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0521018919 - Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12:1-13 in its Rhetorical,  
Religious, and Philosophical Context

N. Clayton Croy

Excerpt

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## 1

INTRODUCTION, RETROSPECT,  
AND PROSPECT

## 1.1 Introduction

Few human experiences are quite so universal as suffering. Its forms and its causes are diverse. Because of its prominence and persistence in human experience, religious traditions (and sometimes philosophy) have given considerable attention to suffering, whether to lament its existence, explain its origin, ascribe some purpose to it, rally forces to alleviate it, or simply to encourage those who face it. Jewish and Christian traditions have done all of the above.

This study focuses on a specific NT passage which addresses the problem of suffering: Hebrews 12.1–13. The text is enclosed by athletic imagery and unified by a common paraenetic aim. The author likens the life of faith to a race, an ἀγών, a process of rigorous discipline, and he<sup>1</sup> urges his readers to endure their struggles and not to be faint-hearted. There are, nevertheless, two distinct sections in the passage: verses 1–3 and 4–13.<sup>2</sup> The first of these issues a call to the readers to “run with endurance,” surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses enumerated in chapter 11 and looking to the example of Jesus, who suffered hostility and death. The second section contains a similar exhortation to endure, this time substantiated by an understanding of suffering as divine παιδεία. In short, the author offers the readers two means of encouragement: the supreme paradigm of

<sup>1</sup> I will use masculine pronouns in referring to the unknown author of the epistle. In light of the masculine participle in the first person statement of 11.32, this seems justified. Nevertheless, conjectures have been made about female authorship. See J. M. Ford, “The Mother of Jesus and the Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Bible Today*, 82 (1975) 683–94; R. Hoppin, *Priscilla, Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews and Other Essays* (New York: Exposition, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Some disagreement exists about the end of the pericope. Nestle<sup>26</sup> makes a paragraph break after vs.11; UBS<sup>3</sup> divides the text after vs. 13. The latter is preferable in view of the *inclusio* produced by the athletic imagery of vss. 1–2 and 12–13. Most recent commentators favor this division.

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endurance in suffering and a view of suffering as divinely purposeful and personally beneficial.

Using this division of the text, scholars have identified two broad streams of tradition as part of the formative milieu of Hebrews 12.1–13: the martyrological tradition exemplified in 4 Maccabees as the milieu of verses 1–3, and the Jewish wisdom tradition such as is represented in Job, Proverbs, and Sirach as the milieu of verses 4–13. This identification is surely valid; the influence of these two traditions is unmistakable. Nevertheless, my own reading of Hebrews 12.1–13 has led me to ask if other dynamics are more influential. Several observations in particular underlie this reappraisal.

First, while the author of Hebrews does indeed draw upon the Jewish wisdom tradition in verses 5–6 (Prov. 3.11–12), his exposition of that passage is selective. Certain features of the passage are developed; others are ignored. This is in keeping with the author's practice of appropriating OT texts often on the basis of a small number of key words. In Hebrews 12.4–13 the concept of παιδεία and the father/son image are clearly the chief concerns of the author. Παιδεία and παιδεύω each occur once in the citation; along with their cognates, the words occur six more times in the exposition. Υἱός occurs twice in the citation; υἱός and πατήρ occur three times each in the exposition. The more punitive terms in the citation, ἐλέγχω and μαστιγῶ, are not appropriated in the exposition. The central term, παιδεία, is notoriously diverse in signification, and the author may very well be exploiting this diversity in his appropriation of Proverbs 3.11–12.

Secondly, the Jewish wisdom tradition often viewed suffering as divine "discipline": in Hebrew texts, *musar*, in Greek texts, παιδεία. This discipline sometimes presupposed culpability on the part of those disciplined, a waywardness of some kind for which they were being punished. But this was not invariably so, and it does not seem to be the case in Hebrews 12.1–13. The epistle addresses a community that was experiencing adversity from an external source: reproaches, trials, imprisonment, and the despoliation of their property (see especially 10.32–4). The immediate causes of this suffering are unnamed persons and/or institutions in the readers' social environment, and although their hardship could be understood as having its ultimate cause in some moral wrongdoing, there is no indication that the author of Hebrews has this in mind.

Thirdly, the athletic imagery of the passage (occurring not just in verses 1–2, but also 4, 11, 12, and 13) favors a non-punitive

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understanding of παιδεία. Sinners face punishments; athletes face struggles and challenges. Both plights can be conceived in terms of “discipline,” punitive discipline for the former, non-punitive discipline for the latter. Since παιδεία can be understood in either sense, the concentration of athletic language may indicate that a non-punitive sense of παιδεία is foremost in the author’s mind. Moreover, the particular way in which the athletic imagery is used in verses 1–3 favors a non-martyrological emphasis, even while it appropriates some language from martyrological texts. The call is to faithful endurance, not death. Even the example of Jesus, which could certainly be portrayed as martyr-like, is used to highlight his endurance of shame and hostility. The exegetical crux in verse 2 regarding whether Jesus renounced joy or pursued it also enters in here. The latter interpretation, which I deem far more likely, contributes to a picture of an athlete’s exertion toward a goal, rather than the martyr’s sacrifice.

Lastly, the list of exemplars in chapter 11, especially with Jesus as the culmination in 12.1–3, lionizes not persons who have endured punishment for sin, but those who have endured (undeserved) hardship, privation, and mistreatment. If the readers of the epistle were suffering God’s punishment, they would not have a sense of solidarity with the luminaries of Israel’s past as the author has described them. Similarly, the list in chapter 11, while certainly including martyrs (vss. 35–8), primarily highlights those who have remained faithful in difficult times. The forward-looking, or promissory, emphasis of chapter 11 is strong. Again, the call is to endure, not to die.

The two categories that I used above are crucial for this study: punitive and non-punitive. Their meaning should now be clear. These categories will serve as a heuristic device, especially in chapter 3 below, to frame alternate interpretations of Hebrews 12.1–13. I will use them to speak both of two different ways of understanding suffering and of two different types of “discipline” (παιδεία). The latter category, “non-punitive,” being a category of negation, is admittedly a “catch-all” grouping, but this sacrifice of precision is compensated by the simplicity gained. The categories have not been chosen to organize a comprehensive, nuanced study of ancient views of suffering, but rather with a view to interpreting Hebrews 12.1–13. If the meaning of παιδεία in this text can be shown to be non-punitive, it will then be necessary to distinguish positively and more precisely the nature and aim of this παιδεία.

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#### 4 Introduction, retrospect, and prospect

This study, in a nutshell, will be an investigation of the rhetorical, religious, and philosophical background of Hebrews 12.1–13 and its two images of suffering. I will be especially concerned to investigate the relevance of *non-Jewish* traditions of the meaning of suffering. Greco-Roman comparative texts have generally been neglected in the history of research, as the following survey will show.<sup>3</sup> Yet they hold the promise of contributing significantly to the interpretation of the passage. In general, the survey will show that Hebrews has been the locus of intense scholarly and homiletical interest, and, with reference to 12.1–13 in particular, a lively arena of debate.

### 1.2 Retrospect: the history of research

The scholarly investigation of the Epistle to the Hebrews is vast. An adequate treatment of its history would require a sizeable monograph.<sup>4</sup> Here I will only attempt to sketch the more significant contributions to the interpretation of Hebrews 12.1–13, with special attention to two major concerns of this study: the concept of *παίδεία* and the use of Jesus as an exemplar. The latter will entail a survey of the shifting interpretation of the phrase *ἀντὶ τῆς χάρας* (12.2). This

<sup>3</sup> The terms “comparative text” and “parallel” are used somewhat loosely in scholarship today. Sometimes there seems to be a distinction of quantity, a parallel referring to a text containing an individual word or phrase, whereas a comparative text refers to a similar story or juxtaposition of ideas. This distinction seems to be implied by Abraham J. Malherbe, “Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament,” *ANRW*, II.26.1, (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) 267–333, especially 277–8. Elsewhere there seems to be a distinction of kind; a different version of the same story is a “parallel” (as in Gospel parallels), whereas a comparative text is a different but analogous story. Since the central passage in this study is non-narrative, the latter distinction is not applicable. As for the former distinction, current practice has not established it. I will use the terms interchangeably although I have a slight preference for “comparative text.” On the use and abuse of parallels, see the celebrated article by Samuel Sandmel, “Paralleomania,” *JBL*, 81 (1962) 1–13.

<sup>4</sup> The early period is covered in Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of our Salvation. A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), and E. Rignebach, *Historische Studien zum Hebräerbrief: Die ältesten lateinischen Kommentare zum Hebräerbrief* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1907). Sixteenth-century research is the topic of K. Hagen’s *Hebrews Commenting from Erasmus to Bèze* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1981). Most of the twentieth century is treated in two essays by E. Grässer, *Aufbruch und Verheissung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Hebräerbrief* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992) 1–99, 265–94. See also the essay and extensive bibliography by Philip E. Hughes, “The Epistle to the Hebrews,” 351–70 in Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae, eds., *The New Testament and its Modern Interpreters* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989). Further bibliography can be found in the recent commentaries by Harold Attridge, Paul Ellingworth, Hans-Friedrich Weiss, and William L. Lane.

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short phrase has been the focal point of a remarkable debate over the centuries.

On the one hand this text is admittedly *not* among the most celebrated passages of the epistle. The history of research has dwelt on topics such as the enigmatic figure of Melchizedek, the ideas of perfection, priesthood, and covenant, the epistle's copious use of the OT, its Christology, and the question of authorship. Prior to the twentieth century there are scarcely any topical monographs or essays on *παιδεία*, suffering, or athletic imagery in Hebrews. Therefore, most comments on 12.1–13 are found in the context of early homilies or in commentaries covering the entire epistle. Accordingly, these sources form the bulk of the material in the following history of research.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, one should not think that this passage is inconsequential, a sort of epistolary backwater. On the contrary, it not only contains several of the recurring features of the epistle (an OT citation, an allusion to Psalm 110, an *a fortiori* argument, and a reference to the historical Jesus), but it also seems to express supremely the letter's paraenetic aim: to reinvigorate the flagging faith of the readers.

The first literary use of the Epistle to the Hebrews is 1 Clement, probably written in the last decade of the first century.<sup>6</sup> Possible allusions to Hebrews 12.1–13, however, are few and obscure. First Clement 19.2 contains the exhortation *ἐπαναδράμωμεν ἐπὶ τὸν σκοπὸν* (Let us run to the goal) which faintly resembles Hebrews 12.1.<sup>7</sup> In 1 Clement 56.4 a series of OT citations includes Proverbs 3.12. This appropriation of Proverbs offers an interesting comparison with the use of the same text in Hebrews 12.5–6 (a comparison that will be taken up later), but it does not constitute an interpretation of Hebrews.<sup>8</sup>

Among the earliest commentaries on Hebrews was that of Origen

<sup>5</sup> I have made use of the chronologically arranged bibliography of H.-F. Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 12–15.

<sup>6</sup> Although 1 Clement's dependence on Hebrews has been disputed, a convincing case is made by Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 6–7 and n. 52.

<sup>7</sup> See also 1 Clement 63.1: *ἐπὶ τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν . . . σκοπὸν . . . καταστήσωμεν* (Let us gain the goal set before us). Translations of patristic, medieval, and modern commentators are mine unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>8</sup> The same is probably true of Tertullian's remark (*De Patientia* 11: *PL* 1.1378) "Those whom I love," he says, "I chasten." Whether Tertullian has in mind here Prov. 3.11, Heb. 12.5, or even Rev. 3.19, is hard to determine.

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(ca. 185–254). Regrettably, the loss of Origen’s writings is extensive; his commentary on Hebrews (as with 275 of his 291 works!) is not extant, surviving only in small fragments of catenae, Biblical manuscripts, and later quotations.<sup>9</sup> Some of Origen’s thoughts on Hebrews survive, however, in scattered portions of his other works.

In *Exhortatio ad Martyrium* 37 (PG 11.612 BC) Origen quotes Hebrews 12.2c and likens the humiliation and exaltation of Christ to that of Christ’s followers: “And those who imitate him ‘despising the shame’ will ‘sit’ with him and reign with him in heaven.” Origen clearly views Christ’s experience as paradigmatic for the church, but whereas he highlights Jesus’ exaltation as a pattern for the believer, the author of Hebrews does this with Jesus’ endurance.<sup>10</sup>

The notion of divine correction is treated by Origen in *Selecta in Exodum* (PG 12.293 A). He cites Proverbs 3.11 as well as Psalm 89.32–3 to assert that the Lord’s “rod” is an instrument of divine mercy, visited on those whom God regards as sons (and daughters). Chastisement is a sign of God’s love for the people of God. The general tradition here and the specific use of Proverbs 3.11 are shared by Hebrews, but there is no explicit appropriation of the text of Hebrews. Moreover, “Origen tends to disassociate the passage from any specific reference to persecution and applies it more generally to God’s disciplinary rule of His people.”<sup>11</sup> The author of Hebrews, on the other hand, applies Proverbs 3.11–12 precisely to a situation of persecution.

Finally, Origen once explicitly cites Hebrews 12.11. In *Homily* 27 he comments on Numbers 33.8 and the Israelite camp at the bitter waters: “When you hear this word ‘bitternesses,’ do not be frightened or terrified. ‘For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.’”<sup>12</sup> Here we find the common reflection that life’s bitter experiences are necessary discipline prescribed by God for our benefit. The reference is not specifically to persecution, but presumably could include it.

The first extant homilies on Hebrews are those of John Chrysostom

<sup>9</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1986) II, 51.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to *Patrologia Graeca*, a critical edition of Origen is available in Paul Koetschau, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte, Origenes, Erster Band* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche, 1899) 34.

<sup>11</sup> Greer, *Captain of our Salvation*, 30. The same is true of Origen’s citation of Prov. 3.11 in *De Principiis* 3.12.

<sup>12</sup> Translation from Greer, *Captain of our Salvation*, 30–1.

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(ca. 347–407). Homilies 28–30 are a rambling commentary on the last few verses of Hebrews 11 through about the middle of chapter 12. The commentary proceeds verse by verse, interrogating the text, clarifying expressions, frequently citing Gospel and Pauline texts, and offering detailed “application” sometimes having little connection with Hebrews. For my purposes it will suffice to cite Chrysostom’s remarks on Hebrews 12.11.<sup>13</sup>

The words τοῖς δι’ αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις from Hebrews 12.11 are quoted, and then, in typical fashion, Chrysostom asks “Τί ἐστι;” (What does this mean?) He answers, “Τοῖς ἀνασχομένοις ἐπὶ πολὺ καὶ καρτερήσασιν.” (To those who have endured for a long time and been steadfast.) Then comes a succinct but perceptive statement: ἄρα γυμνασία ἐστὶν ἡ παιδεία. (Discipline is, therefore, exercise.) In a simple predication, Chrysostom observes that the discipline of which Hebrews speaks is a kind of training. The following clauses reinforce this: τὸν ἀθλητὴν ἰσχυρὸν ἐργαζομένη, καὶ ἀκαταγώνιστον ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι, καὶ ἄμαχον ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις ( . . . making the athlete strong, and unconquerable in contests, and invincible in battles). Chrysostom conceives of παιδεία as a disciplined regimen which prepares a person for life’s contests. In doing so he makes an explicit link between παιδεία and the athletic imagery of the passage, a link which has too seldom been appreciated.

A few additional figures from the fifth to sixth centuries made minor contributions to the patristic exegesis of Hebrews. In most cases, however, the works of these preachers and expositors are only extant in fragments, and their comments are often limited to minor lexical matters, paraphrases of the text, and interpretations of individual clauses. Since these commentaries are sparse, and there are no noteworthy interpretations of παιδεία, I will postpone discussion of them until the detailed exegesis of chapter 4.<sup>14</sup>

Apart from Chrysostom, the only early church leader producing

<sup>13</sup> PG 63.209.

<sup>14</sup> The persons involved are the following: Severian (d. ca. 408), bishop of Gabala; Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428), whose commentary on Hebrews survives in fragments; Cyril of Alexandria (d. ca. 444), whose commentary is now extant only in catenae; and Cassiodorus (485–580), Italian statesman and monastic scholar, whose *Complexiones in Epistolas Apostolorum* includes scattered remarks on Hebrews. Their works can be found in the standard collections and/or in Karl Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Münster, 1933). The references are: Severian (Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 345–51), Theodore (PG 66.952–68, and Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 200–12), Cyril (PG 74.953–1006), and Cassiodorus (PL 70.1357–61).

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*extensive* commentary on Hebrews was Theodoret of Cyrus (*ca.* 393–466), the last great theologian of Antioch. His commentary on Hebrews extends to about sixty full columns of Greek in the standard edition.<sup>15</sup> Theodoret saw the special significance of Jesus' example for Christians. Whereas the exemplars of chapter 11 are called "the archetypes of godliness," in Jesus the author of Hebrews adduces "the greatest archetype" (12.2). Another point made by Theodoret, found repeatedly in patristic commentaries, is the voluntary nature of Jesus' suffering. Regarding the problematic phrase ἀντί τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς (vs. 2), Theodoret asserts that the cross was not inevitable: ἡδύνατο . . . μὴ παθεῖν, εἴπερ τοῦτο ἠέλησεν ([Jesus] was able not to suffer, if in fact he had wanted this). Presumably Jesus might have chosen to continue his earthly life and forgo suffering. An alternate way of construing ἀντί yields, as we shall see, a very different interpretation.

Between the expositors of the fifth and sixth centuries and the turn of the millennium, the work of one particular exegete is worthy of mention. Saint John of Damascus (*ca.* 675–749), whom the modern Orthodox churches consider the last of the "Fathers," produced a collection of notes on Hebrews.<sup>16</sup> Two of his comments on our passage are typical of patristic exegesis. First, he interprets ἀντί in verse 2 as implying that Christ's suffering was not compulsory: Ἐξῆν αὐτῷ μηδὲν παθεῖν, εἴπερ ἠβούλετο. Ὁ δὲ ἀντί τούτου σταυρὸν ὑπέμεινε, μηδεμίαν ἔχων ἀνάγκην τοῦ σταυρωθῆναι. (It was possible for him to suffer nothing, if in fact he had so wished. Instead of this he endured a cross, though having no need at all to be crucified.) Secondly, he adopts the "gymnastic" interpretation of παιδεία, quoting verbatim, but not acknowledging, the exposition of Chrysostom in reference to γεγυμνασμένοις (vs. 11).

In the tenth and eleventh centuries we find Oecumenius and Theophylactus respectively. Oecumenius, bishop of Trikka, composed a substantial commentary on Hebrews, nearly ninety full columns of Greek in the standard edition.<sup>17</sup> Theophylactus, bishop of Ochrida, also wrote a lengthy exposition, extending beyond 100 columns.<sup>18</sup>

Oecumenius, as Theodoret before him, calls attention to the primacy of Christ's example. When the biblical writer moves from the cloud of witnesses to the author and finisher of faith, he comes to τὸ κεφάλαιον τῆς παρακλήσεως . . . τὸν Χριστόν (the main point of the

<sup>15</sup> PG 82.674–786.<sup>16</sup> PG 95. 929–98.<sup>17</sup> PG 119.281–456.<sup>18</sup> PG 125.185–404.



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exhortation ... Christ). Both Oecumenius and Theophylactus stress the voluntary nature of Christ's suffering.<sup>19</sup> The latter wrote, Ἐξῆν γὰρ αὐτῷ μὴ παθεῖν, μὴ ἀποθανεῖν (For it was possible for him not to suffer, not to die). Oecumenius gives the positive alternative: Ἐξῆν αὐτῷ . . . μετὰ δόξης καὶ χαρᾶς διάγειν (It was possible for him to go through life with glory and joy). Both expositors cite John 10.18, Ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι τὴν ψυχὴν μου, as a confirmation in the Lord's own words. Such readiness to interpret Hebrews by reference to a Gospel text is typical of patristic exegesis, but, of course, problematic.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the meaning of παιδεία, Oecumenius offers an exposition which contains some inner tension, but perhaps no more than the text itself possesses. In the exposition of verses 5–10, by necessity Oecumenius uses the imagery of parental discipline. But even here there is a tendency to move away from the punitive tone of Proverbs 3.11–12. After Oecumenius quotes Ὅν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ Κύριος, παιδεύει (12.6a) his exposition continues: Οὐδεὶς γὰρ δύναται δεῖξαι δίκαιον χωρὶς θλίψεως ἐπειδὴ στενὴ ἔστι καὶ τεθλιμμένη ἡ εἰς τὴν ζωὴν ὁδός. Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ὑμᾶς εἰς παιδείαν καλεῖ ὁ θεός, οὐκ εἰς κόλασιν. (For no one can point to a person [who has become] righteous apart from affliction, since the way to life is narrow and hard. Therefore, God calls you also to discipline, not to punishment.) These three clauses give an indication of Oecumenius' interpretation of Hebrews 12.5–10. First, θλίψις is viewed as the means of παιδεία. The readers are experiencing θλίψις, affliction or hardship, and its (potential) result is to render a person δίκαιος. The second clause, an allusion to Matthew 7.14, corroborates this. Παιδεία is understood as the incidental affliction that befalls one who pursues the Christian ζωή.<sup>21</sup> The final clause makes this explicit: God is calling you to a process of παιδεία, not κόλασις.<sup>22</sup> In this last sentence Oecumenius clearly lifts phrases from the two parts of Hebrews 12.1–13. Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ὑμᾶς comes from verse 1 (with the pronoun changed to second person); εἰς παιδείαν comes from verse 7. These subtle echoes show that Oecumenius viewed the passage as a unified call to the training or discipline that inheres in affliction.

<sup>19</sup> They are probably dependent on Chrysostom who makes the same argument and also adduces John 10.18 (PG 63.193–4).

<sup>20</sup> One might just as easily appeal to Rev. 13.8 to show the inevitability of the cross.

<sup>21</sup> Theodoret also cites Matt. 7.14 in his brief comment on vs. 11 (PG 82.773).

<sup>22</sup> Κόλασις is often used of divine punishment in Jewish, Christian, and pagan writers. See BAGD, 441.

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Theophylactus' exposition of verses 5–10 similarly underscores the role of θλίψις in παιδεία. In an echo of Oecumenius he writes Ἀδύνατον γὰρ εὑρεῖν τινα τῶν ἀγαπωμένων τῷ Κυρίῳ χωρὶς θλίψεων (For it is impossible to find a person among those loved by the Lord who has not experienced affliction). Later in a paraphrase of Hebrews 12.8 he substitutes θλίψεις for παιδεία: Εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἔκτος θλίψεων ἦτε, ἐφαίνεσθε ἂν ὅτι νόθοι ἐστέ καὶ οὐχ υἱοί (For if you were without afflictions, it would appear that you are illegitimate and not sons). Anticipating an objection, Theophylactus admits that bandits and thieves are punished, but he distinguishes their punishment from that of sons. The whipping of sons (μαστίγωσις) should be understood as education (παίδευσις), not as payment for evil (κακίας ἔκτισις). Although “whipping” is strongly punitive and the choice of a different word might have lessened the tension in his exposition, Theophylactus clearly regards the aim and presupposition of the “whipping” of sons as quite different from those of the punishment of malefactors.

A second place in which both Oecumenius and Theophylactus interpret παιδεία is in their exposition of verse 11. Both men seize upon the athletic imagery latent in γεγυμνασμένοις. Theophylactus' comment recalls Chrysostom: Ὅρα δὲ ὅτι γυμνασίαν καλεῖ τὴν παιδείαν, ῥωννύσσαν τοὺς πιστοὺς, καὶ οἷόν τινας ἀθλητάς, καὶ εὐτονωτέρους ποιοῦσαν. Τί οὖν ἀποφεύγετε τὴν ἐνισχύουσαν τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν; (Now see that [the author of Hebrews] calls discipline an exercise, one that strengthens the faithful, as if they were athletes, and makes them more vigorous. Why then do you flee from the [discipline] that strengthens your souls?) Oecumenius pens a terse but evocative sentence: Γυμνάζει ἄρα ἡ παιδεία πρὸς ἀρετὴν καὶ ἀλείφει (Therefore, discipline trains [a person] for virtue and anoints). Anointing seems to intrude awkwardly here, but it serves the athletic image.<sup>23</sup> Ἀρετὴ in conjunction with γυμνάζει may evoke the manly, physical qualities of the Homeric epics, but it more likely serves as a Hellenistic equivalent of Hebrews' ἀγιότης (12.10) and δικαιοσύνη (12.11). In summary, both commentators understand παιδεία as including an element of formative discipline, training, or exercise. The faithful who patiently undergo God's παιδεία will be strengthened thereby.

A few trends emerge from this survey of the first millennium

<sup>23</sup> For references to anointing in preparation for exercise as well as metaphorical uses, see LSJ, 62.