to the *Apostolic Constitutions'* dichotomy between believing Gentiles and unbelieving Jews. However, both Tyconius and the pseudoapostolic redactor of the *Apostolic Constitutions* find a bipartite reality in prophetic texts that talk about the one people of God, texts in which the *Didascalia* could still see three parts of that people. This third-century exegesis can still see Jews, whether Christian or not, as members

⁶³ Though the *Didascalia* can talk about the church as a body with distinct parts—e.g., in its long treatise on penance—the issue is when and how to sever from the body of the church a member corrupted by sin (*Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 114–15, 117–18, 222; *Didascaliae apostolorum* 77–78).

⁶⁴ See my *L'Ancien Testament dans l'ecclésiologie des pères: Une lecture des Constitutions apostoliques* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) 526–28.

⁶⁵ See *Les Constitutions apostoliques, II: Livres III–VI*, ed. and trans. Marcel Metzger, SC 329 (Paris: Cerf, 1986) 262–67.

of God's people, while neither the *Apostolic Constitutions* nor Tyconius appears to have room any longer for such inclusion.

However, Tyconius does not make this move for the same reason that the *Apostolic Constitutions* do. This Syrian text witnesses to the polemical competition between Jews and Christians for the same souls. In his fourth-century West Syrian context, Christian polemic brings its audience before a choice between two exclusive alternatives: be a Jew or be a Christian.⁶⁶ Thus, putting the Jews mentioned in the *Didascalia* outside God's people, the redactor of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, in his exegesis of prophecies about Israel, pits Gentile Christians against Jews. But Tyconius is looking forward to an eschatological judgment in which God will separate the sheep from the goats, those who build up the church from those who tear it down. In his North African context, both of these groups believe Jesus is the Messiah, and whether anyone in either group is a Jew is irrelevant. Indeed, Tyconius writes no polemic against the Jews into his rule book, even though he quotes and interprets biblical passages traditionally used in such polemic. The Jewishness of either of the two parts of Israel thus drops out of the mystical interpretation of OT prophecies he expounds in this book.⁶⁷ It drops out so fully, that it can be hard to see the Jewish character of his rule on the bipartite body of the Lord unless one compares the structure of this interpretation with the structure found in the exegeses of texts like the *Didascalia*.

In Gregory of Elvira we see a contemporary of Tyconius applying to the interpretation of OT texts a conception, similar to Tyconius's, of a church composed of one part holy and one part sinful.⁶⁸ Gregory wrote his

⁶⁶ For the context of the *Apostolic Constitutions*' anti-Jewish polemic, see John Chrysostom's sermons "against the Jews" in PG 48.843–942. See also, e.g., Christine Shepardson, "Controlling Contested Places: John Chrysostom's *Adversus Iudaeos* Homilies and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 15 (2007) 483–516; Pieter W. van der Horst, "Jews and Christians in Antioch at the End of the Fourth Century," in *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Brooks W. R. Pearson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000) 228–38; *The Jews among Pagans and Christians: In the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992); Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983); Anne-Marie Malingrey, "La controverse antijudaïque dans l'oeuvre de Jean Chrysostome d'après les discours *Adversus-Judaeos*," in *De l'antijudaïsme antique à l'antisémitisme contemporain*, ed. Valentin Nikiprowetzky (Lille: Presses universitaires de Lille-III, 1979) 87–95; and Simon, *Verus Israël*.

⁶⁷ Again, Tyconius includes all Israelites, just and unjust, in the people of God prior to Christ's coming, but in his own time he includes only Christians, just and unjust, in the body of the Lord.

⁶⁸ I am grateful to Rebecca Hylander for her expert counsel and invaluable assistance on these paragraphs concerning Gregory of Elvira. Any imperfections in them are due to me alone.

commentary on the Song of Songs probably before 392 and most likely no earlier than the mid 360s.⁶⁹ This staunch defender of the Nicene *homoousios* interprets Song of Songs 2:2 (“as a lily in the midst of thorns, so [is] my beloved in the midst of sons and daughters”) to mean that the greater part (*maior pars*) of believers brings forth sins because such Christians are immersed in the cares of this world, while the one who despises such things shines among them as a lily among thorns.⁷⁰ Similarly, Gregory thinks that the wall (*paries*) mentioned in his version of Song of Songs 2:9 shows us that Christ’s body is a wall that, in order to enclose his own within the church, also keeps in those alien to it.⁷¹ Indeed, the brother listening through the netting (*frater meus per retia auscultat*) in this verse of the Canticle shows us the Word of God-become-human netting all sorts of folks and dragging them toward the shore of the kingdom’s coming, where a difference will be made between the good and the evil among them.⁷² Thus, in two verses of the Canticle that do not find their way into Tyconius’s rule book, Gregory sees the Donatist’s basic doctrine of the bipartite ecclesial body of Christ. The dating for Gregory’s Canticle commentary and for Tyconius’s rule book remains so approximate that we do not know whether one could have influenced the other regarding this doctrine.⁷³

⁶⁹ See Manlio Simonetti, “La doppia redazione del ‘De Fide’ di Gregorio di Elvira,” in *Forma futuri: Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d’Erasmus, 1975) 1022–40, at 1029; Manuel Sotomayor, “La Iglesia en la España romana,” in *Historia de la Iglesia en España I: La Iglesia en la España romana y visigoda*, ed. Ricardo García Villoslada (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979) 7–400, at 227–30; Eva Schulz-Flügel’s introduction to her edition, *Gregorius Eliberritanus: Epithalamium sive explanatio in Cantibus Cantorum* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994) 20–26; and José Antonio Molina Gómez, *La exégesis como instrumento de creación cultural: El testimonio de las obras de Gregorio de Elvira* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2000) 225–26. Gregory seems to have revised the first two books of the commentary. See Schulz-Flügel, *Gregorius Eliberritanus: Epithalamium* 11–12, 41–51.

⁷⁰ *Epithalamium* 3.19–20; Gregory’s version of the Scripture verse here is *ut lilium in medio spinarum, sic proxima mea in medio filiorum et filiarum*.

⁷¹ *Epithalamium* 4.7.

⁷² *Epithalamium* 4.8–9, quoting Matthew 13:47. See also Gregory’s *De fide orthodoxa contra Arianos* 6.65, where Christ himself is the net. This latter work was put together in two editions probably between 359 and 364. See the references in n. 69 above.

⁷³ According to E. Ann Matter, Gregory “supported Lucifer of Cagliari against the more moderate anti-Arian position of Athanasius. Unlike Athanasius, Gregory of Elvira opposed allowing those who had made a liaison of convenience with Arianism to re-enter the Nicene ranks by a simple profession of faith; like the Donatist party in the next century, he believed that only those who had not been led astray by false teachers could make up the spotless body of Christ. Gregory of Elvira’s treatise on the wedding-hymn of Christ and the Church develops the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs as a justification for this polemical

Gregory also witnesses to the staying power among Christians of the *Didascalia's* vision of God's bipartite people composed of Jews who believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Jews who do not so believe. In his sixth tractate on Holy Scripture, Gregory interprets Genesis 49:7b ("I will divide them [= Simeon and Levi] in Jacob, and I will disperse [them] in Israel") as Jacob's prediction that the believers among his descendants would be separated from the unbelievers in that people.⁷⁴ Israel, interpreted here to mean the one who sees God,⁷⁵ represents those among Isaac's descendants who will merit believing in the Messiah, whereas Jacob, a name Gregory interprets with the tradition to mean "supplanter," represents those who will trip up the Christ. Here we find an interpretation similar to the *Didascalia's* understanding of Isaiah 8:23–9:1. Among Jacob's descendants, some will accept Jesus as the Messiah, and some will reject him. Both groups are envisaged as Jews.⁷⁶ As I show below, the *Didascalia* and Gregory follow Paul in finding in OT prophecy this distinction between two sorts of Jews.

orthodoxy" (*The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990] 87–88). Gregory's relation to Lucifer and to Luciferians remains debated. I have found no evident Donatist ecclesiology in Gregory. The similarity Matter points out between Gregory and the Donatists here was a similarity he also shared with those who were not Donatists, even with anti-Donatists. Augustine himself, like everyone else, believed in a spotless body of Christ reserved only for right believers. The passages I have discussed above attest that Gregory thought the church included both sinners and saints (as did Tyconius and, in a different sense, Augustine). Polemic against false teachers (including not having wanted to accept them back to function as ministers after they had revised their opinions) and deep enthusiasm for holiness made Gregory similar to Donatists and to many others in the church of this time, East and West, who could not be called Donatists.

⁷⁴ Tractatus 6.27–28 (Gregorio de Elvira, *Tratados sobre los libros de las Santas Escrituras*, ed. Joaquín Pascual Torró [Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 1997] 170–72). Gregory's version of the Scripture text here is *diuidam eos [= Symeon et Levi] in Iacob et dispergam in Israel*. According to Schulz-Flügel, Gregory wrote this tract before his commentary on the Song of Songs; see her introduction to *Gregorius Eliberritanus: Epithalamium* 23–24, 55–56. Pascual Torró does not follow Schulz-Flügel on this point; see *Tratados* 11–13.

⁷⁵ This interpretation of "Israel" is classic by Gregory's time. See Philo's frequent translation of "Israel" into Greek; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos* 1.9.77.2; Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 5.4; many places in Origen; Novatian, *De trinitate* 19; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio evangelica* 7.8.28; 11.6.31; 11.15.3; *Demonstratio evangelica* 5.11.2; 7.2.36; 7.3.45; Athanasius, *Expositiones in Psalmos*, PG 27.296; Ambrose, *Explanatio psalmarum xii*, Ps. 40, chaps. 25 and 36; several places in Didymus the Blind, Ambrosiaster, and Chrysostom; and *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.36.2; 8.15.7.

⁷⁶ See Tractatus 6.12, where Gregory recalls that, according to the Acts of the Apostles, some Jews believed in Christ because of the apostles' preaching. Also at Tractatus 6.31; 6.33; 6.46–50, Gregory mentions those Jews who believed, or who may still come to believe, in Jesus as the Christ. One of the fragments attributed to

Nilus of Ancyra, who is perhaps a generation younger than Tyconius, wrote the oldest surviving complete commentary on the Song of Songs around the year 400 near that capital city of Galatia. He illustrates the survival of another aspect of the *Didascalía*'s notion of a bipartite people of God. Like Tyconius, Nilus adverts to Romans 9–11 to explain Song of Songs 1:5. To illustrate his second rule, Tyconius uses this verse of the Canticle: "I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon." The woman speaking represents the church, which is black, because one part of its members is evil, and beautiful, because another part of its members is good.⁷⁷ Nilus allows as possible an interpretation of this verse of the Canticle as referring to the church composed of Jews and Gentiles. We see here the same combination of similarity and difference between Tyconius and Nilus as we saw between Tyconius and the *Didascalía*. While Tyconius does not see the dichotomy here in terms of the difference between Jews and Gentiles, both he and Nilus see in this verse a reference to the complexity of two different parts compounded to form a single people of God.⁷⁸

Using, among other biblical passages, some that had become classic in anti-Jewish polemic, Tyconius did not innovate in finding in these texts the revelation of a dichotomy within God's people between those who are with Christ and those who are against him. In this he seems less original, at least in his doctrine of the bipartite body of the Lord, than Burkitt thought. Indeed, the fourth-century Donatist appears to be following a traditional interpretation for which the *Didascalía* already saw no need to argue, while it used this interpretation to construct reasoning about a number of controverted ritual practices. Tyconius bore a Greek name, was fluent in Greek, knew the Greek rhetorical tradition, and begins his rule book by referring to the forest of prophecy in a way that recalls similar conceits in Origen and Gregory Thaumaturgus.⁷⁹ It should not surprise us, then, to

Hippolytus's Genesis commentary seems to imply similarly that the curse against Simeon and Levi applied not to all Jews, but only to those involved in the killing of Jesus (Hans Achelis, ed., *Hippolyt's kleinere exegetische und homiletische Schriften*, GCS 1.2 [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1897] 57–58, fragment 14: "The Spirit curses not the whole people, but those who rose up against him" (my translation).

⁷⁷ *Rules* 2.10; B 10,13–11,1. Tyconius's Scripture text here is "Fusca sum et decora ut tabernaculum Cedar ut pellis Salomonis."

⁷⁸ See his commentary on Song of Songs 1:5, sections 13–14 (Nil d'Ancyre, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques: Édition princeps*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Marie-Gabrielle Guérard, SC 403 [Paris: Cerf, 1994] 152–58). At the end of section 14, we see Nilus linking the tents of Kedar and the curtains of Solomon to *to systēma tēs ex ethnōn kai Ioudaiōn ekklēsiās*.

⁷⁹ Kenneth B. Steinhauser, "Tyconius: Was He Greek?" in *Papers Presented at the Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford, 1991*, *Studia patristica* 27, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1993) 394–99.

find him within an ecclesiological and exegetical tradition firmly in place in the *Didascalia*, a work that was originally written in Greek and that we know was read in Syria and Northern Italy in Tyconius's lifetime. The *Apostolic Constitutions* and Nilus of Ancyra show that various aspects of this tradition survived in the East through Tyconius's day. Tyconius's closeness to this tradition will seem even more natural when we see the same tradition at work in the exegesis of his Latin-speaking contemporary, Gregory of Elvira. Tyconius takes this tradition in a direction that can bring him very close to some who cultivate it, as in some of Gregory's exegesis, and that can put him on a tack different from that of others—Nilus, for example—who transmit this tradition.

Where Tyconius differs from the *Didascalia* is that he does not explicitly include in the bad part of the single body of God's people unbelieving Jews and Christians involved in Jewish practices. The *Didascalia*'s polemic against Jews who do not accept Jesus as the Messiah and its Jewish/Gentile dichotomy seem not to interest the Donatist, even as he develops a similarly dichotomous ecclesiology by taking up the dossier of biblical texts used by anti-Jewish polemic to underline, among other things, the difference between Jews and (usually) Gentile Christians. In further contrast, Tyconius explicitly uses the notions of parts and of the Lord's body to develop this ecclesiology, notions that the *Didascalia*, as well as some of the fourth-century texts I have examined here, do not apply in this explicit way. While Gregory of Elvira refers to parts of the church and to the church as Christ's body, he does not clearly and explicitly link these two notions in the passages studied here.⁸⁰ Finally, although Tyconius's bipartite ecclesiology does not explicitly advert to the membership of Jews and Gentiles in a single body of God's people recognizing Jesus as his Christ, different nuances of this aspect of the *Didascalia*'s ecclesiological exegesis survive in Gregory of Elvira and Nilus. Gregory can count among God's people both Jews who accept Jesus as Messiah and Jews who do not, even as Nilus recalls the idea that the church is formed from Jews and Gentiles.

OTHER JEWISH EXPONENTS OF A SIMILAR DOCTRINE

As I mentioned earlier, the Christian doctrine about the church in the fourth century tended to call upon a tradition of OT exegesis much indebted to Jewish forms of interpretation. Scholars have shown that the anti-Jewish polemic of the Christians in antiquity was built on a tradition of interpretation that often shared many hermeneutical techniques with the Jews

⁸⁰ On the church as body of Christ in Gregory of Elvira, see Gregorio de Elvira, *Comentario al Cantar de los Cantares y otros tratados exegeticos*, trans. Joaquín Pascual Torró (Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2000) 27–29.

that it so vehemently criticized.⁸¹ Since Tyconius takes up scriptural passages used by that polemic and since he is engaged in ecclesiological exegesis of the OT, we might well wonder whether we can find similarities between his second rule and some biblical interpretations of late antique Judaism. In a sense, I have already been discussing such similarities; the author, concerns, and biblical argumentation of the *Didascalia apostolorum* are Jewish.

Furthermore, Tyconius's explicit dependence on Romans 9–11 in his treatment of his second rule shows his relation to the writings of someone he knows to be a first-century Jew.⁸² We can say the same of his use of Galatians 4 to show how the second rule works.⁸³ Romans 9–11 expresses a concern for the salvation of non-Christian Jews that is echoed in the *Didascalia's* recognition of the need to fast and pray for the members of God's people who have not yet accepted Jesus as the Messiah.⁸⁴ The end of Romans 10 finds for Isaiah 65:1–2 the same dichotomous interpretation that the *Didascalia* later gives to this prophecy: this prophetic text refers to Gentiles who become Christians and to Jews who refuse to do so. Tyconius comments on Paul's interpretation of Isaiah 65 to show that Paul found here a reference to Jews who would not accept Jesus and to Jews like himself who would, a reference of which the mystic depth is a teaching about the church containing one sinful part and one holy part.⁸⁵ We need not think that Paul's words represent the only Jewish interpretation that resembles the approach of the *Didascalia* and Tyconius to the virtuous and sinful as distinct groups within God's people. Rabbinic interpretations of the Song of Songs, Exodus, and Isaiah provide us with further evidence for a similarity between Tyconius's second rule and some Jewish exegeses of antiquity.

As I have shown, to illustrate his second rule, Tyconius uses Song of Songs 1:5: "I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon." The woman speaking represents the church, which is black, because one part of its members is evil; it is beautiful, because another part of its members is good.⁸⁶ This same

⁸¹ See, e.g., Simon, *Verus Israël* 172, 177–87; Signer and Graham, "Rabbinic Literature," in *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* 1:130. On particular authors, see, among others, Pierre Prigent, introduction to *Épître de Barnabé*, ed. Pierre Prigent and Robert A. Kraft, SC 172 (Paris: Cerf, 1971) 10–12; N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (New York: Cambridge University, 1976) chaps. 7–10; Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews* 132–38; Philippe Bobichon, introduction to *Dialogue avec Tryphon*, by Justin Martyr, ed. Philippe Bobichon (Fribourg: Academic, 2003) 1:2, 81–83, 109–28.

⁸² *Rules* 2.13; 3.23–24; B 11,14–26; 26,18–28,5.

⁸³ *Rules* 3.25–28; B 28,6–30,19.

⁸⁴ *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 191–96, 199–201.

⁸⁵ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,14–28.

⁸⁶ *Rules* 2.10; B 10,13–11,1.

complexity of different groups with contrasting moral statuses within a single people of God finds expression in the interpretation of this same verse in *Midrash Rabbah* on the Song of Songs, a work redacted in the land of Israel about the mid-sixth century and attributing ideas to the *amoraim* active there in the third and fourth centuries.⁸⁷ One of the midrashic explanations of how Israel can be black and beautiful notes that this occurs when Israel does evil and good in the same place. The ten spies spreading an evil report about the Promised Land were black (Num 13:32), while Joshua and Caleb were beautiful (Num 32:12). This midrash similarly opposes Achan to Joshua (Josh 7:1, 19). Tyconius picks up this same example in his treatment of his fourth rule.⁸⁸ According to Tyconius, that Achan's sinful theft of the anathematized booty of Ai is imputed to the whole people shows that he represents the evil part of a bipartite people, and Joshua's declaration that the Lord will exterminate Achan even as he did "today" shows that this bipartite character will carry over into the future church. Tyconius also sees those killed for the idolatry at Shittim in Numbers 25 as indicating the evil part of a bipartite church,⁸⁹ even as the midrash on Song of Songs 1:5 opposes the black idolaters of Shittim to the beautiful Phinehas, who slays the Israelite and his Midianite consort after these latter two have presented themselves before the whole community (see Ps 106:30).

The midrash on Song of Songs 1:5 gives other examples of groups in Israel who are evil and therefore opposed to individuals or groups in Israel that are good.⁹⁰ As does Tyconius, the midrash here divides God's people into two groups, those who are comely because of their good works and those who are black because of their evil works. However, we do not see in the midrash explicit mention of two "parts" in the people of God.

Near the end of his exposition of his third rule, Tyconius adds a reading that would fit well into this passage of Song of Songs *Rabbah*.⁹¹ For him Exodus 16:28 shows the two parts of God's people. The wicked ignore the law forbidding the gathering of manna on the Sabbath, while Moses always obeys that law. Here we see Tyconius adopting as support for his doctrine of the bipartite body of the Lord the same reading of Exodus 16:28 that is

⁸⁷ *Amoraim* were Jewish biblical scholars active starting from the early-third-century compilation of the Mishnah until the last third of the fourth century in the land of Israel and until 500 in Babylonia. To these scholars the Talmud and the midrash collections ascribe most of their attributed material.

⁸⁸ *Rules* 4.10; B 39,18–24.

⁸⁹ *Rules* 7.12.1; B 79,34–80,8.

⁹⁰ *Midrash Rabbah: Song of Songs*, trans. Maurice Simon (New York: Soncino, 1983) I.5, sec. 1, 51–52. The evil kings of Israel are similarly opposed to the good kings of Judah.

⁹¹ *Rules* 3.22; B 26,5–17.

attributed to Rabbi Abba bar Joseph bar Hama at Babylonian Talmud, Baba Qamma 92a. This scholar, who lived in the first half of the fourth century, is said here to have taught that the question, “how long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws” of Exodus 16:28, gives a scriptural basis for the adage, “The cabbage is smitten along with the thorn.” Here what is presupposed is that, because Moses and Aaron are included in the “you” of Exodus 16:28, this passage shows that the good are punished along with the wicked.⁹² Again, the rabbinic commentary does not explicitly mention good or bad “parts” of God’s people, but, like Tyconius, it understands this Exodus passage on the basis of the notion that that people is composed of such distinct groups.

In talmudic interpretations of Song of Songs 4:7, we find a hermeneutical move similar to Tyconius’s and the midrash’s interpretation of Song of Songs 1:5. The relevant text in Song of Songs 4:7 is “You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you.” According to Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, Rabbi Joseph is said to cite this verse on Tannaite authority to prove that not everyone in Israel can judge a capital case because those in a court must be clear of unrighteousness and of blemishes. Since Numbers 11:16 and Exodus 18:22 both imply that judges should be like Moses, the gemara claims that Song of Songs 4:7 mentions blemishes of character, not physical blemishes.⁹³ Here, the Talmud applies this verse of the Canticle to one portion alone of the Israelite people, those who are without moral blemish. Hence, Rabbi Joseph makes an implied dichotomy between two distinct groups within Israel, and in this he resembles Tyconius, who sees this same verse as applying only to that part of the church without sin, as opposed to the other, sinful part.⁹⁴ We find this same rabbinic interpretation of Song of Songs 4:7 two other times in the Babylonian Talmud.⁹⁵

⁹² For a translation of this talmudic text, see Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation*, vol. 20C, *Tractate Baba Qamma, Chapters 8–10* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) 53. For the interpretation of the text, see E. W. Kirzner, trans., “Baba Kamma,” in *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin in Four Volumes*, ed. I. Epstein (London: Soncino, 1935) 1:533 nn. 4 and 6. Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 11a, teaches that God punishes the righteous with the sinners in Exodus 16:28 in order to spare sinners humiliation (Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation*, vol. 23A, *Tractate Sanhedrin, Chapters 1–3* [Chico, CA: Scholars, 1984] 75–76). See also Sanhedrin 43b (Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation*, vol. 23B, *Tractate Sanhedrin, Chapters 4–8* [Chico, CA: Scholars, 1984] 76).

⁹³ Tractate Sanhedrin, 36b (Neusner, *Talmud of Babylonia*, vol. 23B, 32).

⁹⁴ *Rules* 2.10; B 10,13–19.

⁹⁵ Tractate Yebamot, 101a–101b; Tractate Qiddushin, 76b (Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1992] 13D:84; 19B:150). Louis Ginzberg reports the medieval Jewish belief that just

In Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin, Tractate Sanhedrin, chapter 11 begins by quoting a text of the Mishnah stating that all Israel, except for certain members of the people, will have a share in the eschatological world of the saved. As its first category of those excluded from salvation, the Mishnah mentions those denying that resurrection is a biblical doctrine. The long discussion of this first exception alights eventually on the subject of Hezekiah in the role of the Messiah prophesied in Isaiah 9:5–6 and Sennacherib in the role of his eschatological foe. At 94b, the gemara tells us that Isaiah 8:23 was an oracle intended to tell Sennacherib which Israelites he should attack and which he should leave alone. The first clause of this verse is rendered thus: “the wearied is not for the oppressor.”⁹⁶ This sentence refers to those in the kingdom of Judah who were tired out from studying the Torah and were therefore not delivered by God into Sennacherib’s hands. The next clause of Isaiah 8:23 is taken to say that “the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali did lighten [its burden].” These words are interpreted as applying to the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel, who had thrown off the yoke of the Torah and so deserved to have God turn them over to the marauding Sennacherib. The next part of this verse notes what will happen to the virtuous Israelites of the kingdom of Judah if Sennacherib, in obedience to God’s will, abstains from attacking them. “But in later times it was made heavy [it accepted to study, and to live by, the Torah] by way of the sea, beyond the Jordan [so it merited to be miraculously saved from Sennacherib as the Israelites had benefited from miraculous crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan].” The last part of Isaiah 8:23 threatens Sennacherib with the divine punishment that he will suffer if he attacks the kingdom of Judah. Here, a play on the resemblance between the words for “Galilee” (*gelil*) and “dung” (*gelalim*) leads to interpreting the words “in Galilee of the nations” to mean that God will make Sennacherib as the dung of the nations.⁹⁷

Its humorous finale should not distract us from how this rabbinic reading of Isaiah 8:23 resembles both the way the *Didascalía* handles this part of Isaiah and the way Tyconius uses his second rule. We see in all three the same close attention to lexical and grammatical detail. This attention serves to complexify Scripture verses in order to support a dichotomous doctrine

as the burning bush of Horeb seen by Moses had both thorns and roses, so Israel is formed from pious and impious members (*The Legends of the Jews*, vol. 2, *Bible Times and Characters from Joseph to Exodus*, trans. Henrietta Szold [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983] 304).

⁹⁶ Here I follow I. Epstein, trans., *Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin in Four Volumes* 3:635–36. His translation is very close to Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation*, vol. 23C, *Tractate Sanhedrin, Chapters 9–11* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985) 116–17.

⁹⁷ A reading mentioned by Epstein as possible, but preferred by Neusner.

of God's people sorted into categories of those on the way to salvation and those on the way to perdition. Of course, each of these three types of interpretation defends its own criterion for the dichotomy. The Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, depicts cultivation or abandonment of a Torah-based existence as the line of demarcation. The *Didascalia* divides those who accept Jesus as the Messiah from those who do not. Tyconius distinguishes the righteous part of the Lord's ecclesial body from the sinful part. All three develop their dichotomies in the context of an eschatological vision. The rabbinic discussion in chapter 11 of Tractate Sanhedrin aims to answer the question of who has a "portion in the world to come."⁹⁸ The *Didascalia's* interpretation is in the service of an exhortation to pray that the Jews not believing in Jesus as the Christ might come to this faith and thus be saved from eternal perdition.⁹⁹ Tyconius is clear that the revelation of who really belongs to which part of the Lord's body will come only at the end of the world.¹⁰⁰ Again, here we find no explicit mention of "parts" of God's people either in the *Didascalia* or in the Talmud.

Tyconius's way of finding the bipartite body of the Lord in OT texts resembles exegeses found in Romans 9–11, the *Didascalia*, and the midrash and Talmud. Like Tyconius, these Jewish sources see in OT passages, sometimes the same ones that Tyconius interprets in his rule book, a dichotomy within the people of God between those who submit to his revealed will and those who do not. The various sources interpret this divine will, each in its own particular way. In one text or another, that will is seen as expressed in Torah, in particular divine commands for certain occasions (as in the destruction of Ai), in Jesus as the Messiah, or, as in Tyconius's case, sometimes in largely unspecified standards of right conduct. At least some of the rabbinic sources agree with Tyconius that the clarification of who belongs in which of the two groups of God's people comes at the end of the world. Other rabbinic texts convey certitude as to who belonged in which camp at certain crisis moments in Israel's history. Tyconius and the Jewish sources we have considered here agree that such crises, when God firmly criticizes his people, furnish a good number of the OT episodes that occasion a dichotomous conception of God's people.¹⁰¹ Those episodes are crises in large part because the portion of God's people that remains faithful is small, just as Gregory of Elvira and Tyconius supposed was the case for the righteous part of the church.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 90A; see Epstein, *Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin* 601–3.

⁹⁹ *Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* 192–93, 196, 199.

¹⁰⁰ *Rules* 2.9; 2.12; 3.28; 7.16.2; B 10,6–12; 11,5–11; 29,29–30,19; 83,23–30.

¹⁰¹ *Rules* 2.13; B 11,12–14.

¹⁰² For Gregory of Elvira, the *major pars* of the church is too immersed in the cares of the world to live justly; see *Epithalamium* 3.19–20. For Tyconius, the

Did Tyconius consciously advert to Jewish traditions similar to his teaching on the ecclesial *corpus bipertitum* in presenting or applying his second rule? We can be certain that he read Paul's letters, and it is not impossible that he came across the *Didascalia* in Greek or Latin. But what contact did he have with the Jewish Bible and its rabbinic interpretation? Did he take the idea for this rule from the rabbis? Burkitt thought the idea that Tyconius emended his Latin Bible text on the basis of a Hebrew manuscript was an "inconceivable hypothesis" that one can "scarcely suppose."¹⁰³ In the introduction to the SC edition of Tyconius's rule book, Vercruyse tries to show that Tyconius did not master Hebrew.¹⁰⁴ Vercruyse also argues against the notion that Tyconius got his rules from those attributed by Jewish tradition to Hillel or from those elaborated by Ishmael ben Elisha.¹⁰⁵ Howard Jacobson affirms, without argument, that there is "no reason to believe that Tyconius was familiar with Rabbinic exegesis."¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the late antique leadership of the Roman Diaspora had little connection with the rabbinic academies in Israel and Babylonia, and in Tyconius's day, men called *rabbi* were rare in the non-Babylonian Diaspora. While it does seem that two rabbis from Carthage worked in Palestine no earlier than the middle of the third century, no evidence remains to tell us whether Tyconius could have known them.¹⁰⁷ In fact, history has left us with an exceedingly meager

righteous part of the church is prophesied to be small (*Rules* 3.24; B 27,24–28,5: *exiguum . . . modicum*).

¹⁰³ *Rules of Tyconius* cxiii.

¹⁰⁴ *Le livre des règles* 84–85.

¹⁰⁵ *Le livre des règles* 39 n. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Howard Jacobson, "Tyconius's Rules of Chronology: An Innovation," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58 (2004) 203–4, at 204.

¹⁰⁷ The term *rabbi* does appear, however, in an inscription found in Volubilis in Mauretania Tingitana; the inscription may date from the fourth century; see Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University, 2005) 303; Fergus Millar, "The Jews of the Graeco-Roman Diaspora between Paganism and Christianity, AD 312–438," in *Jews among Pagans and Christians* 97–123, at 111. For the Carthaginian rabbis, see Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 4.3; Demai 5.2 (24c); Kilayim 1.9; Shabbat 16.2; Yoma 1.3; Besah 1.6 (Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*, 35 vols. [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987–93] 1:170–76; 3:160–65; 4:41–50; 11:414–16; 14:37–38; 18:32–34); Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 26a; Ketubot 27b; Baba Qamma 114b (Alan J. Avery-Peck, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1995] 9:319–26; Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Talmud of Babylonia, an American Translation* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1992] 14A:100–103; Neusner, trans. *Talmud of Babylonia*, vol. 20C:146–50). See further J. B. Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 219–20; Karen B. Stern, *Inscribing Devotion and Death: Archeological Evidence for Jewish Populations of North Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 95–97.

stock of reliable textual and archeological evidence for Jewish life and practice in ancient North Africa, especially in the fourth century.¹⁰⁸ This lacuna in the sources veils in darkness the relations between, on the one hand, African Jewish teachers and their works and, on the other hand, a Christian thinker like Tyconius, whose rule book cites no source other than the Bible.

This darkness is not the whole story. Archeological remains from the sixth century indicate “the visual interlacing of Jewish and Christian devotional practices and symbols” in Africa.¹⁰⁹ Direct evidence for this interlacing in the fourth century, however, has not survived. In the early fifth century, Augustine knew of a bishop of Tripoli who sought the testimony of Jews to support one reading of the Book of Jonah.¹¹⁰ And six imperial laws promulgated between 335 and 535 oppose Jewish proselytism in Africa and the association between Jews and heretics there for the purpose of persecuting the catholic clergy supported by the emperors. Constans, for example, lumps Donatists together with Jews to constitute the object of some of his repressive legislation.¹¹¹ But scholars have called into question the degree to which this legislation reflects actual Jewish activity, instead of Christian polemical conceptions.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Stern, *Inscribing Devotion and Death* x–xi, xiv, 3, 11–15, 47. On p. 47 she asserts that “the extant material evidence cannot provide enough information to responsibly write a social history of Jews of Roman North Africa.” She goes on to deny that such evidence furnishes “sufficient information to account for Jews’ actual relationships to Christians who surrounded them.” See also Shaw, *Sacred Violence* 260.

¹⁰⁹ Stern, *Inscribing Devotion and Death* 82, referring to her chapter on the synagogue of Naro, the site of the modern Hammam Lif in Tunisia.

¹¹⁰ See Letter 71.3.5. Contrary to Claude Aziza’s contention, this text does not show that Augustine himself consulted rabbis on the tenor or meaning of the biblical text; see “Quelques aspects de la polémique judéo-chrétienne dans l’Afrique romaine (IIe–VIe siècles),” in *Juifs et Judaïsme en Afrique du Nord dans l’antiquité et le haut moyen-âge: Actes du colloque international du Centre de recherches et d’études juives et hébraïques et du Groupe de recherches sur l’Afrique antique, 26–27 septembre 1983*, ed. Carol Iancu et Jean-Marie Lassère (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1985) 49–56, at 51.

¹¹¹ See Aziza, “Quelques aspects de la polémique judéo-chrétienne,” in *Juifs et Judaïsme en Afrique du Nord dans l’antiquité et le haut moyen-âge* 53; Marcel Simon, *Etudes juives*, vol. 6, *Recherches d’histoire judéo-chrétienne* (Paris: Mouton, 1962) 80.

¹¹² It appears that the emperors’ chief source for the existence of threats from Jews was the catholic clergy itself. See, e.g., Stern, *Inscribing Devotion and Death* 94; Shaw, *Sacred Violence* 260–306; Amnon Linder, “La loi romaine et les Juifs d’Afrique du Nord,” in *Juifs et Judaïsme en Afrique du Nord dans l’antiquité et le haut moyen-âge* 57–64, at 59–61; H. Z. (J. W.) Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, vol. 1, *From Antiquity to the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1974) 54, 81–83.

However, certain dimensions of the ecclesiological tradition in the African church had, since the third century, borne the mark of Jewish influences.¹¹³ In fact, I have here shown that Tyconius's doctrine of the bipartite body of the Lord has roots in a Christian exegetical and ecclesiological tradition that shared much with Jewish traditions on sinners and saints in the people of God. Tyconius's rule of the Lord's bipartite body fits well into a context of forms of exegesis shared by Christians with Jews before and during his own day. However, even if it were possible to prove Tyconius's first-hand contact with such a Jewish exegetical tradition, the earlier and contemporary Christian witnesses to a doctrine like his would complicate the case for showing that a non-Christian Jewish source furnished the decisive inspiration for his own teaching in this matter.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Tyconius's second rule places him firmly in a tradition of Christian exegesis that treats the OT, read according to interpretations shared with Judaism, as the privileged source of revelation for ecclesiology. This finding yields at least a partial answer to the question about the origin of Tyconius's second rule, and it helps us better appreciate the pervasiveness of the ecclesiological and exegetical tradition on which he too seems to have depended in elaborating his second rule. The resemblance between this tradition and Jewish exegesis on the precise point of the dichotomous character of God's people reveals what is specifically Christian about the bipartite-body-of-Christ ecclesiology of Tyconius and about similar notions in Gregory of Elvira and Nilus of Ancyra. The original contribution of such authors to this approach is not the claim, shared with late antique Judaism, that the Jewish Scriptures show that the people of God is composed of a group of sinners and a group of saints, but the assertion that this bipartite people of God is the Christian church, the body of Jesus confessed as the Messiah and Lord. This particular idea is a mystery Tyconius believes the Holy Spirit hid in the Bible so that the same Spirit could help readers discover it there. Indeed, Tyconius's and Gregory of

¹¹³ William H. C. Frend points out the custom of calling councils of 70 bishops, the number of elders gathered round the high priest in the Sanhedrin in both Jerusalem and Alexandria. He notes, as well, the custom of confiding administrative tasks to groups of lay elders in Christian communities, a custom taken over from the synagogue. See his "Jews and Christians in Third Century Carthage," *Paganisme, judaïsme, christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique; Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1978) 185–94, at 190–91.

Elvira's explicit use of the notion of parts in the church fills out their understanding of the church as the mysterious body of the Lord Christ.

Tyconius seems to understand that his conception of this mystery depends on the Christian tradition of anti-Jewish polemic. This polemic very often denied that the Jewish people was still God's people, bipartite or not. The *Didascalia* testifies to the tradition of bipartite thinking about God's people in a time and a location in which such a denial seemed out of place. Nilus of Ancyra shows that late in the fourth century some Christians could still entertain Jewish membership along with Gentiles in the people of God that accepted Jesus as the Christ. Gregory of Elvira continues to witness to the notion, important to the *Didascalia*, that God's people included Jews who took Jesus as the Christ and Jews who did not share that faith. The *Didascalia*, Gregory, and Nilus thus encourage the movement by which the dogmatic theology of a number of Christian churches can modify its Tyconian notion of a bipartite church composed of sinners and saints. This notion can be integrated into a more inclusive concept of a people of God embracing Jews and Christians, a concept rendered complex by several lines of dichotomy that cross one another without simply lying one on the other. Among these distinctions one will place the difference between Jews and Christians, as well as the separate distinction between sinners and saints. Theology will realize the full value of such dichotomies only when it understands the commonalities across which these lines are drawn. Here it will come face to face with the sort of grace and the challenge that Tyconius labeled a mystery and that Paul found no better way to address than by blessing the unfathomable knowledge of God (Rom 11:33–36).

My argument has attempted to establish one feature of the commonality that stretches across the Jewish/Christian divide. Tyconius's ecclesiological doctrine of the bipartite body of the Lord, so important for the history of the Western church, seems to have arisen from scriptural interpretations Christians shared with Jews. If so, Judaism's venerable traditions helped in this way to give Christians access to the mysteries of God's saving work in the church. Perhaps, then, Christians and Jews still have much to learn from each other's respective attempts to find a communal existence that springs from faith in the God of Abraham.

Tyconius developed his conception of the bipartite church without ever having joined the church supported by the emperors. In doing so, he drew on a tradition of biblical exegesis that the third-century *Didascalia* is already transmitting and that the Talmud attributes to Jewish thinkers of Tyconius's day. These historical points indicate that the dichotomous ecclesiology embracing sinners and saints inextricably mixed together this side of the eschaton does not necessarily represent a post-Constantinian version of a church allied with the state and compromised in its moral fervor by an

easy mutual acceptance established between it and the earthly city. Indeed, as I have shown, both Jews and Christians joined to a bipartite vision of God's people the moral urging that warned of the coming eschatological separation between the just and sinners. Thus, the doctrine of a church of sinners and saints does not function in antiquity to provide an excuse for a church that has given up working to become its best self, and it should not have that function today.

Both Christians and Jews found in the bipartite character of God's people a permanent fixture of that people's history, from the patriarchs until the end of the age. This doctrine is an exegesis of what Christians consider the OT, and their reading of the NT confirms that God's people has always been and will ever be bipartite, until the end. The doctrine of the bipartite people of God thus excludes any reading of the history of God's people that would narrate a fall from a golden age of purity lived in a community made up only of the sanctified. The doctrine allows no tragic tale of a late-first-century fall into a *Fruhkatholizismus* from which early modern protests finally attempted to save the church, nor can it brook misty nostalgia for a bejeweled patristic synthesis mangled by Scholastic or modern rationalism. From the beginning until the end of salvation history, God's people is always and everywhere falling apart even as the Lord builds it up. In our own time and in any time before the end of time, we should expect nothing better, and nothing worse. Ancient Jewish and Christian exegesis of the Law, Prophets, and Writings makes this point abundantly clear because this exegesis finds God's people bipartite throughout the whole biblical narrative, from Genesis until judgment day. Thus, bipartite ecclesiology, when we realize that this doctrine is an exegesis of the scripture Jesus himself read, as well as of the scripture his disciples wrote, helps us understand the church with increased depth.

Bipartite ecclesiology excludes histories of an ecclesial fall from grace. It also puts out of bounds any theory of salvation history that conceives of the transition from the old covenant to the new as a simple ethical progression from a faithless world populated by ever refractory Jews and culpably clueless Gentiles to a church leading the life of exemplary purity that comes from accepting God's integral revelation in Christ Jesus. The excesses of patristic rhetoric can tend in this direction, but such discourse and any other form of ecclesiology vulnerable to this temptation can seek a healthful balance by embracing the traditional conception of the church as the Lord's bipartite body. This corrective attains its full force once it becomes clear that bipartite ecclesiology sees the Christian church as perduring in the mixed state that has always characterized God's people from the time of the patriarchs. The corrective operates when Tyconius's rule book leaves aside all anti-Jewish polemic even as he builds his bipartite ecclesiology explicitly on biblical passages that all Christians knew were supposed to

demonstrate the superiority of the Christian church over a faithless and feckless Judaism. However Jesus marks the dawn of a new epoch, the difference he makes does not free God's people from the chaotic struggle between sin and virtue, a war that sows seeds of hope and destruction while the smoke of battle keeps the opposed sides from knowing clearly who is fighting with whom. As Israel always was, the Christian church remains this sort of battlefield, although that same church is a renewal of God's people.

When understood as an exegetical doctrine drawn from the old and the new Scriptures, the ecclesiology of the bipartite body of the Lord has the virtue, then, of focusing the question about the sort of renewal Christ has brought God's people, while the church remains such a messy mix of sanctity and sin. This ecclesiology leads us to ask how to conceive of a divine work of salvation that permits, even within the chosen people this side of the eschaton, the struggle between Cain and Abel so foreign to the paradise their parents had lost. But the patristic theology of the bipartite church, precisely as an exegetical doctrine, shows that the saving God does not merely permit the struggle between virtue and sin; this God begins to save rather by instituting the chosen people's righteous struggle against its own sin as one of its perduring characteristics. The Lord thus breaks the unanimity of evil in our history. That God's people carries on the struggle between sin and justice within itself is a form of divine revelation. It is, as Tyconius knew, a secret and a mystery planted in the world by the Spirit, who gives the key to its interpretation. The innermost truth of that mystic secret is the Lord Jesus, who suffered the battle between good and evil in his very body. This suffering brought resurrection, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the dawning of eschatological clarity about the difference between sinners and saints—in Jesus' case first of all, we can be sure who is the sinless Holy One of God. The mystery that shows God's bipartite people to be the body of this Lord reveals that a church accepting the reality of its mixed composition can participate in the hard work of him who brings resurrection, the Spirit, and the final judgment between the just and the unjust.

When the church accepts its own bipartite character, its members will not believe that their conviction about the direction the community should take or avoid yields clarity about who is a sinner and who is a saint. Forces calling for innovation, retrieval, conservation, or reform in the church should confuse neither their supporters with the righteous nor their opponents with the reprobate. Refusing such confusion maintains the distinction between a precisely ecclesial movement and mere social or political mobilization; it limits the range of rhetoric available by excluding the urgency that comes from the claim to know clearly now what becomes manifest only at the end of time: who are the ones ruining the church, and who are building it up. What is left, then, to those who want to make a difference

in the church? The first and last rule of their labors is to respect as the Lord's own body the frustrating ecclesial mishmash of sin and sincerity. Such respect neither instrumentalizes that body, nor holds its failure at arm's length as someone else's instead of ours, nor tries to purge the church of disease at all costs. By encouragement, calls to repentance, and scolding, Jesus chose to live with sinners rather than to eliminate them. He knew this to be the much harder road; the church that recognizes itself as his bipartite body will walk with him.

If the church endures its own muddy ambiguity with the patience and tenacious drive to love that characterized its Lord in the days of his flesh, it follows a high calling and finds itself brought into the very life and work of its savior. It lives, and struggles with itself, as the bipartite body of its crucified and risen Lord. Calling this struggling bipartite church the body of a Christ who has entered the world to come affirms that we touch that pure world by seeking it even while immersed in the mixed condition of this one.