

Old Testament *Questions* of Theodoret of Cyrus

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Of the major figures of the school of Antioch, if we may use that term,¹ Theodoret (later bishop of Cyrus) receives less attention than its earlier more celebrated, even notorious, members. This may be due to the fact that it was not he but John Chrysostom and Theodore (later bishop of Mopsuestia) who had as their mentor in the asketerion of Antioch the later bishop of Tarsus, Diodore,² who can claim to be the founder of that school's method of exegesis.³ It may also, or instead, be due to the attention, often hostile, directed to Diodore and Theodore by critics like Cyril of Alexandria and Leontius of Byzantium, and the condemnation of their works by a synod of Constantinople in 499 and the fifth ecumenical council of 553, respectively. That neglect would be a pity, since the bishop of Cyrus also played a significant role in Church life at the time, representing the oriental bishops in the formulation of the Symbol of Union in 433 and in the convocation of the fourth council at Chalcedon in 451, which has been styled the triumph of Antiochene Christology.⁴ More to the point of this essay, Theodoret's juniority also obscures the fact that as a biblical commentator he alone of that school has left us an extant corpus of commentary ('exegesis' being perhaps too pretentious a term)⁵ on almost the whole of the Old Testament that illustrates the tenets of the Antiochene approach to ἡ θεῖα Γραφή and its distinctive hermeneutic. His typically

“modéré”⁶ treatment of the biblical text and of the opinions of his predecessors secured for his efforts an exemption from the fate that was meted out to works by earlier commentators in that school. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century, who was not above faulting the latter, conceded of Theodoret that, “on the whole, he reached the top level of exegetes.”⁷

THE *QUESTIONS* A LATE WORK OF THEODORET’S

Despite his many commitments as bishop of a see 100 kms northeast of Antioch that, if styled “a little backwater,”⁸ included 800 parishes, Theodoret could claim in a letter to Eusebius of Ancyra in 448 to have produced works on “all the prophets, the psalter and the apostle.”⁹ Missing from that corpus is any mention of work on the Gospels, which (out of deference to Chrysostom’s egregious commentaries?) he seems never to have attempted, and on the Torah and Former Prophets of the Hebrew Bible, on which his Antiochene predecessors have left us some remains, mostly fragmentary.¹⁰ Undeterred by failing health in the years before his death around 460, Theodoret acknowledges the encouragement of a certain Hypatius, apparently a coadjutor, to bring the work of Old Testament commentary to completion with two series of *Questions* on “what appear to be problems, ζητήματα,” in the Octateuch (Genesis to Ruth) and in Kingdoms and Chronicles (1 Samuel to 2 Chronicles). In choosing this genre in place of verse-by-verse commentary, he was following in the path of commentators in the East (not only on biblical texts but also on classical poets like Homer, “la source inépuisable d’apories”)¹¹ from Aristotle to Philo to Eusebius of Caesarea and on to Photius (who acknowledged Theodoret’s effort under the title Εἰς τὰ ἄπορα τῆς Γραφῆς), and in the West Jerome, Augustine and medieval authors like Peter Abelard.

Theodoret had not employed this genre before in treating of “all the (Latter) prophets, the psalter and the apostle” plus his exegetical first fruits, the Song of Songs, where his aim had been “to bring obscurity to clarity,” as he says of that earliest work.¹² His choice of the *Questions* genre in this case was motivated perhaps partly by his failing health, and also by the particular challenge of the material. Though he concedes only that these books contain “*what appear to be problems,*” Genesis and the others did prompt bewilderment on the part of some readers and blasphemous criticism by adversaries such as the Marcionites, and so called for the selective focus allowed by this genre.¹³ There was also the fact that in the case of one of these biblical books, Ruth, there may have been some readers who held doubts of its canonicity (as the first question on it betrays), while the Chronicles (mere “leftovers,” Παραλειπόμενα, in the terminology of the Seventy translators) had escaped, and would continue to escape commentary by any other of the Fathers – perhaps the reason why Theodoret, with no predecessor to suggest key questions for response, lapses into continuous commentary on these books.

The result of this lengthy series of ζητήματα καὶ λύσεις, where an aging commentator in poor health is nevertheless undaunted by the magnitude of the task, is a work (or two works, if one notes the provision of a fresh preface to Kingdoms and Chronicles) that runs to 186,000 words in translation. The only latitude Theodoret allows himself towards the end is in excusing himself from repeating what he has written before in his final prophetic commentary (on Jeremiah) on the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah: “The story of the remaining kings the prophet Jeremiah reported in many places. For our part, since we commented on that book as well, thanks to divine grace, we have presumed it superfluous to comment on it again.” Photius in a later century conceded that the work measures

up to its title, and that “for the most part the book is helpful” – a rather grudging estimate by a reserved assessor of Antiochene scholarship. For modern scholars its value lies in various areas: in the biblical text that Theodoret is reading; in his overall approach to Scripture as emerging from this work; in the critical positions he adopts on Octateuchal composers as well as the Deuteronomist and Chronicler vis-à-vis our positions today; in the Antiochene hermeneutic applied to these composers’ oral and written works; and less so in Christological, trinitarian and other theological accents of the commentator. In these many areas Theodoret’s *Questions* represent an achievement that is, *pace* Photius, more than simply χρήσιμον.

THE TEXT OF THE *QUESTIONS*
AND THEODORET’S BIBLICAL TEXT

We are fortunate to be able to read both parts of the work, which has come to us in direct manuscript tradition, in a critical edition by the eminent Septuagint scholar Natalio Fernández Marcos and his colleagues.¹⁴ Fernández Marcos undertook the task of editing the work with the express purpose of discerning the degree to which it exhibits signs of a peculiarly Antiochene (or Lucianic) recension as distinct from other forms of the LXX, whose existence has been acknowledged at least from the time of Jerome.¹⁵ The conclusion regarding the Octateuch is, in short, that “at least a typically Antiochene text emerges in the last three books,” and that this is true also, as was suspected, of the text of Kingdoms being read by Theodoret, where “a single, uniform text with very clear textual characteristics” appears.¹⁶ A translator (like the present writer) notes distinctive readings in Theodoret’s biblical text, while being aware also that in the Greek version of the book of Judges, the families of manuscripts associated with Codex Alexandrinus and Codex

Vaticanus differ from each other.

Despite claims one occasionally reads to the contrary, Theodoret was (like his Antiochene fellows, and all other Fathers except Jerome) unable to read Hebrew,¹⁷ and so was at the mercy of this local LXX text before him. Should a “questioner” (if we engage in a willing suspension of disbelief regarding the source of the ζητήματα) raise an issue involving use of a Hebrew term, the commentator is left to rationalize. The LXX text of Exodus 22:28(27) outlawing blasphemy reads, “You shall not revile gods, θεούς,” prompting Q.51 about the force of the plural; the commentator could have solved the issue quite simply had he been able to comment on Hebrew usage in the case of *‘elohim*, here wrongly rendered in the plural by the LXX, but he chooses to cite the more difficult case of Psalms 82:1 where the gods of the nations are referred to, insisting that in both cases the plural is appropriate since “judges” is intended. When the questioner asks about the meaning of the form $\nu\omega\kappa\eta\delta\epsilon\iota$ (an obscure Hebrew term simply transliterated by a puzzled LXX) for the occupation of King Mesha of Moab in 2 Kings 3:4, which is thought to mean “augurer” but often rendered “sheep breeder,”¹⁸ Theodoret can only check with the alternative versions associated with the names Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, and then with the context.

The other translators rendered $\nu\omega\kappa\eta\delta\epsilon\iota$ as chief shepherd.

The sequel makes things clear: “He used to pay a tax to the king of Israel of a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand unshorn rams.”

A copy of the Hexapla made available to him another LXX form as well as those alternative versions, to which he has recourse more frequently on Kingdoms and Chronicles. On those books he turns also to the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius of Caesarea, to a lexicon of Hebrew terms, and to an obscure translator named Josephus (not the historian, who also is at his

elbow) in his typical anxiety to leave no question unanswered (even if of his own asking). His acquaintance with Syriac, his mother tongue, an asset in other commentaries, he invokes rarely here – for example, in throwing light on the dialectal diversity in the pronunciation of Hebrew *shibboleth* in the incident in Judges 12:4-6 where Jephthah detects fugitives of Ephraim by that ruse. Within his limits, then, Theodoret (unlike Theodore, e.g.) is a tireless researcher.

THEODORET'S HANDLING OF A NEW GENRE

It is as well that he is conscientious. The *Questions* genre allows a commentator the possibility of dodging the more difficult questions, of catering simply to the idly inquisitive, and of pandering to those with an interest in the sensational or the salacious. Theodoret does not exploit this latitude, generally attending to the major concerns a reader of his time may have had about this challenging part of the Bible. We do note that he does not comment on items of the Decalogue beyond the first three, or share the interest of the composers of Joshua in lists of kings and allotments of land. Debate about Solomon's age at his death, in response to Q.32 on 1 Kings 11 involving reference to the figure cited by Flavius Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities*, leads to no comment on the momentous division of the kingdom that ensued. And we regret the brevity of reference to the fall of Samaria to Shalmaneser V in 722 and consequent deportation of the northern tribes in 2 Kings 17. But for this commentator there is no shirking difficult passages that are obscure even in the Hebrew, like the poem in Deuteronomy 33. The bishop naturally has an interest, like The Chronicler, in things liturgical. An apparently ingenuous Question 60 on Exodus, "Why on earth did God order the tabernacle to be made?" is a cue for a comprehensive account of the design and furnishings of the tabernacle together with the

accoutrements of the priests described in Exodus 25-29, just as he gives free rein to Antiochene ἀκριβεία in pursuing details of the origin and measurements of materials in the building of the Temple in 1 Kings 7-10.¹⁹ On the other hand, texts that might seem sensational, like the sun's stopping in its course in Joshua 10:12-13 or the angelic vengeance meted out to Sennacherib's troops in 2 Kings 19:35, do not attract particular attention.

Does that mean that modern scholars would concur with Theodoret's appreciation of the process of composition of the complicated texts of Torah and Former Prophets? *A priori*, that is unlikely: these terms from the Hebrew Bible are no more familiar to him than Deuteronomist or Chronicler. The term Octateuch, used in the early Church for the Bible's first eight books,²⁰ does not occur in his mouth; yet the grouping is evidently customary for him, whereas a pentateuchal collection is not: he moves from Deuteronomy to Joshua without comment on Deuteronomy 34, which records the death of Moses and the mystery surrounding his tomb, and without remark on any change of authorship. His prefatory remarks include no general introductory comments on the literary and theological unity of the first corpus or on questions of authorship such as might be found in a modern treatment, and the same is true of the preface to Kingdoms and Chronicles – and, it might be added, to his Commentary on Paul's letters.²¹ His exegetical priorities, therefore, are similar to those of Chrysostom in his homilies and sermons on Genesis,²² namely, that Scripture is very much a moral and hagiographical text; the inclusion of Ruth in the canon is justified on the following grounds (beyond its Christological import), “This narrative is sufficient of itself to offer great benefit to those who realize the kind of benefit accruing from it” – χρήσιμον in Photius' terminology.

THEODORET'S POSITION ON OCTATEUCH,
KINGDOMS AND CHRONICLES

Theodoret's more critical modern counterparts would doubtless note features of the commentary that differ from theirs. Even less than Chrysostom does he notice the occurrence, let alone the different character, of a second story of creation in Genesis.²³ He is slow to recognize a cultic rather than simply pragmatic basis for the numerous directives in Leviticus. The significance for an adequate morality of Exodus 20:2, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt..." at the head of the apodictic commandments of the Decalogue is not acknowledged (as likewise many moralists today fail to acknowledge it, admittedly).²⁴ On the other hand, he is astute enough to recognize the creation story as a later reflection of a theological as well as factual nature that takes account of and refines earlier efforts from the ancient Near East.

Since Egyptians used to make a god of visible creation, and in living among them for a long time Israel had contracted this impiety, he necessarily proposes to them the facts of creation and openly teaches that it had a beginning to its existence and that it had the God of all as its creator. Not that he passed over a treatment of true doctrine of God (θεολογία): the statement that heaven and earth and the other parts of creation were made and the revelation that the God of all is their creator provided as well a true doctrine of God sufficient for people of the time.

We might find, nevertheless, that the commentator's constant efforts to salvage David's reputation represent a failure to appreciate the warts-and-all portrait of this flawed instrument of divine purposes by the Deuteronomist.

We are not surprised, of course, that in their time Theodoret and his peers did not arrive at a document hypothesis for the Pentateuch such as that developed by the followers of

Julius Wellhausen in a later age. It is true that Moses as author of those books is presented here in various literary roles (beyond lawgiver, νομοθέτης) – as inspired author, προφήτης, like the psalmist and (Latter) prophets, as simple composer (not necessarily uninspired), συγγραφεύς, as historian/chronicler/annalist, ιστοριογράφος – which might be taken as a code implying a somewhat similar concept of multiple authorship. There are times, too, when the distinctively anthropomorphic character of a Yahwist affects this eastern commentator; he has to deny that Moses could have seen God, as is claimed in Exodus 33:16-23, or that the Lord and accompanying angels ate a meal in the tent of Abraham in Genesis 18. But the many textual discrepancies that give rise to questions in a precise Antiochene rarely elicit responses hinting at diversity of authorship: there are more curses than blessings in Deuteronomy 27-28, not because of an interpolation or the impact of the exile on a Deuteronomistic editor, but because “promises of freedom do not benefit wicked servants to the same extent as threats of chastisement;” Balaam’s changes of heart in Numbers 22-24 are not due to any difference in authorship. Likewise, Theodoret does not arrive at an acknowledgement of individual contributions of a Deuteronomist and a Chronicler in the second corpus, implying instead by consistent use of the terms συγγραφεύς and ιστοριογράφος for these authors in place of προφήτης that their work was less original, perhaps requiring a lower level of participation in the charism of inspiration. He is in accord with the choice by the LXX of Παραλειπόμενα, “leftovers,” as a (“somewhat derogatory and non-theological”) title,²⁵ failing to recognize a distinctive theology in the work of The Chronicler.

AN ANTIOCHENE INTERPRETATION

The commentator on any text, sacred or profane, who

fails to appreciate the complexity of its composition or the contribution of a range of authors is also in danger of mediating to his readers a less than adequate interpretation. Though he had not sat at Diodore's feet like Chrysostom and Theodore, Theodoret had evidently accepted the typically Antiochene accent on τὸ ἱστορικόν in biblical hermeneutics. "It is necessary to adhere to the facts (ἀλήθεια) of the divine Scripture,"²⁶ he says in weighing up various interpretations of the parting of the sea in response to Q.25 on Exodus 14:22; and in his interpretation of the plagues in that book he could not be said to be bent on disabusing his readers of literalist views. The Fall scene in Genesis 3 is also taken at the literal level, as can be seen in his response to Q.32 about the serpent speaking to Eve, the only suggestion of metaphor being in the devil's adopting the guise of a serpent. Yet the commentator can remind his readers that "the bare text" is not an adequate basis for arriving at the author's full meaning: the Lord's threat in Exodus 20:5 to punish children of idolators to the fourth generation should be interpreted, he says, not solely by reference to τὸ γυμνὸν γράμμα, but by an intertextual approach invoking Ezekiel 18. There can be levels of meaning in a text, he assures his readers in responding to Q.26 on Genesis when questioned about the way to interpret the trees in the garden: they are real trees, but they also signify something further.

The divine Scripture said that they also sprouted from the ground, so they do not have a different nature from the other plants: just as the tree of the Cross is a tree and is called saving on account of the salvation gained by faith in it, so these trees also were products of the soil. By divine decree one was called "tree of life," the other on account of the experience of sin occurring in connection with it was named "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" ... Likewise baptism is called living water, not because the water of baptism has a different nature, but because through

that water divine grace makes a gift of eternal life.

The interpretation moves from the literal to the eschatological, spiritual and sacramental.²⁷

This hermeneutical range is required by Theodoret in addressing octateuchal material because of the need he feels to endorse institutions and practices of Judaism at one time, and at another to disallow or reinterpret them. The prescriptions in the book of Leviticus in particular call for this flexibility: the treatment of leprosy by priests prescribed in Leviticus 14:15-18 is transposed to the level of contemporary Church practice regarding public sinners: "The person who remained leprous, of course, continued to live outside the camp, just as the sinner who remained unrepentant is expelled from the Church." The saving effects on the people and on individuals of cultic prescriptions and heroic feats outlined in the Octateuch lend themselves readily to interpretation in a typological manner, of which even Antiochene commentators take frequent advantage. Even in Kingdoms and Chronicles the story from the Elijah cycle of the widow of Zarephath (Q.47 on 1 Kings 17) could be taken similarly, Theodoret felt: "My view is that in her the Church from the nations was prefigured: in faith she welcomed the fugitive from the Israelites, just as the Church also accepted the apostles when driven out by those same people." Christian liturgical practice had doubtless already adopted this style of reading the text. If this hermeneutic gave rise to uneasiness in Antiochene readers/listeners (as Chrysostom admits it did),²⁸ even when the word "allegory" itself is not cited, Theodoret can and does claim the support of "the divine apostle" in 1 Corinthians 10:2-4, as in Q.27 on Exodus.

The old realities were a type of the new: the Law of Moses was the shadow, grace the body. So since the Egyptians pursued the Hebrews, and by crossing the Red Sea they

were freed from the harsh domination of the Egyptians, the sea represents a type of bath, the cloud the Spirit, Moses Christ the savior, the rod the Cross, Pharaoh the devil, the Egyptians the demons, the manna divine nourishment, and the water from the rock the saving blood.

It is not allegory in the style that Antioch (in the person of Diodore) took to be Origen's, because τὸ ἱστορικόν is still preferred to τὸ ἀλληγορικόν and not undermined by it (as Diodore required of the process of θεωρία),²⁹ and in fact is given precedence. It is on this basis that Theodoret quotes 1 Corinthians 10 again at the opening of comment on Joshua, where he claims to see Moses and Joshua acting as types, citing also Galatians 4:24, where Paul admitted to use of allegory in paralleling Hagar and Sarah to the earthly and heavenly Jerusalems. Aware that Diodore, concerned about Alexandrian-style allegory, had corrected Paul on use of the term, Theodoret explains, "(Paul) wrote this, not to exclude the factual basis, but to compare the type to the reality." He himself will reject that other style of allegory in pejorative reference to the interpretation of the clothing of skins as the human body in Genesis 3:21 by the ἀλληγορηταί, probably with Origen and Didymus in mind; nowhere else does he refer specifically to this style of interpretation.

THEODORET'S ACHIEVEMENT IN THE *QUESTIONS*

It is clear that the liturgy of Theodoret's church had already determined that Christological significance is often found in octateuchal texts. Ruth's rightful place in the canon, we noted, was established on these grounds, as Matthew's genealogy of Jesus confirmed. Any hesitant readers of the Torah could be encouraged to read this Jewish material on the grounds that, as Theodoret says in Q.76 on Genesis, "that race was the object of this care for the reason that Christ the Lord, the only-begotten Son of God, was destined to spring

from it according to the flesh.” The ritual of the scapegoat (ἀποπομπᾶιος) and the sacrificed goat in Leviticus 16, which is introduced as a codicil to Q.22, receives lengthy linguistic and theological clarification simply because Jesus is in focus.³⁰ Yet, perhaps because Theodoret was reading his predecessors’ interpretation through the lens of Diodore (as Guinot documents), there is no overall attempt in this work to turn the Torah into a Christian text, or to hunt for traces of Christian dogma. Rarely do elements of Trinitarian thinking strike the commentator.

Such traces and other accents of a theological nature, like the question of the creation of the angels, which receives lengthy treatment, are best left to another study. Here the focus has been on Theodoret as commentator on two large sections of the Old Testament, and specifically on his adoption of an unaccustomed genre for commentary on them, the *Questions*. We can agree that Photius was less than generous in conceding the work – which despite the author’s failing health runs to such length, and includes unique patristic commentaries on Ruth and Chronicles – to be simply “helpful.” Apart from its value to us for surviving in its entirety, unlike the octateuchal fragments from earlier Antiochene commentators Diodore and Theodore, and extending beyond Chrysostom’s Genesis homilies and sermons, it represents a comprehensive and always serious attempt to “make clear to the readers what requires clarification,” while “introducing nothing foreign into the divine Scripture.” It largely avoids the principal hazard of the genre, that of shirking comment on principal issues of the text or settling for irrelevant or sensational detail. The author’s critical positions are those of his time, predictably; only slowly does he come to acknowledge complexity in the narrative and diversity of authorship in the Octateuch, and the Deuteronomist’s purpose and the Chronicler’s theology generally elude him. Yet his peers, whom he surveys

respectfully, suffered from the same exegetical limitations without leaving us his balanced coverage of such an extensive section of the Old Testament, which is interpreted in the best Antiochene fashion, eschewing a hermeneutic based solely on τὸ γυμνὸν γράμμα while not taking refuge in allegory. After consulting his work, Theodoret's readers doubtless felt that "what appear to be problems" in this large part of Scripture are only that.

NOTES

¹ Though we do find J. Quasten, *Patrology II* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1953), pp. 121-23, speaking in a local and physical sense of "the school of Antioch founded by Lucian of Samosata" in opposition to the "school of Caesarea," Origen's refuge after his exile from Egypt, we prefer to use the term only of a fellowship of like-minded scholars joined by birth, geography and scholarly principles, even if some members did exercise a magisterial role in regard to others.

² Cf. Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6, 3 (PG 67.665-68).

³ Cf. J.-M. Olivier, *Diodori Tarsensis Commentarii in Psalmos I, Commentarii in Psalmos I-L*, CCG 6, (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1980), ciii, who, while conceding to Lucian of Samosata the role of "l'initiateur" of the Antiochene exegetical method, claims for Diodore the role of "le véritable fondateur."

⁴ Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 341. For a fuller summary of Theodoret's life and works, see J.-N. Guinot, "Theodoret von Kyrrhos," *TRE* 33.250-54.

⁵ Cf. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 94: "Neither John, nor any Christian teacher for centuries to come, was properly equipped to carry out exegesis as we have come to understand it."

⁶ The compliment is paid Theodoret by G. Bardy, "Interprétation chez les pères," *DBS* IV, p. 582, who proceeds to say that for future ages he was "le noyau ou le terme de comparaison indispensable."

⁷ *Bibliotheca* 203 (PG 105.676), a work in which by contrast Photius rates Theodore's writings as extremely tautological, lacking charm, unpleasing, short on clarity.

⁸ F. M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), p. 267.

⁹ Y. Azéma, ed., *Théodore de Cyr. Correspondance II* (SC 98.202).

¹⁰ Guinot, *L'Exégèse de Théodoret de Cyr*, *Théologie historique* 100, (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), pp. 748-99, documents Theodoret's considerable indebtedness to Diodore's Questions on the Octateuch, fragments of which are collected in R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuch et des Rois*, *Studi e Testi* 201, (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1959). Devreesse also includes fragments of commentary on some pentateuchal material by Theodore in *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, *Studi e Testi* 141, (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1948), pp. 5-27.

¹¹ Cf. G. Bardy, "La littérature patristique des 'Quaestiones et responsiones' sur l'Écriture sainte," *RB* 41 (1932), 210-36, 341-69, 515-37; 42 (1933) 11-30, 211-29, 328-52. The phrase comes from art. cit., 41 (1932) 211.

¹² PG 81.212.

¹³ Cf. Theodoret's preface: "Not all inquirers (into this part of the Bible) share the same purpose: some inquire with ill-will, believing they find the divine Scripture wanting, in some cases for not teaching right doctrine, in other cases for giving conflicting instructions; others by contrast search in a spirit of learning, longing to find what is sought."

¹⁴ N. Fernández Marcos and A. Sáenz-Badillos, *Theodoretī Cyrensis Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, *Textos y Estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"* vol. 17, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1979); Fernández Marcos and J. R. Busto Saiz, *Theodoretī Cyrensis Quaestiones in Reges et Paralipomena*, *Textos y Estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"* vol. 32, 1984.

¹⁵ Jerome speaks of three forms of the LXX current in his time (*Praef. in Paral.*; PL 28.1324-25), referring to the Constantinople-Antioch form as "another version which Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea and all the Greek commentators call the popular text, and which by most is called the Lucianic text" (*Ep.* 106, 2; PL 22.838). Not all agree on the provenance of this Antioch text: P. Kahle, *The Cairo Genizah*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), pp. 256-57, argues that a translation distinct from that of Alexandria called Septuagint was earlier developed in Antioch, and was revised by Lucian in the third century (Lucian's lack of Hebrew relegating him to the role of reviser, in the view of S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pp. 160-61). Fernández Marcos, on the other hand, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible*, Eng. trans., (Boston-Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 54, does not accept Kahle's proposal of a number of Greek translations like the many Aramaic targums, though still admitting that "the Septuagint is not a translation but a 'collection of translations'" (xi, 22).

¹⁶ *The Septuagint in Context*, pp. 229-30.

¹⁷ Evidence from his OT commentaries would confirm the description of Theodoret as “bilingue” by P. Canivet, *Histoire d'une entreprise apolo-gétique au Ve siècle*, (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957), pp. 26-27, Syriac being his mother tongue and Greek his “langue de culture.” As to the degree of Origen’s familiarity with Hebrew, Henri Crouzel concedes, *Origen*, Eng. trans, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 12: “Certainly it would be wrong to credit Origen with a knowledge of Hebrew like Jerome’s, but he must have had enough to direct the compilation of the *Hexapla*, even if the actual work was done by some assistant.”

¹⁸ Cf. J. Gray, *I & II Kings*, 3rd ed., Old Testament Library, (London: SCM, 1977), p. 482, who sees the sequel that Theodoret cites to be a gloss on the obscure term, which thus undoes him (and even modern versions like the NRSV).

¹⁹ Admittedly, there are a goodly number of questions that seize upon insignificant items or false conundrums (*dissonantia* in Abelard’s term), like Q.3 on Exodus asking how Pharaoh’s daughter knew that baby Moses was a Hebrew (through circumcision, the commentator retorts, since it was a distinctively Hebrew practice, in his misinformed view).

²⁰ Cf. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, Eng. trans, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), p. 156.

²¹ Cf. R. C. Hill, *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on the Letters of St Paul I*, (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), p. 9.

²² The homilies are found in PG 53; 54, and the sermons have been critically edited by L. Brottier, *Jean Chrysostome: Sermons sur la Genèse*, SC 433, 1998.

²³ Cf. Chrysostom, Homily 12 on Genesis (PG 53.99): “The Holy Spirit, after all, in his foreknowledge of future events, wishes to prevent anyone’s being able to engage in controversy later on, and in opposition to Sacred Scripture to set notions from their own reasoning against the dogmas of the Church; so now again, after teaching us the order of created things, ... accordingly once again he makes mention of all the items one by one to stop the unbridled tongue of people spoiling to make a show of their shamelessness.” (Translation by R. C. Hill, *St John Chrysostom: Homilies on Genesis 1-17*, Fathers of the Church 74, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), p. 159.)

²⁴ Biblical theologians observe that it is a pattern in the Scriptures that Gospel precedes law, and that consequently according to biblical morality the moral life represents a response to a divine initiative, not simply obedience to arbitrary edicts.

²⁵ So R. Braun, *I Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary 14, (Waco TX: Word Books, 1986), p. i. Theodoret’s acceptance of this term and his

judgement of the author's lower status are related to his and his peers' notion of prophecy as essentially prospective (cf. my article, "Antiochene Exegesis of the Prophets" *StudP* 39 [2005]). As he says at the opening of commentary on Chronicles, "Anyone composing a history mentions not later events but earlier or contemporary ones; it belongs to prophets to foretell the future."

²⁶ Cf. C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der Antiochenischen Exegese*, Theophaneia: Beiträge zur Religions – und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums 23, (Köln-Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1974), p. 170: "Der Bezug auf die 'Realität', die ἀλήθεια, stellt aber die wohl entscheidende Komponente der antiochenischen 'historischen' Auslegung dar."

²⁷ Such hermeneutical flexibility on Theodoret's part is at variance with the adherence shown by Theodore, e.g., to the maxims received in his education (via Diodore and Libanius) from the likes of Aristarchus, who by recommending students to "Clarify Homer from Homer" had the effect of inducing Antiochene interpreters to find the full meaning of OT text within the OT. Cf. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 158-67.

²⁸ Chrysostom suggests that his congregations would not stomach the use of allegory, as he says explicitly in his homilies on Isaiah 6 (SC 277.122): "Those not happy to accept allegories will reject our reference" (to Isaiah 14:14, an allegorical text); and so he has to cite Paul instead. If Theodoret in this work seems to have unusually ready recourse to typology, and even allegory, it is partly because his script has to some extent been written for him by predecessors of that bent in use of this genre, as Bardy explains in, "La littérature patristique," *RB* 42 (1933), p. 224.

²⁹ In his preface to his Commentary on the Psalms (CCG 6.7), Diodore stated his insistence on beginning with a factual reading of the text (κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν), and only then moving to a more elevated sense by a process of θεωρία; bypassing the former resulted not in θεωρία but in ἀλληγορία. Paul Ternant, "La θεωρία d'Antioche dans le cadre de sens de l'Écriture," *Bib* 34 (1953), p. 137, comments, "Par θεωρία Antioche entendait sa propre position, et par ἀλληγορία celle de l'adversaire, i.e., Alexandria."

³⁰ Our term scapegoat (for escape goat) derives from the Vulgate's *caper emissarius* in response to the ἀποπομπῆος of the LXX in Leviticus 16:8 where the Hebrew term Azazel appears (NRSV also); scholars like De Vaux believe it is intended in that verse as a proper name parallel to Yahweh there, and probably with demonic reference – an interpretation as old as Julian the Apostate (but too Manichean for the Fathers), earning Theodoret's scorn because of his sense of a Christological parallel. So the ritual of the scapegoat in Leviticus 16:5-10 receives full treatment.