

# STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. LXIV

Papers presented at the Sixteenth International Conference  
on Patristic Studies held  
in Oxford 2011

Edited by  
MARKUS VINZENT

Volume 12:  
Ascetica  
Liturgica  
Orientalia  
Critica et Philologica



PEETERS  
LEUVEN – PARIS – WALPOLE, MA  
2013

# STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. LXIV

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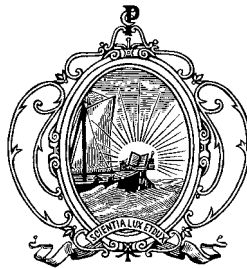
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## Table of Contents

### ASCETICA

Kate WILKINSON, Baltimore, USA	
Gender Roles and Mental Reproduction among Virgins .....	3
David WOODS, Cork, Ireland	
Rome, Gregoria, and Madaba: A Warning against Sexual Temptation	9
Alexis C. TORRANCE, Princeton, USA	
The Angel and the Spirit of Repentance: Hermas and the Early Monastic Concept of <i>Metanoia</i> .....	15
Lois FARAG, St Paul, MN, USA	
Heroines not Penitents: Saints of Sex Slavery in the <i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i> in Roman Law Context .....	21
Nienke VOS, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	
Seeing <i>Hesychia</i> : Appeals to the Imagination in the <i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i> .....	33
Peter TÓTH, London, UK	
‘In volumine Longobardo’: New Light on the Date and Origin of the Latin Translation of St Anthony’s Seven Letters.....	47
Kathryn HAGER, Oxford, UK	
John Cassian: The Devil in the Details.....	59
Liviu BARBU, Cambridge, UK	
Spiritual Fatherhood in and outside the Desert: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective .....	65

### LITURGICA

T.D. BARNES, Edinburgh, UK	
The First Christmas in Rome, Antioch and Constantinople .....	77
Gerard ROUWHORST, University of Tilburg, The Netherlands	
Eucharistic Meals East of Antioch .....	85

Anthony GELSTON, Durham, UK	
A Fragmentary Sixth-Century East Syrian Anaphora .....	105
Richard BARRETT, Bloomington, Indiana, USA	
‘Let Us Put Away All Earthly Care’: Mysticism and the <i>Cherubikon</i> of the Byzantine Rite .....	111

## ORIENTALIA

B.N. WOLFE, Oxford, UK	
The Skeireins: A Neglected Text .....	127
Alberto RIGOLIO, Oxford, UK	
From ‘Sacrifice to the Gods’ to the ‘Fear of God’: Omissions, Additions and Changes in the Syriac Translations of Plutarch, Lucian and Themistius .....	133
Richard VAGGIONE, OHC, Toronto, Canada	
Who were Mani’s ‘Greeks’? ‘Greek Bread’ in the <i>Cologne Mani Codex</i> .....	145
Flavia RUANI, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, France	
Between Myth and Exegesis: Ephrem the Syrian on the Manichaean <i>Book of Giants</i> .....	155
Hannah HUNT, Leeds, UK	
‘Clothed in the Body’: The Garment of Flesh and the Garment of Glory in Syrian Religious Anthropology.....	167
Joby PATTÉRUPARAMPIL, Leuven, Belgium	
<i>Regula Fidei</i> in Ephrem’s <i>Hymni de Fide</i> LXVII and in the <i>Sermones</i> <i>de Fide</i> IV.....	177
Jeanne-Nicole SAINT-LAURENT, Colchester, VT, USA	
Humour in Syriac Hagiography .....	199
Erik W. KOLB, Washington, D.C., USA	
‘It Is With God’s Words That Burn Like a Fire’: Monastic Discipline in Shenoute’s Monastery .....	207
Hugo LUNDHAUG, Oslo, Norway	
Origenism in Fifth-Century Upper Egypt: Shenoute of Atripe and the Nag Hammadi Codices .....	217

Aho SHEMUNKASHO, Salzburg, Austria	
Preliminaries to an Edition of the Hagiography of St Aho the Stranger (ܐܚܐ ܫܡܘܢܟܐܫܐ) .....	229
Peter BRUNS, Bamberg, Germany	
Von Magiern und Mönchen – Zoroastrische Polemik gegen das Christentum in der armenischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung.....	237
Grigory KESSEL, Marburg, Germany	
New Manuscript Witnesses to the ‘Second Part’ of Isaac of Nineveh	245

### CRITICA ET PHILOLOGICA

Michael PENN, Mount Holyoke College, USA	
Using Computers to Identify Ancient Scribal Hands: A Preliminary Report .....	261
Felix ALBRECHT, Göttingen, Germany	
A Hitherto Unknown Witness to the Apostolic Constitutions in Uncial Script.....	267
Nikolai LIPATOV-CHICHERIN, Nottingham, UK, and St Petersburg, Russia	
Preaching as the Audience Heard it: Unedited Transcripts of Patristic Homilies .....	277
Pierre AUGUSTIN, Paris, France	
Entre codicologie, philologie et histoire: La description de manuscrits parisiens ( <i>Codices Chrysostomici Graeci</i> VII) .....	299
Octavian GORDON, Bucureşti, Romania	
Denominational Translation of Patristic Texts into Romanian: Elements for a Patristic Translation Theory .....	309





## Abbreviations

AA.SS	see ASS.
AAWG.PH	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch-historische Klasse, Göttingen.
AB	Analecta Bollandiana, Brussels.
AC	Antike und Christentum, ed. F.J. Dölger, Münster.
ACL	Antiquité classique, Louvain.
ACO	Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin.
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers, ed. J. Quasten and J.C. Plumpe, Westminster (Md.)/London.
AHDLMA	Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, Paris.
AJAH	American Journal of Ancient History, Cambridge, Mass.
AJP	American Journal of Philology, Baltimore.
AKK	Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht, Mainz.
AKPAW	Abhandlungen der königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin.
ALMA	Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin du Cange), Paris/Brussels.
ALW	Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft, Regensburg.
AnalBoll	Analecta Bollandiana, Brussels.
ANCL	Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Edinburgh.
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers, Buffalo/New York.
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, ed H. Temporini <i>et al.</i> , Berlin.
AnSt	Anatolian Studies, London.
AnThA	Année théologique augustinienne, Paris.
APOT	Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. R.E. Charles, Oxford.
AR	Archivum Romanicum, Florence.
ARW	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Berlin/Leipzig.
ASS	Acta Sanctorum, ed. the Bollandists, Brussels.
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Zürich.
Aug	Augustinianum, Rome.
AugSt	Augustinian Studies, Villanova (USA).
AW	Athanasius Werke, ed. H.-G. Opitz <i>et al.</i> , Berlin.
AZ	Archäologische Zeitung, Berlin.
BA	Bibliothèque augustinienne, Paris.
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven, Conn.
BDAG	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd edn F.W. Danker, Chicago.
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Paris.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Louvain.
BGL	Benedictinisches Geistesleben, St. Ottilien.
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, Brussels.
BHL	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis, Brussels.

BHO	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis, Brussels.
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, Tübingen.
BJ	Bursians Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, Leipzig.
BJRULM	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
BKV	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. F.X. Reithmayr and V. Thalhofer, Kempten.
BKV2	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. O. Bardenhewer, Th. Schermann, and C. Weyman, Kempten/Munich.
BKV3	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter. Zweite Reihe, ed. O. Bardenhewer, J. Zelinger, and J. Martin, Munich.
BLE	Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique, Toulouse.
BoJ	Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn.
BS	Bibliotheca sacra, London.
BSL	Bolletino di studi latini, Naples.
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament, Leipzig/Stuttgart.
Byz	Byzantion, Leuven.
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift, Leipzig.
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, Berlin.
CAR	Cahiers Archéologique, Paris.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Washington.
CChr.CM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, Turnhout/Paris.
CChr.SA	Corpus Christianorum, Series Apocryphorum, Turnhout/Paris.
CChr.SG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca, Turnhout/Paris.
CChr.SL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Turnhout/Paris.
CH	Church History, Chicago.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CP(h)	Classical Philology, Chicago.
CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum, ed. M. Geerard, vols. I-VI, Turnhout.
CPL	Clavis Patrum Latinorum (SE 3), ed. E. Dekkers and A. Gaar, Turnhout.
CQ	Classical Quarterly, London/Oxford.
CR	The Classical Review, London/Oxford.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Louvain. Aeth = Scriptores Aethiopici Ar = Scriptores Arabici Arm = Scriptores Armeniaci Copt = Scriptores Coptici Iber = Scriptores Iberici Syr = Scriptores Syri Subs = Subsidia
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Vienna.
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn.
CTh	Collectanea Theologica, Lvov.
CUF	Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé, Paris.
CW	Catholic World, New York.
DAC	Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. J. Hastings, Edinburgh.

DACL	see DAL
DAL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, ed. F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, Paris.
DB	Dictionnaire de la Bible, Paris.
DBS	Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément, Paris.
DCB	Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects, and Doctrines, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace, 4 vols, London.
DHGE	Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique, ed. A. Baudrillart, Paris.
Did	Didaskalia, Lisbon.
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Cambridge, Mass., subsequently Washington, D.C.
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies, Cambridge, Mass., subsequently Washington, D.C.
DR	Downside Review, Stratton on the Fosse, Bath.
DS	H.J. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, ed., Enchiridion Symbolorum, Barcelona/Freiburg i.B./Rome.
DSp	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ed. M. Viller, S.J., and others, Paris.
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amann, Paris.
EA	Études augustinienes, Paris.
ECatt	Enciclopedia Cattolica, Rome.
ECQ	Eastern Churches Quarterly, Ramsgate.
EE	Estudios eclesiasticos, Madrid.
EECh	Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. A. Di Berardino, Cambridge.
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Neukirchen.
EH	Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae, ed. Ueding-Kirch, 6th ed., Barcelona.
EO	Échos d'Orient, Paris.
EtByz	Études Byzantines, Paris.
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain.
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum NT, ed. H.R. Balz <i>et al.</i> , Stuttgart.
ExpT	The Expository Times, Edinburgh.
FC	The Fathers of the Church, New York.
FGH	Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Berlin.
FKDG	Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Göttingen.
FRL	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Göttingen.
FS	Festschrift.
FThSt	Freiburger theologische Studien, Freiburg i.B.
FTS	Frankfurter theologische Studien, Frankfurt a.M.
FZThPh	Freiburger Zeitschrift für Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg/Switzerland.
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Leipzig/Berlin.
GDV	Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit, Stuttgart.
GLNT	Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento, Genoa.
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera, Leiden.

GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, Mass.
GWV	Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht, Offenburg.
HbNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament. Tübingen.
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion, Missoula.
HJG	Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft, successively Munich, Cologne and Munich/Freiburg i.B.
HKG	Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Tübingen.
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen.
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik, Leiden.
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, Cambridge, Mass.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge, Mass.
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies, Cambridge, Mass.
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift, Munich/Berlin.
ICC	The International Critical Commentary of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Edinburgh.
ILCV	Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres, ed. E. Diehl, Berlin.
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin.
J(b)AC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Münster.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature, Philadelphia, Pa., then various places.
JdI	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Berlin.
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies, Baltimore.
JEH	The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, London.
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies, London.
JLH	Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie, Kassel.
JPTh	Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie, Leipzig/Freiburg i.B.
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review, Philadelphia.
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies, London.
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period, Leiden.
JSOR	Journal of the Society of Oriental Research, Chicago.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford.
KAV	Kommentar zu den apostolischen Vätern, Göttingen.
KēTh	Kerk en Theologie, 's Gravenhage.
KJ(b)	Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, Gütersloh.
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library, London/Cambridge, Mass.
LNPF	A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, Buffalo/New York.
L(O)F	Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Oxford.
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, new (9th) edn H.S. Jones, Oxford.
LThK	Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Freiburg i.B.
MA	Moyen-Âge, Brussels.
MAMA	Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, London.
Mansi	J.D. Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, Florence, 1759-1798. Reprint and continuation: Paris/Leipzig, 1901-1927.
MBTh	Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie, Münster.

MCom	Miscelanea Comillas, Comillas/Santander.
MGH	Monumenta germaniae historica. Hanover/Berlin.
ML	Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, Louvain.
MPG	See PG.
MSR	Mélanges de science religieuse, Lille.
MThZ	Münchener theologische Zeitschrift, Munich.
Mus	Le Muséon, Louvain.
NGWG	Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.
NH(M)S	Nag Hammadi (and Manichaean) Studies, Leiden.
NovTest	Novum Testamentum, Leiden.
NPNF	See LNPF.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version.
NRTh	Nouvelle Revue Théologique, Tournai/Louvain/Paris.
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, Münster.
NT.S	Novum Testamentum Supplements, Leiden.
NTS	New Testament Studies, Cambridge/Washington.
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis, Freiburg, Switz.
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta, Rome.
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Rome.
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford.
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, Louvain.
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Louvain.
Or	Orientalia. Commentarii editi a Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome.
OrChr	Oriens Christianus, Leipzig, then Wiesbaden.
OrSyri	L'Orient Syrien, Paris.
PG	Migne, Patrologia, series graeca.
PGL	A Patristic Greek Lexicon, ed. G.L. Lampe, Oxford.
PL	Migne, Patrologia, series latina.
PLRE	The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, ed. A.H.M. Jones <i>et al.</i> , Cambridge.
PLS	Migne, Patrologia, series latina. Supplementum ed. A. Hamman.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis, Paris.
PRE	Paulys Realencyklopädie der classischen Alterthumswissenschaft, Stuttgart.
PS	Patrologia Syriaca, Paris.
PTA	Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen, Bonn.
PTHr	Princeton Theological Review, Princeton.
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien, Berlin.
PW	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, ed. G. Wissowa, Stuttgart.
QLP	Questions liturgiques et paroissiales, Louvain.
QuLi	Questions liturgiques, Louvain
RAC	Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana, Rome.
RACH	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart.
RAM	Revue d'ascétique et de mystique, Paris.
RAug	Recherches Augustiniennes, Paris.
RBen	Revue Bénédictine, Maredsous.
RB(ibl)	Revue biblique, Paris.

RE	Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, founded by J.J. Herzog, 3e ed. A. Hauck, Leipzig.
REA(ug)	Revue des études Augustiniennes, Paris.
REB	Revue des études byzantines, Paris.
RED	Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, Rome.
RÉL	Revue des études latines, Paris.
REG	Revue des études grecques, Paris.
RevSR	Revue des sciences religieuses, Strasbourg.
RevThom	Revue thomiste, Toulouse.
RFIC	Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica, Turin.
RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Gunkel-Zscharnack, Tübingen
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, Louvain.
RhMus	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, Bonn.
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions, Paris.
RHT	Revue d'Histoire des Textes, Paris.
RMAL	Revue du Moyen-Âge Latin, Paris.
ROC	Revue de l'Orient chrétien, Paris.
RPh	Revue de philologie, Paris.
RQ	Römische Quartalschrift, Freiburg i.B.
RQH	Revue des questions historiques, Paris.
RSLR	Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa, Florence.
RSPT, RSPH	Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, Paris.
RSR	Recherches de science religieuse, Paris.
RTAM	Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale, Louvain.
RthL	Revue théologique de Louvain, Louvain.
RTM	Rivista di teologia morale, Bologna.
Sal	Salesianum, Roma.
SBA	Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, Basel.
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, Stuttgart.
ScEc	Sciences ecclésiastiques, Bruges.
SCh, SC	Sources chrétiennes, Paris.
SD	Studies and Documents, ed. K. Lake and S. Lake. London/Philadelphia.
SE	Sacris Erudiri, Bruges.
SDHI	Studia et documenta historiae et iuris, Roma.
SH	Subsidia Hagiographica, Brussels.
SHA	Scriptores Historiae Augustae.
SJMS	Speculum. Journal of Mediaeval Studies, Cambridge, Mass.
SM	Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige, Munich.
SO	Symbolae Osloenses, Oslo.
SP	Studia Patristica, successively Berlin, Kalamazoo, Leuven.
SPM	Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia, ed. C. Mohrman and J. Quasten, Utrecht.
SQ	Sammlung ausgewählter Quellenschriften zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Tübingen.
SQAW	Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt, Berlin.
SSL	Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, Louvain.

StudMed	Studi Medievali, Turin.
SVigChr	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, Leiden.
SVF	Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, ed. J. von Arnim, Leipzig.
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Mich.
TE	Teologia espiritual, Valencia.
ThGl	Theologie und Glaube, Paderborn.
ThJ	Theologische Jahrbücher, Leipzig.
ThLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung, Leipzig.
ThPh	Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg i.B.
ThQ	Theologische Quartalschrift, Tübingen.
ThR	Theologische Rundschau, Tübingen.
ThWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, Stuttgart.
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Stuttgart.
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift, Basel.
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.
TP	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Lancaster, Pa.
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Berlin.
TS	Theological Studies, New York and various places; now Washington, D.C.
TThZ	Trierer theologische Zeitschrift, Trier.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen, Leipzig/Berlin.
USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review, New York.
VC	Vigiliae Christianae, Amsterdam.
VetChr	Vetera Christianorum, Bari (Italy).
VT	Vetus Testamentum, Leiden.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary, Waco.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Tübingen.
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Vienna.
YUP	Yale University Press, New Haven.
ZAC	Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum, Berlin.
ZAM	Zeitschrift für Ascese und Mystik, Innsbruck, then Würzburg.
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen, then Berlin.
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, Leipzig.
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, Gotha, then Stuttgart.
ZKTh	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, Vienna.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, Giessen, then Berlin.
ZRG	Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte, Weimar.
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Tübingen.





# ASCETICA



# Gender Roles and Mental Reproduction among Virgins

Kate WILKINSON, Baltimore, USA

## ABSTRACT

A number of early Christian ascetic writers use the language of conception and the birth of spiritual offspring to describe the intimate contact between virgin and Word. The continuity in female sexual and procreative roles might suggest clerical writers attempted to align the life of the virgin with the life of the matron. The procreative imagery in treatises addressed to virgins, however, is not unambiguously 'feminine'. The generation of rational offspring was a longstanding metaphor in Greek and Latin tradition for masculine philosophical and literary composition. When Christian virgins take up philosophy and literature and metaphorically conceive as a result, this is not so much a matter of continuity with their feminine reproductive destiny as continuity with a masculine adoption of procreative language. Counterintuitive as it may seem, attributing mental reproduction to virgins is at least as masculinizing as it is feminizing.

Several ancient Christian authors, Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine, employed the metaphor of mental or spiritual reproduction in writings to ascetic female virgins. Feminist critics such as Susan Stanford Friedman have written at length on the politics of male appropriation of childbirth as a metaphor for the creative process from the early modern era up to the present time and compared it with women's use of the childbirth metaphor for their own creative processes.<sup>1</sup> But what of those men who employed the metaphor on behalf of women about whom we can know little, women whose writings, if any, are almost all lost? Did these women understand the reproductive imagery as domesticating imagery, which tied them closer to their biological and social destinies? Or, following the history of usage, did they understand the metaphor as bringing them closer to the masculine world of philosophical and literary creativity? In tracing the Christian usage and non-Christian past of the mental reproduction metaphor, I hope to demonstrate that mental childbirth was not an unambiguously gendered concept. Birthing could imply masculine gender roles as well as feminine roles.

Methodius of Olympus, in his *Symposium* of virgins in praise of chastity, uses the language of spiritual reproduction to discuss virginal members of the church giving birth to virtues, to other Christians, and to Christ himself through

<sup>1</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor: Gender Difference in Literary Discourse', *Feminist Studies* 13 (1987), 49-82.

the action of the spiritual seed of good doctrine, or the seed of Christ received in baptism.<sup>2</sup> Although the interlocutors are women, the language is masculine and assumes believers of either sex. In the *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Origen allegorizes 1Tim. 2:15 and equates the virtues of faith, love, and holiness with the children through whom 'women', that is, believers, will be saved.<sup>3</sup> Augustine follows this interpretation in *The Trinity*, reasoning that a barren woman cannot be barred from salvation nor could a woman be held responsible for the perseverance of her children in virtue.<sup>4</sup> Gregory of Nyssa likewise allegorizes 1Tim. 2:15 and employs the metaphor of spiritual children in *On Virginity* for an intended audience of male ascetics,<sup>5</sup> as does Pseudo-Pelagius in *On Chastity*.<sup>6</sup>

Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine, however, all used the metaphor in writings directed to a female ascetic audience. Athanasius, in *First Letter to Virgins* praises virginity's superiority to the union between man and woman instituted by Adam and Eve.

But virginity, having surpassed human nature and imitating the angels, hastens and endeavors to cleave to the Lord, so that, as the Apostle said, they might 'become one spirit with him' (2Cor. 6:17) and they too might always say: 'through fear of you, we have conceived and gone into labour and given birth to a saving spirit; we have begotten children upon the earth' (Isa. 26:17f.). For just as people die, so too their offspring die. Likewise, from this kind of blessed union, true and immortal thoughts come forth, bearing salvation.<sup>7</sup>

The theme is continued later in the letter, in a more agricultural vein, as Athanasius urges the virgins to avoid heretical teachings and remain true to the bridal chamber of the Word of God. 'Your conversation with him is prayer and zeal and your vow, and his conversation with you is true thoughts arising in your heart, by which he ignites your zeal and increases in you your love for

<sup>2</sup> Methodius of Olympus, *Symposium* 3.8, 7.4, and 8.10, for example in Herbert Musurillo, *St. Methodius: The Symposium, a Treatise on Chastity*, Ancient Christian Writers 27 (New York, 1958), 65-7, 105, 115.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, *Commentary on Song of Songs*, Prologue 2, in R.P. Lawson, *Origen: The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, Ancient Christian Writers 26 (New York, 1956), 38-9. Also see *ibid.* 28-9. Waters argues that the passage in 1Timothy was originally intended to be allegorical in this sense, although, oddly, he dismisses the passages in Origen as evidence for the history of interpretation. Kenneth L. Waters Sr., 'Saved through Childbearing: Virtues as Children in 1 Timothy 2:11-15', *JBL* 123 (2004), 703-35.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *The Trinity* XII 11, in Edmund Hill, *The Trinity*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Hyde Park, NY, 1991), I 5, 382.

<sup>5</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On Virginity* II 14, 19, in Virginia Woods Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa Ascetical Works*, The Fathers of the Church (Washington, DC, 1967), 58. 11, 48, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Anonymous, *On Chastity* 17.4, in B.R. Rees, *Pelagius Life and Letters* (Woodbridge, 1991), 293.

<sup>7</sup> Athanasius, *First Letter to Virgins* 3, in David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore, 1998), 275.

him. For such are the thoughts that the Sower of Sowers sows in the souls that cling to him...'<sup>8</sup>

Ambrose relied heavily on Athanasius' *First Letter* in his treatise for his sister Marcellina, *On Virgins*.<sup>9</sup> He takes up the spiritual reproduction of the virgin with the extended metaphor of the honeybee, which was thought by ancient naturalists to produce offspring virginally and conceive by mouth.

The bee feeds on dew, knows nothing of copulation, and produces honey. As for the virgin, her dew is the divine discourse, because the words of God come down like dew (see *Isa.* 45:8). The virgin's modesty is her inviolate nature. What the virgin begets is the fruit of her lips, devoid of bitterness, rich in sweetness (*fertilis suauitatis*) ... How I would wish you, O daughter, to be an imitator of this little bee, whose food is dew, whose mouth begets offspring, whose work is accomplished by her mouth ... Let your mouth bring forth for you, as well, the everlasting posterity of your merits.<sup>10</sup>

This vocal reproduction is directly linked to literary activity, specifically the study and recitation of scripture. Ambrose describes passages, especially in the *Song of Songs*, as those flowers of Christ among which the virgin-honeybee sports.

Augustine, in his letter of congratulation to the matrons of the Anicii family on the occasion of the young virgin Demetrias' consecration, suggests that their family gains more honor through spiritual reproduction than through the begetting of heirs. 'It is a more maternal (*uberior*) and more fecund happiness not to become heavy in the belly but to become great in the mind, not to give milk from the breast but to pour forth light from the heart, to bear not earthly children in the womb but heavenly children in prayer.'<sup>11</sup> The loss of a potential mother is particularly acute for a family of senatorial rank. Augustine carries the parallel between noble progeny for the Anicians and even more valuable spiritual progeny throughout the short but rhetorically polished letter.

At first glance, the use of childbirth metaphors when writing to and about women is entirely unsurprising. If anything, the metaphors would seem part of a program for the feminization of virgins. If they give birth mentally through the divine seed of the Word, their Bridegroom, they have not left the domain of womanly activity, only transposed it to a spiritual sphere. For example, this is how David Brakke takes the metaphor in his analysis of Athanasius' interactions with communities of virgins in the context of his conflict with the Arians. 'Essentially, Athanasius wanted every Christian woman to take on the social

<sup>8</sup> Athanasius, *First Letter* 30, in D. Brakke, *Asceticism* (1998), 284.

<sup>9</sup> Yves-Marie Duval, 'L'originalité du *De uirginibus* dans le mouvement ascétique occidental: Ambroise, Cyprien, Athanase', in *Ambroise de Milan: XVIe centenaire de son élection épiscopale*, Études augustiniennes (Paris, 1974), 9-66. Part 3 starting on 29 for a close comparison of the two texts.

<sup>10</sup> Ambrose, *De Virginibus* I 8.40-1, in Boniface Ramsey, *Ambrose* (London, 1997), 84. Latin text added by author from: F. Gori (ed.), *De Virginibus*, Biblioteca Ambrosiana 14,1 (Milan, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Augustine, *Ep.* 150 (CSEL 44). Author's translation.

role of a wife: either as an ordinary wife dominated by her earthly husband, or as a supernatural wife dominated by her divine bridegroom, the Word of God, through his agents, Athanasius and his fellow clergy.<sup>12</sup> Brakke supplies supporting evidence from Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom* in which Plutarch reminds the husband that he must provide his wife good education in order that she not conceive mental monstrosities.<sup>13</sup> And yet, most ancient mental childbirth metaphors do not concern women at all. The thematic tradition is securely located in two realms, the philosophical and the literary, and is explicitly masculine, not feminine. Women have wombs; *men* have wombs of the mind.

The use of the reproduction metaphor for men goes back at least to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. According to Diotima in Socrates' report of her teachings near the end of the *Symposium*, mental reproduction is the masculine counterpart to physical reproduction. Diotima prefers it to physical childbearing, the result of love and sexual relations with women. The truer form of reproduction results from the mutual love of philosophical beauty and from the rational conversation between men in a homoerotic context. "Now when men are *physically* pregnant," she continued, "they're more likely to be attracted to women ... Those who are *mentally* pregnant ... whose minds are far more pregnant than their bodies; they're filled with the offspring you might expect a mind to bear and produce. What offspring? Virtue, and especially wisdom'."<sup>14</sup> Diotima specifies philosophical and literary works among the offspring of the mind. Being immortal, they are superior to any ordinary children. In the *Theaetetus*, Plato has Socrates use the extended metaphor of the midwife to describe his pedagogical task. Here, the young man is pregnant with reason, but Socrates fears that without professional aid in the birthing process, he may bring forth a phantom rather than a true child of the intellect.<sup>15</sup> Again, the dialogue prefers the masculine, metaphorical form of midwifery to the feminine reality.

The mental or spiritual childbirth metaphor for masculine philosophical or literary activity continued in the classical and late antique traditions. Ovid compares himself to Zeus birthing Athena from his head,<sup>16</sup> and Catullus refers to his verse as progeny.<sup>17</sup> Maximus of Tyre echoes Plato's philosophical use of the pregnancy metaphor in several places,<sup>18</sup> while Longinus, the author of *On the Sublime* describes the literary activity of *imitatio* as a form of mental

<sup>12</sup> D. Brakke, *Athanasius* (1998), 78f.

<sup>13</sup> Plutarch, *Advice to the Bride and Groom* 48, in Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to His Wife* (New York, 1999), 13.

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *Symposium* 208e-209a, in Robin Waterfield, *Plato: Symposium* (Oxford, 1994), 52.

<sup>15</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus* 149-51.

<sup>16</sup> Ovid, *Tristia* III 13.13f.

<sup>17</sup> Judith P. Hallet, 'Catullus on Composition: Response', *The Classical World* 81 (1988), 395-401.

<sup>18</sup> Maximus of Tyre, *Orations* 5.8 and 10.4, in M.B. Trapp, *The Philosophical Orations* (New York, 1997), 49f.; 87f.

pregnancy.<sup>19</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Libanius names speeches children, and Symmachus calls the historian Eutropius' books his children.<sup>20</sup>

Philo often employs the idea of intellectual pregnancy, melding the Sophia traditions of the Wisdom of Solomon with philosophical exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures. Interestingly, wisdom is both the father and offspring in one schema. 'Let us then pay no heed to the discrepancy in the gender of the words, and say that the daughter of God, even Sophia, is not only masculine but father, sowing and begetting in souls aptness to learn, education, knowledge, wisdom, good and laudable actions.'<sup>21</sup> Philo privileges the masculine over the feminine in almost all cases, despite allegorizing many female Biblical characters, and he generally intends men when he speaks of souls.

Two non-Christian sources, of which I am aware, use the language of spiritual or mental pregnancy for women. They are both concerned with women's potential for appropriation of philosophical tradition. The first is Philo, despite his more frequent discussion of the mental pregnancy of men. In *On the Contemplative Life*, Philo describes the Therapeutae, an ascetic group of philosophically minded Jews. The group includes women, mainly elderly virgins.

Desiring to have [Sophia] as their life-mate (desiring to cohabit with her as their spouse) they have spurned the pleasures of the body; they desire no mortal offspring, but immortal children which only the soul dear to God can bring to the birth unaided, because the Father has sown in her spiritual rays, by which she is able to behold the truths of Sophia.<sup>22</sup>

Eusebius of Caesarea gives a close paraphrase of the passage in his *Church History*.<sup>23</sup> He argues however, that Philo must have been referring to very early Christian virgins. In Philo, the women's virginity facilitates intellectual childbirth. Elsewhere in his work, Philo associates mental virginity and abstinence from sexual relations with virility, whereas he associates sexual activity with sensual womanliness, a commonplace in antiquity.

Plutarch, mentioned earlier, ends *Advice to the Bride and Groom* with an exhortation to the groom to train his bride in philosophy. He reasons that a woman trained in mathematics and astronomy, a woman who has memorized the axioms of Plato and Xenocrates, will not fall prey to the superstitious nonsense of other women. Her husband is to be her guide and teacher in

<sup>19</sup> George B. Walsh, 'Sublime Method: Longinus on Language and Imitation', *Classical Antiquity* 7 (1988), 252-69, 266f.

<sup>20</sup> John Vanderspoel, 'Symmachus, Ep. III.47: Books Are Children', *Hermes* 129 (2001), 284-5.

<sup>21</sup> Philo, *Fug.* 52, in Richard A. Horsley, 'Spiritual Marriage with Sophia', *VC* 33 (1979), 30-54, 35.

<sup>22</sup> Philo, *Vita Cont.* 68, in R.A. Horsley, 'Spiritual Marriage' (1979), 43.

<sup>23</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History* II 17.18f., in Arthur Cushman, *Eusebius Pamphilus: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine by Eusebius Pamphilus*, NPNF series 2, vol. 1. (New York, 1890), 118f.



philosophy, and his role in her mental fecundity is as necessary as his role in her physical fecundity. Philosophical training, however, remains the context for mental reproduction. Plutarch holds up other women trained by their fathers or husbands as models of philosophical womanhood, and he quotes Sappho on the immortality of gifts from the Muses.<sup>24</sup>

Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine all wished to domesticate ascetic women in some sense. The lineage of the spiritual reproduction metaphor, however, is almost entirely a masculine lineage, associated with philosophy and literary production. For obvious reasons, any possibility for an analysis of audience response to these particular works is lost to us. An anonymous letter, dated to 400 CE, from one educated Christian lady in Spain to another, however, shows that some women enthusiastically adopted the language of spiritual reproduction for intellectual pursuits. In the following passage the writer praises the recipient for her skill in teaching and Biblical interpretation.

I know well why the prophet said, 'behold a virgin will conceive and bear a son.' (*Isa.* 7:14) You may freely proclaim, 'we have conceived in the womb, Lord, and given birth to your saving spirit, which you have made over the earth.' (*Isa.* 26:18) You gave birth to the word of God, and delivered his discourse, and so you are laboring to bring us knowledge of God, that you may be always fully pregnant (*extensa vel plena*) in yourself.<sup>25</sup>

The author casts her correspondent in the role of exegete as virgin mother. Metaphors and Biblical references throughout the letter are emphatically feminine, yet the intellectual, literary activity she praises is traditionally masculine. The letter demonstrates that whatever domesticating agenda Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine intended to strengthen via the language of mental childbirth, not all female readers and auditors would incorporate the language in the intended manner. The history of the spiritual reproduction metaphor as a masculine, philosophical trope destabilizes it as a simple attempt to tie women to conventional roles. Reproduction is a feminine role, but mental reproduction, for a very long time, had been a masculine role.

<sup>24</sup> Plutarch, *Advice* 48, in S.B. Pomeroy, *Plutarch's Advice* (1999), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Anonyma, *Nisi Tamen Seminis*, in Ralph W. Mathisen, *People, Personal Expression, and Social Relations in Late Antiquity*, Vol. II, *Selected Latin Texts from Gaul and Western Europe* (Ann Arbor, 2003), 131. Author's translation. My great thanks to Virginia Burrus for calling this text to my attention during the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford, summer 2011 in her paper presentation 'The Virgin, her Mother and the Virgin Mother: Mariology in the *Life of St. Helia*' and in conversation.

# Rome, Gregoria, and Madaba: A Warning against Sexual Temptation

David Woods, Cork, Ireland

## ABSTRACT

A sixth-century mosaic preserved in the so-called Hippolytus Hall at Madaba depicts what appear to be three urban *tychai* labelled ΡΩΜΗ, ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ, and ΜΗΔΑΒΑ above a large panel depicting some mythological scenes of a sexual nature. The present note argues that the *tychai* labelled ΡΩΜΗ and ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ personify virtues, 'strength' and 'vigilance', which the artist wished to associate with Madaba, and not towns of these names. As a group, these *tychai* served to provide an explicit moral justification for the depiction of the associated mythological scenes.

The pavement of the so-called Hippolytus Hall discovered beneath the Byzantine Church of the Virgin at Madaba in the province of Arabia, modern Jordan, preserves a sixth-century mosaic which depicts the personification of Madaba itself, together with what appear to be the personifications of two other cities, situated above the left-hand corner of a large rectangular panel (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Within a wide border of acanthus scrolls, this panel is sub-divided into three smaller rectangular sub-panels. The topmost sub-panel depicts Aphrodite seated next to Adonis while before them three Graces attempt to capture a group of six Erotes (Fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> The central sub-panel, which has been severely damaged by a secondary wall, depicts the major characters from the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus, while the bottom sub-panel depicts a grid where trees and plants alternate with birds. Controversy has surrounded the identification of the two personifications which accompany that of Madaba. Each of the three personifications takes the form of a traditional urban *tyche*, a woman seated on a throne, and the name of each appears immediately above her head in Greek capitals.<sup>3</sup> From left to right, they are described as ΡΩΜΗ, ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ, and

<sup>1</sup> I thank Ben Dreyfus for permission to reproduce this photograph. For detailed colour photographs of the whole mosaic, see Michele Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman, 1992), 51-67.

<sup>2</sup> I thank Max Buten for permission to reproduce this photograph.

<sup>3</sup> In general, see Susan B. Matheson (ed.), *An Obsession with Fortune: Tyche in Greek and Roman Art* (Yale, 1994); Eva Christof, *Das Glück der Stadt: Die Tyche von Antiochia und andere Stadttychen* (Frankfurt, 2001).



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

MΗΔΑΒΑ, with the important difference that the name of Madaba is highlighted by the use of red tesserae, while the names of the other two personifications appear in black, as do the names of all the characters depicted within the panel itself also.

There is no problem concerning the identification of the *tyche* labelled MΗΔΑΒΑ. She can only be identifiable as the personification of the town of Madaba itself, and it is not at all problematic that a mosaic discovered at Madaba should depict a personification of that very town. The problems lie in the identification of her two companions labelled ΡΩΜΗ and ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ, particularly the latter. It has generally been agreed that the *tyche* labelled ΡΩΜΗ must represent either Rome in Italy or Constantinople as the New Rome, or Rome simply as it was increasingly known in the East from the late-fifth century onwards.<sup>4</sup> It is somewhat perplexing that this *tyche* does not adhere particularly closely to the traditional representation of the *tyche* of either city, so that it bears neither a shield nor a globe surmounted by a victory, but the label cannot lie, or so seems to run the assumption.<sup>5</sup> The greater problem, however, lies in the identification of the *tyche* labelled ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ. No-one has been able to identify a city known by this exact title, Gregoria. Buschhausen canvassed two possibilities, either that Gregoria was a nickname for Constantinople where the name of a district within the city containing a monastery allegedly built by a lady called Gregoria during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395) had come to be used of the city as a whole, or that the figure represented Gregoria, the wife of the short-lived emperor Constantine III (d. AD 641).<sup>6</sup> As Bowersock has pointed out, however, the story of the foundation of a monastery dedicated to St Dominica by Gregoria at Constantinople is a tenth-century fiction.<sup>7</sup> As for Gregoria, the wife of Constantine III, she lived too late to have been depicted in the mosaic. Nor did she attain such prominence when she did live that one should have expected to see her celebrated even in a relative backwater like Madaba. Consequently, Avner-Levy identified Gregoria as an otherwise unknown local philanthropist who paid for this mosaic, so that, from right to left, the figures represent the city, Madaba, the benefactress, Gregoria, and the capital of the empire, Constantinople.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Bowersock has

<sup>4</sup> On Constantinople as the New Rome, see Glen W. Bowersock, 'Old and New Rome in the Late Antique Near East', in Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (eds), *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown* (Farnham and Burlington, 2009), 37-50.

<sup>5</sup> On the traditional depiction of these *tychai*, see Jocelyn M.C. Toynbee, 'Roma and Constantinopolis in Late Antique Roman Art from 312 to 365', *JRS* 37 (1947), 135-44.

<sup>6</sup> Helmut Buschhausen, 'Die Marienkirche von Madaba und der Saal des Hippolytos', in *Byzantinische Mosaiken aus Jordanien* (Vienna, 1986), 139-56, 153-4.

<sup>7</sup> Glen W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History: The Near East from Late Antiquity to Islam*, *Revealing Antiquity* 16 (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 84-5.

<sup>8</sup> Rina Avner-Livy, 'A Note on the Iconography of the Personifications in the "Hippolytos Mosaic" at Madaba, Jordan', *LA* 46 (1996), 363-74, 370-2.



recently argued that Gregoria represents the city of Antioch in Syria, and that it was nicknamed such after its famous patriarch Gregorius (570-92), so that the three *tychai* represent Madaba, Antioch, and Constantinople, the purpose being to praise Madaba by associating it with the two greatest cities of the eastern Byzantine empire.<sup>9</sup> The main problem here, of course, is that there is absolutely no evidence that Antioch ever was known as Gregoria. Furthermore, the depiction of ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ does not match the traditional depiction of the *tyche* of Antioch as a figure seated on a rock with one or more feet resting on a male figure representing the river Orontes.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of this note is to propose a new interpretation of the name of ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ, and of the significance of these *tychai*. The obvious has been overlooked. While the term ΡΩΜΗ could be used to mean the name 'Rome' in Greek, it was also a noun meaning 'strength'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, while the term ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ could be used as a female name, it was also a noun meaning 'vigilance'.<sup>12</sup> The fact that the names of these alleged towns can both be read to refer to a virtue in this way confirms that this was how they were in fact meant to be read. Furthermore, taken together they seem to allude to the incident where Christ returned from prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane to find his three disciples asleep, and then warned Peter to be vigilant and pray that he would not fall into temptation, because the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.<sup>13</sup> In this way, Christ himself acknowledged that physical strength was necessary for vigilance. Hence the *tychai* labelled ΡΩΜΗ and ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ do not represent the personifications of other cities with which Madaba wished to be associated, but the intrinsically connected virtues with which it wished to be associated. That these are Christian virtues is reinforced by the fact that both *tychai* hold a cross-sceptre in their right hands, as does the *tyche* of Madaba. They take the form of *tychai* because they represent urban virtues rather than because they represent a city itself. Indeed, the artist may have been forced to

<sup>9</sup> G. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History* (2006), 86-7. He is careful to credit P.-L. Gatier, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie XXI: Inscriptions de la Jordanie, 2: Région centrale (Amman – Hesban – Madaba – Main – Dhiban)* (Paris, 1986), 126, as the first to explain the name Gregoria in reference to Gregorius, patriarch of Antioch.

<sup>10</sup> In general, see Marion Meyer, *Die Personifikation der Stadt Antiocheia. Ein neues Bild für eine neue Gottheit* (Berlin, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1996), 1578.

<sup>12</sup> The noun γρηγορία seems to have been relatively unusual. It appears in H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (1996), 360, and Erich Trapp (ed.), *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität besonders des 9.-12. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 1996), 330. It does not appear in either Evangelinus A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (From BC146 to AD1100)* (New York, 1887), or in Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961). The term γρηγόρησις seems to have been by far the favoured form to denote 'vigilance'.

<sup>13</sup> *Matth.* 26:40-1; *Mark* 14:37-8. Note, however, that the verb used to denote strength is ἰσχύω, with the associated noun ἰσχύς rather than ῥώμη. The term ῥώμη seems to have been preferred in the mosaic for the sake of the pun with the name of Rome.

innovate in this manner because there does not seem to have been a standard personification of either strength or vigilance.<sup>14</sup> As for their various attributes, the fact that ΠΩΜΗ has a cornucopia of fruit, while ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ bears a basket of flowers, it is doubtful whether any particular meaning ought to be attached to them. They are generic in nature, attributed to the *tychai* for the sake of artistic variety and in order to distinguish them from one another, but for no more significant reason that these were the types of objects normally associated with *tychai*. Nor should one attach any significance to the fact that the three *tychai* decrease slightly in size from left to right, so that Madaba is the smallest.<sup>15</sup> This was simply a function of the declining available space between the wall and the rectangular panel which formed the focus of the mosaic, where the artist was determined to set the main object of attention to the far right of his composition, exactly as he does within the rectangular panel where Aphrodite and Hippolytus both appear to the right in their particular sub-panels. Hence the mosaic declares the belief of the individual who commissioned it that Madaba possessed both strength and vigilance.

But why did Madaba need these virtues? The answer lies in the contents of the rectangular panel. It needed strength and vigilance against the temptations posed by Aphrodite, that is, sexual temptation, as so lovingly depicted in the topmost of the three sub-panels. In this context, therefore, the central sub-panel serves to illustrate what can happen to those who lack strength and vigilance, but allow themselves to fall victim to Aphrodite. There could hardly be a more famous example of the dangers posed by sexual temptation than the story of how Phaedra brought disaster upon herself and all those around her as a result of succumbing to her lust for her step-son Hippolytus. Here one should draw attention to the fact that the *tyche* labelled ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑ holds a large basket of flowers in her left hand, flowers which are identical in colour and type to the flowers spilled from an overturned basket into which an Eros is pushing himself at the feet of Aphrodite in the topmost sub-panel. The contrast between the two baskets of similar flowers, the first upright with its contents safe and the second overturned by an Eros and with its contents spilling widely over the ground seems deliberate. The intended message seems to be that Vigilance keeps things safe, but that Aphrodite and her associated Erotes would overturn everything if allowed to do so. Indeed, one suspects that there is a deliberate contrast also between the depiction of the two calm and dignified virtues associated with Madaba and the three harassed and struggling Graces associated with Aphrodite who are failing to keep the Erotes under control. Strength and Vigilance trump

<sup>14</sup> There do not seem to be any relevant entries in the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zürich, 1981-97). The Romans seem to have preferred to celebrate courage (*virtus*) rather than physical strength (*vires* or *robur*).

<sup>15</sup> G. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History* (2006), 82, credits Mary Fulghum for drawing his attention to what he describes as the 'careful gradation of size in the three figures'.

the Graces – traditionally identified as Aglaea ‘Radiance’, Euphrosyne ‘Joy’, and Thalia ‘Flowering’ – in keeping things under control, or so the intended message seems to be.

The purpose of the three *tychai* is now apparent. They serve to provide an explicit moral justification for the decision of the individual who commissioned this mosaic to include scenes from classical mythology within it, and not just any scenes, but scenes of a sexual nature. He sought to justify the depiction upon his floor of Aphrodite and Adonis, the associated Graces and Erotes, and the main characters from the legend of Phaedra and Hippolytus, by warning all those who might see this mosaic against the vices which they represented. He seems to have wanted to make it clear to all potential viewers that his interest in the scenes was not a sign of pagan sympathies, neither of prurience, but was entirely moral. At the same time, he also sought to flatter them by appealing to their local civic patriotism in his depiction of Madaba as a town that did indeed possess these virtues: be strong and vigilant, like Madaba, and you too will be free from sexual temptation! It is clear, therefore, that the person who commissioned this mosaic lived in a society where a continued interest in the characters and stories of pagan Greek mythology for and of themselves was viewed with increasing suspicion and needed now to be justified in a way that it had not previously. While it has been claimed of the paintings in a public building in Gaza expounded upon by the early sixth-century Christian author Procopius of Gaza, and whose subjects also included scenes from the story of Hippolytus and Phaedra, that ‘there is nothing in the pictures that a Christian could possibly object to, and the moral is one which a Christian would have to applaud’, this was no longer true, at least not in Madaba.<sup>16</sup> To this extent, therefore, this mosaic represents an important transitional phase in the passage from a classical pagan past to a Byzantine Christian future where biblical rather than mythological imagery would predominate. Somewhat ironically, however, the decision of the person who commissioned this mosaic to depict Madaba, and her associated virtues, as urban *tychai* undercut his very attempt to justify his continued interest in pagan mythology since *tychai* were potentially objectionable in themselves as representation of pagan goddesses. Hence the day was quickly drawing near when artists would prefer to depict cities by means of their cityscapes rather than as *tychai*, a process that peaked with the completion in the mid-eighth century of a wonderful series of cityscapes in the Church of St Stephen at Umm al-Rasas (ancient Kastron Mefaa) in the same province.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Wolfgang Liebeschuetz, ‘Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire’, *IJCT* 2 (1995), 193–208, 195–6.

<sup>17</sup> M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan* (1992), 218–29. In general on the depictions of cities, see Carlo Bertelli, ‘Visual Images of the Town in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages’, in Gian P. Brogiolo and Bryan Ward-Perkins (eds), *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, *The Transformation of the Roman World* 4 (Leiden and Boston, 1999), 127–46.

## The Angel and the Spirit of Repentance: Hermas and the Early Monastic Concept of *Metanoia*

Alexis C. TORRANCE, Princeton, USA

### ABSTRACT

The Angel of Repentance in *The Shepherd of Hermas* is usually understood to be heralding an age of leniency (the possibility of a second repentance) in an otherwise rigorist church setting. This, in turn, is normally viewed in the context of the development of penitential rites in the early church, culminating in the practice of frequent auricular confession by the High Middle Ages. In this paper, an alternative trajectory is offered, which views Hermas not so much as a key figure on the road to the Western confessional, but as a source for early monastic reflections on the concept and meaning of repentance. This will involve noting the reverence for Hermas among the Alexandrian theologians Clement, Origen, and later Didymus the Blind, whose works helped to facilitate the reception of Hermas among the early Egyptian monastic communities. Especial attention will be paid to the rare expression ‘Spirit of Repentance’ which recurs in early Egyptian monastic texts, and which functions, it seems, as an equivalent to ‘Angel of Repentance’. It will be proposed that this link enriches our understanding not only of the legacy of Hermas, but also of the possible meaning of Hermas’ ‘Angel of Repentance’ and his proclamation of a second, once-for-all μετάνοια. It will be concluded that the monastic appropriation of Hermas fits uneasily with a narrative of Hermas’ repentance as a step towards the later sacrament of penance (the dominant narrative). It will be suggested that a more convincing narrative might be of Hermas’ once-for-all repentance paving the way not so much for the sacrament of penance, but for monastic profession.

It was surprising, perhaps even a little daunting, to notice that Hermas is so markedly absent from the 2011 Oxford Patristics Conference. The *Shepherd* is a short and sometimes rather strange work, yet it ‘boasts great things’, exemplified by the manner in which it was received and revered by early Christians. The question of the undeniable influence of Hermas tends to gravitate towards one of two issues. The first is whether and in what sense the *Shepherd* was considered ‘Scripture’ by this or that church father. While not the direct concern of this article, it is important to underline this facet of the discussion. Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Didymus and others cite the *Shepherd* at times on a par with other texts which we now keep conveniently bound in our New and Old Testament volumes, and parts of the text can even be found in extant early Biblical manuscripts, such as the Codex Sinaiticus. This is no mean feat. But, of course, the question of influence must go beyond this: if the *Shepherd* is



cited as authoritative, which specific texts are revered and why, and from this, can we gauge how the text really influenced the mentality and lifestyle of early Christians?

The other issue that tends to dominate the discussion of Hermas' influence is the concept of repentance. The Angel of Repentance in the *Shepherd* is usually seen as heralding an age of leniency (the possibility of a second repentance) in an otherwise rigorist church setting. This, in turn, is normally viewed in the context of the development of penitential rites in the early church, culminating in the practice of frequent auricular confession by the High Middle Ages. It is to this second issue that I wish to turn my attention. I will argue that, rather than placing Hermas at a key juncture on the way to the institutional Western confessional, it seems more natural to discern his enduring influence on monastic ideas of repentance as a life-long task. I will begin by briefly describing repentance in Hermas. This will be followed by a summary of the importance of the *Shepherd* in Alexandria in the following centuries, and consequently its importance for the early monastic movement. In particular, it will be shown how some of its key language and sentiments, revolving around the figure of the Angel of Repentance, were taken up and worked out by this movement.

The *Shepherd's* doctrine of repentance is best known for its intimation that there is one repentance available after baptism to the servants of God, an intimation found in the section on adultery.<sup>1</sup> Such 'leniency' as perceived by the later Tertullian led him to label Hermas' text 'the Shepherd of adulterers'.<sup>2</sup> Yet the idea of the singularity of post-baptismal repentance, which is only very briefly mentioned, should not deter us from the wider meaning of repentance presented in the text. There is a sense in which repentance, even for Hermas himself, is frequent, since he repeatedly prays to the Lord for the forgiveness of his sins. Those who disallow repentance to the faithful are labelled 'hypocrites and introducers of strange doctrines, and subverters of the servants of God'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in the mandate on good and bad restraint, the Angel of Repentance declares that the faithful ought never to restrain from helping sinners: 'Not casting those who have fallen into sin from the faith, but turning them back and restoring them to peace of mind'.<sup>4</sup> What concerns the Angel of Repentance above all is not that repentance is only available once, but that repentance is an open possibility while the 'tower' of the Church is still being built.

The role of the Angel is to direct the path of repentance for the Christian, and so, unsurprisingly, he is preoccupied not with the limitedness of repentance,

<sup>1</sup> *Shepherd* 2.4.1 (SC 53, 154). I would like to note my appreciation for a conference paper delivered by Alexander Huggard in 2008 that triggered my interest in exploring this theme.

<sup>2</sup> *De pudicitia* 20.2 (SC 394, 262).

<sup>3</sup> *Shepherd* 3.8.6 (SC 53, 276).

<sup>4</sup> *Shepherd* 2.8 (SC 53, 180).

but with describing the way in which repentance as ‘great understanding’<sup>5</sup> is worked out, namely, the way of the twelve mandates or commandments. These twelve commandments relate to: 1) faith; 2) simplicity in almsgiving; 3) truthfulness; 4) purity and adultery; 5) patience versus anger; 6) the angel of righteousness versus the angel of iniquity; 7) the fear of God; 8) good and bad restraint; 9) prayer and doubt; 10) grief; 11) discerning spirits; 12) good desire. By presenting these commandments as his message, the Angel is indicating that repentance is less a specific act, and more an integrated lifestyle. He can thus declare to Hermas once he has delivered the commandments: ‘You have now these commandments. Walk in them, and exhort your hearers that their repentance may be pure during the remainder of their life’,<sup>6</sup> and again, ‘walk in my commands which I enjoin upon you, and your repentance will be deep and pure’.<sup>7</sup> Once we begin viewing the message of the *Shepherd* in this light, it becomes clearer how the text might have served to spur on the early monks, adamant as they were to live out repentance as a vocation grounded on the Lord’s commandments.<sup>8</sup> Let me turn to this connection in more detail.

The milieu that most probably conveyed Hermas to the monks was Alexandria. Clement clearly respected the *Shepherd*, and cites or alludes to the text on numerous occasions. His use of Hermas is not always linked with repentance, such as his interest in the preaching of the Gospel to those in Hades,<sup>9</sup> or his preoccupation with the veiling and unveiling of Scripture.<sup>10</sup> In *Stromateis* II, however, he mentions the first repentance of baptism, as well as the second repentance of the faithful fallen, though without explicit mention of Hermas.<sup>11</sup> In *Qui dives salvetur*, having upheld the power of repentance with the tale of John the Apostle and the robber, he calls on all his listeners to ‘welcome the Angel of Repentance’ so as not to need repentance at the hour of death, nor be ashamed at the coming of the Saviour.<sup>12</sup>

Origen likewise had an interest in Hermas. In terms of doctrine, he upheld the *Shepherd* for its clear declaration of creation *ex nihilo*.<sup>13</sup> He also, however, makes an intriguing association between the Angel of Repentance and those who are spiritually responsible for others: ‘We are reproved by bishops and others, as the Angel of Repentance in the Shepherd (if that book can be

<sup>5</sup> σύνεσις μεγάλη – *Shepherd* 2.4.1 (SC 53, 156).

<sup>6</sup> *Shepherd* 2.12.3 (SC 53, 202).

<sup>7</sup> *Shepherd* 3.7 (SC 53, 258).

<sup>8</sup> It may also help us to understand why it was so popular for catechetical purposes: not for its nebulous doctrinal stances, but for its clarity on issues of moral rectitude.

<sup>9</sup> *Stromata* VI 6 (GCS 52[15], 454-5).

<sup>10</sup> *Stromata* VI 15 (GCS 52[15], 489-96).

<sup>11</sup> *Stromata* II 13 (GCS 52[15], 143).

<sup>12</sup> *Qui dives salvetur?* 42,18 (GCS 17, 172).

<sup>13</sup> *Commentary on John* 1.18 (PG 14, 53B).

received').<sup>14</sup> Both Clement and Origen do something quite radical with the Angel of Repentance: they associate him for their audience with human beings (John the Apostle in the case of Clement, and 'bishops and others' in the case of Origen). Perhaps it would be a little too speculative to extend this thought to the development of the phenomenon of the spiritual director in early monasticism, who in many ways seems to fulfil the same role for his disciples as the angel of repentance fulfils for Hermas. Yet it is a tempting association to make, at least in a preliminary way.

From a terminological point of view, Didymus the Blind's respect for the *Shepherd* could provide a glimpse at the way in which the Angel of Repentance made its way into monastic circles. Didymus speaks highly of the *Shepherd*, 'the book of repentance' as he calls it, and certainly considers it an authoritative text.<sup>15</sup> We also find in Didymus, however, the rare expression πνεῦμα μετανοίας (Spirit of Repentance), linked in one of his commentaries with the spirit of compunction.<sup>16</sup> The impact of Didymus on monasticism is of course hard to measure with certainty, but if we are to believe Jerome, he had direct contact with none other than Anthony, the father of monks.<sup>17</sup> I mention the possible connection with Anthony because in Anthony's *First Letter* (unfortunately not preserved in Greek), we find shot through none other than references to the role, power, and presence of the 'Spirit of Repentance' in the lives of the faithful.<sup>18</sup> Here is a characteristic line, clearly echoing the sentiments of Hermas: 'If the soul gives itself to God wholeheartedly, God has mercy upon it and gives it the Spirit of Repentance, which testifies to it about each sin, that it may not again draw near to them'.<sup>19</sup>

The idea of the Spirit of Repentance was clearly important in Anthony's vision, since it recurs in the epistles of his successor Ammonas, where the Spirit of Repentance leads to the purity of adoption by the Holy Spirit.<sup>20</sup> The 'Angel' of Repentance, however, does not altogether disappear from view. In a story in the *Life of Daniel of Scetis*, an incident is recounted in which a prostitute repents when exhorted by her monastic brother, but dies soon after. In a vision, the monk sees his sister at the judgment seat: 'Then the ruler

<sup>14</sup> *Homilies on Psalm 37* 1.1 (PG 12, 1372B).

<sup>15</sup> *Commentary on Zechariah 234,21-2* (SC 84, 714). For the importance of the *Shepherd* in Didymus' thought, see B.D. Ehrman, 'The New Testament Canon of Didymus the Blind', VC 37 (1981), 1-21.

<sup>16</sup> *Commentary on Psalms 29-34* 136,28 (on Ps. 29:13 [LXX]) (ed. Gronewald).

<sup>17</sup> *Letter to Castrutius* (PL 22, 652-3). On this episode, see R.A. Layton, *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria* (Champaign, IL, 2004), 19-23.

<sup>18</sup> Translation found in S. Rubenson, *Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis, 1995), 197-210; see also Rubenson's comments on the influence of the *Shepherd of Hermas* on Anthony's milieu: Rubenson, *Letters*, 171.

<sup>19</sup> *Letter 1*: this translation in D. Chitty (trans.), *The Letters of Saint Anthony the Great* (Oxford, 1978), 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Letter 13.2* (SO 42, 42).

ordered the Angel of Repentance to be brought in; there entered a pleasant looking man holding a paper in his hand' who defends her. The Black One retaliates: 'Do you mean to deprive me of her who was with me, doing my will, for so long, just because she followed you for a tiny part of one day?' His henchmen try to afflict her, but the ruler says 'Do not come near to her until her repentance arrives'. A pleasant-looking man with a golden container arrives, in which are her tears and the blood of her feet. Her impurity is weighed against her repentance. The latter triumphs: 'Then the ruler ordered her to be stripped of the garment she was wearing, after which they put a linen robe on her and handed her over to the Angel of Repentance, who then put her in a place suffused with light'.<sup>21</sup>

The difference between 'the Spirit of Repentance' (in Didymus, Anthony and Ammonas) and the 'Angel of Repentance' (Hermas and Daniel) initially presented itself as a difficulty to me. However, I am becoming more convinced that this is a straightforward case of ἄγγελος and πνεῦμα being relatively synonymous, even if ἄγγελος appears to be reserved more for tangible beings than πνεῦμα. This equivalence of the terms 'angel' and 'spirit' is not an uncommon move for early Christians, and Didymus in particular (whose 'On the Holy Spirit' devotes much space to the diverse possible meanings of 'pneuma', one of which is 'ministering spirit' or 'angel' – 56). When reading Didymus, as well as much other early Christian material (*Hermas* and early monastic texts included), it can often be bemusing and perplexing to see the fluid manner in which terms such as ἄγγελος, πνεῦμα and πνεῦμα ἅγιον are used. I leave the intricacies of unpacking concepts such as 'angelomorphic pneumatology' in these texts to others,<sup>22</sup> but I would simply say that the temptation to compartmentalize these terms in the early Christian era is fraught with dangers and difficulties. Just as God, according to the Psalmist, 'maketh his angels spirits' (Ps. 102:4), so too we find early Christians doing the same. And this seems to have occurred with *Hermas*' Angel of Repentance in the Alexandrian and monastic settings.

Along with this sense of verbal continuity between Hermas and the monastics, it seems to me that a more substantial level exists. This involves linking repentance not so much with a particular action or ritual, as with the living out of revealed commandments. I have touched on this point already, and it may at first come across as trivial. Yet if we bear in mind the lineage in which most church historians tend to place the *Shepherd*, this point can be seen in a fresh light. The standard textbook narrative of repentance in the early church places Hermas on the road towards the Latin confessional. Before Hermas no

<sup>21</sup> See T. Vivian (ed.), *Witness to Holiness: Abba Daniel of Scetis* (Collegeville, MN, 2008), 88-9 and 204-5.

<sup>22</sup> Such as Bogdan Bocur, 'The Son of God and the Angelomorphic Holy Spirit: A Rereading of the *Shepherd's* Christology', *ZNW* 98 (2007), 121-43.

repentance, after Hermas one ecclesiastical repentance, which in turn leads to multiple opportunities for church penance, and eventually the compulsory annual confession decreed at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. But this narrative strikes me as flawed for several reasons, only one of which I have been able to dwell on here. While the singularity of repentance after baptism is indeed mentioned by Hermas (though never emphasized to any great extent), and while this may indeed have impacted the history of ecclesiastical penance (in what way, however, is another issue), this should not blind us to the reception of Hermas outside the sphere of the institution of penance. If anyone read and took seriously the moral message of the *Shepherd*, it was the monks, whose way of life and devotion to the commandments of repentance seem to encapsulate the visions of Hermas in a much more vivid way than does the development of auricular confession. As a final remark, it should perhaps be no surprise to us that the dwindling of repentance as a single, unrepeatable church rite coincides with the rapid rise of monasticism. I would propose, even on the basis of this meagre presentation, that we at least begin to consider not so much frequent confession but the single, unrepeatable monastic vocation as a legitimate and in many ways conscious heir of the repentance declared in the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

# Heroines not Penitents: Saints of Sex Slavery in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* in Roman Law Context

Lois FARAG, St Paul, MN, USA

## ABSTRACT

This essay reexamines the stories of penitent women in early monastic sources, specifically the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, and proposes that these are not stories of penitence but rather stories of women forced into the sex slave industry who overcame their devastating forced conditions and preserved their faith, which secured their rescue from bondage. They are heroines not penitents.

Benedicta Ward's *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in early Monastic Sources* is an excellent example of a scholarly, as well churchly, view of stories of repentant women that needs to be reexamined. To prove the argument the essay will focus on the stories of three women rescued from brothels by three famous monastic figures: Thaïs (rescued by Paphnutius), Paësia (rescued by John the Dwarf), and Mary (rescued by her uncle, Abba Abraham). These stories primarily portray the heroism of the saintly male characters who come to rescue these fallen women. I will argue that these women did not choose to be prostitutes but were rather forced into sex slavery to repay the debt of their families and that the rescue efforts followed the guidelines set by the Theodosian Code (*ThC* IV 8; XV 8; XV 8.1; *NMarc* 4 and 5; and laws of debt). The male characters either responded to requests from these women to come to their rescue or were obligated to act based on the ecclesial obligations set by Roman law. These women persevered in their faith and worked hard to save themselves from their forced enslavement and thus deserve to be portrayed as heroines rather than penitents.

There are some stories in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* about women rescued from brothels by famous monastic figures: Thaïs is rescued by Paphnutius, Paësia by John the Dwarf, and Mary by her uncle, Abba Abraham. In other stories anonymous women are rescued by anonymous monks. Though the main point of the stories is to highlight the heroism of the pious and wise male monastics who come to rescue these fallen women, later preachers focused on the theme of the prostitutes' repentance.<sup>1</sup> In her classic *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources*, Benedicta Ward explains eleventh-century

<sup>1</sup> *Les Apophtegmes des Pères, Collection Systématique*, ed. Jean-Claude Guy, SC 387, 474, 498, 3 vols (Paris, 1993, 2003, 2005).

western obsession with Christian morality and, specifically, prostitutes.<sup>2</sup> Questions of conduct and canon were raised: Does a prostitute keep earnings gained from immoral acts? Does a prostitute tithe? The answer was 'yes' to both. The Medieval West also raised issues of excluding prostitutes from communion and excommunication.<sup>3</sup> Ward alerts the reader that the question of the redemption of prostitutes was not considered before the twelfth century. She credits that interest to three factors: the rise of new monastic reformers and preachers, 'the rise of the new devotion to the Passion of Christ', and the presence of theologically astute audience of abandoned clergy wives whose husbands responded to the Gregorian Reform requirements of clerical celibacy.<sup>4</sup> In her book Ward attempts to restore the theme of repentance to these stories of rescue. She astutely observes that the powerful aspect of these repentance stories is in that the women never sinned after their repentance.<sup>5</sup> I would like to argue that these stories demonstrate not so much repentance as the heroism of these women, who cleverly worked the legal and judicial system of the Roman Empire to free themselves from their forced sex slavery.<sup>6</sup> I will attempt to reconstruct the narratives from the Roman judicial context. To prove my point, I will use primarily the monastic *Apophthegmata Patrum* in their various recensions and the legal code of the Roman Empire, the *Theodosian Code*.<sup>7</sup>

The Roman judicial code craftily maintained the social balance between the free Roman elite and the slave and poor populations. The elite were people of authority exemplified by the senators, landholders, decurions, precurians, tax collectors and other government employees who maintained the steady stream of financial revenue to the imperial coffers in the form of taxes and services. The slave and poor populations were equally important, for they provided the labor for the landholders, public works and small industry. Labor was also required to sustain the entertainment industry embodied in the circus, theater,

<sup>2</sup> Benedicta Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1987), 104.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 106f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> The intentional anachronistic use of the term 'sex slavery' alerts the modern reader to the psychological, physical, and religious trauma these women endured. It also highlights the aspect of unwillingness in contrast to a profession of choice insinuated in the terms used by the *Theodosian Code* describing these women as 'low and degraded persons', 'polluted with sordid blots' because of their 'shameful occupation' and 'obscenity of their profession'. This article discusses sex slavery as a subset of debt slavery.

<sup>7</sup> I will use various recensions of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. For the laws I will focus primarily on *The Theodosian Code* (ThC), Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code* (Princeton, NJ, 1952), but there will be occasional references to the Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (CJ). I focus on the *Theodosian Code* because its time of codification reflects the era of our stories. Justinian's compilation is later and I will use it to demonstrate either the persistence of a certain code or the endurance of a certain social phenomenon.

mimes, gladiators, and prostitutes. The elite were eager to sustain such industry for it reflected their power. The judicial code regulated and restricted the movement of the population from one status to the other.

The privileges of a freeborn entailed responsibilities and burdens that many attempted to escape. Landholders deserted their fields, even suffering the loss of their fortune, and decurions evaded their responsibilities to escape the imprisonment and torture inflicted by the greed and brutality of tax collectors.<sup>8</sup> Procurers exhibited callousness under the pretext of collecting a certain Lustral Tax, which the code describes as giving the right 'to practice the business of corrupting innocence', that is, prostituting slaves or 'the bodies of freeborn persons'.<sup>9</sup> The state was so keen to exact such taxes that decurions who attempted to evade payment by going into the priesthood (which was exempt from such taxes) were recalled to their civic positions.<sup>10</sup> Attempts to abolish the power of the procurers and the harsh actions of tax collectors were not successful, for a century later, in the mid-fifth century, we find further laws to curb their powers. What is clear from these laws is the interconnection between delinquency in tax payment and forced prostitution, whether one was a freeborn or a slave.

Delinquency in debt payment is equally connected to forced prostitution. All persons were obligated to pay off their debt to the municipalities. If a person did not pay his debts during his lifetime, his heirs were obligated to pay the debt with appropriate interest. To ensure their stream of revenue municipalities made sure that debtors did not disappear or squander their property. The state did not require notification for payment of uncontested debt.<sup>11</sup> This gave a free hand to magistrates, curators of debt accounts, and other officials to collect debts at any moment either from the debtors or their heirs. Those in debt could not escape payment by taking refuge in a church, and if a bishop or cleric harbored debtors, the bishops would be required to pay their debt.<sup>12</sup> Debt collectors were ruthless in ensuring payment. They would drag 'from landholdings slave plowmen and plow oxen as pledges'.<sup>13</sup> But the state abolished this practice after recognizing that it affected land productivity and caused delay of payment. On the other hand, if someone could not pay his taxes, his slaves (not those working on the farm) would be taken away as pledges; and if he did not pay his taxes in full within two months, these slaves would be sold and the transaction would not be rescinded.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *NMaj* 2.2. Pharr, 552 [AD 458].

<sup>9</sup> *Nth* XVIII 1 and *NTh* XVIII 1.1. Pharr, 504. *ThC* XIII 1 explains the Lustral Tax Payment as the immediate tax payment in gold and silver.

<sup>10</sup> *ThC* XIII 1.4. Pharr, 385 [AD 364].

<sup>11</sup> *ThC* II 4.3. Pharr, 40.

<sup>12</sup> *ThC* IX 45.1. Pharr, 264f.

<sup>13</sup> *ThC* II 30.1. Pharr, 60 [AD 315].

<sup>14</sup> *ThC* XI 9.1. Pharr, 302f. [AD Dec 31, 323]. This law was affirmed fourteen years later. If a farm or slave was sold on account of default payment of tribute, the debtor would be summoned



In the case of debt collection, freeborns faced the same fate as slaves, though female minors were more vulnerable in such cases. John Malalas records in his *Chronicles* the extraordinary case of Eulalios who lost all his fortune and came into debt. Eulalios wrote a will on his death bed that Emperor Justinian was to provide a daily amount of 15 *folles* for his three daughters and a dowry of ten *litrai* of gold on their marriage. He made Justinian an heir and consequently legally obligated to pay his debt, in addition to provide for his daughters daily livelihood and their dowry. Of course, the curator objected to the terms of the will since the money left did not suffice for executing the terms of the will.<sup>15</sup> This story was recorded to illustrate the pious acts of Emperor Justinian, who saved the daughters from 'sin', but it also demonstrates to what length desperate parents improvised to avoid the inevitable consequence of their daughters fulfilling their debts in brothels. Under Roman law, fathers were 'granted the right of life and the power of death over their children'.<sup>16</sup> Though the law cautioned parents against selling their children, it still regulated the process, knowing it was inevitable. If a freeborn was reduced to slavery, the law provided that person the right to find a sponsor who would defend his freeborn status and who would also be liable for compensation.<sup>17</sup> If a free person was sold as a minor, when he reached maturity he should be appointed by his purchaser as a manager of the estate. If they were freed while minors, they would have the status of freeborn persons. If freeborn persons were sold by their sponsors into slavery, and they did not know they were born as free persons, they could reclaim their free status till the age of 30.<sup>18</sup> If a father sold his freeborn child, 'the child cannot remain in perpetual slavery, but if he has made compensation by his slavery, he shall be restored to his freeborn status without even the repayment of the purchase price'.<sup>19</sup> That meant a child could be freed once she paid the debt but not necessarily the price of her purchase.<sup>20</sup>

The state made sure that these laws were enforced to secure steady revenue to the imperial coffers. The desert monastics were especially aware of such laws. A widow came weeping before Abba Macarius because her husband died without telling her about the location of a 'deposit in trust'. The owner of the trust threatened to sell her and her children to slavery if she did not produce

by the judge and if he was still in default, the purchase of his pledge would be valid perpetually. *ThC* XI 9.2. Pharr, 303.

<sup>15</sup> John Malalas, 18.23. John Malalas, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott, and Brian Croke, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Melbourne, 1986), 255.

<sup>16</sup> *ThC* IV 8.6. Pharr, 89.

<sup>17</sup> *ThC* IV 8.5. Pharr, 88 [AD 322].

<sup>18</sup> *ThC* IV 8.6.3. Pharr, 89.

<sup>19</sup> *ThC* III 3. Pharr, 65 [AD 391].

<sup>20</sup> This law was rescinded in AD 529 by Justinian (*CJ* VIII 51), who 'ruled that a child could not be taken as slave, or a pledge, in settlement of a parent's debt.' Gillian Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Life-Styles* (Oxford, 1993), 50. Thus, during the time of our narratives such laws were still in effect.

the trust. It is clear at this point that the Roman Code is being applied: If a person does not pay a debt, the heirs are obligated to pay. The story ends by Abba Macarius communicating with the dead man, who informs him where the debt was hidden. Abba Macarius informs the widow who is able to free her children.<sup>21</sup> In this case, the widow regained her children, but only after paying her debt.

Paësia was not as lucky. The narrative starts with the orphan Paësia, a young charitable woman, spending her inheritance on hospitality toward the fathers of Scetis. Her money dries up and, the narrative informs us, ‘wicked men’ make her a prostitute.<sup>22</sup> The narrative explains this sudden transformation – from charitable, pious woman to prostitute – in terms of her willful acceptance of prostitution as a natural aspect of women’s fallen nature. The phenomenon of women and widows losing all their inheritance attending to clerics and monks became pervasive in the Roman Empire; it threatened the inheritance of their children and kinsmen (If a widow remarried, her inheritance went to the children of the husband she inherited from<sup>23</sup>). To remedy this problem, in AD 370 Emperors Valentinian, Valens and Gratian decreed that no widow should gift, bequeath, or donate through a testament anything to ecclesiastics, ex-ecclesiastics, or monks. In addition, if any of these men was seen visiting widows they would be banished and the kinsmen of the widow had the right to report them to the authorities.<sup>24</sup> Twenty years later, Valentinian insisted that even widows who joined the rank of deaconesses were to bequeath their jewels, ornaments, gold, silver and other valuables to their children and next of kin.<sup>25</sup> These measures were to insure that inheritance remained within families. Such restrictions were lifted in AD 455 by Emperor Marcian, who gave full permission to widows or any woman to bequeath money to ‘a church, a martyr, a cleric, a monk, or to the poor’.<sup>26</sup> For 85 years there were discussions about the ability of women to give their money freely. It was actually an argument between heirs and church, and Marcian sided with the church. Emperor Severus (461–465) in AD 465 issued a law that reversed all the gains of the church and sided with the women’s children and heirs.<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to observe that the laws did not restrict women’s personal spending, no matter how outrageous; they only mention spending on men of the church, as in the case of Paësia, an indication of the pervasiveness of the phenomenon. These laws indicate that the story of

<sup>21</sup> Abba Macarius 7. Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (London, 1975), 128.

<sup>22</sup> *John the Dwarf* 40. B. Ward, *Alphabetical Collection*, 93.

<sup>23</sup> *NMaj* VI 1. Pharr, 556 [AD 458].

<sup>24</sup> *ThC* XVI 2.20. Pharr, 443 [July 30, 370].

<sup>25</sup> *ThC* XVI 2.27. Pharr, 444.

<sup>26</sup> *NMarc* V 2 and *NMarc* V 3. Pharr, 566f.

<sup>27</sup> *NSev* I 1. Pharr, 568. By this law Severus abrogated *NMarc* V 1, V 2, and V 3, and affirmed *ThC* III 8.2. *NTh* XIV 1.

Paësia is not unique; the debates between families, church and state persisted for centuries. In the case of Paësia there was no intervention of kinsmen or children. Her story represents the fate of many women who were forced into prostitution after their wealth had gone to a church or clerics.

Stories of prostitutes in monastic literature have common themes. All are rescued by monastics: Thaïs is rescued by Paphnutius, Paësia by John the Dwarf, and Mary by her uncle, Abba Abraham. All are rescued from brothels; none prostitutes from her home. Their rescuers take great measures to reach them. Most of them enter the brothel incognito, and do not reveal themselves until they are in the presence of the prostitute, an indication that they know if their true identity as monks or clerics, and thus as guardian rescuers, is revealed they will be prevented from seeing the prostitute. All rescuers know the prostitutes personally because they are in some capacity their guardians; otherwise, the benevolent rescuer would rescue all the women in the brothel. All the prostitutes leave their brothels immediately accompanied by their rescuers; none of them lingers for a day or even an hour. All of them, once they leave the brothel, are kept in places where their guardians are present. All these elements of this common story are determined by Roman laws.

A law issued by Constantius (337-361) in AD 343 declares that if a man subjects pious women to brothels and compels them to prostitution, the only persons who can buy these women are ecclesiastics or 'Christian men upon the payment of the proper price'.<sup>28</sup> In 428, Emperor Theodosius declared that if fathers impose prostitution on their daughters or female slaves, the women would be permitted 'to implore the aid of bishops, judges, and defenders, to be released from all the bonds of their miseries'.<sup>29</sup> Since this essay focuses on monastic literature, women who implored judges or defenders are not included. It is clear from the law that the women initiated the rescue by imploring (*implorato*) an ecclesiastic, in this case a monk. Justinian (527-565) reaffirmed this constitution indicating that these conditions persisted till the sixth century if not later.<sup>30</sup> Since all these women implored monks, then, according to the law, all these women had been forced into sex slavery by their fathers or procurers. These women lived as freeborn Roman citizens within their household and then at the decisions of their father, guardian, or supervisor, they found themselves in a brothel and forced to prostitute.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *ThC* XV 8.1. Pharr, 435.

<sup>29</sup> *ThC* XV 8.2. Pharr, 435.

<sup>30</sup> *CI* I 4.12 and *CI* XI 41.6. Paul R. Coleman-Norton, *Roman State and Christian Church: A Collection of Legal Documents to A.D. 535* (London, 1966), 641f.

<sup>31</sup> Guardianship ends for boys and girls when they reach puberty; for boys at the age of 14, for girls at the age of 12. *JI* I 21. Supervisors are appointed for both girls and boys from the age of maturity till the age of 25, the reason being that, though they are mature, they are not old enough to look after their own affairs. *JI* I 23. *Justinian Institutes*, trans. Peter Birks and Grant McLeod (New York, 1987), 51.

Freeing a prostitute entailed some responsibilities. Leo I (457-474) issued an edict that magistrates or bishops who freed prostitutes were not obligated to pay any judicial expenses.<sup>32</sup> When prostitutes implored a bishop or other religious figure to free them, expenses may have been a hindrance in many cases. In the narrative of Abba Abraham, he took 'a pound's weight in coins' to free his niece. This is different than the 'silver piece' that Abba Paphnutius took with him to the brothel for the assumed sexual services rendered by Thaïs.<sup>33</sup> In this narrative, Abba Paphnutius knows that he can free Thaïs without money because she has already paid her debt through her services at the brothel. In the following narrative, the woman could not be freed without paying the debt: A man told Abba Paphnutius that he once found a beautiful woman who fled to the desert and had not eaten for three days because she was escaping the governor's agents. Her husband could not pay his three hundred gold coins worth of taxes, so he was imprisoned and her three children were sold to slavery, but she was able to flee from the agents. The man went to the agents, paid three hundred gold coins, released the husband and freed the children from slavery.<sup>34</sup> The debt must be paid, either through sexual services or by paying the delinquent amount.

Another issue that had to be taken into consideration is where these women would go after being freed from the brothel. In most cases there was no family to return to; otherwise, the woman would have been rescued much earlier and not gone to the brothel in the first place. The guardian or sponsor who took the responsibility to free her did not find it easy to place a woman with a tainted reputation anywhere. She was an outcast of the society and had no future. Emperor Constantine in AD 336 decreed that no Senator or other high ranking officials should consider children from ill-reputed women as legitimate.<sup>35</sup> Emperors Valentinian and Marcian reaffirmed this edict in AD 454.<sup>36</sup> The main concern of this edict was to secure the inheritance of legitimate children. These edicts give us a description of who was considered of ill-repute in Roman law: slave and freed women and their daughters, stage women, women associated with tavern keepers, and all their children, children of procurers and gladiators, and of course prostitutes.<sup>37</sup> The edicts describe these women as 'low and degraded persons', 'polluted with sordid blots' because of their 'shameful occupation' and 'obscenity of their profession'.<sup>38</sup> These women had no prospect of marriage and no place to go. Some forced rescued prostitutes to work in mimes,

<sup>32</sup> *CI I* 4.14. Coleman-Norton (1966), 862.

<sup>33</sup> B. Ward, *Harlots* (1987), 83, 95.

<sup>34</sup> *Paphnutius* 14.5. Norman Russell and Benedicta Ward, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers* (London, 1981), 95.

<sup>35</sup> *ThC* IV 6.3. Pharr, 86.

<sup>36</sup> *NMarc* 4.1. Pharr, 565.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

dances, or theater. These jobs included sexual services.<sup>39</sup> Leo in his edict explicitly warns magistrates and bishops against placing freed prostitutes in these positions.<sup>40</sup> Because these prostitutes had no place to go, many of them opted to remain in brothels. In 534, when Justinian wanted to marry Theodora, who was an actress by profession, he changed the law in order to marry her and make her empress.<sup>41</sup> When Theodora became empress she freed the prostitutes in Constantinople. Because she knew that they had no place to go and no prospects, she built a palace on the Black Sea and placed them in it for repentance.<sup>42</sup> These laws make it clear that leaving the brothel is but the beginning of a series of other problems.

In all of the narratives the women leave immediately with their rescuers. The narratives attribute such behavior to the powerful arguments the rescuers give the women, which lead to their immediate repentance. My interpretation is that the women had to leave in the custody of the guardian claiming them. In the narratives each guardian either keeps the company of the women to the time of their death or places them in the custody of a female monastic community. Paphnutius places Thaïs in a monastery for women. Paësia dies the second night after she is freed from the brothel while still in the custody of John the Dwarf. Abba Serapion leaves his anonymous prostitute in the custody of the Amma of a monastery. An anonymous monk rescues his natural sister from a brothel and she dies on her journey back while still in her brother's custody; Mary remains in the desert in the custody of her uncle Abba Abraham till the time of his death. Empress Theodora was the custodian of all the women she freed from the brothels of Constantinople; she placed them in a large mansion which was converted into a monastery. All freed prostitutes had to be under the close watch of their custodians. The social norms are unforgiving of these women. The close guardianship was to ensure that these women do not 'sin' again.

Another question that needs to be considered is why these prostitutes did not immediately implore a bishop or other religious figure to rescue them at the moment of their arrival at the brothel. We can imagine several possibilities. At first they would have to recover from their shock at their new predicament.

<sup>39</sup> Sheila Briggs, 'Gender, Slavery, and Technology: The Shaping of the Early Christian Moral Imagination', in Bernadette J. Brooken (ed.), *Beyond Slavery, Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies* (New York, 2010), 160-5; also Judith Evans Grubbs, 'Virgins and Widows, Show-Girls and Whores', in R. Mathisen (ed.), *Law, Society and Authority in Late Antiquity* (New York, 2001), 220-4, and Dorothea R. French, 'Maintaining Boundaries: The Status of Actresses in Early Christian Society', *VigChr* 52 (1998), 293-318.

<sup>40</sup> *CI I* 4.14. Coleman-Norton (1966), 862.

<sup>41</sup> *CI I* 4.33. Coleman-Norton (1966), 1167. Empress Theodora suffered from such a fate, so when she became empress she rescued girls sold into prostitution by their parents. Though the law prohibited the purchase of girls for prostitution, brothel keepers would go to poor men and buy their daughters. *John Malalas* 18.24 (255).

<sup>42</sup> Procopius, *Buildings* I 9.1-10.

Then they would have to find out if there was a law that could work on their behalf. Since the reputation of prostitutes and their prospects in life were almost nil, they might have opted to resign themselves to their new life. Having said this, there are two main issues to be considered. First, they were sold either because of debt or poverty; there is the question of the debt that needed to be paid. Second, even if they got out, and even if they found a place that would provide shelter for them, were they forgiven for being prostitutes?

It is clear from law and practice that debts had to be paid. Free Roman men who were taken as war captives and sold during their captivity had to serve for five years to regain their freedom in order to recompense the buyer for the money he paid, even though they were claimed as free men.<sup>43</sup> For free men who sold their children during the famine in Italy, the state paid the buyer the original price plus an extra twenty percent in *solidi* for their freedom.<sup>44</sup> In another law, those who were redeemed from captivity were obligated either to restore their price or, if they did not have the money, to serve their buyer for five years.<sup>45</sup> Empress Theodora paid to free girls sold to brothels because of their fathers' poverty. The women sold into sex slavery were obligated to fulfill the debt by either paying it in full or prostitute in the brothel until the completion of the debt. Thaïs, Paësia, and Mary had to fulfill the terms of their debt by serving in brothels. When Mary was given to her guardian Abba Abraham, he gave away all her money, so when she was in trouble she knew her ascetic uncle would not be able to redeem her, though Abba Abraham is the only one in these narratives who paid, 'a pound's weight in coins', to redeem his niece. Further, these women could not ask just any person in authority to pay their debt. The law states that if anyone should transfer the debt to men of authority, the creditors are obligated not to collect the debt from such a person but make the debtor accountable for his debt.<sup>46</sup> If the women did not find a bishop, a magistrate, or judge willing to pay the debt, they had to remain in the brothel until the debt was paid. Then they had the right to implore for their release, and the law at this point facilitated the process by eliminating the payment of judicial expenses.

Given their reputation as sinful women, are these freed prostitutes forgiven? Not many early church writers discussed such dilemmas since they have historically been placed under the category of 'repentant' women. When in the sack of Rome many Christian women were raped, Augustine responded that God used rape to chastise these women for their pride and vanity, saying that they 'sinlessly suffered the violence of their captors' for the sake of their

<sup>43</sup> *ThC* V 7.2. Pharr, 108. Peter Van Minnen, 'Prisoners of War and Hostages in Greco-Roman Egypt', *The Journal of Juristic Payprology* 30 (2000), 155-63.

<sup>44</sup> *NVal* 33. Pharr, 544.

<sup>45</sup> *Sim* 16. Pharr, 486.

<sup>46</sup> *ThC* II 13. Pharr, 48f.

humility.<sup>47</sup> Though Augustine describes the violence as ‘sinless’ he still blames the women for the sin of pride that caused violence against themselves. Basil of Caesarea, in his interpretation of *Psalm* 33:7, asks why God permits a woman to be sold to a brothel keeper and forced to sin.<sup>48</sup> His answer is that God’s judgment is beyond comprehension. In his canons Basil does not refer to women sold to brothels but he does not lay any blame on slave women who are forced into sex slavery.<sup>49</sup> It is clear that the church was not eager to exonerate these women from sin. Such literature made some prostitutes, after being freed; go through a harsh penitential regimen. Thaïs enclosed herself in a cell and never left it till the day of her death three years later. The anonymous woman of Abba Serapion also died in her enclosed cell. Mary remained in her cell beside that of her guardian Abba Abraham till the day of his death. Because of the ambiguity of the situation of these women after they leave the brothels, all the narratives affirm God’s acceptance of them at the time of their death. Paphnutius asks Abba Anthony and his disciples about the fate of Thaïs. Paul, the disciple of Anthony, saw in a vision a bed adorned with precious cloths prepared to receive Thaïs in full glory. John the Dwarf saw angels bearing Paësia’s soul along a shining path reaching to heaven. Abba Serapion is assured by the Amma of the monastery that the anonymous prostitute ‘pleased God’. The narratives end with a strong affirmation that all these women died in a saintly state. They do not provide a theological argument but a simple assurance to the reader through divine revelation that God has accepted these women in heavenly glory.

The stories of Thaïs, Paësia, Mary, and the two anonymous prostitutes reveal to us the heroic perseverance of a group of women who represent thousands of women who became victims of the Roman debt system, a system that gave the upper hand to the state and authorized tax collectors to brutally collect taxes and debt at the expense of human lives. The most vulnerable to these measures were women and children. The state made sure that its taxes were collected at the expense of the women of the empire. These narratives are valuable in describing what the life of these women on whom the law was applied was really like. They bring these laws to life and help us understand how devastating they were. A close look at these narratives reveals the terrible effect of the debt law on the lives of these women. They had to fulfill the debt of their parents through forced prostitution. Thousands of women lost hope and became resigned to their ominous fate. But the special group of women in these monastic narratives did not succumb to that fate. They persevered until the debt was fulfilled, implored rescue from an ecclesial figure, and once help arrived, took the opportunity and immediately left the brothel. These women

<sup>47</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *City of God* I 28.

<sup>48</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Exegetical Homilies*, homily 15.

<sup>49</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Epistles* 199.49.

were so determined to leave that at the first opportunity they left everything behind at a moment's notice and exited the brothel. This was a heroic and determined act. Though society and the church looked at them as condemned sinners and labeled them as penitent women, the narratives reveal to us that God considered them saints and accepted them in full glory in the heavenly kingdom. They are not penitents but heroines. They are heroines because of their unrelenting hope and determination to overcome their forced slavery. They had a deep understanding of God and his love for humanity. The world judged them as sinners and, at best, penitents, but they proved to the world that God judged them as saints.





## Seeing *Hesychia*: Appeals to the Imagination in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*

Nienke Vos, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

### ABSTRACT

The *Apophthegmata Patrum* represent a remarkable body of literature. Originating from the oral traditions of the ancient Egyptian desert, they were fragmentary and originally given to concrete, unique individuals. The wisdom of the desert, however, turned out to have universal appeal, and words of wisdom were collected and organised according to the alphabet or to theme. Thus, unlike writings conceived by a single author and discursive in nature, the sayings of the desert both induce and assume a mode of communication that is more associative and – as Patricia Cox Miller calls it – ‘paratactic’. Still, the organisation of the sayings, especially in the Systematic Collection, does acquire a logic of its own. For the ordering of the sayings according to theme, in combination with the alphabetical principle, results in a remarkable ‘chemistry’, with words, images and themes resonating between the sayings, conjuring up wider vistas of the theme at hand. In this contribution, the cluster of sayings devoted to *hesychia*, ‘rest’ or ‘peace’, is analysed (Systematic Collection, chapter 2). The focus is on the evocative imagery and anecdotes, that is, on the visual quality for which the sayings are so well-known. In the case of *hesychia*, it becomes apparent how much the literal and figural dimensions are intertwined, as the literal meaning of enclosure and the cell – representing withdrawal and isolation – shades into the spiritual notions of contemplation and monastic virtue. Thus, *hesychia* encapsulates both the beginning and the end of the spiritual path. One semantic field especially prominent in this section is determined by terms such as ‘to open’, ‘to close’, ‘door’, and ‘gate’. Interestingly, it is the word of a woman that relativises the literal isolation of the cell, suggesting that spiritual *hesychia* may occur in the hustle and bustle of the city. Towards the end of the article, Patricia Cox Miller’s study *The Corporeal Imagination* is discussed, to clarify the dynamics of the sayings and to emphasise their imaginative potential. Because the sayings are so remarkably concrete, they speak to the senses and the imagination as well as to the mind in its more cognitive capacity. In a sense, the reader ‘sees’ the scenes depicted and is able to participate in them: by the ‘Luminous Detail’ of the fragment, a larger ‘whole’ is opened up. This participation is multi-dimensional and applies to ethics, dogmatics, exegesis, spirituality and lifestyle.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The sayings of the desert fathers, and some mothers, represent a remarkable specimen of early Christian literature: they aim to initiate the reader into the spiritual life of asceticism. The special quality of the sayings resides in various factors, two of which I will focus on in this contribution. First, the sayings do not convey the vision of one author, but together – in conjunction – they communicate the path of desert spirituality. Second, the sayings stand out because of the evocative imagery and lively anecdotes that they contain.

Most of the sayings are from the fourth and fifth centuries, while the formation of the collections is usually dated to the fifth and sixth centuries, depending on the stage of transmission.<sup>2</sup> Jean-Claude Guy, editor of the Systematic Collection,<sup>3</sup> emphasises the multiformity of the manuscript tradition: a great variety of versions occurs and one will look for two identical versions in vain. For the Systematic Collection, it must be said that the structure of a prologue followed by 21 chapters is fixed, but within those chapters the differences can be considerable.<sup>4</sup> Within this collection, Guy distinguishes different layers, representative of the various stages of transmission. He accepts an early Latin translation of the Greek collection as the oldest strand. Translated by Pelagius and John in the fifth/sixth century, it is the earliest variant of the Systematic Collection at our disposal. In addition, Guy discerns a second and third layer, with the second occurring in three variations ('états b1, b2, b3') and the third being representative of the final form.<sup>5</sup>

In this article, I will focus on one chapter of the Systematic Collection, namely the second chapter on 'hesychia': rest, peace, or solitude. I will look at the different ways in which *hesychia* is depicted, while considering how, amidst a variety of images and anecdotes, a particular and relatively cohesive view of desert spirituality comes to the fore. In my view, the specific organisation of the sayings, that is, the way they are positioned in this chapter, contributes to the construction

<sup>1</sup> A more elaborate version of this contribution will appear in the proceedings of the first international conference organised by the Dutch Centre for Patristic Research (CPO) in May of 2011, entitled *The Mystagogy of the Church Fathers*, to be published in the LAHR-series (Late Antique History and Religion), by Peeters, Leuven (ed. Paul van Geest *et al.*).

<sup>2</sup> William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford, 2004), 170f.; Jean-Claude Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères I-IX*, SC 387 (Paris, 1993), 79-84 ('Date et lieu de composition'); Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford, 1993), 86.

<sup>3</sup> The edition by Guy was published posthumously in three volumes of the Sources Chrétiennes series: 387 (Paris, 1993), 474 (Paris, 2003), and 498 (Paris, 2005). The first volume was prepared for publication by Bernard Flusin; volumes 2 and 3 were finalised by Bernard Meunier.

<sup>4</sup> J.-C. Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grèque des Apophthegmata Patrum* (Brussels, 1962), 119. See also the analysis of the manuscripts: J.-C. Guy, *Recherches* (1962), 126-81.

<sup>5</sup> J.-C. Guy, *Les Apophtegmes*, 30, 84-7 ('La présente édition'); *id.*, *Recherches* (1962), 182-8 ('Les divers états de la collection systématique normale'), esp. 187 ('Conclusion').

or the suggestion of ‘one voice’ speaking to the reader. For reasons of space, I will not discuss all 35 sayings exhaustively, but I will work with a selection, addressing the order of the sayings, the different connections between them, and their ability to speak to the imagination. In short, I will present a ‘chemistry of the sayings’. Towards the end of this article, I will reflect on Patricia Cox Miller’s latest study *The Corporeal Imagination*, in order to contextualise my findings.<sup>6</sup> But first, a few remarks on Systematic Collection, chapter 2.

### The Sayings as a Path of Spiritual Formation: The Special Case of *Hesychia*

Guy explains that, as a whole, the Systematic Collection depicts the different aspects of the ascetic life, the development of the virtues, but it also presents the successive stages of the spiritual path. By working through the sayings systematically, the ascetic can ascend the ladder of faith. It is about, as Guy writes, ‘la signification spirituelle de l’ordre des 21 chapitres, ordre qui reproduit l’itinéraire du moine tendant vers la perfection.’<sup>7</sup> This means that with chapter 2, on *hesychia*, we are situated at the beginning of the transformative process. *Hesychia*, then, has to do with the outset, with the conditions necessary for the spiritual life to flourish. Still, when one reads the chapter as a whole, culminating in a song of praise, it becomes clear that – in a sense – *hesychia* is also the hallmark of the envisaged end of ascetic living: it represents the peace for which the ascetic longs. *Hesychia* is the door that leads to contemplation, to the vision of God, to the end of the mystagogical process. Thus, it points to both the beginning and the end of the journey.

In this article, I will refer to the text of the edition by Guy, in which chapter 2 contains 35 sayings. In at least one important manuscript the majority of these sayings occur in the order in which they are placed in the edition. This manuscript, W (Athos, Lavra B 37, produced around 970), contains a prologue and the first five chapters of the collection. In W, chapter 2 has 34 of the 35 sayings included in the edition (only 23 is lacking). Because of this, it is warranted to work with the sayings and the order in which they occur, as presented in the edition.<sup>8</sup>

A few remarks are in order. The first is related to terminology. Most of the sayings in the chapter on *hesychia* mention the noun ἡσυχία itself. This noun is difficult to translate. It can be rendered as rest or peace, as silence or solitude. Different translations offer different options. Sometimes a synonym or related term is used, for instance σιωπή, silence. To the noun ἡσυχία, a normal Greek

<sup>6</sup> Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> J.-C. Guy, *Recherches* (1962), 120.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 126-9 (chapter 2 in ‘Analyse comparée des manuscrits’).

word (occurring in, for instance, the work of Homer, Pindar, Herodotus, and Plato), the verb ἡσυχάζω is closely connected. Again, translators make choices as to what is meant, for example, to rest, to remain silent, to live in solitude, to live in contemplation. This wide range of meanings will be addressed in the course of this article. It should also be noted that most of the sayings in chapter 2 refer to either ἡσυχία or ἡσυχάζω, but not all. Sometimes, the connection to our theme has to be inferred on different grounds. In addition, it must be said that use of the term ἡσυχία is not restricted to chapter 2: it does occur in other parts of the collection. Still, in this contribution I will focus on the second chapter.

### **The Evocative Power of the Sayings: The Double Focus of *Hesychia***

In this essay, I emphasise the evocative nature of the individual sayings. They can be considered as autonomous units, rich in meaning, ready to be contemplated again and again. They are like gems that may be viewed and admired from different angles. Generally, I will analyse the sayings in the order in which they occur in the edition. First, however, I present an example occurring towards the end of chapter 2 (number 33):

On a downtrodden path nothing green and juicy can ever grow, even if one sows the seed, because the place has been worn out. So it is with us. Be quiet, keep away from everything and you will see things grow that you didn't know were in you, because you had trampled them all.

In this saying, a comparison is made between the inner life (the things 'inside you') and the world outside: a path on which we tread. It is important to note that a similar verb appears in both clauses: in the clause introducing the comparison a form of πατέω is used ('downtrodden'), while in the application clause the verb περιπατέω is used ('you had trampled'). Such close connections between the image and the reality to which it refers – the referent – often occur. In this way, a strong link to outer and inner realities is implied – a theme to which I will return.

This example of an imaginative saying illustrates the fact that many individual sayings possess evocative power. In addition, I will highlight the connections between the sayings in chapter 2. For this reason, we move to the beginning of the chapter, which opens with two sayings by abba Antony. Here, I must add that within the chapters of the Systematic Collection, which are ordered thematically, a principle of alphabetical structuring is applied. Therefore, the chapter begins with sayings by Antony, followed by words of Arsenius, Diadochus, Doulas, Isaiah *etc.* The chapter includes one saying by a woman, amma Syncletica, and six sayings that figure in the Anonymous Collection.

The two opening sayings by abba Antony, then, point to the double focus which applies to most sayings in the chapter on *hesychia*, namely the characterisation of *hesychia* as a matter of both literal and figural rest or solitude. Various sayings highlight the need to literally withdraw from society, even from the company of the other monks, while other sayings emphasise the fact that such withdrawal always has a spiritual aim. As said, this double focus comes to the fore in the first two sayings. The first is as follows (the translation is based on Benedicta Ward's rendering of the Alphabetical Collection,<sup>9</sup> in which collection it figures as sayings number 10):

Abba Antony said: 'Just as fish die if they stay too long on dry land,<sup>10</sup> so the monks who loiter outside their cells or pass their time with men of the world lose the intensity of inner peace. So like a fish going towards the sea, we must hurry to reach our cell, for fear that if we delay outside we will lose our interior watchfulness.'

Although this saying mentions the dimension of 'inner peace' (Ward's translation of *hesychia* here) as well as the notion of 'interior watchfulness', emphasis is placed on the importance of literally staying within the cell. One should not 'loiter outside'. Loitering outside, mixing with 'men of the world' (μετὰ κοσμικῶν) leads to loss of inner strength. The image of the fish dying on dry land signals the importance of space, pointing to the central notion of monastic space in this chapter: the cell. The concrete and literal space of the cell is likened to the water necessary for living. As fish going out towards the sea, monks must hurry towards their cells.

The second saying by Antony underlines the second aspect, defining the other pole essential to *hesychia*: the fact that solitude – literal rest, silence and withdrawal – leads to *hesychia* in a figural or spiritual sense, 'inner peace', that is the mark of virtue. The saying points to the virtues as follows:

He also said: 'He who sits in the desert and lives in solitude (ἡσυχάζων) is delivered from three battles, namely those of hearing, of speech, and of seeing. Only one battle remains: that of the heart.'<sup>11</sup>

The second set of sayings, 3 and 4, is by abba Arsenius, consistent with the order of the alphabet. It is striking, by the way, that a relatively large amount of sayings by Arsenius is included here: 9 out of 35, which amounts to 25% of the sayings in this chapter. Arsenius and *hesychia* seem to be particularly connected. The first two sayings by Arsenius, then, illustrate the same double focus as the first two sayings by Antony, the third saying focusing on literal flight into the desert (Arsenius has to 'flee from men'), and the fourth explaining

<sup>9</sup> Benedicta Ward (trans.), *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers. The Alphabetical Collection*, Cistercian Studies Series 59 (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1984, revised edition).

<sup>10</sup> I have translated τῇ ξηρᾷ here as 'on dry land', unlike Ward who translates 'out of water', and Guy who renders it as 'hors de l'eau'.

<sup>11</sup> My translation.

how this literal flight supports the life of virtue. Arsenius has to flee, be silent (σιώπα), and ‘rest’ (ἡσύχαζε), for these activities are ‘the roots of sinlessness’, ἀναμαρτησία, a term which may remind the reader of the sinlessness of Christ.<sup>12</sup> Apparently, this sinlessness is the goal of the ascetic enterprise.

As we continue our journey through the sayings, I will come back to this double focus of *hesychia* as dwelling within the literal space of the cell, which implies the avoidance of human contact, coupled with *hesychia* as the beginning and end of virtuous living.

### Evocative Power: Metaphor, Anecdote, and the Chemistry of the Sayings

At this point, we return to the imaginative quality of the sayings, exemplified in different ways. First, evocative imagery occurs in the form of comparisons, drawn from a variety of sources, such as the world of nature, the cultural context, or the Bible.<sup>13</sup> A telling example would be: ‘A human who flees from humans, resembles a grape ripened by the sun, whereas someone in the company of other people is like an unripe grape.’<sup>14</sup> Secondly, the imagination of the reader is engaged through the telling of anecdotes. In the course of this article, various anecdotes will be discussed. Sometimes, these types of images – metaphorical and anecdotal – are integrated into one saying. Apart from evocative imagery, I will also consider the compelling ways in which the sayings are grouped together. The fact that the sayings are organised in a particular way causes them to attract and to engage in a kind of chemical reaction. But first, let us focus on saying number 8:<sup>15</sup>

One day Abba Arsenius came to a place where reeds were blowing in the wind. The old man said to the brothers: ‘What is this shaking (σεισμός)?’<sup>16</sup> They said to him: ‘Some reeds.’ Then the old man said to them: ‘Truly, when one who is sitting in *hesychia*,<sup>17</sup> hears the song of a little sparrow, his heart no longer possesses the same *hesychia*.<sup>18</sup> How much worse is your situation now that you hear the loud rustling (σεισμός) of these reeds.’<sup>19</sup>

This saying requires reflection. It starts with Arsenius, famous for his solitude (he had to ‘flee from men’, according to saying 3), who stumbles upon a place

<sup>12</sup> G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), *The Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1987, 8<sup>th</sup> impr.), 112.

<sup>13</sup> For the use of Scripture in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, see Per Rönnegård, *Threads and Images: The Use of Scripture in Apophthegmata Patrum* (Winona Lake, Indiana, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Saying 20 by abba Moses (Moses 7 in the Alphabetical Collection).

<sup>15</sup> Arsenius 25 in the Alphabetical Collection.

<sup>16</sup> Ward’s translation ‘movement’ seems a little weak. See B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ward translates here: ‘living in silent prayer’. See B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 13.

<sup>18</sup> Ward: ‘peace’. See B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 13.

<sup>19</sup> My translation.

where reeds are moving in the wind. The verb κινέω has the connotation of literal movement, but is also a term, especially in the Stoic tradition, associated with inner turmoil.<sup>20</sup> It immediately becomes apparent that Arsenius is not alone: some brothers are with him. This is an important element within the whole of chapter 2 and the sayings in general, for despite the emphasis on the need to extract oneself from all social relations, the communal context of the brothers is never absent. Moreover, the sayings could never have been generated without the associations between fathers and brothers: the close connection between father and disciple provides the matrix for this type of wisdom literature.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, even the saying that most rigidly proclaims the need for solitude, by its very nature implies the context of human interaction.

Then, Arsenius asks: ‘What is this σεισμός?’, a word which can denote an earthquake. In any case, a loud noise is implied. To the disciples’ answer ‘reeds’, the abba replies by referring to another sound, that of a small bird. He states that even the soft sound of a bird singing takes away the *hesychia* of the monk: the literal sound in his ears upsets the deep and inner silence of his heart. Then, Arsenius applies this notion to the monks that are with him: they, right this minute, do not hear the soft sound of a bird. No, the situation is much worse: they hear a loud noise – the earthquake – of the rustling reeds. The saying does not include an explicit conclusion, but it is clear what the reader must infer: the monks will lose their *hesychia* in the same way – or even more so – as the monk who heard the sparrow singing. Of particular interest here are the function and repetition of the noun σεισμός. It is a strong word and reappears in the final sentence, still referring to the ‘literal storm’ the brothers are hearing. The whole scene is remarkably concrete: together, the abba and his disciples contemplate the loud noise of the reeds. It is the introduction of the sparrow, whose song has the ability to destroy the *hesychia* of the heart, which leads to the conclusion that literal noise, that is, literal lack of silence, causes spiritual lack of silence, loss of inner peace. What happens here, is typical of the sayings, as the dimensions of outer and inner realities seem to merge. In the case of *hesychia*, this dynamic is especially compelling, since the word is ambiguous and carries both literal and figural overtones.

Next, I will discuss the power of anecdotes. Again, I take my cue from Arsenius, namely saying 7, which contains the following story:

Another time the archbishop (Theophilus, NV), intending to come and see him, sent someone to see if the old man would open the door to him. Arsenius explained to him: ‘If you come, I will open the door to you, but if I open it to you, I will open it to all,

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, Cornelia J. de Vogel, *Greek Philosophy III* (Leiden, 1964), 168f.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, W. Harmless, *Desert Christians* (2004), 171-3, D. Burton-Christie, *The Word* (1993), 77-9, and Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, California, 2005), 103-5.



and then I will no longer sit (dwell) here.’ When he heard this, the archbishop said: ‘If I go to him in order to chase him away, I will not go to the holy man.’<sup>22</sup>

Keyword in this saying is the verb ‘to open’. A door is not mentioned explicitly, but it is implied by the word ἀνοίγω. Arsenius explains that if he opens the door of his cell to one man, it means in fact that he opens it to all, which in turns means he will have to leave. In the phrase ‘I will no longer sit here’, the verb καθίζομαι is used, which often occurs in conjunction with the words *hesychia* and the ‘cell’. It is a verb that encapsulates the notion of peace and quiet: the monk sits in his cell.

In the collection, this saying is preceded by another one about Theophilus (6), illustrative of the same attachment to solitude:

Blessed Archbishop Theophilus, accompanied by a magistrate, came one day to find Abba Arsenius. He questioned the old man, to hear a word from him. After a short silence the old man answered him, ‘Will you put into practice what I say to you?’ They promised him this. ‘If you hear Arsenius is anywhere, do not go there.’<sup>23</sup>

The archbishop appears again in saying 10, one of the longer sayings in the chapter, taking up 38 lines in the edition. It tells the story about a rich ascetic lady from Rome, who wants to visit abba Arsenius. The archbishop, who knows the abba well, advises against a visit, but she is determined. When she meets Arsenius, he is angry: does she not know that she is woman, who should stay inside?<sup>24</sup> Why has she undertaken such a journey? To tell her girlfriends: ‘I have seen Arsenius’ – after her return to Rome? To turn the sea into a highway for women? Upset, the Roman lady promises to keep Arsenius’ location secret, but – she asks – will he please pray for her? Then, Arsenius demonstrates his anger once more: ‘I will ask God to banish the memory of you from my mind.’ After this, the woman returns to Alexandria where she falls ill. It is the archbishop who cures her, by saying to her: ‘Do you not know that you are a woman and that the Enemy conquers the saints through women?’ This explanation helps and the woman returns to Rome in good spirits.

As in sayings 6 and 7, the point of the story is that Arsenius does not want to be disturbed, especially not by visitors from ‘outside’. Contact with other monks seems to be tolerable, as is implied by the story about the reeds in saying 8, although saying 5 does point to the fundamental choice between ‘God’ and ‘men’ in response to the question posed by abba Markos: ‘Why do you flee from us?’. The real danger, however, lies in male representatives of the ecclesial and political hierarchy or women who might make the monk’s life

<sup>22</sup> My translation.

<sup>23</sup> This saying is Arsenius 7 in the Alphabetical Collection; translation B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Lines 19-20.

public. Arsenius wants his cell to remain closed – literally, for opening up the enclosure poses a serious spiritual threat.<sup>25</sup>

Subsequently, this motif of closure is taken up in sayings 11 and 12. Saying 11 flows naturally from the story about the Roman lady who is rejected by Arsenius, painting the picture of a girl who should stay indoors. It presents the image of a girl who sits in the house of her father: many want to marry her. But when she begins to leave the house, she is no longer ‘pleasing to all’ (οὐ πᾶσιν ἀρέσκει). She no longer has the same honour (τιμή) as when she was hidden. Then, this image is applied to the soul. The implications are clear: the soul that is involved with external realities loses its value. It has to stay ‘indoors’, so to speak. Once more, the inner and outer dimensions are firmly linked.

The following saying, 12, resonates with both preceding sayings. It contains the evocative image of the doors of the bath house. When these are opened, heat is lost: warmth (θέρμη) easily evaporates through the openings. ‘So it is with the soul (ψυχή)’, Arsenius explains. ‘Even when one speaks good words, the warmth of the soul (the same word θέρμη is used) is lost ‘through the gate of the voice’ (διὰ τῆς φωνητικῆς πύλης). Therefore, one should remain in silence (σιωπή), for she is ‘the mother of the wisest thoughts’ (μήτηρ ἐννοιῶν σοφωτάτων).

So, when we consider the different sayings discussed so far, we move from Theophilus’ double rejection by Arsenius, including the request of a literal visit and the dilemma of ‘opening’, via the lady from Rome whose visit was not appreciated by Arsenius, to his metaphors of the girl in the house and the doors of the bath house. In the latter saying, the literal θύραι of the bath are related to the φωνητικὴ πύλη, the gate of the mouth: if one speaks too much and does not remain in silence (σιωπή), the soul literally loses its warmth, as may happen in the bath house. The saying concludes by stating that silence is ‘a mother of the wisest thoughts’. This image of ‘the mother’ will reappear in the final saying, which contains a eulogy, a song of praise to *hesychia* herself.<sup>26</sup> This overview, then, demonstrates that, although the sayings can be read as self-contained units, they resonate and interact when contemplated in succession.

A rather amusing example of such ‘chemistry’ occurs in sayings 26 and 27. Saying 26 concerns abba Sisoës. His disciple, abba Abraham, says to him: ‘Father, you have grown old; let us move a little bit closer to the inhabited world’, and Sisoës responds: ‘Let us go where there is no woman.’ Abraham then replies: ‘There is no place without women but the desert’, after which the old man concludes: ‘Take me to the desert.’ Clearly, this saying denounces the presence of women. But surprisingly, the following saying, number 27, is by a

<sup>25</sup> I thank Markus Vinzent for alerting me to the difference between the role of visitors from ‘outside’ and the presence of other monks.

<sup>26</sup> I discuss this ‘song’ in my article ‘The Mystagogy of the Desert Sayings: Images of *Hesychia* in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*’ (forthcoming) to be published in *The Mystagogy of the Church Fathers* (ed. Paul van Geest *et al.*).

woman. Thus, saying 26 ends with abba Sisoës desiring the desert as the place in which women are absent, while saying 27 focuses on the wisdom of a woman. In the text, at least, Sisoës can't get away from her.

Moreover, when we consider the words of amma Syncletica, it becomes apparent that she undermines the ideal of strict and literal solitude. So far, most sayings have propagated the ideal of physical solitude, but amma Syncletica takes a different view. She says:

Many who sit on the mountain do the things of the world and will perish, but many who live in the cities carry out the works of the desert and will be saved. For it is possible to be alone in the spirit with many around, as it is possible to imagine the company of the masses in solitude.<sup>27</sup>

Amma Syncletica relativises the importance of the literal desert, claiming that it is possible to live in solitude, μονάζειν (a newly fashioned word, unlike ἡσυχάζω), even in the city. She may have lived in an urbanised area herself,<sup>28</sup> which would help to explain her relativising of the cell. In effect, a female here breaks the spacial understanding of enclosure, emphasised before, and transcends it into the living of solitude in the midst of others. In a way, this is the precise counter-story to what we have read before. Women do not represent the temptation for monks to 'go public', but male monks are exposed to the temptation of foregoing salvation as they enjoy their lives in the cell ('on the mountain') without practicing 'the works of the desert'.<sup>29</sup>

### The Cell, Inner Space, and Inner Peace

We now come to the end of our journey through the text. Firstly, the text emphasises the literal space of the cell. Two sayings illustrate this aptly. One (19) claims that 'the cell will teach you everything', the other (31) tells us: 'If you have Jesus nearby and you talk to him, you do well not to let anyone into your cell.' Time and again the importance of literal solitude is underlined: one should not mix with others, and keep away from the distractions of the world. Literal rest, withdrawal, peace and silence are necessary for the development of the more spiritual aspects of *hesychia*, the beginning and end of virtue, 'the mother of thoughts most wise' (μήτηρ ἐννοιῶν σοφωτάτων).<sup>30</sup> In this sense, it is possible to interpret the literal space of the cell as representing the interior space of the monk. The outer and inner dimensions are entwined – something which also becomes clear when the comparisons in the sayings are analysed: often similar or identical

<sup>27</sup> My translation.

<sup>28</sup> W. Harmless, *Desert Christians* (2004), 441-3.

<sup>29</sup> I thank Markus Vinzent for helping me to bring this point into sharper focus.

<sup>30</sup> See Saying 12.

words occur in both the comparative clause and the application clause. In such cases, image and referent seem to coincide. It means that literal quiet and peace of the heart are correlated directly. Interestingly, it is amma Syncletica who relativises the absolute stillness of the cell: in her opinion it is possible to live in solitude amidst the masses.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the image conjured up by chapter 2 is not monolithic: there is room for variation and a dissenting voice. In order to contextualise the themes of both ‘chemistry’ and ‘the fragment’, I now discuss Patricia Cox Miller’s latest study, *The Corporeal Imagination*. Although she focuses on relics, collective hagiography, and icons, her interpretations also clarify the dynamics of the *Apophthegmata*.

### Patricia Cox Miller: *The Corporeal Imagination*

In the introduction, the author presents a crucial concept: the so-called ‘Material Turn’. She accepts that in the course of the fourth century a ‘Material Turn’, probably elicited by the growing acceptance of the church and its Christian traditions, took place. This meant that the relationship between the material and the spiritual, between the immanent (the ‘real’ in Miller’s words) and the transcendent was reconceptualised,<sup>32</sup> configured anew: the material and the transcendent were increasingly imagined as mutually engaged,<sup>33</sup> and focus shifted to the representation of ‘the material and the spiritual in a single image’.<sup>34</sup> This also implied that ‘the senses were accorded cognitive status and the intellect was materially engaged. Spiritual seeing became more visceral’.<sup>35</sup> By the term ‘visceral’, Miller means to say that the senses became more actively engaged and that the experience of a reader or viewer who responded physically to images, represented an important source of knowledge.<sup>36</sup> In the context of actual texts, Miller emphasises the importance of ‘word-pictures’, referring to words that are able to evoke lively pictures in the reader’s mind. These ‘word-pictures’ act on both the senses and the intellect: they ‘invite the reader to “see” a belief system’.<sup>37</sup> While texts and images thus appeal strongly to the imagination, the recipient of the imagery is drawn into the world of the (textual) image, blurring ‘the distinction between reader and text’.<sup>38</sup> The centrality of the

<sup>31</sup> See Saying 27 and my discussion of it above.

<sup>32</sup> For ‘the real’, and the expressions ‘a touch of transcendence’ and ‘a touch of the real’, see P. Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination* (2009), 8f., 24–35.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 3–7 (‘The Material Turn’).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 11.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 11–4 (‘Visceral Seeing’).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

imagination, as suggested, implies that the role of the viewer/reader is participatory: he has to complete the story, so to speak.<sup>39</sup>

One highly relevant aspect of such 'visceral seeing', is the notion of the fragment, or – as Miller quotes Ezra Pound in the wake of Gallagher and Greenblatt – 'Luminous Detail'.<sup>40</sup> By this term 'Luminous Detail', the author wants to draw attention to the potential of details in a text or an image to represent 'the whole'. She is intrigued by the fact that the literature and visual art of her studies are marked by a tendency to highlight the fragment, for instance in the case of relics.<sup>41</sup> In the case of the relic, this 'fragment' literally concerns a part of the whole, namely the whole body of the saint that was originally intact. Still, the fragment is able to stand in for, or foreground, the whole, that is, the whole of the body as well as the fullness of meanings communicated by that body, such as belief in the resurrection of the body, and the salvation of body and soul.<sup>42</sup> Other examples of the fragment – especially significant for the *Apophthegmata* – are anecdotes and metaphors.<sup>43</sup> Such emphasis on the fragment, that is, on details, requires a different kind of seeing, and of reading: it calls for an ability of the imagination to construct the whole on the basis of the fragment. This is also the case with collective hagiography and miracle stories. Miller explains: 'The real interest in such collections is in the network of relationships that represent the theological vision of the collection as a whole.'<sup>44</sup> Thus, 'a remarkably paratactic imagination was at work requiring the viewer to construct narratives of theological meaning that arise from juxtaposition of images rather than from straightforward linear development.'<sup>45</sup> In such a setting, 'images, intertextual allusions, and etymological wordplay convey more meaning than plot and narrative'.<sup>46</sup>

One last notion, included by Miller in her analysis, must be mentioned here: mimesis. This relates to the position of the reader/viewer mentioned earlier: (s)he is invited to participate in the story or image that is contemplated. This is not only a matter of embedding oneself in a particular scene by an act of the imagination, but it requires the recipient of a text or an image to live a life of virtue. Thus, the imaginative process always has an ethical focus: the aim lies in the 'conversion' of the reader/viewer to 'the good'.<sup>47</sup>

As said, Miller focuses on relics, icons, and hagiography. Strictly speaking, she does not analyse the *Apophthegmata*. Her interpretations, however, fit the

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 23f.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 43, 51f., 60, 95.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 58.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 47.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 57.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 67 ('ethical mimesis of martyrs'), 89 ('moral reform and transformation'), 105 ('mimetic moment'; 'a kind of seeing that is performative').

sayings remarkably well. First, I would suggest that we may view the sayings of the desert ascetics as a kind of relics.<sup>48</sup> They represent what was actually ‘left behind’, namely words of wisdom. These anecdotes and metaphors are word-pictures appealing to the imagination, intimately linking the material and the transcendent, the literal and the figural, body and soul. They do not form a linear argument, a plot designed by one author, worked out discursively. Rather, important images and concepts are communicated by way of the fragment, in our case the fragment of ‘the word’. And, as in the cases Miller discusses, the ethical focus of the sayings is clear: they are meant to convey and inspire the life of virtue. Thus, the following description by Miller also applies to the *Apophthegmata*. They are ‘... sketches that picture a “way of life” (πολιτεία) that the authors hope will be paradigmatic, as the reader is invited to participate in imagining those activities that embody the so-called “angelic life”.’<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusion

What may we conclude? In my opinion, the sayings of the desert can be viewed as a mystagogical text, that is, as a text that aims to initiate the reader into the spirituality of the desert. As Jean-Claude Guy writes: ‘On peut les lire comme le guide pratique de l’expérience de Dieu au désert.’<sup>50</sup> The sayings initiate the reader into ‘the experience of God in the desert’ – an experience which, according to amma Syncletica, strictly speaking does not require the literal desert. It may also occur in the hustle and bustle of the city. The collection of sayings, however, presents an unusual text. It was not conceived by one author and it does not develop one argument. In short, it is not a discursive text. Rather, it is rooted in the oral realities of the ancient desert, offering ‘details of illumination’, in Miller’s language. Originally, the sayings were meant for particular persons. They grew out of personal, unique relationships – unrepeatable. And yet they were repeated, rehearsed, memorised, applied time and again to new people in new situations. Words were written down, collected, organised. And there, in the specific ordering of the collections, they acquired new meanings, words began to resonate, anecdotes were clustered, images collided. Together, the voices of the different abba’s, and in chapter 2 one amma, both allow for variation and project one voice – the voice that in the final saying 35 personifies *Hesychia*, singing about her and to her. The reader is drawn into this rich amalgam of metaphor and anecdote – to seek his or her own *hesychia*, to begin the journey inward, to find ‘peace’ in the desert.

<sup>48</sup> Compare Miller’s statement that ‘like relics, images can effect presence in the face of absence’ (*Ibid.* 151).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

<sup>50</sup> J.-C. Guy, *Les Apophtegmes* (1993), 21.



# **‘In volumine Longobardo’ New Light on the Date and Origin of the Latin Translation of St Anthony’s Seven Letters**

Peter TÓTH, London, UK

## **ABSTRACT**

The seven letters of St Antony of Egypt, after the ground-breaking study of Samuel Rubenson, have been revealed to be one of our earliest sources for Egyptian monastic and ascetic theology of the fourth century. However, the letters, except for some fragments, are not extant in their original Coptic version and the most reliable source we have is a Georgian version and a complete Latin translation of the seven letters. This Latin version, which was first published, in 1516 is usually considered by scholarship as a humanist translation made on the basis of a lost Greek original. This view has remained ever since accepted in later scholarship. A deeper examination of the Latin text and its transmission, however, has revealed a completely different story and the Latin translation turned out to be much earlier than it was previously assumed. It should therefore be regarded as an early composition, made sometimes between the fifth and seventh centuries which, beside the fifth century Syriac translation of Anthony’s first letter, makes it one of the earliest extant witnesses to Antony’s letters.

An early sixteenth century Latin manuscript which once belonged to János Thurzó († 1520), the Hungarian bishop of Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland), now at the Vatican Library, is a strange collection of patristic epistles.<sup>1</sup> The volume written by three scribes at the beginning of the sixteenth century (around 1514-1516),<sup>2</sup> after two series of letters, those of Paulinus of Nola (ff. 2r-154v)<sup>3</sup> and the

<sup>1</sup> Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Vat. Lat. 524, for a description of the manuscript, see: Marco Vattaso and Pio Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *Codices Vaticani Latini I* (Roma, 1902), 397-9.

<sup>2</sup> The manuscript was written by three German scribes, two of whom have even left their names in the volume. The first part of the codex (the letters of Paulinus on ff. 2r-154v) was written by Johann Hess in 1515, while the second with the epistles of Ignatius on ff. 155r-160v by his friend Valentin Crautwald. Both were students supported by bishop Thurzó at different Italian universities. See José Ruyschaert, ‘Johann Hess et Valentin Crautwald rédacteurs en 1514-1515 du manuscrit Vat. lat. 524 pour l’évêque de Breslau Johann Turzo’, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 64 (1984), 397-401.

<sup>3</sup> This part of the manuscript consists of a collection of Paulinus’ letters together with those of his correspondents and also some historical excerpts about Paulinus, as Uranius’ epistle on his death and several passages dedicated to him from other works such as Isidore, Gennadius, Augustine, Vincent of Beauvais or the early fifteenth century Marco di Michele.



so-called ‘spurious epistles’ of Ignatius of Antioch (ff. 155r-160v),<sup>4</sup> contains the seven letters of St Anthony the Great (ff. 161r-170v).<sup>5</sup>

The presence of these letters in an early sixteenth century Central European humanist manuscript seemed a bit surprising in the light of what Samuel Rubenson has written about the Latin version of Anthony’s letters in his extensive survey of their witnesses. In his view the seven letters of Anthony were composed originally in Coptic but the Coptic version, except for some fragments, is not extant any more, but – as early as the early fifth century – the letters were translated into Greek but this translation, except for a short fragment in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, although it was still known to Jerome, has also not come down to us.<sup>6</sup> However, – according to Rubenson – it was still available in fifteenth century Italy, since a certain Valerio de Sarasio has translated the letters from Greek into Latin in 1475 and this translation was printed in 1516 in Paris.<sup>7</sup> Therefore it is this edition of the Latin that, together with a sixth-eighth century Georgian translation of the Greek version, remains the only witness of Anthony’s seven letters. For, as Rubenson remarks in a footnote, except for a late and „confused” copy of the printed text of Letter VII, no Latin manuscripts have been found to-date.<sup>8</sup>

The existence of bishop Thurzó’s manuscript, then, obviously challenges this view,<sup>9</sup> as it closely corresponds to the printed edition of 1516 but it may be

<sup>4</sup> The collection contains the letters of Ignatius to John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary which are thought to be composed in the medieval West (CPG 1029) and another letter of his to a certain Mary (PG 5, 882-7) which is excerpted from the interpolated collection called *recensio longior* (CPG 1026). This set is followed by a collection of historical excerpts about Ignatius (ff. 157v-160v) consisting of passages borrowed from Jerome, Bernard, a certain Hiero, alleged successor of Ignatius in the see of Antioch (CPG 1035), and another again from the work of Marco di Michele.

<sup>5</sup> The seven letters of Anthony, copied by the third, anonymous scribe, is followed in the manuscript by Anthony’s short biography borrowed from the *De viris inlustribus* of Jerome on f. 171r.

<sup>6</sup> Jerome in his *De viris inlustribus* §88 already mentions the seven letters and their Greek translation (*misit ... epistulas septem, quae in Graecam linguam translatae sunt, quarum praecipua est ad Arsenoitas*).

<sup>7</sup> The first edition: Symphorianus Champerius, *Epistolae Sanctissimorum* (Paris, 1516), ff. 8r-42v which was quite frequently reprinted, for example by Migne (PG 40, 977-1000) and most recently by Anton Erdinger, *Epistolae septem quae sub nomine Antonii abbatis circumferuntur* (Oeniponti, 1871).

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St Anthony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis, 1995), 194: ‘The only Latin manuscript I have been able to find is a copy of Letter VII in a 16<sup>th</sup> century ms.: Vat. Lat. 3848, ff. 40v-55r. In spite of its confused text, I have relied on the edition of 1516’.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. the studies of Dimitrij Bumazhnov, ‘The Evil Angels in the Vita and the Letters of St. Antony the Great’, *ZAC* 11 (2007), 500-16: 501: ‘The lost Greek text was still available in 1475 and was used by Valerio de Sarasio, who prepared a Latin translation of the corpus’ and Dimitrij Bumazhnov, *Visio mystica im Spannungsfeld frühchristlicher Überlieferungen: die Lehre der sogenannten Antoniusbriefe von der Gottes- und Engelschau und das Problem unterschiedlicher*

earlier than that. Moreover, since Thurzó’s manuscript does not appear to be the autograph of the translator, but rather a copy made from an earlier model, it implies that there should exist one or even more other manuscripts for the Latin text of the letters which could have served as a Vorlage for Thurzó’s codex.

## Further Manuscripts of the Latin Translation

Indeed, a systematic survey of humanist manuscripts brought to light a very close parallel for the Hungarian manuscript. This piece, a fine humanist copy made for the Medici library in Florence in the late fifteenth century could possibly be the source of Thurzó’s manuscript.<sup>10</sup> This Florentine volume contains almost the same texts in a very similar sequence as found in Thurzó’s book. Both manuscripts commence with the letters of Paulinus which in the Florentine manuscript are followed by the ‘long recension’ of the epistles of Ignatius (CPG 1028) and the medieval addition to them (CPG 1029) of which only the latter piece was copied by Thurzó’s scribes. These two texts are preceded by the same collection of historical notes on Ignatius in the Florentine copy as in Thurzó’s book.<sup>11</sup> The only difference between the two is the presence of Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians (CPG 1040) in the Florentine manuscript. Then come – in the Florentine just like in Thurzó’s volume – the seven letters of Anthony, together with the passage on him from Jerome, and finally a long set of historical excerpts on Paulinus which clearly resemble the notes in Thurzó’s manuscript.<sup>12</sup>

The exact date of this Florentine manuscript cannot be satisfactorily determined, but it is obviously earlier than Thurzó’s copy, as it is already listed in the 1499/1500 catalogue of the library of San Marco in Florence<sup>13</sup> and its title

*spiritueller Traditionen im frühen ägyptischen Mönchtum* (Tübingen, 2009), 2: ‘Die aus dem Griechischen (die Vorlage ist verschollen) 1475 angefertigte Übersetzung von Valerio de Sarasio wurde von S. Champerius ... gedruckt’ and many others.

<sup>10</sup> Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana: Plut. 23. 20. See its description by Angelo Maria Bandini, *Catalogus codicum Latinorum Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae* I (Florentiae, 1777), 727-32 and a more recent description by Sebastiano Gentile in *Umanesimo e Padri della Chiesa: manoscritti e incunaboli di testi patristici da Francesco Petrarca al primo Cinquecento* (Roma, [1997]), 216-7.

<sup>11</sup> This section of the Florentine manuscript (ff. 190v-192r), similarly to the one in Thurzó’s book, contains excerpts from Jerome, Marco di Michele and Bernard while the passage from Hieronymus’ successor was transferred to the end of the corpus of the Ignatian letters (ff. 226r-v).

<sup>12</sup> This collection (ff. 253v-260r) contains also Uranius’ letter on the death of Paulinus together with a passages from Gregory’s Dialogues, Gennadius, Isidore, Augustine, Vincent of Beauvais and again Marco di Michele. See n. 3 above.

<sup>13</sup> Berthold L. Ullmann and Philip A. Stadter, *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence* (Padova, 1972), 145<sup>178</sup>.

page bears a type of the Medici arms which suggests that it was executed for Lorenzo Medici between 1470's and 1499.<sup>14</sup>

During my search after the possible models of Thurzó's book, however, I managed to find another group of manuscripts which preserve the Latin text of Anthony's seven letters. One of this group is a slightly earlier, finely decorated volume copied between 1475-1480 by a scribe from Vespasiano da Bisticci's workshop<sup>15</sup> for the famous library of Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino.<sup>16</sup> This manuscript contains Anthony's letters in a slightly different context. Although, similarly to the manuscripts mentioned above, they follow the same 'longer' corpus of Ignatian letters (CPG 1028 and 1029) accompanied by the same set of historical excerpts (ff. 1r-43v), in the Urbino manuscript the letters of Anthony are followed (on ff. 69v-130r) by the unique text of the so-called 'Palatina' version of the Latin translation of Hermas' *Pastor* (CPG 1052b)<sup>17</sup> and the Sentences of Sixtus (CPG 1115) which are again accompanied by historical excerpts (ff. 130v-140r).

A third copy of the Latin version of Anthony's letters is another Vatican manuscript (Vat. Pal. Lat. 150) which contains the same works in the same order as the Urbino manuscript which actually seems to have been copied from it.<sup>18</sup> For the Vatican manuscript, which came to the pontifical library from the Bibliotheca Palatina in Heidelberg which acquired it from Giannozzo Manetti

<sup>14</sup> See Angela Dillon-Bussi, 'La Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana negli ultimi anni del Quattrocento', in *All'ombra del Lauro: Documenti librari della cultura in età Laurenziana* (Firenze, 1992), 135-49, 141-2.

<sup>15</sup> For the identification of the scribe as the copyist of Vespasiano's *Vite di Uomini Illustri* and his other products, see Albinia C. de la Mare, 'Vespasiano da Bisticci as producer of classical manuscripts in fifteenth-century Florence', in Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel and Margaret M. Smith (eds), *Medieval manuscripts of the Latin Classics: Production and Use* (Los Altos Hills, CA, and London, 1996), 166-207, 199.

<sup>16</sup> Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Urb. Lat. 486, the manuscript was described in the catalogue of the collection by Cosimo Sornajolo, *Codices Urbinales Latini I* (Romae, 1902), 495. The volume is already listed in the earliest inventory of Federico's library (Urb. Lat. 1761, ff. 101r-107v) drawn up around 1487 as entry 121 where the whole content of the manuscript, including also the letters of Anthony, is listed, see Cosimo Sornajolo, *Codices Urbinales Graeci I* (Romae, 1895), lxxix.

<sup>17</sup> The *Pastor* was translated into Latin already in the second century and this translation (the so-called 'vulgate') is quite well recorded in the manuscripts up until the late fifteenth century, but there was a much rarer translation of the work, the so-called *Palatina* (first discovered in and named after Vat. Pal. 150) made in the fifth century which is preserved only in this manuscript and the Urbino copy. See Anna Vezzoni, 'Un testimone testuale inedito della versione Palatina del Pastore di Erma', *Studi classici e orientali* 37 (1987), 241-65.

<sup>18</sup> Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Pal. Lat. 150, for a description see the catalogue by Henry Stevenson and Giovanni Battista Rossi, *Codices Palatini Latini I* (Romae, 1886), 24. The content is – as it was in the Urbino manuscript – the 'longer recension' of the Ignatian letters together with the historical extracts (ff. 1r-60r), Polycarp's letter to the Philadelphians (ff. 60v-65v); the seven letters of Anthony together with the note from Jerome (ff. 66r-93r); the special Latin version of the *Pastor*, called 'Palatina' just because of its attestation in this very manuscript

through the collection of Ulrich Fugger, is apparently much earlier than the Urbino copy.<sup>19</sup> In 1989 Antonio Manfredi detected traces of the erased arms of Cardinal Giordano Orsini († 1438) on the title page of the Vatican manuscript which implies that the volume, before it came into Manetti's possession, was in the collection of the famous cardinal as early as in the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Fortunately, the will of the cardinal which lists the books he bequeathes to his heirs, drawn up presumably in 1434 and copied again in 1438, mentions this manuscript at the end of the inventory as *Epistole beati Ignatii ad diversos et epistole beati Antonii*.<sup>21</sup> So it must be dated before 1438 the year of Orsini's death or even before 1434, the alleged date of his will.<sup>22</sup>

The existence of these four manuscripts, especially the Vatican copy mentioned before, which is almost a century older than the first printed edition of Anthony's letters, obviously implies that the Latin text of the letters is at least a hundred years older than its first publication of 1516. Another, even more significant information we obtain from these manuscripts is that none of them mentions either the date of the translation or Valerio de Sarasio, the alleged translator of the letters. But where could these informations held and repeated by all scholars working on the letters of Anthony derive from if they are not supported by any of the earliest witnesses of the text?

### The Date of the Latin Translation

Samuel Rubenson in his 1986 article on the Arabic translation of Anthony's letters wrote that the Latin translation was made in 1515 just before its first edition in 1516.<sup>23</sup> But in his 1990 book he changed this view and – without any reference to his sources – gave 1475 as the date of the Latin translation which has later been accepted by all subsequent scholarship.<sup>24</sup> However, neither in the

(ff. 94r-180r) and the Sentences of Sextus accompanied by the historical extracts on Sextus (ff. 181r-193v).

<sup>19</sup> For the history of the Palatine collection, see Giuseppe Maria Cagni, 'Codici Vaticani Palatino-Latini appartenuti alla biblioteca di Giannozzo Manetti', *La Bibliofilia* 62 (1960), 1-43.

<sup>20</sup> Antonio Manfredi, 'Primo umanesimo e teologi antichi', *Italia medioeva e umanistica* 23 (1989), 155-203, 182-3.

<sup>21</sup> See the edition of the inventory Francesco Cancellieri, *De Secretariis Basilicae Vaticanae Veteris Ac Novae Libri II* (Romae, 1786), 914.

<sup>22</sup> On dating the inventory and the will, see Giuseppe Lombardi and Flavia Onofri, 'La biblioteca di Giordano Orsini', in: *Scrittura Biblioteche e Stampa a Roma nel Quattrocento: Aspetti e Problemi* (Città del Vaticano, 1980), 371-82 and Sebastiano Gentile, 'Traversari e Niccoli, Pico e Ficino: note in margine ad alcuni manoscritti dei Padri', in Mariarosa Cortesi and Claudio Leonardi (eds), *Tradizione patristiche nell'Umanesimo* (Firenze, 2000), 81-118, 91<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Rubenson, 'The Arabic version of the letters of St. Antony', in Khalil Samir (ed.), *Actes du deuxième Congrès international d'études arabes chrétiennes* (Rome, 1986), 19-29, 21: 'The translation was made by Valerio de Sarasio in 1515, and first published in 1516'.

<sup>24</sup> S. Rubenson, *The Letters*, 19 for its later reception see n. 9 above.

manuscripts, nor in the edition of Symphorianus and its later sixteenth and seventeenth century reprints, could I find any trace of or reference to either 1475 or 1515 as the date of Sarasio's translation. So the year 1515 as the date of the translation rather seems to be a conjecture based on the year of the first printed edition, while the reference to 1475 appears to be much older. Its first occurrence I could find is from the 1920's<sup>25</sup> whence it was taken up by quite a few scholars, including Gérard Garitte<sup>26</sup> and Rubenson himself, but its ultimate source has never been mentioned. So I was unable to find the origin of this information, but it obviously doesn't derive from the manuscripts or the early printed editions.

### The Translator

The name of the translator, Valerio de Sarasio, is even more puzzling. The only source I could find mentioning Valerio de Sarasio as the translator of the seven letters is the 1516 edition of Symphorianus. Except for this edition, however, the name does not appear in any repertory of humanist translators of Greek texts which – in the light of Symphorianus' praise calling Sarasio 'the best among the well-educated'<sup>27</sup> – seems rather surprising. But if we take a closer look at the letters and dedicatory preceeding the text of Anthony's letters in the 1516 edition we may gain information on the origin of Symphorianus' text and on the identity of Valerio de Sarasio, too.

Sarasio's name turns up quite a few times in the numerous prologues and prefaces to the 1516 edition of Anthony's letters. In the long dedication of Symphorianus, and also in the other shorter notices written by his friends, he is generally mentioned as the one who 'translated Anthony's letters from Greek into Latin'.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, Symphorianus does not say too much about Sarasio and his background. The only information he provides is that Sarasio's translation was brought to him by a certain Hector D'Ailly, canon of St Julien de Brioude, who obtained it from Théodore de Saint-Chamond, abbot of the famous monastery of Saint Antoine-en-Viennois in Southern France,<sup>29</sup> to whom

<sup>25</sup> It turns up in the prestigious *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et Géographie Ecclésiastiques* 3 (1924), 732.

<sup>26</sup> Gérard Garitte, 'À propos des lettres de S. Antoine l'Érmite', *Le Muséon* 52 (1939), 11-31, 17. He repeats it in his edition of Anthony's letters, see Gérard Garitte, *Lettres de saint Antoine. Version géorgienne et fragments coptes* (Louvain, 1955), vi and vii.

<sup>27</sup> Symphorianus, *Epistolae* (1516), f. 3r: 'Valerium de Sarasio intra suos lares plurimum educatum.'

<sup>28</sup> For example, Symphorianus, *Epistolae* (1516), f. aiv: 'Antonij septem epistolas ... a Valerio Sesario(!) in Latinum e Graeco traductas eloquio.'

<sup>29</sup> Théodore was an influential character in the clerical affairs of sixteenth century France and the publication of Anthony's letters initiated by him is even mentioned in his life printed in *Antoniana Historiae Compendium* (Lugduni, 1534), f. cv.

it was sent from the library of Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino where the translation was allegedly made.<sup>30</sup> At the very end of the edition, however, there stands another short message written by Symphorianus to Hector D'Ailly acknowledging the acceptance of the manuscript of Anthony's letters. In this text which, on the basis of its mention of Symphorianus' sudden joy over obtaining Anthony's much expected letters,<sup>31</sup> is presumably the earliest document relating to Symphorianus' edition there is a reference to Sarasio which is made in a different context – as here Symphorianus mentions him as the one who 'wrote the letters in Latin'.<sup>32</sup> So in the light of this earliest reference to Sarasio and of the fact that Symphorianus' manuscript came from Urbino where – as observed above – there did exist a copy of Anthony's letters, the text sent by Théodore to Symphorianus from Urbino via Hector D'Ailly seems to be a simple transcript of the Urbino manuscript which might have been written by the mysterious Valerio de Sarasio. So he probably did not translate the letters into Latin, but only copied them in Latin and it was probably in the hands of Symphorianus who got his informations indirectly, through several intermediaries, that Sarasio was elevated from being a simple scribe to the higher status of a well-educated translator. This would easily explain the absence of his name in the extant manuscripts and also from the otherwise quite well-documented group of Renaissance translators.

### The Origin of the Translation

So the Latin translation of the letters of St Anthony is most probably not a Renaissance translation made on the basis of a still extant Greek manuscript by a humanist translator at the end of the fifteenth century but an earlier composition which, for some reason, suddenly surfaced only in the middle of the fifteenth century. The explanation of this curious re-emergence of the Latin text of Anthony's letters lies in their particular context in the edition and especially in the manuscripts. For in the printed edition as well as in the manuscripts the letters are always accompanied by the so-called longer recension of the Latin translation of the *Corpus Ignatianum* (CPG 1026) possibly made in the eighth century.<sup>33</sup> But an even more characteristic feature of their context is that in the

<sup>30</sup> Symphorianus, *Epistolae* (1516), f. 3r: '... princeps Federicus Urbinas Italiae decus ... Valerium de Sarasio tanto operi destinavit.'

<sup>31</sup> Symphorianus, *Epistolae* (1516), f. 46v: 'Accepi tandem quas diu desideravi litteras, quas sacer Theodorus communicaverat et ... ego avidius expectabam.'

<sup>32</sup> Symphorianus, *Epistolae* (1516), f. 46v: 'Antonii epistolas quae et Aegyptiace scriptas et Graece interpretatas, nuper vero a Valerio Sarasio Latine scriptas.'

<sup>33</sup> In Symphorianus' edition this is the second set of letters (ff. 52r-89r), while all the manuscripts commence with the Ignatian epistles, see above the descriptions of their contents. For the date of the Latin version of the letters, see Paul Delagarde, *Die lateinischen Übersetzungen des*

two earliest manuscripts the letters of Anthony are preserved between the Ignatian letters and a non-epistolary text, the early fifth-century Latin version of the *Pastor* of Heras, called *versio Palatina*.<sup>34</sup> The common presence of these two texts with the Latin translation of Anthony's letters in the earliest manuscripts seems very important, because both of these surrounding texts were discoveries made by two humanist scholars, Ambrogio Traversari and Niccolò Niccoli, at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

The Latin translation of the Ignatian letters, together with Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians, was found in the library of the Grande Chartreuse in Grenoble by a young friend of Traversari, Tommaso Parentucelli (later Pope Nicholas V) in 1424.<sup>35</sup> But it was only four years later that Parentucelli could obtain the manuscript from France and he sent it immediately to Florence where it was copied and Ignatius' letters quickly became very popular and wide-spread throughout Europe.<sup>36</sup> The Grenoble manuscript itself, however, which originally preserved the Ignatian corpus and Polycarp's letter has since been irretrievably lost.<sup>37</sup>

The same is true for the *versio Palatina* of Heras's *Pastor* as well. This special Latin version of the work was discovered in 1431 by Niccolò Niccoli, together with a treatise by a certain Asterius (CPL 642a), in Verona and it was immediately transcribed and sent to Traversari.<sup>38</sup> Curiously, the original manuscript, which must still have been available in the sixteenth century,<sup>39</sup> has also disappeared, so the *Palatina*-version of the *Pastor* has come down to us only in the humanist transcriptions preserved in the two manuscripts (Vat. Lat. 150 and its copy Urb. Lat. 486) containing also the letters of Anthony.

This special context of the letters of Anthony in the earlier manuscripts consisting almost exclusively of Latin patristic texts re-discovered by the

*Ignatius* (Göttingen, 1882), i-viii and F.X. Funk and Franz Diekamp, *Patres Apostolici* II (Tübingen, 1913), xvi-lx.

<sup>34</sup> In Vat. Lat. 150 and its possible copy Vat. Urb. Lat. 486. Descriptions of these two manuscripts see above.

<sup>35</sup> Pietro Canneti, *Ambrosii Traversarii Latinae Epistulae* (Florentiae, 1759), 372: '... ut episcopi Bononiensis imploraret auxilium ad eruendas ex principali monasterio Ignatii epistolas.'

<sup>36</sup> See Parentucelli's letter to Traversari informing him that 'Ex coenobio Carthusiae Gallicanae his diebus accepi unum ex duobus illis voluminibus, quae tamdiu expectabamus, in quo ... sunt et XII epistolae Ignatii, quarum in historia ecclesiastica meminit Caesariensis Eusebius. Est et una Polycarpi ad ecclesiam Philippensem' (Pietro Canneti [1759], 1046).

<sup>37</sup> For the history of the discovery of the Ignatian letters, see A. Manfredi, 'Primo umanesimo' (1989), 158-63.

<sup>38</sup> See the enthusiastic letter of Traversari congratulating Niccoli for his discovery saying 'Exilivi laetitia quum legerem Pastoris librum abs te repertum et transcriptum, cuius nullam superesse mentionem arbitrabar ... Asterii item episcopi ad Renatum monachum libellum perlibenter legam, quia laudatur abs te.' (P. Canneti, *Traversarii Epistolae* [1759], 352).

<sup>39</sup> Asterius' work was preserved in another manuscript also from Verona which was copied by Pellegrino Pellegrini at around 1511 presumably from the same copy which Niccoli has found in 1432, see Silvia Rizzo, 'Nota sulla scoperta del *Liber ad Renatum monachum* di Asterio', *Rivista di filologia classica* 102 (1974), 439-41.



humanists of the early fifteenth century suggests that the Latin translation of Anthony's letters might also belong to this group of recent discoveries. This would give the reason why they were inserted between two important discoveries of the early fifteenth century and would also explain the sudden appearance of the letters in humanist manuscripts from the mid-fifteenth century onward.

Indeed, in the vast corpus of Traversari's correspondence we find a letter from Traversari to Niccoli, written in July 1433, in which he describes his visit to a monastery in Padua and mentions the letters of Anthony, too.

I went to Padua and wanted to visit all the important libraries of the town, including that of the Dominicans and also the one of the Franciscans. And I found a Longobard volume which was in the possession of Marianus, a man of considerable secular and theological education. The book contained seven letters of Anthony, those mentioned by Jerome in his *De viris illustribus*, and there was another piece together with them which I have never seen before. The letters are beautiful, full of salutary doctrine, especially the one which is entitled *Letter to those in Arsinoe*. So I immediately asked Marinus, for the sake of our old friendship, to arrange that it be transcribed for me and he has generously promised to do so.<sup>40</sup>

Some weeks later in another letter Traversari expresses his deep indignation over the long delay of the promised copy,<sup>41</sup> while in another message, written six months later, he informs us that the copy has been executed but, instead of being sent directly to him, it was taken to Florence by the Abbot of the Paduan monastery who went there to take part at the preparations of the Council of Florence.<sup>42</sup> So, although after a long delay, the much expected copy of Anthony's seven letters must have reached Traversari and Niccoli in Florence.

The Latin translation of the seven letters of Anthony, then – similarly to the Ignatian corpus and the *Pastor* of Hermas – is also a humanist discovery which was made by Traversari in a manuscript found in the private collection of the abbot of the Camaldulian monastery of Santa Maria di Carceri in Padova. The manuscript of Anthony's letters, so far as its rough description in Traversari's letter is reliable, must have been an early copy written in a script which

<sup>40</sup> P. Canneti, *Traversarii Epistolae* (1759), 417: 'Veni Patavium, ... et placuit visere Bibliothecas celebriores, Praedicatorum, et minorum Fratrum. Offendi in volumine Longobardo, quod erat penes Marinum et bene studiosum et sacrarum litterarum peritum vii Antonii Epistolas, de quibus Hieronymus mentionem in libello de Viris illustribus facit et aliud quoddam opusculum antea nunquam a me inspectum. Epistolae pulchrae sunt, sanaeque doctrinae et illa maxime quae ad Arseniotas inscribitur. Exegi amicitiae iure ut et has et opusculum illud Marinus ipse mihi transcribendum curaret, quod se facturum manu propria gratissime pollicitus est.'

<sup>41</sup> See P. Canneti, *Traversarii Epistolae* (1759), 418: 'Epistolas Antonii Magni, de quibus scripsi ad te, necdum accepi ex Patavio. Eas mecum feram...'

<sup>42</sup> P. Canneti, *Traversarii Epistolae* (1759), 422: 'Epistolas Antonii Magni maxima negligentia Abbatis nostri de Carceribus fecit, ut hactenus desideremus, ex litteris enim mihi nuperrime redditus sum factus certior, simplicem fratrem eas illi dedisse ad me mittendas, illumque profectum esse ad Concilium, nullam fidei, ac pollicitationis suae rationem habentem.'



Traversari defined as 'Longobard'. Although this is certainly not the most precise palaeographic description, in the light of Silvia Rizzo's extensive work on the philological vocabulary of the humanists, it can be more or less securely identified as a term usually referring to such early, pre-Carolingian scripts as the Beneventan and Insular minuscules or the cursive of the sixth century.<sup>43</sup> So the Latin text of the letters of Anthony seems to have been preserved in a unique, quite early Latin manuscript preserved in the fifteenth century at the Abbazia di Carceri in Padua.

The manuscript, however, – similarly to the original copy of the Ignatian letters and of the *Palatina*-version of the *Pastor* – seems to have been lost or destroyed as I have not been able to find any trace of it so far. Unfortunately, not much is known about the later history of the library of the Paduan Abbazia di Carceri, which after the suppression of the order in 1690 was completely dispersed<sup>44</sup> but if the manuscript was a part of the Abbot's private collection, there seems even less hope of finding it again. However, it would perhaps be worth double-checking the monastic libraries of the town, for it might still turn up in some minor not very well investigated Italian monastic collections.

### The Date of the Latin Translation

Although in the absence of the early manuscript itself it is very hard to formulate any judgement on the approximate date of the Latin text of the letters of Anthony, on the basis of what we know about the manuscript, it might probably be much earlier than it has been assumed hitherto. The terminus ante quem seems to be the eleventh or tenth century when the alleged 'Longobard script' of the Vorlage was still in use. But a more exact dating would only be possible after a systematic collation of the extant manuscripts and a critical edition of the text accompanied by a detailed stylistic and linguistic analysis.

Curiously the Latin translation which is usually described as 'barbarian',<sup>45</sup> 'ill-made'<sup>46</sup> or 'very poor'<sup>47</sup> seems to exhibit several archaic features which

<sup>43</sup> See Silvia Rizzo, *Il lessico filologico degli umanisti* (Roma, 1973), 122-6 where she lists four manuscripts mentioned by Traversari as being written in 'Longobard script' but only one of the four can be identified as an eleventh century copy of Origen in Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, S. Marco 610.

<sup>44</sup> See Giuseppe Zattin, *Il Monastero di S. Maria delle Carceri* (Padua, 1973), 122-5 and Giannino Carraro, 'I monasteri benedettini della diocesi di Padova', *Benedictina* 35 (1988), 87-152, 102-3 and 124.

<sup>45</sup> Otto Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* III (Freiburg, 1923), 80, who speaks about 'barbarische[s] Latein'.

<sup>46</sup> Franz Klejna, 'Antonius und Ammonas. Eine Untersuchung über Herkunft und Eigenart der ältesten Mönchsbriefe', *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 62 (1938), 309-48, 309, where he calls the Latin translation 'missglückt'.

<sup>47</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* III (Utrecht, 1960), 150 describes it as 'very poor'.

have never been recognized as such by previous scholars. In the first letter, for example, one can identify several instances for the use of earlier biblical versions which occur in Tertullian or Cyprian<sup>48</sup> or some phrases peculiar to early Christian Latin such as the designation of the Holy Spirit as *deductor*, especially frequent by Tertullian.<sup>49</sup> The presence of such features goes not only against the idea that the Latin of the letters would derive from a Renaissance translator – as such intentional archaism would be alien from fifteenth century humanist translation practice – but it also suggests an even earlier date for the translation. A period such as the late fifth or seventh century when these biblical and linguistic forms were still being used in Latin Christian literature, but for a more comprehensive and reliable view a detailed textual analysis would be indispensable.

However, even on the basis of the observations outlined above, it seems necessary to dismiss the earlier assumption that the Latin version of the letters of Anthony was a humanist translation by Valerio Sarasio made from a Greek manuscript still available in fifteenth century Italy. The Latin translation of the letters, instead, should be regarded as an early composition, made sometime between the fifth and seventh centuries which, beside the fifth century Syriac translation of Anthony's first letter and the slightly later Georgian version, makes it one of the earliest extant witnesses to Antony's letters.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> As for example the quotation of *Gen.* 12:1 which in the first letter reads as '*Exi de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui et vade in illam terram quam tibi ostendero.*' The quotation in this particular form can only be found in Cyprian's *Ad Quintum* (I 21), in Rufinus' version of Origen's *Commentary on Romans* (Caroline P. Hammond-Bammel, *Der Römerbriefkommentar des Origenes: kritische Ausgabe der Übersetzung Rufins* [Freiburg im Breisgau, 1997], 291) and by Augustine (*Liber de divinis scripturis*). Or the quotation of *Luke* 21:34 which is given as '*videte ne quando graventur corda vestra*' which seems to be very rare as it turns up only by Tertullian (*Adversus Marcionem* IV 39), the Latin translation of Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* (IV 36.3) and Cassian (*Collationes* IX 4).

<sup>49</sup> See the long passage in the first letter about the Holy Spirit where it is explicitly called '*poenitentiae deductor*' and '*ille deductor spiritus*' who '*deducit nos*'. For the Spirit as *deductor*, see: ThLL V/1 (1934), 272, 260-79 and 283, 280-2.

<sup>50</sup> The paper was written with the support of the Hungarian National Research Fund (OTKA K75693).



# John Cassian: The Devil in the Details

Kathryn HAGER, Oxford, UK

## ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted that Evagrius Ponticus had a large influence on the writings of John Cassian. Cassian's use of the eight vices compiled by Evagrius are a clear indication of this influence. Many scholars also deem Cassian's demonology to be an inheritance of Evagrius, but a closer look shows how Cassian both inherits and develops Evagrian concepts. An important part of his demonology is his conception of the person of the Devil. Cassian's origin story of the Devil vastly departs from Evagrius' making the role of the Devil in either theologian's writings serve a different purpose and open up questions concerning Evagrius' influence on Cassian.

John Cassian has long inspired debate – debate over his place of birth and biography, his overall relevance, his originality or lack thereof, and his ties to controversy whether Origenist or Pelagian. However, ever since Salvatore Marsili's book on the relationship between John Cassian and Evagrius Ponticus published in 1936, it has been established that the greatest influence on Cassian's works are those of Evagrius, even though he never once mentions the older monk's name. Some scholars have understood Marsili as showing that Cassian was a 'mere translator' of Evagrius into Latin, like Pierre Courcelle,<sup>1</sup> but more recently, scholars have recognized Marsili as a stepping stone into understanding Cassian's theology and overall objective. Augustine Casiday points out that in Marsili's work, Cassian tends to be 'overshadowed by Evagrius' supposed influence', recognizing the importance of delving into the differences and developments in Cassian's writings.<sup>2</sup> Cassian's time in the Egyptian desert clearly had a profound influence on him since 15-20 years after leaving Egypt, he writes to instruct the monks of Gaul on the correct form of monasticism which he learned in the desert. While he was there was most likely the time when he came into contact with Evagrian thought since the two very

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Courcelle states this as his understanding of Marsili's work and says that it is 'highly convincing', see Pierre Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and their Greek Sources*, trans. Harry E. Wedeck (Cambridge, MA, 1969), French orig. *Les lettres grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris, <sup>2</sup>1948). For a similar view, see Michel Olphe-Galliard, 'Cassien (Jean)', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 2 (1937), 214-76.

<sup>2</sup> A. Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St John Cassian* (Oxford, 2007), 5.

well might have been at Kellia at the same time. However, it is also important for us as modern scholars of Cassian to keep in mind the interim period between Cassian leaving Egypt and publishing in Marseilles, and what influences he might have encountered in this period that shaped the works he produced for the monks of Gaul.

Therefore, this paper aims to look at a concentrated element of both Evagrius' and Cassian's works in order to see the similarities, differences, and developments Cassian may have made and what further questions may arise from it concerning the relationship of ideas between them. The eight principal vices are one of the clearest examples of the influence of Evagrius. The order and explanations of these vices in Cassian strongly follows that of Evagrius; however, his understanding of the relationship between the thoughts of men, vices, and the demons is more divided than that of Evagrius. By looking at the role of the Devil in each of these two theologians' works, a figure which is an integral part of the closely linked areas of the vices, demonology, and the ascetic battle, it is possible to see the sometimes small developments Cassian made in his own work and what other areas this may open up in the discussion of Evagrius' influence on the younger monk.

Demons are an essential part of the development of early monasticism. The Devil is the most famous demon with more prominent roles throughout the Bible than any other demon and therefore allows the writers of the time to use him as an example for the rest of the wicked spiritual beings.<sup>3</sup> Cassian and Evagrius are no exceptions to this – they both use the devil (big D and little d) to develop or rationalize the characteristics of the demons. They both represent him as an archangel, named Lucifer, who fell from heaven because of pride, following the common interpretation of *Isaiah* 14:12-5 as referring to the Devil, and also following Origen in connecting *Ezekiel* 28:11-8 with it.<sup>4</sup> Neither of them explicitly call the Devil the leader of the demons, but rather 'one of the princes' of the demons – an imitation of the archangel status he had in heaven. They both represent him as a figure who attacks with 'fiery darts', who can appear in different forms – like certain animals or even an angel of light, who is closely connected with pride and with envy, and who tempts Job and Jesus. They also both use an

<sup>3</sup> By the time of Cassian and Evagrius, the Devil was considered to have roles in both the Old and New Testaments, from *Genesis* as the serpent, to *Numbers* as the *satan*, or 'adversary', in *Isaiah* as the Babylonian King, *Ezekiel* as the Prince of Tyre, in *Job* as his tempter, in the *Gospels* as the tempter of Jesus, in *Revelation* as the dragon, among others. For more on the role of the Devil in the Bible and early Christianity, see Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (London, 1977); Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (London, 1981); and for more specific treatment in relation to monasticism, see David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Origen, *De principiis* I 5.4-5; for Evagrius, see *On the Faith* 31, *Eight Thoughts* 8.11, and *On Thoughts* 1, 14, 19; for Cassian, see *Institutes* XII 4 and 28; *Conferences* 5.6-7, 8.8, 18.16.6.

adjectival form of *diabolus* in order to convey the wicked nature of a certain thing but not necessarily to point directly to the specific individual. All of these aspects are common to the genre and time that Evagrius and Cassian are working in and therefore are not all together remarkable.

However, although Evagrius includes in his works the fall of the Devil from the angelic status, he does not expound on the fall of Adam and Eve. Cassian represents the fall of Adam and Eve as crucial to understanding the current sinful nature of men and the struggle to regain the 'image and likeness of God' that was corrupted in the fall. Through his exposition on this fall and the state of humanity, Cassian quietly makes it clear that he does not follow in the controversial footsteps of Evagrius and Origen in their similar cosmologies. Cassian points out in *Conference* eight that the angels were created before the temporal beginning of *Genesis*, and that the Devil had already fallen once before he tempted Adam and Eve. This distinction allows him to illustrate a cosmology in which the angels were created as angels and experienced no fall or 'movement' away from God; in which the demons fell from their original angelic purity before humanity fell as a result of pride and not envy of humanity; and where Adam and Eve fell with the instigation of the Devil. It is crucial to Cassian that the Devil had a hand in the fall of Adam and Eve because it provides a distinction between humanity and the demons. Where the angels who fell conceived their pride within themselves through their own free will, the Devil, called *serpens* in *Genesis*<sup>5</sup> because he had already fallen once, influenced Adam and Eve with gluttony.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, through interpreting the fall of Adam and Eve, Cassian draws the conclusions that the Devil's first fall was because of pride – the ultimate turning away from God because pride allows one to think that they have no need of God's grace; then, because of his envy and therefore his influence on Adam and Eve, the Devil falls again receiving the punishment given to the *serpens* in *Genesis*;<sup>7</sup> and finally, Cassian concludes that because the first vice Adam and Eve fell to was gluttony, a vice that requires bodily action, which then led to vainglory and pride, this is the reason that humanity can find salvation and the demons cannot. They fell to a vice conceived in the soul, and that is the epitome of turning from God – whereas, Adam and Eve fell first to a vice conceived in the body, which then led to vainglory and pride. The ensuing war between the flesh and the spirit in humanity is what allows for the possibility of salvation through Christ. Cassian then strengthens this point in his exposition

<sup>5</sup> See *Conf.* 8.10 for Cassian's understanding of *serpens* as a name with which the Devil was branded after he had already fallen from heaven.

<sup>6</sup> *Inst.* XII 4; *Conf.* 8.8-10.

<sup>7</sup> The idea that Pride preceded Envy for the Devil is found in both Prudentius, *Hamartigenia* 160ff. and in Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11.16.21; however neither Prudentius nor Augustine describe envy as causing a 'second fall' for the Devil like Cassian does.

on the Devil's tempting of Jesus using the same three vices with which he tempted Adam.

Evagrius and Cassian both recognize the importance of the Devil's tempting of Jesus in the desert. While both recognize that this event teaches men to resist and conquer the Devil's suggestions (or those of any other demon) using the Scriptures, Cassian presents and utilizes it in a different way that distinguishes both his anthropology and Christology from that of Evagrius. Evagrius, in *On Thoughts*, reveals that the first wicked thoughts or demons to be resisted in the ascetic battle are those of gluttony, avarice, and vainglory. Any other vices or demons will follow after these. Evagrius states:

No one can fall to a demon unless he has been wounded by these demons on the front line. For this reason, the Devil presented these three thoughts to the Saviour: first bidding him to turn stones to bread; second offering the whole universe if he would bow and worship him; third saying that if he obeyed he would be glorified, suffering nothing from such a fall. But Our Lord, showing himself superior to these things, ordered the Devil to get behind him, thus teaching us that it is not possible to repel the Devil unless one despises these thoughts.<sup>8</sup>

The order of the temptations Evagrius uses is from *Luke* (4:1-13) and the response from Jesus for the Devil to get behind him is from the representation of *Matthew* (4:10). The mixing of the Gospel accounts in writers of this time is not remarkable – many writers worked based on memory. However, when compared with Cassian's usage of this story in *Conference* five, it becomes relevant.

*Conference* five is Cassian's reiteration of books V-XII from the *Institutes*, where he dedicated a book to each of the eight principal vices. In this conference, Cassian relates a discussion he and Germanus had with Abba Serapion concerning these eight vices. According to Cassian, through the voice of Serapion, Jesus, 'the one who possessed the incorruptible image and likeness of God, had to be tempted by the same passions by which Adam also was tempted when he still enjoyed the inviolate image of God – that is by gluttony, vainglory, and pride.'<sup>9</sup> This was because these were the three vices with which the Devil first tempted Adam and the rest of the vices only came about after these three had already 'violated' the image and likeness of God. Cassian follows the order of temptations presented in *Matthew* rather than *Luke*. He says that the Devil first told Jesus to turn 'the stones into bread,' which represents gluttony, then 'if you are the Son of God, cast yourself down' which represents vainglory, and finally that he would give him all the kingdoms of the world if he would fall down and worship him, which represents pride.

<sup>8</sup> *On Thoughts* 1, from Augustine Casiday, *Evagrius Ponticus* (London, 2006), 89-115.

<sup>9</sup> *Conf.* 5.6.1, from Boniface Ramsey, O.P. (trans.), *John Cassian: The Conferences*, Ancient Christian Writers 57 (New York, 1997).

In *Luke*, the last two temptations are switched, the Devil first asking Jesus to worship him for all the kingdoms of the world, and then telling him to cast himself down if he is truly the Son of God. Cassian seems to prefer the order given in *Matthew*, but states that if interpreted from *Luke*, then the three vices could be understood as gluttony, avarice, and pride. The vices change because the order of them changes. For Cassian, it is important that the order of gluttony first and pride last remain intact. The fact that he points out that avarice can be understood instead of vainglory if one is working off of *Luke* is interesting and points to the possibility that he had Evagrius' explanation in mind. At the same time, however, Cassian does not retain Evagrius' interpretation of vainglory for the last vice and instead calls it pride. Cassian and Evagrius both had a clear division between vainglory and pride, and Cassian especially would not have misrepresented one for the other. Vainglory is the idea of puffing oneself up above one's peers, whereas pride is the idea that one has achieved something on his own without the grace of God and is therefore a much more severe vice because it directly rejects God. Therefore, either Cassian changed it to pride because of the importance he himself places on pride in the ascetic battle because of the fall of Adam and that of the Devil, or there is another influence at work – perhaps an intermediary between Evagrius' works and Cassian.

Cassian oscillates between these two interpretations and lists of the three main vices. In *Conference 22*, he again states the order of gluttony, vainglory and pride based on *Matthew*;<sup>10</sup> however, in *Conference 24*, he reverts to the order from *Luke*, stating that the first temptation represents the concupiscible part of the soul in the Devil telling Christ to turn the stones into bread, then the irascible part offering him the kingdoms of the world, and finally the rational part telling him to cast himself down.<sup>11</sup> These three terms for the tripartite soul are terms Evagrius used in his works, and Columba Stewart suggests that although Cassian only introduces these terms in *Conference 24*, that he had the tripartite layout in mind in the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*.<sup>12</sup> The fact that he does not introduce the terms until *Conference 24* bears further investigation than allowed for this essay. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that the interactions Christ had with the Devil play an important role in Cassian's Christology. Evagrius only mentions the interaction between the Devil and Christ twice, in *On Thoughts* and *Antirrhetikos*, but Cassian mentions it five separate times throughout the *Conferences*<sup>13</sup> as well as in the *On the Incarnation*, in which he refutes the theories of Nestorius. In book VII, Cassian points out that even the Devil, who is the furthest from God's knowledge, recognized the divinity of

<sup>10</sup> *Conf.* 22.10.

<sup>11</sup> *Conf.* 24.17.6.

<sup>12</sup> Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford, 1998), 64.

<sup>13</sup> *Conf.* 5.4.2; 5.6; 21.28.1; 22.10; 24.17.



Christ.<sup>14</sup> To Cassian, the very fact that the Devil said to Christ, ‘if you are the Son of God...’ shows that he recognized His divinity. Whether Cassian’s refutation of Nestorianism is considered successful or not, it is still important that he considers the role of the Devil important in understanding Christ’s time in the ‘likeness of sinful flesh’ and what monks must learn from Him.

Although it may prove to be difficult to pin down a specific idea on the relationship of Cassian’s three main vices from the temptation of Jesus and Evagrius, the role of the Devil in their respective theologies is clearly important not only in understanding the influence Evagrius had on Cassian, but also in understanding Cassian’s own development of ideas outside of Evagrius’ influence. By taking a closer look at the role of the Devil, important questions begin to arise concerning the relationship between Evagrius and Cassian. Already we have seen questions regarding the difference in their understanding of the how and why of the current state of humanity, of their Christologies and cosmologies, and even in their understandings of the details of the vices – an area in Cassian easily considered to be straight from Evagrius. Through further investigation and the consideration of the developments in both Evagrian and Cassian scholarship, it may be possible to figure out other areas in which Cassian may still be ‘overshadowed’ by Evagrius’ influence and, following in the footsteps of recent Cassian scholarship, bring more of his originality and relevance to light.

<sup>14</sup> *On the Incarnation* 7.6, 7.11-3.

# Spiritual Fatherhood in and outside the Desert: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective

Liviu BARBU, Cambridge, UK

## ABSTRACT

Previous scholarship on the topic of spiritual fatherhood has mainly been produced in relation to monastic spirituality. This contribution looks at ways in which spiritual fatherhood was conceived of in the early Church, including early monasticism, in an attempt to shed light on the convergence of the two trajectories at the time. In the third and fourth century, in both monasticism and the mainstream Church, the figure of the spiritual father epitomized the ideal of holiness. I elaborate on some, by now, stereotyped dichotomies such as desert-city, monks-bishops, charismatic-institutional, while proposing a more comprehensive account of spiritual fatherhood in the early Church. Not being yet the subject of wide scholarly interest, spiritual fatherhood provides a revelatory window into an important aspect of early Christian life. The article proposes a theological hermeneutical framework in order to enable a better understanding of the concept of spiritual fatherhood in Eastern Christianity.

## Introduction

Spiritual fatherhood or spiritual paternity is a key concept in understanding early Christian spirituality. In broad terms, it can be defined as the practical pastoral outworking of God's fatherhood in the Church as primarily a ministry of love and care undertaken through a more or less organized form. The prototype of it is Jesus Christ's relationship with the apostles, continued in the history of the Church in various forms. St Paul, St Ignatius of Antioch or Abba Antony, to give some examples, all but share in the same tradition.

Previous scholarship on the topic has mainly been in relation to monastic spirituality and has only dealt with the 'charismatic' side of it.<sup>1</sup> In this article,

<sup>1</sup> A considerable number of scholarly works do a great deal in enlightening us about the different aspects of early monasticism from all perspectives (social, cultural, political and also, though less, spiritual). For recent valuable explorations on the subject, see Alberto Camplani and Giovanni Filoramo (eds), *Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism, Proceedings of the International Seminar Turin, December 2-4, 2004*, OLA 157 (Leuven, Paris and Dudley, 2007); Lorenzo Perrone, 'Necessity of advice: Spiritual direction as a school of Christianity in the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza', in Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky (eds), *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem Studies

I attempt to present a fuller account of spiritual fatherhood describing both the 'institutional' as well as the 'charismatic' side of it (I however view the distinction between 'institutional' and 'charismatic' as problematic, hence 'charismatic' and 'institutional' are placed in inverted commas). At the same time, I will suggest that spiritual fatherhood bridges mainstream Church and monasticism, bishops and monks, and explains subsequent developments in the leadership ministry of the Church.

In general, scholars maintain that the concept and practice of spiritual fatherhood first appeared in monasticism.<sup>2</sup> I submit that spiritual fatherhood, as a theological concept with pastoral implications, had existed earlier. At the centre of it was Christians' initiation into God's fatherhood, a ministry charged with pastoral implications meant to translate God's love and care into the life of the Church and of each Christian. Referring to the view of some Apostolic Fathers in this respect (St Ignatius, St Polycarp and St Clement of Rome), Irénée Hauser asserts that '[t]he first generation of Christians lived in amazement at God's love for man. And their faith in this love is summarized especially in the name "Father", which is the proper title of the God of Jesus Christ ... It was not only the first object of their faith chronologically; ontologically and logically, it was the fountainhead of all things for them.'<sup>3</sup>

Spiritual fatherhood was not therefore an accidental feature of early Christianity or a byproduct of the Greco-Roman world. The ancient *pater familiae* concept only captures a fraction of it; the Late Antiquity holy man of Peter Brown is, besides its various functions (the patron of the village, the adjudicator of the city, the soother of anxieties)<sup>4</sup>, also, and perhaps above all, a spiritual father in the sense I am trying to convey here. The essence of spiritual fatherhood lies

in Religion and Culture Series 3 (Leiden, 2004), 131-49; Andreas Müller, *Das Konzept des geistlichen Gehorsams bei Johannes Sinaïtes: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte eines Elements orthodoxer Konfessionskultur* (Tübingen, 2006). The classic study of Irénée Hausherr, *Spiritual Direction in the Early Christian East*, trans. A.P. Gythiel, CS 116 (Kalamazoo, 1990), first published in French in 1955, is still the single most valuable resource. Since these works concentrate almost exclusively on spiritual direction in the monastic tradition, we still lack a comprehensive study of the subject in early mainstream Christianity. George Demacopoulos' recent study, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Notre Dame, 2007), has, to some degree, extended the area of research into mainstream Church, yet the subject is still ripe for further research.

<sup>2</sup> With some exceptions mentioned in passing, I. Hausherr, *Spiritual Direction* (1990), 17-9; Lucien Regnault, *The Day-to-Day Life of the Desert Fathers in Fourth-Century Egypt*, trans. E. Poirier (Petersham, 1999), viii.

<sup>3</sup> I. Hausher, *Spiritual Direction* (1990), 16. See also Peter Widdicombe, *The Fatherhood of God from Origen to Athanasius*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 2000). L. Perrone, 'Necessity of Advice' (2004), 145: 'Realizing such dependence through confession and spiritual fatherhood, he [the disciple] comes to experience God's universal paternity ... As a consequence of this view, spiritual direction is not simply a practice determined first and foremost by the confession of sins but a religious and pedagogical experience that should command the whole life of man.'

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brown, 'The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity', *JRS* 61 (1971), 80-101.

not in any of the functions of such a holy man, but in the rooting of his ministry in the divine fatherhood of God.

In what follows, I will attempt to trace the trajectory of the concept in both mainstream Christianity and monasticism, allowing a voice for each of its fundamental aspects, the sacramental as well as the charismatic, the former still seriously underresearched.

## 1. Early sources: the bishop as spiritual father

Although there are no ancient writings dedicated to the topic as such, we could nonetheless draw a clear picture of the bishop as spiritual father from some early Christian sources. In the letters of St Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop is the iconic image of the Father, who through his ministry, realizes the evangelical unity (*John* 17:21) and unanimity (*1Cor.* 1:10) of the community under God's fatherhood.<sup>5</sup> In the *Didascalia apostolorum*<sup>6</sup> and the *Constitutiones apostolicae*,<sup>7</sup> the bishop introduces the people into God's fatherhood through the initiatory rites of the Church (baptism and confirmation), feeds them with the Eucharist, and, when necessary, reconciles them with God in virtue of his apostolic commissioning to 'bind and loose'.

As some of the texts selected here from the *Apostolic Constitutions* indicate, it was primarily the bishop's role in the sacramental life of Christians (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, penitential discipline) that made him a spiritual father par excellence. There is, in the second book, a constant focus on the bishop's role in Christians' initiation and their subsequent life in the Church. God adopts the neophytes by the bishop's hand. They ought therefore to honour and love the bishop who 'after God' becomes their father.<sup>8</sup> The *Constitutions* treats further the theme of adoption by making reference to all sacramental aspects of it. The bishops are Christians' 'spiritual parents, benefactors and ambassadors with God' who 'have regenerated you by water, and endued you with the fullness of the Holy Spirit, [...] fed you with the word as with milk, [...] nourished you with doctrine, [...] confirmed you by their admonitions, [...] imparted to you the saving body and precious blood of Christ, [...] loosed you from your sins...'<sup>9</sup>

This excerpt gives us a comprehensive picture of the ministries that made the bishop a spiritual father, most of which resided in his performing of the sacramental acts, but also in the teaching office. Referring to the title of the bishop as

<sup>5</sup> See *IgnEph.* 2.2 (SC 10, 70.2).

<sup>6</sup> *Did. apost.* II, VII. See I. Hasuherr, *Spiritual Direction* (1990), 17-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Const. app.* II. See Liviu Barbu, 'The bishop as spiritual father in early Christian writings and the Eastern Orthodox tradition of spiritual fatherhood', *SP* 52 (2012), 27-33.

<sup>8</sup> *Const. app.* II 33.1 (SC 320, 252.1-3), *ANF* VII 412.

<sup>9</sup> *Const. app.* II 33.2-3 (SC 320, 252.4-254.15), *ANF* VII 412. See also a similar depiction of the bishop's ministry in Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* I 3.

'father' in the early Church, John Zizioulas asserts that '[e]cclesial fatherhood reflects Trinitarian Fatherhood in that membership in the Church requires "generation" or "birth" or "regeneration", which is given "from above" in an act or event (Baptism) of *sonship*, that is, our acceptance by the Father as his sons by grace through our incorporation into his only-begotten Son whom he eternally generates.'<sup>10</sup> For John Zizioulas, however, it is the presiding of the bishop over the Eucharist that makes him the spiritual father par excellence. Spiritual fatherhood, being ultimately rooted in the life of the Trinity, cannot depend on any secular factors since the eucharistic context 'precludes any legalistic or monistic views of "fatherhood" in the Church, as well as any "paternalistic" or "sexist" ideas borrowed from society at large and transferred to ecclesiology.'<sup>11</sup>

There is also in the *Constitutions*, a strong emphasis on the bishops' 'power of life and death' exercised through the penitential discipline: 'They [the bishops] have obtained from God the power of life and death, in their judging of sinners [...] as also of loosing returning sinners from their sins, and of restoring them to a new life.'<sup>12</sup> This ministry however should be accomplished with compassion and the bishop should perform it in the capacity of a 'physician of souls': 'As a skilful and compassionate physician, heal all such as have wandered in the ways of sin; [...] Since thou art therefore a physician of the Lord's Church, provide remedies suitable to every patient's case. Cure them, heal them by all means possible; restore them sound to the Church.'<sup>13</sup> The performing of this 'medical-pastoral' skill may involve shared responsibility, the bishop taking to himself whatever he would forgive, making 'the offence his own' and saying to the penitent: 'Do thou but return, and I will undertake to suffer death for thee, as our Lord suffered death for me, and for all man'.<sup>14</sup> This idea, of the spiritual father claiming to bear the sins of his spiritual children is an imitation of God's fatherly love and it is also encountered, and further developed, in the spirituality of the Egyptian and Palestinian Desert Fathers.<sup>15</sup> Such an approach shows that spiritual fatherhood was the proper medium in which the penitential discipline could be exercised wisely and compassionately, allowing into play the very 'human' face of God.

<sup>10</sup> John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, ed. P. McPartlan (London, 2006), 148. See also *id.*, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop during the First Three Centuries*, trans. E. Theokritoff (Brookline, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness* (2006), 148.

<sup>12</sup> *Const. App.* II 33.2-3 (SC 320, 254.16-20), ANF VII 412.

<sup>13</sup> *Const. App.* II 20.10-1 (SC 320, 202.72-204.78), ANF VII 405. This healing language is a recurrent theme in documents of later date, such as canon 102 of the Quinisext Council (692 AD). See also Robert Barringer, *Ecclesiastical Penance in the Church of Constantinople: A Study of the Hagiographical Evidence to A.D. 983* (D.Phil. thesis; Oxford University, 1979), 33.

<sup>14</sup> *Const. App.* II 20.6 (SC 320, 200.40-3, ANF VII 405).

<sup>15</sup> Examples are to be found in *Alph.*: Lot 2 (PG 65, 256B), Daniel 6 (PG 65, 156BC) and in the correspondence of Abba Barsanuphius and John, *Letter* 268.

Although early Christian sources only provide fragmentary evidence about the pastoral practice itself, we may nonetheless conclude that besides the sacramental dimension of the bishop's ministry, a personal type of pastoral care seems to have been present in the mainstream Church as a salient pastoral concern underlining the ministry of the bishop and later that of the priest too. Later pastoral works will deal in depths with this very subject, presenting spiritual fatherhood as the essence of priesthood.<sup>16</sup> When monasticism emerged, making spiritual fatherhood one of its distinctive features, the concept and the practice of spiritual fatherhood had been long enough in existence in the mainstream Church (given the earlier source of the *Apostolic Constitutions* on this subject, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*). Spiritual fatherhood was an overarching 'sacrament' in itself, defined by all sacramental acts of Christian life. This may explain why, before the advent of the Egyptian *abbas*, bishops were recognized as spiritual fathers in virtue of their pastoral-sacramental ministry.

## 2. Spiritual fatherhood in monasticism

The monastic model of spiritual fatherhood, as well as that of motherhood, complemented and enhanced the picture of spiritual fatherhood already present in the Church. The monastic practice however developed along a distinct path. At the outset of monasticism, most of the famous *abbas*, sought out for spiritual guidance by fellow monks and the people at large, were not in sacramental orders. That model of spiritual fatherhood was primarily linked to ascetic experience, holiness of life and charismatic gifts, such as prophecy, *kardiagnosis* (knowing someone's heart), reading another's thoughts, and above all, the discernment of spirits.

Also, in monasticism, one-to-one personal instruction is key, a more prominent practice, this being facilitated by living in enclosed monastic communities or under the same roof with one's *abba*.<sup>17</sup> This close relationship is the school where one learns the heart of the Gospel, how to love God and one's neighbor and fulfill God's will at all times and in all things. One can also see now special attention given to inward introspection, attentiveness, watching over one's thoughts in order to live in a state of continuous spiritual alertness.

A particular characteristic of monastic spiritual fatherhood is the focus placed on the power of the word. The word of the spiritual father takes its power from the Scriptures, which in essence is the power of the Word of God.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> In the East: Greg. Naz., *De fuga* (PG 35, 408-513); John Chrys., *De sacerdotio* (SC 272, 60-362); Ephr. Syr., *Serm. de sacerdotio*, ed. K.G. Phrantzoles (Thessalonica, 1995), 70-80. In the West, Greg. Magn., *Reg. past.* (SC 381-2).

<sup>17</sup> It was customary that each *abba* had one close disciple who provided help with daily activities and an extended group of disciples.

<sup>18</sup> On the biblical content of the Fathers' teaching, see Samuel Rubenson, 'Argument and authority in early monastic correspondence', in A. Camplani and G. Filoramo (eds), *Foundations*

Hence, the famous entreaty of the disciple, 'Abba give me a word, so that I may live by it' (here 'live by' has both the sense of 'adhering to', but more of 'be saved by it' or 'have life through it').<sup>19</sup> The will of God, unveiled in the spiritual father's word, is life for the disciple. This word is a spring of 'living water' (*John* 7:38) which effects the birth 'from above' (*John* 3:3), a second baptism through which the disciple experiences the conscious receipt of the Holy Spirit.

It may have been the case that, in some monastic circles, under the influence of Origen's legacy, the centre of the monk's life slightly moved away from the sacraments of the Church to a philosophical-mystical pedagogy taught by the master to the disciple. In the dispute with Abba Isidore, Theophilus opposed this Origenist perception of Christian discipleship. According to Theophilus, in the words of Norman Russell, the Church was 'centred on the people gathered round their bishop and participating in the Eucharist, not on a circle of disciples sitting at the feet of a charismatic teacher showing them a higher way to heaven.'<sup>20</sup> Whether Theophilus' charge was legitimate or not would make the subject of another paper.

### 3. Spiritual fatherhood – a bridge between the Church and monasticism

It became evident, with recent studies, that we cannot take for granted an antagonistic relationship between early monasticism and the mainstream Church.<sup>21</sup> Spiritual fatherhood was common to both monasticism and the mainstream Church, although practised differently in the two settings. The enlightened spiritual father, a familiar figure in ascetical literature, represented the epitome of spiritual maturity, an ideal for anyone seeking out a holy life. Hence, we have fluid boundaries between ascetics, monastics and bishops as all were, at least in principle, sharing the same ideals of Christian holiness.

of *Power* (2007), 75-88, 82-3.

<sup>19</sup> On the power of the word in spiritual fatherhood, see Lucien Regnault, 'Où sont les Pères du désert?', *Vie spirituelle* 140 (1986), 183-202; A. Louth, 'Spiritual Fatherhood in the literature of the Desert', in John R. Sommerfeldt (ed.), *Abba: Guides to Wholeness and Holiness, East and West, Papers presented at a Symposium on Spiritual Fatherhood/Motherhood at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina, California, 12-16 June, 1978* (Kalamazoo, 1982), 37-61, 37-42.

<sup>20</sup> Norman Russell, 'Bishops and Charismatics in Early Christian Egypt', in Andrew Louth, John Behr and Dimitri Conomos (eds), *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West: Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos Ware* (New York, 2003), 99-110, 107.

<sup>21</sup> Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 37 (Berkeley, 2005); G. Demacopoulos, *Five Models* (2007); Liviu Barbu, "'Charisma" vs. 'Institution'? The Ascetics and the Church', *SP* 45 (2010), 3-8.



St Athanasius refers to Alexander, his predecessor, as elder, father and bishop.<sup>22</sup> Notwithstanding scholarly readings into the relationship of St Athanasius with early Egyptian monasticism, the ancient sources point to a friendly association, of genuine spiritual ties, one that was based on a common understanding of spiritual fatherhood. Pachomius' *Vita Prima* describes the meeting of St Athanasius with Abba Theodore in 363 in which both the bishop and the monk exchanged compliments as to who was truly a spiritual father.<sup>23</sup> Hausherr and Regnault also allow that there was mutual recognition between bishops spiritual fathers and monks spiritual fathers. According to Hausherr, before the fourth century, the bishops were formally recognised as spiritual fathers in virtue of their sacramental and teaching office.<sup>24</sup> Regnault, in his study on the Desert Fathers, makes a similar assumption based on Abba Pachomius' belief that the bishops were the monks' fathers who taught them according to the Scriptures.<sup>25</sup> Subsequent developments in the leadership ministry of the Church (the election of monks as bishops), as well as in the internal organization of monasticism (given its expansion and the need for self-sustainability, an increased number of monastics became deacons and priests in their own communities),<sup>26</sup> strengthened the relationship between the two parties and their reciprocal acknowledgment as 'fathers' became more evident.

From the fourth century onwards, with the elevation of desert ascetics to bishoprics, the type of spiritual fatherhood customary in monasticism increasingly influenced the pastoral practice of the mainstream Church. Bishops pastoral writers, who themselves either were, or lived as monks and epitomized the ministry of spiritual fatherhood in themselves, sought to equip every priest with the wisdom of the monastic tradition.<sup>27</sup> The ability to act as a true spiritual father was thus considered the very essence of priesthood. By now we have a solidly constituted foundation for what I term an 'institutional – charismatic' type of spiritual fatherhood whereby the spiritual father is not only ordained but he is also an experienced ascetic, and in some cases possesses outstanding charismatic gifts.

Alongside this development, the lay Christians' increased familiarity with monastic figures, and their ascetic practices, influenced spiritual fatherhood in the mainstream Church. The confession of *logismoi* (intrusive thoughts), a monastic practice at its origin, becomes widespread among laity in the centuries

<sup>22</sup> Ath., *Ep. Vir.* I.33; G. Demacopoulos, *Five Models* (2007), 40.

<sup>23</sup> V. Pach. I, 144. See Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, 2010), 66.

<sup>24</sup> I. Hausherr, *Spiritual Direction* (1990), 17-9; G. Demacopoulos, *Five Models* (2007), 57.

<sup>25</sup> L. Regnault, *Desert Fathers* (1999), viii.

<sup>26</sup> This seems to be a more realistic explanation for this development, rather than the now classical view, namely the Church's policy to control monasticism.

<sup>27</sup> See above n. 16; G. Demacopoulos, *Five Models* (2007), 80, 130.



to come.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the penitential practice of the early Church, mainly based on a basic confession of sins, became more sophisticated under monastic influence, though the East never fell prey to the legalistic casuistry of the Middle Ages Western penitentials.

Kallistos Ware believes that in the Christian East, the exercise of spiritual direction, in the sense we perceive it today (as a one-to-one mentoring relationship) was possibly influenced by a change in the practice of confession of sins in the mainstream Church. According to Ware, in the third or fourth century, confession became mainly private and it therefore acquired a counselling dimension.<sup>29</sup> This change fostered private counselling: '... once confession and the practice of penance became private, then probably the priest appointed to deal with this matter would not limit himself just to imposing a penance, but he would offer some kind of guidance, some kind of healing counsel.'<sup>30</sup> Ware also advances the idea that with the rapid growth of Christian communities, it became perhaps impossible for the bishop to hear personally the confession of all people and therefore presbyters were allowed to undertake this duty.<sup>31</sup>

The spiritual fatherhood exercised by bishops, and later by presbyters too, and the monastic one, carried out by outstanding charismatic spiritual fathers, have gradually led to a unified tradition that reached its apogee in Byzantium and has since lived on in the Christian East. To press the case further, I suggest that the high value attached to monastic spiritual fatherhood played a significant role in the subsequent development of the office of bishop in the Eastern Church, which finally led to the realisation of the monastic episcopate.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See R. Barringer, *Ecclesiastical Penance* (1979), 110, 115.

<sup>29</sup> Kallistos Ware, 'Approaching Christ the Physician: The True Meaning of Confession and Anointing', in Liviu Barbu (ed.), *The Theology of Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia: From Image to Likeness or the Pathway to Holiness*, Kallistos Ware Collected Works (in Romanian) (Bucharest, forthcoming).

<sup>30</sup> K. Ware, 'Christ the Physician' (forthcoming).

<sup>31</sup> K. Ware, 'Christ the Physician' (forthcoming); *id.*, 'Patterns of Episcopacy in the Early Church and Today: An Orthodox View', in Peter Moore (ed.), *Bishops, But What Kind? Reflections on Episcopacy* (London, 1982), 1-26, 5. The confession of sins by penitents to the bishop and/or to presbyters-confessors is supposed to have existed in the early Church alongside public confession and public repentance in the case of more serious sins. Public confession of sins may have only been practised for serious sins (idolatry, murder and adultery and other crimes punished by the civil law) and it is generally acknowledged that this practice was stopped to protect the Church from public scandals. An incident in 381 AD in Constantinople, which caused a public scandal, determined the suspension of confession all together (including the private one) for some sixteen years (see Soz., *Hist. eccl.* VII 16, Soc., *Hist. eccl.* V 19). Although Sozomenus' and Socrates' accounts of the incident differ in some details, they both testify to the widespread practice of secret confession of sins by the second half of the fourth century. For other early sources on secret confession of sins, see Tert., *Paen.* 9 (PL 1, 1354), Cypr., *Laps.* (PL 4, 499-500), Orig., *Hom. Lev.* III 4 (PG 12, 429) and *Sel. Ps.* (*Hom.* 3 in Ps. 37 [PG 12, 1386]).

<sup>32</sup> Before the factors generally identified by scholars as causing this landmark switch – *i.e.* the iconoclast disruption of the eighth and ninth century. On the gradual identification of bishops with monks from the fourth to the sixth century, see A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World* (2004), 220-1.

## Conclusion

Given the constraints of a short article, I could not offer a detailed analysis of all the aspects involved. I have however tried to formulate a new perspective that calls for more research in this direction. A closer look into the ministry of the spiritual father in early Christianity may provide us with fresh insights into the relationship between the mainstream Church and monasticism, bishops and monks, and may raise a question mark over dichotomies such as desert-city, monks-bishops or charismatic-institutional. Monasticism may not have been 'attached onto' or 'incorporated into' the Church as Rowan Greer, for example, affirms in his contribution to the *Cambridge History of Christianity*.<sup>33</sup> If we are to believe St Athanasius in the least, Antony, the future father of monasticism, heard the Gospel being read while attending the Liturgy in a village church: 'If you want to be perfect, go sell all your possessions and then follow me'.<sup>34</sup> It was the search for perfection, above anything else, that made Antony leave for the desert. The principle of flight and return, may explain more adequately the relationship of monasticism with the Church and the world. Monasticism grew out of the Church, and then in turn strengthened the Church.

What Greer calls 'the inability of the church to control holy people'<sup>35</sup> gives us a picture of a Church at war with its holy people. Ultimately, this seems to be a modern construct read into the history of monasticism, filtered and developed through modern sociological concepts of authority and power (deeply indebted to Max Weber's paradigmatic categories of the 'charismatic' and 'institutional'), whereas the real story may have been one based on common ends. Monasticism infused the Church with deep spirituality, which nonetheless had its roots in the same Gospel shared by all Christians. The scholarship of those who only see opposition and conflict between monastics and the Church has to be reassessed. This may lead to a new vision very different from the so-called 'politics of Christianity'<sup>36</sup>, one that bases its assumptions on core Christianity and its ultimate values: humility, wisdom, holiness. Hence, we can no longer uphold a struggle for power and authority, be that spiritual or otherwise, as a general characteristic that governed the relationship between monasticism and the Church.

In an early unsettled age of complicated doctrinal disputes, when monks and bishops took sides, it seems that those conflicts were inevitable, but there never was a declared general conflict, nor indeed a subtle one, of the kind 'institution' vs. 'charisma', but rather one coloured by personal disputes and often

<sup>33</sup> Rowan A. Greer, 'Pastoral care and discipline', in Augustine Casiday and Frederick V. Noriss (eds), *Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 2007), 567-84, 574.

<sup>34</sup> *Vita Anton.* 2.3.

<sup>35</sup> R. Greer, 'Pastoral care' (2007), 575.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford, 1995).

localized,<sup>37</sup> that had at stake not necessarily a struggle for domination, but ultimate questions of truth, to do with orthodoxy of faith<sup>38</sup> and its corollary, holiness of life. The protagonists, be they bishops or monks, had the conscience that they belong to a Church, and that they were the true heirs of the apostolic tradition, which they thought they ought to guard, and which was promoted not only through a hierarchical lineage, but also by keeping alive true spiritual fatherhood passed on from the spiritual father to the spiritual son.<sup>39</sup>

The stress on the subsidiary, yet important complex aspects related to asceticism and holiness, cannot fully explain the essence of spiritual fatherhood. While the concept and practice of spiritual fatherhood may well have been influenced by the historical, cultural, social and political contexts of the time, its essence was rooted in the transcendental reality of the fatherhood of God. Likewise, the concept of spiritual fatherhood, laden, as it is, with deep theological connotations, may elude an exclusive historical-sociological inquiry. The spiritual father is not the product of a self-projected image, nor of one projected by contemporaries, or indeed by us. He acquires an existential status 'from above', and this is the main source that attracts disciples. By combining the two elements of spiritual fatherhood, the 'institutional' (which initiates one sacramentally into the fatherhood of God through the body of the Church) and the 'charismatic' (the discerning prophetic inspiration), the Eastern Christian tradition of spiritual fatherhood was able to promote throughout centuries a living witness to the reality of a Christian life lived under the auspices of God's fatherly love.

It is of notable importance that in the last decades, the study of early monasticism has tried hard to break free from confessionally driven agendas. It is now perhaps the time to turn to present-day Eastern Orthodox monasticism, a legitimate heir of that tradition, for a more accurate perspective on some of its own fundamental practices that are as alive as they were in the past. The study of the towering figure of the spiritual father is perhaps the 'new-old' key to understanding the concept of holiness in Eastern Christianity. In the churches of the Eastern family, spiritual fatherhood has remained, to this day, a lodestone of the life in Christ, the actualisation and continuation of Christ's ministry in history and the very link with apostolic Christianity and early monasticism, the defining ultimate ideal of the Christian pastor, the 'art of arts' and the 'science of sciences'.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> I allow for exceptions of undisputed historical evidence of which the most notorious one is the Origenistic controversy culminating in Theophilus' take on Isidore, the Tall Brothers and their followers and, finally, the condemnation of Origen. For a fresh look at this controversy and for some evidence on the blurred boundaries between an *abba* and a patriarch, see Krastu Banev, *Pastoral Polemics: A Rhetorical Analysis of Theophilus of Alexandria's Letters in the First Origenist Controversy* (Ph.D. thesis; Cambridge University, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> See L. Barbu, "'Charisma" vs. "Institution"?' (2010), 6-8.

<sup>39</sup> See Kallistos Ware, 'The Spiritual Father in St John Climacus and St Symeon the New Theologian', *SP* 18 (1989), 299-316, 299.

<sup>40</sup> Greg. Naz., *De fuga* 2, 16; Greg. Magn., *Reg. past.* 1.1.

# LITURGICA



# The First Christmas in Rome, Antioch and Constantinople

T.D. BARNES, Edinburgh, UK

The absurd pagan festival, so dear to the shopkeepers of all countries, Christmas!  
Hugh R. Trevor-Roper to Elizabetta Mariano, 3 December 1958

## ABSTRACT

During the fourth century the celebration of the Nativity of Christ on 25 December began to replace the earlier custom of celebrating the Incarnation on 6 January. It is argued here that it was the emperor Constantine who chose that date to coincide with the *natalis Invicti*, that is, the birthday of the Unconquered Sun, who could be identified with Apollo, the emperor's previous divine patron and protector, and that Christmas was first celebrated on its now traditional date in Rome on 25 December 312. It is further demonstrated that when the custom of celebrating Christmas began on 25 December instead of 6 January, introduced in both Antioch and Constantinople, it was regarded by contemporaries as an innovation imported from the West.

The accounts of the events attendant on the birth of Jesus in the gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke* notoriously contradict each other on virtually every detail except for two undeniable facts and one almost certainly false assertion. Jesus was indeed, as both state, the son of a woman whose name was Mary and Mary's husband Joseph was his legal father, whether or not he was also his biological father. On the other hand, since the adult Jesus lived in Nazareth in Galilee, whereas both *Matthew* and *Luke* were convinced that the Messiah must come from Bethlehem in Judaea, each of them gave his own story, each historically impossible, though presented as fact, of how Jesus of Nazareth could have been born in Bethlehem. But neither *Matthew* nor *Luke* shows any interest in discovering, calculating or inventing the day and the month on which Jesus was born.

The earliest text to offer a precise day, month and year for Jesus' birth has sometimes been assumed to be a *Commentary on Daniel* (CPG 1873), which was composed in the first half of the third century and whose author has often been identified as Hippolytus of Rome.<sup>1</sup> But J.A. Cerrato has demonstrated that

<sup>1</sup> So still Allan Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century. Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 31 (Leiden, New York, London, 1995), 278: 'written after 223 but before the author's martyrdom with Pontianus in 235'.

the theology, eschatology, exegetical methods and principal themes of this commentary have eastern rather than western affinities, from which he correctly inferred that it was written in Asia Minor rather than Rome.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the passage which states that Christ was born on 25 December has long been recognized to be either wholly or partly interpolated.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, when Marcel Richard revised Nathaniel Bonwetsch's standard edition of 1897, he bracketed the words 'on the eighth day before the kalends of January' as not belonging to the original text of the commentary<sup>4</sup> (I note in passing that the principal objection to these words could be obviated by emending 'kalends of January' to 'ides of January').

When Christians in the eastern Roman Empire began to celebrate the Nativity of Christ as a liturgical feast, they did so on what is now the Feast of the Epiphany (6 January). Indeed, as late as c. 370 Epiphanius stated categorically that Christ was born on 6 January and dismissed the possibility of any other date out of hand (*Panarion* LI 22,3-4, 18 [II 284,4-10, 288,11-18 Holl]). Epiphanius' date had already been superseded elsewhere in the Roman Empire and the sixth century writer Alexander of Cyprus commented in his *Inventio Crucis* (BHG<sup>3</sup> 410-410c = CPG 7398) that he was the odd man out since 'all other teachers of the holy, catholic and apostolic church, as with one voice, fixed the birthday of Christ as the eighth day before the kalends of January' (PG 87, 3.4029).

## I. Rome

The earliest evidence for the commemoration (and possibly celebration) of what we now call Christmas on 25 December is provided by one of the documents incorporated in the Calendar-Codex prepared for 1 January 354:<sup>5</sup> a list of festivals celebrated by the Church of Rome at the end of the reign of Constantine (*Chr. min.* 1.71) contains the entry

*viii kal(endis) Ian(uariis) natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae.*

The fundamental discussion of this entry remains that of Hermann Usener more than a century ago as improved by Bernard Botte in 1932, who disproved

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West. The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford, 2002), 116-23, 134-7, 152-7, 162-5, 168-71, 230, 238-42, 250-8.

<sup>3</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* 2 (Utrecht, Antwerp, Westminster, MD, 1953), 172f.; G. Ogg, 'Hippolytus and the Introduction of the Christian Era,' *VC* 16 (1962), 2-18.

<sup>4</sup> Marcel Richard, *Hippolyt Werke* 1.1: *Kommentar zu Daniel*, GCS NF 7 (Berlin, 2000), 244, superseding G. Nathaniel Bonwetsch and Hans Achelis, *Hippolytus* 1.1: *Exegetische und homiletische Schriften*, GCS 1 (Leipzig, 1897), 242.

<sup>5</sup> The treatise *De solstitia et aequinoctia* (CPL<sup>3</sup> 2277), which explicitly dates the birth of Christ to 25 December (lines 273-77 Botte = PLS 1,563), can hardly be earlier than the fifth century.

Usener's aberrant notion that the Church of Rome continued to celebrate the birth of Christ on 6 January until Liberius introduced the celebration of Christmas on its now traditional day of 25 December after he became bishop of Rome on 17 May 352.<sup>6</sup> The list of *depositiones episcoporum Romanorum* in the Calendar-Codex (*Chr. min.* 1.70) shows that in Rome the liturgical year already began with the Nativity on 25 December before the list was drawn up in 336, since the list begins with the burials of Dionysius (who died in 269), Felix (who died in 274) and Silvester (who died in 335) on 27, 30 and 31 December respectively, whereas the notice of the burial of Silvester's successor Marcus, who died on 7 October 337, has been added at the end after the entry for Eutychianus (who died in 283) on 10 December.<sup>7</sup> There is consequently a much more plausible occasion for the first celebration of Christmas on 25 December in Rome.

Constantine entered Rome as its master on 29 October 312, the day after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, which he fought under a Christian banner and in which he defeated Maxentius, who had ruled the city for six years. Constantine resided in Rome for the whole of the months of November and December 312 and remained in the city until at least 6 January 313 (*CTh* 15.4.3<sup>Seeck</sup>). During this period of little more than two months Constantine, who had only announced that he was a devotee of the Christian God shortly before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, began to lavish wealth on the Christian church and bestow privileges on Christian clergy. Hence it is plausible to claim that it was the recently converted Constantine who fixed the date of Christmas by celebrating the Incarnation of his new Christian God on 25 December 312. He chose the day on which Romans celebrated the *natalis Invicti*, the birthday of the Unconquered Sun, his previous divine protector, now displaced by Christ. Constantine did not, however, make any attempt to abolish celebration of the pagan festival, which continued to be marked by games in Rome decades later: another section of the Calendar Codex prepared for 1 January 354 has the entry *viii kal(endas)*

<sup>6</sup> Hermann Usener, 'Sol Invictus', *Rheinisches Museum* 60 (1905), 465-91, reprinted in his *Das Weihnachtsfest*<sup>2</sup>, Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen 1 (Bonn, 1911), 348-78; Bernard Botte, *Les origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie*, Textes et Études liturgiques 1 (Louvain, 1932), 32-9. The attempts to overturn Usener's conclusions by Hans Förster, *Die Feier der Geburt Christi in der alten Kirche. Beiträge zur Erforschung der Anfänge des Epiphanie- und des Weihnachtsfests*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 4 (Tübingen, 2000); *Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphanias. Eine Anfrage an die Entstehungshypothesen*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 46 (Tübingen, 2008), have been refuted by Wolfram Kinzig, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 134 (2009), 708-11. H. Usener, *Weihnachtsfest*<sup>2</sup> (1911), 273-81, had erroneously adduced Ambrose, *De virginibus* 3,1-2 (PL 16, 219-20) as proof that in 353 the church of Rome still celebrated the birth of Christ on 6 January.

<sup>7</sup> B. Botte, *Origines* (1932), 33f., 38; Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York, 1986), 85. Botte's conclusion is significantly misreported by J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth. The story of John Chrysostom – ascetic, preacher, bishop* (London, 1995), 69, when he attributes to him the proposition that Christmas originated 'at Rome, but only around 330'.



*Ian(uarias) n(atalis) Invicti c(ircenses) m(issus) xxx* (CIL 1<sup>2</sup>, p. 278). Constantine merely made sure that from 312 onwards anyone who celebrated the birthday of the Unconquered Sun also, wittingly or unwittingly, celebrated the natal day of the Son of God, the Christian Messiah.

## II. Antioch

The Church of Antioch had begun to celebrate Christmas on 25 December before John Chrysostom was ordained priest on 26 February 386.<sup>8</sup> Towards the end of that year John preached both a homily *On the Blessed Philogonius* on 20 December, which was the anniversary of Philogonius' death 'five days before the birth of Christ' (CPG 4319: PG 48, 747-56) and a homily *On the Birthday of Christ* on 25 December (CPG 4334: PG 49, 351-6).<sup>9</sup> On 20 December 386 John drew attention to the approach of Christmas:

For a feast is about to draw nigh, the most august and awe-inspiring of all the feasts, which one would not be mistaken in calling the metropolis of all the feasts. What is this? The birth of Christ according to the flesh. For from this take their origin and purpose the Theophany,<sup>10</sup> holy Easter, the Ascension and Pentecost. For, if Christ had not been born according to the flesh, he would not have been baptised, which is the Theophany, he would not have been crucified, which is Easter, and he would not have sent the <Holy> Spirit, which is Pentecost. Hence from this, like different rivers flowing from some spring, these feasts have been born for us. (PG 48, 753)

This passage makes it clear that the Church of Antioch celebrated Christmas and the feast that was later to be known universally as Epiphany as two separate

<sup>8</sup> For the date of John's ordination, see Hippolyte Delehaye, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. Acta Sanctorum, Propylaeum ad Novembrem* (Brussels, 1902), 492.26-8.

<sup>9</sup> For proof that the two homilies were delivered in 386, see Bernard de Montfaucon, *Τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὶς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Χρυσόστομου τὰ εὑρισκόμενα. Sancti Patris nostri Joannis Chrysostomi ... opera omnia quae exstant, vel quae eius nomine circumferuntur* 2 (Paris, 1718), 352; Johann Stilling, *Acta Sanctorum Septembris* 4 (Antwerp, 1753), 250, 276-7 (identical pagination in the reprint, Paris and Rome, 1868); Gerhard Rauschen, *Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius dem Grosse. Versuch einer Erneuerung der Annales Ecclesiastici des Baronius für die Jahre 378-395* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1897), 496-512; Eduard Schwartz, *Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln. Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse N.F.* 8.6 (Berlin, 1905), 169-70, 176; Hans Lietzmann, 'Über das Datum der Weihnachtspredigt des Johannes Chrysostomus', in H. Usener, *Weihnachtsfest*<sup>2</sup> (1911), 379-84 (not reprinted in any of the three volumes of Lietzmann's *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Kurt Aland, *Texte und Untersuchungen* 67, 68, 72 [Berlin, 1958, 1958, 1962]). In the first edition of his classic study Usener had dated both homilies to December 387 (*Weihnachtsfest Kapitel I bis III*, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* 1 [Bonn, 1889], 215-40).

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London, 2000), 191, translate *ta theophania* as 'Epiphany', which seems to me anachronistic for 386.

liturgical festivals. In 386 the celebration of Christmas on 25 December had been introduced to Antioch only quite recently and there were still those who objected to the innovation:

For, like noble and well-bred plants (for they are deposited together into the ground and at once grow up to a great height and become laden with fruit), so too this <feast> which has long been acknowledged among those who dwell in the West, though it has been brought to us <only> now, not many years ago, has so shot up all at once and has borne so much fruit as can now be seen, with our holy precincts crowded with people and the whole church packed with those who have hurried together. You should expect a worthy recompense from Christ who was born in the flesh today: he will assuredly reward you for the eagerness you show, for your devotion and enthusiasm for the day is the greatest sign of your love for the one who was born ... What then do you desire to hear today? What else than about this day? For I know well that many still dispute with one another even now, some criticising, others defending. Much discussion occurs everywhere about this day: some object that it is something new and new-fangled and that it has been introduced <only> now, while others defend it as ancient and long established, since the prophets had already foretold his incarnation and <the celebration> has been conspicuous and famous among those who dwell between Thrace and Cadiz from of old.<sup>11</sup> (PG 49, 351f.)

John's words 'from Thrace to Cadiz' indicate that he was thinking of the Latin-speaking provinces of the Roman Empire where the observance of Christmas on 25 December was already well established.<sup>12</sup>

Can the year when the anniversary of Christ's birth was first celebrated on 25 December by the Church of Antioch be discovered? John states that 'it is not yet the tenth year since this day became clear and known to us' (PG 49, 351). The tenth year before the year in which John was speaking (386) is either 376 or 377 (on exclusive and inclusive reckoning respectively). Hence Eduard Schwartz deduced that Christmas was introduced to Antioch between 377 and 380, most probably in 378 or 379 by the bishop Meletius after he returned to Antioch from exile under the emperor Valens,<sup>13</sup> which he appears to have spent in Armenia.<sup>14</sup> More precisely, I suggest that the western custom of celebrating the birth of Christ on 25 December was introduced to Antioch as part of the comprehensive restoration throughout the East of bishops in communion with Damasus, the bishop of Rome, which occurred during the autumn of 378 after

<sup>11</sup> John frequently uses the adverb *anōthen* in a temporal sense, as in three other passages of this homily (PG 49, 351, 353, 356).

<sup>12</sup> The suggestion by Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *Oxford Companion to the Year. An Exploration of Calendar Customs and Time-Reckoning* (Oxford, 1999), 515, that 'from Rome the new feast spread throughout the Western church, and then to Egypt' before it reached Antioch is clearly erroneous, since the celebration of Christ's birth on 6 January persisted into the fifth century in Egypt (B. Botte, *Origines* [1932], 9-13).

<sup>13</sup> E. Schwartz, *Ostertafeln* (1906), 183f.

<sup>14</sup> Hanns C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer. Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 73 (Tübingen, 1988), 232-4.

the homoean *Reichskirche* collapsed with the defeat and death of its imperial protector Valens at the Battle of Adrianople on 9 August 378.<sup>15</sup>

### III. Constantinople

The evidence suggests that the celebration of Christmas on 25 December was introduced into Constantinople twice, as Botte noted in a perceptive discussion which has sometimes subsequently been ignored.<sup>16</sup> First, during the brief period when he was bishop of Constantinople, Gregory of Nazianzus preached a homily on the birthday of Christ ('the theophany') which looks forward to a subsequent homily on the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan (*Oratio* 38.3, 16 [PG 36, 313, 329], see *Oratio* 39 [PG 36, 336-59]): since the later homily was delivered on the Festival of Lights, that is on 6 January, the earlier, which celebrated the Nativity, must have been delivered on the preceding 25 December.<sup>17</sup> Second, the official calendar of the Church of Constantinople, which has several entries relating to John Chrysostom, who was bishop of the city in the reign of the emperor Arcadius, records on 15 December that

it should be noted that our father saint John of the Golden Mouth was on this day consecrated patriarch of Constantinople the New Rome, and on this day the feast of the Nativity of Christ began to be celebrated by him <lasting> until the twenty-fifth day of the month, after some people came from the West and announced it. Hence a very fine and beautiful speech was delivered by him in defence <of the practice>.<sup>18</sup>

John was indeed consecrated bishop of Constantinople on 15 December 397<sup>19</sup> and this notice states not only that John introduced the celebration of Christmas to Constantinople, but that, when he did so, he acknowledged that he was introducing a western custom into the eastern capital. Presumably Nectarius, who replaced Gregory as bishop of Constantinople in July 381, had reverted to the traditional date of 6 January. It would, in my opinion, be hypercritical to dismiss this notice as an error based on a sermon which John had once delivered in Antioch.<sup>20</sup> For in Constantinople it seems clear that there was prolonged

<sup>15</sup> Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* V 1-12: for the date, Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Collapse of the Homoeans in the East', *SP* 29 (1997), 3-16, 13-6.

<sup>16</sup> B. Botte, *Origines* (1932), 26-30.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Gallay in Claudio Moreschini, *Grégoire de Nazianze: Discours 38-41*, SC 358 (Paris, 1990), 11-5.

<sup>18</sup> H. Delehaye, *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (1902), 312.22-314.3. The homily has not survived.

<sup>19</sup> Timothy D. Barnes and George A. Bevan, *The Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom*, Liverpool Translated Texts for Historians (forthcoming), Appendix C.

<sup>20</sup> As does B. Botte, *Origines* (1932), 28: 'il n'est pas difficile de voir que cette notice repose tout simplement sur le sermon prononcé à Antioche'.

resistance to the celebration of Christ's birth on 25 December. In a famous note published sixty years ago, Martin Higgins showed that, although Christmas was certainly celebrated in Constantinople on 25 December 542,<sup>21</sup> twenty years later in 602 'the Nativity of Christ was celebrated on January 6,' from which Higgins deduced that 'Christmas had not yet found its way into popular favour at Constantinople even by the beginning of the seventh century.'<sup>22</sup>

#### IV. Epilogue

It was Constantine, I have suggested, who introduced the celebration of the birth of Christ on 25 December at Christmas 312, and the evidence for the introduction of Christmas at Antioch and Constantinople implies that it was generally recognized by eastern Christians as an importation from the West. Two other equally important contributions of Constantine to the shaping of the Christian liturgical year concerned Easter. In 325 Constantine insisted that the Council of Nicaea fix a uniform date at which all Christians should each year commemorate Christ's Passion and Resurrection, and he also appears to have been responsible for the introduction into the East of the western practice of Lent, that is, of a forty-day period of fasting or abstinence before Easter, where a much shorter pre-Easter fast of six days was still being observed in Egypt until the 330s.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Theophanes a. 6034, p. 222.23-25 de Boor; Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, *Hist. eccl.* 17.28 (PG 147, 292).

<sup>22</sup> Martin Higgins, 'Note on the Purification (and Date of Nativity) in Constantinople in 602', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 2 (1952), 81-3. The conclusion follows from the fact that that the 'Hypante of the Lord', that is, the Feast of the Purification, which is known in the West as Candlemas and is celebrated forty days after the feast of the Nativity, occurred during the week-long festivities for the marriage of Theodosius, the son of the emperor Maurice, from 9 to 15 February 602 (Theophylact Simoncatta 8.4.10-5.3; *Paschal Chronicle* 693 Bonn = p. 142, trans. Whitby and Whitby).

<sup>23</sup> Timothy Barnes, *Constantine. Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2011), 122-6, 185-91.



# Eucharistic Meals East of Antioch

Gerard ROUWHORST, University of Tilburg, The Netherlands

## ABSTRACT

A considerable number of sources deriving from the partly Greek-, and partly Syriac-speaking regions east of Antioch contain interesting data and allusions to Eucharistic meals. Some of them date from the pre-Nicene period (*Acts of Thomas*; probably the *Gospel of Philip*; Pseudo-Clementine literature and the oldest core of the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*) and some from the fourth century (*Madrache* of Ephrem the Syrian; Aphraates). Joining up the allusions and references found in these documents seems to produce a trajectory which is different from the one(s) that developed in Western Christianity (Northern Africa; Rome). Typical elements which regularly recur in that tradition are: invocations of divine Persons (especially the Spirit); emphasis laid upon the breaking of the bread – often in combination with a lack of wine – which at least from the fourth century receives an explicitly sacrificial connotation. In my article I will try to trace this trajectory, while paying specific attention to the pre-Christian roots.

Recent research on the early Christian Eucharist and, more in general, on early Christian common meal practices, has drastically changed our view of its origins and its earliest history.

One of the most remarkable facts that has to be mentioned is the deconstruction of unitary models that were predominant throughout the twentieth century and were based upon the assumption that all early Christian Eucharistic celebrations found in Eastern and Western sources of the first four or five centuries had a common origin and followed the pattern of the Last Supper as described in the Synoptic Gospels.<sup>1</sup> It may be added that also an alternative theory developed by Hans Lietzmann which assumed a dual origin of the Christian Eucharist, hypothesizing the existence of two original types, one being based upon Paul's interpretation of the Lord's Supper and the other rooted in an ancient practice of the 'breaking of the bread', has been rejected by Andrew McGowan

<sup>1</sup> See especially Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford, 1999), 18-32; Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship. Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (London, 2002), 118-43; *id.*, 'Introduction: The Evolution of Early Anaphoras', in *id.* (ed.), *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers* (Collegeville, 1997), 1-18.

as being inadequate and simplifying the complexity of historical reality.<sup>2</sup> Instead, one may perceive a growing trend to highlight the immense diversity that was characteristic of early Christian meal practices, whether they were called Eucharistic or not. It is emphasized that liturgical evolution proceeded from complexity and variety to uniformity and simplicity and not the other way around. This principle is in itself nothing new, as it had already been formulated by Anton Baumstark in one of his 'laws' of liturgical evolution,<sup>3</sup> but until recently many liturgical scholars applied it most of the time to later phases of liturgical history rather than to the earliest period, the period of origins! Now it has become clearer than it was ever before that there was a great diversity of local practices from the very beginnings of Christianity. And this also holds for early Christian meal traditions, including the Eucharist.

Besides the growing emphasis upon diversity instead of uniformity, one may observe in recent research on early Christian meal traditions a second remarkable trend which consists in tracing those traditions back to meal practices which existed in Antiquity in Greco-Roman culture, throughout the entire Mediterranean world. Obviously, the search for pre-Christian meal patterns is not a new phenomenon. Ever since the emergence of the 'religionsgeschichtliche Schule' at the end of the eighteenth century, scholars have been fascinated by the parallels they discovered between the Eucharist and the greatest possible variety of pagan and Jewish meals existing in Antiquity and they have fully drawn upon them to clarify the origins of the former meal.<sup>4</sup> Still, one may distinguish various phases and shifts in the history of the search for the pre-Christian antecedents of the Christian Eucharist. Remarkably, since the second half of the last century, liturgical scholars have expressed a marked interest in the Jewish roots of both the early Christian Eucharist and of Jesus' last meal described in the Synoptic Gospels and in Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians*.<sup>5</sup> However, in the last few decades one may perceive a sort of 'Hellenistic turn'. On the one hand, the continuity with elements which were typical of or even unique to Jewish meals, is being put into perspective or even questioned by several scholars. Especially the idea, until recently almost generally accepted, that both the early Christian Eucharist and the Last Supper had their origins in

<sup>2</sup> A. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists* (1999), 25-7; see Hans Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (Berlin, 1926), English translation: *id.*, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy* (Leiden, 1979). See also Paul Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (Oxford, 2004), 43-60.

<sup>3</sup> See Anton Baumstark, *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1923), 29-36, English translation: *id.*, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy*. Introduction, Translation and Annotation by Fritz West (Collegeville, 2011), 89-97; *id.*, *Liturgie comparée* (Chevetogne, 1953), 18-22.

<sup>4</sup> See for an overview of the theories and views: Hans-Josef Klauck, *Herrenmahl und hellenistischer Kult. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum ersten Korintherbrief*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, Neue Folge 15 (Münster, 1982), 8-28.

<sup>5</sup> See P. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins* (2002), 118-43.

the Jewish Passover meal, has lost many adherents. On the other hand, one may note an increasing interest in the role played by meal customs that were common to the entire Mediterranean basin and were current in Jewish as well as in non-Jewish milieus. Some scholars even go so far as to consider early Christian communal meals simply as varieties of Greco-Roman *symposia* or banquets.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, it has been suggested that certain characteristics of early Christian meals – for instance the use of particular food and drinks – can be best explained by a concern to avoid associations with pagan traditions, especially sacrifices.<sup>7</sup> All these recent developments add to making the picture which we get of early Christian meal traditions, including the Eucharist, even more variegated and also confusing.

All this, however, does not discharge the liturgical historian from the task of tracing patterns and structures in the fragmented source evidence. Liturgical scholars are expected to do more than just deconstruct existing theories and should not limit themselves to merely recording the existence of isolated phenomena. They have to look for possible links connecting the data attested by the sources. To use a metaphor employed by Paul Bradshaw, they should try to join the rare dots left by the rare sources, hoping that at least a faint figure will emerge.<sup>8</sup> Will it be possible to recognize in the first two or three centuries traces of certain regional traditions beginning to take shape? Can we find certain types of early Christian meal traditions which have a number of features in common distinguishing them from other (Christian) traditions? Once these questions will have been answered and some trajectories have been reconstructed, the next step will be to look for explanations, contexts, backgrounds, causes. How did the traditions come into existence? How did they relate to pre-Christian – Jewish or Greco-Roman – traditions? How were these traditions appropriated by the Christian communities?

In this article, I shall focus upon a number of sources that are derived from the regions east of Antioch dating from the third and fourth century. One might raise several objections against the choice of this region and this period. First,

<sup>6</sup> See especially Matthias Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft. Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 13 (Tübingen and Basel, 1996); Hendrik-Jan de Jonge, 'The Early History of the Lord's Supper', in J.W. van Henten and A. Houtepen (eds), *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition* (Assen, 2001), 209-37; Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis, 2002); Clemens Leonhard, 'Mahl V, Kultmahl', *RAC* XXIII (Stuttgart, 2009), 1011-1102, esp. 1067-90; Valeriy Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering. Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 102 (Leiden and Boston, 2010). See for this question also Gerard Rouwhorst, 'The Roots of the Early Christian Eucharist: Jewish Blessings or Hellenistic Symposia', in A. Gerhards and C. Leonhard (eds), *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 15 (Leiden and Boston, 2007), 295-308.

<sup>7</sup> See A. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists* (1999).

<sup>8</sup> P. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins* (2002), 20.



it is impossible to precisely demarcate the region as it is rather vague and includes a variety of cities, areas and populations, some of them speaking a form of Aramaic, some of them being bilingual and some of them speaking predominantly or exclusively Greek. Further, because of the relatively late date of the sources concerned it will be difficult to draw reliable conclusions from them about the earliest period (first and second centuries). Moreover, the sources available are very heterogeneous and often fragmentary and difficult to interpret. They basically consist of the *Acts of Thomas*,<sup>9</sup> the *Gospel of Philip*,<sup>10</sup> the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*,<sup>11</sup> some *madrashé* (teaching-songs) of Ephrem the Syrian<sup>12</sup> and the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*.<sup>13</sup> At first sight a very curious patchwork of writings which differ in literary character and are derived from different theological milieus: mainstream and orthodox (Ephrem; *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*), Jewish Christian (Pseudo-Clementines), Gnostic and probably Valentinian (*Gospel of Philip*)<sup>14</sup> or betraying encratite

<sup>9</sup> Edition of the Greek version Richard Lipsius and Maximilian Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* II, 2 (Leipzig, 1903 / Hildesheim, 1972), 99-291, English translation: Edgar Hennecke and Walter Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* II (London, <sup>2</sup>1975), 425-531. Edition of Syriac version: William Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* I (London, 1871 / Amsterdam, 1968), 170-333. English translation: *id.*, Vol. II, 146-298 (= A. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* [Leiden, 1962], 65-154). French translation: Paul-Hubert Poirier and Yves Tissot, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* I, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris, 1997), 1323-1470. See for the passages referring to the Eucharistic meals in particular: Gerard Rouwhorst, 'La célébration de l'Eucharistie selon les Actes de Thomas', in Ch. Caspers and M. Schneiders (eds), *Omnes circumstantes. Contributions towards a History of the Role of the People in the Liturgy Presented to Herman Wegman* (Kampen, 1990), 51-77.

<sup>10</sup> Edition of the Coptic text and English translation: Wesley Isenberg, 'The Gospel according to Philip', in *The Gnostic Coptic Library* II (Leiden, Boston and Köln, 2000), 129-217. See for the passages referring to the Eucharist, in particular: Herbert Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus. Anfänge einer Theorie des Sakraments im koptischen Philippusevangelium* (NHC II 3), Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 88 (Leiden and Boston, 2007). While citing from this Gospel, I will refer to the number of the pages and the line numbers of Nag Hammadi Codex II 3 – which is quite usual –, but I will add between brackets the numbering introduced by Hans-Martin Schenke which is employed by several scholars, among others by Herbert Schmid.

<sup>11</sup> Edition of the *Homilies*: Bernhard Rehm and Georg Strecker, *Die Pseudoklementinen I. Homilien*, GCS 42 (Berlin, <sup>3</sup>1992); Edition of the *Recognitions*: Georg Strecker, *Die Pseudoklementinen I, Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung* (Berlin, <sup>2</sup>1994). English translation of both the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions*: *Ante-Nicene Fathers* VIII.

<sup>12</sup> The numerous passages dealing with or referring to the Eucharist have been assembled and studied in detail by Pierre Youssif in his book *L'Eucharistie chez saint Ephrem de Nisibe*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 224 (Roma, 1984).

<sup>13</sup> Edition, translation and commentary of the text: Anthony Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford, 1992). See for a survey of the research on this anaphora: Stephen Wilson, 'The Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari', in Paul Bradshaw (ed.), *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers* (Collegeville, 1997), 19-38.

<sup>14</sup> Both the Gnostic character and the presence of Valentinian elements and conceptions in the Gospel are generally accepted. The precise relationship with a Valentinian milieu, however, continues to be a matter of dispute among the scholars. See H. Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* (2007), 11-4. See also Martha Lee Turner, *The Gospel according to Philip: The Sources and*

tendencies (*Acts of Thomas*)! Some provide rather detailed information about the celebration of the Eucharist (*Anaphora of Addai and Mari*) and some contain just some brief and passing allusions to it (*Gospel of Philip*). Still, while reading these texts, it emerges that they exhibit remarkable common tendencies and features which, at the same time, are lacking or are less prominent in sources derived from other traditions, for instance from North Africa, Rome or Egypt.

I shall first assemble and examine the relevant data that can be obtained from these sources concerning various categories of meals and the major ritual elements they involve. In the final part of this article, I will address some questions raised by the pre-Christian backgrounds which certainly are at the root of some of the Christian meal practices. I will try to establish by which pre-Christian tradition they were influenced and make some observations about the ways in which they were appropriated by the Christian communities.

## 1. Categories of meals

To get insight into the development of Eucharistic meals, it is first of all important to take into consideration the variety of meal forms we encounter in the sources, without beforehand excluding certain types and considering them as not being relevant for the history of the Eucharist, as has often been done in the past (the work of Lietzmann constituting one of the rare exceptions). At the same time, there is the risk of lumping together all the types encountered in the sources derived from this region into one and the same category, for instance that of the 'breaking of the bread' tradition or to consider them just as 'meals'. In fact, one may globally distinguish four categories of meals.

1. Regular communal meals held by (baptized Christians), with the primary purpose of just eating together. Most of the writings concerned, do not show a particular interest in this type of meals. The only exception is provided by the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*. These sources betray a particular concern with the purity of Christian communities which should not be contaminated by contact with paganism and idolatry. That is why Christians are not allowed to have a meal together with pagans who are used to eating food that has been sacrificed to pagan gods and who have not been purified by baptism (*Hom.* I 22,5; XIII 4,2-4 and *Rec.* I 19,5; II 72,4-6; VII 29,3-4). Moreover, the Pseudo-Clementines are the only source which make mention of prayers intended for 'regular' meals, in particular, prayers of thanksgiving which are said after the meal. It is, furthermore, interesting to note that this

custom is explicitly called a 'Jewish' one ('after the Jewish rite': *Hom.* X 26,3; *Rec.* V 36,3-4).

2. The meals of the apostles described in the apocryphal Acts and the Pseudo-Clementines. Admittedly, there is some overlap between this category and the previous one. However, what distinguishes some of these meals from the previous category is their markedly ascetic character. Thus, in the Pseudo-Clementines, Peter says that his ordinary food consists of bread, olives and occasional vegetables (*Hom.* XII 6,4; *Rec.* VII 6,4). Likewise, according to the *Acts of Thomas*, the apostle Thomas fasted a lot, eating just bread and salt and drinking only water (ch. 20; 96; 104).

Two remarks are in order with regard to these ascetic diets. First, the emphasis upon the ascetic lifestyle of the apostle fulfils a specific function in the stories about the activities of the apostles. It serves to highlight their specific role as missionaries as well as their special 'magical' power. For that reason, one should be wary of drawing hasty conclusions from those ascetic practices about the meals of ordinary Christians. Second, in so far as these practices were meant to be followed by other Christians, they primarily served as models for fasting, rather than for meal practices.

Apart from these two categories of meals, we encounter two other types which have a more explicitly ritual character and for good reasons, may be characterized as 'Eucharists':

3. The first type, which is most clearly attested by the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles – as well as in the Pseudo-Clementine writings –, forms an integral part and the culminating point of Christian initiation which comprises a baptismal anointment and an immersion into water and is concluded by the consumption of bread and the drinking from a cup, filled with water or with wine mixed with water (I will return to this point later on). The bread is first broken and sometimes called 'eucharistia' (in the Syriac version of the *Acts of Thomas*, the term is simply transcribed). We find this type of 'eucharist' in *ActThom* (ch. 26-7; 29; 49-50; 120-1; 133; 158) and in the Pseudo-Clementine writings (*Hom.* XI 36,2; XIV 1,4 and in *Rec.* VII 15,4).<sup>15</sup>

It may be added that in the *Gospel of Philip* as well, the 'Eucharist' appears to be closely connected with the ritual of initiation (which is interpreted in a Gnostic, probably Valentinian way). Thus in 67:29-30 (68) it is said that the Lord did everything in a mystery: 'a baptism and a chrism and a Eucharist (Coptic: *mnnoeucharistia*) and a redemption and a bridal chamber'. The passage

<sup>15</sup> It may be observed that we find similar types of meals in which the breaking of bread takes a very prominent place, in other apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. See in particular *Acts of John*, chs. 85; 110. See *Acts of Paul* III 5 and IX 21. However, it is only in the last-mentioned passage of the *Acts of Paul* that a meal which includes a breaking of bread follows on the administration of baptism and is closely connected with initiation.

– and especially the meaning of the word ‘bridal chamber – has given rise to a lot of discussion, but it is clear that the first three words refer to the major three stages of Christian initiation.<sup>16</sup>

4. The second type of Eucharist – and the fourth type of communal meal – I would like to distinguish, is closely related to the ritual of the breaking of the bread and it may even be asked whether it is essentially distinct from it at all. It is the Eucharist which is celebrated at a regular basis, that is at least once a week. It is obviously to this Eucharist that Ephrem refers in his *Madrashe* and most probably it also underlies the *Gospel of Philip* (although in this source the Eucharist is closely connected with the entire process of initiation, as is the case in the *Acts of Thomas*). The *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* naturally also belongs to this type of the Eucharist.

In this article, I will mainly deal with the last-mentioned two Eucharistic meals. However, I will first make some observations about two questions which regard all the four categories of meals. For a long time, its importance has been overlooked in studies dealing with the early Christian Eucharist, and Andrew McGowan has rightly drawn our attention to it: the choice of food and drinks and the symbolic meanings they involve.

## 2. Choice of food and drink

To begin with, it should be noted that in some of the sources under consideration, one category of food and one sort of drink are placed in a particularly bad light: meat and wine. Since this issue has been studied in detail by Andrew McGowan, I will limit myself to mentioning the most notable facts, while adding some minor nuances.

The most explicit polemics against the use of meat are to be found in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*. While carefully reading the relevant passages, one will note that the polemic is not directed against the eating of meat as such, but first of all against the eating of meat which has been sacrificed to pagan gods (*Hom.* VII 3,1; 8,1; XI 15,6) or which has not been slaughtered properly according to the rules of the Jewish religious laws, having for instance been suffocated or killed by wild animals (*Hom.* VII 8,1; *Rec.* IV 36,4) or contains blood (*ibid.*; see *Rec.* I 30,1.4; *Rec.* VIII 48,5). Nonetheless, the emphasis placed upon asceticism and upon the ascetic diet of Peter suggests that eating meat as such is, if not explicitly prohibited, at least not recommended. This conclusion also holds for the *Acts of Thomas* which do not contain passages explicitly prohibiting meat, but betray strong ascetic tendencies.

<sup>16</sup> See for the interpretation of this passage and the discussion provoked H. Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* (2007), 83-90.

The situation is more or less similar with regard to the use of wine which is condemned in the same sources.<sup>17</sup> The reason appears to be twofold: on the one hand, just like meat, wine is associated with the cult of pagan gods who are identified with demons, especially with the libations offered to those gods (*Hom.* VII 3,1; XI 15,6; *ActThom* 76). On the other hand, drinking wine leads to drunkenness and debauchery, which are equally the work of demons for that matter (*Hom.* VII 3,1; XI 15,6; *ActThom* 76-7).

The question arises here whether the rejection of the use of wine also holds for the Eucharistic meals. In other words, was an exception made for these meals and did those partaking of them drink wine (mixed with water), or was the prohibition of wine so strict that during the Eucharistic meals only water was allowed?

It turns out that the evidence for the existence of wine-less Eucharists is rather scarce, at least as far as the sources under consideration is concerned. Among these sources the only one which possibly attests the existence of this type of Eucharistic celebrations is the Greek version of the *Acts of Thomas* which occasionally makes mention of a cup (chs. 120-1; 158), saying that it contains water (chs. 120-1), but does not (explicitly) make mention of wine (ch. 121 just makes mention of a 'mixture of water'). In the Eucharistic meals which conclude the initiation in the Pseudo-Clementine writings, no mention is made of any drink, neither of water nor of wine. By contrast, in the Syriac version of the *Acts of Thomas*, some subtle allusions to the use of wine have been added, obviously to adapt it to a more 'orthodox' liturgical practice. Further, the Valentinian *Gospel of Philip* as well presupposes the use of wine during the Eucharist, since it makes mention of a 'cup of prayer' which 'contains water and wine' and is the 'type of the blood for which thanks is given'<sup>18</sup> (75:15/99-100) and the *madrashe* of Ephrem the Syrian do so very frequently, considering the use of wine as self-evident.

### 3. Eucharistic meals and the tradition of the Last Supper

Ever since the discovery of the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, liturgical scholars have been struck by the fact that this Eucharistic prayer as it has been transmitted by medieval manuscripts, did not contain an institution narrative and this fact has given rise to long scholarly debates. At this moment, it is almost unanimously agreed that it never contained such a narrative. The prayer

<sup>17</sup> See for this question also Gerard Rouwhorst, 'L'usage et le non-usage du vin', in André Lossky and Manlio Sodi (eds), *Rites de communion. Conférences Saint-Serge. LV<sup>e</sup> Semaine d'Études Liturgiques, Paris, 23-26 juin 2008*, Monumenta Studia Instrumenta Liturgica 59 (Città del Vaticano, 2010), 229-41.

<sup>18</sup> See for the interpretation of this passage H. Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* (2007), 338-47.

as it is transmitted by all the manuscripts available makes just allusion to it in the intercession for the departed where Christ is said to have taught us to offer the commemoration of His Body and Blood.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it has emerged from more recent research that the *Anaphora* is not at all exceptional in this respect, and certainly not as far as the region east of Antioch is concerned: there is no trace whatsoever to be found of the recitation of an institution narrative in the sources we are studying in this article.<sup>20</sup>

One should, however, be wary of drawing hasty conclusions from this fact. One should avoid hypothesizing the existence of a type of Eucharist which was completely independent from the Last Supper tradition and in which the remembrance of the death of the Lord would not have played any role, as Hans Lietzmann seems to have done while developing his thesis of a non-Paulinian type of Eucharist. As will be known, according to Lietzmann, this type would have had its historical roots in the table-fellowship with the historic Jesus and the Risen Lord and the remembrance of Jesus' last meal and of his death would have been foreign to it. And it would have been this type of Eucharist which would have been continued – among others – in what he assumed to be the bread-Eucharists of the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.<sup>21</sup> In fact, several objections may be raised against this theory. To begin, one of the Eucharistic meals found in the *Acts of Thomas*, contains an extensive evocation of various episodes of the Passion and explicitly states that 'the body of Christ was crucified for us and that his blood was poured for the salvation and for the remission of sins' (ch. 158). It may be added that there is no reason to assume that this passage was inserted at a later date. Moreover, the *madrashe* of Ephrem the Syrian do not contain any unambiguous reference to the recitation of an institution narrative but it emerges clearly from several of these texts that the Last Supper functions for Ephrem as the archetype and the foundation of the Eucharist celebrated by the Church. Neither can there be any doubt that the commemoration of the death of Jesus played a central role in that celebration.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the *Gospel of Philip* interprets wine and water which are in the Eucharistic cup, as the 'type of the blood' for which thanks is given (75:14-7/99-100; see above). In itself it does not become clear from the text that a reference to the death of

<sup>19</sup> See section E of the edition of A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer* (1992), 50-3. See for the interpretation of this passage, among others S. Wilson, 'The Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari' (1997), 31-3.

<sup>20</sup> See for instance Robert Taft, 'Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001', *Centro pro Unione. Semi-annual Bulletin* 63 (Spring 2003), 15-27 = *Worship* 77 (2003), 482-509; Paul Bradshaw, 'Did Jesus institute the Eucharist at the Last Supper?', in Maxwell E. Johnson (ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West. Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis* (Collegeville, 2010), 1-19, published also in *id.*, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (London, 2009), 3-19.

<sup>21</sup> See H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (1926), 249-63 (English translation: 195-208).

<sup>22</sup> See P. Youssif, *L'Eucharistie chez saint Ephrem de Nisibe* (1984), 45-8; 195-232.

Christ is implied. Another passage of the *Gospel of Philip*, which most probably also refers to the Eucharist and in which the blood is associated with the Holy Spirit (57:7-8/23), might rather suggest the contrary.<sup>23</sup> Still, it might be the case that the author of the *Gospel of Philip* is dependent upon a liturgical tradition which associated the Eucharistic cup with the death of Jesus (which was interpreted by him in a different [Gnostic?] fashion).

#### 4. Minor role of the thanksgiving?

Apart from the absence of the recitation of the institution narrative, one looks in vain in most of the sources we are concerned with here, for some other elements which are characteristic of classical Eucharistic prayers, and by which these prayers usually begin, namely the glorifying of God and especially the thanksgiving for the creation and salvation history, the element to which the celebration of the Eucharist even owes its name. For a long time, this remarkable fact remained unnoticed since the research of liturgical scholars on the early Christian Eucharist strongly focused upon the study and analysis of full-blown anaphora's. While dealing with Syriac Christianity, scholars based themselves primarily upon the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* which is indeed a splendid example of a Eucharistic prayer in which the glorifying of God's name and thanksgiving for the salvation of humanity by Christ occupy a very prominent place. However, as soon as scholars started taking into consideration further source material providing evidence of the Eucharist in a more indirect way, especially the *Acts of Thomas* and the *madrashe* of Ephrem the Syrian, it turned out that references to these elements are very rare. In fact, the sole reference to a prayer of thanksgiving I could find in the source material that we are dealing with is the brief allusion made to it by the passage of the *Gospel of Philip* which I have cited at the end of the previous section (75:16-7/100).

How to account for this fact? One possible solution might be to conclude that for a long period, Eucharistic prayers in which the giving of thanks held a prominent place simply were no part of the Eucharistic celebration and were, for instance, only introduced in the fourth century (the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* being a creation of the fourth century). The problem with this solution is that at least the *Gospel of Philip* appears to have been familiar with a prayer of thanksgiving, whereas a prolific fourth century writer like Ephrem the Syrian does not make mention of it. Therefore, an alternative solution seems to me to be more plausible, which is to assume that prayers in which God was glorified and thanked, were part of the Eucharist but were not mentioned for some reason, for instance because they were not considered to be relevant for the plots of the stories (of the apocryphal Acts) or because they were not viewed as the

<sup>23</sup> See H. Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* (2007), 343-5.



highpoints of the celebrations (that might be the reason why Ephrem does not refer to them).<sup>24</sup>

## 5. The central role of the Holy Spirit

Whereas several ritual elements and theological motifs which are often considered as forming the heart of the Eucharistic celebrations, are lacking in the sources concerned or play at best a subordinated role, one is struck by the fact that, in all of the sources we are dealing with, a surprisingly great prominence is given to the role of the Holy Spirit. Some of the sources make explicit mention of a Spirit-epiclesis, an invocation of the Spirit, some do not do so explicitly. Still, they all emphasize the presence and the activity of the Holy Spirit during the Eucharist. Taking part in it means becoming in communion with the Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup>

To begin with the *Acts of Thomas* – which is probably the earliest of the sources we are dealing with –, two of the descriptions of Eucharistic meals found in this source contain a quite long invocation addressed to a divine female entity who is predicated by a litany-like series of titles and epithets. I give here as an example an English translation of the Greek version – which is generally considered to be the oldest one preserved – of the epiclesis found in chapter 50:

Come, perfect compassion.  
 Come, fellowship of the male.  
 Come, you who understands the mysteries of the Chosen One.  
 Come, you who communes in all the combats of the noble Athlete.  
 Come, rest which reveals the great things of every greatness.  
 Come, revealer of secrets who makes visible what is hidden.  
 Holy dove, which bears twin nestlings.  
 Come, hidden mother.  
 Come, you who are visible in your actions  
 and gives joy and rest to those who are joined to her.  
 Come and commune with us in this Eucharist  
 which we celebrate in your name,  
 and in the love in which we are united at your calling.

Most scholarship dealing with these texts has focused upon their literary analysis, upon a comparison between the Greek and the Syriac versions, upon the question whether these texts were heterodox or orthodox, upon the female

<sup>24</sup> See G. Rouwhorst, 'La célébration de l'Eucharistie selon les Actes de Thomas' (1990), 75-6.

<sup>25</sup> See for the following *ibid.* See also *id.*, 'Die Rolle des heiligen Geistes in der Eucharistie und der Taufe im frühsyrischen Christentum', in Bert Groen and Benedikt Kranemann (eds), *Liturgie und Trinität* (Freiburg, Basel and Wien, 2008), 161-84.



character of the Spirit, upon the features she has in common with Jewish divine entities such as Wisdom and Gnostic divine entities, and upon the parallels that the invocations present with 'pagan' texts, magical or otherwise.<sup>26</sup> However, what is of primary importance for our topic, is that the divine Mother invoked is none other than the Holy Spirit – which in ancient Syriac sources is described as a female person – and that, therefore, her descent and her presence play a crucial role in the Eucharist.

This feature the *Acts of Thomas* have in common with the *Gospel of Philip*. The passage which makes mention of the cup of prayer that contains wine and water, states that it is the 'type of the blood for which thanks is given' and that it 'becomes filled with the holy Spirit' (75:18/100). Admittedly, the passage does not explicitly make mention of an epiclesis and just alludes to thanksgiving. Yet, it appears very probable that there is some connection between this prayer of thanksgiving and the fact of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The prayer must in one way or another have been considered as calling for the descent of the Spirit, whether or not it included a proper Spirit-epiclesis. Finally, this passage of the *Gospel of Philip* recalls another one to which we have already alluded to and where, commenting upon 6:53, the author of the Gospel says that the flesh is the Word and that His blood is the Holy Spirit (57:6-7/23).<sup>27</sup>

Next, it is important to note that the oldest core of the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* – which can be reconstructed by comparing this text with the Maronite *Sharar* (*Anaphora of Peter*) – contains an epiclesis addressed to the Holy Spirit. It has sometimes been argued that this text would have been inserted into the text at a later date,<sup>28</sup> but the arguments that have been advanced to bolster this view, are rather weak. They are based upon circular reasoning, that is, they are founded upon the assumption that the epiclesis became part of the Eucharistic prayer in the fourth century and that, therefore, invocations of the Spirit which feature in certain Eucharistic prayers which may have originated prior to the fourth century, have to be considered as secondary insertions.<sup>29</sup> However, it is an indisputable fact that the common core of the East Syrian and the Maronite anaphoras contains an epiclesis and that it even appears to be the culminating point of that common core!

Finally, it is important to note that also in the *Madrashe* which Ephrem the Syrian has devoted to the Eucharist – which have almost completely been

<sup>26</sup> See the commentary of A. Klijn in his *The Acts of Thomas* (1962), 211-7; 245-6 and in particular also Susan Myers, *Spirit Epicleses in the Acts of Thomas* (Tübingen, 2010), in particular ch. 6 (181-220).

<sup>27</sup> See for the interpretation of this passage and its Eucharistic background H. Schmid, *Die Eucharistie ist Jesus* (2007), 320-32.

<sup>28</sup> See especially William Macomber, 'The Ancient Form of the Anaphora of the Apostles', in N. Garsoian, T. Mathews and R. Thomson (eds), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, Dumbarton Oaks Symposium 1980 (Washington, 1982), 73-88.

<sup>29</sup> See G. Rouwhorst, 'Die Rolle des heiligen Geistes' (2008), 168-70.

ignored in studies dealing with anaphora's such as that of Addai and Mari –, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic bread and wine occupies a central place.<sup>30</sup> Taking communion means first and foremost taking part of the fire of the Holy Spirit which resides in these elements. It seems therefore natural to conclude that, in the churches of Nisibis and Edessa for which Ephrem wrote his wonderful teaching-songs, the invocation of the Holy Spirit was the culminating point of the Eucharistic prayer as it is given in the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*.

The remarkable prominence given to the Holy Spirit and to the epiclesis stands in marked contrast with the absence of this element in several Western sources, such as the writings of Augustine, the Roman Canon and its ancient core quoted by Ambrose. It appears that from the outset this element has been lacking in the Western Eucharist or at least was a rather rare and marginal phenomenon in Western Christianity (and also has remained so). On the other hand, it is very striking that the invocation of the Holy Spirit features very prominently in all the classical Eastern anaphoras that have their origins in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean area (Basil; John Chrysostom; the text underlying Theodore of Mopsuestia's catecheses; James and so on). In my view, this suggests that the origins of the epiclesis has to be searched for in this region, in the regions around and east of Antioch.<sup>31</sup>

## 6. The breaking of the bread

Another element which plays a very prominent role in the sources mentioned, is the breaking of the bread.<sup>32</sup> This rite is explicitly mentioned in all the Eucharists described in the *Acts of Thomas* – both in the Greek and in the Syriac

<sup>30</sup> See P. Youssif, *L'Eucharistie chez saint Ephrem de Nisibe* (1984), 253-67. See G. Rouwhorst, 'Die Rolle des heiligen Geistes' (2008), 179-80. Special mention should be made here of the hymns *On Faith* 10 and 40 (edition and German translation: Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO 154/155 [Louvain, 1955]). English translation of the tenth *madrasha*: Robert Murray, 'A Hymn of St. Ephrem to Christ on the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, and the Sacraments', *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1970-1), 142-50. Another edition of the Syriac text and English translation of this *madrasha*: Sebastian Brock, *St. Ephrem. A Hymn on the Eucharist* (Lancaster, 1986).

<sup>31</sup> The question arises in this connection as to whether this fact might shed some light upon the provenance of the Eucharistic prayer of the so-called 'Apostolic Tradition'. Is one allowed to consider the presence of a Spirit-epiclesis as an indication of the (possibly) oriental origin of this prayer, assuming that it has not been later on inserted into the text (as a result of oriental influences)?

<sup>32</sup> See for this ritual gesture also Gerard Rouwhorst, 'Faire mémoire par un geste: la fraction du pain', in André Lossly and Manlio Sodi (eds), *"Faire mémoire". L'anamnèse dans la liturgie. Conférences Saint-Serge. LVI<sup>e</sup> Semaine d'Études Liturgiques. Paris, 29 juin-2 juillet 2009*, Monumenta Studia Instrumenta Liturgica 63 (Città del Vaticano, 2011), 75-86.

version – and appears to be one of its highpoints (chs. 27; 29; 50; 121; 133; 158). This they have in common with the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies and Recognitions* (*Hom.* XI 36,2; XIV 1,4 and *Rec.* VI 15,4), as well as with some other apocryphal Acts, especially those of John (chs. 85 and 110) for that matter. Unfortunately, the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* does not provide any information about the breaking of the bread because it just consists of the text of the Eucharistic prayer. However, it is remarkable that the motif plays an important role in the hymns of Ephrem the Syrian. What is perhaps even more interesting is that Ephrem connects this ritual gesture with the breaking of the bread by Christ during the Last Supper,<sup>33</sup> which, as I noted above, constitutes the archetypical model and foundation of the Eucharist celebrated by the Church.

The question here of course arises what function this gesture fulfils during the Eucharist and which symbolic meaning is ascribed to it. Hans Lietzmann has argued that it was the expression of the *koinonia*, of ‘Tischgemeinschaft’ (‘sharing’) which would have been essential to the early type of non-Paulinian Eucharistic meals in which the meals described in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles would have originated. The entire notion of sacrifice which is encountered in several other sources would originally have been completely alien to it (where they appeared, this would have been due to secondary influences).<sup>34</sup>

With regard to this thesis, we observe the following:

- a) The concept of *koinonia* appears almost exclusively in the *Acts of Thomas* (where, indeed, it fulfils a central role).
- b) In those writings the term has not primarily a social connotation, that is, it does not refer to the sharing of the bread by the members of the community taking the meal together, but to the community with Christ or with the Spirit which is occasionally opposed to sexual intercourse (for which the same word is employed).<sup>35</sup> This may in itself be the result of an interpretation which is typical for the *Acts of Thomas*, but there is no evidence to prove the existence of a more ‘social’ interpretation of the gesture.
- c) It is noteworthy that Ephrem the Syrian interprets the gesture in an outright sacrificial way: it refers for him to the gesture by which Christ during the Last Supper had announced his approaching death in a symbolic, metaphorical way.

<sup>33</sup> See especially Ephrem’s *Madrasa On Crucifixion* III 12 (Edition and German translation: Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Paschahymnen*, CSCO 248/249 [Louvain, 1964], 52-3 [42]). See also an Armenian hymn (nr. 49) ascribed to Ephrem which has been published and translated into Latin by Louis Mariès and Ch. Mercier, *Hymnes de saint Ephrem conservées en version arménienne*, PO XXX 1 (Paris, 1961), 226-7. See G. Rouwhorst, ‘Die Rolle des heiligen Geistes’ (2008), 178 and *id.*, ‘Faire mémoire par un geste’ (2011), 86.

<sup>34</sup> See H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (1926), esp. 250 (English translation: 204).

<sup>35</sup> See G. Rouwhorst, ‘La célébration de l’Eucharistie’ (1990), 58.

With regard to the last-mentioned sacrificial interpretation of the breaking of the bread, attested by Ephrem, it may be remarked that it does not appear to be an isolated fact. It fits in remarkably well with two other phenomena that seem to be typical of the regions around and east of Antioch: the textual transmission of 1Cor. 11:24 and the formulation of the institution narrative in some Eastern fourth century anaphoras. To begin with the former phenomenon, the transmission of 1Cor. 11:24, a great number of manuscripts adds to the words ‘this is my body for you’ the participle passive of a Greek verb, either ‘*didomenon*’, or ‘*thruptomenon*’ or ‘*kloomenon*’. ‘*Kloomenon*’ is the word which is met most frequently: it appears in the majority of the Greek manuscripts: in quotations by John Chrysostom, Basil of Caesarea, Theodoret of Cyrus as well as in the Syriac *Peshitta*.<sup>36</sup> It seems very natural to assume that a) this textual variant implies a reference to Christ’s approaching sacrificial death and b) that it reflects a liturgical tradition. The plausibility of this interpretation is further reinforced by the wording of the institution narrative found in several Eastern anaphoras, especially in the various versions of Basil and James. These texts add to the words ‘this is my body (for you)’ the word ‘*kloomenon*’ (broken) which is again followed by the words: *eis aphenin hamartion* (for the forgiveness of the sins). This obviously betrays a sacrificial interpretation of the breaking of the bread.<sup>37</sup>

This being the case, we may again note a remarkable difference with the Eucharist as attested by Western sources of the third and fourth centuries. Most strikingly, I did not find any reference to the breaking of bread in the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose. As for the works of Augustine, I have found only one reference to the ritual of the breaking of bread (*Epistula* 149), but very tellingly, it is understood as the dividing of the whole loaf into pieces. This interpretation of the ritual of the distribution of the loaf has nothing to do with Christ’s sacrificial death. It is rather connected with a characteristically Augustinian concept of the Eucharist which strongly emphasizes the fact that the faithful share in the One Bread which symbolizes the Church which is the Body of Christ. Finally, I would like to add that the textual transmission of 1Cor. 11:24 in the majority of the Latin manuscripts fits in remarkably well with these data: the majority of the manuscripts of the *Vetus Latina* as well as the *Vulgate* do not insert in 1Cor. 11:24 the word ‘broken’, but the word ‘transmitted’ (*tradetur*).<sup>38</sup>

## 7. The offering of bread and wine by the faithful?

While dealing with the notion of sacrifice – and related concepts like offering – and differences between the regions around Antioch on the one hand and

<sup>36</sup> See for the references also: G. Rouwhorst, ‘Faire mémoire par un geste’ (2011), 83-4.

<sup>37</sup> See *ibid.* 82-3.

<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.* 83-4.

Western Christianity on the other hand, one may make another remarkable observation. One looks in vain for unambiguous traces of an offering of bread and wine by the faithful taking place after the liturgy of the Word and directly preceding the Eucharistic prayer, as it is attested by Augustin and the sources of the Roman liturgy. In the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, the word ‘offering’ (Syr. *qurbana*) occurs several times (that is, in the introductory dialogue, in a doxology concluding the thanksgiving after the *Sanctus*, in the intercession for the departed mentioned before and in the epiclesis) and it will in some way relate to the Eucharistic gift, but how it does, remains difficult to determine.<sup>39</sup> Anyway, there is no evidence that a ritualized offering of the Eucharistic elements by the faithful is implied.<sup>40</sup> For the rest, it is remarkable that, in so far as the sources derived from the regions east of Antioch make reference to sacrificial concepts, it is primarily, if not exclusively, in relation to the sacrificial death of Christ commemorated during the Eucharist and which might be symbolized by the breaking of the bread.<sup>41</sup>

## 8. Christian appropriation of pre-Christian meal practices and ritual traditions

The question finally may be raised to what degree the meal practices which have proven to be characteristic of – and to some extent also unique to – the churches from the region east of Antioch, were influenced by pre-Christian traditions. Assuming that the Christian meal traditions were not created out of nothing, it should be asked what pre-Christian meal customs, ritual traditions, prayer forms were continued, used and reinterpreted and reinvented by the Christian communities.

<sup>39</sup> See for the meaning and the difficulty of establishing the precise meaning of the concept of ‘offering’ in Addai and Mari: Brian Spinks, ‘Eucharistic Offering in the East Syrian Anaphoras’, in *id.*, *Prayers from the East* (Washington, D.C., 1993), 65-88, esp. 66-9.

<sup>40</sup> See in this connection also Gabriele Winkler, ‘Zur Erforschung orientalischer Anaphoren in liturgievergleichender Sicht III: Der Hinweis auf „die Gaben“ bzw. „das Opfer“ bei der Epiklese’, in Albert Gerhards and Klemens Richter (eds), *Das Opfer. Biblischer Anspruch und liturgische Gestalt* (Freiburg/Br., 2000), 216-33, esp. 220-4.

<sup>41</sup> See G. Rouwhorst, ‘Die Rolle des heiligen Geistes’ (2008), 178-9. See also Reinhard Messner, ‘Unterschiedliche Konzeptionen des Messopfers im Spiegel von Bedeutung und Deutung der Interzessionen des römischen Canon Missae’, in A. Gerhards and K. Richter (eds), *Das Opfer* (2000), 128-84, esp. 179-80. It may be added that the idea of an offering of the gifts appears in most oriental anaphoras in the anamneses following after the institution narrative. However, Gabriele Winkler has argued that this was initially not the case with the oldest versions, more particularly neither with the oldest version of the *Anaphora of Basil* – it is lacking in the oldest Armenian text – nor with the original (oldest) versions of some other anaphora’s (Syriac *Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles* and the oldest text of the *Anaphora of James*). See Gabriele Winkler, *Die Basilian-anaphora*, *Anaphorae orientales* 2, *Anaphorae armeniaca* 2 (Roma, 2005), esp. 735-41.

Here it should first of all be remarked that we do not find any trace of one specific type of *pagan* meal tradition which has recently received a lot of scholarly attention and is usually designated by the term 'symposium'. At least, this conclusion forces itself upon us, if we take this term to refer to a full-course communal supper, a banquet, being held in the evening and being followed by some sort of party or meeting (the *symposion* in the proper sense of the word). I do not deny that the symposium pattern sheds light on various early Christian meal traditions, such as those attested by Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians*, by Tertullian's *Apology* or by the so-called *Apostolic Tradition*. Nor do I have a problem with considering these meals as Christian *symposia*. But it does not make sense to extend the meaning of that word in such a way that it may include the ritual consumption of a little bit of bread and water or wine after baptism as found in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, the ascetic meals of wandering apostles, or the type of Eucharist described by Ephrem.

Actually, we only find two clear cases of pre-Christian influences (which are not directly related with pagan meal customs):

- 1) In some of the sources, we find allusions to or parallels with *Jewish* meal customs. We may recall in this regard the fact that in the Pseudo-Clementine writings mention is made of a prayer of thanksgiving at the end of the meal 'after the Jewish rite' (*Hom.* X 26,3; *Rec.* V 36,3-4). Moreover, the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* presents some remarkable parallels with Jewish prayer texts, for instance with the *Birkat ha-mazon*,<sup>42</sup> the thanksgiving said at the end of the meal, but also with the blessings preceding the recitation of the *Shema*.<sup>43</sup> Finally, it is well-known that the gesture of the breaking of the bread plays a role in Jewish tradition and is attested by ancient Jewish sources.
- 2) Already, Hans Lietzmann had observed that the epicleses of the *Acts of Thomas* present striking parallels with pagan Greek texts, especially with magical texts, which originally have no direct relationship with meals. They have some remarkable features in common, in particular the repeated, litany-like invocations asking a divine person to 'come' and to be present. Lietzmann already pointed to several magical papyri.<sup>44</sup> Recently, Susan Myers has drawn our attention to other parallels found in sources like Sappho's

<sup>42</sup> See Gerard Rouwhorst, 'Bénédiction, action de grâces, supplication. Les oraisons de la table dans le judaïsme et les célébrations eucharistiques des chrétiens syriaques', *Questions liturgiques* 61 (1980), 211-40, esp. 231-7.

<sup>43</sup> See especially Jacob Vellian, 'The Anaphoral Structure of Addai and Mari Compared to the Berakoth Preceding the Shema in the Synagogue Morning Service Contained in Seder R. Amram Gaon', *Le Muséon* 85 (1972), 201-23. See Bryan Spinks, 'The Original Form of the Anaphora of the Apostles: A Suggestion in the Light of Maronite *Sharar*', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 91 (1977), 146-61, rewritten version in *Prayers from the East* (1993), 21-36, esp. 22-4.

<sup>44</sup> H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (1926), 244-5 (English translation, 199).

prayers to Aphrodite and the Orphic hymns (roughly contemporaneous with the *Acts of Thomas*).<sup>45</sup>

Fascinating and helpful though the search for pre-Christian sources may be, it involves the risk of overlooking or underestimating the degree to which pre-Christian elements have been transformed in early Christianity and have been appropriated by early Christian communities. In this connection, I would like to make two observations:

First, non-Christian, pagan traditions may have influenced meal practices of the Christians in a negative way, that is, Christians may have avoided certain ritual elements or certain types of food, because they were associated by them with pagan rituals, especially with sacrificial cults. Thus, at least one of the reasons why meat does not appear at the menu of Christian communal meals, will have been given by the fact that it was an essential part of what Andrew McGowan has called the 'cuisine of sacrifice',<sup>46</sup> and because meat that was sold, might have been sacrificed before to a pagan god. The taboo on the drinking of wine may have been caused by the same concern (although here the available evidence seems to me to be less conclusive).

Secondly, the fact that certain pre-Christian traditions have been preserved by Christian communities, should not cause us to overlook the profound transformations those traditions underwent, as a result of their Christian appropriation. Tracing the origins of a certain ritual element, like the invocation of the Spirit, does not suffice to fully understand the meaning it has in the setting of the Christian meal of which it has become part. Thus, the fact that the epicleses of the *Acts of Thomas* present striking parallels with several pagan sources, magical or otherwise, does not in itself account for the fact that the Holy Spirit is invoked during the Eucharist. Other specific factors must have played a role as well, perhaps even a more important one. As I have argued elsewhere in more detail, it seems that the ultimate root of all epicleses that are found in the *Acts of Thomas* and elsewhere – either of oil, water, bread and wine – lies in the ritual of baptism, that is, in the invocation of the Name(s) of Christ or the Trinity pronounced during this ritual.<sup>47</sup> A similar observation may be made concerning the breaking of bread. True, this gesture appears at the beginning of Jewish meals, but it is remarkable that in the *Mishna* and *Tosefta*, it is not mentioned at all, the emphasis being rather laid upon the pronouncement of the *blessing (berakah)*. The accentuation of the breaking of the bread seems to me to be a specifically Christian phenomenon, whatever meanings may have been attributed to it by Christians.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> S. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses* (2010), 167-75.

<sup>46</sup> A. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists* (1999), especially 60-7.

<sup>47</sup> See G. Rouwhorst, 'Die Rolle des heiligen Geistes' (2008), 181-4.

<sup>48</sup> See *id.*, 'The Roots of the Early Christian Eucharist' (2007), 305-6; *id.*, 'Faire mémoire par un geste' (2011), 79-80.



To conclude, the fact that sacrificial terms are used to interpret elements of the Christian Eucharist, does not alter the fact that the whole ritual of sacrifice – as performed in Jewish, Greek and Roman temples – has been profoundly transformed in early Christianity. Of course, in some of the sources – at least in the *madrashe* of Ephrem and in the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari* –, the Eucharist is described in sacrificial terms. But, after all, what has the Eucharist underlying those sources to do with the ritual slaughtering of sheep or goats?

The Eucharist, as well as the other communal meals, as they developed in Christian communities east of Antioch, owed a lot to pre-Christian traditions, both Jewish and pagan, but they were not less affected by the fact that these traditions were appropriated and radically reinvented by Christians.





# A Fragmentary Sixth-Century East Syrian Anaphora

Anthony GELSTON, Durham, UK

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the ‘Sixth-Century Fragments of an East-Syrian Anaphora’ edited by Richard H. Connolly in *Oriens Christianus* NS 12-14 (1925), 99-128. Consideration is given first to the date of the manuscript itself and to that of the text it contains. There follows an examination of the fragmentary nature of the text, and the limitations that this imposes on its evaluation. Finally there is an examination of the criteria for its East-Syrian provenance, and an attempt to relate it to the other known East-Syrian anaphoras.

This paper examines the ‘Sixth-Century Fragments of an East-Syrian Anaphora’ edited by Richard H. Connolly in *Oriens Christianus* NS 12-14 (1925), 99-128. In that article Connolly recounts the earlier history of the publication of this document, followed by a printed edition of the Syriac text, in which letters that cannot be identified with full certainty are marked by half-brackets, and letters or words that are conjectural are marked by square brackets. The text is accompanied by a translation into Latin and followed by a series of notes, many concerning the uncertainties of the text, but some commenting on its contents. The article nowhere addresses comprehensively the questions which would normally be considered in the introduction to an edition, and this paper offers a preliminary attempt to supply this omission. An examination of the manuscript itself in the British Library (Additional Ms 14669, ff. 20-21) has demonstrated the care and accuracy of Connolly’s work in editing this text, and it is doubtful whether any improvement of it could be made. At the same time care needs to be taken to distinguish between readings which are certain, and those which are only probable or conjectural.

The first question to be considered is the date, and this needs to be subdivided into two separate issues: the date of the manuscript itself, and that of the text it contains. A preliminary consideration is that the manuscript presumably predates the reforms of the patriarch Isho‘yabh III (650-59), in which the number of anaphoras used in the East-Syrian Church was reduced to the three still in current use, those of Addai and Mari, Theodore and Nestorius.<sup>1</sup> Since the earliest extant text of these three anaphoras, the Mar Esh‘aya Hudra, dates from the tenth century, the manuscript under consideration must be the oldest

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to simply as *Addai and Mari*, *Theodore* and *Nestorius*.

extant East-Syrian anaphoral text, and is thus of great importance for the early history of the East-Syrian anaphoral tradition.

As for the date of the manuscript, this seems to be derived from the description of William Wright:<sup>2</sup> 'Written ... in a fine Edessene hand of the vi<sup>th</sup> cent.' There is no extant colophon affording evidence of a specific date, so that the only evidence for the date of the manuscript is the palaeographical assessment. It needs to be remembered that palaeographical evidence can afford at best only an approximate date, and that there can sometimes be a margin of doubt of one or even two centuries.<sup>3</sup>

Of greater interest is the question of the date of the actual liturgical text. It is unlikely that the manuscript is an autograph of this text, since it seems to contain at least one scribal error. This is to be found at the end of line 22 of column 2 of fol. 21b, where a singular suffix denoting 'me' occurs in a context consisting of a whole series of verbs with the plural suffix denoting 'us'. In itself this fact contributes little to the dating of the anaphora, since a particular copy may be nearly as old as the autograph itself. But it is at least consistent with the possibility that the anaphora is older than the sixth century. The only other criterion available is that of the content of the anaphoral text itself. One significant indication is to be found in the quotation of the credal formula 'God from God' in the Christological section of the Post-Sanctus,<sup>4</sup> which can hardly be earlier than mid-fourth century. A comparison of this anaphora with the other extant East-Syrian anaphoras may yield some further indications of its date in relation to them.

Unfortunately there is no certainty about the dates of the three other extant East-Syrian anaphoras. The oldest parts of *Addai and Mari* may be as old as the third or even the second century, but all that can be said with any reasonable certainty is that the common core of this anaphora and that of the Maronite anaphora *Sharar* must be older than the separation of the East and West Syrian Churches after the Council of Ephesus in 431.<sup>5</sup> As for *Theodore* and *Nestorius*, some of the manuscripts of these anaphoras have colophons connecting them with Mar Aba, who was Catholicos between 540 and 552, which would suggest an approximate date of origin in the first half of the sixth century.<sup>6</sup> The sections of the anaphoras where development can most easily be traced are the Institution Narrative and the Epiclesis.

<sup>2</sup> William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1870-72), I 204, CCLV.

<sup>3</sup> See the general remarks about dating Syriac biblical manuscripts in *List of Old Testament Peshitta Manuscripts*, edited by the Peshitta Institute, Leiden University (Leiden, 1961), v, ix.

<sup>4</sup> At fol. 20a, column 1, line 10.

<sup>5</sup> See Anthony Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford, 1992), 67-76.

<sup>6</sup> For a recent brief outline of the question see Anthony Gelston, 'The East Syrian Eucharistic Prayers', in Melanie C. Ross and Simon Jones (eds), *The Serious Business of Worship: Essays in Honour of Bryan D. Spinks* (London and New York, 2010), 55-64, 57.

There are two senses in which the text of this document is fragmentary. It must first be noted that Connolly (p. 100) correctly pointed out that the two leaves are bound in the wrong order, so that fol. 21 should precede fol. 20. It is immediately clear that the document is incomplete at both the beginning and the end. There is no opening dialogue. At the point where the text becomes legible, after six lines of which only the last letter or letters are extant, the Pre-Sanctus has already reached the introduction to the Sanctus itself, which is indicated merely by the *incipit* 'Holy, holy, holy'. The end of the anaphora is reached at line 23 of the last column (fol. 20b, column 2), followed by the title and ten partially complete lines of a Postcommunion prayer. The scope of the anaphora is thus complete apart from the absence of any opening dialogue and of the greater part of the Pre-Sanctus.

The other sense in which the text is fragmentary is that substantial parts of the original parchment have been torn away altogether, while there are also a number of passages where the writing is hard to decipher because of damp or other damage. The most serious lacunae occur in the sixth and seventh of the eight columns, in which most of the top half as well as the last few lines are missing. There are also lacunae in the top lines of the first, fourth, fifth and eighth columns. The best preserved columns are the second and third. As far as the content of the anaphora is concerned, the last part of the Pre-Sanctus is extant, as well as most of the Post-Sanctus. A possibly incomplete Institution Narrative is preserved in the second half of the fifth column, together with a few lines of the Intercessions in the sixth column. The Epiclesis is partially extant in the seventh column, as is the closing Doxology in the seventh and eighth columns.

The initial classification of this anaphora as East-Syrian rested on the structure of the prayer, which stands out clearly despite the fragmentary state of the manuscript. The position of the Intercessions before the Epiclesis is a distinctive characteristic of the East-Syrian anaphoral tradition, and sufficient to establish the classification of this anaphora as East-Syrian. Further indications of an East-Syrian provenance emerge from more detailed comparison with the other three extant East-Syrian anaphoras.

It will be convenient to begin with a consideration of the Institution Narrative, which is probably the most significant part of the extant text.<sup>7</sup> The Narrative begins unusually with a reference to the Ascension, and states that before he left the earth the Lord left with us a rite through which he might be united with us at all times. It relates how he took the bread and wine, and 'made it holy' – or, we might almost translate, 'consecrated it' – with a spiritual blessing. This suggests an allusion to consecration through an Epiclesis of the Spirit rather than through the dominical words, of which there is no mention in the extant text, although this is the point where it would be natural to include

<sup>7</sup> A translation of this paragraph, as completed fairly minimally by Connolly, is given in A. Gelston, *Addai and Mari* (1992), 75.

them. Moreover the reference to the taking of the bread and wine, and their hallowing with a spiritual blessing as a single act, is not easily compatible with the citation of the dominical words separately over the bread and the wine.

At this point there is a substantial lacuna in the text, and where it resumes the Intercessions are already in progress. It is impossible to say whether the Institution Narrative was already complete at this point, or whether there was a further continuation in the lacuna, although it may be felt that it had already reached a natural conclusion. As I argued in my *Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari*,<sup>8</sup> 'it seems to stand half-way between a full Institution Narrative of the normal kind, in which the dominical words are quoted, and the kind of allusion to the Last Supper that is to be found in ... the Anaphora of Addai and Mari.' The fact that the other two East-Syrian anaphoras, *Theodore* and *Nestorius*, do contain the dominical words in their Institution Narratives suggests that the fragmentary text under consideration may be dated somewhere between *Addai and Mari* on the one hand and *Theodore* and *Nestorius* on the other.

The Epiclesis is another point where we might hope to find details suggesting a relatively early or late date for the Anaphora. The Epiclesis in *Addai and Mari* prays for the Holy Spirit to come on the elements and sanctify them, so that they may be for the fruits of communion to the communicants. The Epiclesis in *Nestorius* adds to this a prayer that the Spirit will make the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ, changing them, while that in *Theodore* asks that the bread and wine may become the holy body and precious blood of the Lord.

Such details are in fact tantalizingly elusive in the anaphora under consideration. The beginning of the Epiclesis is lost in the lacuna between it and the preceding Intercessions, and there is a further lacuna of two and a half lines in the middle of it. At the end it leads into the closing doxology. Even in the extant lines many of the words are incomplete. The Spirit is not mentioned explicitly in the extant part of the text, although there is no reason to doubt that there was an invocation of the Spirit, particularly in view of the allusion to the 'spiritual blessing' in the Institution Narrative. The main part of the extant text seems to consist of a series of fruits of communion similar to that in the Epiclesis in *Addai and Mari*. One such element, the forgiveness of sins, is found in our anaphora in common with all the other three East-Syrian anaphoras.

Connolly's assessment: 'In contrast with the liturgy of Addai and Mari our text appears to have contained an advanced form of Epiklesis'<sup>9</sup> seems overconfident, and relies heavily on his reconstruction of the crucial verbs as 'make' and 'be' in lines 15 and 21 respectively. In the absence of clear evidence as to the verbs used it is hardly possible to assess the relative degree of development of the Epiclesis in this anaphora.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 75.

<sup>9</sup> R.H. Connolly, *Sixth-Century Fragments* (1925), 127.

East-Syrian characteristics are to be found in other sections of the prayer. In the Pre-Sanctus the joining of the earthly congregation with the heavenly beings in offering this hymn of praise is a theme common to the other three East-Syrian anaphoras, although the expression 'we also' comes after rather than before the Sanctus in *Addai and Mari* and *Nestorius*.

The Post-Sanctus is the longest and best preserved section of the anaphora. It is also longer than the corresponding sections in the other East-Syrian anaphoras. Like *Theodore* and *Nestorius* it begins with a link to the Sanctus, 'Holy are you', and it includes several references to the name of God. There are a number of instances of Semitic parallelism, and several pairs of contrasting statements, especially in the section on the nature and attributes of God. It is unique among the East-Syrian anaphoras in including a long section on the incomparability of God, although *Nestorius* includes a compact treatment of this theme in its Pre-Sanctus. In common with *Theodore* and *Nestorius* our anaphora includes a reference to creation out of nothing. There is a short intermediate doxology with Amen in the middle of this section,<sup>10</sup> which may be compared with the intermediate doxologies at the end of the Post-Sanctus in *Addai and Mari* and near the beginning of the Post-Sanctus in *Theodore*.

The beginning and end of the Intercessions are lost in two substantial lacunae. In many of the twenty consecutive partially extant lines little more than one word is clearly legible. There does seem to be a prayer for faithful kings, as in *Nestorius*, and there is a prayer for the blessing of the 'crown of the year' (Ps. 65:12) similar to the identical prayer in *Theodore* and *Nestorius*.

What conclusions then may we draw about the possible date of this anaphora? The inclusion of the Nicene phrase 'God from God' makes a date earlier than the mid-fourth century unlikely. The apparent absence of the dominical words from the Institution Narrative suggests an earlier rather than a later date. Agreements on points of detail with *Theodore* and especially *Nestorius*, on the other hand, suggest a date not a great deal earlier than these anaphoras. Jacob Vadakkal, who made a brief comparative study of our anaphora with *Theodore*,<sup>11</sup> concluded that *Theodore* was the later of the two. In general our anaphora seems to derive from a period between *Addai and Mari* on the one hand and *Theodore* and *Nestorius* on the other, but perhaps closer to the latter than to the former. In view of the scanty evidence surveyed in this paper we might hazard a guess that this anaphora dates from the middle to late fifth century. At all events, although incomplete, it is of considerable importance for the history of the East-Syrian anaphora.

<sup>10</sup> At fol. 21b, column 2, lines 4-7.

<sup>11</sup> Jacob Vadakkal, *The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India Publications 129 (Kottayam, 1989), 230-4.



## **‘Let Us Put Away All Earthly Care’: Mysticism and the *Cherubikon* of the Byzantine Rite**

Richard BARRETT, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

### ABSTRACT

The *Cherubikon*, sung during the Great Entrance in the Byzantine Rite, has been discussed in a number of different ways in the literature – as a theatrical component of the Divine Liturgy (White, 2006 *et al.*), in terms of musicology (Raasted, 1986 *et al.*), and as a ‘synecdoche’ of the entire Eucharistic liturgy (Taft, 1995). This article seeks to discuss the *Cherubikon* in terms of how it is understood in Late Antiquity as describing the liturgical action as mystical experience. The text sung on regular Sundays refers to worshippers as ‘mystically representing’ (μυστικῶς εἰκονίζοντες) the Cherubim; the text for Thursday of Holy Week describes the Eucharist as ‘the mystical supper’ (τοῦ Δειπνοῦ τοῦ μυστικοῦ); and the text sung for the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on weekdays during Great Lent refers to the ‘mystical sacrifice’ (θυσία μυστική). Germanus of Constantinople’s eighth century commentary on the rite describes the hymn and the multisensory liturgical action as being a corporeal gloss on the spiritual reality they describe – the ‘mystical, living, and unbloody service’ (τῆς μυστικῆς καὶ ζωοθύτου καὶ ἀναιμάκτου λατρείας, 37.17-8) – in what Taft (*ibid.* 54) calls a ‘prolepsis’ of the whole Eucharistic action. Germanus uses the same Greek verb to describe the correspondence of the ritual event to the spiritual reality, εἰκονίζω, as the hymn itself uses to describe the relationship of the worshippers to the Cherubim; this is a term traceable to Neoplatonic authors, such as Plotinus, who uses the verb to describe the created order as ‘an image continuously being imaged’ (ὁ κόσμος εἰκὼν ἀεὶ εἰκονιζόμενος, *Enneads* II 3.18). The engagement with Neoplatonic mysticism is also demonstrable through the influence of Maximus the Confessor, whose *Mystagogy* Germanus quotes in his commentary (Meyendorff, 1984, 105-7). As understood by Late Antique authors such as Germanus, then, the *Cherubikon*’s use of μυστικῶς indicates a conception of the Byzantine Rite that maps onto Iamblichus’ three degrees of prayer – introductory, conjunctive, and ineffable unification (*De mysteriis* V 26), with the Liturgy of the Catechumens serving as the introductory stage, the Great Entrance the conjunctive stage, and the Eucharist itself as ineffable unification.

The Offertory of the Byzantine Rite, the so-called *Cherubikon* or ‘Cherubic Hymn’ sung during the Great Entrance of the Eucharistic gifts, is a pivotal moment in the Divine Liturgy. The bread and wine that are to be consecrated are processed through the nave of the church to the altar, accompanied by a great censing, and the text of the hymn accompanying the liturgical action



describes the earthly worshippers as ‘mystically representing’ (μυστικῶς εἰκονίζοντες) the heavenly worship of the Cherubim and hosts of angels. What does it mean that the *Cherubikon* describes this representation as ‘mystical’, particularly for Late Antique liturgical commentators such as Germanus of Constantinople? How does the idea of ‘mystical experience’ in a Late Antique context describe whatever connection may be understood between the spiritual reality of the hymn text and the liturgical action? It is the contention of this study that in Late Antiquity, this description of the worship experience as ‘mystical’ is a result of Christian engagement with Neoplatonic concepts, liturgical action, and sacramental theology.

There are four *Cherubika* used in the Byzantine Rite; the text sung for a typical Sunday celebration in the Divine Liturgies of St John Chrysostom and St Basil, the text sung for the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on weekdays during Great Lent, the text sung on Thursday of Holy Week, and the text sung on Saturday of Holy Week and for the Divine Liturgy of St James.<sup>1</sup> They are as follows:

#### A. Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Sunday celebration

Οἱ τὰ Χερουβεὶμ μυστικῶς εἰκονίζοντες, καὶ τῇ ζωοποιῷ Τριάδι τὸν τρισάγιον ὕμνον προσάδοντες, πᾶσαν τὴν βιοτικὴν ἀποθώμεθα μέριμναν. Ὡς τὸν βασιλέα τῶν ὅλων ὑποδεξόμενοι, ταῖς ἀγγελικαῖς ἀοράτως δορυφορούμενον τάξεσιν. Ἀλληλούϊα.

We (who are) mystically representing the Cherubim and singing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, let us put away all earthly care, as we are about to receive the king of all, invisibly escorted by the angelic orders. Alleluia.

#### B. Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Νῦν αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σὺν ἡμῖν ἀοράτως λατρεύουσιν, ἰδοὺ γὰρ εἰσπορεύεται ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. Ἴδοὺ θυσία μυστικὴ τετελειωμένη δορυφορεῖται, πιστεῖ καὶ πόθῳ προσέλθωμεν, ἵνα μέτοχοι ζωῆς αἰωνίου γενώμεθα. Ἀλληλούϊα.

Now the powers of heaven invisibly worship with us, for behold the King of glory enters. Behold the mystical sacrifice, being already accomplished, is escorted. With faith and love let us draw near, in order that we might become sharers of eternal life. Alleluia.

#### C. Holy Thursday

Τοῦ δείπνου σου τοῦ μυστικοῦ σήμερον, Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, κοινωνόν με παράλαβε, οὐ μὴ γὰρ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου το μυστήριον εἶπω, οὐ φίλημά σοι δώσω καθάπερ ὁ

<sup>1</sup> Mathews only refers to the typical Sunday hymn as the *Cherubikon*; Taft treats the four as a group, but only explicitly refers to the Sunday version as a *Cherubicon*. For purposes of convenience, the four will be collectively referred to as *Cherubika*. See discussion and texts in Robert F. Taft, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of the Gifts and Other Pre-Anaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* (Rome, 1975), 54-6; Thomas F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, 1971), 156-60.

Ἰούδας, ἀλλ' ὡς ὁ ληστής ὁμολογῶ σοι, μνήσθητι μου, Κύριε, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

Of your mystical supper, Son of God, receive me today as a partaker, for I will not speak to your enemies of your sacrament, neither will I give you a kiss as Judas (did), but as the thief I confess you: remember me, O Lord, in your kingdom.

#### **D. Holy Saturday and the Divine Liturgy of St James**

Σιγησάτω πᾶσα σάρξ βροτεία, καὶ στήτω μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου, καὶ μηδὲν γήϊνον ἐν ἑαυτῇ λογιζέσθω, ὁ γὰρ Βασιλεὺς τῶν Βασιλευόντων, καὶ Κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων προσέρχεται σφραγιασθῆναι καὶ δοθῆναι εἰς βρῶσιν τοῖς πιστοῖς, προηγουνται δὲ τούτου οἱ Χοροὶ τῶν Ἀγγέλων μετὰ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, τὰ πολυόμματα Χερουβείμ καὶ τὰ ἐξαπτέρυγα Σεραφεῖμ, τὰς ὄψεις καλύπτοντα καὶ βοῶντα τὸν ὕμνον, Ἀλληλουῖα.

Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling, and consider in himself nothing earthly, for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is coming forth to be slain and to be given to the faithful as food. The choirs of angels precede him, with all principalities and powers, the many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, their faces covered, and crying out the hymn. Alleluia.

Of these four hymn texts, three use a form of the Greek adjective *μυστικός*. The typical Sunday usage employs the adverbial form *μυστικῶς* ‘mystically’,<sup>2</sup> modifying the present participle *εἰκονίζοντες* ‘representing’ or ‘give the semblance/image of’, and the participial phrase is the subject of the hortatory subjunctive verb *ἀποθώμεθα* ‘let us put away’. The Presanctified Liturgy text uses it in the nominative case, modifying the noun *θυσία*, the ‘mystical sacrifice’ of the Eucharist. The Holy Thursday text uses the genitive case to modify the noun *δείπνος*, the title of ‘mystical supper’ that is also applied to the Eucharist. The Holy Saturday hymn does not use the word, but the images of Cherubim, Seraphim, and other powers of heaven are similar to those used in the Sunday and Presanctified celebrations.

To give a brief outline of the Divine Liturgy for working purposes, there are two parts, broadly speaking – what are conventionally referred to as the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the Liturgy of the Faithful. The Liturgy of the Catechumens involves the entrance of the clergy into the church with the Gospel book accompanied by incense and singing of psalms and hymns, the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel for the day, and the homily – that is, the didactic portion of the Liturgy. The catechumens – those receiving instruction for baptism – are then dismissed from the church, and the Liturgy of the Faithful begins. The Liturgy of the Faithful involves the recitation of the Creed, the Great Entrance into the church with the bread and wine, the consecration of the Eucharist, and

<sup>2</sup> The eighth century *Barberini Gr.* 336 Euchologion, the oldest known manuscript to document the Byzantine liturgy, also uses *μυστικῶς* in the rubrics to indicate when a celebrant is to say a prayer ‘secretly’ or quietly. This is presumably not the meaning intended in the context of the *Cherubikon*.

its reception. While neither Germanus nor Maximus use this conventional terminology, both do indicate the dismissal of the catechumens as the principal point of division in the structure of the Divine Liturgy.<sup>3</sup>

The historical chronicle compiled by the historian conventionally referred to as Cedrenus records that the *Cherubikon* was added to the liturgy in the ninth year of Justin II's reign (573-4).<sup>4</sup> It has been discussed in a number of different ways in the literature – as a theatrical component of the Divine Liturgy,<sup>5</sup> as the subject of musicological study,<sup>6</sup> and as a 'synecdoche' of the entire Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>7</sup> It also seems to represent something of a puzzlement to liturgical scholars such as Dom Gregory Dix, who at one point describes the Great Entrance and *Cherubikon* with awed reverence in comparison to the somewhat muted Offertory of the Roman Rite:

We find on the one hand the gorgeous Eastern 'Great Entrance' while the choir sings the thrilling *Cherubikon* and the people prostrate in adoration, and on the other the pouring of a little wine into the chalice by the Western priest at the altar with a muttered prayer while the choir sings a snippet of a psalm and the people sit.<sup>8</sup>

However, Dix can't seem to quite make up his mind, referring to it elsewhere with his stamp of disapproval, 'unprimitive' – that is, a post-apostolic, and certainly post-Constantinian, development – and claims that it is an 'embarrassment to Eastern theologians' who have to explain why such adoration is being given to *unconsecrated* gifts,<sup>9</sup> deciding elsewhere that at least in part it is because, except for this moment and the presentation of the chalice after the consecration, the action of the Eucharist occurs out of the view of laity.<sup>10</sup>

Taft, on the other hand, sees 'primitiveness' in the *Cherubikon*, arguing that the Great Entrance needs to be understood in a broader liturgical context than simply the procession through the church.<sup>11</sup> Rather, for Taft the function of the hymn is not just to cover the action, but also to emphasize the preparatory

<sup>3</sup> Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy* 15: '... the dismissal of the catechumens signifies the passing from material things ... and the entrance of those who are worthy into the spiritual world...' Germanus 35: 'The catechumens go out because they are uninitiated into the baptism of God and the mysteries of Christ.'

<sup>4</sup> Cedrenus, *Hist. Comp.* (PG 121, 748).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Walker White, *The Artifice of Eternity: A Study of Liturgical and Theatrical Practices in Byzantium*, PhD (2006).

<sup>6</sup> Jørgen Raasted, 'Byzantine Liturgical Music and Its Meaning for the Byzantine Worshipper', in Rosemary Morris (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium: Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Twentieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Manchester, 1986* (Birmingham, 1990), 49-60.

<sup>7</sup> Robert F. Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm', in *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), 45-75.

<sup>8</sup> Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1945; reprint, 1975), 121.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 289.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 483.

<sup>11</sup> R. Taft, *The Great Entrance* (1975), 67-8.

nature of the action for the individual person, noting that in the text ‘Let us put away all earthly care, as we are receiving the king of all’, the future participle ὑποδεξόμενοι most likely refers to the reception of Communion.<sup>12</sup>

While this analysis of the use of μυστικός might at first glance seem to read too much into a very brief phrase, its significance becomes clearer when seen in the relief of the whole problem of mysticism itself in the Late Antique East. Andrew Louth, in the afterword to the second edition of *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (2006), argues that to speak of ‘mysticism’ in Greek Patristic literature is anachronistic, and that the adjective μυστικός and its derivatives are principally used to discuss the meaning of scripture, the liturgy, and then finally the common Christian life. That is to say, per Louth, this term in a Late Antique Greek Christian context refers to experiences that occur in an *ecclesial*, rather than an individual context. Mystical experience in this literature, even for somebody like Pseudo-Dionysius, is not something elite; it is merely, as Louth puts it, ‘the lived reality of Christianity itself.’<sup>13</sup>

Certainly this ‘mystical’ imaging of the heavenly powers can be seen as suggesting an incarnational, bodily aspect of the Liturgy,<sup>14</sup> the presence of cherubim is evocative of scriptural precedent in the Old as well as New Testaments,<sup>15</sup> and the idea that earthly worship was somehow linked to heavenly worship may be dated back to the Jewish temple.<sup>16</sup> The hymn may be seen as an *ekphrasis*, in which, as Patricia Cox Miller explains it, the text brings into view, and yet simultaneously suspends, the gap between earth and heaven.<sup>17</sup> However, there remain a number of relevant strands of intellectual tradition that need to be assessed in order to adequately account for the issues surrounding the *Cherubikon*. Cyril of Jerusalem, writing in 347 or 348, does not mention an offertory or a Great Entrance in his *Mystagogical Lecture* on the Eucharistic celebration, but the following commentary on the anaphora, the section of the Liturgy when the Eucharist is consecrated, appears pertinent to the present discussion:

The priest cries aloud: ‘Lift up your hearts’. For truly ought we in that most awful hour to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earth and earthly things. The priest then in effect bids all in that hour abandon all earthly cares (βιωτικάς) and

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 66.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, 2007), 200-14.

<sup>14</sup> This has not yet been given a complete account, but see, for example, Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage XLII (Berkeley and London, 2006), 57-98.

<sup>15</sup> For example, 1Chron. 28:18 and Rev. 4:8. See John Wilkinson, *From Synagogue to Church: The Traditional Design* (London, 2002), 118-9.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 51-67.

<sup>17</sup> Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2009), 10.

to have their heart in heaven with the merciful God ... After this we make mention of heaven, and earth, and sea; of the sun and moon; of the stars and all the creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible; of angels, archangels, virtues, dominions, principalities, power, thrones; of the Cherubim with many faces: in effect repeating that call of David's, *Magnify the Lord with me*.<sup>18</sup>

The admonition to lay aside earthly cares is here presented as a gloss on the priest's command to the laity to 'lift up your hearts'. On the whole in Cyril there is no real sense here of participation in a heavenly reality, but rather a presentation of the Eucharistic rite as a gathering of the people with the priest. The mind of the worshippers is to be set on the heavenly things mentioned at the altar, but Cyril does not tell those he is catechizing that they are present with them.

Writing somewhat later in the fourth century, John Chrysostom, in his treatise *On the Priesthood*, describes angels at the altar when the presbyter consecrates the Eucharist:

And whenever [the priest] invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers the most dread sacrifice, and constantly handles the common Lord of all, tell me what rank shall we give him? What great purity and what real piety must we demand of him? For consider what manner of hands they ought to be which minister in these things, and of what kind his tongue which utters such words, and ought not the soul which receives so great a spirit to be purer and holier than anything in the world? At such a time angels stand by the Priest; and the whole sanctuary (τὸ βῆμα), and the space round about the altar (περὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον), is filled with the powers of heaven, in honor of Him who lies thereon. For this, indeed, is capable of being proved from the very rites which are being then celebrated. I myself, moreover, have heard some one once relate, that a certain aged, venerable man, accustomed to see revelations, used to tell him, that he being thought worthy of a vision of this kind, at such a time, saw, on a sudden, so far as was possible for him, a multitude of angels, clothed in shining robes, and encircling the altar (τὸ θυσιαστήριον κυκλούντων), and bending down, as one might see soldiers in the presence of their King, and for my part I believe it. Moreover another told me, without learning it from some one else, but as being himself thought worthy to be both an ear and eye witness of it, that, in the case of those who are about to depart hence, if they happen to be partakers of the mysteries (τῶν μυστηρίων μετασχόντες), with a pure conscience, when they are about to breathe their last, angels keep guard over them for the sake of what they have received, and bear them hence ... For the Priest ought not only to be thus pure as one who has been dignified with so high a ministry, but very discreet, and skilled in many matters, and to be as well versed in earthly cares (τὰ βιωτικά) as they who are engaged in the world, and yet to be free from them all more than the recluses who occupy the mountains.<sup>19</sup>

Here Chrysostom anticipates many of the themes that are present in the four *Cherubika*; heavenly figures attend the priest as he carries out the Eucharistic

<sup>18</sup> Cyr., *Mystagogiae* V 4, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Chrys., *De sac.* VI 4.

sacrifice. Here is concern over τὰ βιωτικά, the earthly cares from which that the priest must be able to be free at the time of celebration of the Eucharist. In many respects the imagery Chrysostom uses is closest to the language of the *Cherubikon* for the Presanctified Liturgy – ‘Now the powers of heaven invisibly worship with us, for behold the King of glory enters. Behold the mystical sacrifice, being already accomplished, is escorted. With faith and love let us draw near, in order that we might become sharers of eternal life.’ However, Chrysostom – as one might expect from a treatise titled ‘On the Priesthood’ – is principally interested in locating this spiritual reality at the altar with the celebrant. He is not discussing it in terms that generalize it out to the worshipping assembly in the nave of the church, nor is there the element of the correspondence between the earthly liturgy and the heavenly liturgy. Rather, Chrysostom appears to be conceiving of the two as accompanying, rather than ‘imaging’, each other.

Writing in Antioch at roughly the same time as Chrysostom,<sup>20</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia also does not mention an elaborate Great Entrance, but rather discusses the transfer of the bread and wine to the altar occurring *before* the Eucharistic celebration proper, and while there is some imagery in common with Cyril and Chrysostom, he uses a far more allegorical approach to explaining the relationship between the earthly and spiritual actions taking place:

It is the deacons who bring out this oblation ... which they arrange and place on the awe-inspiring altar, a vision ... awe-inspiring even to the onlookers. By means of the symbols we must see Christ who is now being led out and going forth to his passion, and who, in another moment, is laid out for us on the altar ... And when the offering that is about to be presented is brought out in the sacred vessels, the patens and chalices, you must think that Christ our Lord is coming out, led to his passion ... by the invisible hosts of ministers ... who were also present when the passion of salvation was being accomplished ... And when they bring it out, they place it on the holy altar to represent fully the passion ... It is evident that there were angels beside the tomb, seated on the stone ... And now too should one not depict as an image the similitude of this angelic liturgy? [...] After this [the priest] offers thanksgiving for himself for having been appointed servant of such an awe-inspiring mystery. He prays also for the grace of the Holy Spirit ... as he, being infinitely beneath the dignity of such a ministry, draws near to things far above himself.<sup>21</sup>

Rather than the glory of the heavenly hosts present or recalled at the altar, for Theodore the angels are present to confirm the image of the passion of Christ, and the image of the heavenly liturgy is linked to the presence of the angels at Christ’s tomb. This is language that bears similarity to the *Cherubikon* for Holy Saturday – ‘... the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is coming forth to be slain

<sup>20</sup> See review of the scholarship on this point in R. Taft, *The Great Entrance* (1975), 35<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, Baptism and Eucharist* (Homily 15) V 85-9.

and to be given to the faithful as food.’ There is an explicit sense of the liturgy participating in some kind of concurrent heavenly reality, with the priest ‘[drawing] near to things far above himself.’

The Great Entrance does not itself, as Dix observes, have an exact analogue in the Western liturgies. Nonetheless, writing in the West in the early seventh century, Isidore of Seville describes the *illatio* (preface), the priest’s prayer before the consecration of the bread and wine, in terms similar to Cyril’s:

The fifth [prayer of the Mass] then follows, which is the preface for the sanctification of the offering, in which the universe both of earthly creatures and of heavenly powers (*‘uirtutum que caelestium’*) is called forth for the praise of God, and the *Hosanna in excelsis* is chanted because, the savior having been born of the root of David, salvation will reach from the earth all the way to the heavens (*‘mundo usque ad excelsa peruenit’*).<sup>22</sup>

Thus, while not precisely sharing the same liturgical context in terms of detail, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Isidore of Seville convey the same fundamental concept between the fourth and seventh centuries in far-flung parts of the Roman world that in some way, the earthly liturgy relates to the heavenly liturgy, particularly in moments that are preparatory to the Eucharist, and the images of the range of heavenly powers are invoked in describing this relationship.

With that in mind – Germanus of Constantinople’s eighth century commentary on the rite describes the hymn and the multisensory liturgical action as being a corporeal gloss on the spiritual reality they describe:

By means of the procession of the deacons and the representation of the fans, which are in the likeness of the seraphim, the Cherubic Hymn signifies the entrance of all the saints and righteous ahead of the cherubic powers and the angelic hosts, who run invisibly in advance of the great king, Christ, who is proceeding to the mystical sacrifice (*εἰς μυστικὴν θυσίαν*) borne aloft by material hands. Together with them comes the Holy Spirit in the unbloody and rational (*λογικῇ*) sacrifice. The spirit is seen spiritually in the fire, incense, smoke, and fragrant air: for the fire points to his divinity, and the fragrant smoke to his coming invisibly and filling us with good fragrance through the mystical, living, and unbloody service and sacrifice of burnt-offering. In addition, the spiritual powers and the choirs of angels, who have seen his dispensation fulfilled through the cross and death of Christ, the victory over death which has taken place, the descent into hell and the resurrection on the third day, with us exclaim ‘Alleluia’.<sup>23</sup>

In Germanus’ description, the ideas that Cyril, Chrysostom, Theodore and Isidore discuss are not only glossed and expanded, but they spill out of the altar into the entire church building. Taft calls Germanus’ description, rich in detail correlating the experience of the physical senses to the experience of the spiritual

<sup>22</sup> Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* XV 2.

<sup>23</sup> Germanus 37.



senses, a 'prolepsis' of the whole Eucharistic action.<sup>24</sup> Germanus goes on to note that, in the Divine Liturgy, 'earthly things imitate (μιμοῦνται) the heavenly (οὐράνιον), transcendent (ὑπερκόσμιον), and spiritual (νοεράν) order of things.'<sup>25</sup> This is indeed an *ekphrasis*, but one that relies on the fullness of the liturgical moment, not just the text, to join heaven and earth.

Late Antique patristic writers such as those discussed up to this point represent one kind of intellectual tradition feeding into Germanus' understanding of the *Cherubikon* and the Great Entrance; another is Neoplatonism. Germanus' engagement with Neoplatonic ideas is demonstrable through the influence of Maximus the Confessor, whose *Mystagogy* Germanus quotes in his commentary.<sup>26</sup> Maximus' *Mystagogy* is openly indebted to Pseudo-Dionysius, whose *Celestial Hierarchy* is explicitly cited in the introduction as necessary background to Maximus' work,<sup>27</sup> thus firmly placing it within Maximus' synthesis of Christian Neoplatonic engagement and Chalcedonian orthodoxy.<sup>28</sup> Via Maximus' dependence on Pseudo-Dionysius, links to other Neoplatonic authors and ideas are abundant; Louth points out the influence of the Neoplatonic understanding of 'procession and return', as well as Proclus' metaphysics, on Pseudo-Dionysius.<sup>29</sup> Shaw and Struck argue that Pseudo-Dionysius depended significantly on Iamblichean concepts of theurgy and the soul.<sup>30</sup> Rorem also notes the similarities between Pseudo-Dionysius and Iamblichus, although he maintains that the Areopagite is just as grounded in patristic precedent as he is in Neoplatonism.<sup>31</sup> Rorem nonetheless points out Pseudo-Dionysius' reception of Plotinian concepts when discussing 'rising into the mind' in *The Celestial Hierarchy*.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of how Neoplatonic engagement impacts liturgical exegesis, Maximus opens the first chapter with the principle that Germanus is clearly operating under, that 'the holy Church bears the imprint and image of God (τύπον καὶ εἰκόνα Θεοῦ φέρειν) since it has the same activity as he does by imitation and in figure (κατὰ μίμησιν καὶ τύπον ἐνέργειαν).' He goes on to say that 'it is in this way that the holy Church of God will be shown to be working for us the

<sup>24</sup> R. Taft, *The Great Entrance* (1975), 54.

<sup>25</sup> Germanus 41.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Meyendorff, *St. Germanus of Constantinople: On the Divine Liturgy. The Greek Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary* (Crestwood, 1984), 105-7.

<sup>27</sup> Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogy* proem.

<sup>28</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Brian E. Daley S.J. (San Francisco, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (London, 2002), 20-4.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory Shaw, 'Neoplatonic Theurgy and Dionysius the Areopagite', *J ECS* 7 (1999), 573-99. Peter T. Struck, 'Pagan and Christian Theurgies: Iamblichus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Religion and Magic in Late Antiquity', *The Ancient World* 32 (2001), 25-38.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Rorem, 'Iamblichus and the Anagogical Method in Pseudo-Dionysian Liturgical Theology', *SP* 17 (1979), 453-60.

<sup>32</sup> Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, ed. John Farina, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York, 1987), 152<sup>31</sup>.



same effects as God, in the same way as the image actualizes its archetype (ἀρχετύπῳ εἰκὼν ἐνεργοῦσα).<sup>33</sup> But that's only at the first level of contemplation – at the second level, the Church is an 'image and figure of the entire world composed of visible and invisible essences', with the things that manifest each other bearing a mutual reflection in an altogether true and clear manner.<sup>34</sup> At the third level, the Church is a symbol of the entire sensible world, possessing the sanctuary – where the altar is – as heaven and 'the beauty of the nave', where the faithful are gathered, as earth.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the Church is also an image of the soul, and it is through this particular image that the soul

experiences divine things ... It is in this blessed and most holy embrace that is accomplished this awesome mystery of a union transcending mind and reason by which God becomes one flesh and one spirit with the Church and thus with the soul, and the soul with God.<sup>36</sup>

And, as Maximus is about to make clear, this is accomplished through the celebration and reception of the Eucharist:

By means of the sanctuary [the Church] signifies everything that is manifested as existing in the mind and proceeding from it; by means of the nave it indicates what is shown to exist in the reason and projects from the reason. All of these things it gathers together for the mystery accomplished on the divine altar.<sup>37</sup>

In discussing the Great Entrance, while not discussing the *Cherubikon* specifically, Maximus refers to this moment as 'the beginning ... of the new teaching which will take place in the heavens concerning the plan of God for us and the revelation of the mystery of our salvation which is in the most secret recesses of the divine.'<sup>38</sup> He also refers to it as

the passing away of sensible things and the appearance of spiritual realities and the new teaching of the divine mystery involving us and the future concord, unanimity, love, and identity of everyone with each other and with God, as well as the thanksgiving for the manner of our salvation.<sup>39</sup>

A key point regarding the function of Neoplatonic engagement in understanding Germanus' exegesis of the *Cherubikon* is that he uses the same Greek verb

<sup>33</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* I.

<sup>34</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* II.

<sup>35</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* III.

<sup>36</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* V.

<sup>37</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* V. On these points see also Andrew Louth, 'The Ecclesiology of Saint Maximus the Confessor', *International Journal of the Study of the Early Christian Church* (2004), 109-20, also Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, *Typologie spatio-temporelle de l'écclesia byzantine: la Mystagogia de Maxime le Confesseur dans la culture philosophique de l'Antiquité tardive* (Leiden, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* XVI.

<sup>39</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogia* XXIV.

to describe the correspondence of the ritual event to the spiritual reality, εἰκονίζω, as the Sunday version of the hymn itself uses to describe the relationship of the worshippers to the Cherubim. This is a verb that seems to be mostly used in Byzantine and later Greek, but Late Antique attestations include Maximus the Confessor, who uses it in *Mystagogy* to express the relationship of the ‘holy Church of God’ (ἡ ἁγία ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ) and ‘man’ (ἄνθρωπος), with God using the Church to ‘symbolically represent’ (συμβολικῶς εἰκονίζει) man as well as using man to represent the Church.<sup>40</sup> Other attestations include such Neoplatonic authors as Plotinus, who uses the verb to describe the created order as ‘an image continuously being imaged’ (ὁ κόσμος εἰκὼν ἀεὶ εἰκονιζόμενος).<sup>41</sup> Origen uses it to describe the action through which God fashioned man into His own image.<sup>42</sup> Also relevant to the current discussion is Chrysostom using it in his Third Homily on *Genesis* to discuss how the tree in the Garden of Eden was a symbol of God’s authority and man’s obedience to the Creator;<sup>43</sup> Chrysostom also uses it in his sixth homily on Acts to mean ‘find a counterpart’.<sup>44</sup> Chrysostom does not exactly ‘image’ Neoplatonism himself – indeed, Kelly seems to go out of his way to establish Chrysostom as a very practical rather than theoretical thinker<sup>45</sup> – but he is certainly a product of the intellectual culture as a student of Libanius,<sup>46</sup> and this use of a word rare in Late Antiquity that happens to be common to the *Cherubikon*, Germanus, Maximus, Plotinus, Origen and Chrysostom, certainly suggests an engagement with common ideas.

The question remains – what does it mean for Germanus and other writers of Late Antiquity that the *Cherubikon* describes the liturgical action, and/or the relationship of the earthly worshippers to the angelic powers performing the heavenly liturgy, as ‘mystical’? As a follow-up question, how might the three different uses across the *Cherubika* be significant? That is, why does the Sunday hymn text describe the relationship between the Christians in the physical church and the angelic powers – specifically, the Cherubim – as ‘mystical’, expressing it as a statement of identity, rather than the Eucharistic act itself, as with the other two? The link from Germanus to Maximus and then to Pseudo-Dionysius provides a partial answer; Pseudo-Dionysius argues in *Ecclesiastical*

<sup>40</sup> Maximus, *Mystagogy* III.

<sup>41</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads* II 3.18.

<sup>42</sup> Origen, *Philocalia* 24.7.

<sup>43</sup> Chrys., *In Genesis* 3: ἐνὸς δὲ μόνον ξύλου δέδωκεν αὐτῷ φυλάσσειν, ὑπόδειγμα δεσποτικὸν εἰκονίζων καὶ ἐντολὴν πρὸς ὑπακοήν τοῦ πλάστου. ‘But He has only given to [man] to guard one tree, “imaging” an authoritative token and a command of obedience to the Creator.’

<sup>44</sup> Chrys., *In acta Apostolorum* 6: ... ἀλλ’ ἡμεροὶ τινες λόγοι καὶ προσηνεῖς, καὶ ὄντως ἐκεῖνο τὸ τοῦ ζεφύρου ἡρεμον εἰκονίζοντες... ‘But some gentle and soft words even truly “image” that gentleness of the wind...’

<sup>45</sup> E.g. J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, 1995), 19.

<sup>46</sup> Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* VI 3.

*Hierarchy* that '[f]or us [on earth] ... it is by way of the perceptible images that we are uplifted as far as we can be to the contemplation of what is divine.'<sup>47</sup> He goes on then to say that 'the hierarchic rites are the precise image of these [heavenly] realities.'<sup>48</sup> For Pseudo-Dionysius, the liturgy, the 'hierarchic rites', are the very 'perceptible images' that lift the worshippers to the divine, and it is the Eucharist, the 'mystical supper' and 'mystical sacrifice' as the *Cherubika* for the Presanctified Liturgy and Holy Thursday express it, that is the culmination of this encounter:

For ... the divine Eucharist [is] the high point of each rite, divinely bringing about a spiritual gathering to the One for him who receives the sacrament, granting him as a gift from God its mysterious perfecting capacities, perfecting in fact his communion with God.<sup>49</sup>

The *Cherubika* can speak of the Eucharist as 'mystical' because it is perfects man's communion with God, and because of how it is expressed as a 'rite', as a 'mystery' or sacrament of the Church.

In addition, Pseudo-Dionysius explains that

[t]he name cherubim signifies the power to know and to see God, to receive the greatest gifts of his light, to contemplate the divine splendor in primordial power, to be filled with the gifts that bring wisdom and to share these generously ... as a part of the beneficent outpouring of wisdom.<sup>50</sup>

As has been shown, this gift – the power to know and see God – is understood by Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus to be effected by the Eucharist; the congregation 'mystically' represents the Cherubim, then, as a way of expressing their own liturgical function as those who are about to receive Communion. Germanus' own words regarding Communion are somewhat perfunctory, suggesting that perhaps he thought that Maximus and Pseudo-Dionysius had already said everything worth saying:

After this, as the conclusion, the distribution of the mysteries (τῶν μυστηρίων) takes place, which transforms into itself (μεταποιοῦσα πρὸς ἐαυτήν) and makes those who worthily participate similar to the original good by grace, making them in no way deficient, inasmuch as it is accessible and possible for men, so that they too may be able to be and to be called gods by adoption through grace, because the whole God is theirs, and nothing in them is devoid of His presence. Partaking of the divine mysteries (ἡ τῶν θεῶν μυστηρίων μετάληψις) is called Communion because it bestows on us unity with Christ and makes us partakes of His kingdom.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* I 3.

<sup>48</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* III 6.

<sup>49</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* III 1.

<sup>50</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* VII 1.

<sup>51</sup> Germanus 43.

Barnett has discussed Pseudo-Dionysius' threefold organization of purification, illumination, and perfection,<sup>52</sup> but there is another Neoplatonic threefold schema that appears appropriate to the question of the *Cherubikon* and the Great Entrance. As understood by Late Antique authors such as Germanus, the Sunday *Cherubikon*'s use of *μυστικῶς* indicates a conception of the Byzantine Rite that maps onto Iamblichus' three degrees of prayer – introductory, conjunctive, and ineffable unification.<sup>53</sup> The Liturgy of the Catechumens serves as the introductory stage – the ritual entrance into the church, the teaching of faithful and the yet-to-be baptized alike, and so on. The Great Entrance serves as the *conjunctive* stage – recall that Taft believes the point of the *Cherubikon* is preparation of the individual believer for the reception of Communion. Maximus discusses the Great Entrance as 'the beginning and prelude of a new teaching', 'the revelation of the mystery of our salvation', and 'the passing away of sensible things and appearance of spiritual realities'. For Germanus, it is the appearance of the saints – and recall that the non-baptized are dismissed right before this happens – ahead of the angelic hosts who are themselves ahead of Christ. This is a moment of transition, of passage, where the eternal and the temporal meet, cross over, and image each other, but it is not yet the fulfillment of this coming together. The Eucharist itself is, of course, ineffable unification – Maximus again: 'By holy communion of the spotless and life-giving mysteries we are given fellowship and identity with him by participation in likeness, by which man is deemed worthy from man to become God.' This specific link between Iamblichus and Late Antique Eastern Christian writers is even supported by the physical structure of the church building itself; the design of Byzantine churches was centered around liturgical function,<sup>54</sup> and was such that the worshipper's entrance into and movement within the structure throughout the course of liturgical celebration was intended to reflect a move from earth to heaven as the Liturgy of the Catechumens transitioned into the Liturgy of the Eucharist.<sup>55</sup> This suggests that this conception of the Eucharistic rite in Iamblichean terms was intentional and common currency, perhaps as a way for Christian liturgy to discursively engage Neoplatonic theurgy, dialoguing through rites as well as words; if this is so, perhaps there is an element of *μυστικῶς* being a Christianized way to express the concept of *θεουργικῶς*.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> John Barnett, 'Mysticism and the Liturgy in Denys the Areopagite', *Downside Review* 118 (2000), 111-36.

<sup>53</sup> Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* V 26. On the correlation between Iamblichus and Christian worship, see Wiebke-Marie Stock, *Theurgisches Denken: zur Kirchlichen Hierarchie des Dionysius Areopagita* (Berlin, 2008); for the wider Neoplatonic context of Iamblichus, see H.P. Esser, *Untersuchungen zu Gebet und Gottesverehrung der Neuplatoniker* (Cologne diss.) (Bonn, 1967).

<sup>54</sup> T.F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople* (1971), 3, 111, et al.

<sup>55</sup> J. Wilkinson, *From Synagogue to Church* (2002), 147 et al.

<sup>56</sup> Ps.-Dionysius provides one of the small handful of Christian uses of the word: '... [God's becoming man] is theurgically [*θεουργικῶς*] the perfection [*τὸ τελεῖν*] of everything and the

In conclusion, this way of understanding how Germanus and other Late Antique Greek patristic writers wrote about the Great Entrance and the *Cherubikon* allows lines of connection to be drawn to both the Neoplatonic intellectual tradition, Christian and otherwise, with a clear link extending from Germanus back through Pseudo-Dionysius, and all the way back to at least Plotinus. As well, there are clear connections to earlier eastern patristic authors such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Western writers such as Isidore of Seville. Louth's concern that 'mysticism' in this period not be saddled with anachronisms is also addressed, and this understanding ties the concepts surrounding the 'mystery' firmly to the Liturgy. In Maximus, for example, can be found clear evidence of Louth's point – the language of 'mysticism' or the mystery is in a shared ecclesial and liturgical context, not in the context of individual elites. In other words, the Eucharist is 'mystical' because of how it effects union with God, but also because it is a 'mystery' or sacrament of the Church, and thus effects that union in the context of a communal action. As well, the faithful are representing the Cherubim in a 'mystical' way because they are participants in heavenly glory 'imaged' on earth in a Neoplatonic sense, *and* they are representing the Cherubim in a 'mystical' way because they are doing so as a fundamental part of the liturgical action itself.

consecration [τὸ ἁγιάζειν] of all perfected things.' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* IV 12. For current discussion of theurgy in the kind of ritual context that may be alluded to here, see Sarah Iles Johnston, 'Animating Statues: A Case Study in Ritual', *Arethusa* 41 (2008), 445-77.

# ORIENTALIA



# The Skeireins: A Neglected Text

B.N. WOLFE, Oxford, UK

## ABSTRACT

The only significant non-Biblical record of the Gothic language of Late Antiquity is a commentary on the *Gospel of John*, known as the *Skeireins*. Although much examined by historical linguists, it has been neglected by theologians, with the exception of the late K. Schäferdiek. This article introduces the text, makes observations about its theology, and shows that the *Skeireins* should not be fitted simplistically into the Trinitarian debates which modern historiography sees as the chief feature of the period of its composition.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, Christianity began to spread among the Goths, a Germanic people living on Rome's borders in what is now Romania and Ukraine. Its first exponents were Romans captured and enslaved, and subsequently integrated into the Gothic social structure. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, one descendent of such captives was ordained in Constantinople as a bishop for these Goths. After a persecution by pagan Gothic leaders, he and his flock fled to the Roman Empire, and settled in Moesia. There the bishop, whose name is Ulfilas in our sources (thought to represent Gothic 'Wulfila'), created a new alphabet in which to write Gothic, and undertook a translation of the Bible into his people's vernacular. Approximately two thirds of the New Testament survive, and provide our main record of the Gothic language.

Also attested is a Gothic commentary on the *Gospel of John*, dubbed the *Skeireins* (Gothic 'Explanation') by its first modern editor, H. Massmann in 1834.<sup>1</sup> Eight pages survive of a much longer work: five in Codex Ambrosianus E in Milan, and three in Codex Vaticanus Latinus 5750. All are palimpsest, written over with later Latin, and they are no longer in order. The readings improved dramatically in the 1950's when W. Bennett examined the manuscripts under ultraviolet light.<sup>2</sup> The following chart correlates the page numbers (in Arabic numerals) of the codices as found with the presumed order of the leaves in the original (in Roman numerals). While this order is fairly certain because of the progression of the commentary through *John*, it is possible that

<sup>1</sup> *Skeireins aiwaggeljons pairh iohannen, Auslegung des Evangelii Johannis in Gotischer Sprache* (Munich).

<sup>2</sup> *The Gothic Commentary on the Gospel of John* (New York, 1960).



other, lost leaves intervened. The beginning and end of each leaf is lost. Scripture quotations accord with the Gothic New Testament of Wulfila and its main manuscript, the Codex Argenteus.

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Ambrosianus E	113/4	77/8			79/80	309/10	111/2	
Vaticanus Latinus 5750			59/60	61/2				57/8

- Leaf *I* treats the need for God to become man, and John the Baptist's recognition hereof (*John* 1:29).
- *II* comments upon Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus (*John* 3:1-21), using Jesus' injunction to be 'born of water and spirit' (*John* 3:5) to begin an extended discussion of baptism
- The focus returns in leaves *III* and *IV* to John the Baptist, in accordance with the text (*John* 3:22-36). *IV* also attacks Sabellius and Marcellus (of Ancyra) for claiming that the Father and the Son are one.
- *V* continues this attack with citations from *John* 5:19-23.
- Leaf *VI* is once again concerned with John the Baptist, and Jesus' words at *John* 5:35-6.
- Leaf *VII* discusses the Feeding of the Five Thousand (*John* 6:1-15).
- A leaf is likely missing here, since the events in leaf *VIII*, the Jewish leaders' unbelief and rebuke by Nicodemus (*John* 7:45-52), are considerably farther along in the Gospel than expected by the pace set so far.
- Since the surviving text ends here, we cannot know whether the commentator saw fit to mention the *Pericope de Adultera* which follows in some manuscripts, or whether he moved on directly to Jesus' continuing dialogues with the Pharisees.

Critical consideration of the *Skeireins* has centred upon the question of whether it was composed in Gothic or translated from Greek.<sup>3</sup> It was noted by Massmann at the time of its first publication in 1834 that at the only point where their surviving fragments overlap, there is a strong resemblance to the lost Gospel commentary of Theodore of Heraclea, a 4<sup>th</sup> century eastern bishop.<sup>4</sup> This argument has been developed further by Knut Schäferdiek, the only theologian to

<sup>3</sup> See R. del Pezzo, *La Skeireins – Testo, traduzione, glossario* (Naples, 1973), 18.

<sup>4</sup> "Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace, he published in the reign of the emperor Constantius commentaries on *Matthew* and *John*, on the Epistles and on the *Psalter*. These are written in a polished and clear style and show an excellent historical sense." – St Jerome, *Lives of the Illustrious Men* XC. More on his life in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexicon* XXIV, 1479-85. The relevant commentary section in *Johanneskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, ed. J. Reuss (Berlin, 1966), 72, frg. 27.

take a significant interest in this text.<sup>5</sup> The language of composition is certainly an interesting linguistic and historical question, but it will be passed over here in favour of some theological observations about the commentator's anthropology, Christology, and of course Trinitarian theology.

The commentator's anthropology is dualistic: Man's nature is twofold, body and soul. The requirement that man be born again of water and the Spirit does not entail two actions, but a dual rebirth in Baptism. Indeed, God crafted Baptism to match our natures: '... *mann us missaleikom wistim us satidamma: Us saiwalai raihtis jah leika*' (*Skeireins II c-d*).<sup>6</sup> This anthropology is not in itself remarkable, but it defines the parameters of the commentator's Christology: Although never argued for in the text, it is clear that the *Skeireins*' author argues from a logos / sarx Christology. That is, Christ had the body of a man, but in place of a man's soul, the eternal, divine Logos. '*In-uh þis nu jah leik mans andnam: ei laisareis uns wairþai þizos du guda garaihteins*' (*I d*).<sup>7</sup> This view of the Incarnation was once associated by scholars with Arianism and Arius,<sup>8</sup> but is now seen as a more general feature.<sup>9</sup>

The principal concern of the commentator is to refute Sabellianism, temporarily represented by Marcellus of Ancyra: '... *ni in þis þatainei ei frauþins mikilein gakannidedi: ak du gatarhjan jah gasakan þo afgudon haifst: Sabailiaus jah Markailliaus: þaiei ainana anananþidedun qipan attan jah sunu*' (*IV d*).<sup>10</sup> Every Scriptural passage that shows the Father and the Son as distinct in will or authority is thus emphasized: '... *“nih þan atta ni stojþ ainohun. ak staua alla atgaf sunau” Ip nu ains jah sa sama wesi bi Sabailliaus insahtai: missaleikaim bandwiþs namnamhwaiva stojan jah ni stojan sa sama mahtedi?*' (*V b-c*).<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, passages that accentuate their oneness are downplayed:

*þata qipano: 'ei allai sweraina sunu, swaswe swerand attan', ni ibnon ak galeika sweripa usgiban uns laiseiþ. jah silba nasjands bi siponjans bidjands du attin qap: 'ei frijos ins, swaswe frijos mik'. ni ibnaleika frijaþwa ak galeika þairh þata ustaikneiþ. (V d)*

<sup>5</sup> *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 110 (1981), 175-93.

<sup>6</sup> '... man, to be sure, being put together of various natures, of soul, that is, and body.' The translations in this article are my own, with reference to those of J. Marchand and W. Bennett, available at the excellent online Skeireins Project, <http://www.gotica.de/skeireins>.

<sup>7</sup> '... He took on even the body of man; that He might become a teacher of justice according to God.'

<sup>8</sup> For full references, see W.P. Haugaard, 'Arius: Twice a Heretic? Arius and the Human Soul of Jesus Christ', *Church History* 29 (1960), 251-63.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, A. Grillmeier, who introduced the term 'Logos/sarx', shows that Athanasius thought in this way. *Christ in the Christian Tradition* (London, 1965), I 314.

<sup>10</sup> '... not for this reason alone, that he [St John] might declare the greatness of the Lord, but to censure and rebuke the godless contention of Sabellius and Marcellius, who were so bold as to say that the Father and the Son are one.'

<sup>11</sup> 'Neither does the Father judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son. But now if he were one and the same according to the view of Sabellius, signified by different names, how could the same one judge and not judge?'

... the passage, 'that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father' teaches us to offer not equal but a similar honour, and the Saviour Himself praying for the disciples said to the Father 'that You love them even as You love Me'. Through that He designates not the same but similar love.

The above passage has also been thought apposite to the most obvious Trinitarian question about the *Skeireins*, namely whether it advances the Homoianism espoused by Wulfila and most Goths. Unfortunately, no answer can definitively be given. Exactly how to translate the underlined words in the passage above is a serious limitation: The semantic cartography of these lexemes for 'likeness' and 'sameness' is difficult to delineate. At issue are Gothic *ibna*, *galeiks*, and *ibnaleika*. Schäferdiek<sup>12</sup> would have *ibna* designate 'numerical' equality, that is, if *ibna* honour were given to the Father and the Son, it would be one and the same honour. In rejecting this, the commentator is still only combating Sabellius and Marcellus, not making a necessarily Homoian claim. However, *ibna* and *galeiks* are contrasted elsewhere in the *Skeireins*, and do not appear to be susceptible to this analysis: ... *nasjands ... ni ibna nih galeiks unsarai garaihtein ak silba garaihteī wisands* (Ia).<sup>13</sup> It seems unlikely that the commentator felt he had to rule out the Saviour being numerically one and the same as our (implicitly flawed) righteousness or justice; it is unclear what it would mean if He were. On the other hand, Schäferdiek is on balance probably right to rule out Dietrich's suggestion<sup>14</sup> that *ibnaleika* is to be understood as a calque on Greek ὁμοούσιος.<sup>15</sup>

If a concrete teaching must be taken from *Skeireins* V d, perhaps the easiest to discern is subordinationism. *Ibna* would mean 'equal', and *galeiks* 'like, similar', with *ibnaleika* perhaps 'exactly the same'. The commentator argues that 'as' (*swaswe*) does not imply exactly the same honour being rendered to both Persons, but merely similar.<sup>16</sup> Not unlike logos / sarx Christology, a hierarchical Trinity would not necessarily conflict with any mainstream theology of the period. It is certainly the case that the Son's subordination to the Father is entailed by and thus a feature of Arian and Homoian teaching, but not distinctively so.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> 'Theologiegeschichtliche Bemerkungen zur Skeireins', in *Gotica Minora Prima* (Hanau, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> '... a Saviour ... not equal to nor like our righteousness, but Himself being righteousness.'

<sup>14</sup> *Die Bruchstücke der Skeireins* (Strasburg, 1903), lxix.

<sup>15</sup> Schäferdiek is certainly correct that reference to οὐσία does not fit with the commentator's point, although it is just possible that the *Skeireins*' author might have deployed his opponents' shibboleth here purely for another chance to negate it (though ὁμοούσιος becomes a shibboleth surprising late in the controversy, perhaps too late for Theodore of Heraclea).

<sup>16</sup> St Augustine draws the same distinction, in of course a difference context and to different effect, in his Homily IV on 1John, section 9, commenting on 1John 3:7.

<sup>17</sup> The many church historians who take any hint of subordinationism to be dispositive of an anti-Nicene position have affirmed the consequent.

Thus, in its anthropology, Christology, and Trinitarian theology, the *Skeireins* offers a window into a largely forgotten theological world. Many of the commentary's statements were likely commonplaces in its day, though positions like logos / sarx Christology or Trinitarian subordinationism were in the course of subsequent theological strife identified as heretical. In fact, ironically, when the *Skeireins* engages polemically (with Marcellus of Ancyra), from the point of view of the final Trinitarian settlement it remains orthodox, but when it unassumingly discusses the dual nature of Baptism, or the honour due to God, it becomes heretical.



## From ‘Sacrifice to the Gods’ to the ‘Fear of God’: Omissions, Additions and Changes in the Syriac Translations of Plutarch, Lucian and Themistius

Alberto RIGOLIO, Oxford, UK

## ABSTRACT

The contribution offers a preliminary comparison between pieces by Plutarch, Lucian and Themistius and their Syriac translations, which were probably composed between the fifth and early sixth century. Because of frequent omissions and additions in the Syriac texts, the works look very much like Syriac adaptations. In their editing a leading concern was Christianization, as it is shown by the fact that references to pagan religion are either Christianized or removed, and a number of *exempla* are omitted or changed. Nonetheless, the changes may shed light on the milieu of destination for the works. Indeed, they point at an environment interested in the moral advice contained in the pieces, but more prudent as for the framework of authority in which that advice was proposed. Both the ethical contents and the Christianizing changes raise questions about the purpose of the redaction of these Syriac texts.

In the preface to his Syriac translation of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *De mundo*, Sergius of Resh'aina (d. 536) closes with an interesting remark:

What I have found in the manuscript that was sent from thee, o Beloved, I have taken care to preserve completely, neither adding anything to what has been written here by the philosopher, nor instead taking away from it, according to my ability.<sup>1</sup>

The passage falls within the topic of a declaration of modesty, a common theme in Syriac prefaces.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Sergius' reference to additions and omissions in the text is rather specific,<sup>3</sup> and it may evoke Syriac adaptations, which are

[illegible]

<sup>2</sup> For the theme of modesty within Syriac prefaces see Eva Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface* (Uppsala, 1988), 197-202 and 207-8.

<sup>3</sup> See the note on the passage in Daniel King, 'Origenism in sixth century Syria. The case of a Syriac manuscript of pagan philosophy', in Alfons Fürst (ed.), *Origenes und seine Bedeutung für die Theologie und Geistesgeschichte Europas und des Vorderen Orients*, Adamantiana. Texte und Studien zu Origenes und seinem Erbe I (Münster, 2010), 179-212.

characterised by the practice of editing the text through significant additions and omissions.<sup>4</sup>

In his Syriac translation of the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* Sergius mostly adhered to his resolution.<sup>5</sup> Not only did Sergius compose a remarkably literal translation in contrast to the freer standard of only few decades earlier,<sup>6</sup> but he also strove to translate what he thought was Aristotle's exposition in its entirety, including references to pagan mythology and Greek literature. Yet, the two aspects, literal translation and complete rendering of the original text, are not always coincidental. The present paper ventures into the relation between translation and adaptation by offering a preliminary analysis of four Syriac translations of Greek secular texts. Despite being contemporary or almost contemporary to Sergius, the works were not transmitted with the same care for entirety that Sergius showed in the above mentioned *De mundo*. Indeed, the significant additions, omissions and changes, which mostly affect the references to Greek culture, can be interpreted as the result of deliberate agency.

The Syriac translations of works by Plutarch, Lucian and Themistius are characterised by frequent omissions and – less frequent – additions to their originals, and, accordingly, they look very much as adaptations. Those of which the Greek text has survived, thus allowing the comparison with the originals, are:

Plutarch	<i>De cohibenda ira</i> (Mor. 29) <sup>7</sup>	PI
Plutarch	<i>De capienda ex inimicis utilitate</i> (Mor. 6) <sup>8</sup>	PU
Lucian	<i>De calumnia</i> (13) <sup>9</sup>	LC
Themistius	<i>De amicitia</i> (Or. 22) <sup>10</sup>	TA

<sup>4</sup> Possibly including his own adaptation of a treatise by Alexander of Aphrodisias, see Daniel King, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias' *On the principles of the universe* in its Syriac adaptation', *Le Muséon* 123 (2010), 159-91.

<sup>5</sup> I am very grateful to Adam McCollum for his unpublished doctoral dissertation on the Syriac *De mundo*.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria* (Leuven, 2008), 361-88; David Taylor, 'Early translations from the ancient Orient: from Greek into Syriac', in Harald Kittel *et al.* (eds), *Übersetzung: Ein internationales Handbuch zur Übersetzungsforschung* (Berlin, 2004), 1190-3; Sebastian Brock, 'Towards a history of Syriac translation technique', in René Lavenant (ed.), *Symposium Syriacum, 1980 (Goslar 7-11 September 1980): les contacts du monde syriaque avec les autres cultures* (Rome, 1983), 1-14.

<sup>7</sup> MS *Sinaiticus* syr. S. Catherin. 16 (VII cent.); BM Add. 17209 (IX cent.). Edition in P. de Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca* (1858), 186-95 from BM Add. 17209. For the Sinai manuscript see Bernard Pouderon *et al.* (eds), *Aristide, Apologie* (Paris, 2003), 137, and Agnes Smith Lewis, *Catalogue of the Syriac mss. in the Convent of S. Catharine on Mount Sinai* (London, 1894), 18; for the BM manuscript see William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the Year 1838* (London, 1870-72), III 1185-7 (mii).

<sup>8</sup> MS *Sinaiticus* syr. S. Catherin. 16. Edition in Eberhard Nestle (ed.), *A tract of Plutarch on the Advantage to Be derived from one's Enemies (De capienda ex inimicis utilitate), the Syriac Version edited from a ms. on Mount Sinai* (London, 1894).

<sup>9</sup> MS *Sinaiticus* syr. S. Catherin. 16; BM Add. 17209. Edition in Eduard Sachau (ed.), *Inedita Syriaca. Eine Sammlung syrischer Übersetzungen von Schriften griechischer Profanliteratur* (Halle, 1870), 1-16 from BM Add. 17209.

<sup>10</sup> BM Add. 17209. Edition in E. Sachau, *Inedita Syriaca* (1870), 48-65.

The pieces were probably translated into Syriac during the fifth or the early sixth century, as it is possible to judge from their language and from the relatively free translation technique.<sup>11</sup> The unit of translation ranges from the paragraph to the sentence (in an approximate scale from the least to the most literal: *PI TA PU LC*), thus favouring the hypothesis of diverse authorship and chronology.

The works are structured around pieces of moral advice. *PI* shows how important it is to constrain anger and it provides recommendations on how to defeat it; *PU* reminds the reader that the reproaches coming from enemies should be taken as exhortations to adopt and stick to a morally sound behaviour; *LC* describes the functioning of slander and it offers tips on how to avoid succumbing to it; and *TA* is concerned with leading an upright conduct towards friends, who are always vulnerable to become victims of slander. The works share a similar structure in that they mostly elaborate the moral advice around series of *exempla*. The edifying recommendations are inserted in a framework of authority which is provided by the exemplar or conversely deplorable behaviours of figures mostly belonging to the Graeco-Roman world. Usually the protagonists of the anecdotes are philosophers, historical personalities or mythological figures.

It is in the approach to such *exempla* that the Syriac adaptors often resorted to omit passages of the original texts. An example is provided by Chapter Five of Plutarch's *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*, in fact a series of anecdotes, which is worth reporting in full:<sup>12</sup>

*Greek text*

[5] **a.** Whenever **Plato** was among men who behaved unseemly, while leaving he used to say to himself: 'can it be that I am like them?' If the man who reviles the way of life of another man looked at once at his own and readjusted it by redirecting (it) and turning (it) into the opposite direction, he would possess something useful from (his) reviling. Otherwise it seems, and also is, useless and empty.

*Syriac translation*

[5] **a.** When **Plato** saw men who were worthy of reproach, after leaving them he used to say: 'may I not become such (as they)!' Therefore, anyone who reproaches his fellow man, if he looks (also) into himself when he turns to (reproaching his) equal, is helped by the very reproach he makes, even if (the reproach) is injurious.

<sup>11</sup> Respectively Anton Baumstark, 'Lucubrationes Syro-Graecae', *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, Suppl. 21 (1894), 353-524, 413-22, who based his analysis on *PI TA LC*; and Sebastian Brock, 'Syriac translations of Greek popular philosophy', in Peter Bruns (ed.), *Von Athen nach Bagdad. Zur Rezeption griechischer Philosophie von der Spätantike bis zum Islam* (Bonn, 2003), 9-28, 16.

<sup>12</sup> *PU* 88D-89B: 8.1-9.5. The Greek text is from Hans Gärtner *et al.* (eds), *Plutarchi Moralia*, vol. I (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1993).



**b.** Most people laugh when someone who is bald and hunchbacked reviles and mocks others for these things, for it is completely ridiculous to revile and mock with something which can be used as an insult in turn (against you).

**c.** As **Leo of Byzantium**, who was reviled for the weakness of his eyes by a hunchbacked man, said: 'you reproach me for a human condition, when you bear (God's) retribution on your back.' Therefore, do not revile an adulterer if you are mad after boys, or a profligate one if you are stingy.

**d.** 'You were born of the same kind as the woman who killed her husband' (is what) **Alcmeon** said to **Adrastus**. How did **Adrastus** (reply) then? By making a reproach which was not another's but his own: 'and yourself (are) the killer of (your) mother who gave you birth.'

**e.** **Domitius** (said) to **Crassus**: 'didn't you weep when the sea-eel that was kept for you in the fish-pond died?' and the other [*i.e.* **Crassus**] answered: 'Didn't you bury three wives without shedding a tear?'

**f.** Whoever is reproaching does not have to be naturally clever, loud-voiced and aggressive, but (he has to be) irreproachable and blameless.

**g.** It seems that God commanded 'know yourself!' to nobody so much as to someone who is about to blame another, lest, by saying what they want (to say), they hear what they do not want to (hear). According to **Sophocles**, someone like that 'when uttering words in vain, is used to hearing unwillingly the words that he willingly speaks'.

**b.** Nonetheless many people laugh when they see a man who, being bald or hunchbacked, reviles others for these infirmities, for many fools reproach someone with something which turns back to them.

**c.** **Leo**, when he was called (108r ii) blind by a hunchbacked man, answered: 'you have reproached me for a defect of the body, but you carry your (own) defects on your shoulders.' So, do not call your fellow man 'adulterer', when you are impure, or 'presumptuous' when you are execrable.

**d.**

**e.** **Domitius** wanted to reproach **Crassus**, who, when the animal that was kept for him in a cage died, wept about it. **Crassus** told him this: 'may I not be like you, who buried the three wives you had and shed tears for none of them.'

**f.** A man does not have to be excellent in order to insult, and be impudent and raise his voice, but, when he reproaches, he should not give any room for the reproach to be sent back to him.

**g.** God also demands from (someone) who wants (108v i) to reproach his fellow man, that he first observes his (own) person, in case, when he says what pleases himself, he hears what is not agreeable for himself, as his ears perceive unwillingly what his mouth sent out willingly.

The passage shows that the anecdotes about Plato (**a**), Leo of Byzantium (**c**) and Domitius with Crassus (**e**) are regularly found in translation, while the one about Alcmeon and Adrastus, which is drawn from Greek tragedy, is entirely

omitted (**d**). As it will be shown, the incidence of the omissions of *exempla* can be put in relation with their contents. Similarly, the reference to Sophocles is omitted (**g**), although Sophocles' quotation is readapted into the text. The present analysis, however, is limited to the treatment of the *exempla*, which are intended in a rather inclusive way, and it will not comprehend the rendering of quotations.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, some of the anecdotes that survive in Syriac have been modified, usually by substituting the proper name of the main character with a generic one. For instance, the anecdotes that have philosophers as protagonists survive entirely in Syriac, but they sometime attest a generalization of proper names (in *italics*):

	<i>Greek text</i>	<i>Syriac translation</i>
PI	Socrates 455A	<i>A wise man</i> 188.5
	Plato 456D	Plato 189.20
	Diogenes 460E	Diogenes 193.25
	Arcesilaus 461D	<i>A philosopher</i> 194.15
	Socrates and Xanthippe 461D	<i>Socrates and his wife</i> 194.20
PU	Diogenes and Crates 87A	Diogenes and Crates 3.15
	Zeno 87A	Zeno 3.15
	Diogenes 88A	Diogenes 6.15
	Plato 88E	Plato 8.1
	Socrates and Xanthippe 90D	<i>Socrates and the wife</i> 13.10
LC	Pythagoras 91C	<i>One of the philosophers</i> 15.10
	Demetrius and the wine 16	Demetrius and the wine 10.15
TA	Socrates 29	Socrates 15.5
	n/a	n/a

As a result, the proper names of some philosophers mentioned in the text have been changed, and, for instance, Socrates becomes 'a wise man', Arcesilaus becomes 'a philosopher' and Pythagoras becomes 'one of the philosophers'. Nonetheless, all the *exempla* based on philosophers and on their conduct have been preserved in Syriac.

Instead, the treatment of *exempla* based on historical figures attests not only generalizations of proper names, but also omissions:

	<i>Greek text</i>	<i>Syriac translation</i>
PI	Thebans and Spartans 454C	<b>omitted</b>
	Callisthenes and Alexander 454E	<b>omitted</b>
	Xerxes 455D	<i>a Persian king</i> 188.20

<sup>13</sup> Quotations are mostly omitted.

- Spartans and Helots 455E  
 Gaius Gracchus 456A  
 Ctesiphon and a mule 457A  
 king Antigonos 457E  
 Arcadion and Philip 457E  
 Philip 457F<sup>14</sup>  
 Magas and Philemon 458A  
 Ptolemy and Peleus 458A  
 Alexander and Porus 458B  
 Philip in Olynthus 458C  
 A Rhodian and a servant 458D  
 Agatocles 458E  
 Antigonos 458F  
 Satyrus the Samian 459A  
 Phocion and the Athenians 459E  
 Tyrrhenian slaves 460C  
 Marius 461E  
 Nero and Seneca 461F
- PU* Chilon 86C  
 Xenophon 86E  
 Nasica 88A  
 Leo of Byzantium 88F  
 Domitius and Crassus 89A  
 Thessalian Prometheus  
 (Jason of Pherae) 89C  
 Lacydes king of the Argives 89E  
 Pompey 89E  
 Crassus and a (Vestal) Virgin 89E  
 Postumia 89E  
 Themistocles and Pausanias 89F  
 Hiero 90B  
 Caesar and Pompey 91A  
 Scaurus and Domitius 91D  
 Cato and Murena 91D  
 Demos in Chios 91F  
 Themistocles and Miltiades 92C
- LC* Apelles and Ptolemy 2  
 Solon and Dracon 8  
 Alexander and Hephaestion 17  
 Aristides and Themistocles 27  
 Themistocles and Miltiades 29
- TA* Chabrias and Iphicrates 271A
- omitted**  
*a wise man* 189.5  
 Ctesiphon and a mule 190.5  
 king Antigonos 190.20  
**omitted**  
*a king* 190.25  
**omitted**  
*a king and a philosopher* 190.25  
*Alexander and the king of the Indians* 191.1  
*Philip in an illustrious city* 191.5  
**omitted**  
**omitted**  
 Antigonos 191.15  
**omitted**  
*a wise man and the Athenians* 192.25  
**omitted**  
**omitted**  
*Nero and a man* 195.5  
 Chilon 1.10  
 Xenophon 1.15  
*a wise man* 6.10  
*Leo* 8.10  
 Domitius and Crassus 8.15  
*a man* 10.1  
*the king of Argos* 11.1  
 Pompey 11.1  
 Crassus and a virgin 11.5  
 Postumia 11.5  
 Themistocles and Pausanias 11.10  
 Hiero 12.5  
*Caesar and his enemy Pompey* 14.5<sup>15</sup>  
 Scaurus and Domitius 15.15  
**omitted**  
*Demos in his city* 16.10  
 Themistocles and Miltiades 17.10  
 Apelles and Ptolemy 2.5  
 Solon and Dracon 5.20  
 Alexander and Hephaestion 10.20  
 Aristides and Themistocles 14.25  
 Themistocles and Miltiades 15.10  
**omitted**

<sup>14</sup> Here Philip is not mentioned explicitly.

<sup>15</sup> The Syriac adds ܠܠܥܝܒܐ ‘his enemy’.

As opposed to the anecdotes based on philosophers, which all survive in Syriac, those based on historical personalities from the Graeco-Roman world have been omitted on a number of occasions. At the same time, the adaptors may have had access to some knowledge of the identity of the figures, as it is evident in their correct rendering of Arcesilaus and Pythagoras (philosophers), Xerxes ('a Persian king') and Porus ('the king of the Indians'), since such information would not be otherwise available within the text.

The tendency to omit entire passages becomes more frequent in the rendering of *exempla* drawn from Greek mythology and literature:

<i>Greek text</i>	<i>Syriac translation</i>
<i>PI</i> Helen and Electra 454D	<b>omitted</b>
Achilles and Agamemnon 455A	<b>omitted</b>
Thamyras and Pandarus 455D	<b>any reference to the characters is omitted</b>
Athena 456B	<b>omitted</b>
Marsia 456B	<i>a musician</i> 189.10
Sophocles 458D	<b>omitted</b>
Sophocles 460D	<b>omitted</b>
Agamemnon 460E	<b>omitted</b>
<i>PU</i> A satyr and Prometheus 86F	<b>omitted</b>
Alcmeon and Adrastus 88F	<b>omitted</b>
Telephus' wound 89C	Telephus' wound 9.15
Merope 90A	Merope 11.20
<i>LC</i> Labdacus and Pelops 1	<b>omitted</b>
Anteia and Bellerophon 26	<b>omitted</b>
Phaedra and Hippolytus 26	<b>omitted</b>
Palamedes 28	Palamedes 15.5
Homer's sirens 30	Homer's sirens 15.15
<i>TA</i> Achilles and Patroclus 266A	<i>Achilles and his friend</i> 50.5
Strophius' son [ <i>i.e.</i> Pylades] and Orestes 269A	<i>Orestes' friend and his friend</i> 53.10 <sup>16</sup>
Sthenelus and Diomedes 271B	<b>omitted</b>
Hippolytus 277D	<b>omitted</b>
Orestes 278C	<b>omitted</b>
Aesop 278C	Aesop 64.10
Scylla 279B	<b>omitted</b>
Heracles at the crossroads 280A	<b>omitted</b>

As a result, most of the mythological references are removed. The occurrence of the omissions is not entirely systematic, but overall, while 'philosophical'

<sup>16</sup> The identification of Pylades as Orestes' friend is not available within the text, although it may have been derived from the context.







In the first place act piously towards the **gods**, not only **by offering sacrifice** but also by abiding by oaths: the former is a sign of abundance of means, the latter is a proof of nobleness of manners. Always honour the *daimonion*, especially along with the town, for in this way you will seem **to offer sacrifice to the gods** as well as to abide by the laws.

First of all, you will be concerned about **God, that you shall worship Him and adore Him**, not only through offering(s) and prayer, but also that you shall not break His oaths, for this is a sign of wealth and a mark of good manners. Always honour God, and especially with the congregation, for in this way you will seem **to fear God** and also to keep to **His law**.

The adaptors transformed 'gods' into 'God,' and 'sacrifice to the gods' into the 'fear of God.' The contents of the Syriac *ID* point at a Christian educational milieu, and it might be the case that the Syriac *PI TA PU LC* were similarly conceived as edifying texts for such a readership.

To conclude, a preliminary comparison with the Greek originals shows that the surviving Syriac translations of Plutarch, Lucian and Themistius look very much like Christian adaptations, where, on the one hand, the references to the pagan religion were constantly targeted by omissions, and, on the other hand, the adaptors did not hesitate to add a Christian slant to the text. Their selective approach to the *exempla* may provide a hint to the milieu for which the edited works were intended – perhaps an environment interested in the moral advice advertised in the pieces but not willing to entirely accept the framework of authority from which that advice was derived. Indeed, while the *exempla* provided by the upright and not rarely ascetic conduct of philosophers are transmitted entirely, those drawn from mythology are mostly omitted. Moreover, the similarities in both the moralizing contents and the Christianizing editing in Syriac of a piece for school, the pseudo-Isocratean *Ad Demonium*, may suggest that our adaptations were also intended for a Christian educational environment.





## Who were Mani's 'Greeks'? 'Greek Bread' in the *Cologne Mani Codex*

Richard VAGGIONE, OHC, Toronto, Canada

### ABSTRACT

According to the *Cologne Mani Codex*, Mani was expelled from his childhood community for favouring a wheat bread it describes as 'Greek', Ἑλ[ληνικὸν]. This designation is effectively a *hapax*. The paper uses Rabbinic, Latin, and Greek sources to identify the bread and the 'Greeks' to whom it refers. This, in turn, sheds light on the young Mani's personal and ethnic situation in the 230's and 40's, and points to a possible profession for the Greek translator of the Codex.

At the conclusion of his debate with Justin Martyr, the amiable Jew Trypho remarks that, however unintended their encounter, each had received more than they either desired or deserved.<sup>1</sup> The same could be said of almost any encounter with the *Cologne Mani Codex* – in part because it so often challenges what we always thought we knew. In my own case the challenge comes from the twice-repeated phrase Ἑλ[ληνικὸν] ἄρτον, 'Greek bread'.<sup>2</sup> 'Greek' in both instances is a restoration. But, since the first two letters of Ἑλ[ληνικὸν] are visible in one case, and in both the context is an expressed concern about foreigners, the restorations seem reasonably safe. More to the point, the foreigners in question are called ἔθνη in one place and Ἑλλη[ν]ας (quite legibly) in another.<sup>3</sup> We may therefore take it as settled that the Baptists before whom Mani appeared were indeed concerned about 'Greeks'. But what exactly did they mean by 'Greek bread'?

We may well ask, since they clearly expect us to know, but it does not take much in the way of research to find out that as a matter of fact we do not: there are no other examples. The book of *Tobit* speaks of 'Gentile breads' (ἄρτων τῶν ἐθνῶν),<sup>4</sup> and Pseudo-Chrysostom mentions 'Greek foods' (Ἑλληνικοῖς ... βρώμασιν),<sup>5</sup> but neither speaks of 'Greek bread'.

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Dial.* 142.1-2 (264 Goodenough).

<sup>2</sup> *CMC* 87.19-88.2, 89.23-90.2.

<sup>3</sup> *CMC* 80.16-18; note the concern expressed about flight to the ἔθνη in the line just above the least lacunous example of Ἑλ[ληνικὸν], *CMC* 87.19-21.

<sup>4</sup> *Tobit* 1:10.

<sup>5</sup> (Ps.-)Chrysostom, *Homilia in Ps.* 75:12. 1 (PG 55, 595B).

Of course, it is always possible that the phrase is not Greek. The rather distinctive kind of Greek in which the Codex is written contains enough Aramaisms to show that the original must have been in Aramaic, possibly eastern Aramaic.<sup>6</sup> But while that may explain why we can't find 'Greek Bread' in Greek, it doesn't do much to explain why we can't find it in Aramaic. It appears in neither the *Thesaurus Syriacus* or the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*.<sup>7</sup> Even the rather tempting thought that 'bread' might be a kind of synecdoche for 'food' cannot be sustained. Whatever 'Ἐλ[ληνικὸν] ἄρτον' meant, it had something to do with the σίτινον ἄρτ[ο]ν, 'wheat bread', mentioned a few lines earlier.<sup>8</sup> That, at any rate, *was* bread in the proper sense because according to Mani Jesus ate it himself – probably at the Last Supper.<sup>9</sup> Even the medieval retroversions of *Tobit* are not much help.<sup>10</sup> To move forward, it seems, we must find a different path.

We are fortunate in that bread itself provides a hint. It is alleged that on at least one occasion the 'bread of angels' became the bread of mortals.<sup>11</sup> It could do so, however, only because it had first become something that could be 'ground in mills, beat with a mortar, and baked in pans' – a transformation Mani would have found troubling.<sup>12</sup> And yet, that very tangibility is revealing. For like their contemporaries at Farat,<sup>13</sup> the Baptists of Mani's home community were disturbed as much by his behaviour as by his belief. And with good reason. For on that level, he seems to have rejected their entire *nomos*: 'the Way of God', the commandments of the Saviour, baptism, and their rationale for immersing vegetables.<sup>14</sup> In other words, in the eyes of this community Mani's most disturbing challenge was not so much his religious

<sup>6</sup> E.g., CMC 26.11, 97.8-9, 79.14-16, 127.13-14, etc. 'Eastern Aramaic' is likely *a priori*, but is suggested here because the document's vocabulary so often seems to point in that direction.

<sup>7</sup> Available at <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/>

<sup>8</sup> CMC 89.15-18, cf. 91.11-12, 22-3.

<sup>9</sup> CMC 91.22-92.11. If this is from one of the canonical Gospels, it is closest to *Luke* 24:30, cf. *Matth.* 26:26 *var.* Note that there is no mention of any 'breaking' of the bread, which Mani would have considered an offence against the Cross of Light, cf. Ephraim, *Hypat.* 2 (1.4.12-7, XXX Mitchell).

<sup>10</sup> A. Neubauer (ed.), *The Book of Tobit, a Chaldee text from a unique ms. in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1878), 4.2, 18.5: לחם הגרים and לחם מן בני עממיה. The Peshitta has ܠܚܡܐ ܕܥܡܡܝܐ. Note that though ἄρτον is plural in the two Greek versions, the Vetus Latina and Vulgate (*panibus*, *cibis*, 1:12), it is singular here. The relevant passage from Qumran has not been preserved.

<sup>11</sup> See *Ps.* 78[77]:25.

<sup>12</sup> *Numbers* 11:8.

<sup>13</sup> CMC 140.8-142.15. Note the contrast with Mani's more hostile reception by another (non-Baptist?) community, CMC 137.3-140.7. C.E. Römer, *Manis frühe Missionsreisen nach der Kölner Manibigraphie* (Opladen, 1994), 119 suggests that Farat was close enough to Mani's own community to know (of) him personally. Unfortunately none of these passages is well preserved, and it is impossible to identify the name or location of the other community.

<sup>14</sup> CMC 79.18-80.5. Note that the disputed points are listed in order of decreasing generality, and that the New Testament uses the most general of these ('the Way of God') to designate the Christian movement as a whole, *Acts* 18:24-6, see 9:2, 19:9.

goal as the means by which he proposed to achieve it – 'orthopraxy' rather than 'orthodoxy'.<sup>15</sup> In this they differed from almost all who have studied him since;<sup>16</sup> not because they thought right belief unimportant, but because they were not Christians or Muslims 'born out of due time'. Their interest lay elsewhere; they were focused on observance.

A good deal of that observance was designed to preserve cleanliness or purity (καθαρότης).<sup>17</sup> Indeed, it is even possible that some members of this community called themselves 'the Pure' (*mnāqadē*).<sup>18</sup> But if so, it was an odd kind of purity. So many of the practices needed to maintain it struck later generations as non-utilitarian, that in recent centuries it has come to be called 'ritual'. 'Ritual purity' is a kind of purity partly physical, partly ceremonial, partly moral, which when breached can be restored by ritual activity.

The distinction is a slippery one – indeed, one that most of its practitioners would find artificial<sup>19</sup> – but even if we accept it in fact, we find that not all purities are created equal. Judaism is a case in point. The immersions implied by the Codex sound very much like those undertaken by observant Jews when they immerse themselves in a *miqveh* or ritual bath in order to become clean (*tahōr*).<sup>20</sup> But that is where the resemblance ends. For the purity sought by Rabbinic Judaism is the outward and visible sign of an inward desire 'to comprehend and discern, perceive, learn and teach, observe, practice and fulfil'<sup>21</sup> an authoritative external standard: the written (and oral) Torah. Mani's Baptists possessed no such standard; or – more significantly – the exegetical culture that

<sup>15</sup> The Baptists' reaction to Mani's distinction between light and darkness is a case in point. Mani alludes to this teaching in *CMC* 84.12-14, and his opponents then reject what he does with it. What they do not do is reject the distinction itself. This is in striking contrast to the practice of most later non-Manichaeans and Manichaean missionaries (see J.D. BeDuhn, 'Scepticism in the Manichaeism of Faustus and Augustine', *New Light on Manichaeism* [Leiden, 2009], 3-4, hereafter cited as *NLM*). It is even possible they agreed with him (see *Fihrist* 9.1 2.340.27-8 Flügel; 2.811 Dodge), but they uncompromisingly rejected his practice.

<sup>16</sup> For a notable exception, see J.D. BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body in Discipline and Ritual* (Baltimore, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> *CMC* 83.20-23, 84.9-11, 85.1-4, cf. 98.1-2, probably representing Aramaic דכי or דכיות, the usual translation of the Hebrew technical terms טהור, טהרה ('clean, pure'), e.g., *Gen.* 7:2, *Lev.* 14:32, etc. (Targum). In what follows, the English words 'clean' and 'pure' and their cognates will be used interchangeably to describe this kind of purity.

<sup>18</sup> Theodore bar Konai, *Schol.* 11.58 (CSCO 69, Syr. II 66,311.14, 16; 188.232), ܡܢܩܕܐ. See *KephT* xii, 44.25-7 (50 Gardner), where the 'Pure' (ἁκαθαρσιος) seem to be distinguished from the 'Baptists' (ἁνβαπτιστικ[η]ς). Bar Konai's Syriac word is not quite the same as that applied elsewhere to another rigorist sect, the Novatians (ܡܢܩܕܐ), but it does come from the same root.

<sup>19</sup> Since the roots of this terminology lie in the Christian distinction between the parts of the Torah that deal with Ceremonies, Rites, and Civil precepts, and those parts that deal with the 'Commandments which are called Moral' (39 *Articles*, art. 8), it needs to be used with an awareness of its built-in bias. The Rabbis would have found the distinction wholly artificial.

<sup>20</sup> *CMC* 82.23-83.13, see Epiph., *Haer.* XVII 1.2 (GCS 1.214.9-12). Since ritual uncleanness could so often be reversed by immersion, archaeologists take the presence of a *Miqveh* at a site as a sure sign that some of its inhabitants were Jewish.

<sup>21</sup> Weekday *Shacharit* (Jewish Morning Prayer).

went with it. Their *nomos* was certainly transmitted in written as well as oral form, but neither possessed the kind of focused authority that sets the Bible or the *Qur'an* in judgment over against their respective communities.<sup>22</sup>

This more diffuse approach to authority had a definite practical result. It was possible for the Rabbis to distinguish between physical and religious cleanliness because for them what really mattered was that the Torah – the external standard – be fulfilled. Thus it was perfectly possible to imagine that a *miqveh* with mud in it could make one clean. Once the standard was fulfilled, the mud *per se* was irrelevant.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the existence of an absolute external standard changed what was meant by ‘clean’. In the absence of such a standard, Mani and the Baptists were less free to ignore the practical results. For them, mud *would* make a difference.<sup>24</sup>

For Mani personally the consequences of all this were significant. He had been introduced by his father into an ascetic community at the age of four,<sup>25</sup> something not to be done lightly. In another recorded instance, a four-year-old introduced into a similar community found it physically almost impossible.<sup>26</sup> There is no reason to think Mani found it any easier. The Saviour’s *nomos* taught him to rinse food before eating it, and to abstain from eating wheat bread (σίτινον ἄρτον), tree fruit (δῶρον), and certain kinds of vegetables (λάχανα).<sup>27</sup> If he did this, and immersed himself daily,<sup>28</sup> he was told he would remain pure or clean. What he found in fact, however, was that, even when he did all these things, he still experienced pollution, and that rinsing the food made no difference. It was only when he changed his diet that he began to experience (physical) purity.<sup>29</sup> For Mani, purity or cleanliness was defined at least as much by the outward and visible sign as by the inward and spiritual intent – he had to *experience* the things not seen.

The Codex tells us more about what this community thought might pollute by coming into the body than by going out, but we can probably guess that, like their Jewish contemporaries, they considered bodily discharges such as

<sup>22</sup> The *Sola Scriptura* of the Reformation, like the *ad fontes* of Vatican II, the appeal to *Sharia* among Muslims, or the *Torah* among Jews, all presume the existence of an authoritative, identifiable, and often written source whereby the contemporary community can be judged, and from which it can be reformed. The Baptists had a sense of tradition, but lacked a readily identifiable source by which to judge it.

<sup>23</sup> *Mishnah Miqvaot* 2:10, 7:7.

<sup>24</sup> In Mani’s own case this would have been literally true – his concern for the ‘Cross of Light’ would have made him concerned not only by, but *for* the mud. See the story about Alchasaio in CMC 96.11-18 with its implied criticism of Alchasaio.

<sup>25</sup> CMC 11.1-5, cf. 12.1-6, cf. *Führ.* 9.1 (2.328.8-9 Flügel; 2.774 Dodge).

<sup>26</sup> *Apophthegmata patrum (collectio systematica)* 5.27.1-5 (SC 387.262).

<sup>27</sup> CMC 89.15-18, 91.11-14, 22-3, see 87.18-88.9. Note, incidentally, that while there is no occurrence of ‘Greek bread’, there is such a thing as ‘Greek fruit’ (δῶρον Ἑλληνικόν), Plutarch, *Alexander* 50.3.1.

<sup>28</sup> CMC 83.3-7.

<sup>29</sup> CMC 80.22-82.23.

blood or semen defiling. The Rabbis who discuss this subject are refreshingly matter-of-fact; but their solution was almost always immersion or some other ritual action – remedies Mani found ineffective. Mani wanted to stop *experiencing* pollution (μιαρότης); and yet so long as he observed the *nomos*, his body continued to generate it: blood, bile, wind, and a disgusting kind of excrement (four of the six effluents known to Greek medicine).<sup>30</sup> It was only when he abandoned the *nomos* altogether that these symptoms went away.

We are not told precisely what the symptoms were, but they probably included acid reflux, burps, flatulence, and blood in the stool. We know that Mani thought these problems were caused by his diet, but we don't know exactly what that diet was.<sup>31</sup> Still, it should come as no surprise that a major portion of it was bread. Together with a side-dish bread was the principal component of most ancient meals.<sup>32</sup> What Mani's critics were concerned about was that he thought it appropriate<sup>33</sup> to eat wheat bread, σίτινον ἄρτον, as opposed to a bread made from something else (presumably barley),<sup>34</sup> and that this bread was somehow 'Greek', Ἑλ[ληνικόν]. That *is* puzzling. Wheat bread may have been a bit upscale, but it was certainly not 'Greek' – it had been known in Mesopotamia for millennia.<sup>35</sup> Whatever led the Baptists to call Mani's bread 'Greek', it wasn't just the wheat; it has to have been something done *to* the wheat – something that relieved Mani's symptoms and yet was distinctive enough to warrant its own name.

<sup>30</sup> CMC 81.10-12: αἷμα, χολή, πνεύματα, and σκύβαλα. The remaining two were φλέγμα and οὐρον, phlegm and urine: e.g., Ps.-Galen, *De remediis parabilibus*, 14.569 Kuhn, Aretaeus, *De curatione acutorum morborum* II 5.4.

<sup>31</sup> It is possible we may know more soon. According to Wolf-Peter Funk, 'Mani's Account of Other Religions According to the Coptic *Synaxeis* Codex', *NLM* 119-20, this as yet unpublished codex contains further information on the subject.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., John 13:26, Plutarch, *Marius* 7.4, Plato, *Gorgias* 518B, etc. The fact that Mani insisted on a particular type of bread shows he acknowledged this, but given that breads were among the most highly processed ancient foods, it is difficult to see how he could have eaten them at all! See CMC 97.11-7.

<sup>33</sup> The Greek word represented (somewhat ambiguously) by 'appropriate' here is δέον (CMC 87.23, 89.20, cf. 92.2-3, 94.7-8): Mani said it was δέον to eat the disputed food. This is a little odd; it might mean 'appropriate' in an obligatory sense ('one ought'), or in a permissive sense (it is 'right' or 'permitted' = Aramaic שליש, רשע); but it might also reflect the translator's liking for medical terminology. In medical texts δέον was commonly used to describe treatments that were 'appropriate' or 'beneficial' in a given instance (e.g., Aretaeus, *De curatione* I 3.4, Alexander Med., *Therapeutica* II 331.12, etc.). It is possible, then, that the Aramaic was simply טוב, טב, 'good'.

<sup>34</sup> Note the relative price of wheat and barley in Rev. 6:6, and the ascending order of grains in the *Geoponica* XIV 7.6-7.

<sup>35</sup> See David Waines, 'Cereals, Bread and Society: An Essay on the Staff of Life in Medieval Iraq', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 30 (1987), 257-63. Note that Barley remained the more popular, and that rice (the current staple) did not become popular until much later.

There was in fact such a bread.<sup>36</sup> Most ancient breads were very poorly ground and contained impurities that made them difficult to digest (barley breads in particular). But there were also specialty breads (breads made from fully refined flour) that lacked such impurities. Any such bread would have addressed Mani's symptoms; but there is one – named after his ancestral homeland – which would have done so especially well. This is a bread which Pliny the Elder says came to Italy during his own lifetime; he calls it 'Parthian' (*Parthicum*).<sup>37</sup> The medical community knew it as *πλυτὸς ἄρτος*, 'light' or 'washed' bread.<sup>38</sup> This 'Parthian bread' was a water bread (*aquaticum*): a high ratio of water to flour produced a flat, spongy loaf which physicians considered beneficial for the weak-stomached.<sup>39</sup> A tempting combination of name, history, and alleged effect thus hints that Pliny's [*panem*] *Parthicum* might be what the Codex means by 'Greek bread'. But is there any reason to think that what was 'Parthian' in the West was 'Greek' in the East? That, after all, is the issue. To find the answer, we need to step back a little from the Codex itself.

The Codex does not tell us directly the location of Mani's childhood home. However, we can deduce that it was located not far from the Tigris,<sup>40</sup> was a few days' journey from Ctesiphon,<sup>41</sup> and was one of a number of similar communities in the same area.<sup>42</sup> That accords well with the direct statement of Ibn al-Nadīm, a 10<sup>th</sup> century Baghdadi in touch with a living Manichaean community.<sup>43</sup> According to Al-Nadīm, Mani was brought up in Dastumīsān, a swampy region about a hundred miles south of Baghdad.<sup>44</sup> Until very recently this area was home to almost 200,000 people, including members of a surviving Baptist sect. Unfortunately, in the 1990's Saddam Hussein ordered the swamps drained and the people driven from the land. Our question must naturally be: was there anyone there in the 230's who might qualify as a 'Greek'?

It is difficult to give a straightforward answer because at this period 'Greek' said more about a person's culture than their ancestry. The 'good news' about that is that we are not therefore required to locate a group of Greek immigrants in southern Iraq; the 'bad news' is we still need to find a group a Baptist would think 'Greek'. The best place to begin is with the word Ἑλλη[ν]ας itself.

<sup>36</sup> For the technical information that follows see Naum Jasny, 'The Daily Bread of the Ancient Greeks and Romans', *Osiris* 9 (1950), 227-53, a work based on both experimental and literary evidence.

<sup>37</sup> Circa AD 77: Pliny, *Natural History* 18.105 ([*panem*] *Parthicum*).

<sup>38</sup> E.g., Galen, *De alimentorum facultatibus* I, 6.494 Kuhn.

<sup>39</sup> Oribasius, *Collect. medicae* IV 11.1 (quoting Antyllus, a 2<sup>nd</sup> c. Greek physician), Paulus Medicus, *Epitomae medicae libri septem* III 6.2. There is a reconstructed recipe for this bread in Cathy K. Kaufman, *Cooking in Ancient Civilizations* (Westport, CN, 2006), 134-5.

<sup>40</sup> Note ἐπὶ τῆς γεφύρας in CMC 111.3-4 and πλήρης τῆς θαλάσσης in CMC 109.18-21.

<sup>41</sup> See CMC 109.9-17, see 22-110.2, 18-21.

<sup>42</sup> In CMC 110.5-8 Patticius assumes that Mani has gone to τὰς συνόδους τὰς πέ[ρ]ιξ.

<sup>43</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 9.1 (2.337.24-7 Flügel; 2.803 Dodge).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* (2.328.5 Flügel; 2.774 Dodge): بنواحي دستميسان.



As we have already noted, the Codex was originally written in Aramaic. The first question is naturally therefore: what Aramaic word does "Ελλη[v]ας represent? If we were translating from Greek into Aramaic we might have several choices. Depending on what we were trying to say, we might render "Ελλη[v]ας as *yavna'ē* (Greeks proper), *arama'ē* (Aramaean), *'ammē* (gentiles), or *ḥanēphīn* (heathen).<sup>45</sup> Coming from Aramaic into Greek, however, our choices would be fewer. Not because there are not perfectly good ways to say all these things in Greek, but because it is unlikely that we would render *arama'ē*, *'ammē*, or *ḥanēphīn* in Greek simply as "Ελλη[v]ας. We can be reasonably sure, therefore, that what the translator had in front of him was the Aramaic word *yavna'ē* (ܝܘܢܐ), and that 'Greek bread' was something like *lahmā deyavna'ē*, *lahmā min yavna'ē*, or *lahmā demin yavna'ē* (ܠܚܡܐ ܕܝܘܢܐ, ܠܚܡܐ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܐ, or ܠܚܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܝܘܢܐ).

What makes that interesting is that in Jewish circles *yavna'ē* early became a kind of code to describe Alexander's successors, the Seleucids.<sup>46</sup> More to point, under certain circumstances it could also be used to describe *their* successors, the Arsacids. This can be seen in the Babylonian Talmud. On one very specific occasion the Talmud uses *yavna'ē* (ܝܘܢܐ) to distinguish the Parthians from their Sassanid conquerors the 'Persians' (פרסאי). The latter insisted that their royal courts took precedence over Jewish ones, especially in capital cases, and some Jews resisted this.<sup>47</sup> Thus when Kahana, a disciple of 'Rab' (Abba Arika), spontaneously administered such a punishment in open court, Rab admonished him as follows:

'Kahana, until now the Greeks (ܝܘܢܐ) were here, who were not too concerned about the shedding of blood; but now we have the Persians (פרסאי), and they *do* care about the shedding of blood; they will [surely] cry, 'Murder! Murder!' Get up and go to the land of Israel...' <sup>48</sup>

In other words, for Rab the Arsacids are 'Greeks' and the Sasanians 'Persians'. Since Rab was a friend of Artaban IV<sup>th</sup>, the last Arsacid emperor,<sup>49</sup> and died himself in 247,<sup>50</sup> this incident is almost *exactly* contemporary with the events we have been discussing. Mani came before the Baptists in the spring of 241, not long after the capture of Ḥatra by the first Sasanian king.<sup>51</sup> It cannot be coincidental that the Codex describes this king in exactly the same terms as

<sup>45</sup> E.g. (using the Peshitta), ܡܬܬܐ, ܡܬܐ, Acts 11:20, 14:1; ܡܬܬܐ, Acts 19:10; ܡܬܬܐ, John 12:20; ܡܬܬܐ, John 7:35.

<sup>46</sup> E.g., *Damascus Document* 8.11, 19.24, *Targum I Sam.* 2:4, b. *Abodah Zarah* 8b, etc.

<sup>47</sup> See D. Hoffmann, *Mar Samuel: Rector der jüdischen Akademie zu Nehardea in Babylonien. Lebensbild eines talmudischen Weisen der ersten Hälfte des dritten Jahrhunderts nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Leipzig, 1873), 41-3.

<sup>48</sup> b. *Baba Kamma* 117a (N.B. in the Vilna edition the order is פרסאי and then ܝܘܢܐ; the translation follows the clearly correct revised order given in the margin).

<sup>49</sup> In b. *Abodah Zarah* 10b-11a, Artabanus (אדרבן [sic]) is called Rab's 'minister' (שמשיה).

<sup>50</sup> See M.I. Mühlfelder, *Rabbi, Ein Lebensbild* (Leipzig, 1871), 81.

<sup>51</sup> *CMC* 17.23-18.15, see 73.5-8, *Fih.* 9.1 (2.328.8 Flügel; 2.774 Dodge).



Rab: 'Dariardaxar, King of Persia' (βασιλεὺς τῆς Περσίδος).<sup>52</sup> To find one half of a dichotomy makes it at least reasonable to look for the other. Given the joint witness of both the Talmud and the Codex, then, it seems reasonable to conclude that Ἐλ[ληνικὸν] ἄρτον was indeed [*panem*] *Parthicum* and that Mani's 'Greeks' were Parthians.

On some levels this may seem counterintuitive, but in fact it is quite reasonable. From the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. onwards, Parthian rulers routinely described themselves as ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ, 'Greek-lovers'.<sup>53</sup> This was as true of the rulers of Mesene/Characene (which included Dastumīsān) as of their Parthian lords.<sup>54</sup> The nativism of the Sasanians thus made it useful to portray the Parthians in Seleucid terms, particularly in the 240's. By calling them 'Greeks' it was possible to distinguish them from the Sasanians on one side and the Romans on the other. Once the Parthians were gone, however, there was no further need for a middle term. Rab's successors speak only of *parsā'ē* or *ḥabār'ē* (aggressively Zoroastrian Sasanians) and Romans;<sup>55</sup> the *yavna'ē* have disappeared.

This accords well with the date of Mani's alleged appearance before the Baptists, and even hints at the period in which it must have been written down;<sup>56</sup> but is it possible to locate Mani's 'Greeks' physically? Just possibly it is. The rulers of Mesene/Characene thought of themselves as Philhellenes, but it had been at least fifty years since they really spoke the language.<sup>57</sup> In spite of this they still possessed two cities a Baptist would have considered 'Greek': Charax Spasinou (Kark Maysān) and Apamea. Charax Spasinou was a hundred and fifty miles below Dastumīsān and was sacked by the Sassanids when Mani was about eight years old.<sup>58</sup> It was being rebuilt as Astarābād-Ardašīr, but its gradually silting port was being replaced by that of Farat. Apamea Mesene<sup>59</sup> on the other hand – not to be confused with its Syrian namesake – was not only located *in* Dastumīsān, it was well suited to be the

<sup>52</sup> CMC 18.3-5. Presumably this represents 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭲𐭪𐭥𐭭 as in the *Chronicle of Arbela* 8, 10 (CSCO 199.31.4-5, 24-5, see 32.4, 9; 200.52.14-5, 20, cf. 53.2, 55.25) and on his own coins (see next note). N.B. that Peter Kawerau (followed by Timothy Króll in 1985) translates plain 𐭪𐭣𐭥𐭭𐭮𐭲𐭪𐭥𐭭 misleadingly as *Grosskönig* in 200.52.14-15, 20.

<sup>53</sup> See P. Gardner, *The Parthian Coinage* (London, 1877), 23 and especially the Table of Inscriptions *ibid.* 63-4.

<sup>54</sup> G. Le Rider, 'Monnaies de Characène,' *Syria* 36 (1959), 229-53, cf. 246.

<sup>55</sup> E.g., *b. Gittin* 16b-17a, see *b. Yeb.* 63b, *b. Shabb.* 45a (חברי, חברים, פרסאי vs. ארומאי).

<sup>56</sup> I.e., while the distinction was still fresh in people's minds, perhaps the latter half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

<sup>57</sup> See H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes 38. Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre,' *Syria* 22 (1941), 225-70, cf. 254-5.

<sup>58</sup> According to Muhammad Ibn Jarir Ṭabarī (838-923), *Tarikh al-Tabari (History of the Prophets and Kings)*, I 2.818.12-5 De Goeje, about this time Ardashir killed Mesene's last native ruler, Bandū, and rebuilt Charax Spasinou, renaming it Astarābād-Ardašīr (I 2.820.11-12 De Goeje).

<sup>59</sup> See Ammianus Marcellinus XXIII 6.23: 'inter quas Apamia eminet Mesene cognominata...'

Baptist market town.<sup>60</sup> It was also a stop on a well-known international trade route.

Apamea was one link in a chain binding Farat and India on the one hand to Syria and Rome on the other, with the city of Palmyra as the hub.<sup>61</sup> That makes it interesting that when Mani ran away from home, those looking for him thought of two possibilities: the nearby Baptist 'synods'<sup>62</sup> and 'the Greeks'.<sup>63</sup> If we assume that the latter were as close physically as the former, then the 'Greeks' most likely to have been known to the adolescent Mani were the Hellenized Parthian traders of Apamea. Thus, while the Baptists were wrong in point of fact (Mani had gone to Ctesiphon), the mere fact that they thought first of these 'Greeks' tells us a good deal about where they thought he had been spending his time.

If Mani really did eat 'Greek bread' in Apamea, it goes without saying that he took in more than food. The later content of his religion suggests what some of that might have been; but there is another, more personal, possibility. The translator described the 'bread of the *yavna'e*' as 'Greek'. We will probably never know his name, but his own Greek may tell us his profession. We have already called attention to the Codex's use of medical terms. This is less telling in Greek than the corresponding phenomenon would be in English because Greek medical terms are less technical than our own. What is *more* telling is the use of those terms together with a particular type of Greek.

The translator was clearly educated but not a professional rhetor, as his inconsistent Atticism shows us. It is his inconsistent Ionicism, however, that intrigues. It is not particularly prominent, but it is definitely present.<sup>64</sup> Atticisms in a writer of this period do not require an explanation; Ionicisms do. Though the Ionic dialect was no longer spoken, it was still in use. It was used by people who were deliberately trying to sound archaic (like pseudo-Lucian in the *De Dea Syriaca*); and it was used by doctors. It had been the dialect of Hippocrates, the archetypical Greek doctor, and was thus used for medical treatises long after it ceased to be a living tongue.<sup>65</sup> The Codex is not Ionic enough to show that it *was* translated by a doctor, but it is certainly Ionic enough to show that it *might* have been. That is speculation, but it is speculation based on observation. That makes it worth noting that, while we don't know where the Codex was translated, we do know where it was found, and

<sup>60</sup> On the location of Apamea (and a history of the kingdom) see Monika Schuol, *Die Charakene: Ein mesopotamisches Königreich in hellenistisch-parthischer Zeit* (Stuttgart, 2000), 281.

<sup>61</sup> H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes' (1941), 252-55.

<sup>62</sup> CMC 109.22-110.8.

<sup>63</sup> CMC 80.14-18.

<sup>64</sup> E.g., CMC 67.2 (ξυνεμποροις); 71.11 (εἵνεκα); 83.5, 109.5, 110.19 (εἵνεκε[ν]); 110.7-8 (πέ[ρ]ιξ); 114.10 (ἀντιστήι), etc.

<sup>65</sup> The *De curatione acutorum morborum* of the first century author Aretaeus of Cappadocia is a good example (cited n. 30 above).

that not far away was one of antiquity's most famous medical schools.<sup>66</sup> Since some of Mani's earliest supporters in Egypt were doctors,<sup>67</sup> it is impossible not to wonder if our translator was one of them.

Speculation is notoriously addictive, and we may therefore hope to be forgiven if we take this one a little further. The medical language in the Codex is generally associated with events that are integral to its story. And yet by the time the Codex was written, there had been Greek doctors in Iraq for half a thousand years. In Aramaic, that heritage now survives chiefly in Syriac;<sup>68</sup> but the fact that it exists at all must raise a significant question: is *all* the medical terminology in the Codex due to the translator? Or is it possible that some of it was in the original? We may lack the data to answer that question directly, but the alleged healing power of 'Greek bread' does make one wonder. Given the young Mani's interest in purity and the adult Mani's preoccupation with health,<sup>69</sup> is it possible that one of the reasons he went to Apamea was to see the doctor?

Doubtless we shall never know. Still, Mani tells us himself that as a young man he felt like 'a lamb in an alien flock, a bird with a different cry'.<sup>70</sup> Our search for 'Greek bread' has certainly indicated one of his remedies; but it has also shown us a young man with horizons broader than we might have imagined. Perhaps, then, like Trypho we should acknowledge that we have received more than we either desired or deserved.

<sup>66</sup> See Ammianus Marcellinus XXII 16.18: '*pro omni tamen experimento sufficiat medico ad commendandam artis auctoritatem Alexandriae (si) se dixerit eruditum.*'

<sup>67</sup> *PKell. Copt.* 25.40, *KDT* 1.188 [191]: 'It was some friends who gave them to me; they are doctors [NCHINE].'

<sup>68</sup> See, e.g., S. Bhayro, 'Syriac Medical Terminology: Sergius and Galen's Pharmacopia' in *Aramaic Studies* 3 (2005), 147-65.

<sup>69</sup> E.g., *PKell. Copt.* 53.6.11-141, 30.24-31.9, 52.2-23 (*KLT* 2.31, 39, 57).

<sup>70</sup> *CMC* 73.11-16.

## Between Myth and Exegesis: Ephrem the Syrian on the Manichaean *Book of Giants*

Flavia RUANI, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, France

### ABSTRACT

Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373) wrote many lines and verses against the Manicheans, often keeping their original concepts and their authentic terminology. It is, then, legitimate to wonder if, and to what extent, he was also acquainted with the Manichaean *Book of Giants*, one of the Manichaean canonical scriptures. This article intends to examine the reaction of Ephrem to the Manichaean interpretation of *Gen* 6:1-4, regarding the Giants tradition and base for the *Book of Giants*. We analyze numbers 7 and 19 among his *Hymns against the heresies* in order to understand how he perceived and what he knew about this controversial narrative material within the Manichaean mythology. We also try to identify the polemical techniques used by the Syriac writer in refuting his adversaries' conceptions. To better value Ephrem's verses and arguments, parallels are drawn from direct Manichaean sources preserved in Coptic and other languages.

Even if mostly unknown for this role, Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373) was an astute polemical writer.<sup>1</sup> He particularly fought against the Manicheans. Here, my aim is to discover if Ephrem could have access to the Manichaean *Book of Giants*, a work which belongs to the canon of the Manichaean scriptures.<sup>2</sup> My methodology will consist in examining some lines of two among the *Hymns*

<sup>1</sup> Apart from his anti-Jewish polemic, which has interested many scholars, little attention has been dedicated to his role as a heresiographer. Let us mention the recent exceptions of Sidney H. Griffith, 'The Thorn among the Tares: Mani and Manichaeism in the Works of St. Ephraem the Syrian', in Maurice F. Wiles and Edward Yarnold (eds), *SP* 35 (Leuven, 2001), 403-35, and John C. Reeves, 'Manichean Citations from the Prose Refutations of Ephrem', in Paul Mirecki and Jason D. BeDuhn (eds), *Emerging From Darkness. Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1997), 217-88. Both authors pointed out in particular the polemic stressed against the Manicheans in Ephrem's works. It is true, indeed, that Ephrem was a vehement polemical author, who utilized some *topoi* of the heresiological literature, and who kept, behind his often cryptical expressions, something of his opponents' terminology.

<sup>2</sup> See John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions*, Monograph of the Hebrew Union College 14 (Cincinnati, 1992), 9-24; Michel Tardieu, *Le manichéisme* (Paris, 1997), 43-64; Enrico Morano, 'Testi medio-iranici II. Il "Libro dei Giganti" di Mani', in Gherardo Gnoli (ed.), *Il manicheismo, v. III: Il mito e la dottrina. Testi manichei dell'Asia Centrale e della Cina*, Scrittori greci e latini (Milano, 2008), 71-5.

against the heresies by Ephrem,<sup>3</sup> trying to highlight the Manichaean material implied in the polemic and to understand the ways in which Ephrem criticizes it. By disclosing the authentic terminology or concepts of his opponents, we can reach a better understanding of the polemical methods and the rhetorical features he employs to construct the figure of a heretic.

The Manichaean *Book of Giants* was probably written in Syriac by Mani himself but it is known today only through fragments composed in some Iranian dialects and it is possible to reconstruct the missing parts thanks to quotations kept in other Manichaean texts or anti-Manichaean works.<sup>4</sup> The *Book of Giants* is based upon the Jewish apocryphon 1En. 6-11, which takes its origin from a particular interpretation of Gen 6:1-4. Gen 6:1-4 tells the story of the 'Sons of God', who, attracted by the 'Daughters of men', descended to earth to couple with them; their union gave birth to the giants.

According to the Manichaean *Book of Giants*, the 'Sons of God' are angels or watchers descended from heaven – this is an interpretation which goes back much earlier in Jewish tradition.<sup>5</sup> The work, then, develops the biblical narrative describing, for instance, how the watchers rebelled against the realm of Light, begot giants and monstrous beings with women on earth, taught forbidden knowledge to men, and killed many righteous in battle, or how the giants had dreams predicting the flood and fought one another, etc., until the watchers and their offspring are destroyed by the four Archangels sent by God.

Interpreting this same biblical passage, Ephrem follows another tradition, which became the predominant one in Christian milieu from the 4th century onwards: the 'Sons of God' are not angels but 'Sons of Seth',<sup>6</sup> men of virtue and great size, who descended from their mountain near Paradise, amazed by

<sup>3</sup> The reference edition is: Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen contra Haereses*, CSCO 169 / Syr. 76, CSCO 170 / Syr. 77 (Louvain, 1957).

<sup>4</sup> See Walter B. Henning, *Selected Papers I*, Acta Iranica 14 (Téhéran and Liège, 1977), 115-37 [= *id.*, 'The Book of the Giants', *BSOAS* 11 (1943-6), 52-74] and 341-9 [= *id.*, 'Ein manichäisches Henochbuch', *SPAW* 5 (1934), 27-35] for a survey of the extant fragments of the Manichaean *Book of Giants*, which are translated and put in a coherent order to reconstruct the original composition.

<sup>5</sup> For the Jewish tradition, the interpretation depends upon the identification of the 'Sons of God' (*banē hā-elōhīm*): 'angels' was the commonest one, but *Targum Onqelos* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* translate 'sons of the nobles'; *Targum Neofiti* as 'sons of the judges', *Genesis Rabbah* 26:5,2 rejects the translation 'Sons of God', for it implies the identification with fallen angels (see Philip S. Alexander, 'The Targumim and Early Exegesis of "Sons of God" in Genesis 6', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23 [1972], 60-71). As for the Greek tradition, the interpretation depends upon the Biblical translation of the terms in Gen. 6:2 and 6:4 used or known by each author. Aquila translates, for instance, 'sons of gods', Symmachus 'sons of the strong ones', the Septuagint has, in one place, 'angels of God', in the other, 'sons of God': See Marguerite Harl, *La Bible d'Alexandrie, La Genèse* (Paris, 1986), 124-6, and Lionel R. Wickham, 'The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis', *Oudtestamentische Studien* 19 (1974), 135-47.

<sup>6</sup> The first author to mention this interpretation is Julius Africanus (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century). It can be Jewish in origin: See J.C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony* (1992), 186-7, and

the beauty of the ‘Daughters of Cain’, who dwelt on lower ground and were smaller in size.<sup>7</sup>

Ephrem deals with this subject in his work *Hymns against the heresies*<sup>8</sup>, a poetical collection which particularly fights the doctrinal systems of Bardaisan, Marcion and Mani. In hymns 7 and 19, Ephrem accuses Mani to give credence to the Fallen Angels and Giants interpretation.<sup>9</sup>

## Hymn 19

If the interpretation of angels descended to unite with women is common to

- a) much of the Jewish tradition;
- b) apocryphal texts of the Jewish tradition – *1Enoch*;
- c) Bardaisan;<sup>10</sup>
- d) Mani, the content of hymn 19 suggests a particularly anti-Manichaean critique.

Gedaliahu A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Nag Hammadi Studies 24 (Leiden, 1984), 125-34.

<sup>7</sup> In the exegesis, the descendants of the patriarchs Seth and Enosh deserve the title of ‘Sons of God’ relying on *Gen.* 4:23. This is the exegesis generally followed in Syriac literature: Aphraate (*Demonstrationes* 13, 5 and 18, 9), the *Cave of Treasures* (see G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed* [1984], 128). In *Commentary on Genesis* 6, 5, Ephrem keeps also the reading ‘judges’, similar to some Jewish tradition (ex. *Targum Neofiti* and *Genesis Rabbah*). This reading reminds of a particular variant (*bnay dayânē*) among the manuscripts of the Peshitta, a variant kept in manuscript 8/5b1 (BL Add. 14425), the oldest dated Syriac Old Testament witness, against all the other lessons, which opt for *bnay elôhîm*: See Arie van der Kooij, ‘Peshitta Genesis 6: “Sons of Gods” – Angels or Judges?’, *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 23 (1997), 43-51.

<sup>8</sup> But also in *Commentary on Genesis* 6, 3-5; *De nativitate* 1, 22 (and implicitly 1, 48); *De paradiso* 1, 11. See also *De fide* 46, 8: ‘The watchers are not, at any time, called “sons of God”’; and *De ieiunio* 2, 2 (see Trygve Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian, with particular reference to the influence of Jewish exegetical tradition* [Lund, 1978], 163-71).

<sup>9</sup> Ephrem has never been used as an author testifying to the existence of this Manichaean work, among the indirect sources keeping some allusions to the *Book of Giants*. J.C. Reeves, nevertheless, made a reference to *Hymn 7 Against the Heresies*: ‘A similar criticism [similar to Alexander of Lycopolis, *Contra manichaeos* 25] occurs in a polemical hymn of Ephrem: “Mani hated truth and believed fiction ... he gave credence to (the narrative) about the Giants, and believed (the doctrine of) the Chaldeans”’ (*Jewish Lore in Manichean Cosmogony* [1992], 41<sup>81</sup>). T. Kronholm too has analyzed these two hymns (*Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian* [1978], 163-71), but he was interested in explaining Ephrem’s interpretation of *Gen.* 6:1-4 and did not discuss the possibility of Manichaean sources or concepts being used by Ephrem when writing these verses (apart from a little note *ibid.* 167<sup>41</sup>, which refers to the Manichaean mythological episode of the Seduction of the Archons, without any further commentary).

<sup>10</sup> Bardaisan of Edessa can also be implicitly referred to: he attests, in the *Book of the Laws of Countries* (*Patrologia Syriaca* I 2, 548, 7-9), the interpretation of the Sons of God as ‘angels’ (see A. van der Kooij, ‘Peshitta Genesis 6’ [1997], 45-7).

It deals, in fact, with the rejection of the body, of the world, of matter in general, which belongs to Manichaeism as it is perceived by heresiographers.

In hymn 19, Ephrem attacks the opinion that something corporeal is to be rejected as impure. To refute this view, Ephrem argues that something spiritual such as Satan can be filthy as well, and *vice versa* that something corporeal such as the dove can be pure, because to him sins are not fixed by nature, but depend on freewill ('impure is the one who sins by his freedom', stanza 3, vv. 8-9).<sup>11</sup> In this context, stanzas 2 and 4 present some noteworthy lines for our subject:

Pure are calves, sheep and also deer by their race;  
Doves and fishes, beautiful and pure is their nature;  
Produce and fruits, pure and sweet is their taste.  
Lo, all bodies are pure!  
Hateful are demons, devils and their master,  
*and the guardians of Sheol, of whom they speak,*  
*and the angels who descended to couple, as they preached.*  
Lo, the corporeal ones, how much are pure,  
and the spiritual ones, how much hateful, and the doctrines, how much erred! <sup>12</sup>

"Enoch – they say – and Elijah had undressed and thrown away their bodies" ;  
"when – they say – they flew through the air, their nature was refined" .  
And they blasphemed over the angels: "They sinned – they say – with their body" .  
Oh voices of confusion!

They gave the body to the upper beings, the pure ones,  
and took off the body from Enoch and Elijah.  
The corporeal ones and the spiritual ones, they undressed them and dress  
on the contrary; they perverted their natures:  
they calumniated the one who has, and they oppressed the one who has not!<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> ܡܬܠܝܬ ܕܥܢܝܐ ܕܥܢܝܐ ܕܥܢܝܐ ܕܥܢܝܐ. See also a similar polemic in the *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan*, and the analysis of Marcus Bierbaums, 'Ephraim the Syrian on Freedom of Will in Manichaeism (PR I I-XXVIII: First Discourse to Hypatios) – Reference to Manichaean Common Property?', *Aram Periodical* 16 (2004), 263-77.

<sup>12</sup> Translation in T. Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian* (1978), 167, but with some changes by me. Syriac text:

ܐܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
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ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ

<sup>13</sup> Translation in T. Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian* (1978), 167, but with some changes by me. Syriac text:

ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ  
ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ



In these passages, Ephrem does not explicitly name who ‘they’ are, but he quotes or makes a reference to some words attributed to the adversaries (through the enunciative marks *ak d-âmrîn*, *ak da-sbarw*, *lam*). It is clear that he is referring to something pertaining to an interpretative tradition about the fallen angels of the book of *Genesis*: we can easily suppose a Manichaean interpretation of the Biblical episode behind the expressions ‘the angels who descended to couple’ and ‘they blasphemed over the angels: “They sinned – they say – with their body”’.

As for the ‘guardians of Sheol’, this expression is reminiscent of some passages of the Coptic *Kephalaia*, another Manichaean text, to which we can refer, imagining the missing beginning of the *Book of Giants*. Here, the rebellion of the watchers takes place in the firmament, and more precisely in the watch-district of the Great King of Honour or *Rex Honoris*, one of the sons of the Living Spirit in the Manichaean myth.<sup>14</sup> This mythical figure is the guardian of the watchers before they descended. It is then possible that Ephrem’s expression, the ‘guardians of Sheol’, may refer to this very beginning of the story as seen in Manichaean documents. But the word ‘Sheol’, even if it never appears in Manichaean sources, also suggests another possible moment of the Manichaean myth concerning the watchers. According to it, the Light entities in their wisdom have foreseen the creation of prisons and pits in which to bind evil elements at the end of time. These prisons, tells *Kephalaion* XLV, are expected also for the watchers who rebelled.<sup>15</sup> The term ‘Sheol’ may then refer to this Manichaean place of punishment for watchers, but expressed with more familiar Judeo-Christian terminology.<sup>16</sup>

Let us now turn our attention to the other stanza. It is significant to note that Enoch is mentioned just before the story of the angels, when he is translated to heavens as reported in *Gen.* 5:24. In doing this, Ephrem implicitly proves that Enoch is linked with the Fallen Angels tradition in his opponents’ teaching.

ⲕⲁ ⲗⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ  
ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ ⲗⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ  
ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ ⲗⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ  
ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ ⲗⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ  
ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ ⲗⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ  
ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ ⲗⲉⲗⲁ ⲙⲁⲛⲁⲓⲛ

<sup>14</sup> See *Kephalaia* 92, 24-32; 93, 23-8; 171, 16-9.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Again, before the watchers rebelled and came down from heaven, a prison was fashioned and constructed for them in the depths of the earth, below the mountains’ (*Keph.* 117, 1-4: Iain Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary* [Leiden, New York and Köln, 1995], 123). An ‘eternal chain’ and a ‘prison’ for the watchers are mentioned also in *Kephalaion* 93, 23-8.

<sup>16</sup> Note that the term ‘Sheol’ is used in *1En.* as destiny for sinners (103:7-8), characterized by darkness, nets and burning flames: see also *1En.* 54:1-6; 67:4-7, which portray imprisonment in eternal darkness and torments in burning fire for the rebellious watchers (J.C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichean Cosmogony* [1992], 194-5).





felt desire, the Creator would have provided them a land where they could have put their seeds. This argument brings us to consider hymn 7.

## Hymn 7

With this same argument, which exploits the metaphor of the seed (*zar'ā*) and the ground (*ar'ā*), in fact, Ephrem opens *Hymn 7*, where he reacts once more against what he considers to be an erroneous comprehension of *Gen. 6:1-4*: Since all creatures have been provided with a companion to procreate, God would be culpable if he gave the angels the possibility to beget children without giving them a land, 'so that they would have slipped, descended and scattered (their seeds) over the earth of the lower ones' (stanza 1, v. 6).<sup>21</sup>

The image of the seed and the ground evokes a particular episode of the Manichaean redemption myth, the so-called 'Seduction of the Archons'. This episode concerns the procreation activity of the Archons, male and female, seduced by the vision of the Third Messenger of Light in the form of a beautiful virgin or a splendid man. Male Archons' seeds fall on the earth and give birth to plants; female Archons produce fetuses that fall on the ground and generate Adam and Eve, after another intervention of two dark figures, Ašaqlūn and Nebroēl.<sup>22</sup>

Ephrem seems to allude to this myth also in stanza 2, where he speaks about a 'fetus' (*'ūlā*)<sup>23</sup>, and in stanza 4, where he makes use of the personification of

<sup>21</sup> ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ

<sup>22</sup> According to Theodore bar Konai (*Liber Scholiorum* XI), quoting some excerpts of a Manichaean work: see M. Tardieu, *Le manichéisme* (21997), 99: the fetuses are eaten by Ašaqlūn and Nebroēl; then they unite and give birth to Adam and Eve.

<sup>23</sup> Stanza 2 (my translation):

ܡܬܘ ܕܝܥ ܠܡܢ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܡܢ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ  
ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ

The fraud which has been composed  
has dislocated itself.

There would not have been the place  
in the womb for such a fetus:

the size of his father  
teaches how he would have been:

'His head would have touched  
the stars'.

Nature has violently  
shamed these liars,  
because women refuted  
themselves the thing.

desire in a feminine entity, Venus (*kaūkabtā*), ‘who would have troubled (*šgaš*) the pure ones, the sons of the height’ (v. 3)<sup>24</sup>, with ‘her look’ (*hyârâh*) (v. 5).<sup>25</sup>

Hence, besides the *Book of Giants*, Ephrem alludes to other Manichaean material, namely some features of the ‘Seduction of the Archons’. But not only: stanzas 5-6-7 seem to react against another Manichaean doctrine, different from the *Book of Giants* and the ‘Seduction of the Archons’: it is the teaching which explains the existence of different human sizes.

Let us look at the passage. Ephrem says that (stanza 4, v. 1) Mani ‘gave credence to (the stories) of Giants and believed in (the doctrine) of the Chaldeans’,<sup>26</sup> that is astrology,<sup>27</sup> but he denounces that these two teachings are in contradiction with each other. For Ephrem, the existence of different statures among human beings, not only that of Giants, refutes the horoscope, which is based, on the contrary, on homologation.<sup>28</sup> In other words, men of short stature refute the Manicheans both for their Giants doctrine and their horoscope doctrine.<sup>29</sup> If we search in the Manichaean literature for a source for this polemic,

Furthermore, the verse ‘His head would have touched the stars’, if it recalls *Job* 20:6 (‘his head touched the clouds’), could also be an indication of the size of the Giants, which was probably contained in the Manichaean *Book of Giants* but does not appear in the extant fragments we own (J.C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony* [1992], 171; see also the texts he cites from the Jewish literature of the Second Temple era speaking of the great size of Giants, *i.e.* *1 Enoch* 7:2 and *Jubilees* 29:9-11).

<sup>24</sup> ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ

<sup>25</sup> ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ

<sup>26</sup> ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ

<sup>27</sup> This is a common heresiological practice: presenting the adversary as a mere collector of disparate teachings (see Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles, I, De Justin à Irénée; II, Clément d'Alexandrie et Origène* [Paris, 1985], index ‘plagiat’; and for the Manicheans in particular, Madelaine Scopello, ‘Julie, manichéenne d'Antioche (d'après la *Vie de Porphyre* de Marc le Diacre, ch. 85-91)’, in *ead.*, *Femme, Gnose et Manichéisme. De l'espace mythique au territoire du réel*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 53 [Leiden and Boston, 2005], 237-91, especially 255-65).

<sup>28</sup> This argument about sizes allows Ephrem to state that giants as well as other sorts of people are of human nature, offspring of the house of Adam, and do not originate from the intercourse between angels and women, as the Manicheans would assert (stanzas 6 and 7). See also *Carmina Nisibena* 54, 15, where Adam is called ‘the head of the giants’, and *Commentary on Genesis* 6, 5, where Ephrem explicitly affirms that ‘the giants who were born, were born from the little race of the house of Cain, and not from the powerful one of the house of Seth’ (see T. Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis 1-11 in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian* [1978], 171). He afterwards gives an explanation of this difference of stature between Sethites and Cainites, which lies in the different region they dwelt: the land of the Cainites was cursed and lacked for produces; the hill of the Sethites was blessed and provided abundance of provision.

<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note that in stanza 5 Ephrem uses Zacchaeus, the tax-collector of *Luke* 19:1, as example of a man short in stature (my translation):

ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ  
ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ  
ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ  
ܐܡܢ ܕܢ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ

we find a Coptic *Kephalaion*, number LVII, which contains a long explanation from Mani himself about this very question of different human statures. The text clears up also the connection between astrology and Giants tradition. In this *Kephalaion*, Mani answers to a catechumen who wondered why Adam and the men of his generation were mighty in stature, great in size and long living, whereas the contemporaries are shorter in stature and in life span. The cause of this degeneration is to be found, answers Mani, in the zodiacal signs, and more particularly, in the rotation of the authorities who master them. It is following this change between the powers of year, month, day, hour and moment, that, throughout history, little by little human generations have begun to diminish in age, vigor and size, because of the lesser quantity of life and light purified at their time.<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

This brief analysis of *Hymns 7 and 19 Against the Heresies* shows that Ephrem the Syrian was acquainted with the Manichaean interpretation of *Genesis 6:1-4* as developed by the Manichaean *Book of Giants*.

ܠܩܝܠ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ  
ܕܡܫܟܝܢ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ

Observe again the statures  
which refuted the horoscope.  
There is also another type,  
that of puny men.  
This short stature  
is akin, for instance,  
to the stature of Zacchaeus,  
the tax-collector;  
and if someone propagates it  
with the seed of the big ones,  
it then becomes bigger and more and more  
refutes the divisions (of the horoscope)!

As usual, Ephrem exploits the poetical means by creating a word-play; in this case, the play is with the term 'tax-collector' (*māksā*). If we vocalize quite differently the term *mks'* and read it as *maksā*, as in the final verse, it means 'the refuter'! Furthermore, the example of Zacchaeus is apparently not accidental, considered the anti-Manichaean polemic à l'œuvre. 'Zacheas' is in fact one of the disciples of Mani, under whose name are preserved two chapters of the *Cologne Mani Codex* (140, 9 and probably 94, 1); a Mar Zaku is venerated in Iranian fragments from Turfan (*i.e.* M6 R II 60) and he is probably the disciple of Mani named by Epiphanius (*Panarion* LXVI 1, 1) for the implantation of Manichaeism at Eleutheropolis, Palestina: See Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Mesopotamia and the Roman East*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 118 (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1994) 53-4.

<sup>30</sup> This Manichaean theory constitutes, according to Michel Tardieu, the 'anthropological fundament' of the myth of abortions as it is recounted in the Seduction of the Archons (*Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses* 93 [1984-85], 370).



sin, or of Archons' seduction, or even of astrological rotation. Between myth and exegesis, at the end, there is the human being.

the Archons and not with the gigantomachy of the classical Greek sources, which could represent the war between light and darkness (Alexander of Lycopolis, *Contra Manichaeos* 5, Severus Antiochenus, *Cathedral Homilies* 123, PO 129 [1961], 170,20-172,1). Ephrem's concern is more anthropological than cosmological.



# **‘Clothed in the Body’: The Garment of Flesh and the Garment of Glory in Syrian Religious Anthropology**

Hannah HUNT, Leeds, UK

## **ABSTRACT**

Drawing mostly from the writings of St Ephrem this paper explores the image of being clothed in the body from three perspectives – the concept of Adam being originally ‘clothed’ in a garment of flesh or light (according to the translation from the Targum); the repristination of this fleshly robe through baptism, and the links between the original ‘garment’ and the eschatological wedding garment. It will argue that the use of this image within the early Syrian tradition contributes an affirming sense of human integrity and that the unity of divine and human natures in Christ, who himself was ‘clothed in the body’, is mirrored in the anthropological unity of the body, soul and mind of the ‘first Adam’.

## **Context of embodiment as kenosis**

Being ‘clothed in the body’ is the key metaphor used by early Syrian writers to describe the incarnation.<sup>1</sup> It was the actual phrase used to translate that tenet of the Creed,<sup>2</sup> and the phrase, always with the word *body* rather than the more disparaging *flesh*, is extensively used in the apocryphal *Acts of Judas Thomas and John*, as well as by Ephrem and Aphrahat. Embodiment is at the heart of Syrian theology and anthropology; perhaps as with St Paul, the anthropology is the soteriology, and the whole of the created natural world is the canvas on which the image of salvation is depicted. Jesus is ‘clothed in the body’ so that by assuming the same substance as man, he could redeem him: as it is put in the *Hymn on Paradise 11*, 6-7:

<sup>1</sup> Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A study in Early Syriac Tradition* (London, 2006), 69 and 311, where he cites a phrase from the *Didascalia* as ‘[betraying] how the phrase [clothed in the body] is virtually technical, equivalent to “the doctrine of the Incarnation”.’

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, *The Bride of Light, Hymns on Mary from the Syrian Churches* (Kerala, 1994), 4. See note to v. 15 of *An Epiphany Hymn on the Church as the Bride of Christ* in Sebastian P. Brock, ‘An Epiphany Hymn of the Church as the Bride of Christ’, *The Harp* 2 (1989), 131-40, 135, where he makes the same point that ‘the earliest Syriac rendering of “he was incarnate” in the Creed was “he clothed himself in the body”.’ See also note 49 in Sebastian P. Brock, *Saint Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise* (New York, 1990), 66.



he clothed himself in the likeness of man  
in order to bring man to the likeness of himself.<sup>3</sup>

This symmetrical stripping off the Godhead to match that lost by Adam, and reclothing through the incarnation is explicitly developed as being clothed not just in flesh, but glory:

All these changes did the Merciful One effect,  
Stripping off His glory and putting on a body;  
For he had devised a way to reclothe Adam  
In that glory which Adam had stripped off.<sup>4</sup>

This kenotic encounter is, of course, not confined to the Syrian tradition; though it is a Syrian ascetical emphasis which insists on a complimentary human kenosis of self: the opening passages of the *Book of Steps*, for example, urge the penitent to 'self-empty' the heart.<sup>5</sup> This cleansing must be followed by an 'emptying' of a more physical nature, in relinquishing possessions and worldly inheritance.<sup>6</sup> John of Apamea insists spiritual progress requires human kenosis, which leads to purity and eventually luminosity.<sup>7</sup>

A variant on divine kenosis is the concept of the exalted Godhead diminishing itself so that he can literally fit into the skin of humanity, and here we see the connection between the kenosis effected in the incarnation and the concept of clothing. As Ephrem puts it in one of his *Homilies on the Nativity*, 'in [Mary] It has woven us a garment/ that shall be for our salvation.'<sup>8</sup> Christ not only put aside his divinity but made Himself small enough to fit into the womb, the first clothing of humanity:

He diminished his measurements corresponding to the garment.  
She wove it and clothed in it Him Who had taken off His Glory;  
she measured and wove for Him Who had made Himself small.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Hymn on Paradise* 11, 6-7. See the classic patristic articulation of this in Irenaeus on divinity/humanity – he became human so that we might become divine. See also the *Hymn on Nativity* 26 (9): 'He put on a body and was offered to them both' [Adam and Eve]. Kathleen E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (New York, 1989), 208.

<sup>4</sup> *Hymn 23 (13) on the Nativity*. This translation from S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 74.

This translation by Sebastian P. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (Michigan, 1987), xxiv brings out the clothing metaphor more explicitly than that in K.E. McVey, *Ephrem* (1989), 190.

<sup>5</sup> S.P. Brock, *Fathers* (1987), xxxii.

<sup>6</sup> *Book of Steps Discourse XII*, quoted S. Brock, *Fathers* (1987), 45.

<sup>7</sup> S.P. Brock, *Fathers* (1987), 79.

<sup>8</sup> *Homily on the Nativity* (73), Sebastian P. Brock, 'The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of St Ephrem', *Studies Supplementary to Sobornost* 4 (Oxford: Society of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1983), 65. See the verses of *Isaiah* 61:3 and 10 already discussed, with their image of 'a garment of splendour for the heavy heart.'

<sup>9</sup> *Hymn 4 on the Nativity* (187/8), K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 102. See *Hymn on the Nativity* 17 (4) which talks of 'the small mantle of the body' being given to 'the One who covers all.' K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 154.

The 'Compassionate One' clothes himself in humanity, in order to 'put on Adam the glory that he had shed',<sup>10</sup> Paradise stoops down to clothe itself 'in terms that are akin to you'.<sup>11</sup> In other words, even before the kenosis of the incarnation, God undergoes a form of kenosis in being willing to communicate with humanity in 'terms' that can be understood, in words, through human language. Just as Christ 'puts on the body'; God 'puts on words',<sup>12</sup> so that humanity can share in the Godhead's glory.

He clothed Himself in language,  
so that He might clothe us  
in his mode of life.<sup>13</sup>

Ephrem thus phrases the Irenaean/Athanasian 'exchange' motif ('He gave us divinity,/ we gave Him humanity'<sup>14</sup>) as a clothing metaphor, in order to emphasize a series of integrities; the anthropological integrity of body, soul and mind, which is mirrored in the incarnational integrity of the dual nature; the yoking together of baptism and spiritual rebirth and the temporal unity of creation and the eschaton.

Christ's assumption of the body effectively creates a 'descent of divinity into successive wombs' which each furnish Jesus with light,<sup>15</sup> starting with his nativity and baptism and continuing through his descent into Sheol and his subsequent resurrection. The humanity of Christ is emphasised by casting his swaddling bands as enabling the garment of glory;<sup>16</sup> in Ephrem we read:

<sup>10</sup> *Hymn on Nativity 23 (13)*, K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 190.

<sup>11</sup> *Hymn on Paradise VI (6-7)*, S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 156. *Theosis* is thus seen not just as the interchange of divinity and humanity but as a return to Eden.

<sup>12</sup> S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 41 classes as one of the main modes of divine manifestation the 'allowing Himself – the indescribable – to be described in Scripture in human terms and language.' It is noticeable that Ephrem explicitly includes women in this economy of salvation; note *Hymn on Paradise VII (5)* which reads: 'Both men and women/are clothed in raiment of light; the garments provided to cover up their nakedness/are swallowed up in glory.' S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 120. Harvey explains the significance in Syriac Christianity of the concept of God putting on language in the context of Ephrem's assertion that 'all religious language is metaphorical because no language is adequate to convey God.' Susan A. Harvey 'Embodiment in Time and Eternity: A Syrian Perspective', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 43 (1999), 105-130.

<sup>13</sup> *Hymn 31 on The Faith*, Stanza 2, quoted S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 46.

<sup>14</sup> *Hymn on Faith V. 17*, quoted S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 74. See Isaac, *Second Part V (7)*, Sebastian P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh: The Second Part* (Louvain, 1995), 8; Jesus 'became human in order to renew us by means of voluntary union with the flesh.'

<sup>15</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Aldershot, 1992), 12.

<sup>16</sup> Note *Hymn on Nativity 23 (13)*: 'He wrapped swaddling clothes with his leaves, and put on garments instead of his skins ... He rose and raised him up in glory. Blessed is He who came down, put on [a body] and ascended!' K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 190.

The Lord of David  
and Son of David hid his glory  
in swaddling clothes. His swaddling clothes gave  
a robe of glory to human beings.<sup>17</sup>

### Adam being clothed in the garment of light/flesh

Created with a robe of glory which is lost through the Fall, Adam's body is reclothed through Christ's own self-clothing in that same body.<sup>18</sup> This process starts with Adam's fall, and is continued by baptism. In Syrian writers, the carapace of flesh which Adam wears is both a 'garment of skin' and a 'garment of light', according to variant interpretations of the Targum version of *Gen.* 3:21: the Hebrew words for 'skin' and 'light' are very close, ('wr, with an ayin [skin] and 'wr, with an aleph [light]). The late first century Rabbi Meir 'is reputed to have had a manuscript of Genesis which actually read "garments of light",<sup>19</sup> That this image is used continually within the Syrian tradition to denote Christ's luminous appearance is shown by Isaac's description of Him as 'covered with light as though with a garment.'<sup>20</sup> Was Adam before the fall not, also, luminous, limpid and close to God through his skin of light?<sup>21</sup> The glory he regains is synonymous with the acquisition of light. Eve can also be luminous.<sup>22</sup>

Earlier within Syrian literature, Ephrem depicts Jesus being the Light which 'stripped off and took away from us the garment of blemishes'.<sup>23</sup> Worn by Adam and reprinted by Christ, the garment of light is a garment of glory

<sup>17</sup> *Hymn on the Nativity* 5 (4), K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 106. This image is also found in *Anonymous Soghitha I* in S.P. Brock, *Bride* (1994), 73.

<sup>18</sup> The robe of glory, shared by Christ and humanity, may be seen as 'indicating the interrelatedness between every stage in this continuing working out of divine Providence'.

S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 67 notes 'four main episodes' in the 'cosmic drama': the Fall, the Incarnation, Christ's baptism (and thereby the baptism of all believers into the church) and the Resurrection.

<sup>19</sup> S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 67f. See his comments in *Studies in Syriac Spirituality* (Kerala, 1988), ch. XI, 29. David Aaron, in his 'Shedding Light on God's Body in Rabbinic Midrashim: Reflections on the Theory of a Luminous Adam', *HTR* 90 (1997), 299-314, cites a reading of *Lev R* 20.2: on 303: 'The apple of Adam's heel outshone the globe of the sun; how much more so the brightness of his face.' *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus*, tr. Judah J. Slotki, (London, 1983). He also observes that this idea of brightness or radiance may reflect the Greek word for 'ice' or 'crystal', *ibid.* 305. What isn't clear here is whether this is seen as light-emitting or light-reflecting.

<sup>20</sup> Isaac, *Second Part V*(22), S.P. Brock, *Second Part* (1995), 15.

<sup>21</sup> See S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye* (Michigan, 1992), *passim* on luminosity and limpidity.

<sup>22</sup> In the *Sogdian hymn* M 129 r 10-11, Jesus 'take[s] possession of Eve's body which is strong and shining'. Werner Sundermann, 'Eva Illuminatrix', in H. Preißler and H. Seiwert (eds), *Gnosisforschung und Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Kurt Rudolph zum 65. Geburtstag* (Marburg, 1994), 317-27, at 318-9.

<sup>23</sup> *Hymn 3 on The Nativity* (9), K.E. McVey, (1989), 85.

because it is in light that the presence of God is demonstrated to mortal eyes, be it the dazzling encounter of Moses on the mountain, or the transfiguration of Christ. Just as God chooses to limit himself to human perception by being 'clothed in language', so he shrouds himself in light in order to present the limitations of human sight with no more evidence of divinity than it can apprehend. Being in the presence of God confers luminosity and as Adam rejects the intimacy of his first innocence, he loses his light. Like Moses, from whom God's glory was veiled in order not to blind him, so Adam, awakening to an awareness of sin, is veiled, and then has his robe of glory stripped from him. Adam

tore away and removed  
both veils from his eyes:  
he beheld the Glory of the Holy of Holies  
and trembled.<sup>24</sup>

Christ's 'putting on the veil of the body' to disguise his divinity<sup>25</sup> is juxtaposed to the image of Moses being veiled, providing a typology which parallels Moses and Jesus with first and second Adam typology. This serves to emphasise the covenantal nature of Christian discipleship; Christ being robed in flesh stands in the place of Moses to lead people from the slavery of sin:

The face of Moses shone  
When God spoke with him  
And he laid a veil over his face  
For the people were unable to behold him  
just as our Lord, from the womb,  
entered and put on the veil of the body.<sup>26</sup>

Through disobedience, Adam loses his robe of glory; he becomes physically naked and exposed to God after his temptation in the garden of Eden. Or, as some commentators describe, the serpent steals his clothes, robbing him of the innocence which is his robe of glory.<sup>27</sup> His metaphorical, luminous clothing

<sup>24</sup> *Hymn on Paradise III* (7), S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 93. Verses 10, 12, 14 and 15 develop the theme of being robed in glory. The serpent's losing its feet is even attributed to its having 'stolen [Adam's] garments'! Ephrem seems almost unable to resist a 'garment' image; in *Hymn on Paradise XV*(14), he writes: 'The serpent served as a garment/for the evil one to put on.' S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 187.

<sup>25</sup> *Homily on the Nativity* (73), S.P. Brock, 'The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of St Ephrem' (1983), 64, and see *Hymn on the Church* 36 (6) which compares the 'brightness which Moses put on' coming from outside him, to the river in which Jesus was baptized which 'put on Light from within'. The typology carried across from OT to NT is extended further by a comparison between these two forms of light and the internal light of Mary's womb when bearing Jesus. S.P. Brock, *Bride* (1994), 29.

<sup>26</sup> *Homily on the Nativity*, S.P. Brock, *Bride* (1994), 142.

<sup>27</sup> 'Because the serpent had stolen the clothes/ of Adam, that fair image,/ the royal Son brought them back/ to reclothe Adam in his adornment'. Verse 11 of anonymous hymn, possibly by Jacob of Serug, in S.P. Brock, *Epiphany* (1989), 135.

has to be replaced with a physical clothing of fig leaves.<sup>28</sup> Eve, too, is saved through a regaining of the robe of glory. In her case it is shame which is described as a form of clothing, in place of which Christ compassionately reclothes her 'not in leaves but rather in the glory they had shed'.<sup>29</sup> So Eve, like Adam, shared originally in the luminosity of God. The robe of flesh is sullied through the Fall, and the ritual of baptism cleanses both it and the whole person of Adam. Wearing the 'garment of flesh' which he shares with Adam, Christ's immersion in the river Jordan means that all humanity may in future have a robe of glory to wear, as the robe of flesh becomes once again a robe of light.<sup>30</sup>

### The repristination of the fleshly robe through baptism

Syrian commentators suggest two ways in which the fleshly robe of Adam can be renewed and purified; through Christ's sharing in that clothing (by the incarnation), and through baptism. They thus connect this key sacrament of the church to salvation, not only because of the ritual cleansing effects or immersion but through human conformity to Christ. The universalism of the Syrian reading of the whole of nature as the 'book' of salvation means that in being immersed in the river Jordan, Christ cleansed the river and thereby all waters on earth. Christ's engagement with material elements thus not only sanctifies Adam but all creation.

As so often in Syrian writing, there is a pairing of images which adds theological freight to the image. Just as in baptism Christ picked up the cleansed robe of glory from the River Jordan, so in the resurrection he 'found' his garment in Sheol.<sup>31</sup> If we bear in mind that the orthodox image of the resurrection is of Christ leaning down into Sheol to pull Adam out, this clearly suggests how the kenosis of the incarnation effects man's divinisation. Jesus' baptism

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion on fig leaves, see my paper "'Working the Earth of the Heart": images of cultivation and harvest in the early Syrian Christian tradition' (unpublished as yet) written for the Austerity Project at Leeds Trinity University College, 2009/10.

<sup>29</sup> *Hymn 1 on the Nativity*, 43. K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 69.

<sup>30</sup> See note to verse 11, in S.P. Brock, 'An Epiphany Hymn on the Church as the Bride of Christ' (1989), 138. See Jacob of Serug, ed. Bedjan III, 593, cited S.P. Brock, *Bride* (1994), 5: 'Christ came to baptism, he went down and placed in the baptismal water/ the robe of glory, to be there for Adam, who has lost it.' In the *Commentary on the Diatessaron* XVI (10) Ephrem contrasts the garment of glory and the fig leaves, and he also comments on this in *Hymn on the Epiphany XII* (4). Cited S.P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Spirituality* (1988), 18. See also Cosentino Augusto, 'Il fuoco sul Giordano, il cero pasquale e la colonna del Battistero Lateranense', in *L'edificio battesimale in Italia. Aspetti e problemi, Atti VIII Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Christiana, Liguria 21-26/9/1998*, 2 vols (Bordighera, 2001), 521-40.

<sup>31</sup> *Hymn 30 on the Virginity* (120), K.E. McVey, (1989), 397. The verse ends with a phrase wonderfully reminiscent of parables in the synoptics, with the phrase: 'O Wise One Who lost what was found in order to find the lost.' The Hymns abound with this sort of symmetry which is not only effective poetically but constantly ties in the Incarnate Christ to the human person.

involves the ‘robe of glory’ with which Adam was clothed initially.<sup>32</sup> The integrity of human nature is explicitly denoted in Ephrem’s *Hymn on Faith 14*, where ‘senses and thoughts’ are ‘guests’ of the soul which is ‘your bridal chamber’.<sup>33</sup> And that integrated human nature is merged with the rest of material creation through the humanising of both robe and water in the process of baptism. By personifying the water and the land, Ephrem places the baptism of Christ as a means of unifying a post-Eden world in a new covenant. *Hymn on Virginity 33(10)* says:

Before the feet of our Lord the sea smoothed its waves,  
The land carried [Him] and before Him it took and spread our garments.  
The waves saw You and were calmed,  
And the garments saw You and were spread out.<sup>34</sup>

A common trope in Syrian writers is the renewal of virginity through baptism, and this is configured as the garment of glory being simultaneously the wedding garment referred to in the eschatological verses of the gospels.<sup>35</sup> An anonymous epiphany hymn<sup>36</sup> explains how the newly baptised, being once again a virgin, is brought to ‘His Bridal Chamber on high’ where Jesus has not only exchanged clothing with him (‘He has clothed Himself in me, and I am clothed in Him’) but embraced him as a bride (‘With the kisses of His mouth He has kissed me.’)<sup>37</sup>

Jesus’s incarnation effects a removal of boundaries between the present and the last age; as Brock states, the epiclesis onto the water of baptism ‘effectually makes the water of the individual font identical in sacred time and space with the Jordan waters.’<sup>38</sup> The robe of glory with which the baptismal candidate is clothed thus becomes simultaneously the wedding garment without which one may not enter into eternal light.<sup>39</sup> Ephrem sees the eschatological

<sup>32</sup> S.P. Brock, *Fathers on Prayer* (1987), xxiv. See the statement that Adam had originally been clothed in glory from the *Commentary on Genesis II 17*, cited S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 59.

<sup>33</sup> Brock notes how this image is ‘a remarkable illustration of the very positive attitude of St Ephrem toward the body’, *id.*, *Paradise* (1990), 28.

<sup>34</sup> This conflates Jesus’ baptism with his calming of the waters depicted in *Mark 6:51*, see K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 409–10.

<sup>35</sup> See note to verse 11 of S.P. Brock, ‘An Epiphany Hymn on the Church as the Bride of Christ’ (1989), 138.

<sup>36</sup> This is sometimes attributed to Ephrem but bears many resemblances to Jacob of Serug’s writing.

<sup>37</sup> Verses 15 and 24, S.P. Brock, ‘The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of St Ephrem’ (1983), 135 and 136, and see *Hymn on the Nativity 17 (6)*: ‘You are our bridal chamber and the robe of our glory’. K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 155.

<sup>38</sup> *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (1992), 13.

<sup>39</sup> S.P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (1992), 19. See *Hymn on the Church 36 (11)*: ‘so too at the resurrection/ the righteous are light;/ for their clothing is splendour,/ their garment brightness:/ they become their own light,/ providing it themselves.’ Sebastian P. Brock, ‘St Ephrem on Christ as Light in Mary and in the Jordan: Hymni De Ecclesia 36’, *Eastern*

banquet as transforming the individual into the universal,<sup>40</sup> a type for humanity as a whole, and also asserts that body and soul are both involved in this exchange; human nature cannot be redeemed unless entire and integrated. This echo of Gregory of Nazianzus' formula shows the Syrian view of human nature as essentially and fundamentally a holistic unity of its components. Since God created man in His image, and Christ as God's son is a perfect yoking together of fully human and fully divine, so in redeeming humanity Christ restores it to a state of glory which is shown by a transformation of flesh into light. In using the same image for fallen though redeemable humanity and the angelic forms of the saints, Ephrem affirms the innate goodness of humanity and man's place within the created order.

### **The links between the original garment and the eschatological wedding 'garment'**

In Paradise, the saints have 'put on glory' in place of the leaves of shame; they always wear the luminous robe of the wedding banquet, which is one with 'the robe that belongs to Adam and Eve'.<sup>41</sup> The robe of flesh, with its lightbearing qualities, has become a robe of glory which is worn equally by Adam, Christ and the saints. They are united across time by this sharing in glorification, and the luminosity is a manifestation of divine favour. Jesus puts on 'one body of limbs and another of glories';<sup>42</sup> glory is worn by Adam, the first man, by Jesus who redeemed him by taking 'the dust of man' to be his robe. Lightfilled glory is the attire of the guests who share in the banquet at the end of time, as their 'bodies, their garments will shine'.<sup>43</sup> Wearing the 'garments of light' will enable Adam to return to Eden.<sup>44</sup>

St. Paul extends the clothing motif to include heaven itself as a garment: 'In this present body we do indeed groan; we yearn to have our heavenly habitation put on over this one – in the hope that, being thus clothed, we shall not find ourselves naked.' (2Cor. 5:3) Behind the Christian appropriation of clothing images must surely lie *Isaiah* 61:3: 'the Lord will give them 'a garment of splendour for the heavy heart' and 61:10: 'for he has robed me in salvation as

*Churches Review* 7 (1975), 134-40, 139. Note also *Hymn on Virginity* 7 (10): 'the Anointed, a nature that does not die, put on a mortal body;/ He dove down and brought up from the water the living treasure of the house of Adam.' K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 295.

<sup>40</sup> '... if a single body is a wedding-feast for You/ how great is Your banquet for the whole church!' *Hymn on the Faith* 14 (5), in S.P. Brock, 'The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of St Ephrem' (1983), 19.

<sup>41</sup> *Hymn on Paradise* VI (9), S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 112.

<sup>42</sup> *Hymn on Virginity* 6(8), K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 290.

<sup>43</sup> *Nisibene Hymn* 43, 20-1 (CSCO 240, Syr 102, 45), quoted in R. Murray, *Symbols* (2006), 76.

<sup>44</sup> '(Blessed are you) ... who came to find Adam when he was lost, and in the garment of light to return him to Eden', *Hymn on Virginity* 16 (8), K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 331.



a garment, and clothed me in integrity as a cloak.' The Christian appropriation of *Isaiah's* suffering servant motif as a precursor for Christ's passion is of course not unique to Syrian writers, but their reworking of the texts shows a predilection for clothing images, and the importance they attach to them. For example, *Psalms* 8:6, which from the Greek and Hebrew is translated as 'You created man a little less than the angels: in honour and glory did you crown him' comes across in Ephrem's voice as 'clothe' not 'crown'.<sup>45</sup> In the context of a plethora of other clothing images, this attributes angelic status to the first Adam in his pre-lapsarian state. He does not need the kingly status of a crown if he can share the fleshly clothing of Christ.

### **Incarnation means Christ's unity of natures mirrors human integrity**

In Syrian religious texts, antinomies, pairing, opposites and inversions of subject and object create a theological framework of kenotic exchange which sits parallel to the Christological affirmations contested in the Ecumenical Councils; although the Antiochene voices recorded in these debates are presented as favouring a monophysite understanding of Christ, when we turn to Ephrem the dominant message we find is of a full humanity in Christ, reflecting a complete Adam. Just as Ephrem would not deny Christ a human soul, so he does not shirk from accepting the fleshly aspect of Adam. John of Apamea describes the Incarnation as: "the Word going forth from Silence" and talks of Christ "putting on the body as a word puts on the voice".<sup>46</sup> This blurs the boundaries between the material and metaphysical aspects of Christ. Silence becomes clothed – the Voice becomes a body.<sup>47</sup> The spiritual and physical exchange created presents an incarnate Christ whose perfect unity is shared by the humanity He redeems.

<sup>45</sup> S.P. Brock, *Paradise* (1990), 68.

<sup>46</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, 'John the Solitary on Prayer', *JTS* ns 30 (1979), 84-101, 86.

<sup>47</sup> *Hymn on the Nativity* 4 (143), K.E. McVey, *Hymns* (1989), 100.





## ***Regula Fidei* in Ephrem's *Hymni de Fide* LXVII and in the *Sermones de Fide* IV**

Jobi PATTÉRUPARAMPIL, Leuven, Belgium

### ABSTRACT

This article is aimed at exploring the archaic elements of the West Syrian recension of the creed of Seleucia Ctesiphon (410). Since this is a case study we take up only two examples from Ephraem namely, the *Sermon on Faith* IV and the *Hymn on Faith* 67. This case study is done taking into account the theological context of Ephraem and paying attention to the specific formulation of the rules of faith. Finally, we make a comparison of the rule of faith with that of West Syrian recension in order to bring out the uniqueness of the rules of faith. This study will support the hypothesis that the archaic form of the West Syrian recension is to be found in the rules of faith in the ancient syriac literature and Ephraem is one of the representatives who provides such rules of faith.

In search for the particularity of the 'creedal expressions' (*Regula fidei*) in Syriac tradition, it is necessary to turn our attention to the sermons and hymns of St. Ephrem. A complete study on this topic is beyond the scope of this contribution<sup>1</sup> and therefore, the elements of the *regula fidei* only in Ephrem's *Hymni de Fide* LXVII and in the *Sermones de Fide* IV will be explored since they provide us with the knowledge of expressions of Trinitarian faith in the Syriac tradition of the fourth century. We try to achieve this, first of all, by exploring the meaning and context of the rule of faith in Christian tradition, secondly, by situating the homily and the hymn in their theological context and analyzing the rules of faith and finally, by exposing the uniqueness of this rule of faith and its implications for Syriac tradition.

### **1. The Concept of the Rule of Faith**

The word rule (Latin, *regula* and Greek (κανών) means a standard or measure, with which something can be measured. A rule of faith (*regula fidei*) therefore,

<sup>1</sup> A complete study on this topic is yet to be done. However, as a starting point one must focus on Ephraem's *Homily on our Lord* and *Letter to Publius*, *Sermons on Faith*, and the various hymns especially the *Hymns on Faith*.

signifies a standard for our faith, a norm by which we can know with certainty, what we must believe in order to be saved.<sup>2</sup> The Catholic rule of faith, according to A.J. Coan, has two elements. Firstly, it indicates the sources of our belief, namely, Scripture and Tradition. Theologians would call it the remote rule of faith. Secondly, it gives the reason for our belief, namely, the teaching authority of the Church. The Church draws her doctrine from the teaching of the Apostles as manifested in Scripture and Tradition.<sup>3</sup> I will use the word *regula fidei* as it is understood by L.H. Westra. For him, it is a rather special kind of text that differs from the earliest form of the Apostle's creed in both form and content.<sup>4</sup> It can be described as 'an oral composition preserved and handed on by "composition in performance", probably with an anti-heretical purpose in which the basic contents of Christian faith were formulated according to the needs of the hour.'<sup>5</sup> The concept of the *regula fidei* is first found in Irenaeus' *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* probably written after 185.<sup>6</sup> Irenaeus understands rule of faith as 'canon of truth' by which he did not mean a single universally accepted creed, or indeed any kind of formula as such but rather the doctrinal content of the Christian faith as handed down in the Catholic Church.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1. *The Context of the Rule of Faith*

We can trace back the first context of the rule of faith in baptism. Irenaeus speaks of 'the Rule of the truth ... which he received through baptism.'<sup>8</sup> According to

<sup>2</sup> Alphonse John Coan (ed.), *The Rule of Faith in the Ecclesiastical Writings of the First Two Centuries: An Historico-Apologetical Investigation* (Washington D.C., 1924), 2.

<sup>3</sup> A.J. Coan (ed.), *The Rule of Faith in the Ecclesiastical Writings of the First Two Centuries* (1924), 3. 'Porro fide divina et catholica ea omnia credenda sunt, quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continentur et ab ecclesia sive solemn iudicio sive ordinario et universali magisterio tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur.' See Heinrich Denzinger and Clement Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum: Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen* (Freiburg, 2001), 816, no. 3011.

<sup>4</sup> Liuwé H. Westra, 'Regula Fidei and Other Credal Formulations in the Acts of Peter', in *The Apocryphal Acts of Peter*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer (Leuven, 1998), 134-47, 138.

<sup>5</sup> Louis William Countryman, 'Tertullian and the Regula Fidei', *Second Century*, no. 2 (1998), 208-27, 226.

<sup>6</sup> *Epideixis* 3. However, the earliest *regula fidei* that we possess, is probably found in the *Acts of Justin Martyr*, who died around 165, see P. Smulders, 'Some Riddles in the Apostles' Creed. II. Creeds and Rules of Faith', *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie* 56 (1971), 358-61.

<sup>7</sup> John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1972), 76; Richard Patrick Crosland Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London, 1962), chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Adversus Haereses* I 9. 4; The English translation is from Dominic J. Unger, *St. Irenaeus of Lyons: Against the Heresies*, Ancient Christian Writers 55, vol. 1 (New York, 1992), 47; The entire translation is found in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers: Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, 3rd ed., Ante-Nicene Fathers 1, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1996), 3-567; see R.P.C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (1962), 59-63.

Ferguson, this rule of truth has been considered as a form of baptismal creed, though Irenaeus' precise source for it cannot be reconstructed.<sup>9</sup> In the beginning of the *Epideixis*, Irenaeus impresses Marcianus, to whom the book is addressed, the importance of faith and what it involves.<sup>10</sup> He says: '[F]irst of all, it bids us bear in mind that we have received baptism for the remission of sins in the name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who was incarnate and died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit of God.'<sup>11</sup> In chapter 7 again there is another reference to the threefold name where he explains, 'the baptism of our regeneration proceeds through three points, God the Father bestowing upon us regeneration through His Son by the Holy Spirit.'<sup>12</sup>

In addition to baptism the context of the rule of faith consists of the polemics against the various Gnostic groups, catechesis, liturgy and exorcism.<sup>13</sup> In a polemical situation the rule of faith was necessary not only to safeguard true faith as against the wrong faith but also to instruct and hand over this faith to the catechumens. In catechetical instruction and in the context of liturgy and exorcism the rule in the Trinitarian form was made use of.<sup>14</sup> J.N.D. Kelly opines that the ideas implicit in the catechetical and liturgical formulae, as in the New Testament writers' use of the same dyadic (Father and the Son) and triadic (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit) patterns, represent a pre-reflexive, pre-theological phase of Christian belief. This in no way diminishes their interest and importance. It was out of the raw material thus provided by the preaching and worshipping church that theologians had to construct their more sophisticated accounts of the Christian doctrine of the Godhead.<sup>15</sup>

As we have mentioned, the formulation of the rule of faith depends on the needs of the hour and therefore, it is necessary to look into the theological context of Ephraem.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas C.K Ferguson, 'The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus Rhetoric', *VC* 55 (2001), 356-75, 358.

<sup>10</sup> Iain M. MacKenzie, *Irenaeus's Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: A Theological Commentary and Translation* (Aldershot, 2002), 1.

<sup>11</sup> I.M. MacKenzie, *Irenaeus's Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (2002), 3. '*Fides autem conciliat (προξενέω) nobis hoc, quemadmodum presbyteri apostolorum discipuli, tradiderunt nobis: primo meminisse consilium dat quoniam baptismum recepimus in remissionem peccatorum in nomen Dei Patris et in nomen Iesu Christi, Filii Dei incarnati et mortui et resuscitati, et in Spiritum Sanctum Dei; et baptismum hunc (σφραγίς) esse aeternae vitae et regenerationem (ἀναγέννησις) in Deum, (ita) ut non iam mortuorum (νεκρός) hominum, sed sempiterni- et- perpetui Dei Filii simus.*' Adelin Rousseau (ed.), *Irenaeus Lugdunensis: Démonstration de la Prédication Apostolique*, SC 406 (Paris, 1995), 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Epideixis* 7. '*Et propter hoc regenerationis nostrae baptisma per haec tria procedit capita, in Deum Patrem regenerationem nobis donando, per Filium eius, cum Spiritu Sancto.*' A. Rousseau (ed.), *Irenaeus Lugdunensis: Démonstration de la Prédication Apostolique* (1995), 92.

<sup>13</sup> T.C.K. Ferguson, 'The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus Rhetoric' (2001), 359.

<sup>14</sup> T.C.K. Ferguson, 'The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus Rhetoric' (2001), 372.

<sup>15</sup> John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London, 1968), 90.



Since the formulation of the rule of faith depends also on the theological context it is not out of place to examine some of the predominant 'insider' and 'outsider' adversaries briefly.

## 2.1. Arianism

In fact the polemic against Arianism is the context in which Ephraem develops most of his thought on the value of symbols and the analogical applicability of names and terms.<sup>23</sup> The fundamental theological issue here is the question of the nature of God and the human knowledge of him. Ephraem considered that the Arians by their acceptance of the Greek conceptual frameworks<sup>24</sup> and abandonment of faith in scriptural testimony<sup>25</sup> resulting in unfounded theological speculation about God, Christ and the world<sup>26</sup> had departed from the faith.<sup>27</sup> The result was division in the church.<sup>28</sup> According to Ephraem the later Arians or Neo-Arians err because they think that they can acquire too much knowledge of God, which is beyond human abilities.<sup>29</sup> Ephraem accuses the Arians of their *ܠܚܥܬܐ* (investigation) and *ܠܚܥܬܐ* (scrutiny).<sup>30</sup> Another major problem that Ephraem finds with Arianism is their lack of Nicene Orthodoxy though the Arians share other features of authentic church life.<sup>31</sup> R. Murray has summarised

The Sabellians and the Arians, *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

Along with the rest of them who caused schisms, *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

Even though they do not want to be denominations *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

After the names of their masters. *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

They craftily carry favour with her *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

Because they have noticed where her love is *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

She depends wholly on the Messiah. *ܠܚܥܬܐ ܠܚܥܬܐ*

<sup>23</sup> Robert Murray, 'The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology', *PdO* 6/7 (1975/6), 1-20, 3. Also see Corrie Molenberg, 'Two Christological Passages in Ephrem, the Deacon of Edessa', *SP* 20, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Leuven, 1989), 191-6, 191. see also Edmund Beck, 'Die Theologie des Heiligen Ephraem in seinen Hymnen über den Glauben', *Studia Anselmiana* 21 (1949), 1-106, 62-80.

<sup>24</sup> See *Hymn on Faith* 2.

<sup>25</sup> See *Hymn on Faith* 64; 79.

<sup>26</sup> See *Hymn on Faith* 51.

<sup>27</sup> D.D. Bundy, 'Language and the Knowledge of God in Ephrem Syrus' (1986), 96-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Hymn against Heresies* 23,1; 86.

<sup>29</sup> *Sermon on Faith* 1,1. Ephraem asks the Arians how they are to comprehend their creator or the generation of his son when they cannot even understand their own soul, their own generation or even how they can know things. 'Das Geschöpf ist mit seiner Einsicht nicht imstande, über seinen Schöpfer zu sprechen vermag es ja nicht einmal zu sagen, wie es selbst gebildet wurde. Begreift es nun seine eigene Entstehung nicht, wie könnte es imstande sein, seinen Schöpfer zu begreifen? Der Verstand vermag nicht, die große Höhe seines Schöpfers zu erreichen, weit unter jener Höhe bleibt die Föschung der Forscher.'

<sup>30</sup> The Syriac *ܠܚܥܬܐ* variously translated as analyze, investigate, pry into is one of several terms that he uses in a negative sense to characterize inappropriate theological speculation. R. Murray, 'The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology' (1975/6), 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Hymn against Heresies* 22,20.

Ephraem's three charges against the Arians.<sup>32</sup> The first charge against the 'pryers' is a moral one. They are guilty of mistaken self-confidence which has made them fall into presumption and blindness.<sup>33</sup> The second charge is in effect one of the mental inflexibility, literalism and inability to distinguish the levels of discourse. The Arian positions on the Trinity are due to their univocal use of language and their inability to think analogically. From these charges follows the third: the claim to submit everything to scrutiny and argument leads inevitably to disputes, quarrels breaches of charity and rending asunder of the Body of Christ.<sup>34</sup>

Against the first mistake Ephraem exhorts them to acknowledge the inadequacy of reason and all concepts and symbols and therefore what we need is humility. Ephraem's answer to intellectual investigation is a symbolical and analogical approach to theology.<sup>35</sup> The second mistake will lead them to determinism<sup>36</sup> and here Ephraem prefers the use of symbols. Against the attitude of quarrel and division Ephraem proposes contemplation of God's mystery and preservation of charity.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2. *His Critique on Jews*

Ephraem accuses the Jews of their three tenets: First, the Jews of the past were always guilty of idolatry and they continue to practise false religion; second, they crucified the Messiah sent to them; and finally they and their rituals are now symbolically and really representatives of Satan, Sheol and Death.<sup>38</sup> According to R.A. Darling Ephraem made such harsh accusations because some of the 'brothers' of his church were joining in the life and practice of the synagogue, particularly during Passover, and Ephraem's attempt was to provide

<sup>32</sup> Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge, 1977), 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 10,19: 'The strap of your sandal was dread to the discerning;  
The hem of your cloak was fearsome to the understanding.

By prying into you, our foolish generation has lost its reason, drunk with new wine.'

<sup>34</sup> R. Murray, 'The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology' (1975/6), 15.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Murray, 'A Hymn of St. Ephrem to Christ on the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit and the Sacraments', *Eastern Churches Review* 3 (1970), 142-50, 144, 149.

<sup>36</sup> According to Ephrem, the Arians fall into determinism by their rationalistic approach to theology, which tends to make the divine persons into what Ephrem calls 'bound natures' (that is determined and predictable) instead of free. Following the error of presumption in their enterprise, the Arian's error of 'determinism' in their wooden theological method leads them to produce disastrous practical fruits, which Ephraem found on all sides in Edessa when in 363 he moved there from his native Nisibis, recently ceded to the Persians.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Murray, 'St. Ephrem's Dialogue on Reason and Love', *Eastern Churches Review* 2 (1980), 26-40, 29; John S. Custer, 'Why a Hymn? Form and Content in St Ephrem's Hymn 31 on Virginity', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 40 (1996), 145-54, 148. See also *Hymns on Faith* 9,11; 70.

<sup>38</sup> See for example, *Carmina Nisibena* 61, 62, and 67. See Edmund Beck (ed.), *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena*, CSCO 218-9; 240-1 (Leuven, 1961, 1963).

an antidote, *i.e.*, reasons for not doing so. Another reason could be the imperial building-programs in Jerusalem during the reign of Julian, which implied that the empire was not solidly Christian.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, Ephraem's argument against the Jews is made explicit from the nature and history of the 'Ammā -d-men- 'Ammē ('People from the peoples'). Since Jews were considered as the crucifiers of Jesus Ephraem uses the term 'amma' in a negative sense to mean *zaqopā* ('crucifier'). In a positive sense he uses it to mean the new nation with its covenant, equivalent to the church. The word 'amme' signifies negatively the pagans; but more frequently it has the neutral or positive sense of the non-Jewish nations of the world,<sup>40</sup> especially as they become 'idtā, church.<sup>41</sup>

### 2.3. Other Heresies

Other heresies which were prevalent at the time of Ephraem were Marcionism, Bardaisanism and Manichaeism. Ephraem accuses Marcion<sup>42</sup> because he had established a dualism: a Good God (the Maker) and the divine stranger, the Just God, who disrupted the universe which had been formed from already existing matter. Matter (the world) contains evil and causes the soul to be polluted. Man has no recourse against this pollution and must be purified later. Man must work to purify himself (hence Marcionite asceticism and sexual rigorism) but is predestined to evil by his nature. This led Marcionites to a docetic Christology and denial of the human resurrection of the body, soul and spirit.<sup>43</sup>

Although Bardaisan<sup>44</sup> is presented by his disciple, Philippus in *The Book of the Laws of the Countries* (BLC) as an apologist for an orthodox Christianity<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> R.A. Darling, 'The Church of the Nations in the Exegesis of Ephrem', in *IV Symposium Syriacum*, ed. H.J.W. Drijvers (Roma, 1984), 111-21, 112-3.

<sup>40</sup> At numerous points Ephrem lists all the nations of the world in a factual way with no reference to their place in the eventual salvation of gentiles. In the *Prose Refutations*, they are 'Hebrews ... barbarians and Greeks'; 'Syrians and Greeks'; Egyptians, Babylonians Greeks and Romans'; Romans, Greeks, Hebrews, Barbarians, and Arabs. However in *Hymn de Ecclesia* 44, 21-26 and in *De crucifixione* 3,3,12 Ephrem refers to the Jews simply as one nation among the others.

<sup>41</sup> This theme is repeated in many of Ephrem's works see *De crucifixione* 5; *De resurrectione* 3; both are in *Paschahymnen*.

<sup>42</sup> On Marcion see Adolf von Harnack, *Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott: eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche*, TU 45 (Leipzig, 1924), 276-84; Edwin Cyril Blackman, *Marcion and His Influence* (London, 1948); Nabil El-Khoury, *Die Interpretation der Welt bei Ephraem dem Syrer: Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte*, Tübinger theologische Studien 6 (Mainz, 1976).

<sup>43</sup> D.D. Bundy, 'Language and the Knowledge of God in Ephrem Syrus' (1986), 94-5; see *Hymns against Heresies* 52, 5-23.

<sup>44</sup> See H.J.W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa*, *Studia Semetica Neerlandica* 6 (Assen, 1966).

<sup>45</sup> D.D. Bundy, 'Language and the Knowledge of God in Ephrem Syrus' (1986), 95. Against Marcion he argued that God is one (BLC 4), that faith is necessary for a 'firm' knowledge of God, for hope and for freedom from fear, (BLC 8) and that men have the freedom to choose evil or



Ephraem criticizes him since he endorses the ideas of emanations which, for Ephraem, are on the verge of polytheism. But as Ephraem, he asserted that evil did not have a personality of its own but evolved from the abuse of freedom, the misuse of natural objects and processes, or just misfortune.<sup>46</sup> However, Bardaisan retained some use for the horoscope and for astrology for which Ephraem accuses him of inconsistency.<sup>47</sup>

Manichaeism became a powerful contender with other Christian traditions in the Middle East from c. 240 AD. Ephraem blames Mani and his followers because Mani understood his mission as the 'apostle' of Jesus Christ, the paraclete promised in the Gospels. The Manichaean movement offered a more complete vision of the universe and of salvation buttressed, importantly for the Syrian population, by a determined asceticism. The ideal life of the Manichean 'elect' was not very different from that of the Tatianic 'perfect' or the Marcionite ascetic.<sup>48</sup> The primary differences with the other groups were concepts of cosmology (with attendant implications for the nature of the divine) the lack of freedom of the will (determinism) and the revelatory role of Mani. Ephraem accused him of having taken over the Greek concept of matter<sup>49</sup> and Indian dualism.<sup>50</sup>

#### 2.4. *Ephraem's Proposals against Heresies*

Ephraem proposes three things against the heresies: to uphold the unity of the Scriptures, to have a childlike faith and to accept the limitation of reason.

Firstly, Ephraem proposes that only the Bible is trustworthy and that we do not need to add anything new to the Scripture. 'Why should we add anything new to the truth he has written for us? ... By adding investigations you add disputes, but by reciting what is written, you are putting an end to confusion.'<sup>51</sup> Here Ephraem points to the terminology current in the surrounding world in order to defend faith because some people have added names, which were not biblical to the vocabulary in which Christian faith was expressed. The Excess of them would result in heresies.<sup>52</sup> Against the Marcionites, the followers of

good (BLC 10). He also criticizes Marcion's disparagement of sexuality. Sexuality is not evil, it is the abuse of it which is evil (BLC 34). At the same time he does not deny that evil can happen. Children do die, people do starve. But this is due to fate (bad luck) not inherent evil.

<sup>46</sup> D.D. Bundy, 'Language and the Knowledge of God in Ephrem Syrus' (1986), 95-6.

<sup>47</sup> *Hymns against Heresies* 51,13.

<sup>48</sup> Nicholas J. Baker-Brain, *Manichaeism: an Ancient Faith Rediscovered* (London, 2011); John Kevin Coyle, *Manichaeism and Its Legacy*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 69 (Leiden, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> *Hymn against Heresies* 14,7-8.

<sup>50</sup> *Hymn against Heresies* 3,17.

<sup>51</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 52,14.

<sup>52</sup> Corrie Molenberg, 'An Invincible Weapon: Names in the Christological Passages in Ephrem's "Hymns on Faith" XLIX-LXV', in *Symposium Syriacum* 5, ed. René Lavenant, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 236 (Roma, 1988), 135-42, 135-6.

Bardaisan and the Manicheans it was important for Ephraem to lay claim to both the OT and the NT. The first mistake of these groups is the mutilation of the scriptures.<sup>53</sup>

Secondly, against prying and investigation Ephraem proposes the nurturing of a childlike faith.<sup>54</sup> As this faith grows, the eye of the seeker becomes clearer to see and recognise God's symbols more clearly. According to Ephraem, deep faith, reverence and humility without scrutiny opened the great treasury of the mysteries to Him.<sup>55</sup> Faith leads one to a more profound sense of God's activity creating a sense of wonder and awe before the goodness of God leading one to praise God, which is the only proper attitude of a human being.<sup>56</sup> One is instructed to follow the example of Abraham from whom we can learn faith and not intellectual investigation.<sup>57</sup> Any knowledge of God's hiddenness is attained through faith: 'Through faith God reveals Himself to you.'<sup>58</sup> Orthodox Faith combined with an attitude of love and wonder is the prerequisite for understanding. Ephraem would heartily subscribe to Anselm's words *credo ut intellegam*.<sup>59</sup> 'Only the eye of faith can move from historical person of Jesus

<sup>53</sup> *Hymn against Heresies* 2,19:

'The sons of error see the two testaments  
blended and put together to become the body of the truth.  
They cut out and remove parts of them;  
They paste up and make the books [of their own]  
They cut and remove narratives, which are perfectly fitting.  
This is the disgrace that they want to put together  
A sound body from the mutilation of its members.'

<sup>54</sup> He also proposes the example of Simon Peter. 'Während er tiefgründige Untersuchungen anstellt, verliert er die offen daliegende Wahrheit. Simon gab dir ein Beispiel, ahme ihn nach. ... Wir sollen alle zum Sohne sagen: Du bist der Sohn des lebendigen Gottes. Dieses Wort ist für die Oberen und für die Unteren (Engel und Menschen) zu erhaben, und doch soll es dir zum täglichen Brote werden, und nie mögest du daran Ekel empfinden. Selig ist wer ihn einfach Sohn Gottes nennt.' See Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide I-IV*, CSCO 212-215 (Leuven, 1973), II 4; II 20. Also see R. Murray, 'The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology' (1975/6), 6.

<sup>55</sup> See Peter Yousif, 'Approach to the Divine Reality in the Thought of St. Ephrem of Nisibis', in *The Church I love: A Tribute to Rev. Placid J. Podipara CMI*, ed. J. Madley and G. Kaniarakath (Kottayam, 1984), 54-96; Sebastian Brock, 'The Poet as Theologian', *Sobernost*, no. 7 (1977), 243-50; *id.*, 'The Poetic Artistry of St. Ephrem: An Analysis of H. Azym III', *PdO*, no. 6/7 (1975/76), 21-8; R. Murray, 'The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology' (1975/6), 1-20; Edmund Beck, 'Symbolum-Mysterium bei Aphraat und Ephräm', *OrChr* 42 (1958), 19-48.

<sup>56</sup> Edward G. Mathews, 'St. Ephrem, *Madrashe* on Faith, 81-85: *Hymns on the Pearl, I-V*', *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, no. 38 (1994), 45-72, 54-5; J.S. Custer, 'Why a Hymn?' (1996), 148; also see Kathleen McVey (ed.), *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Selected Prose Works*, The Fathers of the Church 91 (Washington D.C., 1994), 56.

<sup>57</sup> *Sermon on Faith* 2,3: 'Glauben und nicht Forschen; denn weil er glaubte, empfing er die Verheißung; weil er nicht forschte, erhielt er das Reich. Wer glaubt, grübelt nicht; wer aber grübelt, glaubt nicht.'

<sup>58</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 72,2.

<sup>59</sup> Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of St. Ephrem the Syrian*, 2 ed., Cistercian Studies Series 124 (Kalamazoo, 1992), 29.

to the incarnate Christ, so too with scripture only the eye of faith can penetrate inward to discover something of the interior meaning of the spiritual reality.<sup>60</sup> Faith is a 'second soul' to the body, and Ephraem articulates it as follows: 'Just as the body keeps alive by means of the soul, so too does the life of the soul depend on faith; if it denies, or becomes divided by doubt it becomes a mere corpse.'<sup>61</sup>

Thirdly, Ephraem underlines that fact that it is only the Son who can comprehend God, the Father because they are of the same nature. Because of the radical transcendence of God creatures are excluded by this relationship of connaturality.<sup>62</sup> Ephraem concludes that we cannot even understand the mysteries of nature, of our birth and death of our own soul and so it should not surprise us that we cannot reach the heavens.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the attempt of the searcher is in vain.<sup>64</sup> Ephraem shows this human limitation using many images like, the image of the sun and light,<sup>65</sup> sea,<sup>66</sup> archer and mountain,<sup>67</sup> river<sup>68</sup> and the blind man.<sup>69</sup>

What is evident from this analysis is the fact that Ephraem played the role of *defensor fidei*.<sup>70</sup> It was possible for him because (1) he served the church of Nisibis as a faithful servant to her bishops namely, Jacob, Babu, Vologeses and Abraham which lasted for about forty years;<sup>71</sup> (2) Jacob of Nisibis had appointed Ephraem as head or interpreter of the Christian school at Nisibis; and finally also in Edessa Ephraem entered to the service of bishop Barses (361-371) and he produced the great part of his literary compositions.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>60</sup> S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye* (1992), 47; see also *Hymn on Faith* 67,8.

<sup>61</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 80,1.

<sup>62</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 11,7-11; also see Seely J. Beggiani, *Early Syriac Theology: with Special Reference to the Maronite Tradition* (New York, 1983), 2.

<sup>63</sup> See *Hymn on Faith* 2, 22; 2,24; 3,2; 3,3; 3,7; 3,8; 3,15; see also André de Halleux, 'Mar Ephrem Théologien', *PdO* 4 (1973), 35-54, 43-4.

<sup>64</sup> 'Wer über Gott nachgrübelt ... erniedrigt ihn wieder. Gib entweder die Benennung oder das Forschen auf. Nennst du ihn Gott so muß alles Grübeln aufhören; zwischen Gott und dem Menschen wird nur Glaube gefordert ... zwischen den Menschen und Gott gibt es nur Glaube und Gebet; denn du mußt seiner Wahrhaftigkeit glauben und zu seiner Gottheit beten. Er sagt in der Heiligen Schrift, dass er die Geschöpfe erschaffen habe ... Die Grübeleien forscht; wenn sie aber forscht, glaubt sie nicht; ja, je mehr sie forscht, desto weiter entfernt sie sich vom Finden.' *Sermon on Faith* 2.18.

<sup>65</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 6,2.

<sup>66</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 49-55.

<sup>67</sup> *Hymns on Faith* 1,3; 6,1; 7,2; 10,2-4; 11,3. Ephraem mentions the idea of God's height (*Hymns on Faith* 13,1; 37,24) and he introduces mountains such as Ararat, Sinai, and Tabor. See also *Hymns on Faith* 4,1,8; 5,2-3; 22,11; 26,9; 47,2.

<sup>68</sup> *Hymns on Faith* 2,1-2; 4,5; 5,6; 8,15; 23,2,4; 25,8-9; 29,4; 39,4.

<sup>69</sup> *Hymns on Faith* 5,13; 27,8; 65,10.

<sup>70</sup> K. McVey (ed.), *St. Ephrem the Syrian* (1994), 29.

<sup>71</sup> S. Griffith, 'Ephraem the Syrian's Hymns "Against Julian"' (1987), 21.

<sup>72</sup> K. McVey (ed.), *St. Ephrem the Syrian* (1994), 36. Ephraem's surviving hymns and commentaries seem to stem from this period.

Having situated Ephraem in his theological background, we shall examine the rule of faith in the *Hymn on Faith* 67 and in the *Sermon on Faith*. It is to be noted that both the sermons of Faith and the Hymns on Faith are intended in the first place for the intellectuals especially for the leaders of the Arian Party in the Syriac speaking churches whom he hoped to win over. He wanted to show the underminers of the Nicene Creed that the intellect is an instrument developed for use in the physical world and it is not equipped to investigate anything else.<sup>73</sup>

### 3. Rule of Faith in *Hymn on Faith* 67, 19-24

In the *Hymn on Faith* 67, Ephraem instructs his audience to throw controversy away and put on love and proclaim the Truth. Then he gives the summary of the rule of faith which is to be proclaimed as follows:

First, He opened the treasury of his Love/ ܡܬܢ ܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
And formed Adam from the dust When he did not [yet] exist/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Indeed, He quickly opened the door of Sheol/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
and brought out from it Adam's body/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
which had become dust/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Then he quickly opened the gate of paradise/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Through [His] promise and set Adam/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
To live by the tree of life/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Praise to the One who devised this key/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Because, although it is [only] one,/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
It opens every treasure house/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Glory to the Father whose essence is hidden/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
Glory to the Son whose begetting is hidden/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
By the seal of silence./ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
You must confess the Father who is unbounded / ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
You must confess the Son who cannot be investigated/, ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ  
along with the Holy Spirit.<sup>74</sup>/ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ

This rule of faith is significant in many ways: First of all, it indicates the idea of God as creator who formed Adam from the dust. This is certainly in agreement

<sup>73</sup> Andrew Palmer, 'Words, Silences and the Silent Word: Acrostic and Empty Columns in Saint Ephraem's Hymns of Faith', *PdO* 20 (1995), 129-200, 200.

<sup>74</sup> Translation is taken from Paul S. Russell, *Ephraem the Syrian: Eighty Hymns on Faith* (Forthcoming Publication), and the Syriac text is from Edmund Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO 154 (Louvain, 1967), 208-9.

Secondly, Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection are not explicitly mentioned but it is implied<sup>81</sup> as Jesus after his death through his journey into Sheol opened the door of Sheol and brought out Adam back to the paradise in order to live by the tree of life. It is the Son, the second person of the Trinity who opened the door of Sheol and brought Adam to the paradise in order to live by the tree of life.

<sup>81</sup> Markus Vinzent, in his work provides reasons for the implicit idea of resurrection. It is because of a tradition that emphasized more on the suffering aspect than the resurrection aspect. Ephraem remains in the tradition where cross and Jesus' journey to Sheol remain more important than the resurrection. He shows that the mid-fourth century iconography highlights the centrality of the cross and it is the sign of victory and it became the most pervasive of all Christian symbols. Ephraem rendered R (Ro of the Greek letter) of the cross in harmony with the pagan interpretation as the sign of salvation, luck and help. See Markus Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection in the Early Christianity and the Making of the New Testament* (Farnham, 2011), 23. For a detailed argument refer to the chapters 1 and 2.

Thirdly, he makes a doxology by praising God whose essence is hidden and the Son whose begetting is hidden. Ephraem on the one hand acknowledges the relationship between the Father and the Son through the use of the word essence and begetting, but on the other hand he emphasizes that essence and begetting are hidden. It is beyond our understanding and we are instructed to be silent about explaining this mystery and to have a childlike faith. The relationship among the Trinity is not well developed in this rule of faith but it is developed elsewhere in the hymns. For example, he presents this theme in *Hymn* 32 and in 61:

The Father and the Son are one because Their nature is one. אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶחָד  
אֵלֵינוּ אֶחָד

Neither One nor the Other wanders. Each is mingled with the Other. وہ حصہ لے گا  
وہ حصہ بدلے گا

They are distinct One from the Other.<sup>82</sup> **وَمَا يَكْفُرُ أَفَكًا**

The long suffering word teaches about the Father and the Son משה וישראל  
לחלוקה על אהבה אבן

That they are mingled, One in the other.<sup>83</sup> وَأَمَّا حَقُّهُمَا فَتَمِيزُهُمَا

For Ephraem there is only harmony in the Trinity and not confusion. He reasons as follows:

The names Father, Son and Spirit agree and are in concord because of their descent at baptism. The names are in concord, the series [of them] is in concord because [they have] one will, just as they bear one yoke and go [forward together].<sup>84</sup>

Finally, Ephraem ends this rule of faith by acknowledging the Trinity. For him faith which is not imprinted by the Trinity goes astray. This is a frequently recurring theme. It begins with *Hymn* 13:

I presented my faith to the Father and he imprinted it with his Fatherhood; I presented it to the Son and he mingled it with his being and the Holy Spirit too sanctified it and fashioned in it the mystery which sanctifies everything.<sup>85</sup>

These three names are the centre of our faith because ‘on three names hangs our Baptism; by three mysteries has our faith been victorious; three names has our Lord consigned to His twelve. Names in which we have taken refuge.’<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 32,16; also see 29,3.

<sup>83</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 61,2.

[illegible]

<sup>85</sup> *Hymn on Faith* 13.2. തമിഴ്നാട് സാമൂഹിക നവോത്ഥാനം

താമരകൾ നല്ലവർഷം നീർ താമര  
താമരകൾ നല്ലവർഷം നീർ താമര

అకాశముననున్నది

[illegible]





57      ጋዞ ማህበረ ቤተ ክርስቲያን ደቡብ አፍሪካ  
58      ስለ ምርመራው የሚነሱት ጉዳዮች በአጠቃላይ  
59      እንደሆኑና የምርመራው ዓላማና ዘዴ መሆኑን  
60      ማረጋገጥ ይቻላል።  
61      ስለዚህም ምርመራው በሀገሪቱ ውስጥ  
62      በሕግ የተወጣውን ጥቅም ሊያሟላ  
63      ይችላል።

የምርመራው ዓላማና ዘዴ መሆኑን ማረጋገጥ ይቻላል።

29. You have heard that God is God. So get to know yourself as a human being!
31. You have heard that God is the Creator; how can then the creation examine him.
33. You have heard that God is Father. By his Fatherhood we shall know his generation.
35. For if the Father is the begetter, the Son from him is the begotten.
37. Your questions shall not divide or separate the only begotten Son.
39. You have heard of the incorruption of his Son; do not corrupt him with your search.
41. You have heard of the spirit, which is the Spirit of Holiness; so call Him by the name that was designated to Him.
43. You have heard His name, profess this as His name. But, you are not allowed to question His nature.
45. You have heard of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so conclude from the names the true reality of persons.
47. The names are not mingled, but all three are truly mingled.
49. If you confess their names, but not confessing their reality,
51. then you are a worshipper by name only, but in reality you are a liar.
53. Where there is nothing in reality, an empty name is placed in the middle.
55. What is not real, the name-giving is also in vain.
57. This nature will teach you that it truly exists.
59. That it exists, we know; but how it is, we do not comprehend.
61. Because you know that it exists, you have not yet understood how He is.
63. And you will not again deny his existence because you do not understand his existence.
65. Both are blasphemy, either you do not consider (God) or you examined (Him).

The target of this teaching is definitely Arianism and their investigation. It is evident in the articulation when Ephraem says ‘how can the creation examine him [creator]’; ‘do not blaspheme with your examinations’; ‘you are not authorized to question his essence’; ‘both are blasphemy, searching his existence and brooding.’ Human limitation to know God is an article of faith for Ephraem. In this context Ephraem instructs them to believe in the existence of the Trinity and not the ‘how’ of the Trinity. The unity and the separation in the Trinity are well exposed in this formulation. God is the Father and his Son is the begotten and his Spirit is the Spirit of holiness. We are instructed to call them by their names but not to investigate or pry into their nature. Regarding the Trinity Ephraem states that three names are not united but the three are in fact one. These three names are not merely the names but they are reality. However, the ‘how’ they exist we cannot understand.

<sup>90</sup> E. Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide I-IV* (1967), 29-66.



Another summary of faith is given at the end of the *Sermon on Faith IV*, verses from 157-208:

157	ܚܕܬܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
159	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
161	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
163	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
165	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
167	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
169	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
171	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
173	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
175	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
177	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
179	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
181	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
183	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
185	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
187	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
189	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
191	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
193	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
195	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
197	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
199	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
201	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
203	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
205	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ
207	ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܝܬܐ <sup>91</sup>

157. The truth is written down in a few (words), you shall not prolong the search.

159. That the Father exists, everybody knows; but how he is, no one knows.

161. That the Son exists, we all proclaim, but how he is (his creation) and how much he is (his greatness) we shall not measure.

163. Everyone confesses the Holy Spirit, to understand Him nobody is able to.

165. for, confess that the Father exists, but confess not that his being can be measured.

167. Again, believe that the Son exists; that he can be searched, you shall not believe indeed.

<sup>91</sup> E. Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide I-IV* (1967), 157-208.

169. That the Spirit of Holiness exists, accept it as true, however, that he can be searched, you shall not accept.
171. Believe and accept as true that they are one, that they are three, shall not be doubted.
173. Believe that the Father is the first; that the Son is the second, recognize as true.
175. Also that the Spirit of Holiness is the third, shall not be doubted.
177. Never does the firstborn command the Father, because he is the commander.
179. Never does the Holy Spirit send the Son, because he is his sender.
181. The Son, who sits at the right hand, does not assume the position of the Father,
183. neither does the Holy Spirit assume the rank of the Son by whom he was sent.
185. The Son rejoices that his generator is great(er) and the Spirit of Holiness (rejoices) that the beloved of the Father (Son) is great(er).
187. There exists only joy and harmony, mixture with order.
189. The Father knows the generation of the Son and the Son knows the sign of the Father.
191. The Father (gave) the sign and the Son understands. The servants are healed in the Spirit.
193. There is no division among you, because there is only one will among you;
195. There is no disorder in the mixing, but great order governs there.
197. Because they are a mixture, do not believe that there be disorder.
199. You shall not think that there be division because they are separate.
201. They are united without separation and separated without division.
203. Their unity is not separated and their separation is not divided.
205. Who (can) unite your division and who (can) mix your unity?
207. They alone know themselves; take your refuge to silence, O weak one.

Just like the previous one rule of faith, the Arian background is evident here too. He asks his interlocutors to avoid lengthy examinations. Ephraem instructs us to believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The order in the Trinity is expressed as follows. The Father is the first, the Son is the second and the Holy Spirit is the third. For the Father is the genitor and the Son sends the Holy Spirit. The Son rejoices in the glory of the Father and the Spirit rejoices in the glory of the beloved Son of the Father. There is only unity and order in the Trinity and not confusion because there is only one will. Their separation is not a fragmentation. Thus Ephraem acknowledges the unity and division in the trinity. Although he repeatedly speaks of 'mixture,' how they are united and separated is beyond our understanding and only they know it. However, how they are united and separated is beyond our understanding and only they know it. And therefore, we are asked to be silent with regard to his being and nature.

After having analyzed these rules of faith it is important to explicate the uniqueness of this formulation and the various implications of this rule of faith. The unique nature of the rule of faith in Ephraem can be shown against the background of the creedal formulation that we found in the West synodal recension of the synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410.

#### 4. The West Synodal Recension and the Rule of Faith in Ephraem

The synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410 summoned on the initiative of Marutha, the bishop of Maipherqat, officially accepted the council of Nicaea.<sup>92</sup> His intention was 'to bring the church affairs of Persian Christianity in line with the western development and to make the Nicene faith the creedal foundation of the reorganized church.'<sup>93</sup> Prefaced to the canons of the synod we find a creedal profession whose Syriac text comes down in two different recensions, one in Syriac orthodox sources and the other in the manuscripts of the East Syriac synodicon.<sup>94</sup> In the East Syrian synodicon we find the Nicene creed in its 'pure' form but the western edition of the creed differs profoundly from the eastern version. This led to the problem of the authenticity of these documents simply because only one of these documents can be considered authentic.<sup>95</sup> André de Halleux in his article reexamined the creeds in the Eastern synodicon and Western synodicon and recognized the authenticity of the profession of faith in the Western synodicon.<sup>96</sup> He brings out philological arguments to prove the authenticity of the Western recension as the original as against the eastern recension which is of later origin.<sup>97</sup> Though the authenticity of the Western recension is proved as against the eastern recension the problem remains as to the preexistence of the Western recension whether it represents an adaptation of a local creed or baptismal creed or liturgical creed.

According to A. Vööbus the preexistence of the Western recension with its current contents seems to be 'as unlikely as that it was created *ex nihilo*.'<sup>98</sup> Therefore, he suggests that some traces of the underlying model 'seems to have survived in elements of archaic consonance; but they are for the most part

<sup>92</sup> J. Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire Perse sous la Dynastie Sassanide* (Paris, 1904), 93.

<sup>93</sup> Arthur Vööbus, 'New Sources for the Symbol in Early Syrian Christianity', *VC* 26 (1972), 291-6, 291.

<sup>94</sup> Sebastian Brock, 'The Christology of the East in the Synods of the Fifth to Early Seventh Centuries: Preliminary Considerations and Materials', in *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology*, ed. Sebastian Brock, Variorum collected studies series 357 (London, 1992), 125-42, 126.

<sup>95</sup> Jean Gribomont, 'Le Symbole de Foi de Séleucie Ctésiphon (410)', in *A Tribute to Vööbus: Studies in Early Christian Literature and its Environment Primarily in the Syrian East*, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Chicago, 1977), 283-94, 287-8.

<sup>96</sup> André de Halleux, 'Le Symbole des évêques Perses au Synode de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)', in *Erkenntnis und Meinungen. Yad'otho w-tar'yotho*, ed. Gernot Wiessner (Wiesbaden, 1978), 161-90.

<sup>97</sup> De Halleux brings a philological argument that positively rules out the presence of the Nicænum in the original acts of 410. He concludes that the interpolation into the Nestorian synodicon might have taken place before the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century based on the chronicle of Seert though the compilation of the Nestorian synods probably dates back to the beginning of the catholicate of Timothy I (780-823). A. de Halleux, 'Le Symbole des évêques Perses au Synode de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)' (1978), 185-6; Jean-Baptiste Chabot, *Littérature syriaque* (Paris, 1934), 109.

<sup>98</sup> A. Vööbus, 'New Sources for the Symbol in Early Syrian Christianity' (1972), 296.

difficult to distinguish from the possible non-Nicaean glosses made by the fathers of 410 and are in any case insufficient to reconstitute the original, indigenous creed.<sup>99</sup> Though he recognized that the occidental version predated the oriental one, he neither entered into a discussion on the authenticity of the latter.<sup>100</sup> It was Lamy who suggested that we have to do with an ancient symbol of Syriac Christianity – one which was part of the archaic heritage of that ecclesiastical community which had to recede before the weight of the Nicene symbol in the wake of reform. This would explain the absence of the ancient creed from the official acts of the synod.<sup>101</sup> According to Gribomont the Western recension carries the characteristic traits of Nicaea but put together in an original way. Therefore, it postdates the alignment on Nicaea, but seemingly predates the eastern recension.<sup>102</sup> After having considered the formulae in themselves, he pays attention to the Syriac terminology in which they are expressed. Incarnation is rendered in the manner of Aphrahat and the earlier documents,<sup>103</sup> **ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ**. It must be remembered that the faith of Nicaea allowed for local verbal variations until Cyril of Alexandria in opposing Nestorius insisted on a pure Nicene wording. The Western text shows the influence of the Jewish Christian environment emphasizing creation, the Son, regeneration, and the spirit of life and immortality, rather than the inner-Trinitarian relations.<sup>104</sup>

In order to discuss the possible archaic elements of the West Syriac recension and to make a comparison between the rules of faith in Ephraem, it is necessary to give the text of the West Syriac creed:

The faith that was fixed by the Persian bishops: **ܐܡܢܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܥܪܡܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ**  
**ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ**

1. We believe in one God, Father, **ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ**
2. who through his Son, made heaven and earth, **ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ**
3. and through Him established the worlds that are above and that are below, **ܡܠܚܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ**

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 292; it was F.J. Lamy who edited the text of the recension based on the Ms. Sy.62 in Paris, see Thomas-Joseph Lamy, *Concilium Seleucia et Ctesiphonti habitum anno 410* (Lovanii, 1868). Lamy devoted a special study to the form of the symbol found. He suggested that we have to do with an ancient symbol of Eastern Christianity which had to recede before the weight of the Nicene symbol in the wake of reform.

<sup>101</sup> Th.-J. Lamy, *Concilium Seleucia et Ctesiphonti habitum anno 410* (1868), 253, 266, 268-74.

<sup>102</sup> J. Gribomont, 'Le Symbole de Foi de Séleucie Ctésiphon (410)' (1977), 288.

<sup>103</sup> See Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* VII 1; XXI 9 and 20; XXII 4; XXIII 20. One finds the same formula in the *Doctrine of Addai*, ed. George Philips (ed.), *The Doctrine of Addai, the Apostle, Now First Edited in a Complete Form in the Original Syriac* (London, 1876), 19 and in the *Acts of Thomas*, ed. William Wright (ed.), *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: The Syriac Text*, 2 vols. (London, 1871), II 217 and 242. The formulas of faith inspired by Nicaea generally have some different terms, closer to the Greek.

<sup>104</sup> A. Vööbus, 'New Sources for the Symbol in Early Syrian Christianity' (1972), 294.

4. and through him made the resurrection, ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ
5. and the renewal of the whole creation. ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ
6. And in his Son, the Only one, ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
7. Who is born of Him, ܡܢ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
8. that is, however, from the essence of His Father, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
9. God from God ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
10. light from light, ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
11. true God from true God, ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
12. born and not made, ܡܢ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
13. who is of one nature with His Father, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
14. who because of us, men, these created by His hands, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
15. And on account of our salvation. ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
16. descended and put on a body and became man, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
17. and suffered and rose on the third day, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
18. and ascended to heaven ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
19. and sits at the right hand of his Father, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
20. and He shall come to judge the dead and the living ones. ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
21. And we confess the Spirit, living and holy, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
22. The living Paraclete who is from the Father and the Son, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
23. in one essence, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
24. in one Trinity, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
25. in one will, ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ
26. agreeing with the faith of the 318 bishops that took place in the town of Nicaea. ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ

<sup>105</sup> ܡܢ ܥܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܢܐ

The similarity in the expressions of the Trinity is striking in the West Syrian recension and in the rules of faith of Ephraem that we have discussed above. Both express the Trinity as One in essence, One Trinity, One will. Regarding the Spirit Ephraem says that God has sent his Spirit of holiness (a typical Syriac expression for Holy Spirit) and in the Western recension it is mentioned that 'we confess the Spirit living and holy'. The internal relationship of the Trinity is also similar in the expressions of both. The Son is born from the essence of the Father. The idea of the creator God is also present in both formulations. It is true that all the expressions in the Western recension are not found in the rules of faith that we have discussed. But it is possible to trace the

<sup>105</sup> A. Vööbus, 'New Sources for the Symbol in Early Syrian Christianity' (1972), 294-5.

archaic elements of the West Syriac recension in them especially where Ephraem deals with the Trinity.

After having considered the rules of faith in St. Ephraem I would argue that the preexistence or the archaic form of the Western recension is to be sought in the rules of faith found in the early syriac literature. West Syriac recension is not a *creatio ex nihilo* and one can trace back some archaic elements of it to some writings of Ephraem especially in the *Hymns on Faith* and in his *Sermons on Faith*. This archaic form is found in the form of rules of faith in the ancient Syriac literature and Ephraem is only one of the representatives. It is first of all, because of the similarity between the formulation of the Western recension and Ephraem's understanding of the Trinity. It must be remembered that the faith of Nicaea allowed for local verbal variations until Cyril of Alexandria who in opposing Nestorius insisted on a pure Nicene wording. Secondly, it is because of the use of the Syriac terminologies like ܠܒ ܦܥܝܠ (put on body) to express incarnation that is rendered in the manner of Aphrahat and the earlier documents. Finally, the two texts of Ephraem and the West Syriac recension show the influence of the Jewish Christian environment emphasizing creation, the Son, regeneration, and the spirit of life and immortality, rather than the inner-Trinitarian relations. It is to be emphasized once again that Ephraem is only one of the representatives who provides us with rules of faith in the fourth century. There are other Syriac literature which are to be explored further. It was my purpose to expose two examples one from the homily and one from the poetry of Ephraem to expose the rule of faith specific to Ephraem.



# Humour in Syriac Hagiography

Jeanne-Nicole SAINT-LAURENT, Colchester, VT, USA

## ABSTRACT

Scholars of late-ancient Christian literature have shown how hagiographers wrote their stories to instruct and to amuse. My communication will present moments of hagiographic humour in select Syriac *Vitae* from the fifth through seventh centuries. Attention to the rhetoric, vocabulary, and mythic symbols of humorous episodes in sacred fictions offers a fresh lens for understanding Syriac religious culture and conflict of the late-ancient period. Through my analysis of Syriac discourse of the 'laughable', I will argue that hagiographers used humour both to make sense out of moments of ecclesiastical crises and to idealize the religious habits of their heroes. Humour depends upon shared senses of what is appropriate, miraculous, bizarre, or incongruous in descriptions of social relationships, religious practices, and natural phenomena. Through analyzing what hagiographers intended to be humorous in their schematic presentations, I will show how story-tellers managed the memory of their past as they attended to the entertainment and refreshment of their audience. I will focus on exempla from the hagiographies of John of Ephesus, the *Book of Paradise*, and the Syriac *Life of Antony*.

While reading John of Ephesus on the shore of Lake Champlain in northern Vermont, I sat with three volumes of the *Patrologia Orientalis* that contain his collection of the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*.<sup>1</sup> A woman approached me, squinted her eyes, and, upon seeing the size of the tomes, scoffed, 'wow, light reading!' I wanted to defend John's work with a retort: 'Actually, some of this *is* really funny!' Scholars of hagiography characterize the lives of the saints as a genre that inspires or entertains.<sup>2</sup> Yet how do we find the interpretative key in order to find what counts as 'humorous' in texts of the distant past?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and trans. E.W. Brooks, PO 17-9 (Paris, 1923-25), 17:i-xv, 1-307; 18:513-697; 19:153-285.

<sup>2</sup> The element of 'Wonder' played an important role in the entertaining value of hagiographic literature. See Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Wonder', *The American Historical Review* 102 (1997), 1-26.

<sup>3</sup> My thought on the category of 'humour' has been influenced tremendously by the volume on humour from the proceedings of a conference on this topic. See Guy Halsall (ed.), *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2002). In his Introduction to this volume, Halsall notes that the identification of the humorous in late ancient texts is often 'a question of locating the key'. See Guy Halsall, 'Introduction "Don't Worry I've Got the Key"', in *id.* (ed.), *Humour, history and politics in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2002), 1-22, 1.



Hagiography advances particular ideals of the hagiographer and his community, and as I will show, uses ridicule, situational irony, and humour to accentuate the holiness of saints and their superiority to their adversaries. Jokes depends upon understanding what constitutes 'the norm' in a culture in order to point out incongruity with it – and hagiography, as a genre in which the mundane and the miraculous frequently intertwine, presents a fruitful location for exploring how humour makes stories more memorable and saints more colourful. In this article, I will look at three different types of narratives preserved in Syriac, two about ascetics and one about a martyr, and I will show how all three texts use humour as a strategy for crafting the memory of the holy person that their legends enshrine.<sup>4</sup>

Guy Halsall, in his chapter contained in a volume that he edited called *Humour, History, and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, noted that 'much humour works by constructing a set of expectations that are then juxtaposed with an unexpected conclusion, or by the bringing together of anomalous components into the same event or image.'<sup>5</sup> In the lives of the saints, expectations are often juxtaposed with unexpected and incongruous conclusions in the area of dress, and I turn thus first to stories of naked holy men for examples of humorous moments in hagiography.<sup>6</sup>

I take as my example a vignette contained in the compilation of various Egyptian monastic texts by Ananisho, known as the *Paradise of the Fathers*.<sup>7</sup> Although the story focuses on Abba Macarius, who leaves his cell, heads into the desert, and travels further into the desert in search of monks, the title of this

<sup>4</sup> In this essay, I define humour as any message (in this case in a hagiographic text) intended to produce a smile or laugh. Jan Bremmer and Hermann Roodenburg's definition of humour has informed my own thinking about humour as a category of scholarly engagement: 'we see humour as any message – transmitted in action, speech, writing, images, or music – intended to produce a smile or a laugh.' Jan Bremmer and Hermann Roodenburg, 'Introduction: Humour and History', in *eid.* (eds), *A Cultural History of Humour: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (Cambridge, 1997), 1-10, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Guy Halsall, 'Funny foreigners: laughing with the barbarians in late Antiquity', in *id.* (ed.), *Humour, history and politics in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages* (2002), 89-113, 89.

<sup>6</sup> Halsall notes that in the study of humour it is important to attend to expectations and the juxtaposition of them. See G. Halsall, 'Funny foreigners' (2002), 89.

<sup>7</sup> *The Paradise of the Fathers* is a compilation of Egyptian texts by 'Ananisho' that also contains versions of Palladius *Lausiac History* later than the seventh century. This story, 'Concerning two fathers who were naked', comes from the part of the *Paradise of the Fathers* attributed to Palladius. See Earnest A.W. Budge, *The Book of Paradise, being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus, and others, according to the Recension of 'Anan-isho of Beth 'Abhe*, I (London, 1907), 358-9. Budge gives the text and translation of this text from Paul Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (Paris and Leipzig, 1890-97; repr. Hilderheim, 1968), VII 251-2. See also *Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis* (Beirut and Brussels, 1910), no. 354. For an excellent summary on the manuscript transmission of the *Paradise of the Fathers*, see Sebastian P. Brock, 'Saints in Syriac: A Little-Tapped Resource', *J ECS* 16 (2008), 181-96, 189-91.

Thus the incongruous, the mundane, and the miraculous intersect to give the story its delightful color. Humour played a serious role in this hagiography's didactic efficacy. The ideal of detachment from the material world, embodied in the monks' lack of clothing, and the casualness with which they speak to Macarius, work together to promote the values of the story: Christian ascetic detachment results in the absence of anxiety about public approval and trust that God will provide for the basic needs of those who rely in Him.

The Non-Chalcedonian author John of Ephesus wrote some of the richest hagiographic stories in West Syriac literature. The sixth century, for the Non-Chalcedonians in the Byzantine Empire, brought moments of persecution, exile, and economic hardship. In his collection John creates ascetic heroes for the Syriac-speaking community. He uses humorous aspects of the mundane or

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



<sup>20</sup> The Syriac text of which is contained in Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (1890-97 = 1968), II 565-603. The text of Anahid is part of a longer cycle containing the lives of Pethion, Adorhormizd, and Anahid. The section of this cycle describing Anahid's story and martyrdom is translated in Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley, 1987; updated edn. 1998), 82-99. See also 'Anahid', in J.-M Fiey, *Saints syriaques* (2004), no. 41, 33-4; *BHO* (Beirut and Brussels, 1910), no. 47.

her violent death evoke. Through humour, in the form of sarcasm, the martyr wins power for herself.

Anahid, a Zoroastrian convert to Christianity, faces torture and death for refusing to renounce her Christianity. Her enemies sadistically inflict punishments on her body, and the text describes the torment in vivid description.<sup>21</sup> Humour and wit take the form in this story of downright sarcasm. Those who kill Anahid first sever her breasts, but then she strips the torturer of his power through mocking him:

Her two breasts were quickly cut through and hung each by a mere sinew. The holy woman stretched out her hands, snatched her breasts, and placed them in front of the Magian, with the words: 'Seeing that you very much wanted them, O Magian, do with them whatever takes your fancy. If I have any other limbs you would like, give the order and I will cut them off and put them in front of you. I will not hold back anything I have from your banquet.'<sup>22</sup>

Her sarcasm threatens his power, accentuating that she is the one in control.

Moments of inappropriateness and the intertwining of the miraculous and the mundane add further humour elements to the memory of this martyr. Here the story presents animals, in this case, wasps, as models of ideals toward which human beings should strive in the life of holiness. Animals, in ascetic early Christian literature, were often used symbolically to cultivate and teach ethics of restraint, as Blake Leyerle has shown.<sup>23</sup> In this story, the guards unleash wasps to sting Anahid's honey-covered body that they have tortured. These insects, however, become her sentinels, not only not stinging her but protecting her: 'The remainder of the wasps ... were like a fortified wall running up from the ground ... preventing any human beings, animals, or cattle from approaching the spot. If anyone did happen to pass along in that direction, he was immediately struck dead by them.'<sup>24</sup> The wasps become unforgettable characters in Anahid's hagiography, as the hagiographer unexpectedly and humorously turn the intended villains into the heroine's companions and protectors.

I have argued in this article that attention to humour (whether as forms of ridicule, irony, or droll moments of the mundane) illuminates hagiography's

<sup>21</sup> The miracle of Anahid's survival in the face of tremendous suffering relieves the tension of the story that the details of her torture had built up: 'When they came to take a look at her in the morning, they saw her chains lying on the ground to one side, while she herself met them, radiant with joy ففرحت بها. On seeing that she was still alive, they threw a small piece of cloth to her, which she took and wrapped round her loins to hide her nakedness فكسوتها. They observed that all her wounds from the previous day had healed and that her body was without a scar.' See P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (1890-97 = 1968), II 596.

<sup>22</sup> P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (1890-97 = 1968), II 597-8.

<sup>23</sup> Blake Leyerle, 'Monks and Other Animals', in Dale B. Martin and Patricia Cox Miller (eds), *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism and Historiography* (Durham, NC, 2005), 150-71, 163.

<sup>24</sup> P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (1890-97 = 1968), II 602.

didactic and entertaining value. The rich trove of Syriac saints' lives that have survived in many manuscript collections attests to their popularity, and hagiography as a malleable genre that combined theological ideals with stories of heroes that elevated particular groups provided a location for hagiographers to entertain and make their saints more memorable without promoting undue levity to a topics as serious as orthodoxy, martyrdom, or ascetic sacrifice.



# **‘It Is With God’s Words That Burn Like a Fire’: Monastic Discipline in Shenoute’s Monastery**

Erik W. KOLB, Washington, D.C., USA

## **ABSTRACT**

The writings of Shenoute, the long-serving leader of the White Monastery in late antique Upper Egypt, provide a wealth of evidence documenting various disciplinary problems that arose among the monks as well as the responses that perceived offenses provoked among those in positions of power. Relying on biblical models of community maintenance, Shenoute utilized various types of punishment to protect and heal the monks in his care. In several texts from Shenoute’s *Canons*, the abbot employs biblical citations and allusions in order to justify his decision to remove disobedient monks from the monastery. In addition to describing the characteristics of the punishments themselves – rebukes, penance, excommunication, demotion, beatings, and expulsion – Shenoute’s writings highlight the conflict and discord that the administration of these punishments engendered.

Monastic literature from late antique Egypt indicates that punishment was an important part of the disciplinary regimes of early coenobitic communities and that the maintenance of social order<sup>1</sup> was fundamental to the formation and shaping of such groups. While severe disciplinary action was certainly not the defining characteristic of early ascetic practice, it quickly became a necessary component of the coenobitic life. In some respects, the function of monastic punishment mirrored that of public penance in the church more broadly and that of punishment in episcopal courts,<sup>2</sup> but the specific ways in which monastic discipline was constructed and carried out reflected the unique social problems that arose within close communities of coenobitic monks seeking to follow the same well-regulated way of life. The leaders of these communities, faced with challenges to their own authority and an immense sense of responsibility for the spiritual well-being of those in their care, resorted to both non-corporal and corporal punishment as a means of facilitating their ascetic pedagogy.

Despite this fact, few historians of early Egyptian monasticism have paid much attention to the characteristics and functions of punishment within communal

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the preservation of normative or desirable attitudes and modes of behavior.

<sup>2</sup> On episcopal courts, see John C. Lamoreaux, ‘Episcopal Courts in Late Antiquity’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995), 143-67.



groups of ascetic Christians in late antiquity. Historiography on late antique monasticism has traditionally focused on the Greek and Latin textual evidence. Over the past several decades, scholars have increasingly recognized the importance of Syriac and Coptic literature in their quest to reconstruct the early centuries of Christian monasticism, but much research remains to be done. Furthermore, while there is a significant amount of scholarship on violence and punishment in the ancient world, very little of this scholarship deals with Egypt in particular, and still less with early Egyptian monasticism. The small body of literature associated with the Pachomian Koinonia and the relatively extensive collection of texts from the White Monastery Federation have garnered a great deal of interest in recent years.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the role of punishment within these communities has not received very much attention, and an investigation of monastic punishment, especially as it is evidenced in the Coptic sources, will add much to our understanding of ascetic leadership and the development of coenobitic communities in late antique Egypt.

In the ancient world, as is the case today, punishment was seen as legitimate only when it was wielded by someone with legitimate authority; in light of that fact, who had the power to punish, and whence did that power derive? In the non-monastic world of late antiquity, there existed a variety of theories regarding the appropriate uses of and justifications for punishment. As Richard Bauman notes,<sup>4</sup> there are a number of important questions to consider when investigating the reasons for which an individual wrongdoer was punished: was it in order to make that individual suffer? Was it intended to compel that individual to change his or her ways? Was it designed to protect society more broadly? Or was punishment aimed at deterring future offenders? Should punishments be administered according to universal norms, or should there be different punishments for different classes of person or for varying levels of egregiousness with respect to the offense? It would be overly simplistic merely to attempt to place any particular punishments into neat and well-defined categories, but broadly speaking punishments in antiquity were characterized by what Matt Matravers calls 'retributivism' and 'consequentialism.'<sup>5</sup> The former model connects the punishment to what the offender has done – punishment is justified if it is deserved, and the punishment should be proportional to the offense; the latter model asserts that punishment is justified when it yields social or individual benefit – punishment, that is, should be utilitarian, and therefore rules

<sup>3</sup> See Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 6 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985); James E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert*, Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Harrisburg, 1999); Rebecca Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2002); Caroline Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe* (Philadelphia, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Bauman, *Crime and Punishment in Ancient Rome* (London and New York, 1996), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Matt Matravers, *Justice and Punishment: The Rationale of Coercion* (Oxford, 2000), 4-5.

that threaten punishment are designed to reduce the incidence of prohibited acts and thereby correct and improve the group or the person.

In the coenobitic monastic setting, the monk who had transgressed against the precepts of the community had violated both his relationship with God and his relationship with his fellow monks. As such, his reconciliation process necessarily entailed both a return to God and a mending of his bonds with those in the monastery. The leaders of the monastery, especially the abbot, were the individuals responsible for facilitating this two-fold course of amends. The disciplinary regimen of coenobitic monasteries often required some type of penance, accompanied in many cases by a more severe punishment, ranging from verbal rebuke to expulsion. The ascetic hierarchy, endowed with spiritual authority and duty-bound to guide errant monks in the right direction, was tasked with maintaining religious and administrative harmony within the community. While severe disciplinary action was certainly not the defining characteristic of early ascetic practice, it quickly became a necessary component of the coenobitic life. In some respects, the function of monastic punishment mirrored that of public penance in the church more broadly and that of punishment in episcopal courts, but the specific ways in which monastic discipline was constructed and carried out reflected the unique social problems that arose within close communities of coenobitic monks seeking to follow the same well-regulated way of life. The leaders of these communities, faced with challenges to their own authority and an immense sense of responsibility for the spiritual well-being of those in their care, resorted to both non-corporal and corporal punishment as a means of facilitating their ascetic pedagogy.

Monastic punishment in Egypt was intended to be, at its core, corrective rather than strictly punitive. Punishment, for the most part, was intended to change monks' behavior and attitudes, enabling them to remain within the community rather than be expelled from it, although expulsion was always available as a last resort. The health of the monastic body, as it were, was of utmost importance to the leaders of coenobitic monasteries; purity of the group, as well as of its individual members, was the responsibility of the leadership. Relying on biblical models of community maintenance, these leaders utilized various types of punishment to protect and heal the monks in their care. When more moderate and usually non-physical attempts at correction failed to achieve their goals, the leadership often resorted to more drastic measures, such as whippings, beatings, and banishment from the monastery.

The writings of Shenoute, the long-serving leader of the so-called White Monastery in the fourth and fifth centuries,<sup>6</sup> provide a wealth of evidence documenting

<sup>6</sup> On Shenoute's life and career, see Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, CSCO 599-600 (Louvain, 2004) and *id.*, 'From the Other Side of the Nile: Shenute and Panopolis', in A. Egberts, B.P. Muhs and J. van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest* (Leiden, 2002), 95-113.

various disciplinary problems that arose among the monks as well as the responses that perceived offenses provoked among those in positions of power. In addition to describing the characteristics of the punishments themselves – rebukes, penance, excommunication, demotion, beatings, and expulsion – Shenoute’s writings highlight the conflict and discord that the administration of these punishments engendered. In several texts from his *Canons*, Shenoute employs biblical citations and allusions in order to justify his decision to remove disobedient monks from the monastery. Not all of Shenoute’s subordinates, however, agreed with his interpretations of biblical passages as applied to monastic discipline. In this article, I examine briefly a few of the battles over hermeneutics and pedagogy that occurred under Shenoute’s leadership in the context of three very different passages from the *Canons*.

In the first, entitled *Why, O Lord*,<sup>7</sup> Shenoute provides justifications of his disciplinary strategies and then goes on to give specific instructions regarding the punishment by beating of individual, named female monks for a variety of offenses. In the second text, entitled *In the Night*,<sup>8</sup> Shenoute describes the distress he experiences when deciding whether or not to expel a group of monks whom he had ordered to be bound and imprisoned after they had committed an unnamed offense. Ultimately, after what he describes as a demonic encounter, Shenoute decides to expel the monks for the sake of the monastery’s purity. In the third text, entitled *Is It Not Written*,<sup>9</sup> Shenoute again teaches about the importance of purification and orders that monks who have castrated themselves be removed from the community immediately.

While the monks were organized according to a fairly complex series of hierarchies, described by Layton in his recent article on the rules of the monastery,<sup>10</sup> it was often Shenoute himself who arbitrated disputes and meted out punishment. As several scholars have noted in recent years, there was a culture of surveillance that pervaded the community, and the frequent reporting of offenses occasioned a diverse array of punishments by means of which Shenoute intended to deal with disobedience and disharmony among the monks.<sup>11</sup> Offenses deemed worthy of punishment included, but were not limited to, laziness, refusal to perform duties, showing favoritism, slander, lying, stealing, and a wide array of perceived sexual transgressions. Layton observes that while

<sup>7</sup> Text: *Coptic Manuscripts from the White Monastery: Works of Shenute*, ed. Dwight W. Young, 2 vols., *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* 22 (Vienna, 1993), 88-91 and 108-13.

<sup>8</sup> Text: *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* III, ed. Iohannes Leipoldt and W.E. Crum, CSCO 42, *Scriptores Coptici* 2 (Louvain, 1908), 37-41.

<sup>9</sup> Text partially published in *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* III (1908); *Œuvres de Shenoudi: Texte copte et traduction française*, ed. Émile Amélineau, 2 vols. (Paris, 1907-1914).

<sup>10</sup> Bentley Layton, ‘Rules, Power, and the Exercise of Authority in Shenoute’s Monastery: The Problem of World Replacement and Identity Maintenance’, *JECS* 15 (2007), 45-73.

<sup>11</sup> R. Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women* (2002), 27-9.

there are many rules prohibiting certain actions, almost none of the rules prescribe a specific punishment for offenders.<sup>12</sup> Krawiec similarly suggests that punishments were not fixed to particular transgressions, but rather were determined on an *ad hoc* basis. Stubborn monks who refused to reform, for example, were treated more harshly, but some lenience was shown to the sick, the elderly, children, and novices.<sup>13</sup> It is impossible to determine how frequently or infrequently any individual monk would have been subjected to punishment in the monastery, but, in Layton's words, 'the new monk's discovery that a large corpus of rules and punishments exists ... is a significant discovery.'<sup>14</sup>

The conflicts that occasioned much of the material in *Why, O Lord* seem to have arisen because people in the monastery were vocally questioning Shenoute's leadership style.<sup>15</sup> After a lengthy list of regulations and prohibitions, he writes:

Anyone who will come into these congregations at any time shall be instructed about all things. The one who does not want to comply with the prescribed way that all the brothers have been observing shall by no means enter' the community.<sup>16</sup>

As for monks who were granted entrance into the community but later disobeyed its regulations, Shenoute writes that they may, in some cases, be expelled. Admitting that expulsion is severe, Shenoute observes that 'a person roasts pieces of meat with fire ... Thus also with his words God teaches those whom he loves, and with rebukes, entreaties, and blessings he disciplines everyone whom he will receive.'<sup>17</sup> Shenoute describes punishment as a sort of harsh but necessary purging of undesirables from the community:

It is with his words that burn like a fire that [God] chases them from his congregations, a fire that consumes these disobedient people when the Lord expels them from his congregations.'<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, he notes, the disobedient monks are taking up perfectly good space that could be used by more virtuous and obedient people: there are 'some in [God's] congregations who are wasting the place of others who will serve the Lord.'<sup>19</sup> Channeling the parable of the fig tree from *Luke* 16, Shenoute notes that a barren tree wastes the land on which it stands, and that it must therefore be cut down to make room for more fruitful trees to grow. Clearly, not

<sup>12</sup> B. Layton, 'Rules' (2007), 69.

<sup>13</sup> R. Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women* (2002), 28.

<sup>14</sup> B. Layton, 'Rules' (2007), 67.

<sup>15</sup> R. Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women* (2002), 44.

<sup>16</sup> D.W. Young, *Coptic Manuscripts* (1993), 57. All translations from the Coptic are my own unless otherwise noted.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

everyone agreed with his interpretation of the parable as it applied to monastic discipline. Shenoute acknowledges that there are some in the community who want him to be more lenient, giving offenders a chance to try again. But, he says, like the gardener from the parable who wanted to loosen the soil around the fruitless tree in order to nurture it, those who advocate leniency have themselves failed to understand that at a certain point, the disobedient must be expelled for the greater health of the monastic body. Ultimately, according to Shenoute, anyone who is no longer a part of the community has been removed by powers much higher than himself:

I have said these things so that you may understand that it was Jesus and his angels who chased them all from the congregation, whether man or woman, from the first until now. Whether those whom we expelled openly or those who fled secretly in great distress, it was [Jesus] who chased them all from his congregations.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, in order to add support for his insistence that impure monks must be removed, Shenoute cites *Psalms* 5: 'Those who are wicked shall not dwell with you, nor shall the lawlessness continue before your eyes.'<sup>21</sup>

Some of these same themes emerge in *In the Night*, which begins with Shenoute describing an incident that occurred when he couldn't sleep because he was greatly distressed about how to deal with a group of monks who had committed a serious offense.<sup>22</sup> Shenoute was troubled because he didn't know whether he should punish the monks, but allow them eventually to return to the monastic community, or simply expel them immediately. On the one hand, he genuinely wanted the monks to be restored to virtue and was concerned about their salvation. On the other hand, however, he was worried that these offending monks were a danger to the well-being of the community as a whole. Like a disease, the erroneous thoughts and behaviors of these monks could spread and infect others in the monastery.<sup>23</sup> According to Shenoute, as he was standing in the courtyard deliberating these matters, he observed a strange man who was dressed like a secular official. In Shenoute's interpretation, this strange man seemed to be a supporter of Shenoute's captives – the man was 'grieving over those pestilent men' – namely, the offending monks. When the man grabbed Shenoute and began to attack him, Shenoute asked whether he was an angel and whether he had any message about whether Shenoute was correct to consider expelling the monks: 'If you are a spirit or an angel who has come from God, I myself am his servant. And tell me, if you were sent, whether it is they who have sinned against God or we who have sinned against him, for we are

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 75.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 90.

<sup>22</sup> See David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 3-5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

considering leaving them in our midst.'<sup>24</sup> When the man didn't respond, Shenoute overpowered him and threw him upon the ground, pinning him down with his feet. Since it would have been impossible for him to be victorious in a fight with an angel, Shenoute concluded that the strange man was in fact a demon who was tempting him into being lenient with the monks rather than expel them. He determined that even though it was very difficult, he must always be ready to expel monks who are sources of impurity within the community, 'even if I pray with them and even if they pray with me, even if I eat bread with them and they eat bread with me.'<sup>25</sup>

Stephen Emmel has shown that the text we call *Is It Not Written* should probably be divided into several separate works,<sup>26</sup> and the section with which I am concerned here is the final one, which contains a distinct change in subject matter after a lacuna of several pages. The beginning of the passage is lost, but the context clearly indicates that when the text resumes, Shenoute is addressing some monks who were discovered stealing food and giving it secretly to their relatives and others in the monastery who were evidently unwilling or unable to conform to Shenoute's strict dietary regimen.

This bold dissent had its root in concerns about Shenoute's use of corporal punishment. After a long and confusing metaphor about a snake that hides during the day and comes out of its hole at night to wrap itself around people in the dark – presumably a reference to monks acting disobediently and bringing their fellow monks down with them – Shenoute argues that even if those in the monastery don't understand his use of punishment, he is nevertheless obediently following God's will for him as head of the community.<sup>27</sup> Not only does he struggle with the decision to inflict punishment, Shenoute says, but it agonizes him that he has to treat people so harshly. Nevertheless, citing *Ecclesiastes*, he asserts that there is a time for everything, including anger and chastisement.<sup>28</sup>

Complaining that no one fully appreciates the difficult decisions he has to make, Shenoute further illustrates his dilemma by introducing a story of a man caring for his mother, who is blind and mentally disturbed, and his brother, who is also blind. According to the story, while the man was trying to take his blind relatives to a place of safety, the man's brother ran off into the shadows, far away from the road upon which they were walking. The man was unable to run after his brother because he was carrying his mother on his back, and while he called out to his brother to return, the brother was nowhere to be seen. The man decided to continue down the road to his destination, and having left his mother safely there, returned immediately to the road to look for his lost brother.

<sup>24</sup> I. Leipoldt (ed.), *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia* III (1908), 37-8.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 40.

<sup>26</sup> Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, Ph.D. diss. (Yale, 1993), 832-41.

<sup>27</sup> E. Amélineau, *Œuvres* (1907), 40.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 41-2.

Although the man searched for a long time and thoroughly scoured all of the 'dark places', in Shenoute's words, he could not find his brother and eventually abandoned his search.<sup>29</sup> While the passage is not quite this explicit, the point of the story seems to be that while some people can be saved, or rescued, or cured, others cannot.

The next section of the text, involving a man who castrated himself, is difficult to interpret: it is unclear whether Shenoute is describing an actual historical incident or whether his example of the self-castrated man is supposed to be a hyperbolic metaphor about the need to keep the monastery pure and immediately remove anyone who defiles himself or others. He introduces the example as follows: 'It is necessary to be pure of the blood of those who will do evil things at all times and in all transgression. Do not allow them to live with you.'<sup>30</sup> As in *Why, O Lord*, those who opposed Shenoute's policy of expulsion cited a biblical passage to support a more lenient approach – in this case, *Matthew* 13:30: 'Leave them and let them grow', which is what the man in the parable of the weeds says because he is concerned that he will pull up the wheat along with the weeds. The opponents of expulsion also interpreted the parable of the wedding banquet from *Matthew* 22 as a story about forgiveness. While the wedding guests knew that there was a man present who was missing the appropriate wedding attire, they did not kick him out of the celebration. It was only when the king arrived that the man was tied hand and foot and thrown outside into the darkness. According to Shenoute, his opponents were using this parable to argue against expelling monks from the monastery:

It is not necessary, they say, for those who know about those who are doing wicked deeds in the congregations or in the churches to cast them out until they go before the Lord Jesus, or until he comes.<sup>31</sup>

For Shenoute, however, the parable does not apply to the situation at hand: 'Do not believe every word, like the fool, but be wise.' He then cautions the monks to be careful to think through every verse carefully in order to determine its true application – in this case, Shenoute determines that it is not appropriate to let offending monks stay in the monastery until Jesus can deal with them; rather, Shenoute proclaims that the defiled man who castrated himself should be thrown out into the road to lie in his own blood as an example to those who pass by. He later relents and says that the injured man can be taken in by relatives so that he will not die.

Shenoute explicitly states that since God has appointed him to oversee the spiritual well-being of those in the monastery, he himself is responsible for maintaining order. Shenoute *must* punish the monks, he says, because if he does

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 52-3.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 62.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 63.



not, the community will be polluted and Satan will come to dwell in the monastery. Shenoute reminds his monks repeatedly that just as God rejected many people in the Bible who refused to be obedient, so also God blessed many others who were obedient. This contrast between those whom God cursed and those whom God blessed in the Bible serves to mirror Shenoute's own situation, because his monastery consisted of both obedient and disobedient monks. As Caroline Schroeder has demonstrated, however, Shenoute perceived any individual act of disobedience as a threat to the purity of the entire monastic community. Moreover, any deception or laziness, however insignificant, was viewed as a disease that threatened to spread like wildfire through the ranks of the monks. Shenoute's description of his own struggles and distress about expulsion and beatings shows that punishment in the monastery had a destabilizing quality: it served to maintain a dependent power relationship between Shenoute and the other monks, but the dynamics of the various hierarchies in Shenoute's monastery could not have existed without significant tension, since those with power must have been aware that their grip on it was delicate indeed.





# Origenism in Fifth-Century Upper Egypt: Shenoute of Atripe and the Nag Hammadi Codices

Hugo LUNDHAUG, Oslo, Norway

## ABSTRACT

The presence of 'Origenists' in and around the monasteries of Upper Egypt in the second quarter of the Fifth Century is vividly attested by a letter sent by the archbishop Dioscorus of Alexandria to the great archimandrite Shenoute of Atripe sometime in the 440s, as well as by several of the writings of Shenoute himself. Most prominent among the latter is the substantial anti-heretical writing known as *I Am Amazed*, a text which also transmits archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria's anti-Origenist festal letter of 401 in Coptic translation. Both Dioscorus' letter and Shenoute's writings connect their charges against the followers of Origen with the use of heretical books. Arguing that the Nag Hammadi Codices represent likely candidates for the kind of illicit books utilised by Shenoute's opponents, this short communication looks into how the question of the resurrection of the flesh is treated in the writings of Shenoute and in some of the Nag Hammadi texts, aiming to shed some light on the nature of the similarities and differences between the illustrious archimandrite and his 'Origenist' opponents, as well as on the possible connections between the latter and the users and/or producers of the Nag Hammadi codices.

## Introduction

25 years ago James Goehring famously suggested that in the Fourth Century it would not be impossible for the same monk to support Athanasius while reading the Nag Hammadi codices.<sup>1</sup> He thus drew a picture of early Egyptian monasticism that was more doctrinally diverse, and complex, than the one usually depicted in scholarly accounts. In a more recent article Goehring again calls for scholars to imagine 'a more complex world', suggesting a picture that is more ideologically interwoven than what readily emerges from our surviving sources.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James E. Goehring, 'New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies', in *Ascetics, Society, and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, SAC (Harrisburg, 1999), 162-86, esp. 173. The article was originally published in Birger A. Pearson and James E. Goehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, SAC (Philadelphia, 1986), 236-57.

<sup>2</sup> James E. Goehring, 'Some Reflections on the Nag Hammadi Codices and the Study of Early Egyptian Monasticism', *Meddelanden från Collegium Patristicum Lundense* 25 (2011), 61-70.

Taking into account such complexity and diversity, together with the important insight that the Nag Hammadi Codices are just as likely to have been produced in the fifth century as in the fourth,<sup>3</sup> I will in the present article make some suggestions as to how the Nag Hammadi Codices may intersect with other important sources for the doctrinal diversity and complexity of Christianity in Fifth-Century Upper Egypt.

Although the 'monastic cultural war'<sup>4</sup> that was the first Origenist controversy reached its peak around the end of the Fourth and the beginning of the Fifth Century,<sup>5</sup> it is clear from several Coptic sources that, at least in Upper Egypt, Origenism was still a serious issue as late as the second quarter of the Fifth Century. Especially noteworthy in this regard is a selection of sources connected with Shenoute, the archimandrite of the White Monastery near the village of Atriipe, situated on the other side of the Nile from the major city of Panopolis.<sup>6</sup>

See also Hugo Lundhaug, 'Nag Hammadi-kodeksene og den tidlige monastiske tradisjon i Egypt', *Meddelanden från Collegium Patristicum Lundense* 24 (2009), 33-59.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Stephen Emmel, 'The 'Coptic Gnostic Library of Nag Hammadi' and the Faw Qibli Excavations', in Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla (eds), *Nag Hammadi-Esna*, vol. 2 of *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt* (Cairo, 2010), 33-43, esp. 37; *id.*, 'The Coptic Gnostic Texts as Witnesses to the Production and Transmission of Gnostic (and Other) Traditions', in Jörg Frey, Enno Edzard Popkes and Jens Schröter (eds), *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung-Rezeption-Theologie*, BZNW 157 (Berlin, 2008), 33-49, esp. 38; Hugo Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth: Cognitive Poetics and Transformational Soteriology in the Gospel of Philip and the Exegesis on the Soul*, NHMS 73 (Leiden, 2010), 7-9; *id.*, 'Shenoute of Atriipe and Nag Hammadi Codex II', in Christoph Marksches and J. van Oort (eds), *Zugänge zur Gnosis* (Leuven, 2013), 201-26, esp. 208-10.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen J. Davis, *Coptic Christology in Practice: Incarnation and Divine Participation in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2008), 41.

<sup>5</sup> For accounts of this controversy, see, e.g., Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, 1992); Stephen J. Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity*, The Popes of Egypt 1 (Cairo, 2004), 63-70; C. Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Coptic Studies 2 (Leiden, 1993), 186-90.

<sup>6</sup> On Shenoute, see, e.g., Stephen Emmel, 'Shenoute the Monk. The Early Monastic Career of Shenoute the Archimandrite', in M. Bielawski and D. Hombergen (eds), *Il monachesimo tra eredità e aperture: Atti del simposio 'Testi e temi nella tradizione del monachesimo cristiano' per il 50° anniversario dell'Istituto Monastico di Sant' Anselmo, Roma 25 maggi-1° giugno 2002*, StAns 140, AnMo 8 (Rome, 2004), 151-74; *id.*, 'Shenoute's Place in the History of Monasticism', in Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla (eds), *Akhmim and Sohag*, vol. 1 of *Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt* (Cairo, 2008), 31-46; *id.*, 'From the Other Side of the Nile: Shenoute and Panopolis', in A. Egberts, B.P. Muhs and J. van der Vliet (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis: An Egyptian Town from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest: Acts From an International Symposium Held in Leiden on 16, 17 and 18 December 1998*, Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 31 (Leiden, 2002), 95-113; *id.*, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, 2 vols., CSCO 599-600, Subsidia 111-2 (Leuven, 2004), I 6-14. See also Johannes Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atriipe und die Entstehung des nationalen ägyptischen Christentums*, TU 25 (Leipzig, 1903), and the two modern monographs, Rebecca Krawiec, *Shenoute and the Women of the White Monastery: Egyptian Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2002), and Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atriipe* (Philadelphia, 2007).

### Dioscorus' Letter to Shenoute

In several of his writings, which we will return to below, Shenoute opposes ideas and followers of Origen, but before turning to Shenoute's own writings I would first like to draw attention to an intriguing letter of which Shenoute was the recipient, preserved among the remains of the large collection of codices that once made up the contents of the White Monastery library.<sup>7</sup> This is a letter written by Dioscorus, the archbishop of Alexandria, to Shenoute sometime between 444 and 451.<sup>8</sup> It deals with the problem of heretics in Shenoute's area of Upper Egypt and is especially concerned with 'the monasteries of Panopolis',<sup>9</sup> but also with the cities and monasteries of the surrounding area. The letter consists of a memorandum addressed to three local bishops,<sup>10</sup> and a cover letter addressed to Shenoute.<sup>11</sup>

In the latter, Dioscorus praises a certain priest named Psenthaesios and 'the monks who are with him',<sup>12</sup> whom he credits with having fought against heresy, and praises for having expelled the former priest, and most probably

<sup>7</sup> On this library, see esp. Tito Orlandi, 'The Library of the Monastery of Saint Shenute at Atripe', in A. Egberts *et al.* (eds), *Perspectives on Panopolis* (2002), 211-31; Stephen Emmel and Cornelia Eva Römer, 'The Library of the White Monastery in Upper Egypt', in Harald Froschauer and Cornelia Eva Römer (eds), *Spätantike Bibliotheken: Leben und Lesen in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens*, Nilus 14 (Vienna, 2008), 5-14.

<sup>8</sup> This letter is partly preserved in four folios from White Monastery codex XZ, which have been published in Herbert Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute', in *Recueil d'études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion*, BEHE 234 (Paris, 1922), 367-76 (the first three leaves, XZ 66-71), and Henri Munier, *Manuscripts coptes*, CGAE 9201-9304 (Cairo, 1916), 147-9 (the last leaf, XZ 72-3). Dioscorus became archbishop of Alexandria in 444, after the death of Cyril, and there is no reason to believe that it was written after the Council of Chalcedon. For an extended discussion of the letter, see also Hugo Lundhaug, 'Shenoute's Heresiological Polemics and Its Context(s)', in David Brakke, Jörg Ulrich and Anders-Christian Jacobsen (eds), *Invention, Rewriting, Usurpation: Discursive Fights over Religious Traditions in Antiquity*, Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 11 (Frankfurt, 2012); Aloys Grillmeier, 'La "Peste d'Origène": Soucis du patriarche d'Alexandrie dus à l'apparition d'origénistes en Haute Egypte (444-451)', in *Alexandrina: Hellénisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie: Mélanges offerts au P. Claude Mondésert* (Paris, 1987), 221-37.

<sup>9</sup> Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 67 (H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' [1922], 371). All translations from the Coptic sources are my own.

<sup>10</sup> As Thompson has pointed out (H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' [1922], 369-70), Sabinus is probably to be identified as the bishop of Panopolis who is mentioned by this name in the Coptic acts of the council of Ephesus of 431 (see also U. Bouriant, *Actes du Concile d'Éphèse*, MMAF [Paris, 1892], 71, 131); Gennadius was probably the bishop of Hermopolis Magna who was present with Dioscorus at the council of Ephesus in 449; while Hermogenes may have been the bishop of Rhinocoroura mentioned in the Coptic acts of the council of Ephesus of 431 (see also U. Bouriant, *Actes* [1892], 68, 79).

<sup>11</sup> I will refer to the entire text, including the memorandum to the bishops, as Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*.

<sup>12</sup> Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 66 (H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' [1922], 370).

monk,<sup>13</sup> Elijah (ἐηλιας), for his Origenist teachings. It is clear that not everyone appreciated the actions of Psenthaesios and his compatriots, though, for Dioscorus tells Shenoute to ensure that they are well protected, and orders him to see to it that the banishment of Elijah is upheld so that he will not be seen in Panopolis nor indeed in any other city or monastery, or even cave, in the Thebais.<sup>14</sup>

In the following memorandum to the bishops, which Shenoute is told to translate into Coptic,<sup>15</sup> Dioscorus adds an absolute prohibition against communicating with the troublesome heretic in any way whatsoever.<sup>16</sup> As for the nature of Elijah's heresy, Dioscorus simply states that he was spreading the doctrines of Origen. Significantly, however, the archbishop also singles out a couple of especially troublesome monasteries in Panopolis, a monastery called 'the camp' (παρεμβολη),<sup>17</sup> and another which he refers to as 'the former temple in (Panopolis)'.<sup>18</sup> Dioscorus mentions these monasteries in particular because he has heard that they hold 'books and many treatises by the pest

<sup>13</sup> See Jon F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*, North American Patristic Society Patristic Monograph Series 13 (Macon, 1988), 238.

<sup>14</sup> See Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 67-8 (H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' [1922], 371).

<sup>15</sup> See Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 68 (H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' [1922], 371).

<sup>16</sup> According to Dioscorus, anyone who does so will share Elijah's fate and be 'chased out from the holy places' (Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 72 [H. Munier, *Manuscripts coptes* (1916), 148]). The bishops are also told to assemble the entire congregation in the main church of Panopolis in order to inform everybody of the steps taken against Elijah, whom the archbishop fears may pollute many with his heretical teachings (see Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 71 [H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' (1922), 372]).

<sup>17</sup> See Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 71 (H. Thompson, 'Dioscorus and Shenoute' [1922], 373); Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 72 (H. Munier, *Manuscripts coptes* [1916], 147). This monastery may be identical with the 'camp of the Christians' that is mentioned in a documentary papyrus from 355 AD (see Stefan Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, 6 vols. [Wiesbaden, 1984-1992], I 82).

<sup>18</sup> Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 73 (H. Munier, *Manuscripts coptes* [1916], 148). Dechow has suggested that this 'former temple' may be the Pachomian monastery that is mentioned in the *Life of Pachomius*, SBo 54; G<sup>1</sup> 81 (for English translations of these passages, see Armand Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia: The Lives, Rules, and Other Writings of Saint Pachomius and His Disciples*, 3 vols., CistSS 45-7 [Kalamazoo, 1980-1982], I 73f., 352f.), where it is stated that the establishment of this monastery met with opposition among the locals of Panopolis, which would seem likely if it was indeed established in a former temple (see J.F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism* [1988], 239). The temple may, however, well have been abandoned before it was converted into a monastery (see Ariel G. López, *Shenoute of Atriye and the Uses of Poverty*, PhD-diss. [Princeton University, 2010], 198; Roger S. Bagnall, 'Models and Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Roman Egypt', in Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel and Ulrich Gotter [eds], *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 163 [Leiden, 2008], 23-41). The *Epistula ad Sinuthium* refers to Panopolis by its Coptic name, Shmin.

Origen and other heretics', books which the bishops are told to 'scrupulously seek after', and when they find them they are supposed to 'write their <condemnation>' <sup>19</sup> and send them to Dioscorus. <sup>20</sup>

Although our extant manuscript evidence ends here, Dioscorus' letter gives us a uniquely detailed account of serious doctrinal troubles in Panopolis and the surrounding region around the middle of the Fifth Century. For the present purposes it is especially noteworthy, however, that (1) the heresy in question is that of Origenism; (2) that the Origenist heresy is associated especially with the use of heretical books; (3) and that it is the monasteries that are singled out as the main troublespots.

### Shenoute and the Origenists

Apart from the possession and use of heretical books, Dioscorus' letter tells us nothing about any objectionable practices, as opposed to beliefs, engaged in by Elijah and his supporters, nor does it tell us anything about the nature of their beliefs other than the Origenist label. Such information is, however, to be found among Shenoute's own writings. Especially relevant in this regard is the writing known as *I Am Amazed*. <sup>21</sup>

In this relatively long text, which has a certain *terminus post quem* of 431, <sup>22</sup> Shenoute deals with a number of heretical teachers, teachings, and practices, including such figures as Arius and Nestorius, in addition to teachings and practices associated with Origen and his followers. <sup>23</sup> Although, in its extant parts, this anti-heretical writing unfortunately does not contain anything like

<sup>19</sup> This translation requires the emendation of  $\kappa\lambda\theta\epsilon\mu\alpha$  to  $\kappa<\alpha\tau>\lambda\theta\epsilon\mu\alpha$  (κατάθεμα), based on a suggestion by Enzo Lucchesi, 'Chénouté a-t-il écrit en grec?', in R.-G. Coquin (ed.), *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont: Contributions à l'étude des christianismes orientaux* (Geneva, 1988), 201-10, 207<sup>10</sup>. The manuscript reading does not seem to make sense in this context.

<sup>20</sup> Dioscorus, *Epistula ad Sinuthium*, XZ 73 (H. Munier, *Manuscripts coptes* [1916], 148-9).

<sup>21</sup> This text was first published (although not completely) by Tito Orlandi, *Shenute Contra Origenistas: Testo con introduzione e traduzione*, CMCL (Roma, 1985). Orlandi's edition has recently been superseded by Hans-Joachim Cristea, *Schenute von Atripe. Contra Origenistas: Edition des koptischen Textes mit annotierter Übersetzung und Indizes einschließlich einer Übersetzung des 16. Osterfestbriefes des Theophilus in der Fassung des Hieronymus (ep. 96)*, STAC 60 (Tübingen, 2011). Cristea here conveniently publishes most of the surviving textual witnesses. For a complete overview of all presently known fragments of *I Am Amazed*, including those not known to Cristea, see Hugo Lundhaug, 'Baptism in the Monasteries of Upper Egypt: The Pachomian Corpus and the Writings of Shenoute', in D. Hellholm *et al.* (eds), *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism in Early Judaism, Graeco-Roman Religion, and Early Christianity*, 3 vols., BZNBW 176 (Berlin, 2011), 1347-80, 1371<sup>139</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> This is due to the fact that the council of Ephesus is mentioned in it (see Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 464 = DQ 50/DS 126/DD 146 [H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* (2011), 190]).

<sup>23</sup> It is the latter that seems to be of the greatest concern to Shenoute. Although he also devotes some space to the refutation of Nestorius, when it comes to the problematic, and threatening,

the local detail found in Dioscorus' letter, such as local heretics or monasteries mentioned by name, this is still an important document<sup>24</sup> which shows quite clearly that Shenoute was confronting serious doctrinal problems in his area of Upper Egypt in the second quarter of the Fifth Century.<sup>25</sup>

### What kind of Origenists?

In this writing Shenoute confronts a number of teachings and practices which he associates with Origen,<sup>26</sup> including, not least, the use of apocryphal books, of which it is clear that there were numerous in circulation.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the situation was particularly serious due to the presence of such ideas and practices among local priests, monks, and teachers.

practices and ideas circulating among local priests and monks, Nestorius does not seem to exert any significant influence, as noted already by A. Grillmeier, 'Peste' (1987), 236.

<sup>24</sup> Indeed, as Aloys Grillmeier has put it, 'es gibt kaum ein anderes Dokument, das die geistige Lage im Oberägypten zwischen 431 und 451 so gut beleuchten könnte wie dieses' (Aloys Grillmeier, 'Das "Gebet zu Jesus" und das "Jesus-Gebet": Eine neue Quelle zum "Jesus-Gebet" aus dem Weißen Kloster', in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz and L. van Rompay (eds), *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History offered to Professor Albert van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday*, OLA 18 [Leuven, 1985], 187-202, 189).

<sup>25</sup> Grillmeier goes so far as to describe it as 'un crise violente' (Grillmeier, 'Peste' [1987], 236).

<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, although not surprisingly considering the fact that almost the entire *Festal Letter* of 401 is quoted by Shenoute at the end of *I Am Amazed*, we find that Shenoute shared many of his greatest Origenist-related concerns with archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria, namely 'their implications for prayer to the Son, the reception of Christ's body in the Eucharist, and the resurrection of the dead' (Norman Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, The Early Church Fathers [London, 2007], 26). On Shenoute's defense of the correctness of praying to the Son, see, e.g., A. Grillmeier, 'Gebet zu Jesus' (1985); for Shenoute's defense of the real presence in the Eucharist, see, e.g., Hugo Lundhaug, 'Mystery and Authority in the Writings of Shenoute', in Christian H. Bull, Liv Ingeborg Lied and John D. Turner (eds), *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices*, NHMS 76 (Leiden, 2012), 259-85; on Shenoute's views on the resurrection, see, e.g., Caroline T. Schroeder, *Monastic Bodies: Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe*, *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion* (Philadelphia, 2007), 126-57. For an English translation of Theophilus' *Festal Letter* of 401, based on Jerome's Latin translation, see N. Russel, *Theophilus of Alexandria* (2007), 101-17.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., A. Grillmeier, 'Peste' (1987), 236; H. Lundhaug, 'Shenoute's Heresiological Polemics' (2012); H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* (2011), 3; Tito Orlandi, 'A Catechesis against Apocryphal Texts by Shenoute and the Gnostic Texts of Nag Hammadi', *HTR* 75 (1982), 85-95. See also, e.g., the end of Shenoute's quotation of Theophilus *Festal letter* of 401 at the end of *I Am Amazed*, where Theophilus states, in Shenoute's Coptic translation: 'Let us therefore renounce the evils of Origen [and] withdraw from [those (writings)] that are called "apocryphon"' (Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, DS 221 [Coptic text in Stephen Emmel, 'Theophilus's Festal Letter of 401 as Quoted by Shenoute', in Cäcilia Fluck et al. (eds), *Divitiae Aegypti: Koptologische und verwandte Studien zu Ehren von Martin Krause* (Wiesbaden, 1995), 93-8, 95]).



## The producers and users of the Nag Hammadi Codices?

While both Dioscorus' letter and the writings of Shenoute attest to the continuing presence of 'Origenists' in Upper Egypt in the second quarter of the Fifth Century, the identity of these Origenists, and the nature of their 'Origenism', is less clear. While it has previously been suggested by some that Shenoute was confronting Evagrian Origenists,<sup>28</sup> others have on the contrary suggested that they were Origenists of a specifically non-Evagrian type.<sup>29</sup> Here I will instead draw attention to another possible avenue of investigation.

We have seen that both Dioscorus and Shenoute associate their Origenist opponents with the use of heretical books. Moreover, since we are fortunate enough to have a number of codices preserved to us from this period, discovered in Upper Egypt, that in many ways seem to fit the description of the apocryphal books Shenoute associates with Origen and the Origenists, most prominently the Nag Hammadi Codices, we need to take into consideration possible points of contact. Could these codices, or codices like them, have been among the illicit books utilized by the Upper-Egyptian 'Origenist' opponents of Shenoute and Dioscorus? Could codices like these be among the objectionable books held at the monastery called 'the camp' and the former temple in Panopolis?

It was pointed out already some time ago by both Tito Orlandi and Aloys Grillmeier that the Nag Hammadi Codices seem to fit Shenoute's polemics

<sup>28</sup> See T. Orlandi, *Shenute Contra Origenistas* (1985); *id.*, 'A Catechesis' (1982), 85-95, esp. 94-5; E.A. Clark, *Origenist Controversy* (1992), 157.

<sup>29</sup> Grillmeier speaks about 'a new phase of Origenism that does not lie along the line of Evagrius Ponticus' (Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, Vol 2, Part 4: *From the Council of Chalcedon [451] to Gregory the Great [590-604]: The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451* [London, 1996], II/4, 214). I tend to agree with Mark Sheridan that so far no persuasive arguments have been brought forward for identifying Shenoute's Origenists specifically with the theology of Evagrius. See his 'The Modern Historiography of Early Egyptian Monasticism', in Maciej Bielawski and Daniel Hombergen (eds), *Il monachesimo tra eredità e aperture: Atti del simposio 'Testi e temi nella tradizione del monachesimo cristiano' per il 50° anniversario dell'Istituto Monastico di Sant' Anselmo, Roma, 28 maggio – 1o giugno 2002*, *Studia Anselmiana* 140, *Analecta Monastica* 8 (Rome, 2004), 177-216, 209: 'Although (Clark) admits that none of the contemporary sources even mention Evagrius, and the earliest reference to him in the context of Origenism occurs fifteen years after the events of 400, her entire book is dedicated to showing that in reality his theology was central to the dispute', adding that 'there is no doubt that Evagrius' writings figured in the condemnations of the sixth century, but that does not justify the assumption that they were at the center of the dispute 150 years earlier' (*ibid.*). As for Evagrius' important work, the *Kephalaia Gnostica*, Francis Murphy points out that it is not mentioned 'by any of the protagonists in the great quarrel – neither Epiphanius, nor John of Jerusalem, nor Jerome, nor Rufinus mention Evagrius nor this key piece of evidence in this connection' (Francis X. Murphy, 'Evagrius Ponticus and Origenism', in Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel [eds], *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies* [Rome, 1985], 253-69, 260). Despite the common assumption of a connection between Shenoute's 'Origenist' opponents in *I Am Amazed* and Evagrius, in his recent study Cristea does not even mention Evagrius (H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* [2011]).



against the use of apocryphal books well,<sup>30</sup> despite the fact that the archimandrite is relatively general in his condemnation of such books, and does not provide us with any 'smoking gun' in the form of direct quotations from, or titles of, known works, mentioning by name only one such book, an otherwise unknown text entitled 'the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Offspring of the Angels'.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to Orlandi and Grillmeier, however, neither Shenoute nor Dioscorus associate the use of such apocryphal books with 'Gnostics'. Indeed, the very category of 'Gnosticism' is misleading if we want to understand the Nag Hammadi Codices in the context of their production and use. We need instead to take thoroughly into account the critique of this category as mounted by Michael Williams and others, and try to make do without it, for as James Goehring has rightly pointed out:

When one draws many of the texts out of the Gnostic 'ghetto' into which they have been relegated by virtue of their having been 'recycled' into the Nag Hammadi collection and thus associated with the texts representative of 'biblical demiurgical' traditions, they are seen to better align with other worlds of thought.<sup>32</sup>

For one thing, this approach makes it easier to detect affinities between the Nag Hammadi texts and the Christian issues and debates of the time and place in which these codices were actually produced and used, including what is usually regarded as more mainstream branches of fourth- and fifth-century Christianity.<sup>33</sup> Imagining a more complex world will put us in a better position to

<sup>30</sup> T. Orlandi, 'A Catechesis' (1982); A. Grillmeier, *Christ* (1996), e.g., II/4, 169, 189.

<sup>31</sup> Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 309 = HB 19/XE 144 (H.-J. Cristea, *Shenoute* [2011], 141). This title works very well in the context of Shenoute's polemics where it appears and serves a rhetorical purpose in *I Am Amazed*. There are otherwise no indications that Shenoute has any interest in referring to specific works or titles. He focuses instead more generally on ideas and doctrines found in heretical books, without specifying any one in particular.

<sup>32</sup> J.E. Goehring, 'Some Reflections' (2011), 69; See also H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (2010). For persuasive arguments against the use of 'Gnosticism' as a heuristic category, see Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism': An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, 1996); *id.*, 'Was There a Gnostic Religion? Strategies for a Clearer Analysis', in Antti Marjanen (ed.), *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* SESJ 87 (Helsinki, 2005), 55-79; Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003). Michel R. Desjardins, 'Rethinking the Study of Gnosticism', *R&T* 12 (2005), 370-84.

<sup>33</sup> For analyses of the Nag Hammadi materials that do not utilize the 'Gnosticism' category, see H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (2010); *id.*, 'These are the Symbols and Likenesses of the Resurrection': Conceptualizations of Death and Transformation in the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I,4)', in Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland (eds), *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, Ekstasis 1 (Berlin, 2009), 187-205; Roelof van den Broek, 'The Theology of the Teachings of Silvanus', *VC* 40 (1986), 1-23; Lance Jenott and Elaine Pagels, 'Antony's Letters and Nag Hammadi Codex I: Sources of Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Egypt', *J ECS* 18 (2010), 557-89. Some texts seem even to presuppose 'orthodox' anti-heretical discourse, such as, for example, echoes of polemics against the Arians (with regard to *Gos. Phil.*, see H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* [2010]; with regard to *Gos. Truth*,

approach these texts without simply dismissing such features as evidence of later revisions that are of no real interest in the study of the texts as such.

As for the possibility of such texts being in use by Shenoute's 'Origenist' opponents, it should be noted that a number of scholars have indeed argued that there are several tractates from the Nag Hammadi Codices that betray influence of Origen or Origenism.<sup>34</sup> Here I will merely draw attention to one issue, indeed one of the most prominent themes of the first Origenist controversy, namely the nature of the resurrection body,<sup>35</sup> as exemplified by two of the Nag Hammadi texts, the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I,4) and the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC II,3), in comparison with Shenoute's anti-heretical polemics.

In *I Am Amazed*, for instance, Shenoute confronts those who 'despise the body', and who 'do not believe that it shall rise'.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, both the *Treatise on the Resurrection* and the *Gospel of Philip* explicitly argue against the belief that the material body will arise. At the same time, however, both of them affirm the resurrection of another, spiritual, body. This notion that it is another body, rather than the material one, that will rise in the resurrection is in fact

see Raoul Mortley, "'The Name of the Father is the Son' [Gospel of Truth 38]', with an afterword by Michel Tardieu, in Richard T. Wallis and Jay Bregman (eds), *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, Studies in Neoplatonism: Ancient and Modern 6 [Albany, 1992], 239-52; with regard to *Tri. Trac.*, see Alberto Camplani, 'Per la cronologia di testi valentiniani: il *Trattato Tripartito* e la crisi ariana', *Cassiodorus* 1 [1995], 171-95), Anomoeans (see *Great. Pow.*, 40.5-9), and others, even including the 'Valentinians' (see *Test. Truth*, 56.1-5). As Roelof van den Broek has rightly observed, based on his studies of *Teach. Silv.*, 'not only the producers and readers of the Nag Hammadi Library, but also anti-Arian theologians seem to have cherished unorthodox ideas' (R. van den Broek, 'The Theology' [1986], 18).

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., R. van den Broek, 'The Theology' [1986]; Alberto Camplani, 'Per la cronologia' (1995); H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (2010).

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., E.A. Clark, *Origenist Controversy* (1992).

<sup>36</sup> Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 356 = HB 32 (H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* [2011], 155). Shenoute makes clear that 'as for us, it shall never happen that we believe this, nor that we despise the body or say that it shall not rise' (Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 358 = HB 32 [H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* (2011), 155]), and refers to Epiphanius of Salamis ('the man of God'), who 'upbraids the ignorance of those who despise the body' (Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 358 = HB 32 [H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* (2011), 155]). For the identification of 'the man of God' with Epiphanius, see Janet A. Timbie, 'Non-Canonical Scriptural Citation in Shenoute', in Nathalie Bosson and Anne Boud'hors (eds), *Actes du huitième congrès international d'études coptes: Paris, 28 juin – 3 juillet 2004*, 2 vols, OLA 163 [Leuven, 2007], 625-34, 627-8; Janet A. Timbie, 'The State of Research on the Career of Shenoute in 2004', *Coptica* 4 [2005], 52-74, 54<sup>13</sup>). Later on Shenoute further affirms the necessity of universal resurrection at the final judgment, stating that 'it is necessary for all of them to arise' (Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 389 = HB 41 [H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* (2011), 166]). It is worth noting that Shenoute in this passage twice uses the phrase 'it is necessary' (ΤΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΤΕ / ΖΑΠΤ ΠΕ) directly in relation to the resurrection. These terms are used similarly with regard to the resurrection in *Treat. Res.* 44.7-8 [ΟΥΑΝΑΓΚΑΙΟΝ ΤΕ] and *Gos. Phil.* 57.18 [ΖΑΠΤ ΠΕ]). Moreover, in a way echoing the treatment of the resurrection in the aforementioned Nag Hammadi-texts, Shenoute also rhetorically questions whether the dead will arise in a different manner from those who according to Scripture have already risen (see Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, 392 = HB 42 [H.-J. Cristea, *Schenute* (2011), 166]).

confronted at length by Shenoute, who also in another text, entitled *Who Speaks Through the Prophet*, opposes some people who say that 'it is another body that shall sprout up in that very body on the day of the resurrection', and also that 'this very body shall rot away and perish and it shall not at all come into being (again) after the other new body sprouts up [in] it.'<sup>37</sup> Similarly, both the *Treatise on the Resurrection* and the *Gospel of Philip* hold that it is an inner spiritual body that arises from the material one. We see this especially clearly in the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, where this process is metaphorically conceptualized in terms of the inner body being born from the outer.<sup>38</sup>

There is, however, an additional feature of the *Gospel of Philip*'s discussion of the resurrection body that should be noted here, which indeed prompts us to think in terms of a more complex world, for not only does the *Gospel of Philip* affirm the resurrection of a spiritual body over against a material one, but at the same time it also strongly *affirms the need* for a resurrection body, and even a resurrection flesh. Interestingly it seems here in fact to be aware of the discourse of the Origenist controversy, and in a way echoes the polemic between Rufinus and Jerome. For as Jerome in a letter to Rufinus in 399 charges the latter with speaking of the resurrection of the body, rather than of the flesh, in order to be able to hold onto a spiritual rather than material understanding of the resurrection body,<sup>39</sup> the *Gospel of Philip* seems in fact to take such arguments and language into consideration in its clear affirmation of the necessity of arising 'in this flesh', while at the same time holding on to the concept of a spiritual resurrection body. This it manages to do by simply making the resurrection flesh spiritual, which is actually what we also find in the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, where the members of the inner resurrection body are made up of spiritual flesh.<sup>40</sup> It is as if these texts have taken note of the steadily narrowing definition of the resurrection body and of credal formulations affirming the necessity of arising 'in this flesh', while redefining the meaning of the terms to suit their own spiritual understanding of the resurrection. At the same time, however, these two Nag Hammadi texts fit Shenoute's description of the objectionable views on the resurrection entertained by his 'Origenist' opponents.

Now it must be added that this is not the only feature of these Nag Hammadi texts to recall the Origenist teachings opposed by Shenoute. Both the *Gospel of Philip* and the *Treatise on the Resurrection*, as well as other texts in the codices of which they are a part, also show affinities with other such ideas,

<sup>37</sup> Shenoute, *Who Speaks Through the Prophet*, DD 80 = FR-BN 131<sup>6</sup> f.71 (for this unpublished page I am indebted to Stephen Emmel for providing me with a photo and his own transcription).

<sup>38</sup> See H. Lundhaug, 'Symbols and Likenesses' (2009).

<sup>39</sup> See Jerome, *Ep.* 84.5.

<sup>40</sup> On this aspect of *Gos. Phil.*, see H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (2010). On *Treat. Res.*, see H. Lundhaug, 'Symbols and Likenesses' (2009).

such as for instance the pre-existence and fall of souls due to sin, the ascent of the soul, or mind, back to heaven, a transforming vision of Christ, *etc.*<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to emphasise that I am not in any way claiming that the producers or users of the Nag Hammadi Codices, or codices like them, necessarily understood themselves as ‘Origenists’. Neither do I think that those troublesome elements whom Dioscorus and Shenoute associated with Origen and Origenists necessarily defined themselves as such.

What I do think needs to be considered, however, is that in the aftermath of the First Origenist Controversy, those who used books promoting views close to those Shenoute and others associated with Origen, as well as self-styled apocryphal texts, could very easily find themselves being associated with Origen and branded as ‘Origenists’<sup>42</sup> by people like Dioscorus and Shenoute. At the same time it seems that the intersections and boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy in Upper Egypt were complex and not as clear cut as we would often like to think.

Shenoute’s texts are highly polemical, and are concerned with highlighting and condemning certain objectionable ideas and practices. One way of doing so was to connect such ideas and practices to well-known and already condemned heretics,<sup>43</sup> such as Origen, as Shenoute does when he cites, at the end of *I Am Amazed*, archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria’s condemnation in his *Festal Letter of 401* of Origenist ideas and the use of apocryphal texts, urging his readers to ‘renounce the evils of Origen [and] withdraw from [those (writings)] that are called “apocryphon”’.<sup>44</sup> What emerges from this passage, and indeed from the rest of *I Am Amazed*, is in any case a strong impression of a rather close connection between the illicit apocryphal texts and the ‘Origenists’.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> For *Treat. Res.*, see A. Camplani, ‘Per la cronologia’ (1995), 183-4; H. Lundhaug, ‘Images and Likenesses’ (2009); For *Gos. Phil.*, see H. Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth* (2010). As for the similarities between certain Nag Hammadi texts and Origen outlined by Holger Strutwolf in his *Gnosis als System*, I concur with Camplani that the direction of influence is in most cases more likely to be from Origen to the Nag Hammadi Codices, rather than the other way around as argued by Strutwolf. See A. Camplani, ‘Per la cronologia’ (1995), 195; Holger Strutwolf, *Gnosis als System: Zur Rezeption der valentinianischen Gnosis bei Origenes*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 56 (Göttingen, 1993).

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., Ellen Muehlberger, ‘Ambivalence about the Angelic Life: The Promise and Perils of an Early Christian Discourse on Asceticism’, *J ECS* 16 (2008), 447-78, 469.

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., H. Lundhaug, ‘Shenoute’s Heresiological Polemics’ (2012).

<sup>44</sup> Shenoute, *I Am Amazed*, DS 221 (S. Emmel, ‘Theophilus’s Festal Letter’ [1995], 95).

<sup>45</sup> In his commentary to this passage in Jerome’s translation, Norman Russell states that Theophilus is here ‘implying a connection between Origenism and Gnosticism’ (N. Russell, *Theophilus* [2007], 196<sup>71</sup>). If we follow the lead of Williams and others and abandon the use of the ‘Gnosticism’

Although its scale will have to remain unknown, it is likely that Dioscorus' *Letter to Shenoute*, with its memorandum to the local bishops, led to a purge of heretical books from the monastic libraries in the region,<sup>46</sup> and may even have been the direct reason for the their owner's decision to hide away the Nag Hammadi Codices in a sealed and buried jar.<sup>47</sup>

category (see note 32 above), however, we may instead say that what Theophilus is implying is rather a connection between the Origenists and apocryphal texts, *i.e.*, that those who used and produced such texts were 'Origenists', or that the 'Origenists' used and/or produced such texts.

<sup>46</sup> See, *e.g.*, A. Camplani, 'Per la cronologia' (1995), 178.

<sup>47</sup> For recent treatments of the burial and discovery of the Jar with its codices, see James M. Robinson, 'The Discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices', *Journal of Coptic Studies* 11 (2009), 1-21; James E. Goehring, 'An Early Roman Bowl from the Monastery of Pachomius at Pbow and the Milieu of the Nag Hammadi Codices', in Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier (eds), *Coptica – Gnostica – Manichaica: Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, BCNH Études 7 (Québec and Leuven, 2006), 357-71.

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# Preliminaries to an Edition of the Hagiography of St Aho the Stranger (ܐܫܘܬܐ ܐܫܘܬܐ ܐܫܘܬܐ)

Aho SHEMUNKASHO, Salzburg, Austria

## ABSTRACT

Among the hagiographies one can find under the name *Aho* (ܐܫܘܬܐ) two different saints from different periods who are not related to each other, except by their common name. This article does not deal with St Aho the Egyptian of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, who is the brother of St John the Egyptian and a disciple of St Eugene; his hagiography is found in the Mingana Collection 502, ff 92b-158a, a manuscript from 1836.<sup>1</sup> This paper however, focuses on St Aho the 'Akhesnoyo, the stranger (ܐܫܘܬܐ ܐܫܘܬܐ ܐܫܘܬܐ), who is also called *monachos* (ܡܢܚܚܐ), *eremit* (ܐܪܥܡܐ) and *theophore* (ܬܝܘܦܗܘܪܐ). He lived most likely in the fifth and sixth century. He was born in Georgina (ܓܝܘܪܓܝܢܐ), near Rish'aino (ܪܝܫܐܝܢܐ, Rasel'ain in North Syria), studied in Rish'aino from the age of twelve up to nineteen, was captive and later soldier in Persia. He became a monk along with his friend Michael from Nineveh, established five monasteries – among them the famous Monastery of the Cross (ܡܢܚܚܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ) – travelled on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, travelled further up to Athens and Rome to look for the holy cross, and on his return to Constantinople had found it and brought a piece of it to the region of Militini in Armenia Secunda where he succeeded in converting the inhabitants of four villages located on the river Arsianus to Christianity. A unique aspect in his hagiography is the little piece of the holy cross that plays an important role in his missionary activities and in the miracles performed. He died at the age of 105 on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

## 1. Primary Resources

The hagiography of St Aho is very rich, not just in its meaning and spiritual sense for the faithful, but also provides a wealth of material on names of geographical places and individual people. Also it contains some biblical references and liturgical prayers. Nevertheless, it is the only Syriac hagiography that refers strongly to a piece of the holy cross that plays a significant role in the last three quarters of the hagiography, as it actively contributed to his work in

<sup>1</sup> A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts I* (Cambridge, 1933), 924-8.





Today, it is difficult to imagine that in the whole of Tur Abdin only a single manuscript had survived until 1961, although often the liturgical texts of *fenqitho* and *husoyo* play an important role in the community life. Finding Mardin manuscript 122 or other old manuscripts could be a great help for the edition of St Aho's hagiography. The 1960s were indeed the time to recover from the genocide in 1915 where obviously many manuscripts got lost.

<sup>10</sup> Vat Sir 37, 164b (176b); Dolabani, 67.





and a significant site of Eastern Christian history will fall into ruin'.<sup>12</sup> Luckily, recently some work has been done.

### 3. Secondary Literature

While St Aho is not known at all in the Western tradition – even though he travelled to Constantinople, Athens and Rome, he is well known in the West Syriac Church. In 1990 the emigrated community of the Syrian-orthodox Christians in Paderborn, North Germany laid a stone to build a new church. Most of the Syriac people in Paderborn come originally from Tur Abdin, a great number of them are from a village called Beth Harbe (Harabemishka, Dagici) on the slopes of Mount Izlo, not far from the ancient city of Nisibis. The patron of this village is St Aho. The consecration of the new church in Paderborn with the name St Aho took place on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1992 with the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, His Holiness St Ignatius Zakka Iwas I.

It is a common tradition among Syrian Christians to name newly established churches and parishes after saints from their original homeland. This happened not just in the recent immigration to the West, but also in the Middle East. For instance when some Syriac people from Tur Abdin moved to North Syria, they took a stone and some earth from the *Monastery of the Cross* in Tur Abdin and build a new Church with the Name St Aho in Damachija (not far from Qameshly/Syria) in 1943, and in 1948 another church in the village Sleman Sare.<sup>13</sup>

The main church of St Aho is located in Tur Abdin, not far from Beth Qustan (ܩܘܨܬܐ) and is well known under the name Dayro da-Slibo (ܕܝܪܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ, Monastery of the Cross).<sup>14</sup> Next to Beth Harbe (Harabemishka), St Aho is also the patron of Marbobbo (Gunyurdu in the district of Nusaybin) as the church is dedicated to him along with a church in Yukari Dere in the district of Cizre (Gziro). Additionally, another church in Yardo (Yamanlar) in the district of Gercus and a church in Defne in the district of Hasankef are named after him. These churches and St Aho's church in Ain Kasre in the district of Kurtulan are not in use any more.

In order to make the hagiography of St Aho accessible, Lahdo Ishaac and Joseph Asmar translated it into Arabic in 1992. Seven years later, Joseph Asmar Malke published it, in both Syriac and Arabic, with some commentaries, whereby he does not provide any information about the sources he used. He

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Griffith, *A Time of Change in Tur Abdin: A Report of a Visit to S.E. Turkey in May 2000* (<http://sor.cua.edu/Pub/StephenGriffith/VisitSETurkeyMay2000.html>).

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Asmar Malke, ܕܝܪܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܫܝܬܐ ܕܫܝܬܐ [Saint Mor Aho the Dove] (Qameshli, 1999), 149-52.

<sup>14</sup> The name *Dayro da-Slibo* also refers to the village surrounding the Monastery. Isa Dogdu, a teacher in St Gabriel Monastery, published recently a short article on the situation of the Christians of *Dayro da-Slibo*; 'Wir stellen vor. Das Dorf Dayro Daslibo – Wir fühlen uns etwas einsam', *Information Christlicher Orient* 27 (Graz, 2007), 11-2.

has just used the handwriting of Hanna Kirmis from 1969 and added some passages freely to it.<sup>15</sup>

It is worth mentioning that in the home page of the Syrian orthodox Archdiocese of the Western USA a short article, summarising the life of St Aho has appeared.<sup>16</sup>

The information on St Aho in Western literature is based on the manuscript Vat Sir 37. R. Payne Smith, in his *Thesaurus Syriacus* refers to four different figures under the name of Aho, one of them is St Aho the disciple of St Eugene,<sup>17</sup> but no reference to Aho Akhesnoyo – even though he is aware about Assemani's information on the life of St Aho, as he refers to the Catalogue Assemani under the term *Georgina* (ܓܝܪܓܝܢܐ) that is the birthplace of St Aho.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, in Western literature one can find a short article under the name ACA (sir. Aha) from Augusto Mereschini in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*<sup>19</sup> where in less than half a column, the life of St Aho is summarised. His information is based on the short booklet of Arthur Vööbus, *Quelques observations littéraires et historiques sur la vie syriaque inédite de Mar Aha*,<sup>20</sup> where in 27 pages he refers to various aspects of the hagiography and gives an account of the story which he considers rather as unhistorical.

Very briefly, but in contrast to other hagiographies Anton Baumstark makes the following remark, saying that it is likely that the hagiography of St Aho would have some historical background: 'Eher einen gewissen geschichtlichen Wert scheint dagegen diejenige eines Aha zu besitzen, deren Held, als Zeitgenosse erst des Kaisers Markianos bezeichnet...'<sup>21</sup>

Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina, mentions St Aho in his *Patrologia Syriaca*. In §144. *Hagiographiae satis legendariae* he lists him under Nr. 14 writing 'Historiae Ahae, qui dicitur coevus Marciani (inedita)'.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. The historical dating

The date of St Aho the 'Akhesnoyo is a matter for discussion. The exact historical dating of him is complicated as the information is a matter of interpretation. The name of the Roman emperor Marcian (450-7) is given as the

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Asmar Malke, *Saint Mor Aho the Dove* (1999), 149-52.

<sup>16</sup> It is probably from Dale Johnson, see <http://www.soc-wus.org/ourchurch/St.%20Aho.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* I (Oxonii, 1879), 114.

<sup>18</sup> R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 775: 'ܓܝܪܓܝܢܐ *Georgina*, nom. Oppidi in ditione Rhesinensi Mesopotamiae, C. B. V. li. 249.'

<sup>19</sup> Autusto St.eschini, 'ACA (sir. Aha)', *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, Istituto Giovanni XXIII, Nella Pontificia Università Lateranense I (Roma, 1961), 131.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Vööbus, *Quelques observations littéraires et historiques sur la vie syriaque inédite de Mar Aha* (Stockholm, 1956).

<sup>21</sup> A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (1922), 193.

<sup>22</sup> Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (Romae, 1958), 188-9.

time when St Aho was taken captive into Persia being about 19 years old. This would take his birthdate back to the years 431-8. The compiler of the *husoyo* defines the year 421 AD. The information on the agreement between Shapur II and the emperor Julian that took place seventy two years before Aho was captured which seems to support this date.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand ܐܝܬܐ is mentioned as the Persian King, who might be Khosrau II Parves (590-628). Even though the description of ܐܝܬܐ refers strongly to Marcian (450-7) at the time of the Concile of Chalcedon 451, A. Vööbus suggests that the Syriac term ܐܝܬܐ might be standing for Maurice (582-602) who is a contemporary of Khosrau II. This would postpone his birth to the sixth and his death to the seventh century.<sup>24</sup>

Identifying further names might shed some light on the problem of the date in the future, for instance the name of his friend St Michael of Nineve, or his disciples St Heworo (ܚܝܘܪܐ, ܝܠܕܐ) and St Elija Besjojo (ܐܠܝܬܐ ܒܝܫܝܝܐ) but also there are some Roman and Armenian names, that were less known to Syriac writers in a later period, such as: ܐܠܝܬܐ ܒܝܫܝܝܐ, ܐܠܝܬܐ ܒܝܫܝܝܐ. Particularly, the identification of the metropolitan St Cyril/Cyriacus of Militini (ܐܠܝܬܐ ܒܝܫܝܝܐ ܐܠܝܬܐ ܒܝܫܝܝܐ, ܝܠܕܐ), whom St Aho met when he was 83 years old, could be of great help.

Likewise, there are names of some places that remain unidentified yet: the village Georgina (ܕܝܝܝܐ) near Rish'aino where St Aho was born, or the four villages near the river Arsanias (ܐܪܫܝܢܐ, Arsinus/Arisanus), not far from Militini and Amid: ܐܪܫܝܢܐ ܐܪܫܝܢܐ ܐܪܫܝܢܐ ܐܪܫܝܢܐ. There is also another village on the river Arsanias remaining unknown, namely Hadas/Hodes (ܐܪܫܝܢܐ) where the Roman Maximus and Dorsilla were living. Finally, a village in the region of Amid, called Rahbuth or Danbuth (ܪܗܒܘܬܐ (ܕܢܒܘܬܐ) ܕܢܒܘܬܐ), has not been located yet either.

Therefore, discovering some older manuscripts of the hagiography could solve some of the historical questions and provide new material for an edition of the hagiography.

<sup>23</sup> Vat Sir 37, 164a (176a).

<sup>24</sup> A. Vööbus, *Quelques observations* (1956), 9-11.



# Von Magiern und Mönchen – Zoroastrische Polemik gegen das Christentum in der armenischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung

Peter BRUNS, Bamberg, Germany

## ABSTRACT

In Armenian literature historical writings in prose in contrast to Syriac that prefers poetry plays an eminent role. During the fights for liberation from the Sasanides in the years 449-451 serious conflicts arose between Christians and Zoroastrians which left their traces in the polemical literature, for example, of Eznik of Kolb. However, for reasonable grounds also the historiography of Elisaeus is not free of religious polemics against the religion of the invading Persians. The following contribution, therefore, looks to seek clarification from which sources the Armenian historiographers, mostly monks, derived their knowledge about the religions of the magis, their enemies.

Elišê (Elisaeus) mit dem Beinamen Vardapet („Lehrer“) gehört unbestritten zu den bedeutendsten Historikern armenischer Zunge. Zu seinen Meisterwerken zählt neben den zahlreichen Bibelkommentaren und Homilien, die unter seinem Namen tradiert wurden, die „Geschichte Wardans und des Armenischen Krieges“.<sup>1</sup> Über den Autor selbst ist wenig bekannt; die mittelalterliche Hagiographie macht ihn auf Grund des geistlichen Charakters vieler seiner Werke zu einem Einsiedler<sup>2</sup> in der nach ihm benannten Elisaeus-Höhle von Mokk<sup>c</sup> südlich des Van-Sees. Eine Gleichsetzung mit „Elische, dem Bischof der Amatunier“ scheidet aus verschiedenen, hier nicht näher zu erörternden Gründen<sup>3</sup> aus. Bei seiner Darstellung des Armenischen Krieges, der von 449 bis 451 zwischen den Armeniern und Persern tobte, erweckt der Verfasser den Eindruck eines

<sup>1</sup> Armen. Text bei Erwand Ter-Minasean, *Եղիշի վասն Վարդանայ և Հայոց Պատերազմին* (Yerevan, 1957 = New York, 1993); engl. Übers. bei Robert W. Thomson, *Elishê. History of Vardan and the Armenian War. Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge Mass., 1982); ital. Übers. bei Riccardo Pane, *Elishê. Storia di Vardan e dei martiri armeni. Introduzione, traduzione e note* (Roma, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Eine engl. Übersetzung der mittelalterlichen *vita* unseres Autors hat R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 42-4, besorgt.

<sup>3</sup> Zu den Einleitungsfragen vgl. Otto Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur V* (Freiburg, 1932), 202-4; R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 19-24; R. Pane, *Storia di Vardan* (2005), 13-7.

Augenzeugenberichts. Die spätere Tradition<sup>4</sup> nennt ihn einen Sekretär oder Schreiber (*qphs*) des Mamikoniers Wardan, wofür nicht zuletzt der eingangs überlieferte Briefwechsel mit dem nicht näher bekannten David aus dem Hause der Mamikonier spricht. Es war Wardan der Mamikonier, der sich mit seinen Getreuen gegen die Perser erhob und in der Entscheidungsschlacht von Avarayr (nördlich des Urmia-See) sein Leben verlor. In der patriotischen armenischen Geschichtsschreibung<sup>5</sup> wurde dieser christliche Fürst wegen seines Heldentodes als neuer Judas Maccabaeus verklärt.

Die militärischen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Armeniern und Persern in der Mitte des fünften Jahrhunderts waren von z. T. äußerst heftigen wechselseitigen religiösen Polemiken begleitet. Als signifikantes Beispiel für diese literarische Fehde sei auf das sog. Edikt des Mihrnarseh<sup>6</sup> verwiesen, welches im Folgenden eingehender untersucht werden soll. Die Ausführlichkeit, mit der Elišê Mihrnarsehs zervanitische Äußerungen zu Worte kommen läßt, haben in der Vergangenheit bei einigen Forschern Zweifel an der Echtheit dieser Textpassage hervorgerufen. Doch zunächst einmal gilt es festzuhalten:

Das orientalische Grußformular<sup>7</sup> mit seinem Anathem wider die Feinde der zoroastrischen Religion, die als „blind, taub und von Ahrimans Dämonen getäuscht“ verworfen werden, ist in jedem Falle als authentisch anzusehen. Des weiteren dürfte hinsichtlich der Person des Mihrnarseh,<sup>8</sup> der gleichsam als „graue Eminenz“ verschiedenen Großkönigen diente, kein Zweifel bestehen. Seine Sonderstellung bei Hofe ist eigentlich nur mit jener des Obermagiers Kartîr in der Mitte des dritten Jahrhunderts zu vergleichen. Elišê hätte demnach die zervanitischen Lehren nach dem offiziellen Schreiben des persischen Religionsministers aus der Zeit Vahrâms V. (Gôr) und seines Nachfolgers Jazdegerd II. referiert. Hätte es mit der Berufung auf ein ministerielles Edikt dabei seine Richtigkeit, so wäre dies wohl das stärkste Zeugnis dafür, daß der Zervanismus im Westen die offizielle und maßgebende Form der zoroastrischen Religion gewesen sei, was einige Iranisten eher aus dogmatischen denn aus historischen Gründen bezweifeln, während Philologen<sup>9</sup> wie Nöldeke und Gelzer entschieden für die Echtheit des „Edikts“

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 19.

<sup>5</sup> Auch in der traditionellen katholisch-apologetischen Sicht herrscht dieser patriotische Aspekt vor, vgl. etwa Simon Weber, *Die Katholische Kirche in Armenien, ihre Begründung und Entwicklung vor der Trennung* (Freiburg, 1903), 422-72; zur Judas Maccabaeus-Parallele vgl. R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 11-6.

<sup>6</sup> E. Ter-Minasean, *Etishê* (1957), 24,3-27,16; R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 77-80.

<sup>7</sup> E. Ter-Minasean, *Etishê* (1957), 24,3-7: „Mihrnerseh, Buzurg Haramatar von Iran und Nicht-Iran, den Großarmeniern Gruß in Fülle! Ihr müßt wissen, daß jeder Mensch, der unter dem Himmel wohnt und nicht die Religion der Mazdayasnier annimmt, taub, blind und von Ahrimans Dämonen getäuscht ist.“

<sup>8</sup> Er führte viele Titel wie *hazarapet* („Chiliarch“) oder *hazârbandak* („tausendsklavig“), war Wesir unter Jazdegerd I., Buzurgframadhâr unter Vahrâm V. (Gôr) und Jazdegerd II. (438-457), vgl. dazu Heinrich Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik I* (Leipzig, 1897 = Hildesheim, 1992), 54.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. hierzu die Diskussion bei Louis Mariès, *Le De Deo d'Eznik de Kotb* (Paris, 1924), 39-41.

eintreten. Lommel<sup>10</sup> hat in seiner Darstellung der Religion Zarathustras, gestützt auf Meillets Erwägungen, sich gegen Elišês Glaubwürdigkeit ausgesprochen, muß aber zugleich konzedieren, daß um diese Zeit, also in der Mitte des fünften Jahrhunderts, zervanitische Doktrinen anerkannte Geltung besaßen, wie die christliche syrische Polemik erkennen lasse. In der Tat ist die antizervanitische Polemik bei Syrern und Armeniern derart weit gestreut, daß man Elišês Ausführungen kaum als reine Phantastereien verwerfen kann. Außerdem nehmen die armenischen Bischöfe in ihrem Antwortschreiben<sup>11</sup> auf die zervanitische Weltanschauung kritisch Bezug. Ferner gilt es zu bedenken, daß die zervanitische Lehre, wie sie Eznik von Kolb<sup>12</sup> herausstellt, mündlich tradiert wurde; literarisch greifbar wird sie für uns erst in der Widerlegung der syrischen und armenischen Väter. Aus Raum- und Zeitgründen müssen wir hier auf einen ausführlichen Vergleich der beiden von Eznik und Elišê<sup>13</sup> dargebotenen Texte verzichten. Dies ist bereits von kompetenter Seite an anderer Stelle hinreichend geschehen. Es sei hier lediglich auf die Beobachtungen Webers<sup>14</sup> und anderer verwiesen, welche die unterschiedlichen theologischen Gewichtungen der genannten Autoren herausgestellt haben.

Für eine theologische Würdigung des sog. „Edikts“ ist es entscheidend, daß Mihrnarseh darin die traditionelle zoroastrische Lehre von der doppelten Schöpfung gegen das Christentum verteidigt. Der christliche Monismus<sup>15</sup> führe, so seine These, das Gute wie das Böse auf eine einzige Ursache zurück, selbst der Tod, der nach zoroastrischer Anschauung ein Geschöpf Ahrimans ist, soll aus den Händen des (guten) Gottes hervorgegangen sein. Mihrnarseh spottet über die kleinliche Eifersucht und den unbeherrschten Jähzorn des biblischen Gottes, der wegen einer einzigen Feige den Urmenschen gleich mit dem Tode so unverhältnismäßig bestraft. Daß einer der beiden Paradiesesbäume, der Baum der Erkenntnis, ein Feigenbaum gewesen sein soll, kann Mihrnarseh nur der jüdischen Erzähltradition, nicht aber dem Bibeltext selbst entnommen haben. Freilich liegt eine solche Deutung nahe, wenn man bedenkt, daß die

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Herman Lommel, *Die Religion Zarathustras nach dem Awesta dargestellt* (Tübingen, 1930), 25f.

<sup>11</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Elišê* (1957), 28,20-41,12.

<sup>12</sup> Vgl. Eznik, *De Deo* §§145ff.

<sup>13</sup> Vgl. dazu die Synopse der einschlägigen Texte in englischer Übersetzung bei Robert C. Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1955 = New York, 1972), 419-29. Der Zurvan-Mythos, wie er bei Elišê [E. Ter-Minasean, *Elišê* (1957), 24,8-25,15] beschrieben wird, läßt sich nämlich ganz bequem, ohne Schaden zu nehmen, aus dem jetzigen Kontext des Edikts herauschälen und getrennt untersuchen.

<sup>14</sup> S. Weber, *Katholische Kirche in Armenien* (1903), 430<sup>4</sup>, verweist auf den bezeichnenden Umstand, daß Elišê Dinge zur Sprache bringt, die sich weder bei Eznik noch bei Lazarus finden.

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Elišê* (1957), 25,16-26,3: „Und alle Menschen sind im Irrtum, die behaupten: ‚Gott hat den Tod gemacht, und gut und böse stammen von ihm.‘ Besonders wie die Christen (*քրիստոնեայք*) behaupten: ‚Gott ist zornmütig (*հախանձոտ*). Wegen einer einzigen Feige, die vom Baum gegessen wurde, hat Gott den Tod gemacht und den Menschen dieser Strafe unterworfen.‘ Solchen Jähzorn hegt nicht der Mensch gegenüber dem Menschen, geschweige denn Gott gegenüber dem Menschen. Wer solches sagt, ist taub, blind und von Ahrimans Dämonen getäuscht.“



Stammväter nach dem Verlust der himmlischen Glorie ihre Blöße mit den Blättern eines Feigenbaumes zu bedecken suchten und ihr ursprüngliches Lichtgewand gegen raue Fellgewänder eintauschen mußten. In dieser Sicht berühren sich die Aussagen der syrischen Kirchenväter mit denen der jüdischen Hagga-da.<sup>16</sup> Eine aphrodisische Wirkung der Feige, wie sie aus anderen Überlieferungszusammenhängen bekannt ist, wird von Mihrnarseh offensichtlich nicht vorausgesetzt. Ebenso wenig werden weitere Deutungsmöglichkeiten der Paradiesesfrucht (Traube, Apfel, Zitrusfrucht, Olive) in Betracht gezogen. Die mittelpersische Weisheitsliteratur verwirft indes niedere menschliche Affekte wie Zorn, Eifersucht als von Ahriman oder dem bösen Dämon der Begierde (Âz)<sup>17</sup> gewirkt; sie bringen die gute Weltordnung durcheinander und können daher von einem guten Gott nicht sinnvoll ausgesagt werden.

Ein weiterer Themenkreis der erbitterten interreligiösen Polemik befaßt sich mit der Fleischwerdung des Gottessohns aus der Jungfrau Maria. Auf die Botschaft des Neuen Testaments, Jesus sei von der Jungfrau geboren, die mit einem Abkömmling aus dem Hause Davids verlobt war, antwortet Mihrnarseh mit einer drastischen Gegenerzählung,<sup>18</sup> die er gleichfalls jüdischer Tradition entnommen haben dürfte. Den Persern war es nämlich keineswegs entgangen, wie sehr die Juden und Christen Mesopotamiens miteinander verfeindet und wie gegensätzlich ihre jeweiligen religiösen Ansprüche und Deutungen des Bibeltextes waren. Die Infragestellung der Jungfrauengeburt durch Mihrnarseh wurde als so ungeheuerlich empfunden, daß einige armenische Kopisten diese Zeile geflissentlich unterdrückten, doch gehört sie gewiß zum Textbestand, wie die nachfolgende Widerlegung durch die Bischöfe zeigt. Die bissige Polemik gegen die Jungfrauengeburt macht die Verwendung des seltsamen Namens Banturak bzw. Pandurak<sup>19</sup> für den Liebhaber Mariens und den leiblichen Vater Jesu verständlich. Das Schwanken in der Orthographie – leider läßt uns diesmal

<sup>16</sup> Vgl. hierzu Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews I. From the Creation to Jacob* (Philadelphia, 1903), 75: „Adam tried to gather leaves from the trees to cover part of their bodies ... Only the fig-tree granted him permission to take of its leaves. That was because the fig was the forbidden fruit itself. Adam had the same experience as that prince who seduced one of the maid-servants in the palace. When the king, his father, chased him out, he vainly sought a refuge with the other maid-servants, but only she who had caused his disgrace would grant him assistance.“ Zum Feigenbaummotiv in der jüdisch-christlichen Diskussion vgl. zuletzt noch Susanne Talabardon, *Unterm Feigenbaum. Rekonstruktionen zu einem jüdisch-christlichen Thema* (Würzburg, 2011). Eine Anspielung auf den Paradiesesbaum liegt wohl nicht vor.

<sup>17</sup> Vgl. den Index bei R. Zaehner, *Zurvan* (1972), 480.

<sup>18</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Elishê* (1957), 26,4-8: „Hier ist ein weiterer Irrtum: ‚Gott, der Himmel und Erde erschaffen hat, kam, sagen sie, und wurde von einer gewissen Frau geboren, deren Name Maria und deren Mann Joseph war.‘ Aber in Wirklichkeit war er der Sohn eines gewissen Banturak auf Grund einer illegitimen Verbindung. Und so sind viele wegen eines solchen Mannes abgeirrt.“

<sup>19</sup> Բանթուրակ Պանդուրակ? aus Πάνθηρ, Πανθήρα? Zur Diskussion dieser Stelle vgl. R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 79<sup>2</sup>. Thomson hält den Passus im Zusammenhang mit dem Edikt für eine Interpolation, doch gehen auch die Bischöfe in ihrem Antwortschreiben auf

Hübschmanns gelehrte Grammatik im Stich – mag man mit den armenischen Dialekteigentümlichkeiten erklären, und der Guttural am Ende des Wortes wirkt leidlich iranisch. Jedenfalls wird das ehebrecherische Verhalten der Miriam, der Mutter Jesu, in einer Toledoth Jeshu von den Rabbinen der jüdischen Akademie in Pumbeditha<sup>20</sup> gelehrt. Aus diesem Grunde ist es überflüssig, nach einer möglichen armenischen Übersetzung des Origenes, der als erster Kirchenschriftsteller die Panthera-Geschichte bietet, zu forschen. Der Grieche Celsus<sup>21</sup> schöpfte bei seiner Polemik gegen das Christentum aus jüdischen (nicht unbedingt rabbinischen) Quellen, und der Perser Mihrnarseh bediente sich zu seiner Zeit beim Kampf gegen die Christen aus dem Arsenal jener jüdischen Weisen (*hakkîmê*) des Zweistromlandes, welche einst Aphrahat,<sup>22</sup> dem Persischen Weisen, das Leben so schwer machten. Freilich sind nicht alle philologische Fragen rund um den Panther-Panthera-Komplex hinreichend geklärt, aber zuletzt hat Peter Schäfer<sup>23</sup> nochmals die vielfach erörterte und auch von Thomson in seinem Kommentar zu dieser Stelle bevorzugte Deutung bestätigt, wonach es sich bei dem Celsus-Zitat um eine beabsichtigte Konsonantenumstellung von *parthenos* zu *pantheros* handeln könnte.

Mihrnarsehs Ausführungen enthalten eine längere Invektive gegen die „betrügerischen Nazarener“<sup>24</sup> und ihre asketischen, in den Augen der Zoroastrier lebensfeindlichen Praktiken. Die Bezeichnung der Christen als „Nazarener“<sup>25</sup> hat eine lange Tradition im Sasanidenreich, die bis auf die Inschrift des Obermagiers Kartîr (Mitte des dritten Jahrhunderts) hinaufreicht:

diese Vorwürfe ein, vgl. ebd. 90f. Eigenartigerweise hält Thomson, 90<sup>1</sup>, diese Widerlegung nicht für eine Interpolation.

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. Johann Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der talmudischen Überlieferung* (Darmstadt, 1978), 238-43, 260-7, der den rabbinischen Namen Pandera für unerklärlich hält.

<sup>21</sup> Vgl. Origenes, *C. Celsus* I 32: „Doch wir wollen uns nun wieder zu den Worten zurückwenden, die Celsus den Juden sagen läßt, zu der Behauptung nämlich, ‚die Mutter Jesu sei von dem Zimmermann, mit dem sie verlobt war, verstoßen worden, weil sie des Ehebruchs überführt worden sei und von einem Soldaten namens Panthera geboren habe‘. Wir wollen sehen, ob nicht die Fabeldichter ins Blinde hinein, ‚den Ehebruch der Jungfrau mit Panthera‘ und ‚die Vertreibung durch den Zimmermann‘, dies alles erfunden haben, um so die wunderbare Empfängnis vom Heiligen Geiste zu beseitigen. Sie hätten ja doch auf andere Weise die Geschichte wegen ihrer Unbegreiflichkeit verdächtigen können und nicht gleichsam wider Willen die Tatsache zuzugeben brauchen, daß Jesus nicht aus einer gewöhnlichen ehelichen Verbindung hervorgegangen ist. Und es war folgerichtig, daß die Leute, die die wunderbare Geburt Jesu nicht gelten lassen wollten, irgendeine Lüge ausdachten. Sie verfuhrten aber dabei mit wenig Geschick: sie machten nämlich die Beobachtung, daß nicht von Joseph die Jungfrau Jesus empfangen habe. Darum mußten alle Leute, welche Erdichtungen zu erkennen und zu widerlegen vermögen, ihre Lüge bemerken.“ Vgl. auch Origenes, *C. Celsus* I, 69; Epiphanius, *Haer.* LXXVIII 7.

<sup>22</sup> Vgl. Aphrahat, *Dem.* XII 3; XV 5.8; XVI 5.

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. Peter Schäfer, *Jesus im Talmud* (Tübingen, 2007), 195-9.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Etishê* (1957), 26, 14f: „Glaubt nicht euren Führern, die ihr Nazarener (*նազարայի*) nennt, denn sie sind sehr betrügerisch (*խաբէբար*).“

<sup>25</sup> Die Bezeichnungen im Armenischen schwanken; neben *նազարայի* findet sich auch *նազով-պայի* in *Matth.* 2:23; *Apq.* 24:5.

„Christen“ steht für die aus dem Römerreich deportierten Griechen, „Nazarener“ für die einheimischen Aramäer.<sup>26</sup> In den syrischen Märtyrerakten findet sich die Bezeichnung „Nazarener“ ausschließlich im Munde der Perser und wird als Fremdbezeichnung von Christen wie Haschû, die sich als „Messianer“ betiteln, zurückgewiesen. Das Beiwort „trügerisch“ (*ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ*) weist die „Nazarener“ der Sphäre des lügnerischen Ahriman und seiner Dämonen zu. Innerhalb des Sasanidenreiches hat das Christentum darüber hinaus mit dem Odium zu kämpfen, eine Religion der Römer<sup>27</sup> zu sein. Armenische Fürsten, die sich zum Christentum bekennen, signalisieren in Mihrnarsehs Augen ihre Abkehr vom Großkönig und ihre Hinwendung zum Basileus, sie gelten als unsichere Kantonisten und müssen entsprechend hart bekämpft werden.

Der Zoroastrismus gilt mit einigem Recht als askesefeindliche Religion.<sup>28</sup> Die gewaltsame Rezoroastrisierung des östlichen Persarmeniens scheiterte indes, wie Elišê in seiner Geschichte ausführlich<sup>29</sup> nachweist, am energischen Widerstand der Mönche und der Bischöfe, welche oft selbst dem Mönchsstand entstammten und die Fürsten in ihrer Auflehnung gegen die Perser moralisch stärkten und im Felde geistlich begleiteten. Daher erklärt sich die erbitterte Feindschaft der Magier gegen die Enthaltensamkeit<sup>30</sup> der Mönche, die man für die eigentlichen Drahtzieher des Aufstands hielt. Vom Wert und Unwert der Askese, von der Umwertung der traditionellen iranischen Werte im Geiste des Evangeliums und der christlichen Zucht handeln daher zahlreiche Dialoge nicht nur in den syro-persischen Märtyrerakten, sondern auch in der armenischen Historiographie.<sup>31</sup>

Ein letzter Themenkreis der zoroastrisch-christlichen Kontroverse,<sup>32</sup> der kurz angerissen wird, nimmt direkten Bezug auf die Mysterien der christlichen Heilsgeschichte: daß Gott gekreuzigt, gestorben und begraben wurde, um anschließend von den Toten zu erstehen und zum Himmel zu fahren, sind dem

<sup>26</sup> So die Deutung bei Sebastian Brock, 'Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac', in ders., *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London, 1984), IV 80-108, bes. 91-5.

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Etishê* (1957), 26,9-13. Mihrnarseh sieht in der Christianisierung Armeniens eine römische Infiltration am Werk. Das Bekenntnis zum Zoroastrismus ist daher eine Frage der politischen Loyalität gegenüber dem Großkönig. Bemerkenswert ist ferner seine Sicht auf die eschatologische Dimension seines irdischen Tuns. Der Religionsdiener hat Verantwortung für seine Untertanen und ist verpflichtet, diese zum rechten Tun anzuleiten, da er einmal vor „Gott“ (armen. *ստեղծարար* steht wohl für pahl. *yazdân*) Rechenschaft ablegen muß.

<sup>28</sup> Ein Umstand, der mit dazu beitrug, daß die Klerikerenthaltensamkeit bei den Ostsyryern im fünften Jahrhundert im Unterschied zu den Armeniern aufgehoben wurde, vgl. dazu Peter Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis und die Aufhebung der Klerikerenthaltensamkeit im Gefolge der Synode von Beth-Lapat (484)', *AHC* 37 (2005) 1-42, bes. 31-40.

<sup>29</sup> R.W. Thomson, *History of Vardan* (1982), 192-248.

<sup>30</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Etishê* (1957), 26,15-27,5. Das monastische Leben (kein Fleisch, keine Ehe, keine weltlichen Reichtümer) ist in allem dem entgegengesetzt, was, in Maßen genossen, die persische Weisheitsliteratur dem Mazdayasnier keineswegs verbietet.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. Bruns, *Barsauma* (2005), 25-31.

<sup>32</sup> Vgl. E. Ter-Minasean, *Etishê* (1957), 27,6-13.

Perser nur schwer nachvollziehbare Dogmen. Für die dualistisch angelegte Metaphysik der Perser gilt es, den wesenhaften Unterschied zwischen dem Bereich des Geistigen (*mênôk*) und des Stofflichen (*gêtk*)<sup>33</sup> zu wahren. Die verehrungswürdigen Wesen (*yazdân*) fallen wie die Dämonen unter die erste Kategorie und sind prinzipiell leidensunfähig. Die Rede von einem gekreuzigten Gott<sup>34</sup> ist daher für die Perser eine Lästerung, die nicht unwidersprochen hingenommen werden kann. Wir dürfen hinter dieser auffälligen Redeweise keinen ausgeprägten Monophysitismus vermuten, weder einen realen, noch einen verbalen, da Elišês Begrifflichkeit völlig untechnisch ist, was, nebenbei bemerkt, eher für eine Frühdatierung seines Werkes in die zweite Hälfte des fünften Jahrhunderts (in die Zeit des Henotikons) spricht.

<sup>33</sup> Vgl. H. Lommel, *Religion Zarathustras* (1930), 93-129.

<sup>34</sup> Sie wird ebenso in §18 des syrischen *Martyrium Simeonis* (PS II 743,25-746,6) kontrovers diskutiert.



## New Manuscript Witnesses to the ‘Second Part’ of Isaac of Nineveh

Grigory KESSEL, Marburg, Germany

### ABSTRACT

The article presents three newly found and identified witnesses for the ‘Second Part’ of Isaac of Nineveh, one of the best known of Syriac authors (7<sup>th</sup> c.). Cambridge University Library ms. Oriental 1144 is of East Syriac provenance and contains paragraphs 40-67 and 78-96 of ch. 1, the whole of ch. 2, and sections 1-32 and 36-84 of the first century from ch. 3 (‘Headings on Knowledge’). Analysis of the codicological, palaeographical and textual features of the Cambridge manuscript makes it possible to identify it as a part of Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. syr. 298 (ca. 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.), an ancient damaged manuscript that in its original form contained a complete text of the ‘Second Part’. Two other witnesses are of West Syriac provenance (Mardin Orth. 420 and Sharfeh Rahmani 181), both being collections of ascetic and mystical works that were written in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. They contain selections from ch. 3 (‘Headings on Knowledge’), as well the whole of ch. 15 (in Mardin Orth. 420 only), and provide important evidence for the circulation of some chapters of the ‘Second Part’ in the Syrian Orthodox milieu. The special importance of the new witnesses is determined by the fact that so far the text of chapters 1-3 remains unedited (the complete text can be found in Bodleian Library syr.e.7 discovered by Sebastian Brock in 1983). Additionally, Cambridge Or. 1144 appears to represent an earlier stage of the history of the text. Thus, these new witnesses provide important material for a critical analysis of the unedited chapters, as well as for an investigation of the transmission history of the ‘Second Part’ and its reception outside the East Syriac tradition.

It was Sebastian Brock who in 1983 was able to identify a Syriac manuscript in the Bodleian Library (shelf-mark syr.e.7) as containing a virtually complete text of the ‘Second Part’ of Isaac of Nineveh. The finding was first announced at the Ninth Conference on Patristic Studies in Oxford in the same year,<sup>1</sup> and in 1995, thanks to the efforts of the same scholar, chapters 4-41 were published.<sup>2</sup>

I would like to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to J.F. Coakley (Cambridge) who drew my attention to one of the manuscripts discussed below and thereby promoted a further research; at a later stage he kindly read through the text and made helpful corrections.

<sup>1</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, ‘Lost – and found: Part II of the works of St Isaac of Nineveh’, in *SP* 18 (1990), 230-3.

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian). ‘The Second Part’, Chapters IV-XLI*, CSCO 554/5, Syr. 224/5 (Leuven, 1995). Chapters 1-3, constituting roughly half of the entire

It will not be an exaggeration to say that publication of the 'Second Part' brought about a fresh interest in the literary heritage of Isaac of Nineveh, which has resulted in three monographs<sup>3</sup> and a series of articles dealing with various aspects of Isaac's ascetic doctrine.<sup>4</sup> The discovery of a complete text of the 'Second Part' also triggered an investigation of the secondary medieval translations in different languages of the Christian Orient. Arabic,<sup>5</sup> Greek,<sup>6</sup> and Georgian<sup>7</sup> versions to a different extent have been explored so far. Furthermore, research into the manuscript tradition of the works of Isaac enabled Sabino Chialà to find in a unique manuscript preserved in a Chaldean Church in Teheran a collection with new texts entitled the 'Third Part' of Isaac of Nineveh.<sup>8</sup>

Besides the Bodleian codex, Brock's edition uses three manuscripts containing (at least in their original form) the complete 'Second Part'<sup>9</sup> and seven others that contain only selected chapters.<sup>10</sup> A further investigation, mainly done by Brock and Chialà, of the manuscript transmission of the works of Isaac of Nineveh revealed new witnesses to the corpus of Isaac in general and to the

volume, remain till today unpublished. That part was assigned to Paolo Bettio (Padua) who has so far published only an Italian translation of the relevant chapters (Paolo Bettio, *Isacco di Ninive. Discorsi spirituali e altri opuscoli* [Magnano, 2000]). However, as I am kindly informed by Vittorio Berti (Padua and Zürich), although the work was suspended for quite a long time it has been recently resumed and an edition is now in preparation by Paolo Bettio and Vittorio Berti.

<sup>3</sup> Sabino Chialà, *Dall'asceti eremitica alla misericordia infinita. Ricerche su Isacco di Ninive e la sua fortuna* (Firenze, 2002); Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2000); and Patrick Hagman, *The Asceticism of Isaac of Nineveh* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive bibliography of the Syriac corpus of Isaac of Nineveh see Grigory Kessel and Karl Pinggéra, *A Bibliography of Syriac Ascetic and Mystical Literature* (Leuven, 2011), 103-22.

<sup>5</sup> Vittorio Ianari, *Isacco di Ninive. Grammatica di vita spirituale* (Milano, 2009) and S. Chialà, *Dall'asceti eremitica* (2002), 334-8.

<sup>6</sup> S. Chialà, *Dall'asceti eremitica* (2002), 325-33. See also a critical edition: Marcel Pirard, *Ἀββᾶ Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ Σύρου, ΛΟΓΟΙ ΑΣΚΗΤΙΚΟΙ. Κριτική ἔκδοσι* ("Ἁγιον Ὅρος, Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Ἰβήρων, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> S. Chialà, *Dall'asceti eremitica* (2002), 339-41; and Tamara Pataridze, 'Les Discours Ascétiques d'Isaac de Ninive. Étude de la tradition géorgienne et de ses rapports avec les autres versions', *Le Muséon* 124 (2011), 27-58. T. Pataridze has prepared a doctoral thesis that investigates the Georgian translations of the works of Isaac and also contains an edition of that version (Tamara Pataridze, *Une version géorgienne des Discours ascétiques d'Isaac de Ninive (VII s.) et son substrat sémitique: Introduction, édition et étude philologique* [Louvain-la-Neuve, 2012]).

<sup>8</sup> The text was published recently: Sabino Chialà, *Isacco di Ninive. Terza Collezione*, CSCO 637/8, Syr. 246/7 (Leuven, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Bodleian Library, syr.e.7 (East Syriac; 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c.), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, syr. 298 (ES; 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.) [defective], Houghton Library, syr. 57 (ES; 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.) [defective], Teheran Issayi Collection, ms. 4 (ES; 1895 AD; a copy of the Oxford's ms.).

<sup>10</sup> Baghdad Chaldean Monastery, syr. 680 (East Syriac; 1288/9 AD), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, sir. 509 (ES; 1928 AD; a copy of the Baghdad's ms.), Birmingham Mingana collection, syr. 601 (ES; 1932 AD; a copy of the Baghdad's ms.), Birmingham Mingana collection, syr. 86 (West Syriac; ca. 1300 AD), Teheran Issayi Collection, ms. 5 (ES; 1900 AD), British Library Add. 14632 (ES; 10<sup>th</sup> c.), British Library Add. 14633 (ES; 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.).

'Second Part' in particular.<sup>11</sup> Selections and excerpts from the 'Second Part' were identified in five manuscripts of Rum Orthodox (*i.e.* Melkite or Syriac Chalcedonian)<sup>12</sup> and Syrian Orthodox provenance.<sup>13</sup> Those manuscript witnesses provide good evidence for the circulation and availability of the 'Second Part' in different monastic milieux: among the Rum Orthodox in the ninth and tenth centuries and among the Syrian Orthodox in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> The transmission of the text of the 'Second Part' in the form of selected chapters (rather than in full) can be singled out as an essential feature of the evidence offered by those witnesses. This line of textual transmission of the 'Second Part' appears to have had a prominent role in the dissemination of the text outside the original East Syriac tradition; and it is notable that all five manuscripts represent a special type of literary compilation, the so-called monastic anthology, that is, a collection of (Greek and Syriac) ascetic and mystical texts.<sup>15</sup> Some corroborative evidence for this development will be provided below.

The present paper has as its aim to introduce three new manuscript witnesses which have not been taken into consideration in previous scholarship. These three witnesses are of different origin (East Syrian and Syrian Orthodox) and represent two different lines of the textual transmission of the 'Second Part' (in full and in the form of selected chapters).

1. Manuscript Oriental 1144 preserved in the Cambridge University Library<sup>16</sup> belongs to a group of twenty-six Syriac manuscripts that were donated to the University Library by Huw Ifor Lloyd, Esq., M.C., in 1928<sup>17</sup> and so far remain uncatalogued.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For an overview see Sabino Chialà, *L'opera di Isacco di Ninive nella tradizione manoscritta siriana. Presentazione delle fonti e della tradizione manoscritta, seguita dall'edizione critica e dalla traduzione della Terza collezione* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2007) [PhD thesis], 18-78.

<sup>12</sup> *Olim* Codex Syriacus Primus (Rum-Orthodox; 9<sup>th</sup> c.), *olim* Codex Syriacus Secundus (Rum-Orthodox; 882 AD), and ms. Sinai syr. 14 (Rum-Orthodox; 10<sup>th</sup> c.). Codex Syriacus Secundus has not been described thoroughly with proper identification of all the text pieces pertaining to the 'Second Part'.

<sup>13</sup> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, ms. Sachau 203 (West Syriac; after 1493 AD), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, sir. 543 (WS; 1782 AD), British Library Add. 14729 (WS; 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.). It is worth stressing that Chialà's description does not always provide precise identification of all the text pieces from the 'Second Part'.

<sup>14</sup> Chialà lists also eleven liturgical manuscripts that contain prayers attributed to Isaac which were excerpted from the text of the 'Second Part' (S. Chialà, *L'opera di Isacco di Ninive* [2007], 38).

<sup>15</sup> On Syriac monastic anthologies see Herman G.B. Teule, 'Les compilations monastiques syriaques', in *Symposium Syriacum VII* (Roma, 1998), 249-62.

<sup>16</sup> I owe the discovery of the Cambridge manuscript to J.F. Coakley (Cambridge) who amiably drew my attention to it.

<sup>17</sup> It is known that Lloyd was a judge in Basra (Iraq) and later returned to England. See *The London Gazette*, 17 January 1939, 391.

<sup>18</sup> There exists a handwritten catalogue of the manuscripts by C. Winckworth (who did not identify this one). A new catalogue is in preparation by J.F. Coakley.



The manuscript consists of twenty-four leaves, all very much faded and damaged. The red rubrics have suffered the worst and are pretty much wiped out so that their text is almost illegible. It is a part of an East Syriac parchment codex and the text is written in East Syriac Estrangela with occasional use of East Syriac vowel signs. The dimensions of the manuscript are 13.7 × 10.5 cm and it has twenty-three lines per page. The manuscript contains no traces of either foliation or pagination.<sup>19</sup>

This manuscript, or more precisely, part of a manuscript, represents a complete third quire consisting of five bifolia plus three and two bifolia from a second and fourth quire respectively.<sup>20</sup> A diagram will help to make clear the present form of the manuscript:

II		×	×	6	5	4	3	2	1	×	×
III		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
IV		×	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	×

Despite a lack of a title as well as of attribution, an acquaintance with the content allows an identification of the text as paragraphs 40-67 and 78-96 of ch. 1, the complete ch. 2, and sections 1-32 and 36-84 of the first century from ch. 3 ('Headings on Knowledge')<sup>21</sup> of the 'Second Part'<sup>22</sup> of Isaac of Nineveh.<sup>23</sup>

The Cambridge manuscript provides a running text of the first chapters that corresponds fairly well to that of Bodleian syr.e.7 (our only witness to the complete text of the 'Second Part'<sup>24</sup>). From the point of view of the character of the text, both witnesses are very close to each other and the variation between them is slight. For example, apart from differences in forms of some words that

<sup>19</sup> The present foliation is modern and might well have been done when the manuscript came to the Cambridge University Library.

<sup>20</sup> Composition of the quires: 2<sup>10(-4)</sup>, 3<sup>10</sup>, 4<sup>10(-6)</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Differently from all other chapters in the 'Second Part', ch. 3 forms in itself a vast treatise with a special title 'Headings [Kephalaia] on Knowledge' that consists of four centuries each covering 100 chapters (except for the second century that has 105 chapters). In order to avoid confusion between chapters of the 'Second Part' and chapters of the 'Headings on Knowledge' (ch. 3) I refer to the latter as sections using a formula: Roman numeral (for a century) + Arabic numeral (for a section).

<sup>22</sup> Whereas a division into paragraphs of ch. 1 was introduced by modern scholars, the enumeration of sections of the 'Headings on Knowledge' is authentic and is provided by the Bodleian manuscript.

<sup>23</sup> See a detailed collation in the Appendix. The titles of both ch. 2 and ch. 3 in the Bodleian codex do provide the name of Isaac of Nineveh. Although the respective passages in Or. 1144 are almost completely illegible, there remain some elements that prove that the name of Isaac was written there as well.

<sup>24</sup> Another complete manuscript, Tehran Issayi Collection 4 was copied directly from the Bodleian ms (S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* [1995], xiv-xvii).

do not affect the meaning of the phrases,<sup>25</sup> Or. 1144 sometimes adds new nuances to the text (in which cases, nevertheless, either reading seems to be possible).<sup>26</sup> Occasionally the text of Or. 1144 provides faulty readings whilst the Bodleian manuscript contains correct forms.<sup>27</sup> Some variants, however, are more significant and might represent more faithfully the authentic text.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from insignificant variation at the textual level, the most notable disagreement between the two witnesses is the location of the scholia that sporadically accompany some passages of the ‘Second Part’.<sup>29</sup> Generally, one can find these scholia in the Bodleian codex within the main text where they are introduced after a particular section by the rubric *nūhārā* (‘elucidation’).<sup>30</sup> Cambridge Or. 1144, on the contrary, always provides the scholia not in the main text but in the margins of the manuscript.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, although on account of the defective state of Or. 1144 some parts of the margins are no longer legible, it seems that one scholium (to section 21 of the first century) was absent in the original manuscript<sup>32</sup> whereas another one, this time absent in the Bodleian codex, appears on f. 13r and thus might have been appended to one of the sections 12 through 16 of the first century.

<sup>25</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library syr.e.7 [hereafter **B**], f. 18v line 2 ܠܝܫܐܢ ܕܝܫܐܢ Cambridge University Library, Or. 1144 [hereafter **C**], f. 8v line 6 || **B** f. 18v line 4 ܝܫܐܢ ܕܝܫܐܢ **C** f. 8v line 7 || **B** f. 18v line 7 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 8v line 11 || **B** f. 18v line 9 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 8v line 13 || **B** f. 18v line 10 ܝܫܐܢ ܕܝܫܐܢ **C** f. 8v line 14.

<sup>26</sup> **B** f. 19r line 3 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 9r line 11 || **B** f. 22r lines 1 and 2 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 12v lines 11 and 13.

<sup>27</sup> **B** f. 21v line 22 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 12v line 9 || **B** f. 21v line 23 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 12v line 11 || **B** f. 22r line 7 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ om. **C** f. 12v line 20 || **B** f. 23r line 4 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 14r line 2 || **B** f. 23r line 7 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 14r line 5 || **B** f. 24r line 7 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ om. **C** f. 15r line 11.

<sup>28</sup> **B** f. 18v line 11 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 8v lines 15-16 || **B** f. 23r lines 11-12 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 14r line 10 || **B** f. 27r line 3 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 18r 8-9 || **B** f. 29v line 9 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 21v line 9 || **B** f. 31r line 17 ܡܝܬܪ ܕܡܝܬܪ **C** f. 23v line 9.

<sup>29</sup> As far as I could check, those scholia appear predominantly within ch. 3 (‘Headings on Knowledge’), but they can be found in other chapters as well. Interestingly enough, scholia of a similar sort appear also in the East Syriac manuscript of the ‘First Part’, for example in BNF syr. 359 (*olim* Mardin/Scher 46). Only a part of those were edited by P. Bedjan in the apparatus to his edition of the ‘First Part’ (see on that my forthcoming study of the manuscript tradition of the ‘First Part’: Grigory Kessel, [‘The manuscript tradition of the ‘First Part’ of Isaac of Nineveh. Preliminary observations’], in A. Muraviev (ed.), [*Mar Ishʿaq Nineviyskiy. First Part. Treatises 1-6*] (Moscow, 2012) [in Russian]).

<sup>30</sup> The text of those scholia has not been edited, although one can familiarize oneself with their contents in the Italian translation of ch. 3 (P. Bettolo, *Isacco di Ninive* [1990]).

<sup>31</sup> **C** f. 11r = **B** f. 20v (ch. 3, i. 2), **C** f. 14v = **B** f. 24r (ch. 3, i. 22); **C** f. 21v = **B** f. 29v (ch. 3, i. 67). It is worth noting that both Or. 1144 (f. 17v), as well as the Bodleian manuscript (f. 26v), contain a marginal note stating that ‘each of the Headings on Knowledge was written above the lines of the First part’ (see a discussion in P. Bettolo, *Isacco di Ninive* [1990], 20).

<sup>32</sup> **C** f. 23v, whilst it can be found in **B** f. 23v.

Although no provenance of the scholia has yet been identified, there can be no doubt that they do not belong to Isaac and were added at a later stage of the transmission of the 'Second Part'.<sup>33</sup> If so, then it is quite easy to imagine how scholia originally written in margins<sup>34</sup> were eventually, in the course of the manuscript transmission, integrated into the main text, being appended to relevant passages. Curiously, not all the scholia in the Bodleian codex appear in the main text. On f. 72v one can find a scholium to section 61 of the third century of the 'Heading on Knowledge' with a standard rubric *nūhhārā* precisely in the same form as the scholia that appear in Or. 1144. That scholium in the Bodleian is highly likely to reflect an original separation of the scholia from the main text in the manuscripts.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the presence of the scholia in margins can serve as a visible mark distinguishing two distinct periods in the history of the textual transmission of the 'Second Part'. Formerly, the corpus was copied in full while being provided at a certain stage with scholia that were aimed at clarifying selected sections. Later on, these scholia, being considered as a constitutive part of Isaac's text, were integrated into the main text and started to be copied joined to it.

With regard to the possible dating of Cambridge Or. 1144, one can state that its handwriting is a quite regular East Syriac Estrangela of an intermediate period. On the one hand, we find that *semkath* is sometimes not joined to the left, *dalath* and *rish* tend to be angular when separated and *waw* sometimes has an open form. All that, compared with traits of the Bodleian manuscript (dated to the tenth or eleventh century),<sup>36</sup> gives the impression of a similarly ancient type of book hand.<sup>37</sup> However, a few features of Or. 1144 strongly suggest a somewhat later period. Firstly, on a par with standard *alaph* one can encounter also a Serto form of that letter, and, secondly, there appears occasionally an East Syriac ligature *tau + aleph* at the end of a word. Those features, according to the assessment of Hatch, belong to the second period in the history of East Syriac handwriting which is characterized by the use of both Estrangela and Serto

<sup>33</sup> Brock suggested that the scholia might have been added by the editor who collected the 'Second Part' (S.P. Brock, 'Lost – and found' [1990], 232); André Louf considers scribes to be responsible for them (André Louf, *Isaac le Syrien. Œuvres spirituelles II. 41 discours récemment découverts*, Spiritualité orientale 81 [Bégrolles-en-Mauges, 2003], 126).

<sup>34</sup> One wonders whether those scholia were appended by a reader or a scribe *ad hoc*, or if they were borrowed by a reader or a scribe from a commentary on Isaac's works. Although no commentary on any of Isaac's works is found so far, there is scant evidence that they nevertheless existed (e.g. ms Mardin/Scher 9 documents a commentary on the 'First Part'); on some traces of Isaac's reception in posterior Syriac tradition see S. Chialà, *Dall'ascesi eremitica* [2002], 283-5.

<sup>35</sup> The given example of a separate scholium in the Bodleian ms is clearly an idiosyncratic one, for, as two other new witnesses demonstrate (see below), the scholium was transmitted in the main body of the text.

<sup>36</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xiii.

<sup>37</sup> For a development of respective Syriac characters see William H.P. Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Piscataway, NJ, 2002), 31-2 (*dalath*), 33 (*waw*), 34 (*semkath*), 36 (*rish*).

types of writing. That period, so Hatch reckons, begins in the middle of the thirteenth century.<sup>38</sup> While concurring with observations of Hatch I would not, however, exclude as equally possible a somewhat earlier twelfth-century date.<sup>39</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Cambridge Or. 1144 provides a running (but defective) text of chapters 1 through 3 of the 'Second Part'. This very fact can be regarded as sufficient grounds to argue that in its original form the codex must have contained a complete text of the 'Second Part', precisely as does the Bodleian manuscript. If so, might it be possible to identify other parts of the same codex among the surviving fragmentary manuscripts of the 'Second Part'?

As of today, there exist only two defective manuscripts that are known in their original form to have contained the complete 'Second Part'. Houghton Library ms. Syriac 57 was apparently written somewhat later<sup>40</sup> and demonstrates altogether different codicological and palaeographical features.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, the traits of Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. syr. 298 match those of Cambridge Or. 1144 and there seems to be, in fact, no doubt that both constitute two parts of one and the same codex.<sup>42</sup> This can be easily proved on codicological (*e.g.* the same size and layout),<sup>43</sup> palaeographical (*e.g.* identical book hand and occasional ligature *tau + waw*),<sup>44</sup> and textual (notably the presence of the scholia in margins)<sup>45</sup> grounds.

<sup>38</sup> W.H.P. Hatch, *An Album* (2002), 47. For instance, the earliest specimen of ligature *tau + aleph* in Hatch's *Album* is provided by Berlin, Petermann I, 9 dated back to the 1259-1260 AD (Pl. CLXXIII). For justice's sake one ought to clarify that for the period from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries we have a disproportionately small number of dated East Syriac manuscripts (according to the calculations of Brock [Sebastian P. Brock, 'Early dated manuscripts of the Church of the East', *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* (Festschrift J.F. Coakley) 21:2 (2007), 8-34] there are 24 East Syriac manuscripts in contrast with more than 200 West Syriac) and the 12<sup>th</sup> century is especially underrepresented with no dated manuscripts between 1073/4 AD and 1180. It goes without saying that such a limited amount of data prevents a proper investigation of the development of East Syriac handwriting.

<sup>39</sup> See a similar estimation of Brock: S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xix.

<sup>40</sup> Brock accepts that a slightly earlier date than the 13<sup>th</sup> century is possible (S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* [1995], xxi note 20).

<sup>41</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xxii.

<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, I did not have a chance to study the manuscript on site and availed myself of a copy that was made available to me thanks to the kind assistance of Flavia Ruani (Paris). The manuscript in its present form contains no colophon; a note of ownership states that the codex belonged in 1468/9 AD to the monastery of Mar Elia (Brock conjectured that the famous monastery of Mar Elia near Mosul is meant [S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xxi note 18]). The codex was donated to the Bibliothèque Nationale by Chaldean Patriarch 'Abdišō' V Ḥayyāt (1895-1899).

<sup>43</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xviii. The indicated dimensions of BNF syr. 298 (14×12 cm) are slightly different (maybe rounded off?) from those of Cambridge Or. 1144, the difference perhaps due to a mutilation of original folios.

<sup>44</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xix-xx.

<sup>45</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xxxv-xliii. It is especially noteworthy that, as Brock argues, although the Bodleian manuscript is the best witness, occasionally it is BNF syr. 298 that provides correct readings. Among the corrupted readings of BNF syr. 298 Brock distinguishes

As demonstrated by Brock, BNF syr. 298 in its present form lacks quires 1-8, 13-5 and 24<sup>46</sup>. Thus with the finding of quires 1-3 in the Cambridge Or. 1144, a part of what was lost from the original codex is fortunately recovered.

2. With the other two new witnesses, Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 420 and Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Residence in Sharfeh, Raḥmani 181, we approach a later period of the textual transmission of the 'Second Part' when selected chapters from it were copied within Syrian Orthodox 'monastic anthologies', collections of works of ascetic and mystical content.

Both manuscripts are, unfortunately, scarcely known to European scholarship because of the inaccessibility of the respective libraries. The two manuscripts are quite similar in their content: both contain the works attributed to Abraham of Nathpar (6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> cent.), Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523), Macarius of Egypt (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> cent.), John the Solitary (5<sup>th</sup> cent.) and Evagrius of Pontus (d. 399); and in both one encounters a special group of various texts attributed to Isaac of Nineveh. The following is an overview of the evidence that the two manuscripts provide.

a. Mardin Orth. 420 (*olim* Dayr al-Zaʿfaran/Dolabani 110; 1783 A.G. [1471/2 A.D.], Tūr ʿAbdīn, paper, Serto, 2 columns, pp. 552, 277×185 mm).<sup>47</sup>

The manuscript contains a quite extensive group of texts attributed to Isaac of Nineveh (pp. 357-459) under the title 'a teaching of Abba Isaac of Nineveh' (pp. 357, 459). This group opens with treatises from the 'First Part' (pp. 357-409)<sup>48</sup>, followed by a selection of chapters from two treatises of another East Syrian monastic author, Shemʿōn d-Ṭaybūtheh, whose works were transmitted in the Syrian Orthodox milieu always under the name of Isaac of Nineveh (pp. 409-17).<sup>49</sup>

transpositions, graphic and phonetic confusion, addition/omission of a letter and slips. This state of affairs corresponds well to the results of my comparison of Cambridge Or. 1144 with the Bodleian ms (see above).

<sup>46</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xix.

<sup>47</sup> There is no proper catalogue description of the manuscript (but see Charbel C. Chahine, *Abraham de Bêt-Netprā: Discours [Mēmre]* [Roma-Augustinianum, 2004] [ThD thesis], 146-9). Mardin Orth. 420 was used by the Syro-Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Rahmani II (however, without an explicit reference to the manuscript) for his publication of the lives of Isaac of Nineveh, John of Dalyāthā, John bar Penkāyē and Abraham of Nathpar (Mardin Orth. 420, p. 459-68) in the first volume of his series 'Studia Syriaca' (Ignatius Rahmani, *Studia syriaca* (Monte Libano, 1904), 33\*-39\*). The manuscript was also used by Arthur Vööbus in some of his studies (e.g. Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient. A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East*, vol. 3, CSCO 500, Subs. 81 [Louvain, 1988], *passim*). The manuscript became available to me thanks to the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (Collegeville, MN).

<sup>48</sup> E.g. treatises 41, 15, 37, 57, 66, 78, 17, 12.

<sup>49</sup> A fragment from the 'Homily on the consecration of the cell' and selected chapters (24-8) from the text that was edited in 1934 by A. Mingana (Alphonse Mingana, *Early Christian Mystics* [Cambridge, 1934], 10-69 [tr.], 281-320 [ed.]). The latter text, as I argued recently, should be identified with the 'Book of medicine' documented by 'Abdišo' of Nisibis (d. 1318): see Grigory

After that comes a selection from the 'Second Part' (pp. 425-50),<sup>50</sup> namely from ch. 3 (ii 39-44, 92-101, iii 26-38, 42-6, 61-8, iv 34-6, 49-58) under a heading 'on Headings on knowledge' (ܠܗܕܝܬܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ), and the whole of ch. 15.

Some features of the text deserve to be singled out. Although the selection from ch. 3 still contains divisions between each section<sup>51</sup> the original numeration is completely absent. On a few occasions I noticed an additional division within one section that is not supported by the Bodleian codex.<sup>52</sup> Scholia, although appended to the same sections, are inserted into the text differently.<sup>53</sup> Curiously, in case of one scholium (iii 61) Mardin Orth. 420 provides its text in the main text (p. 438) whereas the Bodleian codex gives it in the margin (f. 72v).

As regards textual character, a comparison of ch. 15 with Brock's edition reveals that the text provided by the Mardin Orth. 420 contains some variants which more often concur with the readings of BNF syr. 298 and more rarely with those of Baghdad, Chaldean Patriarchate syr. 680.

b. Sharfeh, Rahmani 181 (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> cent., paper, ser̄to, ff. 121, 170×125 mm).<sup>54</sup>

The group of works attributed to Isaac of Nineveh (f. 43v-78) in this manuscript is not identical with what is in Mardin Orth. 420, although there are apparent overlaps in content. In particular, in both manuscripts one can find treatises from the 'First Part' as well as one chapter from the text of Shem'ōn d-Ṭaybūteh (f. 72v-73v). A group of texts related to the 'Second Part' (f. 52r-58v) contains a selection from ch. 3 ('Headings on Knowledge') under a heading 'a part from the *mēmre* on the Headings on Knowledge'

Kessel, 'La position de Simon de Ṭaybūteh dans l'éventail de la tradition mystique syriaque', in A. Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques*, Études syriaques 8 (Paris, 2011), 129-58, 126-8.

<sup>50</sup> A detailed collation is provided in the Appendix below.

<sup>51</sup> By means of a four-dot mark (✧). Occasionally, however, the mark is omitted and two originally independent sections appear as one unit (e.g. p. 426 where section 40 and section 41 of the second century are not separated at all; and on p. 430 where section 93 of the second century is not separated from section 92).

<sup>52</sup> E.g., section 25 of the third century is provided in the form of two separated sections (p. 434). It is worth noting that in the Bodleian manuscript in the very place of the division one encounters a four-dot mark that normally serves for separation of text units. One wonders whether Mardin Orth. 420 in this case represents a different chapter division. A similar secondary division can also be found in iii. 64 (p. 440).

<sup>53</sup> On p. 426 a scholium to ii. 39 can be found within a section, whereas in the Bodleian ms it goes after the section (f. 42v-43r); on p. 427 a scholium to ii. 44 appears immediately after a first sentence, whilst in the Bodleian manuscript it can be found after the section (f. 45r).

<sup>54</sup> The manuscript is damaged and contains no colophon. The description of Sōnī (Behnām Sōnī, *Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt al-baṭṭariḳiyah fī dayr aš-Sharfeh – Lubnān* [Bayrūt, 1993], 96-7) should be supplemented by that of Chahine (Ch.C. Chahine, *Abraham de Bēt-Netprā* [2004], 104-5). The manuscript was also used by Vööbus in some of his studies (e.g. A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* [1988], *passim*). I had a chance to study a black-and-white microfilm held in the Institute of Eastern Christian Studies (Nijmegen). I am deeply grateful to Prof. Herman G.B. Teule for his generous permission to consult the collection.



(ܬܠܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ): ii 39-44, 96-101, iii 26-9, 32-6, 42-5, 61-5, iv 35, 36, 49, 56-8.<sup>55</sup>

The characteristic features of the text form are an abridgment of many sections of ch. 3<sup>56</sup> and a difference in the location of the scholia<sup>57</sup> in comparison with the Bodleian codex but in agreement with Cambridge Or. 1144.

The point that needs to be stressed is that despite an outward diversity, the selections from the 'Headings on Knowledge' as provided by Mardin Orth. 420 and Sharfeh Rahmani 181 are nevertheless closely related to each other and certainly stem from one and the same branch of the textual transmission of the 'Second Part'. Notwithstanding the smaller number of chapters that feature in the Sharfeh manuscript, all of them are witnessed by the Mardin codex as well. It is especially noteworthy that the text form of the two witnesses is generally the same and demonstrates similar variation in comparison to the Bodleian manuscript.<sup>58</sup>

Both new witnesses apparently represent a particular stage in the textual history of the 'Second Part' when a fixed group of selected chapters from the 'Second Part' was circulating in the Syrian Orthodox monastic milieu being incorporated into monastic anthologies.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the evidence offered by Sharfeh Rahmani 181 allows us to trace a development in this branch of the textual transmission. Whereas the sections from ch. 3 ('Headings on Knowledge') found in the Mardin manuscript are given in full, some of those sections are abridged in the Sharfeh codex. That seems to be a testimony to an ongoing revision of the text that was destined to be constantly reduced.<sup>60</sup> The apophthegmatic character of the 'Headings on Knowledge' facilitated editorial interventions on a part of scribes.

Despite the limited scope of the evidence these two manuscripts provide, it has nevertheless to be stressed that both of them are manuscripts of Syrian Orthodox provenance written in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. Consequently, both of them are witnesses to the further circulation of a selection from the 'Second Part' of Isaac of Nineveh in the West Syriac milieu. Thus, they document that by that time not only the 'First' but also the 'Second Part' (at least in selected form) carried on to be perused and appreciated in the West Syriac tradition.

<sup>55</sup> A detailed collation is provided in the Appendix below.

<sup>56</sup> Ch. 3, ii 39, 44, 100, iii 36, 45, 64, iv 36, 58.

<sup>57</sup> F. 52v (ii 39), f. 53r (ii 44), f. 56v (iii 61).

<sup>58</sup> It is especially noticeable in the location of the scholia (see footnote 53) as well as in the abridged form of ch. 3, iv. 36.

<sup>59</sup> At the present moment it is not possible to verify whether a complete text of the 'Second Part' was ever available in the Syrian Orthodox tradition. In my estimation a possible transfer of the 'Second Part' should have taken place in the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>60</sup> Corroborative evidence is provided by the fact that the Sharfeh manuscript contains only one chapter (no. 28) from the treatise of Shemʿon d-Ṭaybūtheh, whereas in Mardin Orth. 420 one can find four more (see footnote 49).

## Conclusions

Recent scholarship has brought to light new witnesses to the 'Second Part' of Isaac of Nineveh that have enriched our perception of the history of the text. Apart from (originally) complete East Syriac manuscripts, Sebastian Brock used only one manuscript of Syrian Orthodox provenance in his edition of chapters 4-41. Nevertheless it was undoubtedly justified when he, despite somewhat limited evidence, argued that 'Mingana syr. 86 provides clear evidence that Part II, as well as Part I, of Isaac's works was known in Syrian Orthodox monastic circles in the Middle Ages.'<sup>61</sup> Thanks to the efforts of Brock and Chialà this important conclusion not only found corroborative evidence, but also could be broadened to include also the Rum Orthodox milieu.<sup>62</sup> An essential feature of the text of the 'Second Part' witnessed by manuscripts of Syrian Orthodox and Rum Orthodox provenance is that the text was transmitted not in full but in the form of selections.

Three newly found witnesses fit well into the above outlined transmission history of the 'Second Part'. Although Cambridge Or. 1144 was written a couple of centuries later than Bodleian Library syr.e.7, the text form of the 'Second Part' it provides, with scholia in the margins (rather than inside the main text as in the Bodleian manuscript) evidently represents a more ancient period of the transmission of the text. Analysis of the codicological, palaeographical and textual features of the Cambridge manuscript does make it possible to identify it as a part of Bibliothèque Nationale de France ms. syr. 298, an ancient damaged manuscript that in its original form contained a complete text of the 'Second Part' of Isaac of Nineveh.

Mardin Orth. 420 (1471/2 AD) and Sharfeh Rahmani 181 (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> cent.), both monastic anthologies, provide sufficient evidence to illustrate the circulation of the 'Second Part' in the Syrian Orthodox tradition in a period subsequent to that represented by Mingana syr. 86 (*ca.* 1300 AD). Interestingly, the selections preserved in those two manuscripts are quite alike. This fact suggests that both manuscripts witness to a particular branch of the textual transmission of the 'Second Part' in the Syrian Orthodox milieu that was limited (perhaps right from the moment when the text was taken over) to a selected number of chapters only; and in the course of time it is this primary selection that was

<sup>61</sup> S.P. Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh* (1995), xxxi. See also *id.*, 'Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The Translation of Isaac the Syrian', in J. Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, OLA 98 (Leuven, 2001), 201-8, 204.

<sup>62</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, 'From Qatar to Tokyo, by Way of Mar Saba. The Translations of Isaac of Beth Qatraye (Isaac the Syrian)', *Aram* 11-2 (1999/2000), 475-84, 481; and *id.*, 'Crossing the Boundaries: An Ecumenical Role Played by Syriac Monastic Literature', in M. Bielawski, D. Hombergen (eds), *Il monachesimo tra Eredità e Apertura*, Studia Anselmiana 140 (Roma, 2004), 221-38, 225.



further revised and reduced.<sup>63</sup> Thus, whereas Mardin Orth. 420 contains a selection from sections of ch. 3 ('Headings on Knowledge') and the complete ch. 15, the selection of Sharfeh, Rahmani 181 only partially overlaps with that of the Mardin manuscript and some of the sections are provided in abridged form.

In conclusion I would like to highlight two aspects of importance of the newly found witnesses. Firstly, as was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, chapters 1 through 3 of the 'Second Part' remain so far unedited and their complete text is preserved only in the Bodleian codex. Therefore, new witnesses will be of great assistance in establishing a critical edition of the text and its critical analysis.

Secondly, Cambridge Or. 1144, despite its somewhat younger date, turns out to be a unique witness to an authentic early form of the 'Second Part', namely when the elucidative scholia were not yet integrated into the main body of the text (as they are in the Bodleian codex).

Thirdly, the identification of selections from the 'Second Part' in the Syrian Orthodox anthologies strongly suggests that a further investigation of such collections might bring new witnesses to the 'Second Part' of Isaac of Nineveh and thereby contribute to a yet better and fuller understanding of the history of Isaac's corpus and its transmission and reception outside the East Syriac tradition.<sup>64</sup>

#### APPENDIX

Collation of the texts provided by new witnesses.

Cambridge University Library, Or. 1144<sup>65</sup>

F. **1r** (ch. 1. \*40, 41-3), **1v** (44, 45), **2r** (46, 47), **2v** (48-50), **3r** (51-3), **3v** (54, 55), **4r** (56-8), **4v** (59-61), **5r** (61), **5v** (62, 63), **6r** (64, 65), **6v** (66, 67\*), **7r** (\*78, 79-81), **7v** (82-5), **8r** (86, 87), **8v** (88-92), **9r** (93-6), **9v** (96, ch. 2), **10r** (ch. 2), **10v** (ch. 2), **11r** (ch. 3, i 1, 2 [+ a scholium], 3), **11v** (i 4-7), **12r** (i. 8-10), **12v** (i 11, 12), **13r** (i 13-7 [+ a scholium?]), **13v** (i 18, 19), **14r** (i 20), **14v** (i 21, 22 [+ a scholium]), **15r** (i 23, 24), **15v** (i 25-8), **16r** (i 29, 30), **16v** (i 31, 32\*), **17r** (i \*36, 37-9), **17v** (i 40-2),

<sup>63</sup> A detailed investigation of extant Syrian Orthodox witnesses (see footnote 13) will, hopefully, enable to reveal more precisely in which form the 'Second Part' was available in the Syrian Orthodox milieu and whether all extant witnesses indeed go back to that primitive selected version of the 'Second Part'. It is worth pointing out that a selection of fragments from the 'Second Part' in Mingana syr. 86 opens with section 39 of the second century as both new witnesses do.

<sup>64</sup> At the moment I pursue a project that aims, firstly, to describe all extant Syriac monastic anthologies of East and West Syriac as well as Rum Orthodox (Melkite) provenance (in total ca. 130 mss) and, secondly, to study a history of the formation and development of the anthologies as well as peculiarities of the circulation of monastic literature in them. Since a considerable part of such collections was either poorly catalogued or not catalogued at all there are quite good chances to discover further evidence for Isaac's 'Second Part'. For transmission history of the 'First Part' see my forthcoming study G. Kessel, 'The manuscript tradition of the "First Part"' (2012).

<sup>65</sup> An asterisk marks a lacking (either opening or final) part of a section.

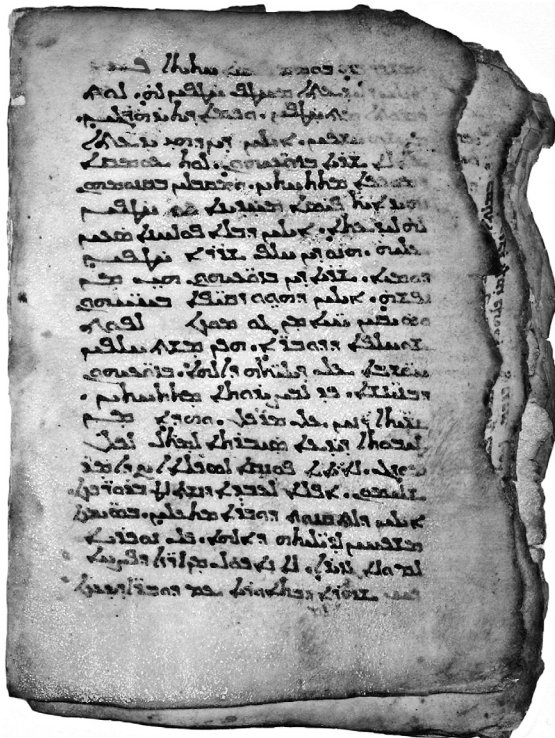
**18r** (i 43-9), **18v** (i 50-2), **19r** (i 53-5), **19v** (i 56-8), **20r** (i 59), **20v** (i 60-2), **21r** (i 63, 64), **21v** (i 65, 66, 67 [+ a scholium], 68), **22r** (i 69-71), **22v** (i 72, 73), **23r** (i 74-9), **23v** (i. 80), **24r** (i 81), **24v** (i 82-4\*)

Mardin Orth. 420

P. **425** (ch. 3, ii 39), **426** (ii 39 [+ a scholium]-41), **427** (ii 42-4 [+ a scholium]), **428** (ii 44), **429** (ii 44), **430** (ii 92, 93), **431** (ii 94-8), **432** (ii 99-101), **433** (iii 26-31), **434** (iii 32-5), **435** (iii 36-7), **436** (iii 38, 42-5), **437** (iii 46, 61), **438** (iii 61 [+ a scholium]-63), **439** (iii 64), **440** (iii 64-8, iv 34), **441** (iv 35), **442** (iv 36 [abridged]), **443** (iv 36, 49-51), **444** (iv 52-4), **445** (iv 55-6), **446** (iv 57), 447 (iv 58), **447-50** (ch. 15).

Sharfeh Rahmani 181

F. **52r** (ch. 3, ii 39), **52v** (ii 39 [abridged + an abridged scholium], 40-3), **53r** (ii 44 [+ a scholium]), **53v** (ii 44 [abridged]), **54r** (ii 96, 97), **54v** (ii 98), **55r** (ii. 99-100 [abridged], 101, iii 26-8), **55v** (iii 29, 32-5), **56r** (iii 36 [abridged], 42-5 [abridged], 61), **56v** (iii 61 [+ a scholium], 62-4), **57r** (iii 64 [abridged], 65, iv 35, 36 [abridged]), **57v** (iv 49), **58r** (iv 56, 57), **58v** (iv 58 [abridged]).



Cambridge University Library ms. Oriental 1144, fol. 15v.

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# CRITICA ET PHILOLOGICA



# Using Computers to Identify Ancient Scribal Hands: A Preliminary Report

Michael PENN, Mount Holyoke College, USA

## ABSTRACT

A software prototype uses recent advances in digital handwriting recognition to analyze ancient manuscripts. The system quantifies how closely the handwriting of a test document matches the handwriting of manuscripts in the computer's database. The results help one to identify manuscripts written by the same scribe and establish a manuscript's composition date and provenance. When tested on a data set of a few dozen Syriac manuscripts, the prototype was 100% effective in correctly matching a test page with the manuscript it came from.

A collaboration between a Smith College computer science professor, a Smith engineering student, and myself has developed a software system that applies recent advances in digital handwriting recognition to ancient manuscripts. This paper briefly details this project's design, its current state of development, a preliminary evaluation of its effectiveness, and an overview of future plans. The project is still in its early stages. Nevertheless, by publishing a preliminary report of its progress, my hope is to solicit feedback and obtain further collaboration from other patristic scholars.

The goal of the *Automated Scribal Identification Project* is to develop and distribute a software package to identify the scribal hand of a given manuscript and to uncover relationships between ancient documents. After a scholar scans in a facsimile copy of a manuscript page of interest, the system will compare the test document to those in its database. It will list the degrees of similarity between this document's handwriting and those of other manuscripts, noting any close enough to suggest that they were written by the same scribe. It will also compare the test document's handwriting to the handwriting of documents with dated colophons, indicating a year range during which the manuscript most likely was written.

Without technological intervention, this level of analysis would not be possible. A minority of extant manuscripts contain a colophon providing the name of the copyist or the date of its composition. We simply do not know how many different scribes were responsible for the others, which documents were written by the same scribes, or – in most cases – when these documents were written. Even the few scholars who have the necessary paleographic expertise cannot

possibly compare the handwriting of a given manuscript with thousands of others to properly trace the relationships between them.

In addition to providing information about the provenance of individual manuscripts, the *Automated Scribal Identification Project* would enable historians to discover new connections between these texts. The ability to identify multiple documents from the same scribal hand would help scholars correlate data from one manuscript to another, discern manuscripts that have been divided between modern libraries, investigate the development of scribal schools, approximate the contents of ancient monastic collections, and trace the circulation of ancient codices. The digital analysis of ancient handwriting thus provides a key for understanding not only the composition of individual documents, but also the larger context and communities in which they were written.

To demonstrate the feasibility and the benefits of applying digital handwriting algorithms to ancient materials, we developed a prototype to analyze manuscripts written in the Aramaic dialect of Syriac. Unlike languages such as Latin and Greek, Syriac developed only three distinct script styles, making it much easier for a research assistant or a computer to identify individual Syriac letters. At the same time, the lack of numerous script types makes the detailed analysis of a scribe's specific handwriting that much more essential for establishing when and where a Syriac document was written. Syriac also has a relatively small corpus of materials: approximately 10,000 extant manuscripts, many of which are currently housed in European libraries that provide inexpensive facsimile copies of individual pages. This facilitates the rapid assembly of a database that can include handwriting samples from a substantial portion of all surviving texts.

The *Automated Scribal Identification Project* will substantially transform our knowledge of this key culture. In addition to providing new information about individual manuscripts, when combined with traditional tools of historical and literary analysis, this project would lead to new questions and new fields of inquiry. Because most manuscripts currently lack verifiable dates of composition and their relationships with each other are indeterminate, researchers most often use manuscripts solely as a means to reconstruct the earliest form of the individual texts they contain. This type of text criticism focuses on origins but deemphasizes transmission and reception history. In contrast, the data this project will generate through the clustering of related manuscripts would allow scholars to explore manuscripts as collections.

The project began in the spring 2009 when I first met with Dr. Nicholas Howe, a professor of computer science at Smith College. Professor Howe is a specialist in digital handwriting recognition. Much of the work in this field analyzes modern handwriting to verify check signatures or handwritten ZIP codes. Dr. Howe, however, is one of the few scholars whose research centers on historical texts. I asked him to consider using the computational techniques he and others had developed to study Syriac documents. The following academic

year, one of Dr. Howe's engineering students, Ms. Emma Dalton, created and tested a computerized system designed specifically to analyze Syriac manuscripts. Ms. Dalton's system forms the starting point for the *Automated Scribal Identification Project*.

Using Matlab, Ms. Dalton's programmed a software package that quantifies how close the handwriting of a test document matches the handwriting of other Syriac manuscripts in the computer's database. It does this by measuring five different handwriting elements. Two of these elements are text-independent – they require neither the computer nor the user to know anything about the Syriac script. Rather, they simply quantify overarching style differences. This is analogous to how the causal human observer often distinguishes between handwriting samples: one writer might favor big bubble letters and another condensed, angular print. Even without comparing individual characters, it is not difficult to tell that these came from separate hands. The advantage of text-independent techniques is that they are fully automated. The user simply scans in a manuscript page and the computer completes its analysis without further input. The system currently evaluates two text-independent elements: (1) contour hinge – how rounded is the Syriac text, and (2) run length – the average vertical and horizontal spacing between Syriac textual elements, essentially how squinted or expansive the handwriting is.

The program also uses three text-dependent methods, algorithms that compare individual letters to each other. This is analogous to how a human might more carefully adjudicate between text samples – how similar are the a's to each other, how similar are the b's, and so on. To quantify such differences, the system uses a technique developed at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, called letter congealing. The computer produces a mean of all its samples of a given letter (say, several hundred examples of the Syriac letter *alaph*). This creates a standard against which the individual letters from a given document can be measured. The system then compares each letter in a document against this standardized letter form in three ways: (1) whole letter – the entire letter is compared, that is, *alaphs* are compared with *alaphs*, *beths* with *beths*, and so on; (2) letter parts – a geometrically significant portion of a given letter is compared, for example, just the upper curve of the *alaphs*, just the inner curve of the *beths*, and so on; and (3) concave hulls – the blank space between letter strokes are compared, for example, the spacing between the upper and lower curves of the *alaphs*, the elliptical space within the *beths*, and so on. To use this system, the user scans in three pages of the test document. She then identifies for the computer several examples of each Syriac letter type found on these pages (a process that will be at least partially automated in future versions of the software). The system then produces a quantitative description of the document's handwriting that far surpasses what could be obtained without digital intervention – two quantifications of the hand's general style and three quantifications for each of the document's twenty-two Syriac letters. Finally, the system compares these



results with those of the Syriac manuscripts in its database to determine which have the most similar handwriting and how close the fit is.

To test the prototype, Ms. Dalton assembled a database of Syriac handwriting from twenty-nine ancient codices, each of which was written by a single scribe. Ms. Dalton initially transferred a PDF file of three pages from each manuscript into the database. To test the system's effectiveness, she chose an additional page from one of the manuscripts as a test page. For example, if the computer had previously analyzed pages 6, 10, and 12 from the first manuscript, the test page might be page 9. Because the system had not previously seen this fourth page, it did not yet know to which manuscript it belonged. The computer was then asked which of the twenty-nine documents had handwriting closest to that of the test page. If the computer chose the same manuscript the test page had come from, this would indicate that the system had properly identified the handwriting. If the computer thought that the closest match to the test page was one of the other twenty-eight manuscripts, then the system had misidentified the scribal hand. Document recognition was tabulated for each of the handwriting elements. That is, what was the success rate if the computer only examined the handwriting contour, what if it only compared the whole letter of all the *alaphs*, what if only the whole letters of the *beths*, and so on. Then, it started combining these elements.

The text-independent methods performed with 76 percent accuracy. That is, if the computer never looked at a single letter but simply the overarching writing style, it would correctly match the documents' handwriting three times out of four. If instead the computer compared the exterior shape of individual letters, the accuracy jumped to 92 percent. If the computer also compared individual parts of the letter and the spaces within the letters, the accuracy was 98.7 percent. When it combined all five handwriting algorithms together, its accuracy was 100 percent. Every time the system would properly match a test page with the manuscript from which it came.

A 100 percent success rate for twenty-nine manuscripts does not guarantee a perfect success rate for a database containing hundreds of manuscripts, but it is a very encouraging result for a prototype. A larger database would also provide important data to further refine the algorithms. Most important, perfection is not necessary for the project's implementation. Although the prototype had been designed with the assumption that its user knows nothing more about Syriac than its alphabet, the anticipated users of the final product would themselves be scholars of Syriac. For a scholar to effectively compare manuscripts, the key is not for the computer to always find an exact match but to successfully eliminate most non-matches. If the computer can cull a database of several hundred manuscripts down to a dozen or so potential matches, Syriac scholars could easily make the final adjudications.

Currently we are focused on refining the prototype and expanding the manuscript database. Over the summer, a research assistant developed a Java interface

to the project, so that one can more easily input new manuscript data. Using this updated interface, another assistant is now entering in a set of manuscript pages in order to test the effect of sample size and image resolution upon the system's efficacy. Next year, we will work toward at least partially automating the input of new manuscripts through the assistance of optical character recognition. We also plan to substantially expand the image database with a particular emphasis on manuscripts with dated colophons and multiple manuscripts written by the same scribe. This will help us better assess the prototype, refine the system's algorithms, and see how closely handwriting from securely dated manuscripts clusters. The final stage would be expanding the database to several hundred manuscripts and developing a publically accessible web portal.

The end product would enable scholars to quickly upload facsimile pages of Syriac manuscripts and receive a list of documents written in a similar scribal hand, as well as suggestions for a range of plausible composition dates. The system's ever expanding database would also allow researchers to explore in new ways the relationships between these manuscripts and the ancient communities they represent. The immediate result would be a significant increase in our knowledge of one of the most important and influential branches of early Christianity. The long-term impact promises, however, to be even greater. Serving as the starting point for similar investigations in other language traditions, the *Automated Scribal Identification Project* could substantially enhance the analysis of thousands of pre-modern manuscripts and the societies that produced them.



## A Hitherto Unknown Witness to the Apostolic Constitutions in Uncial Script

Felix ALBRECHT, Göttingen, Germany

### ABSTRACT

The textual transmission of the Apostolic Constitutions (*Constitutiones Apostolorum*, CA) is rather heterogeneous: while the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions is quite well attested by two uncial manuscripts (*Cod. Vat. Barb. Gr.* 336 and the Latin *Fragmentum Veronense*), so far, no uncial witness for the other books was known. This article presents a new textual witness in uncial script for book one of the Apostolic Constitutions, which comes from the Göttingen State and University Library, and had been wrongly catalogued as a Syriac manuscript, bearing the shelfmark *Cod. Götting. Ms. Syr.* 17f. The new witness is henceforth be referred to by the siglum 'g'. It is part of the maculature of an old book cover and was donated to the Göttingen State and University Library by Hugo Duensing (1877-1961). It is likely that it belonged originally to the Grote collection. Friedrich Grote (1861-1922) was an important collector of Oriental manuscripts, who travelled several times during his life to Egypt and the Sinai. Probably our manuscript comes from Mount Sinai. It is written on parchment in an ogival, inclined majuscule, which is typical for the Sinaitic-Palestinian area. In particular, the script bears striking similarities to the *Auszeichnungsschrift* of the famous *Cod. Vat. Gr.* 2200. For palaeographic reasons our manuscript can be dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century AD and must, therefore, be considered the oldest witness for the first book of the Apostolic Constitutions. It contains CA I 1,3-4. According to Metzger's stemma, it can be assigned to the R-group, *i.e.* the manuscripts b and o. This article elucidates not only the manuscript's provenance, but also gives a codicological and palaeographical description, as well as a transcription and edition of this new, uncial witness.

The Apostolic Constitutions (*Constitutiones Apostolorum*, CA) rank among the most valuable – and checkered – documents available for the study of the history of ancient Church Orders.<sup>1</sup> In antiquity they were erroneously thought to be a collection of ecclesiastical regulations of Apostolic origin, recorded by Clement of Rome. In truth, they are a much later compilation of three main sources: the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the *Doctrina Duodecim Apostolorum*, and the *Traditio Apostolica*. The collection is of Antiochene provenance, and can be dated approximately to 380 AD. The Apostolic Constitutions are an

<sup>1</sup> *Les Constitutions Apostoliques I-III*, ed. Marcel Metzger, SC 320, 329, 336 (Paris, 1985-1987).

important source for the history of the Antiochene liturgy, but their relevance concerns not only liturgy. Much can be learned from them, for instance, about the concepts and development of ecclesiastical offices. The textual tradition of this compilation is not uniform: while the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions is quite well attested by two uncials (*Cod. Vaticanus Barberinianus* Gr. 336, 8<sup>th</sup> century, siglum ‘f’; and the Latin *Fragmentum Veronense*, 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century, siglum ‘FV’), no uncial witness for the other books is currently known. Until now, the only attestations to the first seven books – that we know about at least – have all come from later, minuscule manuscripts.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. *The New Find – Cod. Gotting. Ms. Syr. 17f*

Under the shelfmark “*Codex Manuscriptus Syriacus 17f*”, the State and University Library (SUB) in Göttingen holds a text, which is not – as one would expect – Syriac, but rather Greek, a fact not yet recognized. This hitherto unrecognized text is a fragment of the Apostolic Constitutions in uncial script and contains CA I 1,3-4. As it is written in an ogival, inclined majuscule script this newly discovered text can be dated for palaeographic reasons to the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century and must, therefore, be considered the oldest witness for the first book of the Apostolic Constitutions. The new Göttingen fragment is therefore of particular importance for the textual tradition. It is, moreover, now the oldest artefact in the Greek language in the possession of the Göttingen State and University Library. This textual witness should henceforth be referred to by the siglum ‘g’. After giving a brief codicological and palaeographical description, I would like to present a transcription and edition of this new, uncial witness.

#### 1.1. *Provenance*

Our text is part of the maculature of an old book cover. It was donated together with some Christian-Palestinian-Aramaic (CPA) palimpsest fragments by a person named Hugo Duensing (1877-1961) to the Göttingen State and University Library. Hugo Duensing was a German orientalist and pastor, born in 1877, who was a disciple of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918).<sup>3</sup> He specialized in Semitic languages. Duensing had good contacts with the Middle East. For instance, we are well informed about a journey to Jerusalem in 1914. On the

<sup>2</sup> Some fragmentary (minuscule) mss. listed by Jean-Baptiste Pitra, *Juris ecclesiastici Graecorum historia et monumenta I, A primo p. C. n. ad VI<sup>um</sup> saeculum* (Roma, 1864), 46f. are not taken into account by Metzger; cf. M. Metzger, *Constitutions* (1985), I 63f. Most of these mss. contain the eighth book, whereas none are presenting the first book or are older than the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD.

<sup>3</sup> For Hugo Duensing see Felix Albrecht, ‘Hugo Berthold Heinrich Duensing’, BBKL 33 (Nordhausen, 2012), 307-18; online: [http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/d/duensing\\_h\\_b\\_h.shtml](http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/d/duensing_h_b_h.shtml).

eve of First World War, together with Martin Flashar he took the trip, in order to consult Greek manuscripts in the Library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, we know that in later years Duensing maintained regular contact with antiques dealers, who visited him in Germany.<sup>5</sup> In Goslar, where he worked for more than twenty years as a pastor, he played a major part in establishing the world-famous private collection of Consul Adam. This collection, which contained numerous Oriental manuscripts, was open to the public from 1962 to 1979, but unfortunately was auctioned off in 1979. In particular, Duensing distinguished himself through the donation of important manuscripts to the University Library in Göttingen. Each year from 1911-1913 he gave one Syriac manuscript to the Library and in 1927 he donated another Syriac manuscript.<sup>6</sup> Particularly famous are the well-known Göttingen CPA palimpsest fragments (*Codd. Göttingenses Mss. Syr. 17-20.23*), which came from Duensing's private collection to the Göttingen State and University Library.<sup>7</sup> In the context of those fragments Duensing mentions a man named Dr. Friedrich Grote. Friedrich Grote (1861-1922) was an important collector of Oriental manuscripts, who travelled several times during his life to Egypt and the Sinai.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In the Greek Patriarchal Library in Jerusalem, Duensing took pictures of several mss. for the Septuaginta-Unternehmen in Göttingen, viz. Rahlfs mss. 402-5; 407; 410-2; see F. Albrecht, 'Duensing' (2012) – For Martin Flashar see Felix Albrecht, 'Martin Johannes Gerhard Flashar', BBKL 33 (Nordhausen, 2012), 418-20; online: [http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/f/flashar\\_m\\_j\\_g.shtml](http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/f/flashar_m_j_g.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> In a handwritten supplement to the catalogue of mss. in the SUB Göttingen a note on *Cod. Ms. Syr. 10* mentions the manuscript's provenance as follows: "1911 geschenkt von Dr. Lic. Hugo Duensing, Pastor in Dassensen (Kr. Einbeck), der <die Hs.> von einem oriental. Händler, der ihn gelegentl. in D. aufsucht, gekauft hat. Sie stammt vom Sinai".

<sup>6</sup> In 1911 Duensing donated to the University Library in Göttingen *Cod. Ms. Syr. 10*, in 1912 *Cod. Ms. Syr. 11*, in 1913 *Cod. Ms. Syr. 12*, in 1927 *Cod. Ms. Syr. 15* and in 1950 *Codd. Mss. Syr. 17-20* (v.i.).

<sup>7</sup> The Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA) language and especially the CPA manuscripts have been studied intensively by Hugo Duensing, see Hugo Duensing, *Christlich-palästinisch-aramäische Texte und Fragmente nebst einer Abhandlung über den Wert der palästinischen Septuaginta* (Göttingen, 1906); *id.*, 'Zwei christlich-palästinisch-aramäische Fragmente aus der Apostelgeschichte', *ZNW* 37 (1938), 42-6; *id.*, 'Neue christlich-palästinisch-aramäische Fragmente', *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse* (Göttingen, 1944), 215-27; *id.*, 'Nachlese christlich-palästinisch-aramäischer Fragmente', *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse* (Göttingen, 1955), 115-91.

<sup>8</sup> We do not know very much about Dr. Friedrich Grote (\*4.7.1861 in Päse, †20.1.1922 in Regensburg): He travelled several times to Egypt and was regarded as a proven expert in the Sinai. Margaret Dunlop Gibson, who visited together with her sister Agnes Smith Lewis Mt. Sinai two times at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, writes in her published diary, that they met on their first visit to Sinai in 1892 a man named Dr. Gröte (*sic!*): 'In the afternoon we turned into Wady Djenneh, where we saw a rabbit. Our tents were pitched at the foot of the Nugb Hawa, and there to our great delight we met Dr. Gröte, an Anglo-German missionary to the Bedaween, who had been spending the three months of winter in the convent, and had made good use of the time in exploring its Greek library [...]' ; Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *How the Codex Was Found. A Narrative of Two Visits to Sinai. From Mrs. Lewis's Journals 1892-1893* (Cambridge, 1893), 35. Presumably, this man was Dr. Friedrich Grote. According to William F. Hume, *The Topography*

Definitely the Göttingen CPA texts come from the Sinai Peninsula<sup>9</sup>, in my opinion probably from St. Catherine's Monastery.<sup>10</sup> As the Göttingen *Codd. Mss. Syr.* 17a-e *in toto* come from Mount Sinai, it is likely that also *Cod. Ms. Syr.* 17f has the same provenance: not only because later on it was kept together with the other parts by Duensing, but also due to palaeographical reasons: Palaeographically the Greek uncial script of our manuscript bears resemblance to other uncial manuscripts found on Mount Sinai (e.g. *Cod. Sin. Gr.* 28, LXX Psalms, 9<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. Rahlfs Ms. 1185). The later path of *Cod. Ms. Syr.* 17f is clear: at the end of his life Grote partially liquidated his extensive collection. Whereas parts of the collection were sold to Munich and Goslar, the majority came to Paris, London, in the Vatican Library and in the Schøyen Collection (London, Oslo).<sup>11</sup> His widow Käte Grote-Hahn retained another part, which was also sold afterwards.<sup>12</sup> The Göttingen CPA palimpsest fragments belonged to the Grote collection and came in to the possession of Duensing: in 1938 Duensing mentions that he obtained these as a gift without specifying who the

*and Geology of the Peninsula of Sinai (South-Eastern Portion)* (Kairo, 1906), 19: Grote had 'an intimate acquaintance with the peninsula' and owned 'a large photographic collection' of Mt. Sinai. The 'Chronik der königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin für das Rechnungsjahr 1907', Jahrgang 21 (Halle, 1908), 191 mentions Dr. Grote's gift of animals from Mt. Sinai to the 'Zoologisches Museum der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin' (today: 'Museum für Naturkunde'). – Since 1918 Grote lived in Leutkirch, Württemberg.

<sup>9</sup> H. Duensing, 'Zwei Fragmente' (1938), 43.

<sup>10</sup> In Egypt there are mainly three locations, which have brought to light CPA manuscripts that are almost always palimpsests: First of all St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, then the Wadi El Natrun and the Cairo Genizah. An important codex that came from Mt. Sinai is the so-called *Codex Climaci rescriptus* (now in private ownership; another single leaf from that codex, which contains *Acts* 21:14-25, forms *Cod. Ms. Syr.* 637 of the Mingana Collection, Birmingham). Furthermore noteworthy is *Codex Sinaiticus Zosimi rescriptus* (Schøyen Collection, London & Oslo, Ms. 35 [49½ ff.]; Ms. 36 [1½ ff.]; Ms. 37 [½ f.]; St. Petersburg [16½ ff.]; SUB Göttingen, *Codd. Mss. Syr.* 28A; 28B [½ f. and ¼ f. of Schøyen Ms. 36]), which belonged originally to the Grote collection (v.i.); see Alain Desreumaux, *Codex sinaiticus Zosimi rescriptus. Description codicologique des feuillets araméens melkites des manuscrits Schøyen 35, 36 et 37 (Londres – Oslo) comprenant l'édition de nouveaux passages des Évangiles et des Catéchèses de Cyrille*, Histoire du texte biblique 3 (Lausanne, 1997), 15. See also *id.*, 'L'apport des palimpsestes araméens, Christo-palestiniens. Le cas du Codex Sinaiticus Zosimi rescriptus et du Codex Climaci rescriptus' in *Palimpsestes et éditions de textes, Les textes littéraires. Actes du colloque tenu à Louvain-la-Neuve, Septembre 2003*, Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 56 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2009), 201-11.

<sup>11</sup> See Paul Géhin, 'Manuscrits sinaïtiques dispersés I. Les fragments syriaques et arabes de Paris', *OrChr* 90 (2006), 23-43, 24.

<sup>12</sup> Since 1924 Käte Grote-Hahn lived in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, Hildegardstraße 14. In 1930 she wrote a dissertation in agriculture; Käte Grote-Hahn, *Die Preisentwicklung in der dänischen Landwirtschaft und ihre Wirkungen auf Bodenkultur und Viehhaltung* (Greifswald, 1930). – The private collection of Dr. Käte Grote-Hahn is mentioned several times, e.g. by Gregor Peradze, 'Im Dienste der georgischen Kultur (1926-1940). Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben und mit einer Einleitung versehen von Hubert Kaufhold', *OrChr* 83 (1999), 193-225, 209<sup>30</sup>, and by H. Duensing, 'Zwei Fragmente' (1938), 42.

donor was.<sup>13</sup> However, in 1944, he clarifies: “Now that their former owner is no longer among the living, I believe that I can mention his name: it is the late Dr. Friedrich Grote. In his estate were found pieces which at that time [sc. in 1906] remained unknown to me, (...) that his widow gave to my possession and graciously allowed me to publish”.<sup>14</sup> Finally Duensing donated them to the Göttingen University Library in 1950 as a gift, too. The library archives contain a reference to the donation. In a letter, dated December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1950, Duensing writes from Goslar to Prof. Dr. Hartmann, at that time director of the Göttingen University Library:<sup>15</sup> “Furthermore, I add a book cover with a Greek uncial and an Arabic lateral version. If the pressed on sheet of Armenian script is removed, then the Greek (*i.e.* the Christian text) can certainly be read with ease”.<sup>16</sup> Although a renowned expert in manuscripts, it is noteworthy that Duensing did not identify the Greek text. In the following, I would like to give a brief description of the book cover.

## 1.2. Description

Our book cover forms the front of an ancient codex. Originally it measured 19,0 × 12,5 cm. Today it is misshaped on the exterior side due to the exigencies of survival. The thickness is 3 mm. The exterior was embossed with a simple decoration in a form of St. Andrew’s cross. Five clusters of white fibres forming the oversewing of the original bookbinding are visible. In addition, at the two outer clusters are red fibres belonging to the upper and lower headband. The text is written on a parchment sheet that is glued to the inner side of the book cover as part of the cover’s maculature. It shows the Greek text on the left side with an Arabic translation on the right side. The Greek script has a height of 4 mm and the space between the lines is 3 mm. The Arabic translation can be dated on the basis of palaeography to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The fragments of writing, which Duensing designated as Armenian, are in fact Old Georgian.<sup>17</sup> That is to say, the back cover was originally lined by a folio from

<sup>13</sup> H. Duensing, ‘Zwei Fragmente’ (1938), 44: ‘Als mir nun vor Jahren diese Lage geschenkt wurde’.

<sup>14</sup> H. Duensing, ‘Neue Fragmente’ (1944), 215: ‘Jetzt, wo deren ehemaliger Besitzer nicht mehr unter den Lebenden weilt, glaube ich seinen Namen nennen zu dürfen: es ist der verstorbene Dr. Friedrich Grote. In seinem Nachlaß fanden sich noch mir damals (sc. 1906) unbekannt gebliebene Stücke, (...) die dessen Witwe mir zum Besitz und zur Veröffentlichung gütigst überließ’.

<sup>15</sup> SUB Göttingen, Archiv der Abteilung für Handschriften und Seltene Drucke, Az. 109 Hs. 1950/4.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Ausserdem füge ich einen Buchdeckel mit griechischer Unziale und einer arabischen Lateralversion hinzu. Wenn das darauf gedruckte Blatt mit Armenisch entfernt wird, kann man sicherlich das Griechische (christlicher Text) gut lesen’.

<sup>17</sup> Many thanks to Natka Dundua (Frankfurt) for identifying and transcribing this fragment. The texts are two hymns, ed. Gulnaz Kiknajem, *Nevmirebuli jlispirni (xelnaceri A-603)*, Jveli



a Georgian paper manuscript. Palaeography demonstrates here too that the Georgian writing can be dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3. *Palaeographical Characteristics*

Palaeographically, the script can be characterised as an ogival majuscule, inclined to the right.<sup>19</sup> It shows a pronounced inclination of the script's axis to the right. Very narrow letters (like Epsilon, Theta, Omikron and Sigma) are juxtaposed with large letters (*e.g.* Mu and Omega). The contrast between thick and thin strokes is emphasized: For instance, the middle of the Theta, and the underscore of the Upsilon are thin. The particle  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  is abbreviated in the tachygraphical form of a Latin majuscule 'S', as is typical for the 8<sup>th</sup>, as well as 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> Nu is abbreviated by a small horizontal line, placed over the row.<sup>21</sup> The spiritus is angular. Punctuation consists of commas and raised dots. In general, our script shows similarities to scripts from the Sinaitic-Palestinian area. Peculiar are the serifs, which have a conical and triangular shape, added to the horizontal strokes of the Gamma and Tau, and the angular strokes of the Upsilon. In particular, the script of our manuscript bears a striking similarity to the *Auszeichnungsschrift* of the famous *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200* (*e.g.*, p. 8, ll. 8-10; p. 13, ll. 1-10), which has been described in detail by Lidia Perria.<sup>22</sup> Almost all letters of these two ogival majuscules have comparable

k'art'uli mcerlobis jeglebi 3 (Tbilisi, 1982), 125 (N° 1), 183 (N° 75,1); ll. 6-13 of the fragment can be given as follows:

- 6 (N° 75,1:) კურთხეულარსა ს[იყუა]რულ[ითა ყოველთა მკსნელისადა]
- 7 არად შე[პრ]აცხეს [ყრმათა რისხვად მძლა]
- 8 ვრისა ღმრთის[მო]ძულ[ისადა და] ცეცხლსა შე[თხ]
- 9 [ელონი არა შეიწ]უნეს და ესრ[ეთ] ლაღადებდ[ეს:]
- 10 [მამათა ჩუენთა ღმერთო, კურთხეულ ხარ შენ.] (N° 1:) აკურთხევედითსა ყრმ[ანი] ბაბი[ლონს]
- 11 [შეუწუველნი პირვე]ლად [სახ]ე გექმნეს [შენ.]
- 12 [ქალწულო დი]დებუ[ლო, რაყამს შენგან იშვა] ცეცხლი ღმ[რთეებისა]
- 13 [და] და[გიცვა შენ უგნებელად, უბიწო]დ

<sup>18</sup> Thanks to Nino Doborjginidze (Tbilisi), who affirmed the script's dating into the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.

<sup>19</sup> Guglielmo Cavallo, *Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica*, Studi e testi di papirologia 2 (Firenze, 1967), 118-21; see plates 108-11; Dieter Harlfinger, 'Beispiele der Maiuscula ogivalis inclinata vom Sinai und aus Damaskus. Mit 25 Tafeln', in *Alethes Philia. Studi in onore di Giancarlo Prato* (Spoleto, 2010), II 461-77.

<sup>20</sup> See Oskar Lehmann, *Die tachygraphischen Abkürzungen der griechischen Handschriften. Mit 10 Tafeln* (Leipzig, 1880), 96-8, 97; Gregorij Cereteli, *Сокращения въ греческихъ рукописяхъ преимущественно по датированнымъ рукописямъ С.-Петербурга и Москвы* (St. Petersburg, 1904), 79-86 with plate 7.

<sup>21</sup> See O. Lehmann, *Abkürzungen* (1880), 2f.

<sup>22</sup> Many thanks to Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana (Bologna), who has drawn my attention to this evidentiary similarity. – Regarding the *Auszeichnungsschrift* of *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200* see Lidia Perria, 'Il Vat. gr. 2200. Note codicologiche e paleografiche', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 30-31 (1983-1984), 53-61, esp. 54-7; in general see Salvatore Lilla, *Bibliothecae*

realisations.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the *minuscola agiopolita* of *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200* abbreviates καί in the same tachygraphical way as our manuscript.<sup>24</sup> However, the Göttingen manuscript is written in a less experienced and trained hand as the Vatican manuscript. Perria dates the *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200* to the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> Not only therefore, our text should be dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, too.

On the individual forms of the letters, the following observations can be made:

The letter *Alpha* consists of two parts: The main line is a broad strong stroke drawn from top left to the bottom right. The other part consists of a semi-circle at an angle of 90 degrees that has a rather acute curve and is not always connected to the main stroke. – The *Delta* has a thin base. – *Epsilon* and *Sigma* are – as already mentioned – always written extremely small (which makes them sometimes difficult to distinguish at first glance). The central line of the *Epsilon* is extended to the right. The *sigma* has the form of a lunate *Sigma* (*Sigma lunatum*). – The crossbar of the *Theta* is as high as letters having no ascender. It is higher than most other letters. – Like the *Alpha*, *Kappa* is formed in two parts: The right part of the letter is separate from the left. – The letter *Mu* consists of four parts: two vertical strokes and the bridge-like connection between the two vertical strokes, which is not drawn very carefully and also consists of two parts. *Mu* is quite wide in contrast to *Epsilon*, *Theta*, *Omicron* and *Sigma*. In addition, there is a minuscule like form of *Mu*, which is also known from the Auszeichnungsschrift of *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200* and can be characterized as a transition between majuscule and minuscule form.<sup>26</sup> – *Tau* and *Gamma* have triangular adorning serifs. For the *Tau*, the right serif is angled to the left. The serifs on the *gamma* are drawn like a shepherd's crook. – The right stroke of the *Upsilon* begins at top right and becomes progressively thinner in the descender portion to bottom left. – The letter *Phi* shows a form that is typical for an ogival majuscule inclined to the right, namely the vertical main line with a center circle. – *Omega* has conferred to the other letters the lowest altitude.

## 2. Transcription

The transcription follows the traditional rules for a diplomatic transcription of an uncial text. Therefore I consider the original accentuation and punctuation as precisely as possible. Characters, which are not legible completely, are marked with an underlying dot. The original abbreviations for *nomina sacra* etc. are placed as parentheses, using a smaller font size for the amended text. The *scriptio continua* has been disregarded in favour of a better legibility by a continuous word separation.

*Apostolicae Vaticanae codices manu scripti recensiti iubente Leone XIII Pont. Max., Codices Vaticani Graeci 10, Codices 2162-2254 (Codices Columnenses)* (Roma, 1985), 149-55.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. the *Upsilon*: *Cod. Gotting. Ms. Syr.* 17f, l. 8, comparable with *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200*, p. 13, l. 1.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. *Cod. Vat. Gr. 2200*, p. 22, ll. 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 18 etc. For this abbreviation see L. Perria, 'Il Vat. Gr. 2200' (1983-1984), 65 with plate VI, fig. 5.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 67f.

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.* 58-61; Perria characterizes this script as: 'una scrittura ben circoscritta sul piano spaziale e temporale, attestata al Sinai tra la fine dell'VIII secolo e il IX' (*ibid.* 58).

ΚΑ Η ΤΟΝ ΠΑΪΔΑ Η  
 ΤΗΝ ΠΑΙΔΙΣΚΗΝ  
 ΤΟΥ ΠΛΗΣΙΟΥ, ΗΔΗ  
 ΚΑΤΑ ΔΙΑΝΟΙΑΝ  
 ΜΟΙΧΟΣ Κ(ΑΙ) ΚΛΕΠΤΗΣ  
 ΕΣΤΙΝ ΕΑΝ ΜΗ ΜΕ  
 ΤΑΝΟΗ· ΚΑΙ ΚΕΚΡΗ  
 ΤΑΙ ΥΠΟ ΤΟΥ Κ(ΥΡΙΟ)Υ ΗΜΩ(Ν)  
 Ι(ΗΣΟΥ) Χ(ΡΙΣΤΟΥ) ΔΙ' ΟΥ Κ(ΑΙ) ΜΕΘ ΟΥ  
 Η ΔΟΞΑ ΤΩ Θ(Ε)Ω ΕΙΣ  
 ΤΟΥΣ ΑΙΩΝΑΣ ΑΜΗΝ  
 ΛΕΓΕΙ ΓΑΡ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΕΥ  
 ΑΓΓΕΛΙΩ ΑΝΑΚΕ  
 ΦΑΛΑΙΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ  
 ΣΤΗΡΙΖΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΛΗ  
 ΡΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΔΕΚΑΛΟ  
 ΓΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΟΜΟΥ  
 ΟΤΙ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΝΟΜΩ ΓΕΓΡΑΠΤΑΙ

### 3. Edition (CA I 1,3-4)<sup>27</sup>

New sentences begin with small letters. Initial upper case letters have been used only for proper names and for the terms Θεός and Κύριος. The punctuation follows modern linguistic usage and is not oriented to the transcription. Following the example of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae*, the apparatus readings are indicated using exponent letters in the main text.

*Testes:* H (= a, c, h), M (= p, v), R (= g, o)

a = *Cod. Vat. Gr.* 839, s. X

c = *Cod. Athous Vatop.* 171, s. X

g = *Cod. Gotting. Ms. Syr.* 17f, s. VIII/IX

o = *Cod. Bodl. Miscell.* 204, s. X

h = *Cod. Hierosol. S. Crucis* 3, s. X/XI

p = *Cod. Petrop.* 100, a. 1111

v = *Cod. Vindob. Pal. Hist. Gr.* 73, s. X

(3) [ὁ γὰρ ἐπιθυμήσας τὴν γυναῖκα ἢ τὸν παῖδα ἢ τὴν παιδίσκην τοῦ πλησίου ἤδη κατὰ διάνοιαν μοιχὸς καὶ κλέπτης ἐστίν, ἐὰν μὴ <sup>a</sup>μετανοῇ<sup>a</sup>, <sup>b</sup>καὶ<sup>b</sup> κέκριται ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, <sup>c</sup>δι' οὗ καὶ μεθ' οὗ ἡ δόξα τῷ Θεῷ<sup>c</sup> εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν. (4) λέγει γὰρ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ, ἀνακεφαλαιούμενος καὶ στηρίζων καὶ πληρῶν τὴν δεκάλογον τοῦ νόμου· “ὅτι <sup>d</sup>ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται· [οὐ μοιχεύσεις· ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν”, τοῦτ' ἐστίν<sup>d</sup> ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῷ διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐγὼ ἐλάλησα, νῦν δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς ὑμῖν λέγω]

(a) μετανοῇ] μεταγνῶ H, M, o.

(b) om. καὶ H.

(c) δι' οὗ καὶ μεθ' οὗ ἡ δόξα τῷ Θεῷ] ὃ ἡ δόξα M; δι' οὗ ἡ δόξα τῷ Θεῷ H, o.

(d) ἐν (...) ἐστίν om. o.<sup>28</sup>

The textual transmission is distributed to four families: R, N, M and H, in which family M depends on families N and H. R, N and H are deriving directly from the archetype and are used by Metzger for establishing his critical text.<sup>29</sup> According to Metzger's stemma, our new witness can be assigned to the important R-group (mss. b, o). However, our manuscript differs from 'o' in two ways: First, 'g' testifies a variant reading with μετανοεῖν instead of μεταγιγνώσκειν. Second, 'g' gives the longer reading δι' οὗ καὶ μεθ' οὗ; a

<sup>27</sup> CA I 1,3-4 ed. M. Metzger, *Constitutions* (1985), I 104; see *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum I*, ed. Franz Xaver Funk (Paderborn, 1906), 5.

<sup>28</sup> Here is not to say whether or not g goes with o; at least, the parablepsis is secondary. If g would not have this parablepsis, g would stand before o in the stemma.

<sup>29</sup> See M. Metzger, *Constitutions* (1985), I 88f.

reading that can indeed easily be explained as a supplement according to the common Christological formula.

#### **4. Conclusion**

We can now summarise: the new witness is written on parchment in an ogival majuscule inclined to the right from the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Probably it comes from Mount Sinai. It contains CA I 1,3-4 and is the oldest witness for book one. According to Metzger's stemma, it can be assigned to the R-group, *i.e.* the manuscripts 'b' and 'o'.

# Preaching as the Audience Heard it: Unedited Transcripts of Patristic Homilies

Nikolai LIPATOV-CHICHERIN, Nottingham, UK, and St Petersburg, Russia

## ABSTRACT

The article attempts to provide a reconstruction of all the stages through which a Patristic homily or a cycle of homilies passed from the initial drafts to the eventual redactions of the edited text in circulation. Two particular cases of unedited transcripts are given as examples: a record of an interrupted sermon *In Memory of Martyrs* attributed by its only manuscript to St Basil the Great (CPG 2941, never published or studied before) and a transcript of a homily *On King Uzziah* by St John Chrysostom (CPG 4417, homily 4), which is compared with its edited sibling (homily 5).

The current study of Patristic homilies<sup>1</sup> tends to pay increasing attention to such issues as techniques of preaching, interaction between the preacher and his audience, the liturgical setting of sermons, the editorial process preceding the publication of homilies and the formation of their cycles.<sup>2</sup> A satisfactory solution to many of the questions raised depends on our ability to establish with some certainty how accurately the surviving written text reflects what actually was said on the occasion. Often the degree of reworking of the text before its dissemination in a written form may be substantial although not always immediately apparent. Identification of the stage to which a critically examined text belongs is crucial in assessing whether its possible stylistic differences with securely attributed representative works of the claimed author relegate our text

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Natalia Smelova for her unfailing and generous support for my work on this article.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Cunningham and Pauline Allen (eds), *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, A New History of the Sermon 1 (Leiden and Boston, 1998); Ekkehard Mühlenberg and Johannes van Oort (eds), *Predigt in der Alten Kirche*, Studien der Patristischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft 3 (Kampen, 1994); Alexandre Olivar, *La Predicación Cristiana Antigua*, Biblioteca Herder, Sección de teología y filosofía 189 (Barcelona, 1991); Alexandre Olivar, 'Els predicadors antics i llurs auditoris', *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 8 (1983), 45-80; Nicole Bériou and Franco Morenzoni (eds), *Prédication et Liturgie au Moyen Âge*, Bibliothèque d'Histoire Culturelle du Moyen Âge 5 (Turnhout, 2008); Ramsay MacMullen, 'The preacher's audience (AD 350-400)', *JTS* NS 40 (1989), 503-11; Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church II. The Patristic Age* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1998); David Dunn-Wilson, *A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2005).

to *Spuria* or simply reflect lack of editing and cannot be used for attribution purposes.

A generalised history of the text of a homily or a sermon (as well as their historical predecessors: judicial and political speeches of Classical Antiquity) may, in its full extent, include the following stages:

- 1) preliminary sketches and drafts,
- 2) a prepared text written in advance and learned by heart,<sup>3</sup>
- 3) a stenographic record of the words as they were uttered (written in shorthand signs or σημεία),<sup>4</sup>
- 4) a transcript of the stenographic record into ordinary script,<sup>5</sup>
- 5) the first edited version prepared for copying by scribes and subsequent distribution,<sup>6</sup>
- 6) later handwritten editions.<sup>7</sup>

Unless the speech was given *ex tempore* in response to unexpected circumstances, its carefully prepared text was learned before the delivery (stage 2). The text in stages 3 and 4 may differ substantially from the memorised one because in the process of delivery the speaker could alter his original plan in various ways, including a change of order of the prepared material and addition

<sup>3</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 2.87-8 (355-60), Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Oratore*, ed. Kazimierz Feliks Kumaniecki, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, M. Tulli Ciceronis Scripta Quae Manserunt Omnia, fasc. 3 (Leipzig, 1969), 255-7; Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive studies of memory and literacy in classical antiquity* (London and New York, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Boge, *Griechische Tachygraphie und Tironische Noten. Ein Handbuch der antiken und mittelalterlichen Schnellschrift* (Berlin, 1973); Christian Johnen, *Geschichte der Stenographie im Zusammenhang mit der allgemeinen Entwicklung der Schrift und der Schriftkürzung*, 1 Bd. *Die Schriftkürzung und Kurzschrift im Altertum, Mittelalter und Reformationszeitalter* (Berlin, 1911); Hans Carel Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores: An Inquiry into Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire (from the Early Principate to c. 450 A.D.)*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology 1 (Amsterdam, 1985); Peter Ganz (ed.), *Tironische Noten*, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter Studien 1 (Wiesbaden, 1990); Ernest Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe 42 (Tübingen, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Acts of a public dispute between the Catholics and the Donatists in Carthage in 411 are a valuable example of a transcribed but unedited text. Emin Tengström, *Die Protokollierung der Collatio Carthaginensis. Beiträge zur Kenntnis der römischen Kurzschrift nebst einem Exkurs über das Wort scheda (schedula)*, Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia 14 (Göteborg, 1962). We may be certain that we have access to the live voice of the speaker only if we see the untouched transcript of what was said.

<sup>6</sup> The existing text of the oration on St Basil by Gregory of Nazianzus is so vast that it almost certainly is a result of thorough rewriting for publication purposes. The oral version must have been substantially shorter. Paul Gallay, *La Vie de S. Grégoire de Nazianze* (Lyon and Paris, 1943), 214. On the issue of the real duration of sermons see A. Olivar, *La Predicación Cristiana Antigua* (Barcelona, 1991), 696-7.

<sup>7</sup> Charles W. Hedrick Jr., *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin, Tex., 2000), 171-213.

of entirely new passages improvised on the spot in response to the changing situation and the audience's demands and expectations. Stage 3 is attested by several examples of surviving untranscribed stenographic records on papyri, wax tablets and parchment.<sup>8</sup> Each stage represents a different recension of the text (with the exception of 3 and 4 where the recension is the same). By recension I mean a result of significant and purposeful alteration of the text as opposed to unintended and/or not extensive changes introduced in the process of copying manuscripts by hand (variant readings). Stage 6 may in fact contain several consecutive recensions, if the text was edited or reworked several times.

In the process of transcribing the shorthand record into ordinary script minor and obvious mistakes of either the speaker or the shorthand writer could be corrected.

The process of editing could involve both stylistic and structural alteration of the transcribed text. For a variety of reasons some texts could have been left untouched and unpublished.<sup>9</sup> When the editing was carried out, it could be done by the author of the homily or by another person; it could take place soon after the oral delivery or some time later when the personal taste of the author, public expectations of how a homily should be constructed and theological agenda may well have moved on. Later editors could collate several manuscripts and adopt various strategies for dealing with textual differences contained in them as well as for correcting real or perceived scribal errors. Every homily must have passed through at least some of these stages, so that initially there existed simultaneously single copies of its different recensions. The preacher's personal archive would contain drafts, polished texts memorised for oral delivery, transcripts and edited versions. If the text was reworked for publication, then this recension would have much better chances for survival, yet the accidental nature of text preservation through the ages may have resulted in one of the earlier recensions outliving it against all the odds.

We know, for example, that the oral version and the published text of Cicero's speech in defence of Milo differed so considerably that Milo believed that he would have been acquitted, had the edited version been delivered in court.<sup>10</sup> A transcribed shorthand record of the original speech, stylistically much inferior, was put in circulation without Cicero's approval and was known in Antiquity

<sup>8</sup> C. Johnen, *Geschichte der Stenographie* (1911), 121-37; Michael Gitlbauer, 'Studien zur griechischen Tachygraphie', *Archiv für Stenographie* 54 (1902), 193-204.

<sup>9</sup> Jane W. Crawford, *M. Tullius Cicero: The Lost and Unpublished Orations*, Hypomnemata, Untersuchungen zur Antike und zu ihrem Nachleben 80 (Göttingen, 1984), 1-20.

<sup>10</sup> Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 40. 54. 3, Dion Cassius, *Histoire Romaine*, livres 38, 39 et 40, ed. Guy Lachenaud, tr., ann. Guy Lachenaud, Marianne Coudry, Collection des Universités de France, Série Grecque 483 (Paris, 2011), 187; James N. Settle, 'The trial of Milo and the other *Pro Milone*', *TAPA* 94 (1963), 268-80; A.M. Stone, '*Pro Milone*: Cicero's second thoughts', *Antichthon* 14 (1980), 88-111.



alongside the authorised edition.<sup>11</sup> Augustus regarded the existing text of one of Caesar's speeches as a version recorded by stenographers, who apparently could not keep up with his vigorous delivery, and not a properly edited one.<sup>12</sup>

John Chrysostom's *Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (in 34 homilies) has a subtitle: 'published from tachygraph's signs after his death by Constantine, a priest of Antioch'.<sup>13</sup>

Socrates Scholasticus in his *Church History* distinguishes between Chrysostom's homilies published by himself and those taken down by shorthand writers and presumably left unedited.<sup>14</sup>

Greater awareness of the fact that a surviving homily or a series of homilies reflects a particular stage in the history of the text is crucially important for the testing of manuscript attribution and establishment of authorship.<sup>15</sup> The main tool for this purpose is stylistic analysis. All too often, however, it is applied in an abstract and unhistorical way ignoring both the inevitable development of the manner of writing and speaking of the same person over the years and the huge difference that the editorial process makes to the condition of the text. Plain observation of stylistic difference may be irrelevant for attribution purposes, if the compared texts are separated by a significant period of time or do not belong to the same stage of literary process (especially as far as editing is concerned).

How can we establish to which stage of the textual transmission a particular homiletic text belongs? In other words: is it an advance record of what the speaker intended to say, a transcript of what he actually said or a published rewritten version of the homily (what the speaker thought he should have said

<sup>11</sup> *Ciceronis Oratorum Scholiastae*, ed. Thomas Stangl, vol. 2 *Scholia Bobiensia* (Vindobonae and Lipsiae, 1912), 112: 'Exstat alius praeterea liber actorum pro Milone, in quo omnia interrupta et inpolita et rudia, plena denique maximi terroris agnoscas'; *Q. Asconii Pediani Oratorum Ciceronis Quinque Enarratio*, ed. Albertus Curtis Clark, *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1907), *Pro Milone* 42: 'Manet autem illa quoque excepta eius oratio: scripsit vero hanc quam legimus ita perfecte ut iure prima haberi possit'; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 4.3.17, Quintilien, *Institution Oratoire*, Tome 3, Livres 4 et 5, ed. Jean Cousin, Collection des Universités de France (Paris, 1976), 79: 'Unde Ciceroni quoque in prohemio, cum diceret pro Milone, digredi fuit necesse, ut ipsa oratiuncula, qua usus est, patet.'

<sup>12</sup> Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 55, 5-7, Suétone, *Vies des Douze Césars*, t. 1, *César, Auguste*, ed. Henri Ailloud, Collection des Universités de France (Paris, 1989), 39.

<sup>13</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos Argumentum et Homiliae 1-34* (PG 63, 9): 'Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ἑβραίους Ἐπιστολήν, ἐκτεθεῖσα ἀπὸ σημείων μετὰ τὴν κοίμησιν αὐτοῦ παρὰ Κωνσταντίνου πρεσβυτέρου Ἀντιοχείας.'

<sup>14</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Hist. eccl.* VI 4,9, Sokrates, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Günther Christian Hansen, GCS NF 1 (Berlin, 1995), 316, 11-5: ... οἱ τε ἐκδοθέντες παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγοι καὶ οἱ λέγοντος αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τῶν δευγράφων ἐκληφθέντες; see Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* VIII 18, Sozomenus, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Joseph Bidez, Günther Christian Hansen, GCS NF 4 (Berlin, 1995), 373-4.

<sup>15</sup> The same is true for non-homiletic works like commentaries and treatises. Although their textual history does not include oral delivery, shorthand record and its transcription, still there can be substantial differences between the original draft (or a series of subsequent drafts), the published edited version and possible later revisions by the author himself or later editors.

or the later editors believed he must have said)? Potentially a surviving homiletic text can represent any one of these recensions although we can expect most of the surviving texts to belong to the last broad category: the edited texts. After all, it was this version that the author (and in their turn his later editors) intended for distribution and which was submitted to be copied by scribes so as to be sold by the booksellers.

Are there any criteria which would enable us to assign particular homilies to specific stages of life of the text? Some homilies, especially in the very large corpus of St John Chrysostom, appear to contain more colloquial forms, addresses to the audience and incidental remarks than others, which look revised by comparison. This criterion may form a basis for a distinction between homilies but it will have to remain approximate until we can establish the degree of editing applied to particular texts. Sometimes those texts which do have colloquial features may be suspected of being literary compositions which are deliberately styled as live exchanges with the audience.<sup>16</sup> Equally, what may look like a continuous commentary on a Biblical text may be a result of removal of introductions and doxologies of the homilies which were actually preached to a congregation.<sup>17</sup>

Dealing with an isolated homily we have to rely on the combination of textual and stylistic analysis in order to establish to which particular stage of textual history outlined above it may be allocated.<sup>18</sup> Some incompleteness and stylistic imperfections with no references to the audience or the current situation, possibly no introductory part and no doxology would be indicating a draft. If the homily is polished and contains generalised references to the audience, with or without the preface and the doxology, it is likely to be the text prepared for delivery or its edited version. Stylistically rougher text with impromptu remarks as well as the formal beginning and conclusion of the speech would

<sup>16</sup> A well-known example from pre-Christian oratory is provided by the five extra speeches *Against Verres* which Cicero published after the accused gave up his defence as a result of the first speech, which was the only one to be delivered in court. Accordingly, the remaining speeches with all their addresses to the judges and rhetorical questions to the prosecuted are either a preliminary text prepared for the action when the outcome had not yet been clear, or a literary work produced after the trial was over and demonstrating how Cicero would have conducted the prosecution had it been necessary to continue. Also a number of highly elaborate speeches by the authors of the Second Sophistic movement were probably from the very beginning intended to be read as literature, although they had all the formal marks of oral performance.

<sup>17</sup> Dom Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time I. Antioch*, Sr. M. Gonzaga (trans.) (Westminster, Md., 1959), 299; John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London, 1995), 90, 92-4; Robert Charles Hill, 'Chrysostom's Commentary on the *Psalms*: homilies or tracts?', in Pauline Allen, Raymond Canning and Lawrence Cross with B. Janelle Caiger (eds), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church I* (Brisbane, 1998), 301-17; Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom*, *The Early Church Fathers* (London, New York, 2000), 30-1.

<sup>18</sup> Blake Goodall, *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Letters of St. Paul to Titus and Philemon: Prolegomena to an Edition*, University of California Publications in Classical Studies 20 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1979), 62-78.

suggest an unedited transcript. Presence of some ideas or expressions uncharacteristic of the author or his time in general (if known) would signal a later revision. We should look for any signs of incomplete editorial work betraying the transformation of a series of homilies into a continuous text or of excessive polishing which may indicate that both questions from the audience and responses to them are imaginary.

Opportunities for analysis become significantly extended when we are dealing with a series of homilies. Probably the best case-study is offered to us by the corpus of works of St John Chrysostom because it is very extensive and varied, including homilies in series and on their own belonging to all periods of John's career as a writer and a speaker. The individual homilies and particular groups differ considerably in their polish, occasionally this internal evidence is corroborated by testimony from other sources that some of them were not edited by John and represent more or less untouched transcripts.<sup>19</sup> Even better, we have some rare examples of both edited and raw texts of the same homilies. All this should allow us eventually to identify specific editorial principles and methods which St John was using when preparing his homilies for circulation. It is very possible that these methods as well as the author's oral and written styles were not remaining static but were evolving throughout his life. Once these generic features are established by studying the homilies whose place in the textual history is known, it should be possible to apply the results to other parts of the corpus and to assess their respective positions. This will present us with a clearer and more systematic classification of Chrysostom's homilies, some of which will be reliably reflecting his actual preaching style and interaction with the audience, whereas others will be demonstrating the final result of his editorial work. It should then be possible to apply this analysis to homilies of other preachers, taking into account their specific circumstances.

The most valuable material for the study of the preaching and editorial techniques of a Church Father is pairs of texts of the same homilies representing unedited and edited versions respectively. Currently I am aware of the following ones:<sup>20</sup>

- the fourth and the fifth homilies of St John Chrysostom, *On King Uzziah*;
- Amphilochius of Iconium, *On the words 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me' (Matth. 26:39)* (de Aldama, 355) as edited by Karl Holl<sup>21</sup> and in *Patrologia Graeca*;<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ad Hebraeos argumentum et homiliae 1-34* (PG 63, 9). Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, 'The thirty four homilies on *Hebrews*: the last series delivered by Chrysostom in Constantinople?', *Byzantion* 65 (1995), 309-48.

<sup>20</sup> I am grateful to Dr Peter Tóth for drawing my attention to two recensions of a homily of St Amphilochius of Iconium and the edited and unedited versions of St John's series of *Homilies on Genesis*.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Holl, *Amphilochius von Ikonium in seinem Verhältnis zu den großen Kappadoziern* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1904), 91-102.

<sup>22</sup> PG 61, 751-6.

- Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis* in Codex Graecus 2 of the University Library of Budapest<sup>23</sup> and in *Patrologia Graeca* (Bernard de Montfaucon's text).<sup>24</sup>

There is also one text representing a stenographer's transcript of the homily *In Memory of Martyrs* attributed to St Basil the Great which does not have an edited version since it was interrupted and has remained unfinished.

I will look at the fourth Chrysostom's homily *On King Uzziah* and the homily attributed to St Basil as representative samples of unedited texts.<sup>25</sup>

The interrupted homily *In Memory of Martyrs*<sup>26</sup> is significant as a rare example of undoubtedly literal record of preaching (the middle part is not missing but has never been uttered, since we can see signs of the preacher defending his direction in interpreting the events and then clearly breaking off the sermon with a stinging remark). If this homily is not authentic, it at the very least provides an example of what could go wrong between a priest and a bishop who was going to preach immediately after the priest. However, if the manuscript attribution is correct, then we are most probably allowed to witness the very process of Basil falling out with his bishop Eusebius, the mysterious incident which forced Basil to withdraw from Caesarea to his monastery in Pontus.<sup>27</sup>

The text is preserved in a single tenth century manuscript written in *minuscule bouletée* and kept in Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice.<sup>28</sup> The manuscript contains a corpus of homilies for all of which it claims Basilian authorship. Homilies fall into three categories: 1) genuine; 2) spurious and 3) undetermined for lack of examination. The homily *In Memory of Martyrs* is among eight unpublished and never studied ones.<sup>29</sup>

Delivered by a priest in the presence of his bishop, it begins with a general introduction in elevated rhetorical style which praises unnamed martyrs and describes them as 'helmsmen sailing through this world in the ship of the body,

<sup>23</sup> Zvetlana-Michaela Tănasă, 'ELTE Codex Graecus 2 and some problems of editing a Chrysostomian text', in *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU 1997-1998* (CEU, Budapest, Dept. of Medieval Studies, 1999), 295-319.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Alexander Marcowicz, *The Text Tradition of St. John Chrysostom's Homilies on Genesis and Mss. Michiganensis 139, 78 and Holkhamicus 61*, Dissertation, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1953).

<sup>25</sup> This survey represents only an initial stage of research which I plan to extend to the other identified pairs of edited and unedited texts.

<sup>26</sup> *In Memoriam Martyrum*, CPG 2941, BHG 1191m; Paul Jonathan Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana Universalis* II/2, CC (Turnhout, 1996), 1189.

<sup>27</sup> The affair is discussed in the letters of Gregory of Nazianzus to bishop Eusebius (letters 16-8: Gregor von Nazianz, *Briefe*, Paul Gallay [ed.], GCS 53 [Berlin, 1969], 17-9) and to Basil himself (letter 19: *ibid.* 19-20) but the actual reason for the breakdown in relations is never explicitly stated.

<sup>28</sup> Marcianus gr. 55 (coll. 455), 268r-v; Paul Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana Universalis* II/1, CC (Turnhout, 1996), 116.

<sup>29</sup> Work on these homilies forms a part of a larger project of providing an *editio princeps* and study of unpublished homilies attributed in manuscripts to St Basil the Great in which I have been engaged.

excellent farmers cultivating the body in the manner of the land, experienced master-builders and skilful combatants’.

The second section very sparingly and without much detail draws the picture of trial of the five martyrs by an unidentified emperor and presents them as reciting in turn verses of *Psalm* 25 [26] which, as the preacher remarks, were sung alternately by two choirs just before he started his homily.

Opening the next, third, section the preacher explains that the preceding account of the martyrdom is only an introduction to the really important point – instruction of the listeners by means of analysing the event and showing ‘what the history requires and what the allegorical interpretation does’. Thus the audience is prepared for the presentation of what promises to be the main part of the text. At this point the style of the homily markedly changes. Easy flow of the text is interrupted by arguments defending the chosen path: the author justifies himself by reference to *Galatians* 4:24 in which the Apostle Paul speaks about interpreting historical personalities and events allegorically. The speech becomes more and more personal and starts to sound like an exchange of arguments with an invisible opponent: ‘I for my part trust the Apostle who says that “such things are presented allegorically”<sup>30</sup> and that one should not contrive [anything] contrary to the divine Scriptures’. The preacher resorts to a desperate argument, claiming that having a sermon at all can be justified only by searching for meaning which is beyond the obvious: ‘If this narration were to remain as it is<sup>31</sup> what would be the need of a teacher?’ Then after the words ‘but if one must do something...’ there comes a breaking point. The homily is abandoned without apparently reaching even the middle and is hurriedly rounded up with what amounts to a Parthian shot: ‘... the honourable bishop who has been trained in the divine Scriptures from the cradle will give you the fullest [possible] demonstration of the faith, to him be glory forever. Amen’. All this clearly shows that we are dealing with a transcript of a stenographer’s record taken at the time of the delivery of the homily.<sup>32</sup>

The unparalleled (and no doubt shocking for the listeners) substitution of the usual doxology to God with a proclamation of ‘glory forever’ to the bishop cannot be anything but bitter sarcasm. These final words provide a key to the situation. In their light the whole of the previous sentence assumes the character of sarcastic remark and indicates that far from being ‘trained in the divine Scriptures from the cradle’<sup>33</sup> the bishop was probably not sufficiently grounded in theology.

<sup>30</sup> *Gal.* 4:24.

<sup>31</sup> That is, without an allegorical interpretation.

<sup>32</sup> For the evidence of stenographic recording in Asia Minor at the time of the three Cappadocian Fathers see H. Boge, *Griechische Tachygraphie* (1973), 121-4; Eberhard Nestle, ‘Basilius der Große über die Kunst der Notenschrift’, *Archiv für Stenographie* 57 NF 2 (1906), 105-6. Wilhelm Weinberger, ‘Die Stenographie des Eunomios’, *Archiv für Stenographie* 61 NF 6 (1910), 149-50.

<sup>33</sup> Literally: ‘from tender nails’ (ἐξ ἀπαλῶν ὀνύχων).

The fact that the course of the sermon was diverted and then completely interrupted after the preacher's attempt to introduce allegory into the evaluation of the martyrs' struggle points out to it being the actual course of the sharp disagreement. Apparently the bishop protested or made signs to the preacher<sup>34</sup> who initially reacted by trying to justify himself and then, exasperated, abandoned his homily. The preacher's approach, which is highly unusual indeed, betrays the over-enthusiasm for allegorical method of someone who has only recently mastered and embraced it.

Before tackling the issue of authorship let us try to establish the actual subject of our homily and its possible date. The second part of the homily is disappointingly brief and gives precious little information about the martyrs. Obviously the audience knew the story fairly well and so the task of the preacher was to evaluate the affair rather than to retell it. We know that the martyrs were five and apparently formed a group of the 'holy five'. This still leaves us with several possibilities. One martyr is singled out as 'being about to die nobly (εὐγενῶς)' and this particular emphasis (for all true martyrs die nobly) alerts us to a possibility of play with etymology. Only one established group of five martyrs includes Εὐγένιος, namely the Five Martyrs of Sebaste in Armenia: Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugenius, Mardarius and Orestes whose memory is traditionally venerated on the 13 of December. Their popularity throughout the Christian East is attested by an early epilogue to their passion by Eusebius of Sebaste, a passion in the *Menologion* by St Symeon Metaphrastes, laudatory orations by the Studite monk Michael and by Nicetas David Paphlagon, an entry in the *Synaxarion of the Great Church*, as well as Armenian, Latin and Spanish versions of their passion.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> We also encounter this situation of the bishop apparently making signs to the preacher in Origen's homily on the witch of Endor (there his bishop indicates which of the four Scriptural passages just read Origen must speak about). Although Origen uses the word φησὶν (*he says*) to describe the action of the bishop, the fact that he had to relate it to the audience suggests that the communication was not heard by others and could have been by means of a sign; Origenes, *Homilia in I Reg. (I Sam.)* 28, 3-25: hom. V, 1, 19-24, in Origène, *Homélies sur Samuel*, ed. Pierre Nautin, Marie-Thérèse Nautin, SC 328 (Paris, 1986), 61-6, 172-4; Manlio Simonetti, *La Maga di Endor: Origene, Eustazio, Gregorio di Nissa*, Biblioteca Patristica 15 (Firenze, 1989), 78. At the end of the third homily on Uzziah John Chrysostom momentarily forgets that bishop Flavian was going to preach after him and tells the audience to go home. He immediately corrects himself instructing the people to listen to the bishop (possibly after having caught sight of some frantic gestures by somebody in the audience or by one of the bishop's attendants); Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias*, ed. Jean Dumortier, SC 277 (Paris, 1981), III 5, 54-7 (134); all references to the text of St John in this edition give the homily in Roman numerals, section, lines and pages (in brackets).

<sup>35</sup> François Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* I, Studia Hagiographica 8a (Bruxelles, 1957), 202-3 [646-646c]; *id.*, *Auctarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae Graecae*, Studia Hagiographica 47 (Bruxelles, 1969), 71; *id.*, 'L'épilogue d'Eusèbe de Sebaste à la Passion de S. Eustrate et de ses compagnons', *AB* 88 (1970), 279-83; Alexander Kazhdan and Nancy Ševčenko, 'Five Martyrs of Sebasteia', in Alexander Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* II (New York and Oxford, 1991), 789.



In her sticheron *For Eustratius and Companions* nun-poetess Kassia<sup>36</sup> uses very extensively the same technique of etymological allusion and speaks amongst other things about divine nobility (εὐγένεια) of our St Eugenius.<sup>37</sup>

The date of the composition of our homily can be based on the fact that the only theological reference in it is to the defence of the 'divinity of the Only-Begotten' Son of God which the martyrs are said to confess. This is apparently an issue which preoccupied the author of the homily and points clearly to the time of the Arian controversy in the fourth century. An interesting parallel to the friction caused by different attitudes to the legacy of Origen is provided by the case of consecutive sermons preached in Jerusalem in 393 by Epiphanius of Salamis, who was attacking Origenism, and the local bishop John, who responded by asking Epiphanius to stop and then proceeded himself to speak in defence of allegory and against anthropomorphism.<sup>38</sup>

The manuscript attribution of the homily to St Basil cannot be decisive, although it cannot be ignored either. The circumstances seem to match perfectly the episode between Basil and Eusebius in the course of which, according to Gregory of Nazianzus, who knew the situation well, Basil was 'neglected, insulted and rejected'.<sup>39</sup> Gregory outspokenly complained in a letter to Eusebius of a 'slight which has been inflicted' on Basil and resulted in his 'dishonouring'.<sup>40</sup> It was only a few years before Basil's confrontation with his bishop that he, together with Gregory, had compiled the *Philocalia*,<sup>41</sup> a selection of passages from the writings of Origen, which was largely focused on principles of interpreting Scripture and fully endorsed allegorical method (it may be interesting to note that in later writings Basil grew much more cautious about it). It is only natural that, being what it is, the text did not enjoy wide distribution. It is really surprising that it was copied at all. A severely truncated piece of a beginner's attempt at preaching does not tell much about

<sup>36</sup> Henry Julius Wetenhall Tillyard, 'A musical study of the hymns of Kassia', *BZ* 20 (1911), 420-85; Ilse Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia*, Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 38 (Berlin, 1967); Alexander Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (650-850)*, The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, Research Series 2 (Athens, 1999), 321-2.

<sup>37</sup> H.J.W. Tillyard, 'A musical study of the hymns of Kassia' (1911), 425 f., 452-5; I. Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* (1967), 42-3, 224.

<sup>38</sup> Hieronymus, *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitanum*, Jean-Louis Feiertag (ed.), CChr.SL 79A (Turnhout, 1999), 19-21; John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London, 1975), 199.

<sup>39</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio* 43, 28, Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours* 42-43, Jean Bernardin (ed.), SC 384 (Paris, 1992), 188-90.

<sup>40</sup> Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Epistula* 16, Gregor von Nazianz, *Briefe*, P. Gallay (ed.), GCS 53 (Berlin, 1969), 17-8.

<sup>41</sup> In 358 according to Paul Fedwick, 'A chronology of the life and works of Basil of Caesarea', in *id.* (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium I* (Toronto, 1981), 6.

the five martyrs of Sebaste, is not particularly accomplished in style and does not provide an edifying reading. The only possible reason that anybody might have wanted to copy it would be the appeal of the author's name famous enough to justify interest even in his incomplete and imperfect pieces. This means that the name of St Basil which is given to the text in the only surviving Byzantine manuscript<sup>42</sup> must have been attached to it from early on, possibly from the very beginning. Although the question of authorship will have to remain open for the time being, the unedited transcript which transfers us into the fourth century and makes witnesses of live preaching as well as of a remarkable ecclesiastical situation is extremely valuable and possibly unique.

Now let us turn to the series of six homilies *On King Uzziah* by St John Chrysostom.<sup>43</sup> In its current form it contains two versions of the same homily which in my judgement represent the original unedited transcript and its thoroughly edited and rewritten version which nevertheless is based on the same structure and shares key ideas and expressions with its prototype.

Many of Chrysostom's sermons form cycles both large and small, so it is not surprising that homilies on the story of king Uzziah are in a group. Several of

<sup>42</sup> Manuscript Marcianus gr. II, 176 (coll. 1050) is a copy produced in the eighteenth century by Antonio Bongiovanni; P. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana Universalis* II/1 (1996), 744 (h7057).

<sup>43</sup> For the doctrinal and exegetical setting of the homily see the following: Robert Charles Hill, 'Saint John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in Six Homilies on *Isaiah*', *VC* 22 (1968), 19-37; Jean B. Dumortier, 'Une assemblée chrétienne au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 29 (1972), 15-22; *id.*, 'Les homélies sur Ozias In illud: *Vidi dominum* PG LVI 97-142', *SP* 12 (1975), 283-93; Pierre Augustin, 'La pérennité de l'Église selon Jean Chrysostome et l'authenticité de la IV<sup>e</sup> homélie sur Ozias', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 28 (1995), 95-144; Alesio Peršič, 'L'esegesi patristica di *Isaia* 6 in alcuni autori di area palestinese, cappadoce e antiochena fra IV e V secolo', *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 5 (2000), 189-206; 6 (2001), 277-91; Domenico Ciarlo, Introduzione, in Giovanni Crisostomo, *Commento a Isaia, Omelie su Ozia*, tr. D. Ciarlo, Collana di Studi Patristici 162 (Roma, 2001), 5-40; Robert Charles Hill, 'St John Chrysostom as Biblical commentator: Six homilies on *Isaiah* 6', *St Vladimir Theological Quarterly* 47 (2003), 307-22; Domenico Ciarlo, 'Terminologia esegetica in Giovanni Crisostomo', in *Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo, XXXIII Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana, Augustinianum* 6-8 maggio 2004, Roma, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 93 (Roma, 2005), 185-220; for the analysis of textological issues see: Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου τὰ εὗρισκόμενα, ed. Henry Savile (Etonae, 1612), 8, col. 722 (notes by H. Savile, Johann Andreas Bose, Thomas Allen); Sebastien Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles* XI (Paris, 1712), note 18; Bernard de Montfaucon, 'Monitum ad Homilias in Oziam, seu De Seraphinis', in *Joannis Chrysostomi Opera Omnia*, opera et studio D. Bernardi de Montfaucon, editio Parisina altera VI (Parisiis, 1835), 108-9; Sever J. Voicu, "'Giovanni di Gerusalemme" e pseudo-Crisostomo. Saggio di critica di stile', *Euntes Docete* 24 (1971), 84-90; Jean B. Dumortier, 'Les homélies sur Ozias. Essai d'analyse structurale', *Studi classici in onore di Quintino Cataudella* II (Catania, 1972), 529-43; *id.*, 'Une homélie chrysostomienne suspecte', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 30 (1973), 185-91; *id.*, 'Tradition manuscrite et séquences d'homélies dans In illud: *Vidi dominum* (PG 56, 97-142)', in *Symposion. Studies on St. John Chrysostom*, *Analekta Blatadon* 18 (Thessalonike, 1973), 104-11; *id.*, 'Introduction', in Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias* (In illud, *Vidi Dominum*) (SC 277) (Paris, 1981), 7-40.



them contain references to earlier discussion, sum up what has just been said and lay out plans for what topics should be explored later. This allows us to examine connections within this group of texts.

In the first homily Chrysostom praises his audience for applying with diligence what he had told them before.<sup>44</sup> This refers to sermons outside the cycle and suggests that it was not isolated from St John's preaching on other subjects but rather formed a part of a continuous process of Christian edification.

In a similar way the second homily reminds the congregation about an earlier interpretation of a *Psalm*.<sup>45</sup> Towards the end of the second homily the preacher lists the topics which he would like to narrate: who Uzziah was, when he ruled, who he ruled, how long his rule lasted and how he ended his life. The promise could not be kept on that occasion because the priest had to make way for the bishop who was going to preach after him.<sup>46</sup>

As a result in the third homily Chrysostom speaks about paying a debt to his listeners by narrating to them what was promised before, namely more of the story of king Uzziah. Some time must have passed between the second and the third homilies because the debt is described as an old one. The preacher repeats the same list of planned topics as at the end of the second homily<sup>47</sup> but yet again he does not have time to go through them all: he again has to stop so that his bishop can preach.<sup>48</sup>

The fourth homily, delivered on the next day, returns once again to the issue of the debt of unfinished narrative. The preacher reveals that a part of the congregation was absent yesterday and that he has to go through some of the same material again for their sake.<sup>49</sup>

The fifth homily promises to conclude preaching about king Uzziah and refers to the homilies as a coherent unit<sup>50</sup> but it also presents us with a puzzle. Just as the previous sermon it starts with the reference to a part of the congregation being absent the day before<sup>51</sup> and then picks up where the third homily left, as if ignoring further developments in the fourth homily!<sup>52</sup> This strange feature has been regarded as a problem by many scholars who have studied the six *Homilies on King Uzziah*<sup>53</sup> and I will return to it later in order to offer a solution.

<sup>44</sup> Jean Chrysostome, *Homélie sur Ozias*, Jean Dumortier (ed.), SC 277 (Paris, 1981), I 1, 1-2 (42).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* II 1, 29-35 (84).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* II 3, 48-51, 66-7 (100).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* III 1, 9-13 (104-6); 1, 25-30 (106).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* III 5, 34-7 (132); 5, 54-7 (134).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* IV 1, 1-4 (136); 2, 33-47 (146); 3, 56-63 (154-6); 3, 88-90 (156-8); 4, 19-20 (158).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* V 1, 1-3 (178).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* V 1, 7-23 (178-80).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* V 3, 75-84 (196-8).

<sup>53</sup> S. de Tillemont, *Mémoires* XI (1712), 561-2, note 18; B. de Montfaucon, 'Monitum ad Homilias in Oziam', in *Ioannis Chrysostomi Opera Omnia* VI (Parisii, 1835), 108-9; J. Dumortier,

The sixth homily starts with an acknowledgement that preaching on the story of king Uzziah (as described in the books of *4/2Kings* and *2Paralipomenon* / *2Chronicles*) has been completed<sup>54</sup> but then it proceeds to discuss the dignity and service of the Seraphim, since in chapter 6 of *Isaiah* their description follows immediately after the reference to Uzziah's death.

The preceding description of the form of the six homilies and their references to each other makes it clear that the present collection is rather heterogeneous and the existing arrangement does not fully correspond to the original order. The first homily, unlike most others, does not contain references to the reading of the book of *Isaiah* in the church, to any other homilies connected with this one or to the bishop who was the preacher's superior. In fact, the homily does not even have the words of *Isaiah* as its main subject. It is a well-rounded self-contained piece of preaching on the topic of proper behaviour in the church. St John admonishes his listeners not to waive their hands and shout but rather to listen carefully and to pray piously. As an example the congregation is presented with a quote of verses 3, 1 and 2 of chapter 6 but this is done only to prove a particular point<sup>55</sup> and afterwards this passage is not mentioned in the homily again apart from a very brief allusion.<sup>56</sup> The first homily therefore is not part of the original group and was attached to it later because it happens to mention, albeit briefly, the Seraphim from the first verses of chapter 6 of *Isaiah*. Thus the first homily, when it was placed at the beginning of the cycle, provided a neat symmetry to the sixth homily on the Seraphim at the end of it. The sixth homily itself was delivered soon after the fifth but strictly speaking it is not about king Uzziah.

We are left therefore with homilies two, three, four and five which are devoted to Uzziah and have clear cross references to each other. The situation is clear with the second homily. It was not originally connected with the first but it obviously preceded the third homily. The third, fourth and fifth homilies have many common topics. It is not surprising that the fourth homily repeats a number of topics from the third, since the preacher himself revealed that part of his congregation had been absent the previous day. Numerous parallels between homilies four and five are more difficult to explain until one observes that the structure of the two homilies is identical, not only the major topics are the same but even their sequence. Each of the homilies has some material unique to it but this material represents only digressions whereas the basic structure of the two remains identical. The shared topics are treated similarly

'Une homélie chrysostomienne suspecte' (1973), 189-91; these studies observed a significant overlap of themes in the fourth and the fifth homilies, but did not realise that the correspondence between them goes as far as the complete structural analogy (see the Appendix), which explains the true relationship of these texts.

<sup>54</sup> Jean Chrysostome, *Homélie sur Ozias* (Paris, 1981), VI 1, 1-4 (202).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* I 3, 5-75 (56-60).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* I 4, 26-8 (64).

but in different words, which rules out mechanical borrowing by a compiler. Both homily four and homily five are so particular and so obviously tailored to follow homily three that neither of them would make any sense on its own. It would serve no purpose for a ghost-writer to produce a homily (homily four) which cannot exist on its own or fit anywhere else and which at the same time inexplicably does not displace the alleged original piece, chosen as an object for imitation (homily five).

Jean Dumortier who edited both the *Homilies on King Uzziah* and the *Commentary on Isaiah* by Chrysostom found this situation confusing. In earlier articles he regarded all six homilies as work of Chrysostom, although dated the first and the fourth to 395 and the rest to 387-8.<sup>57</sup> Later he changed his mind and pronounced that the fourth homily was a later forgery from the time of Patriarch St Nicephorus who allegedly composed it in opposition to the Iconoclast Emperor Leo V in the early eighth century and inserted into the group of *Homilies on King Uzziah* by Chrysostom to have a protection of illustrious name for his ideas.<sup>58</sup> The argument falls to the ground as soon as we notice that all the same statements about priesthood being above the kingship are Chrysostom's own ideas and are very prominent in the fifth homily. Patriarch Nicephorus could have referred to the genuine homily of St John and had no need to ghost-write for him. Another argument, based on usage of the Greek word σύγκλητος indicating the Roman Senate, is misplaced.<sup>59</sup> The fourth homily is not anachronistically applying the word σύγκλητος to the local council of Antioch (which was properly called βουλή) but is using a negative argument saying that the glory of Antioch is not in having a Senate but in piety of its people. A contrasting comparison with Rome which follows immediately afterwards makes it clear that the Senate, the consuls and the large size of Rome cannot outweigh the eagerness in listening to the word of God displayed by the people of Antioch.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> J. Dumortier, 'Une assemblée chrétienne au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle' (1972), 15; *id.*, 'Les homélies sur Ozias. Essai d'analyse structurale' (1972), 529; *id.*, 'Les homélies sur Ozias In illud: *Vidi dominum*' (1975), 283-93; Dumortier slightly modified the suggestion of Tillemont who dated the first homily to 395 and all other to 387-8: S. de Tillemont, *Mémoires* XI (1712), 559-61, note 17.

<sup>58</sup> At first Dumortier decided that the fourth homily could not be authentic: J. Dumortier, 'Une homélie chrysostomienne suspecte' (1973), 185-91; then he attempted to establish the identity of the supposed true author: J. Dumortier, 'Introduction', in Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias* (1981), 16-7.

<sup>59</sup> S. de Tillemont, *Mémoires* XI (1712), 561-2, note 18. J. Dumortier, 'Introduction', in Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias* (1981), 14-5.

<sup>60</sup> Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias* (1981), IV 1, 14-24 (138); Pierre Augustin responds to arguments of Dumortier by pointing out to a certain freedom in the use of terms σύγκλητος and βουλή at the time and by St John himself, to stylistic requirements of the pairs of *homoio-teleuta*, and to a reference to two earlier homilies delivered in Antioch: P. Augustin, 'La pérennité de l'Église selon Jean Chrysostome' (1995), 129-37.

With homilies four and five we have a rare situation of simultaneous preservation of the original unedited version of a homily as it was recorded by short-hand writers at the time of delivery and the edited version intended for copying and distribution. The fourth homily is longer, less polished than all others and contains within itself some repetitions natural for oral delivery. It fulfils the preacher's own promise to repeat some of the topics from homily three. Homily five preserves the structure of its original intact but trims excessive examples,<sup>61</sup> polishes the style and removes virtually all repetitions from homily three, although gives a similar promise to go through the discussed topics briefly.<sup>62</sup> Such an intimate relationship between the two texts caused by very specific circumstances at the time of their delivery rules out any possibility of forgery. Homilies four and five are twin versions of the same homily, that is why they can only fit into the same slot in the series.

Why was the original version retained and how could it happen? The answer comes partly from analysis of the homilies and partly from the manuscript tradition.<sup>63</sup> The original Greek collection of the homilies which was edited, copied and distributed (presumably by the author himself) must have included homilies two, three, five and six.<sup>64</sup> The evidence of the Syriac translation suggests even that at first it included only homilies two, three and five because homily six *On the Seraphim* is separate from the group of three in one manuscript and is absent from the other manuscript. However, because the end of this manuscript is lost, the sixth homily could be in the missing part.<sup>65</sup> Later homily six became attached to the group. Finally, as a result of more editorial activity which must have happened after the death of St John, homily one was added at the beginning, thus balancing homily six at the end. All these homilies were in their final edited version and their original transcripts had disappeared.<sup>66</sup> Somehow the original version of homily five came to light and was included

<sup>61</sup> The examples excluded in the process of editing are particularly relevant to the life of the Christian community of Antioch or to the immediate circumstances at the time when the homily was preached. The reworking by St John of the original transcript into the published text and the motives which were behind the changes he introduced will be fully examined in a forthcoming article.

<sup>62</sup> Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias* (1981), V 1, 7-14 (178), compare *ibid.*, III 5, 34-7, 42-54 (132-4).

<sup>63</sup> J. Dumortier, 'Introduction', in Jean Chrysostome, *Homélies sur Ozias* (1981), 30-3; *id.*, 'Tradition manuscrite et séquences d'homélies' (1973), 104-11.

<sup>64</sup> This state of the text is attested by the Armenian translation of the homilies, on which see the article of N. Smelova, 'St John Chrysostom's Exegesis on the Prophet *Isaiah*: The Oriental Translations and their Manuscripts', *SP* 67 (2013), 295-309.

<sup>65</sup> See N. Smelova, 'St John Chrysostom's Exegesis on the Prophet *Isaiah*' (2013).

<sup>66</sup> On stenographic recording of speeches at the time of St John see Alfred Wikenhauser, 'Der hl. Chrysostomos und die Tachygraphie', *Archiv für Stenographie* 58 NF 3 (1907), 268-72; *id.*, 'Kleine Beiträge zur Geschichte der antiken Stenographie', *Archiv für Stenographie* 62 NF 7 (1911), 1-2.

in the collection as homily four. Because unlike its edited version (*i.e.* homily five) it still contained numerous repetitions from homily three it was given its natural place after that homily and before homily five.<sup>67</sup>

Homilies four and five *On King Uzziah* reveal a specific example of turning an orally preached homily into a written work. Preaching was influenced by personal interaction with the audience and by psychological peculiarities of auricular perception. Some of the techniques which could be very effective in live preaching may be perceived differently and less favourably in the process of reading. This required reshaping of the homily.

The observed process of editorial work was determined by particular circumstances and may not serve as a general example. Even so it must reflect some of the common trends of converting an oral sermon into a piece of written work. In order to establish more precisely the correlation between peculiar features of a particular homily and the generic trend of editing for publication I plan to analyse the other identified pairs of unedited and edited homilies. However, the work done so far not only indicates direction for further investigation of general trends, it allows us to witness one of the greatest preachers of the early Church at work, reflecting his personality in the choices he was making and indicating subtle shifts in his priorities. In my opinion this is a rare treat.

<sup>67</sup> Although a large number of Greek manuscripts give the homilies in the order which is familiar to us from printed editions (I, II, III, IV, V, VI), there are groups in which either homily four is following homily one (I, IV, II, III, V, VI) or the other way round (II, III, IV, I, V, VI). This probably indicates some initial uncertainty about where to place the homilies which were added to the cycle at a later date. The Church Slavonic translation attests a different order of homilies (II, I, IV, III, V, VI). The homilies *On King Uzziah* were contained in the Byzantine collection of St John's homilies the *Margarit* which was translated into Slavonic as a whole and was widely copied and read (in this collection the homilies *On King Uzziah* are numbered 13-8). On the Church Slavonic *Margarit* see Татьяна В. Черторицкая, 'Маргарит', *Словарь книжников и книжности древней Руси. Вторая половина XIV-XVI в.* (Ленинград, 1989), 100-2 (Tatyana V. Chertoritskaya, 'Margarit', in *Dictionary of Writers and Literature of Ancient Rus'. The second half of the XIV-XVI cc.* [Leningrad, 1989], 100-2); Елена Т. Казенина, 'Маргарит и историко-культурная ситуация на Руси XV-XVI в., Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики, 4 (10) (2002), 57-66 (E.T. Kazenina, 'Margarit and the historico-cultural situation in Rus' in the XV-XVI cc., *Drevnyaya Rus', Voprosy medievistiki* 4 [10] [2002], 57-66); Евгения Э. Гранстрем, Олег В. Творогов, Андриус Валевиčius, *Иоанн Златоуст в древнерусской и южнославянской письменности XI-XVI веков. Каталог гомилий* (С.-Петербург, 1998) (Evgenija E. Granstrem, Oleg V. Tvorogov and Andrius Valevičius, *Johannes Chrysostomos im altrussischen und südslavischen Schrifttum des 11.-16. Jahrhunderts: Katalog der Homilien*, Abhandlungen der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 100; *Patristica Slavica* 4 [St Petersburg, 1998]); this catalogue lists the Slavonic homilies *On King Uzziah*, but does not always identify their Greek original: N212 (p. 76-7), N345 (p. 116-7), N23 (p. 19), N360 (p. 120), N338 (p. 115), N140 (p. 56-7).

**Appendix: Parallel structure of *Homilies on king Uzziah 3-5* by St John Chrysostom<sup>68</sup>**

Homily 3	Homily 4	Homily 5
	Introduction: Yesterday we were sowing, <u>today</u> we are reaping spiritual harvest. 1, 1-14 (136-8)	
	Digression: encomium of Antioch. 1, 15-51 (138-40)	
	Statement: λόγος distinguishes humans and animals. 1, 51-63 (140-2)	
	Example: Preaching is like a ship guided by Christ. 1, 64-82 (142)	
	Statement: The Church has more honour than the heaven. 2, 1-33 (142-6)	
Address: We will be speaking about Uzziah in order to <u>pay our old debt</u> . 1, 11-15 (104-6)	Address: We will honour <u>yesterday's</u> promise to <u>pay the debt</u> of explanation. 2, 33-6 (146)	Address: <u>Today</u> we will finish homilies on Uzziah and conclude the preaching. 1, 1-7 (178)
Address: preaching is a <u>meal</u> offered to the listeners. 1, 15-24 (106)	Address: <u>We will repeat</u> some of our words for those who were absent yesterday (we will offer a <u>meal</u> which does not become stale). 2, 36-47 (146)	Address: <u>We will repeat</u> a small part of what has been said before. It will be a reminder for those who have heard it and an admonition for those who have not. 1, 7-12 (178)
Digression: <u>Wife is a helper</u> for a man to restrain his raging nature. <u>Fornication</u> is inexcusable because there is <u>marriage</u> . 3, 24-33 (118-20)	Digression: <u>Marriage</u> is not evil whereas <u>fornication</u> is. <u>Wife is a helper</u> , not an obstacle to salvation. 2, 47-61 (146-8)	
	Example: married saints of the Old and New Testament and especially the Maccabean martyrs. 2, 61 - 3, 55 (148-54)	

<sup>68</sup> Homilies four and five are analysed in full, whereas from homily three I present only those sections which are relevant for comparison with the other two texts.

Homily 3	Homily 4	Homily 5
Questions concerning various aspects of Uzziah's life and death and a promise to consider them. 1, 25-33 (106)	Address: promise to answer the question raised yesterday: <u>why the prophet mentions death of king Uzziah and not his life</u> . 3, 56-63 (154-6)	Address: <u>Previously</u> we described <u>how pious Uzziah was before he fell into arrogance</u> . <u>Today</u> it is necessary to explain <u>why the prophet leaving aside his life mentioned his death</u> . 1, 12-23 (178-80)
	Digression: the audience should disregard the heat. 3, 63-81 (156)	
Narrative: <u>Uzziah was righteous but then fell into sin of arrogance</u> . 1, 34-8 (106); 1, 60-6 (108)	Narrative: <u>Uzziah was righteous but then fell into arrogance</u> , the worst of all sins. 3, 81-90 (156-8)	
	Example: the publican and the Pharisee. 4, 1-14 (158)	
Statement: Nothing is so productive of <u>arrogance</u> as a peaceful conscience, if we are not careful. 1. 38-44 (106-8)	Statement: A righteous man should be more afraid of <u>arrogance</u> than the sinner, as I said already yesterday. 4, 14-23 (158)	
Example: <u>Pirates attack the ships not when they leave the harbour empty but when they return with full load</u> . 2, 51-64 (114)	Example: <u>pirates do not attack empty ships but only those laden with goods</u> . 4, 23-30 (158-60)	
Evidence from the Bible: <u>when you fulfill everything, say that we are unworthy servants</u> (Luke 17:10). 1, 45-54 (108)	Evidence from the Bible: <u>when you fulfill everything, say that we are unworthy servants</u> (Luke 17:10). 4, 33-5 (160)	
Example: the tightrope walkers should not look down from great <u>height</u> , otherwise they <u>fall down</u> . 2, 24-36 (112)	Example: whenever you ascend the <u>height</u> beware lest you <u>fall down</u> . 4, 30-3 (160)	
Example: A human is easily turned to sin and falls easily. 2, 18-9 (112)	Example: human affairs are changeable and unstable. 4, 36-50 (160-2)	
	Narrative: Uzziah tried to usurp the function of a priest to <u>burn incense</u> . 4, 50-5 (162)	Narrative: Uzziah became proud and entered the Temple to <u>burn incense</u> . 1, 24-32 (180)

Homily 3	Homily 4	Homily 5
		Example: the soul affected by desires is like a raging horse. 1, 32-46 (180-2)
	Statement: <u>Priesthood is greater than kingship.</u> 4, 55-65 (162)	Statement: <u>Priesthood is a greater <i>power</i><sup>69</sup> than kingship.</u> 1, 46-53 (182)
	Digression: condemn the unworthy priest and not the priesthood. 4, 65 - 5, 13 (162-4) <u>Quote: <i>Matth.</i> 18:18</u>	
	<u>Comparison of the king and the priest.</u> <sup>70</sup> 5, 13-19 (164)	<u>Comparison of the king and the priest.</u> 1, 53-74 (182-4) <u>Quote: <i>Matth.</i> 18:18</u>
	Statement: The king <u>bends his head</u> to the priest. 5, 19-21 (164)	Statement: <i>God bends the head</i> of the king to the priest. 1, 75-9 (184)
	Narrative: <u>the chief priest was trying to stop Uzziah with free speech.</u> 5, 21-37 (164-6)	Narrative: <u>the chief priest was trying to stop Uzziah with free speech and gentleness.</u> 1, 80 - 2, 41 (184-8)
		Example: condemnation of the king is similar to medical operations. 2, 42-71 (188-90)
	Narrative: Reminder of the punishment of <u>Dathan, Abiram and Korah</u> who had rebelled against Aaron. 5, 38-52 (166)	Narrative: Reminder of the punishment of <u>Dathan, Abiram and Korah</u> who had rebelled against Aaron. 2, 71-86 (190-2)

<sup>69</sup> Italics indicate some differences of emphasis introduced into the edited version.

<sup>70</sup> It is similar to the *Comparatio Regis et Monachi*, which, according to D. Hunter could be one of the earliest writings of St John. *A Comparison Between a King and a Monk. Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life. Two treatises by John Chrysostom*, tr. with an intr. by David G. Hunter, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 13 (Lampeter, 1988), 19-41.



Homily IV	Homily V
	Example: David acknowledged his sin. 3, 1-9 (192)
Narrative: When Uzziah ignored the priest, God punished him with <u>leprosy on his forehead</u> . 5, 52-69 (166-8)	Narrative: When Uzziah ignored the priest, God in His <u>love of men</u> punished him with <u>leprosy on his forehead</u> . 3, 9-22 (192)
Explanation: God shows His <u>love of men</u> even in the punishment: he <u>did not send a lightening</u> or shake the earth but used leprosy. 5, 69-72 (168)	
Examples: leprosy on the forehead was like a trophy, an inscription on a column, an animated law on a high place. 5, 72-83 (168-70)	
Example: Just like <u>those who are condemned to death are led to execution with a rope in their mouth</u> ... 5, 83-7 (170)	Example: Just like <u>those who are led to execution have a rope in their mouth</u> as a sign of being <u>condemned to death</u> ... 3, 22-7 (192-4)
Explanation: I say this not in order to slander the kingship, but to state that the priesthood is above the kingship. 5, 87-9 (170)	
Example: Cain and Zechariah sinned with their souls but their bodies were punished. 6, 1-18 (170-2)	
Narrative: Uzziah <u>wanted to usurp the priesthood</u> but <u>lost even</u> what he had had – <u>position of the king</u> . 6, 18-23 (172)	Narrative: Uzziah <u>wanted to usurp the priesthood</u> but <u>lost even his kingdom</u> . 3, 27-32 (194)
	Example: The sea can rage rising to a great height but its power is limited by God with weak sand. 3, 32-9 (194)
	Explanation: God because of His love of men taught Uzziah. He did not apply His sceptre and burn him down but warned Uzziah and instructed him by leprosy. 3, 39-74 (194-6)
	Statement: One thing remains to be explained: why the prophet mentions not the time of king's life but of his death. 3, 75-84 (196-8)
Narrative: the Jews <u>did not expel Uzziah the leper</u> and God punished the people by <u>stopping to speak to them through prophets</u> until Uzziah died. 6, 23-47 (172-4) Quote: <u>1Kgs. [1Sam.] 3:1</u> .	Narrative: the Jews <u>did not expel Uzziah the leper</u> and God punished the people by <u>stopping to speak to them through prophets</u> until Uzziah died but in His love of men He <u>did not overturn the city</u> . 3, 84-97 (198) Quote: <u>1Kgs. [1Sam.] 3:1</u>
Example: Just like a man would <u>stop talking</u> to a friend who upset him... 6, 47-54 (174)	Example: Just like people would <u>stop talking</u> to friends <i>when they have a charge against them</i> ... 3, 97-101 (198)

Homily IV	Homily V
Explanation: God demonstrated His kindness by <u>not sending lightnings</u> and <u>not overturning the city</u> . 6, 54-60 (174-6)	Explanation: Although the Jews did not expel Uzziah, God <u>did not overturn the city</u> . 3, 101-9 (198-200)
Explanation: When Uzziah died and the cause of impurity was removed <u>God returned the prophecy</u> due to His <u>love of men</u> . Because of this Uzziah's death is mentioned and not his life. 6, 60-80 (176)	Explanation: God's <u>love of men</u> is shown by the fact that the punishment stopped when Uzziah died, <i>although his removal was not the people's achievement</i> . 3, 110-20 (200)
Conclusion: Let us therefore expel pride and love humility. 6, 81-4 (176)	Conclusion: let us therefore <i>praise God's <u>love of men</u> of which may we be worthy</i> . 3, 120-5 (200)



# Entre codicologie, philologie et histoire: La description de manuscrits parisiens (*Codices Chrysostomici Graeci* VII)<sup>1</sup>

Pierre AUGUSTIN, Paris, France

## ABSTRACT

The recent publication of the 7<sup>th</sup> volume of the *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci* IRHT Project gives the opportunity to highlight through examples some changes in the model of description of the Chrysostom Greek manuscripts from Paris. The historical and codicological summary at the beginning of each notice endeavours to take into account recent scholarship about the historical development of the ancient Greek collection of the *Bibliotheca Regia* (the provenance of the manuscripts, and the date when they entered the royal library or were rebound) and about those items that were used by French editors and scholars such as Montfaucon and Gaume. On the other hand, a few new formulas were introduced to enable us to give a distinct and thorough analysis of the different parts of the manuscript according to different points of view. Thus, an attempt has been made to describe together the *membra disiecta* from the same *codices*, and to emphasize the relationship between the manuscripts and their models or apographs, especially if they have already been described in the previous *CCG* volumes.

Le programme des *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci* est bien connu de nombreux patristiciens. L'initiative des *CCG* a été présentée à Oxford même par le P. Herbert Musurillo dès le III<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'Études Patristiques, en 1959. Puis, au V<sup>e</sup> Congrès, le 19 septembre 1967, le P. Robert E. Carter en a rappelé les grandes lignes et les priorités, alors qu'il s'apprêtait à publier avec le P. Michel Aubineau les deux premiers volumes de la collection<sup>2</sup>.

Dès l'introduction du volume initial, le P. Aubineau avait pris la précaution de préciser que, s'il commençait l'inventaire des manuscrits chrysostomiens par la Grande-Bretagne, alors qu'à Paris même, les trois fonds grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale de France offrent environ 5000 manuscrits grecs, c'était précisément

<sup>1</sup> Cette contribution a bénéficié de la relecture attentive de Jacques-Hubert Sautel et, pour le résumé initial, de Marie Cronier, que je remercie de tout cœur.

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Carter, 'The Future of Chrysostom Studies', dans F.L. Cross (ed.), *Studia Patristica* X, 1 : *Papers presented to the Fifth international Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1967*, Part 1: *Editiones, Critica, Philologica, Biblica, Historica, Liturgica et Ascetica*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 107 (Berlin, 1970), 14-21. Le titre originel de cette contribution, lors de la session des *Instrumenta Studiorum* tenue à South School, le 19 septembre 1967, était: 'A New Catalogue of Greek Chrysostom Manuscripts'.

parce que, connaissant l'importance numérique et le rôle historique des fonds parisiens, il comptait les aborder avec une méthode éprouvée, après l'avoir testée sur un ensemble relativement restreint de manuscrits qui avaient néanmoins joué un rôle prépondérant dans la monumentale édition d'Henry Savile, en 1612<sup>3</sup>.

Aujourd'hui, l'opportunité nous est donnée de revenir sur la méthode de description des manuscrits de ce programme, à l'occasion de la parution, en juin dernier, du volume VII, consacré précisément à la première partie de l'ancien fonds grec de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (mss grecs 4 à 730)<sup>4</sup>. Ce volume bénéficie de l'apport des précédents, échelonnés de 1968 à 1999, qui recensaient plus de 1500 manuscrits d'Europe occidentale et des États-Unis d'Amérique, en particulier l'important fonds Vatican grec analysé par Sever Voicu dans le volume VI<sup>5</sup>. Le « dernier né » de la famille est dédié, comme il se doit, à la mémoire des Pères Aubineau et Carter. Il est le fruit d'une étroite collaboration avec Jacques-Hubert Sautel, qui en a revu, en particulier, l'analyse codicologique pour la mise en pages et les types de réglure des manuscrits. L'entreprise a présenté des difficultés, qui résultaient à la fois d'une tradition manuscrite abondante et complexe, et d'instruments de travail souvent déficients, qu'il s'agisse des catalogues ou des éditions: en particulier, nous ne disposons essentiellement, pour l'énorme majorité des manuscrits, que des renseignements succincts fournis par le second volume du catalogue de la Bibliothèque royale, de 1740, et le premier tome de l'inventaire sommaire d'Henri Omont, de 1886<sup>6</sup>.

Les nouveautés méthodologiques que nous avons apportées dans ce volume ne remettent pas en cause la finalité de la collection et du programme, qui reste bien sûr avant tout philologique<sup>7</sup>. Mais comme ce sont des *codices* que nous décrivons, leur étude philologique comme témoins du texte chrysostomien est inséparable de leur analyse historique et codicologique comme supports de ce texte. Aussi voudrais-je revenir sur deux caractéristiques du volume VII, dont

<sup>3</sup> Michel Aubineau, *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci*, I. *Codices Britanniae et Hiberniae*, Documents, Études & Répertoires publiés par l'I.R.H.T. 13 (Paris, 1968), xiii et n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Augustin, adjuvant Jacques-Hubert Sautel, *Codices Chrysostomici Graeci*, VII. *Codicum Parisinorum pars prior*, Documents, Études & Répertoires publiés par l'I.R.H.T. 80 (Paris, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Il convient d'annoncer la parution prochaine du volume VIII, où les trois fonds grecs de la Bibliothèque du Patriarcat Œcuménique d'Istanbul feront l'objet d'une description exhaustive par les soins de Francesca Barone.

<sup>6</sup> *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae. Tomus secundus* (Paris, 1740); Henri Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale et des autres bibliothèques de Paris et des Départements*, t. I. *Ancien fonds grec*, codd. 1-1318 (Paris, 1886; réimpr.: Hildesheim, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Selon la formule de Marcel Richard, « Le but de notre entreprise est la recherche des textes et l'établissement, dès que possible, de dossiers complets sur la tradition manuscrite des différentes œuvres » (CCG I, p. xi).

nous avons souligné l'importance dans les chapitres introductifs: tout d'abord, l'attention particulière que nous avons portée à l'histoire du fonds grec de la *Bibliotheca Regia* et, en parallèle, à l'évolution de son exploitation par les érudits chrysostomiens français, notamment Bernard de Montfaucon et les frères Gaume; ensuite, la nécessité où nous nous sommes trouvés d'apporter quelques modifications aux principes de description, pour une présentation plus claire des notices.

#### A. Du point de vue historique

Je mentionnerai brièvement l'apport de la recherche récente à l'histoire du fonds parisien. D'une part, les origines de la *Bibliotheca Regia* sont désormais mieux connues: la constitution d'une bibliothèque savante à Fontainebleau sous François I<sup>er</sup><sup>8</sup>, les collections qui l'ont enrichie pendant trois siècles ont fait l'objet d'études nouvelles, fondées sur des documents d'archives<sup>9</sup>. Chaque fois que nous l'avons pu, nous avons mentionné, en tête de notice, la provenance au moins immédiate des manuscrits et leur date d'arrivée dans la Bibliothèque du Roi ou de Colbert, parfois même leur train de reliure et leur commanditaire, en prenant soin de renvoyer dans la bibliographie aux études consacrées à l'histoire des collections particulières.

Mais surtout, le dépouillement exhaustif des archives de l'édition mauriste conservées dans le fonds Supplément grec de la Bibliothèque nationale de France, joint à l'exploitation systématique des comptes-rendus de sa révision par Théobald Fix et Friedrich Dübner, nous a permis de préciser dans quelle mesure les manuscrits chrysostomiens de Paris avaient effectivement été mis à contribution pour l'édition de Montfaucon, de 1718 à 1738 (cent soixante-douze manuscrits parisiens collationnés, dont soixante-dix décrits dans le présent volume), puis pour sa révision sous l'égide des frères Gaume, de 1834 à 1839

<sup>8</sup> Marie-Pierre Laffitte et Fabienne Le Bars, 'La Librairie de Fontainebleau (1544-vers 1570)', dans *Reliures royales de la Renaissance. La Librairie de Fontainebleau 1544-1570* (Paris, 1999), 11-31, qui s'appuie sur l'étude d'Antoine Coron, 'Collège royal et *Bibliotheca regia*. La bibliothèque savante de François I<sup>er</sup>', dans Marc Fumaroli (éd.), *Les Origines du Collège de France (1510-1560)*, Actes du colloque de Paris, décembre 1995 (Paris, 1998), 143-183.

<sup>9</sup> Il s'agit des legs importants de Gian Francesco d'Asola: Annaclara Cataldi Palau, *Gian Francesco d'Asola e la tipografia Aldina. La vita, le edizioni, la biblioteca dell'Asolano* (Genova, 1998), de Niccolò Ridolfi: Davide Muratore, *La biblioteca del cardinale Niccolò Ridolfi*, Hellenica. Testi e strumenti di letteratura greca antica, medievale e umanistica 32, 2 vol. (Alessandria, 2009), de Jean Hurault de Boistaillé: Donald-F. Jackson, 'The Greek Manuscripts of Jean Hurault de Boistaillé', *SFIC* 4a ser. vol. 2. fasc. 2 (2004), 209-52; Marie-Pierre Laffitte, 'Une acquisition de la Bibliothèque du roi au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: les manuscrits de la famille Hurault', *Bulletin du Bibliophile* (2008), 1, 42-97, et surtout de Jean-Baptiste Colbert: Donald-F. Jackson, 'Colbert Greek Manuscript Binding to 1675', *CM* 66/67 (2008), 55-65; 'The Colbert Greek Library from 1676 to 1678', *CM* 73/74 (2010), 43-57; 'A Delivery of Greek Manuscripts in 1686', *Scripta* 3 (2010), 73-5; 'Colbert Greek Manuscript Binding 1679-1683', *CM* 76/77 (2011), 51-9. Plus du tiers des manuscrits décrits dans le volume VII proviennent de Colbert.

(trente-cinq manuscrits parisiens collationnés, dont treize ici décrits)<sup>10</sup>. Là encore, chaque fois que nous l'avons pu, nous avons indiqué dans l'en-tête de la notice l'utilisation éventuelle du témoin par Montfaucon, Gaume, leurs prédécesseurs et leurs successeurs. C'est tout le travail d'édition des siècles précédents qui se trouve ici mis en lumière par une analyse détaillée des sources qui fournira, nous l'espérons, un point de départ solide à toute future édition des textes chrysostomiens qu'ils contiennent.

### B. *Du point de vue codicologique*

Il faut insister sur le deuxième point de renouvellement méthodologique: le souci de décrire avec une plus grande précision le support matériel du *codex* nous a conduits à développer l'analyse codicologique et à proposer, en conséquence, de légères modifications dans la présentation de l'en-tête des notices. Ces modifications obéissent à une triple finalité: assurer – si nécessaire – une séparation plus nette entre les analyses codicologique et philologique de l'en-tête; regrouper, au sein de l'analyse codicologique, les données concernant les parties divergentes (feuillet restaurés ou insérés, textes ajoutés), dans le cas de recueils homogènes; enfin, dans le cas de recueils composites, distinguer d'emblée les parties divergentes que constituent les unités codicologiques.

#### 1. Une séparation plus nette entre les analyses codicologique et philologique de l'en-tête

Dans les volumes précédents des *CCG*, l'en-tête des notices présentait dans un même paragraphe synthétique toutes les informations concernant la codicologie du manuscrit, mais aussi la mention éventuelle d'une utilisation du témoin par les éditeurs. Dans la mesure où nous avons développé à la fois l'analyse codicologique et l'étude de l'histoire du manuscrit, le paragraphe unique devenait très difficile à conserver, avec une accumulation de données qui concernent des aspects différents du manuscrit. Nous avons donc ajouté, chaque fois que cela s'avérait nécessaire, un alinéa, avec léger retrait, au sein de l'en-tête de la notice, afin de ménager un second paragraphe consacré à l'étude philologique du manuscrit.

Ainsi, dans la notice du *Paris. gr. 607* (pl. 1), l'en-tête est réparti en deux paragraphes distincts: le premier est réservé à l'analyse codicologique et historique, qui concerne le manuscrit en tant que support ou objet, tandis qu'il est envisagé dans le second sous l'aspect philologique, en tant que témoin d'un

<sup>10</sup> Les mss *Paris, BNF, Suppl. gr.* 265 à 268, 270, 272 à 273, 280 à 283, 422 à 423, 435 à 438, 554 et 555, 832, 870 et 879 contiennent les archives de l'édition chrysostomienne de Montfaucon; sur la révision des frères Gaume, voir Théobald Fix, in *Sancti patris nostri Joannis Chrysostomi ... opera omnia*, XIII, 2 (Paris, 1839), *Epilogus nouae editionis*, i-xij; Friedrich Dübner, 'Kirchenväter. Chrysostomi opera, Basilii opera, Augustini opera', *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik* 32 (1841), 46-71, 47-61.

**Paris. gr. 607 (olim Colbert. 629)**

- 61** Saec. XI, membr., mm. 282/284 × 235/239, ff. V + 129 + V, coll. 2, linn. 29, typus ut plurimum Leroy K 55C2de. Discernenda sunt ff. 7-10, 65-67, 76-81, saec. XIV-XV suppleta, linn. 34-41, typus Leroy V 00A2. Anno 1675 in bibliotheca Colbertina compactus.

Huius codicis ff. 1-6 (= A) et Paris, BNF, gr. 620, ff. 1-184 (= B) ex uno eodemque codice defluerunt qui suo loco describitur (cf. infra cod. 74). Magis propinquus uidetur cod. Vaticano, B.A.V., Vat. gr. 575 (cf. CCG VI, cod. 89). Collatus est pro B. de Montfaucon a F. de Faverolles (Paris, BNF, Suppl. gr. 435, ff. 754-805 sub siglo C). Vsi sunt Canet (1914 : ff. 8, col. b, lin. 21-9, col. a, lin. 10 sub siglo P1) et Malingrey (1994 : ff. 95-120 sub siglo M).

LIT. : *Cat. Bibl. Reg.* II, p. 115 (saec. X) ; OMONT I, p. 105 (saec. X) ; CANET 1914, p. 100, 113 et n. 1, 118-119, 124 et 130 ; HALKIN 1968, p. 43 ; MALINGREY 1962, p. 26, 28 ; MALINGREY 1969, pp. 339-353 ; MALINGREY 1970, p. 66, num. 10 (sub siglo M), 73, 74 et not. 2 ; MALINGREY 1994, p. 61, num. 6 (sub siglo M), 65-66, 106-107, 108 et *passim* ; JACKSON 2008, p. 63.

1 (ff. 7-48<sup>v</sup>) Aduersus Iudaeos orationes 5-8 (M. 48, 893-942) : (ff. 7-13<sup>v</sup>) or. 5, inc. mut. εἰς εὐαντόν (col. 893, lin. 33), cuius textus transit (f. 8, col. b, lin. 5) a uu. Διὰ τοῦτο (col. 896, lin. 7) ad uu. πλῆξαντα δις (lin. 16 ab imo) propter lacunam in exemplari, ut in cod. Vaticano, B.A.V., Vat. gr. 575, ff. 32-57 (cf. CCG VI, cod. 89). (ff. 14-18<sup>v</sup>) or. 6 (or. 4 cod.), propter casum nouem foliorum des. mut. γὰρ (col. 908, lin. 25). (ff. 19-31) or. 7, inc. mut. οὗτοι (col. 915, lin. 3 ab imo). (ff. 31-48<sup>v</sup>) or. 8 (or. 6 cod.). (...)

**Paris. gr. 476 (olim Mazarin.-Reg. 1824)**

- 30** Saec. X (1/2), duabus manibus (a : ff. 3-285 ; b : ff. 286-460), fortasse in monasterio Constantinopolitano S. Iohannis Baptistae τῶν Στουδίου exaratus, membr., mm. 395/405 × 265/280, ff. III + 460 + III (+ 7a olim num. 190 ; – 190, 417), coll. 2, linn. 35-36, typus Leroy 20C2 (a), deinde 20A2 (b). S. Basilii Caesariensis et S. Gregorii Nysseni sermones.

Discernenda sunt ff. 1-2 ad custodiendum codicem addita : saec. XI, mm. 385 × 255, coll. 2, linn. 41, typus Leroy X 10D2n ; ff. 424-427, saec. XIII-XIV suppleta et rescripta (excerpta canonica in textu inferiore), mm. 360 × 240, coll. 2, linn. 33-35, typus Leroy inuicem U 10/2 uel V 10A2. Fuit olim (saec. XIII, 2/2) Gabalae gentis, Manuelis lectoris metropolis et paramonarii ecclesiae τῆς Ὁδηγητρίας in Philadelphia (cf. ff. 49, 109, 261, 291<sup>v</sup>).

LIT. : *Cat. Bibl. Reg.* II, pp. 67-68 ; OMONT I, pp. 53-54 ; OMONT 1908-1913, III, p. 260, num. 1824 ; IV, p. 337, num. 1424 ; HALKIN 1968, p. 15 ; DARROUZÈS 1972, XX [1964], p. 31, 35 ; KOUROUSIS 1972, p. 301 et not. 2-3 ; AMAND DE MENDIETA-RUDBERG 1980, pp. 22-25 ; PLP 7, 16675.

(ff. 1-2<sup>v</sup>) In Genesim homiliae 1-2 (M. 53, 24-29) : (f. 1<sup>ov</sup>) hom. 1, inc. mut. δεσπότης (col. 24, lin. 12), propter casum duorum foliorum des. mut. post uu. καὶ μεγάλοι οἱ (col. 25, lin. 29). (f. 2<sup>ov</sup>) hom. 2, inc. mut. φθέγγομαι (col. 28, lin. 23), des. mut. καὶ ὅτι πνεύματι (col. 29, lin. 7 ab imo).



texte, dont on examine successivement l'insertion dans la tradition manuscrite et dans l'histoire des éditions.

Le paragraphe philologique aborde en effet successivement deux aspects: le témoin est situé tout d'abord dans l'histoire de la tradition, pour ses éventuelles relations avec d'autres témoins, modèles ou copies du même texte – en particulier s'ils sont déjà décrits dans les volumes précédents de la collection –, puis il est mentionné comme source éventuelle des éditeurs, en premier lieu Savile, Fronton du Duc et Montfaucon. Dans l'exemple choisi, les six premiers feuillets du *Paris. gr. 607* (pl. 1) appartiennent au *Paris. gr. 620* et sont décrits avec lui; nous avons donc ménagé un renvoi interne à la notice n° 74 de notre répertoire. En revanche, le reste du *Paris. gr. 607* est rapproché du *Vat. gr. 575*, dont il partage la même lacune interne pour le cinquième discours *Aduersus Iudaeos*; aussi renvoyons-nous à la notice n° 89 du volume VI. Nous signalons ensuite que le *Paris. gr. 607* a été collationné pour Bernard de Montfaucon par le mauriste François de Faverolles sous le sigle C; cette collation est conservée dans le *Paris. Suppl. gr. 435*. Enfin nous indiquons qu'il a été plus récemment, collationné par Louis Canet sous le sigle *P*<sup>1</sup> et par Anne-Marie Malingrey sous le sigle *M*<sup>11</sup>.

## 2. Un regroupement des données concernant les parties divergentes dans les recueils homogènes

Dans les volumes précédents des *CCG*, l'analyse spécifique des parties divergentes du recueil était placée entre parenthèses et répétée pour chaque donnée codicologique (le format, le nombre de colonnes, de lignes, le type de réglure), ce qui compliquait la syntaxe descriptive et morcelait l'information. Nous avons remplacé ces parenthèses par la formule: *Discernendum est...* ("Il faut mettre à part..."), qui est bien sûr déclinée en fonction du sujet. Cette formule est employée dans trois cas de figure:

### a) elle introduit l'analyse de feuillets restaurés

Dans notre premier exemple, le *Paris. gr. 607* (pl. 1), il s'agit d'une dizaine de feuillets (les ff. 7-10, 65-67 et 76-81) restaurés à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> ou au début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, dont les particularités codicologiques sont énumérées en une formule synthétique: siècle<sup>12</sup>, support, nombre de colonnes et de lignes écrites,

<sup>11</sup> Les éditeurs ne sont pas ici classés chronologiquement, mais en fonction de la place qu'occupe le texte qu'ils ont collationné dans le manuscrit.

<sup>12</sup> Nous avons ici corrigé une erreur de notre répertoire: les restaurations du *Parisinus gr. 607* ne datent pas du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, comme nous l'avons admis trop rapidement sur une suggestion d'Anne-Marie Malingrey, *Jean Chrysostome. Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu, I: Homélie I-V*, SC 28bis (Paris, 1970), 74 ('complété par une main du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle'). Louis Canet, 'Pour l'édition de S. Jean Chrysostome *Λόγοι κατὰ Ἰουδαίων* et de Théodoret *Ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὸν Δανιήλ*', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 34 (1914), 97-200, 113, n. 1, avançait plus prudemment: 'un certain nombre de feuillets sont réécrits d'une main récente'. Ces feuillets *sur parchemin* sont en effet dus

type de réglure. On notera que c'est dans cette partie restaurée (au f. 8) qu'intervient la lacune commune avec le *Vat. gr. 575* que nous venons de mentionner. L'extrait du cinquième discours *Aduersus Iudaeos* édité en 1914 par Louis Canet (M. 48, 898, lin. 3-899, lin. 39) confirme cette étroite parenté entre le *Paris. gr. 607* (= *P1*) et le *Vat. gr. 575* (= *V4*): ils forment le sous-groupe *a''* de la classe A<sup>13</sup>.

b) elle introduit l'analyse de feuillets insérés ou ajoutés

Dans notre second exemple, le *Paris. gr. 476* (pl. 1), la formule *Discernenda sunt...* introduit l'analyse de deux feuillets de garde chrysostomiens (*ad custodiendum codicem addita*). Il s'agit des gardes antérieures, du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui présentent un fragment des deux premières homélies *In Genesim*. Du point de vue purement philologique, ces fragments sont indépendants du reste du manuscrit et on aurait pu concevoir qu'ils soient décrits de manière totalement séparée de leur support actuel, mais pour l'histoire du texte, ils pourraient avoir partie liée: le manuscrit semble provenir du *Stoudion*, à Constantinople; il a aussi séjourné à Philadelphie. Ce sont autant d'origines possibles pour le fragment chrysostomien.

À ce propos, notons-le, les manuscrits partiellement chrysostomiens ont été étudiés, pour ce répertoire, dans leur intégralité, même si une infime partie seulement avait trait au programme *CCG*, et nous avons cherché à tenir compte du contexte dans lequel s'inséraient les parties chrysostomiennes, afin d'éviter qu'on ne puisse amalgamer, par exemple, un fragment de garde de manuscrit décrit indépendamment de son support habituel avec un feuillet libre conservé à part<sup>14</sup>.

à une main qui imite l'écriture du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, et dont le petit nombre de ligatures plaide plutôt pour le début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, comme nous l'a suggéré notre ami Michel Cacours.

<sup>13</sup> Louis Canet, 'Pour l'édition de S. Jean Chrysostome' (1914), 97-200, 118-9 et 130; Anne-Marie Malingrey, *Jean Chrysostome. Sur l'incompréhensibilité de Dieu* (1970), 66, n° 10; *Ead.*, *Jean Chrysostome. Sur l'égalité du Père et du Fils. Contre les Anoméens homélies VII-XII*, SC 396 (Paris, 1994), 61, n° 6.

<sup>14</sup> Pour autant, une grande partie de la documentation accumulée à l'occasion de cette enquête n'a pu figurer dans les notices, surtout pour ces manuscrits très partiellement chrysostomiens. Ces informations seront peut-être, dans un deuxième temps, mises à la disposition des chercheurs sous une forme différente. La datation relative des feuillets de papier a été fondée sur le relevé systématique des filigranes et leur comparaison avec les modèles fournis par les répertoires usuels (Briquet, Harlfinger, Mošin-Traljić et Sosower). Pour les feuillets de parchemin, le traitement spécifique des types de réglure, selon la codification Leroy-Sautel, a été fondé sur l'analyse systématique de l'ensemble des cahiers et l'étude rigoureuse de leur mise en pages. Jacques-Hubert Sautel a déjà exploité partiellement les résultats de cette enquête (pour les manuscrits des *Homélies sur la Genèse: Paris gr. 602-652*) dans une communication lors d'une table ronde organisée par Patrick Andrist à Berne, en 2010. Il prévoit aussi la publication des schémas de réglures cités ici, mais absents du répertoire Leroy. De même, l'étendue précise des lacunes matérielles est indiquée, chaque fois que c'est possible, non seulement quant au texte (bornes de la lacune), mais aussi quant au support (nombre de feuillets manquants). Cette information nous a semblé nécessaire, en l'absence de rubrique spéciale consacrée à la collation des cahiers, collation sur laquelle est fondée cette information.

c) elle introduit l'analyse de textes ajoutés:

**Paris. gr. 4 (olim Medic.-Reg. 1874)**

- 1 Saec. XIII, partim rescriptus, membr., mm. 295/317 × 228/247, ff. III + 229 + II (-221 ; ff. 228-229 uacua praeter excerptum liturgicum), linn. 29-36, typus Leroy 40C1s (ff. 1-227) uel 30C1 (f. 228). Testamentum Vetus (ff. 1-227). Discernenda sunt ff. 227-228 : textus saec. XIV (linn. 33) ad calcem codicis exaratus. Fuit olim monasterii Deiparae τοῦ Γαλησίου apud Ephesum (f. 1), Cardinalis Ridolfi († 1550 : *Promiscue* 24). Anno 1599 in Bibliothecam Regiam illatus et anno 1602 pro Henrico IV rege compactus.

LIT. : *Cat. Bibl. Reg.* II, pp. 1-2 (saec. XIII ex.) ; OMONT I, p. 1 ; OMONT 1908-1913, II, p. 79, num. 667 (720) ; III, p. 262, num. 1874 ; HALKIN 1961, p. 223, num. 6 et pl. 17a [= 1971, p. 159 et 164 pl. 17a] ; DENIS 1970a, p. 165 et not. 4 ; KOTZABASSI 2004, pp. 130-131, num. 43 et pl. 27 ; MURATORE 2009, I, p. 752 (sub indice).

(ff. 227-228) [Chrysostomo priore manu tribuitur in margine] De Antichristo, inc. Ὅτι τρία μὲν ἐτι κρατήσῃ καὶ ἡμῖν, des. τέθλασται δὲ ὁ μέγας δάκτυλος τοῦ ποδὸς αὐτοῦ (finis textus inde a u. Ἐμφέρεται (f. 228) ex hoc codice ed. NAU 1917, p. 458 § 2 ; iterum ut fragmentum c Apocalypseos Eliae [*CAVT* 167] ed. DENIS 1970, p. 104).

**Paris. gr. 581 (olim Colbert. 418)**

Partes tres in unum compactae, quarum partes II et III dumtaxat ad Chrysostomum pertinent, in codice saec. XI, membr., mm 340/349 × 242/247, ff. V + 256 + V, coll. 2. Fuit quondam fortasse monasterii Προδοτίαςσας καὶ ἁγίων Ἀναργύρων in insula Cypro (ff. 251<sup>v</sup> et 252-253). Anno 1675 in bibliotheca Colbertina compactus. (...)

**II**

- 51 Ff. 9-118 : saec. XI (3/4) manu <Gerasimi monachi> in monasterio Deiparae τῆς Εὐεργέτιδος apud Constantinopolim exarata, linn. 38, typus Leroy 32C2. Ordo foliorum sic restituendus : ff. 84-118, 31, 24-30, 32-83, 17-23, 9-16. (...)

(ff. 9-118<sup>v</sup>) In Genesim homiliae 1-22, 30-31 (M. 53, 24-196, 275-286) : (...)

**III**

- 52 Ff. 119-256 (= A), cod. Paris, BNF gr. 751, ff. 1-171 (= B) et cod. Paris, BNF gr. 713, f. 270 (= C ; cf. infra cod. 175) ex uno eodemque codice defluerunt et hic simul describuntur : membr., coll. 2, linn. 32, typus Leroy 42C2. Discernenda sunt cod. B, ff. 120-171 et cod. C, f. 270 : typus Leroy 43C2c. Ordo foliorum codicis A sic restituendus : 250<sup>v</sup>, 249<sup>v</sup>, 248<sup>v</sup>, 247<sup>v</sup>, 246<sup>v</sup>, 245<sup>v</sup>, 119-244, 251-256.

Magis propinqui uidentur cod. gemello Athena, E.B.E., 414. Codice A usi sunt Naim (1906 : ff. 119-139 tantum sub siglo d) et Malingrey (1994 : ff. 182-211 sub siglo P) ; codex B collatus est pro B. de Montfaucon a G. Grisel (Paris, BNF, Suppl. gr. 436, ff. 21-36) simul cum F. de Faverolles (Paris, BNF, Suppl. gr. 438, ff. 50-84) et P. Susleauë (Paris, BNF, Suppl. gr. 267, ff. 156-158<sup>v</sup>). Vsi sunt Canet (1914 : ff. 15<sup>v</sup>, col. b, lin. 6 ab imo-17<sup>v</sup>, col. a, lin. 15 sub siglo P3) et Dumortier (1981 : ff. 56-98 sub siglo t). (...)

7 (A, f. 256<sup>v</sup> ; B, ff. 1-55<sup>v</sup>) Aduersus Iudaeos orationes 1, 5-8 (1, 3-6 cod.) (M. 48, 843, 884-934) : (A, f. 256<sup>v</sup>) or. 1, propter f. abscissum, inc. mut. Ἐβουλόμην] ὑμῖν ἀποδοῦναι (col. 843, lin. 1), des. ἔργα σου (*ibid.*, lin. 11 post initium). (B, ff. 1-21<sup>v</sup>) or. 5, inc. mut. εἶσε]σθε τὰ ἀποστολικά δόγματα (col. 884, lin. 6). (B, ff. 22-35) or. 6. (B, ff. 35-47<sup>v</sup>) or. 7. (B, ff. 47-55<sup>v</sup>) or. 8, des. mut. ἰουδαῖζή· οὐκ (col. 934, lin. 9 ab imo). (...)

9 (B, ff. 98-167<sup>v</sup> ; C, f. 270<sup>v</sup> ; B, ff. 168-171<sup>v</sup>) De Lazaro conciones 1-4, 7, 5 (M. 48, 963-1026 ; 1043-1054) : (...)

Dans notre troisième exemple, le *Paris. gr. 4* (pl. 2), la formule *Discernenda sunt...* introduit l'analyse d'un texte ajouté à la fin d'une unité codicologique plus ancienne (*textus saec. XIV ad calcem codicis exaratus*). Un petit texte sur l'Antéchrist, attribué à Chrysostome, a été ajouté au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle à la fin d'un manuscrit biblique du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui provient du monastère du Galèsion, près d'Ephèse.

### 3. Une distinction nette des parties divergentes (unités codicologiques) dans les recueils composites

Enfin, nous avons d'emblée voulu ménager dans la présentation de la notice une distinction nette des différentes unités codicologiques qui constituent les recueils composites. Une formule, dont le début est emprunté au volume VI: *Partes duae (tres, plures) in unum compactae* ('Deux [trois, un assez grand nombre] de parties sous une seule reliure'), dénombre les unités codicologiques du recueil factice. Elles sont au nombre de trois dans notre quatrième exemple, le *Paris. gr. 581* (pl. 2). La formule se poursuit par les mots: *quarum partes II et III ... dumtaxat ad Chrysostomum pertinent, in codice* ('dont les parties I [II...] seulement ont trait à Chrysostome dans le manuscrit'), qui isolent les parties chrysostomiennes, distinguées par un chiffre romain et traitées à part sous un numéro de répertoire différent. Cette innovation, déjà présente dans le volume VI, est utilisée ici de manière plus systématique: même lorsqu'une seule partie d'un manuscrit composite a trait à Jean Chrysostome, l'en-tête préliminaire permet de situer cette partie parmi les différentes unités codicologiques du manuscrit.

Inversement, nous avons procédé au regroupement et à la description sous une même cote des *membra disiecta* d'une même unité codicologique. À l'instar de Sever Voicu, nous avons affecté d'une lettre distincte de l'alphabet les parties dispersées issues d'une même unité codicologique et conservées sous des cotes diverses, mais décrites au sein d'une même notice. Dans l'exemple choisi (pl. 2), la troisième partie du *Paris. gr. 581* (ff. 119-256 = A) doit être complétée par deux autres *membra disiecta*: B (*Paris. gr. 751*, ff. 1-171) et C (*Paris. gr. 713*, f. 270).

En introduisant ces quelques modifications dans la présentation des notices, nous avons voulu répondre à une critique souvent formulée à l'encontre des CCG: l'attention exclusive portée au texte de Chrysostome conduit à négliger le contexte de sa transmission. Le caractère essentiellement philologique de ce répertoire se prêtait mal à de grands développements historiques et codicologiques: on ne trouvera donc ici que quelques perspectives ouvertes, pour faire deviner au lecteur ce qu'on pourrait appeler la partie cachée de l'iceberg. Nous espérons ainsi illustrer l'apport de l'histoire et de la codicologie à l'étude du texte chrysostomien proprement dit. L'histoire des textes et l'étude des

manuscrits qui les transmettent s'éclairent mutuellement. Pour appliquer à la codicologie la formule désormais classique que Jean Irigoin employait à propos de la paléographie, philologie et codicologie sont deux disciplines tour à tour maîtresses et servantes l'une de l'autre<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Jean Irigoin, 'Deux servantes maîtresses en alternance: paléographie et philologie', dans *Atti del V Colloquio Internazionale di Paleografia Greca, Cremona, 4-10 ottobre 1998*, a cura di Giancarlo Prato (Firenze, 2000), 589-600.

# Denominational Translation of Patristic Texts into Romanian: Elements for a Patristic Translation Theory\*

Octavian GORDON, București, Romania

## ABSTRACT

A series of denominational differences is obvious in most of the Romanian translations of Greek or Latin patristic texts. Even if two or more translations of the same Greek / Latin word or phrase are philologically correct, it appears that a translation made by an Orthodox will employ certain language (most of them lexical) features, whereas a Catholic or a Protestant, when translating the same patristic text, will use a different terminology, or even topic and morphological features. This may be due to at least two different traditions in the Romanian literature, concerning the history of literary language, but sociological reasons are also to be taken into account. Nevertheless, it appears that elements of denominational hermeneutics could cause the differences of language. Hence, a different understanding of the patristic texts entails the denominational differences in translation, whether we refer to important theological (especially dogmatic and liturgical) terms or the nature of the patristic literature itself.

## 1. Observation

A series of denominational marks can be found in different translations into Romanian of Greek or Latin patristic texts. One can distinguish at first glance an Orthodox translation from a non-Orthodox translation of the same text, not on the basis of the contents, but on the basis of the language employed. Consequently, a common reader belonging to the Orthodox community could easily reject a recently translated text of a certain Father of the Church – of the same Church he believes in / belongs to! – if he comes to the opinion that the translation doesn't use the Orthodox language. Conversely, a patristic translation using the Orthodox terminology or style<sup>1</sup> can be easily recognized as such

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<sup>1</sup> By 'style', though improperly used from the linguistic point of view, I mean other language features but lexical ones, in order to simplify the discourse in the present demonstration.

and, depending on the reader's faith or personal opinion about language, can be regarded as adequate or old-fashioned and inappropriate.

Philologically speaking, even if two or more translations of the same Greek word or phrase are correct, it appears that a translation made by an Orthodox will employ certain language features, in most of the cases lexical features, whereas a Catholic or a Protestant, when translating the same patristic text, will use a different terminology, or even topic and morphological features.

Nevertheless, this statement has to be understood and perhaps reformulated on the basis of the following reality: not always the denominational affiliation overlaps with the position of the official Church, so that one can talk rather about denominational milieus than about denominations as such. At the same time, personal beliefs don't often overlap with the general opinion of the denominational group to which the respective person belongs. Consequently, a translator from patristic literature may proclaim his affiliation to Orthodoxy, for instance, but he may use in translations a language which is alien to the Orthodox spirit, perhaps a language he thinks the official Church or even the Orthodox milieu should adopt. In this contribution, I shall make minimum reference to this category, as it is not clear to what extent the proposed language in translation will be adopted or rejected by the ecclesial corpus. Consequently, I shall limit myself to taking into account the language traditionally considered to be denominational.

As for the traditionally considered Orthodox terminology or style, there are many people who believe that defending the 'Orthodox' language is a sign of backwardness and propose a kind of *aggiornamento* for the language used in the Orthodox Church or by the Orthodox milieus. Nevertheless, the Orthodox or other denominational language features I shall refer to are those features used by each denomination *in the liturgical* (and, partly, homiletical) *discourse*, which, in my opinion, is the core in defining language for every faith or religion and, therefore, relevant for any discussion regarding possible language denominational differences.

Consequently, as a methodological approach, I shall consider characteristic for any denominational language features those features which are concordant with the liturgical discourse. In this respect, the differences of terminology and style between the two main denominations in Romania – Orthodox and Roman Catholic – become an obvious fact, which cannot be denied or overseen. They are not only differences between traditional / old-fashioned and modern, but differences denominationally assumed.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the existence of more than one ecclesiastical jargon in Romanian language is a reality, and not a supposition.

<sup>2</sup> This perspective comes up against most of the language analyses, which talk about 'religious', 'Christian' or 'ecclesiastical language', making no difference between denominational characteristics. However, the language analysis of the religious field was a taboo-subject in the communist age and it is understood why the very recent undertakings in the field are rare, shy and equalizing. Nevertheless, the most comprehensive studies on religious vocabulary in Romanian

Generally speaking, the Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic terminology in Romanian can be easily recognized by its neologistic Latinity ('conciliu', 'penitență', 'misterii', 'oficiu'), whereas the Orthodox terminology is characterized by Slavic or Byzantine Greek elements ('sinod', 'pocăință', 'taine', 'slujbă'). Sometimes, the Catholic terminology prefers neo-Latin terms instead of inherited Latin synonyms: e.g. 'celebra(re)', 'adora(re)', 'vigilii', instead of 'a sărbători' (from the noun 'sărbătoare' < lat. \**servatoria* – *servare*),<sup>3</sup> 'închina(re)' (< lat. *inclinare*), 'priveghe(a)re' (< lat. *peruigilare*).<sup>4</sup>

The most evident mark of the denominational differences in the Romanian ecclesiastical language is the use of different spelling and / or pronunciation of the name of Jesus Christ: 'Iisus Hristos' (Orthodox, under the influence of Byzantine Greek, probably through Slavic intermediary) vs. 'Isus Cristos' (Catholic).<sup>5</sup>

Protestants do not seem to have their own jargon, but their language obviously tries to be modern, in the sense that it doesn't differ from the current standard Romanian language. In this respect, one cannot talk about an ecclesiastic Protestant language, as in the case of the Orthodox or Catholic milieus.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the religious terms, Protestants resort rather to neologistic vocabulary than to the traditional (Orthodox or Catholic) terminology.

I won't overload this presentation with a huge amount of examples in Romanian in order to illustrate the denominational differences of language. Though, for documentary reasons, I will give few examples taken from two translations of the same book written by Pope Gregorius the Great: *Vita Sancti Benedicti*.<sup>7</sup> Even if it is a historical rather than a theological text (as such), the denominational affiliation of the two translations can be immediately perceived, by the use of two series of synonyms: 'milostenie' (p. 22) vs. 'caritate' (p. 22),

are aware of the denominational differences. For example, Dana Luminița Teleoacă, in *Terminologia religioasă creștină în limba română* (București, 2005), 9-10, specifies that 'in the centre of the analysis stays the Orthodox Christian terminology' and only 'few considerations on Catholic religious terms are to be found in the last section of the book'.

<sup>3</sup> The Orthodox terminology prefers 'a prăznui', a synonym with Slavic origin. See D.L. Teleoacă, *Terminologia* (2005), 303.

<sup>4</sup> See Alexandru Ciorănescu, *Dicționarul etimologic al limbii române* (București, 2001), *sub vocibus*.

<sup>5</sup> Details on this denominational language difference can be found in Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologie biblică românească* (București, 2008), ch. 6: 'Inconsecvență ortografică cu motivație confesională: I(i)sus H(ch)ristos', 487-505, and in Dragoș Mîrșanu, 'A Historical Note on the Romanian Orthodox Spelling of the Name of Jesus: "Iisus", not "Isus"', *Biblicum Jassyense* 1 (2010), 149-55.

<sup>6</sup> Few exceptions in the ecclesiastic related terminology: e.g. 'prezbiter', instead of 'preot' ('priest') < lat. *prebiter* (vulg. for *presbyter*). In Romanian, 'prezbiter' is strictly related to the Protestant meaning(s) of the priesthood.

<sup>7</sup> Sfântul Grigorie cel Mare, *Viața Sfântului Benedict de Nursia* (Sibiu, 1998), Romanian translation by an Orthodox priest (Constantin Necula), and Papa Grigore cel Mare, *Viața sfântului Benedict și regula benedictină* (Iași, 2009), Romanian translation by a Benedictine group.



‘mănăstire’ (p. 24) vs. ‘cenobiu’ (p. 25); ‘dragoste’ (p. 24) vs. ‘caritate’<sup>8</sup> (p. 25); ‘stareț’ (p. 39) vs. ‘abate’ (p. 48) *etc.* On the one hand, one can notice the Orthodox words (of Slavic origin), which are also terms of common use, as well, and, on the other, there are the Catholic terms, Latin neologisms, rarely used in standard Romanian.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. A quo?

The establishment has been done: there *are* language denominational differences in patristic translations. The question is when did they appear. I believe that the answer is to be found in the history of Bible translations into Romanian:

Before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it appears that there were no denominational differences in the Romanian language. We can compare the liturgical language of the Orthodox neither with the Roman Catholic language, which was Latin at the time, nor with the Greek Catholic, as the Uniats, being by definition Catholic believers of Byzantine rite, used the same language as the Orthodox did. What we can do though is to compare the translations of the Bible in the first centuries of Romanian literature. Comparing, for example, the first integral edition of the Bible into Romanian at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1688), translated from Greek,<sup>10</sup> and the Bible edited one century afterwards (1795) by Samuel Micu,<sup>11</sup> a famous representative of the Greek Catholic milieu in Transylvania, one can observe no denominational difference. Moreover, the so-called ‘Biblia Vulgata from Blaj’ (1760-1761), which is the first translation of the Latin text<sup>12</sup> into Romanian, edited for Catholic missionary reasons, employs the same ‘Orthodox’ terminology and style. In fact, it was not only ‘Orthodox’, it was Romanian language. So, when did the split occur?

<sup>8</sup> *Caritas* had at least two meanings in Latin Christian texts: ‘love of God / humans’ and ‘charity’.

<sup>9</sup> If used, they refer either to Roman Catholic realities, like ‘cenobiu’ and ‘abate’, either to slightly different meanings, like ‘caritate’ (in Romanian rather synonym of ‘philanthropy’).

<sup>10</sup> *Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a lei vechi și a lei noao leage. Toate care s’au tălmăcit duple limba elinească spre înțeleagerea limbii rumânești, cu porunca preabunului creștin și luminatului domn Ioan Șărbănt Cantacozino Basarabă Voievod și cu îndemnarea dumnealui Constandin Brâncoveanu, marele logofăt* (București, 1688), reprinted in 1988, with the title *Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului și Noului Testament*.

<sup>11</sup> *Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a legii vechi și a celui noao, toate care s-au tălmăcit de pre limba elinească pre înțelesul limbii rumânești, acum întîiu s-au tipărit românește sup stăpînirea preînălțatului împărat a Romanilor Francisc al doilea (...). Cu blagoslovenia mării sale prealuminatului și preasfințitului domnului domn Ioan Bob, vlădica Făgărașului (...)* (Blaj, 1795).

<sup>12</sup> *Biblia Vulgata* (Blaj, 1760-1761), a manuscript version made by a group of Greek Catholic scholars, under the guidance of Bishop Petru Pavel Aaron, printed in București, 2005. Although it is officially stated that this translation follows the Latin text of *Vulgata*, I found also fragments ‘borrowed’ from the TM / LXX tradition, which cannot be found in Hieronymus’ *Vulgata*.

The first translation of the Bible using a surprising terminology and style, different from the traditional one, was the translation of Heliade-Rădulescu, the first President of the Romanian Academy. This translation was published in Paris, in 1858. With a very modern and surprisingly latinizing discourse, this translation was not successful at all, after the impact of Andrei Țaguna's reaction to it.<sup>13</sup> Shortly afterwards, the British Biblical Society published the so-called 'British Bibles', the main issue being the 1874 edition,<sup>14</sup> much more accessible than Heliade's version to the contemporary reader. The 'British Bibles' spread out in the Protestant and neo-Protestant milieus at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their language was much closer to the secular literature, influenced by the massive import of neo-Latin elements (especially from French, Italian and Latin itself). It is self-understood why the Protestants preferred a secular language, rather than an ecclesiastical jargon. Later, the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic milieus adopted some of these neo-Latin elements, but they kept also much from the traditional ecclesiastical jargon (which, before the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, was common to Orthodox and Catholic milieus).

### 3. Possible reasons of denominational differences

The other essential question is why there exist such denominational differences.

Nowadays denominational differences can be understood through the lens of the history of the Romanian language. As we have seen, with the modernization of the Romanian literary language, the Protestant and, afterwards, the Catholic milieus have chosen to be closer to the secular language, whereas the Orthodox kept their traditional way of expression, which is one step back (in time) in comparison with the modern Romanian language. The very fact of this choice might show a different understanding of Christian spirituality, but this is another question to discuss some other time.

The differences may also be explained in socio-linguistic terms: like the first Christian communities, nowadays Christian Churches try to find or to show their individuality through language, as well. In the case of Romanian Christian communities, at the dawn of the Romanian literature, the unique Church language was born together with the first Romanian writings: the first Romanian writings *were* Christian.<sup>15</sup> But, with the very quick development of the modern

<sup>13</sup> See Eugen Munteanu, 'Der Streit um das Recht zur Bibelübersetzung ins Rumänische. Metropolit Andrei Țaguna vs. Publizist Ion Heliade Rădulescu', *Romanische Forschungen* 120 (2008), 425-58. See also Ovidiu Moceanu, *Teologie și filologie. Andrei Țaguna vs Ion Heliade Rădulescu* (Pitești, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> *Sânta Scriptura a Vechiului și a Noului Testament. Edițiune nouă, revedută după texturile originale și publicată de Societatea Biblică pentru Britania și străinătate. Vechiul Testament* (Iași, 1874).

<sup>15</sup> Precisely, Orthodox Christian.

Romanian language, the language of the Church remained one step behind and an ecclesiastical jargon was born. Afterwards, the Protestant communities, whose ecclesiology is fundamentally different from the Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiologies, detached themselves from the traditional ecclesiastical jargon, by adopting the current literary language of the time. Finally, the Catholic milieus felt the need of being different in language from the Orthodox community, by adopting a characteristic language, mainly based on neo-Latin lexical innovations. This need didn't exist before, as socio-linguistics may show, because the Roman Catholic liturgical language was Latin before the second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

However, I wondered: 1) if the differences may be due to a different understanding of the biblical and hence patristic texts or thought; in other words, whether the philological correctness of a translation is organically linked to biblical and patristic hermeneutics; 2) whether and to what extent the major differences in patristic translations are relevant for the understanding of the text as a whole or, at least, in some details.

A recent linguistic dispute about translating published in *Studii Teologice*<sup>16</sup> – this is today the most important Romanian theological journal – shows that the answer to the questions above is rather positive: yes, the denominational hermeneutical differences *determine* different language employments and, conversely, differences in language usually *lead* to different understanding of the translated text.

#### 4. Conclusion

Now, one could wonder why it would not be possible to have a neutral, denominationally-blind translation, philologically correct and *ad usum omnium*. It is hard to say whether such translations into Romanian would be possible or not, but one thing is certain: the translations that allege themselves to be denominationally-blind don't have a language of their own, neither do they employ the modern standard Romanian language as such. In their attempt to be modern and up-to-date, they perforce resort, however, to unavoidable elements of denominational language, either Orthodox or Catholic, in a loosely controlled assortment.

<sup>16</sup> Sabin Preda, 'Mângâietorul și după chipul – două traduceri teologice', *Studii Teologice* 1 (2008), 197-219. The article is followed by two replies, showing opposite hermeneutical opinions: Dragoș Mîrșanu, 'Notă asupra traducerii patristice în cultura română de azi. Răspuns unei critici insuficient contextualizate', *Studii Teologice* 3 (2008), 223-9, and Adrian Muraru, 'Câteva considerații privitoare la traducerea textelor patristice în limba română – răspuns domnului Sabin Preda', *Studii Teologice* 3 (2008), 231-76. Briefly, the dispute goes around the interpretation and hence the translation of the Greek κατ' εἰκόνα and Παράκλητος, in Epiphanius' writing *Ancoratus*.



