

“The Hostile Devices of the Demented Demons”: Tatian on Astrology and Pharmacology

MATTHEW R. CRAWFORD

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Abstract

Approximately one-third of the *Oration to the Greeks* composed by Tatian the Assyrian is devoted to exposing the origin and current activity of demons in human affairs. The primary goal of the present article is to elucidate the source and logic of Tatian’s demonology, specifically as it relates to astrological fate and pharmacology, the two “hostile devices of the demented demons” that he denounces. I argue, first, that his focus upon these two areas is not by chance, but is due to the influence of *I Enoch*, since, like *I Enoch*, he holds that these domains of human expertise derive from malevolent heavenly beings. I argue, second, that Tatian’s criticisms of both astrology and pharmacology are structurally analogous insofar as he claims both are purely the product of demonic contrivance. As a result, these seeming areas of knowledge are in fact based upon nothing real or natural about the world but are instead arbitrary and nonsensical. Moreover, Tatian’s emphasis upon demonic delusion serves the polemical goal of his *Oration* in an additional way, since it casts the demons as a foil for Tatian himself. Unlike the demons, whom he compares to bandits, Tatian speaks as a representative of the true world order and its one legitimate ruler, and he offers his own *Oration* as a kind of harsh logotherapy that can accomplish the very thing the demons mendaciously claim to be able to effect through astrology and pharmacology.

Early Christianity received both from its Jewish as well as its Greco-Roman patrimony a notion of the demonic—or perhaps rather daemonic—and the simultaneous pressure exerted by these two traditions on occasion produced fascinatingly novel intellectual developments.¹ The convergence of these two

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¹ For several recent studies on the demonic in early Christianity, see David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Gregory A. Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008): 479–512; Dale Basil Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 657–77; Dayna S. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Heidi Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). See also the collected studies in Eva Elm and Nicole Hartmann, eds., *Demons in Late Antiquity: Their Perception and Transformation in Different Literary Genres* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019). For demons in the Platonic tradition, see Andrei Timotin, *La demonologie platonicienne: Histoire de la notion de daimon de Platon aux derniers neoplatoniciens* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

strands of demonological reflection is apparent already in one of the first Christian philosophical schools, that of Justin Martyr in mid-second-century Rome. Justin used a demonological discourse to explain the opposition that he and his community experienced, as he attributed such resistance to an ancient transgression with long-lasting effects. The primeval lapse in view is not the well-known Genesis account of Adam's fall from paradise, but rather the story preserved in *1 Enoch* of the descent of the Watchers.² The Watchers tradition first appears in Second Temple Jewish texts like *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* as an interpretation of the account of the antediluvian Nephilim in Genesis 6.1–4, and, in this expansion of the sparse Genesis account, the “sons of God” were angelic beings called “Watchers” who descended from heaven and mated with human women, producing gigantic mixed offspring. These giants were killed but their souls remained on earth as evil spirits, and, in the reception of this story, these evil spirits eventually came to be identified as demons.³ A central element in the etiology of evil set forth in the Watchers tradition is the notion that these fallen angels provided secret, forbidden knowledge to their human wives, which led to the corruption of human culture, and it was this feature

² Justin's dependence upon the Watchers tradition is a scholarly consensus, though some debate exists over whether he was influenced by *1 Enoch* or *Jubilees*. In fact, it has been suggested that he “follows the *Book of the Watchers* [*1 Enoch* 1–36] more closely than earlier Jews and Christians” (Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 160). See the similar conclusion reached by Randall D. Chesnutt, “The Descent of the Watchers and Its Aftermath According to Justin Martyr,” in *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblenz Bautch, and John C. Endres (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 171. A direct influence from *1 Enoch* upon Justin was also suggested by Richard Bauckham (“The Fall of the Angels as the Source of Philosophy in Hermias and Clement of Alexandria,” *VC* 39 [1985]: 319), though Loren Stuckenbruck proposed that the book of *Jubilees* could equally have been his source (“The Book of Enoch: Its Reception in Second Temple Jewish and in Christian Tradition,” *Early Christianity* 4 [2013]: 18). The list of second- and third-century authors and texts that made use of *1 Enoch* include the New Testament epistle of Jude, the *Pseudo-Clementine* literature, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, some of whom simply pass on traditions from the text while others cite it as authoritative and even scriptural. See the overviews of James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. James C. VanderKam and William Adler, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* III.4 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 33–101; Stuckenbruck, “The Book of Enoch,” 17–19. Annette Yoshiko Reed has highlighted the fact that in the *Apologies* Justin's etiology of evil relies on the Watchers tradition while in the *Dialogue with Trypho* he appeals to Adam and Eve for this purpose, a distinction that she argues reveals his different perspectives on the culpability and current state of the Jews over against that of the pagans (“The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr,” *J ECS* 12 [2004]: 141–71).

³ As emphasized by Martin, “When Did Angels Become Demons,” 667, “Nowhere in the Enochic material are the fallen angels (or those “Watchers” who sin) themselves said to be demons or even evil spirits. It is the *souls* of the dead giants—their *offspring*—that become evil spirits. And, contrary to some modern readings, it is a mistake to identify these evil spirits with ‘demons.’” Martin points out that it is in fact with Tatian that “full identification” between fallen angels and demons first occurs (676).

of the story that Justin seized upon, “emphasiz[ing] their pedagogical role in promulgating wickedness on earth.”⁴ Moreover, by identifying the angelic Watchers of *I Enoch* with the pantheon familiar to his pagan audience, Justin both “locate[d] the corruption of Greco-Roman culture firmly within biblical history” and was also able to “indict the whole system of imperial power, and to attack the divine pantheon that supports it as a false government, a form of demonic tyranny.”⁵

Demons continued to be a prominent feature in intellectual landscape of Justin’s students, at least based on the one surviving writing from someone said to have studied with him in Rome.⁶ I have in mind of course Tatian, the “Assyrian” or “barbarian” philosopher⁷ whose *Oration to the Greeks* is well known for its vehement rejection of Greco-Roman culture and yet also often ignored for precisely this reason.⁸ Approximately one-third of this treatise (*Or.* 7–20) is devoted to exposing the origin and current activity of demons in human affairs, and the demonology he lays out for his hearers is, in the words of one recent commentator, “one of the most complex in the whole context of early Christianity.”⁹ In the course of this section, Tatian expounds at length specifically upon astrology and

⁴ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 164.

⁵ Elaine Pagels, “Christian Apologists and the Fall of the Angels: An Attack on Roman Imperial Power,” *HTR* 78 (1985): 301.

⁶ On the relation of Tatian to Justin, see especially these analyses: R. Hanig, “Tatian und Justin. Ein Vergleich,” *VC* 53 (1999): 31–73; Jörg Trelenberg, *Tatianos. Oratio ad Graecos. Rede an die Griechen*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 165 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 195–203. In this study I use Trelenberg’s edition of Tatian’s *Oration*. All translations are my own, though I have usefully consulted the most recent English translation in Molly Whittaker, *Tatian: Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

⁷ Tatian, *Or.* 42.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 191). On the implications of Tatian’s identification as an “Assyrian,” see Laura Nasrallah, “Mapping the World: Justin, Tatian, Lucian, and the Second Sophistic,” *HTR* 98 (2005): 298–306; Nathanael Andrade, “Assyrians, Syrians and the Greek Language in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Imperial Periods,” *JNES* 73 (2014): 311–16; Matthew R. Crawford, “Tatian, Celsus, and Christianity as ‘Barbarian Philosophy’ in the Late Second Century,” in *The Christian Intellectual in the Second Century*, ed. Lewis Ayres and H. Clifton Ward (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

⁸ Cf. Laura Salah Nasrallah, “‘I Do Not Wish to be Rich’: The ‘Barbarian’ Christian Tatian Responds to *Sortes*,” in *My Lots Are in Thy Hands: Sortilege and Its Practitioners in Late Antiquity*, ed. AnneMarie Luijendijk, William E. Klingshirn, and Lance Jennot (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 294: “even most scholars of early Christianity do not like and therefore ignore Tatian.” J. Geffcken once called Tatian “one of the most difficult apologists” (*Zwei griechische Apologeten* [Leipzig and Berlin, 1907], 105).

⁹ Andrei Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” in *Gegen falsche Götter und falsche Bildung. Tatian, Rede an die Griechen*, ed. Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, Sapere 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 274. On Tatian’s demonology, see also Heinrich Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister bei den griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts nach Christus* (Winterthur: P.G. Keller, 1957), 61–90, 186–225; M. Elze, *Tatian und seine Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 100–103; G. F. Hawthorne, “Tatian and His Discourse to the Greeks,” *HTR* 57 (1964): 174–75; Robert M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 130–31; Emily J. Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian*, Routledge Early Church Monographs (London: Routledge, 2003),

pharmacology, denouncing them as the “hostile devices of the demented demons” and producing the most extensive discussion of these topics up to this point in Jewish or Christian literature.¹⁰ The primary goal of the present article is to elucidate the source and logic of Tatian’s demonology, specifically as it relates to these domains of human knowledge and expertise. I argue, first, that his focus upon these two areas is not by chance, but is due to the influence of *I Enoch*, since, like *I Enoch*, he holds that they derive from malevolent heavenly beings.¹¹ I argue, second, that Tatian’s criticisms of both astrology and pharmacology are structurally analogous insofar as he claims both are purely the product of demonic contrivance. As a result, these seeming areas of knowledge are in fact based upon nothing real or natural about the world but are instead arbitrary and nonsensical. He therefore offers, so I will argue, a much more radical critique of these two areas than has been recognized in recent scholarship on this question. Moreover, Tatian’s emphasis upon demonic contrivance serves the polemical goal of his *Oration* in an additional way, since it casts the demons as a foil for Tatian himself. Unlike the demons, whom he compares to bandits, Tatian speaks as a representative of the true world order and its one legitimate ruler, and he offers his own *Oration* as a kind of harsh logotherapy that can accomplish the very thing the demons mendaciously claim to be able to effect through astrology and pharmacology.

Before moving on to Tatian, first a brief word about the relation of Justin to *I Enoch*. Justin’s

133–36; Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 45–49; Chiara Crosignani, “The Influence of Demons on the Human Mind According to Athenagoras and Tatian,” in *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period*, ed. Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 175–91.

¹⁰ Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 278, observed that Tatian is “viel origineller in der Darstellung der (bösen) Tätigkeiten der Dämonen.”

¹¹ Tatian is not mentioned at all in Stuckenbruck, “The Book of Enoch.” Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 175n29, denied that Tatian knows the *Book of the Watchers* but conceded that he “seem[s] to develop traditions found in the writings of Justin and other Christian apologists.” VanderKam, “1 Enoch,” 65, acknowledged that Tatian “used the Watcher story . . . though he does so in less clear form than his mentor.” He then highlighted Tatian’s comments about the fall of the demons in *Or.* 8 and 19 but failed to notice the clearest indication that Tatian was influenced by the story, namely his comments about astrology and pharmacology. The authors who have come the closest to anticipating the present argument about *I Enoch*’s influence upon Tatian are Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian” and Crosignani, “The Influence of Demons on the Human Mind.” Timotin pointed out the influence of Hellenistic Judaism upon Tatian’s demonology and cited several passages from *I Enoch* as representative examples, including *I Enoch* 8.3 about “magic” (see “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 279, 285). Crosignani’s arguments will be addressed later in this article.

most direct comment about the origin of the “demon-ridden universe”¹² in which he lived comes early in his *2 Apology* 4,¹³ and it is this passage more than any other that has convinced scholars that he was influenced by the *Book of the Watchers* in *1 Enoch* 1–36. Like that earlier text, Justin maintains a distinction between the originally good angelic beings appointed over human affairs and the offspring born to them through their mating with human women; like *1 Enoch* 19.1 he attributes the origins of pagan idolatry to the influence of these beings; like *1 Enoch* 8.3 he asserts that they are responsible for teaching humanity the use of magic; and finally, like *1 Enoch* 8.1 he claims that they introduced war, violence, sexual immorality, and all other kinds of evil into human society. Justin’s focus on the instruction the fallen angels passed on to humans “exploits an aspect of the angelic descent myth that lay largely latent in the *Book of the Watchers*,”¹⁴ since earlier interpretations of the book, among both Jewish and Christian authors, had largely ignored this element of the narrative.

Yet there are aspects of the *Book of the Watchers* that Justin does not mention. *1 Enoch* 8.1–3 specifies three domains of illicit knowledge that the fallen Watchers taught to their human wives: first, “cultural arts connected to metalworking and ornamentation (8.1–2)”; second, “magical skills such as sorcery and pharmacology (7.1cd; 8.3ab)”; and third, “divination from cosmological phenomena (8.3c–g).”¹⁵ Despite Justin’s evident dependence upon this text, he only explicitly mentions one of these three types of knowledge, cryptically alluding to demonic “magical changes”¹⁶ and focusing for the most part on the effects illicit knowledge had upon humanity, namely “murders” and “wars” (presumably

¹² Theodoor Korteweg, “Justin Martyr and His Demon-Ridden Universe,” in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, ed. Nienke Vos and Willemien Otten (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

¹³ See Justin, *2 Apol.* 4.2–6 (Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, OECT [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], 282–85).

¹⁴ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 172.

¹⁵ I follow here the summary of Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 37. See Reed’s full discussion of the various interpretive issues that arise from *1 Enoch* with respect to the topics of angelic teaching on pages 37–44. For a discussion of the complicated issues surrounding the reconstruction and history of this text, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 188–201.

¹⁶ Following Thirlby’s edition of Justin’s corpus, Parvis and Minns emend the manuscript reading γραφῶν to στροφῶν here, explaining that with this phrase “Justin refers to the demons assuming different shapes in their efforts to mislead” (*Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 111n6, commenting on *1 Apol.* 14.1, where the same phrase is used). If the manuscript reading is adopted rather than their emendation, it would be “magical writings” rather than “magical changes.”

resulting from metalworking), as well as “adulteries” and “licentiousness” (presumably resulting from cosmetics).¹⁷ Tatian, as we will soon see, carries forward Justin’s Enochic emphasis upon illicit knowledge passed on by demons, but focuses upon pharmacology and divination from cosmological phenomena, areas that his teacher had passed over in silence, at least in his surviving works.

THE DEMONIC ORIGINS OF ASTROLOGY

Astrology occurs first in the sequence of the *Oratio*, so I will begin by addressing it.¹⁸ The discussion of this topic occupies chapters 8–11, following on logically from chapter 7 which introduces the fallen angels as those who have rebelled against the divinely ordained order, with the result that they lost the immortality originally given to them by the heavenly Word. Accordingly, at the opening of chapter 8 Tatian asserts,

Humans became the focus of [the demons’] revolt. For like dice-players they showed them a chart of the constellations and introduced them to fate—an exceedingly unjust thing.

Ἐπιπέσεις δὲ αὐτοῖς τῆς ἀποστασίας οἱ ἄνθρωποι γίνονται. Διάγραμμα γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἀστροθεσίας ἀναδείξαντες (ὥσπερ οἱ τοῖς κύβοις παίζοντες), τὴν εἰμαρμένην εἰσηγήσαντο λίαν ἄδικον.¹⁹

Far from being a “digression” as Whittaker marked it in her outline of the *Oratio*,²⁰ the connecting γάρ clearly indicates that Tatian is presenting astrology as one way in which humanity was influenced by the demons’ apostasy. Recently Laura Salah Nasrallah has argued that the mention of “dice-players” here might indicate that he has in mind divination by sortilege, that is, the throwing of dice to receive

¹⁷ Justin, *2 Apol.* 4.2–6 (Minns and Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr*, 282–85)

¹⁸ On Tatian’s polemic against astrology, see Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister*, 194–204; Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 63–66; Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 278–81.

¹⁹ Tatian, *Or.* 8.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 102).

²⁰ Whittaker, *Tatian: Oratio ad Graecos*, xviii. Trelenberg’s outline of the *Oratio* similarly obscures the unity of this section by structuring *Or.* 5–20 around topics within Christian theology, namely creation, eschatology, demonology, psychology, and anthropology (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 28–29).

an oracular response to a specific question.²¹ While it is possible that sortilege may be one of the divinatory practices Tatian has in view, there can be no doubt that his main focus in this section is on the attempt to determine one's fate using the stars, as can be seen in the reference above to a "chart of constellations." As he asserts in even plainer terms farther on in this section, "the drawing of the Zodiac circle is a creation of the gods" (Ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ζῳδιακοῦ κύκλου γραφή θεῶν ἐστὶ ποίημα).²² Tatian gives a few hints of what kind of diagram he envisions, asserting that the demons included in it representations of the earth-bound creatures among whom they had come to live following their fall from heaven. Clearly he has in mind actual constellations known to the Greeks, and he mentions over a dozen of them as examples, mocking them all as absurd.²³

The mention of "dice-players" at the outset of this section is in fact more a statement about the demons themselves than it is about humans who attempt to use dice for prognostication, for it resonates with two other later comments Tatian makes that present the fallen angels as taking pleasure in the misfortune of their human victims. "Every [human] birth" (πᾶσά . . . γένεσις), he says, became an occasion for the demons' "amusement, as in a theatre" (ὥσπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ τερπωλῆν).²⁴ Later he says that "the seven planets amuse them, like people who are playing checkers" (εὐαρεστοῦσι δὲ αὐτοῖς οἱ ἐπὶ πλανῆται, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς πεσσοῖς ἀθύροντες).²⁵ Of course, the enjoyment is purely on the side of the demons and does not extend to the humans who are tricked into seeking knowledge about their lives through astrology. From the earth-bound perspective, humans are the "offspring of fate itself" (τῆς αὐτῆς εἰμαρμένης . . . ἀπογεννήματα), which determines whether they are the judge or the

²¹ Laura Salah Nasrallah, "Lot Oracles and Fate: On Early Christianity among Others in the Second Century," ed. James Carleton Paget and Judith Lieu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 214–31; Nasrallah, "I Do Not Wish to Be Rich," 290–308. Nasrallah focuses especially on the paragraph in which Tatian slips into the first person singular and provides a list of possible concerns that might lead one to practice sortilege, such as ruling, becoming rich, and pursuing sexual pleasure (*Or.* 11.1). The issues he mentions overlap significantly with those that occur in sources such as the *Sortes Astrampsychi*.

²² Tatian, *Or.* 9.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108).

²³ Tatian, *Or.* 9.4–10.5 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108–12).

²⁴ Tatian, *Or.* 8.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 102).

²⁵ Tatian, *Or.* 9.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108).

condemned, murders or the murdered, rich or poor.²⁶ The gravity of these human experiences only accentuates the maliciousness of the demons who introduced the notion of fate as a kind of sport for themselves.

It is important not to miss the specificity and concreteness of Tatian's claim in this section. He is not merely saying that astrology and the idea of fate are morally perverse, or intellectually incoherent, or incompatible with Christian revelation, but rather that fallen angels, who are to be identified with the "gods" of classical Greece, drew some sort of astrological chart and gave it to humans, teaching them how to use it for the purpose of supposedly determining someone's "fate." He is, so far as I can tell, the first Christian author to claim as much, though a striking precedent for his assertion is the account of *I Enoch* 8.3 that "the ninth [leader of the Watchers] taught [humanity] the study of the stars [ἄστροσκοπίαν]. The fourth taught astrology [ἄστρολογία]. The eighth taught divination by observing the heavens. The third taught the signs of the earth. The seventh taught the signs of the sun. The twentieth taught the signs of the moon."²⁷ Whether Tatian only encountered *I Enoch* orally through Justin's instruction, or whether he read the text for himself, his comments about astrology make sense as a straightforward reading of this passage.²⁸

Tatian's presentation of the zodiac as a demonic contrivance raises the question of whether he thinks the knowledge passed on to humans by demons is true knowledge at all, in the sense of being based upon something real in the cosmos. It would be intuitive to expect that angelic beings who had

²⁶ Tatian, *Or.* 8.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 102).

²⁷ *I Enoch* 8.3. I am translating from the Greek version of this passage preserved by the Byzantine chronicler George Synkellos, which differs somewhat from the alternate Greek version found in the sixth-century Gizeh fragment as well as from the Ethiopic and Aramaic traditions. See M. Black, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece* (Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece 3; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 22. Nevertheless, in all the versions, it is astrological knowledge and the interpretation of celestial "signs" that is the content of the Watchers' illicit instruction. In my translation of Synkellos I follow William Adler and Paul Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 17.

²⁸ Nasrallah has claimed that Tatian's "perspective is not a product of his Christian identity, or of his barbarian flag" ("I Do Not Wish to be Rich," 306; see the similar statement in "Lot Oracles and Fate," 229). However, if the suggestion here is correct and Tatian's opposition to astrological divination stems in part from this passage of *I Enoch*, then this is at least one distinctly Jewish-Christian (and so "barbarian") factor that has contributed to his rejection of astrological divination.

once dwelt in heaven possessed knowledge about cosmological processes that was inaccessible to humans, and, if the movement of the heavenly bodies does indeed impinge upon human destiny, then these demonic beings might be in a position to reveal such knowledge. Or did Tatian deny the efficacy of fate altogether, as though it were purely artificial and conjured up merely for the demons' enjoyment? These two different stances towards fate can be seen in two of Tatian's contemporaries. His teacher Justin, in explicit denial of what he took to be a Stoic doctrine, claimed, "Nor do we say that it is according to fate (καθ' εἰμαρμένην) that human beings do or suffer what they do or suffer, but that each one acts rightly or errs according to choice."²⁹ On the other hand, the late second-century Valentinian named Theodotus wrote, "Until baptism, they say, fate is true, but after it the astrologers no longer speak the truth."³⁰ Nicola Denzey Lewis has claimed that Tatian, like Theodotus, "did not deny the efficacy of *heimarmene*, at least for a portion of the population," that is, the portion of the population that had not yet experienced the waters of baptism.³¹ Additionally, in the most recent study of Tatian's demonology, Andrei Timotin similarly stated, "Tatian by no means denies the influence of the horoscope and the planets on the lives of humans."³² On this reading, Tatian actually did believe the astrological chart furnished to humanity by the demons accurately predicted the fate of those humans who had not escaped its influence, and so was indeed true knowledge.

It is not hard to see why Tatian has been interpreted in this manner, in light of such passages as the previously cited description of humanity as the "offspring of fate." In addition he straightforwardly asserts, "the judge and the condemned have become what they are due to fate" (ὁ τε γὰρ κρίνων καὶ ὁ κρινόμενος καθ' εἰμαρμένην εἰσὶν γεγονότες) and both rich and poor "belong to those who ordained

²⁹ Justin, *2 Apol.* 6.3 (Minns and Parvis, 292–93). Cf. *2 Apol.* 6.9.

³⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Ex. Thdot.* 78.1 (Otto Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus III*, GCS 17 [Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1909], 131).

³¹ Nicola Denzey Lewis, *Cosmology and Fate in Gnosticism and Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Under Pitiless Skies*, NHS 81 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 185. Her more extended analysis of Tatian occurs on pages 156–59, where she writes, "[Tatian] did not actually reject the cosmological *schema* employed by his contemporaries. Tatian believed that fate existed, if only as a demonic construct."

³² Timotin, "Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian," 278–79.

their nativity” (ἔστι τῶν νομοθετησάντων τὴν γένεσιν).³³ The demons, he says, “defined fate” (τὴν εἰμαρμένην ὥρισαν),³⁴ and are thus its “lawgivers” (τοὺς ταύτης νομοθέτας) and “administrators” (τοὺς οἰκονόμους),³⁵ with the aim of their governance being to “make the irrational regulation of life on earth seem well ordered through the constellations” (τὴν ἄλογον ἐπὶ γῆς πολιτείαν εὐλογον διὰ τῆς ἀστροθεσίας ἀποδείξωσιν).³⁶ Such passages imply that, though their rule may be malicious, the laws that the demons oversee are nevertheless efficacious for those under their power.

However, this is not the only possible way of taking these statements. Using the *Oration* to uncover Tatian’s own views is certainly not impossible, but is complicated by the playfulness, irony, and extreme polemic that he deploys as a part of his rhetorical strategy.³⁷ For example, although he describes the demons as “wanderers” (πλανητῶν δαιμόνων), seeming to imply that the demons themselves are the seven planets that determine one’s destiny, he also clearly states that they no longer live in heaven but instead merely hope to make humans believe they reside there.³⁸ The latter passage must mean that Tatian does *not* think the demons are the planets—at least in their current state of existence—so in the former passage he must be making a pun on the Greeks’ own view, without endorsing it himself. Perhaps the same is true for those passages mentioned in the last paragraph that seem to concede the reality and efficacy of fate. That is, these might also be instances of Tatian speaking back to the Greeks what he understands their views to be, without himself endorsing them.

³³ Tatian, *Or.* 8.1; 9.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 102, 108).

³⁴ Tatian, *Or.* 9.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 106).

³⁵ Tatian, *Or.* 9.3; 11.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108, 114).

³⁶ Tatian, *Or.* 9.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 106–8).

³⁷ A similar conclusion was reached by Michael McGehee, “Why Tatian Never ‘Apologized’ to the Greeks,” *J ECS* 1 (1993): 143–58. On Tatian’s use of rhetoric, see also Dimitrios Karadimas, *Tatian’s Oratio ad Graecos: Rhetoric and Philosophy/Theology* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003).

³⁸ Tatian, *Or.* 9.1; 9.3 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108). Pace Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 280, who cited this passage and asserted that Tatian did believe the planets were demons. Trelenberg, on the other hand, rightly recognized that Tatian is arguing for “die Entgöttlichung der Natur,” specifically the heavenly bodies (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 64). On the identification of the stars or planets with demons, see the overview in Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: A History of an Idea*, OECS (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 83–103. Tatian’s statement also suggests that even if the demons once had access to knowledge about the working of the heavenly bodies by virtue of their heavenly abode, their realm of existence and influence is now restricted to the earth.

Such an interpretation is suggested by other passages in his *Oration* that would align him more closely with his teacher's rejection of fate altogether. Key here is the moment when he interrupts his catalogue of constellations to ask rhetorically, "how then was it that heaven was in disorder before these were placed in their pre-arranged positions?" (εἶτα πῶς πρὶν τούτους περὶ τὰς προειρημένας τάξεις γενέσθαι ἀκόσμητος ἦν ὁ οὐρανός;).³⁹ The τούτους of this sentence refers to the constellations he has just been rattling off, including Erigone's dog (the constellation Procyon), Chiron the Centaur (Centaurus), and Callisto's bear (Ursa major). These are some of the patterns in the sky used by the demons to "make the irrational regulation of life on earth seem well ordered" and the clear inference of Tatian's rhetorical question is that heaven, on the contrary, was not "in disorder" prior to the demons introducing humans to such astrological drawings. Rather, the world, so he seems to suggest, was already sufficiently "ordered" by virtue of its creation by the divine Logos (see *Or.* 5).

This interpretation of Tatian's seeming endorsement of fate is also suggested by the overall message of this lengthy passage in which he mocks the constellations.⁴⁰ His criticisms are numerous, but include the following. Why are these constellations apparent in the sky and not others? Why do people disagree over the identity of the constellations? Some of those persons and gods for whom constellations do appear are morally depraved and so unworthy of such honor. And how is it that even very recent persons, such as Hadrian's lover Antinous, were supposedly taken to heaven and given shrines? The point of such criticisms, I suggest, is to sever the supposedly intuitive link between the heavenly phenomena evident to the eye and the patterns of constellations that humans, under demonic influence, use to order and make sense of those phenomena. It is as if Tatian is saying there is nothing intrinsic, natural, or necessary about these constellations the demons introduced to the Greeks. They are instead *arbitrary*, and if there is no real correspondence between the actual heavenly bodies and the patterns used by the demons to give meaning to those phenomena, then the supposed logic of

³⁹ Tatian, *Or.* 9.5 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108).

⁴⁰ Tatian, *Or.* 9–10 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 106–12).

astrological determinism is exposed as fallacious, implying that the entire system is nothing more than an elaborate game made up by the demons for their enjoyment.

In short, Tatian's attack on the constellations is fundamentally a claim that astrological determinism is absurd, or, in his own words, "nonsense" (λῆρος),⁴¹ which would seem to imply that fate has no power over anyone. Such a position is in tension with the passages noted above in which he affirms that people are subject to their star-defined destiny. Discerning Tatian's own view on this question requires taking into account both aspects of his *Oratio*, and thus far those scholars who have argued he affirmed the power of fate have not discussed how to make sense of his attack on the constellations. Of course, it could be, as Jörg Trelenberg has suggested, that Tatian is simply inconsistent and ambivalent,⁴² but another way of making sense of these two features of the *Oratio* is to posit that his seeming affirmations of fate are merely descriptions of the views of his opponents. This interpretation has the virtue of being analogous to his more explicit criticism of pharmacology that we will examine next. Another piece of evidence that supports the interpretation I am proposing is that, in a passage where he is clearly stating his own view, Tatian does indeed affirm the reality of fate, but not the kind determined by the stars. The demons themselves, he avers, are "ruled by the same passions as humans," and so "have fallen under fate."⁴³ His point is obscure, but becomes clearer if we posit that he is eliding the notion of "fate" with "slavery" to a certain destiny and then redefining that "slavery" as being ruled by the passions, a bondage possible for both demons and humans. And if this slavery to the passions is the kind of "fate" that is real, it is one that, according to Tatian, humans have the ability to escape through restraint of desire,⁴⁴ a position that echoes Justin's statement that people have the

⁴¹ Tatian, *Or.* 9.7 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 104). My interpretation of this passage is in keeping with Trelenberg's, who similarly said Tatian is aiming to show "die Nichtigkeit einer Pseudo-Wissenschaft" (*Oratio*, 63).

⁴² Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 65.

⁴³ Tatian, *Or.* 8.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 104). Timotin, "Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian," 279–80, noted that Tatian's point in this passage is "somewhat confused" but helpfully points out that in Middle Platonism passions were commonly associated with daimons.

⁴⁴ Tatian, *Or.* 11.4 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 114).

ability to choose whether they will act rightly or do wrong.

THE DEMONIC ORIGINS OF PHARMACOLOGY

The next four chapters of the *Oration* seem to shift topic to discuss the material constitution of humans and demons (*Or.* 12–15). In fact, however, this section is a continuation of the theme of the angelic fall introduced in *Or.* 7, with Tatian now describing the deleterious anthropological aspects of the cosmological disorder brought about by the heavenly rebellion. By losing the divine “spirit,” humans were left with merely a “soul,” which became mortal in the absence of its more heavenly companion and so liable to the influence of the demons.⁴⁵ The demons themselves likewise were originally made “from matter” and their fall coincided with a turning downwards towards greater materiality, a direction to which they try to draw humans as well.⁴⁶ Humans who still lack the divine “spirit” are unable to see the demons, but those who, like Tatian, are “guarded by the Spirit of God can easily perceive the bodies of demons,” and so escape their tyranny.⁴⁷

This discourse on corporeality leads to the second example Tatian provides of the “hostile devices of the demented demons” (τὰ . . . παραφύρων δαιμόνων . . . ἀντισοφιστεύματα),⁴⁸ namely disease and healing, which he discusses in chapters 16–18.⁴⁹ He stops short of ascribing all disease to demonic influence but he does believe the demons on occasion do directly cause disease, and, even when they are not responsible, they often claim to be:

Now there are diseases and disorders of the matter within us, but the demons take credit for these whenever they occur, and follow sickness wherever it strikes. Sometimes too they shake the body’s system with a fit of their own

⁴⁵ Tatian, *Or.* 12.1; 13.1, 4 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 114–16; 120).

⁴⁶ Tatian, *Or.* 12.5–6; 13.3; 15.8–9 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 118; 120; 126).

⁴⁷ Tatian, *Or.* 15.6–7 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 126).

⁴⁸ Tatian, *Or.* 12.10 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 118).

⁴⁹ For a discussion of this passage, see Owsei Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 119–23; Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 283–86.

madness.⁵⁰

It is possible that the compound subject of the first sentence here is a hendiadys, such that Tatian thinks “diseases” (νόσοι) simply are “disorders of the matter within us” (στάσεις τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ὕλης). Certainly “matter” is a prominent topic in his argument against pharmacology, as we shall shortly see. He does later in passing acknowledge that some diseases stem from environmental factors. Unlike “superior ages” that have a “wholly good climate,” the present world endures “changes of seasons through which come various diseases (ποικίλαι νόσοι).”⁵¹ Yet it is the demonic etiology of certain diseases that Tatian focuses the most upon, which he describes with an elaborate metaphor:

The demons do not heal, but by craft they take people prisoner Just as bandits are in the habit of capturing people and then releasing them to their families on payment, so too those supposed gods visit people’s body parts, and then in dreams create an impression of their presence and order their victims to come forward publicly in sight of all. When they have enjoyed the encomia they fly away from the sick, terminate the disease they have caused, and restore these people back to their previous state.⁵²

This emphasis upon dreams and divine healing reflects a common connection between the two at the time, seen most famously in the cult of Asclepius, in whose temple pilgrims would spend the night in hopes of receiving a dream from the god that would effect a cure.⁵³ Tatian’s contemporary and fellow rhetorician Aelius Aristides highlighted such dreams in his *Sacred Tales*, expressing a special devotion to Asclepius, and in this respect was representative of the medical views common in the second-century

⁵⁰ Tatian, *Or.* 16.8 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 128).

⁵¹ Tatian, *Or.* 20.4 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 138–40).

⁵² Tatian, *Or.* 18.5–6 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 134). On hostage-taking in the Roman Empire, see Joel Allen, *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). At first glance, the opening sentence of this excerpt (“the demons do not heal”) seems to be contrary to the claim at the end that the demons “terminate disease.” Most likely in this passage Tatian is making an implicit distinction between the supposed “healing” accomplished by the demons and the true healing that is only available from God. See the next section of this article for further discussion of Tatian’s proposed alternative therapy.

⁵³ On incubation, see the special issue of *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 17 (2013): 1–159, titled “Heil und Heilung: Inkubation—Heilung im Schlaf: Heidnischer Kult und christliche Praxis.”

Greco-Roman world that Tatian inhabited.⁵⁴

Tatian, however, inverts this cultural norm by asserting that when the gods heal a sick person who calls upon them, they are merely removing the suffering that they themselves had caused, and that they undertake this elaborate game because they enjoy hearing speeches in their honor, precisely the sort of encomia composed by Aristides.⁵⁵ In the most recent discussion of these passages in Tatian's *Oration*, Chiara Crosignani has argued that the action of demons upon humans "is only apparent and is conveyed to the body only because the mind works as the demon wants." In other words, demons merely "make men believe that their action also affects the body."⁵⁶ This, in my view, overlooks the directness of Tatian's language in the two passages highlighted above. The demons themselves "shake the body's system" (κραδαίνουσιν τὴν ἔξιν τοῦ σώματος) and "terminate the disease that they have brought about" (ἦν ἐπραγματεύσαντο νόσον περιγράφοντες). In Tatian's view, demons can influence the human body, and at least some diseases suffered by humans are due to direct demonic agency.

The idea that demons are responsible for some diseases is not exceptional in the ancient world⁵⁷ and indeed is a straightforward reading of some of the healing stories in the New Testament. Where Tatian's argument becomes truly original is in his comments on a method of treating disease, specifically φαρμακεία. He rejects everything under this heading just as strongly as he did astrology in the previous section: "Pharmacology in all its forms is due to the same artificial devising" (Φαρμακεία

⁵⁴ Cf. Ido Israelowich, *Society, Medicine and Religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, Mnemosyne Supplements 341 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), who argued that Aristides's devotion to Asclepius was not that of an eccentric, as is often thought, but rather was typical of his age. The connection with Aristides is also noted by Timotin, "Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian," 286.

⁵⁵ As recognized also by Vivian Nutton, "Murders and Miracles: Lay Attitudes Towards Medicine in Classical Antiquity," in *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 50. Tatian is, nevertheless, not entirely inverting the cultural norms of his day. Philip van der Eijk has highlighted the ancient proverb "he who caused the affliction will also cure it" (ὁ τρώσας αὐτὸς ἰάσεται) ("Galen and Early Christians on the Role of the Divine in the Causation and Treatment of Health and Disease," *Early Christianity* 5 [2014]: 361), which is remarkably close to Tatian's description in this passage.

⁵⁶ Crosignani, "The Influence of Demons," 177.

⁵⁷ Cf. Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider, eds., *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period*, Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Christoph Marksches, "Demons and Disease," *SP* 81 (2017): 11–35; van der Eijk, "Galen and Early Christians," 360–68. However, not everyone in the ancient world agreed that divine or semi-divine beings had a role in causing disease. Van der Eijk pointed out that both Galen and the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* deny such a claim.

δὲ καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ εἶδος τῆς αὐτῆς ἐστὶν ἐπιτεχνήσεως).⁵⁸ As is well known, φαρμακεία was a capacious term that could refer both to compounds that heal as well as those that harm. Tatian acknowledges this polyvalence, referring to both “poisons” (τὰ δηλητήρια) and “remedies” (τὰ ἰώμενα) under this heading and rejecting them both for the same reason—the fact that they are “material compounds” (συνθέσεις ὑλικαί).⁵⁹ He even denounces those who would admit the corruptness of matter but still employ pharmacology as though “using evil means to accomplish good” (τοῖς κακοῖς κἂν πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν καταχρήσονται).⁶⁰ Such a mediating position he regards as meriting the same divine punishment as the demons who contrived these compounds.

And this is indeed his fundamental reason for taking such an uncompromising stance—the demons themselves are responsible for introducing φαρμακεία to humanity and their activity accounts for its seeming potency. The key passage in which he makes this claim is the following:

This is the manner of the [demons’] contrivance (μηχανῆς): just as the shapes of letters and the sentences formed from them cannot by themselves give meaning to what has been composed, but, rather, people have created for themselves symbols of their thoughts and from the nature of their combination (σύνθεσιν) know how the order of the letters has been prescribed to be—similarly the varieties of roots and applications of sinews and bones are not efficacious (δραστικά) in themselves but are the fundamental principles (στοιχείωσις) of the wickedness of the demons, who have ordained (ὀρίκασιν) that each of them should be effective for the relevant things.⁶¹

There are at least two points made in this passage that echo the earlier discussion of astrology. Just as

⁵⁸ Tatian, *Or.* 18.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 132).

⁵⁹ Tatian, *Or.* 18.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 132). Against Darrel W. Amundsen, “Tatian’s ‘Rejection’ of Medicine in the Second Century,” in *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 162, who suggested that “Tatian seemed to know pretty well—for his purposes, that is—what magic was and what it was not. While sympathy and antipathy and the use of amulets were magic in Tatian’s view, the use of drugs were not.” I see no such distinction in the *Oration*. My reading is more in line with Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister*, 217–18, who commented that “man könnte sagen, für Tatian ständen eben auch hinter den echten Heilmitteln die Dämonen.”

⁶⁰ Tatian, *Or.* 18.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 132).

⁶¹ Tatian, *Or.* 17.4 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 130). Note that in this passage Tatian uses the word σύνθεσις to refer to the combination of letters forming words. This is the same word he used earlier for pharmacological compounds (*Or.* 18.2 [Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 132]).

Tatian previously said the demons “defined [astrological] fate” (τὴν εἰμαρμένην ὄρισαν),⁶² so here he says they “have ordained” (ὠρίκασιν) the effectiveness of certain treatments. They are, therefore, directly responsible for creating this area of knowledge and expertise. Moreover, just as earlier he had said that the στοιχείωσις used by the demons to develop astrology was the “making alive” (ζῳωσις) of the stars by projecting animal-like patterns upon the sky,⁶³ so here he says that the στοιχείωσις—we might even translate it as “raw material”—of demonic pharmacology was the material substances they used as treatments.

No doubt the most striking claim in the above passage is that the material substances used in φαρμακεία have no efficacy in themselves, a point that Tatian illustrates with the analogy of language. Rejecting the ancient view that saw meaning as inherent in a word by its very nature, Tatian sides with the conventionalists who denied that words possessed intrinsic meaning and instead posited that meaning arose purely from the way humans decided to use them. In other words, Tatian takes the view that the meaning of a given term is, cosmologically speaking, *arbitrary*, in the sense of not being based upon anything in nature. The same is true, so he claims, for φαρμακεία as well. There is no necessary, intrinsic, or natural link between the application of a specific root to a specific ailment and the resulting relief from suffering. Rather, the perceived efficacy of the compound is due solely to demonic contrivance. This interpretation of the above passage is strengthened by Tatian’s rejection of the medical theory of sympathies and antipathies, attributed to Democritus of Abdera, according to which a πάθος could be cured by an ἀντιπαθεία.⁶⁴ Such a view takes for granted that there is a correspondence between an ailment and its cure, some physical or cosmological explanation for the efficacy of material

⁶² Tatian, *Or.* 9.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 106).

⁶³ Tatian, *Or.* 9.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 106).

⁶⁴ Tatian, *Or.* 17.1, 3 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 128, 130). There is in fact a short second-century text attributed to an otherwise unknown Nepualius that bears the title Περὶ τῶν κατὰ ἀντιπάθειαν καὶ συμπάθειαν and represents the sort of theory Tatian must have had in mind. At *Or.* 18.4 Tatian provides a short list of animals that self-medicate with specific remedies (e.g., a dog eating grass), and the same four examples appear at the start of a much longer list in Nepualius’s work, as recognized by Robert M. Grant, *Early Christians and Animals* (London: Routledge, 2001), 10. Nepualius’s text can be found in W. Gemoll, *Nepualii fragmentum Περὶ τῶν κατὰ ἀντιπάθειαν καὶ συμπάθειαν et Democriti Περὶ συμπαθειῶν καὶ ἀντιπαθειῶν* (Striegau: Druck von Ph. Tschörner, 1884).

compounds. In place of any such account Tatian inserts the direct agency of the demons who lead humans astray.⁶⁵ If one places this stark position in parallel with Tatian's criticism of astrological determinism discussed above, it strengthens the preceding argument that he was not conceding any reality to fate but was attempting to undermine the assumed cosmological foundations upon which it supposedly rested, just as he does with *φαρμακεία*.

Recent scholarship has attempted to rescue Tatian from the embarrassment of his extreme opposition to ancient medical knowledge by pointing out that he rejected only pharmacology, and has nothing to say about the other two branches of ancient medicine, diet and surgery.⁶⁶ Although this is a correct and useful nuance, these apologetic attempts have gone too far in watering down this passage of his *Oration* in an attempt to maintain the thesis that Christians in antiquity "held views regarding the use of medicine and the healing of disease that did not differ appreciably from those that were widely taken for granted in the Greco-Roman world in which they lived."⁶⁷ Coming from a different perspective, Andrei Timotin has suggested that Tatian's concern is not with medicine per se, but rather with "the divine power that was presumed to lie behind it," such that Tatian is only really denying "the

⁶⁵ The interpretation of Tatian offered here is contrary to that of Timotin, "Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian," 284, who suggested that both with respect to astrology and pharmacology, the demons control human's fate "by using the *sympatheia* that binds the parts of the cosmos together" ("indem sie in beiden Fällen die *Sympatheia* gebrauchen, welche die Teile des Kosmos aneinander bindet"). Timotin did not discuss the analogy with language that Tatian employs, which seems to suggest just the opposite.

⁶⁶ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, 122; Amundsen, "Tatian's 'Rejection' of Medicine in the Second Century," 159–60; Gary B. Ferngren and Darrel W. Amundsen, "Medicine and Christianity in the Roman Empire: Compatibilities and Tensions," *ANRW* II.37.3 (1996): 2964; Gary B. Ferngren, *Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 52.

⁶⁷ Ferngren, *Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity*, 13, who stated that this is the thesis of his entire book. Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, 122 seems to me to defend Tatian too much when he asserted, "Tatian should not be quoted as a witness for early Christian hostility to medicine" since he "is concerned with theology, not with medicine." Amundsen, "Tatian's 'Rejection' of Medicine in the Second Century," 170, made a similar move when he claimed that Tatian's *Oration* operates in the "realm" of "faith, trust, indeed dependence," as though he was merely worried that Christians would trust more in medicine than in God. Yet for the Tatian of the *Oration* such a distinction is meaningless since theology and medicine do not operate in separate domains but are instead both attempts at reordering "disordered matter" and so bringing salvation. To suggest otherwise is to import a modern distinction that is alien to Tatian's thought world. In a similarly apologetic mode, Ferngren, *Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity*, 52, likewise went too far in asserting, "Tatian accepted natural herbal remedies but not compound drugs." Evidence for any such nuanced view is lacking in Tatian's sole surviving work.

power attributed to the healing gods.”⁶⁸ This again, strikes me as a less radical position than the one that Tatian stakes out, in which the association between pharmacology and the demons was so intrinsic that pharmacology simply had to be rejected tout court to escape from the demons spell.⁶⁹

With his rejection of the use of any material compounds for treating disease, Tatian breaks decisively with his surrounding culture, and such a complete dismissal of all of ancient pharmacology is otherwise unattested in early Christian sources.⁷⁰ Other Christians attributed at least some disease to demonic influence, including Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Eusebius, and the “gnostics” criticized by Plotinus, as did some non-Christian philosophers such as Porphyry.⁷¹ Nevertheless, only Tatian, it seems, went beyond a demonic etiology of disease to posit a purely conventionalist, demonically inspired account of pharmacology in all its forms.⁷² The oddity of his position becomes clearer when set alongside a highly influential text two centuries later that represents a more mainstream Christian view on this topic. In the fifty-fifth and final question of his *Asceticon*, Basil of Caesarea asked “Whether utilizing the medical art accords with the aim of piety,” to which he gave a lengthy reply, including the statement, “Those plants that are fitted to each of our maladies (πάθη) did not spring up from the earth spontaneously but clearly were brought forth by the will of our Maker for the purpose of

⁶⁸ Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 285.

⁶⁹ The argument presented here is analogous to that put forward by Kathy L. Gaca, “Driving Aphrodite from the World: Tatian’s Encratite Principles of Sexual Renunciation,” *JTS* 53 (2002): 28–52, who suggested that Tatian’s rejection of marriage derived from the belief that “Aphrodite wields and embodies the power of sexuality” with the result that “all sexual activity is irretrievably idolatrous and deadly” (51).

⁷⁰ Amundsen, “Tatian’s ‘Rejection’ of Medicine in the Second Century,” 159, noted that Tatian’s discussion of pharmacology “is unique in early Christian literature.” Also Timotin, “Gott und die Dämonen bei Tatian,” 285, called it “äußerst ungewöhnlich.” Though some ancient physicians also rejected φαρμακεία, none did so for the reasons that Tatian did. See Amundsen, “Tatian’s ‘Rejection’ of Medicine in the Second Century,” 163–64. Galen, while accepting φαρμακεία, nevertheless attempted to dissociate it from the sort of “occult forces” that Tatian opposed, preferring instead to “rationalize [it] by means of his theory of elements, mixtures and faculties” (van der Eijk, “Galen and Early Christians,” 356–67).

⁷¹ Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 27.2; Tertullian, *Apol.* 22; Eusebius, *PE* 5.2; Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.9.14; Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.40. Cf. Ferngren and Amundsen, “Medicine and Christianity in the Roman Empire,” 2965–68; Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies*, 19.

⁷² Ferngren commented, “The issue is not whether the use of medicine is wrong for a Christian, since it is very difficult to find *any* Christians in the early church who held that position *on theological grounds*” (*Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity*, 148). Perhaps it is difficult to find such a person, but it is not impossible, since Tatian’s rejection of a whole domain of medical expertise is precisely for theological reasons.

our benefit.”⁷³ Basil’s position leaves plenty of room for positing physical explanations for the efficacy of healing compounds, and he explicitly attributes this aspect of the world to divine providence, in direct opposition to Tatian’s view.

Of course, this is not to say that Christians like Basil endorsed all forms of the healing arts. His younger contemporary John Chrysostom exhorted his congregation to shun itinerant healers using traditional pagan rituals as well as Jewish synagogues that offered amuletic healing, and he associated them both with the activity of demons, much like Tatian.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, John’s objections were targeted at only specific sources from which someone might seek healing in the health marketplace of late antiquity, and even in the course of these exhortations he, like Basil, conceded that “God gave physicians and medicine” (ὁ Θεὸς ἰατροὺς ἔδωκε καὶ φάρμακα).⁷⁵ In other words, his homiletic interventions were hardly the sweeping denunciation of φαρμακεία that is found in Tatian’s *Oration*. Somewhat closer to Tatian is Origen’s comment in *Contra Celsum*: “A person ought to use medical means to heal his body if he aims to live in the simple and ordinary way. If he wishes to live in a way superior to that of the multitude, he should do this by devotion to the supreme God and by praying to Him.”⁷⁶ The implication of Origen’s statement is that the spiritual elite who pursue the most rigorous form of self-denial have the option of avoiding the medical arts and entrusting themselves solely to God. Given that in other ways Tatian took a notably extreme ascetic position, such as in his wholesale rejection of marriage as corruption,⁷⁷ perhaps in this respect also he represents a radicalized form of

⁷³ Basil, *Reg. fus.* 55 (PG 31:1044b–1045a), on which see Ferngren, *Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity*, 148; Andrew Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 91–93. For the wider theological context informing Basil’s position, see Jonathan Zecher, “Medical Art in Spiritual Direction: Basil, Barsanuphios, and John on Diagnosis and Meaning in Illness,” *JECS* (forthcoming).

⁷⁴ Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 70–77.

⁷⁵ John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Col.* 8.6 (PG 62:359).

⁷⁶ Origen, *Cels.* 8.60 (Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 498, modified).

⁷⁷ On Tatian’s encratism, see the survey of the ancient evidence and modern scholarship in Matthew R. Crawford, “The *Problemata* of Tatian: Recovering the Fragments of a Second-Century Christian Intellectual,” *JTS* 67 (2016): 556–63. The attempt of Naomi Koltun-Fromm to rescue Tatian from the charge of encratism is ultimately unpersuasive. See her article “Re-Imagining Tatian: The Damaging Effects of Polemical Rhetoric,” *JECS* 16 (2008): 1–30.

early Christian asceticism that found few followers.

How, then, did Tatian come to such an extreme take on *φαρμακεία*? One possible influence that could have led him in this direction is the statement from *I Enoch* 8.3 that “Semiazas, the chief [of the Watchers], taught [humans] to be objects of wrath against reason, and the roots of plants of the earth. The eleventh [angelic leader], Pharmaros, taught pharmacology [*φαρμακείας*], spells, cleverness, and the remedies for spells.”⁷⁸ The unqualified mention of *φαρμακεία* in this passage as deriving from one of the Watchers is in keeping with Tatian’s presentation of it as being bound up with demonic deception. In addition, twice in these chapters Tatian also refers to “roots” as a source for medicinal compounds, echoing the “roots of the plants of the earth” from *I Enoch*.⁷⁹ In other words, Tatian’s view on pharmacology looks remarkably similar to that of *I Enoch*.

Perhaps the affinity between Tatian’s views about *φαρμακεία* and this passage in *I Enoch* might appear to some to be too distant to establish conclusively that he was influenced by that text. Nevertheless, circumstantial evidence points in the same direction. If Justin’s demonology really was so profoundly shaped by the Watchers traditions (a scholarly consensus), and if Tatian learned his demonology from Justin (as he himself testifies in *Or.* 18.6), then we should expect to find traces of the Watchers story likewise in Tatian’s demonology. Moreover, any attempt to interpret the *Oration* must speculate on why Tatian has decided to focus extensively upon precisely these two examples of the “hostile devices of the demented demons,” since out of all the aspects of Greek culture that he condemns, only they are assigned a demonic origin. The most plausible explanation is that *I Enoch*

⁷⁸ *I Enoch* 8.3. I am translating from the Greek version of this passage preserved by the Byzantine chronicler George Synkellos, which is slightly more expansive than the alternate Greek version found in the sixth-century Gizeh fragment. See Black, *Apocalypse Henochi Graece*, 22. Both have in view the knowledge of concoctions derived from roots and other natural materials along with spells, but only Synkellos explicitly mentions *φαρμακεία*. In my translation of Synkellos I follow Adler and Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos*, 17.

⁷⁹ Tatian, *Or.* 17.4–5 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 130). G. E. R. Lloyd lists “root-cutters” (ρίζοτόμοι) as one of the “five more or less clearly demarcated groups” involved in healing the sick (G. E. R. Lloyd, *Demystifying Mentalities*, Themes in the Social Sciences [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 30–31). The root-cutters along with the “drug-sellers” (*φαρμακοπῶλαι*) “were concerned primarily with different aspects of the collection, sale and administration of drugs, especially herbal remedies.”

8.1–3, or at least traditions derived therefrom, exerted a profound influence upon Tatian’s demonology, as they had Justin’s. If so, then the present argument supports the contention of Annette Yoshiko Reed, that “the motif of illicit angelic instruction played a special part in the ‘christianization’ of this apocalypse,” beginning with Justin and being taken up by numerous authors thereafter.⁸⁰ Justin, however, treated the content of the angelic instruction only in passing, while these passages in Tatian’s *Oration* must count as one of the earliest and most extensive discussions of this theme. Moreover, Tatian appears to be unique in exploiting the latent potential of *I Enoch* for discounting all of ancient pharmacology.

One reason scholars have thus far been reluctant to see the influence of *I Enoch* behind Tatian’s striking demonology may be that his *Oration* lacks any mention of the most memorable part of the story, namely the Watchers’ sexual encounters with human women and the resulting distinction between this group of fallen angels and the “demons” whom they begot.⁸¹ Recently Crosignani has made precisely this point, observing that “Tatian clearly refuses to confirm that demons are the souls of the giants. In doing so, he appears to be rejecting the Enochic tradition.”⁸² Nevertheless, Tatian’s reluctance to follow one aspect of the Watchers tradition does not necessarily mean that he could not have been influenced by other parts of it. Whatever the reason for his failure to distinguish between the fallen angels and their offspring, he did follow Justin’s most important innovation upon the Watchers tradition: like his teacher, he identified the evil spirits of the Jewish text with the pantheon of Greece, having Zeus as its leader.⁸³ With this identification in place, he intensified and sharpened Justin’s

⁸⁰ Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 185.

⁸¹ The distinction between these two groups does not seem operative in Tatian’s account, insofar as he presents Satan as the “firstborn” among the angels who fell and so became a “demon” (*Or.* 7.4–5). Hence, Dale Martin was right to point out that Tatian is the first author to make a full identification of demons with the fallen angels (“When Did Angels Become Demons,” 676).

⁸² Crosignani, “The Influence of Demons,” 183. Crosignani, however, later acknowledged that “Knowledge is a very important part of Tatian’s demonology” and that this “accords with the Enochic tradition” (188).

⁸³ Tatian, *Or.* 8.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 104). On this aspect of Justin’s demonology, see especially Reed, “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels.” Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 47, suggested, “Die Dämonisierung der griechischen Götterwelt ist ein zentrales Motiv der Apologie, sie gehört zu den Grundelementen der Taktik der Diffamierung.”

polemic against Greco-Roman culture by highlighting two specific areas of human knowledge and expertise that, although highly respected by his contemporaries, nevertheless had a diabolical origin and so contributed to the destruction, rather than to the flourishing of human society.

TATIAN VERSUS THE BANDITS

The preceding analysis of Tatian’s criticism of these two areas of human knowledge and expertise also sheds light on the way in which he articulates his own mission and legitimacy, for the demons ultimately serve as a foil for Tatian himself. Scholarship on the *Oration* has often focused upon the fifth chapter in which he comments on the generation of the Word from the Father and the creation of the world. However, tucked away in the midst of this discussion is a passing comment that offers a rare window into his own understanding of the purpose of his treatise:

By projecting my voice my purpose is to set in order the disorderly matter in you. Just as the Word begotten in the beginning in turn begot our creation by fabricating matter for himself, so I too, in imitation of the Word, having been begotten again and having obtained comprehension of the truth, am remodeling the confusion in kindred matter.⁸⁴

The mention here of the “disorderly matter” in Tatian’s hearers (τὴν ἐν ὑμῖν ἀκόσμητον ὕλην), which he also calls a state of material “confusion” (σύγχυσις), brings to mind his aforementioned association of diseases with “disorders of the matter within us” (στάσεις τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ὕλης), which might imply that he believes his speech could even set aright the bodily maladies of the Greeks. Nevertheless, Tatian also holds that the soul is a “material spirit” (πνεύματος . . . ὕλικού),⁸⁵ so the material discord he alludes to in this passage could refer to diseases of the soul rather than the body. Whatever the case, this passage reveals that Tatian envisioned his own *Oration* as a kind of logotherapy, in keeping with a

⁸⁴ Tatian, *Or.* 5.5–6 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 96–98).

⁸⁵ Tatian, *Or.* 12.1, 3 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 114, 116).

long philosophical tradition.⁸⁶ Though he is usually thought of as merely an angry, and perhaps psychologically unhinged, polemicist,⁸⁷ viewing his *Oration* as an instance of logotherapy provides an ancient framework within which such harsh criticism was, at times, expected and even required. The orator Dio Chrysostom, writing less than a century prior to Tatian, advised that the ideal philosopher must lead people to “virtue and sobriety” not merely by “persuading and exhorting” but also by “abusing and reproaching” (λοιδορούμενος καὶ ὀνειδίζων),⁸⁸ and the Epicurean Philodemus advised that a “harsh form of frankness” was needed for those who were resistant to persuasion.⁸⁹ Believing as he did that the Greeks were morally and culturally bankrupt, as well as under the spell of demonic delusions, abusing and reproaching them in the harshest terms may have seemed to Tatian like the kind of extreme treatment their condition required.

Tatian’s presentation in *Or.* 5 of his own voice as a kind of therapy is in keeping with the alternative to φαρμακεία that he prescribes in his later section denouncing demonic deceptions. As for those demons that are causing some bodily suffering, “Struck by the word of God’s power they flee in terror” (λόγῳ θεοῦ δυνάμεως πληττόμενοι δεδιότες ἀπίασιν).⁹⁰ Tatian implies that such a prescription is also the best course of action even for those diseases for which the demons are not directly responsible, as he calls on his hearers to reject “the baser matter” (τὴν φαυλοτέραν ὕλην) of φαρμακεία

⁸⁶ Cf. Pedro Laín Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity*, trans. L. J. Rather and John M. Sharp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970). For a recent case study in this tradition, see Han Baltussen, “Personal Grief and Public Mourning in Plutarch’s *Consolation to His Wife*,” *American Journal of Philology* 130 (2009): 67–98. For recent studies of early Christian authors who appropriated this tradition, see, e.g., Paul R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 17 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching*, OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 228–82.

⁸⁷ Cf. William L. Petersen, “Tatian the Assyrian,” in *A Companion to Second-Century “Heretics,”* ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 125–58.

⁸⁸ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 77/78.38 (LCL 385:294–95).

⁸⁹ Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism* fr. 7 (text and translation in David Konstan, Diskin Clay, Clarence E. Glad, Johan C. Thom, and James Ware, *Philodemus: On Frank Criticism*, SBL Texts and Translations 43, Graeco-Roman 13 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 30–31). Cf. Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 81 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 89–98.

⁹⁰ Tatian, *Or.* 16.8 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 128). On Tatian’s association of λόγος with δύναμις, see Josef Lössl, “Zwischen Christologie und Rhetorik: Zum Ausdruck ‘Kraft des Wortes’ (λόγου δύναμις) in Tatians ‘Rede an die Griechen,’” in *Logos der Vernunft—Logos des Glaubens: Festschrift Edgar Früchtel zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. F. R. Prostmeier and H. Lona (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 129–47.

and instead “rely on the power of God” (δυνάμει θεοῦ προσανέχων) to be healed, power that he seems to think is best administered through λόγος.⁹¹ “Trusting in God” (πιστεύειν . . . τῷ θεῷ), so he implies, is incompatible with “trusting in the administration of matter” (πιστεύων ὕλης οἰκονομία).⁹² In fact, Tatian very nearly claims that if one follows the Christian philosophy he represents, it is possible to be immune from all disease. Included in a list of worldly concerns he asserts are of no consequence to him is the line, “I am above every kind of sickness; pain does not consume my soul” (νόσου παντοδαπῆς ἀνώτερος γίνομαι, λύπη μου τὴν ψυχὴν οὐκ ἀναλίσκει).⁹³ Perhaps we should not press the metaphor of “above” too far. Tatian may simply be saying that while disease and pain can affect his body they cannot affect his true self, that is, his soul.⁹⁴ Even so, this still would mean that his barbarian philosophy provides the ultimate bulwark against all maladies, and such a stance places him in direction opposition to the demons he denounces. Instead of demonic φαρμακεία, he offers his hearers his own speech that can set aright their disordered matter, just as in place of astrological prognostication he prescribed for them the restraint of desire.

Of course, Tatian’s speech has such power merely because, as he acknowledges, he is imitating the creative power of the Word that formed the universe and has also refashioned himself, and here again the demons serve as a foil for his own self-presentation. Recall that the theme of “order” was prominent in both Tatian’s discussion of astrological divination and φαρμακεία: the demons have attempted to make life on earth seem well ordered by projecting outlines of famous persons and animals upon the bewildering array of stars in the sky and claiming that these patterns can explain the seemingly random twists and turns of life. Similarly, their elaborate system of material compounds prescribed for various bodily ailments gives the appearance of a certain order in the sense that it

⁹¹ Tatian, *Or.* 18.1–2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 132).

⁹² Tatian, *Or.* 18.4 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 132).

⁹³ Tatian, *Or.* 11.1 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 114).

⁹⁴ Elsewhere he makes the same claim about the other area of demonic contrivance, telling his Greek hearers “we are above fate” (Ἡμεῖς δὲ καὶ εἰμαρμένης ἐσμὲν ἀνώτεροι) (*Or.* 9.3 [Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 108]).

presupposes a correspondence between a particular illness and the prescribed therapy; so regulated is this apparent order that Tatian can even compare it to language. In short, as I have argued, Tatian’s polemical strategy in attacking these two areas of knowledge was to undermine the supposed “order” that the demons have overlaid upon the physical cosmos. Seen in this light, Tatian’s own stated aim for his *Oration* is in fact the same as the demons. He too seeks to bring “order” to the state of confusion in which his hearers live.

What, then, is the difference between Tatian and demons? What makes the knowledge he offers to the Greeks superior to the epistemological claims proffered by the demonic host? The answer to this question appears at the very end of the *Oration*. In the final sentence he tells his hearers, “Knowing who God is and what is his creation, I offer myself to you, prepared for an examination of my doctrines” (Γινώσκων δὲ λοιπὸν τίς ὁ θεὸς καὶ τίς ἡ κατ’ αὐτὸν ποιήσις, ἔτοιμον ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν πρὸς τὴν ἀνάκρισιν τῶν δογμάτων παρίστημι).⁹⁵ This stance is the exact opposite of the primeval transgression, which was to “proclaim as God the one who had rebelled against God’s law” (θεὸν ἀνέδειξαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἄγγελοι τὸν ἐπανιστάμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ).⁹⁶ In other words, the legitimacy of Tatian’s mimesis of the Logos derives from his acknowledgement of the one true God and more specifically the inviolable distinction between the Creator and his creation, in contrast to the demons whose imitation of the divine has the goal of undermining God’s authority, a rebellion of the creation against the Creator.

This theme of a divinely governed right “order” ties into one final demonological motif in Tatian’s *Oration* that is often overlooked but has bearing upon the present argument. In the passage I cited above in which he compares demons to “bandits” (λησταί), the ellipses covered a sentence in which he explicitly states that this was an idea that he learned from “the most admirable Justin.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Tatian, *Or.* 42.2 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 192).

⁹⁶ Tatian, *Or.* 7.4 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 102).

⁹⁷ Tatian, *Or.* 18.6 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 134).

Because this is a notion that appears nowhere in Justin’s surviving corpus, discussions of Justin’s demonology usually overlook it,⁹⁸ though given that it comes from a student of Justin, we should regard this report as preserving an authentic piece of teaching current in Justin’s school in Rome in the mid-second century. Moreover, although this is the only time that Tatian attributes this idea to Justin, it in fact occurs in various forms several times in this section of the *Oration*. For example, in *Or.* 10.4 he asks his listeners, “Why have you robbed my God?” by following the demons in giving divine honors to mere humans; in *Or.* 12.6 he says that the demons “were determined to steal divine status”; in *Or.* 14.2 he compares the demons to “savage bandits” who trick humans into becoming like their fellow bandits by practicing evil; in *Or.* 18.3 he compares those who use matter to effect a cure with people who eat with bandits and suffer the same fate as them; and in *Or.* 18.6 he says the demons, like bandits, hold people captive for ransom.⁹⁹ Given its repeated mention in the short compass of these few chapters as well as the fact that this is the one idea upon which he bestows the authority of his revered teacher, the identification of the demons as “bandits” was obviously fundamental to Tatian’s demonology.¹⁰⁰

The connection between this idea and the Watchers myth is not obvious, since *I Enoch* does not

⁹⁸ E.g., no mention is made of this point in Stefan Heid, “Iustinus Martyr I,” *RAC* 19 (2001): col.837–38. Though note that in *I Apol.* 12.6, Justin does compare bad rulers to λησται, just after alluding to the “wicked demons who also seek sacrifices and ministrations from those who live irrationally” (*I Apol.* 12.5 [Minns and Parvis, 104–5]).

⁹⁹ Tatian, *Or.* 10.4; 12.6; 14.2; 18.3 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 112, 118, 122, 132). Human bandits are also mentioned at *Or.* 23.4–5; 27.1.

¹⁰⁰ Clement of Alexandria opposed unnamed persons who held that philosophy derived from demons, apparently based on an interpretation of John 10.8 that identified the demons as “bandits.” Their position was seemingly an extension of the Watchers narrative, since Clement’s opponents argued that philosophy was stolen from heaven by “a power or an angel,” who then communicated the pilfered knowledge to “their wives” (*Str.* 1.16.80.5–1.17.87.7; 5.1.10.1–2 [L. Früchtel, O. Stählin, and U. Treu, *Clemens Alexandrinus. Zweiter Band. Stromata Buch I–VI*, GCS 15 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 52–56; 332]; cf. Clement, *Ex. Thdot.* 72.2; Origen, *Cels.* 7.70). Bauckham, “The Fall of the Angels,” 323–25, has plausibly suggested that the people whom Clement has in view in this passage must have some relation to the tract known as Διασυρμός τῶν ἕξω φιλοσόφων (c.200) which likewise states that philosophy “took its beginning from the apostasy of the angels” (τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰληφέναι ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἀποστασίας), precisely the position that Clement opposes (Hermias, *Irris.* 1 [R.P.C. Hanson and Denise Joussot, *Hermias. Satire des philosophes païens*, SC 388 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1993), 96]). In light of this group’s identification of demons as bandits and dependency upon the Watchers tradition, perhaps they represent a further stage in the development of demonological reflection coming out of Justin and Tatian’s schools. The satirical tone of Hermias’s *Irrisio* likewise is similar to the rhetorical approach of Tatian’s *Oration*. On Tatian’s school and his influence, see most recently Crawford, “The *Problemata* of Tatian,” 542–43, 570–73; Adolf Martin Ritter, “Spuren Tatians und seiner *Oratio ad Graecos* in der christlichen Literatur der Spätantike,” in *Gegen falsche Götter und falsche Bildung*, 287–303.

describe the Watchers or their offspring as “bandits,” or as stealing anything, so this could be an element that Justin added to the Jewish traditions that he received. It does, however, fit remarkably well with Tatian’s concern with right “order” in the world. As Brent Shaw stated in a classic study of bandits in the Roman Empire, “*Latrones* were men who threatened the social and moral order of the state by the use of private violence in pursuit of their aims.”¹⁰¹ More specifically, “the bandit is represented as the opposite type to the (just) emperor. He is the ultimate locus of illegitimate power in society,”¹⁰² and it is this political threat that distinguishes a bandit from a common criminal or thief.¹⁰³ Moreover, in their common literary portrayal, bandits typically existed not as merely isolated individuals but in bands living in the countryside, on the margins of the civilized world,¹⁰⁴ and they often used strategies of deception to achieve their goals and trick the authorities. Well known bandits active during or shortly after Tatian’s lifetime include Maternus, a deserter who in the early 180s gathered a group of bandits around himself and terrorized the Gallic countryside, and Bulla Felix who in the early third century led several hundred outlaws in Italy, managing to evade capture for two years.¹⁰⁵ In all these aspects the metaphor of a bandit captures well key aspects of Tatian’s conception of demons. They too form an “army” (στρατόπεδον) with Zeus at their head,¹⁰⁶ their attempt to claim divine status represents a threatening rival to the legitimate order established by God, and they use deceptive stratagems to perpetuate their resistance, including, as we have seen, astrology and

¹⁰¹ Brent Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” in *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society*, ed. Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 326–74, at 326–27. This is a revised version of an article under the same title originally published in *Past and Present* 105 (1984): 3–52.

¹⁰² Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” 367.

¹⁰³ Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” 369. The passage from Augustine that Shaw uses to open his article captures this point remarkably well: “Remove justice and what are states but gangs of bandits on a large scale? And what are bandit gangs but kingdoms in miniature?” (*Civ.* 4.4).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 255: “Bands of robbers living on the countryside were usually referred to as *latrones* (λησται).” See also Thomas Grünwald, *Bandits in the Roman Empire: Myth and Reality*, trans. John Drinkwater (London: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁰⁵ Herodian 1.10; Cassius Dio 76(77).10, on which see Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” 364–74; Grünwald, *Bandits in the Roman Empire*, 110–36. I make no claim about the historical facticity of these accounts of prominent bandits, but this question is immaterial for my purpose because, even if they were completely fictional, they still represent the conception of a “bandit” that was common at the time.

¹⁰⁶ Tatian, *Or.* 7.5 (Trelenberg, *Oratio*, 102).

pharmacology.

CONCLUSION

In one sense, it should not be surprising to find that Tatian was influenced by the Watchers tradition, given that in the *Oration* he himself points back to Justin as the source of his ideas specifically about the nature and activities of demons. However, even if this conclusion is what one might expect, it opens up further complexities in the development of demonological reflection in the schools of Justin and Tatian, for, as we have seen, whereas Justin interpreted *I Enoch*'s mention of "pharmacology, spells, cleverness, and the remedies for spells" as referring to the practice of magic or sorcery he observed among his contemporaries, Tatian assumed a more expansive sense of this domain of false knowledge, explicitly attributing all of ancient pharmacology—both cursing potions and healing compounds—to the corrupting influence of the fallen angels, a position that is otherwise unattested in early Christian sources. Moreover, Tatian gave sustained attention to astrological divination, a topic that Justin had completely avoided, at least in his surviving works. This shows that those in Justin's intellectual lineage continued to find the Jewish text of *I Enoch* to be a useful framework for making sense of the Greco-Roman world around them, especially the depravity and hostility they perceived among their non-Christian contemporaries.

What cannot be as easily explained by the influence of *I Enoch* is the more extreme stance towards his surrounding society that Tatian took in comparison with his teacher. Justin's demonological critique was carefully calibrated, since his *Apologies* are aimed at people he assumes are rational, philosophically inclined listeners who might be persuaded by his argument and recognize that in fact Christians further their own social, moral, and political aims. His criticism of his addressees is, therefore, somewhat blunted, or at least oblique, since he presents common ground between himself

and them in an effort to persuade. Moreover, when he does deploy the tactic of narrating a genealogy of error via demonic influence, he hardly intends to reject Greco-Roman civilization tout court, but limits his criticism to a narrow set of activities such as the veneration of statues and, most relevant of all to the aim of the *Apologies*, the persecution of Christians by the state. Tatian, on the other hand, takes a sweepingly adversarial stance, seemingly ruling out the possibility that there is anything at all good or redeemable about Greco-Roman culture. It is impossible to say definitively what prompted this development, but one possibility is that this more pessimistic attitude might owe something to Justin's own martyrdom. Perhaps the hopeful optimism of Justin's school evident in his *I Apology* died with him, leaving Tatian to conclude that his interlocutors were even more demonically deluded than Justin had supposed and could only be helped by the harsher form of logotherapy evident in his *Oration*.

Dr. Matthew R. Crawford is Associate Professor and Director of the Program in Biblical and Early Christian Studies in the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry at Australian Catholic University