STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. XCI

Papers presented at the Seventeenth International Conference
on Patristic Studies held
in Oxford 2015

Edited by
MARKUS VINZENT

Volume 17:
Biblica
Philosophica, Theologica, Ethica
Hagiographica
Ascetica



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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 *et al*., 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 *et al*., 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. Zellinger, 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 augustiniennes, 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 *et al*., 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.
KeTh	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.
OrSyr	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 *et al.*, Cambridge.
PLS	Migne, Patrologia, series latina. Supplementum ed. A. Hamman.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis, Paris.
PRE	Paulys Realenzyklopädie 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 Aszese 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.

BIBLICA

L'éphod de David dansant devant l'arche (2*S*. 6:14): problèmes textuels et exégèse patristique

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Abstract

The garment that king David is wearing while dancing in front of the Ark (2*Sam*. 6:14) is problematic. Indeed, in the Greek Bible, this garment is said to be a στολὴ ἔξαλλος, that is to say, an 'exceptional cloth', whereas the Hebrew text (Massoretic text and Qumran) tells that 'David was girded with a linen ephod' (ephod bad). This article intends to understand this discrepancy between the Hebrew forms of the text and the Greek one in the light of the reading of this verse made by Christian authors of the late Antiquity. Because of the ambiguity of the 'linen ephod' which is not clearly depicted in the Ancient Testament, and which therefore could be mistaken for the sacerdotal ephod, one can suggest that the Greek translation for 'ephod bad' was precisely an attempt to avoid possible misunderstandings about this unexpected garment.

En 2*Samuel* 6:14, décrivant la danse du roi David devant l'arche, le texte massorétique (TM), confirmé par les fragments de Qumrân[1], précise que le danseur 'était ceint d'un éphod bad', d'un éphod de lin. À cet endroit, la Bible grecque, dans le Vaticanus comme dans la recension lucianique, évoque plutôt une στολὴ ἔξαλλος, une 'tunique d'exception'. Cette traduction étonne car, non seulement elle ne correspond pas littéralement à l'expression utilisée en hébreu, mais en outre, le terme *ephod,* lorsqu'il est employé dans les livres historiques, est généralement translittéré dans la Bible grecque, ou bien traduit par le terme grec ἐπωμίς, qui désigne un vêtement attaché par un fermoir sur les épaules[2]. Un même décalage entre les deux langues apparaît dans le texte parallèle des Chroniques (1*Ch*. 15:27), qui évoque, là où le texte massorétique propose encore *ephod bad*[3], une στολὴ βυσσίνη, 'tunique de lin fin', et ce, dans la plupart des témoins manuscrits, dont le Vaticanus. La recension

[1] F.M. Cross, D.W. Parry, R.J. Saley, E. Ulrich (éd.), *Qumran Cave 4, XII, 1-2 Samuel* (Oxford, 2005).

[2] L'hébreu *ephod* est translittéré en grec (ἐφούδ ou εφωδ) essentiellement dans le premier livre des *Règnes* (ou premier livre de *Samuel*) 1*Rg*. 2:18; 1*Rg*. 2:28; 1*Rg*. 14:3; 1*Rg*. 14:18; 1*Rg*. 22:18; 1*Rg*. 23:6; 1*Rg*. 23:9; 1*Rg*. 30:7. On trouve la traduction ἐπωμίς dans les livres de l'*Exode* (*Ex*. 25:7; *Ex*. 28:4-15; *Ex*. 29:5; *Ex*. 35:9; *Ex*. 35:27; *Ex*. 36:9-39), du *Lévitique* (*Lv*. 8:7), et des *Juges* (*Jg*. 8:27; *Jg*. 17:5; *Jg*. 18:14-20).

[3] Les fragments de Qumrân sont lacunaires pour ce verset.

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lucianique, quant à elle, donne pour ce verset des Chroniques : ἐφοὺδ μόνον. Cet écart entre l'hébreu et le grec constitue donc une difficulté que nous voudrions ici mettre en lumière.

L'éphod recouvre, sous un même nom, deux réalités bibliques. En un premier sens, il constitue l'une des huit pièces de la tenue liturgique du grand-prêtre[4]. Il s'agirait d'une sorte de corselet en lin bariolé tissé de fils d'or, attaché aux épaules, et enserré par une ceinture. Dans un second sens, il peut renvoyer à un objet divinatoire qui sert d'intermédiaire aux oracles divins; ce type d'éphod n'est cependant pas clairement décrit dans la Bible[5]. Dans le cas de notre péricope, l'éphod désigne une pièce de vêtement, puisque David en est 'ceint'[6]. Or David, n'étant pas prêtre, ne peut *a priori* pas revêtir l'éphod sacerdotal.

Peut-être alors l'éphod a-t-il un troisième emploi, illustré dans notre péricope: de ce vêtement, la seule caractéristique connue est la matière. *Bad*, en effet, désigne un lin écru, simple, grossier, qui s'oppose au lin riche et bariolé de l'éphod du grand-prêtre. Cet *ephod bad* est évoqué à quatre reprises dans la Bible: en 1*Samuel* 2:18, il constitue l'habit du jeune Samuel. En 1*Samuel* 22:18, il est porté par les quatre-vingt-cinq prêtres tués par Doëg, sur l'ordre de Saül. Enfin, en 2*Samuel* 6:14 et en 1*Chroniques* 15:27, il est porté par le roi David. Dans ces quatre occurrences, l'éphod de lin est donc revêtu par de simples prêtres, un jeune lévite et un roi.

D'où vient alors la στολὴ ἔξαλλος dont la Bible grecque revêt David? Στολὴ est un mot d'usage très large dans la Bible grecque: vêtement ordinaire,

[4] Quatre vêtements sont communs aux prêtres et au grand-prêtre: le caleçon, la tunique de lin, la ceinture, et le turban. Les quatre autres vêtements sont uniquement réservés au grand-prêtre: la robe de l'éphod, l'éphod, le pectoral et la plaque en or. Voir 'Prêtres, vêtements des', dans *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du judaïsme*, Geoffrey Wigoder (dir.) (Paris, 1996), 903-4. Sur l'éphod, voir également l'article 'Ephod' d'Eugène Levesque, dans *Dictionnaire de la Bible* 2, Fulcran Vigouroux (dir.) (Paris, 1899), 1866-9.

[5] La définition de l'éphod divinatoire est confuse : dans le livre des Juges, l'éphod est décrit comme une image de fabrication humaine, à usage idolâtrique (*Jg*. 8:27; *Jg*. 17:5; *Jg*. 18:14-20), tandis que dans le livre de *Samuel*, l'éphod apparaît comme un objet clairement oraculaire, sans qu'il soit pourtant précisément décrit (1*S*. 23:6-13; 1*S*. 30:7-9). Voir la synthèse de Michel Lestienne sur les différents types d'éphod dans l'introduction à la *Bible d'Alexandrie* 9.1, *Premier livre des Règnes* (Paris, 1997), 89-93.

[6] Le verbe hébreu est *hâgar*, 'ceindre'. Ce verbe n'est jamais utilisé pour décrire le port de l'éphod, qui est attaché aux épaules. Il est utilisé généralement pour décrire le port d'une ceinture (*Ex*. 29:9; *Lv*. 16:4. Le grand-prêtre est ceint de la ceinture de l'éphod en *Lv*. 8:7; *Lv*. 8:13), d'une épée (1*S*. 1:39; 1*S*. 25:13; *Ps*. 45:4), ou d'un sac pour revêtir la tenue du repentir (2*S*. 3:31; 1*R*. 20:32; *Es*. 22:12; *Jr*. 1:17; *Ez*. 7:18; *Ez*. 27:31; *Jl*. 1:13). Voir l'étude de Theodore C. Foote, 'The Ephod', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 21 (1902), 11-3. D'après Edgard Haulotte, dans *Symbolique du vêtement dans la Bible* (Paris, 1966), 26-7, l'*ephod bad* serait un 'pagne de lin', vêtement originel des prêtres d'Israël, avant la tenue complexe du grand-prêtre décrite dans les livres de l'*Exode* et du *Lévitique*. Cette hypothèse est également présente chez Roland de Vaux, dans *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament* (Paris, 1960), 201-3, et influença probablement la traduction de l'*ephod bad* dans la *Bible de Jérusalem*, par 'pagne de lin', Roland de Vaux étant le traducteur des deux livres de *Samuel*.

exceptionnel ou sacerdotal, il est employé aussi pour désigner, dans son ensemble, la tenue du grand-prêtre Aaron[7]. L'expression στολὴ ἔξαλλος apparaît également dans la Bible grecque, en *Genèse* 45:22 pour désigner les cinq vêtements exceptionnels que Joseph donne à son dernier frère, Benjamin, le préféré de son père Jacob[8]. Plus tardivement, chez les auteurs chrétiens, l'expression est employée dans un sens plus péjoratif. Eusèbe de Césarée, par exemple, au IVe siècle, l'utilise pour décrire la tenue étrange des barbares venus honorer l'empereur Constantin de leurs présents[9]. La στολὴ ἔξαλλος peut ainsi désigner une tenue aussi exceptionnelle qu'étonnante. Rien de commun, cependant, avec l'*ephod bad* du texte hébreu.

Comment expliquer un tel décalage entre l'*ephod bad*, attesté par toutes les formes hébraïques, et la traduction de la Bible grecque par στολὴ ἔξαλλος en 2*Règnes*? On peut observer que le caractère sacerdotal contenu dans la mention de l'éphod s'efface dans la Bible grecque. Le texte, plus vague, affuble David d'un vêtement dont seul l'aspect exceptionnel est mis en valeur. Cette traduction a-t-elle été choisie pour résoudre le problème soulevé par le port, par un roi, d'un vêtement *a priori* réservé aux grands-prêtres? La question se pose d'autant plus qu'elle a été explicitement évoquée par les commentateurs antiques.

Jérôme, le premier, se confronte à plusieurs reprises au problème de l'éphod, et plus particulièrement à l'ambiguïté du mot *bad*. Selon l'auteur de la Vulgate, dans la lettre 29, cet ajout servirait à distinguer l'éphod du grand-prêtre et celui des autres, c'est-à-dire de Samuel, et des quatre-vingt-cinq prêtres du premier livre de *Samuel*[10]. Le cas de David est cité, en même temps que celui de Samuel, dans la lettre 64 à Fabiola. La réponse est la même: il y aurait deux éphods différents, l'éphod du grand-prêtre, riche et coloré, et l'éphod ordinaire, fait de lin blanc, que tous pouvaient porter, le *bad* servant à les différencier:

'Le sixième vêtement se nomme en hébreu éphod […]. Dans une certaine épître, je me souviens avoir écrit – comme l'atteste l'Écriture tout entière – que c'est un objet sacré, et qui n'est attribué qu'aux seuls Pontifes. Et qu'on n'objecte pas que, dans le livre des Règnes, il est écrit que Samuel, qui n'était que lévite, eut, quand il était encore enfant,

[7] *Ex*. 28:3-4; *Ex*. 29:5; *Ex*. 31:10; *Ex*. 35:21; *Ex*. 36:8; *Ex*. 39:12-3; *Ex*. 39:18; *Ex*. 40:13; *Lv*. 8:2; *Lv*. 8:30. Dans la plupart de ces références, la στολή désigne indifféremment les vêtements d'Aaron et de ses fils.

[8] *Gn*. 45:22: 'Et à tous, il donna des vêtements doubles, mais à Benjamin, il donna trois cent pièces d'or et cinq vêtements exceptionnels' (πέντε ἐξαλλασσούσας στολάς), trad. M. Harl, *La Bible d'Alexandrie 1, La Genèse* (Paris, 1986), 292.

[9] Eusèbe de de Césarée, *Vie de Constantin,* IV, 7, 1. L'expression se retrouve également dans la *Réfutation de toutes les hérésies* attribuée à Hippolyte, V, 9, 7, et chez Nicéphore Calliste Xanthopoulos, *Histoire ecclésiastique*, IX, 45.

[10] Jérôme développe la question du 'mystérieux *ephod bad*' du jeune Samuel dans la lettre 29, 4-5, où l'on retrouve la distinction entre l'éphod bigarré et fastueux du grand-prêtre et celui, plus ordinaire, fait de lin grossier. Plus succinctement, il évoque le problème dans l'*In Zachariam* 3, 12 et les *Tractatus in Psalmos*, Ps. 98.

un *ephod bad*, c'est-à-dire un superhuméral de lin, car il est aussi rapporté que David portait la même chose devant l'arche du Seigneur. En effet, c'est une chose d'avoir un vêtement tissé d'or aux quatre couleurs citées plus haut: hyacinthe, byssus, cramoisi et pourpre, et autre chose d'en posséder un, tout simple et de lin, à l'instar des prêtres'[11].

Comment Jérôme sait-il que David est revêtu de l'*ephod bad*, qui n'est évoqué que dans le texte hébreu? Comment se fait-il qu'il soit le seul auteur à le mentionner? S'appuie-t-il directement sur le texte hébreu de 2*Samuel*? Les nombreux parallèles de la lettre 64 avec Origène, soulignés par la critique[12], nous amènent à penser que Jérôme pourrait s'être appuyé ici sur un développement perdu de l'Alexandrin. Grâce aux *Hexaples*, en effet, Origène savait que le texte hébraïque revêtait David de l'éphod. Mais il est aussi possible que Jérôme ait eu connaissance du texte hébraïque indépendamment d'Origène.

L'Ambrosiaster mentionne le problème de l'éphod de David dans un développement qui vise à rappeler que Samuel n'était pas prêtre, bien qu'il ait porté un éphod dans son enfance. Le vêtement du jeune prophète, comme celui de David, est différent de l'éphod sacerdotal, car, selon l'Ambrosiaster, cet éphod n'est pas un vêtement; mais un objet divinatoire permettant d'interroger Dieu[13]. L'éphod à revêtir est porté indifféremment par les prêtres, les lévites et les rois:

Par ailleurs, nous lisons aussi que David était vêtu de l'éphod, et d'un éphod double[14]. Or, Samuel encore enfant était ceint de l'éphod: est-ce qu'un petit enfant a pu offrir des présents à Dieu? Tu vois donc que l'éphod est certes un seul nom, mais qu'il n'a pas toujours la même signification. En effet, les prêtres portaient l'éphod mais n'en étaient pas vêtus. Or, les rois et le lévite Samuel étaient revêtus de l'éphod. Donc tantôt

[11] Jérôme, *Epistula 64*, 15, dans Jérôme Labourt (éd. et trad.), *Saint Jérôme, Lettres* 3 (Paris, 1953), 129-30: *Sextum est vestimentum, quod Hebraica lingua dicitur ephod […]. Hoc autem esse pontificis vestimentum, et in quadam epistola scripsisse me memini, et omnis Scriptura testatur, sacrum quiddam esse, et solis conveniens pontificibus. Nec statim illud occurrat, quod Samuel qui Levita fuit, scribitur Regnorum primo libro habuisse aetatis adhuc parvulae ephod bad, id est, superhumerale lineum: cum David quoque ante arcam Domini idem portasse referatur. Aliud est enim ex quattuor supra dictis coloribus, id est, hiacyntho, bysso, cocco, purpura, et ex auro habere contextum; aliud in similitudinem sacerdotum simplex et lineum.*

[12] Voir le commentaire de Jérôme Labourt, dans *Saint Jérôme, Lettres*, 3 (Paris, 1953), 246-7.

[13] Anastase le Sinaïte dans ses *Quaestiones et Responsiones* 98, sans faire mention particulièrement de David, évoque, lui aussi, l'éphod comme objet oraculaire. Mais il considère qu'il s'agit bien d'une sorte de vêtement, un scapulaire que le prêtre revêt lorsqu'il interroge Dieu, et qui est le réceptacle, par ses changements de couleurs, des réponses divines. Anastase dit tirer son exposé des 'saints pères' (Ταῦτα ἡμεῖς οὐκ οἴκοθεν συνετάξαμεν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων Πατέρων, CChr. SG 59, éd. J.A. Munitiz, M. Richard).

[14] Il y a ici confusion entre le texte de la danse de David (2*R*. 6:14) et celui qui concerne le jeune Samuel en 1*R*. 2:18, où il est question de l'éphod de Samuel ainsi que d'un petit manteau double : καὶ Σαμουηλ ἦν λειτουργῶν ἐνώπιον κυρίου παιδάριον περιεζωσμένον εφουδ βαρ, καὶ διπλοίδα μικρὰν ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ.

l'éphod signifie le vêtement, tantôt comme une petite armoire que les prêtres portaient pour interroger le Seigneur[15].

L'affirmation de l'Ambrosiaster selon laquelle l'éphod peut être revêtu par les rois ne repose sur aucun fondement biblique: l'éphod n'est jamais porté par un roi, excepté précisément dans le cas présent de David[16]. Le postulat de l'auteur est donc probablement tiré de sa lecture de cette péricope.

Dans les *Questions sur les Paralipomènes*, Théodoret de Cyr souligne aussi le problème de l'éphod de David: l'éphod est partie intégrante de l'habit du grand-prêtre, or David est roi, et non prêtre; il lui est donc interdit de s'en revêtir[17].

Comment se fait-il que David, qui n'était pas prêtre, ait été revêtu de l'éphod? En effet, il est dit: 'et sur David, seulement l'éphod'... Il est évident que le grand David, homme pieux et ami de Dieu, n'aurait pas transgressé la loi, et n'aurait pas osé être vêtu d'une tunique sacerdotale. Mais le texte enseigne qu'alors qu'il conduisait l'arche et qu'il dansait, il n'était pas revêtu d'un habit royal, mais seulement d'une tunique sans manche, que l'on appelle aujourd'hui 'arcadique'[18].

Pour Théodoret, David n'est donc pas vêtu d'un vêtement sacerdotal ou royal, mais d'une tunique ordinaire, en lin, et sans manche. Le terme ἀρκαδίκις, attesté seulement chez cet auteur, semblerait renvoyer à la région grecque

[15] Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones Veteris et Noui Testamenti* CXXV, 2, 46, 8, dans Alexander Souter (éd.), CSEL 50 (Vienne, Leipzig, 1908), 87-8: *efut autem etiam Dauid legimus fuisse indutum, et duplicem efut. Samuhel autem adhuc puerulus succinctus erat efut: numquid puerulus deo potuit populi munera offerre? uides ergo, quia efut unum quidem nomen est, sed non unam rem semper significat. Sacerdotes enim portabant, non uestiebantur efut; reges uero et Leuita Samuhel induebantur efut. Aliquando ergo uestis, aliquando quasi armariolum. Quod portabant sacerdotes ad interrogandum dominum, significatur efut.*

[16] Corroborant la lecture de l'Ambrosiaster, une annotation marginale du Codex Legionensis, s'appuyant sur la lecture du texte grec, glose l'*ephod lineo* de la Vulgate par : *indutus erat ueste regali optima (graecus* στολὴν ἔξαλλον*)*, C. Vercellone, *Variae Lectiones Vulgatae Latinae bibliorum editionis,* II (Rome, 1864), 347.

[17] Théodoret soulève la même problématique en *Quaestiones in Judices* (*Jg*. 8:27), 17, 301: Παράνομον μὲν τὸ γεγονός. τῷ γὰρ ἐφοὺδ μόνοις ἐξῆν κεχρῆσθαι τοῖς ἱερεῦσι; *Quaestiones in I Regum*, 6: Τί δήποτε Λευΐτης ὢν ὁ Σαμουὴλ τῷ ἐφοὺδ ἐκέχρητο; μόνῳ γὰρ ἀφώριστο τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ. Des sources antiochiennes possibles de Théodoret ont survécu un fragment de Diodore de Tarse et un autre de Théodore de Mopsueste. Voir R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des Rois* (Cité du Vatican, 1959), 160 et 176 : Samuel porte l'*ephod* parce qu'il était de la classe des prêtres (ἱερατικοῦ γένους).

[18] Théodoret de Cyr, *Quaestiones in Paralipomena* I, 1, Natalio Fernandez Marcos, José Ramón Busto Saiz (éd.), *Theodoreti Cyrensis Quaestiones in Reges et Paralipomena* (Madrid, 1984), 252: Πῶς ὁ Δαβὶδ οὐκ ὢν ἱερεὺς ἐφοὺδ ἠμπίσχετο; Καὶ ἐπὶ Δαβὶδ γάρ, φησίν, ἐφοὺδ μόνον ... Δῆλον δὲ ὡς ὁ μέγας Δαβίδ, καὶ θεοσεβὴς ὢν καὶ θεοφιλὴς ἀνήρ, οὐκ ἂν παρέβη τὸν νόμον οὐδ' ἂν ἱερατικὴν ἐτόλμησε περιβαλέσθαι στολήν. Ἀλλὰ διδάσκει λόγος ὡς ἡγούμενος τῆς κιβωτοῦ, καὶ χορεύων, οὐ τὸ βασιλικὸν περιεβέβλητο σχῆμα, ἀλλ' ἐξωμίδα μόνην, ἣν νῦν καλοῦσιν Ἀρκαδίκιν.

de l'Arcadie, mais il est difficile d'expliciter cette référence[19]. Ici encore, pas de transgression du code liturgique vestimentaire: comme Jérôme, Théodoret admet que l'éphod de David est un vêtement commun[20].

Photius de Constantinople, le dernier, aborde la question en donnant un éventail des sens et des emplois possibles du mot éphod, dans deux textes différents.

Dans les *Amphilochia* 293, il propose deux interprétations. La première suppose que l'éphod dont est revêtu David est bien l'éphod sacerdotal, que le roi est en droit de porter du fait du contexte politique et religieux. En effet, à la mort de Samuel, ses fils étant coupables, personne ne fut jugé digne de le remplacer dans la procession de l'arche vers Jérusalem, excepté David:

> Il est dit que 'sur David aussi se trouvait l'éphod', pourtant, il ne lui est pas permis, même s'il mène une vie pieuse, d'être vêtu de la tunique d'un prêtre. Et à ce sujet, il a été dit par certains que, lorsque Samuel fut mort, que ses fils étaient soumis à une enquête sur les coupables, qu'il fallait qu'un prêtre marchât devant l'arche de Dieu et qu'il n'y avait personne qu'on jugeât digne de se charger de ce ministère, c'est par nécessité que le roi reçoit une telle fonction, puisque précisément il avait lui-même rapporté l'arche de chez les peuples étrangers[21].

La seconde interprétation que rapporte Photius fait de l'éphod de David une tenue royale: 'À d'autres, il semble que le roi David n'aurait jamais osé se vêtir de la tunique sacerdotale, mais il y avait, disent-ils, une sorte de vêtement qui revenait exclusivement aux rois, qui lui-même portait aussi le nom de la tunique sacerdotale, et c'est ce vêtement dont était revêtu à ce moment le roi David[22]'.

Dans la Lettre 192, Photius donne trois sens au mot 'éphod': en premier lieu, l'éphod réservé au grand-prêtre, en second, l'éphod comme vêtement en lin banal, et enfin, en un troisième sens, l'habit utilisé par les prêtres idolâtres,

[19] Le terme est employé une seconde fois en *Quaestiones in I Regum, 44*. Cette explication est reprise, presque mot pour mot, par Procope de Gaza dans son *Commentaire sur les Chroniques* I, 15, 1, PG 87, 1, 1205a.

[20] Si les commentaires des anciens antiochiens ne sont pas conservés, Išo Dad de Merv (IXe s.), qui les utilise parfois, affirme, comme Théodoret, que l'ephod de David n'était pas celui des prêtres, mais, écrit-il, une « imitation » (*Commentaire d'Išo'Dad de Merv sur l'Ancien Testament*, III, tr. C. Van den Eynde, CSCO 230 [Louvain, 1963], 92). Išo Dad avait proposé une explication voisine concernant l'éphod de Samuel (*ibid.* 52).

[21] Photius de Constantinople, *Amphilochia, 293*, dans Leendert Gerrit Westerink (éd.), *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, VI, 1 (Leipzig, 1987), 83: Εἴρηται δὲ ὅτι 'καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Δαυὶδ ἐφούδ', καίτοι οὐκ ἐξὸν αὐτῷ εὐσεβῶς βιοῦντι ἱερέως στολὴν περιβαλέσθαι. ἀλλὰ περὶ τούτου τισὶ μὲν ἐρρήθη, ὡς ἐπειδὴ Σαμουὴλ μὲν ἀπεβίω, οἱ δὲ τούτου παῖδες ἐξητάζοντο ἐν αἰτίαις, ἔδει δὲ ἱερέα τῆς κιβωτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ προπορεύεσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν ταύτην ὑπελθεῖν ἠξιωμένος, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν τοιαύτην ἀναδέχεται λειτουργίαν, ἅτε δὴ καὶ <ἐκ> τῶν ἀλλοφύλων τὴν κιβωτὸν αὐτὸς ἀνενεγκών·

[22] Photius de Constantinople, *Amphilocia, 293*, dans L.G. Westerink (éd.), *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, VI, 1 (1987), 83: Ἑτέροις δὲ δοκεῖ μὴ ἄν ποτε κατατολμῆσαι τὸν βασιλέα Δαυὶδ ἱερατικὴν στολὴν περιβαλεῖν, ἀλλ' εἶναί τί φασιν ἀποκεκληρωμένον τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἀμφίασμα, ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ τὴν ὀνομασίαν ἔφερε τῆς ἱερατικῆς στολῆς, καὶ τοῦτο κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ περιβεβλῆσθαι τὸν βασιλέα Δαυίδ.

contrefaçon de l'éphod sacerdotal[23]. Le vêtement de David, d'après Photius, ferait partie de la seconde catégorie d'éphod: 'Le second type a quelque ressemblance avec la forme dont on a parlé, mais il est commun et non sacerdotal: il est manifeste que David était vêtu de celui-là: En effet *sur David*, est-il dit, *l'éphod seulement*'[24].

En tout, Photius distingue donc quatre types d'éphod: le vêtement sacerdotal, le vêtement royal, la tunique de lin ordinaire et le vêtement des prêtres idolâtres. Pour l'éphod de David, l'auteur hésite entre les trois premières possibilités. Il est le seul commentateur, à notre connaissance, à justifier que David ait pu légitimement revêtir l'éphod sacerdotal. Mais la source de cette hypothèse semble perdue. La seconde proposition rappelle celle de l'Ambrosiaster qui fait de l'éphod un vêtement particulier aux rois ou aux lévites. Quant à la dernière solution, − l'éphod comme habit ordinaire −, elle est commune à Jérôme et à Théodoret. Pour cette dernière, on pourrait imaginer une source origénienne ou antiochienne, dont on n'aurait pas gardé trace.

En survolant ces quelques interprétations, on voit que le vêtement que porte David pose problème aux exégètes anciens, lesquels s'efforcent de disculper le roi d'une transgression liturgique. Si les commentateurs se sont trouvés embarrassés par l'éphod de David, il est possible que cet embarras ait été ressenti par les traducteurs de la Bible en grec: en remplaçant l'*ephod bad* par une στολὴ ἔξαλλος, ils ont pu préférer revêtir le roi David d'un vêtement moins équivoque. Cette hypothèse pourrait également être confirmée par le Targum Jonathan, dans lequel l'*ephod bad* est remplacé par une tunique de lin. Les commentateurs ont pu voir, dans cette reformulation du texte biblique, une volonté d'éviter de prêter à David un vêtement sacerdotal, dans un souci constant du Targum de concilier les pratiques bibliques et les lois prescrites dans la Halakha[25]. La Bible grecque, qui semble parfois procéder à la manière d'un targum, pourrait donc avoir suivi le même fil d'interprétation.

[23] Il s'agit probablement là d'une référence à l'éphod fabriqué par Mika en *Jg*. 17:5.

[24] Photius de Constantinople, *Lettre 192*, dans Basil Louras, Leendert Gerrit Westerink (éd.), *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*, 2 (Leipzig, 1984), 92: Ἕτερον δὲ σχήματί πως τῷ εἰρημένῳ παρεοικός, κοινὸν δὲ καὶ οὐχ ἱερατικόν, ὃ φαίνεται καὶ Δαυὶδ ἀμπισχόμενος· 'ἐπὶ γὰρ Δαυίδ', φησίν, 'ἐφοὺδ μόνον'.

[25] Voir Leivy Smolar, Moses Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York, Baltimore, 1983), 13-4, qui notent que la même modification intervient, pour les mêmes raisons, à propos de Samuel, en 1*S*. 2:18, qui n'est pas prêtre. Dans les deux cas, le Targum Jonathan glose en remplaçant l'*ephod bad* par 'a tunic with sleeves made of fine linen': voir D.J. Harrington, A.J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets* (Edinburgh, 1987), 172. Le texte araméen se trouve dans A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 1-3 (Leiden-Boston, 2004), 168.

Isaiah 44-5 and Competing Conceptions of Monotheism in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have variously assessed what, if any, relationship there was between Monarchianism and Gnosticism in the late second and early third centuries. In his translation of *Adversus Praxean*, Ernest Evans concludes that there was no connection between the two, although he offers little evidence to substantiate his assertion. Reinhard M. Hübner, Adolf von Harnack, and others have argued that Monarchianism was at least partially directed against Gnosticism. To date, Hübner's work on the relationship between Monarchianism and Gnosticism has been the most thorough. This paper addresses the relationship between Monarchianism and Gnosticism by analyzing competing interpretations of passages from *Isaiah* 44-5. 'I am the LORD, and there is no other' is the constant refrain in the polemic against idolatry in *Isaiah* 44-5. This refrain became an integral piece in debates about monotheism in the late second century. The *Apocryphon of John* ironically puts these words on the lips of Ialdabaoth, who is unaware that there is in fact another God who is higher than he. Both *Contra Noetum* and Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* attest to the fact that the Monarchians were using these verses in order to support their rigid understanding of monotheism. They deployed this refrain from *Isa*. 44-5 in order to deny any distinction within the Godhead. By assessing uses of this refrain from *Isaiah*, I argue that the Monarchians were opposing certain types of Gnostic teaching as well as more mainstream articulations of distinction between the Father and Son.

In what follows, I argue that Monarchianism arose at least partially in response to Gnostic theology. Furthermore, I contend that the Monarchian opposition to Gnosticism is evident in their exegetical choices. At the heart of the Monarchian controversy was the question of how to understand monotheism, and the arguments about monotheism were often exegetical. The classic monotheistic refrain from *Isaiah* 44-5, 'I am God, and beside me there is no other', is used by parties on all sides of the Monarchian debate.[1] Various Gnostic systems used

[1] Although beyond the scope of this article, it should be noted that *Isaiah* 44:6, often used in tandem with *Deuteronomy* 32:39, was used to combat the 'Two Powers' heresy in Tannaitic rabbinic works. See, for example, the *Sifre* to Deuteronomy, 329 and *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael, Bahodesh,* 5. Daniel Boyarin has suggested that there was a relationship between Monarchianism and rabbinic polemic against two powers, but his argument is highly speculative. See Daniel

Studia Patristica XCI, 11-18.
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this same refrain from *Deutero-Isaiah* as an ironic means of rejecting the theology of their opponents. I propose that the monotheistic commentary focused on passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* indicates that Gnostics, Monarchians, and the proto-Orthodox (for lack of a better term) polemicized on the same exegetical landscape. This polemical interaction (whether diachronic or synchronic) shows that it is probable that the Monarchians were consciously rejecting the positions of the Gnostics.

The theological origins of Monarchianism have puzzled scholars for many years. The two Monarchian heresiarchs, Noetus and Praxeas, are both said to have come to Rome from Asia Minor.[2] Beyond these scant geographical details, however, we know little about their theological background or what motivated the explosion of their theology at the beginning of the third century. The primary view we have of the Monarchians is through the distorting lens of their opponents.[3] In the absence of any writings from the Monarchians themselves, the best we can do is attempt a reconstruction of their theological motivations from the second-hand evidence that we have. In what follows, I consider whether or not the early Monarchians were reacting against the various forms of 'Gnosticism' prevalent in the second half of the second century.[4] After a survey of scholarly views, I approach the question by means of an analysis of biblical exegesis with special emphasis on the interpretation of *Deutero-Isaiah* and the *Gospel of John*.

Adolf von Harnack had little doubt that what he termed 'modalistic Monarchianism' arose in order to refute Gnostic theology. He writes: 'The predominance of Monarchianism in the church was due primarily to the struggle with Gnosticism … The modalists claimed by their doctrines to obviate ditheism, to assert the complete divinity of Christ, and to cut the ground from under Gnosticism'.[5]

Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, 2004); *id*., 'Two Powers in Heaven: Or, the Making of a Heresy', in Hindy Najman and Judith Newman (eds), *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation* (Leiden, 2004), 331-70.

[2] For the claim that Noetus is from Smyrna, see, Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.1; for Praxeas' putative Asian origin, see Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.

[3] We possess no writings from the Monarchians themselves, and their opponents distort their positions to varying degrees. The polemical distortions of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* are the most obvious and well-documented. The author of the treatise distorts the teachings of Callistus in order to prove that Callistus derived his theology from the philosophy of Heraclitus. On these distortions, see Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' Elenchos as a Source for Greek Philosophy*, Philosophia Antiqua 56 (Leiden and New York, 1992), 231-42; Ronald E. Heine, 'The Christology of Callistus', *JTS* 49 (1998), 56-91, 57.

[4] My usage of 'Gnosticism' here is intentionally broad. Because we do not possess any writings from the Monarchians, it is difficult to determine what strand of 'Gnosticism' they would have been opposing.

[5] Adolf von Harnack, 'Monarchianism', in Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore (eds), *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, 1963), VII 453-61, 458. Harnack repeats this contention elsewhere: *id*., *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston, 1907), III 54. He also writes that 'the monarchians opposed the doctrine

Harnack's contention here, while strongly stated, is the product of an impressionistic reading of the texts rather than a careful reading tightly moored to the specific details of any primary text. His theory is plausible, but the data do not merit the sweeping confidence of his statement. Like Harnack, Gustave Bardy saw the origins of Monarchianism in the reaction to various theologies that threatened the oneness of God: Gnosticism, Marcionism, pagan polytheism, *etc*.[6]

Taking the opposite position of Harnack, Ernest Evans writes: 'It is sometimes suggested that Monarchianism was a reaction against Gnosticism. There seems to be little or no evidence of this. The term *monarchy* was introduced into Christian theology by the apologists as a protest against polytheism. It was afterwards used as a catchword by the professors of that form of Unitarian doctrine which denied the distinction of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit'.[7] He pushes his conclusion even further and writes: 'It is also suggested that monarchianism arose from a reaction, among the more simple sort, against speculations about the Logos. But the evidence hardly proves that: the monarchians were not *simplices et idiotae*; rather these latter were persons whom the monarchians found it easy to lead astray'.[8] Instead of beginning as a polemical reaction, Evans suggests that Monarchianism arose as a natural, organic response to questions that grew out of Christian devotional practice.[9] In his lengthy study on the use of the term *monarchia*, Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao concludes that the term was used primarily against pagan polytheism and only secondarily against Gnosticism.[10] His study only focuses on the use of the term

of the Logos, because it led to the Gnostic doctrine of Aeons'. *Ibid*. III 62-3 n. 5. See also Decker's summary of Harnack's treatment of Monarchianism: Michael Decker, *Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987), 1-2.

[6] Gustave Bardy, 'Monarchianisme', in Alfred Vacant, E. Mangenot and Emile Amann (eds), *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, contenant l'exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire* (Paris, 1929), 10.2, 2193-209, 2194.

[7] Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London, 1948), 6-7. Evans here cites James Franklin Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, to the Time of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3rd ed. (London, 1923), 96. Bethune-Baker argues that Monarchianism was originally an 'orthodox' reaction against Gnosticism that was soon turned against orthodoxy itself. Although Bethune-Baker's use of 'orthodox' might simplify things too easily, it does highlight that Monarchianism seems to have arisen as a reaction to theology that threatened the oneness of God.

[8] E. Evans, *Tertuallian's Treatise* (1948), 7 n. 1. In this section, Evans rarely names those with whom he is disagreeing – perhaps as a courtesy. Regardless, the theory which he is opposing should be familiar by now. Harnack propounds it, and some form of it pervades most of his work on the early church. Bardy and Leclercq both follow the argument of Lebreton which fits very neatly with Harnack. Evans, then, is arguing strongly against the mainstream position here – and doing it a good ten years before Harl declares these sorts of arguments to be *dépassée*.

[9] *Ibid*. 8.

[10] Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El Concepto Teológico "Monarchia" en la Controversia "Monarquiana"*, Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid.

monarchia, however, and does not address whether or not Monarchian theology itself was a reaction against Gnosticism.

Most recently, Reinhard Hübner has argued in a series of essays that Monarchianism was a thoroughly anti-Gnostic theological movement.[11] His argument focuses on a series of antithetical statements about God attributed to Noetus.[12] Although his arguments about the anti-Gnostic intent of these statements are plausible, many of his other conclusions about the dating of Noetus and Monarchianism are difficult to maintain. Like Hübner, I think that Monarchianism was at least partially directed against Gnosticism, but my argument will take a different tack. Although there is no testimony showing that Monarchians had direct contact with Gnosticism in the extant sources, I argue that the exegetical choices of Monarchians, anti-Monarchians, and Gnostics demonstrate that they were polemicizing within the same exegetical landscape. This circumstantial evidence suggests that polemical engagement between Monarchians and Gnostics would have been inevitable.

Near the beginning of *Contra Noetum*, which I consider to be the earliest of the anti-Monarchian treatises, the Noetians quote *Isaiah* 44:6 to support their claim that there is only one God.[13] The text reads as follows: '"I", he says, "am first and I am last and after me there is no one". Thus they are alleging to sustain one God'.[14] In *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian quotes *Isaiah* 45:5 when he writes: 'Therefore there is one God, the Father, and besides him there is no

Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid, 1996), 176.

[11] See the collected volume of his essays: Reinhard M. Hübner, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden and Boston, 1999).

[12] See especially, Reinhard M. Hübner, 'Der antivalentinianische Charakter der Theologie des Noët von Smyrna', in *Der Paradox Eine* (Leiden and Boston, 1999), 95-129; *id.*, 'Die antignostische Glaubensregel des Noët von Smyrna', in *Der Paradox Eine* (Leiden and Boston, 1999), 39-94.

[13] When discussing any of the works attributed to Hippolytus, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is no consensus on the dating and authorship of the works to which his name is attached. A full discussion of all of the problems associated with the Hippolytan corpus is beyond the scope of this article, so the following must suffice. I find Simonetti's general take on the Hippolytan problem more convincing than that of Allen Brent. In short, I take *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* to be the products of two different authors – the former, the product of an Asian writer and the latter, the product of a writer in Rome. I also consider *Contra Noetum* to be earlier than the *Refutatio*, which was probably written between 225-235 C.E. For a good introduction to all of the questions about Hippolytus, see Nautin's classic study, the two Italian volumes produced during conferences on Hippolytus, and Brent's labyrinthine tome: Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe: contribution à l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle*, Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1 (Paris, 1947); Manlio Simonetti, *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum" 13 (Rome, 1977); *id.*, *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis "Augustinianum" 30 (Rome, 1989); Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, SVigChr 31 (Leiden and New York, 1995).

[14] Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.2-2.3. Ἐγώ, φησίν, πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσχατος καὶ μετ' ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδείς. οὕτω φάσκουσιν συνιστᾶν ἕνα θεόν.

other, and he himself who introduces this [statement] is denying, not the Son, but another god: whereas the Son is not another [god] than the Father'.[15] Tertullian appears to be countering the use to which we see the parallel passage put in *Contra Noetum*. Such a statement, he argues, does not deny that the Son is distinct from the father; it denies that idols are gods.

It is clear from *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* that the Monarchians used these passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* to support an exclusive understanding of monotheism. Their understanding of monotheism was so rigorous that they accused their opponents of being ditheists. This accusation of ditheism caused their opponents (like Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Novatian) to reassert their own commitment to monotheism. As one would expect, they too used passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* to demonstrate their commitment to monotheism.[16] In their debate about monotheism, the Monarchians and their opponents were staking claim to the same passages. As mentioned above, Tertullian disarmed his opponents and claimed the passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* for his own statement of monotheism.[17] The author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* removed almost all scriptural references and allusions in his reports on his Monarchian opponents, but an echo of these passages from *Isaiah* 44-5 might still remain. The *Refutatio* has Noetus claiming that the Father and Son are one and the same, 'not one coming to be from another, but himself from himself (γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ)'.[18] The rejection of the Son as ἕτερος by Noetus might be a reference to the refrain of *Isaiah* 44-5.[19] In his later treatise, Novatian quotes *Isaiah* 45:21-2 and, like Tertullian, uses it to refute idolatry and polytheism.[20]

Passages from *Isaiah* 44-5 were used by both the Monarchians and their opponents in order to prove that each had the proper understanding of monotheism. That exegesis of passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* was an important part of their debate about monotheism is easy to see in the primary texts. Because the texts that attest to Monarchianism were written to oppose the Monarchians, they are not focused on Gnosticism – thus making it difficult for us to determine

[15] Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 18.3 (trans. E. Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* [1948], 156).

[16] In the *Contra Noetum*, Hippolytus does not adduce passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* to support his contention that there is only one God. It was still quite an important point for him, however. He begins his own demonstration of the truth by bluntly stating that there is only one God. *Contra Noetum* 9.1. Note also that in response to Noetus, the elders mentioned at the beginning of *Contra Noetum* claimed that they also had knowledge of only one God, but in the true way. *Contra Noetum* 1.7.

[17] Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 18.3.

[18] *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11.

[19] Note also that this could be a reaction to Justin's theology in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin unabashedly referred to the Son as another God. See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.4.

[20] Novatian, *De trinitate* 3.2.

what the relationship between Monarchianism and Gnosticism might have been. As I noted earlier, the best way to approach the relationship between the two is by using circumstantial or indirect evidence. One main example will suffice to demonstrate that some Gnostics inhabited the same polemical landscape wherein theologians offered competing interpretations of *Isaiah* 44-5.

Multiple texts from Nag Hammadi that describe the arrogance of Ialdabaoth or Sakla put passages from *Isaiah* 44-5 on the lips of the demiurge. After an account of the generation of the Aeons, the *Apocryphon of John* records the genesis of Ialdabaoth, the demiurge.[21] It states concerning him: 'And he is impious in his arrogance which is in him. For he said, "I am God and there is no other god beside me", for he is ignorant of his strength, the place from which he had come'.[22] This passage about the arrogance of the demiurge has a number of parallels in other literature from Nag Hammadi, which often includes the same or similar passages from *Deutero-Isaiah*.[23] The passage in the *Apocryphon of John* deliberately draws attention to the irony of Ialdabaoth uttering these words from *Deutero-Isaiah* when it states that he was ignorant of his origin. Ialdabaoth, the chief ruler (ἄρχων is used in the Coptic), is unaware of the Aeons above him, and the God and Father of the All who is described at the beginning of the treatise.[24] The usage of this passage from *Deutero-Isaiah* is at odds with the ways in which both the Monarchians and their opponents came to use the same passages; despite their different interpretations, neither

[21] The date and provenance of the text are notoriously difficult to determine, but Karen King suggests that it was written in Alexandria during the second century. Karen L. King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), 10. King and others note that Irenaeus seems to have been familiar with the work by *ca*. 180, *ibid*. 17.

[22] *Apocryphon of John*, NHC II 11.16-21. Translation from Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse (eds), *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 33 (Leiden and New York, 1995), 71. The section I have just quoted only appears in the longer version of the *Apocryphon*. Note also that Karen King briefly discusses this passage as demonstrating the relationship between Judaism, Gnosticism, and Christianity. She does not state that this might be part of a *theological* debate about monotheism. See K. King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (2006), 15-6.

[23] See the parallels in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III, 58.23-6); *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII, 53.30-4); *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II, 103.6-25); *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NHC II, 86.26-87.4). *On the Origin of the World* was probably not written until the end of the third century; but despite its later date, it still attests to the same tradition of attributing the *Isaiah* passages to the arrogant demiurge. For the dating, see Hans-Gebhard Bethge, 'Introduction', in Bentley Layton (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7: Together with XIII, 2*, Brit.Lib. Or.4926(1), and P.OXY. 1, 654, 655: With Contributions by Many Scholars*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 21 (Leiden and New York, 1989), 13-4.

[24] See also Alan Segal's discussion of the irony of this monotheistic claim on the lips of the demiurge: Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 25 (Leiden, 1977), 251-3. John Dillon notes that despite passages like this, one can still speak of a type of monotheism within Gnosticism: John Dillon, 'Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition', in Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford and New York, 1999), 69-79.

of them would have admitted that there was any God above YHWH, who spoke these words. Even more, the use of this passage by Ialdabaoth gives us a glimpse of what some scholars have suggested is a revolt against and within Judaism.[25]

In their commentary on the passages describing the arrogance of Ialdabaoth or Sakla, scholars do not attend to the fact that the words put on the lips of the demiurge were at the center of competing conceptions of monotheism.[26] This failure to detect the broader context is due, in part, to the theories about Gnosticism as a pre-Christian phenomenon that were dominant when many of the critical editions of the Nag Hammadi texts were produced.[27] When considering the exegetical tendencies at work in Gnosticism alongside those of Monarchianism, however, it is clear that they are focused on many of the same texts. Aside from the passages from *Deutero-Isaiah*, both the Monarchians and the various forms of Gnosticism fixated on the interpretation of the prologue to the *Gospel of John*. Irenaeus records a Gnostic interpretation of the Johannine prologue in the second book of *Adversus haereses*.[28] Origen reports that Heraclides, a Monarchian bishop, quoted the beginning of *John's Gospel* as a profession of his as-yet uncorrected Monarchian faith.[29]

In addition to this common web of scriptural texts, other clues suggest that Monarchianism was an intentional opponent of Gnosticism. When Tertullian describes the distinction of the Son from the Father in chapters 7-8 of *Adversus Praxean*, he clarifies that his distinction of the Son is not like the separation of the projections from the source that occurs within the Valentinian *Pleroma*.

[25] George W. MacRae, 'Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth', *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970), 86-101, 97-8. Note also that despite this explicit rejection of the monotheistic claims of *Deutero-Isaiah*, John Dillon has argued that Gnosticism is still fundamentally monotheistic – or at least monistic. J. Dillon, 'Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition' (1999).

[26] For example, in his commentary on the passage from *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, Louis Painchaud does not even mention that the words of Saklas are from *Deutero-Isaiah*. He spends a good deal of time examining how the text interacts with the *Gospel of John*, but the same attention is not given to the passage from *Isaiah*. See Louis Painchaud (ed.), *Le deuxième traité du Grand Seth (NH VII,2)*, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Textes" 6 (Québec, 1982), 94-6. Böhlig and Wisse note that the words *The Gospel of the Egyptians* puts on the lips of Sakla are from *Deutero-Isaiah*, but they do not mention the broader polemical use of these passages: Alexander Böhlig, Frederik Wisse and Pahor Labib (eds), *Nag Hammadi Codices III, 2 and IV, 2: The Gospel of the Egyptians (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit)*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 4 (Grand Rapids, 1975), 184. Bethge identifies the quotation in *On the Origin of the World*, but like the others, makes no mention of the polemical context of the verse. E. Bethge, 'Introduction' (1989), 14-5. Bullard notes the quotation in *The Hypostasis of the Archons* but not its contemporary usage. Roger Aubrey Bullard and Martin Krause (eds), *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, Patristische Texte und Studien 10 (Berlin, 1970), 49.

[27] Of note here are the many theories that considered Gnosticism to be largely the product of Eastern or Persian religions and not primarily an offshoot from and reaction to Judaism and Christianity.

[28] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* II 28.5.

[29] Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 1.

Against the Monarchian identification of the Father and the Son, Tertullian felt obligated to argue for their distinction. His anti-Valentinian excursus, however, suggests that his attempts at distinguishing the Father and Son might have been met with accusations of adopting the theology of Valentinus. Such an association of a theologian with Valentinian theology would have been an effective way for the Monarchians to pillory their opponents.

Thus, while our accounts of Monarchianism do not explicitly show them in conflict with Gnosticism, the exegetical and thematic overlap suggests, contra Evans, that Monarchian theology was shaped at least in part as a reaction against Gnosticism. If the Monarchians accused Tertullian, Hippolytus, *et al*., of being ditheists, they must have considered the *Pleroma* of the Gnostics to be nothing short of polytheism. When the Monarchians chose to use passages from *Deutero-Isaiah* in support of their exclusive conception of monotheism, they entered into a well-worn exegetical path. By offering their own interpretation of these verses, they rejected those of their contemporaries and of those who preceded them.[30] They could have used other classic expressions of monotheism, like the Shema (*Deut*. 6:4ff), but they chose the very same passages from *Isaiah* as were placed on the lips of Ialdabaoth. This, I think, is more than mere coincidence. It shows Monarchianism pitted against both Gnosticism and the proto-orthodox in an attempt to preserve an exclusive interpretation of monotheism.

[30] Note also that in the second century, Athenagoras used the combination of *Isaiah* 44:6 and *Baruch* 3:36 to lend scriptural support to his otherwise philosophical defense of monotheism. Athenagoras, *Legatio* 9.1-3. Although I don't have time to address it in this article, the combination of these two verses is an exact parallel to the usage in *Contra Noetum*.

Jésus de Nazareth et sa famille ont-ils appartenus à la tribu des prêtres ? Quelques remarques et réflexions pour une recherche nouvelle[1]

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Je voudrais dédier cette conférence
à la mémoire de mon ami
Maurice Geerard, fondateur de la CPG

Abstract

One question has continuously and in various ways run through my most recent book: Did James the Just belong to the priestly tribe or class, or did he not? Because of the implications of the potential answer to this question, particularly when we think of James being the 'brother' of Jesus, it has a considerable importance for our understanding of the Christian movement, within and outside of Judaism during the first two or three centuries of our era. We are taken back to this difficult and delicate question, in order to take it up again, adding preliminary observations and reflections leading to a more extensive research avenue. In order to proceed, we will have a two-fold approach, looking more generally into Judaism and more particularly into Christianity.

I. Introduction

D'un point de vue méthodologique, il convient de préciser qu'il n'est pas question ici de convaincre par une argumentation performative, mais par une illustration documentaire en pointillé comme devrait être construite l'histoire fondée sur des sources dont les aléas sont de toutes sortes.

Observons déjà que le terme « prêtre » dans le monde judéen de l'Antiquité, toutes tendances confondues, ne renvoie pas nécessairement à ce que l'on entend aujourd'hui. Être prêtre dans l'Antiquité classique et tardive, en Judée comme ailleurs en Orient (notamment en Égypte ou en Syrie), signifie tout simplement appartenir à une classe ou à une tribu sacerdotale, mais pas nécessairement avoir des fonctions cultuelles dans un sanctuaire. Malgré cela,

[1] Cette contribution reprend et complète un excursus publié dans S.C. Mimouni, *Jacques le Juste, frère de Jésus de Nazareth. Histoire de la communauté nazoréenne / chrétienne de Jérusalem du Ier au IVe siècle* (Paris, 2015), 543-64.

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cette appartenance permet aux membres de cette classe ou de cette tribu sacerdotale de bénéficier d'un certain prestige et d'un respect certain dans la société judéenne.

Observons aussi que dans le mouvement chrétien, à partir des IIe-IIIe siècles, être prêtre (ἱερεύς / *hiéreus*), c'est exercer la charge du sacré et non plus appartenir à une classe ou à une tribu sacerdotale. Ainsi, il y a là un changement fondamental qui ne renvoie plus à une répartition ethnique de la société, mais qui correspond de plus en plus à une charge religieuse comme on en retrouve ailleurs, laquelle va finir par devenir le prestige d'une conception religieuse particulière (au sens de θρησκεία / *thrêskéia* en grec ou de *religio* en latin).

Pour vraiment réaliser le rôle des prêtres dans l'Antiquité gréco-romaine, il convient peut-être de rappeler la célèbre formule de Denys d'Halicarnasse (ca 60 avant notre ère-8 de notre ère), qui, dans ses *Antiquités romaines* II, 73, 3, définit le prêtre en soulignant que c'est à la fois :

« ἱεροδιδασκάλους… ἱερονόμους… ἱεροφύλακας… ἱεροφάντας (*hiérodidaskalous… hiéronomous… hiérophykalas… hiérophantas*)

« un enseignant du sacré… un administrateur du sacré… un gardien du sacré… un interprète du sacré ».

Une formule qui résume l'ensemble des fonctions sacerdotales que l'on peut retrouver dans toutes les sociétés antiques, y compris dans celle des Judéens tant en Palestine qu'en Diaspora.

Avant de tenter une succincte et nuancée réponse à la question posée dans cette recherche, si tant est qu'il y en ait une qui puisse être tranchée et arrêtée de manière définitive et convaincante, il convient de rappeler ce qu'est la tribu ou la classe sacerdotale dans le peuple judéen et ensuite quelle a été sa place réelle ou fictive dans le mouvement chrétien des premiers siècles.

C'est loin d'être une question mineure ou oiseuse, à une époque où en Israël, actuellement, dans certains milieux politico-religieux qui ne sont pas sans influences et moyens, on reparle de reconstruire le troisième temple et donc de réinstaurer les prérogatives de la classe sacerdotale qui existe toujours et dont son rôle dans le culte juif de la synagogue n'est pas des moindres.

II. La question sacerdotale dans le judaïsme antique

Le sacerdoce judéen, sur lequel on ne peut donner ici que quelques substantiels éléments, remonte sans doute à la période monarchique des royaumes de Juda et d'Israël, et il a évidemment évolué et changé au cours des siècles[2].

[2] Pour une première approche, voir S.C. Mimouni, *Le judaïsme ancien du VIe siècle avant notre ère au IIIe siècle de notre ère : des prêtres aux rabbins* (Paris, 2012), 3-11. Voir aussi R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament* II (Paris, 1967[2]), 253-77 et 457 ; E. Schürer,

Après le retour de la déportation babylonienne, durant la période perse ou la période grecque, le pouvoir en Judée est fondé sur les grands prêtres et une idéologie du sacerdoce semble émerger : elle se reflète dans la *Torah*, surtout dans le Pentateuque, mais aussi dans d'autres parties de la Bible.

Rappelons d'abord que le sacerdoce judéen repose sur un fondement héréditaire : tous les hommes appartenant à certaines familles en deviennent membres, quand ils atteignent l'âge adulte, pourvu qu'ils ne soient ni déformés ni aucunement altérés physiquement (*Lv* 21:16-24) – caractéristiques qui auraient pour conséquence de les exclure du service au temple de Jérusalem, et sans doute aussi des autres sanctuaires judéens de Palestine comme de Diaspora. Ces familles sont toutes censées remonter à Lévi, un des fils du patriarche Jacob, l'ancêtre putatif des Israélites. La transmission de l'appartenance sacerdotale est patrilinéaire et non matrilinéaire : cette transmission patrilinéaire correspond à celle qui prévaut en Palestine pour l'appartenance au peuple judéen en général dans l'Antiquité, hormis le mouvement rabbinique qui lui, prône, surtout à partir du IIe siècle, la règle matrilinéaire[3], laquelle, avec le temps, s'est imposée partout dans le judaïsme.

Rappelons ensuite que le sacerdoce judéen est divisé en deux grands groupes : celui des lévites (*léviim*) et celui des prêtres (*kohanim*)[4]. Ces derniers ont fait remonter leur généalogie jusqu'à Aaron que Moïse, son frère aîné, a désigné pour le service du Tabernacle dans le désert. Melchisédech est le premier dans la Bible à recevoir le titre de prêtre (*kohen*) (*Gn* 14:18) : ce qui renvoie à une époque où le sacerdoce, en tout cas les rédacteurs du *Livre de la Genèse*, ont besoin d'un personnage neutre pour rattacher la figure d'Abraham à Jérusalem[5].

Parmi les *kohanim*, la maison de Ṣadok – le chef des prêtres (*rosh ha-kohanim*) dans le temple de Salomon – a été particulièrement distinguée, puisque nombre de grands-prêtres des périodes perse, grecque et romaine prétendent descendre de cette lignée, légitimant ainsi leur pouvoir.

Les différentes familles sacerdotales forment des cercles concentriques se recoupant ou se recouvrant les uns les autres : le chef des prêtres ou le grand-prêtre appartient à la maison de Ṣadok ; la maison de Ṣadok appartient à la famille d'Aaron ; la famille d'Aaron est une des diverses composantes de la tribu de Lévi.

The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135) II (Édimbourg, 1979), 227-36.

[3] À ce sujet, voir S.C. Mimouni, *La circoncision dans le monde judéen aux époques grecque et romaine. Histoire d'un conflit interne au judaïsme* (Paris, Louvain, 2007), 202-14.

[4] Voir A.H.J. Gunneweg, *Leviten und Priester* (Göttingen, 1965). Voir aussi J.M. Hutton et M. Leuchter (éd.), *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition* (Atlanta, Géorgie, 2011).

[5] À ce sujet, voir S.C. Mimouni, *La circoncision dans le monde judéen aux époques grecque et romaine* (2007), 13-45, spécialement 43-5.

Les prêtres sont socialement mis à part du reste du peuple judéen, mais les trois ordres dans lesquels ils se répartissent – les *léviim*, les *kohanim* et le chef des prêtres ou grand-prêtre appelé aussi le « souverain sacrificateur » – représentent trois degrés ascendants de la pureté et donc de la sacralité (*Lv* 21:1-22:16). Le sacerdoce dans son ensemble a fait l'objet de tabous concernant la pureté rituelle sous toutes ses formes qui ne sont pas nécessairement observés par les autres Judéens : ces tabous, surtout en matière de mariage (*Lv* 21:7-8), sont effectivement plus stricts pour les *kohanim* que pour les *léviim* – ceux qui s'appliquent au chef des prêtres ou grand-prêtre étant évidemment les plus sévères de tous, les plus contraignants aussi (*Lv* 6:1-7:21).

Les privilèges correspondent aux divers degrés de pureté sacrale. Le statut des *léviim* est le plus bas : ils accomplissent les tâches subalternes dans le temple de Jérusalem, comme par exemple la police et la garde des portes et des parvis, ils forment aussi les chœurs du sanctuaire[6]. Ils ne sont aucunement autorisés à offrir le sacrifice sur l'autel : c'est un service réservé aux *kohanim*, et même exclusivement à certains d'entre eux. Les privilèges du chef des prêtres ou grand-prêtre sont les plus importants de tous : lui seul est autorisé à offrir des sacrifices pour le péché, lors de la fête de *Yom Kippour*, et à entrer en cette unique occasion avec le sang sacrificiel dans le Saint des Saints, la partie la plus importante et la plus sacralisée du sanctuaire (*Lv* 16:1-34).

À l'époque des Hasmonéens et des Hérodiens, les *léviim* et les *kohanim* semblent être en oppositions, les premiers revendiquant le sacerdoce au même titre que les seconds – voir certains passages du *Livre des Jubilés* et du *Testament de Lévi*[7].

D'après Flavius Josèphe, à son époque au Ier siècle, les *léviim* bénéficient d'un statut social privilégié qu'ils cherchent d'ailleurs à améliorer, ne se distinguant plus, en réalité, des *kohanim* (*Antiquités judéennes* XX, § 216-218)[8].

Le rôle fondamental du sacerdoce est de servir la divinité tutélaire du peuple judéen. Les prêtres agissent comme les médiateurs entre leur divinité et le peuple. La *Torah* prescrit, en effet, que les Israélites doivent à diverses reprises apporter des offrandes de toutes sortes au dieu d'Israël, mais qu'ils ne peuvent pas le faire directement : ils doivent le faire par la médiation des prêtres et le seul endroit où ils peuvent le faire est, en principe, le temple à Jérusalem – la réalité a souvent été tout autre puisque d'autres sanctuaires sont connus, comme, par exemple, celui du Garizim en Samarie ou celui de Léontopolis en Égypte, dans lesquels des prêtres ont officié et même peut-être des grands-prêtres – comme ce pourrait être le cas dans le second – de la famille exilée des Oniades

[6] Voir R. Nurmela, *The Levites. Their Emergence as a Second-Class Priesthood* (Atlanta, Géorgie, 1998).

[7] C. Werman, 'Levi and Levites in the Second Temple Period', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 4 (1997), 211-25.

[8] Voir L.H. Feldman, 'The Levites in Josephus', *Henoch* 28 (2006), 91-102.

(depuis Onias IV ?) à la suite de certains événements entourant l'insurrection macchabéenne.

La force numérique du sacerdoce est difficile à évaluer, mais elle n'est sans doute pas à considérer comme négligeable. Tous les prêtres et les lévites, loin de là, ne vivent pas à Jérusalem : certains habitent, non seulement dans toute la Palestine, mais aussi en Diaspora, notamment en Babylonie. Ainsi, ceux parmi les prêtres et les lévites, qui vivent dispersés principalement dans toute la Judée, mais peut-être aussi ailleurs dans toute la Palestine, sont censés monter, à tour de rôle, à Jérusalem pour le service au temple – par tranche d'une semaine (2*Ch* 23:4.8 ; Flavius Josèphe, *Antiquités judéennes* VII, § 365), peut-être aussi par tranches de treize semaines tous les six ans (*Rouleau de la Guerre*, colonne 2).

Durant les époques perse, grecque et romaine, les grandes familles de prêtres et de lévites, en Judée, paraissent avoir été réparties respectivement en vingt-quatre « divisions » ou « gardes » (ce que l'on appelle les מחלכות / *maḥlakot* selon la terminologie biblique ou les מישמרות / *mishmarot* selon la terminologie qumrânienne ou rabbinique) : c'est ce qui est rapporté en 1*Ch* 24:1-18 – une liste, sans aucun doute retouchée au IIe siècle, car elle donne la priorité à Yehoyariv (1*Ch* 24:7), d'où est issue la dynastie des Hasmonéens (1*M* 2:1). Ce chiffre, qui reflète une situation sacerdotale qui va se maintenir durablement au moins jusqu'au VIIe siècle (réellement ou symboliquement), varie cependant selon les sources : ainsi en *Ne* 7:39-41 (= *Esd* 2:36-9) ; *Ne* 10:2-9 et *Ne* 12:7.12-21, il est seulement question de dix-sept et de vingt-et-une *maḥlakot* ou *mishmarot*[9]. En revanche, dans le document essénien du *Rouleau de la Guerre* (1QM), colonne 2, le chiffre est de vingt-six – il est aussi question des *mishmarot* en 4Q321, mais d'un point de vue spécifiquement calendaire[10].

Dans le Nouveau Testament, en *Lc* 1:8, il est question de Zacharie, le père de Jean le Baptiste, qui est un prêtre de la classe d'Abiyyah et qui remplit ses fonctions sacerdotales au Temple de Jérusalem[11].

Si l'on en croit la Bible, lors du partage de Canaan entre les tribus, aucun territoire n'a été affecté à la tribu de Lévi. Au lieu de cela, il a été ordonné aux autres tribus de lui concéder une partie de leurs ressources sous forme de dîmes. Les prêtres ont également droit à des portions de certaines offrandes qui sont présentées au nom du peuple judéen dans le temple, lequel bénéficie d'une taxe

[9] Voir J. Liver et D. Sperber, 'Mishmarot and Ma`amadot. Priestly and Levitical Division', dans *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 14 (2007[2]), 317-9. Voir aussi R.T. Beckwith, 'St. Luke, the Date of Christmas and the Priestly Course at Qumran', *Revue de Qumrân* 33 (1977), 73-94.

[10] Voir C. Martone, 'Some Observations on the New *Mishmarot* Texts from Qumran', dans D.W. Parry et E. Ulrich (éd.), *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (Leyde, Boston, Cologne, 1999), 443-4.

[11] Voir P. Winter, 'The Cultural Background of the Narrative in Luke I and II', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45 (1954), 159-67, spécialement 160-5.

d'un demi-shekel que tous les hommes adultes doivent payer, avec l'autorisation et sous la protection des autorités grecques et romaines, qu'ils vivent en Palestine ou en Diaspora, du moins jusqu'à sa destruction.

Les fonctions des prêtres ne sont pas seulement sacrificielles. Ils doivent également avoir une expertise dans la *Torah* pour instruire le peuple et pour exercer la justice, afin de trancher des questions religieuses et civiques. Ils apprennent et apprécient eux-mêmes de manière formelle et fonctionnelle la *Torah*, en particulier le *Livre du Lévitique*, connu comme la *Torah* des *kohanim*. Ils enseignent aussi dans les écoles du temple qui est alors, non seulement un lieu pour les sacrifices, mais aussi un lieu d'études, un lieu de prières et encore un lieu de sociabilité entre Judéens de diverses provenances, notamment lors des grandes fêtes de pèlerinage.

Toutes ces descriptions, fondées sur le *Livre du Lévitique* et sur d'autres textes, relèvent évidemment de la théorie et la pratique a dû certainement être tout autre[12]. On doit se demander, en effet, dans quelle mesure ces descriptions correspondent à la réalité, même si la réponse est très difficile à donner. Il y a de bonnes raisons de penser que l'autorité du sacerdoce s'est progressivement atténuée depuis la domination romaine et avec la disparition des Hasmonéens puis des Hérodiens, notamment en matière civique, mais pas en matière religieuse, compétence à laquelle ne semble guère s'être intéressé le pouvoir romain comme le montre l'attitude de Gallion, gouverneur de l'Achaïe (ca 51), contre les opposants de Paul (*Ac* 18:12-7).

À partir du Ier siècle avant notre ère, le pouvoir et le prestige du sacerdoce semblent avoir été affaiblis, notamment par la montée en puissance du groupe des pharisiens, auquel de nombreux scribes, sans doute des lévites, se sont ralliés : les pharisiens, en effet, ont contesté l'expertise des prêtres en matière de droit religieux. Également aussi par des tensions internes entre les riches familles sacerdotales dont les chefs résident en permanence à Jérusalem, fournissant les grands-prêtres, et les prêtres les plus pauvres qui vivent difficilement à la campagne. Également encore par les intrigues politiques peu scrupuleuses de la haute prêtrise qui ont sans doute dégradé sérieusement son caractère sacralisé et le respect lui étant dû par le peuple, pour qui elle est l'intercesseur suprême auprès de sa divinité.

Flavius Josèphe est représentatif de son époque de par son appartenance à la classe ou à la tribu sacerdotale, et aussi au groupe pharisien[13]. Ce qui ne l'a pas

[12] À ce sujet, voir notamment C. Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: a Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (Tübingen, 2007). Voir aussi C. Nihan, 'Forms and Functions of Purity in Leviticus', dans C. Frevel et C. Nihan (éd.), *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism* (Leyde, Boston, 2013), 312-67.

[13] Voir M. Tuval, *From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew* (Tübingen, 2013). Voir aussi S. Masson, 'The Priest Josephus away from the Temple: A Changed Man?', *Revue de Qumrân* 26 (2014), 375-402.

empêché de jouer un rôle politique et militaire durant la première révolte judéenne contre Rome (66-74) en tant que commandant militaire de la Galilée et auparavant un rôle diplomatique durant un voyage qu'il a effectué à Rome (63/64).

Quoi qu'il soit de ces problèmes, qui sont tout aussi certains que délicats à apprécier, les membres du sacerdoce bénéficient toujours d'un énorme pouvoir et prestige religieux et l'exercent effectivement : appartenir aux classes sacerdotales dans la société judéenne confère indéniablement honneur et autorité, il n'est donc pas étonnant de voir, aux IIIe-IVe siècles, des prêtres exercer des charges civiques dans les cités de Galilée (notamment à Sepphoris et à Tibédiade), comme par exemple celles d'agoranome ou de bouleute qui sont attestées par des inscriptions, sans doute aussi ailleurs[14].

Une situation qui perdure durant toute l'Antiquité tardive, comme le montre le lien à définir qu'il pourrait y avoir entre les esséniens et les karaïtes, qui présentent nombre d'affinités avec la classe sacerdotale et un certain attachement au temple de Jérusalem qu'ils vénèrent et respectent dans leurs prières[15].

L'impact de la destruction du temple de Jérusalem sur le sacerdoce[16]

Il ne peut y avoir de doute que l'impact de la destruction du temple sur le sacerdoce a été dévastateur, tout au moins pour les prêtres et les lévites installés à Jérusalem et dans ses environs et ayant un rapport proche ou lointain avec le sanctuaire dont l'importance dans le culte et la mémoire des Judéens ne saurait être en aucune manière négligée[17].

Lee I. Levine, dans un ouvrage important, a exposé la question de manière succincte et incisive : « La destruction du temple de Jérusalem en 70 a mis fin à un millénaire de domination politique et religieuse sacerdotale. Pour une élite à qui a été accordé le statut le plus élevé dans la société juive et qui a assumé la plus grande partie des responsabilités rituelles, culturelles, judiciaires et politiques depuis des siècles, l'absence soudaine de sa base de puissance a été sans aucun doute traumatisante »[18].

Continuer à parler d'une éclipse totale de la prêtrise après 70, comme certains critiques le font encore, est devenu des plus discutables et d'ailleurs Lee

[14] Voir L.I. Levine (éd.), *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (Jérusalem, New York, 1992).

[15] Voir Y. Erder, *The Karaite Mourners of Zion and the Qumran Scrolls: On the History of an Alternative to Rabbinic Judaism* (Turnhout, 2017).

[16] Voir P.S. Alexander, 'What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood after 70 ?', dans Z. Rodgers, M. Daly-Denton et A. Fitzpatrick-Mc Kinley (éd.), *A Wandering Galilean. Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne* (Leyde, Boston, 2009), 3-34.

[17] Voir I. Fröhlich, 'The Temple as Symbol of Power in Inner-Biblical and Post-Biblical Exegesis', dans P. Carstens, T.B. Hassebalch et N.P. Lemche (éd.), *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis* (Piscataway, New Jersey, 2012), 229-66.

[18] L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue. The First Thousand Years* (New Haven/Connecticut, Londres, 2000), 491-500, spécialement 491.

I. Levine ne le fait nullement. D'autant qu'il existe de nombreux témoignages suggérant que certaines des classes sacerdotales, les משמרות / *mishmarot*, ont quitté la Judée pour la Galilée centrale et orientale et sont parvenues à maintenir leur autorité et leur influence auprès du peuple, tant en matière civique que religieuse : ainsi, les polémiques que l'on retrouve ici et là dans les textes chrétiens des IIe-IIIe siècles représentent probablement des conflits plus réels qu'imaginaires[19]. La question est relativement discutée parmi les critiques pour savoir quand cette émigration en Galilée s'est produite : certains la situent immédiatement après la destruction du temple ; d'autres après la révolte de Simon Bar Kokhbah ; d'autres encore aux IIIe ou IVe siècles avec la mise en place du patriarcat dans lequel les prêtres ont joué un rôle qui ne doit aucunement être tenu pour négligeable[20].

Après 70, il est certain que la tribu ou la classe des prêtres et des lévites a conservé sa structure en matière d'organisation et de succession généalogiques, elle a aussi continué à exercer son influence parmi le peuple et auprès des autorités romaines. D'autant que cette dispersion ne remonte pas à 70, mais qu'elle est bien antérieure à la destruction du temple : aussi, même si les prêtres et les lévites ont certes vécu à Jérusalem et aux alentours, ils ont également vécu de manière dispersée dans toute la Palestine et même en Diaspora, dans l'Empire iranien comme dans l'Empire romain.

Six inscriptions de synagogues, de Palestine et de Diaspora, datant de l'Antiquité tardive, donnent des listes plus ou moins complètes des grandes familles sacerdotales (les *mishmarot*)[21]. On doit observer que le nombre relativement élevé de ces inscriptions, toutes retrouvées, faut-il le souligner, dans un contexte synagogal, suggère que ces familles peuvent avoir été une des caractéristiques standards de la synagogue après 70, sans doute aussi avant 70 – les prêtres y ayant un rôle important dans le service sacrificiel lors du shabbat et des fêtes, notamment lors de la liturgie de *Yom Kippour*.

En Arabie, notamment au Yémen, à Bayt Ḥadir, une inscription rapportant une liste de *mishmarot* a été retrouvée et publiée : elle porte treize noms[22]. Elle daterait vraisemblablement de la fin du Ve siècle ou du début du VIe siècle et

[19] Voir S. Morlet, 'Enjeux, méthodes et arguments de la polémique chrétienne antique contre le judaïsme', dans E. Pinto-Mathieu et D. Boisson (éd.), *L'apologétique chrétienne. Expressions de la pensée religieuse de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Rennes, 2012), 35-59.

[20] Voir D. Trifon, 'Did the Priestly Courses (*Mishmarot*) Transfer from Judaea to Galilee after the Bar Kokhba Revolt?', *Tarfon* 59 (1989-1990), 77-93 [en hébreu] et p. II-III [résumé en anglais] ; Z. Safrai, 'Did the Priestly Courses (*Mishmarot*) Transfer from Judaea to Galilee after the Bar Kokhba Revolt?', *Tarfon* 62 (1993), 287-92 [en hébreu] et p. VII-IX [résumé en anglais].

[21] Voir L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue* (2000), 496-7. Voir aussi J. Yahalom, 'Synagogue Inscriptions in Palestine – A Stylistique Classification', *Immanuel* 10 (1980), 47-56.

[22] Voir M. Gorea, 'Les classes sacerdotales (Mishmarot) de l'inscription juive de Bayt Ḥadir (Yémen)', dans C.J. Robin (éd.), *Le judaïsme de l'Arabie antique. Actes du Colloque de Jérusalem (février 2006)* (Turnhout, 2015), 297-330.

confirmerait la présence dans la Péninsule Arabique de missionnaires judéens venant de Palestine et plus précisément de Galilée qui seraient porteurs de traditions localisant les familles de prêtres dans des localités galiléennes. Ces Judéens missionnaires pourraient avoir appartenu au judaïsme synagogal, en tout cas pas au mouvement rabbinique peu favorable au sacerdoce et au prosélytisme.

Ajoutons encore qu'on a suggéré, non sans raisons, que les prêtres et les lévites ont été les responsables, pas nécessairement les rédacteurs, dans la transmission des poèmes liturgiques originaires du temple de Jérusalem et chantés ensuite dans les synagogues lors de certains offices importants, notamment le shabbat – leurs noms y figurent d'ailleurs[23]. Ils sont mentionnés aussi dans la liturgie karaïte, où on trouve un écho non négligeable des *mishmarot*.

En bref et en clair, il convient de ne pas confondre fonction et classe ou tribu sacerdotales. Si la fonction sacerdotale relève des institutions et des pratiques cultuelles et sacrificielles, notamment celles pratiquées au temple de Jérusalem, mais également celles pratiquées dans les autres temples judéens et samaritains tel que celui de Léontopolis (en Égypte) ou celui du Garizim (en Samarie), la classe ou la tribu sacerdotale relève pour sa part de la généalogie et de l'hérédité, soit de la descendance de la tribu de Lévi. Par conséquent, si tous les prêtres et les grands-prêtres appartiennent, par hérédité, à la tribu de Lévi et sont d'ascendance aaronide, tous les membres de la classe ou la tribu sacerdotale n'assument pas des fonctions et n'accomplissent pas des pratiques cultuelles et sacrificielles dans les sanctuaires reconnus comme officiels.

III. La question sacerdotale dans le christianisme antique

La famille de Jésus est-elle d'origine sacerdotale ? La question est posée de plus en plus par la recherche actuelle, anglo-saxonne notamment. Les réponses sont diversifiées et multiples, étant donné l'état de la documentation qui est considérée, non sans nombre de raisons, comme oscillant entre réalité et symbole.

On ne va fournir ici que des éléments d'ordre méthodologique, afin de jalonner un terrain difficile, qui est en cours d'exploration par des travaux certes d'avant-garde, mais dont les conclusions sont loin d'être acceptées par la majorité des critiques[24].

Pour éviter d'aborder cette question de front, on va traiter d'abord de la sacerdotalisation des ministères dans le mouvement chrétien. Ce n'est qu'ensuite qu'on va essayer de fournir quelques informations concernant en propre

[23] Voir J. Yahalom, *Priestly Palestinian Poetry : A Narrative Liturgy for the Day of Atonement* (Jérusalem, 1996) [en hébreu].

[24] Voir par exemple D. Stökl, 'Yom Kippur in the Apocalyptic *Imaginaire* and the Roots of Jesus' High Priesthood', dans J. Assmann et G.G. Stroumsa (éd.), *Transformation of the Inner Self in Ancient Religion* (Leyde, Boston, Cologne, 1999), 349-66.

Jésus et sa famille, non sans dire auparavant un mot sur la question des généalogies davidiques et aaronides dont l'appréciation est des plus éclairantes pour comprendre leur fonctionnement au tournant de notre ère.

Observons que les prêtres et les lévites ont adhéré bien vite au mouvement chrétien, notamment à Jérusalem (*Ac* 6:7), mais sans doute aussi ailleurs en Palestine comme en Diaspora. On connaît en particulier le cas de Joseph alias Barnabé qui est mentionné dans les *Actes des Apôtres* en de nombreux endroits : il est notamment présenté comme un notable de la classe des lévites, originaire de Chypre, qui a donné à la communauté de la ville sainte le produit de la vente d'un champ (*Ac* 4:36-7)[25].

A. *La sacerdotalisation des ministères chrétiens*[26]

Le phénomène de la sacerdotalisation des ministères dans le mouvement chrétien prend toute son ampleur aux IIIe et IVe siècles, mais on le voit déjà clairement mis en œuvre au IIe siècle, voire peut-être au Ier siècle – sans doute à cause de la présence en son sein, apparemment nombreuse, de prêtres d'origine judéenne[27].

Cette sacerdotalisation des ministères, qui se développe cependant progressivement, s'inscrit dans un mouvement sociétal beaucoup plus global, touchant non seulement les chrétiens, mais aussi les Judéens (à l'exception peut-être de ceux appartenant au mouvement rabbinique) et les Gréco-Romains de l'Empire[28]. Il s'agit d'un processus qui conduit à concevoir les responsables du culte chrétien, à l'égal du culte judéen ou du culte gréco-romain, en termes de « sacerdoce » et à les désigner comme des « prêtres » au sens cultuel et proprement sacerdotal du terme[29].

[25] Voir R. Burnet, 'Barnabé et les processus de construction de la légitimité apostolique', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 108 (2013), 595-625.

[26] Voir A. Faivre, *Ordonner la Fraternité. Pouvoir d'innover et retour à l'ordre dans l'Église ancienne* (Paris, 1992), 77-82 et 83-4.

[27] Pour une première approche, voir M. Jourjon, ' La sacerdotalisation du ministère aux premiers siècles de l'Église', dans R. Didier (éd.), *Le ministère sacerdotal. Un dossier théologique* (Lyon, 1974), 72-83 ; B. Sesboüé, 'Ministère et sacerdoce', dans J. Delorme (éd.), *Le Ministère et les Ministères selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1974), 474-83. Pour une approche plus approfondie, voir J. Coppens, *Le sacerdoce chrétien : ses origines et son développement* (Leyde, 1970) ; J. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church : The Unity of the Church in the Duvine Eucharist and the Bishop during the First Three Centuries* (Brookline/Massachusetts, 2001).

[28] Voir B. Dignas, R. Parker et G.G. Stroumsa (éd.), *Priest and Prophets among Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Leuven, Paris, Walpole/Massachusetts, 2013). Voir aussi J. Rüpke, 'Starting Sacrifice in the Beyond Flavian Innovations in the Concept of Priesthood and their Repercussions in the Treatise 'To the Hebrews'', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 229 (2012), 5-30.

[29] À ce sujet, voir M. Jourjon, 'La sacerdotalisation du ministère aux premiers siècles de l'Église', dans J. Delorme (éd.), *Le ministère et les ministères selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1974), 72-83. Voir aussi A. Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, prêtres nouveaux selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1980).

On fait reposer les motifs de la sacerdotalisation des ministères sur plusieurs raisons, pas moins de trois : (1) l'influence des prêtres judéens devenus chrétiens avant comme après 70 ; (2) la célébration eucharistique comme fondement de la communauté chrétienne, qui est interprétée de plus en plus comme un sacrifice ; (3) un besoin pédagogique – une fonction que ne semble pas avoir eu la prêtrise gréco-romaine qui se fonde sur une pratique et non sur une vérité.

Il convient de souligner que la fonction pédagogique de la prêtrise judéenne, comme celle des autres peuples, est en effet une des plus importantes et que ce n'est pas sans raison que les pharisiens / rabbiniques ainsi que les chrétiens vont s'en emparer afin d'établir progressivement une certaine autorité sur le peuple par la maîtrise de la tradition qu'elle soit halakhique (*via* Moïse) pour les premiers et messianique (*via* Jésus) pour les seconds – en un mot, le pouvoir par le savoir[30]. Dans la même perspective, soulignons que les évêques ont conservé durant longtemps la maîtrise de cette fonction pédagogique, notamment en ce qui concerne les catéchumènes – elle a pu être déléguée cependant à un prêtre régulier, mais tout en demeurant de compétence épiscopale.

L'origine judéenne de cette sacerdotalisation des ministères chrétiens est reconnue depuis longtemps par de nombreux critiques[31]. La connexion entre l'eucharistie et le sacrifice, l'interprétation de l'eucharistie comme un sacrifice, est considérée par ces mêmes critiques comme un élément important de la sacerdotalisation des ministères chrétiens[32].

La sacerdotalisation des ministères, notamment du ministère épiscopal, est un phénomène très important pour comprendre le développement du mouvement parmi les classes élevées de la société antique : elle a entraîné aussi au fil des siècles de nombreuses conséquences dans le christianisme[33].

Cette sacerdotalisation des ministères est fondée principalement sur le caractère sacerdotal attribué, sans doute dès le début, à la figure de Jésus (il en va ainsi pour l'auteur de l'*Épitre aux Hébreux*, mais aussi pour celui de l'*Évangile selon Jean*). Elle est fondée aussi sur le caractère sacerdotal attribué à la figure de Jacques le Juste, premier évêque de la première communauté de Jérusalem (il en va ainsi pour Hégésippe et pour bien d'autres Pères de l'Église après lui).

[30] Je dois cette remarque à Steeve Bélanger que je remercie.

[31] Voir notamment J. Schmitt, 'Jewish Priesthood and Christian Hierarchy in the Early Palestinian Communities', dans *The Sacrament of Holy Order: Some Papers and Discussions concerning Holy Order at a Session of the Centre de Pastorale Liturgique, 1955* (Collegeville/Pennsylvanie, 1962), 60-74.

[32] Voir notamment W. Rordorf, 'La théologie du ministère dans l'Église ancienne', *Verbum Caro* 18 (1964), 84-104. Voir aussi J.M.R. Tillard, 'La 'qualité sacerdotale' du ministère chrétien', *Nouvelle revue de théologie* 95 (1973), 481-514.

[33] Voir B.A. Stewart, *Priest of My People. Levitical Paradigms for Early Christian Minister* (New York, Berne, 2015).

Au IIIe siècle, la sacerdotalisation du ministère épiscopal est indéniable avec notamment des auteurs comme Tertullien[34] et Cyprien[35], qui en constituent des étapes importantes : on s'est cependant souvent demandé, parfois avec une certaine acribie, depuis quand ce phénomène est implanté dans les communautés chrétiennes – plusieurs réponses, on l'a vu, ont été apportées.

L'épiscope, autour des années 200, et le presbytre, à partir des années 250, semblent jouer un rôle « sacerdotal », au sens où ils donnent une « représentation » du sacerdoce lévitique, lui-même considéré comme le type du sacerdoce véritable selon l'ordre de Melchisédech, c'est-à-dire venant de nulle part et allant nulle part – par l'emploi de cette figure, on semble toujours vouloir répondre à une volonté de mettre en place une transmission sacerdotale, dont les origines sont divines : c'est-à-dire non fondées sur la naissance, mais sur la connaissance de la vérité et du savoir.

À l'origine de cette sacerdotalisation de l'épiscope, on trouve donc, comme on vient de le voir, Jésus de Nazareth et Jacques le Juste, considérés l'un et l'autre comme des prêtres ou des grands-prêtres. Ajoutons que pour Jésus, cela renvoie surtout à l'*Épître aux Hébreux*, où il est qualifié de prêtre ou de grand prêtre – autrement dit, de « Fils d'Aaron » (une expression cependant non attestée contrairement à celle de « Fils de David »)[36].

Cette question de la sacerdotalisation touche celle de la pureté requise pour accéder à la légitimité des officiants du culte : on assiste ainsi à une reprise de certaines règles judéennes par les chrétiens, notamment en matière sexuelle (les prêtres comme les Judéens en général qui entrent en contact avec le sacré [c'est-à-dire en service au temple pour les prêtres], ne doivent pas avoir eu auparavant de relations sexuelles : voir M *Abot* V, 5 ; TJ *Yoma* I, 1, 38d ; T *Baba Qama* I, 8 et I, 14).

Contrairement aux rabbins qui ont été durant longtemps en confrontation avec les prêtres pour le leadership de la nation judéenne, les chrétiens ont été beaucoup plus sensibles à la sacerdotalisation, en émettant le principe que le Christ est substitué métaphoriquement au temple, à son sacerdoce et à ses sacrifices, au point de faire appel au titre « symbolique » de grand-prêtre[37]. Une titulature appliquée à Jésus qui est relativement fréquente aux Ier-IIe siècles, puisqu'on la rencontre chez Clément de Rome (*Épître* 36, 1 ; 61, 3 ; 64), Ignace

[34] Voir G. Bardy, 'Le sacerdoce chrétien d'après Tertullien', *La vie spirituelle* 58 (1939), 109-34.

[35] Voir G. Bardy, 'Le sacerdoce chrétien d'après Saint Cyprien', *La vie spirituelle* 60 (1939), 87-119.

[36] À ce sujet, voir S.C. Mimouni, 'Jésus Messie 'fils de David' et Messie 'fils d'Aaron'', dans D. Hamidović (éd.), *Aux origines des messianismes juifs. Actes du colloque international tenu en Sorbonne, à Paris, les 8 et 9 juin 2010* (Leyde, Boston, 2013), 145-72, spécialement 159-68.

[37] Voir encore J.-M.R. Tillard, 'Ministère ordonné et sacerdoce du Christ', *Irenikon* 49 (1976), 147-66.

d'Antioche (*Épître aux Philadelphiens* 9, 1) et Polycarpe de Smyrne (*Épître* 12, 1, voire aussi *Martyre de Polycarpe* 14, 3).

L'influence du culte judéen en général sur le culte chrétien en particulier et le phénomène de la sacerdotalisation de ses ministères ne doit pas être négligée, d'autant que, dans les synagogues judéennes, notamment en Palestine, les membres de la classe sacerdotale (prêtres et lévites) ont continué à tenir une place importante et même dominante dans leur organisation comme dans leur liturgie[38].

B. *La question des généalogies davidiques et aaronides*

Avec les Hasmonéens, surtout sous le règne d'Alexandre Jannée (103-76 avant notre ère), le premier de la dynastie à être à la fois grand-prêtre et roi (après sans doute Aristobule I[er] qui n'a gouverné que quelques mois), on assiste, pour des raisons de légitimité, à un curieux mixage, pour ne pas dire tripatouillage, de certaines traditions généalogiques sacerdotales.

Le fondement scripturaire de cette transformation qui a été évidemment très contestée, notamment par les esséniens et aussi sans doute par d'autres, paraît être le verset de *Ex* 6:23[39] :

« Aaron prit pour femme Élishèba, fille de Amminabab, sœur de Nakhshôn, et lui enfante Nadab et Abihou, Éléazar et Itamar ».

Ainsi, Aaron, de la tribu de Lévi, prend pour femme Élishèba (= Élizabeth en grec), qui est de la tribu de Juda – du moins d'après *Nb* 1:7 ; 2:3 ; 7:12.

Ce verset, apparemment anodin, laisse supposer une alliance matrimoniale entre la tribu de Lévi et la tribu de Juda. Il pourrait avoir été ajouté à l'époque des Hasmonéens qui, pour légitimer leur pouvoir à la fois religieux et politique, ont besoin de se revendiquer comme les descendants non seulement de la tribu de Lévi, mais aussi de la tribu de Juda. En tout cas, il semble être assez différent des versets 21 (sur les fils d'Oziel) et 24 (sur les fils de Koré) qui l'entourent.

Dorénavant, les grands-prêtres ne se sont plus considérés comme issus uniquement de la tribu de Lévi, mais comme issus également de la tribu de Juda.

Avant de poursuivre, observons que dans le *Testament des Douze Patriarches*, il est annoncé que Dieu a donné le commandement à Lévi, le prêtre, et à Juda, le roi (*Testament de Ruben* VI, 7-12 ; *Testament de Siméon* VII ; *Testament de Lévi* II, 10 et *Testament de Dan* V, 4). Dans certains textes retrouvés dans les grottes proches de la Mer Morte, il est question de deux messies, celui d'Aaron

[38] À ce sujet, voir J.T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church. Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge, 1992). Voir aussi J. Schmitt, 'Sacerdoce judaïque et hiérarchie ecclésiale dans les premières communautés palestiniennes', dans *Études sur le sacrement de l'ordre* (Paris, 1957), 77-95.

[39] À ce sujet, voir W. Adler, 'Exodus 6:23 and the High Priest from the Tribe of Judah', *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1997), 24-47.

et celui d'Israël[40]. Dans le *Testament des Douze Patriarches*, il est mentionné encore que c'est de la descendance de Lévi et de Juda leur descendance que sera suscité l'« Agneau de Dieu » (*Testament de Joseph* XIX, 11 ; voir aussi *Testament de Nephtali* VIII et *Testament de Gad* VIII, 1).

Évidemment, les traditions rabbiniques, d'essence pharisienne, qui sont généralement anti-hasmonéennes, s'opposent à une double filiation sacerdotale et militent pour une filiation par le père ; voir M *Qiddushin* III, 12, où les rabbiniques affirment explicitement, dans la lignée biblique (*Nb* 1:2) qui est patrilinéaire, que le statut de prêtre est transmis par le père[41].

Le même phénomène va se produire aussi pour Jésus, toutefois en sens inverse, qui est présenté comme de la tribu de Lévi par sa mère Marie (d'après *Luc*) et de la tribu de Juda par son père Joseph (d'après *Matthieu*) – du moins selon des traditions évangéliques qui sont diverses et d'une fiabilité invérifiable du point de vue de la méthode historique, sans compter que leurs confrontations avec certaines traditions patristiques font ressortir des incohérences et une absence totale de stabilité textuelle dans leur transmission[42].

Cette vision des origines, à la fois lévitique et davidique de Jésus, n'est donc pas une création *ex nihilo*, elle remonte, comme on vient rapidement de le voir, à une tradition qui existe déjà dans le monde judéen depuis au moins la fin du IIe siècle avant notre ère. Elle a pour objectif de légitimer une naissance noble et digne pour le messie chrétien qui ne peut être, dans les mentalités judéennes de cette époque, que d'origine davidique selon certains et d'origine lévitique selon d'autres, voire les deux à la fois – n'oublions pas que dans certains textes esséniens il est distingué au moins entre deux messies, celui de David et celui d'Aaron[43].

On le retrouve dans l'*Épître aux Hébreux* où Jésus n'est pas seulement qualifié, comme on l'a déjà vu, de prêtre ou de grand-prêtre mais aussi comme originaire de la tribu de Juda (*He* 7:14 ; 8:8)[44].

Théodoret de Cyr (ca 393-ca 460), dans ses *Quaestiones in Exodum*, mentionne à juste titre que le mariage d'Aaron est une union entre la tribu de Lévi

[40] À ce sujet, voir J.J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star : The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York, 1995), 79-109.

[41] Je dois cette remarque à José Costa que je remercie.

[42] À ce sujet, voir C. Guignard, 'Julius Africanus et le texte de la généalogie lucanienne de Jésus', *SP* 63 (2013), 221-34.

[43] Voir É. Puech, 'Messianism, Resurrection and Eschatology at Qumran and in the New Testament', dans E. Ulrich et J.C. VanderKam (éd.), *The Community of the Renewed Covenants: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Notre Dame/Indiana, 1994), 235-56 ; 'Messianisme, eschatologie et résurrection dans les manuscrits de la Mer Morte', *Revue de Qumran* 18 (1997), 255-98. Voir aussi J. Starcky, 'Les quatre étapes du messianisme à Qumrân', *Revue biblique* 70 (1963), 481-505 ; A. Caquot, 'Le messianisme qumrânien', dans M. Delcor (éd.), *Qumrân. Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (Gembloux, 1978), 231-47.

[44] Je dois cette remarque à Steeve Bélanger que je remercie.

et la tribu de Juda, entre la tribu sacerdotale et la tribu royale, d'où est issu le Christ, lui-même prêtre, « Fils d'Aaron », et roi, « Fils de David ».

Il est possible de penser que Jésus a été considéré comme un Aaronide par sa mère et un Davidide par son père jusqu'à l'adoption de la doctrine de la naissance virginale, et ensuite par les chrétiens qui l'ont refusée – à commencer par les ébionites et sans doute aussi les elkasaïtes.

Pour Ignace d'Antioche, Jésus est de la descendance de David, mais il ne dit pas pour autant que Marie, sa mère, l'est aussi (*Lettre aux Éphésiens* 18, 2 et 19, 1 ; *Lettre aux Tralliens* 9, 1 ; *Lettre aux Smyrniote* 1, 1). Pour Justin de Néapolis, Jésus comme Marie, sa mère, sont de la descendance de David (*Dialogue avec Tryphon* 100). Origène semble s'opposer aux chrétiens qui acceptent pour Jésus une double descendance (*Commentaire de l'Épître aux Romains* 1, 1).

Toutefois, si l'on s'en tient aux règles strictes de l'appartenance sacerdotale, Jésus n'est pas de la tribu des prêtres, mais de la tribu des rois, puisque son père n'en est pas originaire. Ce qui signifie que la prudence s'impose face à des représentations qui pourraient être plus de l'ordre du discours que de celui de la réalité – représentations répondant à des considérations et à des besoins de légitimation politico-religieuse de toutes sortes.

C. *La sacerdotalisation de Jésus et sa famille*[45]

Jésus et sa famille sont-ils d'origine sacerdotale ? Autrement exprimé ont-t-il été ou non des membres de la tribu ou de la classe des prêtres et des lévites ?

La question paraît pourvoir être posée, tout au moins à titre d'hypothèse à partir de laquelle il convient de travailler car, sans être vraiment nouvelle, elle a été peu retenue par les critiques qui ne lui ont généralement accordé aucune consistance historique. Pour leur part, les théologiens-exégètes l'ont négligée, sans doute parce que trop influencés par la présentation symbolisée que l'on rencontre dans les textes littéraires[46]. Quant aux historiens, ils paraissent ne l'avoir jamais envisagée, autrement que du point de vue littéraire, voire aussi parfois du point de vue liturgique.

[45] Voir C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, 'Jesus as a High Priest Messiah', *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4 (2006), 155-75 et 5 (2007), 57-79.

[46] Voir A. Vanhoye, 'Le Christ, grand-prêtre selon Héb. 2, 17-18', *Nouvelle revue de théologie* 91 (1969), 449-74 ; A. Vanhoye, 'Situation et signification de Hébreux V. 1-10', *New Testament Studies* 22 (1977), 445-56 ; J.-P. Michaud, 'Le passage de l'ancien au nouveau, selon l'épître aux Hébreux', *Science et Esprit* 35 (1983), 33-52.

Pourtant à la lecture de certains documents, comme l'*Évangile selon Jean*[47], l'*Épître aux Hébreux*[48] ou l'*Apocalypse de Jean*[49], cette caractéristique paraît des plus évidentes. Il en va de même pour Jacques le Juste, le frère de Jésus, qui est souvent décrit comme un prêtre, voire aussi symbolisé comme un grand-prêtre. En revanche, dans la littérature pseudo-clémentine, alors que Jacques est considéré comme un personnage important, il n'est, selon toute apparence, pas revêtu de la dignité sacerdotale[50].

Pour affiner plus avant cette problématique, on peut se pencher, par exemple, sur un texte comme l'*Épître aux Hébreux*. Ainsi de l'application à Jésus du *Ps* 110:4, « Tu es prêtre pour l'éternité à la manière de Melkisédeq », par l'auteur de cet écrit (*He* 5:6), il est possible de déduire principalement quatre remarques :

(1) Jésus ne semble pas s'être arrogé le sacerdoce par descendance, comme tout prêtre, mais l'a reçu d'une vocation divine (*He* 5:6) ;
(2) son sacerdoce paraît bien supérieur à celui des fils de Lévi, il ne dépend pas de l'appartenance généalogique, il provient d'un choix divin et a été confirmé par un serment (*He* 7:21) ;
(3) du fait que le sacerdoce de Melkisédeq est antérieur à celui qui découlera d'Abraham, il lui est donc forcément supérieur, l'antériorité, dans l'Antiquité, étant gage de vérité (c'est du moins cette perspective qui est notamment mise en avant dans l'*Épître aux Hébreux*)[51] ;
(4) du fait que le sacerdoce de Jésus est sur le type de celui de Melkisédeq (*Gn* 14:17-20), il est supérieur à celui de Lévi et il semble appelé à le

[47] Voir J.P. Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995), 729-45 ; R. Bauckham, 'Messianism according to the Gospel of John', dans J. Lierman (éd.), *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* (Tübingen, 2006), 34-69 ; H.K. Bond, 'Discarding the Seamless Robe : The High Priesthood of Jesus in John's Gospel', dans D.P. Capes (éd.), *Israel's God and Rebeccas's Children : Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Waco/Texas, 2007), 183-94 ; W.V. Cirafesi, 'The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John in the Light of 1QS, 1QSa and 1QSb', *Journal of Graeco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 8 (2011-2012), 83-105. Voir aussi A. Feuillet, *Le sacerdoce du Christ et de ses ministres d'après la prière sacerdotale du IVe évangile et plusieurs données parallèles du Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1972).

[48] Voir W. Horbury, 'The Aaronic Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrew', *Journal for the Study of New Testament* 19 (1983), 43-71 (= *Messianism among Jews and Christians. Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* [Londres, New York, 2003], 227-54) ; E.F. Mason, *'You are a Priest Forever': Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leyde, Boston, 2008) ; S.C. Mimouni, 'Jésus Messie 'fils de David' et Messie 'fils d'Aaron'', dans D. Hamidović (éd.), *Aux Origines des Messianismes Juifs* (2013), 145-72, spécialement 159-68.

[49] Voir A. Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1980), 307-40.

[50] Voir L. Cirillo, 'Jacques de Jérusalem d'après le roman du Pseudo-Clément', dans A. Motte et P. Marchetti (éd.), *La figure du prêtre dans les grandes traditions religieuses. Actes du colloque en hommage à M. l'abbé Julien Ries* (Namur, 2000), 177-88.

[51] Je dois cette remarque à Steeve Bélanger que je remercie.

remplacer dans son aspect unique et définitif, notamment avec une efficacité salutaire (*He* 7:3.16-17.24).

Il est envisageable alors de considérer que l'auteur de l'*Épître aux Hébreux*, sans doute lui-même un prêtre, en se fondant sur le fait que Jésus appartient à la classe sacerdotale, a symbolisé sa présentation en forçant le trait pour le mettre en exergue comme un « grand-prêtre de l'ordre de Melkisédeq »[52], sans doute afin de l'extraire de la condition commune qui est celle de toute la classe des prêtres et des lévites ordinaires[53].

Jésus unit ainsi en sa personne une double prérogative : celle du sacerdoce et celle de la royauté – cette dernière n'est pas aussi présente dans l'*Épître aux Hébreux*[54] qu'elle l'est dans l'*Évangile selon Matthieu*. Pour décrire l'œuvre rédemptrice du grand-prêtre de la nouvelle alliance, l'auteur de l'*Épître aux Hébreux*, grâce à l'argument de l'analogie et à celui de la typologie, exploite et transpose les rites de la fête de *Yom Kippour* (*He* 4:14 ; 6:19)[55]. Jésus, en grand-prêtre, intercède ainsi devant le dieu d'Israël en faveur du peuple des chrétiens, comme les grands-prêtres judéens en fonction au temple de Jérusalem, mais de manière différente, car le sacrifice qui précède l'entrée dans le Saint des Saints est le sien et non celui d'un bouc ou d'un taurillon. Il est unique et parfait, donc il n'a pas besoin d'être réitéré comme celui des simples prêtres officiant au temple de Jérusalem, qui ne peuvent que faire des sacrifices imparfaits par définition.

Il est évident cependant que Jésus, pas plus que son frère Jacques le Juste, n'a jamais été grand-prêtre – il ne figure en tout cas pas dans les listes connues –, mais il convient de constater que dans certains milieux chrétiens, sans doute d'origine judéenne, il a été considéré comme tel, tout au moins de manière symbolique pour ne pas dire mythique.

Dans l'*Apocalypse de Jean*, qui est une réflexion prophétique et sacerdotale sur la contamination de Jérusalem et du temple, Jésus, notamment en *Ap* 1:5-6, est présenté comme celui qui réunit en lui un double pouvoir : celui de la

[52] Voir H.W. Attridge, 'The Temple and Jesus the High Priest in the New Testament', dans J.H. Charlesworth (éd.), *Jesus and Temple. Textual and Archaeological Explorations* (Minneapolis/Minnesota, 2014), 213-37.

[53] Voir S.C. Mimouni, 'L'*Épître aux Hébreux* est-elle un texte sacerdotal chrétien ? Histoire, tradition et épistolarité. Ouverture introductive', *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* [Bologne] 33 (2016), 11-4. Voir aussi S.C. Mimouni, 'Le *grand prêtre* Jésus *à la manière de Melchisédech* dans l'*Épître aux Hébreux*', *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 33 (2016), 79-105. Voir encore S. Bélanger, 'L'*Épître aux Hébreux* dans le contexte spéculatif sur la figure de Melchisédech durant la période du Second Temple de Jérusalem (IIe siècle avant notre ère – Ier siècle de notre ère)', *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 33 (2016), 31-77.

[54] À ce sujet, voir D.-I. Kang, 'The Royal Components of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7', *Perichoresis* 10 (2012), 95-124.

[55] À ce sujet, voir B. Lourié, 'Calendrical Implications in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*', *Revue biblique* 115 (2008), 245-65.

royauté et celui du sacerdoce – avec le thème de la contamination, qui est la conséquence de la destruction du sanctuaire, on semble être dans la même controverse que celle des esséniens à l'égard des Hasmonéens, les premiers ayant toujours contesté le pouvoir des seconds pour cause de souillure par rapport au sacerdoce des Oniades[56].

On peut évidemment considérer que ces éléments proviennent de prêtres judéens qui ont rejoint le mouvement chrétien et ont appliqué des règles de la prêtrise eschatologique à Jésus et à ses disciples[57] – une éventualité qui n'est pas à exclure, surtout si l'on se fonde sur *Jn* 5 (avec la guérison d'un paralytique à la piscine de Bethzatha à Jérusalem).

Jésus semblerait avoir suivi un calendrier sacerdotal qui n'est pas celui en vigueur au temple de Jérusalem, mais qu'on retrouve notamment dans le *Livre des Jubilés* et dans les écrits esséniens découverts dans les grottes proches du Khirbet Qumrân[58]. Ce qui peut conduire à penser que Jésus aurait suivi des prescriptions sacerdotales en matière liturgique, non pas celles concernant l'ensemble du sacerdoce officiel en usage au temple de Jérusalem, mais celles utilisées par certains groupes de prêtres en rupture plus ou moins déclarée avec le sacerdoce officiel – une rupture qui pourrait avoir des raisons essentiellement politiques, remontant à la mise en place de la dynastie hasmonéenne considérée par ces groupes comme illégitime et donc souillée[59].

Une remarque semble s'imposer. Elle repose essentiellement sur trois points. (1) Les textes chrétiens incorporés dans le Nouveau Testament ont tous été écrits par des Judéens d'origine, mais appartenant à plusieurs tendances idéologiques[60]. (2) Ces auteurs ont eu tendance à insister sur une certaine judéïsation du mouvement chrétien émergeant, à mettre en valeur des aspects de leur Messie, notamment en le présentant comme un « grand-prêtre », ce que Jésus en l'occurrence n'a jamais été. (3) Pour le valoriser ainsi, ces auteurs ont

[56] Voir R. Briggs, *A Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation* (New York, 1999).

[57] Voir P. Di Luccio, 'Priestly Traditions in the Gospel', *Revue biblique* 122 (2015), 84-103.

[58] Voir J.-P. Audet, 'Jésus et le 'calendrier sacerdotal ancien' : autour d'une variante de Luc 6, 1', *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 10 (1958), 361-83 ; A. Jaubert, 'Jésus et le calendrier de Qumrân', *New Testament Studies* 7 (1960), 1-30.

[59] Voir l'étude classique et toujours éclairante de A. Jaubert, *La date de la Cène. Calendrier biblique et liturgie chrétienne* (Paris, 1957). Voir aussi A. Moda, 'La date de la Cène sur la thèse de Mlle Annie Jaubert', *Nicolaus* 3 (1975), 53-116. Voir encore B. Lourié, 'Les quatre jours 'de l'intervalle' : une modification néotestamentaire et chrétienne du calendrier de 364 jours', dans M. Petit, B. Lourié et A. Orlov (éd.), *L'Église des deux Alliances. Mémorial Annie Jaubert (1912-1980)* (Piscataway/New Jersey, 2008), 103-34 ; J.C. VanderKam, 'Jaubert's Solution to the Passion Chronology', dans B. Lourié, A. Orlov et M. Petit (éd.), *L'Église des deux Alliances* (2008), 179-94.

[60] Voir par exemple H. van de Sandt, 'The Jewishness of Jude – James – Hebrews in Light of Purity', dans P.J. Tomson et J. Schwartz (éd.), *Jews and Christians in the First and Second Centuries: How to Write their History* (Leyde, Boston, 2014), 80-102.

dû partir du fait qu'il appartient à la classe ou à la tribu des prêtres, sinon ils n'auraient jamais avancé une telle chose : on n'invente jamais à partir de rien.

Le papyrus Oxyrhynchos 840, publié en 1908[61], est une page de parchemin acéphale et fragmentaire de dimension réduite, qui daterait des IVe-Ve siècles. Il pourrait avoir appartenu à un codex miniature, mais il n'est sans doute pas une amulette comme certains critiques l'ont pensé[62]. Il est rattaché à la littérature apocryphe, traduit dans bon nombre de ses recueils[63]. Il est traité dans d'assez nombreuses contributions et il ne cesse pas régulièrement de l'être[64].

Ce papyrus, dont le texte aurait été composé au IIe ou du IIIe siècle, voire de manière plus précise entre 125 et 150[65], malgré son caractère apparemment anecdotique, pourrait être une des pièces à rajouter au dossier.

Il s'agit d'un extrait où est rapportée une discussion entre un prêtre et Jésus au sujet de questions de purification :

« […] avant même de commettre une injustice, il machine tout avec astuce. Mais prenez garde de ne pas avoir vous aussi à subir les peines qui attendent ces gens ! Car ce n'est pas pendant leur vie seulement que ceux qui font le mal ont leur rétribution, mais ils auront encore à endurcir leur châtiment et bien des tourments ».
Il les prit avec lui et entra jusque dans le parvis des purs (ἁγνευτήριον) ; et il allait et venait dans le temple. Un pharisien, archiprêtre, du nom de Lévi, s'avança, les rejoignit et dit au Sauveur : « Qui t'a permis de fouler ce parvis des purs (ἁγνευτήριον) et de porter tes regards sur ces vases sacrés (ἁγια σκεύη) sans t'être baigné (λούω) ? Et alors

[61] Voir B.P. Grenfell et A.S. Hunt, 'Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel', dans *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, V (Londres, 1908), 1-10, pl. I.

[62] Voir M.J. Kruger, 'P. Oxy. V 840 : Amulet or Miniature codex?', *Journal of Theological Studies* 53 (2002), 81-94 et T.J. Kraus, 'P. Oxy. V 840 – Amulet or Miniature Codex? Principal and Additional Remarks on Two Terms', dans T.J. Kraus (éd.), *Ad Fontes. Original Manuscripts and their Significance for Studying Early Christianity – Selected Essays* (Leyde, 2007), 47-67.

[63] Voir D.A. Bertrand, 'Papyrus Oxyrhynque 840', dans P. Geoltrain et F. Bovon (éd.), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, I (Paris, 1997), 407-10. Voir aussi J. Jeremias, *Paroles inconnues de Jésus* (Paris, 1970), 102-4 (pour les lignes 1-7) et 50-62 (pour les lignes 7-45). Voir encore M.J. Kruger, 'Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840', dans *Gospel Fragments, The 'Unknown Gospel' on Papyrus Egerton 2. Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840. Other Gospel Fragments* (Oxford, 2009), 121-15 et T. Nicklas, 'Das Fragment Oxyrhynchus V 840 (P. Oxy. V 840)', dans C. Markschies et J. Schröter (éd.), *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, I. Band: *Evangelien und Verwandtes*, 1 (Tübingen, 2012), 357-9.

[64] Parmi une bibliographie relativement imposante, voir E. Preuschen, 'Das neue Evangelienfragmente von Oxyrhynchos', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 9 (1908), 1-11 ; M.-J. Lagrange, 'Nouveau fragment non canonique relatif à l'Évangile', *Revue biblique* 16 (1908), 538-53 ; Z. Safrai et C. Safrai, 'Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840', dans A.I. Baumgarten, H. Eshel, R. Katzoff et S. Tzoref (éd.), *Halakhah in Light of Epigraphy* (Göttingen, 2014), 255-82. Voir aussi M.J. Kruger, *The* Gospel of the Savior. *An Analysis of P. Oxy. 840 and its Place on the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity* (Leyde, Boston, 2005) avec T. Nicklas, 'Critical Study: Michael J. Kruger, *The Gospel of the Savior*. An Analysis of P.Oxy 840 and its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity', *Apocrypha* 17 (2006), 203-10.

[65] Voir M.J. Kruger, *The* Gospel of the Savior (2005), 244-5.

que tes disciples ne se sont même pas lavé (βαπτίζω) les pieds ! Au contraire, c'est souillé que tu as foulé ce temple, ce lieu de pureté, alors que personne [à moins qu'il] ne se soit baigné (λούω) et n'ait changé de vêtements, ne le foule et [n'ose en regar] der les vases sacrés ». [Aussitôt le Sauveur s'arrêta avec ses disciples [et lui répondit] : « Et toi donc qui est ici, dans le temple, es-tu pur ? » L'autre lui dit : « Je suis pur, car je me suis baigné (λούω) dans le bassin de David, je suis descendu par un des escaliers et remonté par l'autre, j'ai revêtu des vêtements blancs et purs, et alors seulement je suis venu contempler ces vases sacrés ». Le Sauveur lui répondit ainsi : « Malheur à vous, aveugles qui ne voyez rien ! Tu t'es baigné (λούω) dans ces eaux d'égout, ou chiens et porcs sont vautrés nuit et jour. En faisant tes ablutions, tu as nettoyé (νίπτω) cette peau du dehors, que les courtisanes et joueuses de flûte, elles aussi, parfument, baignent (λούω), nettoient et parent pour exciter la convoitise des hommes ; mais à l'intérieur d'elles sont pleines de scorpions et [de toute sorte des mal]ice. Quant à moi et à [mes disciples], nous qui, dis-tu, ne serions pas passés par le bain (βαπτίζω), nous sommes passés par le bain (βάπτω) dans les eaux vi[ves et pures] qui viennent […]. Mais malheur à ceux […] »[66].

Le caractère historique du débat dont il est question dans cet extrait importe peu, car il est difficile de savoir s'il renvoie à une réalité ou à une fiction, concernant en particulier la recherche du Jésus historique : ce qui compte ici, c'est la discussion et son contenu.

Le débat, qui se déroule dans l'enceinte du temple de Jérusalem, sur le parvis des purs, entre un certain Lévi (qualifié d'« archiprêtre », c'est-à-dire « prêtre en chef », mais pas « grand-prêtre » – ce qui évite les nombreux débats sur l'identification de ce personnage) et Jésus (non qualifié de manière spécifique, si ce n'est qu'il est appelé le « Sauveur » – une désignation assez rarement utilisée dans le Nouveau Testament [*Lc* 1:47 ; 2:11 ; *Jn* 4:42], mais qu'on rencontre dans certains écrits gnostiques), est le suivant : Lévi se considère comme pur, car il s'est baigné dans des eaux du « Bassin de David » (sans doute un des bassins proches de la piscine de Bethzatha ou de Bethesda connue aussi sous le nom de Probatique [*Jn* 5:2]), tandis que Jésus l'est, car il s'est immergé, avec ses disciples, dans des eaux vives et pures.

On pourrait percevoir ici une autre polémique : celle entre les partisans de l'efficacité du bain dans des eaux stagnantes et ceux de l'efficacité du bain dans des eaux vives et pures.

Dans le premier débat, peu importe son époque, sont opposées l'efficacité des ablutions judéennes de la Synagogue à celle des baptêmes chrétiens de l'Église : on le retrouve, non seulement chez Justin (*Dialogue avec Tryphon* 14), mais aussi chez Tertullien (*Contre les Judéens* 13, 15)[67].

[66] Traduction de D.A. Bertrand, 'Papyrus Oxyrhynque 840', dans P. Geoltrain et F. Bovon (éd.), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, I (Paris, 1997), 409-10.

[67] Voir L.T. Rutgers, 'The Synagogue as Foe in Early Christian Literature', dans Z. Weiss (éd.), *"Follow the Wise" : Studies in Jewish History and Culture in Honor of Lee I. Levine* (Winona Lake/Indiana, 2010), 449-68, spécialement 458.

Vouloir opposer des eaux matérielles à des eaux spirituelles, comme le font certains critiques en se fondant sur *Jn* 4:10-1 et *Jn* 7:38, paraît des plus hypothétiques, d'autant que la partie du fragment du P 840 concernée est reconstituée sans grande assurance. Vouloir comparer le bain de Jésus à celui de Jean le Baptiste, comme le font d'autres critiques, est aussi des plus hypothétiques[68]. Vouloir le situer dans une controverse baptismale des IIe-IIIe siècles ou des IVe-Ve siècles, comme viennent de le faire certains autres critiques paraît absolument inapproprié et anachronique[69].

Le débat est halakhique : il touche principalement à la purification lors de l'entrée dans le temple, au lavement du corps complet (avec les verbes λούω et νίπτω), au lavement des pieds (avec le verbe βαπτίζω) et à la vaisselle sacrée (άγια σκεύη) du sanctuaire. Il est très bien documenté dans la littérature rabbinique ancienne qui permet de le comprendre – pour le lavement des pieds, voir TB *Shabbat* 25b et *Shabbat* 108b ; pour la vaisselle sacrée, voir M *Sheqalim* VIII, 4 ; T *Menahot* XIII, 19 ; T *Zebahim* XI, 17 ; TB *Pesahim* 27a. Il est également bien documenté avec la tradition chrétienne du lavement des pieds attesté en *Jn* 13:1-20, même si le contexte est totalement différent que celui où Jésus lave les pieds de ses disciples[70].

En principe, seuls les prêtres, en état de pureté, sont autorisés à voir les « vases sacrées », sauf en certaines circonstances comme lors de leur nettoyage ou lors de la fête de Soukkot[71].

L'auteur de ce passage est indéniablement un Judéen chrétien de langue et de culture grecques ayant une excellente connaissance de la halakhah pratiquée à Jérusalem à l'époque du temple, ce qui permet encore de dater le texte de la fin du Ier ou du début du IIe siècle, et qui se comprend à une époque où la synagogue, dans certains milieux judéens palestiniens, est assimilée au temple du point de vue de la sanctification symbolique[72], une manière pour les prêtres

[68] Voir A. Stewart-Sykes, 'Bathed in Living Waters : Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840 and Christian baptism Reconsidered', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 100 (2009), 278-86.

[69] Voir F. Bovon, 'Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840 : Fragment of a Lost Gospel Witness of an Early Christian Controversy over the Purity', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000), 715-28 (= F. Bovon, *New Testament and Christian Apocrypha. Collected Studies II* [Tübingen, 2009], 174-96) ou H. Buchinger et E. Hernitscheck, 'P. Oxy. 840 and the Rites of Christian Initiation: dating a Piece of Alleged Anti-Sacramentalistic Polemics', *Early Christianity* 5 (2014), 117-24.

[70] Voir D. Tripp, 'Meaning of the Foot-Washing : John 13 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840', *Expository Times* 103 (1992), 237-9 ; C. Égasse, 'Le papyrus Oxyrhynque 840 et Jean 13 : du papyrus mutilé à l'eau purifiante', dans C. Clivaz, J. Meizoz, F. Vallotton et J. Verheyden (éd.), *Lire demain. Des manuscrits antiques à l'ère digitale*, version e-book (Lausanne, 2012), 489-97.

[71] Voir M.J. Kruger, *The Gospel of the Savior* (2005), 111-5.

[72] Voir S. Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue during the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame/Indiana, 1997). Voir aussi Z. Safrai, 'From the Synagogue to the Small Sanctuary', *Israel – People and Land* 7-8 (1990-1993), 149-58 [en hébreu] ; Y. Ta-Shema, 'Synagogal Sanctity – Symbolism and Reality', dans S. Elitzur *et al.* (éd.), *Knesset Ezra: Literature and Life in the Synagogue: Studies Presented to Ezra Fleisher* (Jérusalem, 1995), 351-64 [en hébreu] ; D. Stökl Ben Ezra, 'Templisierung: Die Rückkehr des Tempels in die jüdische und

de conserver leur caractère sacerdotal[73] – c'est le cas notamment à Gush Halav en Galilée, à Kyriat Sefer en Samarie ou à Susya en Judée, des villages où les prêtres et leurs règles de pureté (avec les très nombreuses *mikvaot* qui ont été retrouvées) semblent jouer un rôle important pour ne pas dire essentiel[74].

Sans aller plus avant dans l'examen de P 840, peut-on avancer alors, à titre d'hypothèse, que le Jésus figurant dans ce papyrus sous le nom de « Sauveur » est à percevoir comme un prêtre ? Si l'on admettait que ce genre de débat au sujet des règles de pureté permettant l'accès à l'enceinte du temple et à propos de la contemplation de la vaisselle sacrée, de laquelle sont en principe exclus tous les laïcs, ne peut avoir lieu qu'entre deux prêtres, évidemment de tendances opposées, la réponse devrait être positive. Auquel cas, le débat, réel ou fictif, dont il est question dans ce papyrus serait alors à considérer comme étant entre deux prêtres : Lévi qui est d'obédience pharisienne et Jésus qui est d'une autre obédience de caractère prophétique.

C'est un point de vue, jamais avancé auparavant, qui peut cependant être discuté devant certaines méconnaissances de cette halakhah spécifique et qui le sera sans nul doute, mais l'hypothèse paraît envisageable et mérite d'être proposée pour un document qui a souvent été au centre de débats[75].

Dans le *Protévangile de Jacques*, un texte apocryphisé du milieu du IIe siècle en provenance d'un milieu chrétien d'origine judéenne de Palestine et sans doute pas d'Égypte comme on le dit souvent, on rencontre aussi une orientation sacerdotale, notamment par la mise en situation de certains épisodes de la conception de Jésus au temple de Jérusalem et non dans la maison de Marie. Ainsi, selon George T. Zervos, l'annonciation se serait déroulée non pas dans la maison des parents de Marie, mais dans le temple de Jérusalem : la jeune femme finissant même par s'asseoir sur le trône réservé, à l'intérieur du Saint des Saints, à la divinité judéenne[76]. Par conséquence, la contextualisation de ce récit semble impliquer un milieu chrétien d'origine sacerdotale : Lily C. Vuong apporte une certaine réponse à la conservation d'un souvenir aussi positif du

christliche Liturgie der Spätantike', dans J. Scheid (éd.), *Rites et croyances dans les religions du monde romain* (Genève, 2007), 231-87.

[73] Voir D. Fraade, 'The Temple as a Marker of Jewish Identity Before and After 70 CE : The Role of the Holy Vessel in Rabbinic Memory and Imagination', dans L.I. Levine et D.R. Schwartz (éd.), *Jewish Identity in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern* (Tübingen, 2009), 237-65.

[74] Voir D. Amit et T. Adler, 'The Observance of Ritual Purity after 70 C.E.: A Reevaluation of the Evidence in Light of recent Archaeological Discoveries', dans Z. Weiss (éd.), *"Follow the Wise"* (2010), 121-43.

[75] Voir L.R. Zelyck, 'Recontextualizing Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840', *Early Christianity* 5 (2014), 178-97.

[76] G.T. Zervos, 'An Unperceived Early Jewish-Christian Temple Source', dans J.H. Charlesworth (éd.), *Jesus and Temple. Textual and Archaeological Explorations* (Minneapolis/Minnesota, 2014), 239-60.

sanctuaire et du sacerdoce hiérosolymitains en soulignant notamment les exigences de la communauté de provenance du *Protévangile de Jacques* en matière de pureté rituelle des femmes, et selon un désir de laver Marie et son Fils de tout manquement au commandement de la *niddah*[77].

Observons encore que la tradition du lavement des pieds figurant en *Jn* 13:6-20 est aussi à considérer dans une perspective halakhique et dans un contexte sacerdotal qui donne un autre sens, plus ritualiste et moins doctrinal – on ne peut ici que mentionner cette hypothèse[78].

D. *Comparaison entre le sacerdoce judéen et le sacerdoce chrétien*

Pour cette comparaison on va se limiter à quelques points saillants, mais déterminants.

Le sacerdoce judéen et le sacerdoce chrétien paraissent avoir partagés au moins trois éléments : (1) l'accumulation des charges civiques et religieuses, cela a dû être le cas en Palestine avant la destruction du temple de Jérusalem et sans doute aussi après, comme cela a été aussi le cas pour les évêques qui auront d'importantes responsabilités non seulement religieuses, mais également civiques – le cas bien documenté d'Augustin est très éclairant ; (2) ils vont avoir l'un et l'autre des fonctions cultuelles ; (3) ils vont également avoir des fonctions pédagogiques.

En revanche, par rapport au sacerdoce judéen, le sacerdoce chrétien semble avoir rapidement délaissé : (1) la séparation fondée sur la pureté (qui se retrouve encore dans certaines castes hindouistes et autres mouvements modernes qu'ils relèvent du judaïsme [comme dans le mouvement hassidique] ou du christianisme [comme dans le mouvement anabaptiste]) ; (2) la séparation du lignage : le cas d'Ambroise et d'autres évêques, qui sont nommés à leur charge par acclamation populaire sans même avoir été ordonnés prêtres, démontre que, parfois, cette nomination évêque-prêtre est simultanée – il n'y a donc pas nécessairement d'instruction à recevoir et de cursus à parcourir pour accéder aux plus hautes fonctions.

Passons maintenant à la question du calendrier liturgique en relation avec le sacerdoce.

[77] L.C. Vuong, *Gender and Purity in the Protevangelium of James* (Tübingen, 2013).

[78] Voir A. Jaubert, 'Une lecture du lavement des pieds au mardi-mercredi saint', *Le Muséon* 79 (1966), 257-86 ; R. Kieffer, 'L'arrière-fond juif du lavement des pieds', *Revue biblique* 105 (1998), 546-55 ; R.J. Bauckham, 'Did Jesus Wash His Disciple' Feet?', dans B.D. Chilton (éd.), *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (Leyde, 1999), 411-29 ; J. Zumstein, 'Le lavement des pieds (Jean 13, 1-20) : un exemple de la conception johannique du pouvoir', *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 132 (2000), 345-60 ; J. Briend, 'La signification du lavement des pieds (Jn 13, 1-20)', *Cahiers Ratisbonne* 8 (2000), 9-28.

Le sacerdoce et la question du calendrier liturgique

Dans toutes les sociétés anciennes, le contrôle du calendrier a permis une certaine emprise d'ordre civique et d'ordre religieux, et surtout d'établir une distinction tranchée entre diverses oppositions politiques : c'est ainsi que les prêtres ont toujours tenté d'accaparer le pouvoir par la maîtrise du calendrier liturgique. On ne peut ici encore que donner quelques éléments de recherche indiquant les rapports concurrentiels entre les divers calendriers liturgiques à des fins politiques.

On connaît le cas à Rome, à la suite de l'incendie de la ville ayant provoqué la disparition des archives religieuses, des tribuns nommés à la place des consuls en 389 avant notre ère, qui les ont fait reconstituer, mais les ont gardées cachées et secrètes entre les mains des pontifes afin, affirme Tite-Live, « de tenir les esprits de la foule enchaînés par des craintes religieuses » (*Histoire* VI, 9). La mainmise des pontifes sur le calendrier cultuel romain semble en avoir été ainsi à toutes les époques[79].

Dans le monde judéen du temps de Jésus, des calendriers concurrents semblent avoir coexisté, provoquant de violentes querelles à propos de la fixation des grandes fêtes liturgiques annuelles. On connaît, au moins, l'existence de deux calendriers sacerdotaux : l'un très ancien, maintenu dans des milieux marginaux ; l'autre plus récent, établi dans des milieux officiels[80] – on les appelle ainsi pour ne pas les qualifier outre mesure.

Le calendrier sacerdotal le plus ancien (de type solaire à 364 jours) se trouve attesté dans les livres d'*Esdras*, de *Néhémie* et des *Chroniques*. Il en est aussi question dans le *Livre des Jubilés* qui date du milieu du IIe siècle avant notre ère, aussi dans le *Livre I d'Hénoch* dont la datation varie, selon les différentes parties de l'ouvrage, entre le IIIe et le IIe siècle avant notre ère – il s'agit en particulier du *Livre astronomique* des chapitres 72-78 de *I Hénoch*. Il a été en usage dans le groupe des esséniens qui, comme on le sait, est issu d'une scission avec une nouvelle légitimité sacerdotale (la famille des Hasmonéens) qui s'est établie définitivement à Jérusalem en 152 avant notre ère[81].

Le calendrier sacerdotal le plus récent (de type luni-solaire à 354 ou 384 jours selon les années) est celui qui a été établi par la dynastie hasmonéenne lors de son accession au pouvoir et qui a perduré ensuite après la destruction du temple de Jérusalem en 70 tant chez les Judéens sacerdotaux et synagogaux que chez les Judéens rabbiniques – ce qui ne les a pas empêché de s'opposer

[79] À ce sujet, voir D. Porte, *Le prêtre à Rome. Les donneurs de sacré* (Paris, 1995), 131-49, spécialement 133-8.

[80] À ce sujet, voir S. Stern, *Calendar and Community. A History of the Jewish Calendar. Second Century BCE – Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2001). Voir aussi R.T. Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian. Biblical, Intertestamental and Patristic Studies* (Leyde, New York, Cologne, 1996).

[81] Voir A. Jaubert, 'Aperçus sur le calendrier de Qumrân', dans *Recherches bibliques*, IV. *La secte de Qumrân et les origines du christianisme* (Tournay, 1958), 113-20.

sur certains points, comme le montre l'affaire des « Fils de Bethyra » à propos, par exemple, de l'immolation de l'agneau le shabbat dont il est question dans la littérature rabbinique (T *Pesahim* IV, 1 ; TJ *Pesahim* VI, 1 ; TB *Pesahim* 66a). Il est possible que les sacerdotaux / synagogaux et les rabbiniques se soient distingués à travers deux calendriers : l'un commençant au mois de Nisan pour les premiers, l'autre au mois de Tishri pour les seconds – hypothèse qui est encore à explorer, mais qui apparaît documentée dans le judaïsme en Arabie aux Ve-VIe siècles qui est plus de type sacerdotal et synagogal que de type rabbinique[82].

On laisse de côté ici un calendrier lunaire de 354 jours, attesté dans certains manuscrits qumrâniens, notamment 4Q319-320, qui pourrait bien n'avoir été que théorique.

Les chrétiens ont utilisé au début à la fois un calendrier sacerdotal de type ancien (qu'on retrouve dans la tradition johannique) et un calendrier sacerdotal de type récent (qu'on retrouve dans la tradition synoptique)[83], ce n'est qu'ensuite qu'ils sont passés à un calendrier luni-solaire romain (de 365 jours). Ce changement a provoqué des réactions au sujet de la date de la fête de Pâque, qui les a partagés entre les communautés l'ayant accepté et celles l'ayant refusé. Les premières, dites « romaines », ont suivi un calendrier luni-solaire de type romain, la commémorant un dimanche à une date variable comprise entre le 22 mars et le 25 avril. Les secondes, dites « quartodécimanes », ont continué à suivre, au moins jusqu'au IVe siècle, un calendrier luni-solaire de type judéen, la célébrant le 14 Nisan en même temps apparemment que les Judéens non chrétiens. Ce qui a provoqué, au moins dès la fin du IIe siècle, une controverse dite pascale[84].

Observons pour clore ces brèves notules, qui demanderaient de plus amples développements, que, dans le calendrier sacerdotal ancien, l'année commence le mercredi, c'est-à-dire le quatrième jour de la Création (portant sur les luminaires) : il en va sans doute de même pour le jour de la fête de Pâque. C'est cette tradition liturgique de laquelle sembleraient avoir dépendu Jésus et ses disciples lorsqu'ils célèbrent la Pâque.

Ces éléments calendaires corroborent une possible appartenance sacerdotale de Jésus de sa famille.

[82] À ce sujet, voir C.J. Robin, 'Un nouveau regard sur Ma'add durant le *siècle de Kinda* (440-540 é. chr.) – écriture, langue, ère et calendrier' (à paraître).

[83] Voir A. Jaubert, 'Les séances du Sanhédrin et les récits de la Passion', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 166 (1964), 143-69 et 167 (1965), 1-33 ; A. Jaubert, 'Le mercredi où Jésus fut livré', *New Testament Studies* 14 (1967), 145-64.

[84] Voir B. Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartadecimaner* (Gütersloh, 1953). Voir aussi P. Nautin, *Lettres et écrivains chrétiens des IIe et IIIe siècles* (Paris, 1961), 65-104. Voir encore M. Richard, 'La Question pascale au IIe siècle', *L'orient syrien* 6 (1961), 179-212.

IV. Conclusion

Jésus a-t-il donc appartenu à la tribu ou à la classe des prêtres de son peuple ? En se fondant sur les quelques éléments mis en avant dans cette recherche, qui reposent sur des documents dont la compréhension, il faut le reconnaître, n'est pas toujours facile, il est toutefois possible d'avancer que la question semble pouvoir se poser réellement d'un point de vue historique.

Affirmer que Jésus est d'ascendance sacerdotale, tout au moins par sa mère, ne signifie nullement qu'il ait été un desservant au temple de Jérusalem : en effet, appartenir à la tribu de Lévi ne donne pas nécessairement accès au service du sanctuaire (les *maḥlakot* ou *mishmarot*), ni à ses membres résidant en Palestine, ni à ses membres séjournant en Diaspora. On sait aussi que très peu de familles de prêtres habitent la Galilée au Ier siècle et que la majorité des Judéens de cette région ne connaissent même pas la tradition de leur affecter la dîme (M *Nedarim* II, 4).

Nonobstant des difficultés qui sont certaines, il n'en demeure pas moins que de nombreux indices permettent de le penser, comme on peut le constater non seulement dans l'*Évangile selon Jean*, mais aussi dans l'*Épître aux Hébreux* ou dans l'*Apocalypse de Jean* ainsi que dans d'autres textes comme le papyrus Oxyrhynchos 840.

C'est en tout cas une hypothèse qu'il conviendrait sans doute d'envisager et d'explorer bien plus en avant que cela n'a été fait ici, d'autant qu'elle permettrait aussi de mieux comprendre les intérêts de Jésus pour le temple de Jérusalem[85], en relation avec sa pureté qu'il considère comme compromise à cause des agissements des autorités sacerdotales qui en ont la charge : comme c'est, par exemple, le cas dans l'épisode des marchands et changeurs du sanctuaire (*Mc* 11:15-9 // *Mt* 21:10-7 // *Lc* 19:45-8 // *Jn* 2:13-6), qui, selon lui, le souillent par leurs activités mercantiles[86]. Ainsi, la plupart des préoccupations de Jésus à l'égard du temple (notamment son annonce sur la destruction du sanctuaire [*Mc* 13:1-4 // *Mt* 24:1-3 // *Lc* 21:5-7]) pourrait bien trouver leurs origines dans le fait qu'il est lui-même d'ascendance sacerdotale – ces récits datent dans le meilleur des cas des années 60, mais cela n'empêche pas de considérer

[85] À ce sujet, voir J.H. Charlesworth (éd.), *Jesus and Temple. Textual and Archaeological Explorations* (Minneapolis/Minnesota, 2014). Voir aussi J.H. Charlesworth, 'Jesus and the Temple', dans J.H. Charlesworth (éd.), *Jesus and Temple* (2014), 145-81.

[86] À ce sujet, voir C. Focant, 'La contestation de Jésus au Temple. Un jugement ?', dans C. Focant (éd.), *Quelle Maison pour Dieu ?* (Paris, 2003), 255-83 (= C. Focant, *Marc, un évangile étonnant. Recueil d'essais* [Louvain, Paris, Dudley/Massachusetts, 2006], 293-304). Voir aussi E. Lupieri, 'Fragments of the Historical Jesus? A Reading of Mark 11,11-[26]', *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 28 (2011), 289-311. Voir encore A. Reinhart, 'The Temple Cleansing and the Death of Jesus', dans C.S. Ehrlich, A. Runesson et E. Schuller (éd.), *Purity, Holiness, and Identity in Judaism and Christianity in Memory of Susan Haber* (Tübingen, 2013), 100-11.

qu'ils rapportent des informations plus ou moins historiques sur Jésus et sa pensée[87].

Ce qui permettrait de ne plus voir dans les propos de Jésus prononcés à l'égard du temple une quelconque opposition comme l'ont fait la plupart des exégètes depuis Walter Bauer en 1927[88] jusqu'à Nicholas Perrin en 2010[89], en passant par John D. Crossan et Ed P. Sanders dont les travaux fondateurs sont bien connus. Pour une perspective plus positive et conforme aux normes de la culture judéenne de l'époque, on peut se reporter maintenant aux travaux de James H. Charlesworth[90].

Comment ne pas souligner avec Harold W. Attridge que Jésus n'a sans doute jamais envisagé que le temple puisse être remplacé par la communauté nouvelle qu'il fonde avant sa mort, ni même qu'à terme un « troisième temple », d'origine céleste, à l'instar de celui décrit dans l'*Apocalypse des Animaux* (*I Hénoch* 90, 28-36), va remplacer l'édifice existant – précisant que ce sont ses disciples, avant comme après la destruction du temple de Jérusalem en 70, qui vont essayer de répondre à un traumatisme causé par une absence de plus en plus certaine ou définitive[91].

Il est certain en tout cas que Jean le Baptiste, cousin de Jésus par sa mère, a appartenu à la classe ou à la tribu sacerdotale (ses parents en relevant l'un et l'autre [Élizabeth et Zacharie de la classe sacerdotale, *Lc* 1:5, celle d'Abia, la 8e des 24 classes, pour son père]), ce qui ne l'a nullement empêché d'être en opposition au temple et à ses sacrifices de sang et de feu, proclamant une immersion pour la rémission des péchés – une opposition qui va le conduire à être exécuté sur ordre d'Hérode Antipas, responsable « politique » du sanctuaire[92].

De nouvelles pistes de recherche pourraient ainsi s'ouvrir si l'on acceptait d'envisager cet aspect de la figure de Jésus et des membres de sa famille, et en particulier celle de son « frère » Jacques le Juste, peu importe la manière dont on accepte de concevoir cette parenté qu'elle soit naturelle ou métaphorique.

Serait-il vraiment si étonnant que Jésus ait été un prêtre ou considéré comme tel par ses premiers disciples ? Pas vraiment, surtout quand on sait que la plupart des personnages importants de son époque sont issus de la classe ou de la tribu sacerdotale, la seule, apparemment (la question est des plus discutées

[87] À ce sujet, voir J. Dupont, *Les trois apocalypses synoptiques. Marc 13 ; Matthieu 24-25 ; Luc 21* (Paris, 1985), 9-47.

[88] W. Bauer, 'Jesus der Galiläer', dans *Festgabe für Adolf Jülicher zum 70. Geburtstag, 26. Januar 1927* (Tübingen, 1927), 16-34.

[89] N. Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids/Michigan, 2010).

[90] J.H. Charlesworth, 'Jesus and the Temple' (2014), 145-81 ; 'The Temple and Jesus' Followers', dans J.H. Charlesworth (éd.), *Jesus and Temple* (2014), 183-212.

[91] H.W. Attridge, 'The Temple and Jesus the High Priest in the New Testament', dans J.H. Charlesworth (éd.), *Jesus and Temple* (2014), 213-38.

[92] Voir M. Goguel, *Au seuil de l'Évangile, Jean Baptiste* (Paris, 1928). Voir aussi J. Schmitt, 'Le milieu baptiste de Jean le Précurseur', dans J.-E. Ménard (éd.), *Exégèse biblique et judaïsme* (Strasbourg, 1973), 237-53.

tellement on est dépendant des conceptions issues de la Modernité des XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles), qui soit réellement détentrice du savoir et du pouvoir, comme c'est, par exemple, le cas avec Flavius Josèphe, qui est fier de son appartenance sacerdotale et surtout de relever de la première des vingt-quatre *mishmarot* (*Autobiographie* I, 2).

Il est certain en revanche que Jésus n'a pas été grand-prêtre, comme veulent le faire croire certaines sources apologétiques chrétiennes qui filent plutôt, sur ce point, la métaphore à des fins de diffusion du message évangélique en milieu judéen. Mais on peut cependant se demander que, si leurs auteurs en sont arrivés à cette conclusion, c'est peut-être qu'ils savent déjà que leur Maître est un membre de la classe ou de la tribu sacerdotale.

Cette idée, comme on l'a vue, n'a pas effrayé les Pères de l'Église dont certains, à l'exemple de Théodoret de Cyr, l'ont reprise.

Terminons en observant qu'il faut parfois accepter ce que disent les sources, même si cela est dérangeant pour les esprits modernes, et ne les contester, en bonne méthode historique, que si l'on dispose de la preuve du contraire.

Post scriptum

Dans le Coran, Marie, la mère de Jésus, est la sœur d'Aaron (Sourate 19, 28) et la fille d'ʿImrān (Amram, le père d'Aaron et de Moïse dans la Bible) (Sourate 66, 12). L'ascendance aaronide de Marie est donc affirmée dans un texte qui n'est pas chrétien, même si une influence chrétienne d'origine judéenne n'est pas à exclure[93]. Il en va de même pour Jésus qui est plus rattaché à la descendance d'Aaron qu'à celle de David, l'une, comme on l'a vu, n'excluant pas l'autre.

[93] Voir P. Crone, 'Jewish-Christianity and the Qur'an (Part Two)', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 75 (2016), 1-21, spécialement 11-4.

The So-Called *Catena in Marcum* of Victor of Antioch: Throwing Light on *Mark* with a Not-So-Little Help from *Matthew* and *Luke*

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ABSTRACT

The essay offers a critical assessment of W. Lamb's recent translation of the so-called *Commentary on Mark* that goes under the name of Victor of Antioch, focusing on the issue of identifying the sources of the section on *Mark* 14:22-31 and the way they are used by the compiler of the catena.

The name of Victor of Antioch usually does not ring a bell, not even in a company of Patristic scholars.[1] The man is mentioned in part of the textual tradition of a work that is sometimes still referred to as the first and only commentary on *Mark* from ancient Christian literature, but actually is a catena compiled on the basis of commentaries and homilies on *Matthew* and *Luke*. Its authorship remains debated: a good deal of the manuscripts just leaves it open, while some others have linked the work to other, more famous figures, such as Cyril of Alexandria and, occasionally, Origen. It does not help Victor that nothing else is known about the man – no place, no date, no identity, though 'a Victor' pops up in some catenae on *Luke*. In the following I will briefly touch upon three questions: how to look at the work as a whole; identifying its sources; and the compilation method used in putting together the catena.

1. The work is available in four editions[2] and a Latin translation that antedates the earliest edition by about a century,[3] none of which comes even close

[1] See my contributions to previous Oxford conferences: J. Verheyden, 'Before Embarking on an Adventure: Some Preliminary Remarks on Writing the NTP Commentary on the *Gospel of Mark*', *SP* 44 (2010), 145-56; *id*., 'A Puzzling Chapter in the Reception History of the Gospels: Victor of Antioch and his So-called "Commentary on Mark"', *SP* 63 (2013), 17-27.

[2] Petrus Possinus, *Catena Graecorum Patrum in Evangelium secundum Marcum* (Rome, 1673); Christian Friedrich Matthaei, *Βίκτωρος Πρεσβυτέρου Ἀντιοχείας καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ἐξήγησις εἰς τὸ κατὰ Μάρκον ἅγιον εὐαγγέλιον*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1775); John Anthony Cramer, *Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum*, I (Oxford, 1844); and Samuel Markfi, *Codex Graecus Quattuor Evangeliorum e Bibliotheca Universitatis Pestinensis* (Pest, 1860).

[3] Theodore Peltanus, *Victoris Antiocheni in Marcum, et Titi Bostrorum Episcopi in Evangelium Lucae commentarii; ante hac quidem nunquam in lucem editi, nunc vero studio et opera Theodori Peltani luce simul et Latinitate donati* (Ingolstadt, 1580).

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to modern standards of what should be a critical edition. Cramer, who defended Cyril's authorship on the basis of the manuscript attestations, based his edition, the easiest accessible one of the four, on a handful of manuscripts only (six in total) and produced an edition full of printing mistakes (the result of sloppy copying of the text?). Twenty-five years later Dean Burgeon drew a list of more than fifty manuscripts.[4] The days of Cramer and Burgeon are long gone, and so is their hypothesis that there must have been one 'Urtext' that could, in their opinion, rather easily be recovered from the tradition.

Robert Devreesse's pioneering article on Greek exegetical catenae brought about a significant change in the study of the genre.[5] Devreesse argued that catenae are not only a treasure-hold for Patristic material, but also offer some of the best examples of the principles of Greek Patristic and Byzantine exegesis, even if the excerpts that can be traced in them cannot always be taken at face value for what the original author meant to say, because these excerpts have often been condensed or adapted. But perhaps most important was his insight that catenae (often) are works in progress, put together by many hands and open for revision and addition. Devreesse even ventured a reconstruction of the composition history of the *Catena in Marcum* that is as appealing as it must remain hypothetical, until perhaps some more detailed work has been done along the lines laid out by him. But that catenae in general are complex compositions is now almost a given.

Joseph Reuss, a giant in catenae studies and the last to have paid attention to the Victor Catena for seventy years, picked up on a suggestion by Hermann von Soden who had distinguished three recensions, the first, the oldest and the one on which the two others relied, and the third of which he had identified with the manuscript tradition used, respectively, by Cramer and Matthaei.[6] Reuss reduced the three to two and inverted the order, showing that Matthaei's tradition is often the better or more reliable one and therefore probably the first, while the shortest and the one that did not yet identify the excerpts and also offered these in an order that differs from that of the second.

After Reuss, work on the *Catena in Marcum* had been discontinued for seventy years until in 2012 William R.S. Lamb published an English translation of it (the first one) according to Cramer's text.[7] The translation is preceded by a monograph-like introduction of some 200 pages that not only traces the history

[4] J.W. Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to St. Mark* (Oxford, London, 1871), 278-87.

[5] 'Chaînes exégétiques grecques', in *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément* 1 (Paris, 1928), 1084-233, 1175-81.

[6] *Matthäus-, Markus- und Johannes-Katenen nach den handschriftlichen Quellen untersucht*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 18,4-5 (Münster, 1941), 118-41.

[7] *The* Catena in Marcum. *A Byzantine Anthology of Early Commentary on Mark*, Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 6 (Leiden, 2012).

of research but also discusses such matters as the way Greek Patristic authors dealt with issues of tensions and contradictions in the gospel narratives, the historical context of the *Catena*, arguing that it avoids disputed Chalcedonian terminology and rather is to be situated in the wake of attempts at settling tensions in the decades following the council, and even broader, the principles of the catena tradition and the influence this particular *Catena* had on later authors. Lamb's book has rightly been criticised on a number of points, including sloppiness and inaccuracies.[8] Yet it is not without its merits, not in the least because of the translation it offers of Cramer's edition, which serves a need, if only because it opens this work to a larger public, but also for the efforts that have been done to go beyond earlier attempts at identifying the authors of the excerpts, and because it picks up on Reuss' recension theory, developing this, in line with the work done by Gilles Dorival on the *Psalms* catenae, into the concept of 'the open book'.[9] To some, this may look like introducing plain chaos into research, but it actually probably better reflects the complexities of the manuscript tradition, including some of the more peculiar phenomena such as singular attestations of excerpts, certain inversions of order and arrangement, and some odd ways to handle the excerpts that are occasionally met. It all sounds perhaps less comfortable than when (one thinks) one is reconstructing 'the original', but maybe some comfort can be found in the knowledge that one is most probably closer to the truth.

2. The editors of the *Catena* mentioned above had not really made great efforts in trying to identify the anonymous excerpts. Cramer's edition only contains a list of those authors who occasionally are mentioned by name in some of the excerpts, without bothering too much whether or not the passage was directly taken from their work. In an article published in *JTS* in 1918, Harold Smith produced a list of identifiable passages that illustrated how much of the material was taken from John Chrysostom's *Homilies on Matthew*.[10] One of the merits of Lamb's work is that he has added some more passages, often simply by checking against Reuss' edition of excerpts from commentaries and homilies on *Matthew* and *Luke* that are preserved in the wider catena tradition. It does not really change the overall picture with regard to the impact of Chrysostom in shaping the *Catena on Mark*. But a closer look at two randomly chosen passages from Lamb's notes shows that some more work has to be done, or to be done more accurately. The following gives a comparison between what can be read in Lamb for *Mark* 14:22-5, the pericope of The Last Supper,

[8] See the detailed (and very critical) review of R. Ceulemans in *ETL* 91 (2015), 745-9.

[9] W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 58-64. See G. Dorival, *Les chaînes exégétiques grecques sur les Psaumes: Contribution à l'étude d'une forme littéraire*, 1, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense. Études et Documents 43 (Leuven, 1986), 1-98 ('Comment écrire l'histoire des chaînes').

[10] 'The Sources of Victor of Antioch's Commentary on Mark', *JTS* 19 (1917-18), 350-70.

and 14:26-31, and what a more detailed reference system should probably look like:[11]

Legenda:
Cramer, pp. 422-26 (+ lines); John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, 82, PG 58, 737ff (+ lines); Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke*, PG 72, 909 and 912 (+ lines); other authors are cited according to J. Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche. Aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben*, TU 61 (Berlin, 1957).
line references: italic: adapted or partially missing in the *Catena*; ( ): completely missing. Following // : corrections or additions to Lamb's presentation.

422.6-11 = lemma *Mark* 14:22-24
422.12-18 = extract Chrysostom, 737.35-48 [= Cramer 422.8-20] // 737.*8*-14.(14-18).18-20
422.18-22 = extract Apollinaris, *Fragmenta in Matt*. Fr. 133.1-3 (Reuss, 46) // 133.1-3.(4-8)
422.22-423.5
423.6-8 = extract Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Fragmenta in Matt*. Fr. 106.3-5 (Reuss, 134) // 134.(1-3).3-5.(5-6)
423.8-17 = extract Cyril, 909.25-39 // 909.25-29.(29-30).30-39
423.17-29 = extract Cyril, *CommMatt* Fr. 289.12-22 (Reuss, 255) // 289.(1-12).12-19.(+ Cramer 423.25-27).19-22; 289.12-22 = 912.3-16.(16-17).17-19
423.30-33 // = extract Apollinaris, *Fragmenta in Matt*. Fr. 134.*1-3*.(4-16) (Reuss, 46-47)
423.34-424.2 = lemma *Mark* 14:25
424.3-20 // 13-20 = Chrysostom, 737.31-738.6.*6-7*.7-9
424.20-23 = extract Chrysostom, 739.58-740.2
424.24 = lemma *Mark* 14:26
424.25-29 = extract Chrysostom, 740.48-58 // 740.*18*.19-23.*23-24*
424.30-425.3 = lemma *Mark* 14:27-28
425.4-6
425.6-9 = extract Chrysostom, 740.18-23 // 740.48-50.(50-57).57-58
425.10-15 = lemma *Mark* 14:28-31
425.16-426.6 = extract Chrysostom, 741.1-742.51 // 741.(1-2).*2-3*.(3-4).4-7.(7-13).13-14.(15-18).18-19.(20-742.12).12-14.(14-20).20-24.(25-27).27.(28-32).32-33.(33-42).43.(44-47).47-52

Many of the thirteen sections in which the two pericopes are here divided (not counting the five that consist of the lemmas reproducing *Mark's* text) should either be completed, corrected, or refined. The latter intervention is perhaps less important, but it certainly is helpful to remind or indicate that the compiler of the catena hardly ever reproduces larger excerpts *in toto*. In most instances some lines are left out (lines in parentheses), and a few others are reproduced rather loosely (italics). For sections 424.25-9 and 425.6-9 Lamb has

[11] See W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 420-6 (Lamb also gives the pagination of Cramer in the margin).

simply inverted the references.[12] Section 423.17-29 has a parallel on Cyril's name in the catena tradition on *Matthew*, but the same passage also occurs in Cyril's *Commentary on Luke*.[13] In two instances Lamb has missed the parallel (423.30-3; 424.13-20).

3. The example above not only shows some deficiencies in Lamb's annotations, but also reveals that a more detailed presentation is needed in order possibly to make sense of the procedures of excerpting the compiler(s) has/have been using, that is, if any such procedure can be discovered at all. So here is a short comment on some aspects of the passages just presented.

The first comment is taken from the opening lines of Chrysostom's homily on *Matthew* 26:26-8. Ignoring, as a rule, the more obvious mistakes in the text of Cramer (μετασχών for μετέχων), a comparison shows that the compiler has left out the homilist's emotional outcry about the traitor (βαβαί, πόση ἡ πήρωσις τοῦ προδότου),[14] which works well in a homily but quite rightly is felt rather out of place here. He has replaced it with a more 'academic' ὁ μέν φησιν, by which he evidently means *Mark*, not Chrysostom, all while introducing the label traitor into his opening phrase (ὁ αὐτὸς ὁ προδότης). The reference to the traitor (Chrysostom has προδότης, as in *Luke* 6:16) makes sense at this point as it allows the homilist and the audience to pick up on the previous homily that had dealt with *Matthew* 26:17-25 and had paid quite some attention to the betrayal. It also makes sense in the catena, even though the compiler had dealt with this previous passage much more succinctly and without even mentioning Judas by name (Cramer, 421-2).

Like Chrysostom, the compiler is interested in describing the effect, or rather lack of effect, Judas' partaking in the meal has on his intentions as well as on the efficacy of the meal itself. For Judas this is expressed twice in this same opening phrase (ἔμεινεν ὁ αὐτός ... οὐ μετεβάλλετο). For the other aspect this is formulated a bit cryptically (οὐ τοῦ σώματος καταφρονῶν).[15] It introduces a motif that as such is not developed in the gospels, not even in *Luke* who is cited just before (22:3), and may have been chosen primarily for its rhetorical effect, οὐ τοῦ σώματος καταφρονῶν, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀναισχυντίας λοιπὸν τοῦ προδότου

[12] See *ibid*. 424 n. 90 and 425 n. 94.

[13] *Ibid*. 422, nn. 68 and 70.

[14] While the noun makes sense, though it should probably better not be translated as 'blindness' as this qualification is missing (ctr. the translation in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* [NPNF], 491) but kept rather more generally ('maimed'), it is not used in the gospels for Judas. It could have been chosen here because it is almost identical in form to πώρωσις which is a beloved topic of *Mark* in relation to the disciples as a group (6:52; 8:17; in 3:5 also for the Pharisees) that is met also in *John* 12:40 with reference to Jesus' Jewish opponents and in combination with blinding the eyes in the free rendering of *Isaiah* 6:10.

[15] I take the phrase to mean that Judas' betrayal did not undo the effect of eating from Jesus' body; see also NPNF, 491: 'not as despising the Lord's body'.

καταγελῶν.[16] The motif of Judas' shamelessness may echo Jesus' words to his disciples in *Mark* 8:38 par. *Luke* 9:26 on the condition of the true disciple and the dangers of denying Jesus, which follows right upon the first passion prediction that had ended so dramatically in *Mark* 8:33 (par. *Matthew*, but diff. *Luke*) with Jesus rebuking Peter and calling him Satan. The compiler follows Chrysostom also here, but quickly cuts short the digression by leaving out the second half in which the homilist then tries to explain how all this increased Judas' sin. There is no reason to think that he skipped this part by accident.

He picks up again a couple of lines down with the slightly obscure direct address to the hearers/readers pointing out that Jesus did not prevent Judas from leaving, even though he knew what would come from it, 'in order that you might learn that he leaves untold none of the things which pertain to correction'. The compiler breaks off again and misses out on Chrysostom's explanation of the phrase, arguing that Jesus had not missed an opportunity to warn Judas, and even continued to do so after the latter had left, but that it was all to no avail. Jesus is then also said to concentrate his efforts on trying to explain the meaning of his passion and death to his disciples, in order that they might be prepared for it, for knowing how they reacted to it when this happened, how should one imagine their reaction would have been if they had never been informed of this in advance, as Chrysostom concludes this passage with a rhetorical question. Nothing of this in the catena, which makes the address to the reader a bit obscure.

Chrysostom then moves to the Last Supper itself. The compiler, however, still stays with Judas and cites 'another voice', without naming the source (ἄλλος δέ φασιν), that presents a different take on the issue of Judas' partaking in the meal. The comment comes from Apollinaris of Laodicea, who argues, with reference to *John* 13:27-30, that the traitor had left before Jesus began to explain the real meaning of the Pascha meal they are sharing, because Jesus would just not have allowed him to be introduced in this. The reader will note the periphrastic description of both the Eucharist (τῆς σωτηρίας κοινωνίας τὸν τύπον) and the traitor (ὁ τῆς χριστοκτονίας ὑπηρέτης) that adds even more weight to an already dramatic scene. The compiler forgoes the second half of Apollinaris' comment which basically consists of a warning to the reader/hearer to behave likewise with evildoers in the group followed by a paraphrase of *John* 13:27.30.

The reader may have appreciated the similarity in phrasing towards the end:

ὁ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐκώλυσεν αὐτόν, καί τοι πάντα εἰδώς, ἵνα μάθῃς... (Chrysostom)
καίτοι τἄλλα πάντα ἤνεγκεν ὁ Κύριος· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο οὐκέτι συνεχωρεῖτο (Apollinaris)

[16] Chrysostom seems to have formulated it slightly differently, and more elegantly: οὐ τοῦ σώματος καταφρονῶν τοῦ Δεσποτικοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀναισχυντίας καταγελῶν τοῦ προδότου λοιπόν.

But s/he must already have realised that these are not just 'two opinions'. They differ amongst each other, and they point to a tension or contrast in the gospel accounts. The compiler does not hide this, and takes position in what follows. This passage is the first and longest of three sections that so far have not yet been identified. It reads like a treatise on the meaning of the Eucharist and the way to perform it, which should inspire the participants to be grateful for the gifts that come from the Passion (μάθωσιν ὡς μεγάλα ἀληθῶς καὶ πάσης εὐχαριστίας ἄξια τὰ διὰ τοῦ πάθους οἰκονομηθέντα τοῦ Χριστοῦ; compare ἵνα μάθῃς in the excerpt from Chrysostom) that has brought about 'common salvation' and forgiveness of sins (ἐπὶ κοινῇ τῇ πάντων σωτηρίᾳ τε καὶ ἀφέσει τῶν ἡμαρτημένων αὐτοῖς). It is not explicitly said that Judas has been denied salvation and forgiveness, though that is the implication of his absence, but he can in any case not be instructed in the mysteries of the Eucharistic meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. Going on the opening words of this section, that is most probably how the compiler sees and formulates it: 'But because through these things he handed on to the disciples how they should perform the mystery of the new covenant, I suppose no one would say differently' (ὅτι δὲ διὰ τούτων παρέδωκε τοῖς μαθηταῖς, ὅπως ἐπιτελεῖν αὐτοὺς προσῆκε τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης τὸ μυστήριον, οἶμαι μηδένα ἂν ἑτέρως εἰπεῖν). It is not an open criticism of Chrysostom, but it comes close. Of the two, Apollinaris (and John the evangelist) seems to be closer to the truth in presenting and interpreting Judas' behaviour.

The compiler adds a third voice, again anonymously, but this one does no longer deal with the betrayal and its effects and consequences. It is Theodore of Mopsuestia speaking and his interest is in asserting that the Eucharist is not about physical bread and wine, nor are these a mere symbol, but about believing that they are truly the body and blood of Christ. It represents the better part of an excerpt that is preserved in the catenae. The compiler leaves out (or did not know) the opening line emphasising that Jesus did not speak of a symbol in this context (εἰκότως οὐκ εἶπεν τοῦτό ἐστιν σύμβολον τοῦ σώματος μου κτλ.) and the concluding phrase that basically repeats this (ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς..., ὧν δὴ καὶ τὰ σύμβολα πληρουμένοις). The omission is puzzling, as is the purpose of the excerpt. In the unidentifiable section (assuming it is an excerpt and not from the pen of the compiler) one reads the word σύμβολον (see ὧν δὴ σύμβολα ταῦτα ἐπιτελεῖσθαι παρέδωκεν αὐτοῖς), though it is not argued that the bread and wine are a mere 'symbol', but rather emphasized that those partaking in the Eucharist rightly think they are sharing the body and blood of Christ (see νομίζειν μεταλαμβάνειν and ἡγεῖσθαι). If it were the compiler's intention to counter a 'symbolic' understanding, he should better have included the first part of Theodore's comment, just to make things clear. So perhaps the compiler only wished to rephrase, with the help of yet another authority, what he considers to be the true interpretation of the Eucharistic meal. The ἄλλως with which he introduces the fragment from Theodore is then probably to be

taken in a weak sense, something like, 'Or to put it differently'. It might explain why he left out the relative phrase at the end, which after all looks quite similar to the one in the unidentifiable section and does not really bring anything new.

Anyhow, the excerpt from Theodore offers a further opportunity to step away from the betrayal issue and to focus on the correct understanding of what the meal is about, hence to the exegesis of *Mark* 14:22-4 itself – or so one would expect. There follow three excerpts, from two sources, none of which are identified or even somehow distinguished from one another. First the compiler cites two large fragments from Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on *Luke* 22:19-20 that together form the better part of the second half of this section in Cyril, but do not follow directly upon each other. Throughout, Cyril's comment is dominated by the motif of the 'life-giving' Christ. The compiler drops or ignores the first half and picks in at the point where Cyril illustrates this dimension of Jesus' flesh from a long citation of *John* 6:47-8.51.53. This is again quite remote from *Mark's* text (and actually also from *Luke*'s), but further develops the motif of the salvific function of the Eucharistic meal that had been addressed in the unidentifiable section, though with a twist, for now reference is made to Jesus' 'flesh' (σάρξ) and no longer to his 'body' (σῶμα), which is well in line with Johannine theology. The compiler does not seem to care much about the switch or any comments it might raise. He reproduces the passage quite literally, except for a slight amendment at the beginning (ὁ γὰρ for Cyril's οὐκοῦν), a mere καί instead of Cyril's καὶ πάλιν to separate the citation of 6:47-8 from that of 6:51.53, the omission of v. 51a, the addition of ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς at the end of this same verse, and the abbreviated ποιοῦντες for Cyril's 'eating and drinking'. The compiler drops the address to the unbeliever that follows (as he had done with the line immediately preceding the excerpt), as well as the dogmatic reflections that Cyril connects with it (some 15 lines in PG). He picks up again somewhat further in a rather smooth way to continue the motif of the life-giving aspects of the Eucharist which is now connected with the activity of the Spirit and to end with an exhortation to trust and believe in the truth of Jesus' words in this respect. The compiler reproduces the passage from Cyril in almost identical words, except for a couple of minor differences that cannot be decided because they may have been caused by the editors, but do not affect the tone of the passage (the catena lacks the word ἐναργῶς after λέγοντος and the citation of elements from *Mark* 14:22.24 that is not really needed here). One will note the play on 'flesh' and 'body' of Christ in the switch from τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σαρκός to τὸ σῶμα τῆς ζωῆς. The same passage from Cyril is also found in the catena tradition on *Matthew*. It occurs there as the second half of a longer excerpt, the first part of which is a composite of Cyril's opening phrase on *Luke* 22:19 (ll. 1-3), a couple of lines that can be compared to a catena fragment on *Matthew* 26:26-8 attributed to Theodore of Heracleia (ll. 9-13), with some other material in between, while the part that is

parallel to the one in the *Catena on Mark* lacks a couple of lines, probably by accident (see the omission from τῆς ἑαυτοῦ // σαρκός... // ζωῆς), which would indicate that the compiler did not directly rely on this version.

The compiler concludes his comment on *Mark* 14:22-4 with a short note on the phrase 'for many', which he interprets with reference to *Romans* 5:19 that has a close parallel in an excerpt from Apollinaris and is found there as the opening lines of a much longer passage (16 lines). He does not really alter the text, but has identified the reference to Paul. He omits the rest of Apollinaris' comment (if he knew this fragment with its context), maybe because it brings in references to *Matthew* 6:11 and *John* 6:51, the latter of which had already been cited just before, while the former is not really to the point.

The commentary on *Mark* 14:25.26-31 largely depends on Chrysostom (five excerpts) who is cited extensively, though again while leaving out some sections, and not always for an obvious reason. I present this here in some detail. Instead, for my last comment, I wish to draw attention to the commentary on *Mark* 14:25. It opens with an unidentifiable passage (there is only one other, much shorter, such passage in this latter part: 424.4-6) that is followed by two excerpts from Chrysostom. The transition from the unidentifiable one to the two from Chrysostom is not particularly highlighted, but there is a marked difference between them. The opening passage picks up on each of the elements in v. 25b, pointing out the difference between *Mark*'s text ('Kingdom of God') and *Matthew*'s ('of my Father') and arguing that the Kingdom should be identified with the resurrection (βασιλείαν δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ὠνόμασε τὴν ἀνάστασιν), that καινόν ('anew') refers to a new way of eating in the time after the resurrection (τουτέστι καινῶς μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν), and that Jesus' statement about abstaining from drink and food (which is cited in a form that is different from both *Mark*'s and *Matthew*'s and does not pay attention to *Mark*'s οὐκέτι, but see below) should be taken as proof that not only the resurrection but also the passion was near. The fact that *Matthew*'s 'of my Father' is signalled out as a variant does not in itself mean that the excerpt comes from a commentary on *Mark*. It may just have been adapted by the compiler in light of his purpose of commenting on *Mark*, making his version the 'base text'. One will also note the interest for explaining why Jesus wished to eat and drink with his disciples – ὥστε δὴ μείζονα καὶ ἀληθεστέραν αὐτοῖς τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐγγενέσθαι τὴν πίστιν. There is a pedagogical aspect to it that is also reflected in the gospel accounts of the Supper (see also below).

The first excerpt from Chrysostom, on the other hand, addresses a different question – why Jesus installed the Eucharist and instructed the disciples about its meaning at the Passover meal (424.13-20). The answer follows right at the beginning and it is the obvious one: 'So that you may learn from all sides that he is also the law giver of the Old [Covenant], and the things [in the New Covenant] are foreshadowed in the Old'. The importance of the latter is not

belittled; on the contrary, it is 'a type (that) adds (to the) truth', as Chrysostom formulates it (διὰ τοι τοῦτο ἔνθα ὁ τύπος τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐπετίθει). The question is of course intrinsically linked to the gospel text (see διαθήκη in v. 24), but it is not as such reflected upon in this same elaborate way by any of the evangelists. In Chrysostom, it was apparently separated from the preceding by repeating part of *Mark* 14:22a. It is difficult to say in how far it may have played a role, but it should be noted that the second clause of this section begins in the same way as the last one of the previous excerpt from Chrysostom (ἵνα μάθῃς). The excerpt breaks off rather randomly and in the midst of a phrase (the catena lacks καὶ χρηστὰς κἀντεῦθεν ὑποτείνων τὰς ἐλπίδας) leaving out the rest of the comment on the installation of a new covenant.

The second excerpt is much shorter (424.20-3) and comes from further down in the homily (1 full column in PG). It is picked out from a long passage in which Chrysostom once more mentions the motif of the disciples' confusion, which he had brought up before, and then continues to explain the real reason why Jesus ate and drank after the resurrection – not because he needed any, but to prove its reality to those in need of such a proof, thereby also arguing against such groups that would deny the resurrection or use water at the Eucharist. The compiler is not at all interested in the controversies and foregoes all of it, except for this one short phrase. It was probably chosen because it picks up again on the interpretation of καινόν that is now explained in more detail and more precisely: 'anew' means 'in a strange way', as Jesus' body will then no longer be in need of earthly food (Τί δέ ἐστι καινόν; τούτεστι ξέννον, οὐ σῶμα μαθητὸν ἔχων, ἀλλ' ἀθάνατον λοιπὸν καὶ ἄφθαρτον, καὶ μὴ δεόμενον τροφῆς). It makes for a nice inclusion, with an additional explanation on top of this.

The ending of the unidentifiable passage may need one further comment. Cramer reads it as follows,

τὸ οὖν, οὐ μὴ πίω αὐτὸ τοῦ λοιποῦ ἕως τότε, δεικνύντος ἦν οὐ τὴν ἀνάστασιν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ πάθους τὴν ἐγγύτητα. εἴπερ δὴ οὐκέτι καιρὸν ἕξει τροφῆς αὐτοῖς κοινωνῆσαι καὶ πότου.

There is a variant reading ἐπειδή for εἴπερ δή, which is preferred by Lamb who also suggests replacing the full stop after ἐγγύτητα with a comma. Both corrections make better sense. One will note that the citation from the gospel text does not agree with any of the three gospels, but as *Mark*'s οὐκέτι shows up right after one is perhaps entitled to call it 'a paraphrase of Mark 14.25'.[17]

But maybe more remarkable is the phrase τοῦ πάθους τὴν ἐγγύτητα. The noun ἐγγύτης does not occur in the NT, and nor does πάθος for referring to

[17] W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 423 n. 81.

Jesus' passion (see *Rom*. 1:26; *Col*. 3:5; 1*Thess*. 4:5: always with the negative connotation of passions or lust). The latter is attested, in the singular and with the same meaning as here, by several second-century authors starting with Ignatius and then also by later authors. The former is not a very common word. TLG notes some 300 attestations, the majority of which are from (late) Byzantine authors. It seems to have been used especially by scientific authors, not only geographers but also medical writers (*e.g*., Galen, and much later Johannes Actuarius). It is met less frequently among theologians, Chrysostom taking the place of honour (see TLG # 6-13, 70-89), with some attestations also in the Cappadocians (# 5, 59-63), Theodore of Mopsuestia (# 248-250), Cyril (# 231-232), the catenae (# 31-32, 237-245), and occasionally also in a number of other early Christian authors. However, it is rarely used in a temporal sense, as is the case here. One example can be found in Andreas of Crete's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, who uses the word four times in this way: thrice he writes τὴν ἐγγύτητα τῆς (μελλούσης) κρίσεως (# 116, 118-119) and once also τὴν ἐγγύτητα τῆς αὐτοῦ κολάσεως (# 117).

There is a second occurrence in the *Catena on Mark*, this time with a geographical sense, but unfortunately also in an unidentifiable passage (on *Mark* 2:1-3). In dealing with the location of Nazareth and Capernaum and the apparent confusion there is in the gospels about which of the two was Jesus' hometown, the commentator notes that the problem is after all not that important and gives two possible explanations: either Capernaum had become Jesus' residence because he had often stayed there, or 'given the proximity of the places, the Evangelists were not precise about the details (μὴ ἀκριβολογεῖσθαι), hurrying only to describe the sign'.[18]

The verb ἀκριβολογέομαι is met twice elsewhere in the Catena. In commenting on the pericope of the Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac (*Mark* 5:1-20), the compiler reproduces an excerpt from Chrysostom on the difference between *Matthew* and the two other evangelists on the number of demoniacs (*Matthew* says there are two) and the differences between *Mark* and *Luke* in describing the man's behaviour.[19] It is followed by a shorter excerpt that wishes to belittle the differences and instead focus on the meaning of the story: 'And both being equally hard to deal with, there is agreement in saying simply that "he was demon-possessed", although they are not exact about the number (315.9 μὴ ἀκριβολογησάμενοι περὶ τὸν ἀριθμόν), since they did not think to round up the number for the purpose of making the power of the agent greater'.[20] The excerpt is said by Isho'dad of Merv (*Commentary on Matthew*,

[18] *Ibid*. 243; see J.A. Cramer, *Catenae* (1844), 284.10-2: ἢ καὶ διὰ τὴν ἐγγύτητα τῶν τόπων μὴ ἀκριβολογεῖσθαι τοὺς Εὐαγγελιστάς, σπεύδοντας μόνον τὸ σημεῖον εἰπεῖν.

[19] See J.A. Cramer, *Catenae* (1844), 314.28-315.7. On the compiler's handling of this periscope, see J. Verheyden, 'Puzzling Chapter' (2013), 22-7.

[20] W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 282; J.A. Cramer, *Catenae* (1844), 315.7-12.

43) to stem from Theodore of Mopsuestia.[21] There remains some doubt, because the attestation is only second-hand and Isho'dad occasionally seems to have mixed up Theodore and Theodoret,[22] but in this instance it may well be true as the verb ἀκριβολογέομαι does indeed occur in the works of Theodore with a similar slightly 'deprecatory' ring.[23]

The other occurrence is in the commentary on the pericope of the Withered Fig Tree (*Mark* 11:12-4). The compiler cites Chrysostom's comment, including a long digression on why Jesus made this strange gesture of accursing a tree without any apparent reason. Chrysostom is clear about it. Jesus did not want to show and exercise his power directly on human beings and chose a tree instead, but that is not the point of the story, just as it does not make sense to criticise Jesus for having ordered the pigs to be thrown into the sea in *Mark* 5:1-20. 'For wherever something out of the ordinary happens, let us not be too precise about the rights and wrongs, but let us contemplate the miracle'.[24]

The combined evidence of the fact that both Theodore and Chrysostom use the verb ἀκριβολογέομαι in their commentaries (the second in a way that is similar to its use in the first passage cited in the Catena: see μόνον τὸ σημεῖον εἰπεῖν and compare ἀλλὰ τὸ θαῦμα ἴδωμεν) and several times also have the noun ἐγγύτης, may not be enough to attribute the phrase τοῦ πάθους τὴν ἐγγύτητα in the commentary on *Mark* 14:25 to one of them, especially not because they do not seem to give the word a temporal connotation. But maybe we should once again turn to *Matthew* for help.

Matthew is the only evangelist who has Jesus say that 'his moment is near' when instructing the disciples on how to prepare for Pascha (26:18 ὁ καιρός μου ἐγγύς ἐστιν). Theodore's commentary on the verse has not been preserved in Greek. Chrysostom comments in some detail on the phrase in his *Homily* 81, the one that immediately precedes that on the Last Supper. He argues that it serves a pedagogical and a theological purpose. It is to be read in light of Jesus' repeated announcements of his passion in order to prepare the disciples for what is to come, and of the motif that Jesus suffered his passion voluntarily:

Καὶ ὅρα πάλιν τὴν ἐπίδειξιν τῆς δυνάμεως. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε μόνον, Τὸ Πάσχα ποιῶ· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕτερον προστίθησιν, Ὁ καιρός μου ἐγγύς ἐστι. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει, ἅμα μὲν τοὺς μαθητὰς συνεχῶς ὑπομιμνήσκων τοῦ πάθους, ὥστε τῇ πυκνότητι τῆς προῤῥήσεως ἐγγυμνασθέντας μελετῆσαι τὸ συμβησόμενον· ἅμα δὲ δεικνὺς

[21] See H. Smith, 'The Sources of Victor of Antioch's Commentary on Mark' (1917-18), 360-1; J. Verheyden, 'Embarking' (2010), 155.

[22] *Ibid*. 282 n. 7.

[23] So R.M. Grant, 'Historical Criticism in the Ancient Church', *Journal of Religion* 25 (1945), 183-96, 196; cited also by W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 243 n. 2

[24] W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 376; see J.A. Cramer, *Catenae* (1844), 391.14-6: ὅταν δὲ εἰς τόπους γένηταί τι, μὴ ἀκριβολογώμεθα, δικαίως ἢ ἀδίκως, λέγοντες, ἀλλὰ τὸ θαῦμα ἴδωμεν.

αὐτοῖς τε ἐκείνοις, καὶ τῷ ὑποδεχομένῳ, καὶ πᾶσιν Ἰουδαίοις, ὃ πολλάκις εἶπον, ὅτι οὐκ ἄκων ἐπὶ τὸ πάθος ἔρχεται. (731.10-8)

And see again the display of his power. For He did not only say, 'I will keep the Passover', but He adds another thing also, 'My time is at hand'. And this he did, at once continually reminding His disciples of the passion, so that exercised by the frequency of the prediction, they should be prepared for what was to take place; and at the same time to show themselves, and to him that was receiving Him, and to all the Jews, which I have often mentioned, that not involuntarily doth He come to His passion. (NPNF, 485)

Both topics are dear to Chrysostom and he comes back to both of them on more than one occasion, including in the homily on the Last Supper, and, for the second topic, already in the opening section of *Hom*. 81, just before his comment on *Matthew* 26:18 (730.10 ὅτι ἠδύνατο μὴ παθεῖν, 13 εἴγε ἐβούλετο μὴ παθεῖν).

The compiler does not cite this part of Chrysostom's commentary, but (as usual) relies heavily on him when commenting on the parallel in *Mark* 14:12-3. The comment on v. 12 solely consists of one long excerpt from Chrysostom; that on v. 13 is composed of an excerpt from Chrysostom (continuing the previous one), one from Apollinaris (Frag. 130, Reuss, 44-5), and a longer concluding part that is unidentifiable. However, there is something strange with this whole section. The compiler shows an exceptionally strong interest in the differences between the evangelists in this pericope and seems to have changed his sources accordingly.

He intervenes in the excerpt from Chrysostom in two ways: to point out and explain certain differences among the evangelists, and to drop an observation on the nearness of the passion. The following makes this clear:[25]

C = Ch Πρώτην ἀζύμων ... εἰώθασι γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς ἑσπέρας τὴν ἡμέραν ἀριθμεῖν ἀεί.

C **Ἕτερος δέ φησι πρὸ μιᾶς τῶν ἀζύμων, ἡμέρας** μνημονεύσας ἐκείνης ... θύεσθαι.
Ch καὶ ταύτης μνημονεύει ... θύεσθαι.

C **ὅθεν δῆλον ὅτι τὴν αὐτὴν ἐδήλωσαν ἀμφότεροι**. τῇ γὰρ πέμπτῃ ... καλεῖ,
Ch τῇ γὰρ πέμπτῃ ... καλεῖ,

C **ὁ δὲ αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν ἀζύμων· ἑκάτερος ἀληθεύων·**
Ch *τὸν καιρὸν λέγων, καθ' ὃν προσῆλθον· ὁ δὲ οὕτω λέγει·*
ἦλθε δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων, ἐν ᾗ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα·
τό, ἦλθε, τοῦτο λέγων, ἐγγὺς ἦν, ἐπὶ θύραις ἦν,
τῆς ἑσπέρας δηλονότι μεμνημένος ἐκείνης.

C = Ch Ἀπὸ γὰρ τῆς ἑσπέρας ἤρξατο (Ch ἤρχοντο)· διὸ ... εἴγε ἠβούλετο μὴ παθεῖν;

[25] C = Catena, Ch = Chrysostom; identical or almost identical wording is in normal print and cited selectively to give context to the differences; the extras in the Catena are in bold; text from Chrysostom that is left out in the Catena is in italic; I have disregarded small inversions of word order to focus on the major differences.

C **τοιγαροῦν καὶ σημεῖον αὐτοῖς δίδωσιν**,
ὡς Μάρκος καὶ Λοῦκας ἱστοροῦσιν· τὸ δὲ ἦν ὁ τὸ κεράμιον βαστάζων.
Ch reads instead a much longer passage (11 lines in PG) that ends with κεράμιον βαστάζοντα, which is likened to Saul's commandment in *1 Samuel* 10:3, and is followed immediately by the comment on ὁ καιρός μου ἐγγύς ἐστι cited above.

The excerpt from Apollinaris basically consists of listing differences between *Mark* and *Luke*, on the one hand, and *Matthew* on the other, with *John* going his own way as well. When comparing it in more detail, it turns out that the compiler has not only abbreviated it (as he does elsewhere), leaving out one more instance of what is specific for one evangelist (*Luke*), but has also added another such instance from *Matthew* in the midst of the passage he has excerpted, and has reproduced the text in a form that differs considerably from the one edited by Reuss. The following again makes this clear (C = Catena, A = Apollinaris):

C οὐδέτερος οὖν αὐτῶν εἴρηκεν,
A Μᾶρκος δὲ καὶ ὁ Λουκᾶς οὐκ εἶπον αὐτὸν εἰρηκέναι,

C **πῶς** ἔδομαι τὸ Πάσχα
A *ὅτι* ἔδομαι τὸ πάσχα *ὡς ἕτερός φησιν*,

C ἀλλὰ ποῦ ἐστι το καταλυμά **μου**, ὅπου τὸ πάσχα μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν μου φάγω;
A ἀλλὰ ποῦ ἐστι το καταλυμά , ὅπου τὸ πάσχα μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν μου φάγω.

C **ὥστε ἀρκοῦσαν γενέσθαι τὴν παρασκευήν**.
A

C **καὶ ἐκεῖνον μὲν νομίσαι κρύπτεσθαι αὐτόν**,
A

C **ὁ δὲ Ματθαῖος εἴρηκεν μόνος τὸ πρός σε ποιῶ τὸ Πάσχα**,
A

C δύναται δὲ ταύτην τὴν παρασκευὴν δηλοῦν τοῦ Πάσχα, οὐ τὴν βρῶσιν.
A δύναται δὲ ταῦτα τὴν παρασκευὴν τοῦ πάσχα δηλοῦν, οὐ τὴν βρῶσιν·

C ὁ γὰρ ᾽Ιωάννης δηλοῖ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ **πάθους** ἡμέραν **καὶ ὥραν** μήπω τὸ Πάσχα
A ὁ γὰρ ᾽Ιωάννης δηλοῖ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ *πάσχα* ἡμέραν μήπω τὸ πάσχα

C βρωθὲν ὑπὸ ᾽Ιουδαίων, ἐπείπερ, ὡς ἔλεγεν,
A βρωθὲν ὑπὸ ᾽Ιουδαίων, ἐπειδήπερ ὡς ἔλεγομεν

C ἐχρὴν κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἡμέραν
A ἐχρὴν κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἡμέραν *καὶ ὥραν*

C τό τε τυπικὸν Πάσχα καὶ τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἐπιτελεσθῆναι.
A τό τε τυπικὸν πάσχα καὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐπιτελεσθῆναι.

The compiler has anticipated the explicit mention of *Mark* and *Luke* into his excerpt from Chrysostom (see above) and replaced it in the introduction to that of Apollinaris with a mere οὐδέτερος αὐτῶν. This strengthens the impression

that he may have been inspired by what he read in Apollinaris to further develop the issue of the differences between the evangelists in his own way. The remarkable switch from πάσχα to πάθους, on the other hand, may show the influence of the passage from Chrysostom's commentary on *Matthew* 26:18 cited above that the compiler had left out in this instance.

The differences between the evangelists are once more addressed in the third part of the comment on v. 13, when it is noted that *Matthew* does not give the details of Jesus' commandment to the disciples, which is evaluated positively:

Ταῦτα δὲ παραλέλειπται τῷ Ματθαίῳ ἁπλῶς εἰρηκότι, ἐκέλευσεν αὐτοῖς πρὸς τὸν δεῖνα ἀπελθεῖν, ᾧ καὶ τόδε εἰπεῖν. καὶ γὰρ εὑρήσει τις αὐτὸν ἁπλῶς τοῦ μηνύσαι τὰ πράγματα μόνου γενόμενον, πλεῖστα παραλιμπάνοντα τῶν γεγονότων ἐν μέσῳ, ὅπερ ἐν πολλοῖς αὐτὸν τίς εἰρηκέναι ἀπέδεξατο.[26]

And these things are omitted by Matthew who says simply that he ordered them to go 'to so-and-so', and say this to him. For anyone will find him simply recording the things of consequence, passing over most of the details, which is why one accepts what he has said most of the time.[27]

As said, the source of this passage cannot be identified. But in light of the compiler's interest in pointing out differences between the evangelists beyond what he found in his sources as shown in the two previous excerpts, which may well be the result of his own intervention, one is perhaps entitled to conclude that the same applies to this third passage. Praising *Matthew* in the way this is done here is perhaps not what one would expect to read in a commentary on *Mark*, but the eulogy looks like a variant of the motif of ἀκροβολογέομαι, which was not unknown to the compiler as mentioned above.

What conclusion can be drawn from all this for the unidentifiable passage in the commentary on *Mark* 14:25 speaking of 'the nearness of the passion'? It is at least remarkable that this passage begins by pointing out a difference between *Mark* and *Matthew* ('the Kingdom of God' // 'of the Father'). Also remarkable is the presence of the word πάθος for Jesus' suffering in combination with the motif of 'nearness'. The word was also used in the third passage of the commentary on *Mark* 14:13 and may there have come from Chrysostom's commentary on the peculiar phrase in *Matthew* 26:18.[28] The compiler had left out this comment at that point. Did he come back to it in commenting on *Mark* 14:25, rephrasing it in his own words?[29] If so, we are looking at a specimen of the compiler's own creativity, with a not-so-little help from Chrysostom.

[26] J.A. Cramer, *Catenae* (1844), 421.13-8.

[27] W.R.S. Lamb, *Commentary* (2012), 419.

[28] J.A. Cramer, *Catenae* (1844), 421.7 (see citation above).

[29] One may also note the interest in this same passage in emphasising that Jesus wished to share a meal with his disciples to raise in them 'greater and truer faith', which sounds like a variant on the pedagogical factor which was dear to Chrysostom.

Conclusion

A detailed analysis of specific passages is the only way to discover something of the methods that were applied in compiling this work. In some instances it is relatively easy to make sense of the compiler's selective use of the sources; elsewhere this is more difficult to understand or illustrate, but maybe some kind of pattern shows up if more of the text has been studied in the same detail. The analysis has in any case produced some further insight in the compiler's interests and perhaps it may even have revealed a trace of his own authorial aspirations.

The Good Shepherd of *John* 10: A Case Study of New Testament Exegesis in the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch

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Abstract

In this article I examine the patristic treatment of the Good Shepherd of *John* 10 as a case study of the Fathers' New Testament exegesis. I do so in light of the recent challenge to the traditional scholarly distinction between the two exegetical schools of Alexandria and Antioch. Frances Young in particular has suggested that the traditional characterization of the allegorically-minded Alexandrians and the historically-focused Antiochenes was based on the ancient interpreters' Old Testament exegesis, and that their New Testament exegesis has been overlooked. Further, the categories of literal, typological, and allegorical scarcely apply as analytical tools in this setting, she claims, and thus their NT exegesis requires more nuanced analysis. To this I contribute in my brief examination of the treatment of the Good Shepherd parable by Origen and Cyril of Alexandria, and John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia from Antioch. These interpreters considered the Good Shepherd parable to be an allegory, and thus each of them provided it with an 'allegorical' interpretation. That is, they each assigned referents to the characters of the parable, such as the gate, the shepherd and his sheep, the robbers *etc*. Despite this similarity, their treatments reflect significantly different concerns. As Chrysostom and Theodore approached the parable, they searched the immediate narrative context of *John* 10 and other biblical passages in order to find its meaning. By contrast, Origen and Cyril were much more interested in the passage's application to the individual and communal Christian life in their own setting.

As is well known, the traditional scholarly approach to the hermeneutical controversies between the major Christian centers of Alexandria and Antioch has recently been challenged.[1] According to scholars of the new position, no longer are we to envision the two exegetical schools as the allegorically-inclined Alexandrians and the historically-sensitive Antiochenes; rather we should focus instead upon the considerable overlap between the interpretive

[1] See the following examples of the traditional characterization of the two exegetical schools: Johannes Quasten, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*, Patrology 3 (Westminster, 1960), and Robert M. Grant and David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (Minneapolis, 1963).

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methods of these authors, as all employed the techniques of the Greco-Roman grammatical schools. One of the leading figures of this recent position is of course Frances Young, who made her case in her *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture*.[2]

One of her contentions in this work is that the traditional understanding of the distinction between the two schools overlooks the Fathers' New Testament exegesis.[3] This is problematic for her because, she claims, the categories of literal, typological, and allegorical 'scarcely apply' as analytical tools for their New Testament exegesis.[4] She has thus identified the need for nuanced analyses of patristic New Testament exegesis, suggesting instead that issues of doctrinal coherence, morality, and fate and freedom feature more prominently than a concern for the various 'senses' of the text.[5] In this article, I attempt to contribute to the question of whether these traditional categories apply in the context of the interpreters' New Testament exegesis, or whether we need a modified framework in this setting. I will briefly examine the patristic treatment of one New Testament passage, the Good Shepherd parable in *John* 10. Since the parabolic passage was itself considered to be an allegory of sorts by three of the four authors considered in this article, the question of literal and allegorical interpretation has its own particular shape.[6]

We must begin with Origen of Alexandria's treatment of the passage. We do not have any of Origen's theoretical comments about the appropriate exegetical approach to the parable anywhere in his corpus, and should he have made any such comments in his *Commentary on John* at the point of *John* 10, we do not know, as we no longer have this section. However, notwithstanding the absence of his theoretical comments on the exegesis of the parable, in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, he provides a brief exegetical treatment of the passage. It is provoked by the occurrence of the word 'flocks' (*greges*) in *Song of Songs* 1:7.[7] In this verse, the bride says: 'Tell me, O you whom my soul has loved, where you feed, where you have your couch in the midday, lest perchance I be made as one who is veiled above the flocks of your companions'. When the bride asks the bridegroom where he feeds at midday and where he keeps his flocks, explains Origen, it is plain that this bridegroom is also a

[2] Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, 1997).

[3] *Ibid.* 201.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] By this I mean that these authors may well have considered their 'allegorical' treatment of the passage, which was itself to be composed as an allegory, a *literal* reading of it. That is, they probably thought that a compositional allegory required a corresponding allegorical interpretation. This complicates the question of how these authors understood their approach, as well as how we characterize it.

[7] Orig., *Comm. sur le Cant.* II 4.3 (1991), 330.

shepherd who feeds his sheep.[8] This observation leads him to a discussion of the role of Christ as shepherd in the life of the Christian, and the Good Shepherd of *John* 10 is one of the major sources for his comments.

For Origen, Christ has different aspects or functions (ἡ ἐπίνοια), which one encounters depending upon his or her need, an idea he develops in Book 1 of his *Commentary on John*.[9] As the soul of the believer progresses towards perfection, Origen suggests that he or she relates to different aspects of Christ at each stage. In such a schema, Christ as the Good Shepherd is the aspect of Christ that the believer encounters initially as one of the sheep. In the context of the *Song of Songs* then, Origen tells us, the different stages of believers are represented by the queens, who are at the highest level, followed by the less noble concubines, then the maidens, and lastly, the souls of those who are sheep.[10] As a sheep, the Christian needs Christ the Good Shepherd in particular because of his care for the Christian's material needs. As the believer is perfected, she encounters Christ as Word and Wisdom, and no longer needs him as Shepherd, or as the Gate or the Physician, two alternative aspects of Christ's that the individual in the initial stages of the faith might encounter.

We do not have enough evidence to say whether Origen gave the Good Shepherd parable itself an 'allegorical' reading, and we might wonder whether he would have done so, for he might very well have understood the meaning just outlined in the *Song of Songs* commentary to be the passage's philological or literal meaning. Having said that, however, we do have evidence, both throughout his *Commentary on John* and the rest of his corpus, that he assigned referents for many of the images of the parable, such as the shepherd, the gate, the gatekeeper, the sheep, the thieves, and the bandits *etc*. For Origen, not only do the shepherd and the gate of the parable refer to Christ (for Christ applies these images to himself in the passage), but so too does the gatekeeper. The flock of the shepherd, however, has a variety of referents. In his *Commentary on John*, he says that the flock is an identifiable group within the church at Origen's time, the 'so-called sheep of Christ' (οἱ λεγόμενοι πρόβατα Χριστοῦ), who are in the initial stages of the spiritual journey.[11] However, the shepherd and his sheep can also provide him the image with which to make a distinction between Christ and the church on the one hand and Moses and the old covenant people of Israel on the other, as he says in his *Homilies on Numbers*.[12] Similarly, in his *Commentary on Romans*, he applies the notion of the 'other sheep' of *John* 10:16 to his interpretation of *Rom*. 11, a text in which Paul grapples with the place of Israel within the people of God. Israel is to be identified with

[8] Orig., *Comm. sur le Cant*. II 4.3 (1991), 330.
[9] Orig., *Comm. sur S. John* 1.118 (1996), 120.
[10] Orig., *Comm. sur le Cant*. II 4.3 (1991), 332.
[11] Orig., *Comm. sur S. John* 13.39 (1975), 52.
[12] Orig., *Hom. sur les Nom*. 6.4,2 (1996), 158.

the 'other sheep', which Jesus must bring into his fold at the end of the age.[13] However, this is not enough evidence to say definitively whether or not Origen thought that such interpretive work constituted an 'allegorical' treatment of the passage as such. What we can observe from the fragmentary material in Origen, then, is that he can use the Good Shepherd passage to make sense of other biblical texts, such as the difficult *Rom.* 11 passage, but the parable is for him primarily about the role of Christ in the individual Christian's spiritual life in his own ecclesiastical setting.

In the case of Cyril of Alexandria and the Antiochenes, John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia, all of whom commented on the whole of *John's Gospel*, we have more to draw on. Like Origen, they all assigned referents to each of the figures in the parable. Thus they each provided an 'allegorical' interpretation of a passage that had itself been composed as an allegory, from their view. However, despite the fact that Cyril of Alexandria's and the Antiochenes' approaches to the Good Shepherd parable resemble each other in this particular way, significant differences in their treatments of it remain.

We will begin in Antioch. Chrysostom explains the Good Shepherd parable in two of his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*.[14] He begins not with a discussion of how he will proceed in the interpretation of the passage, but with an immediate explanation of the referent of the gate. For him, the gate refers to the scriptures because the scriptures open and bring the community of faith to the knowledge of God.[15] Accordingly, the one who enters through the gate is the one who uses the scriptures, whereas the one who disregards the scriptures is a thief who 'climbs up by some other way' (*John* 10:1). By these words, 'climbs up by some other way', says Chrysostom, Jesus 'alluded (ἠνίξατο) to the scribes' since they taught the doctrines of men, not God, just as they are accused by Jesus in *Matth.* 15:9.[16] It is notable that Chrysostom does not reflect on or acknowledge at any point the interpretive principles that have led him to assign the gate the referent of the scriptures, which might well suggest that it is simply a well-known Antiochene tradition he is drawing on.[17]

However, once he arrives at the referent for the gatekeeper, he comes as close as he will to articulating explicitly his interpretive strategy. He says, 'if you should be minded to examine the parable word by word (κατὰ λέξιν ἐθέλοις τὴν παραβολὴν ἐξετάζειν), there is nothing to hinder you'.[18] Thus he indicates that one has the option of treating the parable in this manner, but by

[13] Orig., *Comm. sur l'Ép. aux Rom.* 8.7.3 (2011), 512.
[14] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 59-60 (1862), 321-36.
[15] Chrysostom, *Hom. on John* 59.2 (1862), 324.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] It should be noted that he does not typically reflect very much at all on his interpretive principles in his homilies on *John*, which is probably to be explained by the homiletic genre in which he works.
[18] Chrysostom, *Hom. on John* 59.3 (1862), 325.

implication, that one need not. Within his 'word by word' reading, the 'gatekeeper' is Moses, for, after all, he was the one God entrusted with the oracles.[19] Although Chrysostom does not acknowledge it explicitly, he continues his 'word by word' interpretation as he addresses the question of the identity of the 'stranger' of *John* 10:5, and the 'thieves and bandits' of *John* 10:8. Chrysostom finds the immediate referents of both verses' images' in Theudas and Judas of Galilee, the false-Messiah figures/insurrectionists from *Acts* 5:36-7. Finally, Chrysostom has the Pharisees and scribes of the present narrative of *John* in view when he comes to *John* 10:12-3's 'hired hand', who runs away and leaves the sheep when he sees the wolf coming. Jesus was truly the Good Shepherd, Chrysostom claims, unlike these temporary leaders, who did not care for the sheep in their charge, but instead fed themselves.

So again, like Origen, we see Chrysostom, in his *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, assign referents to each of the figures within Jesus' parable of the Good Shepherd, in keeping with what he describes as a 'word by word' interpretation. He does not attempt to determine the text's overall subject matter (ἡ ὑπόθεσις), as the Antiochenes are want to do,[20] but instead, he simply treats the allegory like 'a code to be cracked', to use Young's language for her description of Origen's exegesis, in which each word is thought to refer to something else.[21]

However, the referents of the parable Chrysostom finds seem to be either characters from within the passage's surrounding narrative context or from elsewhere in the New Testament, and in the case of the gate and gatekeeper, from the Torah. In other words, even though he provides an allegorical passage with an 'allegorical' reading, for the most part, his interpretation does not move beyond the level of the biblical narrative. He does not, for example, assign referents from among his contemporaries within and without the church, as we saw in Origen's treatment of the parable.

Theodore of Mopsuestia's treatment of the passage closely resembles Chrysostom's. Theodore, however, begins by making his readers aware straightaway of the distinct genre of the passage when he says, the Lord spoke to them 'by way of allegory' (ܥܠ ܕܪܟ ܡܬܠܐ ܡܠܠ), and that accordingly, the passage needs an 'interpretation' (ܦܫܪܢܐ) so as to be understood properly.[22] More explicitly than Chrysostom, then, does Theodore acknowledge the distinctive interpretive approach required by the parabolic passage. Similar to what we saw in Chrysostom's homily, however, for Theodore, the gatekeeper is Moses, and more specifically than we saw in the case of Chrysostom, the gate is the teachings

[19] Chrysostom, *Hom. on John* 59.3 (1862), 325.

[20] One of the clearest statements made about this Antiochene concern is presented by Diodore, the instructor of both Chrysostom and Theodore. In his commentary on the *Psalms* he says that he wants to 'provide a concise exposition of the subjects' of the *Book of Psalms*. Diodore, *Comm. in Ps. Prologue* (1980), 4.

[21] F.M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis* (1997), 185-6.

[22] Theodore, *Comm. in Evang. Iohannis Apos.* (1940), 196.

of the law and not just scripture generally. The sheep then, are those who subject themselves to that law. Such a reading was apparently simply assumed in Antioch. When Theodore reaches the 'thieves and bandits' of *John* 10:8, like Chrysostom, he thinks they refer to Theudas and Judas of Galilee from *Acts* 5, for these two insurrectionists asserted that they taught something new and useful, and so enticed and deceived many, causing their followers many calamities. Concerning the hired hand in *John* 10:12-3, like Chrysostom, Theodore has the Pharisees and scribes of the present narrative of *John* in view. These false teachers thought they had been entrusted with the leadership of the people, says Theodore, but they did not actually take care of the flock, and were in any case only hired temporarily until the approach of the true Shepherd. Like Chrysostom, the referents of the figures of the parable of the Good Shepherd that Theodore finds are very closely tied to *John's Gospel*, the narrative world of the New Testament, and again, in the case of the gate and its keeper, the Torah. Also like Chrysostom, Theodore does not spend interpretive energy on determining the overall ὑπόθεσις of the passage, but treats the parable 'word by word' for his readers.

Returning to Alexandria, we will end with Cyril. Moses and the scriptures are not in view for him as he approaches the parable, as they were for the Antiochenes. Instead, the gatekeeper refers either to a guardian angel or to Christ. Even though Cyril too assigns allegorical referents to the characters of the parable, he does so only in passing, and the bulk of his comments are not devoted to that. Rather, he devotes his attention to explaining the movement from the level of the text itself to that of the text's application, so that his readers might understand its 'true point' (πρᾶγμα ἀληθές).[23] Of our four authors, he is the most explicit about his interpretive approach and exegetical movement in his treatment of the parable. Cyril's estimation of the parable's 'true point' becomes immediately clear: anyone who is worthy of the honour of leadership will be granted it only if Christ himself calls that person. More specifically, as Cyril interprets the passage, he is most concerned with appropriate *church* leadership, and that in his own day. He seems less concerned than the Antiochenes with the narrative world of the New Testament passage, and is more willing, like Origen, to apply the passage to his own ecclesiastical context.

Cyril remarks theoretically on his interpretive movement from the text to its 'higher meaning' (ἡ θεωρία) as he explains *John* 10:14-5, in a manner that sounds rather Antiochene.[24] He says that the discovery of the 'higher meaning' of the passage should not 'carry us away' (φέρω) from its 'intent' (ὁ σκοπός).[25] However, even though he gives credence to this principle, he has clearly begun his explanation of the Good Shepherd passage with the 'higher meaning', and

[23] Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joannem* (1872), 209.
[24] *Ibid*. 230.
[25] *Ibid*.

it is this meaning he continues to find throughout his analysis of the passage. A characteristic example of Cyril's exegesis of the parable is found in his treatment of *John* 10:9, 'I am the gate; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out and find pasture'. Cyril says that in this verse the Lord shapes the form of his speech 'into a spiritual contemplation' (εἰς θεωρίαν πνευματικήν) and treats things, which are simple to look at and contain nothing difficult of comprehension, as 'images of things more obscure' (εἰκόνα ποιεῖται τῶν ἀφανεστέρων).[26] He begins with the simple things, which Cyril refers to as the 'type' (ὁ τύπος) presented by the story. The 'type' of the parable is that the thieves who enter by another way do so to their own danger, whereas those who enter by the gate itself make a lawful entrance without risk, and are known to the Lord. From here, he immediately moves to the higher meaning. As for that which the interpreter 'transfers' (μεταβαίνω) from 'what is hinted at' (ἐξ αὐτῆς ὑποδηλούμενον) in the type of the text, we are to understand that those who take a position of church leadership without Christ's sanction will perish, while those whom he has sanctioned will rule with security and grace, and will receive crowns from above.[27] So while Cyril makes explicit his movement from text to application/higher meaning, the 'true point' of the parable seems rather similar to the 'application'. For him, the parable is simply about church leadership.

My concluding comments are brief. We saw Chrysostom, Theodore, and Cyril each attending to the parabolic genre of the passage, and accordingly we saw them employ similar interpretive methods as they identified the referents of the parable's images, a practice we already saw in Origen's treatment of the passage. However, despite these similarities in approach, there are other ways we might describe the marked difference between the two schools' treatments of the parable.

We saw that the allegorical referents found by the Antiochenes were from within the narrative of the *Gospel of John* itself or from elsewhere within the Old and New Testaments. We do not find them seeking to find the text's overall ὑπόθεσις, nor the 'higher sense' (ἡ θεωρία) beyond the letter of the text. They simply set to work on 'cracking the code' of John's allegory word by word, which they felt perfectly justified in doing, given that the passage itself contained the word 'parable' (ἡ παροιμία).[28] Thus the Antiochenes' treatment of this passage conforms to the principle espoused by Chrysostom in one of his homilies on Isaiah: 'Everywhere in scripture there is this law, that when it allegorizes, it also gives the explanation of the allegory'.[29] These interpreters

[26] Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joannem* (1872), 209.

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] See *John* 10:6: 'Jesus used this parable with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them'.

[29] Chrysostom, *Hom. in Isa*. 5.3 (1862), 142.

therefore searched the immediate narrative context and other fitting biblical passages in order to find its meaning, which they believed was provided by the passage itself.

By contrast, in their treatment of the parable, the Alexandrians were more interested in the passage's *application* to the individual and communal Christian life, which, in the case of Cyril at least, is equivalent to the parable's 'spiritual' or 'higher' meaning. When he encountered this passage in *John* 10, he was immediately concerned with issues of church leadership in his own day (which is perhaps not surprising in light of the tumultuous events surrounding his own accession of the bishopric).[30] So, though he dealt briefly with the 'code to be cracked' provided by the parable, the bulk of his treatment is concerned with the passage's overall ὑπόθεσις and θεωρία, which in this instance was equivalent to the issue of church leadership in his own setting. In the case of Origen, at least in the little material we have from his treatment of the passage, he too was concerned about the application of the passage to the Christian life, though he used the passage within his schema of the stages of the individual's progression towards perfection.

In this example of these authors' New Testament exegesis at least, it becomes clear that the question of whether the two schools can be distinguished by the categories of literal, typological, and allegorical exegesis, is simply not fitting. We saw Cyril operating with interpretive principles that appeared more classically 'Antiochene', and the Antiochenes applying an allegorical approach, typically associated with the Alexandrians, to the (allegorical) passage, surprisingly without comment. There was also overlap between the two schools in that each interpreter assigned referents to the figures of the Good Shepherd parable. All that being said, however, the two schools' treatments of the passage can be distinguished in significant ways. In Antioch, the exegetes worked closely within the world of the text itself, as good Antiochenes should, whereas in Alexandria, the 'higher sense' or application of the passage to the spiritual life of the church and the individual took pride of place. Clearly these patterns should not be overlooked, and require further attention as we seek to move the discussion of early Christian exegesis forward.

[30] For a helpful account of these circumstances, see Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria*, The Early Christian Fathers Series (New York, 2000).

The Layout of Early Latin Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles and their Oldest Manuscripts

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Abstract

This article examines the layout of the earliest Latin commentaries on Paul, with a particular focus on the treatment of the biblical text. Two types of evidence are used: the physical format of the oldest surviving manuscripts and internal evidence about the structure of the commentary. After an examination of the evidence for quotation practice from the fourth to the sixth century, the following authors are considered: Marius Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, Jerome, Augustine, the Budapest Anonymous Commentary, Pelagius, Rufinus' translation of Origen and the Latin version of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Commentary manuscripts copied between the fifth and ninth centuries exhibit a variety of layouts, and provide evidence for the substitution of the biblical text, the loss of distinguishing features and even changes in format. Nevertheless, each work has a textual tradition which reflects characteristics of its structure and may offer indications of the possible original layout. The significance of the presentation should be taken into consideration in the creation and use of modern critical editions of these writings.

How did the earliest Latin commentators on the New Testament intend their work to be presented? With what sorts of layout were they familiar, and did they choose to conform to these or adopt something new? To what extent does their textual tradition reflect later expectations about the commentary format and, indeed, the biblical text? The paucity of manuscripts surviving from the time of these writers and the following centuries makes these questions difficult to answer with confidence. Nevertheless, in bringing together the evidence which does remain, this article hopes to make a fresh contribution to the study of early New Testament commentaries and their reception. The focus will be

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on Latin commentators on Paul from the fourth and fifth centuries: Marius Victorinus, Jerome, Augustine, Pelagius, the writer known as Ambrosiaster, and a further anonymous commentary, only preserved in a Budapest manuscript, which has been attributed to Constantius, an anti-Pelagian writer in Rome.[2] In addition, Rufinus' translation of Origen and the Latin version of Theodore of Mopsuestia were created during this period. Two sorts of evidence will be investigated: the internal evidence from the text and structure of the commentary as it has been transmitted, and the external evidence of the layout of manuscripts of these works. The latter is mostly restricted to those copied before the tenth century, although in some cases it is necessary to use later witnesses.

Ancient Observations on Quotation Practice

Authors in late antiquity commonly composed by dictating to a secretary but there are indications that some, at least, were concerned about the physical presentation of their work.[3] Guidance on the way in which quotations were to be indicated is rare. Augustine reproduced portions of his opponents' treatises in his polemical works in order to provide a basis for his refutation. Some of these are presented in the form of dialogues, in which he turns his opponent's text into an imaginary interlocutor (*e.g. Contra Faustum*, *Contra Gaudentium* and the second book of *Contra litteras Petiliani*). In each case, the source is clearly indicated before the extracts: Augustine describes the practice as 'putting his words first in extracts under his own name and, underneath, my response to each detail'.[4] This is also found in transcripts of genuine dialogues, such as *Contra Felicem Manichaeum* and the Conference of Carthage in 411. In other writings, such as the first and third books of *Contra litteras Petiliani* or *Contra Iulianum*, the quotations are integrated into the treatise and identified by comments such as *quod dicis* or *inquis*. An explicit instruction about quotation marks comes from Rufinus of Aquileia, in his *Apology against Jerome*:

[2] Theodore S. De Bruyn, 'Constantius the *Tractator*: Author of an Anonymous Commentary on the Pauline Epistles?', *JTS* ns 43 (1992), 38-54.

[3] Examples of this may be seen in Augustine's instructions about the division of *De ciuitate dei* between codices (*Letter to Firmus*/*Epistula 1A*), or the references to the use of different coloured inks for the Eusebian apparatus in the Gospels (Jerome, *Epistula ad Damasum*) and Priscillian's canons for the *Pauline Epistles* (ed. Georg Schepss, CSEL 18 [Vienna, 1889], 111). The latter practice goes back to Eusebius' own *Letter to Carpianus* (quoted in Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition [Stuttgart, 2012], 90*).

[4] *Uerba scilicet eius sub ipsius nomine prius ponens particulatim et sub meo per singula responsionem meam* (*Retractationes* 2.25). On this practice, see further Hugh A.G. Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John. Patristic Citations and Latin Gospel Manuscripts* (Oxford, 2008), 42.

In order that the insertions I am now making in this work from elsewhere may cause no confusion to the reader, they have single marks at the beginnings of the lines if they are mine and double ones if they are my opponent's.[5]

This presentation is also found in Rufinus' translation of Origen's *Commentary on Romans*, which will be discussed below. The fifth-century treatise known as *Praedestinatus*, ascribed by its most recent editor to Arnobius the Younger, explains that it indicates quotations from the book it refutes with a marginal symbol:

Wherever the words are from this book, they are revealed by horizontal dashes at the end of each line.[6]

This type of mark is found for non-biblical quotations in early manuscripts of other Latin works.[7]

The first reference in Latin to the presentation of biblical quotations, however, appears to be in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, in his explanation of the *diple* symbol:

Copyists of our day put this in books of ecclesiastical writers to separate or to indicate quotations from the Holy Scriptures.[8]

In fact, the use of the *diple*, shaped like an arrow-head (>), goes back at least as far as Aristarchus of Samothrace, librarian of Alexandria in the second century BC, who employed it to draw attention to matters of interest in the text of Homer. In Greek literary works, it often indicates the beginning of a new section or speech. Numerous early Christian manuscripts in Greek include *diplai* alongside biblical quotations, including a papyrus fragment of Irenaeus of Lyons copied around the year 200 where they mark the text of *Matth.* 3:15-6.[9]

[5] *Sane ne in legendo error sit ex his, quae huic scripturae nunc aliunde inserimus, si quidem mea sunt, simplices ad uersuum capita habent notas, si accusatoris mei, duplices* (Rufinus, *Apology*, 1.12). Text and translation from Caroline P. Hammond, 'A Product of a Fifth-Century Scriptorium Preserving Conventions used by Rufinus of Aquileia', *JTS* ns 29 (1978), 366-91: this study, which I encountered late in the preparation of this article, has an overview of Latin quotation practice on 378-81; see also Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, 'Products of Fifth-Century Scriptoria Preserving Conventions Used by Rufinus of Aquileia', *JTS* ns 30 (1979), 430-62 and 35 (1984), 347-93.

[6] *Ubicumque autem eiusdem libri sunt dicta, lineis a tergo uersuum iacentibus deteguntur.* (*Praedestinatus* 3.17, ed. Franco Gori, CChr.SL 25B [Turnhout, 2000]).

[7] See further C.P. Hammond Bammel, 'A Product of a Fifth-Century Scriptorium' (1978), 381 and Patrick McGurk, 'Citation Marks in early Latin Manuscripts', *Scriptorium* 15 (1961), 3-13 (reprinted in Patrick McGurk, *Gospel Books and Early Latin Manuscripts* [Aldershot, 1998], 8).

[8] *Hanc scriptores nostri adponunt in libris ecclesiasticorum uirorum ad separanda uel [ad] demonstranda testimonia sanctarum scripturarum* (Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.21.13, ed. W.M. Lindsay [Oxford, 1911]).

[9] P.Oxy. III 405; Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4413. On the history and early examples of the *diple* in Latin, see P. McGurk, 'Citation Marks' (1961); the later development of

Quotation Practice in Latin Manuscripts from the Fourth to the Sixth Centuries

The earliest surviving Christian manuscripts in Latin offer evidence for the treatment of biblical quotations in the fourth and fifth centuries.[10] The oldest Latin gospel book, Codex Bobiensis, is written in *scriptio continua* except for occasional blank spaces left at the end of sense units.[11] Similar spaces sometimes occur before or after quotations from the Old Testament, although not all quotations are consistently marked in this way. Nevertheless, the widespread use of spaces as 'the standard method of indicating a citation' in secular literature means that their use here may be significant.[12] It is important also to remember that quotations are not distinguished at all in several fifth-century gospel books, as well as some patristic writings.[13]

Despite the references above, the marginal *diple* only becomes widespread in Latin book production at the end of this period. The first definite examples occur in manuscripts connected with Rufinus of Aquileia (see Image 1).[14] In two fifth-century gospel codices from north Italy, *diplai* appear not to have formed part of the initial layout but to have been added by a later hand.[15] This is also the case

the sign, in which double *diplai* become modern quotation marks is treated in Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause And Effect. A History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot, 1992), 57-8 (see plate 7 for a manuscript with the Isidore text quoted above). A recent survey of *diplai* in Greek Bibles is provided by Ulrich Schmid and Marcus Sigismund, 'Die Markierung von Zitaten in den Handschriften', in M. Karrer, S. Kreuzer and M. Sigismund (eds), *Von der Septuaginta zum Neuen Testament*, ANTF 43 (Berlin, 2010), 75-152.

[10] Useful lists are given in Elias Avery Lowe, 'Some Facts about our Oldest Latin Manuscripts', *Classical Quarterly* 19 (1925), 197-208, and, especially, E.A. Lowe, 'More Facts about our Oldest Latin Manuscripts', *Classical Quarterly* 22 (1928), 43-62, from which some of the information in the following paragraphs has been taken. Additional bibliography on manuscripts of the Latin New Testament is supplied in Hugh A.G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament* (Oxford, 2016).

[11] Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, 1163 (Vetus Latina 1), copied in Africa in the fourth century, perhaps from a much earlier exemplar. Examples of spaces after citations occur in *Matth*. 4:4 on fol. 49r, or *Matth*. 12:17 on fol. 82r.

[12] P. McGurk, 'Citation Marks' (1961), 4 n. 3.

[13] The gospel books include Codex Palatinus (Trent, Museo Nazionale: Castello del Buon Consiglio, s.n.; Vetus Latina 2), Codex Sarzanensis (Sarezzano in Tortona, Bibliotheca Parrocchiale, s.n.; Vetus Latina 22) and the earliest manuscript of Jerome's revised text (St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1395); Verona, Bibliotheca Capitolare, XXVIII [26] is an early copy of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* with no indication of quotations.

[14] Image 1 is a copy of Augustine's *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* (Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale, 192; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13368 and nouv.acq. lat. 2199) which Hammond Bammel believes was produced around 420 ('Products of Fifth-Century Scriptoria' [1984], 378). See also the discussion below of Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, 483 [413].

[15] The recent edition of St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1394 et al. (Vetus Latina 16), Rudolf Gamper *et al*., *Die Vetus Latina-Fragmente aus dem Kloster St. Gallen. Faksimile, Edition, Kommentar* (Zürich, 2012) identifies the *diplai* at *Mark* 13:14 (p. 107) as the work of a fifth-century corrector. In Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, 6 (Vetus Latina 4), the *diplai* seem to have been added at the same time as the marginal Eusebian apparatus; the text of the citations is also slightly indented (*e.g*. *John* 2:17, fol. 128v, *John* 12:13-5, fol. 178r).

with the earliest surviving manuscript of Augustine, which may have been written in Africa during the author's lifetime as a presentation volume for Simplicianus of Milan.[16] The copyists of the sixth-century Harley Gospels and Codex Fuldensis of the whole New Testament consistently supply marginal marks alongside Old Testament quotations.[17] In the Freising fragments of the Epistles, a citation beginning in the middle of the line is preceded by a space and a reverse *diple* (<).[18] *Diplai* are found in sixth-century witnesses to Augustine, Hilary and Fulgentius of Ruspe.[19] A half-uncial copy of Augustine's *Confessions* has double *diplai* (>>) or an s-shaped symbol alongside each line.[20] The s-shaped symbol, which becomes the commonest marginal quotation mark in later Latin manuscripts, is also found in a contemporary collection of Augustine's shorter works.[21] The oldest witness to Ambrose's *Commentary on Luke*, probably from the sixth century, marks citations 'by a line of flourishes in the left margin'.[22] Two sixth-century manuscripts of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* use differing symbols to distinguish between quotations from secular and biblical sources.[23]

[16] St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Q.v.1.3: see William M. Green, 'A Fourth Century Manuscript of Saint Augustine?', *Revue bénédictine* 69 (1959), 191-7; William M. Green, 'Textual Notes on Augustine's De doctrina christiana', *Revue des Études augustiniennes* 8 (1962), 225-31; Kenneth B. Steinhauser, 'Codex Leningradensis Q.v.I.3.: Some Unresolved Problems', in Duane W.H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (eds), *De doctrina christiana. A Classic of Western Culture* (Notre Dame, 1995), 33-43. *Diplai* only appear in the first text contained in this codex, *De diuersis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*. Although Green suggested that some of the additions were made by Augustine himself, my own examination of this manuscript leads me to believe that they are from a later period in its history.

[17] London, British Library, Harley 1775; Fulda, Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bonif. 1. The Harley Gospels use the so-called 'corrupt *diple*', sometimes doubled, or a dot and horizontal line (see P. McGurk, 'Citation Marks' [1961], 9); Codex Fuldensis has the original form of the *diple* (*e.g.* fol. 67r), although quotations in the *Pauline Epistles* are marked by projection into the margin (*e.g.* fol. 212v).

[18] Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6436 (Vetus Latina 64); an example may be seen at *Rom.* 15:12.

[19] Hilary: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 2160 (and St Florian, Stiftsbibliothek, III.15.B, although no quotations are present on this single leaf); Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberini s.n.; Fulgentius: Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Regin. 267, which indicates quotations with double reversed *diplai* ('<<'). Manuscripts of Augustine are listed in the text.

[20] Rome, Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele, Sessor. 55 [2099].

[21] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13367. Elias Avery Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores. A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century. 11 vols and supplement* (Oxford, 1934-1971), *passim*, describes these later marks as 'flourishes' rather than *diplai*.

[22] E.A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (1938), III 347, *ad loc.*: the manuscript is Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H.78 sup. and Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, G.V.15.

[23] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 12214 has small 's' and shapes more closely resembling *diplai* for biblical quotations (*e.g.* foll. 20v, 24r, 111v) and a variety of symbols for non-Christian works, including some shaped like '7' (foll. 16v, 17r), large 'S' (fol. 51v) and dashes (foll. 65v, 81r); Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, 607 has double quotation marks for biblical verses (*e.g.* foll. 7v, 16v, 99v) and dashes (*e.g.* foll. 26v, 28, 36, 84r) or s-shapes for classical authors (*e.g.* fol. 80r).

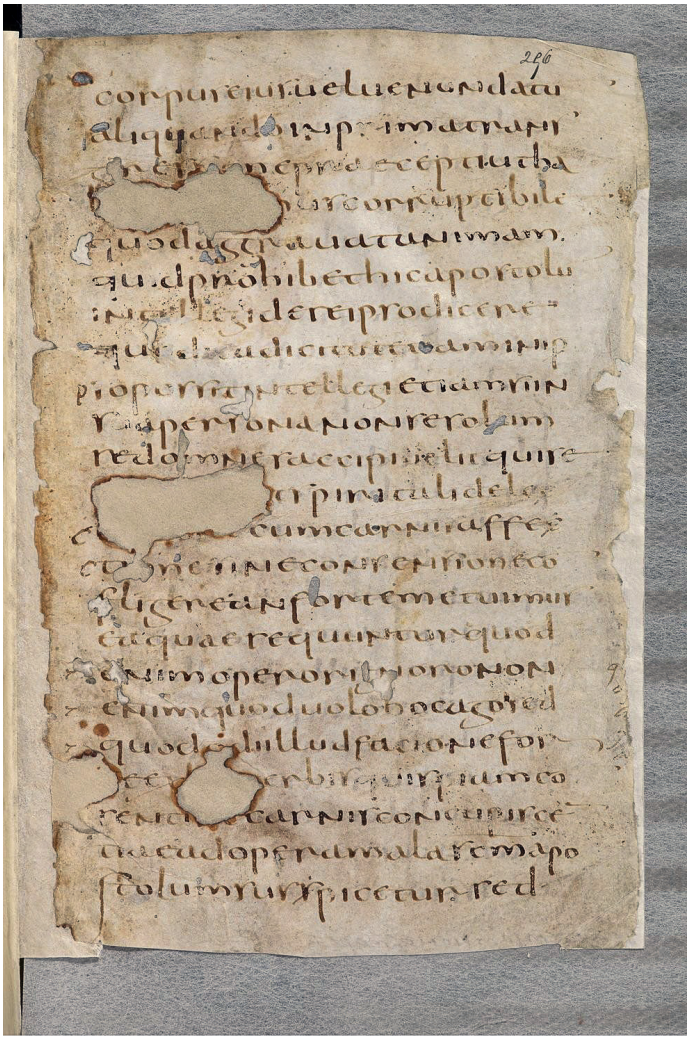


Image 1. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 13368, fol. 256r (Augustine, *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum*). *Diplai* may be seen in the left margin alongside lines 17-19. (Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr by permission.)

The predominant means of marking biblical quotations in fourth- and fifth-century Latin manuscripts appears to have been the indentation of each line by a width of one to three characters, also known as *eisthesis*. This is seen in a number of biblical manuscripts from this period, including the fourth-century

Codex Vercellensis.[24] Patristic examples include the earliest Augustine manuscript, as well as copies of Cyprian, Lactantius, Ambrose, Hilary and Priscillian.[25] Indentation is also found in conjunction with other forms of marking quotations. The Freising fragments indent all quotations, in addition to their occasional use of a reverse *diple*.[26] A fifth-century manuscript of Hilary of Poiters has a space of five characters' width before the beginning of a quotation, with subsequent lines indented (see Image 2).[27] Most striking is the combination of indentation with the use of red ink. This is attested for biblical quotations in the five remaining pages of a fourth-century manuscript of Cyprian's letters, as well as the bilingual Codex Claromontanus of the Pauline Epistles.[28] A fifth-century codex containing Hilary's *De trinitate*, Ambrose's *De fide* and the proceedings of the Council of Aquileia, along with significant Arian marginalia, has the first line of each quotation in red.[29] Apart from these three manuscripts and two copies of Hilary's commentary on the Psalms, the use of red ink for quotations is barely attested before the seventh century.[30] An interesting feature of a manuscript of Ambrose's theological works from the end of the fifth century is the use of a smaller form of half-uncial writing as well as indentation for biblical verses.[31]

[24] Vercelli, Archivio Capitolare Eusebiano, *sine numero* (Vetus Latina 3); see, for example, *John* 2:17 on p. 192. Fifth-century examples include Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 17225 (Codex Corbeiensis, Vetus Latina 8), Autun, Bibliothèque municipale, 21, and the bilingual Codex Bezae (Cambridge, University Library, Nn.2.41, Vetus Latina 5).

[25] For the St Petersburg manuscript of Augustine, see note 16 above. The indentation of quotations is only found in *De doctrina christiana*. It begins on folio 118r, with *qui autem diligit* at 1.23.23 and *nemo umquam* at 1.24.24. In 1.24.25, *caro concupiscit* and *nemo enim umquam* are indented, but *sed nutrit et fouet* is not. Most longer biblical quotations are indicated in the remaining chapters of Book 1, but the only quotation indented in the remaining pages of Book 2 is *dentes tui sicut grex* (2.6.7, fol. 129r). Other writers are found in the following manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10592 (Cyprian); Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, G.V.37 (Cyprian); Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, 701 (509) (Lactantius); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13246 (Ambrose; see below); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 152; lat. 2630; lat. 8907; Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare XIII (11); XIV (12) (all Hilary); Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.q. 3 (Priscillian).

[26] See above; indentation is also found with *diplai* in the manuscript of Augustine's shorter works mentioned in note 21 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13367), and was employed by the copyist in the Verona gospel manuscript (note 12 above).

[27] Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, 452.

[28] London, British Library, Add. MS 40165A and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 107 (Vetus Latina 75).

[29] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8907.

[30] Both manuscripts of Hilary are from the fifth century: in Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, XIII (11), Latin quotations are indented but Greek quotations (possibly just single words) are written in red; all quotations are indented in Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, 452 (381) and Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. lat. 1593, but the first verse of each Psalm is in rubrics.

[31] Ravenna, Archivio Archivescovile, *sine numero*. Compare also a sixth- or seventh-century uncial manuscript of Augustine, in which quotations from his earlier works are written in half-uncial (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Palat. lat. 210).

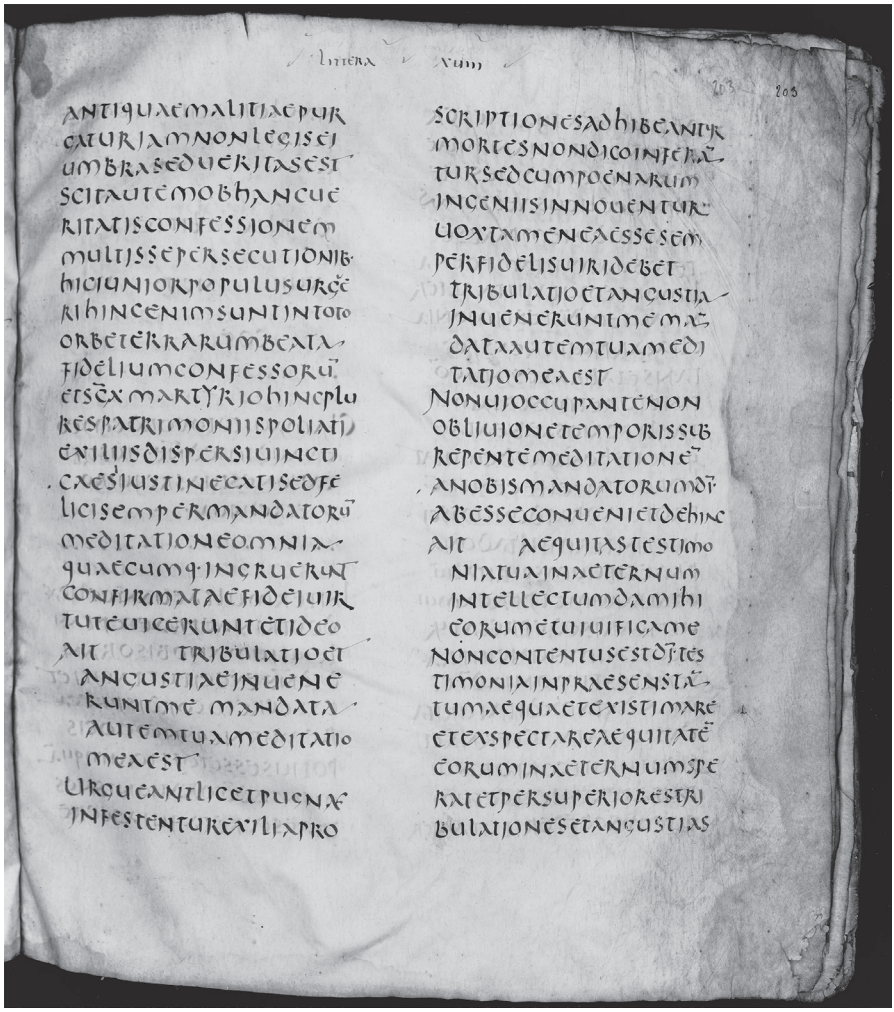


Image 2. Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 452, fol. 203r (Hilary, *Tractatus super Psalmos*). The quotations are marked by indentation, along with a space before the initial words when they do not begin a new line.
(Reproduced by kind permission.)

Biblical verses are handled in a variety of ways in two early copies of Latin Old Testament commentaries. The most ancient manuscript of Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (Image 3) sets the lemma, the verse quoted at the beginning of each section, on a line of its own which projects into the left margin (*ekthesis*). It begins with an enlarged letter (*littera notabilior*) and is

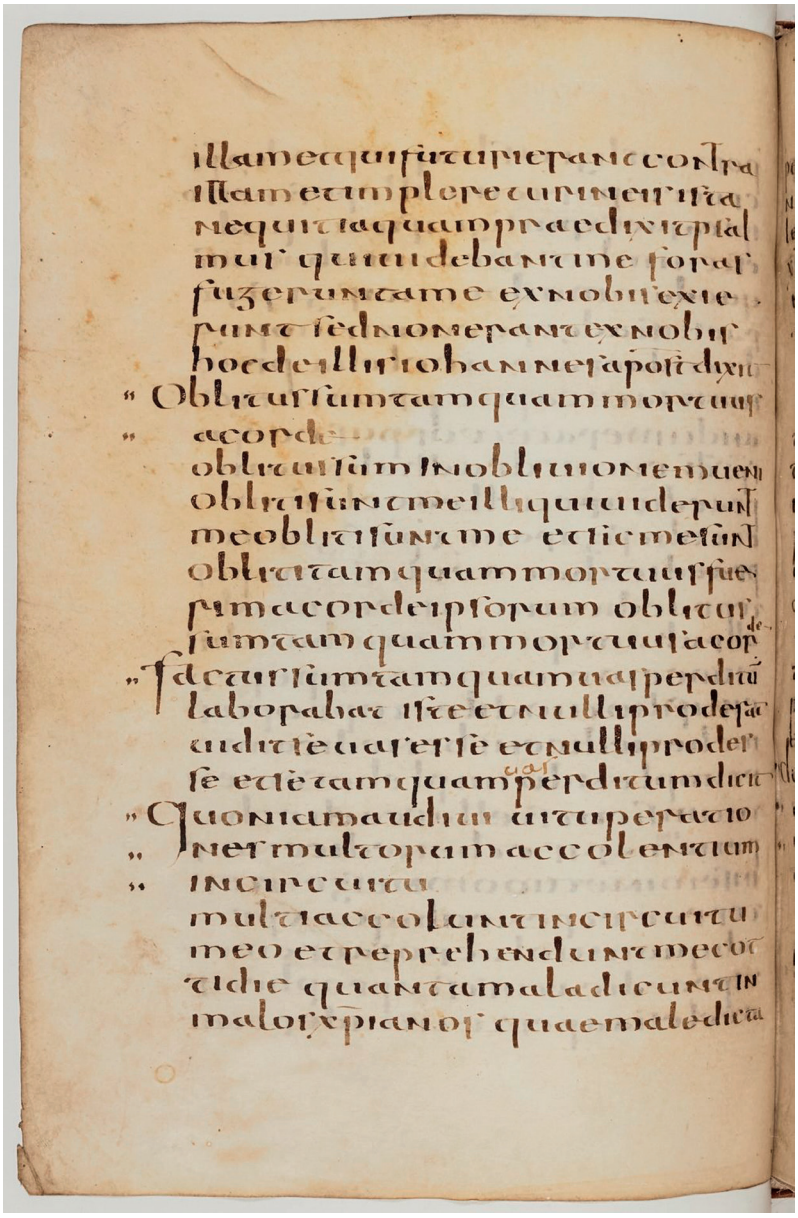


Image 3. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 9533, fol. 45v (Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*). Biblical lemmata are marked by *ekthesis*, a *littera notabilior* and a double s-shaped flourish in the margin. (Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr by permission.)

marked by a double s-shaped symbol in the margin alongside each line of biblical text.[32] The fifth-century Würzburg manuscript of Jerome's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* treats the lemmata very inconsistently.[33] The first verse is marked by projection and an enlarged letter; the second verse begins on a new line but is indented; the next verses are not put on a new line but preceded by a space of three characters. From verse five onwards, a pattern develops of lemmata on a new line with projection, an enlarged initial, and a horizontal dash in the margin alongside the first line. In the middle of the second chapter of the biblical book, however, lemmata are no longer allocated a new line, but preceded by a space; the line on which the quotation begins is marked by a marginal dash as well as a symbol shaped like a comma, and the latter continues alongside all subsequent lines. In much of the latter half of the manuscript, marginal symbols are abandoned altogether. The variety of practices in this early witness demonstrates that paratextual features are at least as vulnerable as the text of a work to alteration through the inadvertence of a copyist.

In conclusion, Latin manuscripts from the time of the composition of these commentaries and from the following centuries demonstrate that biblical quotations were sometimes indicated as part of the layout of the page, although this was not always consistent. Fourth-century authors were likely to be familiar with at least one of five principal means of marking text from a different source: spaces, indentation, projection, rubrication, and marginal symbols such as the *diple*. In addition, the use of a different form of script for quotations, first attested in the fifth century, became much more common in later witnesses after the adoption of minuscule script at the end of the eighth century.

Marius Victorinus

The commentaries on three Pauline Epistles by Marius Victorinus, written some time after the year 363, are transmitted by a slender thread: a single fifteenth-century codex, copied twice in the sixteenth century, and a later sixteenth-century manuscript deriving from a similar source to the first.[34] These witnesses

[32] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9533. Lowe dates this half-uncial manuscript to the sixth century ('More Facts' [1928], 53; *Codices Latini Antiquiores* [1953], V 587), a date accepted by Clemens Weidmann (CSEL 93.1B, 2011); the tenth-century date on the *Gallica* website (last accessed 24th July 2015) appears to be erroneous.

[33] Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.q. 2.

[34] The earliest is Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottobonianus latinus 3288A: its two copies are both in the Vatican (Ottob. lat. 3288B and Vaticanus lat. 3546). The fourth manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. lat. 469) was copied by Sirmond from a Codex Herivallensis, now lost: Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St Paul* (Oxford, 1927), 9, identifies Herivallensis as Herentals in Belgium, but Sirmond's own edition does not confirm this and other scholars prefer the Abbey of Hérivaux in the

indicate that Victorinus, who was already famous as a teacher of rhetoric before his conversion to Christianity, began each section of commentary by quoting the relevant biblical lemma before his exegesis. The length of the lemma can vary from two words (*e.g. Gal.* 1:9) to several sentences (*e.g. Philip.* 2:2-5).[35] Although the lemma is normally separate from the following exegesis, there are a few instances in which it is interrupted or preceded by Victorinus' own words. This is seen in *Eph.* 1:1, where the latter half of the verse is only quoted verbatim as part of another sentence: *scribit igitur Paulus sanctis, inquit, qui sunt Ephesi et fidelibus in Christo Iesu*.[36] This implies that Victorinus himself intended the biblical text to be included as part of his commentary, and may have read it out directly from his copy of the Epistles. Support for this is provided by the affiliation of the biblical lemmata in the surviving witnesses to this work, which transmit an Old Latin form rather than the Vulgate. This version appears to be even older than the texts of the few surviving pre-Vulgate manuscripts of Paul; it also corresponds closely to the lemmata of the commentary by Ambrosiaster. Shorter quotations in the body of the text, which are integrated into the grammar of the exposition and therefore more resistant to alteration than the lemmata, share the same affiliation.[37] Victorinus offers no explicit observations about his practice of quotation, although it is possible that this may have appeared in his lost commentaries on the earlier Epistles. He merely describes his approach as a 'simple commentary' (*commentatio simplex*).[38] The late date of the surviving manuscripts means that they are unlikely to be guides to ancient practice. Those lemmata which are combined in some way with Victorinus' own words, even though they make up a very small proportion of the whole, suggest that he did not intend a formal distinction to be made between the biblical text and his own exposition in the layout of the manuscripts. The inclusion of the source text, preceding each unit of

Ile-de-France (*e.g.* Édouard des Places, 'Marius Victorinus commentateur de saint Paul', *Biblica* 55 [1974], 83-7). The most recent edition of the commentary is Franco Gori (ed.), *Marii Victorini Opera. Pars Posterior: Opera Exegetica*, CSEL 83.2 (Vienna, 1986); a study and English translation of the *Galatians* commentary is offered in Stephen A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford, 2005).

[35] The structure of the commentary is described in S.A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (2005), Chapter 4, especially 100-1.

[36] It is not entirely clear whether the first occurrence of *Eph.* 1:1 (following *nunc quoque isdem uerbis*) is intended to stand as a lemma or is quoted as a comparison with the openings of other letters; even so, both instances of the latter part of the verse are integrated into Victorinus' own text. Other cases where the lemma is not separate from the commentary include the progressive quotation of *Gal.* 1:15-6, and the addition of *item* before the second half of *Phil.* 4:7.

[37] See also A. Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries* (1927), 10-1.

[38] This term appears in the *Commentary on Ephesians*; he also uses *expositio simplex* at *Eph.* 1:11 and *Gal.* 4:18. See further S.A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (2005), 111ff.

exegesis, constitutes the pattern for the self-contained presentation of the majority of early Christian commentaries.[39]

Ambrosiaster

The anonymous commentary on Paul known as Ambrosiaster and composed in Rome between 366 and 384 is attested by a substantial number of copies. Vogels' edition is based on twenty-seven manuscripts.[40] Eighteen of these date from the eighth or ninth centuries, while one goes back to the middle of the sixth century.[41] Several pages of Ambrosiaster's third recension of his *Romans* commentary have recently been identified among the undertexts of the palimpsest Codex Carolinus, copied around the end of the fifth century.[42] The transmission of multiple authorial recensions of the same commentary (three of *Romans*, two of the other Epistles) is an unusual aspect of the tradition of Ambrosiaster.[43] His commentary is structured in a very similar way to that of Marius Victorinus, with sequential biblical extracts at the beginning of each section.[44] These lemmata are, it seems, always grammatically separate from the following exegesis. However, there is at least one instance in the later recension when Ambrosiaster changes his division of the biblical text: at *Gal*. 4:27, after *scriptum est enim*,

[39] On the influence of Victorinus' structure, see S.A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (2005), 183-4. A contrast is provided by a Greek-Latin glossary attested in a papyrus copied in the early fifth century, which has to be used in conjunction with a biblical manuscript (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, BP XXI; Gregory–Aland P99).

[40] The edition is in three volumes: Heinrich J. Vogels (ed.), *Ambrosiastri qui dicitur Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas*, CSEL 81.1-3 (Vienna, 1966-1969).

[41] Monte Cassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, 150 (Image 4 below). A note at the end of the manuscript indicates that it was corrected in the year 570 by the priest Donatus in the monastery of Lucullanum in Naples.

[42] Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Weissenburg 64. The Ambrosiaster fragments occupy folios 210r-217v, 276r, 281r and 318r-325v. A partial transcription by Stefanie Gehrke is available at: <http://diglib.hab.de/edoc/ed000006/index.php?transcript=palimpsest_Ambrosiaster_Gehrke>. In addition, a further ninth-century witness to Ambrosiaster's exposition of *Romans* and 1*Corinthians* was identified last year: Nicolas De Maeyer and Gert Partoens, 'A New Identification of the Pauline Commentary in Manuscript *Oxford Bodleian Library Laud. Misc. 106*', *Sacris Erudiri* 53 (2014), 7-14.

[43] Two authorial recensions also appear to be transmitted of Ambrosiaster's *Quaestiones*: see Marie-Pierre Bussières, 'Ambrosiaster's Method of Interpretation in the Questions on the Old and New Testament', in Josef Lössl and John W. Watt (eds), *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition between Rome and Baghdad* (Farnham and Burlington, 2011), 49-66.

[44] S.A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (2005), 183-246, argues for the use of Victorinus' commentary by Ambrosiaster, although there are no verbal parallels in the exegesis, as well as by Augustine; on the structure of Ambrosiaster's commentary, see also Wilhelm Geerlings, 'Zur exegetischen Methode des Ambrosiaster', in G. Schöllgen and C. Scholten (eds), *Stimuli* (Münster, 1996), 444-9.

he inserts the comment *in Esaia hoc habetur quod subiectum est*. There are also differences in the lemmata of the two recensions: for instance, the first recension gives the text of *Gal.* 1:4 as *qui se dedit pro peccatis nostris ut liberaret nos a praesenti saeculo malo*, whereas the later recension has *qui dedit semetipsum pro peccatis nostris ut liberaret nos de praesenti saeculo maligno*. This derives from a later adjustment of the text of the first recension rather than an authorial change.[45]

In the Monte Cassino manuscript (Image 4), the lemma is written in the same half-uncial script as the rest of the text, but it always occupies a separate line and each row is indented by the width of one or two characters. A symbol comparable to a *diple*, shaped a little more like an 's', is also set against each line of quotation, level with the left margin of the rest of the text. The Wolfenbüttel palimpsest is also written in half-uncial script throughout. In this witness, sections begin on a new line with the initial letters projecting into the margin. Two of the visible biblical lemmata are also indicated in this way (*Rom.* 6:15 and 6:16 on fol. 211r), but three others are not, starting instead in the middle of a line (*Rom.* 1:17 on fol. 210v; *Rom.* 7:8 on fol. 216r; *Rom.* 12:15 on fol. 281r).[46] In every case, the commentary immediately follows the end of the lemma, rather than beginning on a new line. The variation between these two manuscripts shows that, even within two centuries of the work's composition, different forms of layout are present in the manuscript tradition.

Eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts of Ambrosiaster demonstrate that the most common devices for distinguishing the biblical text in this period are rubrication and the use of marginal quotation marks, which are normally mutually exclusive. Rubricated lemmata tend to be in the same minuscule script as the rest of the text.[47] Generally speaking, the exact fit of rubricated text written by the first hand to the space available implies that it was copied at the same time as the commentary sections from the same exemplar. There are a few instances in which lemmata are in both red ink and capital letters: in these cases, the fit of text to the available space is sometimes less precise and may have been written separately.[48] Sometimes only the initial letter of the lemma is rubricated.[49] Quotation marks, shaped like 's', 'ss' or 'w', are added by the

[45] See below. Ambrosiaster's biblical text is reconstructed in H.J. Vogels, *Das Corpus Paulinum des Ambrosiaster*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge 13 (Bonn, 1957).

[46] There is a mark in the left margin alongside the quotation of *Rom.* 6:16 which may be a *diple*, but it is impossible to be confident from the available images and none of the other quotations appear to be marked in this way.

[47] *E.g.* Fulda, Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Aa 18; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 1759; St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 330.

[48] *E.g. Romans* in the Fulda and Paris manuscripts mentioned in note 47, the majority of Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, 87.

[49] St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 101.

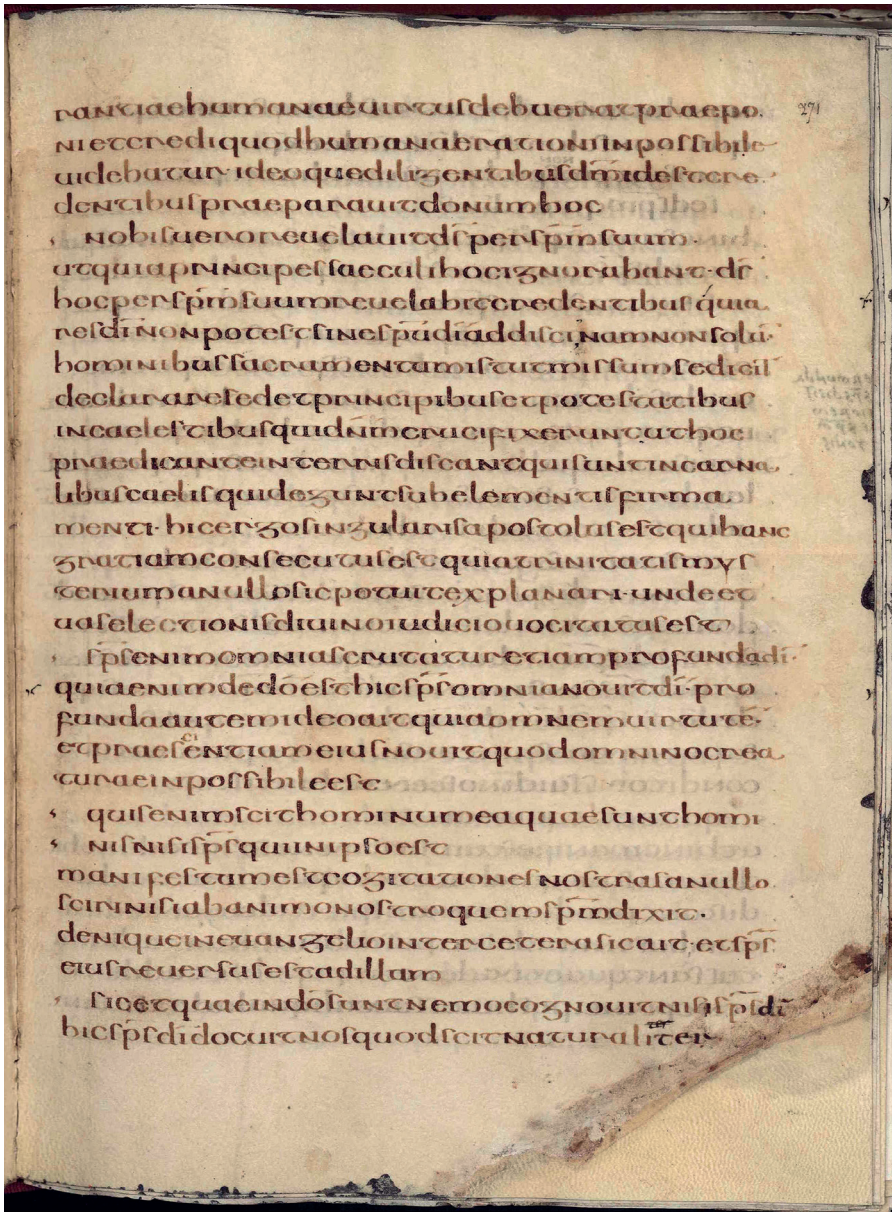


Image 4. Monte Cassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, cod. 150, p. 271. (Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul*). Biblical lemmata are on separate lines, marked by indentation and a marginal symbol.
(Reproduced by kind permission of the authorities of the Archive.)

copyist in the margin.[50] The Vienna manuscript of the later recension generally has marginal quotation marks although some lemmata are written in capitals.[51] The only surviving manuscript of the earlier recension of *Galatians* and *Ephesians* is an eighth-century codex now in Florence (Image 5).[52] This appears to be the sole other witness in which the lemmata begin on a new line, as in the Monte Cassino manuscript. They are indicated by larger initial letters projecting into the margin and the Insular quotation mark consisting of two dots and a comma ('..,') before and after the biblical text.[53] However, the copyist has used the blank space at the end of the preceding line to write the continuation of the first line of the new section, in order not to leave too much empty parchment. These witnesses suggest that the initial practice may have been to begin each lemma and each section of exegesis on a new line, but this was later abandoned, possibly for reasons of economy of parchment.

As mentioned above, differing forms of biblical text are found in the manuscripts of Ambrosiaster. The presentation of the lemmata on a separate line, so that they could readily be distinguished from the commentary, would have assisted in the replacement of the text. It has long been observed that the biblical text was already altered in the Florence manuscript of the earlier recension: in the case of *Gal.* 1:4, quoted above, this is confirmed by the use in both recensions of *malignitas* in Ambrosiaster's exposition, matching the lemma of the later recension.[54] There are, however, cases in which biblical quotations in the commentary have been adjusted as well as the lemma (*e.g. antecessores* rather than *praecessores* in *Gal.* 1:17). The persistence of Old Latin readings in the substituted text, as well as the date of the Florence manuscript, suggest that the alteration was made at an early point in the transmission of the text. This is also the case in the Vienna and Amiens manuscripts of the later recension, in which the lemmata have been replaced with another Old Latin text: in *Romans* this matches the version used by Rufinus in his translation of Origen's commentary, and Hammond Bammel has proposed that this took place during the fifth or early sixth century in a scriptorium connected with Rufinus.[55]

[50] *E.g.* the non-rubricated portions of the Amiens manuscript; St Gall 101; Cologne, Dombibliothek, Cod. 34; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6265; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 13339; St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 100; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 106.

[51] Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 743.

[52] Florence, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashb. 60.

[53] On this symbol, see P. McGurk, 'Citation Marks' (1961), 7: it appears to be of Anglo-Saxon rather than Irish origin.

[54] See A. Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries* (1927), 60; H.J. Vogels, *Das Corpus Paulinum des Ambrosiaster* (1957), 111; compare also the persistence of *placuit* in the exegesis of *Gal.* 1:15 despite the reading *complacuit* in the lemma of the Florence manuscript.

[55] C.P. Hammond Bammel, 'Products of Fifth-Century Scriptoria' (1984), 371-2.

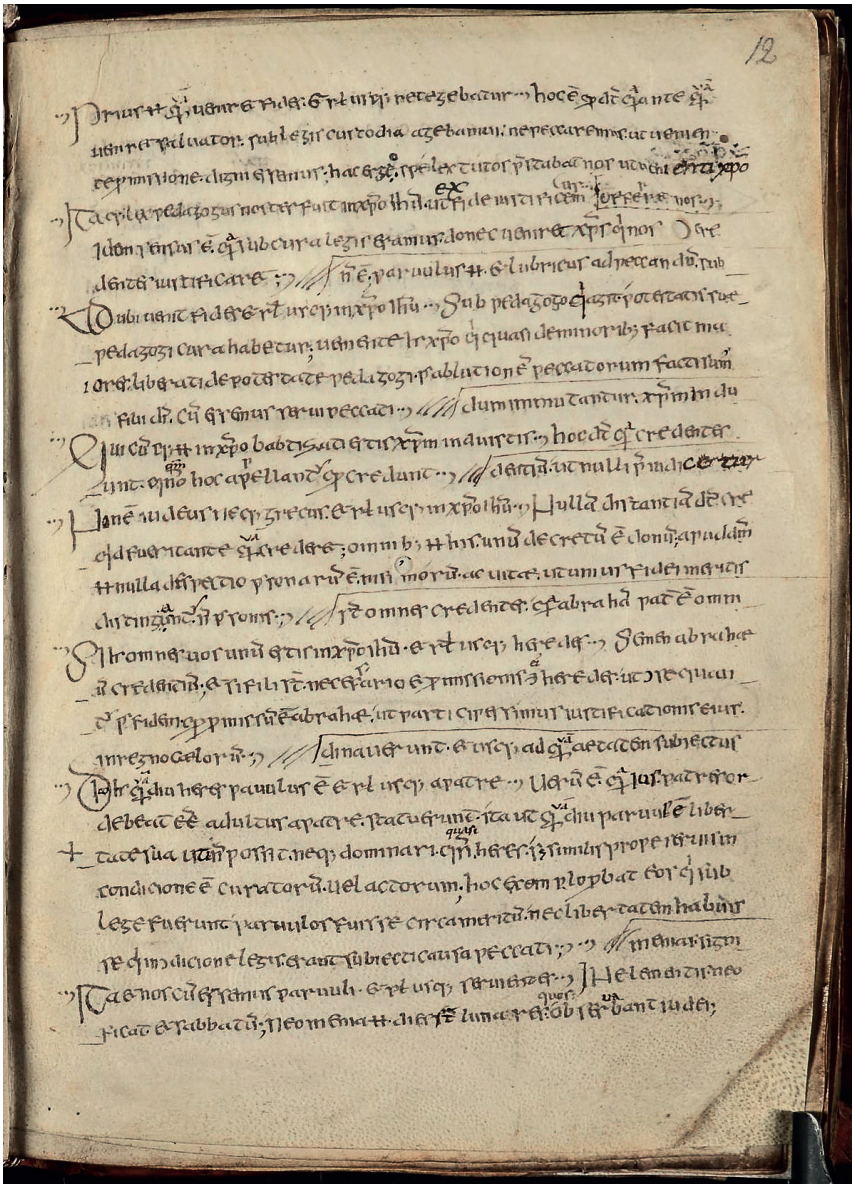


Image 5. Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Ashb. 60, fol. 12r (Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul*). Biblical lemmata are marked by by *ekthesis*, a *littera notabilior* and an insular quotation mark (..,) in the margin. Text written in blank space at the end of the line above is marked off by various lines. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana.)

Another point of interest in the textual tradition of Ambrosiaster is the combination of different recensions in manuscripts of the whole commentary. For example, one manuscript has the earlier recension of 1 and 2*Corinthians* but the later recension of the subsequent epistles;[56] another has the earlier recension of *Romans* but the later recension of *Ephesians* and *Galatians*.[57] It is tempting to connect the use of different sources with a change in layout, yet both the manuscripts in Fulda and Paris which have the *Romans* lemmata in capitals but the other Epistles in minuscule script have the later recension throughout. The differing formats in the Amiens manuscript suggest that the distinction of biblical text and commentary may have been due to the preferences of individual copyists as much as the influence of an exemplar, with no particular form of standardisation. In this respect, the manuscripts of Ambrosiaster show how the presentation of New Testament commentaries evolve over time.

Jerome

Jerome's commentaries on four of the *Pauline Epistles*, composed in 386, are attested in manuscripts from the late eighth century onwards.[58] This is the date of the Vienna copy of his *Commentary on Galatians*, to which there are nine further witnesses from the subsequent century.[59] Rubrication is less common in these than in manuscripts of Ambrosiaster: the principal exception has the lemmata written in red capitals and, in addition, indicated by red quotation marks in the margin from the middle of Book One onwards (Image 6).[60] Only one of the other thirteen manuscripts used in Raspanti's edition of *Galatians* features rubrication, in the form of red initials.[61] A ninth-century manuscript of Jerome's commentaries on *Ephesians*, *Titus* and *Philemon* has the biblical lemmata written in an uncial script and alternating lines of red and black ink.[62] The Vienna manuscript indicates quotations with marginal symbols; another copyist uses a distinctive triple s-shaped symbol,[63] while in two other witnesses some marginal symbols may be first hand, others appear to have been added later, and several

[56] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lyell Empt. 9.

[57] Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, LXXV. A considerable number of manuscripts of Ambrosiaster contain part of Pelagius' commentary for the end of 1*Corinthians* and beginning of 2*Corinthians*, which was presumably added to replace a missing portion at an early point in the tradition: this even affects the sixth-century Monte Cassino manuscript. See further below.

[58] The most recent editions are Federica Bucchi (ed.), *Commentarii in epistulas Pauli apostoli ad Titum et ad Philemonem*, CChr.SL 77C (Turnhout, 2003); Giacomo Raspanti (ed.), *Commentarii in epistulam Pauli apostoli ad Galatas*, CChr.SL 77A (Turnhout, 2006).

[59] The earliest manuscript is Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 1002.

[60] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 1854.

[61] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 340.

[62] Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Weißenburg 13.

[63] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 9531.

lemmata are not indicated at all.[64] A similar situation pertains in the ninth-century Wolfenbüttel manuscript:[65] in Book One, the lemmata are marked by a red number and marginal symbols; only the latter are found in Book Two, while the quotation marks alongside the lemmata in Book Three are infrequent and largely secondary. The contemporary Harvard manuscript has the lemmata in Jerome's commentary on *Ephesians* written in capitals, often decorated with red ink, but in the *Galatians* commentary this is only true of a single lemma, *Christo confixus sum cruci*.[66] This exceptional presentation is matched by a manuscript in Paris,[67] which also features it for *et mansi apud eum diebus quindecim* (*Gal.* 1:18, fol. 9v), a portion of text missing from the Harvard manuscript. This coincidence, as well as other points of contact between these two witnesses, suggests that they are likely to derive from a shared ancestor which itself may have depended on a codex with all the lemmata in capitals. Few of the other *Galatians* lemmata in the Harvard manuscript appear to be indicated by the copyist: most of the marginal quotation marks are by a later hand.

Two further ninth-century manuscripts contain Jerome's three other Pauline commentaries in an identical format.[68] The lemmata are written in black capitals throughout, and are sometimes repeated in particularly lengthy sections.[69] Certain longer quotations from other biblical books, especially in the *Commentary on Ephesians*, are indicated with marginal quotation marks which appear to be by the first hand. In the Karlsruhe witness, these take the later s-shaped form, while in the Cologne manuscript they are slightly more curved and always followed by a medial dot. In a third witness to these three commentaries, also from the ninth century, the lemmata are in black capitals as far as *Eph.* 1:9, but after this are marked by an 'ss' symbol in the margin until *Tit.* 1:16, where the capitals re-appear for just six verses.[70] In *Ephesians*, 'ss' is also used to mark quotations from other biblical books, making these indistinguishable from the lemmata. In *Titus* and *Philemon*, this manuscript uses a single 's' to indicate the text of these Epistles.

Jerome quotes the biblical text sequentially at the beginning of each section of the commentary. In the earlier commentaries on *Titus* and *Philemon*, the lemma is grammatically separate from his exegesis, but this is not always the

[64] St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 128 and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 14850. A ninth-century fragment of this work (Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. frag. 9) appears to have a few quotation marks in the margin written by the copyist, but not all the biblical text is indicated in this way.

[65] Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Weissenburg 28.

[66] Cambridge MA, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ 495. The lemma is at *Gal.* 2:19, on fol. 4v.

[67] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 14850; this lemma occurs on fol. 23r.

[68] Cologne, Dombibliothek, Cod. 58 and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 81.

[69] *E.g. Titus* 1:7 at Cologne foll. 118r and 120v, and Karlsruhe foll. 87r and 89r.

[70] St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 129: see in particular pp. 212-7 of this manuscript.

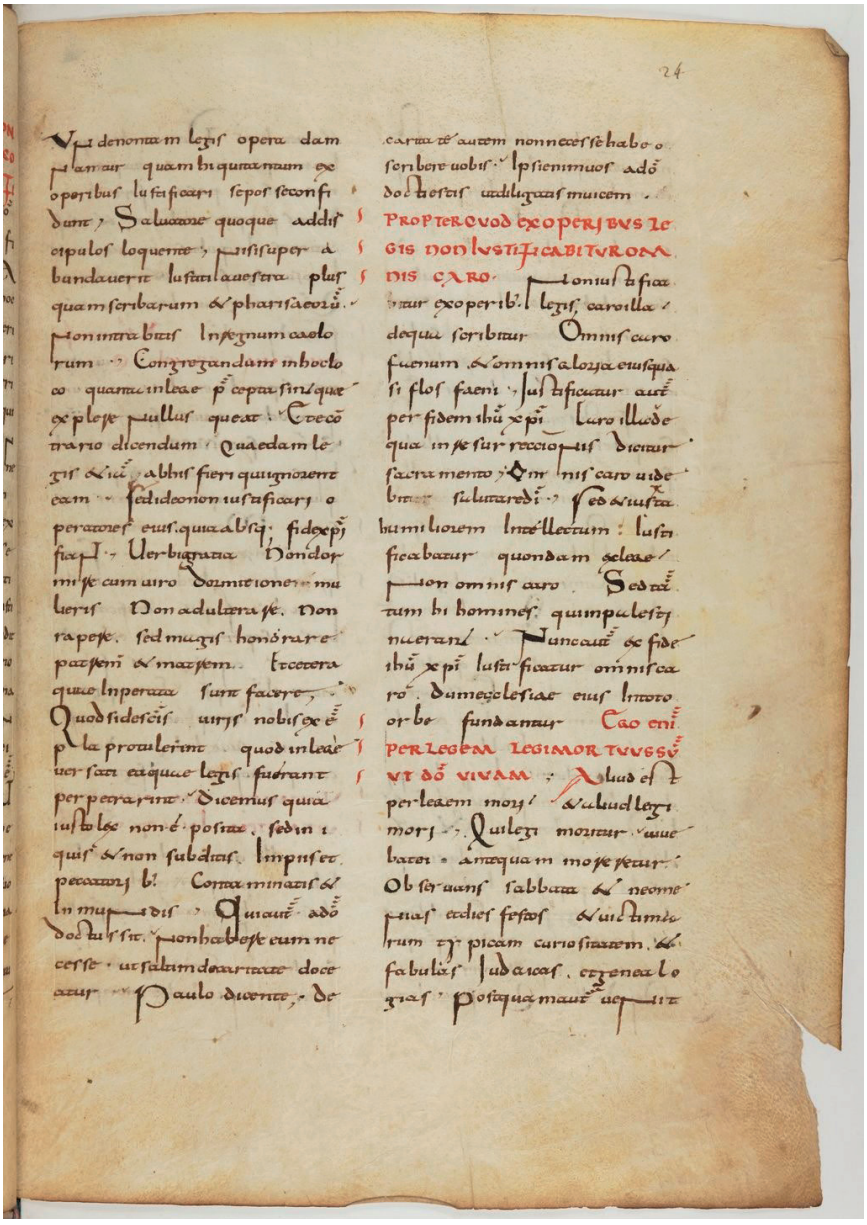


Image 6. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 1854, fol. 24r (Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*). Biblical lemmata are written in capitals and red ink, and marked with a single s-shaped flourish in the margin. (Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr by permission.)

case in the commentaries on *Galatians* and *Ephesians*. At *Eph*. 5:14, for example, he extends the lemma with an alternative reading: *et illuminabit te Christus, siue orietur tibi Christus* ('and Christ will enlighten you, or, Christ will rise upon you'). This is taken even further in *Gal*. 5:11, where Jerome interrupts the lemma, reading: *euacuatum est (siue, ut in graeco melius habet, cessauit) scandalum crucis* ('has emptied, or, as it better reads in Greek, has removed, the scandal of the cross'). This suggests that he saw the quotation of the biblical text as an integral part of his commentary and did not intend it to occupy a different space in the manuscript layout. The general lack of rubrication or separation of the lemmata in surviving manuscripts of the *Commentary on Galatians* is likely to reflect this authorial conception as well as the difficulty of distinguishing them from Jerome's own text in certain places.[71]

Despite the integration of certain lemmata into Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians*, there is evidence of some editorial adjustment to the biblical text to bring it into accordance with a different version.[72] Generally speaking, the trend is towards the introduction of Vulgate readings, but there are also secondary Old Latin variants (e.g. the dative singular *ecclesiae* in the lemma at *Gal*. 1:2, or *impudicitia* in the lemma of *Gal*. 5:19, both of which are contradicted by Jerome's exegetical comments). This also affects quotations in the course of Jerome's exposition: for example his lemma of *Gal*. 5:21 features three non-Vulgate readings, including *talia* and *possidebunt*, but the quotation of this verse in his exegesis in all manuscripts matches the Vulgate, with *haec* and *consequentur*. It may be that the lack of a clear indication of the lemmata in their manuscript confused an editor seeking to introduce the later form.

Augustine

In his *Commentary on Galatians*, written around the year 394, Augustine treats the biblical text in a different fashion to his predecessors. In contrast to his preceding commentary on certain parts of *Romans*, he describes the *Galatians* commentary as 'not selective, passing over some of it, but continuous and complete'.[73] However, although the initial sections of commentary begin with

[71] At the interrupted lemma of *Gal*. 5:11, Paris 1854 returns to black ink and minuscule script from *euacuatum* onwards.

[72] See further Hugh A.G. Houghton, 'The Biblical Text of Jerome's Commentary on Galatians', *JTS* ns 65 (2014), 1-24. The other commentaries are still to be evaluated.

[73] *Non carptim, id est aliqua praetermittens, sed continuanter et totam* (*Retractationes* 1.24). Johannes Divjak (ed.), *Sancti Aureli Augustini Opera IV.1*, CSEL 84 (Vienna, 1971), includes both the *Romans* and *Galatians* commentaries. For a criticism of this edition, however, listing a further tenth-century manuscript (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek MS lat. fol. 759), see Jean Rousselet, 'À propos d'une édition critique: pour mieux lire les Commentaires d'Augustin sur les Épîtres aux Romains et aux Galates', *Revue des Études augustiniennes* 18 (1972), 233-48. See also

a lemma which stands by itself, after the first chapter of the Epistle he takes a much more flexible approach. This sometimes involves interrupting the biblical text with *inquit* (*Gal*. 2:3, 2:20, 3:2, 3:14, 3:19 *etc*.) or other parenthetical comments (*e.g*. *Gal*. 2:5); alternatively, it may be prefaced with an introductory phrase such as *consequenter dicit* (*Gal*. 3:9, 3:23) or *quod autem ait* (*Gal*. 2:10, 3:10). In some places, he quotes the Epistle a few words at a time, interspersed with a brief comment on each phrase (*e.g*. *Gal*. 2:4, 4:12-3), thoroughly incorporating it into the flow of his exposition. Augustine's method appears to have been to work from a manuscript of *Galatians*, quoting the text as he went. This means that his lemmata have to be extracted from the continuous sequence of the commentary, normally taking the first occurrence of each as the form which he read out of his codex.[74] Augustine may quote certain phrases multiple times, sometimes in the form of a 'resumptive citation' when he repeats the text he has just been expounding before proceeding to the next lemma (*e.g*. *Gal*. 1:7, 3:13, 5:13). On several occasions, he rephrases or reorders the text (*e.g*. *Gal*. 1:10, 3:29). Despite Augustine's claim to be complete, however, there are several occasions when the biblical text is so thoroughly embedded into his exposition that it is impossible to reconstruct the form found in his codex (*e.g*. *Gal*. 2:7-9, 3:16-8).

This continual engagement and interaction with the Epistle suggests that Augustine intended his commentary to be written as a single, continuous text rather than to distinguish between lemma and exposition. As he used Jerome's commentary and is likely to have been familiar with that of Marius Victorinus, one may wonder whether he was following codices of the earlier commentators in which quotations were not marked.[75] Of the twenty-eight manuscripts used by Divjak in his edition, just five predate the tenth century. On only one of these are quotations indicated by the copyist, although the marginal marks are often missing from the sequential text of the Epistle.[76] The same is true in a

Johannes Divjak, 'Zur Textüberlieferung der augustinischen *Expositio in epistolam ad Galatas*', *SP* 14 (1976), 402-9. A stimulating paper on the textual tradition of Augustine's *Commentary on Galatians* was given at the Seventeenth International Patristics Conference by Daniel Hadas, who also drew attention to the presence of this commentary in the Harvard manuscript (see below). For a study and English translation of the work, see Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford, 2003).

[74] For more on this method of working, see H.A.G. Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John* (2008), especially 58ff.

[75] On Augustine's use of Jerome and Marius Victorinus and apparent lack of familiarity with Ambrosiaster until later in his career, see E. Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (2003), 20-56 and S.A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (2005), 188. However, Antoon A.R. Bastiaensen, 'Augustin commentateur de saint Paul et l'Ambrosiaster', *Sacris Erudiri* 36 (1996), 37-65 suggests that Augustine may in fact have used Ambrosiaster in his commentary on *Galatians*.

[76] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 17394.

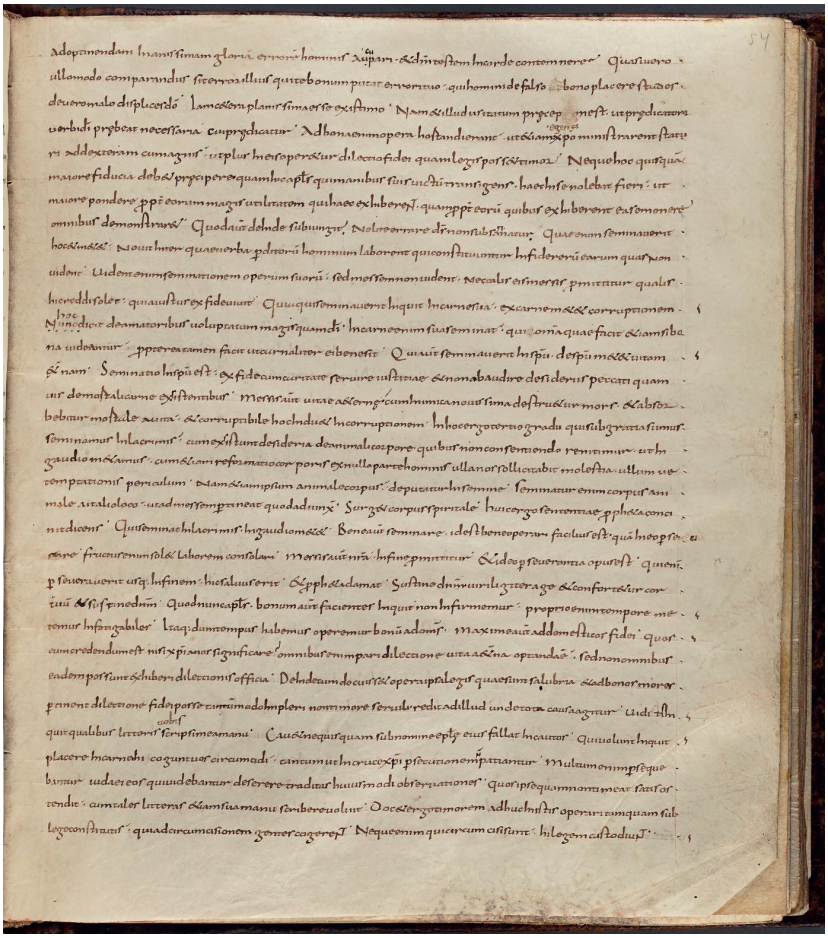


Image 7. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ 495, fol. 54r (Augustine, *Commentary on Galatians*). S-shaped marks can be seen in the right margin alongside biblical quotations. (Public domain.)

ninth-century manuscript not reported by Divjak (Image 7).[77] Two contemporary witnesses have no indication of the biblical text, and this also appears to be true of other manuscripts of this commentary.[78]

[77] Cambridge MA, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ 495, foll. 40r-55r: this manuscript also includes Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians* (see above).

[78] St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 137 and 151. Divjak does not mention any marking of the biblical text in his description of manuscripts in the preface to his edition. E.A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (1934), I 5a does not refer to citation marks in his description of the oldest

Budapest Anonymous Commentary

The anonymous commentary on the *Pauline Epistles* written in Rome at the end of the fourth century is preserved in a single manuscript copied around the year 800 in Saint-Amand (Image 8).[79] Unusually for a commentary, the portions of biblical text are longer than the exegetical comments: between *Rom.* 9:25 and 11:12, there are seventy-five lines from the Epistle and only six lines of exposition, while there is just one comment in the whole of *Ephesians* (fol. 71r). At least two copyists worked on the manuscript, who distinguished the different types of text in several ways. Both lemmata and exegesis begin on a new line: the initial letter is in black or red, respectively, and projects into the left margin. There is usually a quotation mark in the outer margin alongside each line of biblical text, although if no comments are present on a page these are omitted in the latter half of the manuscript. On folios 1 to 58, the end of each section is marked by a symbol consisting of a triangle of dots above a comma, in red for commentary text and in black for the quotations: this seems to be a stylised version of the decorative *hedera* symbol. From folio 59 onwards, these are discontinued: instead, the exegetical sections are written in a smaller script. The text of the *Pauline Epistles* in the lemmata corresponds to one of the forms circulating in Italy prior to the Vulgate. Nevertheless, discrepancies between the lemmata and biblical citations in the commentary indicate that the two are not mutually dependent, and Dunphy has proposed that the commentary is a direct translation from Greek.[80]

The relative size of the passages of biblical text and commentary has led to the suggestion that the commentary originated as marginal glosses in a biblical codex.[81] This may be confirmed by some problems with the sequence of lemmata and commentary in 1*Corinthians*. For example, the comment *aut nomen mulieris*

surviving manuscript of the *Commentary on Galatians*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 491, although the accompanying image shows biblical quotations in the exposition of *Romans* marked by a large initial. I have not been able to consult images of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1975; of the later manuscripts available online, some have sporadic marginal quotation marks (*e.g.* Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1639, 2033 and 10444) and others have no markings at all (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1974; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 12.28).

[79] Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 1. The *editio princeps* and study is Hermann J. Frede, *Ein neuer Paulustext und Kommentar*, AGLB 7-8 (Freiburg, 1973-1974). For the attribution to Constantius, see de S. De Bruyn, 'Constantius the *Tractator*' (1992).

[80] Walter Dunphy, 'Glosses on Glosses: On the Budapest Anonymous and Pseudo-Rufinus. A Study on Anonymous Writings in Pelagian Circles (Part 3)', *Augustinian Studies* 46 (2015), 43-70, especially 66.

[81] Rosalind F. MacLachlan, 'A Reintroduction to the Budapest Anonymous Commentary on the Pauline Letters', in Hugh A.G. Houghton (ed.), *Early Readers, Scholars and Editors of the New Testament*, Texts and Studies 3.11 (Piscataway NJ, 2014), 93-106. This is proposed independently in Walter Dunphy, 'Glosses on Glosses: On the Budapest Anonymous and Pseudo-Rufinus. A Study on Anonymous Writings in Pelagian Circles (Part 1)', *Augustinian Studies* 44 (2013), 227-47, 228.

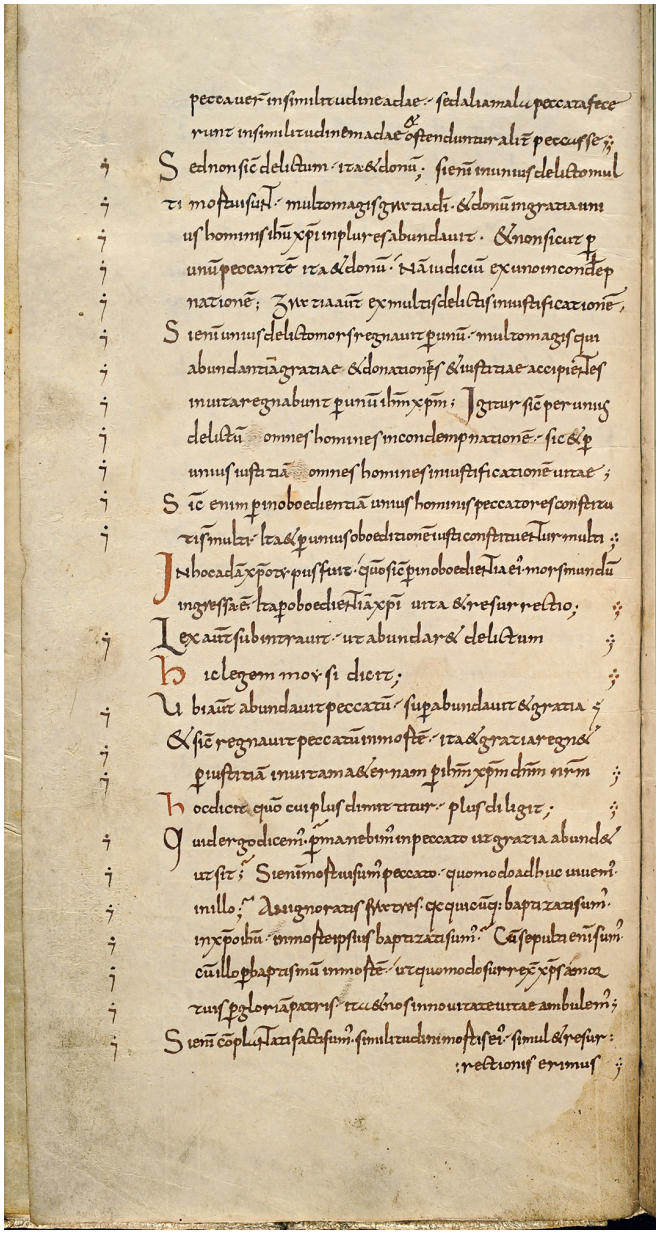


Image 8. Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 1, fol. 9v (Budapest Anonymous Commentary). Biblical text is marked by a symbol in the left margin and black initials, commentary sections by red initials. The stylised *hedera* can be seen on the right hand side at the end of each section. (Reproduced by kind permission.)

aut turbis aut regionis alicuius ('either the name of a woman, or a group, or some district') interrupts the quotation of 1*Cor*. 1:8. Clearly, this is a gloss on Paul's reference to Chloe, yet unlike most comments which follow the relevant lemma, this has been placed immediately before the lemma beginning with *Cloes*. It is easy to imagine how a marginal comment linked to a single word in the biblical text could end up being incorporated in the wrong place by an inattentive copyist when the work was being copied in a different format. The inconsistency is heightened by the fact that neither the preceding nor following biblical lemmata are complete sense units.[82] Similarly, the first comment following 1*Cor*. 2:1 picks up on the biblical word *sermonis*, but the next two comments, which both feature the word *timore*, refer forward to its occurrence in 1*Cor*. 2:3. The sequence of lemma followed by comment is only restored with the comment on *non in persuasione* in 1*Cor*. 2:4. As with the previous example, the confusion is coupled with breaks in lemmata which make no grammatical sense and the absence of *hederae*. The consistent presentation of the commentary, however, along with the division of the work between multiple hands and the small number of corrections suggest that the present manuscript was copied from one in the same layout. The conversion of the marginal format to the more common lineated commentary must have taken place at some point between the fifth and eighth centuries. The origin of the commentary as annotations in the margins of a biblical codex might explain why it remained anonymous.

The late fourth century seems a surprising early date for the creation of a biblical commentary in the margins of a Latin biblical manuscript.[83] Most surviving examples date from the eighth century onwards, such as the Würzburg Paul (Image 9).[84] This is a copy of the Epistles written in Ireland in the middle of the eighth century. The spacing of the lines is wide in order to permit the copying of interlinear glosses above the biblical text.[85] Some of these were copied by the first hand from the manuscript's exemplar but many others were added later, along with marginal extracts from several commentators: a number of these are identified as Pelagius while others are written in Irish. The complicated format of each page is the result of successive layers of additions rather than a single authorial conception: nevertheless, it is easy to imagine how, if a

[82] In addition, the customary *hedera* symbols are missing from the end of the lemma and comment.

[83] The earliest surviving parallel might be the substantial fifth-century Arian scholia added to the margins of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 8907 shortly after it was copied. See Roger Gryson (ed.), *Scolies ariennes sur le concile d'Aquilée*, SC 267 (Paris, 1980) and, further, Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, 'From the School of Maximinus. The Arian Material in Paris MS. Lat. 8907', *JTS* ns 31 (1980), 391-402. Luise Frenkel has also suggested to me that further parallels may be found in the marginal and interlinear glossing of legal codes.

[84] Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f.12.

[85] A similar example from the same time and place, but with slightly less space between the lines of biblical text and fewer comments, is the Würzburg Matthew (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f.61).

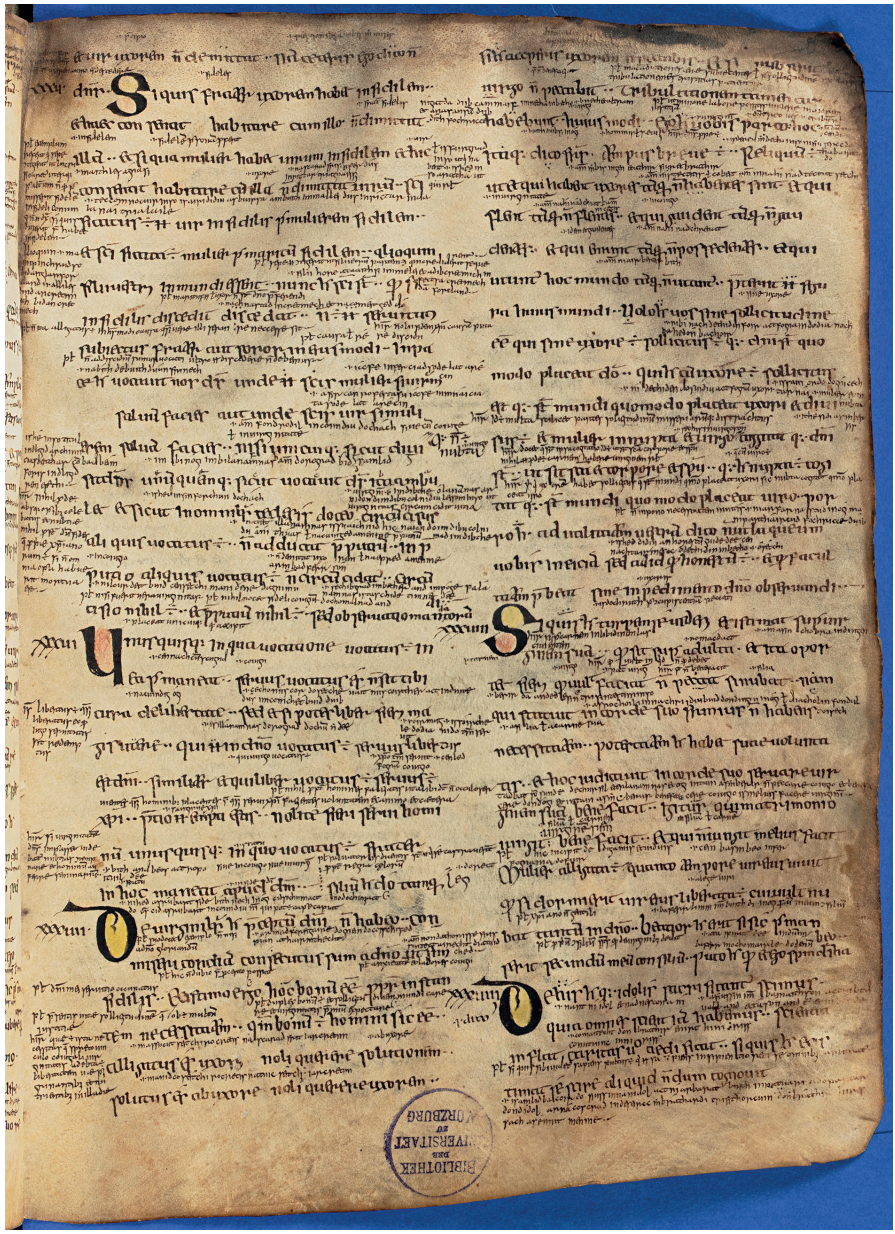


Image 9. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f. 12, fol. 10r (the 'Würzburg Paul'). Glosses can be seen written in the margin and between the lines of the biblical text. The last marginal gloss in each column is identified as Pelagius (*PŁ*). (Reproduced by permission.)

later copyist wanted to create a unified commentary from these dispersed comments, their various placings could lead to confusion in their distribution in the new format, as in the Budapest Anonymous Commentary.

Pelagius

Pelagius' approach in his *Commentary on Paul*, composed in Rome between 406 and 410, is to cite the biblical text in short phrases, normally followed by a single sentence of exegesis.[86] His exposition sometimes takes the form of a reformulation of the lemma or a single gloss, although it may also include quotations from other books of the New Testament and introduce alternative explanations with the word *aliter*. The biblical lemmata sometimes stand by themselves, but on other occasions are connected with Pelagius' argument by the use of relative clauses: the commentary reads like a series of glosses interrupting the full sequential text of each Epistle.[87] The commentary appears to have undergone an early revision in two stages between 412 and 432, which may partly have been the work of Pelagius' disciple Caelestius and is known as Pseudo-Jerome. A second revision, made by Cassiodorus and his pupils at a point when the commentary was circulating anonymously, used to be attributed to Primasius.[88] Despite the absence of Pelagius' name from all surviving manuscripts, the Würzburg Paul and Sedulius Scottus both cite him by name.

The two principal manuscripts of the uninterpolated text of Pelagius' commentary were both identified by Alexander Souter in the first decades of the twentieth century.[89] The Karlsruhe witness is written by several hands: biblical lemmata are sporadically indicated in *Romans* and *Ephesians* by means of a variety of marginal quotation marks; the other Epistles are presented as continuous text. There is no distinction at all between the lemmata and commentary in the Balliol manuscript.[90] However, there is a significant difference

[86] The only edition remains Alexander Souter (ed.), *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul: Text*, Texts and Studies 9.2 (Cambridge, 1926). See also the English translation of Theodore de Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford, 1993). For Pelagius' use of the Budapest Anonymous Commentary, Rufinus' translation of Origen, and Augustine, see T. de Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary* (1993), 4-6, while A. Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries* (1927), 226-8, demonstrates his use of Ambrosiaster and Jerome.

[87] See further A. Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries* (1927), 215-6. It may not be coincidental that Pelagius was in part reliant on the collection behind the Budapest Anonymous Commentary (see W. Dunphy, 'Glosses on Glosses [part 1]' [2013], 228).

[88] T. de Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary* (1993), 27-8. For the attribution to Caelestius, note the comments in W. Dunphy, 'Glosses on Glosses (part 1)' (2013), 228.

[89] Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 119, copied around the year 800, and Oxford, Balliol College, MS 157, produced in Italy around the fifteenth century.

[90] In Balliol 157, Pelagius' commentary is followed by Jerome's commentaries on *Galatians* and *Ephesians*. Oxford, Merton College, 26 is a copy of the Balliol manuscript made within six decades of its production.

between the biblical text of these two witnesses: the Balliol manuscript has an Old Latin form of the Epistles similar to that transmitted in the ninth-century Book of Armagh,[91] whereas the Karlsruhe manuscript has an early form of the Vulgate. The analysis of the biblical quotations in the exegesis has led to the conclusion that the Karlsruhe text best represents that used by Pelagius, which also seems to be the earliest example of the revised Latin text of the Pauline Epistles later adopted in the Vulgate.[92] The Old Latin text must therefore have been the result of substitution of the lemmata by an editor at some point during the transmission of the work, presumably in order to match a local form of biblical text. Souter's observation that the portion of Pelagius which fills a lacuna between 1 and 2*Corinthians* in the latter recension of Ambrosiaster corresponds to the form in the Balliol manuscript indicates that this took place before the middle of the sixth century.[93] The replacement of the text would have been a more complicated task if the lemmata and exegesis were not formally differentiated.

In the same year that Souter rediscovered the Karlsruhe manuscript, Mercati identified the earliest surviving witness to Pelagius' *Commentary*: two leaves in the Vatican from a sixth-century manuscript in semi-uncial script (Image 10).[94] In this fragment, each of the lemmata begins on a new line and is marked by an initial *diple*; in most cases, every line of biblical text projects into the margin by two characters. The exegesis follows immediately, on the same line as the lemma finishes. The layout of this manuscript therefore has certain similarities with the two oldest surviving witnesses to Ambrosiaster, although the identification of *every* line of biblical text by projection is rare.[95] Souter's claim that '[these fragments] show the way in which Pelagius arranged his work' is probably overconfident, given the interval of at least a century.[96] Nevertheless, the clear identification of the lemmata in such a layout would have made it easier to substitute the biblical text. This happened not just in an early ancestor of the Balliol manuscript, but also in at least one of the interpolated versions

[91] Dublin, Trinity College, MS 52 (Vetus Latina 61).

[92] See further Hermann J. Frede, *Pelagius, der irische Paulustext, Sedulius Scottus*, AGLB 3 (Freiburg, 1961); *id.*, 'Der Paulustext des Pelagius', *Sacris Erudiri* 16 (1965), 165-83; T. de Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary* (1993), 8-9. The argument that Pelagius' text precedes the Vulgate is put forward in Karl T. Schäfer, 'Pelagius und die Vulgata', *NTS* 9 (1962), 361-6.

[93] A. Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries* (1993), 207.

[94] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 10800; Giovanni Mercati, 'Two Leaves of a Sixth-Century MS of Pelagius on St Paul', *JTS* os 8 (1907), 529-35.

[95] Only the first line of the lemmata is projected in the fifth-century copies of Augustine and Jerome's Old Testament commentaries mentioned above; compare also the early manuscript of Rufinus below. G. Mercati, 'Two Leaves' (1907), 530, notes that two vertical lines were ruled on each page to align the left-hand margins of the biblical text and commentary respectively, although there are a few occasions on which the copyist does not follow the scheme consistently.

[96] Alexander Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul: Introduction*, Texts and Studies 9.1 (Cambridge, 1922), 228.

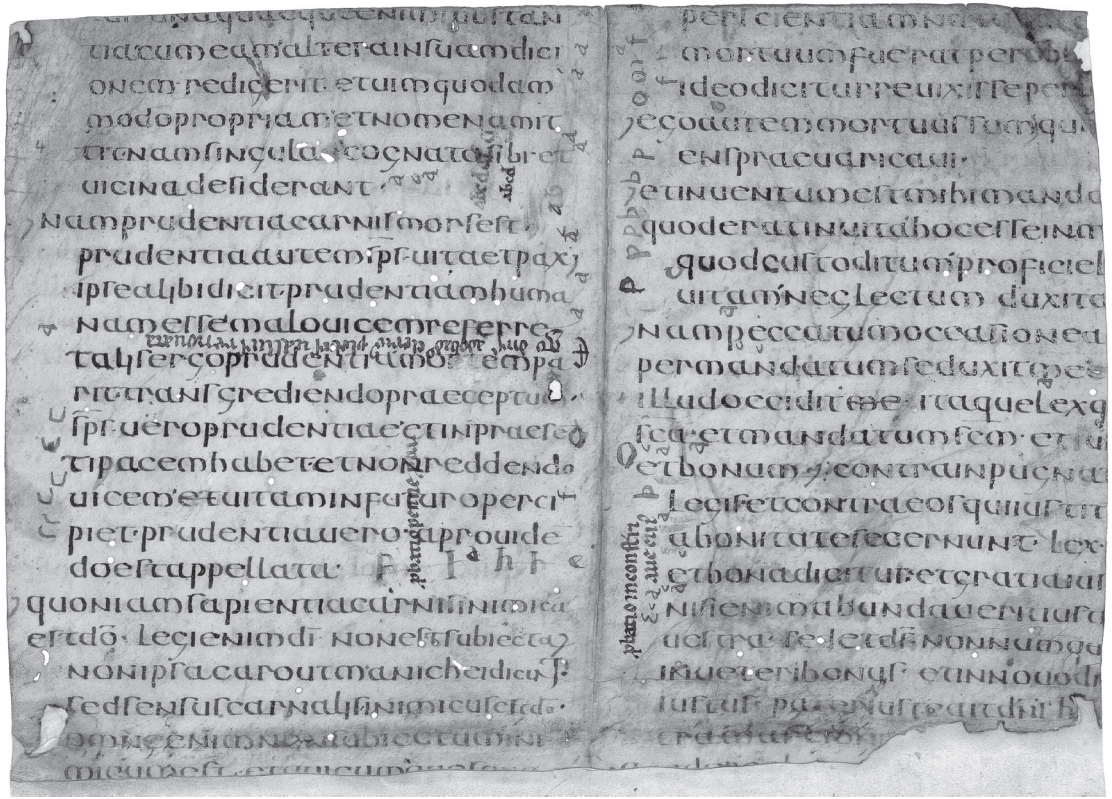


Image 10. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatic. lat. 10800 (Pelagius, *Commentary on Romans*). The lemmata project into the left margin, and a *diple* may be seen along the first line of each. (Reproduced by permission.)

which has Old Latin readings which differ from Balliol 157 in a number of the lemmata.[97] In this Paris manuscript, the text is written continuously, but the beginning of each biblical citation is sometimes indicated by a marginal quotation mark as well as a symbol in the body of the text shaped like 'Γ' or, in later books, like the 's' shaped quotation mark: both these indications, especially the marginal symbols, become less frequent in the latter part of the manuscript. Although many of the interpolations in this manuscript post-date Pelagius, Souter suggests that some of the additions may have been made by the author himself.[98]

Rufinus' Translation of Origen

The earliest surviving Latin manuscript of a commentary on Paul is the fifth- or sixth-century copy of Rufinus' translation of Origen's *Commentary on Romans* (Image 11).[99] The biblical lemmata are indicated by one or two s-shaped marginal marks alongside each line. Quotations which start in the middle of a line are usually preceded by a space and a quotation mark, and close with another space. New sections, whether biblical or exegetical, project very slightly into the left margin. In her examination of this manuscript, Caroline Hammond Bammel concluded that it preserves Rufinus' original layout for this commentary and contains a number of features which represent practices of a fifth-century scriptorium, including the form of the *nomina sacra* abbreviations and the use of half-uncial script.[100] What is more, she suggests that the format used by Rufinus may have evolved during the first book of the translation: initially, all lemmata are indicated by a single mark, but from the latter part of *Rom*. 1, double marks are used for the principal lemma and single marks for repetitions and quotations from other biblical books. Rufinus' use of single or double quotation marks in his *Apology against Jerome* was quoted above: in this commentary it may even derive from his exemplar of Origen, as it is also found in the Tura papyrus of this commentary.[101] It has long been known that, rather than translating Origen's lemmata directly, Rufinus supplied the biblical text from an Old Latin manuscript. For this reason, the initial lemmata are grammatically separate from the exposition, although verses repeated during the commentary function as secondary lemmata.

[97] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 653, copied in Italy around the year 800.

[98] A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions: Introduction* (1922), 255 and 259.

[99] Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, 483 [413].

[100] C.P. Hammond Bammel, 'A Product of a Fifth-Century Scriptorium' (1978); *ead*., 'Products of Fifth-Century Scriptoria' (1979 and 1984). See also *ead*., *Der Römerbrieftext des Rufin und seine Origenes-Übersetzung*, AGLB 10 (Freiburg, 1985), which has a discussion of biblical lemmata in Origen and Rufinus on 173-203.

[101] *Ead*., 'A Product of a Fifth-Century Scriptorium' (1978), 382-3.

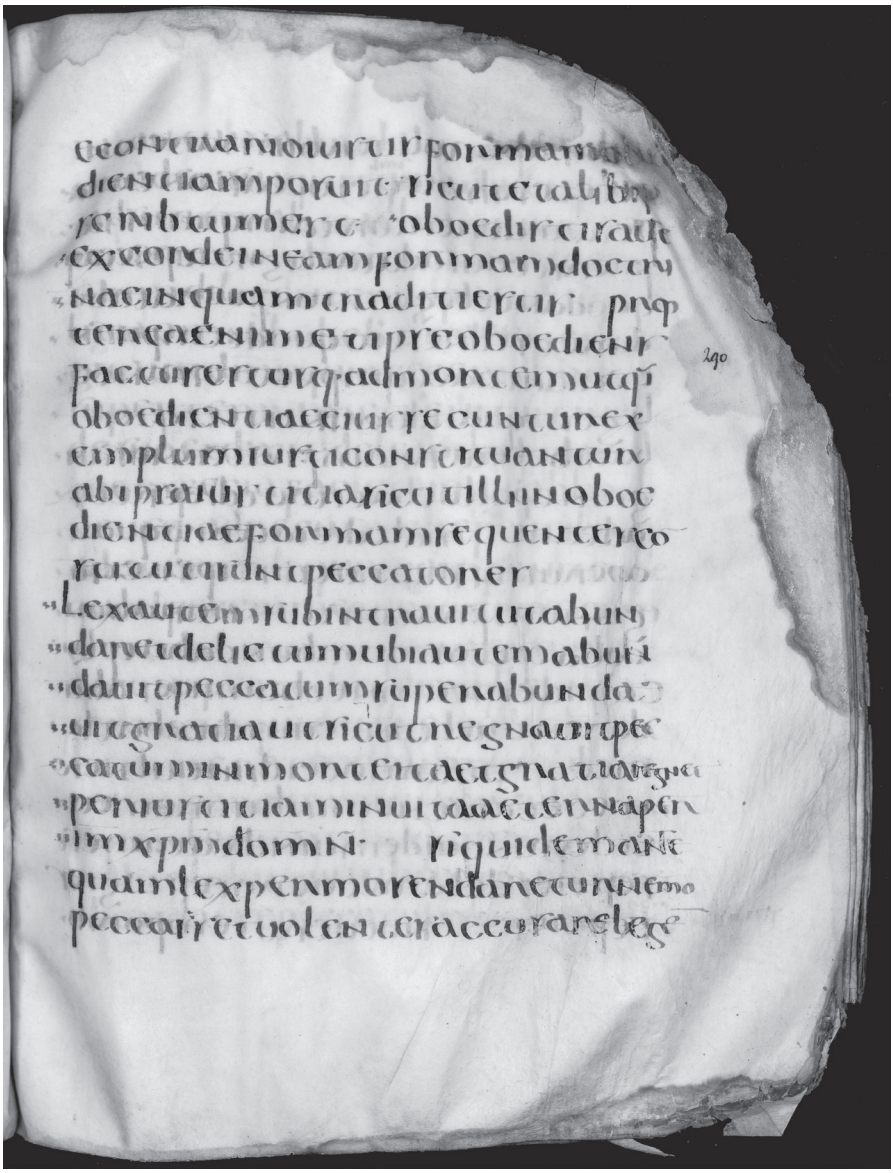


Image 11. Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 483, fol. 290r (Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, translated by Rufinus). Double marginal quotation marks can be seen alongside the lemma in the bottom half of the page; an illustrative quotation begins in the middle of line 3, preceded by a blank space and a single quotation mark and marked by single quotation marks in the left margin alongside the two following lines. (Reproduced by kind permission.)

Hammond Bammel notes that most of the subsequent copies of this commentary derive from this witness through the intermediary of an eighth-century insular minuscule manuscript.[102] Few features of the original layout are preserved in the copies from the end of the eighth or beginning of the ninth century. One witness has double quotation marks for the first lemma, but then all subsequent lemmata and quotations are indicated by a single mark apart from a few pages in which double marks are used.[103] Most of the initial lemmata are also indicated by an outsize capital and projection into the margin, although some quotations are preceded by spaces. In the Wolfenbüttel manuscript, the majority of lemmata begin on a new line and all quotations are indicated by a single y-shaped marginal mark up to fol. 114r, where 'ss' symbols are adopted instead.[104] From fol. 102r onwards (*Rom.* 12:10), most quotations of *Romans* are written in capitals, although longer lemmata revert to minuscule after a couple of lines. A single marginal quotation mark, shaped like ÷, is the only indication of lemmata in Books 1-5 of the ninth-century Paris copy of this commentary.[105] In Books 6-10, written in a more compressed format, a variety of marks are used: single 's', the insular '..,' (*e.g.* fol. 121v), and a 'q' shape which may be a derivative of the latter symbol. The presence of these marks on the same page, sometimes in combination, suggests that the exemplar for this witness may have preserved Rufinus' distinction between double and single quotation marks, at least in part. The copyist who added part of Rufinus' commentary in the eighth century to replace text missing from the beginning of the sixth-century Ambrosiaster manuscript made a deliberate effort to match the format of the rest of the manuscript.[106]

Rufinus' translation of Origen therefore offers a unique perspective on the transformation of the original layout in later copies. The distinction between different sorts of marginal marks is almost entirely lost, and the inclusion of these marks in the spaces before quotations in the body of the text is abandoned. It is instructive that the Wolfenbüttel manuscript has introduced new lines for the lemmata and both standardised and increased the level of projection into the left margin. The Monte Cassino manuscript demonstrates that the format of each commentary was seen as being flexible rather than a key part of the textual

[102] *Ead.*, 'Products of Fifth-Century Scriptoria' (1979), 440.

[103] Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 127; double marks re-appear on foll. 115r-151r.

[104] Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Weissenburg 74. Isolated 'ss' marks are occasionally seen in this witness (*e.g.* fol. 24v, 64v, 75v, 113v), apparently through scribal inattention.

[105] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 12124.

[106] Monte Cassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, 150, pp. 1-64. See C.P. Hammond Bammel, 'Products of Fifth-Century Scriptoria' (1979), 445-6: it is impossible to tell from the single plate of this manuscript available exactly how lemmata were handled. The same is true of the one online image of the ninth-century copy of the commentary held in Manchester, John Rylands Library, latin 174.

transmission. The discrepancies between different copies, and often within the same manuscript as well, also bear witness to the way in which the layout could change regardless of the form of the exemplar. Nevertheless, certain features can survive as inconsistencies through many generations of copying: in a twelfth-century manuscript of this commentary, the first few pages feature both double and single s-shaped marks before the latter prevail for the rest of the codex.[107]

The Latin Version of Theodore of Mopsuestia

A commentary on the *Pauline Epistles* written in Greek by Theodore of Mopsuestia around the beginning of the fifth century is primarily preserved in a Latin translation made a few decades later, probably in Italy. Both of the principal surviving manuscripts seem to have contained a composite commentary on Paul, consisting of Ambrosiaster's exposition of *Romans* and 1 and 2*Corinthians* and Theodore's exposition of *Galatians* to *Philemon*.[108] Many of the lemmata in Theodore's commentary are grammatically separate from the exposition, although they are usually introduced by the preceding sentence. Some, however, are interrupted by brief interjections or questions into units which do not stand by themselves (*e.g. Gal.* 1:7-8, 3:25-6; *Eph.* 1:6, 4:30-5:3; *Phil.* 3:5). There are more than a few occasions on which *inquit* ('he says') intrudes into the lemma, probably corresponding to the Greek φησί.[109] This coheres with Swete's conclusion that the Latin biblical text is a direct translation of the Greek commentary.[110] It is less clear whether the alternative renderings found in the lemmata of *Eph.* 1:10 (*instaurare uel potius recapitulare*) and *Phil.* 2:7 (*in schemate uel specie*) represent Theodore's own glosses or were introduced by the translator following comparison with a Latin biblical codex.

In the Amiens manuscript copied in the ninth or tenth century, biblical quotations are accompanied by s- or w-shaped marginal marks alongside each line (Image 12). On the opening pages, they are written in red capitals, alternating lines of red and green capitals, or occasionally black minuscules. What is more, the text featured in this way comprises not just the lemmata in sequence,

[107] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1643.

[108] Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 88; London, British Library, Harley MS 3063. There is also a single page from an eighth- or ninth-century Latin manuscript of Theodore at Cambridge MA, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Lat 433, although I have not been able to find an image of this.

[109] *E.g. Gal.* 2:6, 3:6, 3:21, 3:23 *etc.* Compare Theodore's introduction of φησί into the lemma at *Rom.* 9:14, 12:13 and 13:14 (in catena fragments), and the extant Greek portions of the commentary at *Gal.* 4:7 and *Phil.* 3:16 and 17. Contrast, however, the fragments of commentary for *Gal.* 2:20 and *Phil.* 1:12.

[110] H.B. Swete (ed.), *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistola B. Pauli Commentarii*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1880-1882): on the biblical text see I.xli-xliv.

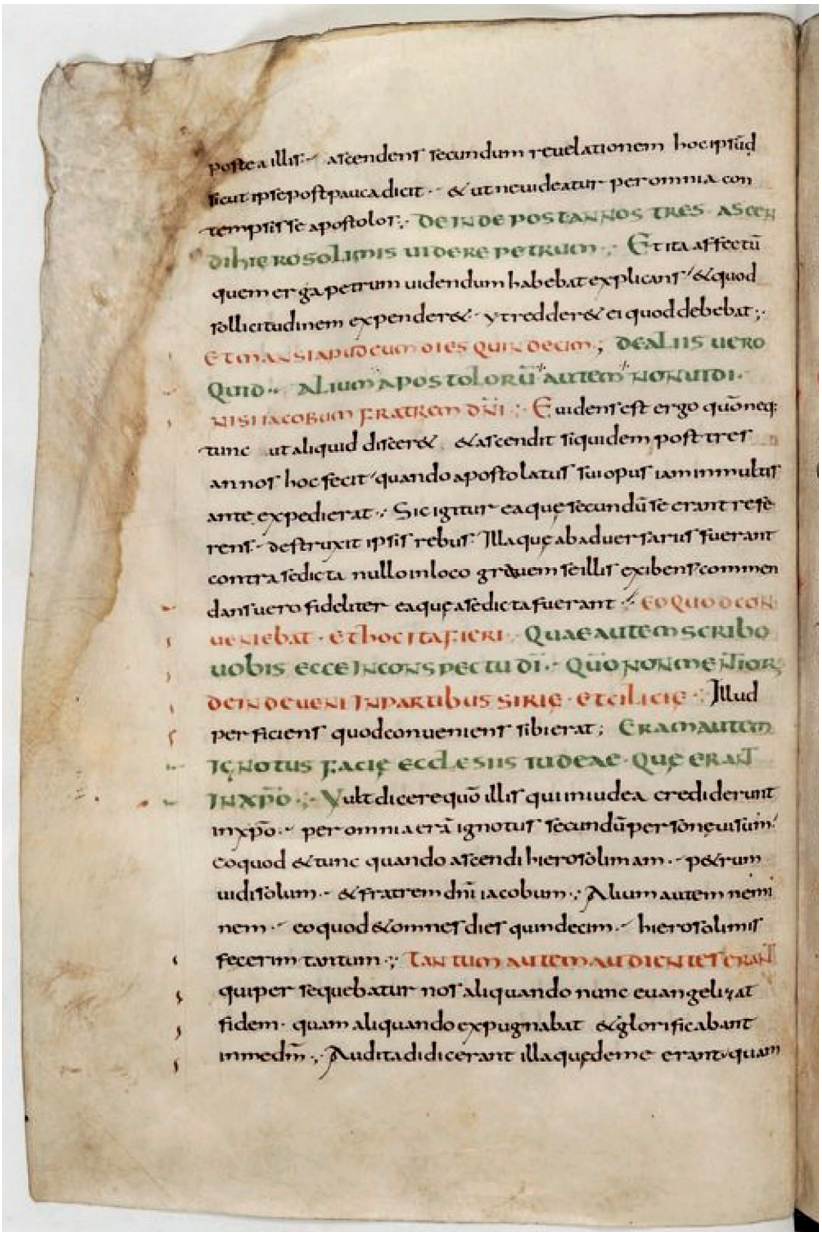


Image 12. Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 88, fol. 6v (Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Galatians*). Biblical text is written in green and red capitals (along with one of Theodore's observations on lines 15-16) and indicated by s- and w- shaped marginal marks. (Reproduced from gallica.bnf.fr by permission.)

but also repetitions of the Pauline text within the commentary, and some of Theodore's own observations.[111] Such a chaotic presentation implies that there was no consistent marking of lemmata in the exemplar. Later in the manuscript, the presentation becomes more regular: some lemmata are written in the same script as the rest of the text and only indicated by an enlarged first letter. In certain Epistles, a *hedera* symbol identical to that in the Budapest Anonymous Commentary is found at the end of each portion of exegesis and each quotation. In the slightly earlier London manuscript, the lemmata appear to be marked by double *diplai* in the left margin and enlarged or coloured initials. Unfortunately, as all the Greek fragments of this work are transmitted in catena manuscripts, no comparison can be made between the layout in the two traditions.[112]

Later Manuscripts and Commentaries

The trend in manuscripts of these early commentaries copied after the ninth century is to reduce the distinction between the biblical text and the passages of exegesis. The use of rubrication for the lemmata is discontinued, and marginal quotation marks are the principal means of identifying biblical passages. Even in ninth-century manuscripts, it has been observed that the copying of marginal material in general, and quotation marks in particular, becomes much less consistent. Where these marks are present in later copies, they are often restricted to the first line of each quotation and not placed alongside subsequent lines; they also become less prominent. An example of this is offered by a twelfth-century manuscript of Ambrosiaster.[113] In this witness, there is a double dot ('··') in the margin at the start of most lemmata, although even this is not consistent. The complete absence of indication of biblical text in the fifteenth-century Balliol manuscript of Pelagius has been noted above. The reduction of distinctions between biblical text and exposition not only makes it less easy to separate the two visually but may also be seen as enhancing the authority of the commentator's exegesis by placing it on the same level as the biblical text.

Such canonisation of patristic exposition may be seen in the commentaries of Bede, who quoted extensively from earlier commentators. These sources were indicated by letters in the margin, such as AU for Augustine and HI for Jerome. Unfortunately, like other marginal material, these were rarely

[111] *E.g. denique adiecit* on fol. 3r, *quomodo dixit ergo aliud* on fol. 5r and various lines on foll. 6v and 7v-8r.

[112] In another paper delivered at the Seventeenth International Patristics Conference, Maya Goldberg announced that a Syriac translation of four of the epistles from Theodore's *Commentary on Paul* is present in the manuscript Diyarbakir 22, of which she is currently preparing an edition. See Maya Goldberg, 'New Syriac Edition and Translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's Reconstructed *Commentary on Paul's Minor Epistles*: Fragments from MS (*olim*) *Diyarbakir* 22', *SP* 96 (2017), 293-300.

[113] Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plutei XIV.2.

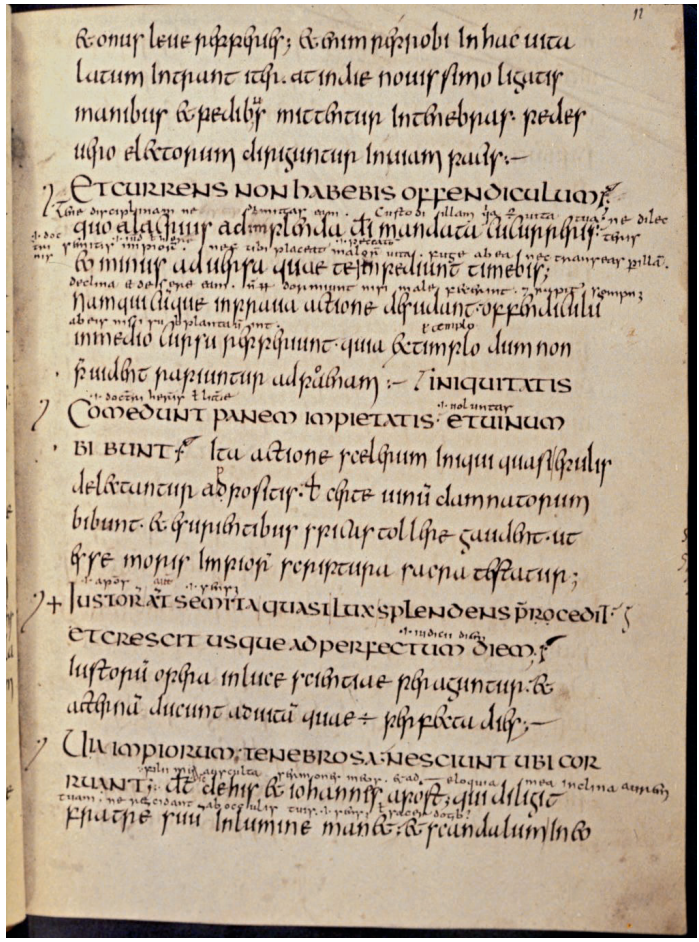


Image 13. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 819, fol. 11r (Bede, *Commentary on Proverbs*). The lemmata are written in capitals, with a *diple* in the left margin and a *hedera* at the end of each. (Reproduced by kind permission.)

accurately transmitted in later copies despite being part of the original authorial conception.[114] Later Carolingian commentators such as Hrabanus Maurus and Claudius of Turin followed this example of identifying their sources in the margin, and it is even found in the twelfth-century Pauline commentary

[114] See Michael M. Gorman, 'Source Marks and Chapter Divisions in Bede's Commentary on Luke', *Revue bénédictine* 112 (2002), 46-75.

of Gilbert of Poitiers.[115] The earliest manuscript of Bede's *Commentary on Proverbs*, produced in his own Wearmouth-Jarrow scriptorium, bears witness to a very specific layout (Image 13).[116] Each lemma begins on a new line, is marked by a *diple* in the left margin, concludes with the *hedera* symbol, and is written in uncial script. The body of the exposition is written in Anglo-Saxon minuscule, but other biblical quotations are marked by marginal symbols.[117] This level of detail makes it highly likely that the author himself was responsible for the presentation. There is no evidence, however, that this complex format was extended to copies of other commentaries produced in Northumbria, and with the demise of the scriptorium Bede's own works were copied in a more conventional way.

Another example of a later commentary drawing on earlier writers, which also has an unusual format, is the commentary on *Romans* attributed to Helisachar, chaplain to Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious (Image 14).[118] This is composed of extracts principally from Ambrosiaster (identified as Ambrose), Augustine, Origen (in Rufinus' translation) and a Latin version of Chrysostom. The source's name and the biblical lemma are written in red capitals before each section of commentary, with several commentators sometimes being quoted for the same verse. The lemma appears to be taken directly from the patristic source, which means not only that Old Latin readings are preserved, but also that the text of the verse varies before each passage of exegesis. For example, at *Rom*. 5:6 (fol. 23v ff.), the lemma for Ambrosiaster begins *ut quid enim Christus cum adhuc peccatores essemus*, that of Origen *adhuc enim Christus cum essemus infirmi* and that of Chrysostom *ut quid enim Christus cum adhuc infirmi essemus*. The creation of a biblical commentary solely from a single earlier author appears to have begun with Peter of Tripoli's use of extracts from Augustine to gloss the *Pauline Epistles*.[119] This reached its apogee in the ninth century with the extensive excerpts from Augustine assembled by Florus of Lyons. Later commentaries, such as the *Glossa ordinaria* initiated by Anselm of Laon in the eleventh century, are often laid out in three columns: the continuous biblical text, sometimes with interlinear glosses, occupies the middle column, while extracts from earlier writers, usually unattributed, are arranged on either side.

[115] *E.g*. London, British Library, Royal 2.F.1, where the source marks include AMB, AU, IE and AIMO (for Ambros[iaster], Augustine, Jerome and Haimo of Auxerre). For Claudius of Turin, see Michael M. Gorman, 'The Commentary on Genesis of Claudius of Turin and Biblical Studies under Louis the Pious', *Speculum* 72 (1997), 279-329; on Carolingian scholarship more generally, John J. Contreni, 'The patristic legacy to c. 1000', in Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (eds), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible. II. From 600 to 1450* (Cambridge, 2012), 505-35.

[116] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 819.

[117] See M.B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect* (1992), 180-1.

[118] This is only preserved in the ninth-century Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 11574. A paper on this commentary, as part of work towards a new edition, was presented by Shari Boodts at the Seventeenth International Patristics Conference.

[119] This work is lost, but is mentioned by Cassiodorus at *Institutiones* 1.8.9.

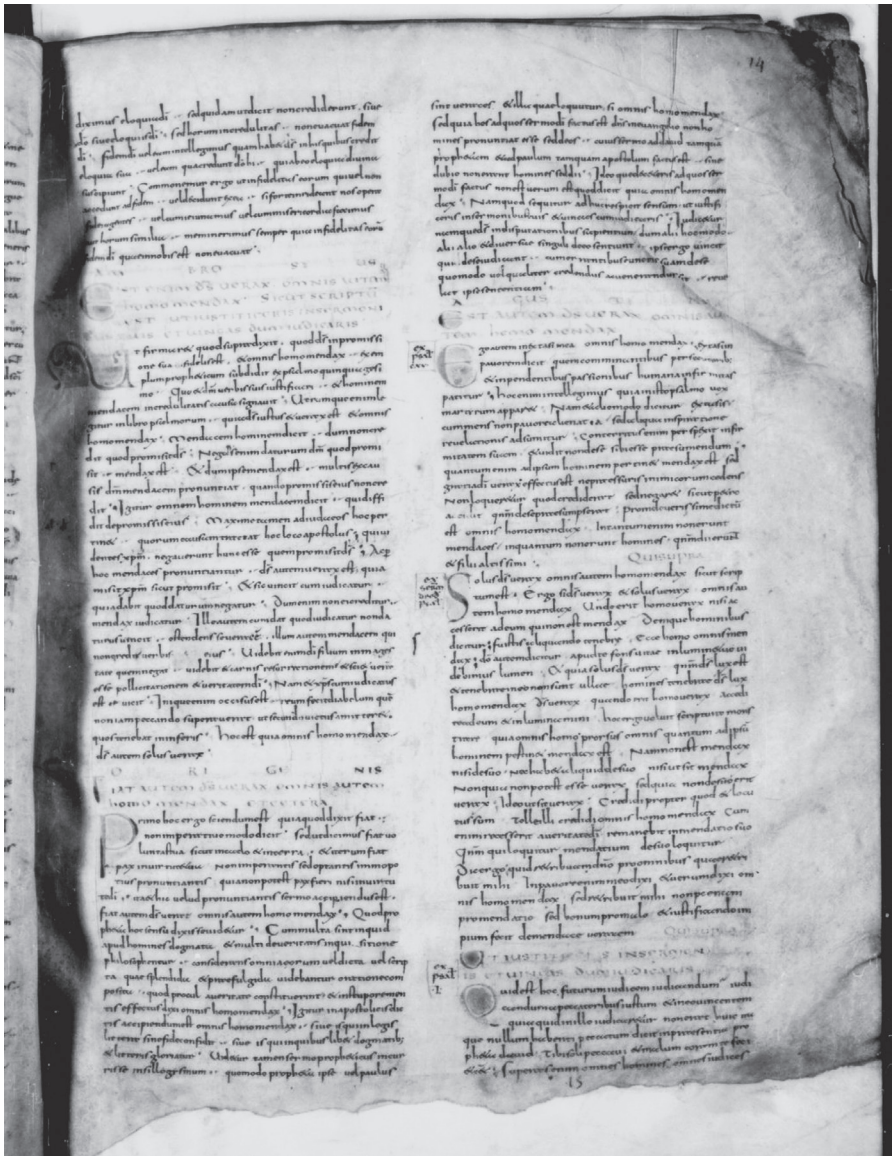


Image 14. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 11574, fol. 14r (Helisachar?, *Commentary on Romans)*. Biblical lemmata are written in red capitals, reproducing the text used in the source writing. Extracts from Ambrose and Origen begin in the left column, while on the right there are three extracts from Augustine with the source text indicated in a little box between the columns.
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Conclusions

This survey has highlighted the variety in the manuscript presentation of early Latin commentaries on the *Pauline Epistles*. Biblical lemmata may be indicated by one or more of the following practices: rubrication, indentation (*eisthesis*) or projection (*ekthesis*), marginal quotation marks, spaces, and outsize or capital letters. Sometimes they are set on lines of their own, or begin with a new line but are immediately followed by commentary. It appears that, to a large extent, the layout of commentary manuscripts depends on contemporary scribal practice: the use of capital letters as a distinguishing feature only becomes possible after the adoption of minuscule script in the eighth century, while the form of marginal quotation marks varies widely. Both Hammond Bammel and McGurk observe that the manner of indicating quotations largely corresponds to the type of script: uncial manuscripts tend to employ indentation or the traditional form of the *diple*; half-uncial script is more consistently accompanied by *diplai*; minuscule copies use later forms of marginal symbols.[120] There is an overall trend towards the avoidance of empty half-lines or blank space, especially as commentaries were normally produced for private study rather than as presentation copies or for liturgical reading. This can be seen in the practice of beginning the lemma on a new line: present in some of the earliest witnesses, the blank space is filled in in eighth-century copies and almost all manuscripts from the ninth century onwards treat commentaries as largely continuous texts. Another trend is towards the reduction or even elimination of marginal material: the use of quotation marks is normally more sporadic than other means of identifying lemmata and appears to become more so in later manuscripts. In many cases the indications included by copyists are supplemented by subsequent users. Similarly, while the initial practice is to place a mark alongside each line of a biblical quotation, this can be simplified to a single mark corresponding to the beginning of a lemma, especially by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Such general tendencies in the treatment of earlier works sometimes contrast with the presentation adopted by authors of the eighth and ninth centuries for their own commentaries.

The differences between commentary manuscripts of a similar date, and the lack in most cases of witnesses from the first three or four centuries of a work's transmission mean that considerable caution must be employed in using surviving manuscripts as evidence for the original format of a commentary. The discrepancies between the two earliest surviving manuscripts of Ambrosiaster as to whether lemmata are indented or projected, and whether the exposition starts on a new line or immediately follows the lemma, exemplify the divergences which could have been introduced during the first century or so. Furthermore,

[120] P. McGurk, 'Citation Marks' (1961), 6-7; C.P. Hammond Bammel, 'A Product of a Fifth-Century Scriptorium' (1978), 380.

the inconsistencies within these manuscripts, and also the sixth-century fragments of Pelagius, raise questions as to how attentive early copyists may have been to matters of layout and, indeed, whether their exemplars were consistent. The textual tradition of Rufinus' translation of Origen's *Commentary on Romans* shows how authorial indications were lost over the course of a few centuries, especially as part of the shift to minuscule script during the late eighth century.

Internal evidence therefore often provides the key to understanding the original layout of a commentary. The interruption or grammatical incorporation of lemmata, or their separation from the following exposition, is central to the author's conception of the relationship between their source and comments. The length of biblical quotations, such as Pelagius' atomistic approach, or the number of repetitions of text from the lemma during the commentary, may also affect the work's presentation. Admittedly, authors themselves may not be consistent: Augustine's separate treatment of the first chapter of *Galatians* contrasts with his interventionist approach to the rest of the Epistle, while Jerome's interruptions to the lemmata of the same Epistle are largely restricted to the last of his three books. One of the most surprising results of the present survey is the degree to which commentators on Paul interact with their lemmata, beginning as early as Marius Victorinus. There is little formal evidence for the treatment of Scripture as a privileged or inviolable source, to be carefully separated from the words of the expositor.[121] Only Ambrosiaster's commentary and Pelagius' glosses appear consistently to preserve the integrity of the lemmata. The vulnerability of separate lemmata to wholesale replacement with another form of biblical text is seen in the textual traditions of Ambrosiaster and Pelagius. The facts that these examples involve pre-Vulgate texts and appear to have occurred in the sixth century imply that this was carried out while the lemmata occupied separate lines. Conversely, evidence for the alteration of the biblical text in sequential commentaries is sporadic, and the continued transmission of an Old Latin form likely to correspond to that used by the author offers a further indication of the integrity of the textual tradition.

Finally, what significance does this study have for the modern understanding of these commentaries and their reception? The presence of the biblical text in all these commentaries indicates that their authors and copyists intended them to be read as complete in themselves, rather than in conjunction with a biblical manuscript.[122] The variety of scriptural texts in circulation in the fourth century may have contributed to the inclusion of complete lemmata, insofar as exegesis requires attention to the exact wording of the source. The separation, or not, of the lemmata may also shed light on the author's attitude to their own work: Pelagius offers a series of glosses, while the Budapest Anonymous Commentary

[121] This is not, of course, to deny the commentators' reverence for the authority of Scripture: see, for example, S.A. Cooper, *Marius Victorinus' Commentary on Galatians* (2005), 88.

[122] The original form of the Budapest Anonymous Commentary, of course, stands apart.

simply consisted of marginal annotations; Marius Victorinus and Ambrosiaster expound a canonical text, usually keeping their own contributions separate from their source; Jerome and Augustine engage more closely with the biblical wording, the latter integrating the biblical text so deeply into his exposition that it is sometimes difficult to separate the two. Nevertheless, it is clear that subsequent users felt the need to indicate the biblical lemmata, whether or not they were marked by the author or a manuscript's copyist. Perhaps this was to aid navigation: apart from occasional division into books, none of these texts has any structural guide to assist the reader apart from the biblical citations. It has already been suggested above that the discontinuation of the distinction between lemmata and exposition in later manuscripts of these commentaries reflects the acceptance of the patristic expositions themselves as canonical, on the same level as the biblical text: this could be seen as the logical outcome of the attitudes towards commentary.

Most modern printed editions of Christian writings in Latin follow a standard typographical layout, with the text split into paragraphs (usually numbered) and the words of biblical quotations indicated in italics. This largely derives from the presentation of these works in manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which were used as the basis for early printed texts. The present study has shown that the original layouts of fourth-century commentaries may have been very different. Given that the physical presentation of a work contributes to its understanding and interpretation by both ancient and modern readers, it is worth considering whether modern editors should attempt to present a work in the manner most closely resembling its original form, particularly in this digital age when the cost of paper is not such a prohibitive factor.[123] For instance, the layout of Pelagius' commentary with each biblical extract and comment on a new line, as in the sixth-century fragments, would promote the understanding of the work as a series of glosses rather than a more discursive commentary. While the use of italics for illustrative citations and repetitions of the biblical text reveals at a glance the way in which the Bible is woven into exegesis, ancient readers seem not to have made so great a distinction between the words of an author and their source text. In the case of Augustine and Jerome, the same could also apply to the lemma text of their commentary. Of course, in each case, the text itself is more important than the physical form

[123] The two principal editions of the Latin Vulgate, for example, reproduce the layout *per cola et commata* found in Codex Amiatinus, with minimal punctuation. Although this slightly postdates the revision of the text, it is closer to the ancient form than a continuous and heavily punctuated presentation. The format of later commentators may be presented with greater confidence. For example, editions of Sedulius Scottus use capital letters for his lemmata (Bengt Löfstedt [ed.], *Sedulius Scottus: Kommentar zum Evangelium nach Matthäus*, AGLB 14, 19 [Freiburg, 1989, 1991]; Hermann J. Frede and Herbert Stanjek (eds), *Sedulii Scotti Collectaneum in Apostolum*, AGLB 31-2 [Freiburg, 1996-1997]). M.M. Gorman, 'Source Marks' (2002), 258-63 and 274-5, argues for the inclusion of source marks in editions of Bede's commentaries.

it takes in any generation. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this survey, in drawing attention to the differing formats of biblical commentaries and the ways in which these may reflect authorial design and later reception, has made a case for the value of studying the presentation as well as the text of New Testament commentaries.

Mapping Exilic Imaginaries: Greco-Roman Discourses of Displacement and the Book of *Revelation*

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Abstract

The early Christian tradition identified John as an exile who received a series of revelations that challenged Roman imperial power structures. Yet contemporary scholars have not considered how ancient exilic literature might have resonated among *Revelation*'s early readers, those who expand upon John's allusive self-description by expressly classifying him as an exile. This article will address this question by analyzing how exilic discourses exploited the concept of the imaginary – the capacity for an author 'to see [a thing] other than it is' – in order to create new social meaning. In the imperial age, Greco-Roman writers on exile were especially proficient in seeing 'otherwise': they utilized the exilic *topos* to reconfigure imperial constructions of identity, knowledge, power, and space. In a similar fashion, the formulation of counter-identities and counter-spaces are central features of the book of *Revelation*. In this text, John rejects the empire's narrative of displacement and instead transforms himself into an authoritative visionary and his location into a place of revelatory triumph. From this position, the seer speaks in the register of the exultant exile, one who exposes the fragility of the imperial apparatus, envisions a more durable social order based upon the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and invites his audience to join with him in celebrating the imminent appearance of the new heaven and earth.

'The fundamental question is … what actually
does take place between text and reader?'[1]

In his recent monograph on Patmos, Ian Boxall has noted that modern scholarly analyses of the island center on descriptions of its geographical location, role in the Roman system of punishment, and place in the life story of John.[2] Yet for Boxall, these are rather narrow historical-critical issues that fail to consider a more interesting question, namely, the role the island has played in the history of the Christian imagination.[3] Boxall thus turns his attention to the history of reception, surveying how Patmos has featured in literary and artistic

[1] Wolfgang Iser, *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore, 1989), vii.

[2] Ian Boxall, *Patmos in the Reception History of the Apocalypse* (Oxford, 2013).

[3] I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 1-2, 170-6.

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works from the patristic age to the present. His study shows that interpreters throughout the ages have invested Patmos with a range of meanings that often reveal more about their own social locations than that of John's.

This observation provides concrete support for the notion, long known in literary critical circles, that readers are active participants in the production of textual meaning. It also draws the book of *Revelation* into discussions on the imaginary, the concatenation of dispositions, attitudes, and expectations that inform and sustain the 'truths' that readers perceive from texts.[4] This article will extend Boxall's line of argumentation by exploring another 'imaginary truth': that of John as exile. Evaluating the development of this tradition reveals the Christian imaginary at work, constructing a narrative that, like other Greco-Roman discourses of displacement, challenged imperial constructions of identity, power, and space and invited reflections on a new, alternative vision of self and society.

John *exul*?

At the beginning of the eighth century, Bede confidently proclaimed that '[i]t is a known historical fact (*historia nota*) that John was exiled (*religatum*) to this island [*i.e.*, Patmos] for the sake of the gospel by the emperor Domitian. It was fitting that when he was forbidden to go beyond a circumscribed confine of the earth, it was vouchsafed to him to penetrate the secret things of heaven (*secreta datum … caeli penetrare*)'.[5] In characterizing John as an exile and Patmos as the site of divine communication, Bede is following two specific literary currents that emerged in the patristic age, were replicated in the early medieval period, and continue to dominate discussions in modern commentaries.[6]

The earliest evidence for these two strands of tradition are scattered among a variety of sources from the late second and third centuries. The exilic component can be pieced together through references in Irenaeus (who dates *Revelation* to the time of Domitian), Clement of Alexandria (who refers to John's movement from Patmos to Ephesus 'after the death of the tyrant'), and Tertullian (who alludes to John's suffering by Domitian in Rome and his later 'island exile').[7] The component centering on Patmos as the place of *Revelation* begins with Hippolytus, whose reference to the 'awful mysteries' that John received on the island spurs later theologically charged meditations.[8] The two strands

[4] I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 225 speaks of the 'truths of the imagination' developed by Christian readers.

[5] *Exp. Apoc.* 1.3.6-9 [*Rev.* 1:9] (trans. Faith Wallis, *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, Translated Texts for Historians 58 [Liverpool, 2013], 110-1). Bede makes the same point in the poem that prefaces his commentary.

[6] I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 28-55, 64-7, 230.

[7] Iren., *Haer.* 5.30.3; Clem. Alex., *Quis div.* 42; Ter., *Praescr.* 36.3.

[8] Hipp., *Antichr.* 36: … ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίων φρικτῶν.

become intertwined and receive expansion by the end of antiquity. For instance, Victorinus notes that John saw an angelic vision as he carried out his sentence laboring in the mines, Eusebius supplements Irenaeus' by placing John within the Domitianic persecutions, and the *Acts of John at Rome* provides a biographical portrait of John from his arrest in Ephesus to his confrontation with Domitian in Rome to his relegation to Patmos (where he 'was counted worthy to see the revelation of the end') and eventual release from exile.[9]

Setting aside the clearly legendary elements of John's story, the notion that the apostle was an exile continues to serve as 'the most likely explanation' for John's appearance on Patmos.[10] Proponents of this theory maintain that a Roman official (either the emperor or provincial governor) exiled John during the time of the Domitianic persecutions, and that his sentence was either a *deportatio* (a permanent punishment that involved the loss of rights and property) or a *relegatio* (a permanent or temporary banishment without these additional punishments).[11] To make this case, scholars weave together arguments based upon internal evidence, such as John's writing style, his reference to persecution and hostile attitude toward Rome, extra-biblical sources that identify a reign of terror under Domitian, and Rome's practice of expelling deviants *ad insulam*.[12]

Yet John's own statement in *Rev*. 1:9 is rather ambiguous: 'I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution (θλίπσει) and the kingdom (βασιλείᾳ) and the patient endurance (ὑπομονῇ), was on the island called Patmos because of (διά) the word of God and the testimony (μαρτυρίαν) of Jesus'. The passage lacks explicit references to banishment, and its vocabulary is allusive enough to admit interpretations other than the exilic.[13] As a result, some scholars have proposed that John traveled to Patmos on his own initiative,

[9] Vict., *In Apoc*. 10.3 [*Rev*. 10:11]; Eus., *Hist. eccl*. 3.17-8, 20; *Acts of John at Rome* (trans. Eric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, vol. 2, Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 2 [Turnhout, 1983], 862-80). See also Orig., *Comm. Matt*. 16.6; Jer., *Vir ill*. 9.

[10] Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St. John* (New York, 2006), 10.

[11] David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, World Biblical Commentary 52 (Dallas, 1997), 79-82.

[12] For examples, see Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven, CT, 2014), 242-3; Brian Mark Rapske, 'Exiles, Islands, and the Identity and Perspective of John in Revelation', in Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (eds), *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 9 (Leiden, 2013), 322-25; Bryan K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY, 2009), 42; Ben Witherington III, *Revelation* (Cambridge, 2003), 79-80; G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), 202; D.E. Aune, *Revelation* (1997), lvi-lxx, 74-82; R. Alan Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend* (Columbia, SC, 1994), 96; M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation* (Louisville, KY, 1989), 81-2; Leon Morris, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary* (2nd ed.; Nottingham, 1987), 37, 51-2; G.B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (London, 1984), 19-23.

[13] Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner and Robert Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (Chicago, 1961), 119 (section 222).

to escape prosecution or to extend the Christian mission. Alternatively, John's claim to have received the spirit on the Lord's day (*Rev*. 1:10) implies a Christian communal setting, and thus opens up the possibility that the seer's vision occurred as he worshiped with an already existing Christian congregation. Moreover, it is not clear that John's endurance of sufferings ought to refer to a specific persecution under Domitian, that Roman officials would propose exile for Christians, that Patmos was an island used for banishment, or that John was on Patmos when he wrote his *Revelation*. Finally, source-critical studies of *Revelation* have questioned placing the text in Domitian's reign, proposing instead a date closer to the time of Nero.[14]

Interpretation and the imaginary

If John's exile is not as secure as ancient and modern commentators have assumed, then we might look to Christian readers as those responsible for this narrative. Boxall has suggested that the emergence of the exile narrative stems from the life experiences of *Revelation*'s earliest interpreters, whose identities were forged under the specter of persecution. In this hostile environment, these readers imported their own life experiences into *Revelation*, creating new understandings for the text that were informed by their specific social locations.[15]

To acknowledge the reader rather than the author as the primary contributor to meaning-making is one of the pillars of reader-response criticism.[16] Rather

[14] Patmos was a military outpost for Miletus with a population large enough to support a gymnasium and temple to Artemis; Apollo was also honored there (C.R. Koester, *Revelation* [2014], 239-42; H.D. Saffrey, 'Relire l'Apocalypse à Patmos', *RB* 82 [1975], 385-417). This would also make it, presumably, a site for Christian proselytizing. On linguistic ambiguities in *Rev*. 1:9 and alternatives to an exilic interpretation: I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 22-4; Matthew J. Streett, *Here Comes the Judge: Violent Pacifism in the Book of Revelation* (New York, 2012), 28-9; D.E. Aune, *Revelation* (1997), clxxvii-clxxviii, 77-8, 82; Leonard L. Thompson, 'Ordinary Lives: John and His First Readers', in David L. Barr (ed.), *Reading the Book of Revelation: A Resource for Students*, Resources for Biblical Study 44 (Leiden, 2004), 25-47; on the reign of Domitian: Leonard L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York, 1990), 95-115; on the compositional stages of Revelation: David L. Barr, 'The Apocalypse of John', in David E. Aune (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (Oxford, 2010), 636-7; Aune, *Revelation*, cxviii-cxxxiv.

[15] I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 12, 55. Boxall grounds this idea on the theory of 'actualization' proposed by Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Revelation: The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* (Oxford, 2004), 8-9.

[16] For overviews and applications of reader-response criticism, see Craig A. Hamilton and Ralf Schneider, 'From Iser to Turner and Beyond: Reception Theory Meets Cognitive Criticism', *Style* 36 (2002), 640-58; Terence R. Wright, 'Reader-Response Under Review: Art, Game, or Science', *Style* 29 (1995), 529-48; Andrew Bennett (ed.), *Readers and Reading* (New York, 1995); Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY, 1983), 63-84; Jane P. Tompkins (ed.), *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore, 1980). For reader-response theory in biblical studies, see Michael Lieb, Emma Mason and

than privileging authorial intention or the stability of the text, this approach concentrates on the constitutive aspects of 'acts of reading'.[17] By 'experiencing' the text, the reader participates in an 'event' that brings a literary work into existence: 'The place where meaning is made or not made is the reader's mind rather than the printed page or the space between the covers of a book'.[18]

This type of analysis does not seek to discover the *meaning* of a text, but rather to explore what texts and readers *do* when they come together. Theorists now acknowledge that acts of reading are mutually transformative: just as texts can shape readers' identities, so too do readers, armed with their own expectations and assumptions, enliven the text through their interpretations. As Wolfgang Iser has argued, when 'a literary text does something to its readers, it simultaneously tells us something about them'. For Iser, literature thus becomes 'a divining rod, locating our dispositions, desires, inclinations, and eventually our overall makeup'.[19] At the same time, however, these readerly traits impose themselves on the text, so that the reader becomes the 'prime mover' in the production of meaning. In the words of Terry Eagleton, '[w]hat a text "does" to us, however, is actually a matter of what we do to it, a question of interpretation'.[20]

From this perspective, interpretation becomes an act of creation, as readers anticipate, recollect, and modify their ideas as they encounter words on the page. By identifying a text's 'coordinates', filling in gaps, and constructing bridges, readers map out its 'virtual dimension'.[21] The imagination is the catalyst that brings this new reality to light – it 'concretizes' the text, forging specific literary connections designed to produce narrative coherence.[22] Literature thus

Jonathan Roberts (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible* (Oxford, 2011); H. Welzen, 'Reader Response', in J. den Boeft and M.L. Poll-Van de Lisdonk (eds), *The Impact of Scripture in Early Christianity*, Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language 44 (Leiden, 1999), 223-44; Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven, CT, 1989).

[17] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in Robert Dale Parker (ed.), *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies* (New York, 2012), 83-7; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendell (Berkeley, 1988), 165-76.

[18] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), 36; see also 25-9.

[19] Wolfgang Iser, 'Do I Write for an Audience?', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 115 (2000), 310-14, 313.

[20] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Anniversary ed. (Minneapolis, 2008), 74. See also Norman N. Holland, *The Critical I* (New York, 1992), 20-4; 47-58, 114-5 who characterizes the interactions between text and reader as a 'feedback loop'.

[21] Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach', *New Literary History* 3 (1972), 279-99, 284-6, 293. Whether these coordinates are 'fixed' in the text or formed by the reader is a point of contention. For contrasting views, see Iser, 'Reading Process', 285-7, and Stanley Fish, 'Why No One's Afraid of Wolfgang Iser', *Diacritics* 11 (1981), 2-13, 7.

[22] W. Iser, 'Reading Process' (1972), 284, 288, 293; see also Wolfgang Iser, 'Do I Write for an Audience?' (2000), 312: concretization is 'the text's realization in the reader's consciousness'. See also T. Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (1992), 67.

does not imitate 'the real'; rather, through the *event* of reading, readers generate various expressions of reality through the intertextual bridges they construct and the extratextual codes that inform this decision making.[23] Bringing the reader into conversation with the narrative produces an 'aesthetic' experience that enables the reader an opportunity to "fashion new identities and to imagine new worlds'.[24]

These insights have brought literary criticism into conversation with a broader range of discourses on the imaginary.[25] In recent discussions, the imaginary is no longer associated with the illusory, considered inferior to reason, or opposed to 'the real'. Instead, it is the creative dimension of human activity that generates symbolic significations for both individuals and society.[26] For Cornelius Castoriadis, the imaginary is 'the invisible cement holding together this endless collection of real, rational and symbolic odds and ends that constitute every society, and as the principle that selects and shapes the bits and pieces that will be accepted there'.[27] The imaginary's production of symbols enables humans to know themselves and the world and to clarify normative codes that allow society to function.[28] It is through the imagination that 'reality' can be said to exist.[29]

[23] Anthony Elliott, 'The Social Imaginary: A Critical Assessment of Castoriadis's Psychoanalytical Social Theory', *American Imago* 59 (2002), 141-70, 151: 'Cultural and symbolic signification is always mediated through an interpreting self'.

[24] Brook Thomas, '*The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*, or, What's Literature Have to Do with It?', *American Literary History* 20 (2008), 622-31, 626; W. Iser, *Prospecting* (1989), 230: the aesthetic experience of reading 'enables the reader to imagine a reality that is real as a process of experience'.

[25] For surveys on the imaginary, see Christian De Cock, Alf Rehn and David Berry, 'For a Critical Creativity: The Radical Imagination of Cornelius Castoriadis', in Kerry Thomas and Janet Chan (eds), *Handbook of Research on Creativity* (Northampton, MA, 2013), 150-61; Jane Kenway and Johannah Fahey, 'Imagining Research Otherwise', in Jane Kenway and Johannah Fahey (eds), *Globalizing the Research Imagination* (New York, 2009), 1-7; Jeff Klooger, *Castoriadis: Psyche, Society, Autonomy* (Leiden, 2009), 55-63; Claudia Strauss, 'The Imaginary', *Anthropological Theory* 6 (2006), 322-44; Wolfgang Iser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore, 1993), 171-246.

[26] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Figures of the Thinkable*, trans. Helen Arnold (Stanford, CA, 2007), 72: 'We definitely must postulate a power of creation, a *vis formandi*, immanent to human collectivities as well as to individual human beings. Consequently, it is quite natural that we call this faculty of radical innovation, this ability to create and to form, the *imaginary* and *imagination*'. On the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic, see also Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, MA, 1987), 127-8.

[27] C. Castoriadis, *Imaginary Institution* (1987), 143.

[28] C. Castoriadis, *Figures* (2007), 73-5; *id*., *Imaginary* (1987), 146-50; Charles Taylor, 'Modern Social Imaginaries', *Public Culture* 14 (2002), 106-7.

[29] Cornelius Castoriadis, 'Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary', in David Ames Curtis (ed., trans.), *The Castoriadis Reader* (Oxford, 1997), 319-37, 321.

Imperial and exilic imaginaries

Societies function through the effective dissemination and acceptance of their social imaginary systems.[30] In the multiethnic world of imperial Rome, elites drew upon an ensemble of strategies – both repressive and ideological – to represent the empire as conquerors and eternal rulers of the inhabited world.[31] An inscription from southern Jordan – 'Romans always conquer' (PΩMEOI AEI NIKΩΣIN) – captures the mentality that emperors sought to inculcate in their subjects.[32]

Rome's Mediterranean expansion authorized and was facilitated by the production of new knowledge. Elites explained and charted the *orbis terrarum*: maps celebrated military triumphs and positioned Rome at the center of the world, while geographers 'wrote' the world from the perspective of the empire. The rhetorical inflections of these efforts both assume and provide evidence for Rome's mastery of the world, demonstrating that the *oikoumene* existed for imperial domination.[33]

These projects reflect the empire's broader 'cosmocratic tradition',[34] which assumed that 'knowing the world … [was] tantamount to conquering it'.[35] This form of intellectual control, was, of course, supported by other grand narratives that equated the *orbis terrarum* with the *orbis Romanum*.[36] Mastery over the

[30] Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis (Stanford, CA, 1997), 6-9; C. Castoriadis, *Figures* (2007), 86; C. Castoriadis, *Imaginary Institution* (1987), 128-30. For Castoriadis, God, gods, taboo, sin, *polis*, citizen, state, commodities, and capital are all examples of imaginary significations.

[31] Vit., *De arch*. 6.1.10-11; Vir., *Aen*. 1.278-9; 6.851-3; Aug., *Res gest*. pref., 25-7, 30; Arist., *Or*. 26; Min. Fel., *Oct*. 6.1-3. See also Peter Fibiger Bang, 'Imperial Ecumene and Polyethnicity', in Alessandro Barchiesi and Walter Scheidel (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies* (Oxford, 2010), 671-84; Warren Carter, 'Vulnerable Power: The Roman Empire Challenged by the Early Christians', in Anthony J. Blasi, Jean Duhaime and Paul-André Turcotte (eds), *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2002), 453-66; Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1988).

[32] W.J. Jobling and R.G. Tanner, 'Zeno the Tribune', *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici sul Vicino Oriente Antico* 6 (1989), 135-42.

[33] Str., *Geog*. 6.4.1-3; 17.3.24; Plin., *Nat*. 3.17, 39. Katherine Clarke, 'Text and Image: Mapping the Roman World', in Fritz-Heiner Mutschler and Achim Mittag (eds), *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared* (Oxford, 2008), 195-214; Trevor Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History* (Oxford, 2004), 129-64; Sorcha Carey, *Pliny's Catalogue of Culture: Art and Empire in the Natural History* (Oxford, 2003), 17-40.

[34] Catharine Edwards and Greg Woolf, 'Cosmopolis, Rome as World City', in Catharine Edwards and Greg Woolf (eds), *Rome the Cosmopolis* (Cambridge, 2003), 6.

[35] S. Carey, *Pliny's Catalogue* (2003), 39. On map-making as a form of 'intellectual control', see Christian Jacob, 'Mapping in the Mind: The Earth from Ancient Alexandria', in Denis Cosgrove (ed.), *Mappings* (London, 1999), 31-2.

[36] Aug., *Res gest*. pref.: Augusus claims to have 'placed the whole world (*orbem terrarum*) under the sovereignty of the Roman people'. See also Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1991), 15-27.

seas stands out as a prominent signifier in these constructions: not only does Augustus find it important to mention this in his *Res Gestae*, but Appian identifies Rome's conquest of the islands as proof of its superiority.[37] Yet another indicator of Roman power centered on the ability to move people in the service of imperial goals.[38] Within the constellation of displacement practices, exile, especially *ad insulam*, attained notoriety by the end of the first century as members of the imperial family, administrative officials, and influential philosophers all met this fate.[39] While the degree of deprivation varied according to locale and personal resources, this form of punishment left a lasting impression on the Roman imagination: Juvenal's reference to exiles living on 'some craggy rock in the Aegean Sea' and Tacitus' report that, after Nero's death, 'the sea was full of exiles and its rocks stained with blood' evoke images of isolation and despair for those whose sentence Roman jurists ranked only below conscription to the mines and capital punishment.[40]

It is not surprising, then, to discover that the wretchedness of displacement is a recurrent theme in many ancient writings: topics such as the loss of homeland, family, friends, status, wealth, and freedom highlight the spatial dislocation and loss of social identity that banishment confers.[41] Even so, another current within the exilic *topos* rejected the theme of privation, choosing instead to depict exile positively. For writers such as Musonius Rufus and Favorinus, both of whom position themselves as island exiles, expulsion is not a tragedy

[37] Aug., *Res gest*. 25-6; App., *Hist. rom*. pref. 9. In the Mediterranean world, control of the islands was a sign of imperial authority. See Christy Constantakopoulou, *Dance of the Islands: Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire, and the Aegean World* (Oxford, 2007), 97-8.

[38] Plin., *Nat*. 7.97; Str., *Geogr*. 6.4.2; see also Str., *Geogr*. 3.1.6; 5.1.6; 5.2.9; 5.4.13; 6.2.4; 7.5.6; 7.7.6; Liv., 42.22.5; Vir., *Ecl*. 1; 9; Sen., *Clem*. 1.1.2; Vett. Pat. 1.14; Flor. 1.1.3; 1.32.5; 1.33.7; 1.34.11; Jos., *J.W*. 6.9.3; Aulus Gell. 16.13.8; Cass. Dio 60.17.3. Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford, 1999), 294-5.

[39] Plin., *Ep*. 3.11.2-3; Suet., *Dom*. 10.5; Phil., *Vit. soph*. 7.11; Cass. Dio 66.13.2. See also Fred K. Drogula, 'Controlling Travel: Deportation, Islands and the Regulation of Senatorial Mobility in the Augustan Pricipate', *CQ* 61 (2011), 230-66; Sarah T. Cohen, 'Augustus, Julia and the Development of Exile *Ad Insulam*', *CQ* 58 (2008), 206-17; Mary V. Braginton, 'Exile Under the Roman Emperors', *The Classical Journal* 39 (1944), 391-407.

[40] Juv., *Sat*. 13.246: *maris Aegaei rupem scopulosque*; Tac., *Hist*. 1.2: *plenum exiliis mare infecti caedibus scopuli* (see also Phil., *Vit. Apoll*. 8.5.3: πλήρεις δ' αἱ νῆσοι φυγάδων); Just., *Dig*. 48.19.28. For a range of views on the islands and exile *ad insulam*, see Str., *Geog*. 10.5.3; Sen., *Helv*. 6.5; 7.8-9; Philo, *Flacc*. 151, 182-4; Juv., *Sat*. 6.553-64; 10.168-70; Jos., *Ant*. 18.81.4; Suet., *Tib*. 53.2; *Tit*. 8.5; Tac., *Ann*. 2.85.4; 3.68-9; 4.13, 30; Plut., *Mor*. 602c; Phil., *Vit. Apoll*. 7.26; Cass. Dio 56.23.4; Just., *Dig*. 28.1.8; 48.19.30; 48.22.4-7.

[41] *Theog*. 332a-b, 341-50, 1197-1202; Eur., *Herac*. 12-6; *Phoe*. 388-403; Char., *Call*. 3.8.9; 5.1.4-6 (although the exile here is not the result of a legal decision; see Tim Whitmarsh, *Narrative and Identity in the Ancient Greek Novel: Returning Romance* [Cambridge, 2011], 222). See also Silvia Montiglio, *Wandering in Ancient Greek Culture* (Chicago, 2005), 20-37; Jo-Marie Claassen, *Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (London, 1999).

but an opportunity to craft counternarratives exploring alternative constructions of space and the self.[42]

Musonius and Favorinus reconfigure exile in ways that challenge central tenets of imperial ideology. Against Rome's drive to put people 'in their place', they appeal to the notion of the cosmopolitan who sees the entire world as his homeland. To imagine the world divided into discrete parts is the way the 'mindless' (ἀνόητος) partition territory. Does not everyone, Musonius asks, live under the same heavenly canopy and have equal access to water, earth, and sun?[43] Moreover, since itinerancy is embedded in the human experience, as Favorinus notes, is not the idea of 'homeland' arbitrary, and does not history show that passion for it produces 'foolish anxieties' (ἀνοήτος ἀλγηδόνας) that lead to discord and violence?[44] The true citizen of the world recognizes that space is value-neutral; it is only through human perceptions that it attains the status of good or sorrowful. Because the exile controls his experience, he should regard himself in cosmographic terms, as 'a citizen of the city of God which is made up of humans and gods'.[45]

Reframing space in this fashion enables Musonius and Favorinus to envision island exile as a catalyst for self-improvement and personal freedom. Both writers recommend cultivating virtue through an ascetic regimen that strengthens both body and spirit. This program enables the exile to overcome the soul's 'antagonists' (*i.e.*, the longing for homeland, friends and family, wealth, and liberty).[46] When successfully completed, the good man will experience true freedom in which the 'soul is restrained by neither sea (θαλάττῃ) nor jail (δεσ[μω]τηρίῳ)'.[47] For Favorinus, this is authentic happiness, a state in which one enjoys equanimity of mind and the favor of the gods.[48] This is a quasi-utopian 'place' that the soul refuses to leave, because it is 'ever indestructible, unconstrained, unchained', and 'has its share in liberty'.[49]

[42] Mus. Ruf., *fr*. 9 (trans. Cora E. Lutz, *Musonius Rufus: 'The Roman Socrates'* [New Haven, CT, 1947], 68-76); Fav., *De exil*. (trans. Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Empire* [Oxford, 2001], 302-24). Musonius Rufus was exiled on Gyaros, while Favorinus' presents himself as an exile on Chios. On the historicity of this claim, see Anthony R. Birley, *Hadrian: The Restless Empire* (New York, 1997), 193-5; Simon Swain, 'Hadrian and Favorinus', *ZPE* 79 (1989), 150-8. For analyses of Musonius and Favorinus, see Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 141-55, 167-78.

[43] Mus. Ruf., *fr*. 9 (Lutz, 69). See also Fav., *De exil*. 11.1-3.

[44] Fav., *De exil*. 10.1-12.4.

[45] Mus. Ruf., *fr*. 9 (Lutz, 69).

[46] *Ibid*. (Lutz, 71, 75); Fav., *De exil*. 6.1. On the ascetic dimensions of Musonius Rufus' work, see Richard Valantasis, *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Eugene, OR, 2008), 279-88.

[47] Fav., *De exil*. 28.2.

[48] *Ibid*. 6.4; 8.2.

[49] *Ibid*. 28.2.

By shifting the moral evaluation of exile from the event itself to the 'proper handling' of it,[50] these writers position themselves as voices of truth and reconfigure the concept of power. It is no longer the exile who is wretched, but rather the corrupt authorities who sentence good men to a unjust fate. To emphasize this point, Musonius fashions himself as the new Socrates, who, emboldened with masculine power, speaks with fearlessness in his condemnation of injustice.[51] Similarly, when Favorinus states that 'virtue does not lie within the city walls, nor evil beyond territorial boundaries … such things are not decided in the assembly or lawcourt', it is impossible not to hear a rather transparent commentary on unjust edicts issued from the emperor's throne.[52]

In their depictions of the banishment, Musonius and Favorinus construct identities for themselves that exist in tension with the *Romanitas* favored by the imperial elites. Both configure islands as heterotopic spaces where exiles, if they complete a program of moral advancement, may commune with the gods and enjoy their favor.[53] Moreover, from this position of moral superiority, the exile renders judgment against 'mindless', arbitrary, and capricious imperial structures of power and proclaims is true freedom.

Inside the early Christian imaginary

These redescriptions of exile bring the reader into the spiritual and intellectual orbit of John, another critic of Roman injustice. Whether or not the apostle suffered official banishment, *Revelation* does suggest that John positioned *himself* within this tradition: channeling the displaced prophets from Jewish history, he constructs an identity that is consistent with 'resistant' readings of the exilic experience.[54]

John was not unique among Christians in this respect. A wide range of sources experiments with the theme of dislocation to define the status of Christians in the world: they are 'exiles' (παρεπίδημοι), 'resident aliens' (πάροικοι), and 'strangers' (ξένοι) whose citizenship lies in heaven.[55] Considering the

[50] *Ibid*. 24.4; Mus. Ruf., *fr*. 9 (Lutz, 75).

[51] *Ibid*. (Lutz, 73, 75).

[52] *Ibid*. 23.2: οὐκ ἐντὸς τειχῶν ἡ ἀρετὴ οὐδὲ ἐκτὸς ὅρων ἡ κακία, οὐδὲ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἢ ἐν δικαστηρίῳ τὰ τοιαῦτα διακρίνεται.

[53] On heterotopia, see Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* 16 (1986), 22-7.

[54] For instance, *Rev*. 18//*Jer*. 50-1 and *Ez*. 26-7; *Rev*. 1:12-6//*Dan*. 7:13. See I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 14-6; *ibid*. 11: 'a Jewish-Christian prophet, *regarding himself as exiled* by an idolatrous empire for his faith, would not have been without antecedents for understanding his situation or role models for sustaining his public ministry' (italics added).

[55] Exiles: 1*Pet*. 1:1; 2:11; *Heb*. 11:13; resident aliens: 1*Pet*. 1:17; 2:11; 1*Clem*. pref.; Pol., *Phil*. pref.; *Diogn*. 5.5; 6.8; *Mar. Poly*. pref.; strangers: *Heb*. 11:13; *Shep*. *Herm*. *Sim*. 1.1; *Diogn*. 5.5; heavenly citizenship: *Phil*. 3:20. See also Benjamin H. Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2009).

pervasiveness of this trope and the frequency with which exile was used as a mechanism to suppress dissent in the post-Constantinian era,[56] it is not difficult to envision early interpreters of *Revelation* reading John's autobiographical statement alongside the book's spirit of social disenfranchisement and 'concretizing' it with an exilic frame. That readers engaged in this type of 'actualization' is evident among authors who designate John as a martyr, a depiction contradicted by the Fourth Gospel (*Jn*. 21:22) but nevertheless promulgated by Christians living through times of persecution.[57] The same phenomenon also appears to have catalyzed the belief that Rome condemned John to the mines. This form of punishment was impossible on Patmos, but more common in the third and fourth centuries, a time when Christians did indeed suffer this fate.[58]

Readerly control over *Revelation* also prompted commentators to explore the meaning of Patmos as a site of divine revelation. To confer special status on an island would be consistent with Greek and Roman sources that acknowledge these spaces as 'privileged location[s] for the occurrence of natural phenomena, the emergence of unusual human situations, [and] the development of the exotic and the miraculous'.[59] Not only did islands appear in dramatic fashion through violent collisions between wind and water, writers also recorded stories connecting islands with the divine and described its societies as utopian, immune to the corrupting influences on the mainland.[60] A second-century inscription recounting Patmos's 'emergence from the depths of the sea' and its affiliation with Artemis, whose cult was established there by Orestes, typifies the lore attributed to islands.[61] Christian writers engage these patterns of thought by highlighting Patmos as the place where God unveiled to his servant an alternative vision of human social ordering.

Patmos exudes the aura of the spectacular: for Victorinus, Domitian condemns John to the island but dies shortly thereafter. The apostle, in contrast, not only survives, but receives a vision and is eventually freed to continue his

[56] See Daniel A. Washburn, *Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284-476 CE* (New York, 2013).

[57] Ter., *Praescr*. 36.3; Orig., *Comm. Matt*. 16.6; Eus., *Dem. evang*. 3.5.65. See also I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 30, 34.

[58] Christians were sent to the mines during the Valerian persecution (Cyp., *Ep*. 77.3). Shortly thereafter, Victorinus introduces this element into the story of John. See also Fergus Millar, 'Condemnation to Hard Labour in the Roman Empire, From the Julio-Claudians to Constantine', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 52 (1984), 124-5, 137-43.

[59] Natural phenomena: Plin., *Nat*. 2.87-90; Str., *Geog*. 1.3.10; Sen., *Nat*. 6.21.1; exotic and the miraculous: ps.-Aris., *Peri Thau*. 832a; 833a; 836a; Arist., *Or*. 44.12, 14, 17. See also Emilio Gabba, 'True History and False History in Classical Antiquity', *JRS* 71 (1981), 55-60, 56.

[60] C. Constantakopoulou, *Dance* (2007), 5: 'Island isolation provided the necessary conditions for alternative communities to exist'; E. Gabba, 'True History' (1981), 58-9.

[61] Eve-Marie Becker, 'Patmos – ein utopischer Ort? Apk 1,9-11 in auslegungs- und kulturgeschichtlicher Hinsicht', *Saeculum* 59 (2008), 81-106, 87.

mission.[62] In this narrative, exile trumps emperor, and the island of deprivation receives the fullness of divine revelation. Early medieval writers, distanced from the specter of persecution, expand upon this spatial realignment by locating John's experience within a metanarrative of salvation.[63] For instance, Primasius marvels at how John's exile was an appropriate use of time and space, for it was while under guard on the island that his mind soared beyond 'humanity's boundaries' and he was able 'to see divine things with unrestricted contemplation'. While bound on earth, John nevertheless 'was allowed to penetrate the secrets of heaven'.[64] Apringius too echoes the salutary nature of John's exile and advances Primasius' spatial contrast by declaring the apostle's sentence to Patmos was followed by a spiritual ascent that enabled him to see visions in 'God's secret places'.[65] The island is not just a focal point for divine-human interaction; it is also a site for advancing the Christian mission. According to the *Acts of John by Prochorus*, Christ utilizes the Patmos exile as a mechanism to ensure that John advances the spread of Christianity, an assignment that the apostle dutifully completes.[66] It is also there that John writes his gospel, an act which the author compares with Moses' reception of the Decalogue. In the *Prochorus Acts*, then, the *Fourth Gospel* represents the new law, and Patmos the sacred site of its deliverance.

Like the islands of Musonius and Favorinus, Patmos functions in these sources as 'heterotopic' space that neutralizes the punitive aspects of exile. John uses his time there well, but in contrast to the Roman writers, his island sojourn is not designed to demonstrate ascetic strength or philosophical wisdom. Rather, it is an event that God employs to disclose his plan for human history. By utilizing Patmos to announce the imminence of his dominion, God signals an end to the emperor's thalassocracy and the coming rule of God – exile *ad insulam* is rendered ineffective, for the *oikoumene*, including its islands, belong to God, not Babylon.[67]

Imaginary (dis)locations

As studies of cultural geography have shown, societal representations of space are discourses of power concerned with self-definition: to assert that someone is either 'in' or 'out' of place is to claim the authority to assign people

[62] Vict., *In Apoc*. 10.3 (*Rev*. 10:11).

[63] I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 61.

[64] Prim., *In Apoc*. pref. 21-5: *metas humanitatis mente trannscendens, libero cuntuitu meruisset uidere diuina* (trans. I. Boxall, *Patmos* [2013], 63).

[65] I. Boxall, *Patmos* (2013), 59-60, 64.

[66] *Ibid*. 106-14; Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 718-49.

[67] On Patmos as utopian space, see E.-M. Becker, 'Patmos' (2008), 89-93.

to specific spots on the socio-cultural map, while resistance to these formulations represents a transgressive impulse to re-imagine space and identities.[68] Exploring early Christian readings of John brings into relief this idea of imaginaries in conflict and competition. Appreciating the reader's role in constructing meaning helps position patristic and early medieval discussions of John's island exile as transgressive interpretations of imperial ideology: not only does John triumph under severe persecution, but Patmos becomes the spot where God proclaims the destruction of the empire's imaginary and re-plots Christians onto a new, divinely-apportioned map.

[68] Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis, MN, 1986).

Polycrates of Ephesus and the 'Canonical John'*

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Abstract

John 'who had reclined at the Lord's chest' is one of the witnesses whom Bishop Polycrates of Ephesos lines up in order to defend the quartodeciman practice of celebrating Easter against Bishop Victor of Rome (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.2-8; see also *ibid.* 3.31.3). This 'John' is identified with the 'Beloved Disciple' of *John* 13:23-5, as in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1. Yet in other aspects, Polycrates' image of 'John' is quite different from what we find, at about the same time, in Irenaeus (partly in Clement of Alexandria, too) who presents the full 'canonical' image of John as it had become common in the course of the 2nd century: 'John', the 'Beloved Disciple', Apostle and author of the *Gospel* and the *Apocalypse of John*. Polycrates' 'John' is, among other things, a priest, but not the author of a literary work, be it a gospel or an apocalypse. This article will trace the differences between these images of 'John' and try to investigate the reasons for Polycrates' peculiar image of 'John'.

When bishop Polycrates of Ephesus, in his letter to bishop Victor of Rome, set out to defend the so-called quartodeciman practice of celebrating Easter, he did so by appealing to the support of apostles and other prominent Christians buried in cities of the province of Asia and thus, in a sense, belonging to Christianity in the region.[1] By taking recourse to prominent early Christians in 'his' region, he implicitly uses antiquity as an argument in support of the Easter practice established in Asia Minor.[2] In fact, antiquity and tradition seem to be his only arguments, as far as his letter is preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.24.2-7):

(2) Now we observe the day as unblemished by dishonesty, neither adding nor omitting (anything). For in Asia, too, great founding figures sleep, who will rise up on the day of the coming of the Lord, on which he will come with glory from the heavens and revive all the saints: Philipp from the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, as well

* This article is part of a larger project about apostles in Christian memory. I am most grateful to Elisabeth Pal (Freiburg im Breisgau) for her assistance in composing the tables.

[1] For this mechanism, see Willam Tabbernee, '"Our Trophies are Better than your Trophies": The Appeal to Tombs and Reliquaries in Montanist-Orthodox Relations', *SP* 31 (1997), 206-17, esp. 206-13.

[2] In view of his argument, we may seriously doubt whether Polycrates would have considered himself an 'early Christian'.

Studia Patristica XCI, 127-134.
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as two of his daughters who have grown old as virgins, and the other daughter, who has led her life in the Holy Spirit, rests in Ephesus. (3) Then John, who had reclined at the Lord's chest, who became a priest, having worn the *petalon*, and a witness and a teacher. He sleeps in Ephesus. (4) Then Polycarp in Smyrna, bishop as well as witness, and Thraseas, bishop as well as witness, from Eumeneia, who sleeps in Smyrna. (5) Why should one mention Sagaris, bishop and witness, who sleeps in Laodicea, then the blessed Papirius and Meliton, the eunuch, who altogether led his life in the Holy Spirit, who lies in Sardis, awaiting the visitation from the heavens in which he will rise from the dead. (6) All these have observed the day of the Fourteenth of Passover according to the gospel, by no means deviating but following according to the canon of faith. Then myself, too, the smallest of you all, Polycrates, according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I even attended. Seven of my relatives were bishops, I am the eighth. And always did my relatives observe the day when the people used to refute the leaven. (7) Now I, brothers, having sixty-five years in the Lord and being joined with brothers from the (whole) inhabited world and having gone through every Sacred Scripture, I am not disturbed about those who bully (me), for greater ones than me have said: One has to obey God rather than humans.

I. Polycrates' image of 'John'

The focus of the present article is not so much on Polycrates' case as such, but rather on the way he employs a particular picture of John in support of his case. The passage in question is preserved twice in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.31.3; 5.24.3):

ἔτι δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος τοῦ κυρίου ἀναπεσών, ὃς ἐγενήθη ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκὼς καὶ μάρτυς καὶ διδάσκαλος· οὗτος ἐν Ἐφέσῳ κεκοίμηται.

Compared to the other authorities (στοιχεία) Polycrates mentions, John receives the most elaborate description: Apart from being identified with the 'Beloved Disciple' of *John* 13:25; 21:20, he is presented as a priest, a witness/martyr and a teacher.

Philipp, although mentioned in first place, is characterised 'only' as (1) belonging to the circle of the Twelve and as (2) father of three[3] prominent daughters. To Polycrates the daughters seem to be more interesting than their father, although the latter seems to be a composite figure, conflating Philipp the member of the Twelve (see *Mark* 4:18 *par. Matth.* 10:3; *Luke* 6:14; *Acts* 1:13; further

[3] This candid disagreement with *Acts* 21:8-9 (where Philipp is alleged to have four daughters with prophetic gifts) is acknowledged and explained by Richard Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates on the Origin of the Fourth Gospel', *JTS NS* 44 (1993), 24-69, 30 with n. 24, as knowledge based on local tradition – instead of the (mis-)use or *Acts* 21:8-9. Then, however, one is left wondering why the reference to John, in turn, should be based on the use of *Acts* 4:6; in any event, the final phrase of Polycrates' statement reveals his knowledge of *Acts* 5:29.

Philipp	One of the Twelve						Hierapolis
John	Reclined at the Lord's chest	Priest		Witness	Teacher		Ephesus
Polycarp			Bishop	Witness			Smyrna
Thraseas			Bishop	Witness			Eumeneia/ Smyrna
Sagaris			Bishop	Witness			Laodicea
Papirius							
Melito						Eunuch	Sardis

John 12:21-2) with Philipp the member of the Seven (Hellenists; see *Acts* 6:5; 21:8-9).[4]

One may wonder why Polycrates puts Philipp into the more prominent position although he has less to say about him than about John and even states John's more intimate relationship with Jesus.[5] It may be that Philipp is more important to Polycrates precisely because of his daughters if he could use both father and daughters as his own figureheads in the controversy with Montanism and as a kind of dynasty of prominent Christians.[6]

This may explain why Polycrates decided to put John, who, as a remembered figure or *lieu de mémoire*, by himself would have been more prominent, in the second place after Philipp. This article, however, is specifically concerned with Polycrates' image of John in comparison to other contemporary conceptions of 'John'.

The threefold description of John as a priest, a witness/martyr and a teacher is striking. While the designation 'teacher' (διδάσκαλος) is unproblematic,[7] the other two present serious puzzles:

[4] See R. Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates' (1993), 30-1. According to Martin Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage. Ein Lösungsversuch*, WUNT 67 (Tübingen, 1993), 35, however, this is not a conflation of the two Philipps into one composite figure, but a confusion of one Philipp with the other.

[5] M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage* (1993), 35-6 described the problem but refrained from offering a solution.

[6] Polycrates seems to have valued a kind of dynastic succession as the means of securing Christian tradition – he himself reclaims his family as guarantors for the authenticity of the tradition he represents (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.6).

[7] It can, but need not, relate to the notion of one John 'who had seen the Lord' as an acquaintance and authority for Polycarp, as Irenaeus mentions it in his letter to Florinus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.20.4-8). For some historical issues connected with this document see Stephan Witetschek, *Ephesische Enthüllungen 1. Frühe Christen in einer antiken Großstadt. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage nach den Kontexten der Johannesapokalypse*, Biblical Tools and Studies 6 (Leuven, Paris and Dudley, MA, 2008), 331-2, 335-6.

The notion of John as a priest (ἱερεύς) is exceptional, even more so since the additional phrase 'having worn the *petalon* (breast-shield)' (τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκώς) excludes any metaphorical understanding of priesthood (as *e.g.* in *Did.* 13:3), but requires the literal understanding of John as a (high) priest at the Jerusalem temple before 70 AD.[8] This is hardly a piece of accurate historical information. Martin Hengel tentatively explained this strange description with reference to *John* 18:16 (the 'other disciple acquainted with the high priest') which, according to him, might have been interpreted in the sense that the Beloved Disciple was a member of the priestly aristocracy.[9] Richard Bauckham, on the other hand, explained it as as an exegetical identification of a certain John who appears in *Acts* 4:6 as a member of the high priestly family, with John the Beloved Disciple.[10] It could also be the case that this description of John results from an identification of John the Beloved Disciple with John the author of the *Apocalypse*, since the latter book is quite fond not only of descriptions of heavenly cult (esp. *Rev.* 4), but also of the notion of Christians being 'priests' (ἱερεῖς) (see *Rev.* 1:5; 5:9). In this connection, it is remarkable that Irenaeus, too, speaks of the *Apocalypse* as describing the 'priestly' coming of Christ's reign (*Haer.* 4.20.11).

The designation of John as a witness (μάρτυς) could similarly point to 'witness' as a prominent motif both in the *Gospel of John* and in the *Apocalypse*. However, in Polycrates' day the term μαρτύς in Christian vocabulary has already acquired the specific meaning of 'martyr'. This meaning of the term is quite conceivable in the cases of the other three witnesses mentioned in Polycrates' list: Polycarp, Thraseas and Sagaris. Assuming consistent use of the term one could understand this text, then, as an early piece of evidence for a tradition of John/the Beloved Disciple having died as a martyr.[11] If that were the case, however, this tradition would find itself in tension with *John* 21:23, an excellent place for a reference to the Beloved Disciple's martyrdom or the refutation thereof. Moreover, according to Richard Bauckham, the middle position of μαρτύς in the

[8] See R. Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates' (1993), 36-40. Especially the definite article (τὸ πέταλον) argues for this specific understanding, since Polycrates thus means precisely one particular breastplate, to be worn by one particular priest at a time. This would hardly have been the case with regard to (high) priesthoods in the imperial cult (for this suggestion see <http://peterkirby.com/johns-priestly-petalon-in-polycrates.html> (last accessed 17 November 2016), although this cult flourished in Ephesus at the time Polycrates was writing. For the imperial cult in Ephesus and Asia see, as a classic, Simon R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984); in addition Steven J. Friesen, *Twice Neokoros. Ephesus, Asia and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family*, RGRW 116 (Leiden, 1993); Hilke Thür (ed.), *„… und verschönerte die Stadt …" … KAI ΚΟΣΜΗΣΑΝΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΟΛΙΝ … Ein ephesischer Priester des Kaiserkultes in seinem Umfeld*, SÖAI 27 (Wien, 1997); Stephan Witetschek, 'Artemis and Asiarchs. Some Remarks on Ephesian Local Colour in Acts 19', *Biblica* 90 (2009), 334-55; *id.*, 'Der provinziale Kaiserkult in Ephesos', in Tobias Georges (ed.), *Ephesus*, COMES 2 (Tübingen, 2017), 93-133.

[9] See M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage* (1993), 36.

[10] See R. Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates' (1993), 42-3.

[11] See M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage* (1993), 36. For (later) traditions about the martyrdom of John the son of Zebedee see *ibid.*, 88-91.

description of John prevents the term from referring to the end of John's life – different from the cases of Polycarp, Thraseas and Sagaris, where μάρτυς is the final element of the description.[12] Hence it seems safer to understand μάρτυς in this text in the more general sense of 'witness' (whose witness may or may not include the ultimate witness of martyrdom). However, one cannot fully exclude the possibility that Polycrates thought of John as a martyr, since the notion of John as a priest shows that Polycrates' image of John was quite peculiar compared to other conceptions of 'John' that existed in the late 2nd century AD.

II. The 'canonical John'

In the course of the 2nd century AD, one can observe how early Christian memory developed a comprehensive conception of 'John',[13] departing from (1) the named author of the *Apocalypse*, whom Justin (*Dial*. 81.4) identified as 'one of the apostles of Christ', (2) John the son of Zebedee who is mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels as one of the three most prominent members of the Twelve (together with Peter and James)[14], and (3) the anonymous Beloved Disciple of *John* 13:25; 21:20. Ptolemy, a disciple of Valentinus, seems to have been the first to attribute the *Gospel of John* to 'the apostle' when paraphrasing *John* 1:3 (*Letter to Flora*, Epiphanius, *Pan*. 33.3.6)[15], and Theophilus of Antioch, as a matter of course, attributes the *Gospel of John* not just to the anonymous Beloved Disciple, but to a certain John who was inspired by the Spirit (*Autol*. 2.22.5-6)[16]. The full picture, however, is most prominently found in Irenaeus. This is the image of 'John' that one may call 'canonical': For Irenaeus, as well as for subsequent authors, 'John' is the Beloved Disciple, the author of the *Gospel of John* as well as of the *Apocalypse*, who was based in Ephesus (*Haer*. 3.1.1; 4.20.11). The same picture is presupposed by what Clement of Alexandria, throughout his works, has got to say about 'John' as the author of *Gospel*, *Epistle(s)* and *Apocalypse*, banished to Patmos but otherwise connected to Ephesus (see esp. *QDS* 42.1).

[12] See R. Bauckham, 'Papias and Polycrates' (1993), 32.

[13] For a more detailed survey see S. Witetschek, *Ephesische Enthüllungen 1* (2008), 326-40.

[14] *Mark* 1:19 (*par*. *Matth*. 4:21; *Luke* 5:10); 1:29; 3:17 (*par*. *Matth*. 10:2; *Luke* 6:14; see also *Acts* 1:13); 5:37 (*par*. *Luke* 8:51); 9:2 (*par*. *Matth*. 17:1; *Luke* 9:28); 9:38 (*par*. *Luke* 9:49); 10:35; 13:3; 14:33; *Luke* 9:54; 22:8; see also *John* 1:35; in *Acts* 3:1-11; 4:13; 8:14 he is singled out as the companion of Peter, in *Gal*. 2:9 he is numbered among the 'pillars' together with Cephas/Peter and James 'the brother of the Lord'.

[15] See Titus Nagel, *Die Rezeption des Johannesevangeliums im 2. Jahrhundert. Studien zur vorirenäischen Aneignung und Auslegung des vierten Evangeliums in christlicher und christlich-gnostischer Literatur*, Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 2 (Leipzig, 2000), 294-9. One could even read Tertullian, *Adv*. *Marc*. 4.3.1-5 as an indication that Marcion – if accurately cited by Tertullian – knew the *Gospel of John* by its very name; see Markus Vinzent, *Tertullian's Preface to Marcion's Gospel*, SP.Sup 5 (Leuven, 2016), 312-9.

[16] See T. Nagel, *Rezeption des Johannesevangeliums* (2000), 55-62.

	Justin	Ptolemy	*Apocryphon of John*	Irenaeus of Lyons	Theophilus of Antioch	Polycrates of Ephesus	Clement of Alexandria	*Canon Muratori*	*Acts of John*
Author of Gospel		Epiphanius, *Pan.* 33.3.6 (John 1.3 cited as words of 'the apostle')		*Haer.* 3.1.1	*Autol.* 2.22.5-6		*Strom* 5.12.81 (John 1.18 quoted as words of 'John the apostle'); *Paed* 1.6.38; 1.9.80	Fol. I a, ll. 9-26	
Author of Epistles							*Strom.* 2.15.66; 3.4.32; 3.6.45	Fol. I a, ll. 26-34	
Author of Apocalypse	*Dial* 81.4			*Haer.* 4.20.11			*QDS* 42.1-2 (John's return from Patmos); Strom 6.12.106	Fol. I b, ll. 26-27 Fol. II a, ll. 7-11	
Apostle	*Dial* 81.4	Epiphanius, *Pan.* 33.3.6					*QDS* 42.1-2; Strom 5.12.81 (John 1.18 quoted as words of 'John the apostle')	Fol. I a, ll. 9-15	26; 88; 112
Son of Zebedee / Brother of James			NHC II p.1 l. 7 / BG p. 19 l. 7-8						90 (transfiguration narrative with the inner circle of disciples: Peter, James, John)
Beloved Disciple				*Haer.* 3.1.1; 4.20.11		Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.31.3; 5.24.3			89 (reference to reclining at Jesus' chest)
Based in Ephesus	*Dial* 81.4 (in combination with Eusebius, *H.E.* 4.18.6			*Haer.* 3.1.1			*QDS* 42.1-2 (John coming to Ephesus from Patmos)		18 (John moving to Ephesus, motivated by a vision)
Buried in Ephesus						Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.31.3; 5.24.3			110-115 (John's death and burial, by implication in Ephesus)

The *Acts of John* presuppose this full picture of 'John' that one finds in Irenaeus and Clement. At this stage (say, end of the 2nd century AD), there seems to have been fairly widespread agreement about the 'John' who was to figure in Christian memory – or as a Christian *lieu de mémoire*[17]: The anonymous Beloved Disciple of the *Gospel of John* 13:25; 21:20 is identified as John the son of Zebedee, who had already been identified (by Justin) with John the author of the *Apocalypse*. Thus, the 'Johannine writings' are supplied with a comprehensive narrative (the *Canon Muratori* is a peculiar witness in this regard).[18]

III. Polycrates' peculiar 'John'

What Polycrates has to say about 'John', however, appears slightly extravagant in view of this 'grand narrative' – in two respects:

- By addition: At least the reference to John as a priest stands out from what Christians in the late 2nd century claimed to know about 'John'. Irenaeus' reference to the *Apocalypse* as describing the 'priestly' coming of Christ's reign (*Haer*. 4.20.11) may point in a comparable direction, but only Polycrates (or possibly his tradition?) goes so far as to speak of John himself as a priest – maybe in an attempt to increase his authority.
- By omission: Polycrates has pretty much to say about 'John', but his 'John' appears free from any literary ambitions. As we have seen, Irenaeus and Clement do their best to connect all the 'Johannine' writings with a single authorial figure called 'John' and thus to provide these writings with the context of a larger narrative of their composition. Polycrates, on the other hand, fails to attribute the authorship of any writing, be it a gospel, be it a letter, be it an apocalypse, to his 'John'.

Polycrates' memory of 'John' is therefore quite unique, and this uniqueness gives rise to the question of the purpose he means to serve with this image.[19]

[17] This concept, mainly developed by the French historian Pierre Nora, provides the possibility to understand the way how collective identity is developed and maintained with reference to certain conceptual 'places' (topographical coordinates, but also buildings, artifacts, traditions, even historical or mythological persons) which serve to condense, shape and orient the sense of collective identity based in a shared past. See Pierre Nora, 'Entre mémoire et histoire', in *id*. (ed.), *Les Lieux de mémoire I. La république* (Paris, 1984), 23-43.

[18] For a comprehensive survey of the 'use' of John in Christian memory, see Régis Burnet, *Les douze apôtres. Histoire de la réception des figures apostoliques dans le christianisme ancien*, Judaïsme ancien et origines du Christianisme 1 (Turnhout, 2014), 343-408.

[19] Martin Hengel, while admitting the impact of legend, primarily stressed the accuracy or historical reliability of Polycrates' memory as a witness to Asian tradition; see M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage* (1993), 34-5 with n. 68. It is probably the major weakness of Hengel's

Especially the reference to John 'having reclined at the Lord's chest' is evidence that Polycrates knew and appreciated the *Gospel of John* and could presuppose the same for the Roman addressee(s) of his letter.[20] But it was not part of his strategy to stress his 'John''s authorship of the *Gospel of John*, which could have served his purpose in view of the ample use of the Passover theme in the *Gospel of John*.[21] Polycrates seems to have had a different view of the *Gospel of John*: By claiming the authority of the *Fourth Gospel*, he could have invited a competing interpretation that would have reclaimed it for the dominical practice of celebrating Easter (see *John* 20:1, 19, 26). The reference to John's liturgical practice in Ephesus was not open to such discussion, since it allowed him as the local bishop to figure as the competent custodian of this tradition.[22] In this sense, local memory and local tradition appear as the more reliable tools – or even weapons – in view of competing claims of 'apostolic' practice in comparison to texts that put all their readers on equal footing.

Thus, Polycrates' letter to Victor or Rome presents itself as a most remarkable witness, not so much to the historical accuracy and reliability of local memory, but to the utilisation of memory or memories in a peculiar shape in order to serve concrete ecclesial purposes. What is even more interesting, and worth further investigation, is the question of whether and to what extent the claims Polycrates made about 'John' convinced those who did not share this peculiar tradition, *i.e.* this peculiar collective memory.

approach that he considered memory mostly in view of documentary accuracy – which is not secured by precision in details, pace *ibid.* 35 – and not in view of the intentions that motivate the transmission of certain memories, as recent theories of collective memory have it.

[20] See M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage* (1993), 36.

[21] For a critical assessment of Passover symbolism in the *Gospel of John* see Stephan Witetschek, 'Die Stunde des Lammes? Christologie und Chronologie in Joh 19,14', *EThL* 87 (2011), 127-87.

[22] See again W. Tabbernee, 'Our trophies' (1997).

‘Many a Gaud and a Glittering Toy’ (Sayers): Fourth-Century Gospel Books

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Abstract

In describing events in Caesarea after 260 AD, during the reign of Gallienus, Eusebius records that Marinus, a would-be Roman centurion, was willing to sacrifice promotion to rank and life itself for the sake of his Christian confession – symbolized by his devotion to a book of the Gospels (*HE* 7.15). The martyrdom of Vincent depicted in the Galla Placidia mausoleum (Ravenna) comes to mind. A little over a century later, Chrysostom complains that wealthy Christians procure private copies of the scriptures not to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest their content, but to revere the elegance of their calligraphy, the fineness of their parchment (*hom in Jo*. 32.3). Jerome castigates Roman Christians for their devotion to *de luxe* codices on purple-dyed vellum with gold lettering, bedecked with gems, ‘while Christ lies at their door naked and dying’ (*Epist*. 22.32; see *Epist*. 107.12.1).What sort of books these? Not pandects, this communication argues. More likely, they were Gospel books, not illuminated, but equipped with Eusebius’ sections and canons, which would become the locus of figurative and auriferous embellishment. While these volumes are status markers for wealthy Christians, transitional forebears of the illustrated Gospel books and Old Testament fascicles that appear in the fifth and sixth centuries (*e.g*., Cotton Genesis, Vienna Genesis, the Rossano Gospels, the Sinope Gospels, the British Library Canon Tables, *etc*.), they also reflect a moment in Christian book production when Eusebius’ practical apparatus is on its way to becoming a synecdoche for the Christian enterprise.

In describing events in Caesarea after 260 AD, during the reign of Gallienus, Eusebius records that Marinus, a would-be Roman centurion, was willing to sacrifice promotion to rank and life itself for the sake of his Christian confession – symbolized by his devotion to a book of the Gospels (*HE* 7.15).[1] The martyrdom[2] of Vincent rendered in the splendid mosaic of the Galla Placidia

[1] Marinus did not own the Gospel book; the bishop took him to the church, brought the book, and told him to choose the book or his sword.

[2] For a reassessment of accounts of martyrdom in early Christianity, see Candida R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies and Traditions*, Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven, 2012). See *ead*., *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York, 2013).

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mausoleum (Ravenna)[3] comes to mind. A little over a century later, Marinus would not have been faced with such a decision. Nor would the Gospel book to which he fled have had to be secreted away. However, by the final quarter of the fourth century, in some circles it would have been necessary to keep Gospel books and Bible pandects under lock and key not because of the threat of persecution or imperial confiscation, but because they had become *Prachtstücke*[4] or, in the words of Dorothy L. Sayers, 'many a gaud and glittering toy'.[5]

[3] Alternatively, the martyr is identified as Saint Laurence. See Gillian Mackie, 'New Light on the So-Called Saint Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna', *Gesta* 29 (1990), 54-60. The mausoleum was built in the first half of the fifth century. The saint, himself with a book in hand, confronts the fires of martyrdom, to the left of which is an open *armarium* containing a codex of each of the Gospels. See Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, 1995), 169; Giuseppe Bovini, *Ravenna: An Art City* (Ravenna, 1969); and E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making*: *Main Lines of Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century* (Cambridge, 1977), 53-5.

[4] This is the word Theodor Zahn uses to describe pandects of the Greek Bible introduced in the fourth century of the Common Era. He notes that they were never more than curiosities and did not enjoy practical use. Rather, such a codex (a *codex pernimius maior*) would have been kept in the treasury of the church, not in the hands of lectors. See *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons* I (Erlangen und Leipzig, 1980), 70. Martin Wallraff reiterates this point in *Kodex und Kanon: Das Buch im frühen Christentum*, Hans-Lietzmann-Vorlesungen 12 (Berlin, 2013), 40-2. See also Gregory Allen Robbins, '"Fifty Copies of the Sacred Writings" (*VC* 4.36): Entire Bibles or Gospel Books?', *SP* 19 (1989), 91-8.

[5] The line comes from the final stanza of 'The Three Kings', the fifth in a collection of fourteen poems entitled, *Op. 1*, the first of Sayer's books.

The third king was very old,
O balow, balow la lay,
Both his hands were full of gold,
O balow, balow la lay,
Many a gaud and glittering toy,
Baubles brave for a baby boy,
O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

Op. 1 was Number 9 in a series, *Adventures All*, conceived of by Basil Blackwell, the son of the Oxford bookseller, in 1914. While only in his twenties, Blackwell hoped to discover and launch the careers of talented young poets with slim, single-authored volumes. Sayers, who had graduated Oxford (Somerville College) in 1915, submitted her work to Blackwell in the autumn of 1916, and it was published in a limited edition of 350 copies on 28 December of that year. The title, the abbreviation for 'Opus One', betrays Sayers' early aspirations as a poet; it would be the first of many such offerings she intended. In 'The Three Kings', Sayers inverts the order of the gifts presented by the Magi in *Matth.* 2:11. While Sayers' portrayal of the royal visitors who pay homage to the infant Jesus echoes the classical description that appears in the treatise *Excerpta et Collectanea* (PL 94, 541CD), often attributed to Bede the Venerable, she eschews much of the traditional symbolism of the gifts. With respect to the old king, his is an act of divestiture, a world-weary act of abnegation, not an honorific due a worthy successor. Things that once caused the heart to rejoice (Old French: *gaudir*) do so no longer. These useless, albeit eye-catching baubles that betoken the world's splendor are what he presents to the 'baby King', trinkets for which the child will have no use but will nevertheless find He has to negotiate – bravely. On Sayers literary achievements, see Catherine Kenney, 'Sayers, Dorothy Leigh (1893–1957)',

In this communication I shall follow the methodological lead of Peter Brown in his recent, magisterial work, *Through the Eye of A Needle*,[6] and its smaller, but no less important sequel, *The Ransom of the Soul*.[7] There, Brown urges us 'to keep together the study of religion and the study of … "material culture"'.[8] Mine will be an illustration of what Brown characterizes as the 'social tone of the Christian communities at the moment when, slowly but surely, these communities came to be joined by the representatives of the wealthy classes'.[9]

One indicator of that social tone was the private ownership of books. This kind of ownership needs to be distinguished from the earlier trend.[10] In the second through the fourth centuries, local Christian congregations accumulated and retained manuscripts for liturgical and archival use. In certain Christian centers, starting with Jerusalem, larger libraries served purposes beyond the liturgical or archival. For example, they could be employed to support historical or apologetic ends. These larger Christian libraries, Caesarea[11] being the best known, may be compared to the great institutional libraries of the ancient world.[12] Christian ecclesiastics and intellectuals curated admirable holdings of

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford, 2004), <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.bianca.penlib.du.edu/view/article/35966>, accessed 29 July 2015. For an appreciation of Sayers' early poetry and *Op. 1*, see Barbara Reynolds, *Dorothy L. Sayers, Her Life and Soul* (New York, 1993), 68-71. More judicious are the assessments offered by James Brabazon, *Dorothy L. Sayers, A Biography* (New York, 1981), 56-75; Ralph E. Hone, *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Literary Biography* (Kent, OH, 1979), 1-36; and Janet Hitchman, *Such a Strange Lady: A Biography of Dorothy L. Sayers* (New York, 1975), 24-38. On the Magi in the Gospel according to *Matthew* and subsequent Christian piety, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (New York, 1977), 164-201, especially 197-200. Jonathan Dove (b. 1959) was commissioned to compose a musical setting of 'The Three Kings' for the 2000 Lessons & Carols service at King's College, Cambridge. I wish to thank Dr. Timothy J. Krueger, artistic director of Saint Martin's Chamber Choir, Denver, Colorado, USA, for bringing this anthem and, thus, Sayers' poem to my attention.

[6] Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, 2012). Among the reviews of Brown's work are those of Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22 (2014), 301-2, and Kate Cooper, 'The Long Shadow of Constantine', *Journal of Roman Studies* (2014), 1-13, an essay that includes a substantive discussion of Alan Cameron's *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011) as well.

[7] Peter Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, 2015). This book is based on lectures Brown delivered at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Vienna in 2012. Brown devotes a couple of pages, xi-ii, to distinguishing the aims of this book from those of *Eye of A Needle*, and to discussing how changing views of the afterlife have been of longstanding scholarly interest to him, as reflected in several articles published and lectures delivered during the late 1990s.

[8] *Id*., *Eye of A Needle* (2012), xxviii.

[9] *Ibid*. 32.

[10] Megan Hale Williams, *Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago, 2008), 136-47.

[11] Andrew Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden, 2003). See also Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, 2006).

[12] Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven, 2001).

their own. Origen, Pamphilus, Eusebius, Jerome[13] and Augustine knew the qualities and uses of a good collection of books. They recognized the need to accumulate Christian (and pagan) literature for scholarship and teaching. Harry Gamble astutely observes that people like these 'had the minds not only of scholars but of bibliographers and librarians'.[14]

But in the post-Constaninian era, we begin to see notices about individual collectors with less lofty aspirations. They are Christians who have the financial means to purchase books. Indeed, they are keen to acquire *de luxe* editions of Christian writings, especially the scriptures. But they are hardly connoisseurs in the technical sense of the word. They are leisured dilettantes. Their holdings function as status markers, not as signs of spiritual discipline or devotion.

John Chrysostom (347-407) singles them out in *Homily 32 on John*.[15] In commenting on *John* 4:13-21, a pericope that narrates Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well in Samaria, Chrysostom considers v. 19 a *crux*. The unnamed woman acknowledges Jesus as a prophet. This, according to Chrysostom, signals an evolution in her character. She has become 'more exalted in mind' (Εἶδες πῶς ὑψηλοτέρα τῇ διανοίᾳ γέγονεν). She begins to manifest a deep interest in doctrine (περὶ δογμάτων); her attention cannot be otherwise averted (καὶ οὐχ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἡμέρας, οὐ τὸ ἐφ' ἕτερόν τι παραγενέσθαι, οὐκ ἄλλο οὐδὲν αὐτὴν ἀπήγαγε τῆς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ζητήσεως).[16] In an unexpected turn, Chrysostom contrasts her singular quest for knowledge with the indifference of the semi-Christian bibliophile to the content of the scriptural text:

> Tell me who of you, when at home, ever takes the Christian Book in his hands and goes through what is contained therein, and studies Scripture? No one would be able to say he does. However, we shall find that games and dice are in most houses; but never books, except in a few. And the latter have the same attitude as those who do not possess books, since they tie them up and store them away in chests all the time. Their whole interest in them lies in the fineness of the parchment and the beauty of the writing, not in reading them. They have not bought them with a view to obtaining help and

[13] M.H. Williams, *Monk and the Book* (2008), 147-65. According to Williams, Jerome's was 'a library after the aristocratic model. It was not the kind of collection that a grammarian – even a very successful one – would have assembled for professional use. It was probably considerably larger than the library discovered in the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, for example. Indeed, the library at Bethlehem may well have rivaled the episcopal library of Caesarea as the foremost Christian library in Palestine. But that collection, by the late fourth century, was the property of a wealthy see, not of a single monk. Jerome's library was the personal possession of a man who had renounced wealth … [I]ts contents were literally worth a fortune' (166). Williams estimates that Jerome's library included at least a thousand codices of the same length as a copy of Vergil's *Aeneid* (*ibid.* 187).

[14] H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers* (1995), 144-202.

[15] In the years 386-398, Chrysostom delivered a series of sermons in Antioch, expounding on *Genesis*, *Matthew*, *John*, *Romans*, *Galatian*s, the Corinthian correspondence, *Ephesians*, and the Pastorals (1, 2*Timothy* and *Titus*).

[16] *In Jo*. 32 (PG 59, 186).

profit, but are eager to acquire them to make a display of wealth and ambition, so excessive is their vainglory. Actually, I hear no one priding himself because he knows their contents, but because he possesses one written in gold letters. Now, what profit is there in this, pray?[17]

It is clear that in this section of the sermon and in the one that follows that Chrysostom has in mind a *de luxe* edition of Gospel books. He wants his hearers not only to possess such books, but to 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest'[18] them. The homilist asserts that 'the Devil does not dare to enter into the house where the Gospel lies' (ἐν οἰκίᾳ, ἔνθα ἂν Εὐαγγέλιον ᾖ κείμενον, οὐ τολμήσει προσελθεῖν ὁ διάβολος).[19] But, he reckons, they are better acquainted with their OTB racing forms and the minutia contained therein – the 'names, races, cities and talents of charioteers … the good and bad qualities of horses' – than they are with the Gospels. By comparison, despite their attendance at divine service, they are 'ignorant even of the number of the books' (ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν βίβλων τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἀγνοεῖν).[20]

What might Chrysostom be implying when he says the collectors are ignorant about 'the number of the books'? He surely doesn't have in mind here that they are ignorant of canon lists. A definitive canon list to which all subscribed is non-existent.[21] Could they possibly have been unaware that there are *four* Gospels? That seems unlikely, too. Or – and this is a tantalizing possibility I would like to suggest – having *de luxe* copies of Gospel books, most likely equipped with Eusebius' sections and canons, are they oblivious to what a powerful, edifying tool they have at their disposal? It is worth remembering

[17] The translation is that of Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin in *John Chrysostom, Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist, Homilies 1-47*, Fathers of the Church (Baltimore, MD, 1957), 311-21, 319. PG 59, 186-7: Τίς γὰρ ὑμῶν, εἰπέ μοι, ἐν οἰκίᾳ γενόμενος, πυκτίον ἔλαβε χριστιανικὸν μετὰ χεῖρας, καὶ τὰ ἐγκείμενα ἐπῆλθε, καὶ ἠρεύνησε τὴν Γραφήν; Οὐδεὶς ἂν ἔχοι ταῦτα εἰπεῖν· ἀλλὰ πεττοὺς μὲν καὶ κύβους παρὰ τοῖς πλείοσιν εὑρήσομεν ὄντας, βιβλία δὲ οὐδαμοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρ' ὀλίγοις. Καὶ οὗτοι δὲ τοῖς οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὁμοίως διάκεινται, δήσαντες αὐτὰ καὶ ἀποθέμενοι διαπαντὸς ἐν κιβωτίοις· καὶ ἡ πᾶσα αὐτοῖς σπουδὴ περὶ τὴν τῶν ὑμένων λεπτότητα, καὶ τὸ τῶν γραμμάτων κάλλος, οὐ περὶ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὠφελείας καὶ κέρδους τὴν κτῆσιν αὐτῶν πεποίηνται, ἀλλὰ πλούτου καὶ φιλοτιμίας ἐπίδειξιν ποιούμενοι, περὶ ταῦτα ἐσπουδάκασιν· τοσαύτη τῆς κενοδοξίας ἡ ὑπερβολή. Οὐδενὸς γὰρ ἀκούω φιλοτιμουμένου, ὅτι οἶδε τὰ ἐγκείμενα, ἀλλ' ὅτι χρυσοῖς ἔχει γράμμασιν ἐγγεγραμμένον. Καὶ τί τὸ κέρδος; εἰπέ μοι.

[18] The phrase is from the collect composed for the second Sunday in Advent in the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, reflecting the initial verse of the Epistle for the day (*Rom*. 15:4).

[19] The 'house' is not simply the physical dwelling in which parchments reside, but the soul upon which the truths of the Gospel are engraved. Chrysostom calls the scriptures 'remedies for the passions of the soul' to be chanted, as 'divine incantations' over the physical body of the believer.

[20] *In Jo*. 32 (PG 59, 188).

[21] Lee Martin MacDonald and James A. Sanders (eds), *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA, 2002), 269-71, 318-20, 381-5, 386-404, pages that also reference and summarize nicely my own contributions on this topic.

that the word 'number' (ἀριθμός) occurs eight times in Eusebius' *Letter to Carpianus* explaining the use and function of the canon tables.[22]

Regardless, Chrysostom envisions nimble users of the Gospel texts.[23] Were they more fully acquainted with the particulars of the four-fold Christian testimony, he asks, would they not be transported to a 'spectacle' (τῆς θεωρίας),

> … to watch it in the company with the King of angels and see the Devil seized from behind and making every effort to escape, but not succeeding? 'But how', you will say, 'can this take place?' If you have the Book in your hand (Ἂν τὸ βιβλίον μετὰ χεῖρας ἔχεις). In it you will see the contests, and the long races, and the hold of the opponent, and the skill of the just man. And by watching these things you yourself will learn how to wrestle in this way and will be rid of evil spirits.[24]

Only slightly earlier, Jerome takes a swipe Roman Christians for their devotion to *de luxe* codices, probably Gospel books. He embeds his tirade – an illustrative aside, really – in his letter of early spring 384 to Julia Eustochium, third daughter of his close female associate, Paula.[25] *Letter* 22 is Jerome's famous – and lengthy – exhortation to virginity. Eustochium, one of Jerome's most responsive disciples, is hardly in need of such a discourse. J.N.D. Kelly contextualizes this letter within a broader ascetic campaign that Jerome wages in 383-384, with the approbation of Pope Damasus. According to Kelly, Jerome uses this letter to Eustochium 'as a platform for setting out his challenging programme, and exposing the rottenness which, as he saw it, was infecting the

[22] The Greek text of the letter has been included in all editions of the Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, including the 28th revised edition (Münster, 2012), 89-90. Eusebius has an interest in number symbolism. Even a cursory glance at the apparatus suggests that he should have extended the number of canons to thirteen, with a separate canon devoted to the passages unique to *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*. Rather, Canon X has four sub-sections. Clearly, Eusebius is wedded to the number ten, a 'triangular' number that can be represented figuratively as an equilateral. Pythagoras considered the fourth triangular, the *tetractys* (= 10), 'the great, all-powerful, all-producing, the beginning and the guide of the divine as of the terrestrial'. See Uta C. Merzbach and Carl B. Boyer, *A History of Mathematics*, third edition (Oxford, 2011), 40-54. Eusebius discusses the significance Pythagoras attached to the number six in *Prep. ev.* XIII 13.

[23] On Chrysostom's strategies as a homilist, see David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford, 2014), especially Chapter 6, 'Chrysostom's Homiletical Methods'.

[24] Again, the translation is that of Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin in *John Chrysostom, Commentary on Saint John* (1957), 321. D. Rylaarsdam, *Divine Pedagogy* (2014), notes that 'through his analogy of the theatre, Chrysostom seeks to persuade people that the church's stage alone accurately depicts the unseen reality of the cosmic theater, whereas its competitors, like the popular earthly stage, are full of deception and lies … The church alone should occupy center stage, Chrysostom argues. Every other theatrical performance is an imposter, an anti-church…' (250-1).

[25] J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York, 1975), 91-103. See also Elizabeth A. Clark, *Jerome, Chrysostom, and Friends: Essays and Translations*, Studies in Women and Religion 1 (Lewiston, ME, 1979).

great numbers of would-be Christians in Rome, including many clergy and professed ascetics'.[26]

That context provides a clue for understanding Jerome's clunky transition to the denunciation of embellished Bibles. In 22.32, Jerome is lamenting women's wardrobe excesses, even among those who aspire to the ascetic life. Some have closets packed with dresses. They can don a different frock every day. Their primary concern is how to keep ahead of the moths. Other women try to wean themselves from this Downton Abbey-esque regimen by wearing one dress until it is threadbare. Boxes of clothes, retained-though-banished to the recesses of the boudoir, however, belie the sincerity of their austerity campaign. 'It is hardly surprising', notes David S. Wiesen, 'that the vitriol with which Jerome described the irrepressible worldliness of Roman women in his long letter to Eustochium aroused indignation in a city which still considered asceticism as a Manichaean and unchristian novelty'.[27]

Out of the blue, Jerome rails: 'Parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted for lettering, manuscripts (*codices*) are decked with jewels: and Christ lies at their door naked and dying'.[28] He does not expand upon the topic. He turns to what his considers a parade example of a 'great lady's' niggardliness (even abusiveness) in almsgiving. *Letter* 22 is not only lengthy, it is also desultory. What is the connection between women's clothing, bejeweled Bibles, and Christian largess?

The answer, in part, has to do with disposable wealth. In one of his most illuminating paragraphs, Peter Brown reminds us that in both the provinces and in Rome the rich looked like nobody else. Brown quips, inimitably: 'Altogether, rich men and women alike were expected to stand out like birds of paradise in a flock of starlings'.[29] Women's dress showed itself in spectacular jewelry and in the use of precious textiles – pendant earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and heavy golden chains falling over brightly dyed silks and cloth of gold. 'Given the restrictions on women's ability to dispose of property, the most available form of wealth, for a woman, was the splendor that sheathed her body'. Brown continues:

> Women carried liquid wealth on their own bodies and kept it stored in great chests in their own bedrooms. Christian women from the aristocracy could load a church with

[26] J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 101. See also Neil Adkin, *Jerome on Virginity: A Commentary on the* Libellus de virginitate servanda [*Letter 22*] (Cambridge, 2003).

[27] David S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist: A Study in Christian Latin Thought and Letters* (Ithaca, NY, 1964), 127.

[28] *Ep*. 22.32: *Inficitur membrana colore purpureo, aurum liquescit in litteras, gemmis codices vestiuntur et nudus ante fores aerum Christus emoritur* (LCL, *Select Letters of St. Jerome*, trans. by F.A. Wright [Cambridge, MA, 1980], 131-3). It should be noted that Jerome does not say, specifically, he is referring to Christian books, to codices of Christian scriptures, though the inference does not seem untoward.

[29] P. Brown, *Eye of A Needle* (2012), 28.

silk veils and altar coverings made from textiles taken from their private wardrobe. A noble woman could finance the foundation of an entire basilica in the middle of Rome through the sale of her jewelry alone.[30]

While Brown does not himself make the connection, it is clear that in Jerome's opinion, *de luxe* Gospel books, embellished Bibles, are an extension of the disposable wealth women's *habillement* represents. 'Clothing' biblical manuscripts in richly inappropriate, bespoke garb arouses Jerome's ire because it constitutes, to his way of thinking, a symbolic 'transference', whereby Christian women's former attachment to personal adornment (and the values such attachment cloaked) is displaced and conveyed to the sacred book, in effect 'feminizing' it. In the world of Christian asceticism he envisions, that projection must be redirected.[31]

Jerome prefers ultraprecise texts to *ne plus ultra* trappings. In an instance of 'countertransference', so to speak, Jerome attacks costly books and their owners. As Megan Williams rightly perceives, these 'seem designed to carve out a space for bibliophilia within the monastic life, distinct from the lavish expenditures that he rejects as un-Christian and, *a fortiori*, improper for a monk'.[32] We see that in the prologue to his 391 translation of *Job*, where he contrasts burdensome, luxury books written in 'uncial' letters with those to be found in his own library: 'wretched pamphlets' and 'copies not so much beautified as corrected'.[33] Echoing Seneca's *De tranquillitate animi* and, perhaps, Petronius' *Satyricon*, Jerome, whose own books are worth a 'senatorial fortune',[34] espouses the 'elite value of austere utility', 'cleverly transpos[ing] this aesthetic to a monastic setting'.[35]

[30] *Ibid*. 27-8.

[31] See M.H. Williams, *Monk and the Book* (2008), 181, especially n. 21: 'The reference to richly decorated codices appears, then, in a series of examples of ostentatious displays of piety meant to garner public admiration, practiced by wealthy women who are in their hearts no Christians. Not only does Jerome exhort his reader to charity and the radical renunciation of wealth, but he condemns the production of richly ornamented Christian books as itself a form of hypocrisy'. Williams contends that 'Jerome has no patience with the notion that their luxury shows reverence for the scriptures. Instead, he condemns such precious volumes as mere opportunities for display, popular among aristocrats who only pretend to be Christians' (181). Obviously, I am attempting to suggest something rather different. See also Patricia Cox Miller, 'The Blazing Body: Ascetic Desire in Jerome's Letter to Eustochium', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993), 21-45.

[32] M.H. Williams, *Monk and the Book* (2008), 182-3.

[33] *Prologus in Iob de Hebraeo interpretatio: … habeant qui uolunt ueteres libros uel in membranis purpureis auro argentoque descriptos, uel uncialibus, ut uulgo aiunt, litteris onera magis exarata quam codices, dum mihi meisque permittant pauperes habere scidulas et non tam pulchros codices quam emendatos*. See M.H. Williams, *Monk and the Book* (2008), 181.

[34] M.H. Williams, *Monk and the Book* (2008), 174-88. Using the scale of the Price Edict issued by Diocletian in 303, Williams reckons the cost of Jerome's library at two and a half million denarii (187).

[35] *Ibid*. 183-4: 'The reverse snobbery of the cultivated aristocratic confronted with the vulgarity of a *nouveau riche* has become the ascetic purity of the monk who stands aside from a church

He returns to these themes in a later letter (107) addressed to Laeta, dated to 403. Laeta is Paula's devoutly Christian daughter-in-law, the wife of Paula's son, Toxotius. In 401 she gives birth to a daughter whom she names after her grandmother. While still in her womb, Laeta vowed that the infant would be given over to the religious life. She writes to Jerome for advice on how the young Paula should be educated. Jerome's response is that Laeta should send her little girl to Bethlehem, where Eustochium will be her companion and model, and Jerome himself her foster-father and tutor.[36]

The curriculum Jerome has in mind for his ward includes a heavy dose of scripture study. 'Instead of jewels or silk, let her love the manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures', he writes, 'and in them let her prefer correctness and accurate punctuation to gilding and Babylonian parchment with elaborate decorations'.[37] She is not to confine her studies to Gospel books alone. Rather, she is to attend to all of scripture, starting with the *Psalms*. Her syllabus will include non-scriptural Christian writings as well – the works of Cyprian, the letters of Athanasius, and the treatises of Hilary – and may extend to a perusal of apocryphal texts if she desires, but only with careful guidance (*Caveat omnia apocrypha*!). Jerome envisions that Paula will be no mere patron-collector of lavish manuscripts. She will be an erudite reader equipped with the technical skills of a *corrector*, as he himself is.[38]

Back in Rome, most of Paula's aristocratic contemporaries will be satisfied merely to fawn over the 'many a gaud and glittering toy' biblical manuscripts in their circles are becoming. They will not necessarily need to read them. In subsequent centuries they will have even less reason to do so.[39] The lavishly-produced Gospel books Jerome and Chrysostom reference, supplied with Eusebius' canons and sections,[40] are the transitional forebears of the illustrated Gospel books and Old Testament fascicles that will appear in the fifth and sixth centuries (*e.g.*, Cotton Genesis, Vienna Genesis, the Rossano Gospels, the

corrupted by worldly display. The ascetic, in appropriating elite values, becomes an aristocrat of the soul – a conception central to Jerome's understanding of the hierarchy of the saved within the church' (184).

[36] J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 273-5.

[37] LCL 107.12: *Pro gemmis aut serico divinos codices amet, in quibus non auri et pellis Babyloniae vermiculata pictura, sed ad fidem placeat emendata et erudita distinctio.*

[38] Concerning this task/role see A. Cameron, *Last Pagans* (2011), 421-97. On Pope Damasus' commission (383/384) to Jerome to produce a uniform text, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 86-9.

[39] See A. Cameron, *Last Pagans* (2011), who notes: 'The most attractive feature of the parchment codex for some aristocratic book lovers may have been the fact that it lent itself much better than the roll to decoration and illustration' (456).

[40] Jerome's revised edition of all four Gospels was completed and presented, with a preface setting out his difficulties and methods, to Pope Damasus in 384. The edition includes Eusebius' canons and sections, as well as a copy of the letter to Carpianus. See J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975), 87-8.

Sinope Gospels, the British Library Canon Tables, *etc*.).[41] Eusebius' practical apparatus will itself become the locus of figurative and auriferous embellishment.[42] Moreover, some versions, such as the Rossano Gospels, will contain illustrations that stand as frontispieces. The thirteen surviving examples in Rossano depict scenes drawn from the final week of Jesus' life.[43] Six of those scenes capture events narrated in all four of the Gospels (Eusebius' Canon I). Seven draw attention to distinctive vignettes, narrated in only in one of the Gospels (Eusebius' Canon X). For the leaf that renders the parable of the wise and foolish virgins from *Matth.* 25:1-13 (folio 2v), a narrative simile found only in that Gospel, we see five sumptuously turned out women standing, knocking outside the gate. On the other side of the wall, is the Bridegroom/Christ, with the other five, arrayed in simple white, monastic/martyr robes. They stand beside a four-branched stream emerging from a single source (symbolizing the Gospels) and a grove of fruit-bearing trees. The scene conflates the Gospel parable with the hymn and promise of *Rev.* 7:16-7 and 22:1-5, and, simultaneously, evokes *Gen.* 2:8-14. The Lamb has guided them to the 'springs of the water of life' (7:17) and they 'need no light of lamp' (22:5) because the Lord God is their light. All of this is prefigured prophetically by four pointing prophets.[44] At a glance, one sees and appreciates what is both shared and distinct about the Gospels. One grasps their relation to salvation history. One is presented with a

[41] See Kurt Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Princeton, 1970), and John Williams (ed.), *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible* (University Park, PA, 1999), especially the essay by John Lowden, 'The Beginnings of Biblical Illustration', 9-59.

[42] J. Lowden, 'Beginnings of Biblical Illustration' (1999), 24-6.

[43] There is one exception: Scene #9, the healing of the man who was born blind narrated in *John* 9. The surviving scenes are: 1) The raising of Lazarus (*John* only, Canon X 4); 2) the entry into Jerusalem (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, Canon I); 3) the cleansing the Temple (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, Canon I); 4) the wise and foolish virgins (*Matthew* only, Canon X 1); 5) the last supper (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, Canon I); 6) the washing of the disciples' feet (*John* only, Canon X 4); 7) the communion of the apostles (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, Canon I); 8) the agony in the garden (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, Canon I); 9) the healing of the man born blind (*John* only, Canon X 4); 10) the good Samaritan (*Luke* only, Canon X 3); 11) Christ before Pilate (*Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, Canon I); 12) Judas' suicide (*Matthew* only, Canon X 1); and 13) Christ before Herod (*Luke* only, Canon X 3). In his discussion of the illustrations, J. Lowden, 'Beginnings of Biblical Illustration' (1999), 19-20, does not link the selection of the scenes with the Eusebian canon tables. That observation is my own.

[44] For noticing the link to *Revelation*, and for pointing out the contrasting vesture of the virgins, I am indebted to Professor Judith Kovacs of the University of Virginia. For a similarly astute observations about the *Apocalypse of John*, see Judith Kovacs and Christopher Rowland, *Reading Revelation Through the Ages* (Oxford, 2015). The 'prophets' are the King-Psalmist David, who is pictured three times, with texts drawn from *Ps.* 45:15, 45:16, and *Ps.* 53:5, and the prophet Hosea, with the text of *Hos.* 7:13. See Herbert L. Kessler, 'The Word Made Flesh in Early Decorated Bibles', in Jeffrey Spier *et al.* (eds), *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven, 2009), 141-68, 159-61. See also Leila Avrin, *Scribes, Script and Books: The Book Arts from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago and London, 1991), 236-40.

virtual synecdoche for the Christian message and enterprise. These elements constitute the 'private' sphere of such books. When further provided with painted book covers or silver revetments decorated in repoussé these texts enter the 'public' sphere, 'enshrined'. The images on the covers take on a specialized function, acting 'as a guide to, in effect as a substitute for, what was enclosed within'.[45] The early Christian book cover becomes, as John Lowden concludes, 'a locus of public affirmation of orthodox belief'.[46] Who needs to read?

[45] See John Lowden, 'The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of the Early Christian Book as Visual Argument', in William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran (eds), *The Early Christian Book*, Catholic University of America Studies in Early Christianity (Washington, D.C., 2007), 13-47, with seventeen figures (eleven reproduced front-and-back). The reference here is found on 22-3.

[46] *Ibid*. 46-57.

Philosophica, Theologica, Ethica

Riddles and Puzzles: God's Indirect Word in Patristic Hermeneutics

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ABSTRACT

This article shows how the paradoxical idea that God's revelatory Word is indirect was culturally apt by paralleling Plutarch's discussion of oracles with Origen's hermeneutical principles. It then signposts the theological significance of this view, and illustrates the hermeneutical consequences by following the afterlife of two scriptural types found in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, namely, the scapegoat and the bronze serpent.

That God's revelation should be indirect seems paradoxical; yet this notion proves to be generally implicit, if not explicit, in patristic hermeneutics, to be culturally apt and theologically significant.

Notoriously Origen stated that 'certain mystical revelations made known through the scriptures' are not understood, and the prophecies 'are filled with riddles' (*De princ.*[1] IV 2.2-3). He not merely preferred spiritual meanings, but asserted that some passages have no literal sense at all (*De princ.* IV 2.5), that the earthly narrative from creation through history was intended to *conceal* true doctrine (*De princ.* IV 2.8; 3.11), and that *aporiai* (stumbling-blocks, puzzles, hindrances, even impossibilities) were purposely inserted into the law and the history to circumvent failure to move beyond the letter to learn more of the divine (*De princ.* IV 2.9). It was necessary to 'search the scriptures (*John* 5:39), to investigate its prophecies and mysteries; discovery of the hidden 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (*Col.* 2:3) required the help of God (*De princ.* IV 3.5; 3.11).

Plutarch's *Moralia*,[2] in particular the *Pythian Dialogues*, illuminate Origen's views, demonstrating how patristic hermeneutics absorbed contemporary cultural norms, not least in treating the scriptures as a collection of oracles to be deciphered. Plutarch raises two questions: 'Why are there fewer oracular shrines active than there were in the past?' and 'why do oracles now come in prose not verse?' (*De Pyth. or.* and *De defectu or.*) Despite explanations that turn to human factors or natural phenomena, the fundamental conviction remains that one Providence orders the universe and everything in it, so

[1] Text: *Origenes Werke V*, ed. P. Koetschau *et al.*, GCS; ET: G.W. Butterworth, *Origen: On First Principles* (London, 1936; reprinted Gloucester, MA, 1973).

[2] Text and ET: *Plutarch: Moralia*, ed. F.C. Babbitt, LCL.

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predictions through oracles are not at all unexpected (*De Pyth. or.* and *De defectu or. passim*; and *e.g. De Is. et Os.* 378). Oracular responses are given as solutions to the problems of life; yet the god also poses problems, so creating a craving for knowledge. Enquiry is the beginning of philosophy, and wonder and uncertainty the beginning of enquiry (*De E apud Delphi* 384). Thus it is only natural that the greater part of what concerns the god should be concealed in riddles, which act as a lure and invitation to investigate. Solving and inventing ambiguities lie at the heart of this; for ambiguous oracles promote logical reasoning (*De E apud Delphi* 385-6). So older oracles used myths and proverbs, circumlocutions, vagueness, metaphors, riddles and ambiguous statements; some people, indeed, still hanker after those riddles, allegories and metaphors of the past (*De E apud Delphi* 406). For the intelligence is guided toward things divine through consecrated symbols, some obscure, others clearer (*De Is. et Os.* 378), and to avoid the extremes of superstition or atheism, it is necessary to adopt philosophical reasoning as guide to these mysteries. The *ainigma* of the divine is found in peculiar rites, sacred animals, names, numbers, signs, *etc.*, which are to be treated with respect as mirrors of the one uncontaminated, unpolluted, pure and transcendent (*De Is. et Os.* 382).

This general perspective on the way the divine is both revealed and hidden, mediated inadequately through things other than the divine whose import is a proper subject of enquiry, not only parallels Origen's position, but is also reflected in the way Clement of Alexandria argues that all divine discourse is necessarily symbolic, hidden in mysteries; for the transcendent God is 'without form or name' (*Strom.*[3] V 12). Indeed, Clement generalises the point:

> All then, in a word, who have spoken of divine things, both Barbarians and Greeks, have veiled the first principles of things, and delivered the truth in enigmas, and symbols, and allegories, and metaphors, and such like tropes. (*Strom.* V 4)

To demonstrate the motif of revelatory concealment Clement not only adduces the oracles of the Greeks, but the symbols of Pythagoras, the myths of Plato and Egyptian hieroglyphs, placing in the midst of these a disquisition on the hidden meanings of the Temple, its veiled Holy of Holies, the unutterable four-letter name of God, *etc.* (*Strom.* V 5-9). Poets and philosophers speak of hidden mysteries, so 'it is proper that the Barbarian philosophy [= the Jewish scriptures] should prophesy also obscurely and by symbols.' (*Strom.* V 8) God's indirect word was culturally apt.

It was also theologically and hermeneutically significant. I could develop the usefulness of this tradition to those responding in the fourth century to Eunomius' claim to define God: the divine nature is indefinable, yet the unknown is known through God's indirect Word, through the multiplicity of names, types and symbols which God adopted in grace and love to communicate with

[3] Text: *Clemens Alexandrinus II*, ed. O. Stählin, GCS; ET in ANCL XII.

humankind, so enabling inadequate hints and intriguing glimpses into that inexpressible divine nature. However, the treatment of religious language in, for example, Ephrem Syrus, the Cappadocians and John Chrysostom, is a well-trodden subject. So here I shall focus on the hermeneutical point by tracing the afterlife of two 'types' found in the *Epistle of Barnabas*;[4] prophetic 'types' are, of course, an intra-scriptural phenomenon[5] and, as we shall see, the hunt for clues to the riddles and puzzles of scripture was common to all early exegetes, both allegorists and those who opposed allegory.

Ps.-Barnabas VII 6-11 describes the two goats to be offered on the Day of Atonement, one for a burnt offering, the other accursed. '*Spit on it, all of you; thrust your goads into it, wreath its head with scarlet wool, and so let it be driven out into the desert*', the author writes, as if this were the ritual enjoined in scripture; then the one who leads the animal into the desert leaves the wool on a thorn bush. Virtually none of this is actually found in *Leviticus* 16. The scarlet wool is assimilated from the red heifer ritual in *Numbers* 19, while the spitting, goading and cursing seems to be read back from the mocking of Christ. The first goat is for the altar, notes the author, the other is accursed, and the accursed one wears the wreath.

> That is because they shall see Him on That Day clothed to the ankles in his red woollen robe, and will say, Is not this He whom we once crucified, and mocked and pierced, and spat upon? Yes, this is the man who told us that he was Son of God.

Thus the red wool would appear to signify the royal purple, and its placing on a thorn bush to suggest the crown of thorns. The point of the two goats being both the same is that 'when they see Him coming on That Day, they'll be struck with terror at the manifest parallel between Him and the goat'.[6] Nothing quite like this is found subsequently, though Justin (*Dial.*[7] 40) does refer the two goats to the two Comings of Christ, one in humiliation and to remove sin, the other in glory, like *Ps.-Barnabas* attributing the scapegoating to the Jews, who will recognise the one crucified on his return.

The Epistle to the *Hebrews*, though associating the death of Christ with the Day of Atonement, says nothing of the scapegoat; Origen, too, never sees in the scapegoat a 'type' of Christ. In the *Homilies on Leviticus*[8] he treats the two

[4] Text and ET: *Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Kirsopp Lake, LCL; ET: Early Christian Writings, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, rev. with introd. and notes by Andrew Louth (London, 1987).

[5] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985).

[6] Both the *Epistle of Barnabas* and René Girard seem to assimilate the scriptural scapegoat to Greek stories of the *pharmakos* = a ritual victim disposed of to save the community. The remarkable similarities between the midrashic development of this 'type' in the *Epistle of Barnabas* and Girard's reading of the crucifixion narratives in light of his scapegoating theory is a subject I have treated elsewhere: *Construing the Cross* (Eugene, OR, 2015), chapter 2.

[7] Text: PG 6; ET: *The Writings of St. Justin Martyr*, trans. Thomas B. Falls, FC 6.

[8] Text and ET: *Origenes Werke VI*, ed. W.A. Baehrens, GCS; ET: *Origen. Homilies on Leviticus 1-16*, trans. Gary Wayne Barkley, FC 83.

goats as Jesus and Barabbas (*Hom. Lev.* X 2) and it was Barabbas that Pilate sent off *alive* with the sins of the people on his head, whereas Christ was offered as a sin offering to cover the sins of those who were to be forgiven. This is a return to the biblical text, which never speaks of the scapegoat suffering, let alone dying, simply of its release *alive* in the desert: yet notice how the two similar goats remain the principal focus.

Origen's chief way of treating the scapegoat, however, both in the *Homilies on Leviticus* and in hints elsewhere, is different (*Hom. Lev.* IX 5; cf. *De princ.* III 2.1; *C. Cels.* VI 43): Christ is identified as the one leading away the powers of sin and evil, with which the goat appears to be identified. The desert is a place empty of virtues, empty of God, empty of justice, empty of Christ, empty of every good thing. The one who led off the scapegoat had to be pure, and this is the one representing Christ: as he washed his garment in the evening so Christ purified the tunic of our flesh and blood, the human nature he had assumed on our behalf. *Col.* 2:15 now illuminates his leading away the scapegoat: 'He nailed to his cross the principalities and hostile powers and triumphed over them' means that

> He fulfilled with regard to them the lot of the *apopompaios*, and as the man in readiness led them into the wilderness; thus he led away the spiritual hosts of wickedness and the rulers of the darkness of this world, triumphing over them in himself.

He alone had the power to lead them off into the desert, the empty places of hell. He then returned with his work accomplished, and ascended to heaven where he was purified more completely at the heavenly altar, that he might present the pledge of our flesh which he took with him in perpetual purity. Thus neither goat constitutes a Christological type in Origen's reading. In the LXX Azazel is represented by *apopompaios*; modern commentators have speculated that Azazel originally referred to a desert demon, and Origen's reading might have similar implications.

Theodoret (*Questions on the Octoteuch*[9] xxii.2) is determined that the *apopompaios* should not be understood as a demon of some kind. The goat is the *apopompaios*, he says, and both goats were offered to God. Indeed, both goats are types of Christ and should be taken as referring, not to two persons, but to two natures.

> Since it was impossible for Christ the Lord's mortality and immortality to be foreshadowed in one goat (the goat being only mortal), he necessarily ordered that both be offered so that the one sacrificed would prefigure the passibility of the flesh and the one set free would manifest the impassibility of the divinity.

This might strike one as giving something of a fifth century twist to Justin's treatment in terms of the two Comings of Christ.

[9] Text and ET: *Theodoret of Cyrus. The Questions on the Octoteuch*, ed. John F. Pettrucione, trans. Robert C. Hill, Library of Early Christianity vols. 1 & 2 (Washington, D.C., 2007).

Here then is a treatment of the text that looks for clues or keys to unlock things which present themselves as riddles or puzzles. The similarity of the two goats and their different fates was resolved by reading back from the presumed fulfilment or by re-examining the wording of the text. Theodoret's discussion appears in his compendium of *Quaestiones* concerning the Pentateuch, which is indicative of the status of *Leviticus* 16 as a text posing questions. The expectation is that it is not wholly transparent, but that by identifying the nub of the issue its hidden import can be uncovered.

Now to our second, sometimes associated, example: voicing concern that some might think it inappropriate for goats to prefigure the passion of Christ (*Questions on the Octoteuch* xxii.3), Theodoret refers to *John* 3:14: 'Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life', and comments: 'If the type from the goats is inappropriate, that from the snake is even worse'.[10] He was not alone in anxiety about this incongruence. Indeed, many of those referring to this second type were puzzled by it. Irenaeus, for example, clearly recognised that *John* 3:14 alludes to the story in *Numbers*, but he avoided direct association of the serpent with Christ. He suggests (*Ad haer.*[11] IV 2) that even the law encouraged belief in the Son of God by saying

> that human beings can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing in him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth on the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to himself, and vivifies the dead.

Ps.-Barnabas had explained that the type of the serpent was to show how Jesus was ordained to suffer and to give life to human beings – even to those who believed they had destroyed him on the cross. Without reference to the Johannine text, the story in *Numbers* was rehearsed. 'Here again', asserted the author, 'you see the glory of Jesus; for there is nothing which is not found in Him, and nothing which does not point to Him'. Maybe that's a bit defensive: for this author certainly had a problem with this type, though not with the association of Christ with the serpent – rather with the apparent endorsement of idolatry.

> To convince the Israelites that the outcome of their sinning must be death, the Lord caused them to be fatally bitten by all manner of serpents – it having been through a serpent that sin first came into the world. So, even though Moses had personally given them the command, *you shall have no image, whether cast or carved, of your God*, yet now, to show them a symbol of Jesus, he constructed one himself. Moses made a serpent out of brass, set it up in a conspicuous position and issued a proclamation … 'whenever one of you is bitten, let him approach the serpent on the pole in a spirit of

[10] Cf. *Eranistes* III, where he exploits the idea that the brazen serpent is a type of the crucified Saviour in order to justify what he calls other surprising comparisons.

[11] Text: *Contre les Hérésies*, ed. A. Rousseau, L. Doutreleau, *et al*., SC; ET: ANCL V & IX.

hope, believing that even though it is without life itself, it has nevertheless power to impart life; and he will recover at once.' (*Ep. Barn.* 12)

Tertullian, as well, found it necessary to insist that the brazen serpent which the Lord commanded Moses to make was no pretext for idolatry, refusing to say what was figured by this cure (*Adversus Marcionem*[12] II 22). Embarrassment at associating Jesus with a lifeless idol would, however, soon be trumped by his association with the serpent, as is clear in Justin's comments:

The spirit of prophecy by Moses did not teach us to believe in the serpent, since it shows us he was cursed by God from the beginning. The type or sign erected to counteract the serpents which bit Israel was intended for salvation for those who believe that death would be the serpent's fate through the one to be crucified, and that they, themselves, despite being bitten would find salvation by turning to the God who sent his Son into the world to be crucified. (*Dialogue* 91)

Doubtless this view is implicit in Irenaeus and Tertullian too. They all took the serpent as signifying the tempter, not least in reaction to the way gnostics' honoured the serpent as the bringer of wisdom and knowledge. The Naasenes or Ophites were clearly snake-worshippers and, according to Ps-Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*[13] II, appealed to the Johannine text: we are told that this Gnostic sect magnified the serpent

to such a degree that they prefer him even to Christ himself; for it was he, they say, who gave us the origin of the knowledge of good and evil. His power and majesty (they say) Moses perceiving, set up the brazen serpent; and whoever gazed upon him obtained health. Christ himself (they say further) in his Gospel imitates Moses' serpent's sacred power in saying: And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so it behoves the Son of Man to be lifted up. Him they introduce to bless the eucharistic elements.

Similar ambivalence is reflected in some later allusions to this type; Gregory Nazianzen, for example, insists that the brazen serpent was hung up as a remedy for the biting serpents, not as a type of him who suffered for us but as a contrast: 'It saved those who looked, not because they believed it to live, but because it was killed, and killed with it were the powers subject to it' (*Oration*[14] 45.22). Conversely, Basil lists the serpent among other types without comment (*On the Holy Spirit*[15] 31), elsewhere using it as an example of what a sign is – by a sign, he says, understand in scripture a cross (*Letters*[16] 260.8). When in his *Quaestiones* Theodoret reaches the actual story in *Numbers* 21, he

[12] Text and ET: *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. and trans. E. Evans, OECT (Oxford, 1972).

[13] Text and ET: *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ed. A. Kroymann, CSEL II.2; ET: ANCL XV.

[14] Text: PG 35; ET: NPNF.

[15] Text: *Basile de Césarée: Traité du Saint-Esprit*, ed. B. Pruche, SC; ET: *St. Basil the Great: On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood NY, 1980).

[16] Text and ET: *Basil. The Letters*, ed. and trans. R, Deferrari, LCL.

accepts that the bronze serpent prefigures the passion, explaining it as a type of the sin and curse which Christ became for our sake:

> Why did God ordain the cure of the snakebites by means of a bronze serpent? This, too, prefigures the saving passion. Sin came into being through the serpent, which, therefore, received a curse from the God of the universe. So the serpent is a type of both sin and curse. Now because, as the holy apostle says, Christ the Lord 'appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh' and took a real body but committed no sin, 'nor was guile found in his mouth', the saving passion is prefigured in the bronze serpent. That is, as the bronze serpent was an image of real serpents but lacked their venom, so the only-begotten Son had a human body but no stain of sin. And as those bitten by the snakes were delivered from death by gazing on the bronze serpent, so those stricken by sin prove superior to death and receive eternal life by placing unquestioned faith in the passion of our Saviour. (*Questions on the Octoteuch* xxxviii)

Ambrose explains it by linking it to other biblical stories:[17]

> He cast down his rod and it became a serpent, which devoured the serpents of Egypt, thus signifying that the Word should become flesh to destroy the poison of the dread serpent by the forgiveness of sins … The rod became a serpent; so he who was the son of God … lifted like the serpent on the cross, poured his healing medicine on the wounds of men. Wherefore the Lord himself says: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up' (*John* 3:14). (*De officiis*[18] III 15.94)

Ambrose and Theodoret alike search for clues, especially from within scripture, to decipher a sign that is ambiguous, so puzzling, if not disturbing.[19]

Teasing out ambiguous symbols, and deciphering clues: we have observed but two examples of hermeneutical practices which prove to be ubiquitous in patristic exegesis. Their cultural fit has been briefly demonstrated; their theological implications have been signposted. Revelation of the divine meant concealment: so God's Word was necessarily and even providentially indirect.

[17] Two stories are conflated in these comments, *Ex*. 4:1-5 (re Moses) and *Ex*. 7:8-12 (re Aaron).

[18] Text and ET: *Ambrose: De Officiis*, 2 vols. ed. and trans. I.J. Davidson (Oxford, 2002).

[19] For the serpent was a deeply ambiguous sign: even Jesus said, 'Be wise as serpents'. Doubtless Ambrose was aware that the serpent was the sign of the healing god, Asclepius, and many other signs of the ambiguity of the serpent could be assembled: *e.g*. in the ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, snakes appear in positive as well as negative guises – as hostile beings to be repulsed with spells, but also with magical powers for renewal of life. See John H. Taylor, *Spells for Eternity. The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London, 2010), 65. Displayed in a British Museum exhibition (*The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, November 2010 – March 2011) was a serpent-staff from about 1500 BC, an instrument enabling the holder to draw on the snake's supposed magical powers. This surely throws light on the biblical stories from which Ambrose drew, as well as the Gnostic reading of the Eden narrative.

Hypostatic Characteristics of Notions of Thought, Knowledge and Cognition in the Greek Patristic Thought

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Abstract

Christian theology assigns to the concept of 'hypostasis' new qualities, which have not been attributed to the relevant ancient Greek term neither in philosophy nor in theology. In the philosophical discourse of the Greeks the meaning of the term 'hypostasis' does not transcend the notion of the individualized essence or existence. Christian theology for a quite a while identified 'hypostasis' with nature possessing particular individual characteristics. However, in Trinitarian, Christologic and anthropological thought 'hypostasis' had been shifted into a new series of concepts, both bound and unmingled with the series of notions having to do with essence. Integral Christian ontology should be viewed as a two-fold one – hypostatic and natural. There is neither nature that is non-enhypostatic nor hypostasis that is not in essence.[1] The properties of natural and hypostatic origins intertwine in complementing each other due to the unity of ontology. The concepts of 'thought', 'knowledge' and 'cognition' which seemingly refer to the intellectual nature as such, are interpreted in Christian theology much more deeply than one can at first think being inextricably linked with the theological concept of hypostasis.

Ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἑκατέρου συμπλοκῆς, τοῦ τε κοινοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἰδίου,
ἡ κατάληψις ἡμῖν τῆς ἀληθείας ἐγγίνεται.[2]

On the mutual knowledge of the persons of the Trinity and that of their own essence

St. Athanasius discusses the Son's knowledge of the Father and the Father's knowledge of the Son in the context of their reciprocal dwelling in each other.[3] In contrast to Arians who depreciated the Godhead of the Son, he argues that

[1] Ἀλλ' ἐνούσιον μέν, τὴν ὑπόστασιν, ἐνυπόστατον δέ, τὴν οὐσίαν (hypostasis is truly in essence, while essence is en-hypostatic), S. Joannes Damascenus, *Contra Jacobitas* 12, PG 94, 1441D.

[2] It is due to the entwined features of the common and the individual that we grasp the idea of the truth, S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* II, PG 29, 637B.

[3] μόνος οἶδε τίς ἐστιν ὁ Πατήρ, ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ ὤν, καὶ ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν Πατέρα, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *In illud: Omnia mihi tradita sunt*, PG 25, 217B.

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just as the Father knows the Son completely, so the Son knows the Father and Himself, *i.e*. His own essence completely.[4] The same idea is echoed by the Cappadocians as they expand the line of thought to the third Person of the Trinity. They refer to both mutual knowledge of the hypostases as well as to their knowledge of their common essence, which is obviously interrelated due to the integrity of the patristic ontological thought.[5] St. Basil also distinguishes between the Father's and the Holy Spirit's knowledge of the Son.[6]

Logos as the inner thought of the Father and the foundation of any other thought and knowledge

St. Basil compares the Logos to the internal mystical thought (νόημα) and intellectual Movement (νοερὸς κίνησις) of God the Father, ineffable, the only-begotten and manifested as the One who co-operates with the Father in the creation of the world. At the same time St. Basil entitles Logos as the Person with whom the Father 'converses' (προσώπου πρὸς ὃν οἱ λόγοι).[7]

Both St. Basil and St. Athanasius associate the understanding of difference of the Son dwelling in and related to the Father with the very appellation of the Begetter – the Father.[8] The name 'Father' implies both the name 'Son' and the cognition of their difference.[9]

St. Basil emphasizes that both with God and with men, names can denote not only common essence, but also the difference between the properties that characterize each hypostasis, and thus can give certain knowledge about the complex of features (ἰδιωμάτων συνδρομήν), distinguishing a specific hypostasis of a certain consubstantial species. Thus, since the Godhead is one, the difference between the knowledge of the Father and Son cannot be obtained otherwise than by means of their distinctive hypostatic features.[10]

Similarly, patristic biblical exegesis suggests, that the Father 'speaking' implies the Son 'listening' and thus grounds a creative Divine conversation

[4] PG 25, 576BC.

[5] Υἱῷ γὰρ μόνῳ γνωστὸς ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι; τὴν οὐσίαν ἀπερίοπτον εἶναι παντί, πλὴν εἰ τῷ Μονογενεῖ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* I, PG 29, 544A-B.

[6] Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἄγνοιαν τοῦ Πνεύματος κατηγορεῖ, ἀλλὰ πρώτῳ τῷ Πατρὶ ὑπάρχειν τὴν γνῶσιν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ φύσεως μαρτυρεῖ, S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistolae, Eidem Amphilochio*, PG 32, 877A.

[7] S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia III In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 56AC.

[8] τοῦ Πατρὸς δὲ ὄνομα λέγοντες, ἐπιγινώσκομεν ἐκ τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου καὶ τὸν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Πατρὶ Λόγον, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio I Contra Arianos,* PG 26, 84A. See also: PG 25, 473CD; PG 29, 517A, 621B.

[9] τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐννοίᾳ ἡ τοῦ Υἱοῦ συνεισέρχεται, S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* II, PG 29, 593B-C.

[10] *Ibid*. 577C-580A-C, 637B, 640A-B.

in the theological dogma of the plurality of the Divine Persons.[11] Hypostatic existence is linked with the Divine Word and the name, thought and therefore the knowledge of the Son is ranked among 'the oldest'.[12] This means that any authentic thought of a reasonable creature about any real thing[13] is substantiated in the Father's thought about the Son. Logos is the personified Thought of the Father.[14] For as the light makes it possible for an eye to discern objects so the concept of the Only-Begotten for the human mind to make use of reason.[15]

On the knowledge of one hypostasis through another hypostasis

Using the theology of the image theologians of Alexandria and Cappadocia distinguish the knowledge of the image (the Son) from the knowledge of the Prototype (the Father) while insisting on the integrity of such knowledge by virtue of one essence.[16] It is important not only to emphasize the distinction in cognition of hypostases in their natural unity, but also the very principle of a hypostasis being cognized through a consubstantial one.[17] Although St. Athanasius still does not use hypostatic terminology to describe the actual intra-Trinitarian differences and relations, yet, taking into account the following development of theological terminology, his approach allows to deduce a hypostatic principle of cognition. Accordingly, it is through the personal or hypostatic action of the Son, distinct from the action of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, that the hypostasis of the Father is cognized by creation.[18] St. Athanasius remarks that the representatives of the human race, being rational (λογικοί)

[11] S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia VI in Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 120C-D; *De Hominis Structura*, Oratio I, PG 30, 13A.

[12] οὔτε μὴ γένηται ἔννοια πρεσβυτέρα τῆς τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ὑποστάσεως, S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Adversus Eunomium* II, PG 29, 596B-C, 608B.

[13] Not only in the imagination.

[14] For instance: ἡ βασιλεία σου ἐπέκεινα τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ ἐννοίας πάσης ἐστὶ πρεσβυτέρα, S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia In Psalmum XLIV*, PG 29, 404B-C.

[15] οὔτε ψυχή, τῆς τοῦ Μονογενοῦς ἐννοίας παρενεχθεῖσα, τῇ νοήσει κεχρῆσθαι; ἀφώτιστος ψυχὴ ἀδύνατος ἐστι πρὸς νόησιν, *Adversus Eunomium* PG 29, 604A-C.

[16] τῷ οἰκείῳ πέφυκε τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐπιγινώσκεσθαι; δι' εἰκόνος δὲ ἡ γνῶσις τοῦ ἀρχετύπου γίνεται, *Adversus Eunomium* I, PG 29, 552B.

[17] δι'αὐτοῦ ἐπιγινώσκεσθαι τὸν Πατέρα, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio I Contra Arianos*, PG 26, 100C; ὁ Λόγος, ὁ τοῖς πᾶσι τὴν γνῶσιν τὴν περὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἑαυτοῦ χαριζόμενος, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Epistola ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae*, PG 25, 576C; See also: PG 26, 181B, 332A; PG 25, 117B, 121C, 188B, 193C-D, 444C-D.

[18] It's through the personal Logos named Self-Sanctification and Self-Life (αὐτοαγιασμὸς καὶ αὐτοζωή) and in Him and through His personal action in the world that the Father reveals Himself: Ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ δι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἐμφαίνει, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio Contra Gentes*, PG 25, 93C-D.

images-icons of the Logos, are capable of cognizing the Logos and through Him – His Father, whose Image He is.[19]

By analogy with the Trinitarian mutual knowledge of hypostases and human cognition of one of the Trinitarian hypostasis through another, one human hypostasis is cognized and estimated by other ones[20] and through them.[21]

Personal action, in particular the incarnation, of the Son of God also enables cognition of the common Divinity of the Son and Father, as well as the uncreated energies, common to them, and God as the Trinity of hypostases and One in essence.[22] Personal action of an individual hypostasis of the human race also can contribute to cognition of God by other human hypostases.[23]

Uncreated energies and knowledge

Knowledge of God is based on the ability of assimilation of the uncreated energies by creation. While the essence of God is incomprehensible and not subject to human knowledge, the Divine energy is offered, multiplied, indivisibly 'separated' and imparted[24] to various created hypostases according to the hypostatic-structural principle 'from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit'.[25] The principles of offering and assimilation are alike hypostatic, which once again confirms the essentiality of hypostatic reality for the human cognition of God.

St. Gregory Palamas notes that the diverse uncreated energies or 'powers', directed at various creatures of God, are united due to the unity of the trihypostatic by internal 'structure' Creator.[26] Thus the unity of uncreated energies is grounded in the oneness of the Creator's essence, and the multiplicity of energies – in the Divine inner 'hypostatic structure' as well as in the conformity of numerous created hypostases to the three uncreated Ones.

[19] PG 25, 16D, 116A-D.

[20] On the knowledge and estimation of one hypostasis of the human race by other ones see, for example: PG 25, 533C.

[21] Ἄνθρωποι γὰρ παρὰ ἀνθρώπων ἐγγυτέρω δύνανται μαθεῖν, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio De Incarnatione Verbi*, PG 25, 117A.

[22] *Ibid*. 97B, 155C, 191A, 193C-D.

[23] On the knowledge of God through personal pursuit of Christian message see, for example: S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Apologia contra Arianos*, PG 25, 403B-C.

[24] Ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄκτιστος ἐνέργεια, μεριζομένη ἀμερίστως, S. Gregorius Palamas, *Capita Physica, Theologica etc*., PG 150, 1169B, 1185C.

[25] Internal 'hypostatic structure' is outlined in a single action of creation: The Father is glorified in the Son, and the Son in the Holy Spirit, See, for example S. Basilius Caesariensis, *De Hominis Structura,* Oratio I, PG 30, 13B; Πρόοδοι γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα, καὶ ἐκφάνσεις, καὶ ἐνέργειαι φυσικαὶ τοῦ ἑνὸς Πνεύματός εἰσι· καὶ δι' ἑκάστης ἕν ἐστι τὸ ἐνεργοῦν, *Capita Physica, Theologica etc*. PG 150, 1172A; τῶν τριῶν ἡ ἐνέργεια, PG 150, 1172D, 1185A; PG 150, 1172B.

[26] ὁ Πατὴρ καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν ἐστιν, ἡ οὐσιοποιὸς καὶ ζωοποιὸς καὶ σοφοποιὸς ἐνέργειά τε καὶ δύναμις, *Capita Physica, Theologica etc*., PG 150, 1185D; See also 1185A-B.

Structural properties of the concept of 'knowledge' and hypostatic principle of being

St. Gregory Palamas considers the triplicity of human knowledge as a special feature of man's conformity to the Trinity, which favorably distinguishes him from the angels.[27] Singling out the three components of knowledge – intellectual, logos-logical and sensual[28] – indicates the complexity of the concept of 'knowledge' as well as a certain correspondence of the three components of human knowledge with the hypostases of the Trinity. Moreover, according to the course of thought of St. Palamas, the inner structure of the concept of knowledge, which includes the idea of unconfused distinction and interconnection between the components, is based on the likeness of man and God in the hypostatic principle of existence.

Hypostatic union, προαίρεσις and knowledge

The knowledge of God is revealed to humanity through the incarnation of the Son of God, which, according to the Chalcedonian *oros*, was accomplished through the hypostatic union of the two natures with their energies in Christ. Assimilation of the uncreated energies of God, allowing man to climb the ladder of knowledge, gradually mastering all of its components, is performed also due to the hypostatic unification of human created nature and the Creator's uncreated energies within a human hypostasis. By reason of this hypostatic union, Christian saints are called the icons of Christ.[29]

It is important that partaking of the uncreated energies is parted by St. Gregory in two qualitatively different modes. He distinguishes the inherent and common for all creatures participation (as they all trace their origin and being to the creative power of God) from the potential one meant for rational creatures (τῶν λογικῶν) which are endowed with free will (προαίρεσις).[30] Προαίρεσις, being inextricably linked with the hypostatic origin of rational creatures, is irreducible to the rational nature and appears to correspond to the vector defining direction and amplitude of development of God-like creatures and, in particular, determining the process of their cognition of God.[31] It is exactly

[27] καὶ τὸ τριαδικὸν τῆς ἡμετέρας γνώσεως, μᾶλλον ἡμᾶς τῶν ἀγγέλων δεικνύειν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *ibid.* 1165C.

[28] τῷ νοερῷ τε καὶ λογικῷ, καὶ τὸ αἰσθητικόν, *ibid.*

[29] St. Gregory Palamas, in citing St. Maximus (PG 91, 297, 1253), refers to the saints as the living icons of Christ, ζῶσαί τινες εἰκόνες Χριστοῦ, *Capita Physica, Theologica etc*., PG 150, 1173C.

[30] προαίρεσις δὲ μόνον τῶν λογικῶν ἐστι, *ibid.* 1176D.

[31] See, for example Methody (Zinkovskiy), Hieromonk, Term 'προαίρεσις' and the Theology of Person, *ΣΧΟΛΗ. Philosophical Study of Antiquity and Classical Tradition* 8 (2014), 312-27.

προαίρεσις, conditioned by a hypostasis to which it belongs, makes possible cognition of God by His creation, all of which without exception is 'alien' to Him by nature.[32]

St. Athanasius, in referring to the freedom of rational (λογικοί) creatures, made by God in the image of the Logos and conferred with the 'power of the Logos' (τοῦ ἰδίου Λόγου δυνάμεως), applies the term προαίρεσις to identify the personal (hypostatic) freedom of choice, which is responsible for the fall in the Paradise.[33] At this point the unseasonable partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is seen as the result of a false choice, leading to a false type of knowledge and corruption. Although St. Athanasius' statement of a rational creature receiving the 'power of the Logos' may be counted to be ambiguous, yet it seems that in this instance the Saint anticipates the theology of the hypostatic union[34] and enables to ground knowledge, and above all – the knowledge of God, in the possibility of created hypostases to assimilate (or repulse) uncreated energies in a hypostatically free way. The false mode of knowledge chosen by the first hypostases of the human race – Adam and Eve – claims to link knowledge with a purely natural aspect of being, and therefore reaps the rewards of corruption by nature, excommunicating (κενωθέντας – literally 'exhausting') a person from knowing God and making him unreasonable (ἄλογον).[35] Obviously, this does not imply a complete loss of rationality, but the direction of its dynamics, depending on the selected mode of existence and cognition.[36] Patristic thought inseparably connects the origin and development of the created intelligent existence with the hypostatic unity and the vector of free personal will.[37]

St. Gregory Palamas also notes that the lack of distinction between the multiple uncreated energies would lead, in particular, to the negation of the freedom of will as concerns both created beings and the Creator Himself.[38] This idea

[32] ξένα ἐστὶ Θεοῦ, *ibid.* 1177A.

[33] S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio De Incarnatione Verbi*, PG 25, 101B-D-104A-D; See also: PG 25, 16D.

[34] At this point St. Athanasius clarifies that the parallel between the incarnation of the Word and the genesis of human being may appear to be peculiar, yet it is allied to the false choice of man and the false kind of knowledge. Also see PG 25, 116A-B.

[35] κενωθέντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τῆς περὶ Θεοῦ ἐννοίας, *Oratio De Incarnatione Verbi*, PG 25, 104 B; ἄλογον γενέσθαι, PG 25, 177C, 172B-C.

[36] Thus, St. Athanasius considers the 'descending' dynamics of the human idea of God, καταβαίνοντες ταῖς ἐννοίαις (*Oratio Contra Gentes*, PG 25, 17C), while St. Basil reflects on the dynamics wherewith the Scripture leads us to the idea of the Only-begotten Son of God (*Homilia III In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 55B); On the vector of cognition see also PG 29, 284C-285A, 292D-293A, 428D-429A, 457A-C.

[37] Human knowledge of God may be worthy or unworthy of Him, depending on the choice and effort of the bearer of knowledge: PG 29, 4A. On the relationship between the freedom of God in creation and the concept of προαίρεσις also see PG 29, 17C, 544C-D; PG 30, 193C.

[38] PG 150, 1189D-1192AB.

maintains the relationship between the hypostatic freedom of volition and cognition and the internal structure of uncreated energies reflecting the 'hypostatic structure' of existence.

On man's knowledge of his own nature and that of the outside world as leading to the knowledge of God

St. Athanasius considers the process of human cognition of his own nature throughout his life journey[39] and cognition of God by man in himself as in a reflection.[40] Human capability of cognizing God based on our conformity to Him is also discussed by St. Basil.[41] Again, this fact compels us to relate the cognitive process not only to the intellectual nature of the human race but also to the hypostatic element in order to avoid the tautological thesis of the mind coming to know itself as well as to draw an analogy between hypostatic-natural integrity of human ontology and that of their Creator.

Patristic thought also draws our attention to the fact that all creatures bear the imprint of their 'Father Superior' – the Logos, through whom they were brought into being, hence even natural knowledge of the surrounding world can lead man to the cognition of the hypostasis of the Logos and through Him – also of His Father.[42] Similarly, the activity, the fruit of labor of an individual human hypostasis enables to know the wisdom thereof.[43]

On the knowledge of difference between species through sets of idioms and potential unlimitedness of a hypostatic idiom series

Every kind of created beings is recognized by certain characteristics, the set which the human mind generally identifies by a particular name.[44] Obviously,

[39] τήν τε φύσιν ἐπιγινώσκων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio II Contra Arianos*, PG 26, 192B.

[40] S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Oratio De Incarnatione Verbi*, PG 25, 117A; *Oratio Contra Gentes*, PG 25, 16D, 68B.

[41] S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia In Psalmum XLVIII*, PG 29, 449.

[42] PG 25, 117A-B. In the same place St. Athanasius puts forward a striking idea that the Word of the Father brings all things in motion so that all creatures should know God. Movement like knowledge proves to be hypostatic by its origin and purpose: διὰ τοῦτο τὰ ὅλα κινοῦντα, ἵνα δι' αὐτοῦ πάντες γινώσκωσι τὸν Θεόν. On the knowledge of the Logos and Father via creation see also *Oratio De Incarnatione Verbi*, PG 25, 129A-C, 89A; on conceptualizing the Artist of all things and His Wisdom by means of creation see S. Basilius Caesariensis, *Homilia VI In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 117C, 145C. Also see PG 29, 544A-B.

[43] *Homilia I In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 17B.

[44] *Homilia VIII In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 169C. Features distinguish species and elements from each other: *Homilia IV In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 89B.

these are natural features, enabling to distinguish in their entirety a particular kind of species. However, St. Basil emphasizes that intrageneric differences between hypostases of each kind should suggest a potential unlimitedness of a certain characteristics series, which allows to establish not only the membership in a certain species but also to isolate a particular hypostasis from an arbitrarily numerous species.[45]

Conclusion: Theological underpinnings of the concepts of thought, knowledge and cognition

Bringing our analysis to a close, we may summarize that from the Christian perspective the concepts of thought, knowledge and cognition bear both hypostatic and natural characteristics. St. Athanasius describes the cognition of the Divine unity within the Trinity of persons.[46] Thought, knowledge and cognition are grounded both in natural unity, hypostatic distinction and hypostatic synthesis. The internal unity of God and the internal unity of creation suggest that homogeneous hypostases mutually are able to know one another. Every kind of hypostases is known through a complex of their distinctive features, while every particular hypostasis is known through unique intra-generic differences, which imply potential unlimitedness of the hypostatic characteristics series.

Hypostatic self-identity and intra-generic inherent distinction between hypostases with reference to one another and to their very nature are the basis of self-knowledge, hypostatic non-merging in the cognitive process, but also enable to 'bridge' a cognitive gap between created and uncreated hypostases of absolutely different natures.

Being characteristics of rational nature, thought, knowledge and cognition are at the same time en-hypostatic like nature itself. Within the biblical and patristic view knowledge is synonymous with the experience of getting into contact and even possessing an object of knowledge – be it a mental or sensory-physical realm of being. The fullness of mutual knowledge belongs to the hypostases of the Holy Trinity due to their absolute reciprocal 'perichoresis'. In the process of cognition of God a human person also achieves a certain degree of conscious 'perichoresis' with Christ[47] and, through Him, with other Persons of the Holy Trinity. Both principles of communication as well as of assimilation of uncreated energy are hypostatic.

[45] Thus, the mother sheep singles out her off-spring from millions of lambs, see *Homilia IX In Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 197A. Also see PG 29, 116B.

[46] ἐν Τριάδι μία θεότης ἐπιγινώσκεται, S. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *De amuletis*, PG 26, 1324B.

[47] In the words of St. Symeon the New Theologian, Christ dwells 'in us bodily… if we dwell in Him consciously', ἡμῶν κατοικησάντων γνωστῶς ἐν αὐτῷ, S. Symeon Neotheologus Poeta et Theol., *Orationes ethicae* 10. 1. 462.

The cognizing hypostasis is the one who freely defines the modes of usage of knowledge and cognitive energies, setting the vector of cognitive process. The internal structure of knowledge has the potential of synthetic integrity by virtue of its belonging to a hypostasis. The manifestation of this potential integrity of knowledge as well as the vector of cognition development depends on the free will of the cognizing person, on his readiness to perceive the cognitive 'power of the Logos' which is the origin of any authentic idea of any rational creature. The vector of cognitive dynamics can be erroneous if it is not coherent with the Logos, which means that not all knowledge is creative, but it can be also destructive, which we all well know from human history.

Every human hypostasis is capable of knowing both its own nature and the nature of the created world, whereby it is exalted via assistance of the Holy Spirit to the cognition of the hypostasis of the Logos, and through Him – to the knowledge of the hypostasis of God the Father. This cognitive process is organically intertwined with our cognition of other human hypostases as well as of ourselves.

Early Christianity about the Notions of Time and the Redemption of the Soul

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> Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know. But I confidently affirm myself to know that if nothing passes away, there is no past time, and if nothing arrives, there is no future time, and if nothing existed there would be no present time. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 11.[1]

Abstract

The first reaction today to a question with respect to the end of the world would be along the lines of an incoming cataclysm that will switch everything off; this if the respondent is not a believer. For a Christian it would refer to life after death; depending on the denomination, it will be either a blissful reality or a dual one (for some a happy continuation of what they already know, for others eternal damnation). In Late Antiquity, Christ's followers held both convictions. We can see that, for instance, in the works of Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200-258), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 332 - after 385), and Augustine of Hippo (354-430), which constitutes the main object of our academic enterprise.

Early Christians and the authors representing them fathomed that the human soul, despite being created, transcends historical time; from a limited existence (peculiar to it as a created entity) it is apt to progress to the time of God, and thus to be redeemed. The argument of this article is that they held such a conviction because of a genuine belief in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit within, and not because of a need to console themselves for disappointments in connection with eschatological promises, as some researchers suggested.

When comparing the writings of the Patristic authors who lived before the eighth century from the perspective of how they treat the nexus time-salvation, one might at first be misled into believing that they proposed two clearly distinct ways of approaching it: one metaphysical and one more explicitly concerned with it from the perspective of human history.[2] But such a distinction does not

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 11. 14 (17), trans. H. Chadwick (Oxford, 1998), I 230.

[2] This is the content of the talk I gave on the 12th of August, 2015 in Oxford at the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies (10 August - 14 August). I thank many colleagues who offered suggestions concerning this particular point and the content of the paper in general, especially Mark Edwards and Metrop. Kallistos Ware (I discussed the matter with His Grace about

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do justice to the complexity of Patristic positions with regard to this connection. Nevertheless, for strictly practical purposes I shall group Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (fifth-sixth centuries) and Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662) together as sharing more communalities between themselves than they do with the rest of the authors analysed here.

1. Time as eternity – Redemption. 'The time of God'

The conception of time in Dionysius the Areopagite's work is expressed not only through that of participation in God, who is concomitantly eternal and 'of Time', but also through eschatology, which the Syrian conceives in the framework of deification. The terms he uses, 'procession', 'union with God', 'uplifting', and 'return' have implications of significance for a view concerning the redemption of the soul. For the Syrian, paradoxically, God is concomitantly 'Ancient'' and 'Young'; Eternity, Days, and Time in general derive from Him even though he is anterior to them.[3]

The Areopagite or rather the Pseudo-Areopagite, as some theologians rightly name him,[4] believed that the Creator constitutes 'the Eternity of all things', but to the same extent that He is 'their Time'[5] and 'the Ancient of Days'.[6] Since, according to this theologian, God is the 'Super-Essence'[7] in which everything

three years ago, when I began my labour on this issue). The topic of time is vast and in the long period that I have been working on it, I gathered substantial material from which I made a selection for the presentation to the conference. Therefore, while fully aware of the impact Henri-Charles Puech's study 'La gnose et le temps', *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 20 (1951), 57-113 made on the way this issue has been analysed, I shall refer to it more broadly while developing a research project about the notion of time. It is entitled 'Dislocated Chronologies: An Investigation in the Early Eastern Christian Conception(s) of Temporality'. The same academic enterprise will pay due attention to books like Richard Sorabji's *Time, Creation and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1983), and especially to new publications and academic work in progress that focus on this concept.

[3] Dionysius the Areopagite, *De divinis nomibus* 10, PG 3, 937B (henceforth *DN*); 'The Divine Names', in *Pseudo Dionysius: The Complete Works,* trans. Colm Luibhéid (New York, 1987), 119-21; see also *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, trans. Clarence E. Rolt (London, 1983), for instance *ibid*. 179.

[4] Paul Rorem calls him so in *Pseudo-Dionysius. A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence* (Oxford, New York, 1993), 3. Also The Right Rev. Dr. Kallistos Ware uses this designation for the Syrian.

[5] Dionysius the Areopagite, *DN* 10, PG 3, 937B; *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, trans. C.E. Rolt (1983), 169-70; *The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibhéid (1987), 120.

[6] Dionysius the Areopagite, *DN* 10, PG 3, 936D, 937B, 940A; *The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibhéid (1987), 119-21; see also *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, trans. C.E. Rolt (1983), 169-73.

[7] The idea is implied, for instance, in Dionysius the Areopagite's *DN* 10, PG 3, 936D, 937A. In *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, C.E. Rolt comments on the 'Super-Essence' and how time relates to it in footnotes on pp. 169, 170, and 190 respectively. On p. 170 the translator

– including time – participates, each reality has its ultimate and everlasting being within it. In the same sense, the terms 'Time', 'Day', 'Season', and 'Eternity' are applied to Him as meaning the 'One Who is utterly incapable of all change and movement and, in his eternal motion, remains at rest; and Who is the Cause whence Eternity, Time, and Days are derived. […] Wherefore, in the Sacred Theophanies revealed in mystic Visions He is described as Ancient and yet as Young; the former title signifies that He is the Primal Being, existent from the beginning, and the latter that He grows not old'.[8]

Dionysius refers to various actions in connexion to Divinity: he speaks about 'uplifting' (ἀγάγω) and 'return' (ἐπστροφή) to God (and also union with Him), and sometimes about 'procession and return' in his treatise *Celestial Hierarchy*.[9] The concept of 'return' is Neoplatonic and has a 'wide range of equivalents'.[10] For the Syrian there is no distinction between 'uplifting' and 'return'. Because Proclus[11] sees them as contrasting notions, it is important to emphasize, with Paul Rorem that, in a divergent manner, the writings of Dionysius conceive both processes designated by these terms as aspects of the same movement towards the one God.[12] The Professor from Princeton also flags out that the Areopagite employs the notion of 'uplifting' and its cognates to explain the soul's move in time from simplicity to trinity, and from creation to its Originator and Steward.[13] By doing so the ancient theologian describes in fact the act of salvation.

The above-mentioned notion of participation (μετοχής) in God's Being is also central to Dionysius.[14] As Istvan Perczel underlined during our current academic event (the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies), specific to the Syrian's theology is the vertical axis on which he sees this process as happening.[15] Pseudo-Dionysius holds that ensouled earthly realities

explains that 'In the Super-Essence each thing has the limits of its duration predetermined. Or else D. means that in Super-Essence the movement of time has the impulse which generates it'.

[8] Dionysius the Areopagite, *DN* 10, PG 3, 937B-937C; *The Complete Works*, trans. C. Luibhéid (1987), 119-20; *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, trans. C.E. Rolt (1983), 170.

[9] For instance, one place in *Celestial Hierarchy* (henceforth *CH*) where Pseudo-Dionysius mentions these notions is *CH* 9, PG 3, 260B.

[10] Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblicus to Eurigena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dyonisian Tradition* (Leiden, 1978), 46, and also *A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden, 1973).

[11] Proclus, in Eric Robinson Dodds (ed.), *Proclus: The Elements of Theology. A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary* (Oxford, 1992), no. 158, p. 138.

[12] Paul Rorem, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols within the Pseudo-Dionysian Synthesis* (Toronto, 1984), 100; especially chapter 7 of this book elaborate on 'the uplifting and return to God'.

[13] P. Rorem, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols* (1984), 99.

[14] Dionysius the Areopagite, *DN* 2, PG 3, 644A-B. See also *CH* 4, PG 3, 187A-D, and *Epistola II*, To the monk Caius the Terapeute [Θεραπευτη], in Nicétas Stéthatos (ed.), *Opuscules et letters*, PG 3, 1067-70.

[15] Istvan Perczel, 'Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Main Source of Pseudo-Dionysius' Christology?', *SP* 96 (2017), 351-75.

'come into existence through participation in the Divine name' and in 'the Essential Principle of all things […] for the "to be" of all things is the Divinity above Being Itself, the true life. Living things participate in Its life-giving Power above all life; rational things participate in Its perfection and in Its great Wisdom above all reason and intellect'.[16] For the Areopagite the degree of participation depends on the capacity/readiness of the soul – of the person – to experience, change, and receive illumination.[17] He also says that 'we are conducted, hierarchically according to our measure, to the deification, *i.e*. to God and the Divine virtues'.[18] Participation happens at God's initiative because 'it is the very nature of God, which is the Supreme Cause of all, to invite all things to participate in Him'.[19] He calls people to uplift themselves through symbols[20] and they respond to this. Stephen Gersh refers to the co-operation described here as a 'downward and upward process',[21] which is consistent with Perczel's insight into this state of affairs. Gersh does so when expounding on an analogous dynamic in the works of the Neoplatonists, but the expression represents equally well what is happening in Dionysius' work. Rorem considers that, in spite of the physical/sensible language the Syrian deploys, 'neither spatial nor even temporal movements' are his main focus, but actually time in relation to God is central to the Areopagite.[22] All the notions he developed seems to merge into that of union with God, which denotes the redemption of the human soul.

The other Church Father who approaches salvation through the concept of time is Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662). He summarises the previous views on this notion by stating that 'all things move in either a linear, circular, or spiral manner'.[23] The monk refers here to 'all the things that come into being from God, whether intelligible or sensible', and sees this fact, as is the case with other representatives of primeval Christianity about whom I speak somewhere else,[24] in connection with movement: 'their coming into being (*genesis*)

[16] Dionysius the Areopagite, *CH* 4, PG 3, 187A-D. See also *DN* 2, PG 3, 644A-B; my trans.

[17] Dionysius the Areopagite, *CH* 1, PG 3, 135A-C; see also *CH* 1, PG 3, 119B-121B, and also *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (henceforth *EH*) 1, PG 3, 381A.

[18] Dionysius the Areopagite, *EH* 1, PG 3, 381B-C; my trans. See also Alexander Golitzin, *Et introibo ad altare dei: The Mystagogy of Dionysius Areopagita* (Thessaloniki, 1994).

[19] Dionysius the Areopagite, *CH* 4, PG 3, 187 C; my trans.

[20] Dionysius the Areopagite, *CH* 1, PG 3, 121A; *EH* 3, PG 3, 424B. See also P. Rorem, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols* (1984), 99, 105; and Paul Rorem and John C. Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus: Annotating the Areopagite*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 1998).

[21] Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblicus to Eurigena* (1978); also *A Study of Spiritual Motion* (1973), 50-1.

[22] P. Rorem, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols* (1984), 59.

[23] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum 7*, PG 91, 1077C; *Ambiguum 7*, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua*, ed. and trans. Nicholas Constas, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 29 (Cambridge, MA, 2014), I 81.

[24] Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, 'Is there progress in the Sacred World? Patristic texts on the notion of advancement in the divine and human realms', in E. Ene D-Vasilescu (ed.), *A Journey along*

is conceived before their motion (*kinesis*), for motion cannot precede coming into being'. He details further: 'The motion of intelligible beings is an intelligible motion, whereas that of sensible beings is a sense-perceptible motion'.[25]

According to C. von Orelli's study *Die hebräischen Synonima der Zeit und Ewigkeit genetisch und sprachvergleichend dargestellt*,[26] in Indo-European languages many words referring to temporality are derived from those meaning movement; their root is the verb *i* = go. The most reputable works to testify to this origin are those by Aristotle,[27] in which Maximus seems to have found inspiration.[28] The situation is the same in Semitic lexes; those have a wide variety of expressions that refer to motion in its array of modes: fast and slow, sudden and abrupt, agitated, circular, *etc*. Each of these types brings to surface different particular nuances of the notion of time. Von Orelli wrote that alongside this group of terms, which represent time as a phenomenon confronting or affecting man, there is another group in which time is characterised as that which is fixed, determined, or ordained. He indicates the Hebrew words that differentiate between, on the one hand *et* – time as a measured duration, and on the other '*olam*' and '*neşah*', denoting time as eternity.[29] Also James Barr affirms that in both Indo-European and Semitic languages the root of the word time is common to that of movement.[30]

Going back to Maximus, he gradually brings the discussion on temporality to a higher level of abstraction; in the words of Andreas Andreopoulos, he 'reframes the questions that concern it, examines it in a different framework, and also explores this notion in a mystagogical way.'[31] This effort leads him to ideas with regard to the link salvation-time. Maximus envisions the final 'destination' of human souls in their union with God in eschaton, at the end of

the Christian Way (forthcoming 2017). My chapter in the volume is based on a paper delivered at the Oxford-Bonn Seminar, September 2015.

[25] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum 7*, PG 91, 1072B; *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua*, ed. and trans. N. Constas (2014), I 81.

[26] C. von Orelli, *Die hebräischen Synonima der Zeit und Ewigkeit genetisch und sprachvergleichend dargestellt* [Hebrew Synonyms of time and eternity genetically and linguistically compared] (Leipzig, 1871).

[27] Aristotle, *Physics* VIII 5 and *Metaphysics*, 1073a 23-8, 32-4. See also Ursula Coo, *Time for Aristotle*, Physics IV. 10-4 (Oxford, 2005).

[28] This is what, among others, Sotiris Mitralexis affirms in his doctoral dissertation *Ever-Moving Repose. The Notion of Time in Maximus the Confessor's Philosophy Through the Perspective of a Relational Ontology* (Berlin, 2014). See also B.J. Daley, 'Apokatastasis and "Honorable Silence" in the Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor', in C. von Schonborn and F. Heinzer (eds), *Maximus the Confessor. Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur* (Fribourg, Switzerland, 1982), 309-39.

[29] C. von Orelli, *Die hebräischen Synonima der Zeit* (1871), 45.

[30] James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (London, 1962), 84.

[31] Andreas Andreopoulos, 'Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor', in Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford, 2015), 322-40, 324; See also Hans Schwarz, *Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2000).

time. Therefore, he conceives eschatology in terms of deification, and speaks about it as being both a personal and a collective redemptive event. His book *Ambigua* reflect best his standpoint on time and its 'end' (as realized eschatology);[32] but intimations about this concept can be found scattered throughout his other writings. Instrumental in the Confessor's view on salvation are three distinct modes of temporality: time as χρόνος, the aeon, αἰών, and the 'ever-moving repose', στάσις ἀεικίνητος (a 'radical transformation of the spatio-temporal dimension and motion'[33]). For Maximus eternity becomes time in eons, when major events like Christ's incarnation take place, and saints are 'created', *i.e*. recognised as such; for the latter, things do not move anymore because they have reached the maximum of divine life which was given to them. The entire 'process' is supposed to be seen in relation to the immovable eternity of God; the temporality specific to 'those beings that are intelligent and rational'[34] might allow them to near it.

2. Time understood with reference to human history: Redemption

Some of the early Christian authors like Tertullian, Origen, Clement, and partially Augustine and Nyssen treated the concept of time in terms more directly related to human history than Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor did. To do so the former cluster of writers employed a terminology usually found in *oeuvres* that focus on historical issues.

Among them Tertullian (c. 155 - c. 240 AD) assumed salvation to take place in a transcendental spatio-temporal reality;[35] however, I will not focus here on his texts,[36] but on those of Origen (c. 184 - c. 254 AD). Adamantius held the conviction of a distinct moment that marked the beginning of the world. For him (but not for all who read him – hence some criticism directed towards him) the existence of this primary instant was consistent with the narrative of

[32] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum 7*, PG 91, 1072B; *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua*, ed. and trans. N. Constas (2014), vols. 1-2. Realised eschatology, as also developed by Charles Harold Dodd (1884-1973) holds that the eschatological passages in the New Testament do not refer to the future, but instead refer to the ministry of Jesus and his lasting legacy. Dodd expressed his views on this topic in *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1935); *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London, 1936), and *History of the Gospel* (New York, 1938). George Eldon Ladd and Donald Alfred Hagner comment on Dodd's 'realised eschatology' in *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1993), 56.

[33] S. Mitralexis, *Ever-Moving Repose* (2014).

[34] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum 7*, PG 91, 1177A-B.

[35] Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* III 24, ed. and trans. Ernest Evans (Oxford, 1972), I 245-53; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, trans. P. Holmes (Edinburgh, 1868), VII 169-74.

[36] Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* III 24, ed. and trans. E. Evans, I 245-53; Ante-Nicene Christian Library, trans. P. Holmes, VII 169-74.

Creation. He also believed that the Cosmos has an end and that its two 'temporal brackets' are similar. In his words from the *On First Principles* 'the end is always as the beginning; as therefore there is one end of all things, so we must understand that there is one beginning of all things…'[37] In the same treatise, Origen gives expression to the idea of a temporary divine punishment undergone by sinners for their own benefit [salvation][38] and their purification through self-awareness (effected through being subjected to a fire coming from within; see *Matth*. 25:41, 46[39]). Probably the notion of Purgatory in the Catholic Church has its roots in these ideas.[40] The Alexandrian (as did Maximus the Confessor[41] and Gregory of Nyssa,[42] as we shall see further), theorizes that the progress of the souls consists in an 'ever moving repose' (ἐπέκτασις- *epektasis*). Origen states that people can arrive at the resurrection unprepared, but after further perfection of their souls, the dead will be raised in 'power', 'glory', and 'incorruption' (see 1*Cor*. 25 cited by Origen); their bodies will be 'refashioned'[43] and become 'spiritual'.[44] This for the purpose of *Restoration*, which involves the regaining of the authenticity of human existence as well as the attaining of transcendence 'in-dwelled' by God.

[37] Origen, *De principiis* I 6, Henry de Lubac (ed. and introd.), G.W. Butterworth (trans.) (Gloucester, 1973), 54.

[38] For instance, in Origen's *De principiis* II 10 ('Resurrection and punishment') (143-6).

[39] Origen, *De principiis* II 10 (141).

[40] The faith of the Church concerning purgatory is expressed in the Decree of Union drawn up by the Council of Florence, J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum concilium nova et amplissima collection* (Florence, 1764), v. XXXI, col. 1031, and in the decree of the Council of Trent, Sess. XXV of which asserts: 'Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has from the Sacred Scriptures and the ancient tradition of the Fathers taught in Councils and very recently in this Ecumenical synod (Sess. VI, cap. XXX; Sess. XXII cap. ii, iii) that there is a purgatory, and that the souls therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar; the Holy Synod enjoins on the Bishops that they diligently endeavour to have the sound doctrine of the Fathers in Councils regarding purgatory everywhere taught and preached, held and believed by the faithful'; Heinrich Joseph Dominicus Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum et definitionum quae in rebus fidei et morum a Conciliis oecumenicis et summis pontificibus emanarunt* (Naples, 1856), 983; H.J.D. Denzinger, *Symboles et definitions de la foi catholoque* (Paris, 1996). See also A. D'Ales, 'La question du Purgatoire au concile de Florence en 1438', *Gregorianum* 3 (1922), 9-50.

[41] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum 10*, PG 91, 1081AC and 1084B. See Paul M. Blowers, 'Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, and the concept of Perpetual Progress', *VigChr* 46 (1992), 151-71; *id*., 'Realised Eschatology in Maximus the Confessor: *Ad Thalassium* 22', *SP* 32 (1997), 258-63.

[42] Gregory of Nyssa, 'De perfectione', in W. Jaeger, J.P. Cavarnos and V.W. Callahan (eds), *Opera ascetica*: *De perfectione*, GNO 8 (Leiden, 1986), 214; Gregory of Nyssa, *In Canticum canticorum* 6, in H. Langerbeck (ed.), *In Canticum canticorum*, GNO 6 (Leiden, 1960), 174-5; 245-6; Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis* 2, in H. Musurillo (ed.), *Opera exegetica*: *De Vita Moysis*, GNO 7 (Leiden, 1991), 110-20.

[43] Origen, *De principiis* II 10 (141).

[44] Origen, *De principiis* II 10 (140).

Methodius (d. c. 311)[45] and St. Jerome (c. 347-420),[46] among others, misinterpreted Origen's doctrine of the eternity of the world (as some did with respect to his notion concerning the resurrection of the body) as being contrary to the Christian doctrine. For instance, Jerome reads the Alexandrian's ideas as meaning that at the (ultimate) Restoration, when the souls will be redeemed, the bodies, spiritualised and of a 'clear' nature will be 'dissolved' into the divine nature. Mark Edwards comments on this debate in 'Origen no gnostic; or, on the corporeality of Man'.[47]

Some researchers, as Andreas Andreopoulos in his entry on the eschatology of Maximus the Confessor from the recently published *Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*,[48] in which he also refers to Adamantius, ascertains that in the Origenist work just quoted here there are ideas which could be interpreted as meaning that the theologian from Alexandria allowed for cycles in the development of the world. He said that Origen 'left the end of historical linearity open, not fixed into an irreversible finality, and therefore possibly leading to a cycle of new beginnings and ends'.[49] I do not read the Alexandrian's treatise in this key; as stated, to me he seems to have believed in '*The Apokatastasis*' (ἀποκατάστασις), *i.e.* in a universal and final process of redemption. But as Edwards indicates,[50] both the idea of its universality, as well as the suggestion that this moment of spiritual climax will be followed by a new fall, have been reproached to Origen.[51] The issue of the state in which the bodies resurrect – if they do so in Origen's texts (and I believe this is the case) – further complicates the discussion; the researcher from Oxford goes into details of it in the source mentioned earlier.[52] If indeed the Alexandrian indeed saw the human course in terms of cycles in parallel with his view on *apokatastasis*, we are faced with a conundrum because, as we have observed, the theologian not only advocated for the latter, but also considered that all things have a beginning. A solution for this would be to assume that Origen was thinking about a certain number of stages of purification (where the bodies

[45] Methodius, *De resurrectione*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, trans. William R. Clark (Buffalo, NY, 1886), VI 364-77. Particularly for the critique of the Origen's teaching regarding the eternity of the world see Methodius' 'Xeno: De creates', in Lloyd G. Patterson, *Methodius of Olympus, Divine Sovereignity, Human Freedom, and Life in Christ* (Washington, D.C., 1997). See also Pamphilus and Eusebius, 'Apologia pro Origene', ed. Georg Röwekamp, FC 80 (Turnhout, 2005), 208-9, and Vladimir Cvetkovic, 'From Adamantius to Centaur. St. Methodius of Olympus's critique of Origen', in Sylwia Kaczmarek and Henry Pietras in collaboration with Andrzey Dziadowiec (eds), *Origeniana Decima. Origen as Writer* (Leuven, 2011), 791-802.

[46] St. Jerome, *Epistolae ad Avitum* 10 (Letter 124), in *NPNF* VI 410-9.

[47] Mark J. Edwards, 'Origen no gnostic; or, on the corporeality of Man', *JTS* 43 (1992), 23-37.

[48] A. Andreopoulos, 'Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor' (2015), 324.

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] *Ibid*.

[51] *Ibid*. 26.

[52] *Ibid*. 23-37.

again become corporeal, as he thought they initially are?) followed by the universal Restoration that would take place once for all souls; in this case, probably for each one of them a different number of such phases of development would be necessary, in accordance with the multitude of the sins a person had committed. They received material bodies only after the Fall, so they go back to the state in which they were before that happened.

The existence of the notion of temporal cycles in Adamantius' *oeuvre* should not constitute a surprise because such a concept was held also by Hesiod (c. 700 BC),[53] Heraclitus (c. 535 - c. 475 BC),[54] Plato (427-347 BC),[55] and the Stoics (in the 300's BC).[56]

Hesiod's well-known *Five Ages of Man* has a section, 'Works and Days', in which he describes the successive ages of humans, the ages of gold, silver, bronze, as well as heroic and iron ages.[57] Despite the fact that he does not mention the word 'cycle' when he deplores the condition of humankind in the iron age, and writes that he wishes he had died before it, or that he had been born after it, and the general context in which he discourses, seems to suggest that the poet believed that human history is characterized by temporal cycles.[58] The expectation of a better age after the present one is, as above mentioned, often current in Greek pagan culture, and so is the cyclical idea of time, which opposes that maintaining that time has a linear course, more specific to Christian thought.[59] It seems that some ideas in Origen's writings come from those of Plato, especially from his dialogues *Republic* and *Timaeus*, where he sees time as cyclical. He contrasts time and eternity[60] and implies a decline, but sees it as followed, through a self-movement, by a new cycle of evolution for both

[53] Hesiod, 'Five Ages of Man', lines 109-201, in *Theogony, Works and Days*, *Testimonia*, edited and trans. Glenn W. Most, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1988), 96-105.

[54] Heraclitus, *Fragments*, ed. by Charles H. Kahn, Toronto (London, 1987). See also Stobaeus, *Eclogarum physicarum et ethicarum/Ecl. Phys.* I, ed. A. Meineke (Leipzig, 1865), vol. I; Heraclitus of Ephesus, *Fragments: The Collected Wisdom of Heraclitus*, ed. Brooks Haxton (New York, 2001), and also Charles H. Kahn (ed.), *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus. An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge, 1979).

[55] Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianopolis and Cambridge, 1997), 971-1224. Here the dialogues where Plato deals with these aspects of time are included. They are 'Timaeus', 'Republic', and 'Symposium'.

[56] As, for instance, Chrysippus who believed in 'periodic conflagrations', when the world is absorbed in Zeus, see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Robert Drew Hicks, Loeb Classic Library (Cambridge, Mass, 1925), VII 180. See also R.W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (London and New York, 2014), 67.

[57] Hesiod, 'Five Ages of Man', lines 109-201 (96-105).

[58] Hesiod, 'Five Ages of Man', line 174, in *Theogony, Works and Days*, *Testimonia*, ed. and trans. G.W. Most, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 100-1.

[59] H.-C. Puech 'La gnose et le temps' (1951) is one of the first publications to have debates this issue.

[60] Plato, *Tim.* 37D, in J.M. Cooper (ed.), *Complete Works* (1997), 1225-91, 1241.

the cosmos and the people. In the former dialogue, Plato speaks about the 'journey from here to there [the world of the gods] and back again'.[61] He also sees smaller cycles within the universal cycle. In *Timaeos* the Greek philosopher affirms that '*Was* and *will be*', as 'motions', are 'forms of time that have come to be – time that imitates eternity and circles according to number'.[62] But it seems that despite the fact that Plato aligns himself to the ideological fashion of his day – the belief in a cyclical progression – he does not seem to consider that to be essential for his philosophical system.

What he regards as crucially important is the effort of the soul to apprehend the Nous (expressed in various forms – beauty, and also love, goodness, and the virtues in general); this notion is similar to the idea of nearing God in Christianity. The issue is developed in the context of our discussion, and I have elaborated on this somewhere else;[63] for now I shall emphasise Benjamin Jowett's comment on this aspect: '… no one prior to Plato had advanced the conception of a God whose very nature leads him to work for the perfection of other beings beneath him'.[64] *I.e*. in Platonic thought, Divinity cares for the human soul. With that Origen would have been in total agreement.

I am aware of the position expressed by Mark Edwards[65] and John David Dawson[66] maintaining that Origen was not a Platonist to the extent usually assumed and sometimes openly expressed. I am also familiar with the contrary opinion as voiced, for instance, by scholars like Daniel Boyarin.[67] The space does not allow delving into this controversy more than to say that while assenting with Edwards that indeed Origen was more 'biblical' than 'Platonist', I also agree with Plato's most known editor, Jowett, on the 'Christianity' of the Greek philosopher.

Some echoes of Origen's thought on the issue of time and redemption can be found in Cyprian of Carthage's writings.[68] Cyprian (c. 200 - 258), in his *Liber*

[61] Plato, *Rep*. X 619e, ed. and trans. Jeffrey Henderson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 2012), II 482-3; see also Plato, *Rep*., in J.M. Cooper (ed.), *Complete Works* (1997), 971-1224, 1222.

[62] Plato, *Tim*., in J.M. Cooper (ed.), *Complete Works* (1997), 1241.

[63] '"Love never fails". Gregory of Nyssa on *Theôsis*', in Mark Edwards and Elena Ene D-Vasilescu (eds), *Visions of God and Ideas on Divinization in Patristic Thought* (Abingdon and New York, 2017), 55-73.

[64] Benjamin Jowett, 'Introduction', in *The Works of Plato*, trans. and ed. B. Jowett (New York, 1928), XVII.

[65] Mark J. Edwards, *Origen against Plato* (Farnham, 2002).

[66] John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley, 2002).

[67] Daniel Boyarin, 'By way of apology: Dawson, Edwards, Origen', *The Studia Philonica Annual* 16 (2004), 188-217.

[68] Cyprian of Carthage, *Liber ad Demetrianum*, PL 4, 561-83; *Ad Demetrianum*, in Manlio Simonetti (ed.), *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera* (Turnhout, 1976), II 33-51; and St. Cyprian of Carthage, 'To Demetrian', in Allen Brent (ed., trans., introduction, and commentary), *On the Church: Selected Treatises* (Crestwood, NY, 2006). See also Cyprian of Carthage, *De mortalitate*,

ad Demetrianum (Book to Demetrian), imagined a linear, progressive evolution of the world whose end ('the old age of the world'/*senectus mundi*[69]) will be marked by cataclysms.[70] He avers that cosmos and society naturally regress before renewal and a return to the first state happens; however, he posits that the final goal of history is Christ's second coming[71] and, we understand, the redemption of human souls.

In order to understand how Gregory of Nyssa (c. 332 - after 385) conceived the notion of time, we shall specify that he cites Moses' 'indication' that heaven and earth were made by God 'in the beginning',[72] and affirms that, 'for he who does admit a beginning of motion surely does not doubt as to it also having an end'.[73] As Origen did, Nyssen tried to express the journey from our fallen state of sinfulness to the transcendence of God through *epektasis*; the paradoxical notion of an ever-moving repose[74] culminating in *apokatastasis*[75] – the 'summer' of 'the gathering of the crops'.[76] Gregory believed that since from the temporal perspective humanity is a thought of God which is not yet completed, additions to the number of souls continue up to a certain limit. This rather surprising bound on the number of human souls has been emphasized by Morwenna Ludlow in her book *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner*.[77] She also underlines Nyssen's view that

PL 4, 603-25, and Cyprian of Carthage, 'About Death', in A. Brent, *On the Church* (2006); Graeme Wilber Clarke (ed.), 'Cyprianus. The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage', in *Ancient Christian Writers* III (Mahwah, NJ, 1986), especially 'Letter 56. To Fortunatus, Ahymmus, Optatus, Privatinus, Donatulus, and Felix', 53-5, Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge, M.A., 1975). See also Allen Brent (ed., trans., introduction, and commentary), *St Cyprian of Carthage, Selected Treatises* (Crestwood, NY, 2007), and *St Cyprian of Carthage: Selected Letters* (Crestwood, NY, 2007).

[69] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* (34). His expression was: *senectutem mundi, qui iam uergebat ad finem*.

[70] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 3 (70).

[71] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum*, PL 4, 545-64 (67).

Cyprian, *Ad Donatum*, CChr.SL 3A (50). On the Stoic determinism and its implications for nature and society see J.M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), 175-85 and A.A. Long, *Stoic Studies* (Cambridge, 1996), 40-4.

[72] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, NPNF 389. See also *De vita Moysis*, PG 44; *The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, The Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ, 1991), 113-4.

[73] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, NPNF 413.

[74] Gregory of Nyssa, *De perfectione*, in W. Jaeger, J.P. Cavarnos and V.W. Callahan (eds), *Opera ascetica*: *De perfectione* (1986), 214; Gregory of Nyssa, *In Cant*. 6; H. Langerbeck (ed.), *In Canticum canticorum* (1960), 174-5; 245-6; Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis* 2, H. Musurillo (ed.), *Opera exegetica*: *De Vita Moysis* (1991), 110-20; P.M. Blowers, 'Realised Eschatology in Maximus the Confessor: Ad Thalassium 22' (1997).

[75] Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, 21.5, PG 44, 205C; *On the Making of Man* (413).

[76] Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, 21.5, PG 44, 205C; *On the Making of Man* (413).

[77] Morwenna Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner* (Oxford, 2000), 47.

the 'ideal relationship of the soul with God consists in the full participation of the soul in God through the attraction of love', and that 'Gregory also appears to imply that perfection and resurrection can (and perhaps will) apply to all humans created by God'.[78] When describing the future life, the bishop mentions beauty, advancement of the soul, and unity to God; the idea of universality is implied in these (certainly 'beauty' is one of the universals in Theology and Philosophy).

Gregory is credited with the understanding of the eternal process of perfection as a linear pursuit begun in the human historical reality and advancing to the Eschaton. However, because in the *Making of Man*, he speaks about *apokatastasis* as consisting in a return to the initial state, implications regarding the notion of cycles could also be found in the work of the bishop. He, as did other early fathers of the Church, maintained this idea on the grounds of variations or even intermittency in the intensity with which the divine 'energies', 'powers',[79] or activities[80] are conceived as manifesting themselves. But the unfolding of *epektasis*, either in a linear or cyclical manner, does not contradict the fact that the kingdom of God, which the transfigured souls will eventually attain, is transcendent. One of the modes in which Gregory details the final state of humankind is through the story of the woman who was married consecutively to seven brothers.

As one can see, Gregory's interpretation – having the account of the fall and return of the human soul as fundamental – is Platonic, and Gregory's familiarity with the words of the Greek philosopher – especially with those from the dialogue *Timaeus* – is evident. Also in relation to another of his writings, Anthony Meredith stresses that, 'underlying and enabling the upward movement in Plato's *Symposium* is the unsatisfied desire to behold unlimited beauty'.[81] Since the content of this statement is true, it is not surprising that the Middle Platonists read Plato in a 'metaphysical' and 'religious',[82] even a 'theistic' note.[83] In a

[78] M. Ludlow, *Universal Salvation* (2000), 76.

[79] All three Cappadocians speak about God's energies and powers. Among others, Maximus the Confessor, for instance, mentions energies in *Ambigorum 7*, PG 91, 1076A-1077B; 1256D-1257C (in the latter, about both energies and *logoi*). See also *Maximus* the Confessor, *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua*, ed. and trans. N. Constas (2014), I. Pseudo-Dyonysius has a chapter (XI) entitled 'Why all the Celestial Hierarchies are commonly called Celestial Powers' in his *Celestial Hierarchy*.

[80] For instance, Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*, PG 44; Maximus the Confessor, for instance, in 'Ambiguum 41'; Gregory Palamas, *Capita CL, physica, theologica, moralia, et practica*, 29, ed., trans. Robert Edward Sinkewicz, Studies and Texts 83 (Toronto, 1988), and Evagrius of Pontus, *The Greek Ascetic Corpus*, ed., trans., and commentary R.E. Sinkewicz (Oxford, 2003).

[81] Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians* (London, 1995), 55.

[82] Cornelia J. de Vogel, 'What was God for Plato', in *Philosophia. I. Studies in Greek Philosophy* (Assen, 1970), 210-42.

[83] John Peter Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism: A Study in Ancient Platonic Theology* (Eugene, 1991), 54-6; Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to*

similar fashion with that manifested in Plato's texts, Nyssen conceives the human soul as being continually engaged in an upwards movement leading, paradoxically, to a state similar – or according to Andreoupolous, a better one[84] – to that from the beginning of its creation.

Somehow between Tertullian and Gregory of Nyssa's standpoints, or rather combining the two, is Augustine's position. He speaks about three temporal modes of existence (past, present, future), and believes that only the present actually exists: 'In the soul there are these three aspects of time, and I do not see them anywhere else. The present considering the past is memory [*memoria*], the present considering the future is expectation [*expectatio*]'.[85] The difference between God's 'today' and the historical today consists in the fact that the former is not followed by a tomorrow, nor did it come after a yesterday, but it is eternal; this is actually how the bishop defines eternity. While for him eternity is peculiar to Godhead, for Plotinus, whose vein Augustine follows on this issue, eternity is a characteristic of the second hypostasis, which he equals with 'the Intellect'; for the Greek eternity is derivative because it occurs in the process of emanation from the One, the One itself is no more eternal than it is temporal.[86]

In Augustine's *Confessions*, by contrast to the eternity of God, creation resides in time; but since its time is always in motion (arrives, remains for a moment, and passes away) one can say that it tends toward non-existence. Augustine (354-430) asks himself how people can deal with this state of affairs. He finds an answer that is psychologically oriented, and which refers to elements of subjectivity as memory, attention, and expectation;[87] that because time can be cognised from the changes that happen in creation. The ancient author seems to think that the only characteristic one can confer with certitude to time is that of transience. In the Book 11 (41) cited above, Augustine said that time itself is a creation of God; God being eternal is outside time. In his interpretation of *Genesis*, the bishop of Hippo avers that God did not create at a given time because for God there *is* no time. His act of creation is both instantaneous and eternal. Since time is a feature only of the created world, there could not have been any time before God created the universe, and with this Augustine offers an answer to the Manichees. He presents this issue in a number of ways: 'There was no "then" when there was no time', or, 'it is not in time that you [God] precede all times. Otherwise you would not precede all times'.[88] Again, God is 'first' only in the sense of being the eternal cause of all

Denys (Oxford, 1981), 18-9.

[84] A. Andreopoulos, 'Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor' (2015), 324.

[85] Augustine, *Confessions*, XI 14 (17), trans. H. Chadwick, I 235.

[86] Plotinus, *Enneads* III 7, trans. Stephen MacKenna, intr. P. Henry (London, 1969), 222-38.

[87] Timothy Harvie, *Jürgen Moltmann's Ethics of Hope: Eschatological Possibilities for Moral Action* (Farnham, 2009), 149.

[88] *Ibid*. 230.

creation. He was not 'doing' anything before he created the world because there was no 'before'.

Concerning the redemption of souls, Augustine implies that, since the mystical City of God exists to 'host' them and would ultimately triumph, Christians should be optimistic; he, like his fellow Roman denizens, calls this 'place' the New Jerusalem. The theologian believed that those inhabiting it have renounced earthly pleasures to dedicate themselves to the eternal truths of God revealed fully in the Christian faith. The bishop states that the 'joys' of those living within it, *i.e*. 'of the saints', in 'that Sabbath', 'shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God'.[89] The bishop of Hippo has expressed himself in these terms under very difficult circumstances for the earthly Roman Empire; its very existence was at risk under the attacks of the Visigoths, who conquered its capital in 410. For many the event constituted the beginning of the Empire's disintegration in the West. Some understood it as a punishment for the fact that a number of its residents abandoned the worship of traditional Roman gods moving their allegiance to Christ. Despite this situation, Augustine wanted his book *The City of God* to convey a spiritual message rather than a political one, and to affirm the victory of Christianity and of God's kingdom. With respect to salvation and the afterlife of the human soul he believed in two resurrections or 'regenerations', thus: 'One after the faith, which even now comes about through baptism; the other after the flesh, which is to come about in its exemption from decay and death through the great and last judgement, so there are two resurrections: one, the first, of the soul, which now is, and which prevents us from coming into the second death; the other, the second, which is not now, but is to be at the end of the world, and is not of the soul but of the body, and which by the last judgement will send some into the second death and others into that life which has no death'.[90] As noticed, the bishop thought that the first resurrection had already taken place in the conversion of sinners to Christianity; the other one is supposed to happen in the Eschaton. He was not only discussing these things with the people in his congregation, but also with the Millenarians (or the Chiliasts, in their Greek designation), who believed that the kingdom was to be the reign of Christ in the world. This faction conceived it as a future reality, but Augustine told its representatives that the current dominion of the Church already constitutes the City of God, at least for some. In his defence of Christianity Augustine argued for its truth over that of other religions and philosophies and stated that it was not to be blamed for the downfall of the Romans, but that on the contrary, it was to be commended for its heavenly success because, as mentioned, the City of God was the Kingdom. As has also been observed, for the Doctor of the Church from Hippo the transience of time does not contradict the souls' chance for salvation. This eschatological

[89] St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XX 7.
[90] *Ibid*. XX 6.

orientation of God's activity in human history was an idea common to many early Christian authors.

One of the conclusions of our work can be formulated thus: while the kingdom of God is beyond historical time, it can still be characterised by linearity and progression; also, the human effort towards it is usually conceived as being linear and increasingly efficacious. And, in a theological context, one can say with Norman Perrin 'time is something in the proclamation of Jesus which fills and *fulfils*, and is something which man experiences, rather than something which moves from past to future'.[91] People begin their journey of redemption from a certain ontological state characterised by the limitations of time and space, and hope to escape these confines through the action of the Holy Spirit and their participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The main conclusion, which ties up with our introduction, can be summarised through an opinion expressed by Brian E. Daley. The author of the *Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* does not believe in Martin Werner's conviction that 'the development of Christian doctrine in the first several centuries [was] essentially the by-product of a failed eschatological hope, a way of coping intellectually with the non-fulfilment of first-century apocalyptic fantasies'.[92] Daley explains that those who believe the latter reverse 'the order of religious priorities suggested by early Christian literature, and confirmed in our own reflective faith'.[93] Probably the truth is that, while at least some of the people who lived before the eighth century waited for the Second Coming of Christ during their lives, many saw this event as happening in 'the time of God' (as was and also still is the case with most later Christians); some can have access to the kind of temporality this reality represents while still subject to their earthly existence.

[91] Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London, 1967), 206; italics in the original.

[92] Martin Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma. An Historical Study of its Problems*, trans. and intr. S.G.F. Brandon (New York, 1957), 125.

[93] Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1991), 3; see also Wolfram Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana: Die Idee des Fortschritts in der Alten Kirche bis Eusebius* (Göttingen, 1994).

Theosis *Kata To Ephikton*: The History of a Pious Hedge-Phrase

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Abstract

In the Greek patristic tradition, the doctrine of *theosis* – becoming as like God as is possible to finite humanity – was one of the most important soteriological models. Throughout its use in the Christian theological tradition, those who employed the model felt it necessary to modify the phrase with delimiting phrases to preserve the absolute distinction between God and the created order. This article will trace one of these phrases – κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν ('as far as possible'). The first extant use of such a delimiting phrase in the context of *theosis* is in Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*, clarifying that the likeness to God achievable through ethical imitation is naturally bounded. The use of κατά τὸ ἐφικτόν was appropriated by many important figures in the Greek patristic tradition, including Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, John Chrysostom, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Maximus the Confessor.

Introduction

In the Greek patristic tradition, the doctrine of *theosis* – becoming as like God as is possible to finite humanity – was one of the most important soteriological models. In this article I will examine an aspect of the doctrine of *theosis* that has received relatively little attention – namely, the use of delimiting phrases or 'pious hedge-phrases' (which is not meant with utter seriousness) in the context of *theosis*. Throughout its use in the Christian theological tradition, many of those who employed the model felt it necessary to modify the concepts and terminology of *theosis* with delimiting phrases to emphasize the absolute distinction between God and the created order. This article will trace one of these phrases – κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν ('as far as possible'). κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν was employed by many important figures in the Greek patristic tradition, including Didymus the Blind, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, and John of Damascus. This article will situate the use of κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν in the context of the development of the use of delimiting phrases in the context of *theosis* and then examine a number of representative uses of the phrase in the writings of important patristic figures.

Christian theologians in the patristic period recognized a tension between the doctrines of *theosis* and of divine simplicity; according to the latter, God is *sui*

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generis, but according to the former, God is in some sense participable. κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν represents an early attempt to resolve this tension, or at least to acknowledge it, and thus stands within a theological trajectory that will result in the development of the essence-energies distinction, especially in Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas. The Fathers of the Christian Church were not the first to recognize this tension, however. Plato, in his *Theaetetus*, uses what is perhaps the earliest extant use of a delimiting phrase in the context of *theosis*. He puts the following speech in the mouth of Socrates:

> Evils, Theodorus, can never pass away; for there must always remain something which is antagonistic to good. Having no place among the gods in heaven, of necessity they hover around the mortal nature, and this earthly sphere. Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible [κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν]; and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise. But, O my friend, you cannot easily convince mankind that they should pursue virtue or avoid vice, not merely in order that a man may seem to be good, which is the reason given by the world, and in my judgment is only a repetition of an old wives' fable. Whereas, the truth is that God is never in any way unrighteous – he is perfect righteousness; and he of us who is the most righteous is most like him.

Plato here refers to likeness to God in an ethical sense – *theosis* is becoming ethically similar to God as much as possible.[1] Plato's use of delimiting phrases in general and of κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν in particular enters Christian usage at least partly through its appropriation by Clement of Alexandria, who quotes the above passage in his *Stromateis:*

> Now Plato the Philosopher, defining the end of happiness, says that it is likeness to God as far as possible [κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν]; whether concurring with the precept of the law (for great natures that are free of passions somehow hit the mark respecting the truth, as the Pythagorean Philo says in relating the history of Moses), or whether instructed by certain oracles of the time, thirsting as he always was for instruction.

Clement elsewhere shows that he has incorporated this delimiting phrase into his theology, as Hägg notes: 'Clement sometimes makes a distinction between "God's essence" and "the power and the works of God" (*Strom.* 6.166.2), or

[1] In Norman Russell's seminal study on *theosis*, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford and New York, 2004), he helpfully distinguishes among four different types of *theosis* or deification language: nominal, analogical, ethical, and realistic: 'The nominal interprets the biblical application of the word "gods" to human beings strictly as a title of honour. The analogical "stretches" the nominal: Moses was a god to Pharaoh as a wise man is a god to a fool; or men become sons and gods "by grace" in relation to Christ who is Son and God "by nature". ... The ethical approach takes deification to be the attainment of likeness to God through ascetically and philosophical endeavour, believers reproducing some of the divine attributes in their own lives by imitation ... The realistic approach assumes that human beings are in some sense transformed by deification' (*ibid.* 13). Plato's use in this passage of the *Theaetetus* would thus conform to the third category.

between "God" and "the things about God", or between "God's essence" and his "accidents" (τα σθμβεβηκοτα) (*Strom.* 6.150.7)'.[2]

Didymus the Blind

In Didymus' commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, he writes: 'The soul is able to be perfected as far as possible [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν] to be like God and to be made like him as far as it is able [κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν]'.[3] It may be that Didymus' use of κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν as equivalent to κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν provided added justification – or at least a precedent – for the use specifically of κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν as a delimiting phrase in the context of theosis, as well as the use generally of delimiting phrases besides κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν.

Cyril of Alexandria

'Do you hear how the only begotten Word of God became like us that we might become like him, as far as this is possible [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν] for our nature and as far as it pertains to our renewal by grace?' (*Commentary on John*, vol. 2, p. 363). Cyril's version of the *tantum-quantum* formula modifies Athanasius' 'God became a human being so that humanity might become God' by addition of a delimiting phrase.

Dionysius the Areopagite

In his *On the Celestial Hiearchies* Dionysius writes: '[The seraphim, cherubim, and thrones] are contemplative … because they have been allowed to enter into communion with Jesus not by means of the holy images, reflecting the likeness of God's working in forms, but by truly coming close to him in a primary participation in the knowledge of the divine lights working out of him. To be like God is their special gift and, to the extent that is allowed them [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν], they share, with a primordial power, in his divine activities and his loving virtues'.[4]

Regarding the order of the celestial powers, Dionysius writes: 'Far from abandoning its godlike movement out of cowardice, it looks undeviatingly to that transcendent power which is the source of all power. Indeed this courage

[2] Henny Fiska Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2006), 267.

[3] Author's translation.

[4] *The Celestial Hierarchy*, trans. Luibheid, 163-4.

becomes, so far as possible [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν], the very image of that power to which it shapes itself, being powerfully returned to it because it is the source of all power. And at the same time, it transmits to its own inferiors its dynamic and divinizing power'.[5]

In another place, Dionysius writes: 'Each intelligent being, heavenly or human, has its own set of primary, middle, and lower powers, and in accordance with his capacities these indicate the aforementioned upliftings, directly relative to the hierarchic enlightenment available to every being. It is in accordance with this arrangement that each intelligent entity – as far as he properly can and to the extent he may [κατὰ τὸ αὐτῷ θεμιτόν τε καὶ ἐφικτόν] – participates in that purification beyond purity, that superabundant light, that perfection preceding all perfection'.[6] In this passage we see more clearly how Dionysius' thoroughly hierarchical conception of reality informs his understanding of *theosis* and of the use of delimiting phrases. For Dionysius, *theosis* is becoming as like God as is possible, relative to one's rank in the ontological hierarchy. Therefore, *theosis* is becoming as like as is possible to the rank of being above oneself, by the mediation and intercession of those beings. Each rank of being is deified by God through the rank above it and contributes to the deification of the rank below it.

Maximus the Confessor

In the *Mystagogia*, Maximus the Confessor's theological interpretation of the liturgy of the church, he writes: '[The soul] will be beautiful and splendid, having become similar to him as much as it can [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν] by the perfecting of the four basic virtues which reveal the divine ten in the soul and include the other blessed ten of the commandments'.[7] The ten powers of the soul which Maximus had previously enumerated become simple in their encounter with the simple God. Maximus then completes the classical triad of truth, goodness, and beauty by stating that the soul becomes beautiful when truth and goodness become one within it, through their union with the truth and goodness that is God. The soul then exemplifies the perfection of order and harmony of proportions that was classically understood to be beauty.

'To [the perfected saints] is there lacking nothing of this good that is possible and attainable [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν] for men, so that they also can be and be called gods by adoption through grace because all of God entirely fills them and leaves no part of them empty of his presence'.[8]

[5] *Ibid*. 167.
[6] *Ibid*. 174.
[7] *The Church's Mystagogy*, trans. Berthold, 193.
[8] *Ibid*. 203.

'Sons are the ones who out of neither fear of threats nor desire of promised things but rather out of character and habit of the voluntary inclination and disposition of the soul toward the good never become separated from God, as that son to whom it was said, "Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours". They have become as much as possible [κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν] by deification in grace what God is and is believed by nature and by cause'.[9]

Theological implications of the use of 'Pious Hedge-Phrases'

I would like to address three points I take to be implications of the patristic use of κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν and other similar delimiting phrases.

First, the patristic use of κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν, *etc*. from the beginning of its use of the conceptuality of *theosis* illustrates that these figures of the early church saw that it was necessary both to affirm that God is participable in some sense and that God is imparticipable in some sense. In his *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Vladimir Lossky articulates this insight in this way: 'God is … at the same time totally inaccessible and really communicable to created beings; neither of the terms of this antinomy [is] excluded or minimized in any way'.[10]

Second, the use of delimiting phrases in the context of *theosis* begins as a purely apophatic doctrine but is transformed to have also a kataphatic aspect. Cyril's Christological transformation of the phrase further fleshes out the character of *theosis*, and in Maximus κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν refers to human participation in every divine excellence.

Finally, it is important to note that the patristic uses of κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν were not only to avoid intellectual problems associated with the doctrine of *theosis*. These articulations were expressions of their own experiences with the God they encountered in the Scriptures and in the liturgy of the church. They witnessed in the lives of their spiritual mothers and fathers the possibility of *theosis* κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν, and in these passages they gave voice to the greatness of the God they worshiped and the greatness of their experience of God's grace toward them.

[9] *Ibid*. 210-1.
[10] V. Lossky, *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge, 1957), 68.

The Church and the Holy Spirit: Ecclesiology and Pneumatology in Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine

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Abstract

This study explores the development of ecclesiology in relation to pneumatology in the works of North African Fathers including Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. In the historical context of early North Africa, with the rise of movements such as Montanism and Donatism, there developed an increasing tension between the church's charismatic dimensions and its visible, institutional marks. For Tertullian of Carthage, the church is constituted by a body that can claim possession of the Spirit as present in unmistakable power. Tertullian is the herald of a kind of rigorism that limits church membership on the basis of a particular charismatic authority. In the midst of the complex process of readmitting lapsed Christians into the fold, bishops such as Cyprian and Augustine sought to develop practices and to articulate ways of welcoming those outside of the church. This pursuit of unity required an approach that mitigated the rigorism of Tertullian so as to offer a more inclusive understanding of church membership. For Cyprian and Augustine, the church's unity in charity is grounded in the unity of the Trinity as a gift given by the Holy Spirit and mediated through the sacraments. Augustine maintains Cyprian's insistence upon the church's visible unity as a sign of the invisible union of the Spirit, yet Augustine builds upon the insights of Cyprian in order to argue that the Spirit may work beyond visible bounds so as to bring those outside of the visible church into communion with the one body of Christ at some future time. This study argues that Cyprian and Augustine successfully mitigate the rigorism of Tertullian by integrating, in varying degrees, the visible and invisible aspects of the church.

Introduction

Many scholars have observed that in earliest Christianity, ecclesiology is not treated as an isolated subject or theological topic – there are no treatises dedicated solely to the church in the East or the West.[1] Nevertheless, by the end of

[1] 'The first believers did not write treatises on the church in the way they wrote them on Christ or the Holy Spirit or other topics. In the vast range of early Christian literature one will find only one treatise, Cyprian's *On the Unity of the Church*, devoted more or less directly to an

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the second century, in the works of North African Fathers such as Tertullian, there can be found highly developed, sophisticated views of the church.[2] Such views do not appear in isolated treatises, nor can they be understood apart from certain fundamental theological commitments.

For Tertullian, the church is intrinsically linked to the Spirit; thus ecclesiology is necessarily related to pneumatology. The church is led by the Spirit, for the power and work of the Spirit is demonstrated in and through the church. The nature of this power became the subject of debate and controversy in early North Africa, particularly in the context of the persecution of Christians and the question of the readmission of the lapsed into the fold. Tertullian was the proponent of a kind of rigorism that demanded the demonstration of the Spirit in order to ensure membership in the church. Such a demonstration was lacking in the case of those who had lapsed under persecution. Further, those who held positions of ecclesiastical authority were not guaranteed the presence and activity of the Spirit. In Tertullian's works, there developed an increasing tension between the church's charismatic dimensions and its visible, institutional marks. For Tertullian, the church, in essence, is constituted by bodies that can claim possession of the Spirit as present in unmistakable power.

For bishops such as Cyprian, Optatus, and Augustine, the unity of the church was of preeminent concern. They sought to develop a process of readmitting lapsed Christians, which included practices of penance prior to being welcomed back into the Eucharistic assembly.[3] Correlatively these bishops attempted to

understanding of the church, but even there the issue is *unity* rather than church', E. Glenn Hinson, *Understandings of the Church*, Sources of Early Christian Thought, ed. William G. Rusch (Philadelphia, 1986), 1; see also Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2001), 154; David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge, 1995), 1; Thomas Halton, *The Church*, Message of the Fathers of the Church 4 (Wilmington, 1985), 13-27; Avery Dulles and Patrick Granfield, *The Church: A Bibliography* (Wilmington, 1985), 9-12; Robert Eno, *Teaching Authority in the Early Church*, Message of the Fathers of the Church 14 (Wilmington, 1984), 13-29. According to Robert Evans, 'Latin theology none the less shows a tendency to be concerned … with the form and character of Christian society, or, to speak more briefly, with the doctrine of the Church', *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought* (London, 1972), 1.

[2] David Rankin has observed that Tertullian does not provide a systematic theology of the church, nor does Tertullian explicitly mention the traditional marks of the church as one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic, as it would be developed later in the Western tradition. Nevertheless, it is possible, at least implicitly, to discern these marks in Tertullian's ecclesiology; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 4, 59-60.

[3] See Everett Ferguson, 'Early Church Penance', *Restoration Quarterly* 36 (1994), 81-100; Bernhard Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*, trans. Francis Courtney (New York, 1964), 63-103; Cyrille Vogel, *Le pécheur et la pénitence au moyen âge* (Paris, 1969); K. Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, Theological Investigations 15 (New York, 1982); James Dallen, *The Reconciling Community: The Rite of Penance* (New York, 1986), 65-73; Kevin Uhalde, 'Juridical Administration in the Church and Pastoral Care in Late Antiquity', in Abigail Firey (ed.), *A New History of Penance* (Boston, 2008), 97-120.

articulate a more inclusive understanding of church membership.[4] The church is at once charismatic and institutional, an invisible society of believers and a visible body that celebrates the sacraments.

This study argues that North African bishops such as Cyprian and Augustine successfully mitigate the rigorism of Tertullian by developing an ecclesiology that integrates, in varying degrees, the visible and invisible aspects of the church. For Cyprian and Augustine, the church's unity in charity is grounded in the unity of the Trinity, as a gift given by the Holy Spirit and mediated through the sacraments. Augustine maintains Cyprian's insistence upon the church's visible unity as a sign of the invisible union of the Spirit, yet Augustine builds upon the insights of Cyprian in order to argue that the Spirit may work beyond visible bounds so as to bring those outside of the visible church into communion with the one body of Christ at some future time. Augustine goes further than Cyprian in distinguishing the church's historical and eschatological dimensions, providing a way to affirm the work of the Spirit to bring all into unity with the one church. These views laid the foundation for the pursuit of unity among Christians in North Africa in the midst of schism and persecution. This study explores the development of Latin patristic ecclesiology by examining the relationship between the church and the Spirit in the works of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine.

North Africa

In the context of Roman North Africa in the third century, the onset of persecution, particularly the Decian persecution beginning in 249, revealed the fault lines among Christian communities.[5] Many renounced their allegiance to Christ and the church and submitted to traditional practices of Punic and Roman idolatry. The controversial issue of readmitting into the community those who had lapsed brought to the forefront the very criteria of ecclesial identity. What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a member of the church?

By this time, many communities in North Africa had come under the influence of Tertullian of Carthage. Tertullian was the proponent of a particular kind of rigorism whereby anyone who had violated one's baptismal oaths, by idolatry or any other sin, must be excluded from Eucharistic communion.[6] Some sinners were allowed readmission after practicing penance, while others were left out

[4] J. Patout Burns, 'Establishing Unity in Diversity', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32 (2005), 381-99.

[5] J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, 2014), 603; H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society* (2001), 148-53; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 9-26.

[6] *De pudicitia* 9.16, 18.8; J.P. Burns and R.M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa* (2014), 602; E. Ferguson, 'Early Church Penance' (1994), 84-6. Ferguson observes that Tertullian viewed

and could be helped only from a church that maintained its purity by excluding them from communion.[7] For Tertullian, the church's purity and holiness depend upon preservation from the pollution of apostates who had been tainted by idolatrous sacrifices.[8]

For Tertullian, the church is constituted by the Spirit, which is active and present in power as revealed by prophecy, healing, and ethical conduct.[9] The sanctifying power of the Spirit need not be associated with an ecclesiastical office, for it could be manifested in a variety of ways among laity and clergy alike. The gifts of the Spirit are distributed among all of the members of the church, and only those spiritual ones who manifest the power of the Spirit in their lives can be considered true members of the one, holy church.[10]

According to Tertullian, the authentic church consists of the presence of 'spiritual persons' (*spiritalia*) as opposed to the 'carnal' members (*psychici*) mentioned in works such as *De pudicitia*.[11] The presence of the Holy Spirit demarcates the spiritual ones; this is the meaning revealed by the Paraclete passages of *John* 14-6.[12] In *De monogamia* 1.2, the New Prophets deserve to be called 'spiritual ones' by recognition of certain 'spiritual gifts' (*spiritualium charismatum*), while those who do not accept the Spirit are carnally minded, and do not belong to the one church.[13] Likewise, in *Adversus Praxean* 2.1,

certain sins as irremissible, including idolatry, adultery, and murder; *ibid.* 85; K. Rahner, *Penance* (1982), 127; *De pudicitia* 5.2, 12.5, 19.25-8, 20.7.

[7] J.P. Burns and R.M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa* (2014), 602.

[8] *De pudicitia* 5.2-15.

[9] *De pudicitia* 21.17; R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 24, 34-5; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 29-38.

[10] H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society* (2001), 120; J.P. Burns and R.M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa* (2014), 602-3; R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 28-35.

[11] *De pudicitia* 21.16: *Quid nunc et ad ecclesiam et quidem tuam, psychice? Secundum enim Petri personam spiritalibus potestas ista conueniet, aut apostolo aut prophetae*, CChr.SL 2 (Turnhout, 1954), 1328. Tertullian argues that the church must be uncontaminated by sinners seeking readmission to communion.

[12] *De pudicitia* 21.1-17; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 46 n. 33.

[13] *De monogamia* 1.2: *Penes nos autem, quos spiritales merito dici facit agnitio spiritalium charismatum, continentia tam religiosa est quam licentia uerecunda, quandoquidem ambae cum creatore sunt*, CChr.SL 2, 1229. In the early third century, Tertullian had committed himself to the New Prophecy, which claimed a certain kind of charismatic authority, often over against the institutional, episcopal authority. The question of whether or not Tertullian remained in the Catholic Church or formally separated is a vexed one; it is a complex issue that requires nuance, and I do neither wish to resolve the matter here, nor do I think it necessary to do so. What we can say, at the very least, is that by the early third century, Tertullian's Montanist tendencies are in full swing, and whether or not these tendencies emerge from Montanism or originate in relation to Montanism is beside the point; see the discussion by D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 43-6; Timothy Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford, 1971), 82; Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge, 1996), 69; William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia* (Macon, 1997), 54-5; Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, The Early Church Fathers (New York, 2004), 4-5.

Tertullian claims those of the New Prophecy have been better instructed by the Paraclete.[14] The spiritual ones are not necessarily coincident with the episcopal, hierarchical church.[15] There is an increasing tension between the charismatic and institutional church in Tertullian's thought, although there is no absolute separation, for Tertullian does not discard the visible church entirely.[16]

Tertullian is the herald of a particular kind of charismatic authority, whereby the church is defined by a body that possesses the Spirit as present in unmistakable power. Tertullian is uncompromising in this regard, for the church is the Spirit. As he declares in *De pudicitia* 21.16, 'the church is itself properly and principally the Spirit, in whom is the Trinity of One Divinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Spirit brings together that church which the Lord has set down in three'.[17] While it would be an oversimplification to claim that there is an exact identification between church and Spirit, it is clear that for Tertullian, the church must be marked by a demonstration of the power of the Spirit.[18] The church is holy as the Spirit is holy.[19] This means that the church must be untainted by the presence of sinners, particularly those guilty of adultery and apostasy, and the church's purity is maintained by the exercise of right discipline.[20]

Tertullian thus holds a perfectionist and exclusionist view of the church, for the church on earth coincides with an eschatological ideal that excludes the presence of sinful members.[21] This may also be described as a kind of 'elitist' ecclesiology, for the church consists solely of the elite who can claim possession of the Spirit as present in demonstrable power.

[14] *Adversus Praxean* 2.1: *Nos uero et semper et nunc magis, ut instructiores per paracletum, deductorem scilicet omnis ueritatis, unicum quidem deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione quam oikonomiam dicimus, ut unici dei sit et filius, sermo ipsius qui ex ipso processerit, per quem omnia facta sunt et sine quo factum est nihil*, CChr.SL 2, 1160.

[15] *De pudicitia* 21.17: *Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum*, CChr.SL 2, 1328. 'This Church, however, is not a 'collectivity of bishops' but is simply the company of "spiritual men"', R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 33. David Rankin observes that Tertullian's pneumatocentric theology was not the product of a diluted Montanism, but the logical consequence of his whole approach; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 43; Eric Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge, 1997), 176-7.

[16] Although Tertullian never discards the institutional church, primacy belongs to the spiritual; R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 28-31; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 119-74.

[17] *De pudicitia* 21.16: *Nam et ipsa ecclesia proprie et principaliter ipse est spiritus, in quo est trinitas unius diuinitatis, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Illam ecclesiam congregat quam dominus in tribus posuit*, CChr.SL 2, 1328. Translations are my own.

[18] See the discussion by D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 77-8.

[19] 'The holiness of the church, however, lies not in the process of its historical development, nor in some ideal to be sought though perhaps never achieved, but in what it is by the grace of God. A less than holy church is, for Tertullian, not logically possible. Anything less than holy cannot authentically be the church. It is not that the church should be or could be holy; it is holy', D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 114.

[20] *De pudicitia* 1.19-21, 2.13-6, 18.8, 19.25-6.

[21] R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 8; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 92-8, 114.

This elitist tendency is evident in Tertullian's use of images of the church in his works. In *De baptismo* 8.4, Tertullian sees Noah's ark as an image of the church.[22] The dove sent after the flood represents the coming of the Holy Spirit, now present and active in the church on earth.[23] The Spirit is sent forth from heaven to guarantee the holiness of the church. Likewise, in *De idololatria* 24.4, the ark is a type of the church, which must be preserved from all impurity. Those outside of the ark are not in the church.[24] There is only one church composed of spiritual persons, through whom the power of the Spirit is revealed.

In similar fashion, Tertullian employs Biblical images for the church such as virgin,[25] bride of Christ,[26] and body of Christ[27] in order to show how the church is one and holy. The invisible work of the Spirit is to form the one body of Christ, yet this power must be manifested in unmistakable fashion. The Spirit is active and made visible most often by prophecy, healing, and ethical living.[28] The church is at once spiritual and visible, for the spiritual ones are marked by the gifts of the Spirit, and the result is a kind of rigorism or elitism that limits church membership to those who manifest spiritual charisms.[29]

For Tertullian, the holiness of the church depends, to some extent, upon the members of the church, for the authentic church consists of 'spiritual ones' who have been made holy by the Spirit. The holiness of the church must be manifested in the members. The church, represented by Noah's ark, is an exclusive club without room for sinners, for the church must be pure without the stain of sinners as the bride and body of Christ, in whom the power of the Spirit resides.

[22] See also *De baptismo* 12.7; *De idololatria* 24.4; *De pudicitia* 13.20, 14; E. Osborn, *Tertullian* (1997), 178; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 65-6, 114.

[23] *De baptismo* 8.4: *Ideo que: estote, inquit, simplices ut columbae, ne hoc quidem sine argumento praecedentis figurae: quemadmodum enim post aquas diluuii quibus iniquitas antiqua purgata est, post baptismum ut ita dixerim mundi, pacem caelestis irae praeco columba terris adnuntiauit dimissa ex arca et cum olea reuersa-quod signum etiam ad nationes pacis praetenditur-eadem dispositione spiritalis effectus terrae id est carni nostrae emergenti de lauacro post uetera delicta columba sancti spiritus aduolat pacem dei adferens emissa de caelis ubi ecclesia est arcae figura*, CChr.SL 1, 283.

[24] *De idololatria* 24.4: *Viderimus enim si secundum arcae typum et coruus et miluus et lupus et canis et serpens in ecclesia erit. Certe idololatres in arcae typo non habetur. Nullum animal in idololatren figuratum est. Quod in arca non fuit, in ecclesia non sit*, CChr.SL 2, 1124.

[25] *De praescriptione haereticorum* 44.2; *De fuga in persecutione* 14.2; *De monogamia* 11.2; *De pudicitia* 1.8, 18.11; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 86; E. Osborn, *Tertullian* (1997), 178.

[26] *De monogamia* 5.7, 11.2; *Adversus Marcionem* 4.11.8, 5.12.6, 5.18.9; *De pudicitia* 1.8, 18.11; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 83-5; E. Osborn, *Tertullian* (1997), 178.

[27] *Apologeticum* 39.1-2; *De baptismo* 6.2; *Adversus Marcionem* 5.8.9, 5.19.6; *De paenitentia* 10.5-6; D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (1995), 70-4.

[28] R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 24, 34-5.

[29] 'This means that Tertullian is in effect adding (substituting?) one kind of empirical criterion to another in answer to the question, "Where is the Church?"'; R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 34.

For Cyprian of Carthage, the pursuit of unity meant mitigating the rigorism of Tertullian and others, and finding a way to welcome back sinners into the fold.[30] This required the development of a more inclusive understanding of the church, as distinct from the teaching of Tertullian, and a sophisticated articulation of the church's charismatic and institutional aspects.[31]

For Cyprian, the church is one and holy not by the recognition of certain spiritual gifts among the members, but rather by charity as a gift given by the Triune God, and mediated by the sacraments of the church.[32] Cyprian resists the tendency to set the Spirit over against the marks of the visible, institutional church.[33] While the charismatic gifts of the Spirit are given to laity and clergy alike, there is no necessary tension between the charismatic and the hierarchical church, for the authority given by Christ to the apostles in *John* 20 must arise from obedience to the commandment to love and serve one another in *John* 15.[34] Charity is a mark of the episcopacy. In contrast to Tertullian, Cyprian employs these Johannine passages to bring together the church's charismatic and institutional aspects.[35] This does not mean that the unity of episcopacy is,

[30] For a helpful discussion, see J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop* (London, 2002), 44-8; 'The Holiness of the Church in North African Theology', *SP* 50 (2010), 85-110.

[31] Robert Evans observes that the church as an object of reflection 'attains a new kind of significance in Cyprian, who denies some of Tertullian's conclusions regarding the Church', particularly the distinction of those who can claim unmistakable possession of the Spirit; R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 48.

[32] Vasilije Vranic has shown that for Cyprian, unity is divinely given, in contrast to the later Donatists, for whom holiness is logically prior to ecclesial unity; Vasilije Vranic, 'Augustine and the Donatist Claims to Cyprianic Ecclesiological Legacy', *Philotheos* 7 (2007), 208-21; *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 8.7-8.

[33] Michael Sage says that Cyprian saw organization and episcopal power as 'the most essential ingredients for salvation', and thus the efficacy of sacraments is tied fundamentally to an institution, which binds the power of the Holy Spirit; Michael Sage, *Cyprian* (Philadelphia, 1975), 248.

[34] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 2: *Inmortalitate autem potiri quomodo possumus, nisi ea quibus mors expugnatur et uincitur christi mandata seruemus, ipso monente et dicente: 'si uis ad uitam uenire serua mandata', et iterum: 'si feceritis quod mando uobis, iam non dico uos seruos sed amicos'?* CChr.SL 3, 249. According to Peter Hinchliff, the 'bishop's function as center and symbol of unity is not merely a function of office, it is a relationship of love', P. Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage* (London, 1974), 117. Other scholars maintain that Cyprian is informed by the Roman imperial ideal and ascribe political theory to his ecclesiology, even if Cyprian remained 'in denial' about this influence; Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge, 2010), 37. Along the same lines, J. Patout Burns understands Cyprian to have assigned a religious or cosmic significance to the communion of the church in order to attain certain socio-political status; J.P. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop* (2002), 46-7.

[35] 'In what we may interpret as an explicit rejection of Tertullian's views, he located sanctifying power and authority to govern in the office of bishop rather than allowing it to be shared among all the members. He explained that Christ had conferred these powers on the bishops, initially represented by the apostles, and not on Peter alone. The gifts were conferred on the elected leader of each local church through his induction into the episcopal college through the ritual of consecration by his counterparts in other churches. This theory of the transmission of the power of the Holy Spirit from Christ through the apostles into the episcopal college and thence

by itself, the substance of the church's unity. Rather, it is a sign of that unity, which is grounded in the unity of the Trinity.[36] In this way, Cyprian understands Paul's proclamation in *Eph*. 4:4 that 'there is one body and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God'.[37] God is one, Christ is one; therefore, the church and the faith are one, and to leave the unity of the church is to leave the substance of salvation.[38]

Like Tertullian, Cyprian takes up other Biblical images to speak of the church as one, precisely as mother and bride. *Song of Songs* 6:9 is an indication of the one church, for 'my dove is one, my perfect one, chosen of she who bore her'.[39] The church is a mother by virtue of the sacrament of baptism, by which she 'seals her sons, to whom she has given birth, for the kingdom',[40] and so Cyprian

into the local church by its leader's membership in the college was a coherent and scripturally based explanation which justified the structures of governance within the community, the efficacy of its sacramental rituals, and the binding force of decisions reached by individual bishops and synods. In theory and practice, it withstood the challenge mounted by the laxist and rigorists who survived the Decian persecution. The differentiation of the clerical role and the rejection of Tertullian's egalitarian views enabled a greater cohesion and stability within the local community', J.P. Burns, 'Establishing Unity in Diversity' (2005), 387-8.

[36] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6: *Dicit dominus: 'ego et pater unum sumus', et iterum de patre et filio et spiritu sancto scriptum est: et tres unum sunt. Et quisquam credit hanc unitatem de diuina firmitate uenientem, sacramentis caelestibus cohaerentem, scindi in ecclesia posse et uoluntatum conlidentium diuortio separari? hanc unitatem qui non tenet non tenet dei legem, non tenet patris et filii fidem, uitam non tenet et salutem*, CChr.SL 3, 254. In *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 5, Cyprian speaks of the unity of the church extending into a plurality, as the rays of the sun are many but its light one, an allusion to the Trinity: *Ecclesia una est quae in multitudinem latius incremento fecunditatis extenditur: quomodo solis multi radii sed lumen unum, et rami arboris multi sed robur unum tenaci radice fundatum, et cum de fonte uno riui plurimi defluunt, numerositas licet diffusa uideatur exundantis copiae largitate, unitas tamen seruatur in origine. Auelle radium solis a corpore, diuisionem lucis unitas non capit; ab arbore frange ramum, fractus germinare non poterit; a fonte praecide riuum, praecisus arescit. Sic et ecclesia, domini luce perfusa, per orbem totum radios suos porrigit, unum tamen lumen est quod ubique diffunditur nec unitas corporis separatur; ramos suos in uniuersam terram copia ubertatis extendit; profluentes largiter riuos latius spandit, unum tamen caput est et origo una, et una mater fecunditatis successibus copiosa: illius fetu nascimur, illius lacte nutrimur, spiritu eius animamur*, CChr.SL 3, 253. This image for the Trinity is also found in Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 8.5-7; R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 53-5.

[37] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4: *Vnum corpus et unus Spiritus, una spes uocationis uestrae, unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma, unus Deus?* CChr.SL 3, 252.

[38] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 23: *Vnus deus est et christus unus, et una ecclesia eius et fides una, et plebs in solidam corporis unitatem concordiae glutino copulata. Scindi unitas non potest nec corpus unum discidio compaginis separari, diuulsis laceratione uisceribus in frusta discerpi; quicquid a matrice discesserit, seorsum uiuere et spirare non poterit: substantiam salutis amittit*, CChr.SL 3, 266.

[39] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4: *Quam unam ecclesiam etiam in Cantico Canticorum Spiritus sanctus ex persona Domini designat, et dicit: 'Vna est columba mea perfecta mea, una est matri suae, electa genetrici suae'*, CChr.SL 3, 252.

[40] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6: *Haec nos deo seruat, haec filios regno quos generauit adsignat*, CChr.SL 3, 253.

declares that 'he cannot have God as his Father who does not have the church as his mother',[41] and one who is outside of the church is outside of the ark.[42]

For Cyprian, these images of the church as body, bride, mother, and ark do not evoke a church free from the presence of those who have sinned. Perfection does not depend upon the presence or absence of sinners in the community, but rather upon the work of the Triune God to unite the church in the perfect bond of charity, the charity maintained by union with the bishop and the worldwide episcopacy.[43] These bonds have an eschatological aim insofar as they are the means of union with the blessed, in anticipation of a final eschatological communion.[44] Unlike Tertullian, Cyprian does not collapse the eschatological *ecclesia* with the historical church on journey, for while there is an eschatological urgency in expectation of an imminent end,[45] the church is pure and holy now as the one spouse of Christ,[46] awaiting final judgment. As we shall see, Augustine further develops the distinction between the church on journey and the church in eschatological perfection.

For Cyprian, there may be tares in the church along with the wheat, for the judgment of God is more complex than a simple separation of the church from the world.[47] God's mercy and judgment are ever active, in anticipation of the final judgment. Cyprian maintains that where the Spirit is, the church is, yet the Spirit manifests power in and through the visible, institutional church,[48]

[41] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6: *habere iam non potest deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem*, CChr.SL 3, 253.

[42] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6: *si potuit euadere quisque extra arcam noe fuit, et qui extra ecclesiam foris fuerit euadet*, CChr.SL 3, 253.

[43] 'The sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in a church was guaranteed by the bishop and his participation within the world-wide and self-perpetuating episcopal college: it did not depend exclusively upon the purity established and maintained by the practices of all the members of the church', J.P. Burns, 'Establishing Unity in Diversity' (2005), 388.

[44] Cyprian sees the church as a mystery of communion since the church's unity has its source in the unity of the Trinity. These bonds of unity are not just terrestrial, but eschatological; see J.A. Gil-Tamayo, *Cyprian: Obras completas* (Madrid, 2013).

[45] Cyprian retains an eschatological urgency in the midst of persecution; see the discussion by R. Evans, *One and Holy* (1972), 59.

[46] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 6: *Adulterari non potest sponsa christi, incorrupta est et pudica: unam domum nouit, unius cubiculi sanctitatem casto pudore custodit*, CChr.SL 3, 253.

[47] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 10: *Sic probantur fideles, sic perfidi deteguntur, sic et ante iudicii diem hic quoque iam iustorum adque iniustorum animae diuiduntur, et a frumento paleae separantur. Hi sunt qui se ultro aput temerarios conuenas sine diuina dispositione praeficiunt, qui se praepositos sine ulla ordinationis lege constituunt, qui nemine episcopatum dante episcopi sibi nomen adsumunt; quos designat in psalmis spiritus sanctus: sedentes in pestilentiae cathedra: pestes et lues fidei, serpentes ore fallentes et corrumpendae ueritatis artifices, uenena letalia linguis pestiferis euomentes; quorum sermo ut cancer serpit, quorum tractatus pectoribus et cordibus singulorum mortale uirus infundit*, CChr.SL 3, 256-7.

[48] 'Cyprian made an important move by identifying the association of bishops as the carrier of the gift of the Holy Spirit held in common by Christian communities throughout the world', J.P. Burns, 'Establishing Unity in Diversity' (2005), 387.

which dispenses the mercy of God through the sacraments, and which binds the church in charity.[49] Thus there is no tension between the charismatic and institutional church, for it belongs to the power of the Spirit to work through the visible, hierarchical church celebrating the sacraments.[50] Being in communion with the visible church is a necessary but not sufficient condition for salvation, for it belongs to God to separate the good from the wicked at the final judgment, and even those who have been readmitted to communion may not presume upon admission into the kingdom of heaven.[51]

Augustine builds upon Cyprian and further mitigates the rigorism of Tertullian. Like Cyprian, Augustine finds no necessary tension between the visible church and the invisible work of the Spirit. For Augustine, the church's unity is grounded in the Trinity, for the charity 'poured out on our hearts' (*Rom.* 5:5) is nothing less than the Holy Spirit, who binds the members of the church together as one body.[52] The very same Spirit through whom the persons of the Trinity are joined[53] is the glue that binds the church.[54] In *De Trinitate*, Augustine argues that God is spirit or love, but when the terms are used relatively, they refer to the Holy Spirit, such that that love is the bond between Father and

[49] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 9: *Idcirco et in columba uenit spiritus sanctus. Simplex animal et laetum est: non felle amarum, non morsibus saeuum, non unguium laceratione uiolentum; hospitia humana diligere, unius domus consortium nosse; cum generant simul filios edere, cum commeant uolatibus inuicem cohaerere; communi conuersatione uitam suam degere, oris osculo concordiam pacis agnoscere, legem circa omnia unianimitatis inplere. Haec est in ecclesia noscenda simplicitas, haec caritas obtinenda: ut columbas dilectio fraternitatis imitetur, ut mansuetudo et lenitas agnis et ouibus aequetur*, CChr.SL 3, 255-6.

[50] *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 4, 6-8, 15, 19.

[51] J.P. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop* (2002), 69.

[52] *De Trinitate* 7.3.5: *amemus ergo eum et inhaereamus illi caritate diffusa in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis*, CChr.SL 50, 253. On Augustine's pneumatology, see Jacques Verhees, *God in beweging: Een onderzoek naar de pneumatologie van Augustinus* (Wageningen, 1968); Joseph Ratzinger, 'The Holy Spirit as *Communio*: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine', trans. Peter Casarella, *Communio* 25 (1998), 324-9; Robert Louis Wilken, '*Spiritus sanctus secundum scripturas sanctas:* Exegetical Considerations of Augustine on the Holy Spirit', *Augustinian Studies* 31 (2000), 1-18; Lewis Ayres, '*Sempiterne Spiritus Donum:* Augustine's Pneumatology and the Metaphysics of Spirit', in George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (eds), *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* (Crestwood, 2008), 127-52; Travis E. Ables, *Incarnational Realism: Trinity and the Spirit in Augustine and Barth* (London, 2013); Najeeb Awad, '"Another Puzzle is ... the Holy Spirit": *De Trinitate* as Augustine's Pneumatology', *Scottish Journal of Theology* (2012), 1-16; Chad Tyler Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology* (Burlington, 2012); Adam Kotsko, 'Gift and *Communio*: The Holy Spirit in Augustine's *De Trinitate*', *Scottish Journal of Theology* (2011), 1-12; Ronnie J. Rombs, '*Vinculum Pacis*: *Eph.* 4:3 and Indications of a Pneumatology in St. Augustine's Theology', *SP* 50 (2011), 321-7.

[53] *De Trinitate* 6.5.7.

[54] *De Trinitate* 5.11.12; 15.17.29. Joseph T. Lienhard, '"The Glue Itself is Charity": Ps 62:9 in Augustine's Thought', *id.* (ed.), *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum* (New York, 1993), 375-84.

Son, and the love that 'binds us' (*nosque subjungens*).[55] In his sermons on Pentecost, Augustine declares, 'whoever has the Holy Spirit is in the church … whoever is outside this church does not have the Holy Spirit'.[56] Like Cyprian, Augustine cites *Eph.* 4:4, declaring there is 'one body and one spirit'.[57] Yet Augustine goes further by considering how the parts of the body, while distinct, are kept together by the 'one spirit' (*unus spiritus*).[58] 'What our spirit, that is, our soul, is to the parts or members of our body, that the Holy Spirit is to the members of Christ, to the body of Christ'.[59] The Holy Spirit is the soul of the church, precisely as the soul of the one body of Christ.

For Augustine, the church's unity as one body with one soul, *i.e.* the Spirit, need not result in tension between the charismatic and institutional church. Following Cyprian, Augustine interprets the Paraclete passages of *John* 16 in light of the commissioning of the apostles, particularly Peter, who is a sign of the church's unity. [60] Peter represents the whole church in confessing Christ as the Son of God, yet the apostles also possess a particular mission. Augustine observes that the disciples were too focused on outward appearance, which they interpreted in a 'fleshly' (*carnalis*) way; they had to turn from being 'fleshly' to being 'spiritual' (*spiritalis*), which can only happen by the gift of the Holy Spirit.[61] The disciples must undergo a transformation from carnal to spiritual, a transformation that Augustine links to the sacraments.[62] The sacraments

[55] *De Trinitate* 7.3.6: *spiritus quoque sanctus siue sit summa caritas utrumque coniungens nos que subiungens, quod ideo non indigne dicitur quia scriptum est: deus caritas est, quomodo non est etiam ipse sapientia cum sit lumen, quoniam deus lumen est?* CChr.SL 50, 254.

[56] Ca. 405, *Sermones* 268.2: *qui ergo habet spiritum sanctum, in ecclesia est, quae loquitur omnium linguis. quicumque praeter hanc ecclesiam est, non habet spiritum sanctum*, PL 38, 1232; Anthony Dupont, 'Augustine's Preaching on Grace at Pentecost', *SP* 51 (2013), 3-14.

[57] R.J. Rombs, '*Vinculum Pacis*' (2011), 321-7.

[58] *Sermones* 268.2: *officia membrorum dispartita sunt, sed unus spiritus continet omnia*, PL 38, 1232.

[59] *Sermones* 268.2: *quod est spiritus noster, id est anima nostra, ad membra nostra; hoc spiritus sanctus ad membra christi, ad corpus christi, quod est ecclesia*, PL 38, 1232; see also *Sermones* 267.4.

[60] Augustine appeals to *Matth.* 16, in which Christ declares, 'You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church', *Sermones* 270.2: *et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam: non supra petrum quod tu es; sed supra petram, quam confessus es. aedificabo autem ecclesiam meam: aedificabo te, qui hac responsione figuram gestas ecclesiae*, PL 38, 1239.

[61] *Sermones* 270.1: *uolebat autem eos affectum potius habere diuinum, atque ita de carnalibus facere spirituales: quod non fit homo nisi dono spiritus sancti. hoc ergo ait: mitto uobis donum, quo efficiamini spirituales; donum scilicet spiritus sancti. spirituales autem fieri non poteritis, nisi carnales esse destiteritis. carnales uero esse desistetis, si forma carnis a uestris oculis auferatur, ut forma dei uestris cordibus inseratur*, PL 38, 1238. On Augustine's understanding of *homo spiritalis*, see Cornelius Mayer, 'Augustins Lehre vom 'homo spiritalis', in *id.* and Karl Chelius (eds), *Homo spiritalis: Festgabe für Luc Verheijen OSA zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Würzburg, 1987), 3-60; John C. Cavadini, 'Eucharistic Exegesis in Augustine's "Confessions"', *Augustinian Studies* 41 (2010), 106-8.

[62] Augustine uses the figures of Esau and Jacob to speak of the transformation from the fleshly to the spiritual, a transformation that occurs by virtue of baptism; *Sermones* 4.1, 5, 8-9, 11-2, 27-8, 32-6.

mediate the transformative work of the Spirit, and so the 'spiritual ones' are not limited either to the apostles, nor to the elite few who manifest the power of the Spirit by virtue of certain charismatic gifts. Instead, the spiritual are those who participate in the sacraments celebrated by the church throughout the world.[63]

Augustine follows Cyprian by arguing that church membership cannot be limited to a particular constituency. Although Augustine recognizes that some may cut themselves off from the effects of the sacraments, as in the case of the Donatists, such that the transformation from carnal to spiritual is not simply a matter of receiving the sacraments, it is clear that Augustine does not place the visible, institutional church over against the spiritual, for one becomes spiritual precisely through participation in the sacraments.[64]

Like his predecessors Tertullian and Cyprian, Augustine has recourse to many Biblical images of the church, including the church as mother and bride.[65] Unlike Tertullian, Augustine uses these images to distinguish between the church in her historical condition and in eschatological glory. While Tertullian collapses this distinction, Augustine develops it in order to demonstrate how the church's holiness is not dependent upon her members, but rather depends upon the distinctive work of the Spirit in the church's particular conditions. The church is heavenly mother,[66] yet she is also mother by virtue of her celebration of the sacraments while on pilgrimage during this time, for she gives birth to her members through baptism, and in this way, she is always holy, for she mediates the life-giving work of the Spirit.[67] Further, Augustine follows

[63] The unity of the church is impressed upon those participating in the Eucharistic liturgy of the church, spread throughout the world; *Sermones* 268.1: *ecce et hic unitas ecclesiae catholicae commendatur toto orbe diffusae*, PL 38, 1232. On the work of the Spirit at baptism, see J. Patout Burns, 'Christ and the Holy Spirit in Augustine's Theology of Baptism', in Joanne McWilliam (ed.), *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (Waterloo, 1992), 161-71.

[64] *Sermones* 4.9.

[65] Rafael Palmero Ramos, *'Ecclesia Mater' en san Augustin: telogía de la imagen en los escritos antidonatistas* (Madrid, 1970); Monique Vincent, *Saint Augustin, Maître de Prière d'après les* Enarrationes in Psalmos (Paris, 1990); J. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesiae* (Washington, D.C., 1943), 127; Aaron Canty, 'The Nuptial Imagery of Christ and the Church in Augustine's Enarrationes in Psalmos', in Craig Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias (eds), *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality* (London, 2009), 225-35.

[66] *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 3.4.8: *absit enim, ut noe iustum et prioris temporis iustos et quicumque ab illo usque ad abraham iusti esse potuerunt uel conspicui uel occulti negemus ad supernam hierusalem, quae mater est nostra, pertinere, quamuis anteriores tempore inueniantur esse quam sarra, quae ipsius liberae matris prophetiam figuram que gestabat*, CSEL 60, 494.

[67] *De doctrina Christiana* 2.6.7: *quid enim est, quaeso, quod si quisquam dicat sanctos esse homines atque perfectos, quorum uita et moribus christi ecclesia de quibuslibet superstitionibus praecidit eos, qui ad se ueniunt et imitatione bonorum sibimet quodammodo incorporat; qui boni fideles et ueri dei serui deponentes onera saeculi ad sanctum baptismi lauacrum uenerunt atque inde ascendentes conceptione sancti spiritus fructum dant geminae caritatis, id est dei et proximi*, CChr.SL 32, 35.

Cyprian in affirming the role of the bishop in preserving ecclesial unity, yet Augustine does not place the burden of holiness upon the bishop himself,[68] but rather upon the invisible work of the Spirit.

Augustine uses the image of the church as bride from *Song of Songs* in order to demonstrate that the church is holy because of the presence and activity of the Spirit.[69] This holiness is not dependent upon the presence or absence of sinners in the church, whether among the laity or the ministers. Against the Donatists,[70] Augustine argues the church is a 'mixed body' (*corpus permixtum*) of good and wicked, wheat and tares, and no one can determine who will be the wheat in the end.[71] The church remains holy insofar as she mediates the Spirit by her sacramental life while on pilgrimage. Only at the eschaton will the tares be removed, and this represents eschatological perfection.[72] During this time, however, holiness is not preserved by the exclusion of sinners from the fold, for that would amount to a certain kind of pride. For Augustine, the church's holiness does not depend upon the members, who must demonstrate the unmistakable power of the Spirit by certain charismatic gifts, or maintain a certain degree of holiness while holding episcopal office. Rather, the holiness of the church is derived from the Spirit's invisible work to bring all into unity, both now and at the end time.

Similarly, Augustine employs the image of the church as the body of Christ in order to distinguish between the pilgrim church and the eschatological kingdom. The members of Christ's body on earth must follow the head to heaven by enduring the trials and temptations of the present time.[73] The church is in a

[68] Burns observes: 'The weak point in Cyprian's system of explaining the unity and holiness of the church turned out to be the burden of holiness it placed on the individual bishops. The leader of the local community was its link to the college of bishops and through that institution to the foundational action of Christ and the continuing power of the Holy Spirit in the church', J.P. Burns, 'Establishing Unity in Diversity' (2005), 388.

[69] *De doctrina Christiana* 2.6.7: *quid est ergo, quod, si haec quisquam dicat, minus delectat audientem, quam si ad eundem sensum locum illum exponat de canticis canticorum, ubi dictum est ecclesiae, cum tamquam pulchra quaedam femina laudaretur: dentes tui sicut grex detonsarum ascendens de lauacro, quae omnes geminos creant, et sterilis non est in illis?* CChr.SL 32, 35. See also *De baptismo* 6.2.3.

[70] Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 51-3.

[71] Marie-François Berrouard, 'L'Église d'ici-bas est mêlée de justes et de pécheurs', *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV*, Bibliothèque Augustinienne 71 (Paris, 1969), 876-7; 'Corpus Christi mixtum', *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV*, Bibliothèque Augustinienne 72 (Paris, 1972), 832-3; F.-R. Refoulé, 'Situation des pécheurs dans l'Eglise d'après saint Augustin', *Studia Theologica* 8 (1954), 86-102; Carole Straw, 'Augustine as Pastoral Theologian: The Exegesis of the Parables of the Field and Threshing Floor', *Augustinian Studies* 14 (1983), 121-52.

[72] C. Straw, 'Augustine as Pastoral Theologian' (1983), 121-52.

[73] *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 86.5: *uos autem estis corpus christi et membra. in his ergo membris cum esset apostolus, dixit: ut adimpleam quae desunt pressurarum christi in carne mea. ergo illuc imus quo christus praecessit, et adhuc christus illuc pergit quo praecessit: praecessit enim christus in capite, sequitur in corpore*, CChr.SL 39, 1202.

process of transformation and transfiguration,[74] such that the carnal become spiritual, yet there is only one body, for there is only one body of Christ.

Using the distinction between the historical and eschatological church, Augustine is able to integrate the visible and invisible aspects of the church in a way that Tertullian, or Cyprian for that matter, cannot. For Augustine, there is only one church, the church that celebrates the sacraments, *i.e.* the visible, institutional church.[75] At the same time, there is an invisible communion of charity that transcends visible bounds, for the Spirit is able to work beyond visible limits.[76] Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is a separate, invisible communion of believers apart from the visible church. Instead, as Augustine argues in *De baptismo*, those who are outside the church but belong to the communion of charity will be brought into unity with the one church 'at some future time'.[77] The Holy Spirit is at work so as to bring all into unity, and there

[74] Michael Cameron, 'Transfiguration: Christology and the Roots of Figurative Exegesis in St. Augustine', *SP* 33 (1997), 40-7.

[75] See the helpful discussion by Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville, 1986), 102-3.

[76] Augustine uses the figure of Noah's ark in order to show how the Holy Spirit can work beyond visible limits, yet in such a way as to bring all into the unity of the one church at a future time; see *De baptismo* 5.28.39: *quapropter si apparent hominibus in unitate catholica baptizati, qui saeculo uerbis solis et non factis renuntiant, quomodo pertinent ad huius arcae mysterium, in quibus non est conscientiae bonae interrogatio? ... aut quomodo non sunt per aquam saluati, quos in praeteritum cum eo baptismate, quod in haeresi acceperant, in ecclesiam simpliciter admissos Cyprianus ipse commemorat? eadem quippe arcae unitas eos saluos fecit in qua nemo nisi per aquam saluatus est … si non per aquam, quomodo in arca? si non in arca, quomodo in ecclesia? si autem in ecclesia, utique in arca, et si in arca, utique per aquam. potest ergo fieri, ut et quidam foris baptizati per dei praescientiam uerius intus baptizati deputentur, quia illic eis incipit aqua prodesse ad salutem neque enim aliter dici possunt salui facti in arca nisi per aquam et rursus quidam, qui uidebantur intus baptizati, per eandem praescientiam dei foris baptizati uerius deputentur. male quippe utentes baptismo per aquam moriuntur, quod nulli tunc accidit nisi qui praeter arcam fuit … sicut ergo non alia sed eadem aqua et in arca positos saluos fecit et extra arcam positos interemit, sic non alio sed eodem baptismo et boni catholici salui fiunt et mali catholici uel haeretici pereunt*, CSEL 51, 296-7.

[77] *De baptismo* 4.3.4: *et deo quidem, aput quem sunt praesentia quae uentura sunt, etiam quod futuri sunt iam sunt, nos autem secundum id quod in praesenti est quisque hominum quaerimus, utrum in illius ecclesiae membris, quae unica columba dicta est et sponsa christi sine macula et ruga, hodie deputandi sint de quibus dicit cyprianus in epistula quam commemoraui, quod uiam domini non tenerent nec data sibi ad salutem caelestia mandata seruarent, quod non facerent domini uoluntatem patrimonio et lucro studentes, superbiam sectantes, aemulationi et dissensioni uacantes, simplicitatis et fidei neglegentes, saeculo uerbis solis et non factis renuntiantes, unusquisque sibi placentes et omnibus displicentes. quodsi eos in suis membris nec illa columba cognoscit et talibus, si in eadem peruersitate permanserint, dicturus est dominus: non noui uos; recedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem, uidentur in ecclesia esse, sed non sunt, immo et contra ecclesiam faciunt. quomodo ergo baptizare baptismo ecclesiae possunt, quod nec ipsis prodest nec accipientibus, nisi intrinsecus uera conuersione mutentur, ut ipsum sacramentum, quod eis accipientibus non proderat, quando saeculo uerbis, non factis renuntiabant, prodesse incipiat, cum et factis coeperint renuntiare, ita et illi quorum est aperta separatio, quia in membris illius columbae nec hi nec illi sunt hodie, sed aliqui eorum fortasse futuri sunt*, CSEL 51, 225-6.

is only one church, which exists in particular conditions, historical and eschatological.[78]

Further, the key pneumatological claim is that the Holy Spirit cannot be limited by any visible markers, even as the Spirit can and does work visibly. That is, for Augustine, no one can claim possession of the Spirit by virtue of certain demonstrations of power. The Holy Spirit cannot be confined to any constituency, for no one knows from where the Spirit comes and goes (*John* 3:8), and the Spirit works to bring all into final unity. Meanwhile, the church on earth is a sign of the future unity of the eschatological church, as signified by Noah's ark,[79] which 'now floats on the waves of the world, and is saved from drowning by the wood of Christ's cross'.[80] Noah's ark functions both as an image of the church on pilgrimage and in eschatological perfection, for the ark is a 'sacrament of the future church' (*sacramentum futurae ecclesiae*).[81] For Augustine, the visible church on earth that celebrates the sacraments is a sign of the eschatological city of God.[82] The church's unity and holiness are not reserved solely for the eschaton, nor are they dependent upon the presence or absence of sinners in the fold, but rather they find their source in the Spirit, who works to unite the church now and in the future.

As we have seen, Augustine follows Cyprian by maintaining the unity of the church as visible and invisible, institutional and charismatic.[83] Augustine further develops the distinction between the historical church on pilgrimage and the eschatological church in a way that Cyprian does not,[84] yet Augustine

[78] Jaroslav Pelikan asserts, 'There were not two churches, one historical and the other eternal, but one single church that was both historical and eternal', *The Mystery of Continuity* (1986), 102-3.

[79] *De catechizandis rudibus* 19.32; see also *De baptismo* 5.28.39; *Contra Faustum* 12.14-23.

[80] *De catechizandis rudibus* 19.32: *praenuntiabatur tamen etiam diluuii sacramento, quo per lignum iusti liberati sunt, futura ecclesia, quam rex eius et deus Christus mysterio suae crucis ab huius saeculi submersione suspendit. neque enim deus ignorabat, quod etiam ex illis qui fuerant in arca seruati, nascituri erant mali, qui faciem terrae iniquitatibus iterum implerent: sed tamen et exemplum futuri iudicii dedit, et sanctorum liberationem ligni mysterio praenuntiauit*, CChr.SL 46, 156-7.

[81] *De catechizandis rudibus* 27.53: *factum est aliquando diluuium per totam terram, ut peccatores delerentur: et tamen illi qui euaserunt in arca, sacramentum futurae ecclesiae demonstrabant, quae nunc in fluctibus saeculi natat, et per lignum crucis christi a submersione liberatur*, CChr.SL 46, 175. See *De baptismo* 5.28.39, in which Augustine identifies the mystery of the church's eschatological perfection contained in the figure of the ark. On Augustine's use of *sacramentum*, see Charles Couturier, *'Sacramentum' et 'mysterium' dans l'œuvre de S. Augustin,* Études Augustiniennes 28 (Paris, 1953), 161-332; Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (New York, 2012); James K. Lee, 'The Church as Mystery in the Theology of St. Augustine', *SP* 70 (2013), 381-99.

[82] *De civitate Dei* 15.26-7; 16.1-8.

[83] Walter Simonis, *Ecclesia visibilis et invisibilis. Untersuchungen zur Ekklesiologie und Sakramentenlehre in der afrikanischen Tradition von Cyprian bis Augustinus* (Frankfurt, 1970).

[84] 'Without ever challenging Cyprian openly, Augustine insisted that sanctifying power belongs to Christ alone and is exercised by the bishop as his agent, thus guarding the efficacy of

remains in continuity with his predecessor. Both Cyprian and Augustine construct ecclesiologies that affirm the power and work of the Holy Spirit, while maintaining the unity of the visible, institutional church. By doing so, these North African bishops effectively refocus the question of ecclesial identity. Membership in the church is not determined by a demonstration of certain charismatic gifts, but rather by participation in a sacramental community. Further, the holiness of the church does not depend upon the presence or absence of sinners in her midst, but rather upon the power and work of the Spirit, both visibly and invisibly. Augustine goes further than Cyprian by removing the burden of proof from all the members of the church, including the bishops, and establishing the church's holiness on the basis of the Spirit's activity both now and at the end time. Both Cyprian and Augustine successfully mitigate the rigorism of Tertullian, and provide the theological foundation for readmitting the lapsed, and forging unity in the midst of diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Latin Fathers we have examined offer distinctive ecclesiologies due in part to their divergent views of the power and work of the Holy Spirit. For each author, the church is one and holy, with visible and invisible aspects. For Tertullian, the work of the Spirit is made manifest in and through the 'spiritual ones', in whom the power of the Spirit is present in unmistakable power. Although Tertullian attempts to liberate the work of the Spirit beyond visible constituencies such as the hierarchy, by insisting upon certain demonstrations of the Spirit, Tertullian has in fact limited the Spirit, for the Spirit must demarcate the spiritual from the carnal. The spiritual ones alone constitute the church, and the church is holy only insofar as it is kept untainted by the presence of sinners, leading to an exclusivist and elitist ecclesiology.

Both Cyprian and Augustine seek to mitigate this elitism. For Cyprian, this means recognizing the distinction between the visible, institutional church and the invisible work of the Spirit while establishing the unity maintained by the episcopacy, for the Spirit works precisely through the visible church. Augustine further develops a pneumatology in which the Spirit works beyond visible bounds. The work of the Spirit while the church is on journey is always toward the same end, namely, the unity of the one church, which will be realized fully at the eschaton. Augustine and Cyprian provide a way to affirm the unity and holiness of the church while making room for sinners in her midst. By the fifth century in North Africa, we find a more inclusive ecclesiology that does not compromise the unity and holiness of the church.

sacramental action by both schismatic and unworthy bishops', J.P. Burns, 'Establishing Unity in Diversity' (2005), 386.

On a final note, if indeed we find in these Latin Fathers the development of a more inclusive ecclesiology, then we have discovered a rich resource for contemporary ecclesiology, not in the least for its ecumenical potential. For given the diversity of global Christianity, it is an indispensible aid for ecclesial communities to find a way to integrate visible and invisible aspects, toward the aim of final unity, and so the study of the ecclesiology of the Latin Fathers may bear fruit for the church on journey until, in the end, all are one.

In Search of the Roots. Reference to Patristic Christology in Gilbert Crispin's Disputation with a Jew

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Abstract

Being the Abbot of Westminster/London in the 12th century AD, Gilbert Crispin (1046-1117) held frequent contact, both personal and official (business), with local Jewish inhabitants. In his literary religious dialogue, *Disputatio iudaei et christiani*, he reflects on his conversation with a Jew, considering Jewish objections to the Christian faith. Both agree on *ratio* and Scripture as being fundamental. The present article argues that Crispin relies on Christological doctrines of the first centuries and integrates these traditions into an interreligious dialogue. After presenting an overview of the general argument, the statements about the two natures (divine-human) of Jesus Christ are examined. This is done by partly quoting 'Jewish' objections to that concept. In addition, the Christian responses are discussed. The primary aim of this approach is to demonstrate the influence of Patristic Christology on an interreligious dialogue in the Middle Ages.

1. Introduction

Homo igitur factus est, non id desinens esse quod erat, sed id assumens quod non erat:[1] 'Thus He became man, not ending what he was, but taking on what he was not'.[2] This phrase is not taken from an unknown apocryphal creed of the early centuries, but was rather written by Gilbert Crispin, a medieval Christian author. He was a Benedictine monk in Le Bec who later became the Abbot of Westminster, from the end of the 11th century until the beginning of the 12th century. In Le Bec he received his education from Lanfranc and Anselm of Canterbury and in Westminster it is said that he had friendly contacts with both. His most well-known work is the *Disputatio*

[1] Karl W. Wilhelm and Gerhard Wilhelmi (eds), *Gilbert Crispin: Religionsgespräche mit einem Juden und einem Heiden*, Lateinisch-deutsch, Herders Bibliothek der Philosophie des Mittelalters 1 (Freiburg, Basel and Wien, 2005), 70-1. Hereafter abbreviate to DI.

[2] Ole J. Thienhaus, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: The Example of Gilbert Crispin*, Translation of the original Latin manuscript with extensive annotations by a modern Jewish reader (Baltimore, 2006), 121.

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iudaei et christiani[3], written between 1092 and 1093; starting in the winter of 1092.[4]

This dispute is introduced in a letter written by Gilbert Crispin to Anselm of Canterbury. Thereby, the author gives a report on several conversations between him and a Jew who received his education in Mayence.[5] These conversations took place on the periphery of professional meetings with the presence of an audience.[6] This might have been the occasion for writing the literary dialogue. Eventually, Westminster served as a place of encounters between monks, Christian believers and Jews.[7]

In this literary dialogue, Crispin recapitulates the interlocutions in London with an unnamed Jew about the Christian faith. In contrast to the widespread polemic-apologetic attitude towards Judaism, Crispin tries to engage his partner in this dialogue in a friendly manner. One of the main topics addressed is rooted in Christological discourse: how did God become man and how can Jesus be understood as being both God and man at the same time? In this context, Crispin and the Jew agree explicitly on *ratio* and Scripture as a fundamental basis for the exchange of arguments. Furthermore, Crispin integrates unidentified authorities and borrowed arguments from other 'theological sources'. He relies *inter alia* on the Christological doctrine of the first centuries and integrates these traditions into interreligious dialogue. Assuming that Crispin wrote this dialogue for specific recipients – namely monks, potential Jewish converts at Westminster Abbey, and other Christian readers – his manner of arguing composes a certain form of Christian identity. Crispin established this identity by means of certain constituents. One of these constituents is the use of the official authority of the official Church; in this case the reception of Patristic Christology.

In considering this issue, this article first gives an overview of the Christological concept of the disputation and its elements, and then, furthermore, outlines

[3] See Anna S. Abulafia and Gillian R. Evans (eds), *The Works of Gilbert Crispin: Abbot of Westminster*, Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 8 (London, 1986), 1-54 and K.W. Wilhelm and G. Wilhelmi (eds), *Gilbert Crispin* (2005), 32-135.

[4] See Michael Borgolte, 'Christen und Juden im Disput. Mittelalterliche Religionsgespräche im "spartial turn"', *Historische Zeitschrift* 286 (2008), 359-402, 380-1; Gillian R. Evans, '"Omnibus Hiis Litteratior". Gilbert Crispin, Noted Theologian', *Studi Medievali* 12 (1981), 695-701, and Bernd Goebel, 'Vernunft und Autorität in den Religionsgesprächen Gilbert Crispins', *Jahrbuch für Religionsphilosophie* 11 (2012), 29-71, 35. See further literature concerning this discussion for instance Marianne Awerbuch, *Christlich-jüdische Begegnung im Zeitalter der Frühscholastik* (München, 1980), 91-2 and R.J. Zvi Werblowsky, 'Crispin's disputation', *JJS* 11 xi (1960), 69-77, 71-3, 73.

[5] See DI 32-3.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] See DI 54-5. It is probable that *Disputatio iudaei et christiani* based on historical conversations. See K.W. Wilhelm and G. Wilhelmi (eds), *Gilbert Crispin* (2005), 15; A.S. Abulafia and G.R. Evans (eds), *Works* (1986), xvii, M. Borgolte, *Christen und Juden* (2008), 382; B. Goebel, *Vernunft und Autorität* (2012), 31 and O.J. Thienhaus, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (2005), 8.

the main references to Patristic Christology, and, finally, summarises their influence on Crispin's dialogue. The primary aim of this approach is to provide an introduction to Crispin's method of argument in an elementary and concise way.

2. The disputation with a Jew: The Christological concept of Gilbert Crispin

As previously mentioned, the incarnation of God is one of the main *foci* of the dialogue. However, it is not a properly structured treatise about how God became man. Corresponding to the literary character of the dialogue, Gilbert Crispin develops this theme at several places in the disputation, in reaction to Jewish prejudices against the Christian faith.

The Jew points out that there is no option for him within the concept of Judaism to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. For him, Jesus is an exemplary prophet in whom he trusts. Nevertheless, Jesus is not the announced Messiah. Moreover, the faith in Jesus as God contradicts the faith in God as one. Evidently, the Jew is referring to *Deut.* 6:4 and is criticising the Christian concept of Trinity.[8] Even if this theme of how God could be one in three persons is not discussed throughout the whole disputation, it forms a basis for the exchange of further arguments. Furthermore, the final chapters are also focussed on the Christological discussion. In these chapters, Crispin explains the double origin of Jesus Christ: the messianic-divine presence and his human origin. Introducing the Prophet Isaiah's position (*Isa.* 2:2-4) the Jew declares the signs as not fulfilled.[9] The Christians do not go on the pilgrimage to Zion but rather go to the houses of Paul or others. In addition, peace has not flourished yet. For these reasons, the arrival of the Messiah is still a future event and Jesus therefore is not the Messiah since he did not fulfil the requirements of the Messiah's arrival. In opposition of this position, Crispin refers to *Gal.* 4:4, declaring that Jesus *is* this peace sent by God, his father. He will return to judge the world.[10] Thereby, Crispin illustrates the messianic divine origin of Jesus Christ. In addition, he points out that Jesus was born by a woman in a miraculous way.[11] This leads directly to the theological issues of incarnation and the discussion of the two natures of Jesus. As the debate progresses, the Jew asks how God as the greatest could suffer as a man[12] and Crispin emphasises the necessity and possibility of the incarnation of God.[13] After Adam and Eve, humanity has to be released

[8] See DI 46-7.
[9] See DI 47-9.61.97-9.
[10] See DI 111.
[11] See DI 65-9.69-73.81-9.99-103.
[12] See DI 71.
[13] See DI 75-9.

from the primeval sin, without being able to influence redemption by themselves. Since there is a need for salvation, Crispin postulates two aspects: first, only a man without sin could rehabilitate humankind[14] and second, the in this manner saved has to serve his saviour. Therefore, only the creator could conduct this redemption, due to his grace and his becoming man.[15] For this reason, Crispin continues, Jesus is both God and man, and this does not – in his view – contradict the unity of God. Finally, this Christian argument indicates, on the one hand, the significant importance of the doctrine of two natures of Jesus Christ. Distinctly, Crispin appeals to the Jew to believe in Jesus Christ with the brief justifying statement: *Manens quippe incommutabiliter deus id quod erat, assumpsit quod non erat*. In other words: in God are two unalloyed natures and no modification of himself. Rather, God took up what he was not and at once, he remained what he was.[16] On the other hand, the Christological concept leads back to the initial and not fully discussed question of how God can be one in three persons.

It seems likely that the discussion about the two natures of Jesus Christ can, and has to be, part of an *inter*-religious dialogue without fear. Crispin implies in the proclamation to the Christian recipients that it is possible to discuss the two natures of Jesus with a Jew or rather with a non-Christian believer. In addition, they receive assistance on how to argue in this situation. In contrast, Trinity is and remains an *intra*-Christian issue for those who believe in Jesus as God and man. This indicates simultaneously the border of the discussion with Jews and demonstrates the fundamental Christian aspect, which creates identity and provides orientation in confrontation with another religion.

In summary, Crispin reveals in this disputation a concept of the hypostatic union, based on the human aspects of Jesus Christ and the salvation of humanity. From a Christological point of view, he refers to the official Christological doctrine, even if he does not give explicit references to the traditional doctrines of the Church.

3. In search of the roots: The reception of Patristic Christology

In contrast to the obvious references to *ratio* and Scripture, references to other authorities are not explicitly mentioned in the disputation.[17] In correspondence with the well-known *Adversus-Iudaeos* genre and its arguments, Crispin presents no further arguments than are already known. Nevertheless, the way

[14] See DI 71.
[15] See DI 79.
[16] See DI 60-3.
[17] Besides the Patristic references the disputation certainly resemblances the works of Anselm of Canterbury.

Crispin creates the argument with and against a non-Christian dialogue partner is one reason for 'the extraordinary popularity'[18] of his disputation. Hence, it is plausible to assume that certain universal presuppositions serve as a basis for the dispute. As far as I can see, Crispin refers to three aspects of tradition: *dogmata*, *opiniones* and the *credo*. For this purpose, three selected examples shall clarify this hypothesis.[19]

First, with regard to the faith in Jesus, Crispin declares: 'Christ is God, he is God's Son by his own strength, not through grace. Of the same substance as the Father, equal and eternal with [Him], existing before all times … Christ is man, he is God's son not by his own strength but through grace'.[20] On the one hand, he clearly summarises the official dogma of the Nicene Creed,[21] while on the other hand, Crispin uses this dogma as a kind of legal interpretation of Scripture in the official Church. For him, a specific explanation on why God became man and why Jesus is God and man does not necessarily require discussion.

Secondly, it is obvious that Crispin is referring to the main *dogmata* and the decisions of the synods of the early centuries. This is linked to the tradition of *opiniones*: in the Latin West, the history of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is mainly a history of the formulas of Chalcedon.[22] This is connected to the reception of St. Augustine's works, particularly *De trinitate* and, in the case of Crispin's disputation, the Christmas sermons. For this reason, and considering the fact that Lanfranc and Anselm of Canterbury also belong to this tradition,[23] it is hardly to doubt that Crispin also includes the doctrine of Augustine. Effectively there are some links to his works. For instance, Crispin argues – as was mentioned before – that God incarnates and rescues humanity due to his grace.[24] In a similar way, Augustine links the incarnation with salvation.[25] The idea that human aspects coexist with his divine aspects can also to be found in Crispin's disputation.

[18] Alex J. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation. Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Pennsylvania, 2013), 53.

[19] There would of course be more examples to be mentioned. For example: Boethius, Lateran council of 649, the Letter *Tomus Leonis* from Leo I to Bishop Flavian of Constantinople in the 5th century BE and others.

[20] O.J. Thienhaus, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (2006), 110; see DI 62-3.

[21] See O.J. Thienhaus, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (2006), 111.

[22] See Carl Andresen *a.o.*, *Die christlichen Lehrentwicklungen bis zum Ende des Spätmittelalters* (Göttingen, 2011), 481.

[23] Crispin was educated by Lanfranc and Anselm in Le Bec. Moreover, Crispin and Anselm held friendly and academic contact. These two aspects suggest that Crispin was familiar with the patristic tradition. See for example Ian Logan, *Reading Anselm's Proslogion: The History of Anselm's Argument and its Significance Today* (Surrey, 2009), 11.

[24] See DI 78-9.

[25] See *De praed. sanct.* 15 and C. Andresen *a.o.*, *Die christlichen Lehrentwicklungen bis zum Ende des Spätmittelalters* (2011), 485.

Finally, a particular feature of Crispin's work is the reference to the creed *Quicumque vult*, also known as the creed of pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria, from the 5th century.[26] This *credo* is connected to the *Disputatio iudaei* with regard to form and content. Both emphasise the Christological aspects and the divine-human unity of Jesus Christ.[27] In terms of form, the disputation is similar to the creed in composition. For example, the *Quicumque vult* starts with the necessity of adopting the catholic faith to be rescued. This faith includes the faith in one God in three inseparable persons.[28] In addition, both works expose the salutary faith into the incarnation.[29] Common to both is the emphasis on the unity of Christ *and* the exultation of Christ. In addition, it is likely that Crispin knew this *credo*, since it was used to teach priests and clergy in the Middle Ages.[30] However, while the *Quicumque vult* explicitly presents the importance of obtaining the catholic faith, the *Disputatio iudaei* opts for this position in a more implicit way.[31] Even though Crispin does not mention these references openly, the Christian recipients – as mentioned above: monks, Jewish converts and Christian believers – could have been familiar with these allusions from liturgy and monastic catechesis at Westminster Abbey.

4. Conclusion

This brief presentation of Crispin's Christological ideas can clarify a crucial aspect of the argument in his literary religious dialogue: tradition is, beside *ratio* and Scripture, the third authority guiding the conversation with a non-Christian counterpart. One of these traditions is the Patristic Christology Crispin refers to. In this manner, the evidence of the disputation with a Jew is authorised by the official doctrine of the Church. This provides assistance for those who get involved in these encounters and builds Christian identity: in this case, the reception of Patristic Christology encourages Christian recipients to consolidate Christian argument. The encounter with the so-called 'foreign' builds up self-confidence and satisfies Christian self-assurance in its own faith. Hence, Crispin's disputation with a Jew is an assistance to understand the Christian doctrine in light of Jewish objections against the Christian faith. In addition, these objections can also be formulated by Christians. Therefore, the *Disputatio iudaei* strengthens Crispin's and the Christian recipients' faith in Jesus as the Christ.

[26] See for time frame, text, and translation DH 75-6.
[27] See DI 62-3.72-3.108-9 and DH 76,34-6.
[28] See DH 75,1-6 and DI 44-5.60-1.64-5.72-3.86-7 *etc*.
[29] See DH 76,29-37 and DI 70-1.74-9.
[30] See Roger J.H. Collins, 'Athanasisches Symbol', *TRE 4* (1979), 328-33, 329.
[31] DH 76,42.

Comparing Patristic and Chinese Medical Anthropologies: Insights for Chinese Contextual Theology

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Abstract

The legitimacy of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has often been contested among Chinese Christians in Asia due to its supposed pagan roots. In this article, I argue that the fathers' reception of Late Antique medicine can inform the above debate in two ways. To begin, the fact that the fathers did not reject Galenic medicine *a priori* suggests that there are no religious grounds for rejecting a medical tradition just because it was based on non-Christian philosophy. Indeed, the fathers' experience indicates that any form of secular medicine, such as TCM, can be appropriated as long as we account for the theological role of such medicine. More importantly, the fathers' reception of Greek medicine can offer rich insights that can help Chinese Christians forge a theological anthropology that is both Chinese and Christian. First of all, Greek medical theories and practice often lend themselves as helpful analogies for pastoral care. Presumably, the same approach can be employed in Chinese anthropological reflections. Second, it is observed that the fathers generally assume psychic restoration as the *sine qua non* of Christian salvation but disagree whether this would benefit one's physical health positively. This ambiguity or, indeed, unilateral bias for the soul, I argue, is inherent to the socio-political context of the classical Greek states and the elemental bias inherent to Greek ontology. This, in turn, raises the question whether this anthropological paradigm is appropriate for Chinese Christianity. In contrast, Chinese medical anthropology presumes that spiritual well-being consists of living in harmony with the *yinyang* of the cosmos and has a direct and positive impact on the body (and vice-versa). In fact, longevity is consistently regarded by both Chinese philosophers and religious Daoists as a mark of one's sanctity. These beliefs are due largely to their Han Confucian roots, which presume that all realities subsist in *yinyang* relationships and are, therefore, inter-related and inter-dependent to one another. These insights, we believe, can be instructive for Chinese Christianity by drawing attention to the constructive role that the body can play in one's spiritual progress, and suggesting that spiritual development should involve living in harmony with the *yinyang* or principles of the cosmos.

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Introduction

Despite the growing popularity of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in the West,[1] modern Chinese societies, such as China and Singapore, have continued to debate its efficacy.[2] A similar ambivalence is observed among Chinese Christian communities in Asia. The issue at hand, however, is not merely the scientific legitimacy of TCM. Rather, it is the supposed Daoist and therefore pagan associations of the tradition. As Daniel Tong puts it, Christians should not become Chinese medical doctors 'because those who choose to do so would … have to first buy into the religious philosophies behind Chinese medical practices'.[3] This, however, is not the first time that Christians have encountered a non-Christian medical tradition. The first occurred during the Patristic period, where the fathers' engagement with Late Antique medicine was both creative and fruitful, to say the least. In this article, I will argue that the experience of the fathers can inform the current debate about TCM in two ways. First, it offers Chinese Christians a ready case study as to how they can creatively adopt a medical tradition whose philosophical roots may be foreign to Christian teachings. Second, and more importantly, a comparative study of Patristic and Chinese medical anthropologies can also offer rich insights as to how Chinese Christians can forge a theological anthropology that is both Chinese and Christian.

Patristic Reception of Greek Medicine: Preliminary Observations

When Galen wrote at the beginning of the third century, Late Antique medicine was a still pluralistic world, with the Hippocratic Dogmatists, Empiricists and Methodists vying for dominance against one another.[4] A century later,

[1] It is only recently that TCM is used as a 'semi-official label for Chinese medicine through the world'. The term is not without its problems since it can suggest that Chinese Medicine (both ancient and modern) is a homogeneous tradition, which is far from being the case. Nonetheless, most Chinese medical traditions do share a common philosophy core that is espoused in Han Confucianism, which will be taken up in the later part of this article. Thus, for ease of reference, the term will still be used in this article. Volker Scheid, *Currents of Tradition in Chinese Medicine, 1626-2006* (Seattle, WA, 2007), 4-5; Miao Jiang *et al*., 'Clinical Studies with Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Past Decade and Future Research and Development', *Plant Medica* 76/17 (2010), 2048-64.

[2] Just a few years ago, *Straits Times* Senior Writer, Andy Ho, wrote a scathing article criticising the Singapore Medical Council for allowing doctors to refer patients to TCM doctors. The article generated quite a heated debate both for and against the legitimacy of TCM. Andy Ho, 'Pinning Down Acupuncture: It's a Placebo', *Straits Times,* Feb 12, 2011.

[3] Daniel Tong, *A Biblical Approach to Chinese Tradition and Beliefs* (Singapore, 2003), 113-4.

[4] This is not to mention the different (non-Galenic) interpretations of the Hippocratic corpus within the Dogmatists and, of course, the diverse folk and religious healers that remained popular for many. Indeed, there were some, like Aristides (117-191), who would have been quite at ease employing 'secular' and religious medicine concurrently. Keimpe Algra, *The Cambridge History*

however, Galenism would gain prominence, so much so that 'arguments over the interpretation of Galen' would gradually replace 'disputes over alternatives to Galen'.[5] From the onset, most Christians took for granted that secular medicine was a gift of God, given for the benefit of humankind.[6] Like their non-Christian peers, they similarly adopted Galenic medicine as the norm and began to employ it for anthropological reflections by the mid fourth century onwards, as it is the case for Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa and others.[7] In their minds, therefore, medical anthropology was largely Platonic and Aristotelian, whereby all human organs were constituted by the four humours, which, in turn, were made of the four elements: air, water, fire and earth. Sicknesses were due largely to imbalances in one's humours or a deterioration of the elements within these humours.[8]

As it appears, the early Christians were not troubled by the fact that Galenic anthropology was based largely on non-Christian philosophy. This, however, does not mean that the fathers were unreflective about their reception of this medical tradition. Rather, if one may gather from patristic discussions on and references to this subject, what they were more concerned about was the *theological role* that secular medicine played in their lives. To begin, even though the fathers concurred with the Greeks that the majority of illnesses had natural causes and were therefore susceptible to medical intervention, they also believed that sicknesses and diseases were, in the first place, the unfortunate consequence of Adam's Fall. Sickness and death were therefore inevitable and can only be eradicated entirely at the general resurrection.[9] Furthermore, the Scriptures would have bequeathed to them also a varied and complex etiological system that went beyond just humorial imbalances. For instance, when one fell ill, it could be due to a wide range of reasons, such as divine punishment (*Ex*. 9:8-12, 2*Kgs*. 5:25-7), the fact that the illness was an occasion for a cosmic duel between God and Satan

of Hellenistic Philosophy (Cambridge, 1999), 604-8; Owsei Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore and London, 1991), 184-5; Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London, 2005), 202.

[5] This is not to say that Galenic medicine became the only recourse for all in the Late Antique world. For the many who do not have access to or cannot afford physicians, particularly those living in rural areas, folk and religious healing would continue to be their primary means of healing. V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (2005), 292.

[6] There were exceptions, of course, such as Tatian, Arnobius and Ps-Macarius, who reject medical treatment for quite different reasons. Darrel W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Baltimore and London, 1996), 136-41, 146; Ps-Macarius, *Homily* 48:4. See also O. Temkin, *Hippocrates* (1991), 109-46.

[7] See Basil of Caesarea, *Longer Rules* 55; Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Creation of Humanity* and Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man*.

[8] *Timaeus* 28-9; V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (2005), 116-7, 119.

[9] Jean-Claude Larchet, *The Theology of Illness*, trans. John and Michael Breck (Crestwood, N.Y., 2002), 26-33; Gary B. Ferngren, *Medicine & Health Care in Early Christianity* (Baltimore, 2009), 51-2.

(*Job* 2), the sickness was a covenantal symbol or it was a means of ascetic training for the afflicted (*Gen*. 32:25, 2*Cor*. 12:7). In such cases, Basil's advice holds true. Healing then calls for 'assiduous prayers', rather than a reliance on medical therapy.[10] Regardless whether one was healed naturally or supernaturally, it remained clear that God was the ultimate healer of all diseases (*Deut*. 32:39, 2*Chron*. 7:13-4) and that medicine was but one of His means of healing.

If the fathers' experience is instructive, two points are clear. First, there appears to be little religious grounds for Christians to reject naturalistic medicine *a priori*. Just because a medical tradition is based on a non-Christian philosophy is insufficient reason for disqualifying it. Second, with regards to Christian reception of a foreign medical tradition, the primary focus ought to be on the *theological role* that it plays. In this aspect, what the fathers developed above offer valuable suggestions as to how Chinese Christians may appropriate TCM. Our conclusion, however, does not in any way legitimize TCM as a valid form of medical practice. This is a separate question altogether and remains strongly contested among biomedical and TCM scholars. This is best left for them to resolve, therefore.[11]

Medical Theories and Patristic Views of Psychosomatic Well Being

What has been discussed thus far is still not quite the whole story of the fathers' reception of Galenic medicine. Indeed, the medical tradition was important for them in two other ways. The first is how Hippocratic theories and medical therapies, such as surgery, cautery and regimen, often lend themselves as helpful analogies for pastoral care and ascetic practice.[12] Since the classical period, pagan philosophers have often seen themselves as the physician of the soul.[13] A similar sentiment would take root among Christians from the second century onwards, with them applying the same epithet to Christ and exalting him as the 'Great Physician' (*Christus medicus*).[14] By the fourth century, church fathers, such as John Chrysostom and Augustine, would take for granted that their pastoral work is no less than a form of psychagogy, and that medical analogies can be helpful means of conceptualising their pastoral advice.[15] Basil

[10] Basil, *Longer Rules* 55.

[11] For discussions on methodological issues involved in assessing TCM's clinical efficacy, see Volker Scheid and Hugh Macpherson, *Integrating East Asian Medicine into Contemporary Healthcare* (Edinburgh and New York, 2012).

[12] Mark Grant, *Galen: On Food and Diet* (London, 2000), 6; Basil, *hom. Deus non auct. mal*. 3; Gary B. Ferngren, *Medicine and Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Baltimore, 2014), 95.

[13] O. Temkin, *Hippocrates* (1991), 8.

[14] *Apostolic Constitutions* 33; D.W. Amundsen, *Medicine, Society, and Faith* (1996), 133.

[15] See, for example, Paul R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2010) and Wendy Mayer, 'Shaping the Sick Soul: Reshaping the Identity of John Chrysostom', in Geoffrey Dunn and Wendy Mayer (eds), *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen* (Leiden, 2015), 150-4.

of Caesarea's instruction in his *Longer Rules* is a good example of this development. Commending the doctrine of humorial balance as a spiritual model for his readers, he explains that just as the flesh must 'eliminate foreign elements (or humours) and add whatever is wanting', so also should one remove whatever vice that damages his soul and increase any virtue that is befitting him as an image of God.[16] Later, he even endorses the medical regimen as an ascetic practice helpful for managing one's passions. The regimen, he explains, 'prohibits sensual indulgence, it is opposed to satiety, it forbids as inexpedient an elaborate diet and an exaggerated liking for condiments. In general, it regards want as the mother of health'.[17] For this reason, any monk who takes it seriously will reap not only bodily health, but also spiritual self-mastery.

More importantly, the influence of Galenic anthropology was also felt in patristic discourse on the relationship between spiritual health and bodily well-being. Crislip's recent study has helpfully identified the dominant views on this subject. The first is that given by Antony in his *Letters*, whereby Christ's salvation is understood solely as the restoration of one's *psyche* and has little bearing on his bodily health. Athanasius, on the other hand, would differ by asserting that the two are actually positively correlated. This may be seen in how he presents Antony as enjoying a pristine health and youthfulness, even though the monk had spent twenty years practising a harsh asceticism in a deserted fortress.[18] An interesting variant of this view is that given in the *History of the Monks in Egypt*. Here, asceticism did take a toll on several monks, with John of Lycopolis, for example, so worn out that a 'beard no longer grew on his face'.[19] Notwithstanding this, these Egyptian monks did not pay the price of a premature death for contravening medical norms. Rather, they lived on to ripe old ages, as it was the case for John of Lycopolis (more than 90 years old) and Cronides (110 years old).[20]

Not all the fathers concurred on the health benefits of asceticism, of course. Pachomius, in his *Letters*, seems to assume that monks will fall sick one time or another, regardless of their regimen or sanctity.[21] Basil and Evagrius even warn that excessive asceticism could cut short one's life, as well as expose one

[16] Basil, *Long Rules* 55 (Translated by Monica Wagner, Fathers of the Church 9, 332).

[17] Basil, *Long Rules* 55 (Fathers of the Church 9, 336).

[18] Andrew Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity* (Pennsylvania, 2013), 60-8, 72; *Vita Antonii* 14.

[19] *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* 1.17.

[20] For example, we are told that Abba Theon ate only 'vegetables … that did not need to be cooked' and Abba John of Lycopolis ate 'nothing apart from fruit' and avoided 'anything that needed to be cooked'. These are not curious observations on the part of the author, but most likely his recognition that the monks have contravened Galenic dietetics. According to Galen, cooking is necessary in order to ripen fruits and vegetables and to aid digestion, *Hist. monach.* 1.17, 6.4; *Alim. fac.* 2.4, 6.4; M. Grant, *Galen: On Food and Diet* (2000), 7.

[21] A. Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh* (2013), 55-6.

to the dangers of pride or demonic influence.[22] The most radical view, however, remains that observed in the Coptic *Life of Pachomius*. Here, we see Pachomius refusing to moderate his asceticism or to receive treatment even when he is ill. This is because sickness has become for him an *askesis* that offers a deeper intimacy with God and a surer mark of his sanctity.[23]

Despite their differing attitudes towards bodily health, the early Christians and, indeed, their non-Christian peers, shared a similar anthropological paradigm. Namely, the Greek conviction that the soul is fundamentally different from and superior to the body, whether this means that the soul was fashioned from the stuff of stars, 'the seat of divinity within the mortal form' or, for most Christians, the image of the invisible God.[24] In his comparative study of the socio-political context of ancient Greek and Chinese sciences, G.E.R. Lloyd observes that Greek philosophers and politicians must constantly vie for their ideas (not to mention, prestige and followers) by denying those of their competitors. The net result is that the Greeks tend to conceptualise their ideas dualistically (mine versus theirs) and that their ideas often take on a characteristic bias for one pole over the other (mine is better than theirs). This unilateral basis is evident not only in matters of ontology, where 'becoming depends upon being, but *not* vice versa. Appearance depends upon reality, but *not* vice versa'.[25] It is also prevalent in Late Antique society, where it is universally assumed that the enslaved must always be subjected to the free, the female is but a deformed male, and the Greeks are always superior to the barbarians.[26]

[22] *Ibid*. 96, 110-4, 117, 121.

[23] *Ibid*. 140-4, 150, 154.

[24] To be sure, Platonic anthropology is less dualistic than post-Cartesian anthropology, which generally assumes the soul as both invisible and immaterial. In contrast, both Greco-Roman Christians and non-Christians alike would take for granted that human souls and demonic beings are rarefied material 'stuff'. John Anthony McGuckin, *Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY, 2005), 317; Gregory A. Smith, 'How Thin Is a Demon?', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008), 479-512; *Timaeus* 42-3.

[25] One may even argue that Greek ontology from the Pre-Socratics onwards is predisposed to such a unilateral bias. By postulating that ontological truth is to be found in the elements (*stoicheia*), rather than the inter-relations between different poles of reality (as in the case of Chinese epistemology), Greek ontology must inadvertently take one pole as the truth and the basis for understanding the other pole in any form of dualities. G.E.R. Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities: Investigations into Ancient Greek and Chinese Science* (Cambridge, 1996), 121, 128, 130.

[26] Elsewhere, Lloyd notes that Greek views of hierarchy postulate 'not the interdependence of the higher and the lower [poles] but of the independence of the former from the latter'. As we shall see, this is quite unlike Chinese polarities which, guided by *yinyang* theory, would emphasise the interdependence between the poles, whether these are between male and female, father and son and so on. G.E.R. Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece* (New Haven, CT and London, 2002), 182-3; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 2008), 10; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254b16-21.

The same influence is, of course, played out in Platonic anthropology, where the *psyche's* superiority is constantly emphasised.

It is with this in mind that we return to the fathers' views on the relationship between spiritual and bodily well-being. Despite their apparent differences, the fathers are actually quite unanimous about the unilateral bias inherent to Platonic anthropology. This can be seen in how their proposals consistently privileged the soul by assuming psychic restoration as the *sine qua non* of Christian salvation, while bodily health is, at best, a side effect or by-product of this psychic health, or at worst, not a related issue at all. Once the psychosomatic relationship is framed in this manner, the corollary is clear: the fathers would not expect bodily health or, indeed, its cultivation to play a constructive role in one's spiritual progress or well being.[27] A few important questions must be asked here. Greek anthropology, through the fathers, has bequeathed the same unilateral bias to classical Christianity. This anthropological framework has, in turn, been taught to Christians both in the East and in the West. If this bias was due largely to the socio-political character of the classical Greek states in the first place, to what extent is it applicable or, indeed, appropriate for Chinese Christianity? More importantly, as we shall see, Chinese anthropology was developed in a rather different cultural and political climate and thus differs from its Greek counterparts in many ways. This being the case, should it not be a more relevant dialogue partner for Chinese theological anthropology? If the answer is yes, how would such a Chinese Christian anthropology look like? For this, we must turn first to Han Confucianism, and the formative role that it played in the development of Chinese anthropology.

Han and Chinese Medical Anthropology

Despite the popularity of classical Chinese philosophy (500-221 BC), it is Han Confucianism that played a more important and enduring role in Chinese civilisation. When the Hans (206 BC – 220 AD) succeeded the Qins (221-206 BC), Confucianism was adopted as their imperial ideology. Han Confucianism, however, differed from its predecessor in a few significant ways. The first is its interest in forging a cosmology that would explain the three poles of reality:

[27] A good example of this unilateral bias can be seen in the *Lives* of John of Lycopolis and Cronides mentioned earlier. Despite their blatant disregard for conventional medical wisdom, these monks were able to live to a ripe old age, presumably because of their ascetic practice and sanctity. Interestingly, this bias is also implicit in their non-Christian counterpart, Plotinus. As Porphyry tells us, Plotinus was resistant to all forms of medical aid, whether this was clysters for his intestinal problems or baths, even though several of his disciples were doctors. On the other hand, the philosopher would affirm that the asceticism of his disciple, Senator Rogatianus, was medically beneficial and the reason why his gout was cured and his limbs regained their strength. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 1-2, 7.

Heaven, Earth and Humankind (天地人). This they achieved through a creative synthesis of Confucian, Daoist, Legalist and other Pre-Qin philosophies.[28] The net result is a cosmological vision that sees the three poles as correlated to and cannot be properly understood except in relation to one another. As Lu Jia (d. 170 BCE) puts it: 'When our [human] deeds and virtues accord with Heaven and Earth, the practice of the Way (*Dao*) emerges'.[29]

Next, to express these correlations, the Han philosophers employed what are traditionally non-Confucian terms: *Qi* (气), *yinyang* (阴阳) and *wuxing* (五行). *Qi* has a wide semantic range, and is commonly used to denote the air we breathe, the principle of life, the *pneuma* that fills the body or simply the fundamental material stuff of the universe. As for *yinyang*, it is often used to describe the orderly or disorderly movement of *Qi* in its regeneration of the cosmos.[30] *Wuxing* is frequently translated as the five agents or phases.[31] It was in the Han era that it came to be associated with *Qi* and *yinyang* as a way of representing the myriad of things that evolve or generate from *yinyang*. As Dong Zhongshu puts it in his *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Fanlu*) 58, 'the *Qi* of heaven and earth unites and becomes one, separates into *yinyang*, divides into the four seasons, spreads out into the *wuxing*'.[32]

Like their Greek counterparts, the Hans' doctrine of the correlated triad enabled them to demythologise and re-envisage the Chinese cosmos as 'a constant flux of transformation, always regenerating itself as its constituents spontaneously change'.[33] The two, however, differs in a fundamental way. Unlike Greek philosophy, Han Confucianism developed in a context where the Han rulers offered their scholars court protection in return for their support and allegiance. Out of this mutuality emerged a new social order, where 'hierarchical relationships that apply all the way from emperors and their ministers, to fathers and sons' were understood as reciprocal, interdependent and analogous to one another.[34]

[28] William Theodore De Bary, Irene Bloom and Wing-Tsit Chan, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2 vols. (New York, 1999), 283-84; Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Readings in Han Chinese Thought* (Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge, 2006), xvi-xviii.

[29] Lu Jia, *Xinyu* (*New Discourses*) 1.

[30] Dainian Zhang and Edmund Ryden, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing, New Haven and London, 2002), 45-54, 83-90. For a discussion of the use of *Qi* in early Chinese medicine, see Paul U. Unschuld, Hermann Tessenow and Zheng Jinsheng, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic – Basic Questions*, 2 vols (Berkeley, 2011), 19.

[31] *Wuxing* refers to metal, wood, water, fire and soil. Despite its superficial resemblance to the four Greek elements, the term is better translated as five phases or agents. This is because the aim of *Wuxing* is to express the relationships between the entities represented by the agents, *i.e.*, how one agent complements or opposes the other.

[32] *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals* 58, *The Mutual Generation of the Five Agents*. Quoted from Zhang and Ryden, *Key Concepts* (2002), 100.

[33] G.E.R. Lloyd and N. Sivin, *The Way and the Word* (2002), 198.

[34] G.E.R. Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities* (1996), 125.

The significance of this bilateral correlation logic cannot be understated. After finding its way into every aspect of Chinese sciences and cosmology, it became the primary worldview by which the Chinese (until recently) understood their world. Namely, as a grand synthesis where all things subsist in *yinyang* relationships of 'mutual interdependence and reciprocity' and that none can exist 'in isolation from the other'.[35]

In the case of Chinese medical anthropology, this correlation logic was worked out in the following ways. To begin, the human being is perceived not dualistically but in terms of a *Qi* continuum. Specifically, all human organs are made from fluid essences or *jing* (精), which are derived from *Qi* or, if you will, condensations of *Qi*. *Qi*, in its rarefied form, is none other than the soul or *Shen* (神). This *Shen*, in turn, may be sub-divided into five spiritual aspects which reside in five different organ systems. The following outlines each spiritual aspect, its respective organ system and the psychological functions associated with them:[36]

Spiritual Aspect	**Organ System**[37]	**Psychological Functions**[38]
Mind (*shen*, 神)[39]	Heart	'the activity of thinking, consciousness, self-identity, insight and memory'
Ethereal Soul (*Hun,* 魂)[40]	Liver	intuition and creative inspiration
Corporeal Soul (*Po*, 魄)	Lungs	'sensation, feeling, hearing and sight'
Intellect (*Yi*, 意)	Spleen	generating ideas and explicit memory
Will-Power (*Zhi*, 志)	Kidneys	memory capability and will power

[35] *Ibid*. 121. For a more comprehensive account of the *yinyang* motif, see Robin Wang, *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture* (Cambridge, 2012), 8-12.

[36] This psychology originates from *Huang Di Nei Jing* (*Simple Questions* 23), the earliest Chinese Medical classic that dates from the Han era. Giovanni Maciocia, *The Psyche in Chinese Medicine: Treatment of Emotional and Mental Disharmonies with Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs* (Edinburgh, 2009), 3-4.

[37] The English translations for the Chinese organs can be misleading at this point. For example, when western biomedicine speaks of the liver, it has in mind the specific organ, delimited by its shape and intrinsic functions. When Chinese medicine speaks of the liver, it has in mind the functions and the biological processes associated with the Liver. The latter include the liver's relationship with other organ systems and the meridians associated with the liver which runs across the body. For this reason, we use the term 'organ system' rather than 'organ'.

[38] G. Maciocia, *Psyche in Chinese Medicine* (2009), 16, 29, 52, 67-9.

[39] The word, *Shen*, has two meanings in Chinese psychology, the first representing the whole complex of the soul, and the second referring to the spiritual aspects of the heart.

[40] K.E. Brashier, however, has challenged the medical distinction between *Hun* and *Po*, arguing that it is hardly employed by the Han populace when 'envisioning post-mortem existence'. Ken. E. Brashier, *Ancestral Memory in Early China* (Boston, MA and London, 2011), 92.

How then does this compare with Galenic anthropology? First of all, the Chinese would have perceived the relationship between spiritual and bodily well-being as less dualistic and ambiguous than that conceived by their Greek counterparts. As they see it, one's spiritual health has a direct impact on and is, indeed, closely related to bodily health. Secondly, the above scheme also suggests strongly that the relationship between the Chinese body and soul is not merely analogous, *i.e.*, just as one should take care of the body, so should we care for the soul. Rather, the Chinese would take for granted that the physical health and well-being of a specific organ system has an immediate effect on one's psychological well-being.[41] To put it differently, what we do with our bodies – the food we eat, the places we live in, how much do we sleep and the physical training that we undergo, will affect our psychological health positively or negatively.

In view of the above, it is hardly surprising that the Han Chinese, from the onset, would assume psychic and somatic health as positively correlated and regard physical health, particularly longevity (*Changsheng*, 长生), as a mark of sanctity. *Zhuangzi* (370-287 BCE), for example, speaks of the scholar as one who nourishes his body so that he can become as old as Pengzu, an 800 year old sage.[42] The earliest Han medical classic, *Huang Di Nei Jing*, likewise regards the sage as one who lives in harmony with the *yinyang* (*i.e.*, in tandem with the seasons and principles of the cosmos) and, in so doing, enjoys good health and longevity.[43] Eventually, 'healing, longevity, and immortality' would be taken by the Hans as 'three different stages along the same continuum of the human body' and in one's journey towards perfection.[44] In line with their *Qi* ontology, the Hans' concept of immortality would always be spiritual *and* bodily.

The same psychosomatic logic would see the development and practice of *Daoyin* healing exercises by the Han aristocrats and, later, the emerging religious Daoists in the third century AD. For the latter, in particular, these techniques of bodily and internal *Qi* manipulation would become an integral and important aspect of their pursuit of immortality.[45] During the late Ming and

[41] According to Chinese medical anthropology, bodily illness may be due to psychological reasons (such as emotional distress) or physical reasons (such as poor diet, lack of exercise, or environmental factors). In both cases, the malfunction of a particular organic system will lead to a psychological deficiency. A recent study of patients with clinical depression, for example, indicates that 99.7% of them suffer from a Live-*Qi* stagnation. G. Maciocia, *Psyche in Chinese Medicine* (2009), 393.

[42] *Zhuangzi* 15.

[43] *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen* 1 [Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen* (2011), 30, 34]. For the significance of harmony in Chinese anthropology, see Yanhua Zhang, *Transforming Emotions with Chinese Medicine: An Ethnographic Account from Contemporary China* (Albany, 2007), 50.

[44] Livia Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture* (Magdalena, NM, 2005), 53.

[45] These healing techniques are first mentioned in *Zhuangzi* 15. The religious Daoists' adoption of Chinese medicine and *Daoyin* exercises is also the reason for the popular misconception that they are the creators of both traditions rather than one of their users. Speaking with regards

Qing dynasties (17th century onwards), such *Daoyin* training was further integrated with Chinese martial arts, so much so that the latter not only became a form of medical therapy for their practitioners, but also a means of spiritual progress. As a *Taiji Quan* martial arts classic puts it,

> the ears and eyes, hands and feet, being divided into pairs are like *yin* and *yang*, and their uniting into one is like *Taiji*. Thus the external becomes concentrated in the internal, and the internal expresses itself externally. In this way we develop within and without, the fine and the gross, and with penetrating understanding, we realize the work of the wise men and sages. Wisdom and knowledge, sagehood and immortality, these are what we mean by fulfilling our intrinsic nature and establishing life. … Herein lies the perfection of spirit and divine transformation.[46]

Conclusion: Towards a Chinese Christian Anthropology

What then might all these mean for constructing a Chinese Christian anthropology? First of all, it should be the clear that the Chinese logic of bilateral correlation allows the body to play a constructive role in Chinese asceticism. Contrary to the Greeks (and some of the fathers), a healthy body does matter for Chinese spirituality. This, in turn, legitimizes the use of medical therapy (herbal or otherwise), in conjunction with pastoral guidance, for the treatment of psychological illnesses that, presumably, may hinder spiritual progress. Furthermore, *Daoyin* exercises, such as *Taiji Quan*, often help their practitioners develop a heightened consciousness of their psychosomatic unity and experience of the world. Apart from their apparent health benefits, surely such *Daoyin* healing exercises can be incorporated into Christian ascetic practice as a way of helping Christians understand how they can live in greater harmony with the world that God has created?[47] This brings us to our final point: the Chinese notion of human perfection as living in harmony with the *yinyang* of the cosmos. This idea can be instructive on two levels. First, it provides further insights as to how humanity may be a steward of God's creation. Namely, we are to respect and work in tandem with the rhythms of creation, rather than to attempt to transcend or surpass it. Indeed, to do otherwise will only sow discord that

to the healing exercises, Kohn cautions that 'although they [Han Longevity practices] are used most essentially as medical techniques and for health improvement … [and] also play an important role in Daoism, … they should not be considered originally or essentially Daoist'. Meir Shahar, *The Shaolin Monastery: History, Religion and the Chinese Martial Arts* (Honolulu, 2008), 144; Ute Engelhardt, 'Longevity Techniques and Chinese Medicine', in Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden, 2000), 74-103; L. Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture* (2005), 54.

[46] *Taiji* literally means 'ultimate supreme', and denotes the origin of all things. Douglas Wile, *Lost T'ai-Chi Classics from the Late Ch'ing Dynasty* (NY, 1996), 89.

[47] For health benefits of *Taiji Quan*, see Peter M. Wayne and Mark L. Fuerst, *The Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi* (Cambridge, MA, 2013).

we cannot imagine – as it is the case with the current problem of climate change. Second, the idea can also be a helpful analogy for Christian living: that is, we should not only do all things in moderation, but also account for the impact that our actions may have on our neighbours and communities. All these, however, is not to ignore some of the problematic elements in Chinese cosmology, such as the idea of *yinyang* as generating all things perpetually without the need of a Creator, or the absence of a doctrine of the Fall in the Chinese view of the psychosomatic relationship. The limits of this article, however, would mean that these and other issues would have to be addressed separately elsewhere.

HAGIOGRAPHICA

Ad Prodendam Virtutis Memoriam: Encomiastic Prefaces in Tacitus' *Agricola* and Latin Christian Hagiography

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Abstract

This article argues that the prefaces of Latin Christian hagiographical accounts from the late antique period adopt the conventions of encomiastic writing that appear in Roman biography. We appeal specifically to Tacitus' *Agricola* as a source that exemplifies the conventions of encomiastic prefaces that appear in our Christian hagiographical accounts. We identify four conventions: 1) the preface is framed as an *apologia* that appeals to the *virtus* of the subject; 2) the preface appeals to a past literary tradition that establishes a precedent for praising virtuous individuals in the community; 3) the preface anticipates a future audience who will derive benefit from the virtuous example of the subject; 4) the preface acknowledges the weaknesses and unworthiness of the author whose self-deprecation elevates and promotes the subject material. Through an examination of the relationship between Roman biography and Christian hagiography, this article will contribute to scholarly discussions on the early Christian practice of adopting and transforming elements of Roman culture in light of the Gospel message.

To the one who invests time in the reading of hagiography from late antiquity, curious similarities in the prefaces are immediately apparent. For example, in many cases the hagiographer defends his choice of subject material as if he were anticipating confusion or criticism from his audience. Since these texts were designed to benefit other Christians, who were likely to appreciate the merits of hagiography, why did hagiographers believe that it was necessary to justify their projects?

In response to this problem, we suggest that the answer lies in the nature of ancient biographical writing itself, which, like Christian hagiography, was typically encomiastic.[1] Therefore, we propose that the key to understanding the prefaces of Christian hagiography lies in examining the conventions of Roman biography. To that end, we turn specifically to Tacitus' *Agricola*, published in

[1] Most ancient biographies are encomiastic, as the ancients did not differentiate between biography and encomium; for a useful summary of the key issues such as genre, historicity, and the antecedents of Roman biography, see Tomas Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2012), 2-8, 232-8; see also see A.J. Woodman and C.S. Kraus, *Tacitus: Agricola* (Cambridge, 2014), 1-2.

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98 AD, in which Tacitus relates the life story of his father-in-law in an obvious encomium. Our decision to use the *Agricola* here is not arbitrary: it is our latest complete extant Latin encomiastic biography. As such, it is the Roman source that is closest to our Latin hagiographical accounts in terms of language, genre, and time period. Our claim here is not that Christian hagiographers used the *Agricola* as a model but that the *Agricola* exemplifies the conventions of encomium that our hagiographers assimilated during their training in rhetoric and literature. In the following discussion, we identify four conventions characteristic of encomiastic prefaces through an examination of Roman sources, including Tacitus' *Agricola* and Roman rhetorical handbooks, as well as Latin Christian hagiographical sources from the third century until the beginning of the sixth. In so doing, we contend that our hagiographical prefaces make clear use of the conventions of Roman biography when praising the deceased members of their communities.

Apologia and *Virtus*

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of ancient prefaces, which is rooted in the practice of ancient Greek historians, is the aforementioned habit of supplying the reader with an *apologia* or defense for the work.[2] This enables the author not only to introduce his subject material but also to supply the reader with an interpretive lens for his story.[3] Tacitus uses his preface to explain his motivation for taking up the life of Agricola as a topic of commemoration. He submits that Agricola is worthy of praise because his deeds and character demonstrate *virtus* or virtue, a quality that Tacitus believes is sadly deficient in his present age.[4] For the Romans, *virtus* was not a vague ethical concept: it referred to the physical courage or the strength of character that soldiers and statesmen demonstrated when they performed deeds for the good of the state.[5] Since Agricola had been a dutiful and prominent military general responsible for the Roman conquest of Britain, Tacitus' decision to style him as the embodiment of *virtus* is particularly appropriate. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Tacitus' predecessor, the Roman biographer, Cornelius Nepos, also used his

[2] On the origin of the explanatory preface in ancient Greek literature, see Justin Marc Smith, *Why Bios? On the Relationship between Gospel Genre and Implied Audience* (London, 2015), 44-8.

[3] *Ibid*. 45-7.

[4] In section 1 of the *Agricola*, a form of the word *virtus* appears four times.

[5] Carlos F. Noreña, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* (Cambridge, 2011), 77-82; Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 2006), 385-9; for a useful collection of essays on *virtus* in Greco-Roman and Early Christian sources, see Gert Partoens, Geert Roskam and Toon Van Houdt (eds), *Virtutis Imago: Studies on the Conceptualisation and Transformation of an Ancient Ideal*, Collection d'Études Classiques 19 (Louvain, 2004).

preface to his biographies of Greek military generals to justify his project of expounding on their *virtus*.[6] Both Tacitus and Nepos here conform to established guidelines for epideictic rhetoric laid out in ancient rhetorical handbooks, which encourage the orator to adopt an apologetic tone by citing the virtuous deeds of his subject.[7]

In our Latin Christian hagiographies, we observe that these prefaces also provide a defense that is connected with *virtus*. For example, the narrator of the early third-century martyrdom account of Perpetua and Felicity explains that he is motivated by a desire to testify to the *virtus* of the Holy Spirit manifested in the lives of the martyrs (*Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 1.3, 5).[8] The term is not unique to the preface: Perpetua herself refers to the *virtus* of the martyrs in her own account to characterize the persuasive power of their Christian witness (9.1).[9] In the mid-third century, Pontius the deacon describes his enthusiasm to portray the *virtus* of the martyr-bishop, Cyprian, whose noble deeds and eloquent writings merit written testimony about his life (*Vita Cypriani* 1.1, 6). Over a century later, Paulinus of Nola announces his intention to relate the life of Ambrose in frank and artless prose in order to draw attention specifically to his *virtus* (*Vita Ambrosii* 1.3). Jerome, for his part, invokes the Holy Spirit to grant him the ability to describe the *virtus* of the hermit-saint, Hilarion (*Vita Hilarionis* 1). Finally, the lesser-known hagiographer, Ennodius, justifies his work on the bishop, Epiphanius, by citing his desire to keep alive the memory of his *virtus* for future generations (*Vita Epiphanii* 4). Like their Roman predecessors, hagiographers regularly invoke *virtus* in their prefaces to justify their works. In the hands of these Christian authors, however, *virtus* refers to the 'wondrous deeds' or 'miraculous power' that a holy person or God himself demonstrates.[10] While this represents a semantic departure from the original Roman notion, Christian *virtus* is nevertheless a dynamic quality that builds up the community, in this case the Church rather than the Roman state. We also observe that the early Christians, like the Romans, adopted the practice of applying *virtus*, which literally means 'manliness', to exemplary women of their communities.[11]

[6] *Praefatio* 1.3: *Non admirabuntur nos in Graiorum virtutibus exponendis mores eorum secutos*; see Peter K. Marshall, *Cornelii Nepotis Vitae*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Latinorum Teubneriana (Leipzig, 2011), 1.

[7] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.10-5; Cicero, *De inventione rhetorica* 2.177-8; William J. Dominik and Christopher Smith, 'Introduction: Praise and Blame in Roman Oratory', in Christopher Smith and Ralph Corvino (eds), *Praise and Blame in Roman Republican Rhetoric* (Oxford, 2011), 7-15.

[8] In 1.5 the word *virtus* is plural.

[9] Thomas J. Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (Oxford, 2012), 244-5.

[10] M. McDonnell, *Roman Manliness* (2006), 89-99; see *virtus* in Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des Auteurs Chrétiens* (Turnhout, 1954), 851.

[11] M. McDonnell, *Roman Manliness* (2006), 161-5, 388; for a discussion on the representation of feminine *virtus* in the face of death, see Catherine Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, 2007), 179-206.

Past precedent

The second characteristic of encomiastic prefaces is the convention of connecting the present project with past practice. This device also buttresses the *apologia* by invoking precedent, which was important to the ancients who valued tradition. Tacitus' *Agricola* is case in point: his first words refer to the well-known custom of transmitting to posterity the examples of famous men. He writes: 'To hand down to posterity the deeds and character of famous men is an ancient custom that even the present age has not abandoned…'[12] Interestingly enough, his opening words evoke the writings of two famous men: the Roman politician, Cato the elder, and the Greek historian and biographer, Xenophon, both of whom mention the ancient custom of praising famous men.[13] Tacitus also mentions individuals who, like him, have undertaken projects 'in order to publish a memory of virtue'.[14] He cites the precedent set by Rutilius Rufus and Aemilius Scaurus, two Roman statesmen and political rivals during the Roman Republic who wrote autobiographies.[15] Although Tacitus is not ostensibly engaged in writing an autobiography, his work occasionally assumes an autobiographical color because of his close friendship with Agricola.[16] Tacitus also invokes the examples of the Roman biographers, Rusticus Arulenus and Herennius Senecio, who memorialized in writing the Stoic martyrs, Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus (2.1). In so doing, Tacitus follows the prescriptions of Roman handbooks that refer to the particular persuasiveness that invoking precedent lends to an argument. For example, in his sizeable work on the theoretical and practical elements of Roman rhetoric, Quintilian, who was Tacitus' contemporary, advises students to incorporate precedents into their speeches on the grounds that antiquity is a recognized source of authority.[17] Even oratorical works bear witness to this convention: Cicero, in his speech against Gaius Verres, notes the importance of drawing on 'examples from ancient memory, from memorials and literature, full of dignity and full of antiquity'.[18]

When we examine our Christian hagiographical accounts, we notice that these prefaces likewise invoke the ancient custom of commemorating famous

[12] 1.1: *Clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere, antiquitus usitatum, ne nostris quidem temporibus … aetas omisit…*; see A.J. Woodman and C.S. Kraus, *Tacitus* (2014), 41; all translations of Latin sources are mine.

[13] *Ibid.* 67-8.

[14] 1.2: *Ad prodendam virtutis memoriam*; *ibid.* 41.

[15] 1.3; *ibid.* 73-4.

[16] Tacitus claims that his motivation to write about Agricola is *pietas* (3.3), an important Roman virtue that points to their familial connection.

[17] *Institutio oratoria* 12.4.1-2; see also *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.3.4.

[18] *In Verrem* 2.3.90.209: *Exempla ex uetere memoria, ex monumentis ac litteris, plena dignitatis, plena antiquitatis*; see H. De La Ville de Mirmont and J. Martha, *Cicéron: Discours Tome IV, Seconde Action: Contre Verrès, Livre Troisième: Le Froment* (Paris, 1960), 124.

individuals. The narrator of Perpetua's *Passion* opens his preface by citing 'ancient examples of the faith' that were written down in order to strengthen the community.[19] Although he does not single out whom he has in mind here, he probably envisages the popular *exempla* of earlier Christian martyrs, like Stephen and Polycarp, or heroes from scripture.[20] Pontius, the deacon, in his preface to the *Life of Cyprian*, also calls to mind the practice of recording and honoring the sufferings of previous Christian martyrs, including catechumens and laypeople, among whom Pontius probably envisions Perpetua and Felicity (1.2). Jerome proposes recounting the life of Paul, the first hermit, on the grounds that so many others have recounted the life of Anthony (*Vita Pauli* 1). Paulinus of Nola, for his part, introduces his *Life of Ambrose* by invoking the precedent established by Athanasius, Jerome, and Severus whose hagiographies of the saints Anthony, Paul, and Martin were well-known to his contemporaries (1.1). Although Possidius does not invoke specific *exempla* in his preface to the *Life of Augustine*, he does state: 'I read and discovered that this [practice] had been done frequently by very religious men of [our] holy mother Catholic Church'.[21] As we observe from the aforementioned examples, early Christian hagiographers took great pains to situate their present works within a broader hagiographical tradition, which served to legitimize their projects in the eyes of their audience.

Future audience

While it is conventional for the author to use the preface to connect his work with a past literary tradition, it is also typical for him to anticipate a future audience who will benefit from reading or hearing his work. The first line of Tacitus' *Agricola* uses the word 'posterity' to describe his intended audience (1.1).[22] Tacitus also concludes his preface by articulating his hope that his story of Agricola, which he characterizes as both a *memoria* and a *testimonium*, will find favor with his readers (3.3).[23] In the middle of his preface, Tacitus mentions the difficult conditions under which both he and Agricola served during

[19] 1.1: *Vetera fidei exempla*; see T.J. Heffernan, *The Passion* (2012), 104; see also Rachel Moriarty, 'The Claims of the Past: Attitudes to Antiquity in the Introduction to *Passio Perpetuae*', *SP* 31 (1997), 307-13.

[20] T.J. Heffernan, *The Passion* (2012), 138-9.

[21] *Praefatio* 2: *Id enim etiam ante nos factitatum fuisse a religiosissimis sanctae matris ecclesiae catholicae viris legimus et comperimus*; see Christine Mohrmann, A.A.R. Bastiaensen, Luca Canali and Carlo Carena, *Vita di Cipriano, Vita di Ambrogio, Vita di Agostino* (Milan, 1993), 130.

[22] In an instance of ring composition, the word 'posterity' appears in the final sentence of the work (46.4), highlighting its importance.

[23] A.J. Woodman and C.S. Kraus, *Tacitus* (2014), 42.

the reign of Emperor Domitian and says: 'We have certainly given a great example of patience'.[24] Although he does not specify an indirect object, we may reasonably assume that he implies his contemporaries and his future readership. This would suggest that Tacitus holds up Agricola – and to a lesser extent himself – as an exemplar of correct behavior that his readers ought to imitate. In fact, Tacitus closes his work with an exhortation to the reader to imitate Agricola by assimilating his *mores* (46.2-3). This in turn points to the communal function of the text: it is designed to create and sustain a particular kind of community – one that is committed to the ideals that Tacitus promotes through his commemoration of Agricola, in this case, the virtues of *obsequium* and *modestia* (42.4).[25] In presenting Agricola as the embodiment of important Roman virtues, Tacitus follows the standards set by his predecessors who recognized the utility of employing *exempla* not only as a device in oratory but also in the moral education of the public who derives benefit from meditating on the lives of exemplary individuals.[26]

For Christian hagiographers, the desire to connect their works with a future audience is also strong. In the first sentence of his preface, the narrator of Perpetua's *Passion* reveals an interest in his future audience when he identifies the edification of man as one objective of spiritual reading (1.1). He later describes his hope that posterity will derive comfort from the knowledge that God continues to work through Christians like Perpetua and Felicity to build up the Church in the present (1.2, 5). He even identifies two future audiences of his story when he characterizes God's work through the martyrs as a *testimonium* to non-believers and a *beneficium* to the faithful (1.5).[27] Furthermore, he addresses his auditors in the second person plural to encourage them to recall and commune with the martyrs via their passion narrative (1.6). Pontius, the deacon, in language that noticeably echoes the preface of Perpetua's *Passion*, voices his intention to lay out the details of Cyprian's life so that posterity may always remember (*in inmortalem memoriam*) and imitate the *exemplum* of the martyr-bishop (1.1).[28] By claiming that his audience's enthusiasm to hear about Cyprian enhances his difficulty to complete his project, Pontius primes his future reader to take interest in Cyprian regardless of whether the reader had any interest in him before (1.4-6). Other Christian hagiographers from late antiquity also follow suit. For example, Paulinus of Nola announces to Augustine his hope that his work on Ambrose will attract readers who will believe his story (1.1, 3; 2.1). Ennodius, writing about the bishop, Epiphanius, endeavors,

[24] 2.3: *Dedimus profecto grande patientiae documentum*; see A.J. Woodman and C.S. Kraus, *Tacitus* (2014), 41.

[25] A.J. Woodman and C.S. Kraus, *Tacitus* (2014), 62.

[26] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.62; Cicero, *De inventione rhetorica* 1.49; Cicero, *Pro archia* 14.

[27] T.J. Heffernan, *The Passion* (2012), 104.

[28] C. Mohrmann, A.A.R. Bastiaensen, L. Canali and C. Carena, *Vita* (1993), 4.

with the help of the Holy Spirit, to establish the bishop as an everlasting *exemplum* for his readers (4). Like Tacitus, these hagiographers predict that their works will circulate both in the present and in the future among members of their communities. They praise the saints in order to encourage the development of virtues associated with Christian holiness, such as piety, fortitude, and endurance. These hagiographers also suggest – either implicitly or explicitly – that their readers or auditors ought to imitate the holy men and women eulogized in their works, as the saints imitated Christ himself. In this way, these texts, like Tacitus' *Agricola*, also have a communal function, namely, to foster a community committed to those values that the saints particularly embody.

Profession of ineptitude and importance of the subject

A final characteristic of encomiastic prefaces is the penchant of the author to profess his inability or unworthiness to write about his subject adequately. Tacitus, who is one of the greatest writers of Latin prose, ends his preface to the *Agricola* with a humble admission that his writing is 'disordered and unpolished'.[29] His final sentence in the preface expresses the hope that his work will either be praised or at the very least excused (3.3). Cornelius Nepos likewise begins his preface with an admission that his reader may find his work 'trivial and unworthy'.[30] It would be a mistake to read these statements at face value, however, since rhetorical handbooks prescribe self-deprecation when administering praise. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the oldest extant Latin book on rhetoric, is a good example. It reads: 'If we praise [a man], we shall say that we fear our inability to equal his deeds with words, that all people should make known his virtues, or that his very deeds surpass the eloquence of all eulogists'.[31] Through self-deprecation the eulogist effectively elevates his subject matter and highlights its importance, which contributes to the apologetic thrust of the preface as a whole. At the same time, the author forestalls criticism by assuring the reader that any dissatisfaction with the work is due to his failings rather than the shortcomings of his subject material. Despite the conventionality of such professions, however, we need not assume that they are purely artifice. For example, it is clear from the *Agricola* that Tacitus deeply loved and admired his father-in-law, suggesting that Tacitus utilized a well-known convention in order to voice genuine sentiments. Furthermore, Cornelius Nepos' anticipation of a

[29] 3.3: *Incondita ac rudi voce*; see A.J. Woodman and C.S. Kraus, *Tacitus* (2014), 42.

[30] *Praefatio* 1.1: *Leve et non satis dignum*; see P.K. Marshall, *Cornelii Nepotis Vitae* (2011), 1.

[31] 3.11: *Si laudabimus: vereri nos ut illius facta verbis consequi possimus; omnes homines illius virtutes praedicare oportere; ipsa facta omnium laudatorum eloquentiam anteire*; see Guy Achard, *Rhétorique a Herennius* (Paris, 1989), 97; Cicero and Quintilian discuss the effectiveness of self-deprecation in oratory: *De oratore* 1.26.119-20; *Institutio oratoria* 4.8-9.

negative response to his work was rooted in a real concern about his readers' unfamiliarity with Greek cultural norms.

Like Roman eulogists, Christian hagiographers uniformly disparage themselves, their works, or their abilities as writers. In the preface to his martyrdom narrative of Perpetua and Felicity, the narrator writes: 'We are unworthy to add to the description of such great glory' (16.1).[32] Pontius writes concerning Cyprian that 'I confess myself unequal to the task of writing worthily of the honor of his merits'.[33] Paulinus of Nola is equally self-deprecating in his preface to the *Life of Ambrose* when he describes himself as 'inferior in speech' to his predecessors; he even cautions the reader that his style is simple and may therefore give offense (1.2-3).[34] Jerome implores the Holy Spirit to help him equal Hilarion's deeds with words and goes so far as to claim that Homer himself would be either envious or overwhelmed at the prospect of writing about this hermit-saint (1).[35] One of the most self-deprecating prefaces from this period comes from Sulpicius Severus, who begins his biography of Martin of Tours by professing himself to be without talent and literary polish; in fact, most of the preface elaborates on his fear that readers will take umbrage at his lack of eloquence, and he even asks his addressee, Desiderius, to remove his name from the work before publication (*Vita Martini*, *Praefatio* 1-6). Like Tacitus, none of these hagiographers suffers from a lack of genuine ability. In fact, all these men are well-educated leaders within their communities. Through a profession of incompetence or unworthiness, however, these hagiographers use their authority as leaders to promote their subject material while also exercising the Christian virtue of humility. As we observed with Roman authors, this expression of humility is probably genuine albeit conventional.

Conclusion

In this brief examination of the prefaces of Latin Christian hagiographical literature, we have identified four conventions that hagiographers regularly borrowed from their Roman predecessors. While these conventions appear with a high level of frequency, we do not suggest that every hagiographical preface produced in antiquity faithfully incorporated any or all of them; nor do we deny that hagiographers utilized other conventions, as well. Finally, our attempt to

[32] 16.1: *Indigni ad supplementum tantae gloriae describendae*; T.J. Heffernan, *The Passion* (2012), 117.

[33] 1.3: *Et inparem me esse confitear ad proferendum digne pro meritorum honore sermonem*; see C. Mohrmann, A.A.R. Bastiaensen, L. Canali and C. Carena, *Vita* (1993), 6.

[34] 1.2: *Sed ego ut meritis tantorum virorum, qui muri ecclesiarum sunt et eloquentiae fontes, ita etiam sermone me inparem novi*; C. Mohrmann, A.A.R. Bastiaensen, L. Canali and C. Carena, *Vita* (1993), 54.

[35] In his preface to his *Vita Pauli*, Jerome also expresses a lack of confidence in his abilities.

identify similarities between Roman and Christian 'biographies' is not an attempt to whitewash important differences between them, such as divergent views on *virtus* and *imitatio*, to name only a few.

What we propose in conclusion is that the conventions discussed here are best understood in light of the ancient approach to artistic creation called *aemulatio*.[36] This term describes the Romans' method of appropriating and innovating Greek literary conventions in order to supersede their Greek predecessors. The best known example of *aemulatio* in antiquity is Virgil's creative utilization of the Homeric epics in his *Aeneid*, which the Romans deemed superior to its precursors.[37] In a like manner, Christian hagiographers developed well-known conventions native to Roman encomiastic biography that they put at the service of their Christian program. More than that, they sought to surpass their predecessors through the promotion of Christian holiness rather than civic duty.[38] Yet, *aemulatio* here cuts both ways: it describes not only the activity of the hagiographers but also the ideal activity of the audience. After all, the objective of hagiography was to persuade Christians to rival in holiness the saints acclaimed therein. In this way, Christian hagiographers made use of Greco-Roman literary tools to promote specifically Christian ends.

[36] I am grateful to Professor Stephen Beall who raised the topic of *aemulatio* during our conversations.

[37] For relevant primary source material, see Lorna Hardwick, *Reception Studies*, New Surveys in the Classics 33 (Oxford, 2003), 25.

[38] The Latin word *aemulatio* implies not only 'emulation', but also 'rivalry'; see Charlton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary, Revised, Enlarged, and in Great Part Rewritten* (Oxford, 1998), 55.

Catechumeni, Not 'New Converts': Revisiting the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*

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Abstract

While abundant interpretive dialogue continues to transpire in regards to the early third-century *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, a ubiquitous assumption with significant exegetical consequences remains to be called into question. The *Passio* purports to narrate the trial, prison experience, and deaths of six Christians in Carthage. *Passio* scholarship past and present asserts that since five of these martyrs are *adolescentes catechumeni* (2.1.1), their Christian identity and instruction was nascent, exiguous at best. This is particularly significant because one among them, the elite matron Vibia Perpetua, is a main character and the second narrator within the text. The pervasive assumption that the catechumens are 'new converts' has cultivated dismissive interpretive engagement with her voice in particular: any apparent engagement with sophisticated Christian concepts or vocabularies must be clever mimicry, muddled vestiges of paganism, or oneiric symbolism. This article counters that we cannot assume that 'catechumen' equates to incipient exposure to Christian texts, oral teachings, corporate practices and identities, *et cetera*. Variegated contemporary sources and scholarship on the catechumenate, in fact, indicate that though catechetical praxis featured variations depending upon time, place, and participants, some generalities may be discerned. Suppositions about the adjective 'catechumen' in *Passio* studies are thus challenged, and, consequentially, it is insinuated that interpretive endeavor can seek potentially mature engagement with Christian texts, traditions, and teachings among the *Passio* catechumens. The implications of this study affect exegesis of this text but also contribute to gender studies and scholarship on early Christian identities and practices.

While abundant and fascinating dialogue continues to transpire in regards to the early third-century martyrdom narrative *Passio Perpetuae,* a ubiquitous modern assumption with significant exegetical consequence remains to be called into question. The *Passio* narrates the trial, prison experience, and deaths of six Christians in Carthage.[1] Its content is particularly intriguing on a number of accounts, including that its authorship is purportedly trivocal.[2] The most

[1] This article employs the Latin text in the critical edition of Thomas Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (New York, 2012), 104-24.

[2] For a summary of the issue of authorship, as well as related subjects of date, texts, genre, *etc*., see the introductory chapter in Jan N. Bremmer and Marco Formisano (eds), *Perpetua's*

Studia Patristica XCI, 237-247.
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prominent authorial voice among these is the martyr-to-be Vibia Perpetua, who narrates a selective and admittedly odd depiction of events between her arrest and the day of her execution. Even a brief summary such as this hints at a few of the *Passio*'s myriad enthralling avenues for exploration; this paper alights upon but one. In the second paragraph of the text, the voice of the principal narrator transitions from a sermonic and polemical introduction to a dramatic yet hardly descriptive line: 'A group of adolescent catechumens were apprehended' (*apprehensi sunt adolescentes catechumeni*, 2.1.1). This locution has elicited perhaps the *least* amount of commentary or controversy in the history of *Passio* studies. The lack of exploration seems due to a pervasive assumption as to its meaning: the narrator is indicating that the group is comprised of 'young recent converts' to the Christian community. This conjecture is reflected in locutions such as 'recent conversion', 'new convert', 'hardly had their training begun', and 'new group', which proliferate in critical evaluations past and present.[3]

Such a general interpretative assumption bears immense exegetical consequences for the account, particularly with regard to the narrative voice of Perpetua. Since Perpetua numbers among the catechumens, typical studies aver, her *Christian* identity and instruction, including any exposure to Christian texts, teachings, and practices, was nascent, if extant at all. Hence comments such as, '[she] had very little formal teaching', '[she] was new to Biblical texts', and as a 'new convert, she probably did not possess a high level of theological sophistication. Her Christian training was probably not extensive', abound.[4] Hence,

Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis (Oxford, 2012), 1-13. See also Petr Kitzler, *From Passio Perpetuae to Acta Perpetuae: Recontextualizing a Martyr Story in the Literature of the Early Church*, trans. Srejber and Thompson (Berlin, 2015), 13-23; and Vincent Hunink, 'Did Perpetua Write Her Own Prison Account?', *Listy filologické* 133 (2010), 147-55.

[3] Examples of such comments abound; quotations drawn from Ross S. Kraemer and Shira L. Lander, 'Perpetua and Felicitas', in Paul Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World*, vol. 2 (London, 2000), 1048-68, 1048; Jacqueline Amat, 'L'Authenticité des songes de la Passion de Perpétue', *Augustinianum* 29 (1989), 177-91, 180; Thomas Finn, 'Mission and Expansion', in Paul Esler (ed.), *The Early Christian World*, vol. 1 (London, 2000), 305; Thomas Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), 194; Judith Lynn Sebesta, 'Vibia Perpetua: Mystic and Martyr', in Laurie Churchill *et al*. (eds), *Women Writing Latin,* vol. 1 (New York, 2002), 103-30. See also this theme of 'new identity' in, *e.g*., Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture-Making* (New York, 2004), 86-7. Near exceptions include Joyce Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York, 1997), 74, and T. Heffernan, *Passion* (2012), 151, both of which indicate (without elaboration) that the length of time that Perpetua had been a catechumen is, in reality, unknown.

[4] Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), 286; T. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography* (1988), 200 (it should be noted that his 2012 publication does not include the overt assertion that Perpetua was a new convert); Cecil Robeck, *Prophecy in Carthage* (Ohio, 1992), 55.

Ameling found Perpetua's narrative use of Christian terminologies 'astonishing', since the connection with 'her new group' was 'recent'.[5] He therefore determines her vocabularies must be adroit mimicry: she uses words she may have heard once or twice, but surely cannot, does not, understand.

Here I would like to raise a note of caution. For although Perpetua is introduced in the text as catechumen, elite, and educated (*honeste nata, liberaliter instituta*, 2.1.2), the majority of criticism tacitly underestimates the significance of the way that these identities would have influenced one another. Such a disparity has cultivated an interpretative conundrum and, indeed, a false dichotomy. On one hand, *Passio* scholarship typically classifies Perpetua's narrative as a 'prison diary', the introspective penning of a woman's thoughts and visions about her subversive inner journey from secular daughter to sacred matron of God.[6] Some readers within this broad approach find salty Jungian divulgence,[7] and some see spiritually-attuned revelations of a Montanist prophetess,[8] a veritable North African Priscilla for whom catechesis is a rather moot point. Alternatively, in some studies, the pericopes attributed to Perpetua are viewed as a complex, sophisticated engagement with variegated Christian texts, practices, social identity and memories, and the like; however, such interpretations insist that such work simply cannot originate from a catechumen and must be the clever creation of an 'experienced', more knowledgeable Christian (presumably a male).[9]

There are several layers of assumptions there, but here I suggest that reconsideration at least begin with a review of what can be perceived regarding the processes and characteristics of catechesis in the late second and early third

[5] Walter Ameling, 'Femina Liberaliter Instituta – Some Thoughts on a Martyr's Liberal Education', in J.N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (eds), *Perpetua's Passions* (2012), 78-102, 100-1.

[6] This is by far the most common initial approach. *E.g.*, Peter Habermehl, *Perpetua und der Ägypter oder Bilder des Bösen im frühen afrikanischen Christentum*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 2004), 87; E. Castelli, *Martyrdom* (2004), 84-7; P. Dronke, *Women* (1984), 15; Andrew McGowan, 'Discipline and Diet: Feeding the Martyrs in Roman Carthage', *HTR* 96 (2004), 455-76, 460; Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York, 1995), 112-3; Petr Kitzler, '*Passio Perpetuae* and *Acta Perpetuae*: Between Tradition and Innovation', *Listy filologické* 130 (2007), 1-19; Candida Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, 2012), 131-7.

[7] *E.g.*, Marie von Franz engaged Perpetua's text as a Jungian case study; more recently, Hartmut Böhme, 'The Conquest of the Real by the Imaginary: on the *Passio Perpetuae*', in J.N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (eds), *Perpetua's Passions* (2012), 220-43.

[8] This can be seen, for example, in the more recent monographs of T. Heffernan's *Passion* (2012) and Rex Butler, *The New Prophecy and 'New Visions': Evidence of Montanism in the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (Washington, D.C., 2006). For a negation of this interpretation, see Christoph Markschies, 'The *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* and Montanism?', in J.N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (eds), *Perpetua's Passions* (2012), 277-90.

[9] Erin Ronsse, 'Rhetoric of Martyrs: Listening to Saints Perpetua and Felicitas', *JECS* 14 (2006), 283-327; R.S. Kramer and S.L. Lander, 'Perpetua and Felicitas' (2000), 1054-58; Ross S. Kraemer, *Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Oxford, 2004), 5-6; Heidi Vierow, 'Feminine and Masculine Voices in the *Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas*', *Latomus* 58 (1999), 600-19.

centuries in general and in contemporary Roman North Africa specifically. Though Perpetua had not yet been baptized at the outset of the *Passio*, it cannot be assumed that her experience of and exposure to Christianity had been momentary. It emphatically remains to be extensively explored whether Perpetua's social status, educational background, and gender could have affected her catechetical process.

We can begin such an exploration with Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Justin, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and, to cautious extents, the earlier *Didache* and the chronologically-complicated *Apostolic Tradition*, accompanied by a survey of scholarship specializing in the catechumenate.[10] These converge to indicate that though catechetical processes were historically multifaceted and naturally featured variations depending upon time, place, and participants, some generalities may be discerned for the era roughly contemporary to the *Passio*. It seems that the catechumenate had developed substantially in cosmopolitan centers by the mid-to-late second century. Its progression seems to have typically lasted several years.[11] Clement of Alexandria (ever a one for creative analogies) compares catechumens to planted trees: both 'are nourished for three years'.[12] Increasingly technical terminologies for advancement further reveal

[10] A brief list of secondary scholarship on the catechumenate includes Frances Young, 'Towards a Christian *Paideia*', in M. Mitchell and F. Young (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity,* vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2006), 485-502; Maxwell Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation,* 2nd ed. (Collegeville, 2007), 1-40, 83-114; Lawrence Folkemer, 'A Study of the Catechumenate', in Everett Ferguson (ed.), *Conversion, Catechumenate, and Baptism in the Early Church*, Studies in Early Christianity 11 (New York, 1993), 367-77; Paul Bradshaw, *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (Collegeville, 2010), 55-97; R.M. Grant, 'Development of the Christian Catechumenate', in *Made, Not Born: New Perspectives on Christian Initiate and the Catechumenate*, Murphy Center for Liturgical Research (Notre Dame, 1976), 32-49; Michel Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate* (New York, 1979), 31-76; Jean Daniélou, *La Catéchèse aux premiers siècles* (Paris, 1968); A. Turck, 'Aux origines du catéchuménat', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 48 (1964), 20-31; Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton, 1999), 107-9; M.L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* (New York, 1971), 119-29; Judith Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher According to Clement of Alexandria', *JECS* 9 (2001), 3-25; James Starr and Troels Engberg-Pederson (eds), *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (Berlin, 2004); and Thomas Finn's collection of sources in *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt* (Collegeville, 1992).

[11] M. Dujarier, *History* (1979), 43, recalls that though the specific length and structure of catechesis likely varied, by the end of the second century, 'one thing is certain: there was a group of converts who followed a special course of formation before being admitted to the sacraments of initiation'. Three years is indicated in Clement, *Strom.* 2.18 and *Ap. Trad.* 17.1; see M. Johnson, *Rites* (2007), 64-75.

[12] Clement, *Strom.* 2.18. We see negative attitudes in both the East and the West in regards to baptism that is administered too quickly: see J. Patout Burns and Robin Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa* (Cambridge, 2014), 173-5; Robin Jensen, 'With Pomp, Novelty, Avarice, and Apparatus: Alternative Baptismal Practices in Roman Africa', *SP* 44 (2010), 77-83; also, Tertullian's remarks below.

some complexity of process during this time.[13] Clement distinguishes between 'protocatechesis' and 'catechesis', Origen mentions catechetical 'stages', and, albeit later in the third century, Sotas in Oxyrhynchus delineates without explanatory remark 'a catechumen in the beginning of the gospel' and 'catechumens of the congregation'.[14]

Corroborative information also can be discerned in North Africa. The necessity and temporal length of the catechetical experience is assumed by Tertullian throughout his corpus: preparation for the Christian life is compared to the preparation of professional soldiers in that both require intensive time and training, Christians 'are made, not born', and both knowledge and moral habit must be observed in catechumens prior to the 'extensive interrogations' that preceded their baptism.[15] Furthermore, Tertullian could witheringly remark – apparently expecting his audience to be swayed by the polemic – that an additional offense of the Marcionites is that they initiate converts *without* adequate instruction.[16] If insufficient catechesis among heretics is expended as an insulting symptom of nonfeasance, whether or not Tertullian's accusation is accurate, it does divulge the assumed significance for the praxis among his audiences.

Thus catechumen ought not be *assumed* to imply newcomer at all, but rather a distinct identity of participation, possibly for a while, under the auspices of teaching authorities. The content of the process itself seems to have involved a distinctive time of instruction from appointed teachers as to both dogma and morals.[17] This included reading and explication of Scripture, and doctrinal, liturgical, and ethical guidance, and, like liturgical gatherings, catechetical instruction included exhortation and prayer.[18] By the late second century, this

[13] Everett Ferguson, *The Early Church at Work and Worship*, *Vol. 2: Catechesis, Baptism, Eschatology, and Martyrdom* (Eugene, 2014), 20-1, explores these early terms and emphasizes that while there were terms for teacher, student, and process, there seems to be no fixed terms for content.

[14] Origen, *C. Cel.* 3.51; Sotas writes the end of the third century: see AnneMarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Harvard Theological Studies 60 (Harvard, 2008), 116-9, for discussion on Sotas' letter to Paul, PSI 9.1041; for general progression, see Annewies van den Hoek, 'The Catechetical School of Early Christian Alexandria and its Philonic Heritage', *HTR* 90 (1997), 59-87, 69-70; D.K. Buell, *Making Christians* (1999), 107-9.

[15] Tertullian, *Paen.* 6, *Apol.* 18.4, *Bapt.* 18, *Cor.* 3.

[16] Tertullian, *Praes. Haer.* 41.2-4, worth quoting here: 'It is uncertain who is a catechumen and who is baptized, as both exhort, both hear, both speak prayer … Even before they are instructed, their catechumens are perfected', *quis catechumenus, quis fidelis incertum est, pariter adeunt, pariter audiunt, pariter orant … Ante sunt perfecti catechumeni quam edocti*'. See A. van den Hoek, 'The Catechetical School' (1997), 59-87; Henri-Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. G. Lamb (London, 1956), 315.

[17] This dual emphasis can be seen in very early literature, *e.g.*, the 'Two Ways' of the *Didache*; see Justin, 1*Apol.* 61.2; Irenaeus, *Epid.* 1, 2; *Ap. Trad.* 7.39; E. Ferguson, *The Early Church* (2014), 3, 18-25.

[18] See Justin 1*Apol.* 13-7, 61, 65-7; Irenaeus, *Demonst.* which Daniélou and Ferguson argue is 'the first catechetical work we possess': R.P.J. Daniélou, *La catéchèse* (1968), 89-102; E. Ferguson,

seems to have been administered in small gatherings connected to varied and unknown extents with larger local Christian circles. Catechumens were not sequestered from the larger Christian community and seem to have partaken in its liturgies, in a distinctly limited manner, for the length of instruction.[19]

Various names are given to instructors, and it is unknown what distinctions existed and applied in different locales, and whether additional private instructors catered to smaller groups of elite Christian *literati*.[20] Origen indeed references this kind of layered activity – one that included involvement in a formal catechetical group, which cultivated moral and doctrinal formation, and private tutoring in a literary circle that featured advanced readings and discussions. It has been pointed out that this is not unlike contemporary secular and Jewish

The Early Church (2014), 1-17; Tertullian, *Paen.* 6.1-22, *Bapt.* 18.1, Origen, *Hom. In Lev.* 6.2, *Hom. in Jesu Nave* 4.1; the *Didache* indicates a required recitation prior to baptism, which would have been received through instruction (7.2), and both the *Didascalia* and a portion of the *Ap. Trad.* acknowledged by Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips to be part of the oldest stratum of the complex document indicate a 'lengthy catechumenate' of three years consisting of instruction and examination in doctrine and conduct: *Ap. Trad.* 17.1, 20.1; see P. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing* (2010), 56-7; M. Dujarier, *History* (1979), 31-76. In my use of the term 'Scripture', I do not anachronistically imply fixed concepts of canon.

[19] They were excluded from practicing the Eucharist and, it would seem, from remaining among the congregation during this time: see Justin 1*Apol.* 67.1; this seems to be indicated by the technical term 'hearers' in Irenaeus, *Epid.* 1 and Cyprian, *Ep.* 18.2.

[20] Terms include (in the West), in various forms, *doctores, presbyteri doctores, aedificatores*, and *lectores*. Tertullian distinguishes *doctores*, *e.g.*, in *Praes. haer.* 41. Cyprian, *Ep.* 8.3.1, indicates an assumption that the catechetical systems of Carthage and Rome are nearly identical. See Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.5.2; for 'student' vocabulary, Cyprian, *Ep.* 18.2.2, 29.1.2, 73.22.1, *Test.* 3.98; for teachers, *Ep.* 29.1.2, which has two different terms for instructors, suggesting a difference in tasks, compare *Ep.* 73.3-73.5, 69.7.1, 70.2.1. F. Young, 'Towards' (2006), 487-92, notes that the possible presence of both presbyters/catechists and 'freelance' teachers or leaders of 'study circles' in larger cities such as Alexandria could have caused some extent of tension but notes that this distinction is a tentative one, since many may have concurrently partaken in different levels of teaching. See also H. Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World* (New York, 2010), 10, 149, and *id.*, 'The Classroom in the Text: Exegetical Practices in Justin and Galen', in S. Porter and A. Pitts (eds), *Christian Origins and Classical Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (Leiden, 2012), 669-91; William Tabbernee, 'Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry in Carthage c.203 C.E.', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32 (2004), 421-41; P. Bradshaw, *Reconstructing* (2010), 55-97; A. van den Hoek, 'The Catechetical School' (1997), 59-87; Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy' (2001), 3-25. In terms of what the catechumens of the *Passio* may have experienced, little is directly stated in the text. Perpetua refers to Saturus as 'he who built us up' (*qui ipse nos aedificauerat*, 4.5). The term she uses, *aedificāre*, seems to be known in local ecclesial circles: in various works, Tertullian uses forms of it for the 'building up' of those within the Christian community. Teachers served a particularly significant role in a convert's life, so the prominent role of Saturus in Perpetua's portions of the *Passio* may confirm his role as catechist. Aspasius, the 'learned presbyter' referenced later in the *Passio* (*presbyterum doctorem*, 13.1) could have been involved in catechetical teaching to some capacity as well. If Perpetua experienced a multi-fold catechesis akin to what Origin and Clement depict, there is reason to consider the possibility that these figures may have had distinct but concurrent roles.

educational practices.[21] Studies such as those by Kovacs and Buell explore these seemingly extra-ecclesial catechetical 'circles', which appear to have catered to the intellectual elite.[22] Indeed, Clement's literary output bespeaks his passion for this didactic task in both settings, and he devoted several works to the practical instruction and moral formation of the cultivated aristocratic type, including such works as *Who is the Rich Man That Might be Saved*, which directs his audience, among other things, to choose the recipients of their benefaction wisely.[23]

Famously, Clement emphasizes that this instruction extends to both men and women.[24] He is not an exception to the rule: catechesis is never indicated to have been somehow systematically differentiated according to gender.[25] Interesting here is an articulation in midst of Tatian's *Oration,* where polemical contrast is made of the *paideia* of the Christians and that of philosophical schools: for Christians, no payment is exchanged, the setting is private rather than public, recipients include the old and young, men and women. He continues then with a litany of women in the history of philosophy and literature, then explains: 'My object in referring to these women is that you would not … treat

[21] *E.g*., Origen, *C. Cels*. 3.51. If we can believe Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 6.18.2-4, Origen put his catechumens through a rigorous program of secular education before they engaged the Scriptures. For Jewish educational processes: *e.g*., the ideals set forth in Philo, *Hyp*. 7.12-4, Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.175-8, 2.204; Rabbinic tradition relates that R. Simon b. Sheeta and Joshua b. Gamla led extensive educational reforms involving the creation of schools, *yKet* 8.11.32c. Even if these sources are exaggerated, they nonetheless relay a cultural ideal. See also A. van den Hoek, 'The Catechetical School' (1997), 59-87, on what she called the early catechetical 'schools' of Alexandria emphasized the many ways early Christian educational practices adapted contemporary approaches as a distinct aspect of their identity; this is also emphasized by M.L. Clarke, *Education* (1971), 119-9.

[22] Within the late-second-century literary culture of cosmopolitan centres, these seem to have continued to meet even after formal initiation. Consensus is that Eusebius (and those following him in asserting the early second century existence of an Alexandrian Christian academy) was a bit premature in this; see D.K. Buell, *Making* (1999), 108, and J. Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy' (2001), 8.

[23] Clement of Alexandria, *Quis* 31.

[24] Clement of Alexandria, *Paed*. 1.4 emphasizes that there is 'one church, one morality, one conscience, one common life' between men and women, so they ought to be educated equally. See J. Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy' (2001), 3-25.

[25] Stewart Hall, 'Women Among the Early Martyrs', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, Ecclesiastical History Society (London, 1993), 1-21; Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge, 1996), 184; this is especially evident in Clement of Alexandria's works, *i.e*., *Strom*. 4.62.4; see also for learned women Christians in 304, *Martyrdom of SS. Agape, Irene, and Chione at Saloniki,* in Herbert Musurillo (ed.), *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford, 1972), 280-93. See William Johnson's analysis of reading/discussion circles in Rome during the Antonine era: if Christians had (or still did) participated in such circles prior to conversion, it would not be unusual for them to continue such practices with Christian texts, such as we see in Alexandria, in William Johnson, 'Constructing Elite Reading Communities in the High Roman Empire', in *id*. and Holt Parker (eds), *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2009), 320-32.

with scorn the women who among us pursue our philosophy … Be ashamed, therefore, you who are professed disciples of women yet scoff at those of this sex who hold our doctrine or the circles they frequent … *for among us there are learned women*'.[26] It is sufficient to recall that in the East as well as the West, wealth, leisure, and ability, *not gender*, served as the keys to acquire advanced instruction and participation in literary circles. Particularly in cosmopolitan centers, wealth provided women with significant intellectual and powerful opportunities, as a great many studies, such as those of Hemelrijk, Cribiore, Haines-Eitzen, Morgan, Cohick, *et al*., continue to emphasize.

Specifically with regard to the *Passio*, there was obviously a group of literate and liturgically-involved Christian women in or near Carthage at the time: Tertullian betrays some extent of their significance with his comment that the Thecla narrative was being read by women who then acted as hermeneuts, using the text as an authority for their act of baptising. Elsewhere, Tertullian speaks of 'precocious females' such as Philoumene who 'presume to teach and to dispute', and so on. His pugilistic pen counters with an inadequate if not unsurprising dismissal: they are 'empty-headed whores'.[27]

To be considered a threat necessitating *that* kind of response, such women would have needed the kind of skills cultivated by liberal *studiae* and Christian instruction both intellectual and liturgical. While I recall cautionary caveats that financial means, capacity, interest and leisure, and familial support for extensive education were necessary,[28] I also emphasize that, in this era's cultural milieu, and in an urbanized province that featured such capabilities, a very literate female elite obviously existed at the exact time of the *Passio*, and perhaps somewhat sizably, if Tertullian's numerous *literary* exhortations *about* and *to* women, what we hear of the erudite Severan family females, the literature of Apuleius, the extant North African inscriptions honoring powerful and active

[26] Tatian, *Or. Ad Gr*. 32-3, using the transl. of *ANF* vol. II 78-9. Emphasis mine.

[27] Tertullian, *Bapt*. 17; *Bapt*. 1 speaks of a female 'viper' whose teachings led many astray, though he attacks her heresy, not the *act* of teaching in itself; in *Praescr. haer*. 41, 'precocious women' 'presume to teach, to dispute, to exorcise, to vow cures, and even to baptize'. Philoumene apparently not only taught within a Christian community and famously converted followers of Marcion through her skill of theological argument, but also supposedly had teachings that were widely circulated in multiple works, including texts titled *Apophthegmata* and *Phanerosis*. She attracted the attention of Tertullian and Rhodon, both of whom perceived the need to publicly object to her Gnostic tendencies (Jesus, a pre-existent soul, created a body for himself out of the four elements, which disintegrated after his resurrection; similarly, the resurrection of Christians involves exclusively the soul) and her leadership. Tertullian, *Praes. haer*. 6.6, 30.6; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl*. 5.13.2. *Nota bene*: I think it is very worthwhile to wonder why scholars are so quick to associate Perpetua with Tertullian, rather than with this group or one of the many other Christian circles towards which he was inimical. I suspect, in fact, the possibility is very great that she was among one of those circles.

[28] Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, 1995), 9.

benefactresses, and so on, are any indication.[29] Specifically, Perpetua is classified as and, as I read the text, repeatedly identifies herself among them.

This being the case, it is worth noting that it was the well-educated elite who tended to experience a more advanced Christian catechetical experience and then were often quickly enrolled in capacities of leadership, often associated with their patronage (as has been emphasized, for example, with Cyprian). In the vast output of ink from early Christian authors, we simply expect to find their secular and religious instruction pulsing through each line.[30] Such authors are *not* expected to avoid all secular literary influences, to produce only cerebral articulations of systematised theology, nor to exhibit penchant for allusion to exclusively a Judeo-Christian corpus.[31] I suggest it should be seen as odd, then, that it is on precisely those grounds that the minute group of scholars who do at least briefly wonder about Perpetua's *catechumena* identity have dismissed a possible intensity of content or temporal interval for her instruction![32]

This means, then, that an exploration of possibilities surrounding Perpetua and the catechumenate cannot begin with the question, 'what kind of theological doctrines did Perpetua acquire?' Ameling, who recently posed that very query, concluded that since 'there is no general outline of the faith' in Perpetua's account, there is little 'notion' of Christian thought therein.[33] In many ways his approach follows that of Amat decades ago. Both note the likely influence of non-Christian literature on her account, and both conclude, in Amat's words,

[29] See Simon Swain, Stephen Harrison and Jas Elsner (eds), *Severan Culture* (New York, 2007), 1-28. Also, Tertullian, *Ad ux.* 2.8.3-4, *Cult.* 2.9.4, 2.11.2-3; Dio, *Hist.* 75.15.6-7; Musonius Rufus, 3.12-15; 4, 13a; Philostratus, *Apol. Ty.* prologue; see also Emily Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in the Roman Elite from Cornelia to Julia Domna* (New York, 2004), 97-145. On female munificence, including detailed reports of inscriptions in North Africa, see the excellent collection of essays in Emily Hemelrijk and Greg Woolf (eds), *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West* (Leiden, 2013).

[30] Sara Rappe, 'The New Math: How to Add and to Subtract Pagan Elements in Christian Education', in Yun Lee Too (ed.), *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden, 2001), 405-32; for Ciceronian stratagems in Tertullian's hermeneutic, see Margaret Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa* (Minneapolis, 1997), 18-28; Karl Olav Sandnes, *The Challenge of Homer: School, Pagan Poets, and Early Christianity* (London, 2009), 111-23; Tertullian, *Idol.* 10.6 indicates that when receiving secular instruction, a Christian student will remember who he is and 'will not drink' the instruction in; however, even the occasion of authoring *Idol.* reveals that there was no consensus among circles of Christians in Carthage regarding liberal studies for Christians. His polemic seems to underscore the significant presence of Christians in discord with his own views in the matter.

[31] One must avoid modern connotations of systematic, primarily cerebral, and deeply nuanced theological training in the 'Bible', as for written traditions that continued the Christian narrative (such as *Shepherd*), significant oral traditions, and *praxis* were together part of the training. Perpetua's bizarre account does not mean that 'l'imagination de Perpétue n'est donc pas le reflet fidèle de la catéchèse', J. Amat, 'L'Authenticité' (1989), 180.

[32] Namely, W. Ameling, '*Femina*' (2012), 100-1; J. Amat, 'L'Authenticité' (1989), 180.

[33] *Ibid.*

that 'Perpetua's imagination does not faithfully reflect catechesis'.[34] It deserves to be asked, however, whether the definitive measure for catechetical experience in the early third century is the explicit presence of systematic theology and solely proto-canonical textual influence. I wonder whether we ought to place something akin to a modern theology course into the variegated Christian educational praxis of this era, or to expect Perpetua's narrative to be an apology *if it was not intended to be one*. Furthermore, if Rebillard's thesis is correct, and Christian identity and Roman social life were not necessarily perceived by most early North African Christians as exclusive contraries, then the influence of non-Christian literature in Perpetua's style and content does nothing to negate the Christian content therein.[35]

Indeed, on the whole, the prevailing assumptions brought to the *Passio* in regards to the descriptor *catechumeni* arguably limit exegetical possibilities.[36] Different insight into the text can be gained from inquiry into catechesis and, I contend, must draw from ongoing work with regard to gender, social status, and the complexities of early Christian identity. Perpetua's status deserves more than the typical passing comment, or attempts to prove that depictions of her status are exaggerated fiction. What if, instead, we ask a different question: if Perpetua *was* of the social status indicated throughout the text, how would the ramifications of this status and its customs, such as the advanced education fashionable for daughters of the elite at this time – manifest in the text? If Perpetua had received an abundant education, we must at least wonder how advanced her Christian education and exposure and access to Christian literary texts and teachers could have been. Given the culture, it is entirely plausible that Perpetua had at her fingertips a significant corpus of texts, instructors, and fellow *literati*, far larger than has previously been assumed. A manifestly

[34] J. Amat, 'L'Authenticité' (1989), 180.

[35] See Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 C.E.* (New York, 2012).

[36] The common conjecture in regards to the *Passio* narrator's initial description of the catechumens as *adolescent* (*adolescentes catechumeni*) might also deserve at least tentative question: does it refer to *literal* age? Descriptive adjectives surrounding terms of Christian identity at times can be symbolic: 'little children', 'brothers and sisters', 'flock', and so on (*e.g.*, the use of *conserva*/*conservus* in Tertullian means 'slave of God', not literal servant-hood, in *Ad ux.* 1.1.1; see 1*Thess*. 4:10). The Latinate *adulescens* is a broadly vague term and indicates more about a stage in one's maturing process than a literal year (it is used by imperial-era authors to indicate 14-year olds as well as 33-year olds, *e.g.*, Cicero, *Philipp*. 2.46). Could the narrator perhaps use *that* term, at *that* place, to indicate the 'spiritual' stage of these catechumens? If so, it could be an indication that this group would not be veritable infants to the enterprise but technically a step away from full maturity. This could also account for the baptism of the group before their transfer to prison. In light of the view that martyrdom was the ultimate baptism (*e.g.*, Tertullian, *Bapt.* 16; see P. Burns and R. Jensen, *Christianity* [2014], 175), and in view of the negative contemporary Christian attitudes towards initiation rituals prematurely administered, perhaps the company would not have been baptised unless they were nearing the end of their catechumenate. I am not certain there is enough evidence to uphold this perspective, but I do think it is worth noting the possibility.

alternative exegetical approach to the *Passio* could indeed result from these acknowlegements.

This article simply offers that we entertain such possibilities. After all, Carolyn Osiek once voiced hope that ever-emerging research on women in the Roman Empire 'can help us bring this severely underrepresented constituency of early church groups back to life and also strengthen the case for viewing females as intellectual contributors in their own right to early Christianity'.[37] What if Perpetua – Perpetua *the catechumen* – is such a contributor?

[37] Carolyn Osiek, *et al*., *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis, 2006), 249.

Hagiography and Autobiography in Cyril of Scythopolis

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Abstract

The following article 'Hagiography and Autobiography in Cyril of Scythopolis' will offer some critical observations regarding hagiographical terminology ('edification') which seems to determine and somehow misdirect the current discourse. Regarding this, some insights into the profile of hagiography and autobiography in Cyril will be delivered by means of the semantic field of ὠφέλεια, *i.e.* 'benefit'. After comparing Cyril's monastic biographies to other monastic Saint's lives, it will be shown that Cyril's monastic Saint's lives can be seen as 'educating stories' rather than as 'edifying stories' due to theological implications. Thus, Christian-monastic education will be presented as a beneficial part of the making of Christian identity in Late Antiquity.

1. Some Remarks on hagiographical terminology

As a collection of seven monastic Saint's lives, composed in Late Antiquity during the sixth century AD, Cyril's corpus can be reckoned to be the most influential source of Palestinian monasticism which becomes clear when we consider that Saint Euthymius and Saint Sabas – the founders of lauritic monasticism in the Judean Desert – are presented as the narration's main characters.[1] The remaining five lives are dedicated to minor monastic characters, among which John the Hesychast seems to have a particular position because of his relation to Cyril as one of his spiritual fathers. The explicit combination of spiritual discipleship and life-writing is an important feature in Cyril's lives to which I will come back later.

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[1] In *Narratologie und biblische Exegese. Eine integrative Methode der Erzählanalyse und ihr Ertrag am Beispiel von Matthäus 28*, WUNT 2.285 (Tübingen, 2010) Sönke Finnern has applied narratological methods to the analysis of biblical narrations. Within this methodological approach one can find a chapter about character studies ('2.5 Figurenanalyse', 125-64) where he offers a helpful inventory of non pre-determined terms which can be useful for the description of characters in hagiography.

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In this corpus Cyril tells his audience and himself what is needed to produce and understand his monastic biographies through his dedication-letter to his spiritual father, Abba George: 'He who attempts to hear or say anything without *faith* labors in vain, unable to procure himself any *benefit* [...]'[2] and further:

> Commanded to record the life in the flesh of this holy father [*i.e.* Euthymius], I obey your command without any delay, honorable father George; for you command what is pleasant and *beneficial* and also worthy of your Holiness. For it is indeed right to depict in word deeds that have been lost with time and are known to few, and not to let them grow dim in the depths of oblivion but *to offer them as a common benefit*, image and model for those hereafter who wish to take thought for their salvation.[3]

According to Cyril it is *faith* in the first place which is needed both to provide the audience with a certain reading-direction and to confirm the author himself in producing his work. It is also faith that gives his hagiographical corpus its inner coherence as well as its outer profile. Cyril's statement is made clear at the very beginning of his corpus by a preceding dogmatic prologue: the true faith can only be the Chalcedonian-orthodox faith.

Furthermore, an author always has to justify his writing. In Cyril's case, we can find three types of reason: 1) he introduces himself as a monk and priest who follows the command of his spiritual father in writing the lives of the holy monks of the Judean Desert which benefits his own soul, 2) he writes to serve a traditional purpose, *i.e.* to *benefit* his audience by describing the life and deeds of these holy monks and 3) he later continues writing due to his personal motivation.

Here, at this point, one has to decide which terms to use for further examination. In comparison to other late antique monastic life-collections, particularly with respect to their prologues and epilogues and moreover the prototype of every monastic life, Athanasius' *Life of Antony*,[4] I would like to point to the

[2] Translation: Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the monks of Palestine*, transl. Richard M. Price, CistSS 114 (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1991), 1. Critical text-edition edited by Eduard Schwartz: *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, TU 49.2 (Leipzig, 1939), here *dedicatio*, 5.10-2: ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἄνευ πίστεως λέγειν τι ἢ ἀκούειν ἐπιχειρῶν διὰ κενῆς κοπιᾶι ὠφέλειάν τινα ἑαυτῶι πορίσασθαι μὴ δυνάμενος.

[3] R.M. Price, *Lives* (1991), 4. Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Euthym. 1, 8.10-7: οὗτινος ἁγίου πατρὸς ἀναγράψασθαι τὴν ἐν σαρκὶ πολιτείαν κελευσθεὶς ἀναμονῆς πάσης χωρὶς πείθομαί σοι κελεύσαντι, τίμιε πάτερ Γεώργιε· κελεύεις γὰρ ἡδέα καὶ ψυχωφελῆ καὶ τῆς σῆς ἁγιωσύνης ἐπάξια. δίκαιον γάρ ἐστιν ὡς ἀληθῶς τὰ παραδραμόντα τῶι χρόνωι καὶ μὴ πολλοῖς ἐγνωσμένα ἀναζωγραφεῖν τῶι λόγωι καὶ μὴ συγχωρεῖν ταῦτα λήθης βυθοῖς ἀμαυροῦσθαι, ἀλλὰ κοινὸν ὄφελος καὶ εἰκόνα καὶ τύπον προτιθέναι τοῖς μετέπειτα βουλομένοις τῆς ἑαυτῶν προνοεῖσθαι σωτηρίας.

[4] The examined works, especially their pro- and epilogues, are: Athanasius of Alexandria, *The Life of Antony*, Tim Vivian and Apostolos N. Athanassakis (eds/trans.), CistSS 202 (Kalamazoo Michigan, 2003); Athanase d'Alexandrie, *Vie d'Antoine*, Gerhardus J.M. Bartelink (ed.), SC 400, 7th ed. (Paris, 1994); *The Lives of the Desert Fathers. The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, Norman Russell (trans.), CistSS 34 (London, 1980); *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, André-Jean Festugière (ed.), SHG 53 (Bruxelles, 1971); Palladius, *The Lausiac History*, Robert T. Meyer (trans.), ACW 34 (London, 1965); *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, Cuthbert Butler (ed.), Texts

common and popular use of an unclear hagiographical term in modern translations and analyses, as there is: 'edification/l'édification/and Erbauung', including related verbal, adverbial and adjective denominations. To avoid critizising without giving a counter-proposal, I would like to introduce some terminology to the discourse of ancient life-writing that is more theologically based than it has been before. This would correspond to the text-internal terms and would be useful to approach the intended theological disposition of the hagiographical work which can be determined by Christian virtues like monastic humility, chastity, obedience and faith itself.

Hagiographical texts are meant for different purposes. As far as I have inspected monastic literature, I can identify three major aims: 1) *remembering* models of monastic life meant for imitation that leads to salvation, 2) *venerating* the Saints and 3) *educating/forming* the audience and/or oneself in a broad sense of the word including edification. It was the term 'edification' in particular that brought me to examine the use of the Greek word ὠφέλεια. In most cases in our contexts, this word means the factual and spiritual *benefit* one can obtain from a certain Saint. It is quite striking to me that many recent publications[5] regarding hagiography use 'edification' and 'edify' to describe the general or particular purpose of Saint's lives without defining its meaning and yet narrowing the broad meaning of ὠφέλεια.

As examples for the use of the unclear term 'edification' I will give now a few instances and will therefore refer to Patricia Cox Miller's article 'Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography. Constructing the Subject as Holy' and André Binggeli's article 'Collections of edifying stories'. As for Cox Miller's use of 'edification' one can observe my point of critique best by giving the corresponding instance, where she speaks about the anonymous author of the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*: 'This author indicates explicitly that he has

and Studies VI.2 (Hildesheim, 1967); Théodoret de Cyr, *Histoire des moines de Syrie. Histoire Philothée I-XIII*, Pierre Canivet and Alice Leroy-Molinghen (eds/trans.), SC 234 (Paris, 1977); Johannes Moschos, *Leimonarion*, Kloster Johannes des Vorläufers (ed.) (Chania, 2008); Joannes Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, PG 87.3.

[5] As there are for example: André Binggeli, 'Collections of edifying stories', in Stephanos Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography: Volume II: Genres and Contexts* (Farnham, 2014), 143-59; Patricia Cox Miller, 'Strategies of representation in collective biography. Constructing the subject as holy', in Tomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau (eds), *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, The Transformation of Classical Heritage 31 (Berkeley, 2000), 209-54. The most imprecise use of 'edification' *etc*. can be found in 'The "rhetoric of emulation" in the work of Cyril of Scythopolis and the Vita Abraamii', *Byzantinoslavica. Revue internationale des études byzantines* 61 (2003), 113-28, 113 of Nikos Kalogeras, where he writes: 'Already in the title of his works Cyril clarified the principal function of his vitae, which was to provide edifying stories to monks by describing the lives, works and miracles of holy figures that were members of the monastic communities of Palestine'. It is regrettable that Kalogeras does not cite the instances for his consideration. The title provides no other information than that Cyril is writing to his spiritual father, Abba George (see Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Sab. *superscriptio*, 85.5-10).

undertaken his writing not only to remember and honor his subjects, but also to edify those who are beginners in the kind of religious life that these subjects exemplify […]. In large part, in fact, this author's collection is a record of his own edification, as he himself says; much of the narrative is presented as his face-to-face conversations with the men whose stories he would ultimately write […]'.[6] This use of 'edification' seems to intermingle 'edification' and 'education'. What is striking here, in my eyes, is that 'edification' as a religious term should have a more religious connotation, or should be more clearly distinguished from 'education', than it is the case here.

In his article 'Collections of edifying stories' Binggeli describes the literary genre among which he reckons also Cyril's monastic biographies. Besides the fact that he gives an informative synopsis of main features of 'edifying stories', he stresses the aspect of 'moral improvement' to define 'edification' in this context:

> At the same time, edifying stories were being composed, and the genre appears initially as an ill-defined field of monastic literature, somewhere between the *apophthegmata* and the full-length *vitae*, with features from both hagiographical and ascetic literature. As in the *Sayings of the Fathers*, a spiritual lesson forms their core, and they aim at moral improvement: hence their designation as "beneficial to the soul" (ψυχωφελής).[7]

And, regarding the prologues of 'edifying stories': 'Prologues always state edification as the first concern of the authors, who wish to offer the reader the possibility of moral improvement through the example of monastic models'.[8] Applying the term 'edification' explicitly on Cyril's monastic biographies, he states: 'Unlike a full-length biography, these portraits usually stress one or two features of the holy man's life and often illustrate his main virtue by a narrative that emphasizes the marvellous element, thus coming closer to an anecdotal portrait, the main point of which is edification'.[9] As far as I can see, aspects of education and (self-) formation determine Binggeli's view of 'edification', while a clear distinction between education, formation and edification is not made.

Having highlighted these crucial aspects, I would like to wage the following approach: If 'edification' means to enable a (Christian) person to emulate a literary moderated Christian-monastic way of life, I would propose the use of 'education' instead, while 'edification' can still be understood as part of education in a broad sense of the word. If 'edification' is understood as a mainly pious reading of Saints' lives, from which one can gain religious strength when facing inner or outer temptations, I would reject this narrow use of the term but consider it a possible part of Christian education.[10]

[6] P. Cox Miller, 'Strategies of representation in collective biography' (2000), 211.
[7] A. Binggeli, 'Collections of edifying stories' (2014), 143.
[8] A. Binggeli, 'Collections of edifying stories' (2014), 144.
[9] A. Binggeli, 'Collections of edifying stories' (2014), 146.
[10] Canivet, as for the French translation of Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Religious History*, has pointed to the difficulty of translating ὠφελεῖν and ὠφέλεια with 'edify' and 'edification' and

2. The monastic shape of Cyril's live writing – 'educating stories'

Given the before mentioned definition of 'educating stories' as both providing Christian-monastic knowledge and helping a person to develop a Christian way of life, I would like to stress that Cyril's hagiography has, first of all, two addressees: 1) Abba George and 2) the audience. For them he writes the informative biographies of Palestine's most influential holy monks, particularly Saint Euthymius and Saint Sabas. Through these lives he lets his audience know, how one can become a perfected monk and what's needed to fulfill Sabas' monastic ideal: 'He [*i.e*. Saint Sabas] had founded a small cenobium to the north of the laura and placed in it men who were austere and sober-minded, and told those making their renunciation to stay there, until they had learnt (μάθωσι) the psalter and the office of the psalmody and received a strict monastic formation (τὴν μοναχικὴν παιδευθῶσιν ἀκρίβειαν)'.[11]

And further on Sabas' monastic ideal: 'A monk enclosed in a cell must be gifted with discernment and zealous, a combater, sober, self-controlled and disciplined, a teacher not needing teaching (διδακτικὸν οὐ διδασκαλίας χρήιζοντα), capable of curbing all the members of his body and of keeping a secure watch on his mind'.[12]

As we can see, according to Cyril's lives, it is absolutely necessary to receive monastic education from experienced monks which have been disciples themselves at their early stage of monastic education and that one can reach a perfected stage of monastic education, a point where the disciple turns into a teacher. Thus, based on experience and personal relations between monks, monastic education is *transmission* of knowledge regarding this Christian way of life and a continuous *formation* of oneself into the aforementioned monastic ideal. Given this monastic ideal and its theological implications, including the preceding and contemporary hagiographical literature, I follow Peter Gemeinhardt's appraisal: 'With Cyril of Scythopolis, who wrote in Palestine in the mid-6th century, and his collections of seven monastic lives, the ideal of the monk as imitator of Christ (be he or she a hermit, a cenobitic monk or an

critizised Festugière for his frequent translation as 'édifier' and 'édification'. He states that 'help' and 'benefit' would be the proper terms and that Theodoret of Cyrrhus 'croit à la valeur éducative de l'histoire'; see Théodoret de Cyr, *Histoire des moines de Syrie*. *Histoire Philothée I-XIII*, Pierre Canivet and Alice Leroy-Molinghen (eds/trans.), SC 234, vol. I (Paris, 1977), 147 n. 2.

[11] R.M. Price, *Lives* (1991), 122. Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Sab. 28, 113.5-10: ἀλλὰ μικρὸν κοινόβιον κατὰ τὸ ἀρκτῶιον μέρος τῆς λαύρας συστησάμενος καὶ ἄνδρας εἰς αὐτὸ ἐστυμμένους καὶ νηφαλέους καταστήσας ἐκεῖσε τοὺς ἀποτασσομένους μένειν ἐκέλευσεν, ἕως οὗ τό τε ψαλτήριον μάθωσι καὶ τὸν τῆς ψαλμωιδίας κανόνα καὶ τὴν μοναχικὴν παιδευθῶσιν ἀκρίβειαν.

[12] R.M. Price, *Lives* (1991), 122. Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Sab. 28, 113.10-4: ὅτι δεῖ εἶναι τὸν κελλιώτην μοναχὸν διακριτικὸν καὶ σπουδαῖον, ἀγωνιστήν, νηφάλεον, σώφρονα, κόσμιον, διδακτικὸν οὐ διδασκαλίας χρήιζοντα, ἱκανὸν ὄντα τά τε μέλη πάντα τοῦ σώματος χαλιναγωγῆσαι καὶ τὸν νοῦν τηρεῖν ἀσφαλῶς.

inhabitant of the emerging Laura) is firmly established as a role-model ("Leitbild") in Greek hagiography'.[13]

With this monastic life-collection, Cyril also fills a gap: until Cyril wrote his lives, no other source of Palestinian monasticism existed, while sources for the other main regions of ancient monasticism like Egypt (the patriarchy of Alexandria) and Syria (the patriarchy of Antioch) did exist. In fact, following Bernard Flusin here, Cyril counterbalanced the predominance of existing local hagiographies and brought his own work, Palestinian monasticism and the patriarchy of Jerusalem under the protection of emperor Justinian.[14]

But here two questions arise: Is there an effect, a *benefit* (in the aforementioned sense of ὠφέλεια), on the author himself because of his hagiographical work and, if so, how does the author bring himself into the text?[15]

According to my presumption that hagiography deals in large part with the transmission of sanctity and its testimony of effect, we can clearly identify this hagiographical phenomenon when Cyril, as author, tells his audience at the edge between the two major lives of Saint Euthymius and Saint Sabas, that 'he had often been benefitted (εὐεργετηθείς) by him [*i.e*. Saint Euthymius] in both body and soul and beheld the benefits (εὐεργεσίας) welling up from his tomb' and that he was astounded in thought and asked himself 'how did this holy Euthymius lead his life among men, and with what virtues did he win God's favor, so as to have obtained such *divine grace*?'[16] The way he had been

[13] Peter Gemeinhardt, 'Hagiography (II. Christianity)', in Dale C. Allison *et al*. (eds), *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, 10 *Genocide–Hakkoz* (Berlin, Munich and Boston, 2015), 1153-9, 1156.

[14] See Bernard Flusin, *Miracle et histoire dans l'œuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis* (Paris, 1983), 85-6: 'Mais les auteurs auxquels Cyrille emprunte ne sont pas seulement des modèles. Ils sont des rivaux. Non pas, ou accessoirement, des rivaux pour une œuvre, mais pour la cause à laquelle Cyrille se dévoue. D'un côté, en effet, la Vie d'Antoine, celle de Pachome, les Apophtegmes sont des œuvres à la gloire de l'Egypte, du patriarcat d'Alexandrie appuyé sur un monachisme prestigieux; d'un autre côté, Théodoret – et sans doute, déjà, l'Histoire Philothée est-elle écrite pour contrebalancer le poids trop grand de l'hagiographie égyptienne – illustre le patriarcat d'Antioche. Pour la Palestine, pour la jeune patriarcat de Jérusalem, Cyrille trouve sans doute qu'il n'y a rien de semblable: l'un des buts essentiels de son œuvre nous parait etre de combler ce vide'.

[15] One has to note, in my opinion, that current research on autobiography should consider not just exclusively textual representations of the authors life – in strict sense – but should also consider, as I do here, remaining information about the author, for example, how and what he tells his audience about his writing-process and what does he mention in terms of his view of a certain Saint *etc*. Accordingly, the autobiographical instances presented by Hinterberger barely record the biographical information about Cyril but do not allow insights into Cyril's information in terms of his own life-writing-process, see Martin Hinterberger, 'Autobiography and Hagiography in Byzantium', *SO* 75 (2000), 139-64, 157 n. 42; the same instances in *id*., *Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz*, WBS 22 (Wien, 1999), 166 n. 87.

[16] R.M. Price, *Lives* (1991), 81. Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Euthym. 60, 82.23-8: ὅθεν κἀγὼ ὁ ἀνάξιος αὐτοῦ δοῦλος πλειστάκις παρ' αὐτοῦ εὐεργετηθεὶς ψυχικῶς τε καὶ σωματικῶς καὶ βλέπων τὰς ἐκ τῆς θήκης αὐτοῦ ἀναβλυζούσας εὐεργεσίας κατὰ διάνοιαν ἐκπληττόμενος

benefitted is presented literarily by a dream-vision in which the two Saints heal Cyril's writer's block. This healing is qualified as a *reception of divine grace* which is a major subject in this chapter (60). Moreover, it is this transmission of divine grace unto Cyril, worked through the two Saints, which enabled and motivated his life-writing. Cyril also gives his personal testimony to his audience about how God works graceful wonders through his Saints. However, there is no further way to be a better witness than Cyril since he knew facts and details about his Saints through hearsay, as a contemporary eye witness, and lastly from first-hand experience. Finally it is obvious to us that the semantic field of ὠφέλεια is flexible in Cyril and can be substantiated as εὐεργεσία, a more concrete type of 'benefit'. Getting in personal contact with Saints, being influenced and benefitted by them can be regarded as part of Cyril's own way of monastic education and as the spring of his 'desire to study and record (καταμαθεῖν καὶ ἀναγράψασθαι)' the life and conduct of the Saints.[17]

Conclusion: Cyril's hagiography

What I have been trying to show is that by differentiating the terminology, one can work out a more specific hagiographical profile of a certain author and his religious as well as literary intentions. Assuming and promoting 'edification' as the major aim of ancient hagiography falls far too short. By understanding 'edification' as part of Christian-monastic education, the term can take its proper place. In particular, if one enforces – as I would do – that hagiography is a genre of Christian literature that is highly concerned with mediation[18] or the transmission of sanctity, the pneumatically incorporated effect of divine grace on a certain person. The meaning of ὠφέλεια would better correlate with a case to case differentiated aim under the major topic of 'Christian-monastic education'[19] due to the plurality of the effects of divine grace[20] and, on the other

ἐλογιζόμην ὅτι ἄρα πῶς παρελθὼν τὸν ἀνθρώπινον τοῦτον βίον καὶ ἐν τίσιν εὐαρεστήσας τῶι θεῶι κατορθώμασιν ὁ ἅγιος οὗτος Εὐθύμιος τοιαύτης θείας τετύχηκε χάριτος;

[17] See R.M. Price, *Lives* (1991), 81. Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Euthym. 60, 82.28-30: ἐντεῦθεν θερμοτάτη μοι ἐπῆλθεν ἐπιθυμία τὴν ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ πολιτείαν καὶ διαγωγὴν καταμαθεῖν καὶ ἀναγράψασθαι.

[18] See P. Cox Miller, 'Strategies of representation in collective biography' (2000), 211, where she cites Momigliano.

[19] See Derek Krueger, 'Literary composition and monastic practice in early Byzantium: On genre and discipline', in *Monastères, images, pouvoirs et société à Byzance*, Byzantina Sorbonensia 23 (Paris, 2006), 43-7, 43: 'The genre hagiography emerged in late antiquity both to describe and to prescribe patterns of monastic life'.

[20] Cyril states in his dogmatic prologue that 'the grace of salvation has dawned upon men without hope, benefitting all in many and diverse ways [...]' (R.M. Price, *Lives* [1991], 3); Kyrillos von Skythopolis, v. Euthym. 1, 7.26-8: ἐντεῦθεν τοῖς ἀπεγνωσμένοις ἐπεφάνη ἡ σωτήριος χάρις διαφόρως τε καὶ πολυτρόπως τοὺς πάντας εὐεργετοῦσα.

hand, due to the plurality of 'benefits' a Christian believer, monk, Saint, or even his hagiographer could identify or receive. Thus, Christian-monastic education is both a *transmission of monastic knowledge* and a way of personal *self-formation* according to specific ideals. Cyril participates in this process of transmission and (self-)formation both as an author of Saint's lives as well as personally. At last, whether collective or individual, as audience, Abba or hagiographer, hagiography and incorporated autobiography aims at fashioning Christian identity through education.

Preliminary Notes on Edifying Stories in Syriac Hagiographical Collections

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Abstract

This article deals with hagiographical writings known as 'edifying stories', short narratives portraying Christian characters, meant to convey Christian values. Very popular in the Byzantine tradition, they also feature in Syriac hagiography, but they have been, thus fur, mostly left unexplored. This article aims to present introductory observations on such stories in the Syriac tradition. Firstly, it provides a preliminary overview of the stories belonging to this hagiographical subgenre attested in Syriac. They are part of monastic collections as well as independent narratives; they are Syriac versions of Greek stories, as well as original Syriac compositions. The majority of these stories are still unedited and many still need to be identified. In this respect, the identification of three texts as the Syriac versions of three stories belonging to the *Pratum Spirituale* by John Moschos (7th c.), proves the relevance of a scholarly interest for these neglected narratives. Secondly, the article focuses on the manuscript tradition of edifying stories, particularly on the role they play in five selected hagiographical collections dated to the 12th c. and emanating from the entourage of the Syro-Orthodox Patriarch Michael the Great. These preliminary notes show how extended the notion of sanctity held by Syriac Christians in this epoch was, promoting clerical *and* lay models of holiness. It also shows the literary value of the edifying stories as compelling narratives for the transmission of the Christian message, something which somehow challenges the established understanding of hagiography as of solely historical relevance.

Syriac people have always loved stories. It is a special kind of story circulating in the Syriac tradition that this article deals with. They can be labeled as 'edifying stories', or 'tales beneficial to the soul' (διηγήσεις ψυχωφελεῖς),[1] borrowing terminology common in Byzantine studies. This kind of narrative was, indeed, very popular in the Greek tradition.[2] According to the current

* My sincere thanks go to the European Research Council (ERC) for funding this research within the framework of the project 'Novel Saints' (Grant Agreement 337344, Ghent University).

[1] See John Wortley, 'The Genre of the Spiritually Beneficial Tale', *Scripta & e-Scripta* 8-9 (2010), 71-91.

[2] André Binggeli, 'Collections of Edifying Stories', in Stephanos Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography. Vol. II: Genres and Contexts* (Farnham, Burlington, 2014), 143-59.

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definition given by scholars of Byzantine hagiography, these short stories, originating in monastic and ascetic contexts, were meant to convey moral Christian values by recounting the ventures of monks and laypeople alike, in a mode similar to the anecdote.[3] My aim is simply to propose some introductory observations on the Syriac equivalent of this literary phenomenon, left thus far mostly unexplored. These observations will allow, at a later stage of research, a more in-depth study of the texts themselves.

There has been a recent growth of scholarly interest in edifying stories belonging to the Byzantine tradition.[4] In 2010, John Wortley published a very useful reference tool, a repertoire of Greek beneficial tales, featuring about one thousand items.[5] Looking at the Syriac counterpart of this hagiographic genre would enhance our knowledge of this genre in general, and may even shed some light on its Byzantine manifestations, given the tight links Syriac literature, and more importantly hagiography, have always had with the Byzantine tradition through the translation and preservation of Greek texts. Moreover, the study of Syriac edifying stories is important for the study of Syriac hagiography in itself, a field which has undergone a renewed interest during the last few decades.[6] In the wake of this interest, there is a need to include research on

[3] See J. Wortley, 'The Genre' (2010), 71-2; A. Binggeli, 'Collections' (2014), 143-4; Martin Hinterberger, 'Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations', in S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography* (2014), 25-60, 34. See also Claudia Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of Diegesis', *JECS* 6 (1998), 431-48, who includes edifying stories, together with texts belonging to other hagiographical subgenres, under the term *diegesis*. *Diegesis* is defined as 'denot[ing] a way of storytelling that finds preferred application in hagiographical writing. This storytelling is characterized by two features […]: its simple and unadorned style and its intrinsic truth-value' (437).

[4] As is exemplified by the research of Stephanos Efthymiadis, who published several edifying stories: see, among others, Stephanos Efthymiadis, 'Living in a City and Living in a Scetis: *The Dream of Eustathios the Banker* (BHG Nov. Auct. 1317d)', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995), 11-29 [= in *id*., *Hagiography in Byzantium: Literature, Social History and Cult* (Farnham, Burlington, 2011), n° II]; *id*., '*De debito bis solute*. An edifying story on the administered oath (BHG *Novum Auctarium* 1317n)', *Fontes Minores* 11 (2005), 235-47 [= in *id*., *Hagiography in Byzantium: Literature, Social History and Cult* (2011), n° IV]; and *id*., 'Redeeming the Genre's Remnants: Some Beneficial Tales Written in the Last Centuries of Byzantium', *Scripta & e-Scripta* 8-9 (2010), 307-25.

[5] John Wortley, 'The Repertoire of Byzantine "Spiritually Beneficial Tales"', *Scripta & e-Scripta* 8-9 (2010), 93-306, also available online: <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~wortley> (hereafter W). The work of John Wortley also shows the recent interest on Byzantine edifying stories: see John Wortley, 'Military Elements in Psychophelitic Tales and Sayings', in Timothy S. Miller, John Nesbitt (eds), *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 89-105, and *id*., 'Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell in Byzantine "Beneficial Tales"', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), 53-69.

[6] Apart from individual editions and translations of texts, see, for the example, the publication of this collection of essays: André Binggeli (ed.), *L'hagiographie syriaque*, Études syriaques 9 (Paris, 2012).

edifying stories as well. Edifying stories are not in fact an insignificant subgenre: very popular in the Byzantine world, they are part of majestic and famous medieval hagiographical manuscripts in the Syriac one. Their analysis may therefore add to our knowledge of the Syriac notion of holiness and of the role of stories for conveying it.

1. Preliminary overview of edifying stories in the Syriac tradition

If we consult the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*,[7] we find only a few examples of edifying stories, which all portray a protagonist with a name. This is not surprising, since its method of cataloguing is alphabetical. However, most of the edifying stories feature anonymous characters, and are therefore not represented, not even in a separate section, as in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, where two appendices are dedicated to the *Narrationes animae utiles* and the *Vitae Patrum*.[8] Thus, a repertoire of Syriac tales, similar to J. Wortley's, is even more a *desideratum*.[9] Which texts would be part of this repertoire?[10]

Firstly, into the category of Syriac edifying stories naturally fall the Syriac translations of the Greek ones. This includes the edifying stories contained in the famous fifth-century Egyptian monastic collections, translated in Syriac at an early date: the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, the *Historia Lausiaca* by Palladius of Hellenopolis,[11] and the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. The sixth-century Syriac versions of these collections were re-worked and incorporated by the East-Syriac monk Henanisho', in the second half of the 7th century, into a Syriac compilation, the *Paradise of the Fathers*.[12] Other translations belong to

[7] Paul Peeters (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*, Subsidia Hagiographica 10 (Bruxelles, 1910).

[8] François Halkin (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, Subsidia Hagiographica 8, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (Bruxelles, 1957), III 175-82, 191-214, and *id.* (ed.), *Novum Auctarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae Graecae*, Subsidia Hagiographica 65 (Bruxelles, 1984), 313-23, 328-64.

[9] Syriac edifying stories can now easily be catalogued in the on-line database for Syriac hagiographical texts, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Syriaca Electronica*, part of the larger *Gateway to the Syriac Saints* hosted in the *Syriac Reference Portal* (<www.syriaca.org>) and edited by Jeanne-Nicole Mellon Saint-Laurent (Marquette University), and David A. Michelson (Vanderbilt University).

[10] The texts presented below are major monastic collections which also contain edifying stories, as well as independent stories that I recovered by consulting the catalogs of Syriac manuscripts preserved in the British Library (London), the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris), and the Vatican Library. In the future, my research will be extended to other manuscript collections, especially Middle Eastern ones. In terms of date, the circulation of the stories mentioned below is attested from the 8th-9th century until a very recent epoch.

[11] Edition and French translation by René Draguet (ed.), *Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque*, 2 vols., CSCO 389-90 / Syr. 169-70; CSCO 398-9 / Syr. 173-4 (Louvain, 1978).

[12] Ernest A. Wallis Budge (ed. and trans.), *The Book of Paradise, Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus and Others:*

Theodoret of Cyrus' *Historia Religiosa*[13] and to the cycle attributed to Abba Daniel of Scetis (6th century).[14] However, in the Syriac manuscript tradition, such huge collections were rarely copied as a whole, appearing, as soon as the 6th century, in various forms, often dismembered, so that these stories, originally belonging to a collection, were transmitted independently or gathered according to a specific theme.[15]

Of particular importance is the identification of three stories originally belonging to the *Pratum Spirituale* by John Moschos (end of the 6th c.-beginning of the 7th c.), which were left unidentified thus far: we have Syriac versions of the *Story of a Man in Prison*,[16] the *Story of a Pagan from Nisibis and his Christian Wife*;[17] and the *Story of John the Monk from Antioch*, or according to its Greek title, the *Story of a Grave-Robber*.[18] This identification

The Syriac Texts, according to the Recension of 'Anân-Îshô' of Bêth 'Abhê, 2 vols. (London, 1904); Ernest A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *The Paradise, or Garden of the Holy Fathers: Being Histories of the Anchorites, Recluses, Monks, Coenobites, and Ascetic Fathers of the Deserts of Egypt. Translated into English* (London, 1907); Paul Bedjan (ed.), *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, vol. 7 (Leipzig, 1897). For a study on the ways in which Henanisho' compiled his *Paradise of the Fathers* drawing from previous material, see R. Draguet (ed.), *Les formes syriaques*, CSCO 389 (1978), 44*-113*, to be completed with Sebastian Brock, 'Saints in Syriac. A Little-Tapped Resource', *JECS* 16 (2008), 181-96, 190-6.

[13] For the Syriac translation of this work, of which only some chapters survive, see André Binggeli, 'Les collections de Vies de Saints dans les manuscrits syriaques', in *id.* (ed.), *L'hagiographie syriaque* (2012), 49-75, 60-1 and note 47 with further bibliography.

[14] These Syriac versions were recently translated by Sebastian Brock and Rowan A. Greer in Tim Vivian (ed.), *Witness to Holiness. Abba Daniel of Scetis: Translations of the Greek, Coptic, Ethiopic, Syriac, Armenian, Latin, Old Church Slavonic, and Arabic Accounts* (Kalamazoo, 2008), 181-205. They are: *Story of the Nun who Feigned Insanity* (BHO 242 – *cf.* W 461); *Story of the Patrician Lady Anastasia* (BHO 242 – cf. W 047); *Story of Andronicus and Athanasia* (BHO 59 – *cf.* W 470); *Story of Eulogius the Stone-Cutter* (SS 120 – *cf.* W 474); *Story of a Monk and His Sister* (*cf.* W 467).

[15] This is why each story would require to be catalogued as an individual item. This need is even more evident when it comes to the delicate matter of identification, since the Syriac versions may differ from the original Greek texts. For the *Historia Lausiaca*, for instance, the relationships between the two versions have been carefully analyzed by R. Draguet, *Les formes syriaques*, CSCO 390 (1978), 11*-84*; for the *Historia Monachorum*, see Peter Tóth, 'Syriac Versions of the "Historia Monachorum in Aegypto". A preliminary investigation on the basis of the first chapter', *Or Chr* 94 (2010), 58-104, who also points (p. 60) to the necessity of an edition of the four Syriac versions of this collection, which pre-exist the Syriac recension of Henanisho'.

[16] This story corresponds to ch. 189 of the *Pratum Spirituale*. *Cf.* W361 and BHG 1442r. This Syriac version is found, for example, in the manuscript London BL Add. 12174 (dated 1196 AD), f. 190v.

[17] It is ch. 185 of the *Pratum Spirituale*, *cf.* W004 and BHG 1442s. The Syriac text is preserved in the fragments of a hagiographical manuscript from Sinai, probably datable to the 9th century; some folios of this manuscript are now kept in Leipzig and St. Petersburg. Paul Géhin (IRHT, CNRS, Paris) presents the reconstruction of this manuscript in his book *Les manuscrits syriaques de parchemin du Sinaï et leurs membra disjecta*, CSCO 665 Subs 136 (Louvain, 2017). I am most grateful to Paul Géhin for sharing his work with me.

[18] This story was summarized by François Nau, 'Hagiographie syriaque. Saint Alexis. – Jean et Paul. – Daniel de Galaš. – Hannina. – Euphémie. – Sahda (1). – Récits de Mélèce sur le

raises the question of the Syriac reception of John Moschos' work, which, to the best of my knowledge, has only been addressed by Anton Baumstark in 1922 and has not been studied at all.[19]

Moreover, some texts are translations of stories that do not originally belong to a cycle or a collection, like the *Story of Peter the Tax-Collector*.[20]

Secondly, the repertoire would of course take into account Syriac original edifying stories. It would thus include the narratives contained in monastic collections emanating from both the Syro-orthodox and the Syro-oriental milieus: the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* by John of Ephesus (second half of the 6th century),[21] the

vendredi, sur Marc et Gaspar, et sur un homme riche qui perdit tous ses enfants. – Légendes de Pierre le publicain, d'une veuve et d'une vierge de Jérusalem, de Jean, moine d'Antioche', *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 5 [15] (1910), 53-72 and 173-97, 196-7, but he did not identify it as the Syriac version of one of John Moschos' tales. Just for the anecdote, in line with the spirit of his epoch, F. Nau defined it as 'the tale of the conversion of what we call today a vampire' ('le récit de la conversion de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui un vampire', *ibid*. 55). It is ch. 78 of *Pratum Spirituale* (*cf*. W034 and BHG 1450i) and it is contained in mss. London BL Add. 14645 (dated 936 AD), f. 155v-157v; Paris BnF syr. 234 (dated 1222 AD), f. 127v-130r; and Paris BnF syr. 236 (1194 AD), f. 361r-364r.

[19] Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur, mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn, 1922), 339 n. 8, where he signaled several chapters of John Moschos' *Pratum Spirituale* (ch. 1, 3, 5 (2nd half), 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 16, 18, 19, 28, 31, 37, 39, 150) contained in the Syriac manuscript Hiersemann 500/2, originally from Saint-Catherine's Monastery, where they were erroneously attributed to Palladius (for a full description of this multi-textual manuscript datable to the 8th/9th c., see the catalogue by Karl W. Hiersemann, *Katalog 500. Orientalische Manuskripte* [Leipzig, 1922]). This sole witness of a Syriac reception of John Moschos's writing was unfortunately destroyed in Louvain during the Second World War, without being edited. I wish to warmly thank Paul Géhin for bringing to my attention this dossier and its history. The three edifying stories listed here are new identifications: they correspond to ch. 78, 185, and 189, which were not contained in the manuscript Hiersemann 500/2. They thus contribute to broaden our knowledge of the oriental reception of the *Pratum Spirituale*, of which several other oriental versions have already been identified and edited (see *CPG* 7376, mentioning versions in Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Slavonic). Further research will allow determining the recension of the *Pratum Spirituale* to which these stories belong. I am currently preparing the edition and English translation of these three stories, which will be published in a volume gathering the edifying stories in the Syriac tradition, in collaboration with Sergey Minov (Oxford University). Another edifying story which originally belonged to the *Pratum Spirituale* and is well transmitted in the Syriac tradition, but still unedited, is the *Story of Gerasimus and the Lion* (ch. 107), later understood as portraying Jerome (*cf*. W312 and BHG 696e).

[20] *Cf*. BHG 2366 and W891. Summary of the Syriac version in F. Nau, 'Hagiographie syriaque' (1910), 196. This version is found in many manuscripts, such as Paris BnF. syr. 234, f. 270v-274r; Paris BnF syr. 236, f. 337v-343r; Damas Syro-Orth. Patr. 12/17 (end of 12th c.), f. 128r-129v; Paris BnF syr. 434, II (18th-19th c.?), f. 79v-86r.

[21] Ernest W. Brooks (ed. and trans.), *John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints*, PO 17/1, 18/4, 19/2 (Paris, 1923, 1924, 1926). This monastic collection knew the same scattered destiny of its Greek correspondents: circulating at first as one composition, the stories of these monks in Upper Mesopotamia appear dispersed in later hagiographical manuscripts, from the 9th century onwards (see A. Binggeli, 'Les collections' [2012], 61). Examples of edifying stories contained in this collection are: *Story of a Stranger Who Would not Give His Name*; *Story of a Monk Who Stole*; and *Story of a Monk Who Left the Convent Without Being Released*.

Book of Chastity by Išoʿdnaḥ of Basra (9th c.)[22] and the *Monastic History* by Thomas of Marga (9th c.).[23] Other stories would be independent compositions: let us mention the *Story of a Widow from Jerusalem and her Five Children*, probably of Syriac origin;[24] the *Story of the Merchant of Ḥarran*;[25] the *Story of the Schoolboy Killed by His master*;[26] and the following unedited texts, which might also be Syriac in origin: the *Story of a King of the Past*,[27] *Story of Notables of Rome and Antioch*,[28] *Story of a Blessed Man*,[29] *Story of a Bishop who Denied Christ*,[30] *Story of a Demon who Repented*,[31] and a group of stories which are attributed, in the Syriac texts, to Abba Meletius of Antioch (perhaps the famous patriarch of the mid-4th century?).[32]

[22] Jean-Baptiste Chabot (ed. and trans.), 'Le Livre de la Chasteté, composé par Jésusdenah, évêque de Baçrah', *École française de Rome. Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 16:3-4 (1896), 1-80, 225-91.

[23] Ernest A. Wallis Budge (ed. and trans.), *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas, Bishop of Margâ A.D. 840, Edited from Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum and Other Libraries* (London, 1893).

[24] Edition and translation (from MS London BL Add. 14535 – 9th c. – and Paris BnF syr. 234 – 1222 AD), accompanied by an analysis: Sergey Minov, 'The Therapy of Grief and the Practice of Incubation in Early Medieval Palestine: The Evidence of the Syriac *Story of a Woman from Jerusalem*', in Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Derek Krueger (eds), *Prayer and Worship in Eastern Christianities, 5th to 11th Centuries* (London, 2017), 210-38. I thank Sergey Minov for sharing with me a copy of his article. The story was also summarized by F. Nau, 'Hagiographie syriaque' (1910), 196.

[25] Francis Crawford Burkitt (ed. and trans.), *Euphemia and the Goth, with the Acts of Martyrdom of the Confessors of Edessa* (London, 1913), 154-9 (transl.), ܒ-ܟܐ (from MS London BL Add. 14649 – 9th c. – and Add. 12174 – 1196 A). I wish to kindly thank Andrew Palmer for pointing this source to me.

[26] I am currently preparing the critical edition of this story, on the basis of eleven manuscripts ranging from the 16th to the 20th century, accompanied by a French translation. For a description of the majority of these manuscripts, see Flavia Ruani, Émilie Villey, 'Recherche sur la transmission manuscrite syriaque de l'*Histoire de Philippe*', in Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet et Muriel Debié (eds), *Manuscripta Syriaca. Des sources de première main*, Cahiers d'études syriaques 4 (Paris, 2015), 385-420.

[27] This story is found in mss. Vatican, Borgias syr. 39 (17th c.), f. 83v-86v, and Paris BnF syr. 309 (1869 AD), f. 317r-325r.

[28] This text is contained in Damascus, Syro-Orth. Patr. 12/17 (end of 12th c.), f. 28v-30r.

[29] Story copied in London BL Or. 4526 (1727 AD), f. 155r-176r.

[30] In Paris BnF syr. 234, f. 229r-230v.

[31] This story is contained in several Syro-oriental manuscripts, dated from the 16th to the late 19th century: for some of them, see F. Ruani, É. Villey, 'Recherche sur la transmission manuscrite syriaque' (2015), 385-420.

[32] These stories are: *Story on the Observance of the Friday* (Paris BnF syr. 234, f. 221v-229r); *Story of a Rich Man and His Poor Neighbor* (Paris BnF syr. 234, f. 288r-291r; Paris BnF syr. 235, f. 265r); *Story of Marc, Christian Merchant, and Gaspar the Pagan Magician* (Paris BnF syr. 234, f. 280v-288r; BnF syr. 235, f. 265r-275v; Damas Syro-Orth. Patr. 12/17, f. 111v-114r). These three stories were summarized by F. Nau, 'Hagiographie syriaque' (1910), 192-6 and they are currently being edited and translated by Sergey Minov, for the joint volume on edifying stories in the Syriac tradition in collaboration with me. It is difficult to assess the origin of these stories.

Acknowledging that this overview is far from being complete and needs to be extended to other stories which have not yet been identified and properly studied,[33] I would like now to discuss briefly the place and the role of these stories in the context in which they appear: within the Syriac manuscript tradition.

2. Important stories: The case of twelfth-century hagiographical collections

Although modern scholarship has mostly neglected these edifying stories, within their original contexts they are by no means marginal.

Edifying stories were mostly copied and transmitted in hagiographical mélanges. I would like to adopt here as a case-study a selection of five manuscripts of this kind, which were produced in the same cultural and geographical context and share similar codicological features:[34] Damascus, Syro-Orth. Patr. 12/17 - 12/18 (copied in Tur ʿAbdin, end 12th c.), Paris BnF syr. 236 (Balad, 1194), London BL Add. 12174 (Melitene, 1196), Paris BnF syr. 234 (Antioch, 1222), Paris BnF syr. 235 (Upper Mesopotamia, end 12th-beginning 13th c.).[35] They are all dated or datable to the same period (end 12th-beginning 13th c.) and were copied in the same region (Northern Mesopotamia), in the entourage of the Syro-Orthodox patriarch Michael the Great (d. 1199); they are voluminous manuscripts displaying dozens of lives of saints, acts of martyrs and other stories organized in similar ways. Studying the place of the edifying stories in these manuscripts may open a window on how ancient copyists and their readership (or audience) perceived them, and consequently which notion of sanctity they embedded and were meant to promote.

I could not find, in any case, their Greek equivalents: *BHG* and *CPG* do not give any such narrative under the name of Meletius, and A. Baumstark, *Geschichte* (1922), 266 n. 9 does not provide further information.

[33] Many other stories could be mentioned and still need to be identified: let us cite the manuscript London BL Or. 4528 (1737 AD), which, according to its description, beside the *History of Joseph* by Basil of Cesarea, contains ‘a large number of short narratives’ (see George Margoliouth, *Descriptive List of Syriac and Karshuni Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since 1873* [London, 1899], 47), and the manuscript Birmingham, Mingana syr. 71 (datable to 1600 AD), which contains a ‘collection of pious stories’ on f. 88r-101r, some of which are part of the *Paradise of the Fathers*, while others must be identified (see the description in Alphonse Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, 3 vols. [Cambridge, 1933], I 180-8). Several of Syriac edifying stories were translated into Arabic and are thus contained in Karshuni manuscripts. In this respect, the reader may want to consult: Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 3 vols. (Città del Vaticano, 1944-1953), I 549-55.

[34] For the description of these manuscripts, the reader can now consult the on-line database *E-ktobe* (<www.mss-syriaques.org>).

[35] For a detailed description of this manuscript, see F. Ruani, É. Villey, ‘Recherche sur la transmission manuscrite’ (2015), 385-420.

The content of these manuscripts was recently studied by André Binggeli. He showed how, in their apparent chaos, these huge hagiographical collections, which do not follow the liturgical calendar, are organized instead according to thematic sections, reflecting a particular kind of sanctity (dedicated mainly to monks, holy women, martyrs, and apostles and bishops).[36] Where do edifying stories make their appearance, in this configuration?

The remarks that follow apply to all edifying stories, but I suggest to focus on the edifying stories which portray laypeople and secular settings, because they represent, to me, the most interesting cases: given that these 'secular' stories appear in a hagiographical context, they present us with a sort of paradox.

First of all, we can observe that the five manuscripts share the device of numbering their stories through more or less decorated letters written in the external margins. The edifying stories too are included in this system, even when they may occupy just the length of one column (as is the case of the *Story of a Man in Prison*, which is n° 27 in the manuscript BL Add. 12174). In line with this 'egalitarian' structure, the very name given to all the stories contained in the manuscripts is always one and the same: all, including the edifying ones, are indiscriminately entitled *taš'ita*, 'story'. Moreover, we notice that the edifying stories are not gathered in a specific section, but are rather dispersed in the manuscripts, in an apparently random way. If we compare the position of the same story in different manuscripts, we can hardly find a pattern: the *Story of Peter the Tax-Collector*, for instance, is n° 38 in the Damascus manuscript, n° 18 in Paris BnF syr. 236, and n° 30 in BnF syr. 234. Furthermore, it is not preceded nor followed by the same story in the three manuscripts. Finally, one may expect these short narratives to be used as 'buffer' stories between two thematic sections, as 'transitional' stories. The manuscript BL Add. 12174, for example, clearly dismisses this possibility: in the same first section on monks, apostles and bishops (from n° 1 to n° 48),[37] it contains three beneficial tales which remarkably do not concern any of those categories (n° 21 *Story of the Merchant from Ḥarran*, n° 27 *Story of a Man in Prison*, and n° 33 *Story of Marc, Christian Merchant, and Gaspar the Pagan Magician*).

We can infer from these observations that the edifying stories are fully integrated into the editorial project of the copyists and probably of the commissioner of these manuscripts, Michael the Great. They are not singled out as different from the other stories, lives of saints or acts of martyrs, neither through paleographical or codicological features, nor through a distinctive title. The reason of their presence in a particular position, within the overall composition of each manuscript, is still to be fully understood, since it does not seem related to thematic affiliations, nor to a specific geographical place, historical period,

[36] A. Binggeli, 'Les collections' (2012), esp. 50-4.
[37] *Ibid*. 54.

or author. Nevertheless, I argue that their presence in itself should be explained in light of the general purpose of such huge literary enterprises: as André Binggeli pointed out, these manuscripts aimed to be encyclopedic collections, reflecting the universal purpose of the patriarch Michael the Great to gather as many sources as possible for the celebration of the Syro-Orthodox Church.[38] Building on A. Binggeli's insight, I suggest that in such large-scale projects, edifying stories of laypeople play their role in completing the variety of social figures portrayed, providing Christian values for secular people. And the fact that they belong to hagiographical collections shows how nuanced and extended the concept of holiness was that both Syriac monks and laypeople shared during the 'Syriac Renaissance'.[39]

Conclusion

To conclude these first notes on the edifying stories attested in the Syriac tradition, it appears that there is still much work to do, in terms of edition, translation and even identification and analysis. These stories challenge a great deal of modern assumptions. The scholarly distinction between history and fiction in approaching hagiography[40] turns out to be problematic when we look at the way in which Syriac medieval copyists unquestioningly combined lives of saints with secular anecdotes. Their concern was another one: to choose a good story for transmitting religious values.[41] They were not (only) involved

[38] *Ibid*. 53.

[39] For the incorporation of the secular world in edifying stories belonging to Byzantine collections, starting with the *Pratum Spirituale* by John Moschos and the *Narrationes* associated with Abba Daniel of Sketis, which opened up to new models of sanctity, see A. Binggeli, 'Collections' (2014), 146-8.

[40] This approach goes back to the Bollandists and their editorial enterprise *Acta Sanctorum*, started in the 17th century. The very famous categorization of hagiographical texts in 'passions historiques', 'passions épiques', and 'passions romanesques', by Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (Bruxelles, 1921), follows precisely this distinction between historical and fictive narratives.

[41] For a very similar claim referring to early Greek hagiographical writings, see C. Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication' (1998), 432, and especially 444: 'Just like the ancient and Byzantine novels, these works do not make a distinction between truth and verisimilitude or like-truth. Their *raison d'être* is not the accurate representation of historical events, but the direct involvement of the audience in the narrative'. Moreover, edifying stories seem to particularly interact with the ancient novel. Charis Messis, 'Fiction and/or Novelisation in Byzantine Hagiography', in S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography* (2014), 314-41, writes as follows about Byzantine edifying stories: 'Thematic similarities between the novel and hagiography are more prominent in the hagiographic production of the early period, especially down to the seventh century, for all that common thematic conventions can be identified here and there in later *vitae*, especially in collections of beneficial tales but also in some saint's *Lives*' (316).

with the historical reality of sanctity, but rather with the contents, the ideas, and with the best way to put them in a coherent and convincing narrative. This is why, unlike us, modern scholars, they considered the apocryphal acts of the apostles as 'hagiography', for instance, and they did not order their stories according to a liturgical calendar, as it is the custom for hagiographical manuscripts of the Byzantine tradition. They were not interested in dates, which are historical records, but in stories. Edifying stories.

Sacred Spectacle in the Biographies of Gorgonia and Macrina

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Abstract

The hagiographic biographies of Gorgonia and Macrina invite audiences into the physical sufferings of two aristocratic Christian women. In these narratives, authors Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa provide access to the most intimate ordeals of their sisters. Such descriptions of personal anguish might otherwise propose elements of voyeurism. But as bishops with sacred authority, Nazianzen and Nyssen transform the spectacle of physical duress into an affirmation of their sisters' piety. These hardships are suggestive of the agonistic setting recreated in *paideia* – the strict regimen of rhetorical exercises and philosophy that refined Greek literati. Gorgonia's and Macrina's responses to corporeal pain, I argue, serve as a metonym for *aretē*, an excellence of character rooted in courage and manliness that was an ideal propagated in elite eastern Roman education. Like athletes, orators, and warriors, Gorgonia and Macrina are put to a test. Confronting and overcoming tribulations, they stand for the idealized valor associated with aristocratic deportment. Both authors inscribe onto their sisters qualities that highlight nobility: in Gorgonia, deference and resolve; and in Macrina, boldness and eloquence. Nazianzen and Nyssen re-orient classical *aretē* by equating it with holiness. The culture of *paideia* thus is increasingly normalized as an integral component of east Roman church leadership.

Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa emphasized a common element in the sacred biographies of their sisters.[1] Each fastened on the theme of physical suffering as a means of unveiling the piety of his sibling. Nazianzen's text was a funeral oration delivered in 370 for Gorgonia, a married woman, while Nyssen's piece was a *vita* of the virgin Macrina that he composed in 380 or 381 and circulated in the form of a letter.[2] In both cases, the authors offered

[1] To avoid confusion over Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, when discussing them together I refer to them individually as 'Nazianzen' and 'Nyssen', and collectively as the 'Gregories'. Research for this article was made possible by funding from the Office of Research, Grants, and Contracts at the University of Tennessee at Martin and the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. I am grateful for the support from these departments and institutions.

[2] Pierre Maraval, 'La Vie de sainte Macrine: continuité et nouveauté d'un genre littéraire', in Géra Freyburger and Laurent Pernot (eds), *Du héros païen au saint chrétien (Strasbourg 1-2 déc. 95)* (Paris, 1997), 133-8.

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his sibling as subject of bodily pain.[3] Recounting injuries and disease might otherwise have represented a voyeuristic enterprise, but the brothers portrayed their sisters as exemplars of such self-control that they transcended physical distress. The Gregories re-oriented spectacle into a display of fortitude. Gorgonia's and Macrina's responses to agony, I argue, represented a convergence of holiness with classical notions of *aretē* – an excellence of character rooted in courage and manliness. The hardships were suggestive of the agonistic setting recreated in *paideia* – the strict regimen of rhetorical exercises and philosophy that refined Greek literati.[4] Like athletes, orators, or warriors, Gorgonia and Macrina were put to a test. Confronting and overcoming excruciating ordeals, they stood for the idealized valor that both Gregories associated with the code of conduct propagated by elite eastern Romans.

In the oration on Gorgonia, Nazianzen fashioned a synthesis of deference and resolve. Early in the narrative, Gregory establishes Gorgonia's humility. 'Cultivating her piety in secret', she surpassed the decorum of the woman idealized by King Solomon in *Proverbs*.[5] Despite her superior wisdom, Gorgonia avoided outward discourse, 'remaining within the proper limits of reverence'.[6] Gregory says that she exceeded all others in *sophrosunē*, a sense of modesty and self-control.[7] This was an attribute that students of *paideia* valued as a marker of social preeminence.[8] It was in the final sections of the oration, however, as she was besieged by bodily pain, that Gorgonia's virtue was made fully visible. Gregory recounts a gruesome accident that resulted in a debilitating injury for his sister: 'The mad mules who ran away with her carriage, that unexpected swerve, the irresistible speed, the awful wreck'.[9] The results were disturbing: 'Everything in her was crushed and broken: bones and limbs, internal

[3] For similarities and differences between the two texts, Georgia Frank, 'Macrina's Scar: Homeric Allusion and Heroic Identity in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 511-30, 515-6; on Nyssen's familiarity with Nazianzen's works, Susan Holman, 'Healing the Social Leper in Gregory of Nyssa's and Gregory of Nazianzus's περὶ φιλοπτωχίας', *Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999), 283-309, 284-5.

[4] Arthur Urbano, *The Philosophical Life: Biography and the Crafting of Intellectual Identity in Late Antiquity* (Washington, D.C., 2013), 9-12; Simon Goldhill, 'Introduction', in *id*. (ed.), *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (New York, 2001), 17-8.

[5] Gregory of Nazianzus *Oration* 8.5, 12 in Brian Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (London, 2006), 65-6, 69; *Prov*. 31:10-31; see B. Daley, *Gregory* (2006), 67 n. 28. Daley considers the description of Gorgonia in 8.12 as based not on the woman of *Proverbs*, but rather the ideal of monk or nun outlined by Gregory's pupil Evagrius.

[6] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.11 (Daley), 68-9.

[7] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.8.

[8] On the nuances of this term and the implications of its multiple meanings in late antiquity, see Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride. Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 56-67.

[9] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.15 (Daley), 71.

and external parts'.[10] Gregory's account was an *ekphrasis*, a re-enactment of the harrowing experience designed to stir the audience, to glorify Gorgonia, and to underscore her nobility.[11] The graphic language made for theatrical effect. But guarding against prurience, Gregory framed the atrocity in a redemptive manner that redounded to the tenacity of Gorgonia. 'Even in her suffering', Gregory writes, 'she maintained her sense of propriety (κόσμιον)'.[12] The term used here, κόσμιος, conveyed moderation and good order. It was an ideal of civic elites, who tried to maintain concord in the polis and who discouraged excess in citizens. Individuals who trained in the ancient Greek *agōn* – an arena of competition – strived for such composure, which came only through many contests. In the physical trial recounted here, the struggle is recreated with the reserved Gorgonia taking on the role of seasoned contender. Gregory develops Gorgonia's anguish as a signifier of her steadiness and courage through misfortune.

Gorgonia's tribulations also recalled the trials ubiquitous in martyr acts. Like stories of early Christian martyrdoms, Gregory used vivid visual passages to recreate acute suffering as a demonstration of faith.[13] Gregory re-inscribed the violence of martyrdoms onto Gorgonia in the form of the carriage accident, where corporeal duress provided a context to exhibit constancy of belief.[14] The severity of her discomfort amplified her strength as part of an epic struggle, where her *aretē* (courage) merged with her piety. The austerity of intellectual exercises in *paideia* is paralleled in the ascetic discipline (φιλοσοφία) by which, Gregory indicates, Gorgonia suffered nobly.[15] After she was healed

[10] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.15 (Daley), 71.

[11] Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, 2009); Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination. Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2009), 67-9; Diane Fruchtman, 'Modeling a Martyrial Worldview: Prudentius' Pedagogical *Ekphrasis* and Christianization', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7 (2014), 131-58; Jás Elsner, 'The Genres of Ekphrasis', *Ramus* 31 (2002), 1-18; Nazianzen was a master of this art form; see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus. Rhetor and Philosopher* (Oxford, 1969), 94-105.

[12] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.15 (Daley), 71.

[13] On martyrdom see Brent Shaw, 'Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 269-312 and Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory. Early Christian Culture Making* (New York, 2004).

[14] Andrew Crislip, *Thorns in the Flesh. Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2013), 90-6, and David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk. Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 185-91; for analysis of Nazianzen's oration on Gorgonia, see Virginia Burrus, 'Life after Death: The Martyrdom of Gorgonia and the Birth of Female Hagiography', in Jostein Børtnes and Thomas Hägg (eds), *Gregory of Nazianzus. Images and Reflections* (Copenhagen, 2006), 157-61.

[15] Candida Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom. Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, 2012), 26-29; on the use of the term φιλοσοφία as a referent to Christian asceticism, see discussion in Anna Silvas, *Macrina the Younger. Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, 2008), 163-7; Anne Marie Malingrey, *'Philosophia': Étude d'un groupe de mots dans la littérature grecque des*

miraculously from the crash, Gregory states that his sister left a story to posterity, 'revealing faith in the midst of pain and toughness (καρτερία) in the face of adversity'.[16] Gregory declares that whatever the obstacle – whether sin, the 'deceptive serpent' (Satan), or death – Gorgonia overcame them all through her self-mastery (ἐγκράτεια).[17]

'Toughness' and 'self-mastery' were distinguishing features of *pepaideumenoi*, individuals trained in the curriculum of ancient Greek poets, historians, and philosophers. This pedagogy was designed to develop bold civic leaders. Gregory affirmed longstanding standards among elite eastern Romans by characterizing Gorgonia with elements that echoed this cultivation. In Gorgonia, these scholars found a soul mate, an *exemplum* of the Christian philosopher. Gorgonia remained situated in a domestic setting – dutiful to family and respectful of her place – but nevertheless she emerged out of her trials as a stabilizing presence in the church and the polis.[18] Gregory invoked his sister as his own source of pedagogy, with Gorgonia serving as an emblem of pious discretion and determination.

Gregory of Nyssa issued a similar image of struggle in the *vita* of the virginal Macrina.[19] In his sister's ordeal, the debilitating effects of a progressing illness unleashed in this saint an air of tranquility and an eloquence of speech. Gregory devotes the last twenty chapters to the sickness that resulted in Macrina's demise, the death itself, and the aftermath. These passages alternate between graphic portrayals of Macrina's declining health and imminent passing and her words of comfort and wisdom to Gregory. As he opens the door to the house where Macrina is staying, Gregory discovers that his sister is lying on the ground on a board covered with coarse cloth with another board as a pillow.[20] The severity of the disease becomes apparent as he learns that she is unable to 'cover up her groans'.[21] Over several chapters Gregory intensifies her symptoms as he conveys her declining state in rich description: the fever 'burning up

présocratiques au IVe siècle après J.C. (Paris, 1961); and G. Bardy, '"Philosophie" et "philosophe" dans le vocabulaire chrétien des premiers siècles', *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 25 (1949), 97-108.

[16] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.15 (Daley), 71.

[17] Greg. Naz., *Or*. 8.14 (Daley), 70-1.

[18] V. Burrus, 'Life after Death' (2006), 160-4, John McGuckin, *St Gregory of Nazianzus. An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, N.Y., 2001), 28-31.

[19] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Macrinae*, translations by Virginia Woods Callahan, *Gregory of Nyssa. Ascetical Works*, FC 58 (Washington, 1967), Anna Silvas, *Macrina the Younger. Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, 2008), and Pierre Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysse: Vie de Sainte Macrine*, SC 178 (Paris, 1971).

[20] *Vita Macr*. 16.13-20; similar to the dramatic effect in Gorgonia's life; see Thomas Hägg, 'Playing with Expectations', in J. Børtnes and T. Hägg, *Gregory* (2006), 142-4;

[21] *Vita Macr*. 17.12-5 (Callahan, 175).

all her energy';[22] the 'slight and labored breathing';[23] the dryness of her tongue; her voice giving out; and the trembling of her lips.[24] During the unfolding of these symptoms, Gregory facilitates the visual experience of his sister's deterioration. But as the director of this drama, he turns otherwise grim fascination into a celebration of comportment.

Throughout the affliction, Macrina refuses to play the victim. Her soul is refined through the trial. In the mist of pain, Gregory states, she remained fixated on 'lofty philosophy' (ὑψηλοτέρας φιλοσοφίας).[25] Instead of seeking explanation for her tribulation, Macrina serves as a source of reason.[26] Nyssen personifies Macrina as the Hebrew sage Job. Like her Old Testament prototype, she summoned a voice to articulate divine wisdom even in her weakest state, explaining 'the cause of our life in the flesh, and why man was made, and how he became mortal, and whence came death; and what is the release from death back to life again'.[27] Gregory offers Job as a paradigm for his sister because his very identity was equated with wisdom in the midst of suffering. No other biblical figure could display grace under hardship as effectively. Like the Hebrew sage, Macrina epitomized equanimity during her torment, 'keeping the pain inside her body' so that she 'kept her mind free in the contemplation of higher things'.[28]

Multiple studies have called attention to the philosophic nature of Macrina's discourse, but the *manner* of her instruction, I emphasize here, also testified to her refinement. She did not just teach on the soul, for example, but she 'explained it all clearly and logically'.[29] Under the weight of a life-draining disease, Macrina summoned a voice of authority and allure.[30] Although her

[22] *Vita Macr*. 18.7-9 (Callahan, 176).

[23] *Vita Macr*. 22.8-15 (Callahan, 178-9).

[24] *Vita Macr*. 25.1-17.

[25] *Vita Macr*. 17.20-5 (my translation).

[26] On Macrina as moderator of passions see Philip Rousseau, 'The Pious Household and the Virgin Chorus: Reflections on Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005), 178-86 and Rowan Williams, 'Macrina's Deathbed Revisited: Gregory of Nyssa on Mind and Passion', in Lionel R. Wickham and Caroline Bammel (eds), *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity. Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead* (Leiden, 1993), 227-46; on Macrina as a Platonic trope, see Ellen Muehlberger, 'Salvage: Macrina and the Christian Project of Cultural Reclamation', *Church History* 81 (2012), 281-5 and Elizabeth Clark, 'A Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the "Linguistic Turn"', *Church History* 67 (1998), 25-30. Also see J. Warren Smith, 'A Just and Reasonable Grief: The Death and Function of a Holy Woman in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12 (2004), 60-4. In a dissenting view, Smith discounts the interpretation that Macrina's dialogues are based firmly on Platonic precedents by giving examples of how the figure of Macrina differs both from Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* and Socrates in *Phaedo*.

[27] *Vita Macr*. 17.20-30 (Silvas, 129).

[28] *Vita Macr*. 18.10-5 (Callahan, 176).

[29] *Vita Macr*. 18.15-22 (Callahan, 176).

[30] James Porter, 'Rhetoric, Aesthetics, and the Voice', in Erik Gunderson (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 2009), 92-108; Lieve Van Hoof, 'Performing *Paideia*:

strength is 'wasted by fever', nevertheless she summons the will to engage her brother in a lesson that enables his soul to 'take its stand in the heavenly sanctuaries'.[31] As she lies on her death bed, Macrina takes on the role of instructor for Gregory by lecturing him on divine purpose and the resurrection. Gregory states that 'her noble words' provided solace and that he remained 'obedient to her as my teacher in all things'.[32] Macrina was equipped for the task with ease of speech (εὐκολίᾳ), which flows 'just as a stream of water goes down a hill without obstruction'.[33]

Under highest duress, Macrina exhibited the mastery of a seasoned orator as she regulated the passions of her brother. She comforts Gregory by 'the sweetness of her words' (καταγλυκαίνω).[34] Despite her pain, Macrina remains unnerved as she rouses Gregory with 'beautiful words' (καλοὶ λόγοι).[35] She was a paragon of what Maud Gleason calls 'an ethic of self-control that stressed discipline and restraint'.[36] Gregory emphasized the aesthetics of Macrina's speech as a contrast to the unpleasantness of her symptoms, and also as metonym for her noble nature. The voice in classical Greece reflected an individual's character, and particularly status. Macrina's sacrosanct nature was credited in her ordeal through her fluency and παρρησία, boldness of speech. Her eloquence reflected refinement through trial, which enabled her to speak with the grace and force of a *pepaideumenos*. By expressing Macrina's sanctity through the power of her speech, Gregory illustrated her devotion in a manner that would resonate with elite audiences.

In these two biographies, Nazianzen and Nyssen inscribed onto their sisters qualities that paralleled features of classical *paideia*: for Gorgonia, deference and resolve; for Macrina, boldness and eloquence. The Gregories used similar strategies as they narrated the sufferings of their sisters. Both authors reoriented somatic duress as a means of highlighting nobility and piety. The Gregories used these agonies as a rhetorical display of sacred *aretē*, transforming their sisters from objects of morose curiosity into paragons of a sanctity that now commanded authority in the civic setting. As embodiments of an idealized virtue, Gorgonia and Macrina functioned best in a martyrological setting, that is, in a place where their bodies were subjected to a severity that disclosed supreme courage. A setting characterized by weakness – with women under the

Greek Culture as an Instrument for Social Promotion in the Fourth Century A.D.', *Classical Quarterly* 63 (2013), 387-406.

[31] *Vita Macr*. 17.28-30 (Callahan, 175).

[32] *Vita Macr*. 19.1-10 (Callahan, 176).

[33] *Vita Macr*. 18.20-2 (Callahan, 176).

[34] *Vita Macr*. 22.1-3 (Callahan, 178).

[35] *Vita Macr*. 22.10-5 (Callahan, 179).

[36] Maud Gleason, 'Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire', in David Potter and David Mattingly (eds), *Life, Death, and Entertainment in The Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 67-84, 72.

siege of corporeal affliction – this was the unadulterated locus to highlight the ideals of *paideia*. It was the ultimate agonistic arena. Gorgonia and Macrina's virile attributes manifested elite status, even as they personified the ideal modest woman. These saints opened vistas for audiences to contemplate the divine while reaffirming a Greek heritage rooted in aristocratic virtue. The synthesis of sanctity and *aretē* in these accounts was itself a rhetorical display.

In these lives, the erudition of *paideia* merged with the self-mastery of saints grounded in piety, as Gorgonia's and Macrina's sacred comportment re-oriented classical virtue. Nazianzen's and Nyssen's biographies were compositions that embedded the language of control in the holiest of persons, with the pious self-abnegation in their holy sisters denoting literary refinement and decorum.[37] The culture of *paideia* thus was increasingly normalized as an integral component of east Roman church leadership.

[37] See K. Cooper, *Virgin* (1999), 60; referring to asceticism, Cooper posits that 'paradoxically, an exhibition of supreme self-control … was precisely the token by which Christian accession to power could be bought'.

The Life of Balthild and the Rise of Aristocratic Sanctity

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Abstract

In the two last chapters of the 7th-century Life of Balthild its anonymous author presents a short history of the pious Merovingian queenship – he mentions royal consorts from the past, namely Clothild, Ultrogotha, and Radegund, and their special contribution to the religious history of the Frankish kingdoms. Eventually, Balthild is introduced as the one who 'surpassed her predecessors in holy aspiration' and summed up in her charisma all their virtues (apostolic activity, charity, chastity, longing for monastic life). It would be tempting to accept somehow the hagiographer's perspective and consider Balthild a new emanation of an old idea of Merovingian royal sanctity. However, a close inspection of the passages in which Balthild's hagiographer is reproducing themes from the 6th-century Life of Radegund by Venantius Fortunatus shows that the Life of Balthild actually introduces an entirely new model of sanctity in the guise of continuation. The apparent similarities highlight the essential differences. The hitherto indispensable virtues, the renunciation of the world, earthly privileges and pleasures, are now outdone by the clearly aristocratic aretalogy in which wealth, power and social elevation play the crucial role. Therefore the comparison of the saintly queens cannot serve to define a homogenous Merovingian spirituality or a special and distinctive royal sainthood, but rather to emphasise the dynamic change in the Christian spirituality in the Merovingian era.

The 7th c. was a period of radical change that eventually led to the new order of the Carolingian times. An important feature of this transformation was an aristocratic Christian spirituality, traditionally described in the categories of the calculated use of the cult of saints and the monastic movement to boost the prestige of a family.[1] However, I am convinced that a close analysis of the evidence of the 7th c. hagiography can challenge some points of this supposition. Many *Lives* from the late Merovingian period propose an ideal of Christian perfection curiously tailored to characteristically aristocratic values. It does not necessarily mean that this paradigm always responded to the particular interests of the noble families. Quite often the sanctity is promoted as something especially beneficial for the whole kingdom. It becomes most evident in

[1] F. Prinz, 'Aristocracy and Christianity in Merovingian Gaul. An Essay', in Karl Bosl (ed.) *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Literatur. Rezeption und Orginalität im Wachsen einer europäischen Literatur und Geistigkeit: Beiträge K. Wallach gewidmet* (Stuttgart, 1975), 153-65.

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the hagiography presenting the royal point of view. In this article I will focus on the *Life of Balthild*[2] written by an anonymous author *ca.* 680, shortly after the death of Balthild, wife of Clovis II, Merovingian king of Neustria.[3] The originality of this hagiographical project and its embeddedness in the specific social context of the 7th c. can be assessed in comparison with the 6th c. hagiography devoted to the queen – Venantius Fortunatus' *Life of Radegund*.[4]

Balthild was an Anglo-Saxon who came to Gaul as a slave, served the Neustrian mayor of the palace, and then married the king. After his death she acted as regent for her under-aged sons, and eventually was forced to retire to her foundation in Chelles. Her hagiographer was deeply inspired by Venantius Fortunatus' *Life of Radegund:* she was a Thuringian captive who was forced to marry Chlotar I, and then left her husband to lead a religious life and become a nun in her own foundation, the convent in Poitiers. To read these two texts together is by no means a new idea. Any reader of the annotations in the standard edition of the *Life of Balthild* in the Monumenta Germaniae Historica series can notice the references to the *Life of Radegund*.[5] And even if it were otherwise, no deep and hermetic knowledge of Merovingian times is required to match two figures of troubled foreigners who became wives of Merovingian rulers, then adopted a life full of devotional acts and pious works and eventually retired to the convents they had founded.

The similarities between the two *Lives* are evident, but one can easily notice that the presentations of Radegund and Balthild were created in two different, distanced times, thus, in two different social realities. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the nature of the literary borrowings from the works of Venantius

[2] *Vita sanctae Balthildis* A, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 2 (Hannover, 1888), 482-508.

[3] Balthild's hagiographer says that Balthild died after bishop Genesius of Lyon (*Vita sanctae Balthildis* A ch. 14). According to the local traditions of Chelles, he died in 678 or 679. See Bruno Krusch, 'Zur Chronologie der Merowingischen Könige', *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 22 (1882), 449-90, 485. For the further arguments for dating the *Vita* to the early 680s see Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France. History and Hagiography 640–720*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester, 1996), 114-5.

[4] Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita sanctae Radegundis*, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 2 (Hannover, 1888), 364-78.

[5] *Vita sanctae Balthildis* A, ed. B. Krusch, 484, 496. See also C. Papa, 'Radegonda e Batilde: modelli di santità regia femminile nel regno Merovingio', *Benedictina* 36 (1989), 13-33. There is, however, an open question as to whether the hagiographer of Balthild knew the second life of Radegund, the one written by Baudonivia in the beginning of the 7th c. In many instances Baudonivia's image of the saint seems more in agreement with the *Life of Balthild*, as Radegund is portrayed there as a powerful figure who burns pagan temples, obtains priceless relics, and punishes those who have disrespected her. But as for now I cannot find any textual similarities between these two texts. For the comparison of the two lives of Radegund see M. Cristiani, 'La sainteté féminine du haut Moyen Âge. Biographie et valeurs', in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (IIIe-XIIIe siècle). Actes du colloque de Rome (27-29 octobre 1988)* (Rome, 1991), 385-434, and F.E. Consolino, 'Due agiografi per una regina: Radegonda di Turingia fra Fortunato e Baudonivia', *Studi Storici* 29 (1988), 143-59.

Fortunatus in the *Life of Balthild*. On the one hand, they can be treated just as redundant hagiographical substrata, pious filibustering, tribute paid by Balthild's hagiographer to the presumably well-established model of sanctity.[6] In this case, the analysis seems to consist of separating superfluous intertextual references from the seemingly more 'real' or 'original' image of a saint. For my part, I am convinced that the process of hagiographical rewriting and adaptation needs the other kind of scrutiny. Balthild's hagiographer explicitly mentions Radegund as a figure to whom Balthild may be compared. He also adapts specific scenes from Fortunatus' life (*e.g.* the powerful image of the holy queen working in the convent kitchen and cleaning the latrines[7]). But one has to ask the question of why he is doing this? What effect does he intend to create? Does he preserve in his adaptations the way of thinking of Fortunatus or does he introduce new ideas? We cannot resign ourselves to the fact that one author imitates the other. We have to be mindful of the consequences of this imitation in the broadest possible way.

First of all, I will consider the episode in the *Life of Balthild,* which is commonly explained as a clumsy tribute to the female hagiographical tradition. In the third chapter of the *Life of Balthild* the author relates how the saint was trying to avoid marriage with the mayor of the palace whom she served – she hid herself under a pile of clothes in a corner of the house until her suitor had desisted from looking for her and had taken another woman as his wife. The hagiographer explains that she did it because 'she wanted to deserve the heavenly groom',[8] but shortly afterwards he announces that Balthild married king Clovis II. The 'childlike and fairy-tale simplicity' of the story (in the words of Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, who commented on the *vita*[9]) presented a challenge to the scholars. Janet Nelson wrote that the hagiographer introduced this detail 'to deploy the chastity motif obligatory in the Vitae of

[6] *E.g.* S. Tatum, '*Auctoritas* as *sanctitas*: Balthild's Depiction as "queen-Saint" in the *Vita Balthildis*', *European Review of History / Revue européenne d'histoire* 16 (2009), 809-34, 816: 'The author of the Vita Balthildis drew on Radegund's Lives for two reasons – to associate Balthild with Radegund's successful cult and status as both queen and pre-eminent Merovingian female saint, and to emphasise that the small amount of stereotypical saintly behaviour exhibited by Balthild echoed that shown by Radegund'; 818: 'The accounts of Balthild's humility and saintliness are much more perfunctory than Radegund's … they are hagiographic shorthand, to show that despite the lack of more typical saintly material in the Life, Balthild was still to be seen as another saint-queen, equalling Radegund's holiness and piety as well as her rank and status'. Lynda L. Coon, *Sacred Fictions. Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1997), 120-41.

[7] Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Radegundis* 23, ed. B. Krusch, 372. *Vita sanctae Balthildis* A 11, ed. B. Krusch, 496.

[8] *Vita sanctae Balthildis* A 3, ed. B. Krusch, 485: *Temptabat ut poterat humanum devitare thorum, ut merereretur ad spiritalem caelestemque pervenire sponsum.*

[9] P. Fouracre and R.A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France* (1996), 99.

female saints and otherwise unusable in the special case of Balthild'.[10] It is reasonable to suspect that the story about avoiding marriage is drawn from the account about Radegund, who having learnt about the wedding preparations of the king, escapes in the night from her residence. The basic frame of the story is preserved, but Balthild's biographer does not adapt Fortunatus' wording or the dynamics of his narration. However, the other difference is crucial – Balthild's attempt ends successfully and Radegund's does not. For Venantius Fortunatus, Radegund's failure to maintain virginity is transformed into the affliction she has to suffer as a quasi-martyr (as the hagiographer put it, she 'endured persecution from her own household'[11]). This scene is also only a prelude to the monumental passage in which Fortunatus tells how Radegund eventually abandoned her husband and compelled the bishop Medard of Noyon to consecrate her[12] – against the opposition of the royal dignitaries and against canon law.[13] In this controversial way Fortunatus builds an image of sanctity on the principle of renunciation of the world. In other words, the more Radegund is distanced from the secular things, the more of a saint she is. On the contrary, Balthild's actions are not primarily driven by her striving for holy virginity or for the religious life of a nun. She was an unfree servant in the house of the mayor of the palace; therefore a marriage with her owner would significantly increase her social status. Thus the hagiographer specifies that Balthild refused to marry the noble, because she 'fled empty high positions and sought humility'.[14] This extraordinary humility is a virtue much more important than her virginal chastity.[15] In this light it is much easier to understand why she eventually married the king. We read: 'By the true will of God who had shunned the nuptials of the prince, she would later have Clovis, son of late king Dagobert, in marriage so that He could thus raise her to a higher station through the merit of humility'.[16] Her royal elevation is an award for a truly Christian attitude and also the providential event for all the Frankish kingdoms.

[10] Janet L. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', in *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe*, History Series 42 (London, 1986), 1-48, 17.

[11] Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita sanctae Radegundis* 2, ed. B. Krusch, 365.

[12] *Ibid*. 12, 368.

[13] M. Rouche, 'Mariage et le célibat consacré de sainte Radegonde', in *La riche personnalité de sainte Radegonde. Conférences et homélies prononcées à Poitiers à l'occasion de XIVe centenaire de sa mort (587-1987)* (Poitiers, 1987), 79-98.

[14] *Vita Balthildis* A 3, ed. B. Krusch, 485: *Honores vanos fugiens et humilitatem diligens.* Here and below I follow the English translation of P. Fouracre and R.A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France* (1996), 118-32.

[15] The explicit praise of the virtue of chastity is generally quite rare in late Merovingian lives. M. van Uytfanghe, *Stylisation biblique et condition humaine dans l'hagiographie mérovingienne (600-750)* (Brussels, 1987), 192.

[16] *Vita sanctae Balthildis* A 3, ed. B. Krusch, 485: *Nutu vero Dei, ut, qui prinicipis nuptias devitaverat, postea Chlodoveum, Dagoberti quondam regis filium, in coniugium acciperet, et merito humilitatis ad altiorem gradum eam attoleret.*

Characteristically, Balthild's hagiographer pays a lot of attention to the period of her regency. Admittedly, he focuses on her religious works – almsgiving,[17] helping captives, fighting with simony and infanticide,[18] but all of them are conditioned by her royal position and access to power and money. The emphasis is put especially on the actions concerning churches and monasteries – foundations, offerings and grants of immunities. In the chapters 7 to 9 the hagiographer mentions the recipients of Balthild's concessions – the convents and monasteries in Chelles, Corbie, Jouarre, Fontenelle, Luxeuil, Faremoutier (to name only a few), the basilicas of the important saints in Gaul and the churches of Rome.[19] Curiously in the description of the grant of a village and money for the monastery of Corbion (today's Moutier-au-Perche) the hagiographer adds that the queen 'even her own royal belt, with which she was girded, devotedly took from her holy loins and gave to the brothers in alms'.[20] The personal and direct character of this gesture strikes as quite unusual in comparison to the rest of the text. Why does the hagiographer bother to introduce this image of private generosity into the long litany of the massive donations granted basically from the royal fisc?

Firstly, I think that it is an allusion to the scene from Fortunatus' *Life of Radegund*. In the story of the consecration of Radegund, Venantius mentions that she changed her clothes into the monastic robe,[21] and in the next chapter he adds that she laid on the altar her royal vestments along with the jewellery.[22] He also specifies that among the precious things was a 'heavy belt of costly gold', which she offered 'for the relief of the poor'.[23] This detail fits well into the narrative about Radegund's exspoliation, which marks powerfully her renunciation of the worldly status of a queen. Balthild's hagiographer, however, does not adapt the same way of thinking. He is rather interested in the addressees of Radegund's generosity – hermits and monasteries. It is the only place in the *Life of Radegund*, which could be some kind of parallel to the extensive Balthild's *Klosterpolitik*. I think that borrowing the image of offering the belt from Fortunatus Balthild's biographer either misinterpreted or consciously transformed its symbolic meaning – originally it was a powerful sign of the repudiation of the earthly honour. But in *Vita Balthildis* it is above all the symbol of almost unlimited and spontaneous generosity. It also joins firmly the ecclesiastical policy of the dynasty with the personal merit of Balthild.

[17] *Ibid*. 4, 487.
[18] *Ibid*. 9, 494.
[19] *Ibid*. 7-9, 489-94.
[20] *Ibid*. 8, 492: *Etiam suum ipsum regale, quo ipsa cingebatur, cingulum, desupra sacros lumbos suos devote abstulit et fratribus in elemosinam ipsum direxit*.
[21] Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita sanctae Radegundis* 12, ed. B. Krusch, 368: *Monachica veste induitur*.
[22] *Ibid*. 13, 369.
[23] *Ibid*.: *Cingulum auri ponderatum fractum dat opus in pauperum*.

Venantius Fortunatus' *Life of Radegund* was without doubt a very important point of reference for Balthild's hagiographer, but calling Balthild's sanctity simply *imitatio Radegundis* would be an overstatement.[24] In the two last chapters of the *vita* its author presents Balthild's life as the acme of pious Merovingian queenship. She is not only equal to Clothild, Ultrogotha, and Radegund, but she 'has outdone them in holy striving'.[25] In the eyes of her hagiographer Radegund is an ideal of the nun who left everything to fulfil her longing for monastic life, but Balthild is so much more – her charisma and exceptional charity embrace the whole kingdom. Thus the model of sanctity based on the renunciation of the world is replaced by the one in which humility and generosity come to the fore. I believe that this metamorphosis is not only a literary or conceptual evolution, but that it correlates with the social change.

In a conventional view of the 7th c. in the Frankish kingdoms its social history was marked by the predominance of aristocratic power gradually overshadowing the more and more deteriorating royal authority. Many phenomena were considered to be symptoms of this development – the move of the centres of power from the South to the North, extensive aristocratic landownership, immunities from the royal exactions, vigorous development of the monasteries founded by the members of the Frankish elite, and the more frequent presence of that elite in the high ecclesiastical offices. Especially the success of the Columbanus' movement has been linked with the new aristocracy that was 'legally acknowledged, and derived its power independently of the king'. [26] But, as Chris Wickham argued, 'the attachment to court politics remained a constant throughout the Merovingian period'[27] and in consequence, direct and constant relations of the elites with the king (or queen) remained one of the most important features of the social and political life of the period. Also the importance of the royal initiative in Columbanian monasticism has been more fully recognized.[28] Similarly, the *Life of Balthild* shows this characteristic intertwinement between the aristocratic culture and the central and formative role of the royal court. Queen Balthild is not presented as an ascetic who renounced the world

[24] *Ibid.* 13, 369.

[25] *Vita Balthildis* A 19, ed. B. Krusch, 507: *Multo magis eas in sanctis studiis precessisse cognovimus*.

[26] G. Halsall, 'Social Change around A.D. 600: An Austrasian Perspective', in Martin Oswald Hugh Carver (ed.), *Age of Sutton Hoo. The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe* (Woodbridge, 1992), 272.

[27] C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800* (Oxford, 2005), 198.

[28] Y. Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul. Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elites* (Cambridge, 2014). R. Le Jan, 'Convents, Violence, and Competition for Power in Seventh-Century Francia', in Mayke de Jong, Frans Theuws, Carine van Rhijn (eds), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001), 243-69.

and thus gained miraculous power.[29] She is rather a successful politician whose prosperity is tightly connected with the virtues of humility and generosity. Even her unfortunate political retirement in the monastery of Chelles, sometimes interpreted as an unskilful way to hide Balthild's failure, can be interpreted according to this pattern. In danger of humiliation and disgrace, one can save face by the voluntary shift from the worldly service to the service of God. [30]

She is less an unearthly figure who transcends the laws of nature, and more a model possible to be imitated by an average Frankish aristocrat. Thus, her *Life* can be read as a hagiographic proposition for the ruling elites teaching them how to hold secular power and make use of wealth in a truly Christian way.

[29] *The Life of Balthild* is not, however, completely devoid of miracles. Her hagiographer mentions that 'wonderful things' happen 'at her holy sepulchre', and in chapter 17 he relates the story about the possessed boy who was healed on Balthild's tomb. *Vita Balthildis* A 17, ed. B. Krusch, 503-4.

[30] A.-M. Helvétius, 'Hagiographie et formation politique des aristocrates dans le monde franc (VIIe-VIIIe siècles)', in E. Bozóky (ed.), *Hagiographie, idéologie et politique au Moyen Âge en Occident. Actes du colloque international du Centre d'Études supérieures de Civilisation médiévale de Poitiers 11-14 septembre 2008* (Turnhout, 2012), 59-80, 66-7. See also C. Wickham, *Framing of the Early Middle Ages* (2005), 197.

Eastern, Western and Local Habits in the Early Cult of Relics

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Abstract

The cult of relics emerged in Christendom only in the 4th century, but then it spread with an astonishing speed. This article addresses the questions of whether in this process this new phenomenon remained uniform or evolved locally, and especially whether the general distinction between eastern and western customs is useful for its description. I will argue that several practices indeed developed in specific places and remained more popular in their regions of origin. However, these practices did proliferate and if the diversity of customs in this field never disappeared, it is due to limited contacts between different regions and to the lack of interest in making the cult of relics homogeneous, and not to any profoundly different views on how the remains of saints should be venerated.

The cult of relics, one of the most fascinating and picturesque phenomena of late antique religiosity, appeared in Christendom suddenly in the second half of the 4th century. Certainly, Christians venerated martyrs much earlier, took care of their graves, and in the second half of the 3rd century had already started to seek their intercession.[1] But there is no evidence, securely dated to the period before the 350s, which would suggest that the corporal remains of saints were considered to be a source of a special power.

The belief in the power of relics, essential for the development of their cult, is attested for the first time only around 360, by Hilary of Poitiers, who was at that time coming back to Gaul from the East.[2] But then it was spreading with an astonishing speed: in the 360s we can see tombs of saints considered to be miraculous places in Constantinople or Asia Minor, in the 370s in Egypt and Cappadocia, in the 380s in Italy, in the 390s in Syria and Gaul, in the 400s in

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[1] For the development of the cult of martyrs see still H. Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Brussels, 1913). For the earliest, epigraphical evidence of the belief in their intercession: E. Jastrzębowska, *Untersuchungen zum christlichen Totenmahl aufgrund der Monumente des 3. und 4. Jh. unter der Basilika des Hl. Sebastian in Rom* (Frankfurt am Main, 1981). See also Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.6 (the martyr Potamiaena, after her death, intercedes for a soldier).

[2] *De trinitate* 11.3; *Contra Constantium* 8.

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Spain, in the 410s in Latin Africa.[3] Although the testimonies named in the footnote do not necessarily mark the moments when the cult of relics actually arrived in these regions, but when it appeared for the first time in the evidence, they still give a sense of the swift progress of the new belief. This article addresses the questions of whether, when spreading through the Mediterranean, this new belief and the customs which it engendered remained uniform or evolved locally, and whether a Christian from, say, Carthage, who entered a shrine of a martyr somewhere in Egypt felt at home or was shocked. And especially, whether a general distinction between eastern and western customs is useful in describing the cult of relics.

The East and the West in ancient Christianity

This last issue is of course part of a larger question of how real and important the distinction between the East and West was in Late Antiquity. We are quite accustomed to perceive late antique Christianity as consisting of two major zones, still united, but in many respects different in customs, literature, liturgy, theological thinking, Church structure, monasticism *etc*.[4] Of course, we know that these differences should not be overestimated and that we should not project backwards a division which became real only in the second millennium.[5] We are aware that the very distinction between the West and East is often problematic, because unlike the natural difference between the North and South it is arbitrary and not based on natural factors.[6] Perhaps even more importantly, the administrative, political, and linguistic borders of the East and West overlapped only vaguely and the simple distinction of the two cultural zones ignores the fact that ancient Christendom spoke and wrote in more than two languages.

[3] Asia Minor or Constantinople: see above; Egypt: Athanasius, *Epistula festalis* 42.28; Cappadocia: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Iulianum* 1.69; Gregory of Nyssa, *In Theodoro martyre* and *Sermo 2 in XL Martyres*, GNO X 1,159; Syria: John Chrysostom, *Hom. in sanctum Julianum* 2; *Homilia dicta postquam reliquiae martyrum* 2; Palestine: Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 33; Italy: Ambrose, *Ep*. 77.2; Gaul: Victricius, *De laude sanctorum* 11; Spain: Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 1.13-20 and 94-114; Africa: Augustine, *De civitate* 22.8-9; *Liber de miraculis sancti Stephani*.

[4] This can be seen in the structure of modern syntheses of church history. In the third volume of the *Histoire du Christianisme. Les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident (432-610)*, ed. J.-M. Mayeur, Ch. and L. Piétri, A. Vauchez, M. Vénard, the parallel chapters on religious custom, church organisation, liturgy, and the cult of saints in the West and East are separated and to be found in different parts of the book.

[5] Averil Cameron, 'Cult and worship in east and west', in Leslie E. Webster, Michelle P. Brown (eds), *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400-900* (London, 1997), 96-110.

[6] See P. Brown, 'Eastern and western Christendom in Late Antiquity: a parting of the ways', in *id*., *The Society and the Holy* (Berkeley, 1989), 166-95, 166-9. Brown is quoting E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, xxxvi.

We know that, but most of us – with the important and understandable exception of those who work on the Syriac world or the Caucasus – do not react against this dichotomic vision of ancient Christianity.

If this distinction can be useful, it is interesting to remark that it was not as widely shared by late antique authors as one might expect. It is true that Latin Christian writers used it sometimes when identifying the West with the Latins and the East with the Greeks.[7] Yet they did so rarely, for they were usually aware that the Christians of the East spoke diverse languages, and not only Greek.[8] They sometimes mentioned in one phrase both *ecclesiae orientales* and *ecclesiae occidentales*, but normally did it rather to signal that they had in mind the whole of Christendom, and not in order to distinguish the two parts of it and their distinct customs.[9] Certainly, the Latins occasionally referred to a practice as specifically eastern or Greek. However, they usually did so for the sake of argument and so overemphasised real differences. They mentioned 'eastern customs' both to justify a new practice, previously unknown in Gaul or Africa, or to stigmatise a habit supposedly inconsistent with the old, western tradition.[10] Yet in both cases 'the East' was partly an artificial or imaginary creation, very much like the 'West' was for people in communist countries in the 1980s. In those years in Warsaw where I live we used to say that in the West people behave and institutions work in such or such a way, and by the 'West' we meant Norway, the US and Greece, sincerely assuming that they did not differ that much.[11] And so, similarly, when Jerome says that 'in all eastern Churches, even when they have no relics of the martyrs, whenever the Gospel is to be read the candles are lit, although the dawn may be reddening the sky'[12] we should not necessarily take these 'all eastern churches' at face value and assume that it was actually a common custom of the entire oriental part of Christendom.

Not surprisingly, the bipolar vision of Christendom was even weaker in the East which was multipolar from the perspective of ecclesiastical power and diverse linguistically. Those who lived there recognised that the West was Latin-speaking and dominated by Rome, but they rarely thought about their

[7] See Augustine, *C. Iulianum* 1.13.

[8] Apponius, *In canticum canticorum expositio* epil.; Augustine, *Sermo* 24D.2 (*aliter loquuntur Latini, aliter Graeci, aliter Punici, aliter Hebraei, aliter Syri, aliter Indi, aliter Cappadoces, aliter Aegyptii*); Jerome, *In Danielem* prol.; Julian of Eclanum, *Tractatus in prophetas Osee, Iohel et Amos* praef.

[9] See *e.g.* Ambrose, *Ep.* 8.1; Augustine, *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 4.8.20; *Contra Iulianum imperfectum opus* 1.106; Gennadius, *De viris illustribus* 44; The distinction is visible in writings from the times of the Acacian schism and the Three Chapters controversy.

[10] Justification of new customs: Augustine, *Confessiones* 9.7; Jerome, *C. Vigilantium* 2, 7. Denial: Gregory the Great (*Registrum epistularum* IV 30.1-7, 32-6; ed. D. Norberg, CChr.SL 140 [Turnhout, 1982]) and Hormisdas (*Collectio Avellana. Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum* 218.1-2, ed. E. Günther, CSEL 35/2 [Vienna, 1898]).

[11] Personal experience.

[12] Jerome, *Contra Vigilantium* 7.

own part of the world as a single coherent region. In his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius tells that the Council of Nice gathered the bishops from 'all the Churches which filled all Europe, Libya, and Asia'.[13] This does not fit to the dichotomic distinction. Similarly, the church historian Socrates, in a long passage about the diversity of customs in the Church, names several lands and cities which differ from each other, but does not distinguish between the East and West at all.[14] From the Syriac perspective, especially from beyond the frontiers of the empire, the Latin West was not very important and actually hardly visible. Syriac writers who talked about 'Rome' often had in mind Constantinople and already in the 6th century were scarcely interested in the Christians who lived farther west.[15] All in all, the East/West distinction in late antique writers is not as frequent as one might suspect and more importantly, it does not always reflect the reality.

Moreover, this distinction is not the only one that we can see in late antique authors. The division between the South and the North, mentioned above and so important in ancient ethnographic and physiognomic literature,[16] is much less articulated in ecclesiastical writings, but it does exist. For instance in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogues*, Gallic monks are only half-facetiously portrayed as unable to hold strict fasts which are easy for those living in the softer climate of the Mediterranean.[17] From the perspective of the Latin African writers the distinction between the African and overseas (which usually means Italian) Churches is at least as important as that between the Churches of the East and West.[18] Augustine for instance claims that unlike in Rome 'amongst a number of Christian peoples in the East and West' nobody fasts on Saturday, thus suggesting that this specific difference of customs does not overlap at all with that between the occidental and oriental Christianity.[19]

Needless to say, I am not going to argue that the East/West distinction was entirely artificial. But it was less evident than we often think. And being oversensitive to it is dangerous, because if we divide the Mediterranean into two parts, every phenomenon that we find, say, in Syria becomes 'eastern', even if we cannot find it in Egypt, Palestine or Asia Minor. And every new 'eastern' phenomenon, identified in this way, confirms the reality of the division. Such a method, however, can easily lead to making completely arbitrary, if not absurd,

[13] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 3.7.

[14] Socrates, *HE* 5.22, see also Sozomen, *HE* 7.19.

[15] John of Ephesus, *Vitae sanctorum orientalium* 2, 7, 10; see also R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus syriacus*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1901), 3831.

[16] See B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004), esp. 83-110; 136-50.

[17] Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 1.4.

[18] Optatus of Milevis, *Contra Parmenianum* 2.15.3; Augustine, *Ep.* 128.2; 141.6; *Contra Cresconium* 3.13; *Gesta cum Emerito* 5; Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 8.4.

[19] Augustine, *Ep.* 36.5.

distinctions. For instance, one could draw a line dividing Christendom from the North-West to the South-East, find a practice attested only on one side of this line and take this fact as a proof that this division reflects the reality, which conclusion obviously would not be true.

The East, the West, and the cult of relics

All this shows that in Late Antiquity the distinction between eastern and western customs is not always obvious. Thus one should seriously ask, whether it is relevant in the specific case of the cult of relics. The opinion that the two major parts of Christendom did differ in this respect was advocated by Hippolyte Delehaye in his still important study on the origins of the cult of the martyrs. When dealing with the issue of transferring and dividing the corporal remains of the saints, Delehaye without hesitation attributed the origins of this, in his opinion, highly unsuitable custom to the Greeks.[20] This issue is a good point of departure for the study of differences between the cult of relics in diverse regions. Delehaye claimed that the process of dividing martyrs' bodies had already begun in the East in the 4th century, while the West was essentially immune from it at least to the end of the 6th century. Interestingly, the fact that in the late 4th century, Ambrose of Milan had sent out relics of saints Gervasius and Protasius to some of his colleague bishops[21] did not change Delehaye's conviction about the profound difference of the western customs. The Bollandist just remarked that Ambrose had simply followed the eastern model.[22]

Qualifying the practice as eastern, even if it is attested in the West, is not the only problematic feature of this view. Now, the conviction that the East allowed the dismemberment of the bodies and the West did not is heavily based on two documents from the 6th-century papal correspondence. The first is a letter addressed to Pope Hormisdas by his legates in 519.[23] It concerns the request of Justinian, who wanted to bring from Rome to Constantinople some relics of saints Peter, Paul, and Lawrence. The legates informed the Pope that they had explained to Justinian his demand, being 'made according to the custom of the Greeks', was contrary to the practice of the Holy See. The second document is the letter of Gregory the Great to the empress Constantina, in which the Pope, when asked for 'the head of St Paul or some other part of his body', answered

[20] H. Delehaye, *Les origines* (1913), 60-1.

[21] Rouen (Victricius, *De laude* 6), Nola (Paulinus, *Ep*. 32.17), Concordia (Gaudentius of Brescia, *Tractatus* 17.12).

[22] H. Delehaye, *Les origines* (1913), 79.

[23] *Collectio Avellana* 218.

that he would not dare to disclose the Apostle's sepulchre.[24] In both cases the Westerners were ready to offer the emperors some contact relics: filings of the chains of the Apostles and of the gridiron of St Lawrence, and *brandea*, or strips of cloth, which were sanctified by the touch of the saints' tombs. The difference seems to be serious: the Greeks considered division and transfer of relics a normal habit; the Latins refused to divide or send anything but contact relics. However, firstly, one has to remember that Gregory and the legates unsurprisingly did not want to share the most precious Roman relics, and so we should not take their explanations at face value. They badly needed an acceptable justification for the refusal, and the difference of habits sounded good.[25] Secondly, one should not too readily identify Rome with the West. Actually, during Gregory's pontificate we can find body parts venerated outside Rome, but still in the West.[26] Thirdly, one should not consider eastern customs to be homogenous either. Fourthly, even assuming that in the late 6th century Roman and eastern practices differed, we cannot be sure that the same was true a hundred or two hundred years earlier. It is true that already in the 5th century diverse relics of the same saints were deposited in diverse places and according to Theodoret of Cyrrhus in Syria such a situation was normal.[27] However, before the 6th century the evidence does not mention any act of dismembering saints' bodies. Neither does it mention specific body parts which would have been kept in different places. Certainly, there were some exceptions. At the beginning of the 5th century the heads of St John the Baptist and St Phocas were kept and venerated separately from their bodies,[28] but they belonged to beheaded martyrs – thus the dismembering was not made by Christians. In the same years in the West the Italian city of Ancona was proud of possessing the elbow of St Stephen, but Augustine explains that this was actually a stone, used during the martyr's stoning, which only later started to be venerated as a bodily relic.[29] Thus there is no proof of actual divisions of the saints' bodies in this early period, and the East and West did not differ in this respect. The fact that relics of one saint could be found in diverse places can be explained by independent discoveries (the classic example being the two heads of John the Baptist) or by the distribution of quasi-corporal relics, like the supposed blood found in the grave of Gervasius and Protasius in Milan or the 'earth and dust' from the tomb

[24] Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistularum* IV 30.

[25] See A.J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes. Eastern Influence on Rome and Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias AD 590-752* (Lanham, MD, 2007), 16-7.

[26] Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum* 13 (thumb of St John the Baptist); Baudonivia, *Vita Radegundis* 14 (finger of St Memmas).

[27] Theodoret, *Graecorum affectionum curatio* VIII 10-1; see also his letters 131 (CXXX) and 145 (CXLIV).

[28] The head of John the Baptist: Sozomen, *HE* VII 21; the head of Phocas: Asterius of Amaseia, *Homilia in s. Phocam*, PG 40, 309.

[29] Augustine, *Sermo* 323.2.

of St Stephen in Caphargamala.[30] In all, a closer examination of the evidence shows that in the early cult of relics the practice of dismembering bodies was at best very rare both among the Greeks and Romans. It is very probable that in the later period this custom developed first in the East, though, as we will see, it happened rather in Syriac or Armenian and not Greek-speaking milieux.[31] Only subsequently the new practice reached the West and it is perfectly possible that the Church of Rome was reluctant to accept it even then for a while. Yet all this process, the beginning of which can be traced in the early 6th-century evidence from Armenia and the end in the late 6th-century papal letters quoted above, was quite swift and we can hardly see a long period in which the habits of the two parts of Christendom in this field differed.

Regional and universal customs

The issue of dismembering the bodies of the saints shows that one has to be cautious in making a strict and general distinction between eastern and western ways of dealing with relics, but it is still worth asking the question of whether diverse regions of Christendom differed in this respect. The general answer is 'yes', but the problem is that in many cases we cannot say if a specific practice was local, regional, or universal. Our sources rarely claim that a custom was endemic to a region and, as we have seen, even if they do, they are not always to be trusted. Moreover, our evidence is not abundant enough to make us sure that a practice attested only in one place was unknown in others. In Egypt, for instance, relics were used in a divinatory procedure which consisted in drawing oracular lots in shrines of martyrs, probably at their tombs. Several hundreds of such tickets were found in the sanctuaries of St Philoxenos in Oxyrhynchus and St Kollouthos in Antinoe.[32] We do not hear of a similar practice from other parts of the Christian world (the only exception is a single mention in Gregory of Tours[33]). Yet this silence may be due to the general attitude of ecclesiastical writers toward Christian divination. On one hand, they considered it suspicious and so rarely advertised it. But on the other hand, they found it less harmful than pagan oracular methods, and so did not openly condemn it either.[34] And

[30] Gaudentius of Brescia, *Tractatus* 17.12; Lucian, *Revelatio s. Stephani* B 48-9.

[31] See below.

[32] A. Delattre, 'L'oracle de Kollouthos à Antinoé. Nouvelles perspectives', in *Oracoli, visioni, profezie. L'Egitto da Alessandro il Grande all'Alto Medioevo*, Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni 79/1 (Rome, 2013), 123-33 (the author prepares a more substantial study on this topic).

[33] Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum* 9.2.

[34] This can be seen also in other Christian divinatory methods such as Bible divination (Augustine, *Ep.* 55.20) and the use of sets of divinatory answers: W. Klingshirn, 'Defining the *Sortes Sanctorum*: Gibbon, Du Cange and Early Christian Lot Divination', *JECS* 10 (2002), 77-130 and A.-M. Luijendijk, *Forbidden Oracles?: The Gospel of the Lots of Mary* (Tübingen, 2014).

Egypt is the only region in which scraps of papyri which were thrown on a heap of rubbish in the 6th century could survive until now. Had they not survived we would not know about this practice, for the literary evidence from Egypt does not mention it. Thus in this case I suspect that the custom, which is attested only locally, could actually be widespread.

However, it was certainly not always so. We know, for instance, from the anonymous Pilgrim of Piacenza that in the second half of the 6th century the head of John the Baptist was displayed in a glass jar in Emesa. It is a most interesting piece of evidence, because the practice of displaying relics or even holding them in glass receptacles is not attested in other parts of the empire. In this case I tend to think that the custom which the pilgrim saw in Emesa was unique. For if in the study of most practices concerning relics we have to rely on textual evidence, which is often vague, the methods of storing relics are known to us thanks to good archaeological material. And this material does not show parallels to the jar from Emesa.[35] We can possibly say why this particular type of reliquary appeared in Emesa and not elsewhere. Now, what was displayed in this city was the second head of John the Baptist, the first being held in Constantinople from the end of the 4th century.[36] Thus one can suppose that this specific relic was put into a transparent reliquary, because it was necessary to prove that Emesa really had it. All in all, a custom attested in just one place could be, but did not have to be, really local, and only the analysis of the context in which it is mentioned can suggest if it really was.

While it is more interesting to concentrate on regional differences, what our evidence shows better are striking similarities, particularly of beliefs concerning relics. Their functions were essentially the same everywhere. The relics were expected above all to expel demons and heal diseases, and the sources which tell us about it come from every part of the Christian world.[37] They were also expected to protect the cities: here the evidence is less abundant, but that may result from the fact that the situations in which a city was besieged, but not seized, and so could attribute its salvation to relics, were not that numerous.

[35] For the reliquaries see H. Buschhausen, *Die spätrömischen Metallscrinia und frühchristlichen Reliquiare* (Vienna, 1971); A. Mintschev, *Early Christian Reliquaries from Bulgaria (4th-6th century AD)* (Varna, 2003); M.C. Comte, *Les reliquaires du Proche-Orient et de Chypre à la période protobyzantine (IVe-VIIIe siècles). Formes, emplacements, fonctions et cultes* (Turnhout, 2012); G. Noga-Banai, *The Trophies of the Martyrs: An Art Historical Study of Early Christian Silver Reliquaries* (Oxford, 2008); A. Aydin, *Reliquaries of the Sarcophagus Type* (Antalya, 2011); and generally A.-M. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult, and Community* (Cambridge, 2009); Pilgrim of Piacenza, *Itinerarium* 4.6.

[36] The first head of John the Baptist: Sozomen, *HE* VII 21; see also *Chronicon Paschale*, *s.a.* 391; the second head: *Chronicon Paschale*, *s.a.* 453; Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, *s.a.* 453.

[37] The earliest evidence of the tombs of saints as sources of power able to heal the sick, expel demons and predict the future: Gregory of Nazianzus, *C. Const.* 1.69.

Still, the conviction that the saints care about places where their bodies were deposited was widespread.[38]

Another belief which was widely shared in diverse parts of Christendom is the conviction that the power of relics can be transmitted in a physical way. Already in the 5th century in distant regions of the Mediterranean we can see the very same need of being as close to the remains of saints as possible in order to enter into contact with their power. In Gaul, Germanus of Auxerre always carried with him a small chest with relics and so did Peter the Iberian in Palestine.[39] In Africa a pious woman with a paralysed face inserted her head into a niche containing relics of St Stephen, because she wanted not just to touch them, but to touch them with the suffering part of her body.[40] Later evidence shows that this practice did not change. At the beginning of the 7th century in Constantinople, a deacon with inguinal hernia rubbed his private parts against the angle of the sarcophagus of St Artemios.[41]

Thus the need for physical proximity is attested in many places. However, before the 6th century the old taboo of touching the dead was not altogether gone, the tombs of saints were not opened at will, and direct access to relics was limited. In consequence, diverse methods of an indirect contact appeared. For our interest it is important to remark that many of them developed independently and remained most popular locally, even if subsequently they were exported to other regions. And here there was a diversity. A good example of a region in which we can see and sometimes explain the emergence of local customs, some of which were subsequently adapted elsewhere, is Syria. In the Limestone Massif in north-western Syria, for instance, many stone reliquaries were equipped with a system of pipes which permitted the circulation of oil, poured in by a hole in the lid, flowing over the relics, and collected at an outlet below.[42] Such reliquaries were not unknown in other regions, one of them was discovered recently in Marseille.[43] But in the Limestone Massif, renowned for its oil production, they seem to be standard equipment; dozens of them were found *in situ* during the excavation of churches in this region. The case of the reliquary found in Marseille may be quite special, because this city managed to keep commercial contacts with the East after the fall of the empire in the West.[44]

[38] A.M. Orselli, *L'idea e il culto del santo patrono cittadino nella letteratura latina cristiana* (Bologna, 1965).

[39] Constantius of Lyon, *Vita Germani* 4, 15, 43; *Vita Petri Iberi* 34 and 144.

[40] *Liber de miraculis s. Stephani* 2.2.6.

[41] *Miracula s. Artemii* 21.

[42] See M.-T. Canivet, 'Le Reliquaire à huile de la grande église de Huarte (Syrie)', *Syria* 55 (1978), 153-62; M.-Ch. Comte, *Les reliquaires du Proche-Orient* (2012), 110-2.

[43] M. Moliner, 'La Basilique funéraire de la rue Malaval à Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône)', *Gallia* 63 (2006), 131-6.

[44] See D. Pieri, M. Bonifay, 'Amphores du Ve au VIIe s. à Marseille: nouvelles données sur la typologie et le contenu', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 8 (1995), 94-120, 106-14.

Thus this case shows both that local practices proliferated and that their success abroad was often limited.

Another Syriac custom was that of producing the *hnana*.[45] The word means a 'grace' in Syriac, but like the Greek term *eulogia*, that is a 'blessing', it could be used with reference to a material object.[46] *Hnana* was a mixture of oil, water and dust from the place where a saint lived or was buried, which the faithful received as a healing relic. The habit of collecting dust from the holy place is attested also in Egypt, the Caucasus, Cappadocia, and Gaul,[47] but the use of a specific mixture and the technical term suggests that in Syria, unlike in other regions, it was a standard way of making contact relics, specific for this region.

Local background

It is interesting to ask whether diverse ways of handling and venerating relics reflected pre-existing funeral or other local habits. In some cases they almost certainly did. For instance, in Egypt where the massive transfer of bodies of the martyrs from cemeteries to martyria had started already before 370, physical contact with relics was probably facilitated by the fact that the separation of the living and the dead was there traditionally less strict than in other regions.[48]

More interestingly, some specific customs concerning relics, rooted in local tradition, are attested in Persia and neighbouring regions. In his early 6th-century *History of Armenia* Łazar Parpetsi tells an interesting story about a curious way of turning the bodies of St Łewond and his fellow-martyrs into relics. It runs as follows:

> Then they cleaned off from the saints' bones their sweet-smelling flesh which they wrapped in linen-cloth in a worthy manner and carefully buried with honour in the desert. Taking the bones they brought them to the capital and kept them in secret for many days. Then quietly they began to give them to some of the virtuous Christians who were in the army. Those who received them counted it a token of salvation for their souls and bodies.[49]

[45] John of Ephesus, *Vitae sanctorum orientalium* 4; *Vita Syriaca Symeonis Stylitae*, p. 565, 568-9, 588, 594, 607; *Canons of Marutha* 64.

[46] For the term eulogia used in a very similar way as *hnana*, that is in reference to a contact relic made out of dust, see *Vita Symeonis Stylitae Iunioris* 163.2; 232.25; 236.16. See also V. Foskolou, 'Blessing for Sale? On the Production and Distribution of Pilgrim Mementoes in Byzantium', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 105 (2012), 53-84.

[47] Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum* 8.6; *History of the Albanians* 1.19; Paphnoutios (of Scetis), *Stories of the Monks of the Desert*, fol. 44b-45b; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 24.18 (on St Cyprian).

[48] B. Borg, 'The Dead as a Guest at Table? Continuity and Change in the Egyptian Cult of the Dead', in M.L. Bierbrier (ed.), *Portraits and Masks* (London, 1997), 26-32.

[49] Łazar Parpetsi, *History of Armenia* 103, trans. R.W. Thomson.

In this story, which is a very early witness to the practice of dividing and distributing corporal relics, the bodies or rather flesh of the martyrs is properly buried, but only after being separated from the bones, and only the latter are destined for distribution and further protective use. In another passage the same author tells that Christians venerated bones, teeth and nails, that is only the hard parts of the body.[50] Was it a local custom? At first sight it does not seem so, for in Late Antiquity we can hardly find any mention of soft tissue relics.[51] But normally the bones were obtained after natural and long decomposition of the body in the grave.[52] In this case this process was somehow accelerated, and since it took place in Armenia, which switched to Christianity from Zoroastrianism, this practice can be attributed to the influence of Persian funeral customs. The Zoroastrians exposed the bodies of the dead to wild animals, carrion birds, and elements in order to clean pure bones out of unclean flesh.[53] In the episode quoted by Łazar Parpetsi the custom was Christianized, for the flesh was buried, which was contrary to the Zoroastrian rules. Still, it was buried somewhere in the desert, was not taken into the city, and did not become a relic. The influence of Zoroastrian sensibility can be found also in the 7th-century Syriac story of the Martyrs of Beit Garmai, who died in times of king Chosraw II, for according to this text their final burial took place only a year after death, 'when the flesh fell off from the bones'.[54]

Spreading new customs

Local practices certainly could spread through the Christian world, though it is often difficult to say if parallel customs, found in different regions, should be explained by an import or independent development, based on the commonly shared convictions. Gregory of Tours for instance names diverse contact relics used in 6th-century Lyon. In this city, he says, one could see:

… an immense crowd of people near the tomb [of St Nicetius], buzzing around like a swarm of happy bees around their familiar hive, some taking from the priest in attendance

[50] *Ibid*. 2.50.

[51] Only in late, most probably eight-century *Martyrdom of Lukianos* we find the relics of his intestines, distributed miraculously among several churches, but this text is known only thanks to a Georgian translation, dating most probably from the 8th century (*Kartuli agiograpiuli literaturis zeglebi*, Kimeni II, ed. K. Kekelidze (Tbilisi, 1963), 3-16, see N. Aleksidze, *Cult of Saints Project* database, record E 01717).

[52] In Baudonivia's *Vita Radegundis* 14 we find an instructive passage showing that a corporal relic (meaning a bone) can be obtained only by careful examination of the saint's skeleton in hope that one of the bones will detach by itself.

[53] See D. Huff, 'Archaeological Evidence for Zoroastrian Funerary Practices', in M. Stausberg (ed.), *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context* (Leiden, 2004), 593-630.

[54] *Martyrdom of the Ten Martyrs of Beth Garmai*, in *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, ed. P. Bedjan (Paris, Leipzig, 1890-1897), vol. IV 184-8.

pieces of wax as holy objects (*benedictio*), others a little dust, and others plucked and went away with a few threads from the fringe of the tomb-covering, all thus carrying off for different purposes the same grace (*gratia*) of health.[55]

In principle, the practice of collecting wax, dust, and pieces of cloth which had any contact with relics could develop in Gaul independently, for the conviction that the relics heal by touch and that whatever touched them was imbued with their power[56] was shared in diverse parts of Christendom. However, an almost technical use of the words *benedictio* and *gratia* in reference to contact relics, with the same meaning as the Greeks used the term *eulogia* and the Syriacs *hnana* may suggest that these customs were brought to Gaul directly from over the sea.

New customs could arrive in a region in diverse ways. Sometimes they were brought together with new relics, transferred from distant countries. It is not easy to assess how frequent these transfers were. On one hand, the number of *translationes* which are known to us is limited.[57] And yet relics probably travelled more frequently than we can see it in the sources, for besides major corporal relics transferred solemnly, deposited in churches, and then immortalised in inscriptions or literary evidence, there was a substantial private and lay import of relics, which is only incidentally mentioned in the evidence.[58] Augustine tells about the dust from the Holy Land, which an ex-military tribune received from his friend and hung on the wall in order to protect the bedroom in his manor near Hippo.[59] Gregory of Tours mentions a Syriac merchant in Marseille who hid St Sergius' finger-bone in the wall of his house.[60] Most small transfers of relics, however, had little chance of finding their way into late antique texts. Still, they were probably as important for the spread of new customs as the solemn, official transfers. We cannot be sure if the habit of hanging or hiding relics in one's house, which was alluded to both by Augustine and Gregory of Tours, came to Africa and Gaul together with relics brought respectively from Palestine and Syria, but it is very probable that it did so.

[55] Gregory of Tours, *Liber vitae patrum* 8.6.

[56] This idea is expressed in Gregory of Tours' famous description of weighing pieces of cloth before and after placing them on the tomb of St Peter. They get heavier, because they are soaked with divine power (*Liber in gloria martyrum* 27).

[57] The *Cult of Saints* project which aims to collect the entire evidence of this phenomenon up to 700 AD is far from being completed at the time of writing these words, but we already know the names of several thousand saints venerated in Late Antiquity and those whose relics are attested beyond the region of their death are few. For the project see: <http://cultofsaints.modhist.ox.ac.uk>.

[58] See *e.g.* the privately owned *memoria* of Gervasius and Protasius in an estate called Victoriana, 30 miles from Hippo: Augustine, *De civitate* 22.8; Sylvia: Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 31.1; nieces of Basil: Gaudentius, *Tractatus* 17.15.

[59] Augustine, *De civitate* 22.8.

[60] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 7.31.

The relics, and customs, obviously travelled mostly westward from the East, rich in its biblical saints and martyrs, but the opposite direction was not entirely uncommon.[61] Gregory of Tours, whose writings are an irreplaceable source for the study of customs in late antique Gaul, mentions the practice of making an infusion out of leaves or grass growing at tombs of saints, which could be a local or regional practice. But he also says that some merchants exported to the East leaves of the laurel tree growing at the tomb of St Baudilius in Nîmes.[62] This could be simply an advertisement of the power of a Gallic saint, but there is no reason to think that the Easterners were not interested in western relics and practices if they came across them.

New practices could have been brought home also without relics. In a letter discussing the diversity of liturgical customs in the Church, Augustine says that some people, when abroad, obstinately follow their own country's habits, while others refuse to do it even at home 'from preference for that which they have seen abroad, supposing that wisdom is increased in proportion to the distance to which men travel from home'.[63] Indeed, in late antique evidence we can find accounts of travellers to distant countries who described, among other matters, practices related to the cult of relics. Some of them seem to have been unknown in the regions from which the travellers came, and still did not raise outrage, disgust, or shock. [64] They incited rather curiosity if not enthusiasm. The same pilgrim of Piacenza, who venerated the head of John the Baptist placed in a glass jar, refers also to another practice which he witnessed to in the basilica of Sion in Jerusalem in the following way:

> There I saw a human skull enclosed in a golden case, adorned with precious stones, which they say is that of the martyr Theodota, from which many drink for a blessing, and I drank.[65]

Obviously, we cannot say if the Pilgrim of Piacenza tried to adapt this custom back at home, but he seems to have been eager to do so – his reaction does not show any trace of reserve. And that is certainly the spirit which made diverse practices proliferate in the Mediterranean.

Interestingly, before the 6th century there is not much evidence of the massive transfer of new customs between diverse parts of the western Mediterranean. Rome, the only city which could have played a unifying role in this respect did so to a limited degree, because it became a pilgrimage centre much later than

[61] See H.A. Klein, 'Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004), 283-314.

[62] Gregory of Tours, *Liber in Gloria martyrum* 77; see also *Liber vitae patrum* 6.7.

[63] Augustine, *Ep.* 54.3

[64] See: Piacenza Pilgrim, *passim*; Gregory of Tours (story of a pilgrim to Rome), *Liber in gloria martyrum* 27; Evagrius, *HE* II 3 (tomb of St Euphemia at Chalcedon).

[65] Piacenza Pilgrim, *Itinerarium* 22, trans. A. Stewart.

the Holy Land, and its relics policy was largely negative.[66] Rome kept the bones of its saints hidden and was reluctant to share them for longer than other cities, and so had a lesser impact on customs concerning at least corporal relics than the churches which were more ready to distribute their saints.[67] There is also no evidence that Rome tried to impose its habits in this domain on other western churches. Neither did western councils play such a role, for they rarely dealt with relics. The council of Carthage (411) permitted the construction of *memoriae sanctorum* only in the places where relics were deposited, and the council of Epaone (517) forbade keeping relics in rural estates, but this is all.[68] If we add to this that the Western Mediterranean of Late Antiquity was not a closed economic area, tightly connected by commercial ties and at the same time separated from the East,[69] we cannot point out a mechanism which would have created distinct western customs in the field of the cult of relics.

To sum up, the very idea of the cult of relics, and the basic beliefs and needs in this domain, were widely shared in the Christian world of late antiquity. The ways in which these needs were satisfied were diverse and often developed locally, sometimes on the basis of earlier regional customs, sometimes in response to specific needs. People who came across new practices, either in their own countries or during their travels, often accepted them enthusiastically. This helped to spread these practices throughout Christendom and there were no barriers in this field which were really impossible to cross. The persistence of local diversity should be attributed, then, to limited contacts and a lack of interest in making the cult of relics homogeneous rather than to any profoundly different views on how the remains of saints should be venerated.

[66] D. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in Middle Ages* (Woolbridge, 1998), 23-37 suggests that the pilgrimages to Rome had started already in the 4th century, in parallel with those to the Holy Land, but does not quote a single piece of evidence for this earlier than the 6th century.

[67] J. McCullough, 'From Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change in Papal Relic Policy from the 6th to the 8th Century', in E. Dassmann and K. Suso Frank (eds), *Pietas. Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting* (Münster, 1980), 313-24.

[68] *Registri ecclesiae Carthaginensis excerpta* 83; *Concilium Epaonense* 18.

[69] About the complicated patterns of the long-distance trade of Late Antiquity see B. Ward-Perkins, 'Specialized production and exchange', in A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins and M. Whitby (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History* 14 (Cambridge, 2000), 346-91, esp. 369-77.

ASCETICA

‘Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything’ (*AP* Moses 6): How the Physical Environment Shaped the Spirituality of Early Egyptian Monasticism*

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Abstract

The following study proposes a re-evaluation of literary sources about early Egyptian Monasticism, in light of the recent developments of ‘cognitive archaeology’, a discipline which looks for ‘physical markers of religious acts’, to ask how landscape as physical space affects spirituality. The article focuses specifically on the role of desert in *The Life of Anthony* (365 AD) by Athanasius and on the geography of the cell in which the first Egyptian monks trained themselves into ascetic practice, as depicted by Palladius’ *Lausiac History* (419-420 AD). The leading question is whether or not the desert’s landscape and the spatiality of the cell should be considered to have a transformative effect on the spirituality of the different ascetic movements. After discussing the model of spatial discourse established by the desert theme in the *Life of Anthony*, I will proceed to the close reading of a later and often overlooked source, the *Lausiac History*, to show the continuity of the environmental theme at the literary level and how it influenced the formation of monastic spirituality along the early centuries. In this analysis I will suggest a different perspective on the application of cross-disciplinary approaches to literary texts borrowed from ‘cognitive archaeology’ and on the way in which they complement the reading of literary accounts of saints’ *Lives* and disclose their strong ties with the surrounding environment. In examining the portrait of the early Egyptian saints, I will finally argue that the supposedly intimate space of the cell has, actually, been fundamental in shaping the relations between the first monks and their surrounding ecclesiastical and imperial context.

The following study proposes a re-evaluation of literary sources about early Egyptian Monasticism, in light of the recent developments of ‘cognitive archaeology’, a discipline which looks for ‘physical markers of religious acts’, to ask how landscape as physical space affected spirituality.[1] The article focuses

* I have adopted the following abbreviations for recurrent citations: AP = *Apophthegmata Patrum. Patrologia Graeca* LXV, 71-440 (by name and number of the saying and column).

HL = Palladius, *The Lausiac History*, ed. Robert T. Meyer (London, 1965).

[1] Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, ‘Redrawing a Portrait of Egyptian Monasticism’, in David Blanks, Michael Frassetto and Amy Lavingstone (eds), *Medieval Monks and Their World: Ideas and Realities: Studies in honor of Richard Sullivan* (Leiden, 2006), 11-34. See also Roger S. Bagnall,

Studia Patristica XCI, 299-312.
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specifically on the role of desert in *The Life of Anthony* (365 AD) by Athanasius and on the geography of the cell in which the first Egyptian monks trained themselves into ascetic practice, as depicted by Palladius' *Lausiac History* (419-420 AD). The leading question is whether or not the desert's landscape and the spatiality of the cell should be considered to have a transformative effect on the spirituality of the different ascetic movements.

Before the archaeological excavation in the 1980s, Christian monasticism in Egypt was generally categorized according a two-tiered model: while the earlier desert Fathers retired from urban communities in the pursuit of isolation, in 346 AD Pachomius (292-348 AD) decided to give a more organized communal life to his disciples and established the first coenobitic community of monks at Tabenna in Upper Egypt. As Kalvesmaki recently noted, the only writing left behind by Pachomius are thirteen brief epistles – 'all terse, all puzzling'.[2] Thus the best way to obtain insights on the life of coenobitic communities rests on historiographical accounts of Pachomius' life and his monastic *Rules* whose complex literary tradition has been exhaustively presented by Philip Rousseau already in 1999.[3] Literary sources provide better documentation for the life of the earlier desert Fathers, in particular upon the life of the first and most famous hermit of early Egyptian monasticism, Anthony the Anchorite (251-356 AD). Father and founder of ascetic monasticism in the western desert of Alexandria, Anthony's life is celebrated in Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* already in the mid-fourth century AD. This literary account established a very successful and influential model of monastic *Lives* for the following centuries and its influence on the conception of monastic rules and spaces can be traced in the Graeco-Roman world from soon after its appearance.[4] In this work, the notion of 'desert' is a particularly relevant one and I argue that its appreciation is necessary in order to properly evaluate other discourses of spatiality exhibited by later sources of monastic literature, such as the *Lausiac History*. Thus, after discussing the model of spatial discourse established by the desert theme in the *Life of Anthony*, I will proceed to the closer reading of a later and often overlooked literary source, the *Lausiac History*, to show the continuity of the environmental theme at the literary level and how it influenced the formation

Egypt in Late Antiquity (Princeton, 2003), 4-5; Edwin Judge, 'Fourth Century Monasticism in the Papyri', in *Proceedings of the XVIth International Congress of Papyrology* (Chico, 1981), 613-20; Elzbieta Makowiecka, 'Excavations in Kellia, 1987-1988: Kom 39-40 at Qusur Hegeila', *Archaeologia* 44 (1993), 103-12, 103.

[2] Joel Kalvesmaki, 'Pachomius and the Mystery of the Letters', in Blake Leyerle, Robert Darling Young (eds), *Ascetic Culture – Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau* (Notre Dame, 2013), 1-19, 1.

[3] Philip Rousseau, *The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1999), 37-57.

[4] Malcolm Choat, 'The Life of Anthony in Egypt', in B. Leyerle, R.D. Young (eds), *Ascetic Culture* (2013), 2-26.

of monastic spirituality along the early centuries. In this analysis I will suggest a different perspective on the application of cross-disciplinary approaches to literary texts borrowed from 'cognitive archaeology' and on the way in which they complement the reading of literary accounts of saints' *Lives*.[5] This section intends to underline the increasing impact of the environmental theme in shaping later literary sources about monasticism and to function as an example of the kind of complementary reading that 'cognitive archaeology' can provide when applied to literary sources. Lastly, I will examine the new portrait of early monasticism and point to some peculiar aspects of early asceticism as they appear from the spatial analysis of the monk in his cell. In particular, I will argue that the supposedly intimate space of the cell has, in fact, been fundamental in shaping the relations between the first monks and their surrounding ecclesiastical and imperial environment.

1. *Status quaestionis*: Are literary constructions of the monastic space to be understood only in spiritual terms?

In fourth century Egypt, ascetic Christians embraced a life, which demanded spatial withdrawal (*anachoresis*) from the social world of the villages and towns to the isolation of the desert. In reading many of their texts, the reader is struck by the importance of space for the ascetic lifestyle. 'Whether it be Antony locked in his desert fortress, the tightly arranged cells of *Kellia* in the *Apopthegmata Patrum*, or the landscape of the desert as prominent feature of much hagiographical literature, the space in which the early Christians practiced ascetic renunciation was as infused with meaning as the ascetic practices themselves'.[6]

Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* is the first literary portrait of an Egyptian desert hermit by a Christian theologian. This work accounts for the extensive numbers of *anachorites* that increasingly populated Egyptian desert by the year 357 AD, a phenomenon that prompted Athanasius himself to claim that 'the desert has been transformed into a city by monks who left their own people [in the towns and cities] and devoted their lives to secure a place in heaven'.[7] The *Life of Anthony* reflects Athanasius' vision of Anthony's uniqueness as a role model of deep devotion and as a triumphant hero over paganism and unorthodox belief.[8] The desert's landscape plays a fundamental role in shaping Athanasius'

[5] D.L. Hedstrom, 'Redrawing a Portrait' (2006), 20-34.

[6] Caroline T. Schroeder, '"A suitable abode for Christ:" The Church Building as Symbol of Ascetic Renunciation in Early Monasticism', *Church History* 73 (2004), 472-521, 472.

[7] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 14 (PG 26, 865), my translation.

[8] See the discussions of the *Life of Anthony* in three chapters by Averil Cameron, 'Form and Meaning: the *Vita Constantini* and the *Vita Antonii*', 72-89; Philip Rousseau, 'Antony as Teacher in the Greek Life', 89-110; and Samuel Rubenson, 'Philosophy and Simplicity: The Problem of

image of asceticism. In fact, Athanasius makes *anachoresis*, the monk's withdrawal to the desert, an essential message of his *Life*, in which Anthony's virtues are perfected according to the ever further withdrawal from humanity into the isolation of the desert.

Some would argue that the binary opposition between the desert and the city in early monastic literature is merely a metaphor rhetorically used by authors to comply with polemical warnings against the moral dangers and pitfalls of urban and ecclesiastical life.[9] To explain why the ascetic monk came to play such an important role in the society of the fourth and fifth centuries, Peter Brown identifies the desert's landscape as the main factor in shaping the history of both Syrian and Egyptian monasticism.[10] In Egypt, in particular, the antithesis between the desert and the settled land was so stark that Brown believes it 'exercised a discreet and irresistible pressure in the direction of an inward-looking and earnest attention to the hard business of [spiritual] survival'.[11] For the society around him, then, the holy man was the man who could stand outside the ties of his family, and of the economic interest. By going to live in the desert, the holy man stood in close identification with the divine kingdom at the opposite pole of all human society. In this sense, the *Life of Anthony* seems to represent the late Antique response to the ideal of oracles and divination in the ancient world, where sanctity and prophecy were sought for in places where the spirit of the divine was secluded enough not to be threatened by human sin: 'While the Great One (Anthony) is still alive … go to him … and wait until Anthony comes out from the cave and refer the case to him. And whatever he says to you, go by his decision, for God speaks to you by him'.[12]

Also in Goehring's view, the theme of the desert's landscape worked as an ideology both in ancient contemporary writings and their reception by the modern critique.[13] Athanasius draws a direct connection between his hero's increasing ascetic power and his withdrawal from the inhabited world (*oikoumene*) deeper and deeper into the desert. In so doing, the *Life of Anthony* portrays an ascetic landscape (the desert) innocent of the ecclesiastical and theological divisions that were troubling the Church at the time. The text fosters the assumption that the remaining ascetics would conform to the Athanasian model in which, for instance, there was no mention of Arian or Melitian communities. The text

Classical Education in Early Christian Biography', 110-40 in Tomas Hagg and Philip Rousseau (eds), *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2000).

[9] James Goehring, 'The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993), 281-96.

[10] Peter Brown, 'The rise and function of Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80-101, 91-2.

[11] *Ibid*. 83.

[12] *HL* 20.7

[13] James Goehring, 'The Dark Side of Landscape: Ideology and Power in the Christian Myth of the Desert', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003), 437-51, 440.

offers the reader a mythical unity by which the unorthodox and schismatic ascetics have all disappeared.[14]

However, a closer reading of this monastic account suggests that the division between the city and the desert does not simply reiterate the common dichotomy between the complexity of city life and the simplicity of pastoral settings. Rather, it offers a radical opposite version of the view that associates the areas of human habitation with life and the desert with death. The author of the *Life of Anthony* depicts the desert's landscape as the most desirable battleground against the demoniac since evil spirits have fewer places to hide in it. Thus, the desert's landscape offers the monk a favourable space in which he can gain better clarity on the reality and nature of evil. While in the desert, Anthony summons his monks to keep their perseverance in the fight against the wiles of Satan:

> The demons, therefore, if they see all Christians, and monks especially, labouring cheerfully and advancing, first make an attack by temptation and place hindrances to hamper our way, to wit, evil thoughts. But need not fear their suggestions, for by prayer, fasting, and faith in the Lord their attack immediately fails.[15]

The desert's landscape, therefore, does not merely carry a metaphorical significance of spiritual truthfulness against the falsehood of urban life. Its physical reality, as portrayed by the literary text, is indissolubly intertwined with the ascetic goal of the monk, *i.e.* to reject the mortal world and gain a place in heaven. In this, the desert makes the struggle against evil easier, only in the sense that it makes it more direct. The author of the *Life of Anthony*, thus, portrays the desert as the natural home for demons[16] and depicts the desert monks as those engaged in the effort of expanding Christian civilization into the realms of Satan.[17]

The widespread success of Athanasius' *Life* continued to influence early Christian monastic accounts. The increasing impact of the desert's landscape as a real factor shaping Christian spirituality because of its physical and geographical features is best detected in later readings of the early sources. The *Lausiac History*, for instance, shows an earlier authentic prologue that was originally less focused on the explicit connection between the desert's landscape and asceticism: 'I shall leave unmentioned no one in the cities, or in the villages, or in the desert. For we are concerned not with the place where they settled, but rather it is their way of life that we seek' (*HL* Prologue 16). Palladius' disinterest for the geographical settlement of his monks, however, seems

[14] *Ibid*. 442.

[15] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 23 (PG 26, 948), in Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (NPNF)* Series II, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988).

[16] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 13 (PG 26, 861C); 8 (PG 26, 856A).

[17] James Gohering, 'The Encroaching Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt' (1993), 281-96, 282-3.

to undergo a change in the words of the later author of the foreword. Commencing the reading of this second edition, one is informed that 'in this book is recorded the wonderfully virtuous and ascetic lives of the holy fathers, monks, and anchorites of the desert' (*HL* Foreword 1), and a little further in the prologue the author claims that he 'had travelled on foot and looked into every cave and cabin in the desert with all accuracy and pious motive' (*HL* Foreword 5). In this second forward, the reader is given more programmatic details about the monastic ties to the desert's landscape than what had been previously reported. While the first Palladius did not make explicit reference to the evidence of early monastic settings included in his work, the editor of his work believed it important to specify the heavy presence of geographical markers spread throughout the account, and in particular those connected to desert hermits.[18] Thus, the reader whose copy of the *Lausiac History* began with this second foreword was more inclined to read the entire text as an account of the desert's ascetics and to bear in mind the physical and geographical coordinates disseminated in the texts as relevant elements of their identity. Keeping this complex influence of the desert's landscape in mind, early monastic literature on ascetic saints, with its emphasis on *anachoresis*, appears to build on the visual as well as on the metaphorical significance of the monastic geography. For this reason, I will now offer a reading of the physical markers contained in the *Lausiac History* and show the conscious development of a literary as well as a geographical design.

2. The geography of the cell in the *Lausiac History*

Darlene Hedstrom's contribution on the geography of the cell in early monastic literature is the leading study that first attempted to relate archaeological evidence of Egyptian monastic remains with literary constructions of monastic space.[19] Through her narration of monastic geography, she maintains that the space of the cell triggered a spiritual transformation of the monks' interior life and she makes use of sociological and archaeological evidence to illustrate the emphasis placed upon locative transformations in literary sources.

> Training in the exterior life would manifest itself in the training of the interior will; by staying within the built cell, one could learn to stay in the presence of God. The *Life of Antony* speaks little of how Antony conceived of this final step of interpreting the use of his dwelling, but the sayings of the early Desert Fathers suggest that the monks were already transferring knowledge to encourage monks to seek God, to gaze upon God, and to dwell with God both in and out of the cell.[20]

[18] *Ibid*. 444.

[19] D.L. Hedstrom, 'The Geography of the Monastic Cell in Early Egyptian Monastic Literature', *Church History* 78 (2009), 756-91.

[20] *Ibid*. 790-1.

I shall build on Hedstrom's argument on the role of the monastic space of the cell in the formation of ascetic spirituality. However, my focus on the literary sources, and in particular on the *Lausiac History*, intends to establish the impact that literary constructions of the monastic space had in shaping old and new discourses on spatiality. According to my reading, the geographical significance of the cell in the formation of the monk's interior life is not primarily a physical but rather a literary construct, whose rhetorical development greatly influenced later monastic representations. The monk's spiritual journey through the space of the cell is first reflected in the heightened measure of self-consciousness at the level of the writing of the journey, and, in particular, its power to impact the hearer. The series of physical markers present in the narrative link the geographical subtext to the virtues of the monk and to his voyage towards heaven. The author's treatment of monastic space thus aspires to accomplish a transfer from literature to history through the 'sacralization' of the physical surroundings and to draw the reader into it. In this way, the author's missionary or conversionary scope ultimately shapes the way in which the geography of the cell informs monastic spirituality.

The *Lausiac* testimony about ascetic practices performed in the space of the cell suggests three ways in which the physical space creates spiritual meaning:[21] the first is the cognition of the cell as a realm for training against evil in order to enable the monk to achieve his heavenly citizenship. In sociology, the belief that a lived space, such as the cell, may have the ability to shape spiritual practices of individuals and communities is an illustration of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*.[22] For Bourdieu there is a system of dispositions, attitudes or behaviours, which create memories within a social space and foster attraction towards such space. These memories can, of course, change or be modified by lived experience; but it is the nexus between the physical reality and the emotional associations created in it and by it that affects the spiritual formation of an individual.[23] It is certainly possible to view this concept at work in early monastic accounts. However, a caveat is needed here to contextualize the use of such anachronistic and theoretical principles. In light of the testimony of the *Lausiac History*, one must observe that it is not the application of 'cognitive archaeology' that primarily sheds light upon the spatial discourse present in the literary sources; rather it is the literariness itself that is constructed with a spatial meaning.

When Palladius intends to exemplify the spiritual benefits achieved by the physical training performed in the cell, he recounts how the monk Dorotheus never lied on a mat or allowed himself to stretch out his body when he slept. Instead, the author reports that Dorotheus spent sixty years in his cave 'collecting stones all day long in the burning heat along the sea and building cells for

[21] *Ibid*. 760.
[22] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977).
[23] D.L. Hedstrom, 'The Geography of the Monastic Cell' (2009), 760.

those who could not build their own, finishing one each year' (*HL* 2.2). In this literary image, the monk's virtue is not only perfected through his physical training in the cell, rather the geography of this space constitutes the very fabric of his virtue, the spatial dimension that shapes the specific qualities exhibited by Dorotheus. Another example in which Palladius constructs his spatial rhetoric is given by the account of John of Lycopolis, a monk whose spiritual virtue is associated to the capacity of building himself three different cells: 'one cell was for bodily needs, he ate and worked in the second; in the third one he prayed' (*HL* 35.1). Through this image, the author of the *Lausiac History* underlines once more his fondness of the theoretical nexus between the geographical space of the cell and the creation of its metaphorical meaning for the life of the monks.

The second way, in which the *Lausiac History* shows the intimate relation between the geography of the cell and the monks' spiritual formation, relies upon the efficacy of the monastic training performed in the cell in fostering the idea of the sacredness of such space. According to this argument, the *Lausiac History* not only reveals the way in which the cell shapes the development and elaboration of the monks' spiritual virtues. It also illustrates the formation of a specific spatial rhetoric whereby the monks articulate the educative role of their physical environment, in particular of the cell, in equipping them to encounter the divine. This is the testimony of John the Little as he says: 'Watching means to sit in the cell and be always mindful to God. This is what is meant by "I was on the watch and God came to me"' (*Matth.* 25:36).[24] In these words, the cell appears to be the only place where prayer and communion with God can be maintained outside the Eucharistic table. 'Within the geography of the cell, belief and practice work as performative rituals that lead to the internalization of the cell within the heart and mind of the monk. The cell thus becomes an image of the interior cell in which God dwells'.[25]

The last theme that reflects the performative role of the physical markers in shaping the literariness of the *Lausiac History* is represented by the embodiment of the geographical space of the cell within the spiritual reality of the monk.[26] Palladius tells us that one of the peculiarities of the monk Nathaniel was to stay 'so much in his cell, in order that he might not weaken in his resolution' (*HL* 16.1). Seeing this, a demon visited Nathanial and attempted to weaken his relationship with his cell. Nathanial is won over, as 'he seemed to feel bored at the first cell, so he went off and built another one closer to the city' (*HL* 16.2). This passage informs the reader that dissuasion from the spiritual training performed in the space of the cell is enough for demons to declare their victory over one's soul, which means that the geography of the cell has been transfigured to represent *ipso facto* the spiritual life of the monk himself. After

[24] *AP* John the Little 27. Compare *HL* 19.7-8.
[25] D.L. Hedstrom, 'The Geography of the Monastic Cell' (2009), 762.
[26] *Ibid.* 763-4.

admitting he had been fooled, Nathanial vowed to return to his previous residence, 'and to spite the demon, he did not cross the portal for fully thirty-seven years' (*HL* 16.3). This story about Nathaniel, who initially failed in his pursuit to remain in his cell and consequently regained his spiritual life by never crossing again the entrance of that very cell, teaches the reader of the constitutive character of physical markers in the articulation of early Egyptian monastic accounts. As highlighted in Bourdieu's theory, such social markers can affect communities as well as individuals. Along these lines, the importance of the cell in training for self-discipline and supporting spiritual awareness also affected the monks as much as their visitors. This is the witness of Palladius himself, who tells us more than once how the time spent in the company of the monks within the space of the cell produced a conversionary change in his own spirituality. Talking about the monk Didymus, Palladius reports that, 'once when he tried to make me say a prayer in his cell and I was unwilling, he told me this story:

> Into this cell Anthony entered for the third time on a visit to me. I besought him to say a prayer and he instantly knelt down in the cell and did not make me repeat my words, giving me by his action a lesson in obedience. So if you want to follow in the steps of his life, as you seem to, since you are a solitary and living away from home to acquire virtue, lay aside your contentiousness'. (*HL* 4.3)

Even though the *Lausiac History* does not present programmatic statements about the role of the cell – a lack due to the rhetorical conventions of literary texts[27] – a close reading of it still enables us to point to specific episodes in which the space of the cell is used to describe the coming into being of a new ascetic spirituality and consequently of a new spatial rhetoric in literary accounts.

The theme of the cell conceived as a physical reality embodied in the spiritual identity of the monks also informs other late Antique literary accounts that witness to the literary influence on the development of such geographical discourses. These are the testimonies of Evagrius Ponticus (345-399 AD) and Paul of Tamma (fourth-century AD hermit).[28] For Evagrius, the cell is the contained battleground in which the monk can purify his heart:

> One must not quit the cell at the hour of temptations no matter how plausible seem the excuses. Rather one should stay seated inside and be patient and receive nobly the attackers, every one, but especially the demon of listlessness who, because he is the heaviest of all, brings the soul to its most proven point. For to flee such struggles and to avoid them teaches the mind to be unskilled and cowardly and a fugitive.[29]

[27] J. Goehring, 'The Dark Side of Landscape' (2003), 444-5.

[28] Evagrius, *The Praktikos and chapters on Prayer*, ed. John Eudes Bamberger (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1981). See Tim Vivian and Birger Pearson, 'Saint Paul of Tamma on the Monastic Cell (de Cella)', *Hallel* 23 (1998), 86-107. See also D.L. Hedstrom, 'The Geography of the Monastic Cell' (2009), 764-78.

[29] *Praktikos* 28.

Paul refers to the cell as a conduit for travel to heaven: 'Be wise and remain in your dwelling, which is your delight, and your cell will remain with you in your heart as you seek its blessing, and the labour of your cell will go with you to God'.[30] The cell is elevated to be the monastic sanctuary, a sacred temple of a new heavenly Jerusalem: 'For the incense of God is a wise man in his cell'.[31]

While sources such as Evagrius and Paul of Tamma make explicit reference about self-discipline and purity of thought, skills to be developed through the willingness to return and remain within the cell where the monk committed himself to prayer and manual labour,[32] Palladius collects witnesses that, despite not being so explicit, still carry the same kind of educative purpose. Such is the one of Moses the Ethiopian, who is said to have been standing in his cell every night for six years, 'praying, never shutting his eyes – and still he could not control his mind' (*HL* 19.8).

A critical analysis of the geographical instructions found in the literary sources thus enables us to define the spatial discourse – especially that concerning the cell – not only in its relation to the spiritual formation of the first generation of monastics, but also in its rhetorical nature of conversionary device.[33] From this perspective, literary accounts carry implications on a 'metatextual' level whereby their corporeal and geographical vividness stands for the concreteness of the *Lives* they depict.

In this light, the application of the modern cross-disciplinary approach of 'cognitive archaeology', which actively seeks to identify physical markers of religious acts within the archaeological record, adds a new facet to the complex nature of spatial rhetoric as played out in literary sources. According to this recent discipline, literature represents the importance of visuality and practice in the eyes of the monastic authors without necessarily implying that those practices were actually thus performed.[34] It is usually through the investment of effort into the construction of special places (*i.e.* the cell) and in the development of iconic representations for use in such places that 'cognitive archaeology' believes to obtain major insights into past religions.[35] The first archaeological indicator of ritual is a physical place with special, natural associations (*e.g.* a cave, a tomb, a structured building) to the sacred functions of the ritual. Monastic space in late Antique Egypt concretely exemplifies the idea of space as defined by an individual's hopes and actions within that space. The cell where monks lived is in fact maintained by all literary sources as 'a holy space filled

[30] *De cella* 1.
[31] *Ibid.* 52.
[32] *Praktikos* 12; 28; *De cella* 108-11; 113; 115; 117.
[33] D.L. Hedstrom, 'The Geography of the Monastic Cell' (2009), 764.
[34] *Ibid.* 765.
[35] Colin Renfrew, 'The Archaeology of Religion', in Colin Renfrew and Ezra B.W. Zubrow (eds), *The Ancient Mind: Element of Cognitive archaeology* (Cambridge, 1994), 47-54.

with sacred dwellings'.[36] While the literary tradition recounts several examples in which monks built their own cells wherever they were, the extensiveness of such settlements is only alluded to in passing. The result is that the literary evidence seems to create only a limited account of monastic settlements and architectural planning.

However, the archaeological remains of sites such as Kellia or Bawit (excavated in the 1970s and 1980s) reveal that literary sources created typological models for Egyptian settlements when there was still no actual evidence of record of rules and regulations about monastic sites and their dwellings.[37] The literary terminology reports the word Κελλίον with reference to the abode of the monk in all literary sources and it is applicable to either single or communal monastic structures.[38] Also the word Λαύρα is used[39] with the following meaning: 'Term that seems to have originated in Palestine where it described a range or group of cells around a common centre, including a church, a bakery and various communal services where the hermits gathered on Saturday and Sunday, bringing the fruit of their labours and leaving again with their bread for the week…'[40] Therefore, 'in physical term, a *laura* is a colony of scattered anchorite cells, which are connected by constructed path to each other and to the core where the church and other communal structures are built'.[41] If we look at these terminological and literary testimonies through the principles of 'cognitive archaeology', we are able to strengthen the role that literary accounts played in the creation of the most venerated physical religious markers of Antiquity. In this way, the application of 'cognitive archaeology' enables us to see that the spatial rhetoric contained in literary accounts first provided the geography of the cell with the 'transformative' role that shaped the monk's spiritual engagement. The alternate use of Κελλίον and Λαύρα describes the existing tension between intimate and extended communities and, by extension, defines the relationship between the monks and the surrounding spatial setting. The testimony of the *Lausiac History* confirms that the individual creates a space which, in turn, transforms his own perception of the cell.

[36] D.L. Hedstrom, 'Divine Architects: Designing the monastic dwelling place', in Roger Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World* (Cambridge, 2007), 368-89.

[37] *Ibid*. 380-9.

[38] Mariachiara Giorda, *Monachesimo e Istituzioni Ecclesiastiche in Egitto* (Bologna, 2010), 34-6. See also *HL* 18 for the cell as part of a collective structure.

[39] Benedicta Ward (trans.), *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers: Apophthegmata Patrum from the Anonymous Series* (Oxford, 1975). Also see *AP* 29; 7.62.

[40] Rene-Georges Coquin, s.v. 'laura', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* V, 1428.

[41] Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: a comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism*, *Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 122.

3. Monasticism and institutions

The identification of geographical markers in early Egyptian Monasticism can also be used to explore other themes strictly connected to the spiritual formation of the monk in relation to his surroundings. One of the questions that immediately comes to mind is how the sanctity of the cell affected the relationships existing between the first monks and the ecclesiastical and imperial institutions from which they withdrew. It is in fact important to remember that Egypt was a Roman province between the fourth and fifth century AD and one of great wealth because of its grain's production. For this reason it had developed a strong urban economy before which the monastic ideal of withdrawal into the desert represented a real threat. From a religious point of view, on the other hand, Egypt was a fervent Christian colony and was at the centre of the first split in the Christian world with the Arian controversy in the middle of the fourth century. Thus the birth of Monasticism inserted itself into a much greater stream of Christian spiritual traditions among which it had to battle to establish its ground. In light of this brief historical account, the literary construction of the desert theme as 'one of the most abiding creations of Late Antiquity'[42] takes on a renewed value. The analysis of the relationship between the desert fathers and the surrounding environment functions in fact as a lens for the appreciation of the real sense of identity affirmed by early Monasticism. I am going to exemplify this concept once again with the aid of Palladius' work. The first example is drawn from *Lausiac History*, chapter 11 and reveals the monks' relations to the themes of priesthood and ordination. Envoys are sent with the order of bringing the monk Ammonius back from the desert and making him bishop. Knowing he was trapped, Ammonius 'pleaded with them and solemnly swore that he would not accept the election, that he would not leave the desert. They did not give in to him. Then while they were looking on he took a pair of shears and cut off his left ear, knowing that the law forbids a man with his ear cut off to be ordained priest' (*HL* 11.2). Although the episode could lead us to perceive Ammonius' behaviour as representative of a total refusal of the ecclesiastical institution of priesthood on the part of the first ascetic monks, a second episode will help clarify the point: I am thinking of the monk Nathaniel as he receives an official visit from several bishops into his cell and he is torn by the dilemma whether or not he should leave his cell to escort them forth. After he was accused by the deacons of committing an arrogant act, Nathaniel replies: 'I am dead both to my sovereign bishops and to the whole world. I have an intention which is hidden and God knows my heart, why I do not escort them forth' (*HL* 16.4). In this particular case, the relationship between the monk and his cell opens up to a whole new conception of bonds and duties.

[42] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), 216.

The ascetic monk does not merely dismiss the ecclesiastical authority, he is indeed unable to obey to his duties before it because he perceives a different scale of priorities and obligations which he ought to respect. God has called him to a kind of life that is not the one known by the ecclesiastical embassy, the training undergone in its sacred dwelling represents his gateway to heaven and, thence, the first obligation he ought to keep his oath with. Another episode of this developing process of connections between asceticism and the surrounding world is visible in the account of John of Lycopolis. In the scene Palladius is both author and character and, while spending some time in John's cave, he reports that John had explained to him how impossible it would be to get ordained to the priesthood while being in the desert (*HL* 35.11). Again it is reaffirmed the specificity of monastic training in relation to its geographical configuration: the desert's landscape and the cell. There is a final example from the *Lausiac History*, which also sheds light on the on-going relationship between the first monastics and the imperial authority. While the *Theodosian Code* reports different kinds of initiatives taken towards monastic movements and demonstrates the impact of its birth on provincial administration,[43] Palladius tells us that John of Lycopolis was awarded the gift of prophecy after many years of training in his cell. After this he was held in great regard by the same emperor Theodosius, who actually consulted him about his warfare business (*HL* 35.2). This episode witnesses to the further development of the spatial rhetoric used to describe monastic identity. Far from being a rhetoric of isolation, the geographical significance of the monks' training is instantaneously reflected in the reshaping of their relationships with the urban ties and surroundings.

Conclusion

The importance of spatial rhetoric in the spiritual formation of early Egyptian monks lies primarily in the fact that it asserts a diversity of practices all of which seem to guarantee both a physical and a spiritual path to God. In this, the geography of early Egyptian monastic cells develops a very open and including character which seems underestimated by the crystallized reading of certain literary accounts. On the contrary, Palladius himself provides a confirmation of such inclusive attitude: 'On the mountain live some 5000 men with different modes of life, each living in accordance with his own powers and wishes, so that it is allowed to live alone, or with another, or with a number of others. There are seven bakeries in the mountain, which serve the needs both of these men and also of the anchorites of the great desert, 600 in all' (*HL* 7.2).

[43] *Codex Theodosianus* 12, 1.63; 16, 3.1; 16, 3.2.

By remapping the settled world through their new habitations, the monks created new identities, not based upon familial affiliation, but based upon their citizenship as sons and brothers of heaven.[44]

Furthermore, Egyptian monastic practice is frequently categorized by the dichotomous forms of Monasticism drawn from the eremitical life of Anthony and the coenobitic life of Pachomius. However, a close examination of the sources reveals a multiplicity of forms of dwellings that goes against this two-tiered model. Rather than placing the sites into an evolutionary model of development from simple and solitary places to more complex and communal, we are invited to recognize the concurrent occupation of these sites with their very different site plans and expressions of how to construct ascetic space. Beside that, the archaeological remains, as represented by painted cells, the multi-room dwellings, and the luxury of everyday items belie the view that asceticism was a total renunciation of the world in which 'monks lived as paupers and had no concern for themselves or others'.[45]

[44] D.L. Hedstrom, 'Divine Architects' (2007), 385-7.

[45] James Goehring, 'Monasticism in Byzantine Egypt: Continuity and Memor', in R. Bagnal (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World* (Cambridge, 2007), 390-407.

El concepto de *xénitéia* en la hagiografía Monástica primitiva

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Abstract

God's call to Abraham: 'Leave your Land' just as the experience of the people of Israel in the desert is a theological-literary: *xénitéia* or peregrinate. This reality is also present today in the Church in diverse manifestations of popular piety. The reports of Egeria or the *Vita Antonii* are examples. Nevertheless, it is an experience that is also made in the 20th and 21st centuries. The missionary diaries or the foundation reports express the profound desire that man has in recuperating the lost paradise and thus goes in an unknown adventure. This is why the pilgrim transcends scriptures and is a model of christian life. The object of this communication is to develop the elements that give form to the literary topic of pilgrimage.

1. Introducción

La peregrinación constituye un tópico antropológico, literario, sociológico y por sobre todo religioso. La filología utiliza el término *Bildungsroman*[1] para designar un tipo de novela en la cual la peregrinación constituye un elemento fundamental. Pero la tradición literaria la considera un *leitmotiv*[2] concreto y estereotipado. La semiótica abstraerá la experiencia a un estado: "*El símbolo no solamente expresa el carácter transitorio de todas situación, sino el desapego interior, con respecto al presente, y la vinculación con fines lejanos de naturaleza superior*".[3] Por ello, la fenomenología de la religión afirmará que la peregrinación corresponde a uno "*(…) de los comportamientos que el hombre aprende no por esfuerzo y generalización de una conducta innata o sólo mediante ensayo y error, sino mediante observación e imitación de 'personas*

[1] Johann Carl Simon Morgenstern creó el término *Bildungsroman*. La novela de formación distingue tres etapas: la primera es el aprendizaje de juventud ('Jugendlehre'), la segunda son los años de peregrinación ('Wanderjahre') y por último el perfeccionamiento ('Läuterung'). Cf. V. Propp, *Morfología del cuento; seguida de Las transformaciones de los cuentos maravillosos / Vladimir Propp. El estudio estructural y tipológico del cuento / de E. Méletinski, traducción Lourdes Ortiz* (Madrid, 2000).

[2] W. Kayser, *Interpretación y análisis de la obra literaria* (Madrid, 1965), 90 ss.

[3] J. Chevalier, A. Gheerbrand, *Diccionario de los símbolos* (Barcelona, 1995), 812.

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modélicas o ejemplares'".[4] La semántica afirma que el sustantivo *peregrino* se caracteriza por la "*(…) conjunción de tres elementos: la existencia de un lugar consagrado, el desplazamiento colectivo o individual hacia ese lugar (…) y la obtención ciertamente de un bien material o espiritual*".[5] Aún más, Juan Pablo II agrega una nueva pista: "*(…) los primeros cristianos que siguieron a Cristo fueron llamados los hombres del camino. La Iglesia, en su recorrido por las sendas de la historia no deja de afirmar constantemente la presencia de Jesús de Nazaret, ya que en el camino de todo cristiano está presente el misterioso Peregrino de Emaus, que sigue acompañando a los suyos, iluminándolos con su Palabra esclarecedora y alimentándolos con su Cuerpo y Sangre, pan de vida eterna*".[6] Mas allá de una significación antropológica del *homo viator*, se hace patente el carácter cristiano, eclesial y escatológico de esta palabra[7]. La presente ponencia estudiará la relación entre el concepto "peregrinación" o "xénitéia" y la literatura hagiográfica de corte monástico.

2. La *xénitéia* y el nacimiento del Monacato Cristiano

El tópico teológico-literario del "peregrinación" y sus consonancias bíblicas tendrá un desarrollo puntual en la literatura cristiana primitiva. En un comienzo será un mero "*factum*"[8] atestiguado por distintos cronistas.[9] Más adelante se transforma en un "*sermo*" hagiográfico[10] que tiene por objeto "*(…) la conservación de la memoria histórico-biográfica de los santos, a menudo con una finalidad explícita de edificación y de ejemplaridad*"[11] de acuerdo a coordenadas

[4] B. Grom, *Psicología de la religión* (Madrid, 1994), 36.

[5] F. Lenoir, T. Masquelier, *Encyclopédie des religions 2* (Paris, 1997), 1976. Cf. M. Eliade, *Tratado de historia de las religiones* (Madrid, 1974); *Dictionnaire des religions*, dir. de la publication P. Poupard (Paris, 1984), 1397 (Traducción española); J. Ries, 'Pèlerinages, pèlerins et sacralisation de l'espace', en *Pèlerinages: Compostelle, Jérusalem, Rome* (Paris, 1999), 376. La palabra peregrinación hunde sus raíces en el vocablo peregrinatio que proviene de "peragere". Esta acepción ya da a entender su sentido más prosaico. La peregrinación es una práctica religiosa inherente a una religión que conlleva un desplazamiento físico y una finalidad sacral.

[6] Juan Pablo II, *Discurso durante el rito del peregrino,* sábado 19 de agosto de 1989.

[7] Cf. B. Hume, *Ser un peregrino* (Salamanca, 1984).

[8] A. Di Berardino *et al*., *Diccionario Patrístico y de la antigüedad cristiana II* (Madrid, 1991), 1755.

[9] Eusebio de Cesárea en su *Historia Eclesiástica* (6, 11, 2) narrará la visita del obispo capadocio Alejandro a Jerusalén alrededor del año 200.

[10] Dos son las dos acepciones más comunes de este término: La primera alude al género literario que estudia las biografías de los santos y la segunda se ocupa de la materialidad del escrito hagiográfico. Por lo tanto, existe un significado general que atiende a un tipo de literatura y otro que se ocupa del estudio científico del mismo relato. Cf. *Hagiographies* I, Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout, 1994), 13. G. Philippart en su introducción señala que la hagiografía contribuye a la reconstrucción de la memoria histórica de los santos.

[11] Cf. *Diccionario de Literatura Patrística y de la antigüedad cristiana I* (1991), 791, 1006; F. Pierini, *Mil años de pensamiento cristiano, literatura y los monumentos de los Padres de la*

históricas y estilísticas.[12] Dentro de este contexto surge un tipo de literatura, producto del florecimiento de la vida monástica en el desierto de la Tebaida.[13] Ella convertirá el "*relato*" en una condición existencial del cristiano que se convierte en monje.[14] La santidad monástica expresa la unidad interna del monje – monachus, id est solus – que renunciado a la *politeia* se convierte en el perfecto atleta de Dios.[15]

La vida monástica[16] constituye un hesicasmo cristológico que nace de la pureza del corazón y se proyecta al orden escatológico. Una característica fundamental es el exilio voluntario o *xénitéia*. Esta corresponde a uno de los

Iglesia (Bogotá, 1993), 172. V. Saxer amplia el concepto, señalando que la hagiografía es una rama de la historia. Por lo tanto, no sólo se limita al escrito en sí mismo, sino incluiría la vida, el culto y la leyenda de los santos. Por su parte, Pierini circunscribe a la hagiografía dentro de las fuentes literarias del estudio patrístico; ésta seria un instrumento de lectura para acceder a los Padres de la Iglesia. O mejor dicho a literatura cristiana primitiva. Hubertus Drobner distingue patrología, patrística y literatura cristiana primitiva. Cada una de ellas se abocaría a un estudio diferente. Sin embargo las dos primeras son utilizadas indistintamente. La última podría englobar a la patología, salvaguardando lo teológico. Cf. H. Drobner, *Manual de Patrología* (Barcelona, 1999), 20-1.

[12] Así pues, autores como Filón de Alejandría con su Vida de Moisés o las Vidas paralelas de Plutarco no eran desconocidas por gran parte de los cristianos y dejaron una huella considerable en la prosa cristiana. De igual forma, los procesos penales contra los cristianos dieron origen a las llamadas Acta Martyrum o actas Consulares, por las cuales conocemos el testimonio de Perpetua y Felicidad; y por ende el desenlace de su vida. Las epigrammata del papa Dámaso (366-384) o los panegíricos fúnebres no desestimaron ensalzar las virtudes del cristiano muerto, Finalmente los distintos sacramentarios y menologios celebraron el dies natalis del difunto. Por ello, la hagiografía cristiana primitiva posee un sin fin de fuentes, donde lo espiritual o lo milagroso reconstruyen la memoria del mártir o del confesor.

[13] R. Trevijano, *Patrología*, Colección Sapientia Fidei (Madrid, 2001), 200-12. Cf. *Dictionnaire de l'orient Chrétien* (Wiesbaden, 1991); C. Vidal, *Diccionario de patrística* (Estella, 1997). Los más relevantes son los *Apopthegmata*. Son relatos breves basados en una pregunta, una anécdota o una historia que revelan la sabiduría de un "padre del desierto". Junto a lo anterior, aparecen las primeras reglas de vida, entre las que destaca la *Regla de Pacomio*. El movimiento monástico atrajo a todo tipo de viajeros deseosos de conocer este tipo de vida. Estos relataron sus experiencias en la *Historia de los monjes de Egipto*, *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* y la *Historia Lausíaca*. Sin duda la más conocida obra de este movimiento es la *Vita Antonii*. A ella, se pueden agregar la *Vida griega de Pacomio*, *La vida de san Martin de Tours* de Sulpicio Severo y las tres biografías de san Jerónimo: *La Vida de Pablo, Malco e Hilarión*. Cabe mencionar las obras doctrinales como son las *Colaciones* e *Instituciones* de Casiano, *La escala del Paraíso* de Juan Clímaco, las Cartas de Doroteo de Gaza y las obras de Evagrio Póntico.

[14] Cf. S. Pricoco, 'Il monachesimo occidentale dalle origini al Maestro lineamenti storici e percorsi storiografici', en *XXVI Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 8-10 maggio 1997* (Roma, 1998), 18.

[15] Cf. G. Penco, *Il Monachesimo* (Milano, 2000), 212.

[16] Cf. G.M. Colombás, *La Tradición Benedictina Tomo I* (Zamora, 1999); A. Linage Conde, *San Benito y los benedictinos, Tomo I* (Braga, 1993); A. Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1991); *íd*., *Regards sur le monachisme des premiers siècles: recueil d'articles* (Roma, 2000); *íd*., *De Saint Pachôme à Jean Cassien: études littéraires et doctrinales sur le monachisme égyptien à ses débuts* (Roma, 1996).

primeros pasos en la ascética monástica. El monje es invitado a dejar su vida pasada, a pasar de una existencia coyuntural a una espiritual. Excepcionalmente "*algunos monjes son llamados por el Espíritu Santo a practicar esta forma de ascesis de forma literal mediante una renuncia a toda vida estable y experimentando una itinerancia perpetua*".[17] Juan Clímaco desarrolla brillantemente este tópico afirmando: "*Exilio voluntario es abandonar sin mirar para atrás todo aquello que en la patria nos impide alcanzar la meta de la piedad*".[18] Por ello, el monje es como un peregrino que "*conscientemente, como hombre extranjero, vive entre gente que habla otros idiomas*".[19] El modelo a seguir es Jesucristo, quien en *Matth*. 12:50, dice: "*Mi madre y mis hermanos son los que cumplen la voluntad de mi Padre celestial*". El apego desordenado por los familiares, amigos o situaciones son remediados por la *xénitéia*. Incluso después de encontrarse "(…) *peregrinado algunos años fuera de nuestra patria y haber alcanzado un poco de piedad y de autodominio o de abstinencia, comienzan a surgir en nosotros pensamientos de vanidad, incitándonos a que volvamos a nuestra tierra*".[20] Sólo después de lograr este estado es posible ascender espiritualmente a la obediencia. Más aún si el monje busca vivir sólo para Dios, le es imprescindible lograr esta meta de ser uno consigo mismo y con Dios.[21]

3. Tres ejemplos paradigmáticos de la *xénitéia* monástica

La presente comunicación pretende estudiar el concepto de "*xénitéia*" en la literatura monástica primitiva. Sin embargo se limitará a una lectura desde esta clave en tres ejemplos paradigmáticos: la *Vita Antonii* de san Atanasio, la Vida de Martín de Tours y la Homilía fúnebre escrita por san Hilario de Poitiers con motivo de la muerte de san Honorato.

3.1. *Vita Antonii y el fundamento bíblico de la xénitéia*

San Atanasio de Alejandría es conocido por el carácter apologético de sus obras sobre la encarnación[22] pero también por el carácter parenético de sus

[17] Cf. P. Deseille, *L'échelle de Jacob et la Vision de Dieu* (Tulle, 1974), 85; *Vitae Sanctorum Honorati et Hilarii epsicoporum arelatensium* (Lund, 1952). El término peregrinatio aparece en 9,24; 11,14; 12,10; 35,10. La palabra peregrinus aparece en 9,11; 11,2; 12,13; 33,10.

[18] San Juan Clímaco, *La escala espiritual o escala del Paraíso* (Zamora, 1990), 53.

[19] *Íd*. 55.

[20] San Juan Clímaco, *La escala espiritual o escala del Paraíso*, 55.

[21] Cf. San Agustín, *Enarr. in Ps*. 132, 2.

[22] X. Le Bachelet, 'Athanase', en *Dictionaire de théologie catholique* I/2, 2144. Cf. X. Morales, *La théologie trinitaire d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 2006); L. Dînca, *Le Christ et la Trinité chez Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 2012).

escritos ascéticos. Entre ellos la llamada *Vita Antonii*,[23] la cual recrea el retrato del amigo de Dios[24], quien desde pequeño es el perfecto *puer senex*. Esta hagiografía narra el viaje material del anacoreta, pero también una *xénitéia* del alma humana. El escrito de san Atanasio se encuentra en los albores de la literatura hagiográfica y además servirá de modelo a numerosas biografías tanto de santos tanto de Oriente como de Occidente.[25]

La experiencia de la conversión constituye un tópico constante en sus páginas. La tensión entre la vida cotidiana y el ideal cristiano[26] sólo se comprenden a la luz de la búsqueda de Dios. Es así como el tránsito entre dos realidades se manifiesta desde el inicio del relato. El monje es sometido a la decisión de pasar de un estado a otro. La vocación inicial de Antonio es un ejemplo claro de ello. Pero sin duda puede reconocerse un símil bíblico.

Atanasio afirma que Antonio después de meditar la vida de los primeros cristianos, entra en una Iglesia cuando se lee el Evangelio de *San Mateo* 19:2: "*si quites ser perfecto, vete, vende lo que tienes y dáselo a los pobres, y tendrás un tesoro en los cielo; luego ven y sígueme*". La palabra de Dios gatilla el inicio de un proceso espiritual en el joven: Ὁ δὲ Ἀντώνιος, ὥσπερ θεόθεν ἐσχηκὼς τὴν τῶν ἁγίων μνήμην, καὶ ὡς δι' αὐτὸν γενομένου τοῦ ἀναγνώσματος, ἐξελθὼν εὐθὺς ἐκ τοῦ Κυριακοῦ. Y Antonio, como si el recuerdo de los santos le hubiera sido inspirado por Dios y pensando que esta lectura había sido leída para él-[27] decide vender sus bienes y distribuirlo entre los pobres, conservando lo necesario para su manutención y la de su hermana. Este episodio vuelve a repetirse en idénticas condiciones, pero cambia el texto bíblico: "*No os preocupéis del mañana*".[28] Antonio ya no guardo nada para sí después de oír esto. La Escritura posee una carácter performativo, pues a la escucha sigue de inmediato la acción. Antonio no sólo renuncia a los bienes en sí sino a la tenencia legítima de los mismos. La providencia divina guía la vida concreta y la espiritual. Por esa razón: Πάντες μὲν οὖν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς κώμης καὶ οἱ φιλόκαλοι, πρὸς οὓς εἶχε τὴν συνήθειαν, οὕτως αὐτὸν ὁρῶντες, ἐκάλουν θεοφιλῆ· καὶ οἱ μὲν ὡς υἱόν, οἱ δὲ ὡς ἀδελφὸν ἠσπάζοντο. T*odos los habitantes de la aldea y la gente de bien que él frecuentaba lo llaman "amigo de*

[23] *Vita S. Antonii* (greca), PG 26, coll. 835 ss. Versión sahidica, de Garitte, CSCO 117/8 = Copt. 13/4 (Leuven, 1949). Versione siriaca, ed. R. Draguet, *La vie primitive de S. Antoine conservée en syriaque*, CSCO 417/418 = Syr. 183/4 (Leuven, 1980); cf. Atanasio, *Vida de Antonio*, en *Ciudad Nueva* 27 (Madrid, 2013), 31. Utilizaremos la traducción de G.J.M. Bartelink, *Athanase d'Alexandrie. Vie d'Antoine*, SC 400 (París, 1994). En adelante VA.

[24] Cf. *St*. 2:23; *Sab*. 7:27, *Is*. 41:8. Es el título atribuido a Abraham tradicionalmente; cf. E. Bettencourt, 'L'idéal religieux de saint Antoine et son actualité', dans *Antonius Magnus eremita 356-1956: studia ad antiquum monachismum spectantia*, Studia Anselmiana 38 (Roma, 1956), 48-9.

[25] Cf. E. Poirot, *Saint Antoine le Grand dans l'Orient chrétien partie 1* (Friedber, 2014), 27.

[26] Cf. J. Roldanus, *Le Christ et l'homme dans la théologie d'Athanase d'Alexandrie* (Leiden, 1968).

[27] VA 2, 4.

[28] *Matth*. 6:34.

Dios" (Teófilo) y los unos lo amaban como un hijo, los otros como un hermano.[29] El título de θεοφιλῆ es el mismo que se aplica a Abraham (*St*. 2:23; 2*Cron*. 20:7).[30]

Pero el diablo, enemigo del bien y envidioso, no soportó ver tan firme propósito en el joven. Trató de hacerle abandonar la ascesis sugiriéndole el recuerdo de sus bienes, la preocupación de su hermana, sus relaciones familiares, el amor al dinero, el deseo de la gloria, los placeres de la comida, las demás amenidades de la vida, en fin, le hizo ver la aspereza de la virtud y los grandes esfuerzos que exige. En una palabra: suscitó en su espíritu una tempestad de pensamientos "logismoi" con la intención de hacerle desistir de la xénitéia. Éste repetía de continuo el *Salmo* 117:7: "*El Señor es mi defensor, y yo despreciaré a mis enemigos*".[31]

Antonio se dirigió a la región de las tumbas vacías en el desierto (275-285). Comienza una nueva peregrinación. Se dirige a la Tebaida; pero también al lugar propio de la tentación: el Desierto. Luego se instalará en un fuerte abandonado (Pispir), lleno de reptiles y alimañas. El aspecto físico de Antonio no cambiará. Vivió así durante 20 años, para luego salir de allí y comenzar un etapa de apostolado. Antonio (312-356) nuevamente se internó en el desierto que se extiende entre el Nilo y el Mar Rojo y caminando tres días con sus noches llegó a una alta montaña, el monte Qolzum o Qolzim. El motivo era la afluencia de personas. Había allí unas palmeras y una fuente de agua muy clara, dulce y fresca. "Antonio amó aquel lugar" y lo eligió como morada definitiva. El ambiente paradisíaco es subrayado por el hecho de que Antonio llega a tener amistad con los animales del lugar.[32] Antes de morir Antonio se retiró a un lugar aún más apartado con dos de los discípulos que lo habían acompañado los últimos quince años, pues quería evitar que su cadáver llegara a ser objeto de algún culto. En su última recomendación Antonio había dicho "*Como está escrito, yo me voy por el camino de mis padres*".[33]

Antonio no sólo es el iniciador de la vida monástica, sino es un ejemplo claro de una existencia que se empapa de las enseñanzas de la Escritura.[34] El desplazamiento por el desierto nos recuerda la experiencia del pueblo de Israel y sus tentaciones. Sin embargo, el desasimiento interior gobierna todo el relato.

[29] Cf. Casiano, *Instituciones* V 3.

[30] Cf. G. Penco, 'La vocazione di Abramo nella spiritualità monastica', in *Spiritualità monastica: aspetti e momenti* (Abbazia di Praglia, 1998), 176-90.

[31] VA 6,5 (p. 40).

[32] Aparece aquí la vida del monje como "retorno al paraíso", tan claro a la espiritualidad monástica posterior, la buena amistad con los animales como señal de la recuperación de la gracia de Adán, llegará a convertirse en un lugar común a todas las hagiografías monásticas posteriores.

[33] VA 91, 2 (p. 123).

[34] M. Mara, 'Bibbia e historia nel fenomen monastico: *la Vita Antonii*', en *Pléroma: salus carnis: homenaje a Antonio Orbe*, ed. por Eugenio Romero-Pose con la colab. de Josep Rius-Camps, Josep Montserrat-Torrens (Santiago de Compostela, 1990), 564.

La pluma de Atanasio conjuga no sólo una vida ejemplar, sino un tejido bíblico guiado por la *xeneteia*. Antonio logra ser un nuevo Adán.

3.2. *Martín de Tours*

"La Vida de Martin de Tours"[35] escrita por Sulpicio Severo[36] es un relato que busca inmortalizar la figura del obispo galo por medio de las obras más que por las palabras *res non verba*. Por ello, la Sagrada Escritura más que norma de vida es un recurso literario que describe situaciones: "*Lo que nos importa no es el vano recuerdo de los hombres, sino el premio eterno de Dios*".[37] El escrito de Sulpicio Severo nos muestra a un santo lleno del celo por las almas, de allí que su peregrinar tiene siempre presente el bien del pueblo que le ha sido encomendado. Sin embargo, Martín es incitado a volver al camino mediante la Escritura. Es verdad que los textos son pocos, pero se encuentran en el momento preciso. Ejemplo de ello es la muerte de Martín narrada por la III carta a Basula de Sulpicio Severo. El Obispo de Tours afirma: "Señor, si aún puedo hacer algo en tu pueblo, no rehusó el trabajo; hágase tu voluntad". Como yacía de espaldas contra la tierra, sus discípulos quisieron colocarle más cómodamente, pero él se negó, diciendo: "*Dejadme, hijos, mirar al Cielo, para que los ojos vean el camino por donde el alma se va a dirigir hacia su Dios*". Y continuó, viendo al demonio a su lado: *'¿Qué haces aquí, mala bestia? Nada tuyo encontrarás en mí; voy a ser recibido en el seno de Abraham'*". Estas fueron las últimas palabras de aquel hombre extraordinario. Martín había nacido en la región occidental del Danubio, Panonia, de padre pagano, que ostentaba en el ejército el grado de tribuno militar. Recibió en Pavía una esmerada educación, y allí conoció la religión cristiana. A los diez años se agrega al número de los catecúmenos, y algún tiempo después, manifiesta la intención de huir a un desierto. Siente el anhelo de practicar el evangelio integral. Para librarle de las influencias cristianas, su padre le hace soldado contra su voluntad y le incorpora al arma de caballería. Pero "*Cierto*

[35] Cf. M. Calvo, *Vita S. Martini* (París, 1967-1969). Cf. R. Pernoud, *San Martin de Tours* (Madrid, 1998).

[36] Sulpicio Severo fue un aristócrata de Aquitania (nacido el 363 y fallecido entre el 420 y el 425), Hizo estudios jurídicos y trabajó como jurista en diversas ciudades de la Galia. A la muerte de su esposa, en el año 392, inició una vida de ascetismo en las cercanías de Biterrae (Béziers). Entre sus obras se cuenta la primera biografía de San Martín de Tours y una crónica (*Chronicorum Libri Duo* o *Historia Sacra*) que se extiende desde la creación del mundo hasta el año 400 y es una fuente de información muy importante para entender la controversia prisciliana en la Galia. Al empezar el siglo IV, la religión druídica de la Galia había perdido aquella vitalidad pujante de los tiempos de César. De la mezcla de la mitología romana con la céltica se había formado una religión popular. El cristianismo avanzaba con grandes dificultades, y la misma herejía se esforzaba por corromper en la misma fuente la evangelización del país. Dentro de ese contexto, Sulpicio Severo cuenta la historia del gran evangelizador de las Galias.

[37] VM, prefacio.

día, no llevando nada más que sus armas y una sencilla capa militar (…) encontró (…) a un pobre desnudo ¿Qué hacer?"[38] Éste parte su capa y se la da al mendigo. La noche siguiente ve en sueños al Salvador vestido con aquel fragmento de su manto y oye de Él estas palabras: "*Martín, todavía catecúmeno, me has dado este vestido (…) Lo que hicisteis a uno de estos pequeños, a mí me lo hicisteis*". El sueño nocturno confirma la acción. Es la palabra de Dios la que motiva a dejar todo a Antonio, en este caso verifica el deseo del corazón. ¿Cuál es este? dejar todo por Cristo. Poco después, por la Pascua del año 339, recibirá el bautismo.

3.3. *San Honorato*

La vida de San Honorato es conocida por la *Laudatio funebris* (431) pronunciada por San Hilario de Arlés[39] en el aniversario de su muerte, suele llamarse *Sermo de vita S. Honorati*.[40] Por ella nos enteramos que San Honorato pertenecía a una familia consular de la Galia belga. Recibió el bautismo, contra la voluntad del padre y posteriormente convenció a su hermano Venancio de abrazar la vida monástica. Ambos hermanos deciden abandonar la Galia, se embarcaron en Marsella en compañía de San Caprasio rumbo a oriente. Al llegar a Grecia murió santamente Venancio. Después de este hecho van a Italia, donde llevan vida anacorético en una pequeña cueva cerca de Provenza (Cap Roux). A dos millas de Cannes hay un pequeño archipiélago: son las islas de Lérins.[41]

[38] VM 3,1 (p. 4).

[39] A. Di Berardino *et al*., *Diccionario Patrístico y de la antigüedad cristiana I* (1991), 1032-3. Cf. L. Cristiani, *Lérins et ses fondateurs* (Saint Wandrille, 1946); A.C. Cooper-Mardsin, *The History of the Islands of the Lerins* (Cambridge, 1913), 185-91. San Hilario de Arlés nació en el 401 y se hizo monje de Lérins cuando era joven. Entre sus brazos muere San Honorato, quien lo había recomendado para la sede de Arlés (430). Allí ejerció su ministerio por más de veinte años, distinguiéndose por su abnegación, su celo y su caridad, que lo llevó a despojar las basílicas de sus tesoros, con el fin de rescatar a los cautivos. De una gran elocuencia cuando se dirigía al pueblo o auditorios distinguidos. Llevaba una vida austera y simple pese de dirigir una de las diócesis más importante de Francia. Organizó con sus clérigos una especie de monasterio episcopal, donde con sus instrucciones edificaba al pueblo y al clero. Cuando, en 449, Hilario moría santamente, apenas cumplidos los cuarenta y ocho años de edad, tres monjes de Lérins ocupaban sedes episcopales: Lupo era obispo de Troyes, Euquerio era obispo de Lyon y Máximo era obispo de Riez.

[40] Cf. Hilario de Arles, *Vie de Saint Honorat*, introd., texte critique, trad. et notes par Marie-Denise Valentin (Paris, 1977).

[41] A. Vogüé, *Le monachisme en Occident avant saint Benoît* (Bégrolles-en-Mauges, 1998), 85-98. El ideal monástico de Lérins se concentraba en una imitación del monacato copto y del monacato oriental. Es así como se daban el nombre de archimandritas o de cellularii (moradores de celdas). De hecho en Lérins hay una combinación de cenobitismo y eremitismo que recuerda la organización de las lauras de Palestina. Los novicios o monjes jóvenes vivían en comunidad; los adultos ya probados en celdas individuales separadas entre sí. Debido a la extensión, los solitarios, viven a corta distancia del monasterio y continúan bajo la vigilancia del abad y del prepósito. En días determinados acuden a los oficios y a la conferencia del superior. Se dedican

En la antigüedad, las dos mayores recibieron el nombre de Lero o Lerona (Santa Margarita) y Lerino o lerina (San Honorato).

Hilario desde el comienzo de su sermón establece una bipolaridad en la vida de Honorato. Éste es ciudadano del cielo y habitó en la tierra: "*Si pues dijera: 'Él ha migrado hacia los astros' pero más aún, al mismo tiempo durante su estancia sobre la tierra, fue contado entre aquellos astros de mayor resplandor del reino de Dios. Agregaré: '¿Él está presente ante Cristo?' ¿Pero en qué momento, durante el curso de su vida, no estuvo ante su presencia?, su vida entera la realizó según la palabra de Elías: '¿Vive el Señor ante quien sirvo*?'"[42] El abad de Lérins ciertamente gozo de una admiración grande entre sus discípulos, pero ello es producto de su vida mortal. Desde su juventud "*Cristo lo tomó a su servicio, (más) el mundo luchaba para detenerlo en medio de los suyos*". Es clara la referencia a *Romanos* (14:3). Honorato era catecúmeno y su padre intentaba detener toda piedad y conversión religiosa. Nos encontramos ante el inicio de una vida nueva que el mismo Honorato describe: "*Cristo invita al reino eterno, aquí el diablo intenta atraeros a un reino temporal. 'Todo lo que existe en el mundo es vanidad y concupiscencia de los ojos; el mundo pasa con su concupiscencia; mas quien hace la voluntad de Dios mora en la eternidad', como Él mismo mora en la eternidad*".[43] *La primera carta de Juan* (2:16-7) establecerá dos caminos. Uno que lleva a la vida y otro a la muerte. Honorato junto a su hermano Venacio adoptan la vida monástica, pero ello no impide que comience la peregrinación: "*Así, después de haber tomado su decisión y de sufrir de algún modo la persecución hecha de honores por su vuelta, se dirigieron al extranjero. De nuevo sus compatriotas se sublevaron, nuevamente sus parientes manifestaron su oposición*".[44] Siguiendo los pasos de Antonio y de Martín se consideraron extraños al terruño natal. Este nuevo estado de vida les permite ser llamados *antorchas, resplandecientes del fuego*. Expresión del *Cantar de los Cantares* (8:6). Abandonada la patria se mostraban

intensamente a la oración, el ayuno, las vigilias nocturnas, las mortificaciones y a la contemplación. La pobreza es rigurosa. La formación del novicio consiste en mostrarse dócil al anciano que el abad le ha designado como director espiritual. Después de un tiempo éste hace una promesa formal de vida religiosa y cambia de vestido. Algunos estudiosos opinan que Honorato dio una regla escrita a sus monjes otros sostienen que dio un conjunto de normas escritas trasmitidas por vía oral (statuta). Sin embargo, el concilio de Arlés (454) habla de una regla dada por el fundador. Pese a ello, los monjes de Lérins se distinguieron por su vida de piedad, disciplina y fervor. Otra cuestión en disputa sobre el monacato de Lérins es la posible existencia de un centro de estudio en el monasterio, el cual se abocaba al estudio sagrado y también al estudio de las disciplinas profanas. Ante todo, la isla era un cenobio; la cual se fue llenando de intelectuales de gran renombre. Muchos de ellos se dedicaron a escribir después de haber abandonado el monasterio para ocuparse de labores pastorales. Lérins fue ante todo un semillero de santos obispos, y no de intelectuales; lo que resalta es su testimonio de vida.

[42] SVH, Prefacio, 2.

[43] SVH 7, 1-2.

[44] SVH 11, 1.

como verdaderos *hijos de Abraham* (*Gen*. 12:1). Durante el viaje, muere Venancio en la ciudad de Motona. Hilario afirma: '*¡Muy bien,* Venancio, *bueno y fiel servidor!'* y, entonces escucha, '*Entra en la alegría de tu Señor*',[45] recordando que las alegrías del siglo persisten en combatir. Pero, aquí encuentran su término los combates de la carne y del alma, aquí comienza la vida eterna en la gloria". Comienza a habitar en una isla cerca de los Alpes y del Obispo Leoncio, lugar poco acogedor pero: "*Es iluminado el escondrijo, mientras que allí se esconde la luz. La oscuridad de un lugar de exilio antes desconocido da lugar al brillo de un exilio voluntario. ¿Quién vería allí una mentira? En todo lugar a donde llega Honorato, el honor se encuentra también necesariamente*".[46] El exilio se transforma en posibilidad de acercarse a Dios. La oscuridad da paso a la luz. El siervo de Dios atrae a nuevos monjes, a los que instruye en la ley de Dios y lo purifica de sus pecados: "*Qué vicio no habría extirpado esta constancia asociada al ardor? O bien ¿qué piedras no habrían sido cambiadas en hijos de Abraham cuando existía un gran taller donde, con el pulimento de los espíritus, se labraban las virtudes?*"[47] La expresión hijos de Abraham vuelve a repetirse. Honorato ya no es el "peregrino" sino es "Padre de peregrinos". Éste desarrolla la paternidad espiritual de manera que "*Conocía las fuerzas, las disposiciones y el temperamento de todos, por una intuición que, creo, le venía de Dios 'haciéndose, verdaderamente, el servidor de todos' por causa de Cristo Jesús*".[48] Pero además sabiéndose extranjero: "*Grande era su solicitud hacia los extranjeros y los huéspedes. ¿Quién, en efecto, ha pasado indiferente ante esta casa? ¿Quién abruptamente, por mucho que fuese próspera la navegación, por mucho que fuesen los vientos favorables, no se aventuró por el deseo de ver a un hombre tan ilustre, o bien si en la más terrible de las tempestades con vientos impetuosos no le fue permitido hacer escala en la isla*?"[49] Lo anterior se debía en gran parte a su santa liberalidad. Éste hacía suyas las palabras de *Matth*. 19:21. No en el sentido de Antonio; es decir dejarlo todo; sino en el de la koinonia monástica. Al ser nombrado obispo, fue todo para todos (1*Cor*. 9:22).

Llegado el momento de la muerte no olvido su verdadera condición: forastero en camino: "*Así, él mismo en vista de su próximo fin, como partiendo para un viaje, como despidiéndose, para no dejar nada inacabado, para no dejar nada desorganizado de lo que se había propuesto, nos interrogaba uno a uno y nos invitaba a sugerir lo que habría podido escapar de su memoria; confirmaba todas las disposiciones tomadas en el momento firmándolas con su mano; aunque evitabamos su fatiga, nos forzaba a hacer todo lo que le faltó, pero,*

[45] *Matth*. 25:21.
[46] SVH 16, 1.
[47] SVH 17, 4.
[48] SVH 18, 1. 1*Cor*. 9:19.
[49] SVH 20, 1.

como siempre, él nos forzaba con órdenes llenas de delicadezas".[50] La oración fúnebre de Hilario finaliza con un anhelo que sintetiza la vida de Honorato: "A*cuérdate, pues, oh verdadero amigo de Dios*[51], *acuérdate sin cesar de nosotros, tú que te encuentras sin mancha ante Dios cantando ese cántico nuevo*[52] *y siguiendo al Cordero a donde quiera que Él vaya*".[53]

Conclusión

Nuestra inquietud inicial nos enfrentó a dos palabras: peregrinación y hagiografía monástica. La primera puede resultar positiva o negativa en la medida que es un don pneumático. Nos encontramos ante el misterio de la elección de dos caminos. Ambos invitan a seguirlos, pero en ellos se encuentra la libertad humana. Tanto Antonio, Martin y Honorato se consideraron extraños al mundo, pero siervos de Dios.

Por otra parte, la Escritura da a conocer la revelación divina. Tras cada cita bíblica se expone su inteligibilidad, la cual apoya, sostiene y dirige el deseo del hombre. Éste es dirigirse a la Patria Celeste. Hemos visto la dinámica del peregrinar. Existe una pedagogía tanto de la filiación como de la paternidad. Pero, es indudable que el Espíritu conduce el camino del cristiano. La hagiografía no hace otra cosa que mostrarnos la oblatividad de todo hombre. Así como aprendemos a ser hijos en el Hijo y padres que damos vida a ejemplo del Padre. También, debemos hacer de nuestra vida una oblación en el Espíritu, la cual sea "agradable a Dios" en la Iglesia como la de estos tres santos. El peregrinar es una vocación y a la vez un desafío.

[50] SVH 30, 3.
[51] *Jdt*. 8:22; *St*. 2:23.
[52] *Ap*. 14:3.
[53] VSH 39, 1. *Ap*. 14:4.

Examination of Conscience in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*

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Abstract

The relationship of Christianity and philosophy is one of the enduring questions in Patristic studies. However, this question tends to be approached from an almost-entirely dogmatic perspective, leaving little room for studies of practice. This article proposes to examine just such an issue, taking as its starting point one of the spiritual exercises in ancient philosophy expounded by Pierre Hadot, namely the practice of the examination of conscience. All the major schools of ancient philosophy, frequently drawing upon the Pythagorean tradition, encouraged regular and searching self-examinations in order to uncover occasions when adherents had failed to live up to their philosophical principles, and also when they had succeeded in living them out. In the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, a practice emerges which bears a number of close similarities to its philosophical predecessor, in such a way that an organic connection between the two seems likely. In particular, both the philosophers and the Desert Fathers suggest a morning as well as an evening examination, both advise the examination of successes as well as failures, and both promote practices whereby the results of examination are externalized, either through confession or writing. The purpose of this article is twofold. First, it aims to explore the practice of self-examination in ancient philosophy and Christian monasticism, tracing the developments and modifications it undergoes as it moves from one context to another. Second, the article seeks to help broaden the conversation about the relationship of Christianity and philosophy, one that includes elements of practice as well as doctrine.

Introduction

In his work on ancient philosophy as a comprehensive way of life, as opposed to a set of doctrines only, the philosophical historian Pierre Hadot introduced the idea of a set of transformative practices which he termed 'spiritual exercises'. In *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, he offers a definition of this concept: 'By this term, I mean practices which could be physical, as in dietary regimes, or discursive, as in dialogue and meditation, or intuitive, as in contemplation, but which were all intended to effect a modification and a transformation in the subject who practiced them'.[1] This article proposes to

[1] Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, 2002), 6. The concept of spiritual exercises, encapsulated well in this passage, is one that Hadot explores in greater detail elsewhere. Hadot's most substantive treatment of the phenomenon can be found in

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explore one of these exercises, that of the examination of conscience, as it developed in the philosophical tradition and, later, in Christian monasticism, as exemplified by the Systematic Collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. This exploration will reveal that the monastic practice can be best understood as a development of its philosophical predecessor. In addition to illuminating an element of the history of spiritual practice, this also indicates a need for further study of the relationship between Christianity and philosophy on the basis of practice in addition to the doctrinal questions which have predominated.

Examination in Ancient Philosophy

The fundamental structure of the practice is provided for us in the Neopythagorean sayings collection (used by Neoplatonists in the early stages of formation)[2] known as the *Golden Verses*: 'Do not welcome sleep upon your soft eyes until you have gone over each of the day's deeds three times. Where have I transgressed? What have I accomplished? What was necessary that I did not do? Beginning from the first, go through them, and after, if you have brought about worthless things, rebuke yourself, but if you have done useful things, be glad'.[3] This passage served as the foundational text for the tradition of self-examination in ancient philosophy. Again and again we see this passage cited in philosophical exhortations to examination. Epictetus, Porphyry, Ausonius, Themistius, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Plutarch, and Diogenes Laertius all quote this passage at some point.[4] Iamblichus[5] and Galen[6] also ground

Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford, 1995), 81-125. Hadot places the philosophical practices in conversation with Christian (especially monastic) texts in the same volume, P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995), 126-44.

[2] 'A preliminary moral conditioning might appropriately precede the study of logic … [which] would be based on the non-technical moral edification to be drawn from such works as the Golden Verses or Epictetus' Manual', Dominic J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2003), 59.

[3] *The Golden Verses* 40-4 in Johan C. Thom, *The Pythagorean Golden Verses, with Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, 1995).

[4] Epictetus, *Discourses* III 10, IV.6, in *Epictetus: Dissertationes ab Arriano Digestae*, ed. H. Schenkl (Stuttgart, 1965); Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae*, in *Porphyre: Vie de Pythagore, Lettre à Marcella*, ed. Edouard Des Places (Paris, 1982), 40. See J. Thom, *The Pythagorean Golden Verses* (1995) for references to the other authors mentioned and their appropriation of *Golden Verses* 40-4.

[5] Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 35.256, in *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Way of Life, Text, Translation, and Notes*, ed. and trans. John Dillon and Jackson Hershbell (Atlanta, 1991).

[6] *Galeni De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione*, in Corpus Medicorum Graecorum V 4.1.1, VI, ed. Wilko De Boer (Leipzig and Berlin, 1937).

examination in Pythagorean wisdom, and Seneca, in *De ira*, bases his detailed description of it on the practice of one Sextius, a Neopythagorean:

> The soul should daily be called up to render an account. This is what Sextius would do: the day being over, when he retired for his nightly rest, he questioned his soul: 'What evil have you cured yourself of today? What vice have you struggled against? In what area are you better?' … What therefore is finer than to examine one's conduct during the whole day? How good the sleep which follows upon this review of oneself, how tranquil, how deep, how free from worry, when the soul has either been praised or admonished and the hidden investigator and censor has examined one's morals? I make use of this power and daily put my cause before myself. When the light is taken from sight and my wife has fallen silent, aware of my practice, I scrutinize my whole day and reflect upon what I have done and said. I hide nothing from myself, and I pass over nothing.[7]

This broad reliance upon Pythagorean authority indicates a substantial unity to the tradition of examination, even across school boundaries.

From the descriptions of self-examination that survive from ancient philosophy, three distinctive characteristics emerge. First, depending on the text, morning as well as evening examinations might be recommended, as in the case of Porphyry, who advocates for self-scrutiny before sleep and also immediately upon waking.[8] Marcus Aurelius gives one of the more famous descriptions of the morning examination, exhorting himself in this way: 'Early in the morning say to yourself, "I shall encounter people who are officious, ungrateful, violent, treacherous, slanderous, anti-social…"' He goes on to elaborate the proper way to respond.[9] Iamblichus speaks in similar terms, commending the practice of a morning walk to prepare for the challenges of the day.[10] Second, the examination was supposed to cover where the practitioner has failed, but also where he

[7] Seneca, *De ira* III 36.1-3, in *L Annaei Senecae Dialogorum Libri Duodecim*, ed. L.D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1977). Seneca also, less poetically, commends the practice of examination of conscience in *Epistulae morales* 28.10, in *L. Annaei Senecae ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, vol. 1-2, ed. L.D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1965).

[8] Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae*, in *Porphyre* (1982), 40. We might also mention Hierocles of Alexandria's *Commentary on the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans*. Hierocles does not specifically recommend examination upon waking, but he does comment extensively on the importance of reflection before action (Hierocles, *Commentary on the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans* 14 and 18, in *Hieroclis: In Aureum Pythagoreorum Carmen Commentarius*, ed. F.W. Koehler [Stuttgart, 1974]). In chapter 18, he specifically connects this to the evening reflection (the subject of the following chapter), indicating that one of the virtues of careful consideration before action is that it makes one's evening reflections more pleasant. Finally, we must also consider Foucault's discussion of morning and evening examination in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 3: The Care of the Self* (New York, 1986), 60-2.

[9] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* II 1, in *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, vol. 1-2, ed. and trans. A.S.L. Farquharson (Oxford, 1944). Given Aurelius' familiarity with Epictetus (*Meditations* 1.7 acknowledges the debt), he may well have been drawing on the earlier Stoic's advice at *Discourses* IV 6, at which point Epictetus recommends morning preparations.

[10] Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 21.95-6, in *Iamblichus* (1991).

has succeeded (the *Golden Verses* and *De ira* passages cited above make this clear). This reflects a concern for evaluating the total state of one's soul, rather than simply tabulating one's sins. Third, practices of externalization were at the heart of philosophical examination. Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* are a primary example here, as he often records the content of his scrutiny.[11] Hadot remarks upon the value of writing in self-examination: 'We would be ashamed to commit misdeeds in public, and writing gives us the impression that we are in public'.[12] The Epicureans, meanwhile, were at the forefront of developing a practice of confession.[13] Philodemus' *On Frank Criticism* describes this process of self-disclosure, followed by constructive criticism from a philosophical friend or teacher. Like writing, confession brings misdeeds into the light, and therefore provides greater motivation for avoiding them. These three factors combine to make the examination of conscience a powerful tool for achieving vigilance, an attitude of focused attention in every moment whereby one could effectively live out one's rule of life in practice.

Examination in the *Apophthegmata*

This same exercise was also present in Christian monastic communities from an early period. Exhortations to examine oneself are littered throughout the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Antony says: 'Let us examine if we have become worthy of God'.[14] Poemen advises: 'Then let us go into our cell and, sitting there, let us remember our sins, and the Lord will go with us in all things'.[15] Poemen practiced what he preached as well. According to another saying: 'They said concerning Abba Poemen that when he was going to go to the *synaxis*, he sat scrutinizing his thoughts for an hour, and thus he would go out'.[16] We similarly hear of how 'at one time while Abba John Colobos was sitting in

[11] For example, Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* II 4 and VIII 1, in *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius* (1944).

[12] P. Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* (2002), 243-4.

[13] 'The [Epicurean] therapy would begin (and continue) with confession, as the teacher would listen to [the pupil's] account of her life, her anxieties and ends, her religious attitudes, her view of the cosmos, her loves – in order to understand how, and in what areas, she requires therapeutic treatment'. Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 1994), 275. As it happens, this practice of confession is our primary source of evidence for self-examination in the Epicurean school. Without examination, confession would be logically impossible. Nussbaum has also suggested that the Skeptics may have engaged in another, somewhat different, form of confession in *ibid*. 295-6.

[14] Jean-Claude Guy, *Les Apophthegmes des Pères* III 1. *Collection systématique*, vols. I-III, SC 387, 474, 498 (Paris, 1993, 2003, 2005). In the same saying, he also encourages the monks to 'keep vigil', an indication of the relationship of examination and vigilance.

[15] *Ibid*. III 27.

[16] *Ibid*. XI 58.

front of the church, the brethren surrounded him and were examining their thoughts'.[17] Some fathers even called for this practice to be essentially constant. As one put it: 'Do not do anything without having first examined your heart as to whether what you are about to do is in accordance with God'.[18] In the communities described in the *Apophthegmata*, a regular practice of rigorous self-examination was expected.

Because of the nature of the *Apophthegmata* as a sayings collection, as opposed to a set of extended treatises on specific topics, we unfortunately do not get much in terms of a definition of examination. For the original readers, as well as those who had earlier passed the sayings along in the oral tradition, the structure of the practice would have already been well-known to them, embedded as they were in the monastic context. The closest the Sayings come to giving a full explanation is a brief word from an anonymous monk: 'A monk ought to make an account of himself each evening and each morning: "which of the things that God wishes did I not do, and which of the things he wishes did I do?" And thus examining himself, he ought to repent his whole life long'.[19] This brief saying reflects two parallels with the key elements of philosophical self-examination noted above. First, along with the Pythagorean tradition, in which so many philosophical allusions to self-examination were grounded, the elder recommends both morning and evening interrogations. Second, unlike the examination of conscience many modern Christians are accustomed to making in preparation for sacramental confession, the *Apophthegmata* joins the philosophers in recommending a review of what one has done right along with one's errors. Thus the monks also follow the philosophers in placing an emphasis upon the evaluation of one's total spiritual state through self-examination, as opposed to tallying sins only. The saying ends with the cultivation of an attitude of perpetual repentance, an outlook found only in Christianity, not in philosophy. Still, it is significant that examination of conscience is tied to the fostering of a general spiritual attitude, not to addressing specific errors only.

In addition to these factors, I have identified practices of externalization as a key element of philosophical self-examination. Externalization in monasticism, as in Epicureanism, is achieved through the practice of confession.[20] Exhortations for monks to reveal their thoughts and deeds to their elders and stories about the results of such revelations are a constant throughout the *Apophthegmata*. Sayings of this sort occur in chapter after chapter, including those

[17] *Ibid*. XVI 4. It appears from the context that the brothers were examining their thoughts in order to ask Abba John about them.

[18] *Ibid*. XXI 22.

[19] *Ibid*. XI 91.

[20] The *Apophthegmata* do not speak of writing practices of the sort Marcus Aurelius used, but the concept was known in Christian ascetic circles, as the *Life of Antony* shows. See Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 59.9, in G.J.M. Bartelink, *Athanase d'Alexandrie: Vie d'Antoine*, Sources Chrétiennes 400 (Paris, 1994).

on hospitality, love, forbearance, humility, vigilance, sexual sin,[21] and more. This self-disclosure was known to be a hazardous affair, and had to be made to an experienced and discerning elder. As we hear from Abba Moses, via Abba Cassian: 'It is good to not hide the *logismoi* but to make them known to spiritual and discerning elders, not to those who have turned grey from time alone'.[22] It was also essential that confession be totally open and honest, with nothing remaining hidden. 'If possible', Abba Antony advises, 'the monk should confide in the elders how many steps he takes or how many drops he drinks in his cell [to learn] whether he errs in these things'.[23] Abba Theonas is remembered as having warned the brothers that 'nothing so harms the monks and delights the demons as the hiding of the *logismoi* from the spiritual fathers'.[24] It is only within this context of total openness between disciple and spiritual father that the kind of instruction that the desert communities sought could be achieved. Otherwise, it would not be possible to provide the kind of advice and counsel sensitive to the intricacies of the individual situation that was required.[25] The importance of examining not only sins, but the whole of one's spiritual state, is here brought to the fore – everything must be submitted to the judgment of the elders. Just as valuable as any advice an elder might give in response to a confession, however, was the act itself. Another saying explains: 'Nothing disgusts the demon of *porneia* so much at revealing his works, and nothing brings him such joy as hiding the *logismoi*'.[26] Dragging the *logismoi* into the light was, on its own, a powerful spiritual tonic.

These three distinctive features, present in both the philosophical and monastic traditions, combine to make the examination of conscience a powerful instrument for achieving vigilance, which Hadot rightly identifies as the 'fundamental attitude' of both the ancient philosophical schools and Christian monasticism.[27] When a monk begins to move beyond solely reflective self-examination and to truly live up to the exhortation, noted above, to 'not do

[21] J.-C. Guy, *Les Apophthegmes des Pères* XIII 5, XVII 5, XVI 23, XV 7, XI 50, V 4 respectively, among many others.

[22] *Ibid*. V 4. The saying goes on to tell of the dangers of confessing to an inexperienced elder, and how confession to a truly wise monk has saving power.

[23] *Ibid*. XI 2.

[24] *Ibid*. IV 27.

[25] One is reminded at this point of Martha Nussbaum's criteria for a properly therapeutic philosophy, in particular the necessity of being 'responsive to the particular case'. M. Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* (1994), 46.

[26] J.-C. Guy, *Les Apophthegmes des Pères* V 16.

[27] '*Prosoche* or attention to oneself, the philosopher's fundamental attitude, became the fundamental attitude of the monk'. P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995), 131. See also P. Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?* (2002), 242, 195-6, and, for the connection between vigilance and the examination of conscience, P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995), 134. Within the *Apophthegmata*, the eleventh chapter of the Systematic Collection covers vigilance (*nēpsis*), and is one of the longest in the text.

anything without having first examined your heart',[28] he becomes genuinely vigilant, attentive to the present moment, reading each and every circumstance in the light of his moral obligations. It is this reading of every circumstance in light of one's rule of life that constitutes the heart of philosophy and monasticism as lived practices.

Conclusion

Over the course of this brief treatment, we have seen three parallels in the philosophical and the monastic practices of self-examination: a preparatory morning examination combined with a reflective evening one, the evaluation of one's total spiritual state, and practices of externalization. These three features combine in both cases to form the foundations of vigilance, the central spiritual virtue of monastic and philosophical practice. Given these deep connections, it is implausible to suggest that the monastic practice developed wholly independently of the philosophical. In addition to illuminating the history of the transmission of this one spiritual exercise, this conclusion also indicates that Christianity drew upon ancient philosophy for practical as well an intellectual resources. These practical connections should provide fertile ground for future studies of the Christian reception of 'the spoils of the Egyptians'.

[28] J.-C. Guy, *Les Apophthegmes des Pères* XXI 22.

The Fascination of the Desert: Aspects of Spiritual Guidance in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*

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Abstract

In the present study, we discuss the issue of spiritual guidance in early Egyptian monasticism. Our argument is twofold: first, the archetypal figure of a spiritual guide in the Christian East was epitomized by the Desert Fathers: the *abba* was regarded as the spiritual father (the 'ascetic authority'). Secondly, the ascetics did not assume the authority to 'bind and loose' (the 'institutional authority'). Our investigation has allowed us to remove certain misconceptions concerning the role of spiritual fathers in the Christian East. This includes delimiting the spiritual father's role from other roles that are related but not identical, such as those of teacher (*didaskalos*), spiritual master, or even confessor-priest. In our opinion the *abba* or spiritual guide is generally defined as an *anthropos pneumatikos*, which means that the spiritual father's authority is not equivalent to that of a teacher's, because what an elder conveys through his word is not doctrine, but his personal experience concerning spiritual life.

On the other hand, we have found that the authority of a spiritual father is not determined by the same *auctoritas* claimed by a bishop or priest. Whereas a bishop or confessor-priest exerts an authority delegated to him by an 'institution' (*de jure* authority), the spiritual father's authority is based on his personal charisma (*de facto* authority). In sum, the tradition of spiritual fatherhood is based on a personal rather than institutional model. Our opinion is that the early monastic model and the institutional model (primarily defined by sacramental obligations) complemented each other and in time produced a unified tradition of spiritual fatherhood.

'Abba, give me a word': The dynamics of the spiritual guidance in the desert Tradition

This article examines the concept of spiritual guidance with particular reference to the relevant literature from early Egyptian (Fourth-Fifth century) monasticism. Our main premise is that the archetypal figure of the spiritual father (Gr. *geron*, Slavonic *starets*) in the Christian East was epitomized by the Desert Fathers. On the basis of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* or *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, this article aims to clarify the somewhat mystified figure of the spiritual father. Although the bond between a spiritual father and his disciple

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is probably the relationship most often studied[1] in the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, we believe that the concept of spiritual guidance in the early Christian East has not yet received the attention it deserves.

The literature of the desert can be identified to a great extent with the exercise of spiritual fatherhood. indeed, the need for spiritual guidance is a defining-theme throughout the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*: The old men used to say: 'If you see a young monk climbing up to heaven by his own will, grasp him by the feet and throw him down, for this is to his profit (…) If a person places his faith in someone else and surrenders himself to the other in full submission, he has no need to attend to the commandment of God, but he needs only to entrust his entire will into the hands of his father. Then he will be blameless before God, for God requires nothing from beginners so much as self-stripping through obedience'.[2]

As in philosophical and rabbinic circles,[3] teaching and learning among the Desert Fathers was centered on a personality. Many times learning began with a request: 'Give me a word, abba'. Stories in the *Apophthegmata* open simply: 'One day a brother went to Abba So-and-so and asked him such-and-such' or 'Abba So-and-so used to say this about Abba So-and-so'. Many describe encounters between two monks, usually an elder and younger one. They speak simply and directly.

In their descriptions of these encounters, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* illustrate how the reception of such visitors validated as legitimate the recognizable

[1] There is an extensive literature on spiritual guidance and 'fatherhood'. On spiritual guidance in the spirituality of the East, the standard work is by I. Hausherr, *Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois* (Rome, 1955); English translation, *Spiritual Direction in the Early Christian East* (Kalamazoo, 1990). For the spiritual guide in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, see G. Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (Oxford and New York, 1993), especially 26-87. See also, Ph. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford, 1978), 33-55; J. Chryssavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert. The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (Bloomington, 2008); *id*., *Soul Mending: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Brookline, 2000), 49-58; K. Ware, 'The Spiritual Guide in Orthodox Christianity', in *The Inner Kingdom* (Crestwood, 2000), 127-51; A. Louf, 'Spiritual Fatherhood in the Literature of the Desert', in J.R. Sommerfeldt (ed.), *Abba: Guides to Wholeness and Holiness East and West* (Kalamazoo, 1982); K. Ware, 'The Spiritual Father in St. John Climacus and St. Symeon the New Theologian', *SP* 18/2 (1989), 299-316.

[2] F. Nau (ed.), '"Histoire des solitaires égyptiens (MS Coislin 126, fol. 158f.)." Nos. 133-369', *Revue d'Orient Chrétien* 13 (1908), 47-57, 266-83; 14 (1909), 357-79; 17 (1912), 204-11, 294-301; 18 (1913), 137-40; esp. 14 (1909), 364, 376; trans. B. Ward, *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers* (London and Oxford, 1984), 112, 158.

[3] In the spirituality of the desert the control of the body through ascetic practices was intended to create the conditions for mental and spiritual growth. Striving for perfection was a continuous process. More advanced monks were therefore in a position to provide guidance as spiritual fathers for younger, less experienced apprentices. Their role was analogous to that of the philosopher who acted as a teacher and guide for his disciples, as Pierre Hadot has so beautifully shown, P. Hadot, 'The Spiritual Guide', in R.A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality* (New York, 1986).

characteristics of holiness in Late Antiquity. A disciple's validation of the holiness of a desert abba acknowledged the embodiment of those teachings and practices in Scripture and tradition from which such holiness derived.

Hearing a 'word' is central to the spiritual pedagogy of early monasticism. The elder, seasoned in the ways of asceticism and wise in the Lord, would offer counsel and wisdom to younger monks.[4] A saying would convey a common example of spiritual guidance found among semi-anchoritic desert monks of the Fourth century, through which the monastic *abba* imparted his wisdom and insight to an eager visitor seeking counsel. As Peter Brown observes, desert *abbas* 'had to work and to be seen to work. Charisma was the visible manifestation of an equally visible ascetic labor, whose rhythms and physical effect were palpable to all'.[5] Their example was harnessed and contained in the oral and written sayings of these holy men. These sayings highlight the activity of spiritual guidance, 'the sight and sound, observation and dialogue'[6] that shaped the relationship between holy monks and their disciples. Benedicta Ward writes that the apophthegms 'are neither accounts of the way of life of the monks nor records of their teaching, but glimpses of them as they are known to their disciples'[7] Although idealized to some extent, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* provides evidence for a mode of teaching and learning about the spiritual life that forms the basis of our study.

This figure of the old man (*abba*), so prominent in the first generations of Egyptian monasticism, had a unique role in the spirituality of the desert. As a spiritual father, his role should be delimited from other ecclesiastical roles that are related but not identical, such as those of teacher (*didaskalos*), spiritual master, and even priest-confessor. Thus, the particuliarity of an 'elder' is that he does not convey a doctrine in an abstract, discursive manner, but rather he proposes to his disciple a living assimilation of a spiritual teaching: Abba Sisoes asked Abba Or, 'give me a word', and he said to him, 'go, and what you have seen me do, do also'.[8] Also, a brother asked Abba Sisoes to give him a word, he said: 'Why do you make me speak without need? Whatever you see, do that'.[9] First of all the 'elder' teaches by example and only then by word: a brother asked Abba Poemen: 'Some brothers live with me: do you want me

[4] For examples in the *Apophthegmata*, see Ammonas 1, Macarius 23, and Antony 19. See also A. Louf, 'Spiritual Fatherhood in the Literature of the Desert' (1982); G. Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (1993), 26-87.

[5] P. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1978), 94.

[6] R. Valantasis, *Spiritual Guides of the Third Century: A Semiotic Study of the Guide-Disciple Relationship in Christianity, Neoplatonism, Hermetism, and Gnosticism* (Minneapolis, 1991), 3.

[7] *The Lives of the Desert Fathers. The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, introd. B. Ward, trans. N. Russell (Kalamazoo, 1980), 3.

[8] *Apophthegmata Patrum*, alphabetical collection, Or 7, trans. B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (London and Oxford, 1984), 247.

[9] *AP*, Sisoes 45, trans. B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 220.

to be in charge of them? The old man said to him: No, just work first and foremost, and if they want to live like you, they will see to it themselves. The brother said to him: But it is they themselves, father, who want me to be in charge of them. The old man said to him: No, be their example, not their legislator'.[10]

The Desert Fathers wanted to teach more by example than by words. In certain cases, the ascetics chose to respond with silence instead of words, which forced the disciple to move from the theoretical to the experiential level. One of the greatest of the Desert Fathers, Abba Poemen, made it a cornerstone of his teaching that spiritual maturity could not be attained merely by theoretical knowledge: 'A person who teaches and does not practice what he teaches is like a spring which cleanses everybody and quenches their thirst but cannot purify itself'.[11] Indeed, it is doubtful whether such a person benefits anyone at all. When a brother asked him, 'what is a hypocrite?' Poemen replied, 'a hypocrite is one who teaches his neighbor something which he has not attained himself. For it is written, Why do you see the speck which is in your brother's eye but do not notice the beam which is in your own eye? (*Matth.* 7:3-4) and so on'.[12] In a word, the ascetics are unanimous in stressing the danger – even potential disaster – of merely occupying oneself with spiritual matters, let alone teaching them or expounding them. Two sayings sum up the eremitical approach to the acquisition of knowledge: 'Someone said to the blessed Arsenius, "how is it that after so much education and wisdom we have nothing, while these Egyptian peasants have acquired so many virtues?" Abba Arsenius said to him, "we have nothing from our secular education, but these Egyptian peasants have acquired the virtues by their own labors"'.[13] 'Once when Abba Arsenius was asking an Egyptian elder about his own thoughts someone else saw him and said: "Abba Arsenius, how is it that you ask this peasants about your thoughts?" He said to him, "I have had a Latin and Greek education, but I have not yet learned even the alphabet of this peasant"'.[14]

The desert community created its own form of education, an education imparted by peasants and illiterates, that is to say, by people who wish to change themselves rather than satisfy their intellectual curiosity or spiritual unease. A true education is serious work. An education based on curiosity is a mere pastime and a distortion of culture. Generally, the Desert Fathers did not care for theological discussions, which they felt were often merely a distraction from the disciple's actual lived situation. For them the aim of spiritual guidance was not to engage in theological debates, but rather to help the disciple make

[10] *AP*, Poemen 174, trans. B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 191.
[11] *AP*, Poemen 25.
[12] *AP*, Poemen 117.
[13] *AP*, Arsenius 5.
[14] *AP*, Arsenius 6.

progress along the path of knowledge of God.[15] As W. Harmless observes: 'There is no theorizing, no trains of logical argument, no intricate analysis of biblical texts. Their exchanges focus on the specifics of desert living and the spiritual quest. Each word seems measured, spare, chosen after long silence. Even the most everyday encounters take on an almost oracular quality'.[16]

In sum, the spiritual elder, then, does not aim at imposing rules and punishments, but offers a personal relationship.

Monks, bishops, and authority in early monasticism

In the spirituality of the desert, for many desert monks, teaching and learning required sustained oversight. This required geographic proximity and longer acquaintance with a desert *abba*. Graham Gould writes that teaching 'takes place in the context of a personal relationship, which makes great demands on both parties involved'.[17] The process of learning required 'self-disclosure, endurance, and obedience' on the part of the disciple.[18] Desert abbas often tailored their teaching to the specific needs of their disciples. For their part, the disciples were convinced that their elders were 'able to identify and describe their personal problems, and to propose for them suitable solutions'.[19]

The elder never prescribes rules but rather becomes a personal rule or living model, not so much through his or her words as through example. 'Be their model, not their legislator' is the advice of Abba Poemen. John Chryssavgis writes: 'If the Desert Fathers became beacons of spiritual direction, it was because they first rejected human structures of power. An ages-long spiritual heritage, of which they comprised only a part, taught them that alongside the more institutional lines of "apostolic succession" there was also a complementary inspirational element of "spiritual succession". This is why they did not establish regulations or write down fixed rules. The only rule was that there were no hard rules. Flexibility was the sole rule of the desert'.[20]

Therefore, the spiritual father became what in early monasticism is termed an 'elder', a spiritual guide who teaches others not through book-learning, but through personal experience, and not through words only, but through the profundity of his own example. For the desert *abba* the relationship with a disciple was a means of 'testing (one's) own endurance, submission, and integrity in teaching by example and by personal involvement with a disciple's problems and

[15] B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 167.
[16] W. Harmless, *Desert Christians. An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford, 2004), 171.
[17] G. Gould, *The Desert Fathers* (1993), 26.
[18] *Ibid.* 27.
[19] Ph. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority* (1978), 20.
[20] J. Chryssavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert* (2008), 66.

temptations'.[21] In this way, teaching was a product of and a contributor to the spiritual formation of these holy men. The disciples believed that these spiritual guides had acquired their inner purity of heart and had been given the gift of discernment through their ascetic-monastic devotion. Spiritual Discernment was the distinguishing feature that separated the desert *abba* from a disciple: it was precisely through the attainment of discernment that the desert *abba* was able to serve and to be recognized. 'This supposed inspiration by God was the essential basis of trust in the teaching of the fathers. An apparently intimate relationship with God, a complete dependence upon him, did more than anything else to give experienced ascetics a permanent standing in the eyes of other men'.[22]

From this perspective, the elder is mainly defined as an *anthropos pneumatikos* – a man who by his long experience in the desert has learned the skills of spiritual life. As Claudia Rapp remarked: 'The spiritual guide acted like the *pneumatophoroi*, namely he was able to offer guidance to others because he had attained certain spiritual qualities: the discernment between good and evil thoughts in himself and in others, the gift of immediate recognition of the causes of a troubled soul, and the ability to gauge accurately the degree to which a young disciple needed to be challenged to stimulate his growth, without the risk of breaking him'.[23]

Generally, the *Apophthegmata Patrum* considers spiritual expertise as one of the specific criteria of the elders, since they were not sought for theoretical teachings, but mainly for their practical spiritual knowledge. Through his lifestyle, the spiritual father tacitly provides a model to his disciple, as often attested in the *Paterikon*'s accounts of the Desert Fathers. The essential role of any genuine spiritual father is configured in his endeavor to guide his disciple's inner spiritual life. Our idea is that an elder/spiritual guide does not simply convey spiritual expertise, but also embodies it by his very lifestyle. We consequently see that a spiritual guide inspired through his mere presence, and not through his discourse, which means that the practice of spiritual guidance is placed in sight, it is shown, to be imitated.

The desert ascetic-monk acts as a magnet, as a pole of attraction, by making his life 'public', so that others were able to see the calm and integrity in and through him. For example, the *Apophthegmata* mentions the power of Antony's presence. One story recounts how three monks used to go out to visit him every year. Two used to pour out their inner thoughts and ply him with questions. But the third remained silent. One time, Antony asked the silent one: 'You often come here to see me, but you never ask me anything'. The monk replied: 'It is enough for me to see you'.[24]

[21] L. Swan, *The Forgotten Desert Mothers* (New York, 2001), 87.

[22] Ph. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority* (1978), 29.

[23] Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2005), 76.

[24] *AP*, Antony 27, trans. B. Ward, *The Sayings* (1984), 7.

In the tradition of desert spirituality the spiritual father is a spiritual man in the full sense of the word, with corresponding experience to teach and guide in the subtle and mysterious ways of life. As Columba Stewart says:

> The desert abba was not a guru: disciples did not just sit and listen to words of wisdom. Often there were no words to listen to. Nor was the elder a magician: there was real work to be done, and most of it was to be done by the disciple. The religious, medical, legal, and other sorts of images which began to accumulate around the figure of the desert elder can obscure the actual means by which desert father worked with desert child. The elder was not a source of power. The elder was not a distributor of self-help guidelines. The elder was sometimes called 'healer', but was really more a sort of witness or midwife than an omnicompetent, self-assured professional. The desert elder was certified by experience rather than by vows or by an academic degree or by ordination.[25]

The monks who moved away from society into the desert of Egypt in the Fourth century acquired considerable spiritual authority among their contemporaries. By totally rejecting ordinary human structures and almost provocatively renouncing worldly institutions, they paradoxically came to represent another kind of power. In popular perception, the desert ascetics enjoyed a position of spiritual prestige. But no 'abba' was declared a spiritual authority or an oracle of wisdom.[26] This spiritual authority may be understood as a kind of 'charismatic succession' alongside of the more institutional 'apostolic succession.[27] In the words of K. Ware 'the elder or *starets* is essentially a "charismatic" and prophetic figure, accredited for his task by the direct action of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual guides are ordained, not by human hands, but by the hand of God. They are an expression of the Church as "event" or "happening", rather than of the Church as institution'.[28]

History shows that functionally the ministries of elder and confessor are not identical. Spiritual direction functions as a form of 'guidance', ideally performed in a series of engagements, dialogues, and explorations between spiritual guide and disciple. Briefly, spiritual guidance does not depend on the institutional expression of the Church. Bishop Kallistos Ware writes that 'while the confessor must always be a priest (clergy), the *starets* may be a monk not in holy orders, or a nun, a layman or a laywoman, since his or her function is essentially charismatic and prophetic: the *starets* gives advice, not only at Confession, but on many other occasions'.[29]

[25] C. Stewart, 'The Desert Fathers on Radical Self-Honesty', *Sobornost* 12 (1990), 25-39; 143-56.

[26] Ph. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority* (1978), 25.

[27] D. Chitty, *The Desert a City. An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism Under the Christian Empire* (New York, 1977), 67-8.

[28] K. Ware, 'The Spiritual Guide in Orthodox Christianity' (2000), 129.

[29] *Ibid*. 129.

In what follows, we discuss the 'ascetic-charismatic' (the ascetic authority) and the 'institutional' (the spiritual authority) forms of spiritual fatherhood in the Christian East.[30] As Claudia Rapp has remarked 'ascetic authority derives its name from *askesis*, meaning "practice". It has its source in the personal efforts of the individual. It is achieved by subduing the body and by practicing virtuous behavior. These efforts are centered on the self, in the hopes of attaining a certain ideal of personal perfection. Ascetic authority is accessible to all. Anyone who chooses to do so can engage in the requisite practices. Finally, ascetic authority is visible. It depends on recognition by others, as it is made evident in the individual's appearance, lifestyle, and conduct'.[31]

The personal practice of asceticism prepares an individual for the receipt of the gifts of the spirit, and thus of spiritual authority, from God. Since ascetic authority is founded on the regulation of lifestyle and behavior, this is a path open to all. In fact, it is the only path by which an individual can hope to bring down God's grace on his or her own initiative. Yet at the same time, asceticism is a gauge of the presence of spiritual authority. Nobody can walk the difficult and thorny road of ever more demanding ascetic practices unless he or she receives the help of God. To observers and bystanders, ascetic accomplishments are thus the outward face of spiritual authority. In other words, ascetic authority is simultaneously the humanly and freely accessible precondition for spiritual authority and its openly visible confirmation. As a consequence, spiritual authority can reside not just in the *person* of the bishop, but also in the episcopal *office* per se. According to the *Apostolic Tradition*, the Holy Spirit is conferred on the bishop-elect by other bishops through the imposition of hands and the prayer of ordination. The apostolic succession is an *external* source of the Holy Spirit that is attached to the episcopal office. The institutional spiritual authority inherent in the episcopate is distinct from the personal spiritual authority held by the bishop and displayed in his conduct. Ideally, the former is bestowed as a confirmation of the latter. The relation of the personal spiritual authority to the spiritual authority acquired *ex officio* would remain a major concern in Christian spirituality for long (?).[32] A monk or a saint was not necessarily the opposite of the bishop. In her recent monograph, as we see, Claudia Rapp warns against overemphasizing the opposition between monks and bishops.[33]

[30] On the sacramental dimension of spiritual fatherhood, see Liviu Barbu, *Pastoral Care as Spiritual Direction: An Eastern Orthodox Pastoral Theology and Its Implications for Contemporary Pastoral Practice* (London, 2009), 103-24.

[31] C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity* (2005), 17.

[32] Before the advent of the Egyptian abbas, the bishops were recognised as spiritual fathers by virtue of their role in the sacramental life of Christians (Baptism, Eucharist, Repentance) and their didactic dissemination and explanation of Scripture for either apologetic purposes. They were recognized as such even by ascetics and monks, L. Regnault, *Day-to-Day Life of the Desert Fathers in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Massachusetts, 1999), viii.

[33] C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity* (2005).

Individual physical effort and its public recognition are two of the characteristics of ascetic authority. A third is its affirmation through the possession of spiritual abilities, especially the ability to instruct others. Herein lies the seed for potential conflict with priests and bishops, whose duties entailed teaching and preaching. The ascetics of the Egyptian desert were held in high regard as teachers in the spiritual life by the Christian community. Disciples apprenticed themselves as 'sons' to their spiritual 'fathers', some for a short period of time, weeks or months, before moving on to be instructed by another *abba*, while others remained with their spiritual father for the duration of his life, assisting him in his old age.

The literary products of early monasticism (*Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, *Historia Lausiaca* by Palladius of Helenopolis, the anonymous *History of the Monks in Egypt*, and John Cassian's *Conferences*, Athanasius of Alexandria's *Life of* Anthony) give the impression of an uneasy relation between the desert fathers and the officially ordained Church clergymen, continually renegotiated, depending on the historical circumstances and on the players involved. The Potential for conflict arose from the competing claims of both sides for spiritual authority.

In contrast to the desert fathers, priests and bishops derived their authority and their mission to teach from their ordination. Two aspects of the ordination ritual are crucial in this respect: the prayer over the ordinaned through which the divine Spirit is called down upon him and the imposition of hands, which placed the newly-ordained in the continued tradition of the Apostles' receiving the Holy Spirit from Christ.[34] Meanwhile the Desert Fathers, according to the *Apophthegmata*, were *pneumatikos* (or *pneumatophoros*), *i.e.* imbued or filled with the Holy Spirit through their own practice. The Desert Fathers strongly emphasized that the Holy Spirit is the true guide of souls –, but this assertion involved many long years of solitude in the Egyptian desert. The spiritual father ('Abba') is the one who has journeyed the way of the desert, so that an 'elder' speaks from experience. Moreover, while the confessor-priest must always be a priest, the *starets* may be a simple monk, not in any holy order, or even a mere layman.

A unique practice among the desert ascetics was the 'manifestation of thoughts' (*exagoreusis*), which was more than just a confession of sins. Everything could be presented to the 'elder', not just sins. His dominant values are humility and obedience, rather than penitence and pardon – the dominant values

[34] For example, charismatic bishops, such as Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom, provided a model of spiritual fatherhood that held together ordination and asceticism, community life and contemplative life. Recent studies, such as those by Andrea Sterk, Claudia Rapp and George Demacopoulos, have shown the fusion of these two ideals in the person and ministry of the ascetic bishop, see A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); G.E. Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (Indiana, 2007).

of the ordained clergy. In fact the essence of the relation between the spiritual father and his disciple consists in the latter opening himself to the holy man, enabling him to discern and examine the thoughts of the disciple's heart.[35] As such, the 'manifestation of thoughts' (*exagoreusis*) remains one of the least understood practices of desert ascetics. If anything amounted to a technique of guidance it was this particular practice. It has been described as a 'spirituality of opening one's heart'.[36] The disciple was encouraged to make known to the spiritual guide all that was going on interiorly and had a much broader meaning than sacramental confession. The aim was not absolution from guilt, but rather an increase in discernment about the propensities of the deep will in one's personality.

Abba Poemen once remarked that 'a man may remain for a hundred years in his cell without learning how to live in the cell'.[37] The art of learning to live in the cell came from the guidance he gained from the *abba*. The cell was the crucible where the monk did his 'interior' work. But what happened to him there, particularly if he was young or new to the desert, he was expected to discuss with an *abba*. This was the discipline of the 'manifestation of thoughts'. W. Harmless writes:

> The practice sounds very much like private confession. And in a sense, it was. But it was also very different. It differed from later sacramental practice in certain obvious ways. First, the *abba* was not necessarily, or even usually, a priest. Wisdom, not ordination, was what counted. Second, while the *abba* might have prayed before dismissing the monk, it was not a liturgical prayer signaling absolution or formal reconciliation. Third, and most important, the conversation between monk and *abba* centered not on sins per se, but on *logismoi*, on 'thoughts'.[38]

The literature of Eastern Christianity, such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, demonstrates that the elders used the virtue of spiritual discernment to lead changes toward a deeper understanding of the hidden operations in their lives. They spoke of this simply as bringing the light of truth into the inner person. As C. Stewart has noted:

> The whole life was about opening up: of self to another and of the self to God, with no obsessive concentration on the self or on the relationship with one's abba. Perhaps another way to understand this is to remember that it was the commitment to truth, to seeing things as they are, which disposed the monk for contemplation of God. To see fantasy, projections and pious wishes, depends in the first place upon stripping away the mask of fantasies and projections about ourselves. We find that the masks we place on ourselves and the masks we see on the face of God are, in the end, the same, and are of our own making.

[35] On the mandatory disclosure of thoughts to the spiritual guide in *Apophthegmata*, see G. Gould, *The Desert Fathers* (1993), 32-3.

[36] F. Neyt, 'A Form of Charismatic Authority', *Eastern Churches Review* 6 (1974), 52-65, 60.

[37] *AP*, Poemen 95.

[38] W. Harmless, *Desert Christians* (2004), 229.

The goal of the elder was utter transparence to divine light. The elder, far from being a centre of power and a 'director', served in his or her transparence to divine light as a lens which focuses the light of truth on the dark places in the disciple's heart.[39]

The manifestation of thoughts was intended to be preventive rather than remedial, dealing with issues early on, before they had time to manifest in action.

The disciple was encouraged to make known to his spiritual father all that was going on inside his mind and soul. The spiritual guidance of early Egyptian monasticism was based on one presupposition that progress was possible in spiritual life. This was closely linked to the idea of a spiritual relationship, of a combat against the passions that obstructed the road to contemplation. It had a much broader meaning than sacramental confession. The aim was not absolution from guilt but rather an increase in discernment about the propensities of the deep will in one's personality.[40] The 'manifestation of thoughts' (*exagoreusis*)[41] brought true self-knowledge and gave the opportunity for the charismatically endowed elder to be a physician for one's soul. This dynamic was not so much private confession as spiritual direction. Even this terminology is a bit misleading, for the *abba* did not 'direct' the monk.

However, this practice gradually died out as spiritual guidance became increasingly institutionalized.[42] The final stage in this institutionalization was the assimilation of the 'old man' with the confessor-priest. The 'elder', whether ordained or lay, frequently speaks with a spiritual authority that only few confessor-priests possess. As Timothy D. Barnes observed, with the rise and reforms under Constantine and his sons, the Christian bishop 'possessed an ascribed status, his authority was inherent in his office, and he was at the centre of a web of local patronage. His position thus conferred on him a very real political power'.[43] Such authority would, at times, conform to and, at times, compete with the popular authority of the desert monk.

[39] C. Stewart, 'The Desert Fathers on Radical Self-Honesty' (1990), 27.

[40] In the spirituality of the desert there is a correlation between a deepened consciousness of sin and a charismatic word. The word of 'elder' is intimately connected with the history of confession. For this theme, see Hermann Dörries, 'The Place of Confession in Ancient Monasticism', *SP* 5 (1962), 284-311.

[41] The conversation between monk and *abba* centered not on sins per se, but on *logismoi*, on 'thoughts'. The young monk was expected to manifest his 'thoughts' regularly, and the *abba* helped the monk discern the 'thought', whether it was good, evil, or neutral, whether it should be acted upon, ignored, or fought against. On more details, see W. Harmless, *Desert Christians* (2004), 229-32.

[42] For the gradual increase of the importance of priesthood in monasticism, see Ph. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority* (1978), 61-2. However, ascetic experience (rather than ordination) was still regarded as determinant for spiritual guidance see G.E. Demacopoulos, *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church* (2007), 7.

[43] T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, 1993), 179.

Therefore, the institutional and charismatic/prophetic were never radically opposed, because within the Church they complement one another, indeed grow out of each other, within the single ministry of healing. The tradition of spiritual guidance still survives in the Eastern Orthodox churches today, in practices such as confession of sins and spiritual counselling, activities closely connected to the Eucharist and Liturgy. Charismatic spiritual direction grew in monastic circles, as well as in the mainstream Church. Both the bishop or priest and the elder could share a life of holiness, and as a result were able to offer charismatic leadership. Thus we can say that the desert concept of the spiritual elder had a significant impact on the Eastern spirituality. And, indeed, the role of the spiritual father constitued a *prototype* or *model* of spiritual guidance for subsequent generations, a role that is summed up in the words of St Barsanuphius: 'I care for you more than you care for yourself'.

To conclude, it is important to reiterate that the human relationship in the desert between a spiritual father and a disciple, generally younger, who came to learn the monastic way of life, had a fundamental impact on Eastern spirituality. This relationship was in the first instance practical. Therefore the spiritual father, or *abba*, necessarily had to teach by example as well as by word. Equally necessary, of course, was the disciple's ready obedience in fulfilling the word or imitating the example. Hence, the desert abba was not a guru: disciples did not just sit and listen to words of wisdom. Often there were no words to listen to. Nor was the elder a magician: there was real work to be done, and most of it was to be done by the disciple. In the *Apophthegmata* there is no theorizing, no trains of logical argument, no intricate analysis of biblical texts. Their exchanges focus on the specifics of desert living and the spiritual quest. W. Harmless has noted that in the spirituality of the desert the term 'elder' or 'Abba' was a term of respect, not of office. It did not mean that the elder was a priest.

Therefore, the authority of a spiritual father is not confined to that authority claimed by the priest, as one might think. Whereas the confessor-priest exert an authority delegated by an 'institution', thus an officially conferred one (*de jure* authority), a spiritual father's authority is, *a contrario*, based on his personal charisma (*de facto* authority). We understand that the two types of authority, the 'administrative and charismatic' one (F. Neyt) or the 'institutional and practical' one (K. Ware), are not mutually exclusive. They are to a certain extent compatible and they can intersect, since a priest can assume the role of spiritual father.

This phenomenon can be understood by reaching a *via media* between the two dimensions of the Church, because due to its charismatic character the practice of spiritual guidance provided by the Desert Fathers complement the Church's institutional character. This twofold character of the Church, defined by both the ecclesial side (priest or bishop), and the charismatic one (*abba* or elder) actually achieve the communitarian dimension of the Church. Thus,

although in approaching this (ir)reconcilable tension between *pneumatic* asceticism and *hierarchical* authority, we have opted for a mediating solution, believing that the issue of charismatic authority *versus* institutional authority is still an object of theological reflection in the Christian East. By placing the practice of spiritual guidance in the realm of spiritual expertise, the tenet we support is that an elder is *stricto sensu* a spiritual man, spiritual expertise is the distinctive characteristic of a spiritual father in Eastern Christian spirituality. From this perspective, by looking into *Apophthegmata Patrum* we have been able to render the dynamics of spiritual guidance in its depth.

On this point, we argue that the mainstream model of spiritual guidance, exercised by ordained clergy (by bishops and, from the third century onwards, also by the presbyters), and the model represented by the monastics influenced each other, and that a synthesis between the two was gradually realized. Beginning with the Fourth and Fifth centuries, the charismatic authority of non-ordained monks was backed up by their ordination to the priesthood, so that monks could serve as both Eucharistic and spiritual leaders. Our conclusion is that the tradition of spiritual guidance is based on a personal, rather than institutional, model. In any case, the figure of spiritual guide, either ascetic, either priest or bishop, has retained its full significance up to the present day in Orthodox Christendom.

‘Pay for Our Sins’: A Shared Theme in the Pachomian Koinonia and the White Monastery Federation

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Abstract

In his translation of Pachomian texts, L.-Th. Lefort suggested that an emendation was needed in the text of the *Third Catechesis* of Theodore, so that it would read ‘fill up our benefits’ rather than ‘fill up our sins’. Examination of the manuscript and the Coptic vocabulary in this passage suggests that this emendation is unnecessary and the meaning is ‘pay for our sins’. Theodore, at this point in the *Third Catechesis*, shares both vocabulary and message with statements in the works of Shenoute. Both the Koinonia and the White Monastery are described as suitable places to pay for one’s sins. This is evidence of connections between the two groups that go beyond shared monastic rules to include elements of monastic, specifically cenobitic, catechesis.

While reading Pachomian texts, I found that the *Third Catechesis* attributed to Theodore presented a small problem. Was the editor’s proposed emendation to the Coptic text necessary? I will argue that the emendation is not necessary and, in fact, obscures an interesting parallel between the teaching of the Pachomian Koinonia and that of the White Monastery Federation, as expressed by Shenoute.

The Coptic text of the *Third Catechesis* is preserved on nineteen leaves of one codex.[1] L.-Th. Lefort, the editor and first translator of the text, attributes it to Theodore, the fourth leader of the Koinonia, on the basis of content: named leaders and references to the early days of the community.[2] The passage that I will discuss offers instruction on how a monk should go about his work in the community. ‘Let us not be careless about our tasks … saying, “It is only (a matter of) obedience. If it goes wrong, we don’t care. If it succeeds, we don’t care.”… This attitude is rooted in arrogance and wickedness’.[3] Biblical examples, both

[1] L.-Th. Lefort, *Œuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples*, CSCO 159 (Louvain, 1956), xiii-xvii, for description of the scattered leaves of the codex, which may date from the 9th century.

[2] The catechesis is attributed to Theodore in part because both Pachomius (‘Apa’) and Horsiesius are mentioned by name, while Theodore is not; L.-Th. Lefort, *Œuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples* (1956), xvi-xvii.

[3] Theodore, *Third Catechesis*, CSCO 159, 45.

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good and bad, are then offered. This attitude toward the work of the community is like that of 'Onan, who knew that his seed would not belong to him, and (so) poured it on the ground'.[4] The monk should take Jethro, not Onan, for his guide. 'Let us take the goodness of Jethro the Gentile (for an example), he who put forth (a plan) for the organization of a crowd of sixty myriads and so helped all the people, as well as Moses who led them'.[5] Jethro gains nothing for himself from organizing the decision-making process of the Israelites. The monks should take him as their model, for 'we know that we do not work for (any) person or for any thing, but because God gave us a place to work so that we (might) ⲙⲟⲩϩ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲛⲟⲃⲉ: either the leader of the community or he who is in charge of stewardship or in any rank … let each one set his hand "seven times" to every matter and every task'.[6]

The key phrase, Coptic ⲙⲟⲩϩ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲛⲟⲃⲉ, could mean 'fill our sins' or 'fill up our sins', since 'fill' is a common literal meaning of the verb, as in the Sahidic New Testament, *John* 2:7, when Jesus says, 'Fill the water jars' (ⲙⲉϩⲛ̄ϩⲩⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ).[7] But that translation seemed impossible to Lefort, so he suggested emending ⲛⲟⲃⲉ to ⲛⲟⲃⲣⲉ, from sin to benefit or profit.[8] Therefore, his translation (offered in my English from Lefort's French) was 'achieve what is useful for us'.[9] This emendation has been accepted by later translations of the Pachomian texts: Armand Veilleux in English, 'realize that which is to our advantage', and recently, Christoph Joest in German, 'wir unseren Vorteil wirken'.[10]

There are problems with the emendation ⲛⲟⲃⲉ-ⲛⲟⲃⲣⲉ, however. The manuscript is clear at this point, reading ⲛⲟⲃⲉ, sin, and the spelling ⲛⲟⲩⲣⲉ, not ⲛⲟⲃⲣⲉ, is much more common in Sahidic monastic works such as those

[4] *Ibid*., referring to *Gen*. 38:9.

[5] *Ibid*., referring to *Exod*. 18:14-27.

[6] Theodore, *ibid*. 45-6.

[7] *Concordance du Nouveau Testament sahidique*, ed. Michel Wilmet, CSCO 173 (Louvain, 1957), 450.

[8] L.-Th. Lefort, *Œuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples* (1956), 45 n. 70, 'Lire (?) ⲛⲟⲃⲣⲉ. Serait-ce une allusion à la I *Clementis* où le terme rende le grec κοινωφελές, au chap. 48.6?' 1*Clement* was written in Greek in the second century, but also partially survives in an Akhmimic translation, suggesting that it was available from an early date in Egypt. But the Akhmimic version of 48:6 does not offer a neat equivalent for the Greek word cited by Lefort. In Akhmimic (my translation): 'It is more beneficial for him to humble himself insofar as he says that he is great, and not seek his benefit (ⲛⲁⲩⲣⲉ) but that of everyone'. See *Der erste Clemensbrief in altkoptischer Übersetzung*, ed. Carl Schmidt (Leipzig, 1908), 99. And this solution leaves the problem of the verb unsolved; see below.

[9] The French translation of the passage appears in L.-Th. Lefort, *Œuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples*, CSCO 160 (Louvain, 1956), 46, 'nous réalisions ce qui nous est utile'.

[10] *Pachomian Koinonia III*, trans. Armand Veilleux, CS 47 (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1982), 100; *Theodoros von Tabennese und Horsiese von Šeneset*, trans. Christoph Joest, Weisungen der Väter 17 (Beuron, 2013), 54.

of the Pachomians and Shenoute.[11] Also questionable is the translation of the verb ⲙⲟⲩϩ that accompanies the emendation. It shifts the verb from the literal 'fill, fill up, or be full' to a more metaphorical 'achieve or bring about', a move that is not supported by Coptic dictionary evidence.[12]

Rather than emend the text, I looked at the entire range of meaning of the verb and found some interesting texts and contexts. First of all, ⲙⲟⲩϩ can mean pay in reference to tax or other payments.[13] Farmers pay (ⲙⲟⲩϩ) their tax (ⲇⲏⲙⲟⲥⲓⲟⲛ) from the fields; someone says, 'Bring the bill here and I will pay you (ⲛⲧⲁⲙⲁϩⲕ ⲙⲙⲟϥ)'.[14] Shenoute, in *De iudicio*, a sermon on preparing for death and judgment, commends various acts of piety and charity as ways to accumulate lasting wealth (the treasure in heaven of *Matt*. 6:20): 'Wealth is in fasts and prayers … and charity, (as in) tearing up bills owed by the poor who are unable to pay (ⲉⲙⲁϩⲟⲩ)'.[15]

The idea of payment is extended beyond the realm of taxes and debts. In the *Martyrdom of St. Victor the General*, Victor goes against the wishes of his father by refusing to sacrifice. The devil then takes the form of a soldier guarding Victor and berates him for disobeying his father and rhetorically asks, 'O Victor, where will you be able to pay for this wickedness?'[16] 'Pay for this wickedness' is ⲙⲉϩⲡⲉⲓⲡⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ. The devil urges Victor to be like Isaac, not Ham, in his treatment of his father.[17] Otherwise, like Ham, Victor will be cursed since he can never 'pay for' such behavior towards his father. He must turn back now before it is too late.

The same argument is present in another discourse of Shenoute of Atripe: pay now because you cannot pay later. Shenoute criticizes those who say that one can pay for sins in post mortem punishment and clear the account.[18] This discourse, with the incipit *What Person Would Say*, is partially preserved in three manuscripts and small fragments are found in a fourth.[19] I have found the

[11] W.E. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939), 239.

[12] *Ibid*. 208-9. The citations in which the meaning is fulfill, complete, or amount to always have some numerical or time reference, as in 'complete 20 days of work' or 'amount to 12 men' (*Acts* 19:7).

[13] *Ibid*. 208.

[14] Examples are taken from W.E. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939), including E.A.W. Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts* (London, 1915), 310; on ⲇⲏⲙⲟⲥⲓⲟⲛ, see Hans Förster, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Wörter in den koptishcen dokumentarischen Texten*, TU 148 (Berlin, 2002), 171.

[15] Shenoute, *De iudicio*, ed. Heike Behlmer, Catalogo del Museo egizio di Torino 8 (Turin, 1996), 115: ϩⲛ̄ϩⲉⲛⲥϩⲁⲓ ⲉⲡⲁϩⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲛⲛϩⲏⲕⲉ ⲉⲙⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲙ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲙⲁϩⲟⲩ.

[16] E.A.W. Budge, *Coptic Martyrdoms* (London, 1914), 12: ⲱ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ ⲉⲕⲛⲁⲯⲙⲉϩⲡⲉⲓⲡⲉⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲧⲱⲛ.

[17] *Ibid*. 13.

[18] See Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, CSCO 600 (Louvain, 2004), 676-7, for details on attestation of this work.

[19] *Ibid*. 864.

verb ⲙⲟⲩϩ in two passages in *What Person Would Say*, each attested in more than one manuscript.

In the first example, Shenoute tells his audience that it is important to act now, before it is too late, and warns them not to be led astray by those who say something else: 'Isn't it easy for a person to reconcile with God now, when there is time? But it is very difficult for (a person) to reconcile with (God) when he dies in his sins, since (then) there is no time! How will you influence Him? If I say, "Do not be led astray by those who say, 'If men pay for their sins (ⲙⲉϩⲛⲉⲩⲛⲟⲃⲉ) with punishments, they are brought up,'" I am not going to argue with those who push people into evil, for they talk about what they do not know. But I will tell you what I know!'[20] The ignorant opponents of Shenoute seem to believe that it is not necessary to repent and change one's ways before death, because after a period of punishment the dead are 'brought up' from hell into heaven.

Slightly later in *What Person Would Say* Shenoute uses the same phrase 'pay for your sins' (ⲙⲉϩⲛⲉⲕⲛⲟⲃⲉ) in sarcastic rhetoric that reduces his opponents' argument to absurdity: 'For the Lord did not say to the thief, "As soon as you pay for your sins (ⲙⲉϩⲛⲉⲕⲛⲟⲃⲉ) with punishment when you die, you will be brought up". But he said, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (*Luke* 23:43)'.[21] According to Shenoute, the thief has already paid for his sins by admitting them ('we have been condemned justly' *Luke* 23:41) and acknowledging that Jesus is Lord ('remember me when you come into your kingdom' *Luke* 23:42).

These examples demonstrate that it is not necessary to emend the text of the *Third Catechesis* and read ⲛⲟⲃⲣⲉ instead of ⲛⲟⲃⲉ. Pay or pay for, expressed with the verb ⲙⲟⲩϩ, is a common idiom. But if I return to the text of the *Third Catechesis* and ask what 'pay for our sins' means for monks in the fourth century, I cannot simply rely on the citations from Shenoute for guidance. The two Shenoutean sermons cited are not addressed to exclusively monastic audiences; like others in his *Discourse* volumes, they seem to address mixed audiences of laity, clergy, and monks. Their message is clear: there is no possibility of finite punishment for sin after death, followed by promotion to heaven. There is no notion of purgatory and punishment is unending. But is this doctrine given any special nuance in Theodore's address to the monks to meet the needs of a communal monastery? One answer to this question may be that the monastery is described as a place that is especially favorable to repentance, and some other debt language appears.

[20] Shenoute, *What Person Would Say*, GG 213-14 = BN 130[4] f. 97; see Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, CSCO 599 (Louvain, 2004), 36-45, for a summary of the codex and manuscript designations.

[21] Shenoute, *What Person Would Say*, GG 216 = BN 130[4] f. 98.

Shortly before the 'pay for our sins' passage, the monks are warned: 'If we love honor in this age, we force God to confront us with our IOU (a χειρογραφον, written bill of hand) … at the judgment-seat of Christ … and there is no way to run from the fire that consumes the enemies (*Isa*. 26:11)'.[22] In other words, if we die in debt because of sin, there is no avoiding punishment. On the other hand, 'if we keep our weakness … in mind all the time and grieve over it, we will escape eternal shame'.[23] A little later in the catechesis some examples of monastic faults or 'debts' are mentioned: murmuring and evil thoughts. Then Onan and Jethro are cited as bad and good role models, before Theodore states that '(we) know that we are not striving for (any) person or (any) thing, but (because) God has given us a place to pay for our sins (ⲙⲟⲩϩ ⲛⲛⲉⲕⲛⲟⲃⲉ)'.[24] The monk is fortunate because he is in a place (the monastery) that is full of opportunities for disinterested effort, in which benefits accrue to the community and not to the individual, as in the example of Jethro.

The next step would be to examine the *Canons* of Shenoute, which are the works meant for a monastic audience, for instances of the phrase 'pay for sins' as well as discussion of repentance and punishment before death, not after.[25] At the same time, further mention of the special value of a communal monastery as a place for repentance might be sought in both the works of Shenoute and the works of Pachomian leaders.

[22] Theodore, *Third Catechesis*, CSCO 159, 44.
[23] *Ibid*.
[24] *Ibid*. 45.
[25] S. Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, CSCO 600 (2004), 553-8.

The Political and Philanthropic Role of Monastic Figures and Monasteries as Revealed in Fourth-Century Coptic and Greek Correspondence

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Abstract

Letters to and from monks that were written in fourth century Egypt constitute an important, but somewhat overlooked, body of evidence for the development of early monasticism. Collections of such letters include those written to the anchorites Apas John and Paphnutius, the correspondence of a Melitian monastery known as 'Hathor', from which come letters to and from Apas Paieous and Nepheros, and the letters that were found amongst the cartonnage fragments of the Nag Hammadi codices. The relative inaccessibility of several of these letter collections has meant that scholars have tended to favour the far better known hagiographical literature in their presentations of early monasticism rather than turn to original documentation. This has resulted in the production of scholarly descriptions of early monasticism that may be considered to lack a certain authenticity as they remain skewed towards a somewhat idealised depiction of the desert fathers and their supposedly isolated lifestyles. In this article I explore extracts from a selection of fourth century monastic letters from Egypt in order to consider the extent to which monastic figures in this period, rather than living in isolation, were in actuality playing an active role in local society. I have focused in particular on requests for philanthropic and judicial intervention made by secular persons in the wider community. It is my contention that by using documentation such as these letters it is possible to demonstrate that monks and monasteries in Egypt in the fourth century played a far more influential role in everyday social and political life than has often hitherto been acknowledged and that, as a consequence, the popular scholarly depiction of Egyptian monasticism is still in need of some revision.

Late antique literature describing early monasticism in fourth century Egypt abounds with depictions of desert dwelling ascetics who are sought out by members of the public as miracle workers and spiritual guides.[1] A foremost example is that of John of Lycopolis who makes his appearance in all the major

[1] Most notably the *Historia Lausiaca* of Palladius and the anonymous *Historia Monachorum*. The translations I have used here are taken from William K.L. Clarke (ed.), *The Lausiac History of Palladius* (London, 1918) and Norman Russell and Benedicta Ward, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (London, 1981).

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works of the period.[2] The description of John given in the *Historia Lausiaca* for example tells us that,

> here was a certain John in Lycopolis, who in his childhood learned the trade of carpentering; he had a brother a dyer. Later, when he was about twenty-five years old, he renounced the world. And having lived in various monasteries for five years he retired by himself to the mountain of Lyco, where he made himself three cells on the actual summit and went in and immured himself. One chamber was for his bodily needs, and another where he worked and ate, and the third where he prayed. Having completed thirty years thus immured, and receiving the necessaries of life through a window from one who ministered to him, he was counted worthy of the gift of predictions.[3]

John, who is said to have spoken no Greek and had little or nothing in the way of a formal education, was granted the power of prophecy and an ability to perform miracles due to his saintly lifestyle and, as a consequence, attracted visitors of some import. These, we are told, included such politically significant figures as a *praepositos*, a *stratelates*, a tribune, a *sugkletikos*, and Alypius, the *Hegemon* of the Lycopolis region.[4] In such hagiographical works as these, the monastic luminaries of Egypt remain physically rooted within the desert environment. Their visitors are an intrusion into a life devoted to ascetic practices. They have often escaped the distractions of urban life in order to find peace in lonely places. So, for example, an Alexandrian woman named as Alexandra shuts herself up in a tomb to avoid distracting the male gaze.[5] John of Lycopolis is invited to Constantinople by Theodosius but refuses, preferring the solitude of his desert cell.[6]

The artifice inherent in such material has been ably explored in recent times and it has become apparent that such accounts are not always to be taken at face value. James Goehring, in his exploration of the foundations of Pachomian monasticism, and Samuel Rubenson, in his analysis of Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, have done much to dispel the notion that such significant monastic figures as Pachomius and Antony could have been as uncultured and isolated from the world as the available literature would have us believe.[7] More recently,

[2] *Hist. mon.* I, 2, 4-9, 10, 12; Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* XXXV; Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* XI 19 and 32; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* VII 22,7-8; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Hist. eccl.* V 25,2; Aug., *civ. Dei* V 26; Cassian, *Inst.* IV 23. For further information on the achievements of John of Lycopolis see the Paul Devos, 'John of Lycopolis', in Aziz S. Atiya (ed.), *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1991), 1363b-1366a and Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints, Compiled from Original Monuments and Authentic Records* III (Dublin, 1866), 260-5.

[3] *Hist. Laus.* XXXV 1.1-2.

[4] *Hist. Laus.* XXXV 5-6.

[5] *Hist. Laus.* III 1-3.

[6] Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* V 24; Aug., *civ. Dei* V 26; Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* XXXV 2; Cassian, *Conf.* I 24.26, *Inst.* IV 23; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* VII 22, Rufinus, *Hist. eccl.* XI 32.

[7] Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint*, SAC (Minneapolis, 1995); James E. Goehring, *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, PTS (Berlin, 1985).

research into the religious and political values and purposes that may have lain behind the writing of Egyptian hagiographical literature has also brought to the fore the complex social and political maelstrom from which such deceptively straightforward literature sprung.[8] A particular debt is owed in this respect to Ewa Wipszycka who has done much to transform the study of monasticism through her insistence on the use of archaeological and documentary evidence alongside the literary. Claudia Rapp should also be mentioned here for the valuable use she has made of letters as documentary sources in her explorations of monastic and clerical life.[9] However, much remains to be done to make such material more easily accessible to the general scholar both in terms of translating unpublished Greek and Coptic materials and the need for new editions of such letters and documents that are known to exist.[10] The paucity of documentary material and a lack of scholarly research into it has meant that, despite its shortcomings, scholars are still heavily reliant on hagiographical literature for information. So then the emphasis on the stereotypical depiction of Egyptian monks as desert dwelling illiterates of humble social origin remains in place. In this article, which focuses on the social and political activities of early monastic figures within their local communities, I shall demonstrate how, by discarding hagiographical literature and looking instead only at documentary evidence, in this case letters, it is possible to come to a markedly different view of early monasticism. I shall use in particular several examples of letters from amongst those associated with a monk named as Apa John and those found within the cartonnage material of the Nag Hammadi Codices.[11]

There are several letters addressed to monks within the Nag Hammadi cartonnage material of codex VII, including most notably those to one or more

[8] Notably, David Frankfurter, 'Hagiography and the Reconstruction of Local Religion in Late Antique Egypt: Memories, Inventions, and Landscapes', *Church History and Religious Culture* 86 (2006), 13-37. For a variety of responses to the issues and methodologies used in exploring hagiographical literature, including commentary on the work of Frankfurter, see Mathilde van Dijk and Jitse Dijkstra (eds), *The Encroaching Desert. Egyptian Hagiography and the Medieval West* (Leiden, 2006).

[9] Ewa Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (IVe-VIIIe siècles)*, JJP supp. 11 (Varsovie, 2009), 69-106, 471-565; Claudia Rapp, '"For Next to God, You are My Salvation": Reflections on the Rise of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', in Paul Antony Hayward and James Howard-Johnston (eds), *The Cults of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford, 1999), 63-81. C. Rapp, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium* (Oxford, 2016), 109-15.

[10] *E.g.* on the need for an edition of the letters of Apa John, see Malcolm Choat, 'The Archive of Apa Johannes: Notes on a Proposed Edition', in T. Purola and E. Salmenkivi J. Frösén (eds), *Proceedings of the 24th Congress of Papyrology*, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum (Helsinki, 2007), 175-83.

[11] For the published cartonnage material see John W.B. Barns, Gerald M. Browne and John C. Shelton, *Nag Hammadi Codices: Greek and Coptic Papyri from the Cartonnage of the Covers*, NHS (Leiden, 1981).

monks named as Apa Sansnos.[12] This documentation is of particular interest as the provenience and the general date of the material is known, unlike most other documentary evidence from the same period.[13] The letters are written in Greek and Coptic and deal with several aspects of the daily life of the monks mentioned. Likewise, the fourth century Apa John letters are also written in Greek and Coptic,[14] although unfortunately they are of an unknown provenience. The circumstance surrounding their subsequent sale in the early twentieth century does suggest however that they may originate from a monastic archive in the Hermopolis region.[15] If this is the case then these letters are the correspondence of a monk living in or near one of the foremost towns of Egypt, one that contained an estimated population of over 30,000 people in the late antique period.[16] An examination of letters such as these can prove very fruitful; Claudia Rapp has already used similar letters to study the intercessional role of monks within their wider communities.[17] The pleas for divine intercession that she describes are also to be found within the Apa John and Nag Hammadi material where there are several surviving letters from those who ask directly for prayers of intercession by the monks on their own behalf or for members of the community.[18] Such religious activities were, it seems, considered an

[12] At least 8 letters are written to Sansnos; seven are in Greek and one is in Coptic. See J. Barns *et al*., *Nag Hammadi Codices* (1981) letters G68, G72, G73, G75, G76, G77, G78, and C5.

[13] Documents dated to 333, 341, 346 and 348 AD were found in the cartonnage material of codex VII, see John C. Shelton, 'Introduction', in J. Barns *et al*., *Nag Hammadi Codices* (1981), 4-5.

[14] The Greek and Coptic sections of the archive were first brought together by Peter van Minnen, in 'The Roots of Egyptian Christianity', *APF* 40 (1994), 71-85. For the Greek Apa John letters see *P.Herm.Rees* 7-10 and 17 in Brinley Roderick Rees, *Papyri from Hermopolis, and Other Documents of the Byzantine Period: Edited with Translations and Notes by B.R. Rees* (London, 1964). Additionally, see Nikolaos Gonis, 'Further Letters from the Archive of Apa Ioannes', *BASP* 45 (2008), 69-86. For the Coptic Apa John letters *P.Ryl.Copt*. 268-74 and 276, see Walter Ewing Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the collection of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (Manchester, 1909). Other letters in this volume identified with Apa John include *P.Ryl.Copt.* 292, 301, 311-2, 314, 352 and 296. See also, Malcolm Choat, '"P. Lond. Copt." I 1123: Another Letter to Apa Johannes?', *ZPE* 156 (2006), 157-64. N. Gonis gives a brief overview of the origin of the Apa John collection in 'Further Letters from the Archive of Apa Ioannes' (2008), 69-73. See also most recently the comments of M. Choat in 'Lord Crawford's search for papyri: On the origin of the Rylands papyrus collection', in Paul Schubert (ed.), *Actes du 26e Congrès International de Papyrologie*, Recherches et rencontres 30 (Genève, 2012), 141-9.

[15] Constantine Zuckerman has alternatively suggested an origin in the Lycopolitan nome for these letters following his theory that the Apa John of the letters is in fact John of Lycopolis. See Constantine Zuckerman, 'The Hapless Recruit Psois and the Mighty Anchorite, Apa John', *BASP* 32, no. 3-4 (1995), 183-94.

[16] For the evidence leading to this estimate and a brief description of the city in the late antique period see John Matthews, *The Journey of Theophanes: Travel, Business, and Daily Life in the Roman East* (New Haven, 2006), 12-6.

[17] C. Rapp, 'For next to God you are my salvation' (1991), 63-81.

[18] See *e.g. P.Nag.Hamm.* C4 written from Daniel to Aphrodisios: 'Have the goodness to send up my prayers, both you and the blessed brothers who are with you', published in J. Barns *et al*., *Nag Hammadi Codices* (1981), 133-8. Similarly, in *P.Herm.Rees* 8 the anonymous author writes

essential part of the duties that were expected to be performed by monks for the community. Here, I shall examine how the same monks who were expected to play a role as spiritual intercessors also were called upon perform more material services for the nearby communities.

Several letters in the Apa John collection involve those facing prison sentences. *P.Misc.inv. II 70* is a letter from a man asking that Apa John write to his gaoler, a certain Apollonius, telling him to release him:

I want you to know, my lord father, that I came to you some other time too, asking your goodness about Apollonios, (saying) that I ask you to send (a letter) to him, so that he releases me from … power … that he releases me from prison, because I do not have enough of the food I need.[19]

Similarly a Coptic letter of Apa John, *P.Ryl.Copt.* 272 , although badly damaged, can be seen to contain a discussion concerning an old man who is imprisoned and some involvement with the *archon*. 'An old man imprisoned in ... (Ni?)lammon the magistrate…'[20] These sort of requests were not unusual in the wider Roman Empire as can be witnessed by the appearance of legislation regarding monastic intervention in prison cases that were embedded within a series of laws produced by Theodosius I and Arcadius between 392 and 398.[21] Not all activities involving monks were benign, earlier in the 380s Syrian monks were infamously involved in anti-pagan and anti-Semitic activities that included damage to several notable shrines and synagogues. The involvement of monks in issues that were seen as of a destabilising nature reached such proportions that it prompted a constitution of 390, issued by Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius, proclaiming that, 'if any person should be found in the profession of monks, they shall be ordered to seek out and inhabit desert places and desolate solitudes'.[22] This constitution was repealed two years later when monks were once more allowed to return to the cities. It is hard to know what impact, if any, such legislation may have had on the organisation of monastic communities or whether it curtailed their activities in the social sphere. It may

to Apa John: 'Therefore I greet your reverence by this letter, entreating you to remember both me who salute you and all my house in the prayers which you send up ever daily to the Lord our Saviour', in B.R. Rees, *Hermopolis* (1924), 15-7.

[19] γινώσκειν σαι βούλομε, κύριέ μου πάτηρ, ὅτι ἦλθον πρὸς σαὶ καὶ ἄλλοτε ἀξιῶν σα[ι] τὴ᾽ν᾽ σὴν χρησ- τότητα περὶ Ἀπολλῶ νίοῦ, ὅτι ἀξιῶ σαι πέμψαι πρὸς αὐ- τ[ὸ]ν εἵνα ἀπολύσῃ μαι ἀπὸ . . . ω ἐξουσίαν μου . . . ἀπολύσῃ με ἀπὸ τῆς εἰρκτῆς, ἐπιδὴ ο᾽ὐ᾽ χοράζομαι τῆς ἀνανκέας τροφῆς·

[20] [. . . ϵ] ογϩλλο ϵqηλ ϵϩογν[. . .νι?]λαμμων παρχων ν . . .

[21] *De monachis*. See Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, Corpus of Roman Law (Princeton, 1952), 449. See also Julia Hillner, *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015), 86. Also of relevance here are the comments of N. Gonis, in 'Further Letters from the Archive of Apa Ioannes' (2008), 73.

[22] Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 166-7.

be that only itinerant monks suffered the consequences of such legislation, but it is a telling indication of how monks played a role in local and international affairs and the difficulties faced by the authorities in controlling them.

How monks were expected to intercede in such legal cases is not recorded. It is probable that many demands could easily have been satisfied with a form of written intervention, as in the example of the man who requests that Apa John to write to his gaoler Apollonius. In certain cases there would perhaps have been the need for the monk in question to appear physically before the local magistrate or other court official. As, prior to 460 AD, there was no requirement that a lawyer who was listed to plead in the magistrate's court should have any legal training it would not have been impossible for a monk to appear in person in court acting for his supplicant. Lawyers feature prominently in trial records in Egypt from the fourth century onwards, but their required training and any demand for formal registration is still shrouded in mystery. The lack of legal protection for the poorest sections of society prompted Valentinian in 368 to create a new judicial role, that of the *defensor civitatus*, originally known as the *patronus plebis*, in an attempt to protect the plebeians against abuses by the curials, the landowners and the government administrators. However, in reality, in many places in the Roman world these officials were absent, a point noted by St. Augustine in his pleas to his congregation not to expect him, as their bishop, to have the ability to carry out all the functions of such an official.[23] The lack of such an official further prompted him to write for intervention at Ravenna in order to secure a defensor for his own city.[24] In essence, the monks in our correspondence could be viewed as people who could take on such a function *in absentia* of any prescribed or appointed official. That such intervention was considered a part of the role played by monks in the fourth century is confirmed in the law codes issued by Arcadius and Honorius to Eutychianus in 398 where it is stated that, 'we do not deny to such clerics, monks or synoditae the right to interpose an appeal in a criminal case, in consideration of humanity ... in order that a more careful investigation may be made in a case where it is supposed that, through the error or the favouritism of the judge, justice has been suppressed…'[25] That this intervention was carefully delineated has been previously noted; activities which wilfully opposed the state, such as holding by force of those sentenced to a form of civil punishment, were to be penalised, but it does clarify the understanding that monks and clergy could and indeed, were expected, to play a formal, if prescribed, role in the legal process.

[23] Leonard A. Curchin, 'The end of local magistrates in the Roman Empire', *Gerión* 32 (2014), 271-86, 282.

[24] John C Cavadini Allan Fitzgerald, *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 179.

[25] C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code* (1952), 257.

The economic affairs of the local community are ever present in the Egyptian letters; *P.Ryl.Copt* 273 is written in order to ask Apa John to help resolve a land dispute of relevance to the tax collector. The author writes concerning his supplicant: 'I have sent him to you because the magistrate said to me, "why is he distressed over this matter?" He is a man of great strength regarding the mind but weak in regards to the body. Now then the matter is about some fields over which the water has carried off the field(?) of the tax collector… They said, "appeal to the Hegemon…"'[26] This issue then seems to have escalated to such a point that the *hegemon* himself is involved. Scribbled above one of the lines in this letter is the insertion, 'make haste and write to Apa John'. Clearly this was a monk who was considered to carry some weight within his local community. The monastic letters of the Nag Hammadi Codices display an equally close involvement with the economic affairs of a local community, a fact noted by James Goehring and most recently discussed in Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott's book, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*.[27] So for example in *P.Nag Hamm. 72* a woman named as Proteria calls on two monks, Sansnos and Psatos or Psas, to locate chaff for her animals. She writes

> Sansnos and Psatos, monks, from Proter(ia) greetings, If it is possible where you are, seek out a little chaff for my asses, because they are short of it and I can't find any to buy here. If you find some, write to me about the price, how much it is per wagon-load of chaff so that the boat can come…[28]

An interesting aspect of this letter is that it is written, or at least dictated, by a woman. This is in contradiction to the traditional depictions of the Egyptian monks of the desert who are often said to have refused to communicate directly, or even indirectly, with women.[29] In the documentary evidence it can be seen that such communications are not uncommon. Letters from women form part of the Apa John archive and a further letter has survived addressed to the anchorite Apa Paphnutius.[30] The Sansnos mentioned in Proteria's letter is

[26] ⲁⲉⲓⲧⲛⲛⲟⲟⲩⲫ ⲱⲁⲣⲟⲕ ⲭⲉⲁⲛⲁⲣⲭⲱⲛ ⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲭⲉⲫⲣⲏⲱ ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲟⲩ ⲡⲣⲁⲕⲙⲁ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉⲡⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲧⲥⲩⲛⲧⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲟⲩⲃⲱⲃ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲯⲱⲙⲁ ⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲡⲣⲁⲅⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲉⲓⲱⲧⲉⲡⲉ ⲉⲁⲡⲙⲟⲟⲩ ⲫⲓⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲛⲁⲯⲁ ⲛⲉⲕⲥⲁⲕⲧⲱⲣⲛⲉ . . . ⲁⲩⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲫ ⲭⲉⲥⲙⲙⲉ ⲛ̄ⲫⲏⲅⲉⲙⲟⲛ

[27] James Goehring, 'The Provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices one more', *SP* 35 (2001), 234-53. Most recently these letters have been re-examined in Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Tübingen, 2015), 129-39.

[28] Σανσνῶτι κ̣αὶ Π̣σ̣άτος μοναχοῖς Προ̣τηρ[ία] χ̣έρ(ειν) εἰ δυνατὸν παρ' ὑμῖ̣ν̣ ἐστιν τὸ ἐραυνῆσαι ὀλίγον ἄχυρον πρὸς τὴν ὑπηρεσίαν τῶν ἐμῶν κῶν διότι ὑστεροῦσι, κ̣αὶ οὐχ εὑρίσκω ἐνταῦθα ἀγοράσαι. ἐ̣πὴν δὲ εὕρη̣τε,πέμψατέ με ὑπ̣ὲ̣ρ τὴν τιμην ὅτι πόσον τὴν ἅμαξαν ἀχύρου, κ̣αὶ ἵνα ἔρχεται τὸ πλοῖο̣ν̣.

[29] As in the story of the wife of the tribune who wished to meet John of Lycopolis face to face. He refuses but appears to her in a dream instead where he reproaches her for her desire, see *Hist. mon.* I 10-7.

[30] For example the Greek letters from Leuchis to Apa John, *Herm.Rees 17*, see B.R Rees, *Papyri from Hermopolis* (1964), 29-30. For the letter of Valeria to Paphnutis, *P.Lond. 6. 1926*,

presumably the same Sansnos who, in a letter to Aphrodisias, has dealings with local shepherds from whom he procures sheep and other livestock in order to feed 'the children'.[31] Whether this refers to children in the village or those in a possible monastic community is unknowable but it is a demonstration of how involved monks were in economics affairs, including as they do in their letters the discussion of such mundane yet vital topics as the price of wheat and how to get the wherewithal to procure it.

Involvement with monetary affairs, including the borrowing and lending of money and goods, is a central topic in several surviving monastic letters of the period. In *P.Nag Hamm*. C5 Aphrodisios, who is unwell, writes in Coptic to Sansnos asking him to purchase grain and settle specific accounts for him. He states: 'It is Aphrodis(ias) who writes to Sansnos in the Lord ... Take twenty-four talents from Abraham and give ten to Moses {I know} out of (them). For I do not know what is going to happen to me, whether I shall leave the body or whether I shall live…'[32] In a similar vein, a monk acts as a sort of financial go-between in p.*Herm.Rees 7*. This is an appeal by the writer, in poorly written Greek, to Apa John asking him aid his discharge from military service. He says:

Write a letter to Psois from Taeto, the ex-tribune, to have me released, if I haven't yet been released. For Psios' son has already 7 gold solidi and his assistant another gold solidi. For you took money from me in order to obtain my release and I have not been released. I ask God that you either release me or hand over the 8 gold solidi. I am Psois son of Kyllos from the village of Pocheos in the Antaeopolite nome. Now do not neglect this master, for God's sake, for you have already given my children as security to the securities to the money lender on account of the gold…[33]

The writer, who had paid Apa John the 8 solidi needed for the transaction, understandably wants the issue resolved or his money back, particularly as Apa John has given his children as surety to a money lender. Having your children

see Harold Idris Bell and Walter E. Crum, *Jews and Christians in Egypt: The Jewish Troubles in Alexandria and the Athanasian Controversy* (London, 1924), 108-10. Further examples of women's letters to monks and clerics are published in Roger S. Bagnall, Raffaella Cribiore and Evie Ahtaridis, *Women's letters from ancient Egypt, 300 BC-AD 800* (Ann Arbor, 2006), 198-208.

[31] *P.Nag.Hamm. 69*, see J. Barns *et al*., *Nag Hammadi Codices* (1981), 63-5.

[32] ⲁⲡⲣⲟϯⲥⲉ ⲡⲉϩⲉⲓ ⲛϩⲁⲛⲥⲛⲉⲟⲩ ⲛϫⲁⲉⲓⲥ . . . ϫⲓ ϫⲟⲩϫⲁⲙⲇⲉ [ⲛ]ⲑⲓⲑⲱⲣ ⲛⲇⲟⲟⲧϥ ⲛⲛⲁⲃⲣⲁⲙ ϯⲙⲏⲧ [ⲙ]ⲙⲱⲥⲏⲥ ϯⲥⲁⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲡⲟⲗ ⲛϩⲏⲧ . . [ ]ϫⲉ ϯⲥⲁⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲛ ϫⲉ .ⲩ ⲡⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲁⲱⲱⲡⲉ[ ]ⲛⲙⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲓⲇⲉ ⲉⲉⲓ ϩⲛⲛⲯⲱⲙ·ⲁ ⲉⲇⲉ ⲉⲓⲉⲱⲛ[ϩ]

[33] ... γράψον εις ἐπιστολη πρὸς Ψοις ἀπὸ Ταετῷ ἀπὸ τριβουνου, ἵνα ἀπολύομαι ἐαν μὴ ἀπ̣ο̣-λ̣υ̣θήσ̣ο̣μαι. ἤδη γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς Ψοῖς ἀπαίτησέ μαι χρυσ(οῦ) νομ(ισμάτια) ζ καὶ τοῦ βοηθὸς ἄλλα χρ̣υ̣σ̣(οῦ) νομ(ισμάτιον) ᾳ̣· ἔλαβες γὰρ παρ' ἐμοῦ ἵνα ἀπολ̣ύ̣ω̣μαι καὶ οὐκ ἀπόλυσόν μαι. ἀξιῶ τὸν Θεὸν ἵνα ἢ ἀπόλυσόν μαι ἢ παραδοτε μοι το χρυσ(οῦ) νομ(ισμάτια) η. ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι Ψόϊς Κυλλός ἀπὸ κώμης [Π]ώχεως τ̣ο̣ῦ̣ Ἀνταιουπολείτου νο̣μ̣οῦ. νῦν οὖν μὴ ᾳ̣μελήσῃς, δέσ̣π̣ο̣τ̣α̣, διὰ τὸν [Θ]εό̣[ν]. ἤδη γὰρ τὰ τ̣έκνα μου ἔδωκας ὑ̣π̣ο̣θήκ̣α̣ς̣ [τ]ῷ̣ δανι[στ]ῃς διὰ τ̣ὸ̣ χ̣ρ̣υσάφι̣ν̣.

in the possession of creditors and begging for intervention is also a feature of two of the fourth century Apa Paieous letters.[34]

The 'down to earth' nature of early monastic letters is a fact noted by Peter van Minnen who states that, 'this is a far cry from the miracles reported in hagiographical literature, but allows us to draw important conclusions as to the role of the average monk in Egyptian society. Already in the fourth century AD the monk functions more or less as an ombudsman for individuals and communities seeking redress from government officials'.[35] In pre-Christian Egypt, Benjamin Kelly describes how petitions could be on occasion submitted to minor officials who had suitable connections.[36] These would act as 'brokers' with those at higher levels of administration. In the letter of Psois to Apa John it is arguable that it is a type of elite monk in this case who has taken on such a role. Claudia Rapp has suggested that the education and training of certain fourth century monks came from their preparation for civil and Church administration and this would certainly accord with the actions of the monks in the correspondence quoted here.[37] We have no information regarding the past life of the monks who wrote or were the recipients of the surviving body of monastic letters from this period, but there is nothing to argue against their having a previous professional status or having been well educated as the children of prosperous families. This does not accord with the traditional picture of the uneducated and illiterate Egyptian monk of the desert, but as Samuel Rubenson has revealed in his investigation into the life of Saint Antony, such portrayals often owe more to Church politics than to recounted facts.[38]

In conclusion, when we explore the letters of these early Egyptian monastic figures, we are drawn into the social networks of monks who are clearly viewed as respected figures by the communities in which they live. They receive letters in both Greek and Coptic, a point which acts as support for the contention that these monks were reasonably well educated and therefore able to correspond

[34] *P. Lond. 6 1915*/*16*. Both letters are written from a man named as Herieous who has had his children seized by creditors, a fairly widespread, if illegal, practice at the time. For further examples see H. Idris Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt* (1924), 72-3.

[35] Peter van Minnen, 'The Roots of Egyptian Christianity', in *AfP* 40 (2009), 71-85, 80.

[36] Benjamin Kelly, *Petitions, Litigation and Social Control in Roman Egypt*, Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents (Oxford, 2011), 215-8. In particular he discusses the case of a woman named as Ulpia Herois who submits a petition to an *eirenophylax* in a form of brokerage on behalf of a disabled man who is being cared for in her orchard.

[37] See Claudia Rapp, 'Christians and their Manuscripts in the Greek East during the Fourth Century', in Guiseppe de Gregorio, Guglielmo Cavallo and Marilena Maniaci (eds), *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* (Spoleto, 1991), 127-48, 134. Regarding the existence of educated monastic figures, see also Chrysi Kotsifou, 'Books and book production in the monastic communities of Byzantine Egypt', in Linda Safran and William E. Klingshirn (eds), *The Early Christian Book* (Washington, 2007), 48-67, 56.

[38] A point discussed in greater detail by Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of Saint Antony* (1995), 118-25.

and interact with people from many walks of life. The names of the monks themselves reveal a possible variety of ethnic origins. It is difficult to ascertain whether 'John' is of Greek or Egyptian origin and he has been claimed for both. Several names, such as Paphnutius or Paieous, do however point to a definitely Egyptian ethnic origin which then gives evidence for the existence of a well-educated Egyptian elite. It needs to be acknowledged of course that these letters represent only a tiny proportion of the monastic activity of the period. It does not preclude the possibility that many monks may have been illiterate, an issue that was addressed in the Pachomian monasteries where monks were expected to learn to read. It is clear however that the roles played in the social sphere by the monks in this surviving material are significant involving as they do philanthropic and economic interventions at some of the highest levels of society.

These letters come from a variety of places and perhaps originated in very different types of communities. What are we to make for example of the fact that Apa John is several times addressed as an anchorite, but seemingly lives in a form of community with other monks? Similarly, if some of these monks belong to a Melitian monastery, are we to assume that they did not live in the same manner as other monastic institutions? Is the fact that one monk may have lived in an urban setting atypical of the general monastic experience? It cannot be doubted that there was diversity of practice in this period and, by extension, it cannot be assumed that monks lived their whole lives in one state so that the hermit, for example, never dwelt in the monastery. Whatever the variations in circumstance, it is notable that the letters themselves cover much common ground and this is hardly surprising as these monks are people who originally came from communities with the same established rules and customs. To expect that a man or woman could declare themselves monks and thereby throw off all the trammels of society just by retreating into the wilderness is not realistic. As these letters reveal, monks had duties to perform, whether financial or pious and they are constantly called upon in these letters to perform these duties. In order to deal with the practicalities of life, monks created their communities and, as we have seen, took on the financial and economic burdens that came with such a formation, including the payment of taxes and involvement in trade. By the sixth century, monasteries were clearly acting as social and economic power houses in Egypt. It is possible that in these letters what we see is the groundwork being laid for that future expansion by this well-educated and well-connected monastic elite.

Monica, the Ascetic

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ABSTRACT

Augustine's *Confessions* are the major ascetic manifesto of the bishop of Hippo. This article argues that Monica's *vita* is construed in a way as to represent her ascetic transformation alongside Augustine's conversion. Monica's is a 'parallel life': rather than simply registering the conversion of his son to Catholic asceticism, she also actively engages in life-changing metamorphoses. In the *Confessions*' complex structure, the dichotomy between flesh and spirit, body and soul, descent and ascent is construed as a diptych of 'two Monicas': the 'fleshly' mother of Books I-VIII and the 'spiritual' mother of Book IX. Augustine describes the progress of his mother from a sometimes irritatingly possessive parent into a detached, ascetic 'philosopher'. Monica, just like Alypius, is a key figure in the great ascetic project of the *Confessions*, as Augustine seeks to reveal the sweeping effect of ascetic Christianity. Monica will be the perfect product of Augustine's ascetic turn: she will rise to the height of contemplation thanks to her estrangement from the world and to her rejection of the concerns of the flesh. Presenting her widowed mother at the apex of ascetic ambition served Augustine's ecclesiological purposes too. For Augustine's entire congregation, Monica's portrait offered a poignant testimony that reaching God was not just a business of a handful of ascetic professionals. Every member of the Catholic Church is entitled to reach the height of contemplation if s/he is ready to exchange material thinking for living spiritually in the world.

Augustine's mother Monica was no ascetic. Neither was she a philosopher. Yet she was consistently presented as such by Augustine both in his Cassiciacum *Dialogues* written in 386,[1] and in his *Confessions* composed some ten years later.[2] Scholars have never questioned Augustine's representation of Monica as

[1] *De ordine* II 1: *nobiscum erat etiam mater nostra, cuius ingenium atque in res diuinas inflammatum animum, cum antea conuictu diuturno et diligenti consideratione perspexeram, tum uero in quadam disputatione non paruae rei, quam die natali meo cum conuiuis habui atque in libellum contuli, tanta mihi mens eius apparuerat, ut nihil aptius uerae philosophiae uideretur.*

[2] *Confessiones* IX 10. 24: *cumque ad eum finem sermo perduceretur, ut carnalium sensuum delectatio quantalibet, in quantalibet luce corporea, prae illius vitae iucunditate non comparatione sed ne commemoratione quidem digna videretur, erigentes nos ardentiore affectu in idipsum, perambulavimus gradatim cuncta corporalia et ipsum caelum, unde sol et luna et stellae lucent super terram. et adhuc ascendebamus interius cogitando et loquendo et mirando opera tua. et venimus in mentes nostras.*

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a philosopher,[3] but have always been puzzled about how to assess this idiosyncratic representation. Does Monica stand for an idealized female figure of wisdom dear to Platonist thinkers?[4] Or is she rather cast as an 'alternative philosopher' for ordinary Christians[5]? Augustine himself oscillates between these poles. In Matheusz Stróżyński's words, 'sometimes he pictures her almost as a philosopher, sometimes her life is an alternative to the way of philosophers'.[6]

This article aims to nuance Monica's representation as a philosopher by adding to it the ascetic dimension, an aspect hitherto unexplored in scholarship. I wish to suggest that this may indeed be a key aspect of Augustine's representation of Monica in the *Confessions*. The *Confessions* are Augustine's major ascetic manifesto, narrating his conversion from Manicheism via Platonism and academic scepticism to Catholic asceticism.[7] In this work, Monica is presented

[3] Domenico Bassi, 'Monica nei dialoghi di Casiciaco', *Augustiniana nel XV centenario dalla morte di sant'Agostino. 430-1930* (Napoli, 1930), 51-61; André Mandouze, 'Monique à Cassiciacum', *Revue des études latines* 47 (1969), 131-41; Margaret More O'Ferrall, 'Monica, the mother of Augustine', *Recherches augustiniennes* 10 (1975), 23-43; Takeshi Kato, 'L'extase à deux', *Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione, Roma, 15-20 settembre 1986*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1987), 85-93; Émilien Lamirande, 'Quand Monique, la mère d'Augustin, prend la parole', in A. Zumkeller (ed.), *Signum pietatis. Festgabe für Cornelius Petrus Mayer OSA zum 60. Geburtstag* (Würzburg, 1989), 3-19; Colin Starnes, 'The Ninth Book of the Confessions', in J. McWilliam (ed.), *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (Waterloo, 1992), 51-67; Heikki Kotila, 'Monica's Death in Augustine's Confessions, IX.11-13', *SP* 27 (1993), 337-41; Ragnar Holte, 'Monica, "the Philosopher"', in P. Merino and J.M. Torrecilla (eds), *Charisteria Augustiniana Iosepho Oroz Reta dicata*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1994), 293-316; Kim Power, *Veiled Desire*: *Augustine on Women* (New York, 1996); Kim Paffenroth, 'Tears of Grief and Joy. Confessions Book 9: Chronological Sequence and Structure', *Augustinian Studies* 28 (1997), 141-54; Elizabeth A. Clark, 'Rewriting Early Christian History: Augustine's Representation of Monica', in Jan Willem Drijvers and John W. Watt (eds), *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient* (Leiden, 1999), 3-23; Bernard Bruning, '"Ab utero matris meae, quae multum sperauit in me": la maternité et la paternité d'Augustin', *Augustiniana* 54 (2004), 379-400; Michaela Zelzer, 'Zum Bild der Mutter Monnica in den Confessiones des Augustinus', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Augustiner-Chorherren-Kongregation (In Unum Congregati)* 52 (2005), 17-23; Catherine Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (Oxford, 2006); Marianne Djuth, 'Augustine, Monica, and the Love of Wisdom', *AS* 40 (2009), 217-32; Mateusz Stróżyński, 'Old Age before the Court: Monnica and Socrates in Book Nine of Augustine's Confessions', *Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae* 24 (2014), 119-34; Mickaël Ribreau, 'Quand une chrétienne prend la parole. Monique dans le *De ordine* et le *De beata uita* d'Augustin', *Cahiers Mondes anciens* 3 (2012) <http://mondesanciens.revues.org/773> (last accessed 24 December 2015); Gillian Clark, *Monica: An Ordinary Saint* (Oxford, 2015), 91-115.

[4] R. Holte, 'Monica, "the Philosopher"' (1994); M. Djuth, 'Augustine, Monica, and the Love of Wisdom' (2009); M. Ribreau, 'Quand une chrétienne prend la parole' (2012).

[5] K. Power, *Veiled Desire*: *Augustine on Women* (1997); C. Starnes, 'The Ninth Book of the Confessions' (1992); E.A. Clark, 'Rewriting Early Christian History: Augustine's Representation of Monica' (1999); C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (2006); G. Clark, *Monica: An Ordinary Saint* (2015).

[6] M. Stróżyński, 'Old Age before the Court' (2014), 130.

[7] Frederick J. Crosson, 'Structure and Meaning in St. Augustine's *Confessions*', in G. Matthews (ed.), *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley, 1999), 27-38; Gaëlle Jeanmart, *Herméneutique*

as an authoritative influence not only on Augustine's life, but also on his philosophy. But just as much she influenced Augustine, did Augustine influence her. Augustine's changes of mind are shown as having exercised an effect on Monica: thus, for example, in the memorable apex of the *Confessions*, she is portrayed happy and rejoicing when learning about his son's conversion and, consequently, about his rejection of a dearly arranged marriage and a well-paid job.[8] Augustine constructs not only his own *Bildungsroman* in the *Confessions*, but also Monica's, sketching the progress of his mother from a rather irritatingly possessive parent to an ascetic philosopher. In the words of Mickaël Ribreau, 'les deux personnages, Monique et Augustin, fonctionnent donc de façon, sinon identique, du moins parallèle, d'autant plus qu'Augustin présente sa mère comme un maître de philosophie'.[9] Monica's 'little *vita*'[10] is a 'parallel life' of Augustine's. It follows the general philosophical pattern of the *Confessions:* the soul's fall and return to God through conversion, but in so doing, it undeniably also follows the pattern of Augustine's life. The two lives are intrinsically one: 'That life … which had been made but one out of hers and mine together' – as Augustine says.[11] Monica is Augustine and Augustine is Monica. I argue that Monica partakes in the ascetic program of the *Confessions*, written by an ascetic to ascetics,[12] in which events and protagonists are handpicked to serve the ascetic narrative.

As a result, Monica partakes in the metamorphoses of her son. Rather than registering with detachment Augustine's many intellectual-religious conversions, Monica becomes actively engaged in life-changing transformations promoted by the ascetic revolution. I argue that Monica will be the most perfect, most spiritual product of Augustine's ascetic turn: she will rise to the height of contemplation[13] thanks to her utter estrangement from the world and to her wholesale rejection of the concerns of the flesh.

et subjectivité dans les Confessions d'Augustin (Turnhout, 2006); Kim Paffenroth and Robert Kennedy (eds), *A Reader's Guide to Augustine's Confessions* (Westminster, 2003).

[8] *Confessiones* VIII 12, 30: *inde ad matrem ingredimur, indicamus: gaudet. narramus quemadmodum gestum sit: exultat et triumphat et benedicebat tibi, qui potens es ultra quam petimus et intellegimus facere, quia tanto amplius sibi a te concessum de me videbat quam petere solebat miserabilibus flebilibusque gemitibus. convertisti enim me ad te, ut nec uxorem quaererem nec aliquam spem saeculi huius, stans in ea regula fidei in qua me ante tot annos ei revelaveras, et convertisti luctum eius in gaudium multo uberius quam voluerat, et multo carius atque castius quam de nepotibus carnis meae requirebat*, see K. Paffenroth, 'Tears of Grief and Joy. *Confessions* Book 9: Chronological Sequence and Structure' (1997), 141-54.

[9] M. Ribreau, 'Quand une chrétienne prend la parole' (2012), 7.

[10] C. Starnes, 'The Ninth Book of the Confessions' (1992), 58-9.

[11] *Confessiones* IX 12, 30: *vita, quae una facta erat ex mea et illius*.

[12] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography* (Berkeley, 2000), 151-75.

[13] Paul Henry, *La vision d'Ostie. Sa place dans la vie et l'œuvre de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1938); Takeshi Kato, 'L'extase à deux' (1987), 85-93; John Peter Kenney, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions* (New York, 2005).

Philosopher and ascetic

The 'ascetic' Monica completes, rather than contradicts, the construction of the 'philosopher' Monica. Asceticism was just another cover name of philosophy in Antiquity. Philosophy was regarded as an *askésis*: a concentrated training of soul and body to reject the world and renounce to its pleasures for the sake of reaching the numinous light of the divine mind.[14] Philosophers were ascetics, and ascetics were philosophers. 'Philosopher' and 'ascetic' did not indicate two different jobs or states of mind, but one and the same person for Christians too.[15] Thus, I am not suggesting that Monica is 'more' of an ascetic and 'less' of a philosopher: she is both. In the *Confessions*, however, her ascetic progress gets the limelight, while in the *Dialogues*, her philosophy occupies the scene. Yet it is clear, already in the *Dialogues*, that Augustine's aim is not so much to graft Monica onto a philosophical tradition featuring women as embodiments of wisdom than to emphasize that her mother has her own philosophy (Catholic Christianity) which entails an entire philosophy of life (asceticism): 'Le point essentiel en revanche est la présentation de Monique comme une philosophe, qui possède sa *philosophia*'.[16]

The uneducated, but ambitious Monica has many faces and many functions in the *Confessions*. Before Augustine's conversion, in Books I-VIII, Monica is a possessive, ambitious, controlling, irritating mother whom Augustine flees. After Augustine's conversion, in Book IX, Monica is an obedient daughter, an obedient daughter-in-law, a humble, servile wife, a caring mother to whom Augustine returns and finds himself. In Book I-VIII, concerned with Augustine's faith and conversion to Catholic Christianity, Monica has largely a prophetic-legitimizing function, but by the time we arrive to Book IX, she receives an ascetic function as partner in Augustine's progress on the path to Christian perfection. Monica is presented in constant progress throughout the work: progressing from Africa to Milan, from controlling mother to detached 'philosopher'. This, in the terminology of the fourth-century ascetic revolution, means that she has renounced the material world and fully devoted herself to the pursuit of higher spiritual values: that is, she became an ascetic.

The salient ascetic characteristics that recur in Augustine's portrayal of Monica are the following:

1. she is able to break with her bad habits
2. she is humble and obedient and acts as a peace-maker in her house
3. she possesses the gift of prophecy, God reveals her the future through dreams and visions

[14] Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris, 1981).

[15] Wayne J. Hankey, 'Philosophy as way of life for Christians?', *Laval philosophique et théologique* 59 (2003), 193-224.

[16] M. Ribreau, 'Quand une chrétienne prend la parole' (2012), 5.

4. she has the gift of discernment that enables her to distinguish between idle dreams and divine revelations
5. she controls her desires, rejects the flesh and the world
6. she experiences a mystical union with God (*visio beatifica*).

Monica's prophetic abilities, her dreams and the mystical ecstasy of Ostia have been amply discussed in scholarship.[17] I focus exclusively on Augustine's presentation of Monica's spiritual progress towards adopting and realizing in life key prescriptions of the ascetic *propositum*.

Breaking bad habit

Consuetudo mala is one of the great theological themes that define and structure the *Confessions*.[18] Strikingly, Monica is attributed a string of strange bad habits from childhood alcoholism[19] to banqueting at the tombs of the martyrs.[20] She acquired the habit of drinking wine at a tender age:

A weakness for wine gradually got a grip upon her. By custom her parents used to send her, a sober girl, to fetch wine from the cask. She would plunge the cup through the aperture at the top. Before she poured the wine into a jug, she used to take a tiny sip with the tip of her lips. She could not take more as she disliked the taste. What led her to do this was not an appetite for liquor but the surplus high spirits of a young person, which can overflow in playful impulses and which in children adults ordinarily try to suppress. Accordingly, to that sip of wine she added more sips every day, for 'he who despises small things gradually comes to a fall', until she had fallen into the habit of gulping down almost full cups of wine.[21]

[17] P. Henry, *La vision d'Ostie* (1938); Leo C. Ferrari, 'Monica on the Wooden Ruler', *AS* 6 (1975), 193-206; *id*., 'The Dream of Monica in Augustine's *Confessions*', *AS* 10 (1979), 3-28; Kevin J. Coyle, 'In Praise of Monica: A Note on the Ostia Experience', *AS* 13 (1982), 87-96; Suzanne Poque, '*In quadam regula linea* (Conf. III, 11, 19): Essai d'élucidation d'une vision onirique', *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 20 (1984), 480-8; T. Kato, 'L'extase à deux' (1987), 85-93; J.P. Kenney, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine* (2005); William E. Mann, 'The Life of the Mind in Dramas and Dreams', in W.E. Mann (ed.), *Augustine's Confessions. Philosophy in Autobiography* (Oxford, 2014), 108-35.

[18] John G. Prendiville, 'The Development of the Idea of Habit in the Thought of Saint Augustine', *Traditio* 28 (1972), 29-99; Kathleen Roberts Skerrett, 'Consuetudo Carnalis in Augustine's Confessions: Confessing Identity/Belonging to Difference', *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 37 (2009), 495-512.

[19] *Confessiones* IX 8, 18.

[20] *Confessiones* VI 2, 2.

[21] *Confessiones* IX 8, 18: *nam cum de more tamquam puella sobria iuberetur a parentibus de cupa vinum depromere, submisso poculo qua desuper patet, priusquam in lagunculam funderet merum, primoribus labris sorbebat exiguum, quia non poterat amplius sensu recusante. non enim ulla temulenta cupidine faciebat hoc, sed quibusdam superfluentibus aetatis excessibus, qui ludicris motibus ebulliunt et in puerilibus animis maiorum pondere premi solent. itaque ad illud modicum cotidiana modica addendo (quoniam qui modica spernit, paulatim decidit) in eam consuetudinem*

Why does the bishop of Hippo choose to recall his mother's early drinking habits *palam et publice*? Why does he seek to shock his congregation by saying 'my mother was a drunkard'? Girls sport a vast range of childhood misbehaviour and have many petty vices from gluttony to sloth, greed, pride, vainglory and luxury, but boozing is not a typical girlish fault. Why does Augustine choose wine-drinking for a demonstrative example of breaking with bad habit?

Wine is the worst enemy of the ascetic. Ascetic advisory literature, 'do-it-yourself' guides and the earliest monastic rules unanimously decry the dangers of drinking wine in a monastic context.[22] None of these texts, however, deploy such a bombastic rhetorical armory against wine-drinking as Jerome in his ascetic counseling – addressed to a young girl!

> Now, if such are the temptations of men who, since their bodies are emaciated with fasting, have only evil thoughts to fear, how must it fare with a girl whose surroundings are those of luxury and ease? Surely, to use the apostle's words, She is dead while she lives. Therefore, if experience gives me a right to advise, or clothes my words with credit, I would begin by urging you and warning you as Christ's spouse to avoid wine as you would avoid poison. For wine is the first weapon used by demons against the young. Greed does not shake, nor pride puff up, nor ambition infatuate so much as this. Other vices we easily escape, but this enemy is shut up within us, and wherever we go we carry him with us. Wine and youth between them kindle the fire of sensual pleasure.[23]

Was Augustine referencing Jerome's celebrated *Letter to Eustochium* when evoking Monica's childhood drinking? The anecdote about the young Monica's case with wine might have easily evoked Hieronymian reminiscences in the high-brow ascetic audience of the *Confessions*.

Monica's problems with wine, however, are not cut short with childhood alcoholism. Wine, this highly symbolic liquor, is not always an enemy: it is

lapsa erat ut prope iam plenos mero caliculos inhianter hauriret, English translation by Henry Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (Oxford, 1991), 167.

[22] A. de Vogüé, 'Les grandes règles de saint Basile. Un survol', *Collectanea cisterciensia* 41 (1979), 201-26; *id*., *Les règles monastiques anciennes (400-700)* (Turnhout, 1985); Veronika E. Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting: The Evolution of a Sin; Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity* (London, 1996); Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists. Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford, 1999); G. Archetti (ed.), *La civiltà del vino. Fonti, temi e produzioni viti-vinicole dal Medioevo al Novecento* (Brescia, 2003).

[23] Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22, 8: *si autem haec sustinent illi, qui exeso corpore solis cogitationibus oppugnantur, quid patitur puella, quae deliciis fruitur? nempe illud apostoli: uiuens mortua est. si quid itaque in me potest esse consilii, si experto creditur, hoc primum moneo, hoc obtestor, ut sponsa Christi uinum fugiat pro ueneno. haec aduersus adulescentiam prima arma sunt daemonum. non sic auaritia quatit, inflat superbia, delectat ambitio. facile aliis caremus uitiis; hic hostis intus inclusus est. quocumque pergimus, nobiscum portamus inimicum. uinum et adulescentia duplex incendium uoluptatis.* English translation by W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 6, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, N.Y., 1893), <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001022.htm> (last accessed 29 December 2015). Remarkably, warnings of the dangers of wine-drinking are absent from Jerome's ascetic epistle to the virgin Demetrias written in 414.

also the Christian's best friend, his only hope of salvation.[24] The cult of the martyrs offered an outstanding opportunity for entire Christian congregations to indulge in the 'health-giving cup', as drinking at the holy tombs was an act of honour and respect. Albeit Monica remained sober, she did do her rounds in the cemeteries with a pitcher of wine in her little basket:

> Her spirit was not obsessed by excessive drinking, and no love of wine stimulated her into opposing the truth, as is the case with many men and women who, when one sings them the song of sobriety, feel as nauseated as drunkards when offered a watery drink. After bringing her basket of ceremonial food which she would first taste and then share round the company, she used to present not more than one tiny glass of wine diluted to suit her very sober palate. She would take a sip as an act of respect. If there were many memorial shrines of the dead which were to be honoured in that way, it was one and the same cup which she carried about and presented at each place. The wine was not merely drenched with water but also quite tepid: the share she gave to those present was only small lips. Her quest was for devotion, not pleasure.[25]

The contrast between Monica's childhood drinking, an internally developed bad habit for the sake of pleasure, and Monica's adult, responsible drinking at the tombs of the martyrs for the sake of devotion, grafted onto her externally by the African congregation whose custom it was to celebrate the martyrs with wine,[26] could not be greater. In both cases, however, it takes an external authority (another famous theological thread and organizing principle in the *Confessions*) to help Monica shake off her bad habit. In the first case, it is pride that makes her renounce wine when her slave girl calls her a 'little boozer';[27] in the second case, it is reason that makes her consider the measures of the bishop of Milan.

[24] John David Penniman, 'The Health-Giving Cup: Cyprian's *Ep*. 63 and the Medicinal Power of Eucharistic Wine', *JECS* 23 (2015), 189-213.

[25] *Confessiones* VI 2, 2: *non enim obsidebat spiritum eius vinulentia eamque stimulabat in odium veri amor vini, sicut plerosque mares et feminas qui ad canticum sobrietatis sicut ad potionem aquatam madidi nausiant, sed illa cum attulisset canistrum cum sollemnibus epulis praegustandis atque largiendis, plus etiam quam unum pocillum pro suo palato satis sobrio temperatum, unde dignationem sumeret, non ponebat, et si multae essent quae illo modo videbantur honorandae memoriae defunctorum, idem ipsum unum, quod ubique poneret, circumferebat, quo iam non solum aquatissimo sed etiam tepidissimo cum suis praesentibus per sorbitiones exiguas partiretur, quia pietatem ibi quaerebat, non voluptatem.*

[26] Henri Irénée Marrou, 'Survivances païennes dans les rites funéraires des Donatistes', in *Hommages à J. Bidez et Fr. Cumont* (Bruxelles, 1948), 193-203; P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981).

[27] *Confessiones* IX 8, 18: *ancilla enim, cum qua solebat accedere ad cupam, litigans cum domina minore, ut fit, sola cum sola, obiecit hoc crimen amarissima insultatione vocans "meribibulam". quo illa stimulo percussa respexit foeditatem suam confestimque damnavit atque exuit. sicut amici adulantes pervertunt, sic inimici litigantes plerumque corrigunt. nec tu quod per eos agis, sed quod ipsi voluerunt, retribuis eis. illa enim irata exagitare appetivit minorem dominam, non sanare, et ideo clanculo, aut quia ita eas invenerat locus et tempus litis, aut ne forte et ipsa periclitaretur, quod tam sero prodidisset.*

In both cases, the decision is quick, the change immediate. Augustine himself is stunned how fast her mother can give up inveterate habits:

> In accordance with my mother's custom in Africa, she had taken to the memorial shrines of the martyrs cakes and bread and wine and was forbidden by the janitor. When she knew that the bishop was responsible for the prohibition, she accepted it in so devout and docile a manner that I myself was amazed how easy it was for her to find fault with her own custom rather than to dispute his ban.[28]

Not only is the speed astonishing with which Monica responds to the warnings of external agents, but also the calm with which she doffs her habits. She gives up drinking because her pride is hurt at being called 'little drunkard', but she does not say a bad word to the slave girl. She obeys to the bishop's prohibition and changes her material cult into spiritual veneration without asking questions or making tart remarks. Monica does indeed 'everything without murmuring or questioning the providence of God'.[29] Remarkably, she is presented by Augustine as breaking with bad habits without murmur – a prime monastic requirement and virtue!

Oboedientia, *humilitas*, *pax*

Monica's obituary in Book 9 of the *Confessions* is hagiographical not only in tone, but also in *topoi*. Her family's social status is consciously obscured in line with the rules set by early hagiography. Monica is presented as cut off from his biological parents and social background: created by God alone, she grows in the Christian Church: 'You created her, and her father and mother did not know what character their child would have. She was trained in your fear by the discipline of your Christ, by the government of your only Son in a believing household through a good member of your Church'.[30]

Monica's childhood and marriage are conceived by Augustine as schooling in humility and obedience. She is brought up by a senior Christian maidservant who governs the daughters of the family like an abbess rules her convent:

> [She] discharged [her service] with diligence and, when necessary, was vehement with a holy severity in administering correction. In training them, she exercised a discreet prudence. Outside those times when they were nourished by the most modest meal at

[28] *Confessiones* VI 2, 2: *itaque cum ad memorias sanctorum, sicut in Africa solebat, pultes et panem et merum attulisset atque ab ostiario prohiberetur, ubi hoc episcopum vetuisse cognovit, tam pie atque oboedienter amplexa est ut ipse mirarer quam facile accusatrix potius consuetudinis suae quam disceptatrix illius prohibitionis effecta sit.*

[29] *Phil.* 2:14.

[30] *Confessiones* IX 8, 17: *tu creasti eam (nec pater nec mater sciebat qualis ex eis fieret) et erudivit eam in timore tuo virga Christi tui, regimen unici tui, in domo fideli, bono membro ecclesiae tuae*. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 166.

their parents' table, even if they were burning with thirst, she allowed them to drink not even water, wishing to avert the formation of a bad habit. She used to add the wise word: 'Now you drink water because it is not in your power to get wine. But when you come to have husbands and become mistresses of storerooms and cellars, water will seem dull stuff but the drinking habit will be unbreakable'. By this method of laying down rules for behaviour and by her authoritative way of giving commands, she restrained the greedy appetite of a tender age, and brought the girls' thirst to respectable moderation, so that they should not later hanker after anything they ought not to touch.[31]

Does Augustine describe a nunnery, or her grandparents' household? The commanding authority (*auctoritas imperandi*) of this long-serving, unnamed maidservant in the North-African *domus* is more reminiscent of the power of abbesses in monastic texts than to the behaviour of domestic slaves. This passage offers not only a stunning picture of the powers of a slave-nurse-teacher, but also precious information about the shared values of the Roman household and the monastery, reminding us that the first monasteries often started as family enterprises.[32] Even more striking is that the governess-servant does not teach the girls self-discipline, but monastic self-renunciation: her prohibition of drinking water (a particularly demanding abstention under the African sun) evokes the harshest discipline of *xerophagia* practiced by the most angelic of the desert fathers alone.[33]

Obedience is the highest virtue in this household, and it is instituted here by God himself: '[Monica] was made by you obedient to her parents rather by them to you'.[34] She obeys her parents who arrange a marriage for her and she obeys her husband in the marriage. It is her patience that marks her out in her new

[31] *Confessiones* IX 8, 17: *unde etiam curam dominicarum filiarum commissam diligenter gerebat et erat in eis cohercendis, cum opus esset, sancta severitate vehemens atque in docendis sobria prudentia. nam eas, praeter illas horas quibus ad mensam parentum moderatissime alebantur, etiamsi exardescerent siti, nec aquam bibere sinebat, praecavens consuetudinem malam et addens verbum sanum: 'modo aquam bibitis, quia in potestate vinum non habetis; cum autem ad maritos veneritis factae dominae apothecarum et cellariorum, aqua sordebit, sed mos potandi praevalebit.' hac ratione praecipiendi et auctoritate imperandi frenabat aviditatem tenerioris aetatis et ipsam puellarum sitim formabat ad honestum modum, ut iam nec liberet quod non deceret*. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 167.

[32] Jacques Fontaine, 'Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens à la fin du IVe siècle occidental', in *Epektasis. Mélanges offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), 571-95; Philip Rousseau, 'Blood-Relationships Among Early Eastern Ascetics', *JTS* 23 (1972), 135-44; Rebecca Krawiec, '"From the Womb of the Church": Monastic Families', *JECS* 11 (2003), 283-307; Kate Cooper, *The Fall of the Roman Household* (Cambridge, 2007); Andra Jugănaru, 'Living like Angels in the Near East: Men, Women, and the "Family" Double Monasteries in Late Antiquity', *Annual of the Medieval Studies Department, CEU* 23 (2014), 3-25.

[33] See for example Or in *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, ed. E. Schulz-Flügel (Berlin, 1990).

[34] *Confessiones* IX 9, 19: *potiusque a te subdita parentibus quam a parentibus tibi*. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 168.

home and in her village. By her quiet and patient manners, she wins over not only her violent husband – 'She knew that an angry husband should not be opposed, not merely by anything she did, but even by a word. Once she saw that he had become calm and quiet, and that the occasion was opportune, she would explain the reason for her action, in case perhaps he had reacted without sufficient consideration',[35] – but even her hostile mother-in-law – 'Monica's mother-in-law was at first stirred up to hostility towards her by the whisperings of malicious maidservants. Monica won even her over by her respectful manner and by persistence in patience and gentleness'.[36] This representation of Monica's angelic character is light years away from the violent, often tragic, family conflicts reported with such virtuosity and brio in early Christian literature,[37] but has all the transcendental charm of the *Life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary*.[38] From the late Roman household, we have arrived to the world of medieval hagiography.

Childhood and marriage are exploited by Monica as if they were a 'monastic school'. Armed with her experience as a domestic peacemaker, she exits the household to pacify the neighborhood:

> Whenever she could, she reconciled dissident and quarrelling people. She showed herself so great a peacemaker that when she had heard from both sides many bitter things, such as the bilious and undigested vomit that discord brings up, the crude hatreds that come out in acid gossip in the presence of one woman who is a friend and in the absence of another who is an enemy, Monica would never reveal to one anything about the other unless it might help to reconcile them.[39]

Does Augustine talk about his mother's as a young woman, or to his monastic community? The comment that he makes following his description of Monica's hatred of gossip makes it clear that the passage was written with his monastery

[35] *Confessiones* IX 9, 19: *sed noverat haec non resistere irato viro, non tantum facto sed ne verbo quidem. iam vero refractum et quietum cum opportunum viderat, rationem facti sui reddebat, si forte ille inconsideratius commotus fuerat*. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 168.

[36] *Confessiones* IX 9, 20: *socrum etiam suam primo susurris malarum ancillarum adversus se inritatam sic vicit obsequiis, perseverans tolerantia et mansuetudine*. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 169.

[37] *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/thecla.asp> (last accessed December 29, 2015); *The Life of Saint Helia*, ed. Virginia Burrus and Marco Conti (Oxford, 2013); see also Judith Perkins, 'Fictional Narratives and Social Critique', in V. Burrus (ed.), *Late Ancient Christianity: A People's History of Christianity* 2 (Minneapolis, 2010), 46-70.

[38] 'Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum sanctae Elisabeth confectus', *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* 2493, see Kenneth Baxter Wolf (ed.), *The Life and Afterlife of St. Elizabeth of Hungary: Testimony from her Canonization Hearings* (New York, 2011).

[39] *Confessiones* IX 9, 21: *quod inter dissidentesque atque discordes quaslibet animas, ubi poterat, tam se praebebat pacificam ut cum ab utraque multa de invicem audiret amarissima, qualia solet eructare turgens atque indigesta discordia, quando praesenti amicae de absente inimica per acida conloquia cruditas exhalatur odiorum, nihil tamen alteri de altera proderet nisi quod ad eas reconciliandas valeret.*

in mind. No monastic founder hated gossip more than Augustine. Gossip was not allowed at the table of the bishop of Hippo:

Who injures the name of an absent friend
May not at this table as guest attend.[40]

The bishop poignantly kept urging his monks to live in peace: 'Live then, all of you, in harmony and concord; honor God mutually in each other; you have become his temples'.[41] It is his own unceasing fascination with peace and harmony in human society that he retrojects into the life of his mother. Augustine formulates his own, urgent concerns in speaking about Monica. By setting an ordinary, uneducated housewife as a model of peaceful coexistence, Augustine exploits fully the rhetoric of 'womanly insinuation'[42] and raises the bar very high indeed for his monks. If this is what an ordinary Christian woman can do in her family and neighbourhood, the champions of Christian perfection should aspire even higher.

Renouncing the world, rejecting the flesh

Augustine's conversion represents a turning point in Monica's life. She herself becomes an 'ascetic' in her thinking and behaviour. Not only does she give up immediately her project for Augustine's marriage, but even her hope for grandchildren dissipates like morning fog after sunrise:

We went in to my mother, and told her. She was filled with joy. We told her how it had happened. She exulted, feeling it to be a triumph, and blessed you who 'are powerful to do more than we ask or think'. She saw that you had granted her far more than she had long been praying for in her unhappy and tearful groans. The effect of your converting me to yourself was that I did not now seek a wife and had no ambition for success in this world. I stood firm upon that rule of faith on which many years before you had revealed me to her. You changed her grief into joy far more abundantly than she desired, far dearer and more chaste than she expected when she looked for grandchildren begotten of my body.[43]

[40] Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 22, 6-7, see P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (2000), 195 n. 8: 'He had plainly underestimated Monica's virtues in being above gossip before he came to live among clergymen'. Brown also makes the connection between Monica's representation and Augustine's present.

[41] *Regula sancti Augustini* 1.8, in G.P. Lawless (ed.), *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule* (Oxford, 1987), 83.

[42] K. Cooper, 'Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy', *Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992), 150-64.

[43] *Confessiones* VII 12, 30: *inde ad matrem ingredimur, indicamus: gaudet. narramus quemadmodum gestum sit: exultat et triumphat et benedicebat tibi, qui potens es ultra quam petimus et intellegimus facere, quia tanto amplius sibi a te concessum de me videbat quam petere solebat miserabilibus flebilibusque gemitibus. convertisti enim me ad te, ut nec uxorem quaererem nec*

If Monica was able to think all this when seeing her son shaking with excitement, crying, running into the house from the garden in Milan, we must congratulate her. This means that her conversion to asceticism was more radical than Augustine's. After all, Augustine had prepared for his conversion by reading philosophy for fifteen years, while Monica was busy running the family estate in Thagaste and raising money for her wayward son. And yet, in Augustine's report, Monica is able to give up, all of a sudden, her material thinking and adopt a stark spiritual outlook in the best philosophical and ascetic tradition: she abandons the marriage project; she realizes that asceticism is better than grandchildren; she buries the idea of dying at home and being buried next to her husband. If this is what was *eigentlich gewesen*, then Augustine rightly claims in the Cassiciacum *Dialogues* that Monica 'have laid hold on the citadel of philosophy'.[44]

Living under the same roof with a zealous neophyte, Monica was bound to arrive, sooner or later, at an 'ascetic' understanding of life. She might have indeed professed these views as she watched the events unfolding before she died and as she understood the changes his son's conversion would entail. It is possible, however, that she had never held ascetic views, only Augustine attributed them to her. Be it as it may, Augustine does represent Monica living like a 'sister' in the makeshift 'monastic community' of Cassiciacum and Ostia: 'for we were bound together in community in you after receiving the grace of baptism – she exercised care for everybody as if they were all her own children. She served us as if she was a daughter to all of us'.[45] Monica is both mother and daughter of a community of ascetic Christians. Augustine offers a brilliant characterization of the monastic brotherhood, an artificial family, which replaces blood relationship with a relationship of shared beliefs, ideals and values. Breaking the biological tie is the ultimate act of breaking with the world, even if the kernel of the ascetic community remains, more often than not, the family.[46] Breaking traditional divisions of labour reinforces the ascetic brotherhood: hierarchy is demolished, all members are equal, each serves the other.

This ascetic community prepares mother and son for the ultimate, sublime, immense, unspeakable mystical transport in Ostia – an experience unthinkable

aliquam spem saeculi huius, stans in ea regula fidei in qua me ante tot annos ei revelaveras, et convertisti luctum eius in gaudium multo uberius quam voluerat, et multo carius atque castius quam de nepotibus carnis meae requirebat. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 153-4.

[44] *De beata vita* 2,10: *ipsam, inquam, prorsus, mater, arcem philosophiae tenuisti*. English translation by G. Clark, *Monica: An Ordinary Saint* (2015), 99.

[45] *Confessiones* IX 9, 22: *in te iam consociati vivebamus percepta gratia baptismi tui, ita curam gessit quasi omnes genuisset, ita servivit quasi ab omnibus genita fuisset*.

[46] See especially Ph. Rousseau, 'Blood-Relationships Among Early Eastern Ascetics' (1972), 135-44; R. Krawiec, '"From the Womb of the Church": Monastic Families' (2003), 283-307; A. Jugănaru, 'Living like Angels in the Near East' (2014), 3-25.

without a previous ascetic, that is, philosophical, training of the soul. Recreating Paradise on earth, establishing a community of saints, living the angelic life, a life of superior, transcendental quality, this is what preoccupies the group, a concern reflected in Augustine's and Monica's rapt contemplation:

> We asked what quality of life the eternal life of the saints will have, a life which 'neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man'. But with the heart wide open, we drank in the waters flowing from your spring on high, 'the spring of life' which is with you. Sprinkled with this dew to the limit of our capacity, our minds attempted in some degree to reflect on so great a reality.[47]

Their rapture reached its peak when they 'extended their reach and in a flash of mental energy attained the eternal wisdom which abides beyond all things'.[48] The entire world pales in the light of this ecstasy. At this point, Monica is ready to depart from this life and formulate her ascetic creed:

> My son, as for myself, I now find no pleasure in this life. What I have still to do here, and why I am here, I do not know. My hope in this world is already fulfilled. The one reason I wanted to stay longer was my desire to see you a Catholic Christian before I die. My God has granted this in a way more than I had hoped. For I see you despising the world's success to become his servant. What I have to do here?[49]

Monica suddenly reveals herself an ascetic all her life, as if she had been praying throughout for that his son renounce the lures of career and family and become an ascetic. Her paying for Augustine's education, her arranging his marriage are obliterated. Their roles are switched: at this point, it is not Monica who follows Augustine, the ascetic, but it is Augustine who simply fulfils the ascetic aspirations that Monica had been praying for all along. By equating Catholic Christianity with asceticism, Monica makes her ascetic testament: 'Bury my body anywhere you like. Let no anxiety about that disturb you. I have only one request to make of you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you may be'.[50] It is now Augustine's turn to rejoice: 'I was delighted

[47] *Confessiones* IX 10, 23: *quaerebamus inter nos apud praesentem veritatem, quod tu es, qualis futura esset vita aeterna sanctorum, quam nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascendit. sed inhiabamus ore cordis in superna fluenta fontis tui, fontis vitae, qui est apud te, ut inde pro captu nostro aspersi quoquo modo rem tantam cogitaremus*. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions* (1991), 171.

[48] *Confessiones* IX 10, 25: *haec una rapiat et absorbeat et recondat in interiora gaudia spectatorem suum, ut talis sit sempiterna vita quale fuit hoc momentum intellegentiae cui suspiravimus*.

[49] *Confessiones* IX 10, 26: *fili, quantum ad me attinet, nulla re iam delector in hac vita. quid hic faciam adhuc et cur hic sim, nescio, iam consumpta spe huius saeculi. unum erat propter quod in hac vita aliquantum immorari cupiebam, ut te christianum catholicum viderem priusquam morerer. cumulatius hoc mihi deus meus praestitit, ut te etiam contempta felicitate terrena servum eius videam. quid hic facio?*

[50] *Confessiones* IX 11, 27: *'ponite' inquit 'hoc corpus ubicumque. nihil vos eius cura conturbet. tantum illud vos rogo, ut ad domini altare memineritis mei, ubiubi fueritis'*.

and surprised that my mother had disclosed this to me'.[51] What did Monica disclose to Augustine? That she had been a pilgrim, a stranger on earth longing for her true homeland all her life. She made her ultimate renunciation by declaring that she did not care about dying in Thagaste[52] and being buried at home. Monica revealed to Augustine that her home was elsewhere and everywhere where the Lord was praised.

In this article, I argued that the complex portrait construed by Augustine about his mother cannot be fully understood without the ascetic dimension. If we accept the concept of 'Monica, the philosopher', we must also accept 'Monica, the ascetic'. Monica – just like Alypius –, is a key figure in the great ascetic project of the *Confessions*, in which Augustine sought to demonstrate the all-embracing impact of ascetic Christianity on the human person and in human society. The most salient aspects of Augustine's representation of Monica are her ascetic features. This representation is meant to offer an example for his monastic community and for his congregation. Augustine reveals interesting things about Monica to his readers: the *Confessions*' rollercoaster runs from 'my mother was a drunkard' to 'my mother was an ascetic'. Monica, the ordinary housewife as a peacemaker is a powerful model for his monks to strive to do better; Monica, the ordinary widow as a mystical visionary is a potent reminder for his congregation to aspire higher. The portrait of Monica in the *Confessions* offers a poignant testimony that reaching God is not a business of a handful of ascetic professionals. Every member of the Catholic Church is entitled to reach the height of contemplation if s/he is ready to exchange material thinking for living spiritually in the world.

[51] *Confessiones* IX 11, 28: *laetabar, admirans quod sic mihi apparuisset.*

[52] *Confessiones* IX 11, 28: *quamquam et in illo sermone nostro ad fenestram, cum dixit, 'iam quid hic facio?', non apparuit desiderare in patria mori.*

The Letter *Ad filios Dei* of Saint Macarius the Egyptian – Questions and Hypotheses

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Abstract

Although the debate about the authenticity of the letters attributed to the desert fathers is one of the most important issues related to the recent research on early monasticism, an important part of these texts, the so-called 'Macarian letters' have only occasionally caught some scholarly attention. This article examines the most important piece of the corpus, the first letter usually cited as *Ad filios Dei*. In the first part of my article I present the central theological and ascetical motifs of the text (the role of the Holy Spirit in ascetic life, self-knowledge, and the 'play of the divine grace') and summarize their possible relationship with monastic literature in the context of the letters of Antony and Ammonas, and then I turn to survey a special philological aspect of the Greek text by comparison with the Coptic and Syriac versions. On the basis of two unusal adverbial phrases indicating time, I conclude that one must hypothesize a strong bilingual environment behind the Greek version.[1]

Introduction

For a long while our idea about early monasticism had been determined by the classical hagiographical sources (such as, above all, the *Vita Antonii*) and the sayings collected in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Beside the evaluation of the papyrological evidences,[2] the first and most important challenge to this view was Samuel Rubenson's book on the *Letters of Saint Antony*.[3] Rubenson not only proved that the letters are authentic, but also criticized the cliché of the first monks being simple *fellah*s. He inspired scholars to rethink or debate questions on the desert fathers' approach to the philosophical schools and in particular the legacy of Origen in the framework of the Alexandrian theological

[1] This research was financially supported by the Hungarian National Research Fund OTKA K 101503.

[2] Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London, 1979) and Ewa Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Egypte, IVe-VIIIe siècles*, Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplements 11 (Varsovie, 2009).

[3] Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony*: *Origenist Theology*, *Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (Lund, 1990), 2nd revisited edition: Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony – Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis, 1995).

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tradition.[4] While a number of scholars has accepted Rubenson's views, others have violently contradicted them;[5] it was only at a relatively late stage that scholars began to compare systematically the letters of Saint Antony with the fourth-century letter collection attributed to Ammonas,[6] while other collections – including the one attributed to Saint Macarius the Great – are almost completely left out from research.[7] Therefore this study is far from being complete.

Prior to the thesis of Rubenson, among the letters which are attributed to the pioneers of early monasticism – apart from the writings of Ammonas – only the first letter of Macarius the Great (or Macarius the Egyptian), widely known with its Latin title *Ad filios Dei*,[8] was seen as a text which, according to Antoine Guillaumont, 'had the chance to be authentic'.[9] This article surveys the central motifs of this letter and their possible relationship with the early monastic literature, then it turns to examine some philological aspects of the text, which are rather important to the question of the letter's authenticity.

[4] It is worth noting that these connections are far from being as unambiguous as the common view suggests it in the case of the traditional sources. For example, there could be some possible Origenist implications in the *Vita Antonii* as well, the discourses of Antony therein being based on his *Letters*, see István Perczel, 'Mankind's Common Intellectual Substance: a Study in the Letters of Saint Antony and His Life by Saint Athanasius', in Nagy Balázs and Sebők Marcell (eds), *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways...: Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak* (Budapest, 1999), 197-213.

[5] For the debate about Rubenson's thesis: Jan Pollok, 'The Present State of Studies on the Apophthegmata Patrum: An Outline of Samuel Rubenson's and Graham Gould's Perspectives', in Marek Starowicyski (ed.), *The Spirituality of Ancient Monasticism* (Kraków, 1995), 79-90. Rubenson's opinion as a standard point of view: Samuel Rubenson, 'Asceticism and Monasticism I.: Varieties of Eastern Monasticism', in Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (eds), *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 2007), 637-68.

[6] Bernadette McNary-Zak, *Letters and Asceticism in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Lanham, MD, 2000), 20-33. This comparison appears as a criticism of Rubenson's opinion: Rowan Williams, 'Faith and Experience in Early Monasticism: New Perspectives on the Letters of Ammonas', in *Akademische Reden und Kolloquien der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg* 20 (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 2002), and Dimitrij Bumazhnov, *Visio mystica im Spannungsfeld frühchristlicher Überlieferungen* (Tübingen, 2009).

[7] In spite of the close connections with the contents of the *Letters of Antony*, McNary-Zak does not even mention the Macarian letters, probably because in their critical edition of the Greek collection Paul Géhin dates them to the 5th century: Paul Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien de l'Atheniensis gr. 2492', *Recherches augustiniennes* 31 (1999), 89-147. In his article about one of the letters (which had been published before Géhin's publication) Tim Vivian briefly touched upon this topic; however, because of the popular character of his article, he did not give a deep analysis: Tim Vivian, 'The Good God, the Holy Power, and the Paraclete', *Anglican Theological Review* 80 (1998), 338-65. A notable exception is a short conference paper by Samuel Rubenson, 'Argument and Authority in Early Monastic Correspondence', in Alberto Camplani and Giovanni Filoramo (eds), *Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 157 (Leuven, 2007), 75-87, in which he presumes that two of the letters could be authentic, and treats them as belonging to the same corpus with the letters of Antony and Ammonas.

[8] I am referring to it as *Ad filios Dei* in the main texts and as '*Ep. Mac.* I' in the footnotes.

[9] 'Macaire l'Egyptien', in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 10, 12: '... a quelque chance d'être authentique'.

1. The text to be examined

The text is quite a short – a little more than a hundred lines – introductory teaching on the process leading to the ascetic life. The text is called a letter, due to the opening lines of the Syriac and the Athenian Greek manuscripts, which introduce the passage as a quasi quote saying 'Abba Macarius writes to his beloved sons exhorting them'. However, I would regard it rather as a treatise than a letter, since there is no sign of a relation with the addressees or with current events. It is a kind of exhortation, but it mostly emphasizes the difficulties and the temptations for the beginner monks. It became quite popular in the first millennium, as we know of versions in five ancient languages: Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Armenian, and Greek.[10]

The first Syriac manuscript dates to 534 AD and contains other works belonging to the pseudo-Macarian corpus as well. Since Gennadius of Massilia was the first to mention this text independently – with a short summary of its teaching and together with a Latin translation of it – its *terminus ante quem* is as early as the seventies of the fifth century AD.[11] It is worth noting that in contrast to the almost contemporary Syriac tradition, Gennadius emphasizes that this is the only written work of Macarius the Egyptian.[12]

Although it was partly bequeathed as a piece of the pseudo-Macarian corpus, scholars have demonstrated that the author could not be the writer of the famous spiritual homilies, the so called pseudo-Macarius/Symeon. For these reasons, I attempt to examine this text separately.[13]

2. The central motifs of the text and the parallels of them

Even though *Ad filios Dei* does not use the word 'monk', it is obviously a guide for novices for the spiritual combat with temptations (a *topos* known from other writings such as the *Vita Antonii* or the ascetical writings of Evagrius Ponticus) through which they become experienced fighters, true ascetics. A particular characteristic of this process is the dynamic role of the divine help. The conversion to ascetic life and the first experiences of repentance trigger the

[10] P. Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien' (1999), 104-8 (Greek recension); Émile Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères de la Basse-Egypte*, Annales du Musée Guimet 25 (Paris, 1894), 122-5, 175 (Coptic, *errata et corrigenda*: Tim Vivian, 'The Virtues of Saint Macarius, The Manuscript, and Amelineau's Text', *Coptica* 1 [2002], 69-76, 70, 74); André Wilmart, 'La lettre spirituelle de l'abbé Macaire', *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 1 (1920), 58-83 (Latin); Werner Strothmann, *Die syrische Überlieferung der Schriften des Makarios*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1981), 73-84 (Syriac).

[11] P. Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien' (1999), 100.

[12] *Gennadius*, *De viris illustribus* 10.

[13] W. Strothmann, *Die syrische Überlieferung* (1981), XXIV-V. and P. Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien' (1999), 92, 96-7.

demons' attack; nevertheless, God sends him a holy power (δύναμιν ἁγίαν, ⲟⲩϫⲟⲙ ⲉⲥⲟⲩⲁⲃ, ܚܝܠ ܩܕܝܫܐ), and with its help he can easily defeat the spiritual enemy. But when 'God sees that his heart is strengthened enough against the enemies', he withdraws the power and leaves the ascetic alone for a while. Thus, through this almost hopeless fight, the monk becomes aware of the true source of his strength and learns humility and trust.[14]

This early occurrence of the divine help's withdrawal for pedagogical reasons becomes a frequent motif in the later spiritual literature, from the works of Diadochus of Photiké, Maximus the Confessor, and Niketas Stethatos, to *The Screwtape Letters* of C.S. Lewis, and the contemporary athonite tradition, where it is known as Παιχνίδι τῆς χάριτος, 'the game of the grace'.[15] However, there is a closer example in the *Conferences* of John Cassian: Abba Chæremon explains this phenomenon using a parable of the nurse who occasionally stops holding an infant's hand in order to teach him (or her) to walk alone.[16] One has to note that, even though scholars relate this passage[17] to the parable of the caring mother (who actually symbolizes the Holy Spirit) from the Pseudo-Macarian *Homilies*,[18] in this case, only the source of the analogy (a caring woman) is similar. The target, that is the role and the operation of the Holy Spirit, is different, since the parable of Pseudo-Macarius does not refer to the essential detail of John Cassian (the nurse who stops holding the child's hand). Instead, he emphasizes the intimacy and care of the Holy Spirit through an analogy with breastfeeding, without mentioning the method employed for teaching a child to walk.

Nevertheless, other motifs of the *Ad filios Dei* are more closely related to the heritage of the first desert fathers, especially by the letters of Antony and Ammonas. In his publications, Samuel Rubenson discusses most of these.[19] In the following lines, I will briefly mention them:

[14] *Ep. Mac.* I 10.

[15] *E.g. Philokalia* 1:375, *Philokalia* 2:302, *Philokalia* 4:156, Carl Staples Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York, 2001), 37-41.

[16] *Cassianus*, *Collationes* 13.14.

[17] *E.g.* Vincent Desprez, *Pseudo-Macaire: Œuvres Spirituelles I – Homélies propres à la Collection III*, Sources Chrétiennes 275 (Paris, 1980), 320 and Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences* (New York, 1997), 498.

[18] Collection III 27.3 (SC 275, 320-2), Collection II 46.3, Hermann Dörries, Erich Klostermann and Matthias Kroeger (eds), *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, Patristische Texte und Studien 4 (Berlin, 1964), 302.

[19] S. Rubenson, 'Argument and Authority' (2007) and *id.*, 'Antony and Ammonas, Conflicting or Common Tradition in Early Egyptian Monasticism', in Dmitrij Bumazhnov, Emmanouela Grypeou, Timothy B. Sailors and Alexander Toepel (eds), *Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient: Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zum 65. Geburtstag* (Leuven, 2011), 185-201 and *id.*, 'The letter-collections of Antony and Ammonas – Shaping a community', in Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen (eds), *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015), 68-79.

– All three texts refer to things which cannot be declared, but only experienced[20] (a commonplace of any mystical experience).
– All of them emphasize the rest and freedom which the divine power or grace grants[21] (and the oxymoronic coexistence of gladness and weeping).
– There are different spiritual beings (powers or spirits, and The Spirit), which help the ascetic on the way towards perfection: the lower spirits act at the time of purification and repentance, and the Holy Spirit only enters the scene – and the ascetic – after purification.[22]
– Both texts of Antony and Macarius speak about the commandments of the Spirit; when an ascetic does not keep them, he must face a new wave of attacks, until he converts again (thus, repentance is possible even after the process of purification and the reception of the Spirit).[23]
– The letters of Ammonas also refer to the withdrawal of the divine help – in this case, of the Holy Spirit – with a pedagogical aim (the central theme in *Ad filios Dei*).[24]
– Similarly to Antony, but in contrast with Ammonas, the *Ad filios Dei* emphasizes the idea of knowledge, and particularly of self-knowledge. It also refers to the purification of the body's members.[25]
– Like Ammonas, Macarius assesses the role of mystical revelations; Antony's letters do not address this topic.[26]

Even though any sign of a connection between the author and the recipients of his letter is absent, as it happens in the *Letters of Antony* and *Ammonas*, the parallel analysis which I briefly referred to above confirms that the author of *Ad filios Dei* 'belonged to very much the same community and period as the authors of the Antonian and Ammonan letters'.[27] However, the picture becomes more obscure once one approaches the text at the philological level.

[20] *Ep. Ant.* VII 48, *Ep. Amm.* I 1, *Ep. Mac.* I 13.

[21] *Ep. Ant.* I 45, IV 13, VI 16, 99, 115; *Ep. Amm.* II 3, VII 2, VIII 2, IX 2, X 3, XI 3, *Ep. Mac.* I 9.

[22] *Ep. Amm.* XIII 2; *Ep. Ant.* I 25-6; *Ep. Ant.* II 7, 26-30, III 31, IV 9-10; *Ep. Mac.* I 9;14. The situation is somewhat similar in Evagrius' ascetic writings, but there specifically the angels help the πρακτικοί. See Jason Scully, 'Angelic Pneumatology in the Egyptian Desert: The Role of the Angels and the Holy Spirit in Evagrian Asceticism', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19 (2011), 287-305.

[23] *Ep. Mac.* I 15-6. *Ep. Ant.* I 42-5.

[24] *Ep. Amm.* IX.; *Ep. Mac.* I 10.

[25] *E.g. Ep. Ant.* IV 16; *Ep. Mac.* I 1. For the wider context see S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Anton* (1995), 59-88.

[26] *E.g. Ep. Amm.* IV, XIII; *Ep. Mac.* I 13.

[27] S. Rubenson, 'Argument and Authority' (2007), 79. All the more so because the second letter of Macarius verily shows this feature, and it is closely related to the first one.

3. Two adverbial phrases indicating time

The original language of the *Ad filios Dei* – according to the general opinion – is undoubtedly Greek.[28] However, I would like to present the use of two unusual adverbial phrases which could alter or at least nuance this opinion.

The first one occurs at the end of the text, in a passage which summarizes its teaching. I quote its translation of the Greek version:

> According to my judgment I am telling (you) that if man has not acquired great humility in his heart and in his body and (the ability) not to measure himself in anything and to reduce haughtiness and to constrain himself in everything and to keep his death before him day by day and renunciation of the material things and renunciation of the things of the body, he cannot keep the commandment of the Spirit.[29]

The adverbial phrase 'day by day' (ἡμέραν καθ' ἡμέραν) is rare in Greek,[30] while the parallel Syriac (ܒܝܘܡ ܒܝܘܡ) is very common, and the Coptic one (ⲛⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ ϩⲁ ϯϩⲏ ⲛⲉϩⲟⲟⲩ) is not unprecedented. According to the present state of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae,[31] the Greek phrase occurs only – as an obvious Semitism – twice in the Septuagint (2*Chron*. 30:21, *Ps*. 67:20), and once as a paraphrase or quotation variant in the text of the *Second Letter to the Corinthians* (2*Cor*. 4:16).[32] Besides these occurrences, most of the other passages are quotations or commentaries of these biblical verses. There are only few exceptions in which the term is used independently: on the one hand, several later examples, such as the *Bellum Troianum*,[33] a passage from Symeon the New Theologian,[34] and Digenes Akritas;[35] on the other hand, one quotation from Mani by Epiphanius,[36] the *Vita Barlaam et Joasaphaat*,[37] one quotation attributed to Saint Basil in the *Physiologus*,[38] a passage from the *Vita Symeonis*,[39]

[28] See *e.g*. T. Vivian, 'The Good God, the Holy Power, and the Paraclete' (1998), note 65.

[29] *Ep. Mac*. I 17: Κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν οὖν γνώμην λέγω ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ὁ ἄνθρωπος κτήσηται μεγάλην ταπείνωσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σώματι καὶ τὸ μὴ μετρεῖν ἑαυτὸν ἐν μηδενὶ πράγματι καὶ τὸ ὑποφέρειν ὕβριν καὶ τὸ ἑαυτὸν βιάζεσθαι ἐν παντὶ καὶ τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἔχειν ἔμπροσθεν ἡμέραν καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀποταγὴν τῆς ὕλης καὶ ἀποταγὴν τῶν κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ δύναται κατασχεῖν τὰ ἐντάλματα τοῦ πνεύματος.

[30] Augustinus for example explains the Greek phrase in particular (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 67.28).

[31] <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu> (30.11.2015).

[32] Basil, *Quod rebus mundanis adhaerendum non sit* (PG 31, 549.40), Cyril, *Epistulae paschales sive Homiliae paschales* (PG 77, 412.36), Severian, *In Job* (PG 56, 578.33).

[33] *Bellum Troianum* 9289.

[34] *Catecheses* 3.313.

[35] *Digenes Acritas* 9.4208.

[36] *Panarion* 74.3 (115.1).

[37] *Vita Barlaam et Joasaphaat* 39.94.

[38] *Physiologus* (*redactio tertia*) 25.8.

[39] *Vita Symeonis Stylitae iunioris* 157.40.

and eleven (!) passages from the *corpus* of Ephrem the Syrian.[40] Although the oriental roots of the contemporary parts of these texts suggest a Semitic language background for the Macarian letter as well, one should analyze it more thoroughly. Since the phrase is used in the Septuagint, and especially because it occurs in the *Book of Psalms*, undoubtedly the most used text in the monastic milieu, one can only argue that the Greek text of the letter uses an unusual phrase which deviates from the literary standards.

The second adverbial phrase is even more astonishing. It appears in the passage which describes the divine power's withdrawal:

When the good God sees that the heart has been strengthened against the enemies, he takes away the power from him hour by hour, and allows the enemies to fight against him in licentiousness and with the pleasure of the eyes and vainglory and haughtiness.[41]

The phrase ὥραν εἰς ὥραν ('hour by hour') is a *hapax legomenon* in Ancient Greek.[42] Technically, one could argue that the phrase itself could be a mirror translation either from the Syriac ܫܥܐ ܒܫܥܐ or from the Bohairic ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟϯ ϩⲉⲛ ⲟⲩϩⲟϯ expressions. Each of the three words ὥρα, ܫܥܐ, and ϩⲟϯ, mean a certain – although obscure – period of time. However, the Syriac and the Coptic expressions have special senses in a different way. While the Syriac ܫܥܐ ܒܫܥܐ in usual context used to mean a rather longer period of time, such as a 'year',[43] the Bohairic Coptic ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟϯ ϩⲉⲛ ⲟⲩϩⲟϯ means precisely a very short one ('sudden').[44] Therefore, the Coptic version of the letter has a different syntax:

When the good God sees that the heart is strong against the enemy (lit. enmity), then seeing his intention (ⲡⲣⲟⲁⲓⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ) he begins to take away the power from him, and <u>suddenly</u> allows the enemy in him to fight against him with defilement and the pleasure of the eyes and vainglory and haughtiness.[45]

[40] *De paenitentia* 365.3, 375.4, *De compunctione* 381.12, *Sermo compunctorius* 387.11, *De iudicio et compunctione* 399.3, *Paraenesis ad ascetas* 341.3, *De iis, qui filii dei naturam scrutantur* 205.6, *Precationes* 324.11, *Encomium in martyres* 185.13, *Sermo in pulcherrimum Ioseph* 277.11.

[41] *Ep. Mac.* I 10 : Τότε ὁ ἀγαθὸς θεός, ἐὰν ἴδῃ ὅτι ἡ καρδία ἐνεδυναμώθη ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, ἀφαιρεῖ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὴν δύναμιν <u>ὥραν εἰς ὥραν</u> καὶ συγχωρεῖ ἀφεθῆναι τοὺς ἐχθροὺς πολεμεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀσελγείαις καὶ ταῖς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἡδοναῖς καὶ τῇ κενοδοξίᾳ καὶ ὑψηλοφροσύνῃ, ὡς πλοῖον ἀπηδάλωτον ὧδε κἀκεῖ προσκροῦον.

[42] At least I was not able to find any occurrence earlier than the eighteenth century. Even the much more regular ἀπὸ ὥρας εἰς ὥραν form is very rare, I found only three occurrences: Adamantius, *De ventis* 35.31, Ammonius, *Catena in Joannem* 315.16, and *Basilica* 10.4.3.8.

[43] R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1901), 2811: *annus integer*.

[44] Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939), 721b.

[45] *Ep. Mac.* I 10: ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲁⲣⲉϣⲁⲛ ⲫ̄ⲧ̄ ⲡⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡⲓϩⲏⲧ ϫⲉ ⲁϥϫⲉⲙϫⲟⲙ ⲉϩⲣⲏⲓ ⲉϫⲉⲛ ⲧⲙⲉⲧϫⲁϫⲓ ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ϣⲁϥⲉⲣ ϩⲏⲧⲥ ⲛⲱⲗⲓ ⲛⲧϫⲟⲙ ⲉⲃⲟⲗϩⲁⲣⲟϥ ⲉϥⲥⲟⲙⲥ ⲉⲧⲉϥⲡⲣⲟϩⲉⲣⲉⲥⲓⲥ ⲟⲩⲟϩ <u>ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟϯ ϩⲉⲛ ⲟⲩϩⲟϯ</u> ϣⲁϥⲉⲣⲥⲩⲅⲭⲱⲣⲓⲛ ⲛⲧⲙⲉⲧϫⲁϫⲓ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉⲑⲣⲉⲥⲉⲣⲡⲟⲗⲉⲙⲓⲛ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϥ ϩⲉⲛ ⲡⲓⲃⲱϣⲉⲙ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲧϩⲩⲇⲟⲛⲏ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲃⲁⲗ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲡⲓⲱⲟⲩ ⲉⲧϣⲟⲩⲓⲧ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲧⲙⲉⲧⲃⲁⲥⲓ ϩⲏⲧ.

The adverbial phrase (ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟϯ ϩⲉⲛ ⲟⲩϩⲟϯ) does not belong to the preceding clause (the withdrawal of the power), but to the subsequent one. Therefore, in contrast to the Syriac text, which denotes a gradual process, this passage suggests that after God has started to take away the power from the ascetic, so that at one point he finds himself in the middle of a spiritual combat. Although a Coptic sentence in the present form (with a third, additional circumstantial clause between the other two) cannot be a direct source for the structure of the Greek or the Syriac sentence, its meaning seems to be more coherent.

A short conclusion

In the first instance it is obvious that, in its main motives the *Ad filios Dei* is so close to the Antonian and Ammonian letters that it is almost impossible to be independent of them. The closest parallel of the motif of the game of grace – which is the special feature of the text – namely the parable of Abba Chæremon in the work of John Cassian also shows an Egyptian connection (or at least Cassian attributes it to an Egyptian origin).

Secondly, the unusual Greek forms of the adverbial phrases of time suggest a strong bilingual environment, which is not at all surprising in the Eastern Mediterranean. Even if one agrees that the letter was composed in Greek – and at the present point of research, there is absolutely no solid evidence against that *communis opinio*[46] – I argue that the author also used translations which are influences of his other native language. On the other hand, the problem of the Semitic or Coptic nature of this bilingual environment – and thus the very possibility of finding an answer to the question of authenticity in any sense – still has to be resolved.

[46] It is also worth noting that it looks like almost impossible to find any evidence against it, because we have not a single Greek text which was testified as a result of a translation either from Coptic or Syriac. See *e.g.* David Brakke, 'The Greek and Syriac Versions of the Life of Antony', *Le Muséon* 107 (1994), 29-53.

Notes on Ascetic 'Regression' in Asterius' *Liber ad Renatum Monachum*

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Abstract

One of the most intriguing aspects of the formative decades of ascetic practice at Rome are the unconventional domestic arrangements, based on the idea of chaste cohabitation, that appear in writings from the developing decades of Christian monasticism. Impelled by the intersection of devotional celibacy and the practicalities of social circumstance, these arrangements were a source of concern in exhortative and conciliar writings, exhibiting as they did a troubling *nimia familiaritas* (over-familiarity) between the sexes. In the fourth and fifth centuries such arrangements appear in Jerome (*epp*. 22 and 117), John Chrysostom (PG 47, 495ff and 513ff), in fourth century church conciliar canons (*e.g*. Council of Nicea, Can. 3), and in the *Liber ad Renatum monachum*, ascribed to a fifth-century Asterius of Ansedonia. In this last, Asterius describes the cohabitation of former celibates as a gradual descent into sin. The present article compares this depiction of ascetic 'regression' in the *Liber ad Renatum* with the model of ascetic formation offered in Jerome's *Letter* 128 (and elsewhere), focusing on the role of incremental habit in each, and sets this motif within its late antique discursive context.

Some of the most arresting lines in Jerome's famous letter to Eustochium are those in which he ridicules the 'false virgins' who (he claims) pretend ascetic chastity while living with men: 'Wives without marriage, a new type of concubine, whores of a single man ... they live together in the same house, in the same room, share the same bed'; ascetics who abandon their own blood siblings in order to seek 'spiritual solace' with unrelated members of the opposite gender but, of course (Jerome asserts), are in fact engaging in sexual congress.[1]

The social phenomenon which these lines obliquely illustrate is the practice of 'chaste cohabitation', a striking feature within the late antique evolution of Christian asceticism. The specificities varied from case to case, but chaste

[1] Jerome, *Letter* 22.14.1-2 (CSEL 54, 162-3). *unde sine nuptiis aliud nomen uxorum? immo unde nouum concubinarum genus? plus inferam: unde meretrices uniuirae? eadem domo, uno cubiculo, saepe uno tenentur et lectulo, et suspiciosos nos uocant, si aliquid aestimemus, frater sororem uirginem deserit, caelibem spernit uirgo germanum, et, cum in eodem proposito esse se simulent, quaerunt alienorum spiritale solacium, ut domi habeant carnale commercium.*

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cohabitation generally involved a man and a woman both previously pledged to ascetic life taking up residence with each other for mutual convenience and companionship – but, crucially, while continuing to live celibately and according to other ascetic ideals. The topic of chaste cohabitation is engaging on the one hand simply on the grounds of human interest: it occurs at the intersection of private life and human sexuality in the ancient world, and illustrates something of the period's shifting social habits. But chaste cohabitation also provides a useful glimpse of particular theologies of asceticism and sexual celibacy being adapted and worked out in the specific socio-historical context of late antiquity, a period when Christian asceticism in the West is evolving and coalescing to become increasingly communal and institutional.[2]

One of the texts that arose in response to the phenomenon of chaste cohabitation is Asterius' *Liber ad Renatum monachum*, a polemic against false monks.[3] Both the identity of the author and the exact provenance of the work remain unclear, but the evidence of the text itself indicates that it was written in the first part of the fifth century and that its author was closely familiar with Jerome's writings, though not necessarily with the man himself.[4] The argument of this article is that the process of ascetic regression described in the *Renatum monachum* can be read as forming a kind of inverse to the process of ascetic *formation* as it is depicted in Jerome's *Letter* 128 (on juvenile asceticism) with respect to *how* exactly these processes are said to occur. Both of these models – Jerome's of ascetic formation and Asterius' of ascetic regression – are premised on contemporary ideas of the soul's moral formation.

One of the particular 'types' of false monk described in *Liber ad Renatum monachum* is the ascetic who practices syneisaktism, the (chaste) cohabitation of two ascetics who previously lived alone or in single-sex communities:

[2] The various configurations of 'chaste cohabitation' in which men and women, sometimes husbands and wives, lived together in ascetic celibacy, have been discussed only in part in modern scholarship. E.A. Clark, 'John Chrysostom and the Subintroductae', *Church History* 46 (1977), 171-85, deals with the evidence from Chrysostom; W. Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther* II (Solothurn, 1995) with the Pauline epistles; J. Lössl, 'Satire, Fiction and Reality in Jerome's ep. 117', *VC* 52 (1998), 172-92, with Jerome's *Letter* 117. Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994) discusses these 'chaste' arrangements in relation to the term *syneisaktos*. Most recently, H. Tamas and L. Van der Sypt, 'Asceticism and syneisaktism in Asterius' Liber ad Renatum monachum', *ZAC* 17 (2013), 504-25, discuss contemporary polemics against chaste cohabitation. The most recent synoptic treatment is from the turn of the last century: Hans Achelis' *Virgines subintroductae: Ein Beitrag zum VII. Kapitel des I. Korintherbriefs* (Leipzig, 1902).

[3] Asterius, *Liber ad Renatum monachum*, ed. Rainer Jakobi (Berlin, New York, 2011). For the nature and history of the text see H. Tamas and L. Van der Sypt, 'Asceticism and syneisaktism in Asterius' Liber ad Renatum monachum' (2013), 504-12.

[4] H. Tamas and L. Van der Sypt, 'Asceticism and syneisaktism in Asterius' Liber ad Renatum monachum' (2013), 511-2.

Under honourable names, which are, moreover, consecrated to God, one encounters [ascetics] living as couples, two yoked together, who most often do not lack occasions to sin.[5]

Asterius goes on to detail for the reader precisely how spiritually upstanding ascetic men are 'seduced' by women into the practice of syneisaktism. In Asterius' rhetorising account, a woman first selects her ascetic victim and then, through clever plotting, gets herself ensconced in the household as a platonic companion for the male ascetic. Thus in position, the woman is able to seduce her new companion by successive, incremental degrees, desensitising him gradually to intimacies both social and physical:

playing the wanton with every giggle, she presses little kisses to the caught hand of the unhappy man; she sometimes rests her head on his chest and sometimes warms his sides with soft embraces and hangs her arms all the way around his neck, and through such degrees of shamelessness she proceeds even as far as kisses.[6]

What is most crucial to notice here is the language of repetitive action leading to progressive, incremental change. The woman is said to 'suckle a more libertine manner of life through daily use/practice' (*cum quotidiano usu liberiorem nutrierit frontem*), a feat accomplished 'through … degrees of shamelessness' (*per hos impudentiae gradus*).[7]

These lines from the *Liber ad Renatum monachum* take on enlarged interest when they are considered against the description of the process of ascetic formation in Jerome's *Letter* 128.[8] This particular letter was written to a Christian couple who had vowed their infant daughter to a life of dedicated celibacy and had sought Jerome's advice on inculcating ascetic zeal in the girl from her infancy.[9] In the letter, Jerome very clearly predicates the success of such 'vicarious' ascetic dedication on the early establishment of proper, reiterative habit.

[5] Asterius, *Liber ad Renatum monachum* 2,7 (Jakobi 2011, 4): *sub honestis nominibus deo quippe dicatis paria inueniantur et bigae, quae plerumque non careant occasione uitiorum*. Trans. H. Tamas and L. Van der Sypt, 'Asceticism and syneisaktism in Asterius' Liber ad Renatum monachum' (2013), 512-3.

[6] Asterius, *Liber ad Renatum monachum* 28,50 (Jakobi 2011, 20): *sed cum quotidiano usu liberiorem nutrierit frontem... uerecundiam proicit; et omni garrulitate lasciuiens, apprehensam infelicis manum iungit osculis suis; reclinat interdum pectori caput et molli nonnumquam latera fouet amplexu insertisque collo brachiis tota pendet ex humeris, et per hos impudentiae gradus etiam ad oscula peruenitur.*

[7] Asterius, *Liber ad Renatum monachum* 28,50 (Jakobi 2011, 20).

[8] Jerome, *Letter* 128 (CSEL 56, 156-62). For *Letter* 128 see especially Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome* (London, New York, 2002), 130-6, the most accessible recent introduction and translation.

[9] All we know of this infant girl is her name, Pacatula, and that of her father, Gaudentius. Pacatula: *PLRE* 2.816. See *PLRE* 2.493 (Gaudentius 4) and Pietri and Pietri 1999, 892 (Gaudentius 10). S. Rebenich, *Jerome* (2002), 204 n. 43 and Alfons Fürst, *Hieronymus: Askese und Wissenschaft in der Spätantike* (Freiburg, 2003), 180 both note the erroneous title given in Hilberg's critical edition (CSEL 56, 156-62), which has Pacatula as its recipient rather than Gaudentius.

In other words, the vow made by the parents on behalf of the child was to be 'worked out' in the dedicatee through daily and incremental, progressive inculcation. These ideas are remarkably suggestive of those described by Asterius, with one critical difference: while the *Renatum monachum* describes the monk's regression downwards, away from the ideal ascetic life, Jerome's *Letter* 128 depicts the vowed girl being led step-by-step *upwards* towards ascetic perfection.

The fundamental notion that unites the two models is the idea of cumulative and inevitable escalation. Asterius describes the process of seduction away from ascetic purity as beginning with a giggle and ending in body-draping kisses. In *Letter* 128, Jerome discusses the inculcation of ascetic zeal in the infant dedicatee using the metaphor of fire, which begins with the single strike of a flint but escalates quickly to become an inferno: 'sparks kindling a conflagration'.[10] Jerome's confidence in the ultimate control of the parents over the destiny and direction of their daughter depends on his assertion of the critical importance of early impressions and habits. The image of a larger blaze precipitated by small sparks is meant to represent the all-important effect of early influence on the little girl's moral formation *whether the effect in question be positive or negative*. As Aristotle said, long before Jerome: '[T]he actions from or through which any virtue is produced are the same as those through which it also is destroyed'.[11] The parents of a girl dedicated to chastity must, Jerome stresses, take care over what *kind* of sparks are set off in their daughter, what *kind* of incremental transformation she undergoes: 'You argue weakly against what you have previously permitted to become a habit'.[12] This preoccupation with small beginnings leading to inevitable ends is very like the picture we see in Asterius' rhetorisation of the moral descent of the false monk who takes up residence with a woman; he is seduced, after all, not by some grand dramatic gesture of seduction but by little kisses and giggles.

Finally, the discursive context for the idea of incremental habituation that appears in both these texts is the contemporary debate around the topic of sin and the fundamental nature of the human soul. One of the points most vigorously argued by theologians in this period was whether sin was original, an inalienable quality of the postlapsarian human condition, or something that accretes over time through sinful habits and actions but is able to be scrubbed off like rust.[13] Notably, thinkers on either side of the debate conceived of the soul's

[10] Jerome, *Letter* 128.4.4 (CSEL 56, 160): *de scintillis incendia concitare paulatim*.

[11] Aristotle, *Nicomedian Ethics* 1103b, trans. J. Bywater: ἔτι ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ γίνεται πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ φθείρεται, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τέχνη: … οὐ μικρὸν οὖν διαφέρει τὸ οὕτως ἢ οὕτως εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν.

[12] Jerome, *Letter* 128.4.4 (CSEL 56, 160): *aegre reprehendas, quod sinas consuescere*. He is quoting Publilius Syrus, as he had done years earlier in *Letter* 107.8.1 (CSEL 55, 299).

[13] For the debate in this period over sin as inherent or accreted, see *e.g.* William O. Stephens, 'The Roman Stoics on Habit', in Tom Sparrow and Adam Hutchinson (eds), *A History of Habit:*

transformation as occurring via increments of reiterative accustomisation – precisely the process depicted in both Asterius' text and Jerome's *Letter* 128.[14] In these two texts we have two sides of the same coin: that is, we read the potency and momentum of small progressive steps possessed of an ultimate inevitability, in whithersoever direction they might lead.

From Aristotle to Bourdieu (Lanham, MD, 2013); Paula Fredricksen, *Sin: The Early History of an Idea* (Princeton, 2012), 93-134; Piet F. Fransen, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Controversy on the Doctrine of Grace', *Louvain Studies* 12 (1987), 172-81.

[14] See also Jerome, *Letter* 127.7.2 (CSEL 56, 151) where he refers to 'whatsoever was joined to me by long effort and was turned, as it were, by daily meditation into my very nature' (*quicquid in nobis longo fuit studio congregatum et meditatione diuturna quasi in naturam uersum*).

The 'Prayer of the Heart' in the *Philokalia*: Questions and Caveats

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Abstract

This article addresses the subject of the 'prayer of the heart' in Orthodox Christian asceticism, as displayed in the *Philokalia*, the eighteenth-century collection of patristic texts on the attainment of spiritual perfection – dating in their original form from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries – put together in a Greek Orthodox milieu on Mount Athos. The 'prayer of the heart' is a composite practice, comprised of physical techniques combined with meditative methods, aiming to produce an emptying of the mind and the advent of the experience of deification. Even though this method of prayer has been at the heart of the Palamite controversy, a major debate that is one of the cornerstones of today's understanding of Hesychasm, modern scholars have not engaged in a comprehensive study of these hesychastic techniques.

These major techniques, as primarily expounded by St Mark the Monk, St Symeon the New Theologian, and Nicephorus the Monk, will be analysed in a novel approach, before correlating the techniques with each other, identifying common ground and emerging relationships, and outlining the distinct stages of the 'prayer of the heart'. It will be shown how reference is ultimately made to a singular prayer technique, as is tacitly affirmed by tradition, but has not as yet been systematically established. This article also contributes an analysis of the mystical anthropology employed by the Church Fathers focused on the human heart, and discusses the significance of the heart and the way that the 'prayer of the heart' functions in one's path towards deification, before concluding with some crucial methodological caveats in relation to the study of composite spiritual practices.

I. Introduction

In this article, we will examine the connection and interdependence between the physical and contemplative techniques of the 'prayer of the heart' espoused by the authors of the *Philokalia*,[1] the eighteenth-century collection of patristic texts on the practice of contemplative prayer and deification, compiled by Sts

[1] References to the treatises of the *Philokalia* are drawn from the edition *Φιλοκαλία τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπτικῶν* (Athens, 1957-1963), henceforth abbreviated '*Philokalia*'. Citations follow the form *x: a-b*, where *x* is the number of the volume, and *a* and *b* the span of pages, where employed. English passages are direct translations of the original Greek text.

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Macarius of Corinth and Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain. It will be shown that spiritual practice can only be properly studied through a threefold approach that entails the study of the spiritual practices themselves, the stages towards the attainment of their aim, and the patristic anthropologies that define these practices. These three aspects are inter-related and none of them can be adequately studied on its own.

The *Philokalia* belongs to – and consistently echoes[2] – the spiritual tradition of Hesychasm,[3] a long-standing thread within Orthodox monasticism and asceticism that pursues the attainment of perfection through methods characterized by states of silence and stillness. In the hesychastic perspective, the key to these states is contemplative prayer and watchfulness. The uniting purpose of the *Philokalia* was the provision of instruction about the attainment of *theōsis*. St Nicodemus in his proem describes it as '[t]he book that is … the secret school of contemplative prayer … in short, the very instrument of *theōsis*',[4] and this is the very aim of the 'prayer of the heart'. It is a composite practice, consisting of physical techniques combined with meditative methods, aiming to produce an emptying of the mind and the advent of the experience of deification through what is traditionally called 'purification and guarding of the heart'. The term 'prayer of the heart' has mainly been correlated to the 'Jesus Prayer' – the repetition of the name of Jesus in various formulations – as many of the later texts of the *Philokalia* focus primarily on it.

In this article, I will show that the 'prayer of the heart' does not merely refer to a combination of psychosomatic techniques and the Jesus Prayer, as has been argued so far. The techniques that accompany, and are even part of, the 'prayer of the heart', aimed at quieting the thoughts and focusing the attention on the heart, are essential in order for the ascetic to reach the necessary state at which one is to use the Jesus Prayer, according to various Philokalic authors who are principal exemplars of the hesychastic evolution of the exposition of prayer techniques in distinct stages. It will become apparent that the Jesus Prayer is not just the 'prayer of the heart', but actually *the prayer of the pure heart*, that is, the prayer that is recited through the pure heart, and this is why for various authors of the *Philokalia* its recitation takes place only after one's purification – and, according to some of them, illumination – in the form of an orison and invocation of Christ. This point comes into sharp contrast with contemporary approaches that favour the recitation of the Jesus Prayer on its own before one

[2] See Kallistos Ware, 'St. Nikodimos and the *Philokalia*', in Dimitri Conomos and Graham Speake (eds), *Mount Athos: The Sacred Bridge. The Spirituality of the Holy Mountain* (Bern, 2005), 69-122; also *id*., 'St. Nikodimos and the *Philokalia*', in Brock Bingaman and Bradley Nassif (eds), *The Philokalia: A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford, 2012), 9-35.

[3] Gerald E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware, *The Philokalia: The Complete Text, Compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth* (London, 1979-1995), henceforth abbreviated 'English *Philokalia*', 1:14-5.

[4] *Philokalia* 1: κγ' [23].

experiences purification – a technique, however, that, as we will see, is attested by one of these authors, but only as an alternative for beginners.

It will be shown how through these methods of prayer the three gradations of ascetic practice (purification, illumination, and *theōsis*, in the Dionysian naming) are attained, and what the significance of the heart is. Also, the esoteric 'anatomy' of the 'outer' and 'inner', or 'deep', heart will be explained, along with the ascription of the 'deep heart' as the adytum where God or Christ may be located, in a manner of an individuated 'Holy of Holies'. This theme represents an elaboration of earlier patristic interpretation of Moses' ascent of Sinai and encounter with God.

These major techniques, as primarily expounded by St Mark the Monk, St Symeon the New Theologian, and Nicephorus the Monk, will be analysed in a novel approach, before correlating the techniques with each other, identifying common ground and emerging relationships, and outlining the distinct stages of the 'prayer of the heart'. I will show how reference is ultimately made to a singular prayer technique, as is tacitly affirmed by tradition, but has not as yet been systematically established.[5]

As mentioned above, the choice of authors is based on the way they function as principal exemplars of the hesychastic evolution of the exposition of prayer techniques in three distinct stages. Mark expresses in the fifth century the earlier milieu, within which some of these methods were deemed common knowledge, as will be shown. Symeon, in the eleventh century, enunciates the technique clearly, distinguishing it from what was then considered as a commonly accepted and utilised method of petitionary prayer, and, in a sense, restoring what he considered to be the proper approach to prayer. Finally, Nicephorus the Monk, who writes in the thirteenth century, at a time when it was apparently necessary, not only to reintroduce the technique, but also to prove that it was not novel, but rather well-established upon tradition, also functions as a significant fulcrum in the dissemination of hesychastic spirituality and the connection of the older with the newer authors.

II. The terms 'prayer' and 'heart'

Before we approach the matter itself, it is crucial that the two terms used, 'prayer' and 'heart', receive a short, yet concise, outline. This is necessary, since in the ascetic context in general and the *Philokalia* in particular, these two terms receive meanings that either simply deviate from those which are commonly received or, at some points, are re-defined in particular, technical senses.

[5] See, for example, Kallistos Ware, 'Praying with the Body: The Hesychast Method and Non-Christian Parallels', *Sobornost* 14 (1992), 6-35, 12, where reference is made to '*the* psychosomatic method during prayer' (emphasis mine).

To begin with the concept of 'prayer' (Greek: προσευχή and εὐχή), it should be noted that the term is rigidly defined in patristic theology. Among the earliest concise definitions available is that of Evagrius Ponticus (4th c.), who defines prayer as 'the ascent of the intellect towards God'.[6] This early definition sets the trend for what will be considered a normative approach in hesychastic spirituality. As exemplified by the reference to an 'ascent', which entails a change of state initiated through a personal choice, prayer is considered to be an action, not necessarily of a physical nature, but one performed through the intellect. Its intended outcome is simply and uniformly the approach to God. Keeping the precepts of biblical theology in mind, this approach is of the form of a *rapprochement*, a reconstitution of relations between man and God, as well as a potential reconstitution of the prelapsarian nature of man and a restitution of likeness to God. A further elaboration by Evagrius expands the description of prayer, considering it 'that habitual state, freed from passions, in which through extreme love the philosophically and spiritually inclined intellect is caught up to the intellectual height'.[7] The deliberate use of 'caught up' (ἁρπάζουσα) here directly references 2*Cor*. 12:4, where Paul is described as being 'caught up to paradise' (ἡρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον). It is in this sense, as Evagrius elaborates, that 'the undistracted prayer is the highest intellection of the intellect'.[8]

This language of ascent and exit will later be tacitly transformed into a language of descent and entrance, as the verse of Luke, 'the kingdom of God is within you' (*Luke* 17:21) becomes widely interpreted as referring to the space enclosed by the human heart.[9] The two outlooks, the outward-upward and the inward-downward, are not mutually exclusive. Through a sense of the value of tradition, older texts and nomenclature will be perpetuated; while thanks to a steady appreciation of the Pauline epistles, this fragment of Jewish Apocalyptic terminology will be preserved in hesychastic thought. Almost a millennium after Evagrius, Gregory of Sinai still talks of prayer in the same manner,

[6] *De oratione* 36; *Philokalia* 1:180; PG 79, 1173D. In the *Patrologia Graeca* edition this is aphorism no. 35. I use the numbering of the Greek *Philokalia* throughout, noting any differences where necessary. In the Greek editions, this work is attributed to St Neilus the Ascetic, but the Evagrian authorship has been shown by Irénée Hausherr, 'Le traité de l'Oraison d'Evagre le Pontique', *Revue d'Ascetique et lie Mystique* 15 (1934), 34-93, 113-70; also *Les Leçons d'un Contemplatif. Le traité de l'Oraison d'Evagre le Pontique* (Paris, 1960); English *Philokalia* 1:11, 29.

[7] *De oratione* 53; *Philokalia* 1:181; PG 79, 1177C. In the *Patrologia Graeca* edition this is aphorism no. 52.

[8] *De oratione* 35; *Philokalia* 1:180. This aphorism is not included in the *Patrologia Graeca* edition. R.E. Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (Oxford, 2006), includes it as aphorism no. 34a (p. 196), noting the uncertainty of the placement (p. 277 n. 23), and continues with our aforementioned aphorism no. 36 as no. 35.

[9] See, for example, Igumen Chariton of Valamo (ed.), *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology* (London, 1966), 169.

describing it as that activity where 'the intellect is caught up towards God'.[10] This rapturous effect, and the immediate proximity to God that results from it, is the actual objective of prayer. It is in this sense that St Mark the Monk praises prayer, conceding that 'prayer is called a virtue, although it is the mother of all virtues, for it gives birth to them through the contiguity with Christ [that it produces]'.[11] The necessity for contiguity (συνάφεια) is echoed in Gregory of Sinai's description of prayer as the method through which the mind is attached to God (ὁ νοῦς … τῷ Κυρίῳ κολλώμενος).[12]

Let us move now to the subject of the heart, as it is understood in hesychastic – and, to some extent, generally patristic – thought. The heart as a term refers not only to the physical organ, but also to the mind. This holds true in both Jewish and Christian thought, where the coterminous Hebrew *lev* and Greek *kardia* also designate the faculty of intellection in the human being. Thus, when the Psalmist petitions God, saying: 'Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me' (*Ps*. 50:10 LXX), by speaking of a 'clean' or 'pure' heart he refers to a heart free from distracting thoughts.

A leading proponent of the hesychastic tradition and technique, St Gregory Palamas, indicates that: 'our heart is … the shrine of the intelligence and the chief intellectual organ of the body'.[13] The heart, then, is copiously filled with thoughts, and, when approached for the first time in an attitude of lucid awareness, does indeed appear as a cauldron of evil thoughts, out of which flow forth 'murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness and slanders' (*Matth*. 15:19). The heart is, paradoxically, not only the place where the divine and the human coincide and renew the filial testament, but also the place – and organ – where all the commandments may be defiled. This happens because the heart swiftly fills with whatever the mind desires – or, to translate the patristic terminology, desire instills specific thought-patterns in the intellect that, in turn, overtake and populate the mind. Sin, then, as deviation from the divine path, occurs even when one lusts after something, not only when one acts out the desire.

Since the heart-mind is in constant motion, one is instructed to continually guard one's mind, as profane thoughts and passions are quick to attack and overtake it completely. To this effect, Isaiah the Solitary notes: 'I entreat you not to leave your heart unguarded for as long as you remain within the body.

[10] 'Much-edifying chapters' 111; *Philokalia* 4:51; English *Philokalia* 4:237 (entitled 'On commandments and doctrines, warnings and promises; on thoughts, passions and virtues, and also on stillness and prayer: one hundred and thirty-seven texts).

[11] 'Concerning those who imagine that they are justified by works' 35; *Philokalia* 1:111; PG 65, 936B (second *opusculum*, entitled Περὶ τῶν οἰομένων ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦσθαι, *De his qui putant se ex operibus justificari*). In the *Patrologia Graeca* edition this is aphorism no. 33.

[12] 'On stillness' 1; *Philokalia* 4:71; PG 150, 1313A; English *Philokalia* 4:263.

[13] 'In defence of those who devoutly practice a life of stillness'; *Philokalia* 4:125; English *Philokalia* 4:334.

… Even to the last breath, one cannot know which passions may attack'.[14] This spiritual vigilance, constantly maintained, is the distinguishing mark of the true monk – indeed, this is the necessary and sufficient condition for a person to become a true monk, as Hesychios the Priest notes: 'A true monk is one who has achieved watchfulness; and he who is truly watchful is a monk in his heart'.[15] If, on the other hand, one leaves the heart unguarded, and allows oneself to indulge in the whims of desire, the heart subsists in an impure state, and essentially becomes what Mark the Monk calls 'a prison and chain for the soul'.[16]

At this point, we have sketched an outline of the two terms, 'prayer' and 'heart', that are at the centre of the *Philokalia*. We have seen that hesychastic prayer is a mental predisposition and intellectual motion, not a mere recitation of words or immersion in images. We have also seen that the heart is a concept far broader than just the physical organ, instead being coterminous with the function of the intellect, and also the domain of intellection.

It is important to note that the theologies and practices of the prayer of the heart closely follow the evolution of patristic anthropology, in that differences in anthropological understanding cause variations in the prayer method, both in its linguistic expression and its technical considerations. The two most significant of these transformations are: (a) the evolution of the 'anatomy of the heart', which significantly modulates ascetic spirituality and the language employed to discuss the method; and (b) the translation of the seat of the intellectual faculty from the chest – the *locus* of the heart – to the head, which abruptly amends the psychosomatic techniques with its demand to cause the intellect[17] to 'descend from [the] head into [the] heart'.[18]

III. St Mark the Monk: The early tradition

St Mark the Monk was born in Athens in the fifth century, and betook himself to the Egyptian desert in search of a life of stillness. He is one of the earliest exponents of hesychastic spirituality contained in the *Philokalia*. His

[14] 'On guarding the intellect'; *Philokalia* 1:32; English *Philokalia* 1:25.

[15] 'On watchfulness and holiness' 159; *Philokalia* 1:166; English *Philokalia* 1:190.

[16] 'On the spiritual law' 20; *Philokalia* 1:97; PG 65, 908B (first *opusculum*, entitled Περὶ νόμου πνευματικοῦ, *De lege spirituali*); English *Philokalia* 1:111. In the *Patrologia Graeca* edition this is aphorism no. 17.

[17] Anna Ngaire Williams, *The Divine Sense: The Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge, 2007), attacks the question of the meaning of the 'intellect' in patristic thought. Her work is helpful in establishing a foundation for the study of the evolution of the concept, but its function in ascetic practices is outside the scope of her work.

[18] 'On stillness' 2; *Philokalia* 4:71; PG 150, 1316A; English *Philokalia* 4:264. Also see Christopher D.L. Johnson, *The Globalisation of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer* (London, 2010), 23.

works are usually short in length and exude a laconic and ascetic, rather than rigorous and theological, air. It is worth noting that in J.-P. Migne's *Patrologia Græca*, the works are not catalogued by their proper and apparent titles, but are enumerated simply as '*Opusculum* I', '*Opusculum* II', and so on. Even though Mark may not present a theological *corpus* that displays the expansiveness of Origen's works, or the scholastic diligence of St John of Damascus' 'Exact exposition of the orthodox faith', his practical considerations afford his readers the benefit of a direct look into the thought and the concerns of a monk involved exclusively in the life of silence and prayer, rather than communal ecclesiastical life and its accompanying troubles.

In this section, we will examine the conclusion of his 'Letter to Nicolas the Solitary'.[19] In this work, Mark addresses Nicolas, a troubled young monk whose life took unforeseen turns, before he was remanded to the care of one Epiphanius, and assumed a life of prayer himself. In the concluding part of this epistle, Mark offers one of the earlier examples of the hesychastic approach to prayer, through which not only his views on the technical aspects of prayer may be gleaned. Several significant observations will be drawn from the following excerpt:[20]

If you wish to surmount the imposition of the aforementioned passions, and to smite the phalanx of the barbarians of the intellect, then, having through prayer and the succour of God dived into the depths of the heart, identify those three mighty giants of the devil. I am talking about forgetfulness, indolence, and ignorance, the foundation of the barbarians of the intellect. It is through them that the other vices of wickedness act and exist, and are promulgated within those untrained hearts that are guided by hedonistic souls. Through great attention and watchfulness over the intellect, along with an upward inclination, you will find those things that are ignored by the multitudes and are considered as inexistent, which things, in fact, are more destructive than those things that are known. Employ against them the weapons of justice. I am talking about that virtuous memory, which is the cause of all good things; that illumined knowledge, which resuscitates the soul, and drives away the darkness of ignorance on its own; and that most perfect desire for salvation, which inclines the soul towards that which is good, and causes within it a sense of great urgency. After you have donned these weapons of virtue, and through the power of the Holy Spirit drawn through prayer and orison, you will successfully wage a brave and valiant battle against the intellectual barbarians and you will manage to defeat the three mighty giants of the devil. Through the perfect recollection of God, you will be constantly thinking of those things that are true, humble, just, pure, and honourable, and by considering all that is virtuous and praiseworthy, you will expel that vicious forgetfulness all by yourself. Through the illumined and

[19] *Philokalia* 1:127-38; PG 65, 1028D-1049D (fifth *opusculum*, entitled Πρὸς Νικόλαον νουθεσίαι ψυχωφελεῖς, *Ad Nicolaum præcepta animæ salutaria*); English *Philokalia* 1:147-60. Small variations exist between the text included in the *Philokalia* and the *Patrologia Græca*. I am employing here the text of the *Philokalia* in an original translation.

[20] *Philokalia* 1:138; PG 65, 1049BCD.

heavenly knowledge, you will dispel the pernicious ignorance of the darkness. Through the wholly virtuous and perfect eagerness, you will cast off that godless indolence that instils evil into your soul. These virtues come not through some light-hearted desire, but are developed through the power of God and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, and conquered through intensive watchfulness and prayer. It is through those virtues that you will manage to overtake the three aforementioned giants of the cunning spirit. Through the concordance of true knowledge, remembrance of the words of God, and benign eagerness, and the agency of divine grace, your soul will be guarded with great urgency, and all traces of forgetfulness, ignorance, and indolence will be eradicated and driven off to non–existence. Then will grace reign in your soul, in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom all glory and power be to the ages of ages. Amen.

An interesting preliminary note that ought to be made is that Mark in the above-cited passage refers to actions to be undertaken by Nicolas after the young monk has achieved the descent into the heart: 'having through prayer and the succour of God dived into the depths of the heart'. The descent, then, is achieved through the combination of two distinct factors, namely the prayer of the individual and assistance drawn from divine sources. The importance of the latter factor will be analysed presently. On the question of prayer, however, a specific practice to be exercised, in order for the desired result to be attained, is contained neither in this Letter, nor in Mark's two other works contained in the *Philokalia*, and is here present only in a superficial and nonchalant manner. The level of attention Mark gives, both in the quoted excerpt and in the Letter in general, to thoroughly discussing each new concept he introduces, together with the evidence that will follow in this paper, leads us to believe that Mark understood the technique of the descent to be well-known, even to a young monk, who otherwise seems not truly accustomed to the trials and tribulations of the ascetic way of life. It is through this line of thinking that the technique appears to be well-known enough to be only tangentially referred to, two centuries after the institution of Christian desert monasticism, and one century after Evagrius' treatise 'On prayer'. It could very well be that Mark has mentioned the technique in a more analytic manner in a previous letter to Nicolas, of course. What is still of increased value is the tacit understanding communicated that the internal warfare against the giants, leading to purification, should only take place after one has dived into the heart.

Mark resorts to mythical language to express himself, personifying the three major factors that hinder the presence of grace in the soul, and identifying them with demonic giants devoted to, and actively serving, the devil. Even under such a guise, however, the nomenclature attached to the 'giants' evinces their true nature. Mark is not discussing here some supernatural demonic entities, glimpsed through the eyes of pre-modern superstitious intellects. He rather uses language customary to his era to refer to intellectual properties and proclivities which, in this instance, exercise a negative influence on the life of prayer. It is through the combined actions of forgetfulness (λήθη), indolence (ῥαθυμία),

and ignorance (ἄγνοια), that the mind succumbs to temptations, and the 'barbarians of the intellect' come to overtake the indigenous inhabitants of the mind. Mark's repeated references to barbarians (in the Greek: ἀλλόφυλοι, *i.e.* 'those of other and foreign races') function to underline the foreign nature of those thoughts.

This perception of Mark is evidence he was accepted more widely than his modern position, largely one of obscurity, would lead one to believe. St John of Damascus, citing Mark, insists that 'man falls victim to no sin, till these mighty giants … appear within him and overtake him; namely forgetfulness, indolence, and ignorance'.[21] The progenitor of these principal vices is, John continues in the same passage, the combination of attachment to sensual pleasures, luxury, the pursuit of social status, and distraction. St Peter of Damascus, referring to these same three giants, which he also directly receives from Mark, admits of being 'terrified of them' and of himself being wholly and constantly dominated by them.[22] St Gregory of Sinai, after providing a short introduction to these three giants, attempts to trace their origins, saying that 'they too were [heavenly] intelligences, but, having fallen from their [state of] immateriality and subtleness, each acquired material grossness'.[23] This passage may be interpreted *prima facie* as referring to the apostasy, and these three giants may be understood as angelic entities in the pre-apostatic state, which have subsequently aligned with Satan, accompanying him in his fall. On a further, non-mythical interpretation, one that is supported by the abstract manner of thinking already evinced in Mark, the three giants signify intellectual proclivities that 'fall' and are 'darkened' and 'demonised' when turned away from spiritual things, becoming immersed in material concerns and focused on the pleasures of the flesh. Although customarily residing in – and operating through – one's thoughts, especially under the pitiless sun of the Egyptian desert, the three giants and their offspring are only unlawful occupants that come to dwell in the same 'land' of the mind only due to the diminished defences of the intellect. As such, it is both the right and the obligation of the ascetic to work for their expulsion.

Mark's thought is suffused with the idea of cooperation, an idea that functions on multiple levels. Referring to the giants, it is the conjoined function of the three that gives rise to all evil thoughts that overtake the mind. Referring to the remedial actions of the ascetic in prayer, it is the assembly of the three primary devices of recollection (μνήμη), knowledge (γνῶσις), and eagerness (προθυμία)[24] that proves effective in the combat against the barbarian hordes.

[21] 'On virtues and vices'; *Philokalia* 2:233; PG 95, 89A; English *Philokalia* 2:335-6.

[22] 'On practical knowledge'; *Philokalia* 3: 28; English *Philokalia* 3:102 (entitled 'Active spiritual knowledge').

[23] 'On commandments and doctrines' 123; *Philokalia* 4:56; English *Philokalia* 4:243.

[24] Mark's use of προθυμία ('eagerness') here, rather than a possibly more anticipated ἐπιθυμία ('desire'), quietly distinguishes between passive and active intention, opting for an active motivation in the soul, rather than a proclivity that either never produces any results, or

Finally, referring to the act of prayer as a whole, it becomes effective only through a cooperation of personal choice (προαίρεσις) with the grace (χάρις) of the Holy Spirit, and through sustained personal practice, in the form of watchfulness (προσοχή) and prayer (εὐχή). In the first two cases, cooperation is simply a systemic concept that arises out of sheer necessity. Given that the three primary demonic influences co-exist in the human mind and interact in the production of their manifold vices, it necessarily follows that, not only each one of them must be countered by its contrasting principle, but their combined effect should be opposed by the combination of the adverse qualities. In the third case, however, the idea of cooperation is exalted to a theanthropic level. Here, it is not a combination of intellectual proclivities or cognitive and psychological techniques, rather it is a synergy of the divine with the human. The ascetic is advised to seek divine assistance through the practice of prayer, through which it is expected that the power of the Holy Spirit will be drawn.

Even though Mark makes no direct reference here to the Jesus Prayer, a way to invoke the Paraclete that functions in a somewhat less obvious manner is by invoking the name of Jesus. This is evidently known to Hesychius the Priest,[25] who assures his reader that 'in approaching Jesus, you will [feel] the Holy Spirit spring up in your soul'.[26] To him, it is actually through the Holy Spirit that the presence of Christ is mystically (μυστικῶς) confirmed.[27] This mystical (μυστικῶς) invocation of Jesus Christ and effective recitation of the prayer, St Gregory of Sinai considers to be possible only through the participation of the Holy Spirit: 'no one is able on his own to mystically invoke the Lord Jesus, if not in the Holy Spirit, purely and perfectly'.[28] This idea is directly influenced by the Pauline precept that 'no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit';[29] no invocation of the name of Jesus is possible without the succour of the third person of the Trinity.

is the result of an emotional, rather than rational, tendency. As such, προθυμία is connected marvellously with the notion of προαίρεσις, which is not merely a choice (αἵρεσις), but an active participation in choice.

[25] St Nicodemus, in the chronological ordering of the Philokalic texts, places Hesychius between Mark and 'Abba Neilus the Ascetic' (Evagrius Ponticus), identifying him with Hesychius of Jerusalem (d. 433?), a presbyter and exegete (*Philokalia* 1:140). In the English *Philokalia* (1:161), on the other hand, Hesychius is dated to the eighth or ninth century, considered to be the namesake abbot of the Monastery of the Mother of God of the Burning Bush at Sinai.

[26] 'To Theodoulos' 29; *Philokalia* 1:145; English *Philokalia* 1:167.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] 'On how the hesychast should sit in prayer and not rise up quickly', section 'On how the prayer should be said'; *Philokalia* 4:80; English *Philokalia* 4:276 (entitled 'On prayer: seven texts' and 'How to say the prayer' respectively).

[29] 1*Cor.* 12:3 ESV.

IV. St Symeon the New Theologian and Nicephorus the Monk: The reintroduction of the method

'St Symeon the New Theologian'

St Symeon carries the ambiguous cognomen 'the New Theologian', initially in a derogatory sense due to his youth, and later as a laudatory appellation that included him in the ranks of the only two other Fathers to be considered theologians proper and share the cognomen: St John the Evangelist and St Gregory of Nazianzus. 'Symeon'[30] approached the subject of prayer in what would be called today a comparative and analytic approach. In his work 'On the three methods of prayer',[31] he commences by analysing the two customary and widest-spread manners of praying used by his contemporaries, before discarding them as inefficacious, and proceeding to expound on the third method, which he considers the only proper and effective manner of prayer.

Before proceeding with an examination of this third, and correct, according to Symeon, method of prayer, a few short words should be said about the first two methods. As these two methods are outside the scope of this paper, representing modes of spirituality not espoused by the Hesychasts, I will refrain from going into too much depth, instead opting for a short exposition of their features. Introducing the three methods, Symeon says:[32]

> Three are the ways of attention and prayer, through which the soul either advances and is exalted, or perishes and suffers destruction. And if one avails oneself of these three methods in their proper time and in a proper manner, one will make progress. While if one uses them foolishly and precariously, one will collapse.

It is apparent that Symeon does not disparage the first two methods preemptively, instinctually favouring the third. He rather recognises that all three methods may assist the ascetic work, provided they are not used arbitrarily and haphazardly. A further consideration he raises is that the three methods should not be treated as equals to one another, or as producing similar or identical effects. Instead the merits and properties of each one, relative to the individual ascetic's progress, should be taken into account, and woven into his

[30] Contemporary research doubts the direct ascription of the text to Symeon himself, yet it allows for it to have been produced by a student drawn from Symeon's circle. For further information, consult Hannah Hunt's short note in 'Uses and Abuses of Spiritual Authority', in B. Bingaman and B. Nassif (eds), *The Philokalia* (2012), 312 n. 5. Also see K. Ware, 'Praying with the Body' (1992), 12. For facility, I will simply refer to the author as 'Symeon', rather than the more cumbersome 'pseudo-Symeon'. This traditional ascription inadvertently makes the reader aware of the atmosphere of authority the text not only was vested with, but also exuded, and the degree of influence it exercised on both the editors of the *Philokalia* and its readers in subsequent centuries.

[31] *Philokalia* 5:81-9; PG 120, 701B-710B; English *Philokalia* 4:67-75.

[32] *Philokalia* 5:81; PG 120, 701B; English *Philokalia* 4:67.

daily practice. This is one reason for the reticence of some hesychastic teachers as regards the dissemination of such techniques to a general public that is fated, being bereft of proper instruction, to remain unaware of the necessity of delicate balance in their 'spiritual diet', or the manner in which this balance is to be achieved. For the same reasons, the same voices stress the importance of the presence of an experienced and qualified elder as a teacher and a guide.

The first method of prayer[33] entails the ascetic raising hands, eyes, and intellect to the heavens. The monk recalls to his mind divine concepts, the choirs of the holy angels and the dwellings of the saints, and, in short, all that one has heard from Scripture. These things are to be witnessed in the imagination, or, as one can understand from Symeon's explicit language and use of the verb φαντάζομαι ('to imagine', or 'to delude oneself'),[34] to be produced by self-delusional fantasy. This critique is further accentuated by Symeon's phrasing, that assumes an almost sarcastic manner, contrasting lofty imagery and concepts in honest-seeming language with hypothetical constructs (φαντάζομαι, as mentioned, and τάχα, 'as if'). Later in the same passage, he explicitly says that 'these things are signs of delusion' (τὰ ὁποῖα εἶναι σημάδια τῆς πλάνης), and ultimately but certainly lead an individual to madness, as the many examples, mentioned tangentially by him, of monks who have either thrown themselves off cliffs, or committed suicide in other ways, attest. Symeon, stressing the egoism that urges one to undertake this method, finally is to be understood not as describing a legitimate method, but rather the results of a certain form of self-delusional conceit, one that leads a monk to witness 'the devil … assuming the form of an Angel of light',[35] instead of the uncreated light of the trinitarian divinity.

The second method of prayer[36] is apparently less imaginative and more technical. It commences with the ascetic gathering the mind within (συνάγῃ τὸν νοῦν τοῦ μέσα εἰς τὸν ἑαυτόν τοῦ), and disengaging the attention from all external and sensorial things, practicing the guarding of the senses and watchfulness over the mind's thoughts, as one is instructed in the third method, as will be seen shortly. In this state of inward contemplation, however, the ascetic is to actively combat any arising thoughts. This cognitive warfare is only referred to, rather than analytically described, as Symeon quickly moves from describing the method to deconstructing it. He likens the monk who follows it to a person combating enemies in the darkness, hearing their voices and feeling their blows, but remaining blind as to either their forms and shapes, or their positions. Eventually, the ascetic exits this state being overcome with vainglorious satisfaction for a war well fought, and increasingly tired, yet without

[33] See *Philokalia* 5:81-2; PG 120, 701D-703B; English *Philokalia* 4:67-8.
[34] Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 1470, lemma φαντάζω.
[35] See 2*Cor*. 11:14.
[36] See *Philokalia* 5:82-3; PG 120, 703B-704A; English *Philokalia* 4:68-9.

having made any real progress. Even so, many people who follow upon this path come to regard themselves as experienced ascetics and mighty warriors of the spirit, feeling qualified to guide others upon the same path, 'like the blind who promises to lead the blind'. Symeon concludes that this second method is indeed better than the first, in the manner that a moonlit night is better than a completely dark night. But this is where the running thread of cynicism breaks off, because from here on Symeon starts discussing the third method with a solemnity of expression and a sobriety of approach that contrasts sharply with the manner previously employed.

Symeon's text on this third method of prayer can be considered as the seminal, most comprehensive, and most technical exposition of the composition of the hesychastic ways of prayer:[37]

(1) Three things you should take care of, before anything else. First, freedom from concern over everything, either meaningful or meaningless and vain; that is, you should be dead to all things. Second, a clear conscience on all accounts, as we have said, so your conscience does not judge you on any single thing. And third, perfect unaffectedness, having your mind rest on no worldly thing.
(2) Then, sit in a remote and quiet place by yourself, in a corner, and close the door, and gather your mind from any temporal and vain thing.
(3) Then, place on your chest your lower jaw, that is to say, your chin, so you will be attentive in this way within yourself with [both] your mind and your sensible eyes. Also hold your breath a little bit, so that your mind is focused there, to find the place where your heart is – there your mind should be focused exclusively.
(4) In the beginning, you will find there darkness, and impenetrable density, and hardness. But later, after you toil on this work of attention ceaselessly day and night, you will find – as if by miracle! – an unceasing joy. Because your mind too, struggling to this end, wants to achieve the place of the heart, wherein it will instantly see those things that it never saw before, nor knew existed. Because it will see that air which lies in the heart and the entire self luminous and filled with all wisdom and discernment.
(5) From then on, any thought that springs up from any place, before it manages to enter the mind, to be pondered upon, or even formed, is chased away from the mind and banished by the name of Jesus; that is to say, with 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me'.
(6) From then on, the human mind develops rancour and passion against the demons, and wages an incessant war against them with natural anger, and pursues them and smites them and banishes them. Those things that follow from there on, you will find – with the help of God – on your own, by experimenting, through the attention of the mind and by keeping in your heart Jesus, that is to say, his prayer 'Lord Jesus

[37] *Philokalia* 5:86-7 (my partitioning). The translation echoes the transcription in a colloquial vernacular that survives (see PG 120, 701 and *Philokalia* 5:81.7-9), one that is justifiably perceived as 'vulgar', see Irénée Hausherr, 'La Méthode d'Oraison Hésychaste', *Orientalia Christiana* 9 (1927), 100-210, 111: 'une version largement paraphrasée en grec vulgaire'.

> Christ *etc.*', for as a Father says: remain in your cell, and it will teach you everything.[38]

The third method is partitioned into six distinct components. As outlined in my division of the text, these components respectively are: (1) the intellectual and psychological prerequisites necessary for practice of the prayer; (2) a short note on the physical conditions that must be in place for successful practice of the technique; (3) the psychosomatic technique itself, including both its external-physical and its internal-intellectual facets; (4) the experience the ascetic is expected to undergo while performing the technique, including both its initial stages and the signs of its success; (5) the Jesus Prayer; and, finally, (6) a short description of the state of attainment, and the further steps that lie ahead in the ascetic's progress.

Firstly, Symeon delineates the state the ascetic's intellect should be in while undertaking the technique. This state is composed of three distinct parts that assure one's whole-hearted dedication to the practice of prayer, and the avoidance of any distractions. Although the three conditions seem to be mere repetitions, with minor variations, of an essential attitude of apathy, it will be seen that each one of the three has specific outcomes in mind. The importance of these preconditions is evident in Symeon's stressing that these should be satisfied 'before anything else', that is, both at the very beginning of the technique, and at a priority higher than any other concern, such as place or time of prayer. As will become evident from the stipulations themselves, their satisfaction is not the product of some momentary determination; they are, instead, conditions that are gradually satisfied over the course of a lifetime. The first among these, freedom from concern over any one thing, is directed towards things both meaningful and meaningless. Symeon uses the motif of νέκρωσις, 'being dead to all things', to convey this notion. The second precept, that of maintaining 'a clear conscience on all accounts', precludes the arising of any insidious, self-demeaning thoughts of guilt, the door through which the 'demons' enter, and assures that a state of internal silence will be achieved with some facility. Here can be detected an indirect reference to the ecclesiastical mystery of Confession and, by extension, to Communion. The third and final principle of 'perfect unaffectedness' establishes a separation between the monk and worldly concerns of any type, making sure there are no disruptions that will affect the practice.

After the correct psychological and intellectual disposition has been achieved, come considerations of physical setting. The place where one should practice prayer (the monk's cell) should be far removed from the centres of social activity, and should generally be in quiet surroundings. It should be a place from

[38] The reference here is to Abba Moses, whose succinct teaching to those who visited him for instruction was: 'Go, sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything'. See *Apophthegmata Patrum (collectio alphabetica)*, PG 65, 284C.

within which a clear separation from the external world can be established. The act of the closing of the door in Symeon's phrasing is connected in a habitual-ritualistic manner with the mind's disengagement from any concern and with dedication to the practice at hand. The reference to this closing relates not only to the act of physical isolation from the surrounding environment, but also to a closing of the 'door of the senses', and the institution, through the willed control of attention, of a rigid barrier between the intellectual domain and any thoughts that could emerge during the time of prayer.

The third part is concerned with the psychosomatic technique proper, which one is to employ during prayer. A particular bodily posture is to be assumed, one that emulates the foetal position in a sitting form and facilitates the inward focus of attention. The technique also includes a slight constriction of breathing, with the expressed intent that the mind be focused on the breathing. As will be seen shortly, the reason for this is displayed more clearly by Nicephorus, who insists that the ascetic should train the attention not only to be focused on the breath, but also to follow its pathway, commencing in the nasal opening and concluding at the heart. This is a direct physical consequence of the patristic anthropology and its pre-modern physiology of the heart.

Some writers insist on generating a sense of physical discomfort, underlining that prayer should be strenuous rather than comfortable. Gregory of Sinai particularly insists that the posture should be rather uncomfortable and even painful, yet the ascetic should persevere, both enduring and almost indulging in that pain, which should be sought vigorously (σφοδρῶς περιαλγῶν).[39] This approach is at variance with modern teachers, either Orthodox or non-Orthodox, who suggest a general attitude of relaxed physical comfort. According to Kallistos Ware's exegesis, Gregory of Sinai '[d]oubtless … considered that an invocation such as the Jesus prayer which expresses *penthos* [mourning], grief and penitence, may appropriately be companied by physical pain rather than by feelings of ease, comfort and relaxation'.[40] This interpretation certainly has weight, not only on its own merits, but also on account of the considerable theological and practical experience of Metropolitan Kallistos, himself a practicing Hesychast. The more relaxed modern-day approach also shows merits, not in its insistence on the physical comfort of the ascetic *per se*, but for the sake of avoiding any arising problems when one practices without the guidance of an experienced elder.

In the case of Symeon, the only sense of pressure is that which constricts the breath, making it more discernible. The text clearly speaks of 'placing' or 'resting' (ἀκούμβισε) the chin on the chest, intended to help the ascetic focus on the heart, instead of an equally possible – yet absent – 'pressing' (πίεσε). Patriarch Kallistos, the fourteenth-century Philokalic author rather than the

[39] 'On stillness' 2; *Philokalia* 4:71; PG 150, 1316A; English *Philokalia* 4:264.
[40] K. Ware, 'Praying with the Body' (1992), 16.

contemporary Metropolitan, uses the metaphor of the dulcimer player, urging his student:[41]

> If you wish to pray as you ought, imitate the dulcimer player; bending his head a little and inclining his ears to the strings, he strikes the strings skillfully, and enjoys the melody he draws from their harmonious notes. Is this example clear to you? The dulcimer is the heart; the strings – the feelings; the hammer – remembrance of God; the player – intellect. … So the intellect, during active prayer, descends into the depths of the heart with sobriety and can no longer listen to aught but God.

Patriarch Kallistos' approach is certainly a more unrestrained and sweeter-tasting one; one could say that here one experiences the joys of communion with 'sweet Jesus', instead of mourning along with him (συμπενθῶν). In the extreme separation that is necessary from all things lofty or base, even the Passion should be left aside.

Symeon follows the hesychastic understanding – as that of Mark, which we saw earlier – that the heart is filled with thoughts of both divine and earthly inspiration, each creating a specific state in the ascetic. These two contending states constitute an 'inner' or 'noetic' warfare, a battling between 'the Spirit' and the 'devil'. Symeon goes on to describe how worldly thoughts – in contrast to spiritual thoughts or contemplation – form an impenetrable density[42] filling the heart. Thus, in the fourth part of the text, Symeon's description of the experience is simple and direct. When the monk closes the eyes and focuses the attention inwards, he is introduced to a *terra incognita*, the geography and topography of which is quite unknown to him, as the darkness initially experienced is an outcome of the disturbed mind, plagued by thoughts and perturbed by them.

It should be noted here that the darkness described in Symeon's text should not be mistaken for the 'divine darkness' (θεῖος γνόφος) of the Mosaic experience of ascending the Sinai. The polarity between darkness and light directly represents the distinction between ignorance and knowledge, and impurity and purity of mind. This darkness bears negative connotations, as emerging from the perturbation of the mind and the darkening of the 'eye of the body'.[43] When stillness is achieved, however, this state is exchanged for one of quiet and

[41] 'Texts on Prayer'; Russian *Dobrotolubiye*; English translation in Evgeniya Kadloubovsky and Gerald Palmer, *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart* (London, 1951), 271. This text has been translated from the Russian *Dobrotolubiye*, a translation of the *Philokalia* by Theophan the Recluse, who added various texts that are not in the Greek *Philokalia*. For further information, consult Christopher C.H. Cook, *The Philokalia and the Inner Life: On Passions and Prayer* (Cambridge, 2011), 9.

[42] See 'purifying it [the intellect] with full perception from all gross and cloddish density'; Diadochus of Photiki, 'On spiritual knowledge and discrimination' 16; *Philokalia* 1:239; English *Philokalia* 1:257.

[43] See *Matth*. 6:22-3: 'The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy [simple, ἁπλός], your whole body will be full of light. But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled

detached observation, and the heart is emptied and restored to a state of purity. Thoughts being silenced, and the blinding veils they weave being removed, the mind may all the more clearly witness a reality that appears novel, but existed all along. Patriarch Kallistos' metaphor of bending the head to incline the ear to the strings expresses this very need and reflects the technique suggested by Symeon; it becomes evident that bending the head is not just about the physical posture, but also about turning the attention inwards and, specifically, to the heart, being watchful over the feelings and thoughts that arise there, and eventually, through perseverance and spiritual practice, emptying the heart. It is in this stillness and silence, *hesychia* (ἡσυχία), that one 'can no longer listen to aught but God'.

Symeon tangentially explains his understanding of the concept of unceasing prayer in its outer form, insisting that the incessant nature of this practice consists in persisting in it 'day and night'; in that manner prayer becomes a state of being. By applying such an unwavering perseverance, the mind gradually grows more and more estranged from the usual gamut of human experiences, simultaneously being introduced to a new way of living. This way, admittedly, is one that subsists in darkness, until the moment of the revelation, but even that functions to develop a certain desire and motivation in the mind to discover and enter the place of the heart where human and divine meet, a sort of pilgrimage towards an internal promised land.

It is important to note here that even though in hesychastic thought the heart is considered to be filled with thoughts and images that form an impenetrable density when one has not attained purification, there is still a 'virgin point', the 'secret centre of the heart', which is the *locus* of the divine spark where human and divine meet,[44] and, as Mark describes it, it is 'the innermost, secret and uncontaminated chamber of the heart … the innermost and untroubled treasury of the heart, where the winds of evil spirits do not blow'.[45] Theognostus calls it the 'precious pearl' and writes: 'Descend to the abyss of humility, and there you will find the precious pearl of your salvation hidden in the shell of divine knowledge. This will be your pledge of the radiance of God's kingdom'.[46]

with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is'. Darkness is here considered as a loss of unity and simplicity of the mind.

[44] Kallistos Ware, 'How Do We Enter the Heart?', in James S. Cutsinger (ed.), *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East* (Bloomington, IN, 2004), 4. It is surprising that no other studies have focused on the centre of the heart, let alone on the significance that the heart possesses in the process of *theōsis* and the ontological value of the specific *locus* of the 'innermost (chamber of the) heart'. The nature of this connection is important in understanding the results watchfulness, ascetic ethics, and contemplative prayer effect upon the human being as a whole.

[45] 'On baptism'; PG 65, 996C, also see 1005BCD, 1016D.

[46] 'On the practice of the virtues, contemplation and the priesthood' 10; *Philokalia* 2:257; English *Philokalia* 2:361.

As we will see, that 'secret centre of the heart', being understood as the *locus* of God's indwelling, is considered to be the source of illumination.

Symeon stresses the need for sustained application of this technique, as it will introduce 'as if by miracle' a change of state to the inner landscape, one so marvellous that it is accompanied by 'unceasing joy', experienced in a state of illumination and direct knowledge of things 'never seen before' and not even suspected. In the state of unilateral inclination towards the divine, when the heart is pure and empty, it presents an open space to be filled with God's light and grace. As Hesychius the Priest writes, 'the blessed light of the Divinity will illumine the heart only when the heart is completely empty of everything and so free from all form'.[47]

The illuminating experience clearly delineates two different states of being, one that existed before the monk had tasted enlightenment, and one after, as is evinced through Symeon's clear distinction with 'from then on' (καὶ ἀπὸ ἐδώ). In this new state, the mind has achieved a singularity of purpose, and on its own attacks and banishes any thought that springs up. The weapon for this battle is none other than the prayer of Jesus, which Symeon introduces only after the ascetic has experienced purification and illumination. The Jesus Prayer then takes root in the ascetic's mind, which develops an innate 'rancour and passion against the demons', constantly guarding itself against them, and also actively and constantly banishing them. It is at this stage that the ascetic may experience the state with which Symeon concludes his exposition, a state that he refrains from describing but hints that it is *theōsis*. This is probably a defence against those minds that cleave to fantasy, as earlier underlined, and are more eager to imagine heavenly kingdoms and glories, rather than engage in the humble and strenuous work that can produce them in reality.

The concepts here presented are certainly reminiscent of the scriptural story of Jacob's overnight struggle with the 'angel of the Lord', a struggle crowned with victory at the break of dawn.[48] It is with the breaking of dawn, of the first perception of the clear light of illumination, that the technique starts to have actual, perceptible and significant results: the ascetic is filled with 'wisdom and discernment'. Although the content of this wisdom and the character of this discernment are left untold by Symeon, St Maximus the Confessor describes them in his outline of the experience as such:[49]

> When the sun rises and casts its light on the world, it reveals both itself and the things it illumines. Similarly, when the sun of righteousness rises in the pure intellect, he reveals both himself and the essences (λόγοι) of all that has been and will come to be brought into existence by him.

[47] 'On watchfulness and holiness' 89; *Philokalia* 1:154; English *Philokalia* 1:177.
[48] See *Gen.* 32:22-32.
[49] 'On love, four centuries' 1:95; *Philokalia* 2:13; PG 90, 981C; English *Philokalia* 2:64.

To Maximus's mind, wisdom and discernment consist of contemplation of both the self-revealing divinity and the inner essences of things. These essences of beings (λόγοι τῶν ὄντων) are ultimately traced back to their source, the simple and singular essence and Word of God (Λόγος Θεοῦ), of whom they are manifestations.

Nicephorus the Monk

Symeon's methodological considerations can be further clarified through the syncretic and comparative study that Nicephorus the Monk has undertaken on the same subject. Nicephorus lived in the thirteenth century and was originally neither a (Byzantine) Greek, nor an Orthodox, but a Catholic Italian who, according to St Gregory Palamas:[50]

> drew his lineage from the Italians, but, coming to know the error of their ways (κακοδοξία), he joined our orthodox Church … and took up the most perfect life, that is, the monastic.

In his text on prayer, entitled 'On watchfulness and the guarding of the heart',[51] Nicephorus wishes to show not only a technique of prayer, but also attempts to establish its invariance across the centuries of tradition by offering in his text excerpts from the methods of earlier ascetic writers, starting already with St Antony, generally considered to be the father of desert monasticism, and including such seminal patristic figures as St Mark the Monk, St John of the Ladder, St Macarius the Great (under whose name were published the highly influential *Homilies*), St Diadochus of Photike, and St Isaac the Syrian, as will be seen shortly. In Nicephorus' view, all the various authors and texts on prayer 'signify one and the same thing'.[52] His choice of terminology leans in favour of naming the practice 'attention' (προσοχή – also: attentiveness), even if in the title of his treatise he proposes to discuss νῆψις (literally: sobriety, temperance, or alertness[53]). It may be surmised that the title of his essay addresses the subject in the most commonly used terminology, much in the way that the English translation employs 'watchfulness' in translating νῆψις, while within the text itself he reverts to using προσοχή as a term at once more precise and less laden with preexisting associations.

The text on watchfulness (νῆψις) focuses on the technique already mentioned by Mark – by whom Nicephorus is heavily influenced, even in structural

[50] *De hesychastis* 2.2.2; ed. John Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads* (Mahwah, NJ, 1983), my translation.

[51] *Philokalia* 4:18-28; PG 147, 945A-966A; English *Philokalia* 4:194-206.

[52] *Philokalia* 4:26.14 (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ δηλοῦσιν).

[53] G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (1961), 913, lemma νῆψις.

matters – and Symeon. Nicephorus' text is, like Symeon's, also analytical and detailed:[54]

(1) So, you, having taken a seat and gathered your mind, introduce it – I mean your mind – into the nasal pathway, through which the spirit enters the heart, and push [your mind], and force it to descend along with the inhaled spirit into the heart. When it enters there, not without rejoicing or grace will happen what comes next. But just as a man who has emigrated from his home, upon his return is filled with joy, being reunited with his children and his wife, likewise the mind, when it is once more conjoined to the soul, floats in an ineffable delight and gleefulness.

(2) Thus, brother, accustom your mind not to exit that place quickly, for the mind is at first slow to accustom itself to the cloistering and the narrowness of its surroundings. After it grows accustomed, however, it does not wish to saunter outside: for the kingdom of the heavens is within us (*Luke* 17:21). [The mind] remaining there, then, observing and through pure prayer seeking [that kingdom], starts to consider every external thing as atrocious and hateful. If, then, after your initial attempts, you manage to enter through your mind into the place of the heart (εἰς τὸν καρδιακὸν τόπον), as I have outlined, let grace be unto God, and glorify him and rejoice, and keep upon this work forever. And this work will teach you those things of which you now know nothing.

(3) It would also be appropriate for you to learn this thing as well: When your mind reaches that place, do not remain silent and idle. But have as your continuous practice and incessant subject of study the phrase 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me'; never let the repetition of this phrase cease. For this prayer gathers the intellect together, protecting it from distraction, and renders it impregnable to the attacks of the enemy, instead increasing daily the love and the longing for the divine.

(4) If, after much effort, brother, you fail to enter in the realms of the heart in the way I have enjoined, do what I tell you, and you will, with God's help, find what you seek. You know that every man's faculty of intellect is in the chest. It is within the chest that we speak, and formulate ideas, and weave wishes and psalms and other things when our lips are silent. This faculty, then, you can, if you wish, give over to the repetition of [the phrase] 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me'. Compel it to repeat this phrase ceaselessly, instead of any other. Retain this practice for a long time, and the entrance of the heart (καρδιακὴ εἴσοδος) will open itself to you through it, in the way we have written, beyond any doubt, as we have come to know from experience.

Then, along with the attentiveness you have so much wished for, will come to you the entire choir of virtues: love, joy, peace, and the others, through which all your petitions will be answered in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit shall be power, glory, and worship, now and forever and for the age to come. Amen.

[54] *Philokalia* 4:27-8; English *Philokalia* 4:205-6.

Nicephorus foregoes any introductory considerations regarding the proper place for the technique to be exercised, and commences immediately with the psychosomatic technique. Where Symeon mentions briefly the importance of applying some constraint to the breathing cycle, Nicephorus explicitly instructs his reader to 'introduce the mind into the nasal pathway', by binding the mind (in the form of focused attention) and the breath. In this manner, Nicephorus suggests, the mind will all the more easily receive an inward direction, and accompany the breath in its passage through the nostrils and the pharynx, and into the cavity of the heart.

J. Meyendorff, in commenting upon Gregory Palamas' brief mention that the Hesychasts 'introduce their own mind within themselves through control of breathing',[55] notes that 'the technique may be helpful for beginners', but is 'not essential to progress in interior prayer'.[56] Meyendorff puts particular stress on the pertinence of the breathing to beginners only, hinging his understanding upon his rendering of Palamas' text as 'it is not out of place to teach people, especially beginners, that they should … introduce their own mind within themselves through control of breathing',[57] where Palamas clearly writes, [τ]ὸ δ' εἰς ἑαυτοὺς μάλιστα τοὺς εἰσαγομένους βλέπειν εἰσηγεῖσθαι καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀναπνοῆς εἴσω πέμπειν τὸν οἰκεῖον νοῦν οὐκ ἀπὸ τρόπου, acknowledging the assistive nature of manipulating the breathing, generally for all, and specifically as most helpful to beginners (μάλιστα τοὺς εἰσαγομένους, rather than a possible reading of ἀποκλειστικῶς, or μόνον, τοὺς εἰσαγομένους) – not introducing any notion of exclusive use of breathing by beginners alone. Meyendorff's note is possibly the reason that drives K. Ware to posit that 'the inner exploration, like the control of the breathing, is a preparatory exercise, preceding the Jesus Prayer rather than accompanying it',[58] having earlier described the conclusion of Nicephorus' work, not as an exposition of a traditional technique, but rather as 'suggesting a bodily method to help the beginner to attain "attentiveness"'.[59]

The question of precedence is a significant one, but, still, a question. Are the psychosomatic techniques, including but not limited to manipulating the breathing, preparatory? Is the entrance into the heart *a necessary precondition* for the recitation of the Jesus Prayer? Both Symeon and Nicephorus initially place the recitation of the Jesus Prayer after one has in fact reached and entered the heart. Nicephorus proposes the recitation of the prayer on its own only in an attempt to assist a beginner, and not as part of the technique he draws from tradition.

[55] *Pro hesychastis* 1.2.7. See J. Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas* (1983), 44.
[56] *Ibid.* 126 n. 50.
[57] *Ibid.* 44.
[58] K. Ware, 'Praying with the Body' (1992), 18.
[59] *Ibid.* 10.

Expanding upon Symeon's mention of darkness and density, Nicephorus speaks of a claustrophobic environment that causes distress to the mind that is not accustomed to it. Yet, continuing, he insists that the mind will be quickly accustomed to these surroundings, and come to view the entry into the heart as a sort of a long-awaited return, a *nostos* of sorts. Nicephorus follows Symeon's understanding that the recitation of the Jesus Prayer should be performed following one's entry into the heart. He insists on its significance and power, saying that his reader should 'never let [his] mind give it up', for it functions as the centripetal point, upon which the mind is attracted and concentrated, acquiring attributes of invulnerability, immaculacy, and a divine longing.

Where Nicephorus significantly deviates, however, or rather expands, is that after having assured his reader of the efficacy and the unfailing nature of what he considers to be the traditional method of praying, he includes a note stipulating that, should the ascetic's efforts to enter the heart prove unsuccessful, one may instead simply recite the phrase 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me', enforcing it over any other concept and establishing it exclusively within the heart-mind. At this point, he validates the latter approach, not through tradition, but rather through his own personal experience, writing that persistent practice will produce the same results after a long period of time.

Discussion should turn now to the question of the reintroduction of the technique into the body of ascetic literature. While discussing Mark's exposition of the method, it was mentioned that the prayer technique was apparently quite common during the fifth century, but was almost entirely lost by the time of Symeon. This view emerges from Symeon's own admission:[60]

> The third method is a thing truly paradoxical and difficult to interpret. To those that do not know it, not only does it appear difficult to comprehend, but also it seems almost entirely unbelievable. They cannot believe that such a thing can exist, because in these times, this method cannot be found in many, but only in very few (εἰς πολλὰ ὀλίγους). It seems to me that it has deserted us along with the virtue of obedience.

In the time of Symeon, then, this technique had been condemned to obscurity, for reasons unknown to modern scholarship, and maybe to Symeon himself as well. It is, then, with a sense of a vocation to salvage and reintroduce a precious hesychastic artefact – much along the same lines that St Nicodemus and St Macarius worked in collecting, editing, and publishing the *Philokalia* – that he elects to speak in so candid and detailed a manner. As we saw earlier, Symeon functions as a vessel, containing the desired knowledge, and, as such, the reintroduction of the technique could possibly be seen with suspicion and as a 'novelty', rather than a restoration, by those who approach the technique from the standpoint of disbelief. The work of reintroduction having being performed

[60] *Philokalia* 5:83; PG 147, 704A; English *Philokalia* 4:69.

by Symeon, however, the reconnection of the technique with tradition will be left to the capable hands of Nicephorus.

On the question of the preexistence and ultimately loss of the technique, G. Mantzaridis notes that:[61]

> Barlaam thought that Nicephorus the Athonite had introduced such prayer, but Palamas sees Nicephorus as continuing an older tradition. … Palamas notes that Nicephorus was not the first to speak of those whom Barlaam derivatively called 'inhalers': there were, he says, many previous references to them made by spiritual men, including John Climacus himself. But although Palamas attempts to prove that this practice constitutes an ancient tradition, he himself does not seem altogether convinced that this is so, and he is not able to cite evidence from the ancient Fathers.

His view originates from St Gregory Palamas' own opinion that Nicephorus, having retreated to the Athonite desert, culled the patristic writings (ἐκ πασῶν τῶν πατρικῶν φωνῶν συνειλοχώς).[62] G. Mantzaridis' view, that Palamas possibly remained unconvinced of this, is evinced further ahead in Palamas' defence of the Hesychasts, where he characterises the composition of Nicephorus' work as being performed 'naively' and 'ingenuously'.[63] I wonder if this view can be supported through an examination of Palamas' work. It is indeed true that Nicephorus speaks with at least some enthusiasm about the antiquity and sanctity of the method, and seeks to dispel any doubt whatsoever from his readers' minds:[64]

> To this end, let us imitate our fathers, and seek our treasure – which lies within our hearts – in the same manner that they did. … And if another Nicodemus comes with a contesting spirit and the tendency to challenge these things, saying: 'How can one enter into the heart, and work or dwell there', like the first Nicodemus that came to the Saviour and retorted, 'How can one enter into his mother's womb twice and be reborn, being an old man'[65] – then this new Nicodemus will also receive the same reply: 'the spirit blows where it wishes'.[66] … But since lacking scriptural proof it is impossible to acquire true knowledge on these things, let us bring the lives of the Saints, and the texts authored by them, and let us integrate them to our subject, receiving much benefit. For if we are to be informed through them, all doubt shall be dispelled.

Nicephorus then proceeds to cite excerpts from fourteen fathers, stretching all the way back to St Antony the Great, and including St Theodosius the Cenobiarch, St Arsenius, St Paul of Mt Latros, St Savvas, Abba Agathon, St Mark the

[61] Georgios Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man: St Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition* (Crestwood, NY, 1984), 94.

[62] *Pro hesychastis* 1.2.12 (ed. Meyendorff, my translation).

[63] G. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man* (1984), 95; see Gregory Palamas, *Pro hesychastis* 2.2.2 (ed. Meyendorff).

[64] *Philokalia* 4:19; English *Philokalia* 4:195.

[65] A reference to Nicodemus' argumentation with Jesus; see *John* 3:4.

[66] See *John* 3:8.

Monk (from his 'Letter to Nicolas' that we have previously examined), St John of the Ladder, St Isaiah the Solitary, St Macarius the Great (under whose name were published the highly influential *Homilies*), St Diadochus of Photike, St Isaac the Syrian, St John of Karpathos, and concluding with St Symeon the New Theologian. I should apologise for the inclusion of such a long list. However, both its length, and its inclusion of so many canonised fathers of the Church, exemplifies Nicephorus' perception of the validity and, what is more, the canonicity of the technique, and the clarity of his understanding of a long-standing tradition. In this sense, what Symeon left out by simply reintroducing the technique in the *corpus* of patristic writings on its own, Nicephorus comes to elaborate upon and complete, reinstating the traditional nature of the technique.

V. Conclusions

To provide some brief conclusions, it should be noted that Mark takes for granted knowledge of the technique of 'descending into the heart', instead focusing on the characteristics of the two warring sides of the battle of the mind. He stresses time and again the necessity for the invocation of divine assistance in the form of the Paraclete, yet does not directly refer to the repetition of the divine name of Jesus in the customary form of the Jesus Prayer. It may be deduced that, in Mark's era, the practical aspects of the hesychastic method were widely spread enough, so as not to warrant detailed expositions. Although Mark's approach lacks most of the essential characteristics the techniques of Symeon and Nicephorus portray, it nonetheless recognises from quite early on that the practice of prayer is an intellectual toil. It is indeed on this basis that later practitioners and authors establish their personal understanding, practices and, in consequence, expositions. As we have seen, this is highly accentuated in the case of Symeon and Nicephorus, whose main expositions on prayer can be directly paralleled to Mark's text. They both describe the same method: (a) delving into the heart, (b) fighting the demons and attaining purification and the guarding of the heart, and then (c) reciting the prayer through the pure heart as an orison, asking for divine grace, at which stage the ascetic may experience union with the divine. Symeon's and Nicephorus' quite different historical circumstances from those of Mark, led them to perceive a necessity for a much more detailed elucidation. However, while their texts are linguistically and conceptually enriched, they appear as if they evolved on the basis of Mark's text.

Patristic anthropologies significantly affect the perception and the practice of prayer, and the 'prayer of the heart' is a very interesting case of this. Symeon's exposition of what he considers to be the proper method of prayer is possibly the most candid expression of the teaching up until his own time. It reflects his understanding of an esoteric 'anatomy' of the heart, that of the 'outer' and

'inner' heart, along with the ascription of the latter as the adytum where God or Christ may be located, in the manner of an individuated 'Holy of Holies'.

As we have argued, the path, according to Symeon, is one that constitutes a pilgrimage towards the 'inner' heart, where human and divine meet. The ascetic first enters the heart, which is initially filled with thoughts and images forming an impenetrable density and thus one finds darkness – that is where according to Mark one finds the giants of the devil. Symeon stresses that it is through perseverance and constant practice that the ascetic can manage to eventually empty the heart from all the density that obstructs the experience of light – hinting that this light stems from that place of the heart where God dwells, the centre of the heart or 'inner' heart, what Mark describes as 'the innermost, secret and uncontaminated chamber of the heart'[67] – thus one experiencing purification and illumination. Of course, these are conditions that are gradually satisfied over the course of a lifetime of practice, and their satisfaction is not the product of some momentary determination.

Hence these expositions of the 'prayer of the heart' do not merely refer to a combination of psychosomatic techniques and the Jesus Prayer, as has been argued so far by academics. In the course of this paper, it has become evident that, according to both Symeon and Nicephorus, the Jesus Prayer should be recited with an empty, pure heart (after one has delved into the realms of the heart and attained purification and the guarding of the intellect), as it is understood to function as an orison, asking for divine grace, through which the ascetic may be united with the divine, thus experiencing the third gradation of the ascetic practice, *theōsis*. This point contrasts with contemporary approaches that favour the application of the Jesus Prayer on its own before the experience of purification – a technique certainly attested by Nicephorus himself, yet only as a secondary means of gaining entry. The latter method has the same results because the invocation of the divine presence facilitates the emptying of the heart and the attainment of stillness, leading to the purification of the ascetic. As we have seen, Mark emphasizes that the weapons of virtue and the power of the Holy Spirit drawn through prayer and orison constitute the way to fight the demons.

We have shown how through the 'prayer of the heart' the three stages of spiritual practice – purification, illumination, and *theōsis* in the Dionysian nomenclature – are attained, as well as the relation between these stages and the esoteric 'anatomy' of the heart, which maps out the path towards union with the divine. This theme presents an evolution of earlier patristic interpretation of Moses' ascent of Sinai and encounter with God, as well as of entering the 'Holy of Holies' with a pure heart, which has been the focus of many Philokalic authors. As K. Ware has shown, the 'ideal of *theōsis*, of direct transforming

[67] Mark the Monk, 'On baptism'; PG 65, 996C, also see 1005BCD, 1016D.

union with the living God, constitutes a unifying thread throughout the *Philokalia* as a whole'.[68]

It is appropriate to conclude with a caveat, regarding the study of not just the 'prayer of the heart' but also spiritual practice in general: in order for the academic to properly research the nature of spiritual practices, one has to adopt a threefold approach that entails the study of (a) the spiritual practices themselves, (b) the stages towards the attainment of their aim, and (c) the patristic anthropologies that define these practices. As we have seen, these three aspects are inter-related, each sheds light on the other two, and none of them can be adequately studied on its own. With the proper study of spiritual practice, within the right methodological framework, new worlds open up and our understanding advances in a way that was not possible before.

[68] Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Unity of the Philokalia and its Influence in East and West* (Athens, 2004), 50. See also Kallistos Ware, 'St. Nikodimos and the *Philokalia*', in B. Bingaman and B. Nassif (eds), *The Philokalia* (2012), 31, where he writes that '[t]he ideal of *theosis* is the most decisive of all the connecting threads that bind the *Philokalia* in unity'.

Monastic Hybridity and Anti-Exegetical Discourse: From Philoxenus of Mabbug to Dadišo Qatraya*

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Abstract

The end of the fifth century and beginning of the sixth was a period of cultural transition in Syriac Christianity, when the assimilation of Greek patristic theology, and the growing prestige of Greek monastic literature, stimulated local intellectual life. To what extent did this monastic cultural fusion reflect the theological stance of its Syriac authors? This essay examines this question by focusing on the attitude of monastic leaders toward the exegetical and intellectual activity of their monks. It begins with the work of the West Syrian theologian Philoxenus of Mabbug at the end of the fifth century, and ends in the seventh century with the East Syriac monastic author Dadišo Qatraya, via Abba Isaiah (d. 491) and the monastic community of Gaza that flourished in the fifth-sixth century.

The end of the fifth century and beginning of the sixth was a period of cultural transition in Syriac Christianity, when the assimilation of Greek patristic theology, and the growing prestige of Greek learning and wisdom, stimulated local intellectual life.[1] Most recently, Sebastian Brock has described another element in this process of Syriac culture's 'Hellenization', namely, its increasing incorporation of elements from Greek literary culture in the course of the fourth to seventh century.[2] The Syriac monastic culture was one of the sites of

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[1] See the classic studies of Sebastian P. Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', in Nina G. Garsoïan (ed.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, D.C., 1982), 17-34; *id*., 'Greek and Syriac in Late Antique Syria', in A.K. Bowman and G. Woolf (eds), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1994), 149-60; Bas ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis* (Louvain, 1977); Glen W. Bowersock, 'The Syriac *Life of Rabbula* and Syrian Hellenism', in Thomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau (eds), *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2000), 255-71; David Michelson, '"It Is Not the Custom of Our Syriac Language…": Reconsidering the Role of Translation in the Polemics of Philoxenos of Mabbog', in David Brakke, Deborah Deliyannis and Edward Watts (eds), *Shifting Cultural Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2012), 7-22.

[2] Sebastian P. Brock, 'Charting the Hellenization of a Literary Culture: The Case of Syriac', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 3 (2015), 98-124. Brock focuses here on changing attitudes to translation practice and the growing number of Greek loanwords in Syriac. He

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this inter-cultural process of hybridization, incorporating Greek patristic learning while maintaining many indigenous features as well.

The translation of Basil of Caesarea's works into Syriac – for example, his treatise *Questions of the Brothers*, perhaps accomplished already in the 370s – gives the measure of the Syriac monastic assimilation of Greek literature.[3] This important Syriac translation demonstrates not only Basil's undeniable authority in Syriac-speaking communities already at the end of the fourth century but, as Anna Silvas has noted, it evinces the Syriac translator's non-literal techniques: He himself composed a substantial body of the treatise, thus producing a hybrid text.[4] This loose approach to translation witnesses to a hermeneutical and intertextual dynamic already when the monastic movement was still in the early stages of its formation. This melding of Greek and Syriac traditions accelerated in the fifth century and beginning of the sixth, when Syriac translations of the major Greek hagiographic literature began to circulate, for example, the *Life of Antony* and Palladius' *Lausiac History*, and the writings of such key figures as Mark the Monk and Abba Isaiah.[5] No doubt, the Syriac translations of Evagrius Ponticus' writings, which rapidly and radically reshaped local monastic discourse, represents a cultural watershed.[6] An analysis of this process reveals, in addition to the creative assimilation of Greek monastic lore, the ways in which

emphasizes that he uses the term 'hellenization' in this context not in the sense of colonizing, but in its descriptive sense (*ibid*. 100).

[3] The Greek original is now lost. The Syriac text with English translation was edited by Anna M. Silvas, *Basil of Caesarea, Questions of the Brothers* (Leiden, 2014). For the date of the translation into Syriac, see *ibid*. 22. For further information about early Syriac translations of Basil's ascetic writings, see Jean Gribomont, *Histoire du Texte des Ascétiques de S. Basile* (Louvain, 1953), 144-7. On Basil's contact with Syriac-speaking Christians, see David G.K. Taylor, *The Syriac Versions of the de Spiritus Sancto by Basil of Caesarea*, CSCO 577 (Louvain, 1999), VIII-XIX.

[4] A.M. Silvas, *Basil of Caesarea* (2014), 37.

[5] On Syriac hagiography and the translation from Greek into Syriac of major hagiographic compositions, see Sebastian P. Brock, 'Syriac Hagiography', in Stephanos Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*: Volume I: *Period and Places* (Burlington, 2011), 259-83. On the Syriac translations of Palladius' *Lausiac History*, see *id.* 'Saints in Syriac: A Little-Tapped Resource', *JECS* 16 (2008), 181-96. For Mark the Monk's treatises, see the Greek text with French translation by G.M. Durand, *Marc le Moine: Traités*, SC 445, 455 (Paris, 1999-2000). The Syriac version is unedited, but the Greek edition contains variant readings of the Syriac manuscripts. See Grigory Kessel and Karl Pinggéra, *A Bibliography of Syriac Ascetic and Mystical Literature* (Leuven, 2011), 172-3.

[6] For the *Evagriana Syriaca*, see the bibliography listed according to Evagrius' treatises, in G. Kessel and K. Pinggéra, *A Bibliography* (2011), 76-92. On the impact of Evagrius' thought and terminology on Syriac authors, see, for example, Antoine Guillaumont, 'Les versions syriaques de l'œuvre d'Evagre le Pontique et leur role dans la formation du vocabulaire ascétique syriaque', in *III Symposium Syriacum 1980*, edited by René Lavenant, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 221 (Rome, 1983), 25-41; Paolo Bettiolo, 'Povertà e conoscenza: Appunti su alcune "Centurie gnostiche" della tradizione Evagriana in Siria', *Parole de l'Orient* 15 (1988/1989), 107-25; Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'The Limit of the Mind (*NOUS*): Pure Prayer according to Evagrius Ponticus and Isaac of Nineveh', *ZAC* 15 (2011), 291-321.

Syriac authors challenged the most characteristic images embedded in this tradition, and how they coped with the tensions inherent in this culture and managed its perplexities.

To what extent did this monastic cultural fusion reflect the theological stance of its Syriac authors? I am fully aware of the breadth of this question, so I shall limit the discussion in this essay to a subject that re-emerged in Late Antique monastic discourse: the attitude of monastic leaders toward the exegetical and intellectual activity of their monks. I begin with the work of the West Syrian theologian Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) at the end of the fifth century, and end in the seventh century with the East Syriac monastic author Dadišo Qatraya, via Abba Isaiah (d. 491) and the monastic community of Gaza that flourished in the fifth-sixth century.

Philoxenus of Mabbug on reading and interpreting Scripture

As Sebastian Brock has observed, the work of Philoxenus of Mabbug – erudite exegete, monastic leader, ardent polemicist and defender of the Miaphysite stance – which spanned the end of the fifth century and the early years of the sixth, usefully focuses this stage in the cultural transition of Syriac Christianity.[7] Similarly, Lucas Van Rompay has demonstrated that Philoxenus quoted Ephrem more frequently in his earlier works than in his later ones, in which only a few quotations are found. Philoxenus criticized the imprecision of Ephrem's language and preferred Greek writers.[8] According to Van Rompay, this shifting attitude between Philoxenus' earlier and later works is symptomatic of the transition through which Syriac Christianity passed around the year 500. Philoxenus is the representative, *par excellence*, of this Syriac monastic hybridity in its transitory stage. He was among the earliest authors to embrace Evagrius Ponticus' ascetic theory and to merge it with native Syriac ascetic tradition. Since Irenée Hausherr's 1933 study, scholars have continued to detect Evagrian theology, language and contemplative theory in Philoxenus' works.[9] The 1960s – with the studies of André de Halleux on Philoxenus' theology and sources of inspiration, Antoine Guillaumont's decisive suggestion that Philoxenus was the author of the Syriac version of Evagrius' *Kephalaia Gnostica* (known as S1), and Paul Harb's analysis of Philoxenus' use of Evagrian contemplative terminology – established that Philoxenus' writings had fused

[7] S.P. Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation' (1982), 17.

[8] Lucas Van Rompay, 'Mallpânâ dilan Suryâyâ: Ephrem in the Works of Philoxenus of Mabbog: Respect and Distance', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 7 (2004), 83-105; *id.* 'Past and Present Perceptions of Syriac Literary Tradition', *Hugoye*: *Journal of Syriac Studies* 3 (2000), 71-103, 75.

[9] For example, Irenée Hausherr, 'Spiritualité Syrienne: Philoxène de Mabboug en version française', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 23 (1957), 171-85 (republished in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 183 [1969], 285-99).

Evagrian epistemological and contemplative theory with his traditions.[10] Other scholars, however, pointed out Philoxenus' significant departure from the authentic Evagrius text of the *Kephalaia Gnostica* and his use of the expurgated version (S1), while continuing to trace Evagrius' influence on Philoxenus and to discern the practical and contemplative elements that the latter had espoused.[11] Most recently, Robin Darling Young and David Michelson have enriched the picture of Philoxenus' appropriation and reconfiguration of Evagrius' soteriological legacy and epistemology.[12]

A comparison of the content and terminology of Philoxenus' early monastic writings – for instance, the *Discourses*, his most popular monastic exhortations, which he wrote during his episcopate in Mabbug, most probably between 485 and 498 – with his later work – for example, the *Letter to Patricius* – reveals his gradual removal from Syriac native spirituality and the extent and enthusiasm of his adherence to Evagrius' ascetic and contemplative theories.[13] He was one of the rare authors in that period to make use of the anonymous Syriac ascetic treatise the *Book of Steps*, and most likely also of John of Apamea's taxonomy of silence.[14] Philoxenus followed the distinctive bipartite theory of

[10] André de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog: Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain, 1963); Antoine Guillaumont, *Les Kephalaia Gnostica d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'Origénisme chez les grecs et chez les syriens* (Paris, 1962), 207-13; Paul Harb, 'L'attitude de Philoxène de Mabboug à l'égard de la spiritualité "savant" d'Évagre le Pontique', in F. Graffin (ed.), *Mémorial G. Kouri-Sarkis 1898-1968* (Louvain, 1969), 135-55.

[11] For instance, John W. Watt, 'Philoxenus and the Old Syriac version of Evagrius' *Centuries*', *Oriens Christianus* 64 (1980), 65-81. Watt refers to Philoxenus' *Commentary on Matth.* 3, which according to him summarized Evagrius' *Praktikos*. Watt suggests that the version S1 of the *KG* was made in Edessa during the fifth century, before Philoxenus arrived there, by a translator who adhered to the Antiochene theology, and that he was inspired by Theodore's criticism of Origenism (76-7). According to Watt, Philoxenus came to know *KG* S1 during his education at the school of Edessa.

[12] Robin Darling Young, 'The Influence of Evagrius of Pontus', in *id.* and Monica J. Blanchard (eds), *To Train His Soul in Books: Syriac Asceticism in Early Christianity* (Washington, D.C., 2011), 157-75; David A. Michelson, *The Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug* (Oxford, 2014). See also the double issue on Philoxenus in *Hugoye* 13.1-2 (2010) and Michelson's introduction there.

[13] Philoxenus' *Discourses* edited by Wallis Budge, *The Discourses of Philoxenus Bishop of Mabbôgh, A.D. 485–519. Edited from Syriac Manuscripts of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries, in the British Museum, with an English Translation*, 2 vols (London, 1983-1894); New English translation by Robert A. Kitchen, *The Discourses of Philoxenos of Mabbug: A New Translation and Introduction*, Cistercian Series 235 (Collegeville, Minnesota, 2013). The date of the discourses is uncertain. This is de Halleux' suggestion (*Philoxène de Mabbog* [1963], 288).

[14] *The Book of Steps*, ed. with Latin translation, by Mihály Kmosko, *Liber Graduum*, Patrologia Syriaca 1.3 (Paris, 1926); English translation by Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F.G. Parmentier, *The Book of Steps: The Syriac Liber Graduum*, Cistercian Series 196 (Kalamazoo, 2004). On Philoxenus' use of the *Book of Steps* in his *Discourses*, see Kitchen and Parmentier, *Book of Steps*, Introduction, xxvii, lxxxii-lxxxiii. On John of Apamea's notion of silence, see my essay '*More interior than the lips and the tongue*: John of Apamea and Silent Prayer in Late Antiquity', *JECS* 20 (2012), 303-31.

the *Book of Steps*, which discerns two Christian lifestyles divided according to their level of virtuous life and social obligations: the Upright (ܚܫܝܪ) who follow the minor commandments and the Perfect (ܓܡܝܪ) who adhere to the major commandments.[15] In his *Discourses* and the *Letter of Exhortation to a Man Who Left Judaism and Came to the Monastic Life*, which also belongs to his earliest writings, Philoxenus pivoted on the *Book of Steps*' notion of Perfection (ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ).[16] He cherished the metaphor of 'two ways' (ܬܪܝܢ ܐܘܪܚܬܐ), two roads – bodily labour and spiritual thoughts – and combined this bipartite scheme with *Matth*. 7:14: 'The gate is narrow and the way is straight' – that is, the narrow road of bodily labours (ܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܓܫܝܡܐ ܘܫܚܠܐ), and the straight path of spiritual thoughts. Philoxenus here remained faithful to *Discourse* 19 of the *Book of Steps*, in which the ascetic lifestyle is depicted as a narrow and difficult road of Perfection.[17] It is important to recall that the notion of perfection was not Evagrius' preferred concept for framing his ascetic teaching, and he almost never used this term. Philoxenus bases his theory of Perfection in his *Discourses* on the *Book of Steps* model.

Philoxenus' early fascination with the *Book of Steps* faded, however, in his *Letter to Patricius* (= *LP*), written after the *Letter of Exhortation* to the converted monk, and the *Discourses*, sometime around 500-505.[18] Patricius, a monk from Edessa who apparently was looking for a shortcut to avoid the long way of ascetic practice, asked Philoxenus whether it were necessary to keep the commandments in order to be saved.[19] Surprisingly, Philoxenus did not frame his answer at this point in light of the *Book of Steps*' most characteristic concepts, namely, that of the minor and the major commandments. Rather, at this stage, Philoxenus revealed his profound acquaintance with and adherence to the core of Evagrius' ascetic and contemplative doctrine, and framed his reply to Patricius 'in Evagrian dress', yet without mentioning Evagrius by name. In addition, he propounded his monastic teachings here along the lines of other Greek monastic sources, among them Basil of Caesarea's writings and the *Apophthegmata*, all the while praising the prestigious model of the Fathers

[15] Sebastian P. Brock, 'Some Paths to Perfection in the Syriac Fathers', *SP* 51 (2011), 77-94, 83.

[16] The Syriac text of the *Letter of Exhortation* with English translation will be published by Sergey Minov and me in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (2016). For a summary of the fundamental expectations from the Upright and the Perfect, see R.A. Kitchen and M.F.G. Parmentier, *The Book of Steps* (2004), Introduction, xxxviii-xlvi. For the dynamic of these two levels of Christian life, see Paolo Bettiolo, 'Confessare Dio in perfetta spogliazione: La via del discernimento dei commandamenti nel *Liber Graduum*', *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 19 (1998), 631-51.

[17] For example, *The Book of Steps, Discourse* 19.1-3; 29.16-8; 30.25. On the 'narrow gate of Perfection' (*Matth*. 7:13), see also *Discourse* 2.1.

[18] *The Letter to Patricius*, ed. with French translation by René Lavenant, *La Lettre à Patricius de Philoxène de Mabboug*, Patrologia Orientalis 30.5 (Paris, 1963), hereinafter *LP*. The date of the *LP* is according to A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog* (1963), 259.

[19] *LP* 3.11; 24, 744-6, 754-5, 768-9.

of Egypt (*LP* 19).[20] In line with Evagrius, he admitted that the pure mind is the entity that senses the divine; he thus centred his reply to Patricius on the activity of the mind, its recollection, stillness and purity leading to various degrees of contemplation (*LP* 32-4). He challenged the entire sophisticated Evagrian contemplative schema, which includes the five sorts of contemplation known from his *Kephalaia Gnostica*, and elucidated how the mind experiences each sort of contemplation (*LP* 74, 820-1).[21]

The Evagrian ascetic and contemplative theory, however, was never a scholastic demarche – that is, it did not entail the learning of specific texts, nor did it require a particular way of interpreting the Scriptures. It was far from the textual approach of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, for example, who grounded their contemplative theories to a great extent on spiritual exegesis of the Scriptures. Given that the Evagrian corpus determined Philoxenus' intellectual and spiritual horizons at this stage of his life, it is not surprising that he perceived the performance of the ascetic and contemplative life as an inner demarche of purification of the mind, beginning in faith and ending in impassibility (*apatheia*) and contemplation, an itinerary that he articulated in the most peculiar Evagrian terminology.[22] Indeed, Philoxenus himself linked Patricius' question about the observance of the commandments to the issue of hermeneutic practice and discussion of the Scriptures among the monks, all the while expressing his negative stance on such matters. As David Michelson has demonstrated, Philoxenus rejected theological inquiry and exegetical activity in many of his writings in relation to his objection to Theodore of Mopsuestia's exegetical method and the Christological controversies. Faith, Philoxenus said, and not investigation was the key for approaching the Scriptures.[23] However, it is rather interesting that in his *Letter to Patricius*, in which the central issue revolves around the question of observing the commandments, Philoxenus found it suitable to link his answer to the subject of scrutinizing the Scriptures, yet with no direct relation to the dispute with Theodore of Mopsuestia, which holds only a marginal place in this letter.

Philoxenus asked: What need is there for the solitary life for wise discourses or explications, or for many and varied readings of the Scriptures? And he answered by using Evagrius' theory of passions (*logismoi*, ܪܥܝܢ), and the

[20] See, for example, *LP* 37-9, 784-5, in which Philoxenus quoted the *Apophthegmata*, Abba Poemen 5 and Simon 1.

[21] For an analysis of Evagrius' theory of contemplation, see Antoine Guillaumont, *Un philosophe au desert: Évagre le Pontique* (Paris, 2004), 284-306.

[22] A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog* (1963), 437 n. 50: *Comm. Matth.* 3:1-16; *LP* 51-7; *Discourses* 9, 268; Evagrius, *Gnostikos* 49, edited by Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, *Évagre le Pontique: Le Gnostique ou à celui qui est devenu digne de la science*, SC 356 (Paris, 2008), 190-1.

[23] See the discussion in D.A. Michelson, *Practical Christology of Philoxenos* (2014), 123-8, 132-6.

well-known division of the soul and its ruling forces: 'The rational, the concupiscible (ܥܝܬܘܡܝܐ, *epithumia*) and the irascible (ܬܘܡܣܐ, *thumos*) forces of the intellect' (*LP* 35, 782-3). The intellect's rational part (ܡܕܡ ܕܡܬܠܠ ܥܡ ܡܕܥ), he elucidated, scrutinizes natural knowledge; its concupiscible part aspires to partake of spiritual things, and the irascible (ܬܘܡܣܐ) struggles against evil doings. At the same time, he drew on *Matth.* 18:20 ('For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them') and offered an allegorical interpretation: The monk should aspire to harmonize his inner space and the three inner powers. When the three are harmonized, he explained, Christ dwells in them and brings about progress for each part. The soul that desires God, he clarified, remains in a place that is beyond all passions and has no need to interrogate or learn, because it has no more the interrogatory quality, but of viewing (ܐܠ ܚܙܝܐ ܕܡܫܟܚ ܒܗ ܡܕܡ ܕܠܐ ܫܐܠ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܬܒܥ). In other words, purity of intellect is not a matter of reading and interpreting the Scriptures, but of harmonizing the three parts of the soul (*LP* 35, 782-3). He then turned to Patricius' initial question about the commandment. 'In my view', Philoxenus said, 'this is a question that is superfluous to ask', since knowledge of Christ cannot be learned through words and questions, nor can it be captured by multiple readings or discovered through the inquiry of the soul, but only through the soul's purity. Just as the corporeal senses do not need to inquire and learn in order to sense, so it is for the spiritual senses of intellect: they feel in a natural manner the knowledge of Christ when the intellect is pure and healthy, thereby retaining its role as a viewer and does not make inquiries about its subject (*LP* 61, 808-9).

Philoxenus identified the very notion of variety (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ) as a stark menace to purity of the mind, which should be in a state of unity, reflecting Evagrius' theology of the unification of the intellect and its unity with the divine in the *Kephalaia Gnostica*.[24] Thus, he explained, multiple readings produce various thoughts in the soul because meanings in the text are diverse; this diversity troubles the mind: 'Inasmuch as the multitude of thoughts increases in it [in the mind], there is no stillness', and does not dwell in unity (ܕܠܐ ܢܬܚܒܫ ܒܗ), which is the state of contemplation (*LP* 62, 810-1). Philoxenus, in fact, represented exegetical activity as an obstacle to reaching the purity and harmony of the three parts of the soul. Like many monastic authors, he was aware of the fragility of the inner techniques for purifying the soul and the dangers of the mind's wanderings. Constant and multiple readings of Scripture do not lead to stillness (*šelyā*) and tranquility, but causes disturbance; instead of recollecting, the mind wanders. For this reason, he opines, the monk should eschew such activities (*LP* 65, 812-3).

[24] On the unification of the intellect in the *Kephalaia Gnostica*, see A. Guillaumont, *Un philosophe au desert* (2004), 395-404.

Philoxenus' anti-exegetical monastic discourse, which advocated performance rather than intellectual pursuit, was probably also inspired by Evagrius' view as stated in his *Praktikos*: '*Praktike* is the spiritual method for purifying the passionate part of the soul' (τὸ παθητικὸν μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς), that is, its *thumos* and *epithumia*.[25] In his *Exhortations to Monks* he advised: 'Restrain your curiosity about the Trinity; only believe and offer worship, for one who displays curiosity does not believe'.[26] However, Philoxenus was also well versed in Evagrius' *Praktikos*, from which he quoted in his *Letter to Patricius*: 'When the mind wanders, reading, vigils and prayer bring it to a standstill' (*LP* 65, 812-3).[27] Thus he nuanced his statement about exegetical practice and advised reading the Scriptures, though for only a short while, until one feels the recollection of his mind. At that point, the monk should turn toward pure prayer, all the while stressing that one should not aspire to an interpretation of the words of Scripture, but rather to a spiritual contemplation (*theoria*) of the words, which brings delight to the intellect (*LP* 65, 812-3). Not everyone has the capacity to read the Scriptures in a good manner or with knowledge, he stressed; some read it just for the citing or for learning exegesis, others for dispute against heretics or for vainglory. Therefore Philoxenus sharpened his tone and asked: To what purpose does the monk need to know the interpretation (ܦܫܪܢܐ) of a certain word or the meaning of a phrase? It is sufficient for the monk to be enlightened in a phrase of the Scriptures: if the text concerns the commandments he should observe them; if the text deals with a parable he should not explain it; and if it deals with a mystery he should not elucidate it (*LP* 66-7, 812-5). Philoxenus admitted that the words of the Scriptures include various theological subjects, among them divinity, creation, providence, judgement and commandments. However, only texts dealing with the commandments should be considered by the monk, and he has to ignore the other subjects to attend to the health of his soul (*LP* 67, 814-5). Philoxenus exhorted the monk to leave 'the investigation of knowledge in its place and seek instead how to enter the place of knowledge' (*LP* 68, 816-7). Advocating the practice rather than the theology or the theory of contemplative life, Philoxenus stressed that the monk should aim to study how to ascend 'the

[25] Evagrius, *Praktikos* 78, edited by Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, *Évagre le Pontique: Traité pratique ou le moine,* SC 171 (Paris, 1971), 666-7.

[26] Evagrius, *Exhortations to Monks* 33, trans. Sinkewicz, *Greek Ascetic Corpus*, 222. Philoxenus repeats this idea in his *Discourses* (Kitchen, Introduction, lxxiv).

[27] Evagrius, *Praktikos* 15, 536-7. English translation by Robert Sinkewicz, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (Oxford, 2003), 100. See also Evagrius' *Exhortations to Monks*, 1.3, trans. in Sinkewicz, *Greek Ascetic Corpus*, 218. Sinkewicz's translation based on two unpublished major collections of Evagrian work, Athos. Protaton 26 and Lavra *Γ* 93 as well as the collections discussed by J. Muyldermans, 'Evagriana: Le Vatic. Barb. Greaecus 515', *Le Muséon* 51 (1938), 198-204. For the Syriac text, see J. Muyldermans, *Evagriana Syriaca: Textes inédits du British Museum et de la Vaticane*, Bibliothèque du Muséon 31 (Louvain, 1952), 61-2.

mountain of contemplation' (ܛܘܪܐ ܕܬܐܘܪܝܐ) and not 'to study what contemplation is' (*LP* 69, 816-7).

Although the *Letter to Patricius* for the most part lacks the author's habitual polemical tone, Philoxenus directed some invective toward the Messalians and Theodore of Mopsuestia (*LP* 108-12, 850-5). In this context, however, and in line with Evagrius' *Gnostikos*, which he paraphrased in this passage, he restricted his position to young people who might be disturbed by these investigations, which easily provoke laxity (ܫܚܪܘܬܐ).[28] Nonetheless, while rounding on Theodore of Mopsuestia's misleading interpretations of the Scriptures, Philoxenus concluded by asserting that to interpret the commandments means to observe them (*LP* 124, 866); one should interpret the commandments not by words but by performing them. The same applied to the mysteries that the Scriptures contained: they cannot be explained by words and interpretations (ܒܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܦܫܩ); their explanation lies in their luminous contemplation (*LP* 125, 866).

We have seen here Philoxenus' tremendous effort to sever monks from exegetical engagement with the text of Scripture. How should we understand Philoxenus' position, especially when we recall the centrality of the Scriptures in Late Antique monastic life, such as the meditative reading of Psalms as a spiritual exercise, and when we remember that Evagrius, his master, composed a sort of *testimonia Scripturarum*, the *Antirrhêtikos*, in which he developed the technique of reading the Scriptures during demonic temptation, and as a form of self-transformation?[29] We should also recall Evagrius' own exegetical works, such as his *Scholia on Psalms* that served a wide variety of spiritual improvement and as spiritual weapon, and his *Scholia on Ecclesiastes* and *Scholia on Proverbs*.[30] Moreover, nobody suspects that for Philoxenus, the sponsor of the new translation of the New Testament, the biblical text and exegesis, was not imperative. Living in a period of blazing theological controversy, Philoxenus' fear both of the monks' misunderstanding the biblical text and of their probable deviance from his theological stance certainly suggest the first explanation that comes to mind. David Michelson reminds us of Philoxenus' anxiety about such misunderstandings, which Philoxenus linked to his

[28] *LP* 112, 854-55; Evagrius, *Gnostikos*, Syriac version, edited by W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus*, Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen (Berlin, 1912), 550.

[29] David Brakke, 'Reading the New Testament and Transforming the Self in Evagrius of Pontus', in Hans-Ulrich Weidemann (ed.), *Asceticism and Exegesis in Early Christianity: The Reception of New Testament Texts in Ancient Ascetic Discourses* (Göttingen, 2013), 284-99, 285. On Evagrius' *Antirrhêtikos*, see David Brakke, *Evagrius of Pontus: Talking Back*: *A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons*, Cistercian Studies Series 229 (Collegeville, 2009), 1-44.

[30] *Scholia on Ecclesiastes*, edited by Paul Géhin, *Évagre le Pontique, Scholies à l'Ecclésiaste*, SC 397 (Paris, 1993); *Scholia on Proverbs*, edited by Paul Géhin, *Évagre le Pontique, Scholies aux Proverbes*, SC 340 (Paris, 1987). On the Psalter as spiritual weapon, see Luke Dysinger, *Psalmody and Prayer in the Writings of Evagrius Ponticus* (Oxford, 2005), 131-49.

dogmatic defence of Miaphysite doctrine. The pervasive Christian ideal of simplicity, according to Michelson, stood in opposition to the speculative inquiry which was the primary cause of Christological heresy.[31] Philoxenus' rhetoric certainly aims to control theological views in monastic communities and bring to his side communities and individuals to whom he directed much of his epistolary activity and toward whom he channeled his Christological propaganda. Philoxenus understood that monasteries in many regions in the East had grown into centers of ecclesiastical (thus, political) power. But what seems to have been urgent in the immediate monastic context was the performance of the ascetic life and the observance of the commandments, as he writes in the letter to Patricius. Thus, I do not share the view that Philoxenus identified a collapse of ascetic discipline in Theodore's approach to Scripture.[32] Once the Evagriana Syriaca were available to Philoxenus, Evagrian ascetic and contemplative theories became for him the most challenging theory that he wanted to accommodate. Like many monastic authors, however, he was aware of the fragility of the inner techniques for purifying the soul and of the dangers of the wandering mind. Thus it would be a mistake to measure his position regarding readings and exegetical activity solely through the lens of Christological controversies. Rather, it is the rhetorical strategy of a monastic leader who recognized the power of this literary dynamic in an age of cultural hybridity, and who did not overlook the ascetic tension that it created – a tension that he feared would menace the contemplative lifestyle in the monasteries. In my view, Patricius' question about the commandments reflects precisely this tension that resulted from the dilemmas of shaping the ascetic self, namely, whether to do so through scrutinizing Scripture or scrutinizing the self, a dilemma that Philoxenus addressed through Evagrian ascetic theory. But this tension was not exclusive to any theological party or exegetical school.

The attitude toward investigating the Scriptures in the monastic community of Gaza

Far from the impact of Theodore of Mopsuestia's exegetical authority, Abba Isaiah in the region of Gaza (d. 491), shared the position of Philoxenus regarding scrutinizing the Scriptures.[33] Abba Isaiah discussed this subject in his influential *Asceticon*, which was translated into Syriac from Greek at the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century. More than 50 manuscripts survive, some dated to the sixth century. Abba Isaiah taught that investigating Scripture gives

[31] D.A. Michelson, *Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug* (2014), 181-4.
[32] *Ibid*. 126.
[33] On Abba Isaiah's historical context, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Aryeh Kofsky, *The Monastic School of Gaza* (Leiden, 2006), 20-4.

rise to hatreds and contention, whereas weeping over one's sins brings peace (*Asceticon* 6).[34] He insisted that whoever seeks to honor God loves ignorance (ἄγνοια) in the fear of God.[35] Accordingly, he said, better to discuss with another brother the words of the Fathers than those of Scripture, since the Scriptures are dangerous (*Asceticon* 30.4).

The next generation of the Gaza monastic community shared this same ascetic rhetoric and this same perspective on reading and discussing both Scripture and theology.[36] The spiritual leaders Barsanuphius and John rejected the investigation of both the Bible and of the Fathers, although they themselves were well versed in this literary heritage.[37] Their overall attitude to theological discussion was radically negative, to the point that to the question of a layman who asked whether he should curse and condemn Nestorius when asked to do so, they answered in the negative, saying: 'We are all sinners and must therefore focus on repentance' (*Questions and Answers* 700).[38] The monastic lifestyle faced tensions both without and within, not only from the world but also from 'church tradition' (*ekklesias paradosis*), as Barsanuphius termed it. Thus the monks asked about the theological views of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, and complained that other monks advocated the Origenist doctrine of the preexistence of the soul by deriving support from the two Cappadocians. How could these authorities be wrong about preexistence, or

[34] There is no critical edition of the Greek text. I refer to the edition by Augustinos Monachos (Jerusalem, 1911), 2nd ed., S.N. Schoinas (Volos, 1962); French translation by Lucien Regnault and Hervé de Broc, *Abbé Isaïe, Recueil ascétique*, Spiritualié Orientale 7 (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1985[3]); English translation by John Chryssavgis and Pachomios (Robert) Penkett, *Abba Isaiah of Scetis*: *Ascetic Discourses*, CS 150 (Kalamazoo, 2002). For the Syriac versions of the *Asceticon*, see René Draguet, *Les cinq recensions de l'Ascéticon syriaque d'abba Isaïe I-IV*, CSCO 289-90; 293-4 (Louvain, 1968).

[35] I have discussed the problem of the Greek reading of this passage, especially, whether it is ἀγνεῖα (purity) or ἄγνοια (ignorance, ܕܥܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ) in my article 'Pure Prayer and Ignorance: Dadisho' Qatraya and the Greek Ascetic Legacy', *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 78 (2012), 200-26, 216-8.

[36] This section draws on my joint publication with A. Kofsky, *Monastic School of Gaza* (2006), 99-104.

[37] On the central role of and the distinctive perspective on the Scriptures in the Palestinian monastic world in the Byzantine period, see Lorenzo Perrone, 'Palestinian Monasticism, the Bible, and Theology in the Wake of the Second Origenist Controversy', in Joseph Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church From the Fifth Century to the Present*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 98 (Leuven, 2001), 245-59; *id*., 'Scripture for a Life of Perfection: The Bible in Late Antique Monasticism: The Case of Palestine', in L. DiTommaso and L. Turcescu (eds), *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity. Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11-13 October 2006*, Bible in Ancient Christianity 6 (Leiden and Boston, 2008), 393-417.

[38] Barsanuphius and John, *Questions and Answers*, Greek text and French translation by François Neyt, Paula de Angelis-Noah, Lucien Regnault, *Correspondance*, SC 426-7, 450-1, 468 (Paris, 1997-2002). English translation by John Chryssavgis, *Barsanuphius and John: Letters*, FC 113-4 (Washington, D.C., 2006-2007).

about whether Paradise were material or spiritual, or about the interpretation of Scripture? Barsanuphius answered that preoccupation with such matters caused only harm and confusion, and deviation from orthodoxy. Even the saints did not fully understand the divine mysteries, he stressed. On the Day of Judgement, the monks would not be examined concerning these matters of theology, but rather whether they had struggled against the passions.[39] This preference for ascetic inner performance over speculative theological discussion echoes Philoxenus' stance. In response to the question of the monk who said he could not remain silent about the heterodox view in the *Apophthegmata* that the holy bread was not the body of Christ but only a symbol (*Daniel* 8), Barsanuphius rebuked him and said that the devil was pushing him to useless matters. There are further examples of the negative stance regarding the hermeneutic activity. In a series of questions the monks asked very detailed questions concerning Origen, Didymus and Evagrius (*Questions and Answers* 600-3). Barsanuphius condemned these doctrines as the speculation of Greeks, and reiterated his negative views on theological investigation. One of the monks persisted and asked precisely whether one might at least read the writings of Evagrius. The answer is quite surprising, attesting to the complexity and problematic nature of Evagrius' spiritual and literary legacy, and to the sophisticated way they assimilated it. Barsanuphius recommended a selective reading: 'Do not gather such doctrine, but read of him, if you want, what is useful to the soul' (*Questions and Answers* 602).

Dadišo Qatraya and Abba Isaiah's attitude to scrutinizing the Scriptures

If Philoxenus marked the transitional stage of Greek/Syriac monastic hybridity, Dadišo Qatraya marked its culmination. Dadišo, himself a learned author with philological sensitivities, wrote an erudite *Commentary* on Abba Isaiah's *Asceticon* that reflects Abba Isaiah's spiritual authority in the Syriac monastic milieu as well as the wide range of Greek and Syriac monastic fusion, the prestige of the Egyptian desert's tradition, and the permanent tension between ascetic practice and theological exegesis.[40] In this *Commentary* Dadišo paraded well-known Late Antique authors and evoked the texts of the two worlds: Ephrem, Theodore of Mopsuetsia, John of Apamea and Babai the Great, as well as Basil, *The Life of Antony*, John Chrysostom, Evagrius, the *Apophthegmata* and Mark the Monk. This work is a premier example of a Late Antique attempt

[39] *Questions and Answers* 604, SC 451, 814-5. See also *Questions and Answers* 469, 605, 694, 694, 697, with B. Bitton-Ashkelony and A. Kofsky, *Monastic School of Gaza* (2006), 102-4.

[40] Dadišo Qatraya, *Commentary on the Asceticon of Abba Isaiah*, edited with French translation by René Draguet, *Commentaire du livre d'Abba Isaïe (logoi I-XV) par Dadišo Qatraya (VIIe s.)*, CSCO 326 [Syriac], 327 [trans.] (Louvain, 1972).

to creatively harmonize various monastic traditions. Moreover, in a culture overwhelmed with various and often conflicting theological positions, erudite authors not only transmitted to their readers their new reconfigurations, but also their own views on the literary legacy shaping their thought. This sort of reflection on ascetic theories and images from the past is at the heart of Dadišo Qatraya's work, which discloses his deep assimilation of Greek patristic and ancient monastic literature.

Abba Isaiah's statement in the *Asceticon* 6 on scrutinizing the Scriptures is a key text in Dadišo's anti-exegetical monastic discourse. He seemed to be especially puzzled by Abba Isaiah's claim, which according to the Syriac translation reads as follows: 'Whoever seeks to honor him [God] loves ignorance in the fear of God (ܡܢ ܕܡܒܥܐ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ,ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬ ܕܚܟ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ)'.[41] In a remarkably sophisticated and original way, Dadišo combined this passage with the psychology of the Egyptian desert and with the ascetic theories of Evagrius, whom he considered 'the *grammaticus* of the passions (ܓܪܡܛܝܩܐ ܕܚܛܝܬܐ) and the examiner of thoughts'.[42] Dadišo perceived the very notion of the solitary way of life as a hermeneutic tool. He claimed that, when the solitary monk has completed the three stages of spiritual progress – that of the body, the way of life of the mind, and arrived at purity of the heart – he can then see the light of his soul, a light in which he can see clearly the meanings hidden in the Scriptures.[43]

He also drew on the best known anti-intellectual image in Late Antiquity, that of the Athanasian Antony, characterized by his failure to learn letters.[44] Dadišo likewise paraphrased the well-known distinction embedded in the *Life of Antony* between the philosophers' understanding of the world and Antony's natural wisdom, stressing that the wisdom of the solitary is according to the Spirit.[45] Antony's image functions in Dadišo's discourse as an example of what

[41] *Comm. Logos* XIII 9, 191 [Syriac], 147 [trans.]; Abba Isaiah, *Asceticon*, *Logos* 6.1 (= Syriac version, XIII 1; ed. Draguet, *Les cinq recensions*, 1:178.

[42] Dadisho', *Letter to Abkosh* 3, edited with French translation by Antoine Guillaumont and Micheline Albert, 'Lettre de Dadisho Qatraya à Abkosh sur l'hésychia', in Enzo Lucchesi and Henri D. Saffrey (eds), *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière: Antiquité païenne et chrétienne*, Cahiers d'Orientalisme 10 (Genève, 1984), 235-45, 237. The same term was found in the manuscrit of Baghdad, see D. Phillips, 'Dadisho' Qatraya's *Letter to Ab-kosh*: The Text according to MS Baghdad Archbishopric of the East n° 210 with Critical Notes and a Translation', *Bulletin de l'Académie Belge pour l'Étude des Langues Anciennes et Orientales* 4 (2015), 201-23.

[43] *Comm. Logos* XI.17, 154 [Syriac], 119 [trans].

[44] However, from the *Letters of Antony* (which have survived only in translation into Arabic, Latin and Georgian), Antony emerges as a philosopher who contrasts sharply the illiterate Athanasian Antony, and who provides a superior educational alternative to the neo-Pythagorean revivals. See, for example, Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Monasticism and the Making of a Saint* (Minneapolis, 1995); *id*., 'Monasticism and the Philosophical Heritage', in Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2012), 487-512.

[45] David Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore and London, 1995), 260-2.

Evagrius terms in his *Gnostikos* 4 'knowledge that is from the grace of God', which stands in contrast, in Evagrius and in the *Life of Antony* (93), to the knowledge and philosophy that arrives from the exterior (ἐκ τῆς ἔξωθεν) – namely, profane knowledge and philosophy.[46] Dadišo authorized his discussion here by widely quoting Evagrius by name, from the *Gnostikos* and other writings, concluding with the words of Evagrius that only those that are purified of passions can receive the Spirit.[47] This linking of Antony's image and Evagrius' theory offered Dadišo the setting for discussing his Syriac master's approach to reading the Psalms – namely, that of Theodore of Mopsuestia. According to Dadišo, if the Psalms are read 'according to the correct manner' they can drive out the demons. Dadišo pointed out that this manner of reading does not designate either Theodore's historic method or the hermeneutic manner of Basil, since these fit the scholastics and the seculars. He clarified that by the phrase 'according to the manner' Theodore meant interpretation according to the Spirit of the Psalms themselves as performed only by the solitary monks and the saints. At this point Dadišo revealed his aim in this long and convoluted discourse: 'To defend the solitary Fathers, and particularly, Abba Isaiah'.[48] Why did Dadišo feel the need to defend them?

It is mainly in *Discourse* 13 of the *Commentary* that Dadišo expanded on this subject and included his negative position on reading Greek philosophy, representing it in Evagrian demonological language. In the days of the Egyptian Fathers, he recounted, it happened that the demons pushed those monks who were instructed and had sharp minds to study Greek wisdom and to mediate on the books of Aristotle: *Categories*, *Peri Hermeneias* and the *Apodeiktikos*.[49] According to Dadišo, these same monks who studied Greek philosophy blamed Evagrius, yet without mentioning for what. He then quoted Evagrius' *Antirrhetikos* 'against the soul that is troubled by vainglory and desires to learn the wisdom of the Greeks', and Evagrius' advice to 'despise the *Logic*'.[50] Those were monks, Dadišo explained, who were simple intellectually (ܒܣܝܛܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ) and incapable of learning how to discuss wisdom, yet studied and mediated on the meaning of the Scriptures in a scholastic way (ܒܚܟܡܬܢܘܬ ܐܣܟܠܝܬ), neglecting the meditation (ܪܥܝܢ) that would be profitable to their salvation.

[46] On secular learning versus spiritual knowledge in Evagrius' *Gnostikos*, see Julia S. Konstantinovsky, *Evagrius Ponticus: The Making of a Gnostic* (Farnham, 2009), 42-5.

[47] Evagrius, *Gnostikos* 4, SC 356, 92, Syriac version 107, ed. Frankenberg, 546. For the contrast between the two sources of knowledge and the term ἐκ τῆς ἔξωθεν, see *Gnostikos* 4, 93. Draguet offers here a list of Evagrius' writings from which Dadišo quoted in this passage, CSCO 327, 119-20.

[48] *Comm. Logos* XI 17, 156 [Syriac], 120 [trans.].

[49] *Comm. Logos* XIII 4, 181 [Syriac], 140 [trans.].

[50] *Comm. Logos* XIII 4, 181 [Syriac], p. 140 [trans.]; *Antirrhetikos* VII 37, ed. Frankenberg, 536; Evagrius, *Letter* 62, ed. Frankenberg, 610.

In the past it was through these traps and temptations – namely, interpreting the Scriptures and learning Greek wisdom – that the devil struggled with the solitary monk; but 'with us, people of this generation', Dadišo said, things are different: The current temptation was the new habit of reading many hymns and canons in the liturgy, which represented a new demonic tactic. The elaborated liturgy is the work of the clergy and the scholiasts, and not of the solitary monk, whose 'art of way of life is long' (ܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܣܓܝܐ ܗܘ), yet his liturgy should be simple.[51] Dadišo drew here on the prestigious authority of the Egyptian monastic tradition, averring that the abundance of hymns and canons did not exist in the time of the Egyptian Fathers, and that if it had, then surely Evagrius and Abba Isaiah would have rejected them. He also found support in the East-Syriac monastic tradition, explaining that neither had Babai the Great (*ca*. 551-628), the commentator on Evagrius' *Kephalaia Gnostica* or the abbot of the Great Monastery on Mount Izla instructed on such things.[52]

After this lengthy criticism of the liturgy, Dadišo stated that his discourse aimed to explain to the reader why Abba Isaiah prevented the solitaries from scrutinizing the Scriptures, why Evagrius prevented them from learning Greek wisdom, and why Babai and Rabban Sapour hindered the multiplicity of hymns and canons.[53] He repeatedly quoted Abba Isaiah's statement in *Asceticon* 6: 'He who wants to honor Him love ignorance in the fear of God', and explained his entire negative approach to scrutinizing the Scriptures.[54] For Dadišo, understanding Scripture was a matter of grace and a spiritual gift, not a scholastic pursuit. He found support for his view also in a story from the *Apophthegmata* about Antony, who had been questioned by a monk about the meaning of a phrase in *Leviticus*. Dadišo paraphrased this passage and added: 'Although he [Antony] did not know [the interpretation] since he did not read the Scriptures and their commentaries', he could instruct the monk by the Spirit.[55] It is interesting to note that in this *Apophthegmata* (Antony 26) there is no mention of Antony's illiteracy, an image that Dadišo could find in the *Life of Antony*, also in its Syriac version.[56] In several passages, he introduced his perception of the unlearned Athanasian Antony, who 'was deprived of the visual reading of the Scripture'. Yet for him, Antony's image represented an alternative authority to the scholastic approach to the Scriptures in his milieu. Thus he inserted Antony's alleged declaration: 'My book is nature', or what Dadišo called 'the

[51] *Comm. Logos* XIII 5, 182 [Syriac], 141 [trans.].

[52] *Comm. Logos* XIII 5, 183 [Syriac], 141-2 [trans.]. Sabino Chiàla has been able to find some similarities of this critic in the *Apophthegmata*, 'De la simplicité des moines: quelques échos d'une polémique Orientale', *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 73 (2011), 507-22.

[53] *Comm. Logos* XIII 5, 182-4 [Syriac], 140-2 [trans.].

[54] *Comm. Logos* XIII 6-9, 185-91 [Syriac], 143-7 [trans.].

[55] *Comm. Logos* XIII 6, 187 [Syriac], 145 [trans.].

[56] *The Syriac Life of Antony* 1, 6 [Syriac], 4 [trans.], edited by René Draguet, *La vie primitive de S. Antoine conservée en syriaque*, CSCO 417-8, Syr. 183-4 (Louvain, 1980).

spiritual knowledge which worked out in the time of prayer'.[57] Elsewhere, Dadišo introduced the images of simplicity and ignorance from the *Apophthegmata*, asking: 'Who among the solitary Fathers was more unlearned and simple (ܪܥܝܐ ܒܣܝܛܐ ܪܥܝܐ ܝܬܝܪ) than the blessed Paul the Simple (ܦܘܠܘܣ ܒܣܝܛܐ), the disciple of Abba Antony? [...] he was also ignorant (ܐܓܢܘܣ), and he was not entirely versed in the Scriptures'.[58]

Dadišo closed the discussion on this topic by returning to Abba Isaiah's key statement and offered an explication that linked all the issues he had invoked so far: 'He who wants to honor Him loves ignorance in the fear of God', that is, he who wants to honor God should not honor him in profane knowledge and a multitude of considerations [or thoughts] but through labour that combines the fear of God and fear about the Day of Judgement.[59] Dadišo knew, however, that many monastic communities were not centres of ignorance, rather the contrary. Thus, like Philoxenus, he felt the need here to soften and adjust the position of Abba Isaiah, clarifying that Abba Isaiah did not mean to prevent all the monks from this activity, merely to bar from it those that are incapable and those who have their thoughts outside the remembrance of God.[60] Nevertheless, this adjustment attests to the tension created by the intellectual impulses in the monastic communities and the tendency to advocate the ascetic practice rather than the speculative pursuit.

Dadišo's full and complex view on biblical exegesis is outside the aims of this essay. It is important to stress that unlike Philoxenus' *Letter to Patricius*, theological issues did not seep into his discourse on monastic learning. Moreover, I do not mean to ignore his negative views on the method of learning of school men (*eskolaye*), nor the fact that his hero, Abba Isaiah, according to him, was a subject of mockery by certain men of school for being only a teacher of youths.[61] However, the way that Dadišo crafted his anti-textual and anti-intellectual discourse attests that his primary aim was not to emphasize the contrast with the scholastic approach to the Scriptures, a statement that he made more than once in his *commentary*.[62] Rather, his discourse indicates that he was well aware of and troubled by the fact that the monastic movement from the time of Antony and Abba Isaiah up to his day was facing serious tensions concerning its correct *paideia* and its sources of spiritual authority. Dadišo's concern was the behaviour of the solitary monks, to whom he addressed his writings, rather

[57] *Comm. Logos* XI 17, 154 [Syriac], 119 [trans.].

[58] Dadišo, *On Stillness* 1.57, edited by Francisco del Río Sánchez, *Los cinco tratados sobre la quietud (šelyā) de Dāḏišō' Qaṭrāyā*, Aula Orientalis Supplementa 18 (Barcelona, 2001), 78.

[59] *Comm. Logos* XIII 9, 191 [Syriac], 147 [trans].

[60] *Comm.* XIII 8, 190-1 [Syriac], 147 [trans.].

[61] *Comm. Logos* X 2, 140 [Syriac], 108 [trans.].

[62] On the tension in Syriac Christianity between the school and the monastery, see for example, Adam H. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia, 2006), 188-91.

than their theological thoughts. He delineated the spiritual world of the monks by drawing on the authority of the past, and by conceptualizing the solitary way of life itself as a hermeneutic process. Dadišo's monastic exegesis is an interesting attempt to solve the inherent tension and contradictory impulses in monastic culture regarding intellectual and textual activity, all the while harmonizing the various streams of the Eastern monastic legacy, from Antony and Paul the Simple to Evagrius and Abba Isaiah, and contextualizing some of its uncomfortable images.

On the basis of the sources that I have examined here it would appear that the reception of Evagrius' spirituality was obvious. In many instances in the history of the anti-exegetical monastic discourse Philoxenus, Abba Isaiah and Dadišo relied on Evagrius' desert psychology, contemplative theory and ascetic teachings. Hence in this religious dynamic Evagrius merited the crown of 'the *grammaticus* of the passions'. It was Irenée Hausherr who stated in another context that the *Letter to Patricius* in which Philoxenus articulated his reticence regarding the investigation of the Scriptures is a remarkable '*mise au point*' of Evagrius' teachings. In the same spirit we can conclude that Dadišo's *Commentary on the Asceticon of Abba Isaiah* is a '*mise au point*' of three hundred years of monastic discourse on investigating and learning the Scriptures and a creative 'mise en scène' of Greek and Syriac ascetic fusion.

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