

# NUMENIUS AND ALCINOUS ON THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

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IN A NOTE published in *Phoenix* a decade ago<sup>1</sup> I argued against acceptance of an emendation by E. R. Dodds of Numenius fr. 22 Leemans (= fr. 13 des Places)<sup>2</sup> not because I thought it palaeographically implausible but because the emendation, being based on a false assumption, is unnecessary. The pertinent fragment (preserved in direct quotation *ap.* Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 11.18, GCS 2.42.15 ff. Mras) reads as follows:

“Ὡςπερ δὲ πάλιν λόγος ἐστὶ γεωργῶ πρὸς τὸν φυτεύοντα, ἀνὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον μάλιστα ἐστὶν ὁ πρῶτος θεὸς πρὸς τὸν δημιουργόν. Ὁ μὲν γε ὦν σπέρμα πάσης ψυχῆς σπείρει εἰς τὰ μεταλαγχάνοντα αὐτοῦ χρήματα σύμπαντα· ὁ νομοθέτης δὲ φυτεύει καὶ διανέμει καὶ μεταφυτεύει εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐκάστους τὰ ἐκείθεν προκαταβεβλημένα.

Dodds had argued<sup>3</sup> on the one hand that “if we make σπέρμα the predicate of ὦν we make nonsense,” and on the other hand that “ὁ ὦν, ‘He that is, κατ’ ἐξοχήν’ cannot be convincingly defended as a Hebraism.” Consequently, Dodds suggested, we should read “ὁ μὲν γε α’ ὦν (= πρῶτος ὦν).” It was the object of my aforementioned paper to defend the mss reading and to demonstrate that Numenius’ use of the title ὁ ὦν to designate the supreme divinity is indeed an instance of his well-attested affection for Judaism and other non-Greek religions, but nonetheless does not constitute a “Hebraism.” Philo of Alexandria and probably his Hellenistic Jewish predecessors (followed by the Christian patristic tradition) had seized upon the ὁ ὦν of Exodus 3.14 as a significant link between Jewish belief and the Platonic concept of Being. In the mind of Philo (and perhaps already in the mind of the LXX translator) the title ὁ ὦν is not a Hebraism but a Platonism—a scriptural proof of the ultimate identity of the teachings of Moses and Plato, and a justification of the wholesale appropriation of current Platonism into Alexandrian Jewish exegesis.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Moses Atticizing,” *Phoenix* 21 (1967) 196 ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Numénios: Fragments, texte établi et traduit par E. des Places* (Paris 1973).

<sup>3</sup>In his “Numenius and Ammonius” in *Les sources de Plotin (Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt 5: Vandoeuvres-Genève 1960)* 15 f. The view which Dodds (following Scott) rejects as “nonsense” would not necessarily have appeared nonsensical to the late Hellenistic mind. Gregory of Nyssa, *In S. Stephanum Protomart.* p. 14. 14 ff. Lendle (= PG 46.708), for example, describes Satan sowing himself into the impromptu executioners of the protomartyr: καὶ ποικίλως ἑαυτὸν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνδιασπείρας πάντα γίνεται τῷ Στεφάνῳ, κατήγορος, δικαστής, δῆμιος καὶ ἡ λοιπὴ τοῦ θανάτου ὑπηρεσία. There are, however, other more solid objections to the interpretation repudiated by Dodds; cf. pp. 151 f. below.

<sup>4</sup>Is it possible that John 8. 58 (πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι, ἐγὼ εἰμι) is a weak reflection of the classic Platonic division of reality into τὸ ὄν αἰεί and τὸ γιγνόμενον?

That Numenius was familiar with the writings of Philo has not been proven, but his sympathy with the syncretistic approach practised by the Alexandrian Jew is not in doubt.<sup>5</sup>

Even though Dodds' emendation has not met with much favour, there are still scholars who hesitate to accept that Numenius has recognized the platonizing potential of the LXX appellation and has (in this one instance at least) employed it to designate his own supreme principle. Indicative of such hesitation is P. Thillet's emendation (reported in des Places' *apparatus ad loc.*) of  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon \omega\acute{\nu}$  to  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon\gamma\acute{\nu}\omega\acute{\nu}$  on the strength of Plato's description of the Demiurge as  $\delta \tau\acute{o}\delta\epsilon \tau\acute{o} \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \gamma\epsilon\gamma\acute{\nu}\eta\sigma\alpha\varsigma$  at *Tim.* 41 A 5 f. M. Baltes in his recension of des Places' edition extols Thillet's conjecture as a "glänzende Verbesserung" and continues: "Die Konjekture ist leider nicht in den Text aufgenommen worden. Der erste Gott kann als  $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu \kappa\alpha\iota \alpha\lambda\tau\iota\omicron\nu \tau\eta\varsigma \omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\varsigma \kappa\alpha\iota \tau\eta\varsigma \iota\delta\epsilon\alpha\varsigma$  (Fr. 16 = 26 L) jedoch kaum  $\delta \omega\acute{\nu}$  benannt werden."<sup>6</sup> The opinion expressed here by Baltes, be it noted, diverges not insignificantly from that put forward in his own practically simultaneous study "Numenios von Apamea und der platonische Timaios" which on the one hand gives reserved support to Dodds' emendation and on the other concludes that "Thillet konjiziert nicht schlecht:  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon\gamma\acute{\nu}\omega\acute{\nu}$ ."<sup>7</sup> Still more recently J. Dillon has proposed that we read  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon\omega\rho\gamma\acute{\omega}\nu$  in place of the disputed  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon \omega\acute{\nu}$ .<sup>8</sup> The following comments may offer some clarification of what is obviously by no means a closed issue.

In fairness to Dodds it deserves to be emphasized that the textual corruption which he envisages is palaeographically speaking far from impossible. The use of the letters of the Greek alphabet (whether uncial or minuscule) as symbols for ordinal as well as cardinal numbers is universal in Greek manuscripts of all periods and can be traced far back into the ancient world itself.<sup>9</sup> To eliminate confusion letters employed as numerals were generally distinguished by means of an appropriate lectional sign. In the case of uncials this lectional aid usually took the form of a horizontal stroke above the top of the letter or letters—a practice apparent already in, for example, a second-century B.C. papyrus fragment of Homer (P. Teb. 1.4, col. 5 = Univ. of California 2390) in which the stichometric notation  $\bar{\text{B}}$  appears in the left margin between *Iliad* 2.200 and 201.<sup>10</sup> For some ninth-century instances of this usage see *Parisinus gr.* 1962, fol. 146 verso (cf. *Phoenix* 28 [1974] Plate 2). It persists com-

<sup>5</sup>Cf. my *op. cit.* (above, note 1).

<sup>6</sup>*Gnomon* 47 (1975) 540.

<sup>7</sup>*Vigiliae Christianae* 29 (1975) 262, n. 88.

<sup>8</sup>See Dillon's *The Middle Platonists* (London 1977) 368.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. in general V. Gardthausen, *Griechische Palaeographie*<sup>2</sup> 2 (Leipzig 1913) 358 ff.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford 1971) plate 12. But as Turner points out (*ibid.* 18), in the actual body of the writing numerical abbreviations rarely occur in papyri containing classical literary texts.

monly throughout the medieval period whenever uncials are employed, i.e., frequently in titles, subscriptions, lemmata, pinaxes, marginalia, gathering-marks, etc. In the case of minuscule letters employed as numerical symbols the same distinguishing mark may be utilized, but more commonly a stroke was placed high in the line behind the pertinent letter or letters, sloping down to the left and tipped often by a short return-stroke dropping to the right at a roughly 45 degree angle. Both signs may appear in combination, whilst numbers above a thousand are normally preceded by an identifying stroke sloping down to the left below the level of the line.<sup>11</sup> All these conventional signs were employed with great frequency, and were therefore thoroughly familiar to the literate public. This universal familiarity renders it likely that the numerical phenomena in question could lead to misunderstanding and consequent textual corruption only when the text was for one reason or another illegible, or when the scribe met with number symbols in circumstances in which he had no reason to expect them. For example, in *Vaticanus gr.* 784 the subscription at the foot of fol. 160 verso ends as follows: *μοῦ ἕως τοῦ νῆν* [sc. *νῦν*] *ἀπὸ τοῦ ᾠ πλάστου* [= *πρωτοπλάστου*] *Ἀδὰμ· ἔτη ςωκῆ*:— [A.M. 6825 = A.D. 1316/1317].<sup>12</sup> It would be excusable if an unobservant reader mistook the horizontal bar over *ᾠ* for a *spiritus lenis* and began to wonder what sense there could be to describing Adam as *ἀπλάστου*! If such a reader went on to “correct” *ἀπλάστου* to *πλάστοῦ*, then he would have produced precisely the type of textual corruption which Dodds believes to have taken place in the transmission of Numenius. Since no such “correction” has been made in *Vaticanus gr.* 784, this example, although instructive, is less valuable than it might have been. Of much greater pertinence is an instance in the history of the text of the *Didaskalikos* of the Middle Platonist Alcinous<sup>13</sup> in which failure to grasp the numerical value of a letter has led to the disfigurement of the entire subsequent manuscript tradition, and indeed of all printed editions up to the present day.

*Didask.* 10 contains a description of the *via eminentiae* which reads as follows in Hermann’s edition (165. 24 ff.):

*τρίτη δὲ νόησις τοιαύτη τις ἂν εἴη· θεωρῶν γάρ τις τὸ ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασι καλὸν μετὰ τοῦτο μέτεισιν ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς κάλλος, εἶτα τὸ ἐν ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ νόμοις, εἶτα ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ, μεθ’ ὃ αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν νοεῖ καὶ τὸ ἐραστὸν καὶ ἐφετὸν ὥσπερ φῶς φανέν καὶ οἶον ἐκλάμψαν τῇ οὕτως ἀνιούσῃ ψυχῇ· τούτῳ δὲ καὶ θεὸν συνεπινοεῖ διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ τιμίῳ ὑπεροχὴν.*

<sup>11</sup>For instances of the use of accents and breathings on numeral letters see A. Turyn, *Dated Greek Manuscripts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries in the Libraries of Italy* 1 (Urbana, Ill. 1972) 113.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Turyn, *Codices Graeci Vaticani saeculis XIII et XIV scripti annorumque notis instructi* (Vatican 1964) 113 f. and plate 188.

<sup>13</sup>On the matter of the authorship of the *Didaskalikos* see my “*Parisinus gr.* 1962 and the writings of Albinus,” *Phoenix* 28 (1974) 320 ff. and 450 ff.

As also at *Didask.* 5, p. 157. 13 ff. H. Alcinoüs paraphrases *Symposium* 210 A 4 ff., but takes here the additional step of conflating Diotima's ultimate Beauty with the Platonic Idea of the Good conceived in Aristotelian terms as αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν . . . καὶ τὸ ἐραστὸν καὶ ἐφετόν. Festugière translates this latter phrase as follows: "... le Bien en soi, l'objet ultime de l'amour et du désir."<sup>14</sup> Although his "ultime" has no counterpart in Hermann's or any other printed edition of the Greek text, Festugière is right in recognizing that some such term is required. The ascent to the Good = Beautiful consists precisely in a progressive transference of one's ἐρως to ever higher levels of Beauty. That only the final stage of this ascent should be described as ἐραστὸν καὶ ἐφετόν entails an intolerable weakening of the argument and destroys entirely its impact. The correct reading at this point is undoubtedly that preserved in *Vindob. phil. gr.* 314, a manuscript copied in 925 and containing scholia stemming in all probability from Arethas, but which has been ignored hitherto by editors of the *Didaskalikos*.<sup>15</sup> The pertinent passage in this *vetustissimus* reads (fol. 6 recto) thus: αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν νοεῖ καὶ τὸ α' [= πρῶτον] ἐραστόν, καὶ ἐφετόν. The semi-formularic character of this more appropriate designation of the goal of the *via eminentiae* is established by an unnoticed parallel in Plutarch's cosmological interpretation in the *De Iside* (374 C f.) of Plato's myth of Πενία and Πόρος in the *Symposium* (203 B 1 ff.). Plutarch identifies Πόρος with the self-sufficient First Principle and Πενία with basic matter,<sup>16</sup> and says of the former (374 D) ὁ γὰρ Πόρος οὐχ ἑτερός ἐστι τοῦ πρῶτου ἐραστοῦ καὶ ἐφετοῦ καὶ τελείου καὶ αὐτάρκους.<sup>17</sup> The precise identity of Plutarch's formulation with that of Alcinoüs indicates that Markland's emendation of ἐραστοῦ to ἐρατοῦ in the text of Plutarch was both unnecessary and undesirable; and ἐραστός is in any case the term used by Plato

<sup>14</sup>*La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* 4, *Le dieu inconnu et la Gnose* (Paris 1954) 100.

<sup>15</sup>To my short bibliography of this manuscript in *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 387 f., n. 1, add B. Laourdas, "Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν μελέτην τῆς "ἐπιτομῆς" τοῦ Ἀλβίνου," *Ἀθηνᾶ* 54 (1950) 29 ff., and F. W. Köhler, *Textgeschichte von Hierokles' Kommentar zum Carmen aureum der Pythagoreer* (Münster 1965) 6 ff.

<sup>16</sup>For a similar but slightly different interpretation of the *Symposium* myth see my "Proclus, Procopius, Psellus and the scholia on Gregory Nazianzen," *Vigiliae Christianae* 29 (1975) 310 f. Cf. also Plotinus, *Enn.* 3.5 [50], and in particular 3.5.9.49 ff.

<sup>17</sup>Since Plutarch is as far as practicable avoiding hiatus, it is possible but not essential that we should accept the testimony of the fifteenth-century *Vindob. phil. gr.* 46 and read πρῶτως ἐραστοῦ in place of πρῶτον ἐραστοῦ. However, the work of the scribe of the *Vindobonensis* is more calligraphic than careful and therefore on its own of doubtful value. With Plutarch's sequence of attributes compare Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* 1.22, p. 101. 14 ff. S-W Ἐν δὲ γε τῷ Φιλήβῳ (20 D 1 ff.) στοιχεῖα παραδίδωσιν ἡμῖν ὁ Πλάτων τῆς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φύσεως τρία τὰ κυριώτατα, τὸ ἐφετόν, τὸ ἱκανόν, τὸ τέλειον· δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πάντα ἐπιστρέφειν, καὶ πληροῦν, καὶ κατὰ μὲν ἐλλείπειν μὴδὲ ἐλαττοῦν τὴν αὐτοῦ περιουσίαν. Cf. also Apuleius, *De dogm. Plat.* 2.2.221 *Bonum primum est verum et divinum illud, optimum et amabile et concupiscendum* (= ἐραστόν καὶ ἐφετόν).

himself in the *Symposium* myth (204 C 4 f.): καὶ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ ἐραστὸν τὸ τῷ ὄντι καλὸν καὶ ἀβρὸν καὶ τέλεον καὶ μακαριστόν. J. G. Griffiths, be it noted, perversely renders Plutarch's ἐραστοῦ as "the primal lover" as if it were the genitive of ἐραστής.<sup>18</sup> This translation is, needless to say, invalidated by the above-mentioned combined evidence of Plato himself and the *Didaskalikos*.

Although the conception of the supreme principle to which Plutarch and the author of the *Didaskalikos* have here given expression in identical terms is commonplace enough, the precise phraseology which they have employed was not adopted into the permanent vocabulary of metaphysical theology. No exact parallel in later literature springs readily to mind. Since therefore in the case of *Didask.* 10 there is nothing in the immediate context to suggest compellingly the presence of a numeral it would not be surprising if a scribe who found in his exemplar the formula τὸ α' ἐραστὸν should fail to recognize the numerical value of the α'. As it happens, *Vindob. phil. gr.* 314 seems to have led an underground existence throughout the entire medieval period. The manuscript has no known medieval progeny and its whereabouts are unknown prior to its acquisition for the sum of three ducats by the scholar-collector Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584),<sup>19</sup> whence with the remainder of Sambucus' library it passed into the possession of the then Imperial Library in Vienna (now the Nationalbibliothek) where it has remained until the present day. However, the effect of scribal misunderstanding is manifest already in our oldest manuscript of the *Didaskalikos*, *Parisinus gr.* 1962 dating probably from the second half of the ninth century.<sup>20</sup> On fol. 157 recto of the *Parisinus* the text in question reads: αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν νοεῖ, καὶ τὸ ἀεραστὸν, καὶ ἐφερόν. Here the scribe has quite evidently failed to grasp that the α in front of ἐραστὸν is a numerical symbol. However, since the α was plainly present in his exemplar, he has reproduced it faithfully even if incomprehendingly and he has left us a record of his incomprehension in the small, hesitant vertical stroke which he has placed above the letter. This stroke is quite unlike the lectional signs which our scribe employs elsewhere to distinguish numerals and quite different from the apostrophes which he occasionally uses. It is indeed not a mark of punctuation at all, but a mark of hesitation and incomprehension.<sup>21</sup> Later scribes have been equally incompre-

<sup>18</sup>In his *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (University of Wales Press 1970) 211.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. H. Gerstinger, "Johannes Sambucus als Handschriftensammler," in *Festschrift der Nationalbibliothek in Wien. Herausgegeben zur Feier des 200-jährigen Bestehens des Gebäudes* (Vienna 1926) 377. Nothing further is known of the circumstances in which Sambucus obtained possession of the manuscript.

<sup>20</sup>On the *Parisinus* cf. my *op. cit.* (above, note 13).

<sup>21</sup>See also my "Textual comments on *Timaeus* 27 C-D," *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 387 ff. where I have discussed some instances in *Parisinus gr.* 1807 of hesitation on the part of the same scribe.

hending but less conscientious, since not a single manuscript apart from the two above-mentioned *vetustissimi* contain the  $\alpha$  in question. It has left no trace in the entire subsequent manuscript tradition, and has not been given consideration by modern editors.<sup>22</sup>

The above example drawn from the textual tradition of the *Didaskalikos* presents a perfect parallel to the corruption envisaged by Dodds in the text of Numenius; for here is indeed an incontestable instance of the numerical  $\alpha' = \pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\nu$  first of all being met with incomprehension (i.e., by the scribe of the *Parisinus* and probably its exemplar) and finally disappearing completely from the transmitted text. However, before we hasten to accept this example as a clinching proof of Dodds' argument it will be well to weigh the following counter considerations.

That Numenius made frequent use of the terms  $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\delta\epsilon\ddot{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$ , and even  $\tau\rho\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\varsigma$  to refer to the various levels of divinity is abundantly attested and also in keeping with the hierarchical conceptions of his age.<sup>23</sup> But nowhere in the surviving testimony has Numenius used any of these numerals in conjunction with the present participle of  $\epsilon\iota\mu\iota$  in a manner comparable to that which Dodds has proposed to introduce into the disputed fragment. There is therefore nothing to suggest that the locution  $\delta \pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\varsigma \ddot{\omega}\nu$  is a specifically Numenian designation denoting at once Being and Primacy. Nor is it easy to find elsewhere evidence that the locution had attained the status of a common formula. But if the locution did not enjoy formularic status, one is hard put to see, supposing that Dodds be right, what useful purpose the present participle  $\ddot{\omega}\nu$  could serve in this sentence. If  $\delta \pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\varsigma \ddot{\omega}\nu$  simply equals  $\delta \pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , then the participle is at once superfluous and out of step with Numenius' normal usage. If on the other hand one were to hold that the  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  which opens the sentence is pronominal and  $\ddot{\omega}\nu$  in consequence a circumstantial participle with  $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\varsigma$  as predicate, then one would have to suppose that there is some necessary and obvious link between "being first" and "sowing the seed of all soul." But since there does not appear to be such a link it seems wisest to discount also this latter interpretation. We may conclude that

<sup>22</sup>Daniel Heinsius was able to consult *Parisinus gr.* 1662 for his 1607 edition of Maximus of Tyre and Alcinous (i.e., not first for his 1614 edition, as I suggested in my *op. cit.* [above, note 13] 351 f.) but he has taken no note of the  $\alpha$  which precedes  $\epsilon\rho\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\nu$  in that manuscript. P. Louis, *Albinos: Epitomé* (Paris 1945) 61, whose *apparatus* mistakenly reports the reading of the *Parisinus* as being  $\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\rho\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\nu$ , is the only modern editor to make any reference at all at this point to the Paris manuscript. Louis' mistake is repeated by B. Laourdas, *op. cit.* (above, note 15) 31.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. the *Index Verborum* s. vv. of des Places' edition (above, note 2), P. Merlan, "Drei Anmerkungen zu Numenius," *Philologus* 106 (1962) 137 ff., and H. J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam 1964) 63 ff. Cf. further G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London 1969) 140 ff. and D. J. O'Meara, *Structures hiérarchiques dans la pensée de Plotin* (Leiden 1975).

unless some more plausible interpretation of Dodds' emendation can be suggested—and to this date none has—, there can be no justification for his insertion of *πρῶτος* into the text.

Also Thillet's emendation lacks cogency as the following considerations will show. The terminology of sowing and planting in our fragment seems inspired by *Tim.* 41 B ff., as Thillet himself points out.<sup>24</sup> The term *νομοθέτης*, on the other hand, is absent from the *Timaean* but had nonetheless become a usual Middle Platonic title of the Second God.<sup>25</sup> Likewise the term *γεωργός* is lacking in the *Timaean*, but it, too, (though this has not been noted by students of Numenius) was a common divine appellation of the imperial age, as evidenced by *inter alia* the cult of *Ζεὺς γεωργός* celebrated at Athens in the month of Maimakterion (the season of plowing and sowing)<sup>26</sup> and by the appearance of the appellation *γεωργός* in magical *ἐπικλήσεις* and elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> Those who had like Numenius himself a penchant for Jewish and Christian conceptions would be familiar from the literature of these religions with descriptions in agricultural terms of God and his activities.<sup>28</sup> But the agricultural imagery of this fragment of Numenius would also have suggested to his contemporaries obvious associations from the realm of popular Stoicism. *Deus ad homines venit*, says Seneca (*Ep.* 73.16), *immo quod est propius, in homines venit; nulla sine deo mens bona est. Semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt, quae si bonus cultor excipit, similia origini prodeunt et paria iis, ex quibus orta sunt, surgunt; etc.* Thus, though it may be partly influenced by Jewish conceptions there is from the popular Graeco-Roman viewpoint nothing startlingly new in the following passage from a Hermetic writing (*C.H.* 14.9 f.): *ἴδε εἰκόνα καλλίστην καὶ ὁμοιοτάτην, ἴδε γεωργὸν σπέρμα καταβάλλοντα εἰς τὴν γῆν, ὅπου μὲν πυρόν, ὅπου δὲ κριθήν, ὅπου δὲ ἄλλο τι τῶν σπερμάτων. ἴδε τὸν αὐτὸν ἄμπελον φυτεύοντα καὶ μηλέαν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τῶν δένδρων.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ap. des Places, op. cit.* 108, n. 3. Cf. also *Tim.* 73 C and *Phdr.* 248 D 1. Metaphors of sowing and planting entities other than souls are common enough; cf., e.g., *Rep.* 597 D 5, *Tim.* 70 C 5, 75 D 4, 77 C 6.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Baltes, *op. cit.* (above, note 7) 262, n. 89.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. A. Dieterich, *Abraxas: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des spätern Altertums* (Leipzig 1891) 123, and M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* 2<sup>3</sup> (Munich 1961) 331.

<sup>27</sup> See the evidence assembled by R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen 1968) 408, n. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., e.g., Philo, *De plant.* 2 (ὁ μὲν τοίνυν τῶν φυτουργῶν μέγιστος καὶ τὴν τέχνην τελειότατος ὁ τῶν ὄλων ἡγεμὼν ἐστι, φυτὸν δὲ αὐτὸ περιέχον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὰ ἐν μέρει φυτὰ ἅμα παμμύρια καθάπερ κληματίδας ἐκ μίας ἀναβλαστάνοντα ῥίζης ὅδε ὁ κόσμος) and in general U. Früchtel, *Die kosmologischen Vorstellungen bei Philo von Alexandrien* (Leiden 1968) 53 ff. Pertinent references are given by Bultmann, *loc. cit.* See also Nock-Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum* 1 (Paris 1945) 104, n. 26. Many of the relevant biblical texts are catalogued and commented by [Pseudo-] Gregory of Nyssa, *De paradiso* (*Gregorii Nysseni opera: Supplementum*, ed. H. Hörner [Leiden 1972]).

οὕτω καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν μὲν οὐρανῷ ἀθανασίαν σπείρει, ἐν δὲ γῇ μεταβολήν, ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ ζῶν καὶ κίνησιν. We may conclude that our fragment of Numenius, curious as it may seem, builds upon a combination of what must have been to the Hellenistic mind familiar conceptions.

Into this context of ideas Thillet's emendation introduces unequivocally the assertion that the First God is the father or parent (ὁ γεννῶν) of the soul whose seed he sows. Numenius does indeed use the term πατήρ to describe the relationship of the First God to the Second (Fr. 21 L. = 12 des Places): τοῦ δημιουργούντος δὲ θεοῦ χρή εἶναι νομίζεσθαι πατέρα τὸν πρῶτον θεόν. But nowhere in the surviving fragments does Numenius suggest that the First God generates out of himself the seed of all soul. On the contrary, according to Proclus (*In Tim.* 2.153.17 ff. Diehl), Numenius taught in dependence upon the *Timaeus* that souls were not born of the First God but compounded ἐκ μονάδος . . . ὡς ἀμερίστου, καὶ τῆς ἀορίστου δυνάδος, ὡς μεριστῆς (Test. 31 L. = Fr. 39 des Places).<sup>29</sup> Thus, Thillet's emendation brings into the fragment a new element which is contradicted rather than supported by the ancient evidence. One might claim in defence of Thillet's suggestion that Numenius could be using the term ὁ γεννῶν ambiguously and metaphorically without implying any real relationship of paternity. This could perhaps be the case, even though the term ὁ γεννῶν was not a common divine title.<sup>30</sup> But even if Numenius may be imprecise on occasion in his choice of words,<sup>31</sup> it is unjust to him to introduce deliberate ambiguity by means of unnecessary emendation.

Nor must it be supposed that Numenius could have used innocently and unthinkingly the term ὁ γεννῶν in some metaphorical sense. That the relevance of the notion of paternity to the activities of divine beings was under question in the early centuries of our era is evident from Plutarch's discussion (*Plat. quaest.* 2, p. 116.20 ff. Hubert-Drexler) of the problem τί δήποτε τὸν ἀνωτάτω θεὸν πατέρα τῶν πάντων καὶ ποιητὴν προσεῖπεν [sc. Plato at *Tim.* 28 C 3 f.]. Plutarch suggests three possible solutions to this quandary: (1) ὅτι τῶν μὲν θεῶν τῶν γεννητῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πατήρ ἐστιν, . . . ποιητῆς δὲ τῶν ἀλόγων καὶ ἀψύχων (*ibid.* 116.21 ff.), (2) ἢ τῇ μεταφορᾷ χρώμενος, ὥσπερ εἶωθε, τὸν αἴτιον πατέρα τοῦ κόσμου κέκληκεν (*ibid.* 116.26 f.), or

<sup>29</sup>For a consideration of the evidence cf. Baltes, *op. cit.* (above, note 7) 243 ff.

<sup>30</sup>The fact that it is not a common title would render the term all the more emphatic in the context of our fragment of Numenius. Common cognate terms which would have been readily available as divine titles are, e.g., γενετήρ, γενέτης, γενέτωρ, γεννήτωρ; cf. LSJ and Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* s. vv. Thillet (*ap. des Places, op. cit.* [above, note 2] 108) states that ὁ γεννῶν is inspired by *Tim.* 41 A 5 f. which describes the Demiurge as ὁ τόδε τὸ πᾶν γεννήσας. But the use of the bare participle in a different tense could hardly constitute a reminiscence, and it would in any case be appropriate that an adaptation of a Demiurgic title be applied not to the First but to the Second God whom Numenius regularly identifies with the Platonic Demiurge.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. Baltes, *op. cit.* (above, note 7) 269, n. 112.

(3) ποιητοῦ μὲν, . . . ἀπήλλακται γενόμενον τὸ ἔργον, ἡ δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἀρχῇ καὶ δύναμις ἐγκέκραται τῷ τεκνωθέντι καὶ συνέχει τὴν φύσιν, ἀπόσπασμα καὶ μόριον<sup>32</sup> οὖσαν τοῦ τεκνῶσαντος. ἐπεὶ τοίνυν οὐ πεπλασμένοις ὁ κόσμος οὐδὲ συνηρμοσμένοις ποιήμασιν ἔοικεν, ἀλλ' ἔνεστιν αὐτῷ μοῖρα πολλῇ ζωότητος καὶ θεϊότητος, ἣν ὁ θεὸς ἐγκατέσπειρεν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τῇ ὕλῃ καὶ κατέμιξεν, εἰκότως ἅμα πατήρ τε τοῦ κόσμου, ζῶον γεγονότος, καὶ ποιητῆς ἐπονομάζεται (*ibid.* 117.9 ff.). Plutarch himself favours the latter alternative—God has on the one hand made the physical universe out of pre-existent matter, but on the other (*ibid.* 117.24 ff.) ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ, νοῦ μετασχούσα καὶ λογισμοῦ καὶ ἁρμονίας, οὐκ ἔργον ἐστὶ τοῦ θεοῦ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ μέρος, οὐδ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀλλ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν. The same interpretation, be it noted, seems to underlie Apuleius' description of the supreme God as (*Apol.* 64) *summus animi genitor, aeternus animantium sospitator, assiduus mundi sui opifex*.<sup>33</sup> Cf. likewise Hilary of Poitiers, *In Ps.* 64.4, CSEL 22.235. 18 ff. (*mundi opificem atque animae nostrae parentem*). However, also Plutarch's second alternative had powerful support. Thus, Cicero's translation renders the relevant phrase of the *Timaeus* simply as *illum quidem quasi parentem huius universitatis*.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Diogenes Laertius (7.147 = SVF 2.305.18 f.) reports as if it were the view of Chrysippus that god is δημιουργὸν τῶν ὄλων καὶ ὥσπερ πατέρα πάντων. Galen in his *Compendium Timaei* seems to have omitted, apparently tendentiously, the term πατήρ from his paraphrase of the Platonic commonplace; cf. *ibid.* 2.14 f. Kraus-Walzer (*creatorem mundi revera invenire investiganti haud facile est*).<sup>35</sup> The same

<sup>32</sup>The terminology is Stoic; cf., e.g., Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.14.6 (ἀλλ' αἱ ψυχαὶ μὲν οὕτως εἰσὶν ἐνδεδεμένοι καὶ συναφεῖς τῷ θεῷ ἅτε αὐτοῦ μόρια οὔσαι καὶ ἀποσπάσματα); *ibid.* 2.8.11 (σὺν ἀπόσπασμα εἰ τοῦ θεοῦ· κτλ.). Significantly, the terms ἀποσπάω and ἀπόσπασμα are used of the production of semen; cf., e.g., Epicurus, fr. 329 Usener, and (with an interesting agricultural analogy) Gregory of Nyssa, *De. an. et res.*, PG 46.125 (καὶ ὥσπερ τῆς ρίζης τὴν ἀποσπάδα λαβοῦσα παρὰ τῶν γενητόνων ἡ γῆ δένδρον ἐποίησεν, οὐκ αὐτὴ τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνθεῖσα τῷ τρεφομένῳ δυνάμιν, ἀλλὰ μόνον τὰς πρὸς τὴν αὐξήσιν ἀφορμὰς ἐνιέισα τῷ ἐκκειμένῳ· οὕτω φαμέν, καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀποσπώμενον πρὸς ἀνθρώπου φυτεῖαν, καὶ αὐτὸ τρόπον τινὰ ζῶον εἶναι ἐξ ἐμψύχου ἔμψυχον, ἐκ τρεφομένου τρεφόμενον).

<sup>33</sup>Although Apuleius here describes the Supreme God as *summus animi genitor*, he is careful to add that he is *sine propagatione genitor*; cf. my "The historical background of Proclus' doctrine of the αὐθυπόστατα," in *De Jamblique à Proclus (21es Entretiens de la Fondation Hardt: Vandoeuvres-Genève 1975)* 222. Perhaps one should emend Apuleius, *De dogm. Plat.* 1.5.190 to read *animarum genitor rerumque omnium exstructor*? For other relevant Apuleian formulations cf. *ibid.* 1.7.194 (*ille aedificator mundi deus*), *ibid.* 1.8.198 (*fabricator deus*), and *ibid.* 1.11.204 (*patrem et architectum huius divini orbis*). For the equation demiurge = architect cf. Philo, *De opific.* 17 ff. As U. Früchtel, *op. cit.* (above, note 28) 9, n. 2, points out, the notion is inspired by *Tim.* 28 C 6 (ὁ τεκταινόμενος) and *Tim.* 30 B 5 (συντεκταίνετο).

<sup>34</sup>At *N.D.* 1.18 Cicero renders the same phrase as *opificem aedificatoremque mundi*.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. Kraus-Walzer, *Galen's Compendium Timaei Platonis (Plato Arabus 1: London 1951)* 12 and 39.

omission occurs at, e.g., Tertullian, *Ap.* 46.9 (. . . *licet Plato affirmet factitatore universitatis neque inveniri facilem et inventum enarrari in omnes difficilem*). Apuleius, on the other hand, was familiar with a version of the Platonic text which avoids (perhaps deliberately) taking issue (*De dogm. Plat.* 1.5.191): *Platonis verba haec sunt: θεὸν εὐρεῖν τε ἔργον, εὐρόντα τε εἰς πολλοὺς ἐκφέρειν ἀδύνατον*. But the Middle Platonist Alcinous defends the pertinent conception as follows (*Didask.* 10, p. 164.35 ff. H.): *πατὴρ δὲ ἐστὶ τῷ αἰτίῳ εἶναι πάντων καὶ κοσμεῖν τὸν οὐράνιον νοῦν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ κόσμου πρὸς ἑαυτὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ νοήσεις*. Moreover, as G.C. Stead has pointed out, this Platonic debate on the acceptability of the notion of divine paternity is an essential presupposition of the Arian controversy.<sup>36</sup> It was precisely the view of Arius that only metaphorically can God be described as Father.

That disputes within pagan scholastic circles might burn as intensely as the Arian strife which split the Christian community Numenius himself confirms when he speaks of the fate wreaked by rival scholars upon Plato (Fr. 1 L. = 24 des Places) *ὡς νῦν μανικώτερον ἢ Πενθεῖ τι νι προσήκε διελκόμενος*.<sup>37</sup> As is understandable in one composing an elementary presentation of his subject the Middle Platonist Alcinous tends to sit on the fence in his *Didaskalikos*. But from the attention accorded him by Plotinus, Amelius, Origen the Christian, Porphyry, Theodore of Asine, Proclus who classifies him among *τῶν Πλατωνικῶν οἱ κορυφαῖοι*,<sup>38</sup> and Eusebius who quotes from him at length,<sup>39</sup> it is evident that Numenius was in his lifetime and beyond in the forefront of current philosophical debate. It is therefore not likely that in the fragment under discussion Numenius would have employed unthinkingly and with no ulterior motive the metaphor of paternity. For any mention of paternity could not but be a contribution to what was a major debate of the day.<sup>40</sup> In this debate it was, as we have seen, the view of Numenius that the First God stood in a paternal relationship to the Demiurge, whilst there is evidence that he did not think such a relationship to subsist between the First God and individual souls, and nothing to suggest that Numenius favoured a metaphorical use of terms indicative of paternity to describe the relationship between First God and souls.

<sup>36</sup>See Stead's "The Platonism of Arius," *Journal of Theological Studies* N.S. 15 (1964) 16 ff.

<sup>37</sup>For a relevant use of the same simile cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.57.1 ff., GCS 2.36.8 ff. Stählin-Früchtel.

<sup>38</sup>Cf. *Test.* 13 ff. L. On the influence of Numenius upon his successors cf. des Places' edition (above, note 2) 17 ff.

<sup>39</sup>All the surviving *verbatim* fragments have been preserved by Eusebius. Cf. further des Places, *op. cit.* 28 ff.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. my *op. cit.* (above, note 33).

Easier to deal with is Dillon's proposal that we read  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon \omega\acute{\nu}$  in place of  $\delta \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu \gamma\epsilon \omega\acute{\nu}$  in that the suggested emendation introduces no new conception into the text but serves the sole objective of eliminating the formulation  $\delta \omega\acute{\nu}$ . Fatal to this and indeed to all the proposed emendations of what is in fact a perfectly straightforward text is the indisputable testimony of Origen, Porphyry, and Eusebius (all of whom were familiar with Numenius' writings at first hand) that Numenius wrote approvingly of Jewish religion and made frequent recourse to Jewish writings in his own works, especially the *Περὶ τὰγαθοῦ* from which the disputed fragment derives.<sup>41</sup> In particular Origen reports (Fr. 9b Leemans = 1b des Places) that Numenius *ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ τὰγαθοῦ, λέγων περὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν ὅσα περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς ἀσωμάτου διείληφεν, ἐγκατέταξεν αὐτοῖς καὶ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους, οὐκ ὀκνήσας ἐν τῇ συγγραφῇ αὐτοῦ χρήσασθαι καὶ λόγοις προφητικοῖς καὶ τροπολογῆσαι αὐτοὺς*. It is difficult to believe that Numenius would have found it profitable to discuss without reference to Exodus 3.14 the "immateriality" of the Jewish god. It is equally difficult to believe that he did not have in mind this same Biblical text when he posed his famous question (Fr. 10 Leemans = fr. 8 des Places): *τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων*;<sup>42</sup> Far from presenting "a nasty textual problem," as Dillon claims,<sup>43</sup> the fragment under discussion simply corroborates what we otherwise know of the fascination and influence exercised upon Numenius by Jewish religious notions and texts.

We are forced to conclude, firstly, that unless further evidence be produced Thillet's suggested emendation is no more commendable than that of Dodds, and secondly, that any emendation is unnecessary and superfluous since an appropriation by Numenius of the LXX title  $\delta \omega\acute{\nu}$  is neither surprising nor exceptionable.

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<sup>41</sup>For the pertinent references see my *op. cit.* (above, note 1).

<sup>42</sup>See my *op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup>*Loc. cit.* (above, note 8).