THE BOOK OF GENESIS
IN JEWISH AND ORIENTAL
CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

A Collection of Essays

EDITED BY
JUDITH FRISHMAN AND LUCAS VAN ROMPAY

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During the fourth and fifth centuries there was a distinct antagonism between Alexandria and Antioch in the fields of dogmatics and exegesis. This antagonism is often identified as the opposition between Platonism and Aristotelianism. There is some truth in this: the predilection for allegorism found among the Alexandrians is related to the idea that the plain sense of a text is only the reflection of a reality which has yet to be discovered by the exegete; the Antiochenes took a more realistic view, concentrating on the actual events that had taken place, just as they were recorded. Thus the opposition between Platonism and Aristotelianism may provide a means of describing the difference between the basic attitudes towards a text. However, it does not suffice as an historical explanation, if only because no direct influence of Aristotle on the Antiochene exegetes can be demonstrated.

Many other possible explanations have been put forward. In the more recent publications, there is a tendency to concentrate on a single explanation for the specific nature of the Antiochene School. I believe that this reasoning is out of touch with reality: no school of exegesis — or any other school of thought, for that matter — comes into existence within a vacuum. It is the task of the historian to describe the larger context of a school and to determine which conditions may have contributed to its specific development and characteristics. In this paper, I should like to examine one of these conditions, namely the proximity of the Antiochene School to the Syriac-speaking world.

Though such nineteenth-century students of the history of exegesis as Diestel, Kihn and Harnack regarded Syrian influence as an important
factor, it is apparently no longer considered relevant by certain more recent authors. Schäublin, for example, explains the Antiochene School on the basis of the profane education provided by the schools of grammaticus and rhetor of the imperial age. He stresses this idea precisely because the above scholars failed to give it due attention. In his turn, however, he underestimates the value of other factors which may have helped to shape the Antiochene School in the making. This also applies to Froehlich and Young; they follow the same line of thought, but emphasize the fact that allegorical methods are part of the tradition of the philosophical schools and were not found in the rhetorical schools of the Antiochene educational system. The possibility of Syrian influence is not mentioned by Drewery either; he explains the characteristics of the Antiochene School mainly on the basis of a presumed inheritance of "Hebrew forms of exegesis and theological argumentation".


6 The idea as such was not new, however. Thus we find, for example, that in the early part of the nineteenth century, F. Münter had already recorded the possibility of a Greek (profane) education ("Über die antiochenische Schule", Archiv für alte und neue Kirchengeschichte 1,1 (1813) [1–31] 11). E. Hatch explained somewhat later that "the earliest methods of Christian exegesis were continuations of the methods which were common at the time to both Greek and Graeco-Judean writers" (The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church (The Hibbert Lectures 1888, 3rd ed.; London 1890) third lecture; quotation p. 69). Bultmann stressed the importance of research into the relation to profane exegesis in his Habilitationsschrift (Rudolf Bultmann. Die Exegese des Theodor von Mopsuestia. Posthum herausgegeben, H. Feld and K.H. Schelkle, eds. (Stuttgart [etc.] 1984) 18) and E. Schweizer ("Diodor von Tarsus als Exeget", Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 40 (1941) [33–75] 64–67) pointed out the implications of Diodore’s education in Athens.


In the first part of this paper, I shall give a working definition of the Antiochene School, going on to examine why the proximity of the Syriac world was noted as a contributing factor in the last century, and why Schäublin and others do not attach any particular importance to it. Then I shall undertake to establish whether or not the connection can be upheld. Here the person and work of Eusebius of Emesa will prove to be of prime importance.

The Antiochene School

In Antioch there was not always a clear line of succession from pupil to teacher. Or, to put it more correctly, we are often unable to identify the exact links between the members of this school, although we have a clear impression that they do indeed belong together. The Antiochene School is perhaps best described as a school of thought (Richtung), rather than an institution (Lehranstalt) such as the School of the Catechists in Alexandria.

Certain scholars have distinguished between an ‘early’ and a ‘late’ Antiochene School, the latter beginning with Diodore. For some, this meant there were actually two schools; others kept to the single school, but made a distinction between its earlier and later members. All based this partitioning of the School on the dogmatic differences between earlier and later Antiochenes, but it is interesting to note that those who were considered members of the ‘Early Antiochene School’ were precisely those about whom the least was known. Now that the dogmatic positions of Eusebius of Emesa and Diodore of Tarsus have become somewhat clearer, and Diodore’s indebtedness to Eusebius in exegeti-
cal matters has been established beyond doubt, this distinction is no longer acceptable. It is still difficult to come to grips with the time before Eusebius because of the scarcity of texts handed down to us from this period, but there are equally few grounds for drawing the line before Eusebius. This does not mean that I recognize no developments in the School. The method of exegesis clearly became more and more systematic after Eusebius; we know, for example, that Theodore developed a system of strict rules for exegesis. However, this was no sudden change: Diodore’s theoretical writings date from before this time, and many of Theodore’s rules appear — explicitly or implicitly — in Eusebius’s works. Thus there is no evidence to suggest that the School falls into two clearly distinct parts.

Antiochene exegesis focuses on the events that have actually happened (the ἔργαμα), examining their place in the context and logic of the narrative, and their moral and dogmatic implications. To that end, the exegete explains words, metaphors, and comparisons on the basis of the context, his knowledge of practical things as well as external sources; he fills gaps in the story and discusses ambiguities, paradoxes, and discrepancies; and he often provides a paraphrase. He recognizes the difficulties arising from the fact that the Septuagint is a translation, and occasionally cites other witnesses of the biblical text. The Old Testament is regarded as an entity, and a collation with other passages within this entity is an important device, according to the principle “Ομηρον ἐξ Ὀμήρου σαφηνίζειν”. Allegorism is rejected and very few Old Testament texts are seen as pointing directly and exclusively to the New Testament. The Antiochene exegete can, however, build a dif-

14 For example, the hypothesis to Ps 118 from the Commentary on the Psalms which is attributed to him ("Extraits du Commentaire de Diodore de Tarse sur les Psautres. Préface du Commentaire — Prologue du Psame cxviii", L. Mariès, ed., Recherches de Science Religieuse 10 (1919) [79-101] 90-101. English translation in Froehlich, Biblical Interpretation, 87-94). The Suida (6 1149 s.v. Diodore) also mentions his Ἀγνοφάθθαθεορίας καὶ ἀλληγορίας, now lost.
16 A good description of the Antiochene method is found in Schäublin’s Untersuchungen. See, in particular, his detailed survey of Theodore’s exegesis (84–155) and his chapter on the Antiochene χρήσις ποιήματον (157–170). Compare also Diestel, Geschichte, 129–141 and Novotny’s “Fragments exégétiques”.
17 Schäublin, Untersuchungen, 159–160.
different bridge between the Old and the New Testament, using typological explanations, in which the text retains a single sense: it refers to one historical fact, which is a figure, a foreshadowing of another\textsuperscript{18}.

The School and the Syrians

Those authors who pointed to the influence of the Syriac-speaking world on the Antiochene School did not always provide evidence to support their view. The fact that Antioch was the capital of the Province of Syria probably meant that they took this influence for granted. Indeed, the geographical and sociological position of Antioch is an important argument: not only was there a direct road to Edessa and Nisibis (both of which had their own schools), but there was also a large Syriac-speaking community in the Antioch area itself. Contacts between the Greek and the Syriac-speaking communities must have been lively; moreover, the trade route ensured an exchange of ideas with northern Mesopotamia.

A further argument was to be found in the tradition that the school of Antioch was founded by the Syrian martyr Lucian († 312). He was said to have been born in Samosata (on the Euphrates, to the north of Edessa), and educated by Macarius of Edessa before coming to Antioch. Moreover, Eusebius of Emesa, considered by some\textsuperscript{19} to be the first to apply the Antiochene method of exegesis, was also of Eastern descent and education, having been born in Edessa. And finally, Mariès suggested a Syrian origin because of certain characteristics shared by Ephrem’s commentaries and the commentary on the Psalms which he attributed to Diodore\textsuperscript{20}. The affinity between Ephrem’s exegesis and the Antiochene School and Eusebius’s position as a trait d’union between Edessa and Antioch have attracted renewed attention in recent publications\textsuperscript{21}.

\textsuperscript{18} Schäublin, Untersuchungen, 166–170 and Diestel, Geschichte, 131–133. See also J.-N. Guinot, “La typologie comme technique herméneutique”, in Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 2. Figures de l’Ancien Testament chez les Pères (Strasbourg 1989) 1–34, with references to the earlier literature.


\textsuperscript{20} L. Mariès, Études préliminaires à l’édition de Diodore de Tarse sur les Psaumes: la tradition manuscrite, deux manuscrits nouveaux, le caractère Diodorien du commentaire (Collection d’études anciennes; Paris 1933) 66.

Now Schäublin does not actually deny any Syrian influence; he simply maintains that it does not explain the problem of the origin of Antiochene exegesis. It is probably among those factors which he deems not ‘concrete’. As he makes no further reference to this point, we shall have to guess at the reasons behind his rejection. In my opinion, it has to do primarily with the fact that his knowledge of the School is based on Diodore and later exegetes. (The same probably holds true for Froehlich and Young, who do not even mention the possibility of Syrian influence. In the case of Drewery, too, a certain one-sidedness with respect to the question of origin may be due to his focus on only a few representatives of the School.) Schäublin explains that very little is known about the life and activities of Lucian, who was assumed to be the founder of the School. It was Diodore who was to be its first tangible representative, as well as the first scholar after Lucian to leave his mark on the School. If Schäublin had been familiar with Bardy’s studies on Lucian, he would have found that a bit more is now known about the latter, even though many uncertainties do remain. Bardy even questions Lucian’s origins: he may have been born in Antioch instead of Samosata, and was perhaps not educated in Edessa. All in all, these data would certainly not have persuaded Schäublin to change his mind on the issue of influences from the East.

There is, however, something else which should have set him thinking. Schäublin is one of those who are striving to come up with one single explanation for the Antiochene methods. At one point, however, he gets into trouble: he states that Diodore and Theodore recognized the problems stemming from the fact that the Septuagint is a translation. He gives numerous examples to support this view, and admits that these data presuppose bilingualism and a knowledge of translation problems. Such knowledge cannot be explained on the basis of Greek education. As yet, scholars had little experience in translating into Greek, he says, and neither...
Diodore nor Theodore knew any other languages. Unfortunately, he then simply gives up any further attempts to solve this problem.26

The solution is not, however, that difficult. As we have seen, some scholars attached great importance to the position of Eusebius of Emesa at the beginning of the School. This high esteem was based mainly on a few passages in Jerome’s *De Viris Inlustribus*, which refer to the indebtedness of Diodore and John Chrysostom to Eusebius.27 This evidence is rejected by Schäublin out of hand,28 though Schweizer had previously proven that Diodore used Eusebius’s commentary on at least one occasion.29 An early Armenian translation of Eusebius’s *Commentary on the Octateuch* has now been published by Hovhannessian,30 while Petit has done considerable work on the *Catena*. These new data fully corroborate the thesis that the expositions in Diodore’s *Commentary on Genesis* that demonstrate a knowledge of translation problems or that cite ‘the Hebrew’ or ‘the Syrian’ are based on Eusebius’s *Commentary*.31 It is time to explore what the biography and works of this Syrian can tell us.

**Eusebius of Emesa: Some Biographical Details**

There are a number of extensive studies on Eusebius’s life.32 Here it will be sufficient to recall a few relevant details. Eusebius was born

26 *Untersuchungen*, 123-126. He concludes: “... doch wagen wir kein Urteil darüber, woher eine solche Einsicht zu Diodor und Theodor gelangt sein könne.”


28 *Untersuchungen*, 43 note 2.

29 E. Schweizer, “Diodor von Tarsus”, 49 n. 78; cf. p. 68.


31 See Petit’s “La tradition de Théodoret de Cyr”, 284 (note 13 above).


A discussion of the patristic sources for the life of Eusebius can be found in É.M. Buytaert’s extensive study of his life and work (*L’héritage littéraire d’Eusèbe d’Émèse. Étude critique et historique. Textes* (Bibliothèque du Muséon 24; Louvain 1949) 4–42).

around 300 in Edessa, where he was educated in profane and sacred literature. Although his mother tongue must have been Syriac, it was in the Greek language that he pursued his studies: he was a pupil of Eusebius of Caesarea and Patrophilus of Scythopolis. He lived in Antioch and Alexandria, and in both cities declined to accept nomination as bishop, perhaps because he wanted to avoid taking sides in the dogmatic strifes of the day. Eventually, he did accept the see of Emesa. The reception he received there was not entirely favourable — his flock probably considered him too much of a scholar — and he appears to have spent his last years in Antioch.

Eusebius's Commentary on Genesis 22:12

The scope of this paper does not permit the examination of more than a small part of Eusebius's Commentary on Genesis. I hope, however, to succeed in giving an impression of the problems and possibilities involved in the study of the difficult textual tradition of this important text. The fragments I have selected deal with the expression Νῦν γὰρ ἐγὼν ὤντες θεὸν σὺ, Now I have come to know that you fear God, from Gen 22:12. I shall first give the text of all the witnesses, together with a translation.

A. CATENA FRAGMENT attributed to Eusebius of Emesa: ed. Petit, Chaîne 1267

'Aντί τοῦ «Νῦν ἐδείξας». Πῶς γὰρ ἄγνοεί αὐτὸς λέγων· Ἡδεῖν γὰρ ὤντες θεὸν σὺ, Now I have come to know that you fear God, from Gen 22:12. I shall first give the text of all the witnesses, together with a translation.


34 The texts are taken from the relevant editions or manuscripts. In two instances an apparatus records a change which I propose to the text as edited. — Chaîne = La Chaîne sur la Genèse. Édition intégrale 3. Chapitres 12 à 28, F. Petit, ed. (Traditio Exegetica Graeca 3; Louvain 1995), cited by section; Csl. = Catenae Graecae in Genesim et in Exodum 2, Collectio Coisliniana in Genesim, F. Petit, ed. (Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 15; Turnhout – Louvain 1986), cited by section; Mnc = Manuscript of Procopius, München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Gr. 358; PG = Patrologia Graecæ.
In the sense of “Now you have shown”. For how does (God) not know, who himself said: “For I knew that Abraham would order his children to keep the commandments of the Lord”? However, just as the (expression) “In order that I know” shows (God) as if he wants to learn, but (in fact) wants to teach God’s strictness, so (Scripture) now also shows God as discerning from this (act of Abraham), but (in fact) it wants to teach us, by saying “Now I have come to know”, to discern from this (act Abraham’s) love for God.

B. CATENA FRAGMENT of uncertain authorship: ed. Petit, Chaîne 1266

Δηλαδή ο Μεγάλης βουλής ἄγγελος.

Clearly (Scripture refers to) the Angel of the great counsel.

C. CATENA FRAGMENT of uncertain authorship: ed. Petit, Chaîne 1268

Τουτέστι «Νῦν ἐδείξας», ὡς ο Ἐβραῖος. Οδ γὰρ ἀγνοιαν εἰσάγει θεοῦ, ἄλλα δίκης ἀκριβείαν· ὡς τὸ Κατέβη ἰδεῖν εἰ κατὰ τὴν κραυγήν αὐτῶν συντελοῦνται.

That is: “Now you have shown”, as (reads) the Hebrew. For he does not bring forward ignorance of God, but (rather) strictness of trial, as (in the expression) “He went down to see whether they acted altogether according to the cry against them.”


That is: “Now you have shown”, as (reads) the Hebrew. For he does not bring forward ignorance of God, ‘for how does he not know, who himself said: “For I knew that Abraham would order his children to keep the commandments of the Lord”’? However, as the (expression) “In order that I know”, (this one) signifies strictness of trial. The Hebrew, however, says: “I know that you fear God.”

E. ARMENIAN TRANSLATION: ed. Hovhannessian, 68,579–69,595

Then he says: “For now I have come to know that you fear God,” that is, “Now you have shown”. For he does not bring forward ignorance of God, ‘for how does he not know, who himself said: “For I knew that Abraham would order his children to keep the commandments of the Lord”? However, as the (expression) “In order that I know”, (this one) signifies strictness of trial. The Hebrew, however, says: “I know that you fear God.”
"Do not", he says, "stretch out your hand to the boy, and you should not do any evil to him, for now I have come to know that you fear God — in the sense of saying: "now you have shown". For how would he not know, who said: "I knew that Abraham would order his children to keep the commandments of the Lord"? However, as the (expression) "In order that I know" shows (God) as if he wants to learn, and (Scripture in fact) wants to teach through this (expression) God's strictness, so it now also shows that God wants to reveal to us what he knows, in order that through this Abraham's love should appear, which he had for God. Now the Syrian, instead of saying "Now I have come to know", says "Now you have made known". He correctly says "Now you have made known", in the sense of saying: "Now you have taught all mankind". Now the Hebrew says: "I know that you fear God."

F. DIODORE: ed. Petit, Csl. 204 II. 1-14
bring forward ignorance of God, but (rather) strictness of trial — for how would he have descended if he did not know the sinners? — thus also the (expression) "Now I have come to know" (is used) in the sense of "now you have shown" or "now you have made known" that you fear God.

G. AUTHOR UNCERTAIN (Gennadius?): ed. Petit, Csl. 204 ll. 15–21

Some think that it was not the Son but an angel who said "Now I have come to know", as if (this angel) spoke in the name of God, but confessed his own ignorance, and discovered Abraham’s loyalty from his works. Others, however, say that the (expression) "Now I have come to know" is ambiguous in Hebrew, and that it means in fact at the same time also "now you have made known", in the sense of “you have shown it to all and made it manifest”.

Discussion of the Fragments

Textual tradition. Lines 1–8 (12–20) of the Armenian text contain a rather literal translation of the Greek text as found in Catena fragment A, except for the end of the passage, which may be just a somewhat freer rendering. Lines 8–11 (20–23) contain a Σόρος and a Ἐβραῖος reading not found in the Catena. At first sight, this Armenian text seems to be a complete unit. However, I venture to suggest that Eusebius has written more about this verse. The following elements should be mentioned: (1) a summarizing statement “For he does not bring forward ignorance of God, but rather strictness of trial,” found in C, D (split up), and F; (2) a long quotation from the first part of Gen 18:21 in C and F (as against the short one from the end of the verse in A and E); (3) the identification of the angel with the Angel of the great counsel in B and F.

As these elements are found in the Catena proper, in Procopius, or in both, it is less likely that they were created by Diodore himself: we have

35 Procopius gives the same identification just before the fragment cited above, in Mnc 108v 13–18 (partially edited by Petit ad Chaîne 1279; cf. PG 87.1, 389/390B 15–19 [Latin]). However, the wording of this piece — except for its last sentence, which says the angel spoke in the same way as Balaam — is much closer to a passage in Gregory of Nyssa’s De Deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti (PG 46, 572D 8 – 573A 3; Catena fragment: ed. Petit, Chaîne 1279).
no evidence that he was quoted on a regular basis by these witnesses. On the other hand, the fact that they are found in Diodore does suggest that they may have originally been written by Eusebius, his model and the main supplier of material for his own *Commentary on Genesis*. If such is the case, the question arises of why they are not found in the Armenian translation. Now it should be noted that there are other indications that the Armenian translation is not complete. The way Procopius combines A and C, and the fact that B and C are found in different places either before or after A in *Catena* manuscripts, suggest that the original version of B and C came from a different place in the *Commentary* — relocation of fragments is, after all, not unusual in the *Catena* — or even formed part of some other work written by Eusebius.

Two problems remain: what about the first line of C, containing a 'Εβραῖος reading which conflicts with the reading found in A and D, and what can we learn from fragment G? As to the first question, it is not likely that Eusebius provided two different 'Εβραῖος readings for one word. Now the reading οἶδα is supported by the Armenian and Procopius; moreover, in Procopius we find the same formula as the one found in C, τούτεστιν «Νῦν ἐδειξας», instead of A(E)'s ἀντὶ τοῦ «Νῦν ἐδειξας» — which means they are both quoting the 'other' fragment mentioned above —, but he does not say that Νῦν ἐδειξας is the Hebrew's reading. We can explain all this by assuming that ὃς ὃ 'Εβραῖος in C is not appropriate here. This is where we come to fragment G.

This text may have been written by Gennadius, who in a few places quotes Eusebius, although not as literally as Diodore does. In his use of Eusebius here, the author of fragment G evidently confused the Syrian and the Hebrew; this is not surprising, for the Hebrew was considered more important, and the Syrian was used even by Eusebius himself as a way of getting closer to the Hebrew. Thus the Greek text of ὅ Σῦρος should be established as Νῦν ἐγνώριος, and perhaps the paraphrase of

37 To give one example, the Greek fragment on Gen 11:3 discussed in "'Ο Σῦρος Revisited" (ed. Petit, *Chaine* 838) is attributed to Eusebius by *Catena* manuscripts and contains a Σῦρος reading, but it has no counterpart in the Armenian text.
38 The elements from A in Procopius appear between half brackets.
39 See for the suggestion concerning Gennadius's authorship Petit, *Csl.* 204 note c; for his way of quoting Eusebius, compare *Csl.* 205 ll. 2–4.
40 He explicitly makes an appeal to Syriac as a neighbouring language of Hebrew (ed. Hovhannessian, 1,10–12), and his way of dealing with the 'Εβραῖος readings points that way as well. See my "'Ο Σῦρος Revisited".
the Syrian, translated into Armenian as “Now you have taught all mankind” (cf. the Armenian text, E, line 10 (22)), is found here in Greek as well: Πᾶσιν ἐδειξας καὶ ἑποίησας φανερόν.

Now if the text or texts which formed the basis of the Catena fragments do indeed use the word ἐδειξας in the paraphrase of the Syrian, too, then the inappropriate ὅς ὣ Ἐβραῖος in fragment C can be considered the result of a confusion between the Syrian and the Hebrew similar to the one in fragment G.

The question at issue. With respect to the genre, Eusebius’s Commentary on Genesis can best be termed a selective commentary, as it deals with only a limited number of difficult passages, one of which is Gen 22:12. The problem at issue here is the conflict between the omniscience of God and the expression Νῦν ἐγνών, Now I have come to know. Eusebius comments upon the text using the context and parallel passages; he gives paraphrases and uses alternative readings of the biblical text.

The same problem arises in connection with ἴδειν in Gen 2:19, 11:5, and δῶσαι...τα γνῶ in Gen 18:21. In all instances, Eusebius provides an explanation, which suggests that a good understanding of these passages was quite important to him. The explanation may be the fact that these passages could be used by Marcionites to show that the God of the Old Testament was not omniscient. Origen also deals with this problem. His answer is simple: the sinners are not worth knowing42. Eusebius gives two other answers.

In the first instance, he says that God conceded the authority to name the animals to Adam, so that the naming itself was beyond his control43. Here he mentions two other instances, Gen 11:5 and 18:21, and gives the same explanation: the building of the tower of Babel and the acts of the Sodomites happened in spite of him. This idea is repeated ad Gen 11:5, with reference to the Sodomites44. The other explanation is found ad Gen 18:2145 and here ad Gen 22:12: Scripture wants to show that God is acting scrupulously when passing judgement, thus giving Abraham the opportunity to show his good will and his love for God. In other words, ἐγνών should be taken as ἐδειξας. Eusebius mentions the

41 This type is closely related to the genre of the ζητήματα καὶ λόγες. For the term, see L. Van Rompay’s contribution to this volume.
42 Homiliae in Genesim iv, 6 (Origène. Homîlies sur la Genèse, L. Doutrèeau, ed. (Sources Chrétiennes 7bis; Paris 1976) 156–161).
reading of ‘the Syrian’ in confirmation of this. As we have shown elsewhere, this ‘Syrian’ should be taken as Eusebius’s own rendering of the Syriac version of the Bible. An important addition to this Σύρος reading is the paraphrase mentioned above, which adds an indirect object to the verb and may have closed the circle by giving ἔδειξας as the verb. This raises the question of which came first, the Σύρος reading or the explanation. It would appear that Eusebius’s understanding of this passage was determined from the outset by his understanding of the Syriac Bible. It should be noted here that exactly the same explanation — Abraham has shown his love for God — is found both in Ephrem and in the so-called Ephrem Graecus. And finally, the citation of the Hebrew appears to have been intended as another confirmation that God already knew, as the verb is clearly non-inchoative.

Quotations from the Septuagint. It is clear that Eusebius is quoting Gen 18:19 from memory, as it is a rather free citation. The element τοῦ φυλάσσειν (instead of καὶ φυλάξοσον) is given as the reading of the Syrian in his explanation of Gen 18:19. The short quotation of Gen 18:21 in A, D (and E) (with εἶδος instead of γνῶ) does not have the support of any Septuagint manuscript either; this, too, is probably a quotation from memory. The longer one is in fact a combination of Gen 11:5 (καὶ κατέβη κύριος ἵδεῖν) and Gen 18:21; this comes as no surprise, for as we have seen, these belong to a series of verses with the same problem.

The alternative readings. As explained above, Eusebius cites the Syriam as Νῦν ἔγνωρίσας, “you have made known”. This is in fact a common interpretation of the Peshitta’s λαός among Syrian exegetes, “I have made known” being the other possibility. The Hebrew is quoted

46 See my “‘Ὁ Σύρος Revisited’.
only once: ‘Εγὼ οἶδα δι' ἑαυτῆς σοῦ τὸν θεόν, a literal translation of the Masoretic Text. The absence of νῦν in this quotation probably does not indicate any textual difference, as this word is not under discussion here. It may have been left out on purpose to prevent any inchoative understanding of the verb.

Eusebius, Ephrem, and Origen

In the case of Gen 22:12, among others, Eusebius and his contemporary and fellow-countryman Ephrem both favour the same explanation. There is, however, no reason to assume that one of them borrowed from the other. The agreement can easily be explained by the common traits in their method of exegesis and their use of the Syriac Bible. Nevertheless, in order to answer the question of Syrian influence, it may be worthwhile to explore the relationship between Ephrem and Eusebius in more detail.

As Van Rompay explains in his contribution to this volume, Ephrem’s exegesis may be compared to the Antiochene, but there are certain differences in the genre of the respective commentaries and the way of dealing with the biblical text. Moreover, Ephrem makes quite extensive use of aggadic traditions, whereas the Antiochenes are critical of these. The aggadic material fits neatly into Ephrem’s genre: he provides a paraphrase of Genesis, often using it to fill in the gaps in the narrative. He employs the material in an uncritical, non-explicit way. I believe he is able to do so because of the congeniality of his genre and the narrative aggada. In more than one case, his additions to the biblical text have no parallel in Jewish sources; thus it could even be argued that he invented some of them himself.

Greek and Latin patristic literature used aggadic traditions somewhat differently. Kamesar makes clear that aggadic material was employed in an aspect of exegesis called τὰ ἱστορικά, the supplying of information pertaining to persons, places, dates, and events. Data from the aggada were especially useful in filling in gaps in the story, events that are passed over in silence (σχῆμα συμπλήρωσις in the Greek literary terminology), but which should be supplied for a full understanding of the story. This may seem comparable to what Ephrem is doing, but it is not the same thing. The Greek and Latin Fathers who belonged to what Kamesar calls the Palestinian-Alexandrian group, such as Origen,

Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome, used the aggada in a conscious and critical way. The data were taken out of their original literary context and before they were accepted, their consistency with the biblical text was assessed. The Antiochenes had an even less accommodating attitude to aggadic traditions. Kamesar explains that they did not want to exploit the σχῆμα σωφρίσκως for 'historical' interpretation. They only appealed to this feature of biblical style when required to do so by the immediate context. The Antiochenes, not surprisingly, were anxious not to add anything to the biblical text that was based on conjecture.

Eusebius, more than the other Antiochenes, appears to be aware of aggadic traditions, but like them, he warns against adding anything to the biblical text. He is a contemporary of Ephrem and both are Syrians; moreover, he is a pupil of Eusebius of Caesarea; but we can already discern some of the Antiochene uneasiness with regard to the aggadic traditions.

The commentary on Gen 22:12 points to another important difference between Ephrem and the Antiochenes: the latter show an awareness of the fact that the Septuagint is only a translation of the Hebrew text; they had a knowledge of translation problems; and they used other versions in their commentaries. We have seen that the knowledge of translation problems goes back to Eusebius’s bilingualism. The citing of other witnesses to the biblical text may be seen as a practical consequence, but Eusebius did not have to invent this procedure himself. Through his Caesarene namesake and as a result of his stay in Alexandria, Eusebius knew about Origen’s philological work and about the Hexapla. This must have inspired him. There is, however, also a clear difference between Origen and Eusebius. Origen fostered an idealistic view of the different witnesses: they all give no more than one image of the true text of the Bible, and thus all have their relative value — though it may be that the Septuagint was especially suited to the Christian community, through God’s ολίγονομία. Eusebius, on the other hand, adhered to the idea of the Hebraica veritas; his interest in translation problems stemmed from his bilingualism. Thus Eusebius and Origen proceeded

52 Kamesar, “The Evaluation of the Narrative Aggada”, 68.
53 See Novotný, “Les fragments exégétiques”, 32 (item 3 with n. 18).
from different premises. Kamesar rightly states that Eusebius did not know enough Hebrew to use the original text himself — which is why he used the Syriac Bible —, but this does not alter his intentions, which are comparable to those of Jerome, that other bilingual (and even trilingual) scholar.

**Conclusion**

In Eusebius’s commentary we have seen no allegorizing: he wants to solve problems by keeping to the plain sense, to the events as such. This does not mean that he has no other interests, such as the refutation of the Marcionites. In these respects he is in line with later Antiochenes and Ephrem. In his knowledge of the Syriac Bible and certain Jewish exegetical traditions, Eusebius is closer to Ephrem than to his followers, but with regard to the genre of his commentary and the acceptance of aggadic traditions, it is the other way round: Eusebius’s genre is strongly influenced by the pagan Greek grammarians, and we feel a growing dislike of the aggada in his commentary; by contrast, aggadic material is incorporated in a natural way into Ephrem’s work, which appears to be congenial with the narrative aggada.

As to the question with which this paper opened, I agree with Schäublin and others that the roots of the Antiochene method must be sought in the educational system of the late Hellenistic and imperial age. It can be argued, as Froehlich and Young do, that the Antiochene reaction against allegorism was the protest of rhetoric against the methods of the philosophical schools; Eusebius was, after all, known for his knowledge of rhetoric. However, other factors also played a role.

Thus the fact that Ephrem’s *Commentary on Genesis* displays the same attitude toward allegorism, although the genre of this work places him at some distance from the exegesis of the Greek grammarians and rhetors, gives food for thought. It may be argued that a more general aversion to the excesses of Origen’s allegorizing methods was a catalyst in the reaction against allegorism. There may also be apologetic motives that were important for the situation in Antioch and Edessa: Dilthey, for example, suggests that allegorical interpretations could not be used in the defence against the gnostics. In addition, it is not inconceivable that

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56 See Jerome’s *De Viris Inlustribus*, section 91 (see note 27 above).

57 “Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik”, 323 (see note 5 above).
Christian exegetes borrowed some of their attitude towards the biblical text from Jewish scholars, but the extent of this influence remains to be determined. If it did exist, the Syriac-speaking world may have played a mediating role, though the Antiochenes did not adopt the latter’s openness to the content of aggadic traditions.

For the moment, we can at least be sure of the following: the Syriac-speaking world contributed certain exegetical traditions, several readings from the Syriac Bible, and the person of Eusebius of Emesa. It was his bilingualism that made him aware of translation problems and led him to employ a different theoretical framework than Origen did to assess the various texts of the Bible, although the latter’s philological work was undoubtedly a source of inspiration to him. Through Eusebius of Emesa, later Antiochenes became acquainted with these issues.
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