4

Hiddenness and Revelation

The Hippolytan School and the Knowledge of Mystery

Many of the factors shaping catechesis in Irenaeus and Tertullian also apply to the writings associated with the so-called Hippolytan school of the third century. Even more here, however, issues of authorship and textual history make conclusions about the evidence they provide of catechesis highly fraught. Nevertheless, scholars have continued to turn to several texts associated with the name Hippolytus as potential sources for understanding early Christian catechesis – most famously, the *Traditio apostolica* (hereafter *TA*) but also the *Commentarium Canticum Canticorum* (*In Canticum*) and the *De Christo et antichristo* (*De Christo*). While the evidence must be approached judiciously, these works can be usefully queried for understanding the relation between knowledge and pedagogy in baptismal instruction.

In this chapter, I focus on the paradoxical relationship between openness and hiddenness in catechesis. As we saw briefly in the previous chapter, the charge of secrecy was not an uncommon one to pose. Tertullian, for example, accused Valentinian initiation of using a suspicious five-year initiation ritual, which taught new members by withholding rather than inducing sound reasoning.[1] By the fourth century, the use of mystery language would become a common feature of catechetical initiation – a feature we see, for example, in the writings of Ambrose of Milan and Cyril of Jerusalem. The Hippolytan writings, however we understand their provenance, provide rich material for thinking through questions of hiddenness and secrecy. On the one hand, they express that

[1] Tertullian, *Val.* 1.1–4.

access to spiritual knowledge comes only through a lengthy process of preparation; knowledge is available only to those who have proven themselves worthy to receive it. On the other hand, we find in these writings a concerted theological effort (driven by anti-heretical convictions) to express God's divine manifestation in terms of openness, as a manifest revelation of the divine economy. God does not remain inaccessibly hidden by multiple layers of emanating aeons but is revealed through the activities of Word and Spirit. For the writers of these texts, heavenly knowledge is open and manifest, yet discovered only through the lengthy process of disciplined training.[2]

There is, as I have already alluded, considerable debate as to whom various works attributed to Hippolytus belong and where they emerged. While these issues cannot be treated in depth here, a brief comment is warranted.[3] Eusebius and Jerome list several works by someone named Hippolytus – whom they curiously cannot locate – some of which overlap and some of which correspond to a list of works found on the famous "Statue of Hippolytus" discovered in a Roman cemetery in 1551 that may have belonged to a Christian school associated with Hippolytus in the third century.[4] While an earlier view held that all of these works belonged to a single figure named Hippolytus who lived in Rome in the early third century, scholars now usually subscribe to some version of a two-author hypothesis: one of whom is the author of the *Contra Noetum* and the exegetical commentaries, likely from Asia Minor or Alexandria; the other is the pugnacious opponent of Callistus in Rome who authored the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, the *Chronicon*, and other works listed on the statue.[5] For some scholars, the Hippolytus of *Contra Noetum* and the

[2] This is not to imply that Christians were esoteric in *cult* but exoteric in *doctrine*. Against this thesis, see Guy Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 3.

[3] For a judicious overview of the issues of authorship, see Ronald Heine, "Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus, and the Hippolytan Canons," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Christian Literature*, ed. Andrew Louth, Frances Young, and Lewis Ayres (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 142–51.

[4] See Eusebius, *HE* 6.20, Jerome, *uir.* 61. On the statue and its importance to the evaluation of the school, see Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Markus Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity: From Reception to Retrospection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 162–95.

[5] After Emmanuel Miller's publication of the *Refutatio* in 1851 (in which it is ascribed to Origen), John von Döllinger, following other scholars who attributed it to Hippolytus, composed his influential biography in which the author of the *Contra Noetum* and the author of the *Refutatio* were the same Hippolytus who was also named a Roman martyr

commentaries was strictly an Eastern writer, with no ties to Rome.[6] Others, while conceding that these works stem from multiple hands, contend that the Eastern Hippolytus who authored the *Contra Noetum* and commentaries came to Rome at some point and succeeded the author of the *Refutatio* ("Ps.-Hippolytus") as head of the school there, eventually being reconciled as a presbyter under the bishop Pontianus.[7] The school nature of early third-century Roman Christianity, this position argues, allows for the theological and ecclesiastical variances one finds in the texts associated with Hippolytus, and thus one must be wary of unequivocally rejecting the idea that certain "Eastern" writings could not have been written in or transmitted to Rome.[8]

The name Hippolytus has also become important for the history of catechesis since the beginning of the twentieth century when a text once

by Pope Damasus (366–84), a schismatic "antipope" in Rome exiled to Sardinia with a rival bishop, Pontianus, in 235. In 1947, Pierre Nautin proposed that the *Contra Noetum* belonged to an Eastern Hippolytus, while the *Refutatio* belonged to a Roman presbyter (whom Nautin suggested was a certain Josephus). While the attribution to Josephus did not gain traction, the suggestion of two authors has become the main theory, especially through the influential work of Manlio Simonetti and Vincenzo Loi. Josef Fricket attempted to reassert Döllinger's single-author view, but in a later work no longer held the view that the *Contra Noetum* belonged to Hippolytus. Some of the key texts here include: Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe: Contribution de la litterature chretienne du troisieme siecle* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1947); Manlio Simonetti, ed. *Ricerche su Ippolito* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1977); Simonetti, "Aggiornamento su Ippolito," in *Nuove Ricerche su Ippolito* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1989); Vincenzo Loi, "La problematica storico-letteraria su Ippolito di Roma," *Ricerche su Ippolito*, 31–45; Josef Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom: ein Lösungsversuch; die Schriften Elenchos und Contra Noëtum* (Graz, Austria: Institut für Ökumenische Theologie und Patrologie an der Universität Graz, 1988). Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift *Contra Noetum*: Ein Pseudo-Hippolyt," in *Logos. Festschrift für Luise Abramowski*, ed. Hanns Christoph Brennecke (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993), 87–123.

[6] The most explicit and recent version of this argument is J. A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[7] This thesis has been most forcefully argued by Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*.

[8] As Brent puts it, there is no reason to equate "geographical distance" with "cultural distance"; one need not assume, especially in the third century, that "documents illustrating Eastern literary genres and liturgical practices cannot spatially exist within a Western provenance such as the city of Rome." Brent, "St. Hippolytus, Biblical Exegete, Roman Bishop, and Martyr," *SVTQ* 48, no. 2–3 (2004): 207–31 (at 209–10). Yancy Smith has built upon Allen's arguments for a Roman provenance of Hippolytus' "Eastern" commentaries based on Hippolytus's references to Easter as the preferred time for baptism (*Comm. Dan.* 1.17.2) and his reference (potentially) to a post-baptismal anointing, both of which are typically associated with Rome (*In Cant.* 2.8–9). See Yancy Smith, *The Mystery of Anointing: Hippolytus' Commentary on the Song of Songs in Social and Critical Contexts* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015).

thought to be an Egyptian church order was identified as the *Traditio apostolica* listed on the Hippolytan statue.[9] The original Greek text is no longer extant, but a small number of Greek fragments and several oriental translations (Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic) remain, along with adaptations in fourth and fifth-century church order documents such as the *Apostolic Constitutions* (and its *Epitome*), the *Canons of Hippolytus*, and the *Testamentum Domini*. Many factors – the absence of an original text, the paucity of corroborating third-century evidence, the inconsistences and conflicting portrayals within extant editions, and its proliferate influence in Syria and Egypt – have led some scholars to reject a third-century dating and/or Roman provenance.[10] Nonetheless, a small cadre of scholars, led by Allen Brent and Alistair Stewart, maintains that the *TA* can in fact be linked with third-century Rome – not as the work of a single hand but as a multi-layered editorial project involving several members within a community associated with the name Hippolytus.[11] In his

[9] This was first suggested by Edward von der Goltz, and shortly thereafter by Eduard Schwartz and Hugh Connolly. See Eduard Schwartz, *Über die pseudoapostolischen Kirchenordnung* (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1910); R. Hugh Connolly, *The So-Called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916). For earlier reconstructions of the original work, see Dom Gregory Dix, *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr*, ed. Henry Chadwick, 3rd rev. ed. (London: Alban Press, 1992; 1st ed. 1937); Bernard Botte, *La Tradition apostolique de saint Hippolyte. Essai de reconstitution*, 5th ed. emended by A. Geerhards and S. Felbecker (Münster: Aschendorf, 1989).

[10] For the most thorough presentation of this criticism, see Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, L. Edward Phillips, eds., *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), esp. 1–6. This position has been restated in Paul Bradshaw, "Conclusions Shaping Evidence: An Examination of the Scholarship Surrounding the Supposed *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus," in *Sanctifying Texts, Transforming Rituals: Encounters in Liturgical Studies*, ed. Paul van Geest, Marcel Poorthuis, and Els Rose (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 13–30; John F. Baldovin, "Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary," *Theological Studies* 64, no. 3 (2003): 520–42. A different kind of doubt was raised by Christoph Markschies, "Wer schrieb die sogennante Traditio Apostolica? Neue Beobachtungen und Hypothesen zu einer kaum lösbaren Frage aus der altkirchlichen Literaturgeschichte," in *Tauffragen und Bekenntnis. Studien zur sogenannten "Traditio Apostolica," zu den "Interrogationes de fide" und zum "Römischen Glaubensbekenntnis,"* ed. Wolfram Kinzig, Christoph Markschies, and Markus Vinzent (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 1–74. The view that the *TA* was Alexandrian rather than Roman was made by J. M. Hanssens, *La liturgie d'Hippolyte. Documents et études* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1970). A discussion of many of the key issues can be found in the articles by Bradshaw, Cerrato, Brent, and Stewart in *SVTQ* 48, no. 2–3 (2004): 179–248.

[11] Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*; Alistair Stewart, *Hippolytus: On the Apostolic Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2015), 15–16.

reconstruction, Stewart proposes that the Hippolytan author of the *Refutatio* compiled pre-existing second-century material – including the section on the catechumenate – with several liturgical and disciplinary rites that fit his purposes in the early third century; he was then succeeded by the Hippolytan author of the *Contra Noetum*, who edited this material again and incorporated prayers and rites that matched the newer monepiscopal setting of the mid-230s.[12] In what follows, I take the view that the *TA* was very much the work of "living literature," with multiple hands involved in its development, and though I see no good reason for definitively rejecting a third-century Roman provenance, it must remain an indefinite conclusion. The *In Canticum* and *De Christo*, meanwhile, were likely the product of the "Eastern" Hippolytus, though again, it is possible that these works came to be associated with the Roman school.

Granting the insurmountable textual difficulties, in what remains I want to focus on the question of how theological knowledge is displayed, accessed, and contested in these texts. Once again, we do well to situate these impulses within the social landscape of early third-century Rome – in particular, the transition from independent churches to the monepiscopate. The language of mystery and the larger setting of esoteric and exoteric impulses were already present in the first and second centuries, yet they arose to new prominence amid the transition to monepiscopacy. After first situating the Hippolytan school within this context, I next consider the *Traditio apostolica* and what it suggests about the relation between pedagogy and knowledge. Then I turn to the *In Canticum* and *De Christo* to further elucidate the tensions between concealing and revealing knowledge.

MYSTERY LANGUAGE AND THE TRANSITION TO MONEPISCOPACY

In his learned treatment of esotericism in early Christianity, Guy Stroumsa remarks that the early Christian impetus to resort to the language of mystery (μυστήριον) stemmed from the fundamental paradox at the heart of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ, both man and God, died on a cross to save humankind.[13] In antiquity, mystery could be a loaded, if wide-ranging, term. Drawing on the Eleusinian mysteries and

[12] Stewart, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 28–38.
[13] Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*, 132.

other ancient cults, it could be applied in an array of teaching activities in philosophical schools and early Judaism to emphasize aspects of hiddenness and revelation.[14] In the New Testament, Paul deployed this language to describe the in-breaking of God's eschatological kingdom (Eph. 1:3–9; Rom. 16:25–27). He could also claim that while true wisdom remained opaque to the rulers of this world, followers of Christ "speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7).[15] Already in the early Christian period, then, we find this paradox: God's kingdom is manifest, available to all; and yet certain forms of instruction are more appropriate for broader audiences while others are better suited for smaller ones. Jesus himself taught the crowds through parables, while reserving the "secrets" of the kingdom for his closest disciples (Matt. 13:10–17; Mark 4:10–13; Luke 8:9–10).

In the centuries following, the language of mystery began to be applied in a broader range of activities – cultic, exegetical, and doctrinal, among others. The language of mystery, and its Latin corollary *sacramentum*, was used to frame ritual practices, such as baptism.[16] In Alexandria, Clement and Origen used the language of mystery to articulate the pedagogy of scriptural interpretation.[17] By the fourth century, the language of mystery proliferated, designating a wide range of activities. In catechesis, the language appears in discussions of the so-called *disciplina arcani* – the restriction of certain teaching to only the initiated. The genre of literature commonly referred to as "mystagogical," meanwhile,

[14] There is a well-established consensus that early Christian mystery language originated not first in the mystery cults but in second-temple Judaism. In addition to Stroumsa, see Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990); T. J. Lang, *Mystery and the Making of a Christian Historical Consciousness: From Paul to the Second Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015). On the relation between mystery and education, in particular, see Andrew Ballard, "The Mysteries of Paideia: 'Mystery' and Education in Plato's *Symposium*, 4QInstruction, and 1 Corinthians," in *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 243–82.

[15] This is the NRSV translation of the Greek text: λαλοῦμεν σοφίαν θεοῦ ἐν μυστηρίῳ τὴν ἀποκεκρυμμένην ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν.

[16] See Tertullian, *bapt.* 1.1; 9.1.

[17] For Clement's use of mystery initiation in his exegetical and pedagogical practice, located within the sphere of antique philosophical–rhetorical education, as well as the mystery cults, see J. M. F. Heath, *Clement of Alexandria and the Shaping of Christian Literary Practice: Miscellany and the Transformation of Greco-Roman Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), chap. 10.

designates writing that emerged from teaching the newly baptized the inner or hidden meaning of the rites they had recently experienced.[18]

The language of hiddenness and openness also appears in the rhetorical constructions of orthodoxy and heresy during the emergence of the monepiscopate. While some scholars have interpreted the transition to monepiscopacy as a settled matter by the late second century, a counter view, proposed by Allen Brent, holds that the monepiscopate was not established until at least 235, when the presbyter Hippolytus was reconciled with his bishop Pontianus.[19] If so, then the polemic against Callistus in the ninth book of the *Refutatio* should not be viewed as evidence of a "schism" per se but as an argument among rival schools – not unlike the disputes among Marcionites, Valentinians, and the proto-orthodox in the second century, or between philosophical schools more generally.[20] This mode of argument evinces the unrealized character of the monepiscopate and the enduring legacy of the school-church model of the second century.

At the same time, however, while the *Refutatio* accuses Callistus in the terms of school Christianity, the author also presents this debate in a way that rhetorically contrasts churches with schools and bishops with teachers. Repeatedly, the *Refutatio* refers to Callistus as belonging to or heading a theological "school" and that his pretentions to the title of bishop are false. This again, points to the transitional nature of ecclesiastical organization. While third-century Christians continued to operate in many ways according to the older school model, writers like the

[18] The most well-known of these are Ambrose's *De mysteriis* and *De sacramentis*, discussed in Chapter 5. Another is the series of five homilies attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem often called the *Mystagogic Catecheses*.

[19] See esp. Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 402–12. The main reason for a later date is that, although Victor attempted to operate like a monarchial bishop in Rome (during the Paschal controversy), his efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. Since he was not able actually to persuade oppositional churches on account of his episcopal status, we cannot yet declare Victor's monepiscopal structure as having eclipsed the second-century school model. This state of affairs suggests an ongoing communion with other such school churches in Rome, even despite the attempts of a bishop to excise certain schools. Brent is here building on the earlier work of George La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century: The Episcopate of Victor, the Latinization of the Roman Church, the Easter Controversy, Consolidation of Power and Doctrinal Development, the Catacomb of Callistus," *HTR* 18, no. 3 (1925): 201–77, and Gustave Bardy, "Les écoles romaines au second siècle," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 28 (1932): 501–32.

[20] The author of the *Refutatio*, after all, as Brent argues, does not accuse Callistus of severing a monepiscopal church or claiming illegitimate jurisdiction but of teaching false doctrine. See Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 416–20.

Hippolytus of the *Refutatio* invited their hearers to imagine the church differently – as something distinct from heretical "schools." To the true apostles Christ gave plain, revealed teaching – not something divulged in secret. The mark of heresy, meanwhile, is a predilection for secrecy and opacity. Even if such rhetoric appears to us as contrived and one-sided, we can appreciate the rhetorical force that such accusations held within the changing ecclesiastical landscape of the early third century.

The transition to monepiscopacy serves as a useful backdrop for understanding the institutional emergence of catechesis during this time. Catechesis appeared when a centralizing church was forming out of a conglomeration of independent churches. In this context, the language of mystery would need to find a place within the parlance of orthodox Christian discourse, yet it needed to be situated alongside other aspects of church education that dissociated one's community from heretical secrecy. In turning now to look more closely at the Hippolytan writings linked with catechesis, we will see how the dynamics of openness and concealment figured in organizing catechetical knowledge.

THE PEDAGOGY OF MYSTERY: *TRADITIO APOSTOLICA*

For scholars who treat the *Traditio apostolica* as evidence of early Christian catechesis, the primary interest has been in the potential evidence it provides for reconstructing patterns of initiation.[21] More recent work, however, has pointed in new directions. Joseph Mueller, for example, has sought to deconstruct the predominant historiographical lens of "church order literature," proposing instead to view the *TA* in terms of early Christian exegetical polemics.[22] Meanwhile, Stewart and

[21] See, e.g., Thomas M. Finn, "Ritual Process and the Survival of Early Christianity," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 3, no. 1 (1989): 69–89; Victor Saxer, *Les rites de l'initiation chrétienne du IIe au VIe siècle. Esquisse historique et signification d'après leurs principaux témoins* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1988), 109–19; Paul Gavrilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l'église ancienne*, trans. F. Lhoest, N. Mojaisky, and A.-M. Gueit (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007), 95–120; Benjamin Edsall, *The Reception of Paul in Early Christian Initiation: History and Hermeneutics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 44–48.

[22] Joseph Mueller, "The Ancient Church Order Literature: Genre or Tradition?" *JECS* 15, no. 3 (2007): 337–80. Tracing the historiographical origins of so-called church order documents to Reformation-era Germany, Mueller finds such labels anachronistic and too easily liable to allowing patristic material to be interpreted according to the function of such literature in German *Kirchenordnungen*. By reconsidering early church order literature in this way, Mueller opens up new interpretive possibilities for texts like the *TA*.

Brent have sought to situate the *TA* as part of a constructive project within the school setting of third-century Roman Christianity.[23] Stewart in particular has noted that the *TA*'s depiction of a three-year catechumenate should be understood within the philosophical climate of third-century Christianity. It is the connotations of the philosophical schools, he suggests – more than, say, the cultural conflicts between Christianity and empire or the debates over true or false *gnosis* – that informed the *TA*'s presentation of the catechumenate.[24]

Stewart's proposal prompts closer attention to the *TA*'s depiction of pedagogy and knowledge in catechesis. The description of the catechumenate in *TA* 15–21, I argue, served not only to describe or prescribe a process of initiation but also to present the community in a certain way – namely, as a learned and intellectual community, on par with other philosophical schools in antiquity. Crucial to presenting Christianity in this light, however, was the careful balance of openness and concealment. The *TA*'s presentation of catechesis is part of a rhetorical discourse that shows Christianity to be constituted by illumination and reasoned teaching, but which was also not opposed to a concealed initiation ritual. The *TA*, to be sure, is not the only instance of defensive presentations of secretive initiation.[25] However, it is easily one of the most important in early Christianity.

TA 15–21 presents a detailed structure for how students should be examined and tested before baptism.[26] *TA* 15 describes a process in which newcomers are brought to a teacher to "hear the word," and are

[23] Stewart, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 61; Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church*, 458.

[24] Stewart, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 124. Cf., however, Bradshaw et al., *Apostolic Tradition*, 96–98. There, the authors argue that the three-year catechumenate must be a fourth-century interpolation, since they find no other corroborating third-century evidence of this practice (they reject potential corollaries like Clement's reference to a three-year training period in *Strom.* 2.18 as inconclusive). They find the projection of a three-year catechumenate in the *TA*, along with similar evidence in the canons of Elvira and Nicaea, as representative of post-Constantinian worries about slackening preparation methods.

[25] Elsewhere, I have compared the TA's initiation process with Josephus's presentation of the Essenes in the Jewish Wars and Pythagoras' *De uita Pythagorica*. See Alex Fogleman, "The Apologetics of Mystery: The *Traditio apostolica* and Appeals to Pythagorean Initiation in Josephus and Iamblichus," *VC* 77, no 2 (2022): 176–93.

[26] I use the numbering proposed by Botte, which is also used in both Bradshaw's and Stewart's recent editions. There is a lacuna in the Latin translation for this portion, lasting until the baptismal interrogation in *TA* 21.15. I will cite primarily from the Coptic translations as presented in Bradshaw et al., *Apostolic Tradition*. The many discrepancies between these texts and the evidence from the later church orders will only be noted occasionally.

asked about their reasons for coming.[27] Their sponsors are asked about their capacities for learning and their manner of life – they are asked whether the catechumens are married or in a non-marital sexual relationship, whether they are enslaved to a pagan, and whether they have a demon.[28] Next, in *TA* 16, various occupations and activities are proscribed or qualified. There is a great deal of differences among the various translations and later church orders – no doubt reflecting regional variations. But generally, these lists forbid activities that pertain to sexual deviance and idolatrous practices, including involvement in the theater (Sahidic), circus (Arabic and Ethiopic), or education. Also prohibited, in different translations, are certain military occupations that involve hunting or gladiatorial games, as well as occupations involving astrology and divination.

After this review of forbidden occupations, we learn a bit more about the process of instruction. The *TA* does not give clear indication of what was taught during this period. Chapter 17 states only that catechumens "hear the word" for three years, though exceptions can be made for those demonstrating proficiency in knowledge, devotion, and moral uprightness. A general principle is given that admission to baptism should not be based on how long one is a catechumen but on one's manner of life. Next, Chapter 18 describes the organization of prayer among catechumens. After instruction, catechumens gather for prayer separated from the faithful and organized by gender. The catechumens are not to greet the faithful with a kiss, for their kiss is not yet pure. Male catechumens greet other males while female catechumens greet other females; women adorn themselves with a veil.[29] Next, Chapter 19 says that the instructor, whether a lay person or cleric, is to lay hands upon the catechumens. At this point, there is an interjection stating that if a catechumen is arrested for the sake of the faith, he need not worry: "he will be justified, for he has received baptism in his own blood."[30]

After this presumably three-year period, those who are selected for baptism undergo another round of examination, exorcism, and instruction. Both candidates and sponsors give another account for the candi-

[27] The Ethiopic specifies that these are newcomers who come "to be baptized."

[28] The oriental versions do not identify the clerical status of these "teachers"; only the *Apostolic Constitutions* says that candidates are brought by deacons to the bishops or presbyters.

[29] This section is absent in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

[30] *TA* 19.2 (Bradshaw et al., *Apostolic Tradition*, 102).

dates' way of life. Here the subject is not their occupations but their way of life: Have they cared for the poor and the sick, performed good works? If so, they are permitted to "hear the gospel" for a period of time.[31] But if not, they are to be removed from fellowship because they "have not heard the word in faith" (*TA* 20.4). From this time on, candidates undergo a series of exorcisms and washings on the fifth day of the week. They fast the day or two preceding baptism, are exorcised by the bishop, and keep vigil during the night listening to readings and instructions. At the baptism itself, flowing water is drawn, the candidates are stripped naked and descend into the water, and the bishop anoints them with oil of thanksgiving and of exorcism.[32] Then follows the renunciation and credal interrogation as candidates are submerged into the water. Arising, they are clothed, anointed, and receive the laying on of hands and a prayer from the bishop that God would make them worthy of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. Finally, they are welcomed into fellowship with the community through prayer, the exchange of the kiss, and the sharing of the eucharist.

We have thus far a dearth of evidence about what was taught during catechesis. After the description of the baptismal rites, however, several versions of the *TA* include a cryptic passage about certain teaching that is expressed openly and other teaching that is withheld but will be conveyed by the bishop at (or after) baptism (*TA* 21.39). Here, for example, is how the Sahidic version states it:

> We have given these things to you in brief concerning the holy baptism and the holy offering since you have already been instructed [κατηχεῖσθαι] concerning the resurrection of the flesh and all the other things as written. And if there are other things that are appointed to recite, let the bishop say it quietly to those who will receive baptism. And do not let those unbelievers know, unless they first receive baptism. This is the white stone of which John said, "There is a new name written on it, which no one knows except the one who will receive the stone" (Rev. 2:17).[33]

[31] The distinction between "hearing the word" (*TA* 15) and "hearing the gospel" here provides a possible clue to the content of catechetical teaching. Paul Bradshaw, for example, has proposed that instruction in the Gospels might have been reserved from catechumens until a certain point, before which they learned Christian doctrine primarily from the Old Testament. See Paul Bradshaw, "The Gospel and the Catechumenate in the Third Century," *JTS* 50, no. 1 (1999): 143–52.

[32] There is considerable disagreement here and throughout the text about when and by whom certain anointings are performed.

[33] *TA* 21.39 (Bradshaw, *Apostolic Tradition*, 122, 124). The Arabic and Ethiopic vary in minor ways but also convey the same idea.

It is not at all clear from this passage what, besides some kind of instruction on the resurrection, is included in such teaching. Besides this, and the distinction between "hearing the word" (*TA* 15.1) and "hearing the gospel" (*TA* 20.2), there is precious little to deduce what was taught before and after baptism.

Despite all that is concealed, it is interesting to note what the *TA* does not conceal. While *TA* 15–21 is tantalizingly laconic, it is abundantly clear about the formal elements of catechesis – the steps taken, the questions by which catechumens are interrogated, and the rituals and prayers of baptism. The formal and ritual elements are disclosed, while doctrine is largely hidden. And yet, precisely in describing initiation in this way, the author/editor makes clear that the secretive elements of initiation should not engender suspicion. Indeed, the identification of what questions to ask catechumens reveals precisely the opposite: Only those who have rejected morally objectionable occupations and activities are welcomed into inner communion. While the text hides many aspects of instruction, the aspects that it chooses to reveal aim to show that the community has nothing deviant to hide.

In this balancing of openness and hiddenness, the *TA* shares some parallels with other apologetic presentations of the Christian worship, such as one finds in Justin's *First Apology* 61–65 and Tertullian's *Apologeticum* 39. Through a selective revelation of the secret life of the community, these texts demonstrate Christianity's non-secretive character. However, what purposes does this presentation of catechesis serve for the audience of the *TA*? At least according to one reconstruction – that of Alistair Stewart – one of the main functions of the *TA* is to articulate and bolster a vision of the church as a community led by learned and educated teacher-bishops rather than financially wealthy (but unlearned) patrons. The prologue to the *TA*, which Stewart attributes to the Hippolytan author of the *Refutatio*, sets out this polemical agenda.[34] Here, the "well taught" are contrasted with those who bear responsibility for church leadership but are in danger of leading the church astray through ignorance (*TA* 1.1–5). One scenario for this rhetoric is, of course, the debate between Hippolytus and Callistus, but perhaps more likely is some kind of internal debate within the Hippolytan school about who has proper

[34] For this argument, see Stewart, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 67–68. The prologue is preserved in the Latin translation, but where lacuna exist, the key points have been verified in the Ashkumite Ethiopian version. See Stewart, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 65–66.

oversight of the church – educated bishops or wealthy patrons.[35] The author/editor of the prologue emphasizes that church governance should be a matter of learning and education and not simply financial wealth.

We learn more about the *TA*'s depiction of the church as a philosophical community from other descriptions in the text, especially descriptions of the moderation observed in the communal meal and gatherings for instruction. In the description of the eucharist, we read not only of the proper administration and who is allowed to participate but also the manner in which members are to observe the meal. There is a special emphasis on eating and drinking in moderation, simplicity, and purity. Christians are to eat in a manner pleasing to God, for this demonstrates the unity and sobriety of the church as a witness to outsiders (*TA* 28.5). Likewise, there are important descriptions of the scholastic orientation of the Hippolytan community. In *TA* 35 and 41 (the latter of which is likely a reworking of former), we read about how and why Christians are to meet for instruction and prayer. Christians should "hurry" to such instruction for the strengthening of their soul, for it is here where the Spirit abounds (*TA* 35.2). Christians should be eager to listen to their instructors, considering it to be God who is speaking through them (*TA* 41.2–3).[36]

The description of baptism as a lengthy, rigorous, and somewhat secretive process is made to cohere with the depiction of the Christian community as a disciplined community of learning. The *TA* includes details for an arcane initiation process and communal meal, one highly austere about the contents of teaching yet open about the methods and forms of instruction. It describes the community's disciplined life – its rejection of licentious behavior and illicit occupations, its care for the poor and sick, its high estimation of teaching and prayer – all of which demonstrate the community's non-suspicious and non-secretive character. The presentation of a graded form of initiation is here intricately balanced with a depiction of the church as an ascetic and learned community.

CATECHESIS AND MYSTERY: *COMMENTARIUM IN CANTICUM CANTICORUM*

Another work in the Hippolytan corpus where we see the dynamic of concealment and openness is the commentary on the Song of Songs, one

[35] Stewart, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, 67–68.
[36] This phrasing is only found in the Sahidic version.

of the first extant treatises on a text that would be so influential in the Christian mystical tradition, especially through the writings of Origen. For those who subscribe to the two-author theory, this work is usually attributed to the "Eastern" Hippolytus, author of the *Contra Noetum* and the other exegetical works, and thus may have originated in an Asian or Egyptian context.[37] Without insisting definitively on an Eastern or Western provenance, it is plausible that this author was connected with the Roman school of Hippolytus. Unfortunately, the original Greek text of the *In Canticum* is no longer extant; all we have is an Armenian translation and a later Greek paraphrase.[38] Nevertheless, the Armenian gives good indication of the argument and thrust of this work. It is likely one of the first interpretations of the Song of Songs as an allegory of Christ and the church, preceding and possibly influencing Origen as well as later interpreters such as Ambrose.[39] It has long been suggested that its original setting was an Eastertide homily, which has in view baptismal candidates.[40] Yancy Smith has recently corroborated this thesis in his exhaustive treatment of this text.[41] The *In Canticum* includes invitations

[37] See also Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West*, 147–57. I am not, as stated above, persuaded by the rejection of a Roman provenance. In particular, I am not convinced by Cerrato's argument that the antichrist doctrine that Hippolytus proposes is distinctively Eastern, especially when compared with the writings of someone like Cyprian (*ep.* 58). Cyprian, for that matter, was also read in the East, further making an argument for geographical provenance difficult.

[38] This text is listed by both Eusebius and Jerome and is considered one of the earliest writings of Hippolytus. It exists complete only in a Georgian translation of an earlier Armenian work, along with Armenian fragments and a Greek paraphrase. For the critical tradition and translation, I have used Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, in consultation with Gérard Garitte, *Traités d'Hippolyte sur David et Goliath, sur Cantique Cantique des cantiques et sur l'Antéchrist: Version géorgienne*, 2 vols. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 263, 264 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1965). While the original Greek is lost, a pre-seventh-century Georgian translation exists, along with a seventh-century paraphrase. Garitte provides a Latin translation and the original Georgian. Smith provides the Armenian and Greek paraphrase, along with English translations of both.

[39] In particular, Ambrose, *sacr.* 5.5–6 and *Ps. 118*. For these connections, see Pietro Meloni, "L'influsso del *Commento al Cantico* di Ippolito sull' *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* di Ambrogio," in *Letterature comparate, problemi e metodo: Studi in onore di Ettore Paratore* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1981), 865–90.

[40] Johannes Quasten, *Initiation aux pères de l'église* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1955), 207; Gertrud Chappuzeau, "Die Auslegung des Hoheliedes durch Hippolyt von Rom," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 19 (1976): 45–81.

[41] In addition to following many of Brent's arguments, Smith also utilizes iconographic references in the *Commentary* and the distinctly Western post-baptismal anointing mentioned in *In Cant.* 2.2, 5.

for its hearers to be "filled by means of the anointing oil" (*Cant.* 2.9) and to come to the "righteous nuptials, tasting the water become wine" (*Cant.* 27.6). These indications suggest, for Smith, that the *In Canticum* was most likely a series of "notebooks for liturgical use . . . for the instruction of new converts," serving to teach the meaning of baptism and the anointing of the Logos to the newly baptized, as well as to foster solidarity against oppositional (most likely Valentinian) groups.[42] It must be added, however, that while Smith has made a good case for the catechetical origin of this text, he himself concedes that evidence for this thesis is "slim," and so we must yet again approach this text's evidence of catechesis with caution.[43]

The *In Canticum* certainly demonstrates the author's awareness of the problems associated with setting community boundaries. On the one hand, Hippolytus uses certain dogmatic and ritual markers to delineate the peripheral boundary markers of the community – "sound dogma" (*Cant.* 1.4), the "ordinance" of anointing (*Cant.* 2.7), and the "just ordinance" (*Cant.* 8.2). On the other hand, Hippolytus orients communion around the center of the community's life – the hidden mysteries of the bridal chamber.[44] At the core of the community are those who have been initiated into the saving mysteries of Christ, which Hippolytus communicates by highlighting the Spirit's open manifestation of the hidden Logos and the Christic anointing of the initiate in baptism.[45] Here again we see a certain tension between openness and concealment – a need to draw communal boundaries but to do so in a way that accents the open, non-concealed revelation of God.

Smith, following Jean Daniélou, draws attention to the importance of bridal imagery in initiation as a possible source of Hippolytus's use of the Song of Songs in baptismal instruction.[46] It is also plausible that Hippolytus focused on the nuptial imagery to provide an alternative

[42] Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 69.
[43] Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 239.
[44] Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 258.
[45] As Smith comments, "Several features of [Hippolytus's] *On the Song of Songs* show a marked connection with gnostic, especially Valentinian, Christian *practice*. . . . he may well have been reacting to the nuptial interpretation of second baptism and even perhaps against elements of a Valentinian initiatory interpretation of the Song of Songs to enhance his own rites." Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 376.
[46] Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 287, 339–43; Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 191–92. The image would become prominent in fourth-century initiation, as in, for example, Ambrose's *De sacramentis* and *De mysteriis*.

account of the "bridal chamber" depicted in certain Valentinian texts.[47] For Smith, Hippolytus dwells on this theme to unveil the mystery of initiation in Christ in a way that organizes its logic according to a different theological cosmology. Against the Valentinian picture of initiation into the mysteries as a diffuse series of aeonic emanations, Hippolytus stresses the Holy Spirit's open revelation of the hidden wisdom of God in Christ.

Hippolytus situates this view of revelation within the literary placement of the Song of Songs within the Solomonic trilogy that also includes Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.[48] These three books contain, for Hippolytus, a trinitarian mystery: The Book of Proverbs proclaims the wisdom and grace of the Father; Ecclesiastes presents the Son who embraced "the gloom of the world"; and the Song of Songs is "a [work of] praise for the joy of the Holy Spirit and to give the delight of consolation, and [thereby] the knowledge of God is made manifest to many people."[49] The Song of Songs, with its focus on the Holy Spirit's revelation of Christ as the Logos of God, was, amid this trio, especially linked with the Spirit's revelation of Christ. Through the Spirit's revelation of God in Christ, the once hidden plan from before the creation of the world has now been made manifest, with baptism serving as the entryway for the initiates' nuptial union with Christ the bridegroom.

While Hippolytus emphasizes the Spirit's manifestation of the divine life, he also stresses the eternality of the Logos as God's hidden wisdom preceding the world's creation. Drawing on the language of Proverbs 8:22 and 1 Corinthians 1:24, Hippolytus claims that the Word – as the wisdom and power of God – was "brought forth by the Father before all mountains," arraigning the world with beauty.[50] After his introductory remarks, Hippolytus interprets the initial verses of the Song in a way that unfolds the meaning of Christ's eternal existence in God in view of his more recent coming in time in human form. For Hippolytus, the speaker of the Song voices those who "entreat the heavenly Word to kiss them, because [the people] wish to join [together] mouth to mouth" – that is, "to join the power of the Spirit to itself."[51] In explaining the oil "poured

[47] Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 161–63; 375–87.

[48] Origen makes the same association of these three works in the prologue of his famous commentary on the Song of Songs, though he implies that the Song of Songs was not intended for new Christians but only for the more advanced.

[49] Hippolytus, *Cant.* 1.5 (Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 424).

[50] Hippolytus, *Cant.* 1.6 (Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 425–26).

[51] Hippolytus, *Cant.* 2.2 (Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 443, parentheticals original).

out," Hippolytus shows why the eternal Word, who was in the heart of God before creation, was not disclosed until the incarnation:

> For, just as a vessel in which there is anointing oil, [which] has been guarded safely and sealed up, does not emit an aroma, nevertheless it continues to contain [the aroma], that is the potential, but when they release it, it emits its aroma both [to] those nearby and those far away [are] filled [with it], so also the Word was in the heart of the Father, and so long as it had not gone forth, no one rejoiced in it all, but when the Father sent forth the Spirit of the aroma, the Word spread joy abroad to all.[52]

In contrast to traditions that would view Christ's redemptive work as separate from the work of a creator/demiurge, Hippolytus argues for the fundamental unity between Christ's creative and redemptive work. Christ was in the beginning with God, as an aroma sealed in a vessel. The Spirit has released this divine fragrance into the world, yet without changing the fundamental nature of the Word. "By bringing forth the esteemed Word from Him[self], he causes the aroma to descend from heaven. This descending fills everything."[53] Whereas Valentinian exegesis of the Song emphasized the esoteric reception of the Spirit's *gnosis*, Hippolytus stresses its capacious, exoteric expansion, poured out upon "everything." At one point, Hippolytus deliberately rejects the term "emanations" to describe the Spirit's activity, showing instead why the language of "outpouring" is to be preferred.[54] The Word, who was always with the Father, has now been made known through the outpouring of the Spirit, and this has been made openly manifest. The Spirit's expansive and far-reaching mission means that access to God is now immanent to creation and not concealed behind a series of aeonic emanations. In Hippolytus's exegesis of the Song, an emphasis on the Spirit's outpouring of the eternal Logos supports a view of creation's immediacy to divine knowledge, which opposes a Valentinian cosmology.

If indeed the *In Canticum* provides evidence of baptismal instruction – and again, we can only cautiously suppose that it does – it provides an

[52] Hippolytus, *Cant.* 2.5 (Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 447–48, parentheticals original).

[53] Hippolytus, *Cant.* 2.6 (Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 449, parentheticals original).

[54] Hippolytus, *Cant.* 2.7 (Smith, *Mystery of Anointing*, 451, parentheticals original): "[The Spirit] was spread out to the Gentiles, and it congregated the Gentiles. It was dispersed over Israel and it brought together the Gentiles, those who believed it. For this reason this word is to be avoided, for this reason [the text] does not at all mean, 'anointing oil emanated' but 'anointing oil poured out.' [It happened] in various ways over many thorough outpourings because what emanates is contemptible, nevertheless what [was] poured out did not diminish from the vessel itself and it filled the ones (or things) nearby."

insightful portrait of how theological knowledge in baptism was conditioned by discourses about concealment and openness. Using similar texts, practices, and images as his Valentinian opponents, Hippolytus charts a deliberately anti-Valentinian cosmology; he pictures a world receptive to divine grace rather than shielded by a multitude of aeonic emanations. On the one hand, there is a conviction that access to divine knowledge is concealed, only revealed "at the center" of the Christian community – in the bridal chamber and nuptial mysteries. On the other hand, against the position that such a view necessitated a Valentinian aeonic cosmology, Hippolytus stresses that divine openness occurs by an exoteric outpouring of the Word by the Holy Spirit. Here we find a view of theological knowledge grounded in an ontology of divine immediacy to creation through the Word and Spirit, one that calls attention to the poles of both openness and concealment.

APOCALYPSE HIDDEN: *DE CHRISTO ET ANTICHRISTO*

A final text in the Hippolytan corpus that has been linked with catechetical instruction is the *De Christo et antichristo*, one of the earliest works we have dealing with the theme of the antichrist.[55] In addition, it also provides insight into the ways that potentially esoteric doctrines could be enfolded within more open, centralized church structures and theological discourses. This correlation of secrecy and openness provides, with the *In Canticum*, another glimpse into the character of theological epistemology in catechesis during this transitional period.

The *De Christo* begins with the author's purpose for writing, which are addressed to a certain Theophilus, who was perhaps a catechist or teacher who had requested a summary of teaching on the antichrist doctrine.[56] In response, Hippolytus presented a scriptural compendium – drawn out from the Scriptures "as from a holy fountain" – so that Theophilus could

[55] J. A. Cerrato has made a compelling case that this treatise shows "evidence of design of a baptismal catechetical setting." J. A. Cerrato, "Hippolytus and Cyril of Jerusalem on the Antichrist: When Did an Antichrist Theology First Emerge in Early Christian Baptismal Catechesis?" in *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity*, ed. Robert Daly, SJ (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 154–59 (at 156). His primary reasons are the appearance in *De Christo* of a topical compendium of scripture, its prefatory remarks indicating an address from one teacher to another, and, most intriguingly, its reserved way of speaking about the doctrine of the antichrist, which indicates that this doctrine was not intended for public hearing.

[56] On the identity of Theophilus, see the options in Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West*, 147–52.

"sow them in the ground of [his] heart."[57] This method of instruction, Hippolytus thinks, will be especially useful for Theophilus as he teaches doctrines that could be misunderstood and so may disparage the gospel.[58] He warns Theophilus, however, that certain teachings should not fall into impious hands: "See that you do not give these things over to unbelieving and blasphemous tongues, for that is no common danger. But impart them to pious and faithful men, who desire to live holily and righteously with fear."[59] For justification, he cites Paul's admonition that Timothy should avoid "profane" babblings, oppose "knowledge falsely so called," and present what he has learned only to faithful Christians (1 Tim. 6:20).

> If, then, the blessed [apostle Paul] delivered these things with a pious caution (μετ᾽εὐλαβείας παραδίδου ταυτα), which could be easily known by all, as he perceived in the spirit that "all men have not faith" [2 Thess. 3:2], how much greater will be our danger, if, rashly and without thought, we commit the revelations of God to profane and unworthy men?[60]

This caution resembles the kind of reserve we find in the *Traditio apostolica*, as well as later forms of the *disciplina arcani*. In *De Christo*, however, it is not the eucharist or baptism that is in view but rather a particular teaching about the antichrist and, more broadly, a certain teaching about eschatology. Perhaps this is indicative of the kind of teaching that a bishop would have taught initiates in secret only after baptism, as *TA* 21.39–40 suggests. The antichrist doctrine, for the author of the *De Christo*, was a topic unsuitable for public hearing, a sacred mystery only for those worthy to receive it.[61]

While *De Christo* provides evidence of esoteric teaching, it also expresses, like the other works examined here, an exoteric view of divine revelation. The recollection of Paul's indictment against "knowledge falsely so called" suggests, perhaps, a reference to Valentinian Christianity or other gnostic communities.[62] Against the kind of elitism he projects upon his opponents, Hippolytus presents true Christianity as open to a broad audience, restricted only to those of faith and purity of heart: "By those who live by faith he is easily found; and to those of pure

[57] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 1.1 (ed. Enrico Norelli, *Ippolito: L'Anticristo. De Antichristo* [Florence: Centro Internazionale del Libro, 1987], 64; ANF 5:204).
[58] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 1.2 (Norelli, *L'Anticristo*, 64; ANF 5:204).
[59] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 1.2 (Norelli, *L'Anticristo*, 64; ANF 5:204).
[60] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 1.3 (Norelli, *L'Anticristo*, 64; ANF 5:204).
[61] Cerrato, "Hippolytus and Cyril of Jerusalem," 156.
[62] Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West*, 155.

eye and holy heart, who desire to knock at the door, he opens immediately. For he casts away none of his servants as unworthy of the divine mysteries" (τῶν θείων αὐτοῦ μυστηρίων).[63] Christ denies neither the economic nor social outcast – the poor, the barbarian, or the eunuch. He rejects neither male nor female on account of their transgressions in the beginning. Instead, "he seeks all, and desires to save all, wishing to make all the children of God, and calling all the saints unto one perfect man" (εἰς ἕνα τέλειον ἄνθρωπον καλῶν).[64] In addition, Hippolytus claims that the Scriptures are public texts, which hold accountable those who teach and those who learn.

> For we do not attempt to make any change one way or another among ourselves in the words that were spoken of old by them, but we make the Scriptures in which these are written public, and read them to those who can believe rightly; for that is a common benefit for both parties: for him who speaks, in holding in memory and setting forth correctly things uttered of old; and for him who hears, in giving attention to the things spoken.[65]

The juxtaposition of doctrinal reserve and anti-elitist proclamation indicates a key aspect of how knowledge was presented in catechesis. Presenting himself in opposition to Valentinian secrecy, which excluded the larger population of Christians from the divine mysteries, Hippolytus describes salvation as open to all and sundry, even while recognizing that faith and purity of heart are necessary for the apprehension of divine mystery.

CONCLUSION

The three texts associated with the Hippolytan school surveyed here – the *Traditio apostolica*, *Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum*, and the *De Christo et antichristo* – provide important insight into the relationship between knowledge and pedagogy in early Christian catechesis. To be sure, each text presents difficulties in terms of the evidence it provides of catechesis. Nonetheless, they still allow us to perceive the ways in which the dynamic of openness and concealment obtained in their approaches to teaching. While each of these texts highlights ways in which knowledge of God is restricted and concealed, they also contain theological convictions that emphasize the openness of divine revelation. These works present

[63] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 3.2 (Norelli, *L'Anticristo*, 70; ANF 5:205, alt.).
[64] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 3.2 (Norelli, *L'Anticristo*, 70; ANF 5:205).
[65] Hippolytus, *antichr.* 2.3 (Norelli, *L'Anticristo*, 68; ANF 5:205).

knowledge of God as immediate and accessible through the Spirit's manifestation of the Word; yet they also present access to divine knowledge as something restricted based on disciplined moral and spiritual formation. In the Hippolytan writings, in short, we see crucial ways in which discourses of concealment and openness shaped catechesis in early Christianity. These dynamics would, in turn, shape the practice of catechesis for centuries to come.