

BOOK REVIEW

From Logos to Trinity: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian. By MARIAN HILLAR. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 320. \$99.00/£60.00. ISBN 978-1-107-1330-8.

In this sweeping review, Marian Hillar attempts to trace the development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, from the early pre-Socratic philosophers to Tertullian, with a special focus on Philo (20 BCE–50 CE), Justin Martyr (115–165 CE), and Tertullian (160–225 CE).

To explore the philosophical foundations of Christianity, Hillar begins with the pre-Socratic Logos, which he attributes to Pythagoras' theory of the cosmic intelligible principle embodying three principles, the Monad, the Dyad, and Harmony, and its influence on the thinking of Plato and Aristotle. He then proceeds to Heraclitus (with whom, he finally acknowledges, the Logos is usually associated) and to Anaxagoras. He attributes to Kirk the conclusion that "Heraclitus believed in resurrection and the judgment of the world" (10–12). He then traces the fundamentals of "the three main religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—focusing on the "metaphysics of the divinity." His main focus, however, is on the development of Christian thought, beginning with the influence of Judaism and its evolution from a theocratic monolithic system into a more democratic rabbinical system after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

In Ch. 2 (36–70) Hillar discusses the Logos in Jerusalem and, in particular, in the theories of Philo of Alexandria. In the Septuagint, the Logos is used to describe God's utterances, actions, or spoken voice, and messages of prophets by means of which God communicated with his people. In the ancient Near East, there was a wide-spread "conceptual anthropomorphic device to express the action of a supreme divinity or a divine principle" (36). The Hebrew Logos will later be expressed, in the Fourth Gospel, as the man, Jesus (38). He argues that Jewish Wisdom literature "is the closest approximation to the reflective thought that the Greeks described as philosophy." In Philo of Alexandria, who was both Greek and Hebrew, Hillar sees a synthesis of both traditions, which laid the formulations for development of Christ in today's western and eastern worlds, but the Greek metaphysical concept of the Logos contrasted sharply with the con-

cept of a personal God described in anthropomorphic terms, as was typical of Hebrew thought (39). Philo, like other Jewish scholars, identified Moses with Musaeus and Orpheus. Philo “considered Moses the teacher of Pythagoras and of all Greek philosophers and lawgivers. ... For Philo, Greek philosophy was a natural development of the revelatory teachings of Moses” (41).

Hillar then pauses in his discussion of Philo to turn back to Aristobolus (2nd c. BCE), Philo’s antecedent (41–4) and “the first Jewish philosopher,” who concluded that “Plato and Pythagoras developed their ideas from Jewish Law, which was allegedly known from a pre-Alexandrian translation. Similarly, Philo claimed Jewish Law as the source of Heraclitus’s theory of opposites...” But a problem remained, namely, how to explain the anthropomorphic representation of the divinity in the Jewish tradition. Hillar argues that Philo also believed that time was formed as a part of Creation and did not exist until Aristobolus made the number 7 a governing principle of the universe, and thereby introduced Order. Hence the Sabbath “is a visible manifestation of cosmic order, Wisdom” (43).

These are just brief samplings of the theories Hillar discusses in this chapter, which concludes (69–70) with a summary of Philo’s Logos (which he defines as “the first begotten son of the uncreated Father, the Stoic *nous*.”

Chapter 3 (71–103) concerns the development of Jewish Messianic Traditions as the source of Christian scriptures and doctrine “The Jewish Messianic tradition was linked not to Hebrew or to the Greek Logos, but “probably first developed with the Fourth Gospel and later with speculations of the Christian Apologists in the period of Hellenistic influence. ... Christianity originated as a Jewish messianic and political movement ... with a group that believed that the Messiah <‘the anointed one’> had come” (71). Chapter 4 (104–37) then turns to the development of Hellenistic Christian Doctrine, which he argues began as Jewish Messianism, acquired Hellenistic elements, and developed in the second half of the 1st century CE and the beginning of the 2nd into Hellenistic Messianism with the Pauline and Gospel varieties. This stage, in Hillar’s thesis, represented the reformation movement within the old Judaism. The second pattern began around the first half of the 2nd century when the figure of the Savior Jesus was deified and Jewish Messianism changed into a Hellenistic triadic Christianity in its two forms. He shows how (119) the Fourth Gospel, ascribed to John, was used by Christian Apologists and theologians as a proof text for Trinitarian doctrine, leading to the deification of Jesus as Logos and true God (129), and the consequent evolution of the Trinity as the central doctrine of Christiani-

ty (132). Chapter 4 concludes with an appendix on the failure of the quest for the Historical Jesus (135–7).

Hillar then devotes two Chapters (5 and 6) to Justin Martyr (115–165 CE), “the first Christian Apologist who speculated on religious matters in the philosophic terms of his time.” Chapter 5 discusses Justin Martyr and the Logos (138–70), while Chapter 6 examines his position on the Metaphysical Triad (170–89). The next two Chapters (7 and 8) are devoted to Tertullian, whom Hillar considers the originator of the Trinity (190–220). Tertullian dealt with the Christian triadic doctrine by establishing the relative unity of substance (221). The book concludes with St. Thomas Aquinas’ formulation of the accepted concept of the Trinity in his *Summa Theologiae*. There are two appendices, one listing “Possible Sources for the Development of the Christian Trinitarian Concepts” (273–304), and one listing Egyptian Chronology.

This is a most interesting but complex work. Hillar covers a wide range of relevant materials for this complex subject, and brings them into an intriguing focus. The book accordingly really needs a better index. This could be done by incorporating more lists into the text, as when he lists the works of Philo (on p. 44). But he would help the reader more, I believe, if he had standardized indices for each of the authors he discusses, with the abbreviations for each work clearly defined, as for example *Q.G.* on p. 54 presumably is *Questions and Answers on Genesis* (listed on p. 44), but to which of Philo’s works on p. 44 does *Her.* on p. 54 refer? Or *Ebr.*? Sometimes the same work is referred to with different abbreviations. Some abbreviations appear to be Latin abbreviations (*Ebr.*) (?), while others (*Q.G.*) are clearly English (he lists all of Philo’s titles on p. 44 in English.) It is clear that much more thorough lists are needed not only for Philo’s works, but for the other authors and subjects he discusses as well, ideally in a separate Index. The existing Index for the entire book is itself too limited. For example, he does not list there such basic parts of his discussion as the Mystery Cults, Isis, Osiris, Cybele (however much he scorns them, they are in his text); and even Augustine, Cyprian, Perpetua, and Paul are missing. Since he moves over such a wide array of subjects, and not always in a clear, logical sequence, he really owes it to his readers to provide a fuller Index. This would enhance the experience of reading this most interesting work.

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