

# STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. XCII

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

Edited by  
MARKUS VINZENT

Volume 18:  
Liturgica and Tractatus Symboli  
Orientalia  
Critica et Philologica  
Historica



PEETERS

LEUVEN – PARIS – BRISTOL, CT

2017

# STUDIA PATRISTICA

VOL. XCII

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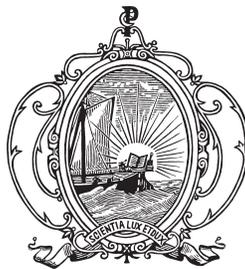
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## Abbreviations

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 <i>et al.</i> , Berlin.
AnSt	Anatolian Studies, London.
AnThA	Année théologique augustinienne, Paris.
APOT	Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. R.E. Charles, Oxford.
AR	Archivum Romanicum, Florence.
ARW	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Berlin/Leipzig.
ASS	Acta Sanctorum, ed. the Bollandists, Brussels.
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Zürich.
Aug	Augustinianum, Rome.
AugSt	Augustinian Studies, Villanova (USA).
AW	Athanasius Werke, ed. H.-G. Opitz <i>et al.</i> , Berlin.
AZ	Archäologische Zeitung, Berlin.
BA	Bibliothèque augustinienne, Paris.
BAC	Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven, Conn.
BDAG	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd edn F.W. Danker, Chicago.
BEHE	Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Paris.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, Louvain.
BGL	Benedictinisches Geistesleben, St. Ottilien.
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, Brussels.
BHL	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis, Brussels.

BHO	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis, Brussels.
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, Tübingen.
BJ	Bursians Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, Leipzig.
BJRULM	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
BKV	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. F.X. Reithmayr and V. Thalhofer, Kempten.
BKV2	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, ed. O. Bardenhewer, Th. Schermann, and C. Weyman, Kempten/Munich.
BKV3	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter. Zweite Reihe, ed. O. Bardenhewer, J. Zellingner, 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 = Scriptorum Aethiopicum Ar = Scriptorum Arabicum Arm = Scriptorum Armeniacum Copt = Scriptorum Copticum Iber = Scriptorum Ibericum Syr = Scriptorum Syriacum 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., <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum</i> , Barcelona/Freiburg i.B./Rome.
DSp	Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ed. M. Viller, S.J., and others, Paris.
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, ed. A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and E. Amann, Paris.
EA	Études augustinienes, Paris.
ECatt	Enciclopedia Cattolica, Rome.
ECQ	Eastern Churches Quarterly, Ramsgate.
EE	Estudios eclesiasticos, Madrid.
EECh	Encyclopedia of the Early Church, ed. A. Di Berardino, Cambridge.
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, Neukirchen.
EH	Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae, ed. Ueding-Kirch, 6th ed., Barcelona.
EO	Échos d'Orient, Paris.
EtByz	Études Byzantines, Paris.
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain.
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum NT, ed. H.R. Balz <i>et al.</i> , Stuttgart.
ExpT	The Expository Times, Edinburgh.
FC	The Fathers of the Church, New York.
FGH	Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Berlin.
FKDG	Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, Göttingen.
FRL	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Göttingen.
FS	Festschrift.
FThSt	Freiburger theologische Studien, Freiburg i.B.
FTS	Frankfurter theologische Studien, Frankfurt a.M.
FZThPh	Freiburger Zeitschrift für Theologie und Philosophie, Freiburg/Switzerland.
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Leipzig/Berlin.
GDV	Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit, Stuttgart.
GLNT	Grande Lessico del Nuovo Testamento, Genoa.
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera, Leiden.

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

MCom	Miscelanea Comillas, Comillas/Santander.
MGH	Monumenta germaniae historica. Hanover/Berlin.
ML	Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, Louvain.
MPG	See PG.
MSR	Mélanges de science religieuse, Lille.
MThZ	Münchener theologische Zeitschrift, Munich.
Mus	Le Muséon, Louvain.
NGWG	Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen.
NH(M)S	Nag Hammadi (and Manichaean) Studies, Leiden.
NovTest	Novum Testamentum, Leiden.
NPNF	See LNPF.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version.
NRTh	Nouvelle Revue Théologique, Tournai/Louvain/Paris.
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, Münster.
NT.S	Novum Testamentum Supplements, Leiden.
NTS	New Testament Studies, Cambridge/Washington.
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis, Freiburg, Switz.
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta, Rome.
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Rome.
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies, Oxford.
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, Louvain.
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Louvain.
Or	Orientalia. Commentarii editi a Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome.
OrChr	Oriens Christianus, Leipzig, then Wiesbaden.
OrSy	L'Orient Syrien, Paris.
PG	Migne, Patrologia, series graeca.
PGL	A Patristic Greek Lexicon, ed. G.L. Lampe, Oxford.
PL	Migne, Patrologia, series latina.
PLRE	The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, ed. A.H.M. Jones <i>et al.</i> , Cambridge.
PLS	Migne, Patrologia, series latina. Supplementum ed. A. Hamman.
PO	Patrologia Orientalis, Paris.
PRE	Paulys 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 Ascese und Mystik, Innsbruck, then Würzburg.
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Giessen, then Berlin.
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins, Leipzig.
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, Gotha, then Stuttgart.
ZKTh	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie, Vienna.
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, Giessen, then Berlin.
ZRG	Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte, Weimar.
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Tübingen.



**LITURGICA AND TRACTATUS SYMBOLI**



# Creating a Theological Difference: The Myth of Two Grammatical Constructions with Latin *Credo*

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## ABSTRACT

The theological difference between ‘believing in God’ and ‘believing the Church’ is presented as a real and significant one in most dogmatic handbooks. However, this difference was only invented in the fourth century. Latin sources show, that the Church (just as Forgiveness and Resurrection) was originally taught the catechumens as something to believe in the same way as they were taught to believe in the Triune God. Thus, the fourth century appears to be an important turning point in patristic ecclesiology.

## 1. Short history of a grammatical finesse with important implications

In the ninth and tenth articles of what is known as the *Textus Receptus* of the Apostles’ Creed we read *Credo in spiritum sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem*. In many, mainly Continental, modern explanations, both dogmatic and devotional, we are warned to remember that we should interpret these words using two distinct grammatical constructions. The Holy Spirit, on the one hand, is a divine person, in whom we believe just as we believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his Son. The Church, however, is not a person but a conceptual reality, which we believe to be there. Thus, according to many modern theologians, we should be aware that we are not reading [*Credo in*] *sanctam ecclesiam*, but [*credo*] *sanctam ecclesiam* etc. *Credo in* is not the same thing as just *Credo* with the accusative.<sup>1</sup> In several

<sup>1</sup> To give just a few examples: Eberhard Busch, *Credo. Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (Göttingen, 2003) even quotes the Creed as *Credo sanctam ecclesiam...* (245), and continues: ‘Achten wir jetzt auf eine sprachliche Feinheit des Apostolikums. Es heißt von der Kirche nicht etwa so, wie es zuvor von Gott dem Vater, dem Sohn und dem Heiligen Geist geheißen hat: “Ich glaube an...” Die Kirche ist hoffentlich der Raum, in dem an Gott geglaubt wird, an Gott den Vater, den Sohn und den Heiligen Geist. Aber wir können nicht ernstlich an die Kirche glauben’ (247). Compare also the title of Michael Weinrich’s collection of essays *Kirche glauben. Evangelische Annäherungen an eine ökumenische Ekklesiologie* (Wuppertal, 1998). Similarly Gerhard Ludwig Müller, *Katholische Dogmatik für Studium und Praxis...* (Freiburg, Basel and Wien, <sup>3</sup>1998), 571: ‘Die Kirche glaubt dabei nicht an sich selbst, sondern sie glaubt an Gott und versteht sich im Glauben als eine Frucht des geschichtlich verwirklichten Heilswillens Gottes’. See for a

Calvinist churches, *Credo* (or its vernacular equivalent) has even been inserted into the official version of the Apostles' Creed.<sup>2</sup>

This distinction is not due to modern linguistic or lexicographic investigations, but rather is part and parcel of popular Medieval theology. The *expositio symboli* was an extremely common kind of text of which numerous examples have come down to us. At a certain moment in time, the interpretation of the several articles became highly standardized. Susan Keefe has collected forty-three explanations that are still available to us in manuscripts that date from Carolingian times. Of these, seven mention either explicitly or implicitly this grammatico-theological difference between *Credo in* and *Credo* with the accusative, and connect it to the difference between the divine persons on the one hand and creation and ministry on the other.<sup>3</sup>

However, the roots of this piece of popular theology should be sought in the Patristic period. First of all, most if not all of the formulations that have been quoted from the Carolingian texts above go back to patristic or at least pre-Carolingian sources, dating from a period when the *expositio* was already a popular genre. Thus, the frequently recurring phrase *ecclesia non deus, sed domus dei est* can already be found in the Gallican sixth or seventh-century *Expositio super symbolum* (CPL 1760): *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Non*

dissent voice, "*The Ship That Was Simon's*". *Belief in the Church an Article of Faith*, Catholic Truth Society 231 (London, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> See previous footnote. Similarly, countless Dutch Bibles contain a version of the Apostles' Creed with the words 'Ik geloof ene heilige, algemene, christelijke kerk'. This also applies to editions of the Heidelberg Catechism, in which the Apostles' Creed is quoted in Answer 23, although the 1563 original still reads *Ich glaube in den heiligen Geist / eine heilige algemeine Christliche Kirche: Catechismus oder Christlicher Unterricht / wie der in Kirchen und Schulen der Churfürstlichen Pfalz getrieben wirdt* (facsimile Franeker, 2013); 23. The 1580 manuscript of the *Confessio Belgica* 27 (originally 1561) has *Nous croyons et confessons une seule église catholique*: see <<https://disc.leidenuniv.nl>>.

<sup>3</sup> *Explanationes symboli aevi Carolini*, ed. Susan Keefe, CChr.CM 254 (Turnhout, 2012), *Textus* 8: *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Sciendum est quod sanctam ecclesiam credere, non tamen in ecclesiam credere debemus, quia ecclesia non deus, sed domus dei est* (47); *Textus* 9: *Credo in spiritum <sanctum>, sanctam ecclesiam catholicam ... Sancta uero ecclesia non est deus, sed domus siue templum dei ...* (52); *Textus* 30: *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Credo enim esse sanctam ecclesiam, sed non <in> illam credo quia non est deus sed congregatio Christianorum est et domus dei* (143); *Textus* 32: *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Sciendum est quod ecclesiam credere, non tamen in ecclesiam credere debeamus, quia ecclesia non deus, sed domus dei est. Id est, non in ea credo, sed credo eam esse sanctam* (158); *Textus* 36: *Crederere debemus ecclesiam. Non est <deus> sed domus dei est* (173); *Textus* 37: *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Non: In sanctam ecclesiam, quia ecclesia non est deus sed domus est dei, sed sanctam ecclesiam esse credo* (181); *Textus* 42: *Post hunc sermonem sequitur: Ecclesiam sanctam catholicam. Non dicit: In ecclesiam catholicam, In remissionem peccatorum, nec: In carnis resurrectionem. In deo patre, dicitur et: In Iesu Christo filio eius, et: In spiritu sancto. In ceteris uero, <ubi> non de diuinitate sed de creaturis et de ministeriis sermo est, In praepositio non additur, ut dicatur: In ecclesia, sed sanctam ecclesiam credendam esse* (198-9). The emendations are Keefe's. Orthography and punctuation are mine, as in all Latin quotations in this article.

*tamen in ecclesiam credere debemus, quia ecclesia non est deus sed domus dei est.*<sup>4</sup> The importance of the absence of the preposition *In* before the Church is mentioned in another anonymous text, the probably fifth-century Spanish *Sermo de symbolo* (CPL 1759): *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, remissionem peccatorum. Non dixit: In sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, sed: Credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam.*<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the explanation in Keefe's *textus* 42 is a direct quotation from Rufinus of Aquileia's early fifth-century *expositio symboli* 34:<sup>6</sup>

*Sequitur namque post hunc sermonem: Sanctam ecclesiam, remissionem peccatorum, huius carnis resurrectionem. Non dixit: In sanctam ecclesiam, nec: In remissionem peccatorum, nec: In carnis resurrectionem. Si enim addidisset In praepositionem, una cum superioribus eademque uis fuerat. Nunc autem in illis quidem uocabulis ubi de diuinitate fides ordinatur, In deo patre dicitur, et: In Iesu Christo filio eius, et: In spiritu sancto. In ceteris uero, ubi non de diuinitate sed de creaturis et de mysteriis sermo est, In praepositio non additur, ut dicatur: In sancta ecclesia, sed sanctam ecclesiam credendam esse, non ut deum, sed ut ecclesiam deo congregatam. Et remissionem peccatorum credendum esse, non in remissionem peccatorum, et resurrectionem carnis, non in resurrectionem carnis. Hac itaque praepositionis syllaba creator a creaturis secernitur et diuina separantur ab humanis.*<sup>7</sup>

Next, there is an important passage in the work *De spiritu sancto* by Faustus, bishop of southern Gallican Reius (Riez) in the second half of the fifth century, in which the presence or absence of the preposition *In* is used as an argument both for and against the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. First, Faustus quotes his opponent:

*Sed opponis et dicis non statim in hoc uerbo deum posse monstrari quo dicimus: Credo et in spiritum sanctum, quia sequitur: Credo in sanctam ecclesiam catholicam.*

<sup>4</sup> Anonymous, *Expositio super symbolum* 13; ed. Liuwe H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed. Origin, History, and Some Early Commentaries*, *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* 43 (Turnhout, 2002), 507. See for date and place of origin *ibid.* 378-81.

<sup>5</sup> Anonymous, *Sermo de symbolo* 22; ed. Liuwe Westra, *Apostles' Creed* (2002), 492. See for date and place of origin *ibid.* 371-8. *Credo* does not belong to the text of the Creed itself, but only serves to indicate how to read the accusative *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam* here.

<sup>6</sup> Parts of this paragraph are also incorporated in Keefe's *Textus* 10, a cento of patristic quotations in which the sources of the several quotations are duly mentioned (CChr.CM 54, 62).

<sup>7</sup> Rufinus of Aquileia, *Expositio symboli* 34, ed. M. Simonetti, CChr.SL 20 (Turnhout, 1961), 169-70. The use of *credo in* with an ablative is sometimes presented as a peculiarity of the wording of the Creed in Aquileia, but should rather be explained here as caused by the breaking down of the distinction between the accusative and the ablative cases in later Latin. Thus correctly J.N.D. Kelly, *Rufinus. A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* (Westminster Maryland and London, 1955), 103; compare the *apparatus criticus* of Simonetti's edition. Nevertheless, Kelly states that the ablative is 'undoubtedly correct' in the articles on Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In my opinion, Rufinus would still have known and applied the distinction (as he consequently does in his writings), and the breakdown only starts in the later manuscript tradition. But see also below, footnote 10.

However, Faustus accuses his opponent of deliberately inserting *In* before *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam* here:<sup>8</sup>

*Ergo dicis: Credo in sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Quid supponendo exiguum, id est In syllabam ingentem caliginem subtexere conaris? Credimus ecclesiam quasi regenerationis matrem, non in ecclesiam credimus quasi in salutis auctorem. Nam cum hoc de spiritu sancto uniuersa confiteatur ecclesia, numquid et in semet ipsam ecclesia credere potest?<sup>9</sup> ... Qui in ecclesiam credit in hominem credit. Non enim homo ex ecclesia, sed ecclesia coepit esse ex homine ... Haec enim quae in symbolo post sancti spiritus nomen sequuntur ad clausulam symboli remota In praepositione respiciunt, ut sanctam ecclesiam, sanctorum communionem, abremissa peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, uitam aeternam credamus in deum, id est, ut haec a deo disposita et in deo constare fateamur. Nam nonnullorum imperitia praepositionem hanc uelut de proxima uicinaque sententia in consequentem traxit ac rapuit et ex superfluo imprudenter apposuit....<sup>10</sup>*

Finally, we find the earliest possible witness to the grammatical point under discussion in the probably late fourth-century *Libellus de symbolo* by Nicetas of Remesiana:<sup>11</sup>

*Post confessionem beatae trinitatis iam profiteris te credere sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Ecclesia quid est aliud quam sanctorum omnium congregatio? ... Ergo in hac una ecclesia credis te communionem consecuturum esse sanctorum ... Credis deinde remissionem peccatorum ... Consequenter credis et carnis tuae resurrectionem et uitam aeternam. Reuera enim, si hoc non credis, frustra in deum credis.<sup>12</sup>*

Although the author does not explicitly mention the grammatical difference, his consistent use of *Credo* with accusative for the final articles of the Creed, in contrast to *Credo in* for the articles that refer to the persons of the Trinity, makes it extremely probable that this is our first witness to the point in question.

Similarly, many other variants or expositions of the Creed seem to indicate in some way or another a difference between belief concerning the divine

<sup>8</sup> In fact, it would be closer to the truth to state that Faustus is suppressing the preposition that is explicitly repeated in nothing less than the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople, to which he refers himself in the preceding paragraphs. Faustus is not the first to do so: see below, footnote 33.

<sup>9</sup> Compare the statement in G.L. Müller, *Katholische Dogmatik* (1998), quoted in footnote 1.

<sup>10</sup> Faustus of Riez, *De spiritu sancto* I 2, ed. A. Engelbrecht, CSEL 21 (Vienna, 1891), 103-5. The correct construction according to Faustus, following which one should 'believe the Church etc. in God', artificial though it may appear, possibly has its roots in classical *Credo* with an accusative and *in* with an ablative, meaning 'believe something to be the case with regard to someone', which is attested from Seneca the Elder onwards and is also found in Tertullian; see *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* s.v. *credo* IIB1b § 1146, 26-58 (where also many cases of *Credo in* with an ablative only are numbered; this use is completely synonymous with *credo* with an accusative).

<sup>11</sup> The authorship of this text is disputed. However, none of the arguments for denying that this text is by Nicetas of Remesiana seem convincing to me.

<sup>12</sup> Nicetas of Remesiana, *Libellus V de symbolo* 10, ed. A.E. Burn, *Niceta of Remesiana. His Life and Works* (Cambridge, 1905), 48-9.

persons and belief concerning the Church and the items that follow it in the Creed.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Church fathers missing the point?

As we have seen, Faustus of Riez not only vehemently made his point that the preposition *In* should not be taken to govern the tenth and subsequent articles of the creed, but also admits that a fair number of *imperiti* were not aware of this distinction. In the second part of this article, I shall try to trace back this ‘naive’ way of interpreting the final clauses of the Apostles’ Creed.

First of all, there are a number of variants of the Apostles’ Creed in which *In* is repeated before the article on the Church, just as Faustus accused his opponent of inserting the preposition in order to impair the divinity of the Holy

<sup>13</sup> Thus, some variants of the Apostles’ Creed repeat *Credo* without *in* in the tenth or subsequent articles: Eusebius ‘Gallicanus’, *Homilia 9* 11, ed. F. Glorie, CChr.SL 101 (Turnhout, 1970), 107: *Sequitur: Credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam*; Caesarius of Arles, *sermo 9*, ed. G. Morin, CChr.SL 103 (Turnhout, 1953), 50: *Credo, inquit, sanctam ecclesiam catholicam...*; pseudo-Augustine, *Expositio super symbolum* (CPL 365) 19, ed. L.H. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 430: *Credamus ergo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam...*; Anonymous, *Expositio symboli* 8-9, ed. L.H. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 538: *Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam. Subauditur credo esse ... Credo communionem sanctorum, id est...* Variants of the Apostles’ Creed that show their awareness of the same distinction in a different way can be found in pseudo-Ambrose, *Exhortatio ad neophytos de symbolo* (CPL 178) 3, ed. L.H. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 415: *... et in spiritum sanctum, et sanctam ecclesiam catholicam...*; an inscription on the Croatian island of Kres, ed. Piero Sticotti, ‘Documenti epigrafici dell’Istria medievale’, *Atti e memorie della Società Istriana di Archeologia e Storia Patria* 30 (1914), 135-53, 138-9 (without abbreviations and spelling normalized): *Credo in sanctum spiritum et sanctam ecclesiam catholicam ...*; the Antiphony of Bangor 35, ed. F.E. Warren, *The Antiphony of Bangor ... A Complete Facsimile*, Henry Bradshaw Society 4 (London, 1893), 19R-19V: *Credo et in spiritum sanctum ... sanctam esse ecclesiam catholicam...* Similarly, the abbreviated form of the Creed in a *missa de infirmis* in the *Book of Dimma*, ed. F.E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford, 1881; repr. Woodbridge and Wolfboro, New Hampshire, 1987), 169 ends with: *Credo et in spiritum sanctum, credo uitam post mortem, credo me resurgere*. As to expositions of the Creed, one can point to Eusebius ‘Gallicanus’, *Homilia 10* 11, ed. F. Glorie, CChr.SL 101 (Turnhout, 1970), 122: *Quod uero sequitur: Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, abremissa peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, uitam aeternam, in deum haec quidem commemoramus, non tamen in ea credimus sed ipsa in deo credimus. Haec, inquam, non quasi deum sed quasi dei beneficia confitemur*; Anonymous, *Expositio de fide catholica* (CPL 505) 5-9, ed. L.H. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 437: *Credite et in spiritum sanctum ... Credite ecclesiam catholicam ... Credite remissionem peccatorum...*; pseudo-Fulgentius, *Sermo de symbolo* (CPL 846), 21-5, ed. *ibid.* 445: *Credentes itaque in deum patrem omnipotentem, et in filium eius dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, credite in spiritum sanctum ... Credite etiam carnis resurrectionem...*; ‘Chrysostomus Latinus’, *Homilia 28* 10-1, ed. *ibid.* 455-6: *... ecce et in spiritum sanctum credimus ... Credite carnis resurrectionem ... Credite ergo uitam aeternam...*; Anonymous, *expositio symboli* (CPL 1761), 13-5, ed. *ibid.* 517: *Credo in spiritum sanctum ... Et credo sanctam ecclesiam catholicam ... Et credo sanctorum communionem me habere...*

Spirit. First, we have a pseudo-Athanasian *Enarratio in symbolum* (CPL 1744a), probably stemming from Northern Italy and earlier than 600 AD, which explicitly quotes the tenth and eleventh articles as follows:

*Credo in spiritum sanctum. Quod post tantorum ... Subiungitur denique: In sanctam matrem ecclesiam, ut illa una ecclesia et sancta apud nos habeatur et mater, quam in apostolis domini doctrina constituit. Amen.*<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, we have a probably fifth-century *Tractatus symboli* (CPL 1751), also an anonymous Northern Italian text, which closes its discussion of the Creed in the following way:

*Sequitur in symbolo: Et in spiritum sanctum ... Sequitur: In sanctam ecclesiam, in remissionem peccatorum. Sancta ecclesia una et uera est, in qua sanctorum communio in remissionem peccatorum, in qua huius carnis nostrae resurrectio praedicatur.*<sup>15</sup>

However strange both formulations may appear to us, the explicit way in which both are introduced as literal quotations hardly makes another reconstruction possible. Moreover, even more deviant ways of mentioning the Church can be found, as is proved by the second *Tractatus* of Priscillian of Ávila, which was written around 381. Priscillian quotes the Creed in an oblique way because he makes all of the articles dependent on the participle *credentes*. Thus, he writes:

*Fidem uero sicut accepimus, ita et tenemus et tradimus, credentes unum deum patrem omnipotentem ... et unum dominum Iesum Christum ... inde uenturum et iudicaturum de uiuis et mortuis, sicut scriptum est: Sic ueniet quemadmodum uidistis illum euntem in caelum, credentes in sanctam ecclesiam, sanctum spiritum, baptismum salutare, sicut scriptum est ... credentes remissionem peccatorum ... credentes in resurrectionem carnis...*<sup>16</sup>

Whether Priscillian really knew or used a version of the Apostles' Creed in which the Church was mentioned before the Holy Spirit is a question that deserves separate treatment at some future date. But in the meantime, it is clear that Priscillian does not object in any way to combining *Credo in* with *Sanctam ecclesiam*. What is more, he does not even seem to feel a difference between using *Credo in* and *Credo* with an accusative only, as is borne out both by his making the whole creed dependent on the participle *credentes* without any preposition, and by his quotation of the eleventh and twelfth articles.

However, this is not as strange as it may seem. In fact, we can point to a good number of explanations of the Creed in which this difference is ignored

<sup>14</sup> Pseudo-Athanasius, *Enarratio in symbolo* 21-4, ed. L.H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* (2002), 463-4. See for time and place of origin, *ibid.*, 351-61.

<sup>15</sup> Anonymous, *Tractatus symboli* 15-6, ed. L.H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* (2002), 472. See for time and place of origin, *ibid.* 361-9.

<sup>16</sup> Priscillian of Ávila, *Tractatus II*, ed. G. Schepss, CSEL 18 (Vienna, 1889), 36-7.

altogether. Thus, Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna, who has left us no fewer than seven sermons *de symbolo*, quotes the final articles of the Creed in the following ways:

- (1) *Sanctam ecclesiam ... Et in remissionem peccatorum ... Carnis resurrectionem ... Vitam aeternam*
- (2) *Et sanctam ecclesiam ... In remissionem peccatorum ... Carnis resurrectionem ... Vitam aeternam*
- (3) *Et sanctam ecclesiam ... In remissionem peccatorum ... In resurrectionem mortuorum ... Vitam aeternam*
- (4) *Credimus sanctam ecclesiam ... Credimus remissionem peccatorum ... Credimus carnis resurrectionem ... Aeternam credimus uitam*
- (5) *Credo in sanctam ecclesiam ... Credo in remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem...*
- (6) *In sanctam ecclesiam ... In remissionem peccatorum ... Carnis resurrectionem ... Vitam aeternam.*<sup>17</sup>

Of course, Peter Chrysologus will have recited the Creed always in the same way. But his easy-going way of quoting the final articles makes abundantly clear that he did not see any fundamental or grammatical difference between belief in the Holy Spirit and belief in the Church, Remission of Sins, Resurrection of the Flesh, and Eternal Life.<sup>18</sup>

Similar observations can be made in the works of Augustine of Hippo,<sup>19</sup> Quodvultdeus of Carthage,<sup>20</sup> and Ambrose of Milan. The latter is of particular interest, because he explicitly denies any difference between believing in God and in his works in his *explanatio symboli*:

*Sane accipe rationem, quemadmodum credimus in auctorem, ne forte dicas: Sed habet et: In ecclesiam, sed habet et: In remissionem peccatorum, sed habet et: In resurrectionem. Quid ergo? Par causa est: sic credimus in Christum, sic credimus in patrem, quemadmodum credimus et in ecclesiam et in remissionem peccatorum et in carnis*

<sup>17</sup> Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 57 13-5; 58 12-5; 59 14-7; 60 14-7; 61 13-4; 62 15-8, ed. Alexander Olivar, CChr.SL 24 (Turnhout, 1975), 323; 328; 333-4; 340; 344; 351-2.

<sup>18</sup> This conclusion only gains strength when one sees that Chrysologus is much more consistent in his way of quoting the articles on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This seems to imply that, for the final articles, *Credo* with an accusative and *Credo in* do not belong to the quotation proper, but are used together with *Et*, *In*, or *Et in* to make smoother transitions.

<sup>19</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* 213 8-9, ed. Germanus Morin, *Sancti Aureli Augustini tractatus sive sermones inediti...* (Campoduni and Monaci, 1917), 6-8: *Iam quod sequitur ad nos pertinet. In sanctam ecclesiam. Sancta ecclesia ... In remissionem peccatorum. Haec in ecclesia ... quod confitemur in symbolo, ut cum dixerimus: Sanctam ecclesiam, adiungamus: Remissionem peccatorum.*

<sup>20</sup> Quodvultdeus introduces the articles on Remission of Sins and Resurrection of the Flesh both with and without *In*: *Sermo de symbolo* I IX 30 - XI 1 and 3 X 1 - XI 1, ed. R. Braun, CChr. SL 60 (Turnhout, 1976), 329-31 and 361: *... quod in isto sancto symbolo sequitur: Remissionem omnium peccatorum. Noli ... In carnis resurrectionem. Resurrecturam ... and: In remissionem peccatorum. Fortiter ... Carnis resurrectionem. Magna ...*

*resurrectionem. Quae ratio est? Quia qui credit in auctorem credit et in opus auctoris. Denique ne hoc ingenii nostri putetis, accipite testimonium: Si mihi non creditis, uel operibus credite ... Nunc fides tua amplius elucebit, si in opus auctoris tui fidem ueram et integram putaueris deferendam, in ecclesiam sanctam et in remissionem peccatorum.*<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Cyprian of Carthage is a special case as he was writing more than a hundred years before Ambrose. He twice testifies to a liturgical formula expressing belief in the Remission of Sins and Eternal Life in his letters. First, we read: *Nam cum dicunt: Credis in remissionem peccatorum et uitam aeternam per sanctam ecclesiam? ...* Next, we find: *Nam cum dicimus: Credis in uitam aeternam et remissionem peccatorum per sanctam ecclesiam? ...*<sup>22</sup>

Even if these quotations should not be taken as referring to the Apostles' Creed but only to a set of baptismal questions,<sup>23</sup> the fact remains that Cyprian does not object to linking *Credo in* with something other than one of the divine persons.

Thus, in the third part of this article we ask the question, are Peter Chrysologus, Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyprian all *imperiti*, missing an essential theological point? Or is their grammatical interpretation of the final articles of the Creed, in which these are grammatically dependent on the verb *Credo in* of the ninth article, original? That would certainly be the most natural way to read the text, whereas the mental shift of construction between the ninth and tenth articles would constitute an exceptionally hard zeugma (for which I at least would be unable to offer a parallel). On the other hand, Rufinus's characterization of the Church, Remission of Sins, and Resurrection of the Flesh as *creatura* and *mysterium* in contradistinction to the divine persons seems to be prompted by a certain embarrassment with the traditional formula rather than an unprejudiced explanation of the text. It seems in order, therefore, to investigate the origin of the credal use of *Credo in* with an accusative more closely.

### 3. A theological distinction created by a translation problem

When we look for the origins of Latin *Credo in deum*, we have of course to turn to the New Testament, where Πιστεύω εἰς is one of the ways of expressing faith in God or Jesus, others being Πιστεύω ἐν, or ἐπί, or with a dative.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ambrose of Milan, *Explanatio symboli* 6, ed. Otto Faller, CSEL 73 (Vienna, 1955), 8-9.

<sup>22</sup> Cyprian of Carthage, *Epistula* 69 VII 2 and 70 II 1, ed. G.F. Diercks, CChr.SL 3C (Turnhout, 1996), 480 and 505-7.

<sup>23</sup> See on this question Liuwe H. Westra, 'Cyprian, the Mystery Religions and the Apostles' Creed – an Unexpected Link', in Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, Hans van Loon (eds), *Cyprian of Carthage. Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, Late Antique History and Religion 3 (Leuven, Paris and Walpole MA, 2010), 115-25.

<sup>24</sup> Of these, the construction with the dative is the oldest. The other constructions seem to have arisen as synonyms in *koinê*-Greek. See Liddel-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* s.v.

All these uses are generally considered to be synonymous, without any implication of a special religious connotation, as Πιστεύω just means ‘to put one’s trust in’.<sup>25</sup> This does not really change in the patristic period, where Πιστεύω may be used with ἐπί, εἰς, and a simple dative to express belief in Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup> There is no such thing as a special construction with an accusative to give the verb a different shade of meaning, for example ‘believe to exist’. Thus, one can say ‘to put one’s trust in God’ as well as ‘to put one’s trust in the Church’, as the Church is God’s instrument to save humankind. Therefore, there seem to have been no objections to the formulation in the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople in 381 Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ... εἰς μίαν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Similarly, we can find sets of baptismal questions such as that represented by the famous Dêr-Balyzeh papyrus: Πιστεύω εἰς θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα, καὶ εἰς τὸν μονογενῆ αὐτοῦ υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ εἰς σαρκὸς ἀνάστασιν, καὶ ἁγία καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.<sup>27</sup>

Things change, however, when one translates Πιστεύω with *Credo* in Latin. Just as Πιστεύω, the Latin verb can be used with several different constructions without affecting the basic meaning. However, a difference between the two is, that although *Credo* may be used to express the meaning ‘to put one’s trust in’, the more common meaning is ‘to believe to be true or reliable’. Thus, *Credo* is basically an epistemological rather than an existential or relational term. A second difference is that *Credo* is often used in a pregnant way to express belief in gods: belief in their existence, belief in their being gods, not, or not in the first place, putting trust in them.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, *Credo in deum*,

<sup>25</sup> This is essentially a relational term: see Teresa Morgan, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith* (Oxford, 2015), 425-37.

<sup>26</sup> See Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon* s.v. A thorough discussion of all the New Testament and patristic material is offered by Dieter Lührmann, ‘Glaube’, *RAC* 11 (1981), 48-122.

<sup>27</sup> See for a discussion of this formula Theodor Schermann, *Der liturgische Papyrus von Dêr-Balyzeh. Eine Abendmahlsliturgie des Ostermorgens*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 36 (Leipzig, 1910), 30-9. Although it is not clear which construction is concealed by the ungrammatical nominative case, the equivalence of belief in the Spirit and belief in the Resurrection seems certain. Nevertheless, a different reconstruction of the final ‘articles’ in their ‘original’ form is proposed by P. Nautin, *Je crois à l’Esprit Saint dans la Sainte Église pour la Résurrection de la chair. Étude sur l’histoire et la théologie du Symbole*, Unam Sanctam 17 (Paris 1947), as is borne out by the title of his study. The African peculiarity of closing the Apostles’ Creed (or for that matter, baptismal questions) with *Per sanctam ecclesiam* might point in the same direction: see L.H.Westra, *Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 248. However, it is equally possible that this peculiarity is an African innovation in order to solve the same problem that was felt later in other parts.

<sup>28</sup> See ThLL s.v. IIB2 and Caelestis Eichenseer, *Das symbolum apostolicum beim heiligen Augustinus mit Berücksichtigung des dogmengeschichtlichen Zusammenhangs*, Kirchengeschichtliche Quellen und Studien 4 (St. Ottilien, 1960), 157-62. A good example of the difference between Greek Πιστεύω and Latin *Credo* is Livy, *Ab urbe condita* XXXII 32: *Neminem equidem timeo praeter deos immortales, non omnium autem credo fidei quos circa te uideo*. Here, *credo fidei*

*Credo in deo*, *Credo deo*, and *Credo deum* were all used to express the Greek concept of ‘to put one’s trust in God’, still without any semantic difference between the various constructions.<sup>29</sup> However, in particular for speakers of Latin who were not acquainted with Greek, the meaning of such phrases must soon have shifted to the common Latin ‘believe to be a god’.<sup>30</sup> And precisely this meaning must have made people uneasy when they heard themselves proclaiming that they ‘believed in the Holy Church’ just as they ‘believed in the Holy Spirit’.

In particular during what is known as the Pneumatomachean struggle, this must have sounded blasphemous to orthodox Latin ears: either the Church was being proclaimed a divine being, or the Holy Spirit was being put into the same category as the Church, as was maintained by Faustus’s opponent. For this reason, it was felt necessary to create a grammatical distinction in credal texts that not only was not originally there in the Creed, but was also an innovation in Latin grammar, as no such construction as *Credo* with an accusative with the distinct meaning ‘believe to exist’, in contradistinction to *Credo in* with the meaning ‘put one’s trust in’, can be found before Nicetas.<sup>31</sup> But not only the grammar, also the wording of the Creeds underwent subtle changes. It is shown

means ‘I do not trust’, literally: ‘I do not believe in the good faith of’. The element of trust (or rather trustworthiness) is carried by *fides*, not by *credo*, which only bears the element of assumption.

<sup>29</sup> See Christine Mohrmann, ‘*Credere in deum*. Sur l’interprétation théologique d’un fait de langue’, in *ead.*, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens. Tome I. Le latin des chrétiens*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Rome, 1961), 195-203.

<sup>30</sup> The difficulty would have been avoided if the Latin Christians had used *Confido* to translate Πιστεύω, just as they retained *Fides* and *Fidelis* for Πίστις and Πιστεύων. The choice of *Credo* was probably caused by the fact that *Credo* already had a strong religious connotation (see above) and that it bears a more general sense than *Confido*: see J.H.H. Schmidt, *Handbuch der lateinischen und griechischen Synonymik* (Leipzig, 1889), 712-3.

<sup>31</sup> Later, a third construction with a separate meaning was combined with this distinction, viz. *Credo* with a dative to indicate belief in the truth of someone’s words, although this meaning was originally not confined to one construction either: see *ThLL* s.v. *Credo* II B1b and C. Mohrmann, ‘*Credere in deum*’ (1961), 197-203. This threefold distinction seems to occur for the first time in Augustine: see for example *Sermo 130A* 5, ed. François Dolbeau, *Augustin d’Hippone. Vingt-six sermons au peuple d’Afrique ... 2e édition revue et corrigée*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 147 (Paris, 2009), 159: *Et quoniam paulo ante distinximus aliud esse credere illi, credere illum et credere in illum – credere illi est credere uera esse illa quae loquitur, credere illum est credere quod ipse sit Christus, credere in illum diligere illum...* Later, we find this phrase as a standard formula adopted by Bede and subsequent writers. See Bede, *In ep. Iacobi* 2, 19, ed. D. Hurst, CChr.SL 121 (Turnhout, 1983), 198: *Aliud est enim credere illi, aliud credere illum, aliud credere in illum. Credere illi est credere uera esse quae loquitur, credere illum credere quod ipse sit deus, credere in illum diligere deum*; similarly Keefe’s *Textus* 7, CChr.CM 254, 31 and 208. Faustus seems to have been the first to combine this threefold distinction with the already existing discussion of the grammatical construction of the article on the Church in creeds. See his *De spiritu sancto* I 1: *Credo inquam et in spiritum sanctum. Agnoscamus uerbi ipsius priuilegium. Credere illi cui libet potes homini, credere uero in illum soli te debere noueris maiestati. Sed et hoc ipsum aliud est deum credere, aliud in deum credere...* (CSEL 21, 103).

above that many variants of the Apostles' Creed inserted *Credo* in the tenth article. This addition has been retained down to the present day in official documents of the Dutch Protestant Church.<sup>32</sup> Nor did the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed escape alteration. We have already seen that Faustus of Riez seems to deny the preposition *In* its legitimate position before the Church in that formula. Indeed, the official Latin form has *Et* instead of *In*: *Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam*.<sup>33</sup>

The irony of this development is, that originally, patristic sources all testify to what can be designated a 'high' ecclesiology, according to which the Church has more divine than human traits.<sup>34</sup> However, because Latin theologians wanted to avoid the suggestion that the Church was a divine agent just like the three persons of the Trinity, they had to downplay the status of the Church and begin to stress its characteristics as a human congregation, something firmly belonging in the created world. As a consequence, however, a new difficulty arose. It is clear what one means by 'believing that resurrection and eternal life exist', because these cannot be seen in our earthly existence. But why should one state that one 'believes that the church exists', if the church is a visible community of human beings? To salvage the theological use of *credo* here, theories of an invisible church alongside a visible one became attractive. Of course, I would not dare to suggest that Augustine's vision of the invisible *ciuitas caelestis* alongside the physical *ciuitas terrena* was ultimately due to a grammatical fiction. But the grammatical fiction of two different constructions for *Credo* definitely helped to make the vision of two kinds of church popular.

Nevertheless, the original situation of a single meaning of *Credo*, independent of the grammatical construction, can be found as late as the fifth century and even later. In the Dutch Protestant Church, many congregations like to sing the Apostles' Creed to a certain well-known tune. This tune was composed for a somewhat old-fashioned translation, which uses the otherwise extinct feminine article, comprising two syllables: *Ik geloof ene heilige, algemene, christelijke kerk*.<sup>35</sup> Because people do not use that form of the article anymore, and because

<sup>32</sup> See K. Zwanepol and C.H. van Campenhout (eds), *Belijdenisgeschriften van de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* (Heerenveen, 2009), 85. This concerns the quotation of the Creed as part of the Heidelberg Catechism. In the separate presentation of the Apostles' Creed, the insertion has been silently removed (13).

<sup>33</sup> H. Denzinger and P. Hünermann, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum...* (Freiburg u.a., 1991), 85. This Latin text is the basis of the official version of most Western European churches. However, the Dutch Protestant Church recently (and silently) reversed this change: see K. Zwanepol and C.H. van Campenhout (eds), *Belijdenisgeschriften* (2009), 18 and G. van den Brink and C. van der Kooi, *Christelijke dogmatiek. Een inleiding*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Zoetermeer, 2012), 520.

<sup>34</sup> See for example Hugo Rahner, *Symbole der Kirche. Die Ekklesiologie der Väter* (Salzburg, 1964).

<sup>35</sup> *Dienstboek, een proeve. Schrift, maaltijd, gebed*, Proeven voor de eredienst. Een serie publicaties op weg naar een Dienstboek voor de Kerken ... 4 and 5 (Zoetermeer, 1998), 623-5.

Rufinus' and others' grammatical distinction, that is in no way suggested by the text itself, remains artificial, and finally, because the number of notes in the tune is still the same, almost everyone nowadays sings: *Ik geloof **in een** heilige, algemene, christelijke kerk.*

This teaches us that theological doctrine should not try to change grammar. Grammar is a part of language, language is a part of life, and life is stronger than doctrine.

## *Tractatus symboli:* A Brief Pre-Baptismal Explanation of the Creed

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### ABSTRACT

*Tractatus symboli* is an anonymous brief commentary on the *Apostles' Creed*. Compared with other creedal sermons and/or commentaries of the same time and provenance, it demonstrates certain theological autonomy. Thus and despite its brevity, *Tractatus symboli* should be taken as a relatively independent witness to the rite of *treditio symboli*. It also includes a full text of the creed which enables a comparison with other contemporary forms of the same creed. This article detects a particular closeness of the subject-matter of the *Tractatus symboli* to that of the creedal sermons of Peter Chrysologus. Yet, the treatise is theologically different enough for not being a mere eclectic compilation of ideas found in Chrysologus' sermons.

Every bishop was supposed to teach the creed, in whatever form it was known to him, at least a few times a year (*i.e.*, on the occasions of *treditio* and *redditio symboli*). Yet only a fraction of patristic creedal sermons and/or commentaries in Latin are extant. There are over 40 *Expositiones* of the *Apostles' Creed* which are still available,<sup>1</sup> and about one third of these are anonymous and of uncertain provenance.

*Tractatus symboli* is one of those brief anonymous explanations of the *Apostles' Creed* which is without a clear date or place of origin. Apart from a few studies of the provenance of the text and the form of its creed, the document as a whole has not been much discussed. However, a new critical text based on two independent twelfth-century manuscripts<sup>2</sup> was published in 2002.<sup>3</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> Liuwe H. Westra, 'Enigma Variations in Latin Patristics: Fourteen Anonymous Sermons *de symbolo* and the Original Form of the Apostles' Creed', *SP* 29 (1997), 414-20, 414-5. Only one anonymous Latin patristic commentary of the Nicene Creed is extant: *Commentarius in symbolum Nicaenum* X-XIII, in Cuthbert H. Turner, *Ecclesiae Occidentalis iuris antiquissima* 1/2 (Oxford, 1913), 229-354.

<sup>2</sup> Codex Oxoniensis, Bodleian Library, Ms. Canonici Lit. 345 (B); and Codex Florentius, Bibliotheca Laurentiana, Plut. 16.8 (L).

<sup>3</sup> Liuwe H. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed: Origin, History, and Some Early Commentaries*, *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* (Turnhout, 2002), 466-73. An earlier edition of *Tractatus symboli*, based on Codex Florentius (L) only, can be found in Carl P. Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen zur Geschichte des Taufsymbols und der Glaubensregel* (Christiania, 1879), 291-304.

enables one to study a more reliable text of *Tractatus symboli* and assess its theological content more securely. I will argue that despite its similarity to the other creedal sermons/commentaries of similar provenance, *Tractatus symboli* demonstrates its theological independence and thus, should be taken as a relatively autonomous witness to the instruction of catechumens in the early church.

Westra has contended that *Tractatus symboli* provides ‘a complete liturgy for the *traditio symboli*’.<sup>4</sup> On one hand, in *Tract. sym.* 5, the catechumens are commended to hear ‘what we hand on to you today in the sight of God ... the creed (*quod tradimus uobis hodie in conspectus dei ... symbolum*)’.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, one of the manuscripts, Codex Oxoniensis (B), provides the text of the whole creed. All this fits quite well with the liturgy of *traditio symboli*. On the other hand, the catechumens ‘have already heard (*audistis*)’ the ‘explanation (*rationem*)’ of the words of the creed (7). That is, the first occurrence of the verb form *audistis* comes *before* the creed is cited in the text.<sup>6</sup> In addition, if one follows the narrative order of the text, it does not seem to be the catechumens’ initial reception of the creed. In fact, the ‘they’ who have to return (*repetunt*) the creed (10) are arguably the *competentes* (2), who are blessed in order to become the *digni* and accept baptism.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, one can detect a certain discrepancy between the first (1-6) and the second part of the text (7-17) and this has allowed the conjecture that *Tractatus symboli* is, at least partially, a compilation of liturgies.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the question remains whether any conclusions can be drawn from the particular form of the verb *audire* and the order of statements in *Tractatus symboli*. If the document is a collection of notes,<sup>9</sup> one should not expect to encounter a polished coherence of all grammatical details.

A unique feature in *Tractatus symboli* is that it provides the actual text of the creed. According to Westra’s geographical typology, the creed in *Tractatus symboli* matches best with the creedal variants found in fifth century northern Italy.<sup>10</sup> In particular, the creed seems to be an especially good match with that

<sup>4</sup> L. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 361.

<sup>5</sup> Twice the catechumens are urged to hear (*audite*) the creed again (*Tract. sym.* 10 and 14).

<sup>6</sup> The word *audistis* also occurs four times in *Tract. sym.* 8 and once in *Tract. sym.* 11.

<sup>7</sup> This benediction is not part of the critical text, but is to be found in Codex Oxoniensis (B) (see Germain Morin, ‘Textes inédits relatifs au Symbole et à la vie chrétienne’, *RevBen* 22/4 [1905], 505-24, 507).

<sup>8</sup> Caspari suggested that *Tractatus symboli* might have been a seventh or eighth century compilation (C. Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen* [1879], 307-8).

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Wolfram Kinzig for his comment about the exact nature of this document.

<sup>10</sup> L. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* (2002), 181-207, 367-9, 559. For this reason, I will limit my comparisons mainly to the contemporaneous creedal commentaries coming from northern Italy, such as Rufinus of Aquileia’s *Expositio symboli* (CChr.SL 20, ed. Manlio Simonetti [Turnhout, 1961], 133-82), an anonymous *Explanatio symboli* (Milan) (Richard H. Connolly, *The Explanatio symboli ad initiandos: A Work of Saint Ambrose* [Cambridge, 1952], 6-13 [Latin]), the anonymous *Expositio symboli* (northern Italy) (L. Westra, *The Apostles’ Creed* [2002], 424-5), Chromatius of Aquileia, *Tractatus in Mathaeum* (CChr.SL 9A, ed. Raymond Étaix and Joseph Lemarié [Turnhout, 1974], 185-498), and the sermons of Peter Chrysologus (Ravenna) (CChr.SL 24, ed. Alexander Olivar [Turnhout, 1975], 314-55).

of Peter Chrysologus.<sup>11</sup> One should notice the presence of the same clauses (including *uitam eternam*), the uncommon use of the article *in* in front of the clauses *sanctam ecclesiam* and *remissionem peccatorum*,<sup>12</sup> and the absence of the words *passus est* and *catholicam*.<sup>13</sup>

The Creed in <i>Tractatus symboli</i>	The Creed of Peter Chrysologus
<i>Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem</i>	<i>Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem</i>
<i>et in <u>Iesum Christum</u> filium eius unicum dominum nostrum</i>	<i>et in <u>Christum Iesum</u><sup>14</sup> filium eius unicum dominum nostrum</i>
<i>qui natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria uirgine qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus tertia die resurrexit a mortuis ascendit in <u>caelis</u> sedet ad dexteram patris inde uenturus <u>est</u> iudicare uiuos et mortuos</i>	<i>qui natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria uirgine qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus tertia die resurrexit (a mortuis)<sup>15</sup> ascendit in <u>caelos</u> sedet ad dexteram patris inde uenturus iudicare uiuos et mortuos<sup>16</sup></i>

<sup>11</sup> Suggested, in passing, by Ferdinand Kattenbusch, *Das apostolische Symbol*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1894), 133. There are several recent but slightly different reconstructions of Chrysologus' creed. The differences are due to the fact that, in his sermons, Chrysologus cited the creedal clauses in slightly different ways. See Harold W. Moore, 'The Baptismal Creed of St. Peter Chrysologus: A Translation of Seven Sermons of St. Peter Chrysologus on the Creed', STL thesis, St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore (1950), 78, n. 106; Oliviar, CChr.SL 24, 312; L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* (2002), 199-206, 552-3; *id.*, 'The Authorship of an Anonymous *Expositio symboli* (CPL 229A)', *Augustinianum* 36 (1996), 525-42, 528-9. The form I have used in the chart is the closest possible reconstruction of Chrysologus' creed to that of *Tractatus symboli*. It should be added though that it is not only the formal similarities between the respective creeds, but also their expositions which demonstrate certain affinities.

<sup>12</sup> Although *in sanctam ecclesiam* occurs in Chrysologus' s. 61.13 and 62.15, and *in remissionem peccatorum* in s. 57.14; 58.13; 59.15 (also *in resurrectionem mortuorum*); 61.14; and 62.16, I have used brackets because the occurrence of the preposition *in* is probably due to the smoother flow of Chrysologus' sermons (L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 203-5). (For the occurrences of the preposition *in* in *Expl. sym.* 9, see L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 187). The creedal forms *in sanctam ecclesiam* and *in remissionem peccatorum* are unique, for Rufinus adamantly argues that the preposition *in* should be used only in connection with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For this reason, the creed *non dixit: in sanctam ecclesiam* (*Exp.* 34).

<sup>13</sup> Although the words *passus est* occur in the commentary (*Tract. sym.* 11), these are missing in other northern Italian creeds (see L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 234). The word *catholicam* is missing at least in one of the manuscripts of *Tractatus symboli*, in Codex Florentinus (L), as well as in the northern Italian creeds (see L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 248) and in Chrysologus' s. 57.13; 58.12; 59.14; 60.14; 61.13; 62.15. While *Tract. sym.* 7 says *in sanctam ecclesiam*, paragraph 16 also mentions a possible creedal clause *sanctorum communionem*.

<sup>14</sup> Once, in s. 60.5, the word order that Chrysologus uses is *et in Iesum Christum*, but his commentary considers 'Christ' before 'Jesus'.

<sup>15</sup> While s. 57.8 includes the words *a mortuis*, other shorter but more numerous citations of the clause may be abbreviations.

<sup>16</sup> On two occasions, s. 58.10 and 61.11, it reads *inde uenturus est iudicare uiuos et mortuos*. Yet, as Westra contends, because the word *est* occurs in *Textus receptus* (T), it 'was probably more apt to be added than omitted' (L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 203).

<i>et in spiritum sanctum</i>	<i>credo in sanctum spiritum</i> <sup>17</sup>
<i>in sanctam ecclesiam</i>	<i>(in)</i> <sup>18</sup> <i>sanctam ecclesiam</i>
<i>in remissionem peccatorum</i>	<i>(in)</i> <i>remissionem peccatorum</i>
<i>carnis resurrectionem</i>	<i>carnis resurrectionem</i>
<i>et uitam aeternam</i>	<i>uitam aeternam</i> <sup>19</sup>

There are several factors which seriously complicate the reconstruction of the wording of ancient creeds with any confidence, even if a particular creed is unmistakably a variant of the *Apostles' Creed* (R). Expositions often did not provide the full text of the creed. Instead, the clauses were merely indicated by the opening words or cited partially.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, certain discrepancy between the underlying creed and its clauses in the expository part was a fairly common feature as well, although this is arguably not the case in *Tractatus symboli*.<sup>21</sup> Other times the credal clauses were either paraphrased or adapted for the narrative text. Such changes for the sake of a better flow of a text cannot be taken as indicators of the exact wording of the creed. In short, there is no automatic guarantee that collecting credal clauses from the interpretative remarks of an expositor would give an adequate basis for reconstructing the actual wording of a creed.

Yet another complicating factor is that, in its liturgical function, a creed was memorized, learned by heart, and made one's own, rather than written down<sup>22</sup> and carefully preserved for the satisfaction of the curiosity of later credal scholars. After all, a creed was meant only for those desiring to be initiated to the Christian faith.<sup>23</sup> Outsiders had no business in knowing the creed – the

<sup>17</sup> The word order *in spiritum sanctum* occurs in *s.* 57.12; 60.13; and 61.12, but again, since it concurs with T, it is less likely to be original (L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 203).

<sup>18</sup> For the preposition *in* in front of the clauses *sancta ecclesiam* and *remissionem peccatorum*, see Liuwe H. Westra, 'Creating a Theological Difference: The Myth of Two Grammatical Constructions with Latin *Credo*', in this volume, pp. 3-14.

<sup>19</sup> This clause is absent in Chrysologus' *s.* 61. However, it is found in other northern Italian credal examples, such as Chromatius, *Tract. in Math.* 41.8, and in the Anon. *Exp.* 14.

<sup>20</sup> A good example of this phenomenon is the so-called 'skeleton citations', where only the first and last words of a clause are given (*Expl. sym.* 8-11).

<sup>21</sup> Caspari suspects that the commentary may be later than the underlying creed (C. Caspari, *Alte und neue Quellen* [1879], 305-8). Westra, however, has judged the formal differences between the creed and its commentary as relatively insignificant (L. Westra, *The Apostles' Creed* [2002], 362-4).

<sup>22</sup> Warnings against writing the creed down can be found in *Expl. sym.* 12 and Chrysologus, *s.* 56.5; 57.16; 58.1; 59.18; 60.18; 61.1, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Among others, Sozomen witnesses to the *disciplina arcana*: 'Only the initiates and the mystagogues have the right to recite and hear [the creed]' (*Hist. eccl.* 1.20; cf. *Matt.* 7:6). Yet such secrecy was hardly ever absolute, for Christian creeds were never considered some sort of secret, magic formulae. See Juliette Day, 'Adherence to the *Disciplina Arcana* in the Fourth Century',

mystery (*sacramentum* or *mysterium*) of faith.<sup>24</sup> *Tract. sym.* 4 reads: ‘Stay away from here, I insist, all stranger(s), all profane; hear the mystery of faith the unfaithful may not hear (*Absistat omnis hinc, quaeso, alienus, absistat omnis profanes, audite mysterium fidei, non audiat infidelis*)’. This might also be the reason why at least the manuscript Codex Florentius (L) of *Tractatus symboli* does not provide the full text of the creed. However, the very fact that Codex Oxoniensis (B) does, is quite exceptional in the light of the prevalent *disciplina arcani*.

The introductory part (1-6) focuses on faith. While not attempting to read a later distinction back into *Tractatus symboli*, the question for a modern interpreter is inevitably whether the commentator means the act of faith (*fides qua creditur*), or the content of faith (*fides quae creditur*). Its first sentence employs the expression *fidem catholicam* and, as it applies to the creed, it should be understood as the content of faith. In fact, in *Tract. sym.* 6, the creed is explicitly called ‘a brief account of the whole faith (*totius fidei breviarium quoddam*)’.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, because the first word in a creed is *credo*, expositions often elaborate on faith as the act of believing.<sup>26</sup> Immediately after employing the phrase *fidem catholicam*, *Tract. sym.* 1 refers to *Heb.* 11:3, which is indeed about the act of believing. Furthermore, the explanation of the final clause of the creed is connected with *John* 20:31: ‘So that those who believe may have eternal life (*ut credentes habeatis uitam aeternam*)’ (17). The last injunction of the commentary says, *Credite (creditur L) ergo ex fide* (17). It can be rendered as ‘believe by faith’ or ‘believe according to faith’ and may suggest that an either/or solution in this case is not adequate after all. Rather, it is a combination of the act and the content of faith that is emphasized here.<sup>27</sup>

After the introductory part, a deacon<sup>28</sup> commands, *Signate uos*,<sup>29</sup> *audite symbolum* (7). Such a command is evidently a liturgical-structural marker in

*SP* 35 (2001), 206-10; Daniel L. Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult: Christian Initiation in Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, D.C., 2013), 47-69.

<sup>24</sup> Explaining the meaning of the word *symbolum*, *Tract. sym.* 6 calls the creed *pactum* and *indicium* (cf. Rufinus, *Exp.* 2; Chrysologus, *s.* 62.3). As a token or a password, the creed had to be protected and kept hidden from the uninitiated public. For critical discussion, which points out that Rufinus’ ‘password explanation’ is but one of the later explanations, see Harry J. Carpenter, ‘Creeds and Baptismal Rites in the First Four Centuries’, *JTS* 44 (1943), 1-11; and John N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3d ed. (Essex, 1993), 52-61.

<sup>25</sup> *Expl. sym.* 3 calls the creed *breuiarium fidei* as well.

<sup>26</sup> Rufinus, *Exp.* 3; Chrysologus, *s.* 56.4; 58.1; 60.1; 61.2.

<sup>27</sup> Chrysologus certainly combines the two senses of faith when he preaches, ‘Receive, then, this profession of faith by faith alone (*Accipite ergo fidem sola fide!*)’ (*s.* 58.1).

<sup>28</sup> Only Codex Florentius (L) identifies the one giving orders as *diaconus* and the one reading the creed *presbyter*.

<sup>29</sup> The injunction *signate uos* occurs in *Expl. sym.* 4 and in Chrysologus’ sermons 56.5, 57.16; 59.18; 60.2, 18; 62.3, 4. Thus, there is no need to link *Tractatus symboli* with the later, seventh century *Ordo romanus* XI which uses the command *signate illos* (12, 27, and 41).

*Tractatus symboli*.<sup>30</sup> While the first and the third occurrences of this command appear in expected places,<sup>31</sup> the second one comes in *Tract. sym.* 10, after *et Maria uirgine* and before *qui sub Pontio Pilato*. However, such placement does not seem to question the traditional three-fold Trinitarian division of the creed. Rather, and speaking theologically, it may underline the Cyrillian point that the one born from Mary the *Theotokos* was the *Logos*. The continuity of the subject of Christ is emphatically reiterated in *Tract. sym.* 13: ‘The very same ascended who descended (*Ascendit ipse qui descenderat*)’.<sup>32</sup> Such placement of the marker *signate uos* also divides – just as it is stated in the previous sentence – between that which pertains to divinity (*i.e.*, miraculous conception, virgin birth)<sup>33</sup> and that which pertains to humanity (suffering and death). Further reinforcement of this idea comes in *Tract. sym.* 10. Affirming the ‘double birth’ of the Son (*de patre, ex uirgine*),<sup>34</sup> the commentator states explicitly that ‘while Christ’s humanity is acknowledged from his sufferings, his divinity is attested to by his divine operations (*Qui sicut ex passionibus homo agnoscitur ita deus ex diuinis operationibus comprobatur*)’ (10). As is well known, in the beginning of the twentieth century, Karl Holl proposed that the two clauses of the creed, which start with the definite article *ton* in Greek, correspond to the two titles of Jesus Christ – the ‘Son of God’ and the ‘Lord’.<sup>35</sup> Whether his theory as such holds or not, in *Tract. sym.* 10-1, *signate uos* divides the two clauses beginning with the Latin word *qui* into the theological and economical aspects of Christology.

<sup>30</sup> Other markers, which identify the main constituent parts of the creed, are the word *sequitur* (*Tract. sym.* 9, 11, 13, 15, and 16) and the word *inquit* (10).

<sup>31</sup> In *Expl. sym.* 4, the command *signate uos* likewise occurs immediately before the saying of the creed.

<sup>32</sup> The statement in *Tract. sym.* 10: ‘Because just as the humanity is acknowledged from his sufferings, so deity is attested by his divine operations (*quia sicut ex passionibus homo agnoscitur ita deus ex diuinis operationibus comprobatur*)’ (10) does not necessarily contradict Cyril’s point. Cyril insisted that Christ’s sayings and deeds could be attributed notionally to the underlying nature-referents, but never to the postulated two subject-referents (*ep.* 17.8; 44.6-7).

<sup>33</sup> Although the anonymous *Explanatio symboli* does not repeat the command *signate uos* after mentioning the virgin birth, it too has an ‘unexpected’ injunction ‘so let us say the symbol (*Ergo dicamus symbolum*)’ in this particular place (5). Chrysologus explicates: ‘Everything that takes place here [*e.g.*, *qui natus est...*] is the work of God (*totum diuinum geritur*), not the work of man’ (*s.* 57.6; cf. 58.5; 59.7).

<sup>34</sup> While the creed says *qui natus est de spiritu sancto et Maria uirgine* (7), the commentary employs the expression *ex uirgine* instead (10). Since the creed of Aquileia reads *qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria uirgine* (Rufinus, *Exp.* 8, and so arguably also a variant of the creed of Milan [*Expl. sym.* 5; Augustine, *s.* 213]), the different prepositions may have attempted to differentiate between Christ being *of* the Holy Spirit and *from* the Virgin Mary. That is, the Son of God is related to the Spirit differently than he is related to his virgin mother.

<sup>35</sup> Karl Holl, ‘Zur Auslegung des 2. Artikels des sog. Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses’, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte II: Der Osten* (Tübingen, 1928), 115-22 (originally published in 1919). Chrysologus’ *s.* 60.6 also elaborates on the two titles.

After the first structural marker *signate uos* and the citation of the creed comes the instructional elaboration on the creed.

To begin with, it should be noticed that the first creedal clause, which is called the *initium fidei* (8; cf. *Heb.* 11:6), exists in both a declaratory and in an interrogatory form: *Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem* (7) and *Credis in deum patrem ominpotentem?* (8).<sup>36</sup> Rather than being a mere adjustment of grammar for the sake of the narrative flow, the interrogatory form may anticipate the triple questioning at the baptismal ceremony.<sup>37</sup>

It is followed by a clarification that to speak about the Father (*pater*) necessarily implies the existence of the Son (*filius*).<sup>38</sup> This is a traditional pro-Nicene argument against those who contended that at some point of (a pre-temporal) ‘time’ God began to be a Father.<sup>39</sup> The *competentes* are also urged to understand the ‘very nature (*naturam ipsam*)’ (8) of God, apparently without any apophatic reservations. However, in its immediate literary context, the issue is not apophaticism. Instead, the mentioning of God’s ‘very nature’ next to what is not God (*i.e.*, the creation) may highlight the so-called ‘basic Christian distinction’ – God and the creation are ontologically different.<sup>40</sup> In fact, the juxtaposition of the two titles ‘Father’ and ‘Almighty’ underlines the important point that the Son is begotten from the Father’s nature and not made as a creature.<sup>41</sup> The sentence, ‘therefore, who looks at the Son is the Father, and who (looks at) the creation is the Almighty (*Quod ergo ad filium spectat pater est, quod ad creaturam omnipotens*)’ (7) makes the difference between the respective relationships explicit.

The first thing said about Jesus Christ is that his name means ‘savior (*saluator*)’ and ‘the anointed regal one (*unguendum regale*)’ in Hebrew (9). Such explanation is consistent with the heightened attention to the economical part of the creed that the exposition demonstrates (9-13). It is also consistent with other commentaries from northern Italy, which provide a similar explanation of the name Jesus Christ.<sup>42</sup>

Following *1Cor.* 1:24 (cited in the end of *Tract. sym.* 9), the expositor identifies the Son primarily as the ‘power (*uirtus*)’ of God. The Son/‘power’ is born

<sup>36</sup> An early eighth century *Dicta Abbatis Primini de singulis libris canonicis scarapsus* provides both the declaratory (10) and interrogatory (12) forms of the *Apostles’ Creed*.

<sup>37</sup> *E.g.*, (pseudo-)Ambrose, *sacr.* 2.7.20.

<sup>38</sup> See Rufinus, *Exp.* 4; Chrysologus, *s.* 57.4; 58.3; 59.4; 60.4; 61.3.

<sup>39</sup> *E.g.*, Arius, *ep. Alex.* 3-4 (*Urk.* 6). Chrysologus says explicitly that the Son did not have ‘any beginning (*non conceptu inchoatum*)’ (*s.* 59.4; cf. 60.4, which includes the words *principium* and *initium*; 61.3; 62.6) and adds that the one who contends that God ‘has not always been a Father (*ne patrem semper non fuisse*)’, blasphemous (*s.* 62.6).

<sup>40</sup> Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C., 1995), xi-xvi, 31-4; see Rufinus, *Exp.* 7.

<sup>41</sup> Perhaps this is a veiled reference to the Nicene *natum non factum*; see Chrysologus, *s.* 57.4.

<sup>42</sup> See Anon. *Exp.* 2; Rufinus, *Exp.* 6; Chrysologus, *s.* 59.5; 60.5; 61.4.

(*nascitur*) as well as proceeds (*procedit*)<sup>43</sup> from God the Father. Here the intra-Trinitarian relationships are carefully noted, so that the Father alone remains the ‘first principle’, the ‘unbegotten (*ingenitus*)’, the ‘source (*fons*)’ and ‘origin (*origio*)’ of the ‘Godhead (*deitatis*)’ (8-9). Whether this claim is ‘orthodox’ in all aspects is a matter of argumentation,<sup>44</sup> but the point that the Son is *unicum* in the sense of being divine, yet caused and begotten, is definitely communicated. It should be observed here that the strong emphasis on the monarchy of the Father and the clear affirmation of the Son’s hypostatic existence<sup>45</sup> in *Tractatus symboli* do not enable an assertion that the anonymous commentary is some sort of ‘Cliff-notes to Chrysologus’. While *Tractatus* is quite anti-modalist<sup>46</sup> and cautiously pro-Nicene, Chrysologus seems to be more explicitly anti-‘Arian’/Homoean. This impression can be substantiated further by observing the telling end of paragraph nine, where the author makes an intriguing statement: ‘He was the only-begotten Son of God who was *before all ages* [emphasis mine] with the Father and in the presence the Father (*Ipse unigenitus dei filius qui erat ante saecula cum patre et apud patrem*)’.<sup>47</sup> Instead of saying outright that the Son was eternal or co-eternal<sup>48</sup> with the Father (as Chrysologus, for example did<sup>49</sup>), the commentator uses a biblical phrase *pro (chronōn) aiōniōn*,<sup>50</sup> which can and at times did serve a subtly anti-modalist, subordinationist agenda.<sup>51</sup>

The economical section of the creed is introduced already before the clause *qui natus est...* is mentioned. Namely, paragraph nine states that ‘the Son assumed the squandering of the flesh in order to save us (*filiiu dissipationem carnis assumpsit ut nos redimeret*)’. Again, the unusual placement of the second

<sup>43</sup> Chrysologus’ s. 57.4 has *processit filius*.

<sup>44</sup> One would expect the author to say that the Father is the source and origin of the Son, rather than Godhead. Likewise, in *Tract. sym.* 8, God (*deus*) is confusingly said to be the ‘source of divinity (*fontem diuinitatis*)’. However, because of the brevity of the remarks, it is hard to say whether the commentator identified God with the Father (vis-à-vis the Trinity) (see the benediction coming from *1Thess.* 3:11, ‘May God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ make you... [*Deus et pater domini nostri Iesu Christi uos faciat...*]’), or postulated a divinity apart from the divine persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

<sup>45</sup> The Son is said to have existed ‘before the ages’ ‘with (*cum*)’ and ‘in the presence (*apud*)’ of the Father (9).

<sup>46</sup> It was because of the error of Sabellius (*i.e.*, modalism) that the Creed of Aquileia added the words *inuisibilem et impassibilem* to the Roman creed (Rufinus, *Exp.* 3 and 5). Although these words are not part of the creed, in *Tract. sym.* 7, the commentator nevertheless later states that the Father is *inuisibilis et impassibilis* (9).

<sup>47</sup> The phrase *ante saecula* occurs also in *Tract. sym.* 10.

<sup>48</sup> In *Tract. sym.* 15, the Holy Spirit is said to be *coaeternus* with the Son, but the two are never said to be *coaeternus* with the Father. It is hard to decide whether this is deliberate or not.

<sup>49</sup> S. 58.3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ps.* 55:19 (LXX 54:20); *Prov.* 8:23; *1Cor.* 2:7; *Titus* 1:2.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Arius contended that the Son had a beginning, although this ‘beginning’ was ‘before’ the time (*ep. Alex.* 4 [*Urk.* 6] and *ep. Euseb. Nicom.* 4 [*Urk.* 1]).

structural marker *signate uos* arguably highlights the *pro nobis* character of the incarnation. Immediately after introducing the clause *qui sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus est et sepultus*, the anonymous commentator points out that ‘Our Lord suffered in order to free us from bodily passions, died in order to dissolve the law of death (*passus est Dominus noster ut nos a passionibus corporalibus liberaret, mortuus est ut mortis iura dissolueret*)’. Christ’s resurrection is likewise for the purpose of ‘demonstrating for us the mystery of the future resurrection in his body (*ut nobis future resurrectionis mysterium in suo corpora demonstraret*)’ (12).

The clause on final judgment has merited a biblical comment. The catechumens, who are about to become the faithful (*ex catechumeno fidelem ... faciet*) (1), are foreknown, predestined, called, and justified (*Vos ... quos praesciuit deus et praedestinavit, quos uocavit et iustificavit*) (*Rom.* 8:29-30) (5), yet the judgment on each one is rendered ‘according to his/her works (*Prov.* 24:12)’ (14). No particular colors of Augustine’s theology can be detected here, although earlier faith is said to be ‘a part of the divine gift (*fides diuini muneris portio est*)’ (1).<sup>52</sup>

After the third *signate uos* comes the credal clause on the Holy Spirit. At least two things are significant here. First, the intriguing phrase, ‘who proceeds from the Father and is coeternal with the Son (*qui de patre procedit et filio coaeternus*)’ (15) defines the intra-Trinitarian relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son.<sup>53</sup> However and earlier, in paragraph nine, the Son too was said to proceed from the Father ‘as splendor proceeds from true light (*et unus splendor ex uera luce procedit*)’. The verb *procedere* may simply be a suitable word for the light metaphor. Even if this is not the case, it still does not seem to be a *terminus technicus* yet, used exclusively for the theological ‘proceeding’ (vis-à-vis the economical ‘sending’) of the Holy Spirit.<sup>54</sup> The lack of technical discourse characteristic to the *filioque* controversy argues again against a later date of the commentary. Second, the Holy Spirit is said to be the ‘unity (*unitas*)’ of both the Father and the Son.<sup>55</sup> It is even put in rather strong terms: ‘With the Holy Spirit, the Trinity remains undivided (*Cum spiritus sancto indiuisa manet trinitas*)’ (15). Because of the lacuna, however, the explication of this idea too – if it ever existed – remains inaccessible.

The last credal clauses have merited only one-sentence paraphrases. Significant among these is perhaps the claim that resurrection concerns ‘this flesh

<sup>52</sup> In *Tract. sym.* 2, faith is called *donum dei*.

<sup>53</sup> True, being coeternal does not define a relationship. Because of the brevity of the statement, it is impossible to figure out how exactly the commentator perceived the intra-Trinitarian relationships of the divine persons.

<sup>54</sup> See *John* 15:26. For ‘proceeding’, see Rufinus, *Exp.* 33.

<sup>55</sup> While *Tract. sym.* 15 uses the single words *unus* and *unitas* in connection with the Holy Spirit, Chrysologus uses a more explicit *unius cum patre et filio substantiae* language (s. 58.11).

(*huius carnis*)' (16).<sup>56</sup> The word *huius* emphasizes that the resurrected body of Christ was the same body that Christ had in his incarnation.

In conclusion, based on the theology of *Tractatus symboli*, as well as on the creedal form it uses, the treatise fits well into the context of the fifth century northern Italian creedal sermons/commentaries. At the same time, it is theologically independent enough not to be a mere summary or compilation of the other extant texts.

<sup>56</sup> Rufinus, *Exp.* 41-3. *Huius carnis resurrectionem* is also found in Chromatius' *Tract. in Math.* 41.8.

# The Trinitarian Doctrine of the *Apostolic Constitutions*

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## ABSTRACT

Brian Daley has argued that the late-fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* (AC) represent an effort, allied with Meletius of Antioch, to steer a middle course between, on one hand, a conception of the Son and the Spirit as foreign to God's nature and, on the other hand, an erasure of the Son's and Spirit's distinction from the Father, seen by many in the fourth-century East as the vice of Nicaea and its defenders. In the service of this project, the AC clung to biblical language and categories traceable to the influence of Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea. Daley's argument here largely follows Metzger's introduction to the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition of the AC ('The Enigma of Meletius of Antioch', in Ronnie J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang [eds], *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.* [Washington, 2010], 128-50). This present article will submit that Daley's arguments are incomplete. Certain of his interpretations of the AC leave questions unanswered. His depiction of Meletius' circle does not seem to square with key Trinitarian positions of the AC. Daley does not address sufficiently those arguments made by Georg Wagner and Thomas Kopeček to link the AC to currents closer to Eunomius. Tracing the Trinitarian revisions made by the AC to its source documents also provides support for relating the AC to such currents.

In a recent article Brian Daley has done us the service of shedding some light on the Trinitarian approach of the mid- to late-fourth-century bishop Meletius of Antioch, an approach that had proven difficult for modern scholars to nail down.<sup>1</sup> Daley suggests that Meletius 'embodied, more and more, the moderate, self-consciously traditional, terminologically conservative position sought by the majority of bishops in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor in the period between 341 and 381.' He believes this suggestion 'fits more easily' if we suppose that the *Apostolic Constitutions* (AC), put together in a city in the politico-ecclesiastical orbit of Antioch around 380, were written by 'supporters' of Meletius.<sup>2</sup> Daley's article thus argues that the AC represent an effort, allied with Meletius, to steer a middle course between two theologies. The AC would seek

<sup>1</sup> Brian Daley, 'The Enigma of Meletius of Antioch', in Ronnie J. Rombs and Alexander Y. Hwang (eds), *Tradition and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.* (Washington, 2010), 128-50.

<sup>2</sup> B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 140.

to avoid, on one hand, a conception of the Son and the Spirit as foreign to God's nature and, on the other hand, an erasure of the Son's and Spirit's distinction from the Father, seen by many in the fourth-century East as the vice of Nicaea and its defenders.<sup>3</sup> In the service of this project, the *AC* clung to biblical language and traditional categories traceable to the influence of Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea and not far from Cyril of Jerusalem's catecheses, and the *AC* developed a pseudoapostolic scenario to bolster its claim to traditional status. Daley's argument here largely follows Metzger's introduction to the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition of the *AC*.<sup>4</sup> Daley also provides evidence that the other works of the redactor of the *AC*, the *Commentary on Job* and the *Pseudo-Ignatian Letters*, are in the same theological current that he attributes to the *AC*.<sup>5</sup>

Leaving aside his reading of *Pseudo-Ignatius* and the *Commentary on Job*, this present article will suggest that Daley's case for situating the *AC* in the entourage of Meletius remains incomplete. I will support this suggestion in four ways. First, I will ask a question about an interpretation of the *AC* by which Daley associates them with Meletius. I will next propose that the *AC* seem not to match some elements of Daley's description of Meletius' circle. Then, comparing the *AC* with their source documents will provide other evidence of a contrast between Daley's portrait of Meletius and the theological current represented by the *AC*. Finally, I will confirm this contrast by referring to signs that the *AC* are close to a Trinitarian doctrine like that of Eunomius.

In making his case for the proximity of the *AC* to Meletius' circle, Daley proposes an interpretation of the *AC* that leaves room for a question one would have to answer in order to complete his case. He remarks that the baptismal creed of this document 'professes with Nicaea that Christ, the only Son of God, is "the first-born of all creation, begotten before the ages, by the good pleasure of the Father, not created; by him all things were made in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible"''.<sup>6</sup> But can we most accurately say that the *AC* is making a profession with Nicaea here? Several considerations motivate this question.

<sup>3</sup> Daley already adumbrated this position in 'Primacy and Collegiality in the Fourth-Century: A Note on Apostolic Canon 34', *The Jurist* 68 (2008), 5-21, but the article I comment on in this present study offers a more developed position. I use here the best edition of the *AC*: *Les constitutions apostoliques*, vol. 1 (Books 1-2), vol. 2 (Books 3-6), vol. 3 (Books 7-8), ed. Marcel Metzger, *Sources Chrétiennes* 320, 329, 336 (Paris, 1985, 1986, 1987). For the provenance and dating of the *AC*, see Joseph Mueller, *L'Ancien Testament dans l'ecclésiologie des Pères: Une lecture des Constitutions apostoliques*, *Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia* 41 (Turnhout, 2005), 86-90. In a paper read at the North American Patristics Society meeting of May 2013, 'Authority in Pseudo-Ignatius', Paul Smith offered a similar account of the provenance and dating of the *AC*: in Antioch itself they are written in reaction to the return of the exiled Nicene bishops to Antioch in 378-9.

<sup>4</sup> M. Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques* (1986) 2:10-38.

<sup>5</sup> B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 140-8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 142, quoting *AC* 7.41.5.

While the quotation of the *AC* creed above conveys nothing against Nicaea, ‘first-born of all creation’ and ‘by the good pleasure of the Father’ do not figure in the Nicene creed. Indeed, the entire text of the *AC* creed in question here overlaps more with the Fourth Dedication Creed of Antioch and Cyril of Jerusalem’s creed than with Nicaea.<sup>7</sup> A collation of this creed of the *AC* with those of Nicaea and Cyril of Jerusalem, as well as with the Fourth Dedication Creed, shows that the baptismal creed of the *AC* shares only two precise expressions with Nicaea that it does not share with these other two: that Christ ‘came down’ (*katelthonta*) and ‘suffered’ (*pathonta*, which might also be in Cyril’s creed). Only twice does the *AC* creed express ideas similar to the Nicene creed that are not found either in the Fourth Dedication creed or that of Cyril. First, while Nicaea says that the Son was not made (*poiēthenta*), the *AC* creed says he was not created (*ktisthenta*), and second, whereas Nicaea affirms that the Son became flesh (*sarkōthenta*), the *AC* creed professes the Son to have taken on flesh (*sarka analabonta*).

On the other hand, the *AC* creed shares with both the Fourth Dedication creed and with Cyril’s a greater number of precise expressions than it shares with Nicaea: that Christ was born ‘before all ages,’ that he ‘was crucified’ and ‘died’ and rose ‘on the third day’, that ‘his kingdom’ has no end, and that the Holy Spirit is ‘the Paraclete’. All three of these creeds mention, in varying formulas, the session of Christ as the right of the Father, while Nicaea omits this particular. Furthermore, the *AC* and the Fourth Dedication creeds share between them a number of features that neither Nicaea nor Cyril has. Both the former say that the Father is creator (*ktistēn*) rather than maker (*poiētēn*), as Nicaea and Cyril have it. Neither the *AC* nor the Fourth Dedication creed explicitly professes ‘one’ Christ, as do Nicaea and Cyril. Unlike these two, both the *AC* and the Fourth Dedication creed explicitly affirm that the creatures made through the Son are ‘both the visible and the invisible’. Similarly, both these creeds aver that ‘in the last days’ Christ ‘was born from the holy virgin’,

<sup>7</sup> For the Greek text of the Nicene Creed, see Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1: *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London and Washington, 1990), 5. For the Fourth Dedication Creed, see Athanasius, *De synodis* 25; for a brief discussion, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford, 2004), 121-2. The creed of Cyril of Jerusalem can be almost entirely reconstructed from his catechetical lectures, especially 7.4; 9.4; 11.21; 14.24; 15.2; 17.3; 18.22; see A.A. Stephenson, ‘The Text of the Jerusalem Creed’, *SP* 3 (1961), 303-13; that argument is summarized and its reconstruction repeated in Leo P. McCauley and A.A. Stephenson (trans.), *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, The Fathers of the Church 61 (Washington, 1969), 1:60-5; Greek text following Stephenson at J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1972), 183-4; for discussion of Cyril’s creed, see Alexis James Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of the Mystagogic Catecheses*, Patristic Monograph Series 176 (Washington, 2001), 37-46; for brief discussion of his catechetical lectures, including a case for their delivery in the weeks before Easter of 351, see Jan Willem Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 72 (Leiden, 2004), 53-8.

while Nicaea and Cyril do not mention these two aspects of the incarnation. Neither of these mention that Christ will come again at the ‘consummation of the age’, a phrase that both the AC and the Fourth Dedication creeds use in this context. These two creeds both mention that the Holy Spirit was promised by Christ and was sent to the Apostles and believers; Nicaea and Cyril mention neither the promise nor the sending to the Apostles and believers. Near the end of the AC and Cyrilian creeds, we find numerous expressions not seen in the Nicene and Fourth Dedication creed: that the coming of Christ to judge will be in ‘glory’, and, not in the same order, mentions of the ‘resurrection of flesh’, ‘forgiveness of sins’, the ‘holy catholic church’, and eschatological ‘life’. Finally, as to formulations, of varying importance, peculiar to only one of the four, we find 11 of these in the AC creed,<sup>8</sup> six in the Fourth Dedication creed,<sup>9</sup> four in Cyril,<sup>10</sup> and three in Nicaea.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the AC creed seems much closer in its formulations to the Fourth Dedication creed than it does to Nicaea. The AC baptismal creed speaks not so much “with” Nicaea as it does with the Fourth Dedication creed and, to a lesser extent, with Cyril’s creed.

Yet must we not say that the baptismal creed of the AC agrees with Nicaea on the uncreated status of the Son? An affirmative answer to this question has some difficulties to overcome. For Nicaea’s placement of the Son above creaturely status is explained by its doctrine of begetting from the Father’s essence, by its claim that Christ is true God from true God, and by its assertion of the *homoousion*, but we find none of these ideas in the AC, the baptismal creed of which claims, just before saying the Son is uncreated (*ou ktisthenta*), that the Father is the only true God (7.41.4).

Furthermore, the *ou ktisthenta* of AC 7.41.5 is in some tension with the location of Christ’s attribute ‘first-born of all creation’ in that same part of the creed, among the expressions that present the Son’s pre-incarnational status.

<sup>8</sup> God the Father is ‘unbegotten’, and the ‘only’ God, the Father ‘of Christ’; the Father is the one ‘from whom are all things’; Christ is the ‘first-born of all creation’, born ‘by the good will of the Father’, and ‘lived holily according to the laws of his God and Father’, was crucified ‘under Pontius Pilate’; the Holy Spirit is ‘the one working in all the saints since the age’; in addition to other eschatological beliefs, Christians believe ‘in the kingdom of heaven’; the eschatological life is that ‘of the coming age’ (*tou mellontos aiōnos*).

<sup>9</sup> God the Father is the one ‘from whom every fatherhood in the heavens and on earth is named’; as the one through whom all things came to be, Christ ‘is word and wisdom and power and life and true light’; he ‘was buried’ after his death (perhaps also in Cyril’s creed); his kingdom ‘being indissoluble, lasts unto the infinite ages, for he is seated at the right hand of the Father not only in this age but in the coming one’; Christ sends the Spirit to the Apostles ‘after his going up into heaven, to teach them and to remind them of all things, through which [Spirit] the souls of’ those who have believed ‘absolutely in him are sanctified’.

<sup>10</sup> After his resurrection Christ ‘sat [active] at the right [plural] of the Father’; the Holy Spirit ‘which spoke in the prophets’; Christians believe ‘in one baptism of conversion’; the eschatological life is ‘eternal’ (*aiōnion*).

<sup>11</sup> Christ is born of the Father, ‘that is, from the essence of the Father’; Christ is ‘true God’ born ‘from true God’, and he is ‘consubstantial with the Father’.

That tension is unlike anything we find in the Nicene creed. The tension increases when we find, a few pages earlier, a reworked synagogal prayer at AC 7.36.1, which states that the Lord almighty, distinguished from Christ by the redactor, established feasts so that, in the context of celebrating God's work of creation, we might remember the wisdom created (*ktistheisēs sophias*) by the Lord. According to the redactor of the AC, this wisdom is born of a woman and appears as God and human, is crucified, and rises from the dead.<sup>12</sup> In another redactional passage, the AC state that Solomon spoke in the person of the Lord Jesus when he wrote, 'The Lord created [*ektisen*] me as the beginning of his ways unto his works, before the age he established me ... before all the hills he begot me' (5.20.9).<sup>13</sup> How did the redactor of the AC understand the relationship between such passages and his creedal claim about the uncreated status of the Son?

Did he understand the *ou ktisthenta* applied to Christ in his baptismal creed in something of the way that Eusebius explained to his church at Caesarea the *ou poiēthenta* applied to Christ in the Nicene creed? Athanasius relates, in *De decretis* 33.11, that Eusebius told them that the 'not made' of Nicaea meant that, in virtue of the Son's ineffable generation, that Son has no likeness with the other creatures (*tōn loipōn ktismatōn*), which all come to be through him. Here Eusebius implies that the Son is a *ktisma*, but one that is *sui generis* and above all others. What keeps this view from simply matching that of the AC is that for Eusebius, the Son's generation gives him a divinity like that of the Father's,<sup>14</sup> whereas for the AC, the Father is incomparable (*asugkritos*) to anything else (8.5.1; 8.15.7; 8.38.4; 8.46.17). While Eusebius likes to call Christ the image of the Father, the AC never uses this traditional scriptural title for Christ.<sup>15</sup> Whatever the AC mean by calling the Son uncreated, the Father's incomparability seems to place the Son's status far from the *homoousion* of Nicaea, indeed, at some remove from a claim of a likeness according to substance, or even likeness *tout court*, to the Father. Daley's interpretation would do well to go further, then, in order to answer in what sense the baptismal creed of AC 7.41 professes the Son's uncreated character with Nicaea.

<sup>12</sup> For the redactional character of this passage, see David Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones apostolorum*, Brown Judaic Studies 65 (Chico, Ca., 1985), 181-2.

<sup>13</sup> Quoting most of *Prov.* 8:22-5. For the passage in which this redactional material is inserted, see *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, trans. Arthur Vööbus, CSCO 402 and 408, Scriptorum Syri 176 and 180 (Louvain, 1979), 2:201-2.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica theologia* 1.8-11.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, *Commentaria in Psalmos*, on *Psalm* 85:8-10 (PG 23, 1033-6). However, for Origen, at least in one passage, the Son's condition as image of the Father is consistent with the exclusion of any possible comparison between Father and Son; see his *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*, 13.25.

Apart from this unanswered question on the text of the *AC*, I propose, too, that this collection seems not to match some elements of Daley's description of Meletius' circle. Daley links the *AC* with positions allied to Meletius by asserting similarities between, on one hand, the *AC* and, on the other hand, Basil's treatise on the Holy Spirit and the creed of Constantinople of 381. He writes: 'Here [in the *AC*] as in those works, the Spirit is never directly said to be God, or to be "of the same substance" as God, and in a number of places is spoken of as having been created by the Father' to help achieve the Son's work'.<sup>16</sup> As I will show further on, Daley accurately describes the pneumatology of the *AC* here, and it is true that they share with Basil's treatise on the Holy Spirit and with Constantinople a decision not to call the Spirit God or *homoousion*. However, I find no mention of the Spirit's creation by the Father in the creed of the Council of Constantinople of 381, of which Meletius presided the first sessions. Furthermore, the treatise on the Holy Spirit by Meletius' supporter Basil of Caesarea denies created status for the Spirit in several ways.<sup>17</sup> If the *AC* teach that the Spirit is a creature how closely can they be allied with Meletius, who is tightly associated with Constantinople I and Basil, both of whom oppose this teaching?

Daley further notes that Basil of Caesarea thought, in 375, that 'the loosely knit Meletians' were busy trying to develop 'theological refinements beyond the simple affirmation of the "single substance" of Father and Son'.<sup>18</sup> But how could the redactor of the *AC*, someone clinging to the traditional language traceable to Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, be involved in this groundbreaking search? Should we think that Basil's knowledge of the Meletians was incomplete enough not to cover the traditional posture of the *AC*? If so, how useful is he in helping us to figure out what the allies of Meletius were like?

Daley remarks that, between 374 and 376, Epiphanius 'interestingly characterizes' the increasingly cohesive group of Meletius' sympathizers by attributing to them the acceptance of the application of the *homoousion* to the Son and the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> If this characterization is correct, one wonders how a document like the *AC* could come from such a group. As I will show momentarily, the *AC*

<sup>16</sup> B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 142.

<sup>17</sup> Basil notes the impossibility of one's thinking of a nature like a creature while hearing the word 'spirit' (9.22; *Basile de Césarée: Sur le Saint-Esprit*, 2nd ed., ed. Benoit Pruche, Sources Chrétiennes 17 bis [Paris, 1968]). To those who pretext Israel's faith in Moses at the Red Sea in order to claim that baptismal faith in the Spirit does not raise him above the level of creation, Basil makes the claim that faith in the Spirit is like faith in the Father and the Son (14.31). Basil explicitly prefers ranking the Spirit with God to dishonoring the Spirit by ranking him with creatures (16.37; 19.50-20.51; 24.55-6; 28.70), and he counts the Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit not as one counts a created multitude (18.45). The Spirit does not glorify Christ as a creature would (18.46), nor is the Spirit holy, good, acquainted with God, or alive in the way that a creature is any of these things (19.48; 24.56).

<sup>18</sup> See B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 137-8, citing Basil's *Letter* 214.

<sup>19</sup> See B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 135-6, discussing *Panarion* 73.34.2-3.

calls the Spirit a creature and emphasizes the difference between the Father's and the Son's divinities, positions foreign to the application of the *homoousion* to the Son and the Spirit. Was Epiphanius' characterization false or simply ignorant of the extent of diversity among the Meletians? In either case, how helpful is his testimony in reconstructing Meletius' entourage?

Examining a long quote from *Oration 22.12* of Gregory of Nazianzus, Daley argues persuasively that 'although Gregory's own way of conceiving and formulating the Church's distinctive, trinitarian view of God will certainly be substantially different from what seems to have been the language of Meletius and his followers, he seems to be saying here that their unity of vision was substantial enough to hold them all together, in opposition to really divergent views, and to assure them that they formed one Church'.<sup>20</sup> But by counting the *AC* as part of that Meletian orbit, Daley opens up a question about a significant part of his interpretation of this passage from Gregory. Daley quotes him as saying, 'Do we not consider this to be the one norm of piety: to worship Father and Son and Holy Spirit, the one divinity and power in the three, but not to honor them in an excessive or deficient way ... nor to break apart that one single Greatness by linguistic innovation? For nothing is greater or smaller than itself.' Daley then remarks in his footnote 59 that Gregory here 'rules out any attempt to rank them [the hypostases of the Trinity] ontologically'. This exclusion is, for Gregory, part of the 'norm of piety' within which variations in Trinitarian doctrine should be embraced. But the *AC* would fall under this exclusion, for, as I will show below, they clearly rank Father, Son, and Spirit from sole supreme and incomparable true deity; to derived, subordinate divinity; to highest creature. While the ranking in the *AC* does not use the terms 'essence' and 'hypostasis', it is as ontological as the relation of divinity to creatureliness and the notion of a cause, both ideas present in the Trinitarian expressions of the *AC*. To complete his argument here, then, Daley could well discuss further how the *AC* and the Meletian group he has described could both fall within Gregory's 'unity of vision ... substantial enough to hold them all together' in one Church.

The *AC* is a compilation and reworking of several sources, which, Daley correctly implies, helps to support their claim to traditional status.<sup>21</sup> However, comparing the *AC* with their source documents will provide other evidence of a contrast between Daley's portrait of Meletius and the theological current represented by the *AC*. Chief among the sources of the *AC* are the *Didascalia of the Apostles* (revised in *AC* 1-6), the *Didache* (revised in *AC* 7.1-32), several prayers of Jewish provenance (behind *AC* 7.33-8 among others), the *Apostolic Tradition* (a version of which is in *AC* 8.1-40), and a collection of canons similar to those of several fourth-century councils (*AC* 8.47). Comparing the

<sup>20</sup> B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 148-9.

<sup>21</sup> B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 140-1, 147.

AC with textual witnesses to these sources – and in the case of the Jewish prayers, with reconstructions of scholars – can show us the patterns of revision that reveal the redactor’s concerns running consistently through the whole of the AC. Some of these patterns suggest a Trinitarian theology that would not seem to fit very well with Daley’s picture of the theology of Meletius and his circle.<sup>22</sup>

Through numerous revisions of his sources, the redactor of the AC distinguishes the Son from God or from the Lord God. For example, where the *Didascalia* mentions that God Almighty raises us up through ‘God our Savior’, the AC has Almighty God doing so through ‘our Lord Jesus Christ’.<sup>23</sup> The AC credits the Father with interventions in the history of salvation attributed to the Son by its sources. For example, AC 6.19.2 ascribes to God the Law and the whole economy from the beginning, while the source passage in the *Didascalia* has them coming simply from Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> In interpolating a prayer that was originally Jewish, the redactor of the AC states that in Christ’s theophany to Jacob, God shows Christ to the patriarch and speaks through Christ to him (AC 7.33.5, see *Gen.* 28:10-5; 35:9-15).<sup>25</sup> Jewish prayer would depict these appearances as manifestations of God or of his angel, whereas pre-Nicene Christian tradition sees Christ manifesting himself or speaking in these events.<sup>26</sup> Again, the redactor of the AC modifies his sources to make clear that Jesus, and not God, speaks in the Gospels. For example, AC 5.4.2 has the Lord saying that he will deny before his Father those who deny him, whereas the source text in the *Didascalia* has the Lord God making this statement.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> My arguments for this statement adapt some of the reasoning found in J. Mueller, *Ancien Testament* (2005), 92-107, 120-6.

<sup>23</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:175 to AC 5.7.1. See also *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:223 and *Didascaliae apostolorum canonum ecclesiasticorum traditionis apostolicae versiones latinae*, ed. Erik Tidner, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 75 (Berlin, 1963), 78 (‘you who have been converted to believe in God our Savior Jesus Christ’) compared with AC 6.19.1 (‘we exhort you in the Lord’). Since there are no standard subdivisions of the text of the *Didascalia*, I refer to this work by citing volume and page numbers of Vööbus’ English translation of the Syriac version (*Didascalia in Syriac*) and by citing page numbers of Tidner’s edition of the Latin version (*Didascaliae apostolorum*). Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 1:77 to AC 2.20.8; *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:145 to AC 3.6.2; *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:211 to AC 6.7.2.

<sup>24</sup> See *Didascalia in Syriac* 2:223; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 78. Compare also *Didascalia in Syriac* 2:185 (the Lord speaks through Jeremiah) to AC 5.11.2 (God speaks through Jeremiah); similar revision at AC 6.20.6 (compare with *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2.226; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 82). The Lord’s words in Gospel and in Christ’s teaching (*Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:247; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 103) become God’s words in Gospel and in Christ’s teaching (AC 6.30.8).

<sup>25</sup> On the interpolations in this passage, see D. Fiensy, *Prayers* (1985), 171.

<sup>26</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 54-8; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4.10.1; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14; Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 2.5; Origen, *In Genesim homiliae* 11.3; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Eclogae propheticae* 1.7; 1.12 (PG 22, 1040-4; 1068-70); *Demonstratio evangelica* 1.5; 5.10; also *Commentaria in Psalmos on Psalm* 79:2 (PG 23, 953D).

<sup>27</sup> *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:170; similarly, compare AC 3.14.1, 5 with *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:152, 154; compare AC 4.3.1-2 to *Didascalia in Syriac* 2:161 and *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 63.

As the AC note in additions to their sources, as well as in passages retained from them, the Father and the Son are each Lord, creator, author of the resurrection, king, judge, agent of providence, and giver of the Law.<sup>28</sup> But it is more precisely through Christ that God creates the world, provides for it, gives the Law, works the resurrection, and executes his judgement (6.11.3).<sup>29</sup> At the Father's order, the Son creates the world and rises from the dead (5.7.12, 18; 7.34.6).<sup>30</sup> Sent by the Father into the world, the incarnate Son's main tasks on earth are teaching (a theme taken over from the *Didascalia*) and dying for the redemption and salvation of the world, an idea that the AC insert into their sources.<sup>31</sup> The AC add to the *Didascalia* that Christ assists and serves his Father, doing only his will, and he is submitted to his Father's authority as a deacon is to that of the bishop (AC 2.26.5; 2.30.2).<sup>32</sup> Insofar as the Son is priest of the Father and caused by him, the Father is superior (*kreittōn*) to him, an idea that the AC adds to its source texts (2.27.3-5; 8.5.1),<sup>33</sup> along with the notion that the Son depends on (*hypochreōs*) the Father as his servant (2.30.2).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> God the Father fulfilling all of these roles: AC 7.35.10; 7.36.1, 2 (redactional passages, according to D. Fiensy, *Prayers* [1985], 180-3); 8.33.3. In revisions of the *Didascalia*, we see Christ as creator: AC 3.9.4; 5.4.1; 5.14.20; Christ as judge: AC 5.6.10; Christ as agent of the resurrection: AC 5.7.12; Christ as giver of the Law: AC 6.25.2; Compare these passages, respectively, with *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:151, 170, 191-2, 174-5, 179 and *Didascalie apostolorum*, 65-6 (the AC abounding in the sense already present in the *Didascalia*); *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:237 and *Didascalie apostolorum*, 90. Following the *Didascalia*, AC 6.22.5 calls Christ the lawgiver. Christ as agent of providence and lawgiver: AC 7.36.6 (interpolation, according to D. Fiensy, *Prayers* [1985], 135, 183). In phrases found in no other witnesses to the *Apostolic Tradition*, God and Christ are judges (AC 8.4.5; 8.12.38), and Christ is creator, lawgiver, and agent of providence (AC 8.7.5-8; 8.12.30).

<sup>29</sup> The text revised here is found at *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:214; providence: AC 4.44.3, clause added to *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:119-20; AC 8.13.10; creation and providence: AC 7.25.2 (added to *Didache* 9.3); 8.9.8, 10; 8.12.8, 30; 8.16.3; 8.37.2; 8.48.3; creation, providence, and giving of the law: AC 7.26.3 (added to *Didache* 10.3-4); creation and resurrection: AC 5.7.18-23, revising text found in *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:181-2 and *Didascalie apostolorum*, 68-9; AC 5.19.6, revising *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:199; AC 7.34.1, 8; 7.36.1 (interpolating Jewish prayers: D. Fiensy, *Prayers* [1985], 172-6, 181); creation: 8.5.2; 8.12.18.

<sup>30</sup> The first two passages are revisions of passages found at *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:181-2, 179 and *Didascalie apostolorum*, 68-9, 65-6.

<sup>31</sup> Compare the following pairs of texts on baptism: AC 6.15.1, 4 and *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:156-7; AC 7.22.2-3 and *Didache* 7.1-3. See also on baptism: AC 7.43.4; 8.47.47. From a Eucharistic prayer: AC 8.12.30-1.

<sup>32</sup> See *Didascalia in Syriac*, 1:100, 103 and *Didascalie apostolorum*, 42. See also Jesus as *pais* at 8.12.27, 30; 8.15.2.

<sup>33</sup> Compare the first passage with *Didascalia in Syriac*, 1:100 and *Didascalie apostolorum*, 42.

<sup>34</sup> Comparing Christ the Son of the Father to a bishop's deacon. Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 1:103. Asterius of Cappadocia (fragment 27, from Athanasius, *De decretis* 8.1) thought that the Son is an assistant (*hupourgōs*) and helper (*boēthos*) through whom the only God acts to make the other creatures (*ta loipa ktismata*), which cannot bear the direct activity of the inoriginate Father. Here Asterius sees the Son's assisting service as that of a creature, the only one to come

The long Eucharistic prayer notes that the Son is the worthiest worshipper of the Father (8.12.7, 27). The *AC* add to the *Didascalia* that the Son has piety towards the Father insofar as the Son suffers and the Father is his God (5.3.5),<sup>35</sup> while, according to a redactional insertion into an originally Jewish prayer, piety is precisely our attitude toward the Son (7.35.10).<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the Son is God, but in a secondary sense compared to the divinity of the Father, who is alone God over all things (*AC* 1.8.1; 3.17.4; 6.11.1; 6.18.2; 7.26.3; 8.6.11; 8.12.25; 8.48.3).<sup>37</sup> In redactional passages, the *AC* call the Son only-begotten God (3.17.4<sup>38</sup>; 7.43.2, 3; 8.5.2; 8.7.8), God the Word (6.11.10; 7.26.3; 7.36.6<sup>39</sup>; 8.12.7), our God (8.12.27, 30), our God and Savior (8.5.7; 8.48.3), and the resurrected God who judges (5.19.6).<sup>40</sup> The *AC* add to a list of heresies in the *Didascalia* the impious supposition that Jesus is the God over all things (6.26.2).<sup>41</sup>

The liturgy of the *AC* backs up this secondary status for Christ's divinity. A redactional passage at *AC* 6.14.2 specifies that the Father alone is to be worshipped, but through Christ. Of the dozens of prayers and doxologies in the *AC*, only six are addressed to Christ. The Eucharistic Maranatha of *Didache* 10.6 asks for the Lord to come (*AC* 7.26.5), which is something the Father does not do. Explicitly after and on account of the Father, Christ is offered worship in the blessing of the baptismal water (7.43) and in two Eucharistic doxologies (8.12.50; 8.15.9). The bishop's prayer at the dismissal of the possessed from

directly from the Father; see Markus Vinzent, *Asterius von Kappdokien, die theologischen Fragmente: Einleitung, kritischer Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar*. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 20 (Leiden, 1993), 96 (text), 206 (commentary). The *AC* expressly affirm and deny that the Son is a creature (see discussion above), and *AC* 2.30.2 emphasizes the Son's dependence on the Father. In the same place, Vinzent points out that, in a way like that of Asterius, Eusebius of Caesarea uses *hupourgōs* at *Demonstratio evangelica* 4.10.16; *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.2.3-5; 1.2.23. These Eusebian passages mention the Son's authority over the world derived from his ineffable origin. The *AC* do not use the words *hupourgōs*, *hupourgeō*, *boēthos*, and *boētheō* to depict the Son's relationship to the Father. Vinzent does not list *diakonōs* or *hupochreōs* in his index to Greek concepts in the Asterian fragments (pp. 372-5), and I have not found Eusebius using *hupochreōs* of Christ. But Eusebius does compare Christ's mediation of grace and creation to Moses' work as a *diakonōs* through whom God gave the law (*De ecclesiastica theologia* 2.14.9-10). See also Eusebius, *Eclogae propheticae* 1.10 (PG 22, 1053D: the divine Word as deacon of the Father's will; but Gabriel, too, at *Eclogae propheticae* 4.24, PG 22, 1236D); *Demonstratio evangelica* 5.11.3 (the Son mediating [*diakonoumenon*] oracles to the Old Testament saints).

<sup>35</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:172.

<sup>36</sup> See D. Fiensy, *Prayers* (1985), 180.

<sup>37</sup> For source passages modified here, see *Didascalia in Syriac*, 1:20; 2:156-7 (and *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 59), 214-5, 220-1 (and *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 76-7); *Didache* 10.2-4. The passages in *AC* 8 are also redactional.

<sup>38</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:156-7.

<sup>39</sup> On these three texts respectively, see *ibid.* 2:214; *Didache* 10.2-4; D. Fiensy, *Prayers* (1985), 135, 183.

<sup>40</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:199.

<sup>41</sup> Compare *ibid.* 2:237-8; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 90-1.

the Eucharist is addressed to Christ, but in response to the deacon's call for a prayer that God might free the possessed through Christ, and while the doxology is addressed first to Christ, it tacks on a glorification of the Father through Christ (8.7). In a context emphasizing adherence to the will of the Father through Christ, the doxology added to the *Didascalia* at AC 2.14.11 is likely to the Son, but perhaps to the Father.<sup>42</sup> We seem to have here an antimodalist subordinationist Christology very often expressed by an updating of traditional texts that were considered to be apostolic but that called Jesus God in terms that could also be used of the Father. Unlike the theology of Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, the *AC*'s theology avoids using any language of hypostasis, essence, likeness, or image, although moderate Origenists had already been alarmed at the subordinationism they saw in the prohibition of essence language by the statement of faith elaborated at Sirmium in 357.<sup>43</sup>

Redactional passages in the *AC* communicate teaching that sees the Holy Spirit as the most eminent of creatures, created through Christ before, even if like, all the rest (6.11.2<sup>44</sup>; 8.12.7-8). Called in redactional passages servant (8.5.5; 8.12.8) and witness (6.15.4; 7.22.1<sup>45</sup>; 8.12.39; 8.33.7) to the Son, the Spirit is his interpreter (8.12.8) and has a teaching to deliver (6.18.4),<sup>46</sup> even as the Spirit benefits from the high-priestly mediation of Christ (6.30.10).<sup>47</sup> God the Father is the Lord of the Spirit (8.37.2), although the *AC* never call the Father Christ's Lord. It makes sense, then, that the *AC* never attribute to the Spirit any role in creation, in providence, in the giving of the law, in judgement, or in the resurrection of Christ. The *AC* cut out from the *Didascalia* the notion that the Spirit causes Jesus to ascend to heaven; instead, it is the Father who does so (6.30.9).<sup>48</sup> While the baptismal creed of the *AC* mentions that baptizands say 'I believe and am baptized' in the Father and in the Son, it repeats only the

<sup>42</sup> 'For it is necessary to affirm (*istan*) not the will of the hard-hearted people [who do not reintegrate repentant sinners into the church], but that of the God and Father of all things, that [will] which is through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom [masculine, singular] the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen'. See *Didascalia in Syriac*, 1:56; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 21-2.

<sup>43</sup> See L. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy* (2004), 149-53, 179; John Behr, *The Formation of Christian Theology*, vol. 2: *The Nicene Faith*, part 1: *True God of True God* (Crestwood, N.Y., 2004), 86-95; Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2011), 21-2; Christopher Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven, 2012), 173.

<sup>44</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:214. For arguments justifying the punctuation of this passage of the *AC*, see Marcel Metzger, 'La théologie des Constitutions apostoliques par Clément', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 57 (1983), 29-42, 112-22, 169-94, 273-94, at 273-4; J. Mueller, *Ancien Testament* (2005), 103<sup>229</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> For the source passages modified in these two texts, see *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:215; *Didache* 7.1.

<sup>46</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:215, 221 and *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 76.

<sup>47</sup> An idea absent from the source text attested at *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:248; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 103.

<sup>48</sup> Compare *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:248; *Didascaliae apostolorum*, 103.

verb ‘I am baptized’ before the phrase ‘in the Spirit’ (7.41.4-5, 7). In erasing the Spirit as an object of baptismal faith, the AC distinguish themselves from the fourth-century Syriac translation of the *Didascalia*,<sup>49</sup> as well as the following creeds: that of Caesarea known to Eusebius, as reported in Athanasius’ *De decretis* 33.4-5, and the creeds of Nicaea, Fourth Dedication of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Constantinople I. Origen seems to have known a creed professing belief in the Holy Spirit.<sup>50</sup> Even while claiming the creaturely status of the Spirit, Eunomius himself presented an exposition of faith that proclaimed, ‘[W]e believe in one Paraclete, the Spirit of truth’.<sup>51</sup> Daley makes the useful comment that the AC adhere to the tradition of ‘referring to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together, as a distinctive and irreducible triad forming liturgical speech and action’.<sup>52</sup> But how traditional is this adherence if it takes the Holy Spirit out of the baptismal profession of faith?

The combined arguments of Eduard Schwartz, C.H. Turner, and Marcel Metzger have shown that the long recension of the fiftieth of the Apostolic Canons in AC 8.47 goes back to the redactor of the AC. The shorter recension of this canon, appearing in Ioannou’s collection of ancient church discipline, resulted from a later hand’s effort to clean up what had come to look like an unorthodox text.<sup>53</sup> The longer recension of Canon 50 includes a commentary on the triple-immersion baptismal rite that conveys some of the standard anti-modalist formulae aimed at the most characteristic doctrines of the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople I. The commentary mentions three times that the unbegotten God was neither incarnate nor submitted to the passion of the Cross

<sup>49</sup> *Didascalia in Syriac*, 2:174-5: ‘We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and in God His Father, the Lord God Almighty, and in His Holy Spirit’; revised in AC 5.6.10: ‘believing in the one and only true God and Father through Jesus Christ, the great high priest and redeemer of souls and rewarder of struggles’.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, his *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis* 32.16 and other passages mentioned by J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 92-3.

<sup>51</sup> See his *Expositio fidei* 4, lines 1-2, 12, Richard Paul Vaggione (ed. and trans.), *Eunomius: The Extant Works*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford, 1987), 156. All the Trinitarian creeds mentioned in Hünermann’s edition of Denzinger and in Kelly’s *Early Christian Creeds* that they know not to be fragmentary have an explicit confession of faith in the Spirit, including the creed Arius and Euzoios submitted to Constantine in 327. See J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 189-90; Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Peter Hünermann, 40th ed. (Feiburg, 2005), nos. 1-76.

<sup>52</sup> B. Daley, ‘Enigma’ (2010), 142-3, which cites AC 8.47.50 as forfending a modalism ‘possibly thought to lurk in an indiscriminate use of the term *homoousios*’ (p. 143).

<sup>53</sup> Eduard Schwartz, ‘Über die pseudoapostolischen Kirchenordnungen’, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5: *Zum Neuen Testament und zum frühen Christentum* (Berlin, 1963), 192-273, at 221-8; originally published separately as *id.*, *Über die pseudoapostolischen Kirchenordnungen*, Schriften der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Straßburg 6 (Strassburg, 1910), 15-8; C.H. Turner, ‘Notes on the Apostolic Constitutions, II: The Apostolic Canons’, *JTS* 16 (1915), 523-38; M. Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques* (1987), 3:10-2; Périclès-Pierre Joannou, *Discipline générale antique (IV<sup>e</sup>-IX<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, vol. 1.2: *Les canons des synodes particuliers*, Fonti 11 (Rome, 1962), 33-5.

since he has no king and is submitted to no one's will. Unlike the Son, the Father is no one's high priest. The commentary insists that neither was the Paraclete incarnate or exposed to suffering since the Holy Spirit is without flesh. The commentary also emphasizes that the Paraclete is neither the Father nor the Son, and we see critique of those who would confuse these three. While avoiding mention of the *homoousion*, the commentary explicitly eschews for the Spirit the attributes co-creator, co-provident, co-lawgiver, co-judge, and co-cause of the resurrection, together with equality of honor (*homotimon*), any of which would place the Spirit, called here again Christ's servant and witness, at the same level as Father and Son. Finally, the commentary fears a duplication in Christ of the *anarchos* Father and has no hesitation in evoking the menace of a modalism – belief in one God who is three in name only – that threatens the integrity of the economy of the incarnation and that would go all the way back to Simon Magus. Both the Christology and the pneumatology of the *AC*, then, seem to contrast with positions of the other allies and sources that Daley links to Meletius.

I now move to confirm this contrast in Christology and pneumatology by referring to signs that the *AC* are close to a Trinitarian doctrine like that of Eunomius. On one hand, Bernard Sesboüé's summary of Eunomius' theology describes fairly well the main lines of that found in the *AC*: 'There is for him only one God alone in the strict sense, the unbegotten; there is also a god in a minor sense, the Only-Begotten, who is the god of creation; as for the Spirit, he is not God, nor an object of adoration, he belongs to the world of creation'.<sup>54</sup> Khaled Anatolios' account of the fourth-century Trinitarian debates has rightly accepted the case elaborated by Thomas Kopeček in favor of recognizing that the prayers and creeds of the *AC* contain a number of expressions very close to those of Eunomius and Aëtius.<sup>55</sup> Kopeček even argues that the first lines of the episcopal ordination prayer of the *AC* contain direct allusions to the first

<sup>54</sup> *Saint Basile et la Trinité: Un acte théologique au iv<sup>e</sup> siècle; Le rôle de Basile de Césarée dans l'élaboration de la doctrine et du langage trinitaire* (Paris, 1998), 48, referring to Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, *Studia ephemeridis 'Augustinianum'* 11 (Rome, 1975), 502.

<sup>55</sup> K. Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea* (2011), 72 ('the *Apostolic Constitutions* ... shows traces of emanating from Eunomian circles'), 76 ('If we can take the *Apostolic Constitutions* as a witness to Eunomian liturgical life, we find that Christ's role as obedient servant also has a doxological dimension, as we saw with Arius: "Christ's role is that of the prototypical worshiper of God"'), citing Thomas Kopeček, 'Neo-Arian Religion: The Evidence of the *Apostolic Constitutions*', in Robert C. Gregg (ed.), *Arianism: Historical and Theological Reassessments; Papers from the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Patristic Studies, Sept. 5-10, 1983, Oxford, Engl.*, Patristic Monographs 11 (Philadelphia, 1985), 153-79, at 172-3 and 169. The starting point for Kopeček's article and for his review of the second and third volumes of Metzger's edition of the *AC* (*JTS* 39 [1988], 611-8, at 614-8) are the arguments in Georg Wagner, 'Zur Herkunft der Apostolischen Konstitutionen', in *Mélanges liturgiques offerts au R. P. Dom Bernard Botte O. S. B. de l'Abbaye du Mont César à l'occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de son ordination sacerdotale (4 juin 1972)* (Louvain, 1972), 525-37.

lines of Arius' profession of faith sent by letter to Alexander of Alexandria around 321, as well as to the lead syllogism in Aëtius' *Syntagmation*, establishing that the Father is above all cause and becoming.<sup>56</sup> Whether such passages, whose presence in the prayers of the AC Metzger admits,<sup>57</sup> show dependence, rapprochement or distancing with respect to the positions of Aëtius, Eunomius, and their associates or followers, there is no reason to think that the redactor did not subscribe to the Trinitarian doctrine that these texts express. Thus, Daley's assertion that 'the language of the' AC 'successfully avoids the technical terminology of fourth-century debates' would gain in cogency by considering Kopeček's arguments and the use in the AC of terms like *ou ktisthenta*, *ktistheisēs*, *asugkritos*.<sup>58</sup> Following Metzger, Daley believes that the Christology of the AC owes much of its language and conceptuality to Origen and Philo, but this interpretation does not really contradict the placement of the AC's theology near to that of Eunomius.<sup>59</sup> An argument connecting the AC to Meletius' circle would do well to answer Kopeček's position, an answer that Daley's larger argument did not leave him space to give. Such an answer would include pointing out that, although he endorses the Son's creation as the Wisdom of Proverbs 8:22 (5.20.9; 7.36.1), the redactor of the AC explicitly denies that the Son is a creature (7.41.5).<sup>60</sup> It therefore seems difficult to identify the theology of the AC as simply Eunomian.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See T. Kopeček, 'Neo-Arian Religion' (1985), 161-4. Compare AC 8.5.1 ('the only unbegotten ... the one who ever is and is existing before the ages ... the being superior to all cause and becoming [*genesis*], the only true, the only wise ... the only good') with the texts in Athanasius, *De synodis* 16 ('the only unbegotten, the only eternal ... the only true ... the only wise, the only good') and in L.R. Wickham, 'The *Syntagmation* of Aetius the Anomean', *JTS* 19 (1968), 532-69, at 540-1. For the dating of Arius' profession of faith, see Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Mich., rev. ed. 2002), 48-62.

<sup>57</sup> Marcel Metzger, 'La cognoscibilité de Dieu dans les Constitutions apostoliques', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 67 (1993), 37-50, at 50.

<sup>58</sup> B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 142. For the use of 'cause' in the Trinitarian theology of the AC, go to 3.17.2; 6.11.1; 8.5.1; 8.12.6; 8.47.50, all redactional passages.

<sup>59</sup> See B. Daley, 'Enigma' (2010), 141, citing M. Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques* (1986), 2:32; *id.*, 'Théologie des Constitutions apostoliques' (1983). More particularly, see the following pages of Metzger's article: 46-8, 173-4, 284, 292. Here Metzger depends on J. Lebreton, 'Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Église chrétienne du III<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 19 (1923), 481-506 and 20 (1924), 5-37, especially 26-33.

<sup>60</sup> The manuscript tradition is the strongest argument for the authenticity of the *ou ktisthenta* ('not created') at AC 7.41.5. See M. Metzger, *Constitutions apostoliques* (1987), 3:99; *id.*, 'Cognoscibilité' (1993), 46. Kopeček's arguments in favor of reading *kai ktisthenta* ('and created') do not convince me; see his review of the second and third volumes of Metzger's edition of the AC in *JTS* 39 (1988), 616-7.

<sup>61</sup> Here I do not follow Anatolios' notion that the AC come simply from a Eunomian milieu, although the liturgy of the AC could well have similarities to Eunomian liturgy. See note 55 above. For Eunomius, the Son is not uncreated (*ouk aktiston*), but a creature (*poiēma*) whose creator (*poiētēs*) is the Father (for example: *Expositio fidei* 3, line 4; *Liber apologeticus* 12; 17; 26; 28; R.P. Vaggione, *Eunomius*, 152, 46-8, 54, 68-70, 74).

I conclude that Brian Daley is right to put the *AC* between, on one hand, radical anti-Nicene positions like that of Eunomius and, on the other hand, a theology of Christ's unity with the Father that would undermine the distinctions between them in a way that could be charged with modalism. But the *AC* do not seem to be navigating between this Scylla and that Charybdis in the Nicene direction that Meletius ended up taking. The redactor of the *AC* may be backing away from Eunomius, but there is still room to question whether he is approaching the embrace of those, like Meletius, who supported the movements that gave us the creed of the First Council of Constantinople.



# ‘O Day of Resurrection!’: The Paschal Mystery in Hymns

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## ABSTRACT

As a genre of sophisticated theological reflection, liturgical hymnody remains largely underappreciated in modern scholarship. This article offers a close reflection on one *sticheron* from the paschal cycle of the ‘Byzantine’ rite, examining the hymn’s scriptural and patristic sources, arguing that it stands in a tradition of Christological exegesis, which is the basis for the hymn’s authority.

The paschal mystery of Christ is the source and summit of the Christian life and the foundational truth of the gospel proclamation, and the development of an annual commemoration of this mystery in the rites of Holy Week and Easter occasioned the composition of some profound liturgical texts, especially in the Orthodox East where hymnody came to dominate the principle offices into which the Holy Week ceremonies were incorporated, first in the monasteries and then more widely after the demise of the Constantinopolitan cathedral rite.<sup>1</sup> Much of this liturgical material contains sophisticated theological reflection upon the central themes of the Christian *kerygma*, but hymns have received little scholarly attention, especially with regard to their theological content. In what follows, I wish to consider in detail just one *troparion*, Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα, which has long been part of Eastern Christian paschal observance and remains so in the modern ‘Byzantine’ rite. After some historical remarks, I shall examine carefully two examples of the language found in this *sticheron*, then I shall consider its sources and the way in which the theology of the text is constructed. I shall conclude with a few very brief comments on the construal of hymnography in liturgical studies and historical theology.

The text I wish to consider is instantly recognizable to anyone familiar with the current Byzantine rite:

Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα,  
καὶ λαμπρυνθῶμεν τῇ πανηγύρει // καὶ ἀλλήλους περιπτυξώμεθα.

<sup>1</sup> For a brief overview, see Robert F. Taft, ‘Holy Week in the Byzantine Tradition’, in Maxwell E. Johnson and John Francis Baldwin (eds), *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, 2000), 155-81.

Εἴπωμεν ἀδελφοὶ καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἡμᾶς·  
 Συγχαρῆσωμεν πάντα τῇ Ἀναστάσει, καὶ οὕτω βοήσωμεν·  
 Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας,  
 καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζοῆν χαρισάμενος.

O day of Resurrection!

Let us be made radiant by the festival // and let us embrace each other.

Let us say, brothers, even to those who hate us,

‘Let us forgive all things by the Resurrection,’ and thus let us cry:

‘Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,

and, upon those in the tombs, bestowing life.’

This hymn is attested in liturgical use since at least the time of the so-called *Typikon of the Anastasis* (copied in AD 1122, though probably reflecting ninth to twelfth century use), in which it was assigned to prominent moments in the paschal office, including the dramatic ceremony at the opening of the doors of the Church of the Resurrection early on Easter morning.<sup>2</sup> In the modern Byzantine rite, Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα is the *doxastikon* of the Paschal Stichera, which are prescribed for the Praises at Matins of Pascha and Bright Week, and thereafter as the Aposticha of Vespers on Saturday evenings, and additionally at Matins on Sundays according to the Greek *typikon*, until Ascension.

Unlike the wildly popular Paschal Canon by John of Damascus, the Paschal Stichera have seldom captured scholarly interest. When commentators have spoken, they have noted the similarity of apparent influences here and in the Canon, which is directly inspired by the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, known in the East as ‘the Theologian’.<sup>3</sup> Many of the images, and indeed whole phrases, are reproduced verbatim from Gregory’s two extant paschal orations (*Or.* 1 and 45), the first of which was for many centuries the appointed sermon for Paschal Matins in the Christian East, while his second homily for the feast was read on Bright Monday.

The first part of the *doxastikon* of the Paschal Stichera almost exactly parallels the opening of Gregory’s *First Oration*, differing only in the omission of

<sup>2</sup> The name ‘*Typikon of the Anastasis*’ is commonly applied to Hagios Stavros Gr. 43, which is transcribed in Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, ‘I. Τυπικὸν τῆς ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐκκλησίας’, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμητικῆς Σταχυολογίας* Vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1894). It has received treatment most recently by Daniel Galadza in his unpublished PhD thesis, *Worship of the Holy City in Captivity* (Rome, Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2012), 34-9, and ‘Sources for the Study of Liturgy in Post-Byzantine Jerusalem’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 67 (2013), 75-94.

<sup>3</sup> See Peter Karavites, ‘Gregory Nazianzinos and Byzantine Hymnography’, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993), 81-98. Karavites points out the large number of hymns which quote or allude to Gregory’s orations or follow the structure of his thought; this borrowing may be seen as early as the works of Romanos the Melodist, and more so in the poetry of the great canonists of the eighth to eleventh centuries. Karavites mentions Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα only in passing at the beginning of his article, as one of the more commonly recognized texts indebted to the Theologian.

two short phrases and the addition, at the conclusion, of the Paschal Troparion Χριστὸς ἀνέστη with a short introductory phrase. The homily begins:

O day of Resurrection! And the beginning is right. Let us be made radiant by the festival and let us embrace each other. Let us say, brothers, to those who hate us and not only to those who have done or suffered something out of love: 'Let us forgive all things by the Resurrection.' And let us give forbearance to one another...<sup>4</sup>

A close relationship between homily and hymn cannot be denied, and it is usually assumed that the latter quotes from the former, in the manner of the Paschal Canon. John of Damascus undoubtedly composed the Canon, which is attributed to him in both liturgical books and hagiographical texts, and given the apparent similarity in compositional history between the Paschal Stichera and the Paschal Canon, John is perhaps the most obvious candidate for authorship of these *stichera*, which are unattributed in modern printed liturgical books and appear to have been ever thus.

Future manuscript work may conclusively revise this assumption, but for now we may briefly note three points of an internal textual nature that offer an alternative to the hypothesis of Damascene authorship and possibly point to a longer textual history. First, the manner in which Gregory is quoted: the Canon quotes words and phrases from his homilies, in fresh combinations, with comment and expanded reflection, while the *doxastikon* is more or less quoted verbatim at length. Second, the composite nature of the Paschal Stichera when we consider them as a unit. The first and fourth *troparia* are encomia on the word 'Pascha', while the second and third *troparia* expound the theme of the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb (somewhat similarly to the Evlogitaria of the Resurrection sung at Matins of Holy Saturday and all Sundays), and the fifth *troparion*, the *doxastikon*, is, if you like, a meditation on the consequence of the Resurrection for us. It would be unfair to say that there is no formal coherence to this arrangement, but one would perhaps expect something more thematically and stylistically cohesive if these *stichera* were composed as a complete set. Of course, this fact does not eliminate the possibility that John collated them or composed individual *troparia* himself, but it does open the door more widely to the possibility that the *doxastikon* was borrowed from elsewhere and not composed for the Paschal Stichera as a pair with the Canon. Third, the perplexing omission in the *doxastikon* of two brief phrases from Gregory's homily, which poses not so much a direct challenge to John's authorship, but raises the prior question of whether Gregory was drawing on traditional material which he interpolated to make it more relevant to his homily.

<sup>4</sup> Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα, καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ δεξιᾶ, καὶ λαμπρυνθῶμεν τῇ πανηγύρει, καὶ ἀλλήλους περιπτυσώμεθα· εἴπωμεν, ἀδελφοί, καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἡμᾶς, μὴ ὅτι τοῖς δι' ἀγάπην τι πεποιηκόσιν, ἢ πεπονθόσι· συγχωρήσωμεν πάντα τῇ ἀναστάσει· δῶμεν συγγνώμην ἀλλήλοις... Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 1* (PG 35, 396-401).

A further complication is introduced by the existence of two variants on the received text, found in the aforementioned *Typikon of the Anastasis*. The first occurrence of this hymn in the *akolouthia* of Pascha gives the text to the Patriarch as his opening words at Paschal Matins, and includes the phrase *καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ δεξιά* (which it is rather difficult to know how to translate effectively), thereby differing from the opening words of the homily only in the omission of the longer line: ‘And not only to those who have done or suffered something for love...’<sup>5</sup> The second variant omits both these phrases (which are also absent in the received text), and also preserves an alternative opening exclamation, *Ἀγαλλιάσεως ἡμέρα...* ‘O day of rejoicing!’ Are these variations on a single *sticheron* composed by John, which heavily quotes Gregory? Or do they evince an independent and malleable unit of hymnody, which either drew on Gregory’s homilies or, perhaps, pre-dated them? It should be noted that the sequence of *troparia* in the *Typikon of the Anastasis* in which *Ἀγαλλιάσεως ἡμέρα* occurs at the Praises of Matins is quite different than the Paschal Stichera known today. Clearly, there are questions that demand further historical research in answer.

I wish now to look at the theological sources of the *doxastikon* of the Paschal Stichera. Like most Byzantine hymns, *Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα* is saturated with scriptural language, though this is perhaps not immediately apparent and is certainly obscured for those who hear such hymnography only in translation or with a limited knowledge of the Scriptures to which it appeals. In closely examining the language of this *sticheron*, we see that the hymn is far from some kind of ‘non-biblical’ poetic retelling of Christian truth, but a work of theology in the same vein as much early theological reflection, which sought Christ in the Scriptures first and foremost, in this case specifically in the prophecy of *Isaiah*.

The most obvious indication that the hymn is inspired by this prophecy is found in its close paraphrase of part of *Is.* 66:5. The prophet writes: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word. Say “our brothers” to those who hate us and abhor [us], so that the name of the Lord might be glorified and might be seen in their joy, and they shall also be put to shame’.<sup>6</sup> This quotation

<sup>5</sup> In her otherwise lucid translation, Nonna Verna Harrison renders the first line of Gregory’s *Or.* 1 as ‘it is the day of resurrection and an auspicious beginning’. See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Festal Orations*, trans. Nonna Verna Harrison (Crestwood, 2008), 57. From a cursory glance, it seems that the extensive commentary tradition on Gregory’s orations, beginning in the fifth century, demonstrates no clearer sense of the meaning of this phrase.

<sup>6</sup> Ἀκούσατε τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου οἱ τρέμοντες τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ· εἶπατε ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἡμᾶς καὶ βδελυσομένοις ἵνα τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου δοξασθῆ καὶ ὀφθῆ ἐν τῇ εὐφροσύνῃ αὐτῶν κάκεινοι αἰσχυνθῆσονται. The text of *Isaiah* differs considerably between the LXX and the Masoretic text. The Hebrew text of *Is.* 66:5 reads: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word: Your brothers that hate you, that have cast you out for the sake of my name, have said “Let the Lord be glorified, that we may gaze upon your joy”, but they shall be ashamed’. The LXX clearly reverses the sense of the Hebrew in the second part of the

from *Isaiah* immediately draws our attention to the eschatological vision concluding the prophecy, and firmly connects it to its fulfillment in Christ’s Passion and Resurrection. The second-century philosopher Justin Martyr takes up this passage in the same way in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, where he writes:

Jesus commanded, ‘Love even enemies’, which was proclaimed in many words by *Isaiah*, in which also is the mystery of our regeneration [τὸ μυστήριον πάλιν τῆς γενέσεως ἡμῶν], and, quite simply, of all those who expect that Christ will be revealed in Jerusalem and are eager to please him by their works. These are the words said by *Isaiah*: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word. Say, “our brothers”, to those who hate you and abhor the name of the Lord to be glorified’.<sup>7</sup>

The overarching theme of the *doxastikon* – the relationship between resurrection and reconciliation – is evident here in Justin’s thought, which ties Christ’s instruction to his disciples, to ‘do well to those who hate you’ (*Matth.* 5:44 // *Luke* 6:27), with the prophecy of *Isaiah*. Justin thereby demonstrates his understanding of how all the Scriptures speak of Christ and his teachings, and he relates this to what he calls ‘the mystery of our regeneration’, an idiom used in the same chapter of *Isaiah* to speak of redemption, and likewise to speak of the church and the mystery of salvation.

Once the link between this *sticheron* and the prophecy of *Isaiah* has been noticed, then further scriptural connections become apparent. An example is the use of πανηγύρις, commonly translated in this context as ‘feast’ or ‘festival’, in the line ‘let us be made radiant by the festival’. The most common word for a festival in the Greek Scriptures is ἑορτή – this is found throughout the Old Testament, and a number of times in the New Testament, always indicating one of the annual Jewish feasts. By contrast, the term πανηγύρις occurs only once in the New Testament, in the *Letter to the Hebrews*, where the author exhorts his audience to persevere in the race and ‘pursue peace with everyone’ (*Heb.* 12:14), on account of having come to Mount Zion ‘to a festival [πανηγύρει]

verse. Justin’s text (discussed below) is closer to the Hebrew in translating דבר (word) in both cases as ῥῆμα, but this lessens the force of the Christological reading of the prophecy, which is so obvious in the LXX text. There is much confusion over the translation of the personal affixes in the Hebrew: whereas the LXX renders them both as first-person plural pronouns (ἡμῶν/ἡμᾶς), producing the reading I suggest, Justin offered the first as a first-person plural (ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν) and the second as a second-person plural (μισοῦσιν ὑμᾶς); neither accurately translates the Masoretic Hebrew text which gives ‘your’ in both cases.

<sup>7</sup> Ἰησοῦς ἐκέλευσεν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς, ὅπερ καὶ διὰ Ἡσαίου ἐκεκήρυκτο διὰ πλειόνων, ἐν οἷς καὶ τὸ μυστήριον πάλιν τῆς γενέσεως ἡμῶν, καὶ ἀπλῶς πάντων τῶν τὸν Χριστὸν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ φανήσεσθαι προσδοκόντων καὶ δι’ ἔργων εὐαρεστεῖν αὐτῶ σπουδάζοντων. Εἰσι δὲ οἱ διὰ Ἡσαίου λόγοι οὗτοι· Ἀκούσατε τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου, οἱ τρέμοντες τὸ ῥῆμα αὐτοῦ. εἶπατε· ἀδελφοὶ ἡμῶν, τοῖς μισοῦσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ βδελυσομένοις τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου δοξασθῆναι. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 85.7, in E.J. Goodspeed (ed.), *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen, 1915).

and assembly [ἐκκλησία] of the first-born who have been enrolled in the heavens' (*Heb.* 12:23).<sup>8</sup>

Πανηγύρις is at root a compound noun, from πᾶς and ἄγυρις, meaning something like a 'general assembly' or perhaps, more idiomatically, a 'mass gathering'.<sup>9</sup> I suggest that what remains as the definitional residue when πανηγύρις and ἑορτή are juxtaposed is the emphasis in the former on collectivity and in-gathering for a common (religious) purpose.<sup>10</sup> This sense of πανηγύρις as a 'festal assembly' is key to linking the *sticheron* Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα with the single New Testament occurrence of the term in the *Letter to the Hebrews* and one of its rare uses in the Septuagint at *Is.* 66:10. It seems to me that the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews* is drawing on the eschatological vision in which the prophecy of *Isaiah* culminates, which has now been fulfilled for those who have received the 'unshakable Kingdom' (*Heb.* 12:28), for, as the Letter says (*Heb.* 12:22-4),

[They have] come to Mount Zion, a city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and a myriad of angels, a festival [πανηγύρει] and assembly of the first-born who have been enrolled in the heavens, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous who have been made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaks better than that of Abel.

This passage resonates with the language of *Isaiah* in chapter sixty-six (vv. 10-24), where the prophet writes:

Exult, O Jerusalem, and make festival [πανηγυρίσατε] in her, all you that love her; rejoice greatly, all you who grieve over her ... As a mother comforts a child, even so shall I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem ... I know their works and their thoughts. I am coming to assemble all the nations and tongues, and they shall see my glory...

These verses are relevant not only for their obvious use of the term we are examining, πανηγύρις. They also follow the passage noted above, which the *doxastikon* quotes; likewise, they are drawn from the final reading from *Isaiah*

<sup>8</sup> Πανηγύρις is also rare in the Septuagint, occurring only six times, usually pejoratively. It translates three different Hebrew roots, which are more commonly translated by other Greek terms: (1) *Hos.* 2:13 and 9:5, *Ezek.* 46:11: מַעַד (*mo'ed*) from יָעַד (*ya'ad*), to appoint a time, designate a time, to gather by appointment; מַעַד (*mo'ed*), appointed time or place; (2) *Amos* 5:21: חַג (*hag*) from חָגַג (*hgg*), festal gathering, specifically a pilgrimage feast; see Arabic *hajj*; see *Ex.* 23:14; *Is.* 66:10: גִּילָה (*gilā*) from גָּלַל (*gyl*), to rejoice. Πανηγύρις also occurs at *Wisd.* 15:12, a Greek text which is not part of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>9</sup> For the etymology of πανηγύρις see Liddell & Scott, 1297.

<sup>10</sup> This reading is supported by the instance where πανηγύρις translates חַג (*hag*) at *Amos* 5:21. The eschatological character of the Christian πανηγύρις is highlighted by the fact that it also translates יָעַד (*ya'ad*), which in other instances is rendered in Greek by καιρός (*e.g.* *Ps.* 103:19 LXX), which in turn has a very specific meaning in Christian usage, related to the 'appointed time' of Christ's coming.

assigned in the Byzantine lectionary during the Lenten cycle, read at the Ninth Hour on Friday in the Sixth Week of Lent, that is to say, in the final liturgical moments of Great Lent proper, before the services shift gear into the eschatological mode of Great and Holy Week. This passage from *Isaiah* concludes the triumphal announcement of the Lord's victory, which begins in chapter sixty, with words which cannot but resonate with anyone who knows the Byzantine Paschal Canon: 'Shine, shine, O Jerusalem, for your Light is coming, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you...' (*Is.* 60:1 LXX). Thus, the *doxastikon* of the Paschal Stichera does not refer generically to a festival, but appeals to a very specific image in Scripture with a clear eschatological context.

To conclude, then, we can see that this *troparion*, so prominent in the contemporary 'Byzantine' rite, contains some carefully constructed, quite traditional theology. Whatever the relationship of the *sticheron* to Gregory's homily, it also has roots deep in the Septuagint, from which its central imagery of festal gathering and brotherly reconciliation is drawn. In this respect, the hymn should be understood as very much a product of the patristic mindset. And whether or not it quotes Gregory, we should resist the idea that its authority or truthfulness rests in its derivation from a patristic text. Rather, its authority derives from the way in which it constructs its meaning, through the configuration and interpretation of the Scriptures in the light of Christ. Such an insight should impact the way we think about hymnography more broadly in the history of the liturgy and as a theological resource. We should exercise caution around the oft-repeated assertion of liturgists that early Christian liturgy moved from a focus on 'biblical' hymns to 'extra-biblical' hymns, because in fact many of the latter are firmly grounded in Scripture and represent a continuation of the tradition of theology which we see in earlier sources. Furthermore, in turning to the liturgy of the church as a theological resource today, we should be careful to examine closely how the liturgy constructs its meaning before granting it fundamental 'revealed' authority.



# Witnessed by Angels: The Role of Angels in Relation to Prayer in Four Ante-Nicene Euchological Treatises

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## ABSTRACT

On the basis of four treatises on prayer from the third century, this article investigates the role of angels in connection with the act of praying. The sources are: Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis*, Book 7, Origen's *Peri Euchês*, Tertullian's *De oratione* and Cyprian's *De oratione Dominica*. Despite of the different emphases in these treatises, they all accentuate the social relations established in the act of prayer. Most important are the vertical relations to the triune God and the horizontal relations to the fellow Christians. The authors, however, envisioned that additional celestial agents, such as angels, were involved in the act of prayer, but the authors understood the role of angels differently. For instance, Clement describes the angels as praying by themselves (*Stromateis* 7.7), whereas Origen points out that the angels pray with the Church (*Peri Euchês* 31.5); and Cyprian mentions the angel Raphael's role as mediator between humans and God (*De oratione Dominica* 33). These are but a few of the many examples. The aim of this article is to investigate these different roles of angels with the purpose of outlining the 'social world' in which the Late Antique Christians shaped their Christian identity.

## Introduction

In modern times, the reformed theologian, Karl Barth, has characterized angels as 'essentially marginal figures'.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Barth has specified that '... every angelological statement can only be an auxiliary or additional statement ...',<sup>2</sup> because angels are just auxiliary and additional figures in relation to the Word of God. When it comes to the role of angels within Christian theology, Barth

<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, III.3, The Doctrine of Creation § 50-1* (London, 2010), 371. I became aware of Barth's analysis of angels via a reference in Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (Oxford, 2013), 7.

<sup>2</sup> K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (2010). In order to get the full picture, it is worth mentioning that according to Barth, the marginal character of angels also constitutes the glory of angels, since angels are servants to God and man. They are directed to God and man, and they belong especially to the person and work of Christ.

wishes to follow a *via media* ‘between the far too interesting mythology of the ancients and the far too uninteresting “demythologization” of most of the moderns’.<sup>3</sup>

Despite of such modern reservations, the theme of this article is exactly the ancients’ view on angels. In particular, this article focuses on the role of angels in relation to prayer in Christian texts from the third century. In the following we shall investigate four third-century treatises on prayer. These four treatises are the earliest Christian texts on prayer that have been handed down to us. The sources are: Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromateis*, Book 7, Origen’s *Peri Euchês*, Tertullian’s *De oratione* and Cyprian’s *De oratione Dominica*. We are thus looking at both the Alexandrian and Latin tradition at the dawn of the third century.

The guiding questions in this article are: What was the role of angels according to third-century theology? And which effects were angels thought to have in the social world of third-century Christianity? These questions are not easy to answer, because the authors of the third century understood the role of angels in varied ways, and there does not seem to have been a unified concept of angels in the late antique period.<sup>4</sup> However, in all four treatises dealt with here, there are frequent references made to angels as agents with important roles in relation to both collective and personal prayer. This article will give some examples of this. First, however, it is worth mentioning that both collective and personal prayer in third-century Christianity had an inherent social character, and angels were frequently understood as agents taking part in prayer. The presence of angels and other figures has made Lorenzo Perrone characterize the moment of prayer as ‘the realization of a larger communion. Such an act of communion not only involves the persons of the Trinity, but implies also the active assistance of the angels and the saints, with the whole “cosmic theatre” as the proper scene of this most personal act’.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Paul Bradshaw notes that Christians in the early church seem to have prayed very frequently, and their prayers were in some sense liturgical. By ‘liturgical’ Bradshaw refers to the fact that prayer ‘either was done corporately, or at least involved forms of worship which were also being offered by other Christians and was associated with the prayer of the rest of the church by being said at the regular hours of the day and night which others were praying’.<sup>6</sup> Also, the Oxford-scholar Carol

<sup>3</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (2010), 369.

<sup>4</sup> In her book *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (2013), Ellen Muehlberger shows that the ideas and beliefs about angels were varying among Christians also in the following centuries. See also M. Recinová, ‘Clement’s Angelological doctrines: Between Jewish Models and Philosophic-Religious Streams of Late Antiquity’, in M. Havrda, V. Hušek, J. Plátova (eds), *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis. Proceedings of the Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria* (Leiden, 2012), 93-112, 93.

<sup>5</sup> Lorenzo Perrone, ‘Prayer in Origen’s *Contra Celsum*: the Knowledge of God and the Truth of Christianity’, *VC* 55 (2001), 1-19, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Bradshaw, ‘What Happened to Daily Prayer?’, *Worship* 64 (1990), 10-23, 10.

Harrison notes that ‘[prayers] are all multifaceted dialogues – between the speaker and God; the speaker and him or herself; the speaker and any intended or imagined (over)hearer (human beings, angels, and demons)...’

Carol Harrison has noted that the attendance of ‘angelic powers’ in prayer is ‘a relatively neglected aspect of the early church understanding of communal prayer’.<sup>7</sup> One could add that the presence of ‘angelic powers’ is also neglected in relation to individual prayer. In the following, examples will be presented where angels appear in the treatises on prayer. We shall first investigate instances dealing with angels and collective prayer and thereafter with instances dealing with angels and individual prayer.

### Angels and collective prayer

The four early theologians under investigation, Clement, Origen, Tertullian and Cyprian, share one belief concerning angels and prayer: that collective prayer taking place on earth is a foreshadowing of the heavenly worship in which angels were thought to be engaged already. Angels thus became ideals for constant and perfect prayer.

In Tertullian’s treatise, there are more instances where he makes a link between, on the one hand, present worship and prayer in the Christian congregation and, on the other hand, the angels praying in heaven. He sees a connection between current worship and future glorification. For instance, Tertullian mentions that Christians ‘are here already learning that heavenly song to God and that task of future glory (*iam hinc caelestem illam in Deum vocem et officium future claritatis ediscimus*)’.<sup>8</sup> Tertullian thus clearly understood salvation as connected to the heavenly worship. This is also a theme in the last paragraph of *De oratione*, where Tertullian expresses the idea that a cosmic act of prayer is taking place at the moment when the congregation prays: ‘Indeed, every angel prays, every creature’.<sup>9</sup> Tertullian writes as if the future salvation and the present worship are conflated in the present. Prayer is thus breaking boundaries of time and space, and allows the whole of creation – past and present, heavenly and earthly – to be united in prayer. Also angels take part in this prayer. Furthermore, in this last passage, Tertullian depicts how prayer sways the entire creation: ‘And even now (*nunc*<sup>10</sup>), the birds arise, lifting

<sup>7</sup> Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2003), 200.

<sup>8</sup> Tertullian, *De oratione* 3 in *De baptismo, De oratione/ Von der Taufe, vom Gebet*, ed. Dietrich Schleyer (Turnhout, 2006), and translated by Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord’s Prayer* (New York, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 29.

<sup>10</sup> Here I follow the editions of E. Evans and G.F. Diercks: *Tertullian’s Tract on The Prayer*, ed. E. Evans (London, 1953) and *Tertulliani De Oratione et De Virginitibus Velandis Libelli*, ed.

themselves to heaven, spreading out their wings like a cross whilst uttering what appears to be prayer'.<sup>11</sup>

Also Clement envisioned the heavenly, angelic prayers as taking place in parallel to human prayer and worship. He notes that the angels are praying and are doing so in a better way than the ordinary Christians, because the angels only pray for continuance of blessings and not for anything new.<sup>12</sup> The most perfect Christians, whom Clement calls true gnostics, however, are able to take part in the prayer of angels already while he/she is here on earth: '[The gnostic] prays also with angels (μετ' ἀγγέλων εὐχεται), as being already equal to angels (ὡς ἂν ἤδη καὶ ἰσαγγελος), and never passes out of the holy keeping: even if he prays alone (κἂν μόνος εὐχεται) he has the chorus of saints (τὸν τῶν ἁγίων χορόν) banded with him'.<sup>13</sup>

The approach of Clement's Alexandrian successor, Origen, is a bit different. Where Clement sees ordinary Christians as not yet capable of praying with angels, Origen holds that angels pray with the entire Church.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Origen shows a more egalitarian and collective sentiment, and expresses it by way of the participation of angels. Origen believes that where a congregation is in place, it will in fact be a twofold church, at the same time human and angelic.<sup>15</sup> Origen is certain that when Christians pray together, they are not only praying with each other, but also with Christ, with already deceased Christians and with angelic powers (ἀγγελικῶν δυνάμεων). He thus envisions a cosmic gathering that is called forth by Christians praying in a group, and he supposes that such a gathering makes prayer as efficient as possible.<sup>16</sup>

Cyprian for his part does not mention angelic worship in *De oratione Dominica*, but he envisions future salvation as worship. This becomes evident from the last passage of his treatise on prayer, where he writes that Christians should pray now because in the Kingdom of God 'we shall pray constantly and give

G.F. Diercks, *Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia IV* (Antwerp, 1956), since Schleyer has *tunc*, i.e. 'then', *De baptismo, De oratione/ Von der Taufe, vom Gebet*, ed. D. Schleyer (2006).

<sup>11</sup> Tertullian, *De oratione* 29 in *De baptismo, De oratione/ Von der Taufe, vom Gebet*, ed. D. Schleyer (2006) and translated by A. Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord's Prayer* (2004).

<sup>12</sup> Clement, *Stromateis* 7.7.39, ed. Fenton J.A. Hort and Joseph B. Mayor, *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies, Book VII. The Greek text with introduction, translation and notes* (London, 1902).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 7.12.78.

<sup>14</sup> Origen, *Peri Euchês* 31.5, ed. P. Koetschau et al., *Origenes Werke*, GCS 3 (Leipzig, 1899) and translated by A. Stewart Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord's Prayer* (2004).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 31.5

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* The way in which Origen presents also the deceased as intercessors in prayer recalls his ideas of the 'heavenly priesthood', Pamela Bright, 'Priesthood', in John Anthony McGuckin (ed.), *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, 2004), 180. In the early church order *Apost. Trad.* 41, another reason for collective prayer is given, namely that the Spirit is present where Christians pray collectively.

thanks to God'.<sup>17</sup> Praying on earth is thus a foreshadowing of eschatological realities.

There are thus differences between the Christian authors' views on angels in relation to collective prayer. Whereas, Tertullian and Origen hold that angels are actively praying with Christians on earth, Clement seems to believe that angels are praying with their own, distanced from ordinary human beings. According to Clement, only perfect Christians have reached a level where they pray with angels, and a benefit of being a perfect Christian is the participation in angelic prayer. The above mentioned examples show that angels occasionally were understood to have a positive influence on the efficacy of prayer, and angels were frequently employed to create a positive image of congregational worship as something uniform and harmonious. The congregation as such stood in connection with the heavens and with heavenly prayer.

### Angels and individual prayer

Angels were not only believed to work together with the Christian community as such, but occasionally angels were also presented as having an effect on the spiritual development of the individual who prayed. This idea of angels as guardians and teachers in relation to prayer is found in the texts of the Alexandrian authors, Clement and Origen.

With a word borrowed from Ellen Muehlberger, the kind of discourse that deals with angels as teachers can be labelled 'cultivation discourse', because in this discourse the individual is seen to be cultivated by encountering angels. Ellen Muehlberger mentions how Origen and later on Evagrius reckoned that angels were rational beings who were in the process of returning to union with God. Humans found themselves in the same situation and had to find their way back to God. Angels were believed to help people in their individual return to God, which was made possible through studies and prayer. One manner in which the angels could help was by being witnesses to prayer and help to purify and educate the praying individual. In this way angels were connected to a certain 'cultivation' of the individual.<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned, Ellen Muehlberger acknowledges Origen as a predecessor for this sort of 'contestation discourse' which is developed further by for instance Evagrius Ponticus. However, when studying Clement of Alexandria, it is noticeable that already he presented angels in 'cultivation discourses'. Clement envisioned angels both as ideal figures, representing the highest level of being

<sup>17</sup> Cyprian, *De oratione Dominica* 36, in *L'oraison dominicale par saint Cyprien*, ed. M. Réveillaud (Paris, 1964) and translated by A. Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord's Prayer* (2004).

<sup>18</sup> E. Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (2013), 210-2.

(except from the divine persons) and as guides that help the individual in his/her progress towards God. As such angels had a 'cultivating effect' both as ideals and as assumed helpers in prayer. Angels were almost perfect beings, according to Clement. Because of their degree of perfection, they could help Christians. Clement believed that there was a hierarchy of beings within the cosmos: 'At the extreme end of the visible world there is the blessed ordinance of angels; and so, even down to ourselves, ranks below ranks are appointed, all saving and being saved by the initiation and through the instrumentality of One'.<sup>19</sup> These angels are themselves in need of salvation, and therefore their progression is an ideal for human beings. The true gnostic is therefore admonished to '[fix] his eyes on noble images, on the many patriarchs who have fought their fight before him, on a still greater multitude of prophets, on angels beyond our power to number, on the Lord who is over all, who taught him, and made it possible for him to attain that crowning life'.<sup>20</sup>

The role of angels, however, goes beyond being ideals. Clement also believes that angels actually work in the world for the benefit of human beings, and that the process towards salvation is furthered by the chastening act of angels. In this way angels exercise *pronoia* on behalf of God.<sup>21</sup> According to Clement, *pronoia* is the way in which God works. God educates human beings by the events that occur in their lives. Therefore God's *pronoia* is an education, a *paideia*. In this life humans will experience punishment and chastisement, 'which we have to endure as salutary chastening (εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένομεν σωτήριον)'. Silke-Petra Bergjan formulates it thus: '*Pronoia* describes the joining of the individual into the broader framework which Clement interprets as education'.<sup>22</sup> Angels take part in the chastening of Christians, but according to Clement at some point the individual Christian reaches a point at which angels cannot help any further, because the Christian has reached 'equality with the angels'.<sup>23</sup> When having been thus perfected, prayer becomes a confession and response to the promise of salvation instead of a petition: 'The gnostic should no longer need the help given through the angels, but being made worthy

<sup>19</sup> Clement, *Stromateis* 7.2.9, ed. F.J.A. Hort and J.B. Mayor, *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies, Book VII* (1902).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 7.11.63.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 7.2.11. On the role of angels in Clement's work, see also Silke-Petra Bergjan, 'Clement of Alexandria on God's Providence and the Gnostic's Life Choice: The Concept of *Pronoia* in the *Stromateis*, Book VII', in M. Havrda, V. Hušek, J. Plátova (eds), *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis* (2012), 63-92, 78.

<sup>22</sup> Silke-Petra Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott. Der Begriff der PRONOIA Gottes in der apologetischen Literatur der Alten Kirche* (Berlin, 2004), 173: '*Pronoia* beschreibt die Einbindung des einzelnen in den Gesamtzusammenhang, und Clemens interpretiert dies als Erziehung' (own trans.).

<sup>23</sup> Clement, *Stromateis* 7.10.57, ed. F.J.A. Hort and J.B. Mayor, *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies, Book VII* (1902). The gnostic also prays with the angels and saints whenever he prays (*ibid.* 7.12.78).

should receive it from himself, and have his protection from himself by means of his obedience. The prayer of such an one [sic] is the claiming of a promise from the Lord'.<sup>24</sup>

In *Peri Euchês*, Origen presents similar ideas regarding God's *pronoia* and its salvific effects, and he confesses: 'I do think that God deals with each rational soul in such a way as to lead it to eternal life'.<sup>25</sup> Origen makes it clear that angels play a role in helping people back to God. For instance, he notes that to the person who prays perfectly, God will give more than what is prayed for, namely also the guidance of an angel (*cf. Eph. 3:20*). Origen writes that God will send an angel: 'To this other person who will be of a particular character, I shall send this angel to assist (τὸν ἄγγελον λειτουργόν) him, to work with him for a certain time for his salvation...'<sup>26</sup> According to Origen, angels are 'superior co-workers' (τὸν κρείττονα συνεργόν) of God, *i.e.* superior in comparison with human beings and other 'inferior powers' (χειρῶν ... ἢ δύνಾಮις). Also Origen believes that angels pray with humans and work to fulfil prayers. He summarises: 'But more than this, the angel of each of us (ὁ ἐκάστου ἄγγελος), even of 'little ones' in the church, who for ever look upon the face of the Father in heaven and on the divinity of the one who formed us, prays alongside us and acts together with us, as much as is possible, with regard to the matters concerning which we pray'.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, Origen presented the idea that the world is 'a theater of angels and humans (ἐν θεάτρῳ ἔσμεν κόσμου καὶ ἀγγέλων)', and that every human has an individual angel who is in contact, face to face, with the Father in heaven (τίς ὁ ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ἄγγελος βλέπων 'τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς' 'πατρὸς' τὸ πρόσωπον).<sup>28</sup> According to Origen, angels are thus also mediators between humans and God.

The Latin authors do not in the same way understand angels to play a role in the development and divine education of human beings, although Tertullian admonishes Christians to be 'angelic' (*angelorum candidati*).<sup>29</sup> This admonition has positive connotations and is related to the anticipated salvation.

Cyprian refers to angels mentioned in the Scriptures and makes the point that angels are witnesses before God; angels testify to the prayers and good deeds of people. Cyprian mentions the angel coming to Cornelius in *Acts 10:3-4* to

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 7.13.81.

<sup>25</sup> Origen, *Peri Euchês* 29.13, ed. P. Koetschau *et al.*, *Origenes Werke* (1899) and translated by A. Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord's Prayer* (2004).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 6.4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 11.5. (see *Matth.* 18:10).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 28.3.

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *De oratione* 3 in *De baptismo, De oratione/ Von der Taufe, vom Gebet*, ed. D. Schleyer (2006) and translated by A. Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord's Prayer* (2004).

testify to the efficiency of Cornelius' prayers and almsgiving.<sup>30</sup> Cyprian also refers to the angel Raphael as a witness to prayer. It is the angel who bears the 'recollection of your prayers into the presence of the holiness of God'.<sup>31</sup> Angels are thus part of the monitoring of Christians that Cyprian mentions at several instances, but they are also helpers in the communication with God.

## Conclusions

We cannot point to one specific function of angels in relation to prayer in the four treatises studied here. Angels are presented as role models, witnesses, educators, mediators and helpers in the act of praying. Generally, according to the Alexandrian mind-set, angels are dynamic and act on their own accord for the benefit of individual Christians who pray; they exercise *pronoia* on behalf of God.<sup>32</sup> Contrary, according to the Latin authors, angels are more passive in relation to human prayers, they observe and witness.

Frequently in the early Christian treatises on prayer, prayer was presented as having to do with social relations and relations to various types of beings. Recognising this social dimension of prayer and worship might give us an idea about how the world must have been perceived by early Christians. A person praying found himself in a communion or *synaxis* whether he or she prayed alone or in a congregation. When praying, the individual Christian was encouraged to see him or herself in relation to the others with whom he or she was praying. The act of praying was therefore also an act of relating to others. Modern identity theories propose that identity is always formed through interaction and relations with others.<sup>33</sup> Since Christians apparently saw angels as real social beings, then angels – through the relationship established between humans and angels in prayer – could also have a formative effect on the Christians. As influential agents in the Christian narrative, angels were more than witnesses.

<sup>30</sup> Cyprian, *De oratione dominica* 32 in *L'oration dominicale par saint Cyprien*, ed. M. Réveillaud (1964) and translated by A. Stewart-Sykes, *Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen On The Lord's Prayer* (2004).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 33. See *Tob.* 8:12.

<sup>32</sup> S.-P. Bergjan, 'Clement of Alexandria on God's Providence and the Gnostic's Life Choice: The Concept of *Pronoia* in the *Stromateis*, Book VII' (2012), 78.

<sup>33</sup> This understanding of identity is for instance prevalent within the stream of thought called 'Symbolic interactionism', see e.g. Maria Munkholt Christensen, *Relating through Prayer: Identity Formation in Early Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main, 2016). See also R. Hvalvik and K.O. Sandnes, *Early Christian Prayer and Identity Formation* (Tübingen, 2014).

## He Lifted to You? Lost and Gained in Translation

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### ABSTRACT

The bread rite described in the Last Supper narratives in the synoptic gospels and *1 Corinthians* have nothing between the verbs of *taking* and *praying*, but the synoptic accounts of the feeding of the multitudes have an intervening reference to *looking up*. In the liturgical anaphoras other intervening elements appear in the same place, including the perplexing ἀναδείξας [*he lifted/showed*] element in the Anaphoras of Basil and James, with parallels in Syriac and Armenian texts. This article offers an explanation for in ancient cross-lingual borrowings.

The use of an institution narrative in anaphoras emerges with certainty only from the fourth century, and every instance contains elements that are not derived from the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper (*1 Cor.* 11:23-6, *Matt.* 26:26-9, *Mark* 14:22-5, and *Luke* 21:15-20). Those four passages are the only biblical sources for the cup-rite, but the same bread-rite is found in the feeding of the multitudes in all four gospels (*Matt.* 14:19, 15:36, *Mark* 6:41, 8:6, *Luke* 9:16, and *John* 6:11), and in Luke's post-resurrection supper at Emmaus (*Luke* 24:30). The verbs describe the ritual activity, and in turn form the core of the liturgical narratives: *take*, *bless*,<sup>1</sup> *break* (pertaining only to bread and fish) and *give*. The biblical narratives are simplest, with the direct and indirect objects of the verbs often being understood from the context alone, whereas the liturgical anaphoras expand on them in ways that more specifically describe the subject, *Jesus*, and direct and indirect objects: *loaf/loaves*, *fishes* and *cup* are variously the direct objects for *take*, *break* and *give*, which itself has *disciples*, *crowds*, or *communicants* as its indirect objects. *Bless* has *God the Father* as direct object, but it sometimes has *loaf/loaves*, *fishes* or *cup* as a prepositional goal, but a later tendency makes these direct objects, as is the case for some synonymous verbs, such as *sanctify*, that came to populate the field. The Last Supper and the liturgical narratives have another category of verb, *say*, that introduces the interpretive words 'This is my body ... This is the blood...'

<sup>1</sup> For simplicity, *bless* is used throughout to cover all original forms, *bless*, *praise*, and *give thanks*, and all later additions: *glorify*, and *sanctify*.

The most common liturgical additions to the description are of three types: 1) an adverbial expansion on *take* mentioning *his hands*, themselves often further adjectivally expanded, *holy* being the simplest and most regularly found; 2) an adverbial prelude to *blessing* that has Jesus *looking heavenward* or *lifting his eyes to the Father* that designates a prayer posture or disposition; and 3) varying ways of specifying the contents of the cup.<sup>2</sup> It is a mistake to dismiss every addition as non-scriptural solely because it is foreign to the Last Supper narratives, for a reference to *looking heavenward* as a prelude to *blessing* is found in three of the synoptic versions feedings (*Matt.* 14:19, *Mark* 6:41 and *Luke* 9:16) in the form ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. The Byzantine anaphoras of Basil and James have in the same place an unusual phrase with no obvious scriptural antecedent, ἀναδείξας σοὶ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ [*having up-lifted* (or *shown, dedicated*) *to you, the (his) God and Father*].<sup>3</sup> The verb requires a direct object, but lacks one here, and so the phrase does not make sense, strictly speaking. Translators therefore often add an appropriate pronominal object to point to the bread or cup, but why Jesus would show or lift them to God is not at all clear. Another possibility is to read it as indicating Jesus presenting himself to the Father, but asking how he would do so finds no ready answer, nor why he should do so since there is no corresponding practice in Scripture – unless he were lifting his hands in prayer in the common *orans* position, but his holding loaves or cup would make that awkward at best.

A careful comparison of the elements found in this position in scripture and anaphoras can offer insight into this novel phrase in these Byzantine anaphoras, and indeed in Syriac anaphoras.<sup>4</sup> In 1912 Paul Cagin published a detailed comparison of the semantic units of institution narratives by way of Latin translations, but while this made comparison easier it flattened the variety of

<sup>2</sup> Eastern texts usually specify mixed wine and water, whereas the West has only the oblique phrase *hunc praeclarum calicem* to point to wine; see Barry M. Craig, 'Potency, not Preciousness: Cyprian's Cup and a Modern Controversy', *Worship* 81 (2007), 290-313. Eucharists in apocryphal Gospels and Acts often specify a mixture of water and wine, but none that I have found mention hands or looking upward.

<sup>3</sup> Frank E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford, 1896), 327, here following *Grottaferrata Γβ VII* since this section is lost from the oldest witness, *Barberini gr. 336*. The composite text is given without manuscript information in Anton Hänggi, Irmgard Pahl, Albert Gerhards and Heinzgerd Brakmann, *Prex Eucharistica, I, Textus e variis liturgiis antiquioribus selecti*, SF 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Freiburg, 1998), 234, which text is also employed in John R.K. Fenwick, *The Anaphoras of St Basil and St James: An Investigation into their Common Origin*, OCA 240 (Rome, 1992), 125.

<sup>4</sup> The field suffers from the lack of editions of all seventy known Syriac anaphoras, which for consistency may be referred to by the number out of seventy as assigned by Alphonsus Raes in his alphabetic listing in his introduction to the incomplete collection in *Anaphorae Syriacae* [= AS] (Rome, 1939-1981), I.1, xi-xiv, although the 22 anaphoras it did publish are also numbered in order of appearance. Others have since appeared, without critical details, in the bilingual edition of Athanasius Y. Samuel (ed.), Murad S. Barsom (trans.), *Anaphoras: The Book of the Divine Liturgies according to the Rite of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch* (New York, 1991).

expressions in use and so disguised differences.<sup>5</sup> In 1928 Fritz Hamm produced another study that looked at this element with more detail, but without getting to its origin or connections outside liturgical texts.<sup>6</sup> In this article, relevant texts are examined in their original languages.

One of the earliest witnesses to the inclusion of an institution narrative in anaphoras, *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.12.36-7,<sup>7</sup> is also the earliest witness to the presence of all three common types of expansion mentioned above. Its *looking up* element, ἀναβλέψας πρὸς σέ, τὸν Θεὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ Πατέρα (*looking up to you, his God and Father*) does not cite the phrase found in the synoptics' feeding account (ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν), nor any other Scripture passage; it employs the same verb as the feeding story, but its prepositional goal is personal. While the *Ap Cons* narrative does not cite Scripture, the earliest liturgical texts generally tended to use allusion rather than citation; for example, *Ap Cons* lacks any of the scriptural *blessing* verbs in either the bread or cup units, but it does introduce ἀγιάσας (*hallowed*) in the cup unit. Nearly identical forms of its ἀναβλέψας construction, but expanded with the mention of it being toward heaven as found in the feedings' Synoptic accounts, are found in later instances of the Egyptian anaphoras of Mark and Basil,<sup>8</sup> and with a variant in Egyptian Greek Gregory.<sup>9</sup> The equivalent is also found in Ambrose, *De sacramentis* 4.21, and later Irish-Gallican books,<sup>10</sup> though this northern form was later replaced with the variant form in the Roman Canon. The same is also found in the narrative added to Maronite Sharar that originally had no institution narrative.<sup>11</sup> The unexpanded scriptural form is found in the Syriac anaphoras of Mark and John the Evangelist.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Paul Cagin, *L'Euchologie latine étudiée dans la tradition des ses formules et de ses formulaires*, 2, *L'Eucharistia: Canon primitif de la messe ou formulaire essentiel et premier de toutes les liturgies* (Paris, 1912).

<sup>6</sup> Fritz Hamm, *Die liturgischen Einsetzungsberichte im Sinne vergleichender Liturgieforschung untersucht*, LQF 23 (Münster in Westfalen, 1928), especially 55-60, 65-8.

<sup>7</sup> Marcel Metzger, *Les Constitutions Apostoliques. Livres VII et VIII*, SC 336 (Paris, 1987), 196-8.

<sup>8</sup> Egyptian Basil (Greek and Bohairic): Achim Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora: Text, Kommentar, Geschichte*, JThF 7 (Münster, 2004), 152-3. Egyptian Mark (Greek); Papyrus, *Manchester John Rylands Library* n.465; A. Hänggi, *Prex* (1998), 120; and G.J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St Mark*, OCA 234 (Rome, 1990), 39-43.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Eucharistischen Hochgebets*, LQF 65 (Münster, 1984), 32. The Coptic Bohairic version is still to be collated: Ernst Hammerschmidt, *Die koptische Gregoriosanaphora: Syrische und griechische Einflüsse auf eine ägyptische Liturgie* (Berlin, 1957), 34-6.

<sup>10</sup> Alban Dold and Leo Eizenhöfer, *Das Irische Palimpsestsakramentar im Clm 14429 der Staatsbibliothek München*, Text und Arbeiten 53/54 (Beuron, 1964), 15-6.

<sup>11</sup> AS n.18 (60/70) II.3, 300, also known as Peter 3.

<sup>12</sup> Mark [AS 51/70; Samuel-Barsom, 166], and John the Evangelist [AS 37/70; Samuel-Barsom, 233-4].







Arm Basil-1 <sup>18</sup>	ցուցեալ			բեզ շար եւ Ա<ստուծոյ>
Arm Basil-2 <sup>19</sup>	վերացուցեալ			բեզ Ա<ստուծոյ> եւ շար
Arm James <sup>20</sup>	եցոյց			բեզ շար Աստուած
Syr James <sup>21</sup>	,aw			ԽԽԸ ԽԽԸ ԿԼ
5 Syriac texts <sup>22</sup>	,aw			ԽԽ ԽԽԼ ԿԼ
Roman Canon	elevatis	oculis	in caelum	ad te Deum Patrem suum
Maronite (late standard) <sup>23</sup>	չար	,տաւ		,տաւ ԽԽԸ ԿԽԼ
Jacob of Edessa <sup>24</sup>	ԼԻԻ ԽԸ	ԽԽԽ ԽԻա	ԽԽԽ.1 ԽԽԽԼ	ԽԽ ԽԼ
Dioscorus of Alexandria 2 <sup>25</sup>	ԿԽԽ		ԽԽԽ.1	
Severus of Antioch; 12 Apostles 1 <sup>26</sup>	ԿԽ		ԽԽԼ	

Reading across all gathered anaphoras reveals that, although *lifting the eyes* is much attested in Scripture, mention of *the eyes* appears remarkably rarely in the anaphoras, specifically the five (or six) mentioned in the table above. Western Europeans may be much more familiar with the ‘lifting his eyes to heaven’ expression due to its constant presence in the Roman Canon, whence it replaced the variant in the Ambrosian and Gallican traditions, but otherwise it remains little used among the total number of anaphoras composed.

In summary, it appears that the original phrase from the synoptic gospels accounts of the feeding of the multitudes with Jesus *looking to heaven* was early adopted into anaphoras in Syriac or Aramaic speaking circles, but in the form of the *lifting eyes* equivalent that was at the same time eliding mention of the eyes. The abbreviated form thence entered Greek in a literal translation that

<sup>18</sup> Gabriele Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora: Edition der beiden armenischen Redaktionen*, Anaphorae Orientales 2, Anaphorae Armeniacae 2 (Rome, 2005), 162-7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 232-7.

<sup>20</sup> Hans-Jürgen Feulner, *Die Armenische Athanasius-Anaphora*, Anaphorae Orientales 1, Anaphorae Armeniacae 1 (Rome, 2001), 323.

<sup>21</sup> AS n.14 (26/70), II.2, 144-6.

<sup>22</sup> Timothy of Alexandria [AS n.1 (69/70), I.1, 20; absent from the earliest manuscripts (8<sup>th</sup> C.) but present in the copy of one from 17<sup>th</sup> C.], John Chrysostom [AS n.4 (41/70), I.2, 166; 12<sup>th</sup> C.], Jacob of Sarug 2 [AS n.11 (31/70), II.1, 48 (pre-13<sup>th</sup> C.)], Celestine of Rome [AS n.17 (5/70), II.3, 248 (derived from Byzantine Basil, c. 10<sup>th</sup> C.)], and Philoxenus 1 [AS 62/70; Samuel-Barsom, 387-8].

<sup>23</sup> The standardized narrative throughout the *Missale Syriacum* (Rome, 1843).

<sup>24</sup> ET: Having lifted the (his) aspect/gaze/look slightly to the height of heaven.

<sup>25</sup> AS n.8 (16/70) v. 1.3, p. 308, 310. ET: turning to heaven.

<sup>26</sup> Severus of Antioch, and Twelve Apostles 1. ET: He stretched/spread/lifted to heaven.

was formerly valid, but it is not certain whether this was done by a native Syriac speaker who did not realise the Greek word does not have the same nuance, or by a native Greek speaker unfamiliar with the transferred sense of the Syriac. From the Greek sources it was adopted literally into Armenian, and was even transported back into Syriac in a similarly literal manner. The assimilation of the two synonymous forms in Byzantine James and Syriac Philoxenus 1 thus resulted in the redundant construction, 'looking up to heaven and looking/turning to you God the Father'. Such redundancy is itself distracting, but the second part was not intended to suggest that Jesus showed or lifted the loaf or the cup or himself to God the Father.

# Reconsidering the ‘Egyptian Connection’ in the Anaphora of Fourth-Century Jerusalem

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## ABSTRACT

Geoffrey Cuming’s 1974 article, ‘Egyptian Elements in the Liturgy of Jerusalem’, identified notable parallels between the liturgical practices of fourth-century Egypt and the rites described in the *Baptismal* and *Mystagogical Catecheses* of Jerusalem. These parallels, Cuming argued, indicated possible Egyptian influence on early Hagiopolite liturgical practice. Cuming’s suggestion was heavily criticized, but recent scholarship reexamining the relationship between the liturgical centers of West Syria, Jerusalem, and Egypt with regard to developments in early Christian baptismal rites, in particular, the rites of baptism fourth- and fifth-century Jerusalem, suggest that, Jerusalem’s developing liturgy may indeed share some important parallels with baptismal practice in the Egyptian tradition.

This article builds on that scholarship by focusing on the eucharistic portions of the texts that have been analyzed for their baptismal content, namely three texts from the family of the *Apostolic Tradition*. Following a brief comparison of the liturgical form and content of these texts, this paper concludes that sufficient similarities are evident between the fourth-century Hagiopolite eucharistic material and Egyptian eucharistic rites to merit a more detailed investigation of the relationship between these two liturgical centers.

## I. Introduction

Prior to Geoffrey Cuming’s 1974 article ‘Egyptian Elements in the Liturgy of Jerusalem’, scholars long assumed that the baptismal and eucharistic rites of early Jerusalem belonged to the Syrian liturgical family.<sup>1</sup> Cuming, however, argued that the Hagiopolite rites share more significant parallels with the Egyptian liturgical family than with the Syrian.<sup>2</sup> He based his argument on formal and structural parallels that he observed between early Egyptian liturgical sources and the liturgical rites described in the *Baptismal* and *Mystagogical Catecheses* attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a brief summary of scholarship on the Hagiopolite *Mystagogical Catecheses*, see Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2002), 113-4.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Cuming, ‘Egyptian Elements in the Jerusalem Liturgy’, *JTS* 25 (1974), 117-24.

<sup>3</sup> While scholars agree on the Cyrilline authorship of the *Baptismal Catecheses*, the authorship of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* remains a matter of some dispute. My work here will build on

Fifteen years later, Bryan Spinks published an article in which he identified several difficulties with Cuming's argument, chief among them the interpolation of an institution narrative into the eucharistic rite described in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, despite the absence of any mention of an institution narrative in the *Catecheses* themselves.<sup>4</sup> Spinks also highlighted several points of linguistic affinity between the Hagiopolite and Syrian baptismal and anaphoral traditions, as well as 'non-Egyptian anomalies' in the *Prayers of Sarapion*, which Cuming relied on as a key piece of evidence for the Egyptian liturgical tradition. Spinks ultimately concluded that Egyptian influence on the Hagiopolite liturgy could be neither proven nor ruled out; but his challenges to Cuming's hypothesis may need to be re-evaluated in light of subsequent scholarship on the rites of Egypt and Jerusalem.

Juliette Day and Maxwell Johnson, for example, have recently noted important parallels between the baptismal rites of these two liturgical centers. Day concludes her extensive study of the rites of initiation in fourth- and fifth-century Jerusalem in this way:

It has become apparent that the two sources which lie closest to the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, both theologically and structurally, would appear to be those 'derived' from the *Apostolic Tradition*: The *Canons of Hippolytus* [an Egyptian document] and the *Apostolic Constitutions* [a West Syrian document]. If the *Apostolic Tradition*, as reconstructed, lies behind the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, then the manner in which these two texts have interpreted their source is quite distinctive. It is possible, we suggest, that the *Mystagogical Catecheses* might be a Hagiopolite interpretation of whatever source (or sources) – possibly even a version of the *Apostolic Tradition* – lies behind the common sequence in the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Apostolic Constitutions*.<sup>5</sup>

And Johnson extends Day's conclusion, writing:

While there is no direct Egyptian influence implied here by Day, the possibility of an indirect influence or even a common, yet-to-be identified source, is certainly raised. And if this common source turns out to be, as she suggests, a version of the *Apostolic Tradition*, a document from which both the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Apostolic*

recent arguments by Alexis Doval and Donna Hawk-Reinhard, who argue that some form of the rite described in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* was likely known in Jerusalem by the late fourth century. Their work, in conjunction with recent evidence from Abraham Terian, persuasively establishes a *terminus ante quem* of 387 for the *Mystagogical Catecheses*. A. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of the Mystagogic Catecheses* (Washington, D.C., 2001); D. Hawk-Reinhard, *Christian Identity Formation through Sacramental Theosis in the Mystagogic Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem* (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 2012); and A. Terian, ed. and trans., *Macarius of Jerusalem: Letter to the Armenians, AD 335* (Crestwood, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Bryan Spinks, 'The Jerusalem Liturgy of the *Catecheses Mystagogicae*: Syrian or Egyptian?', *SP* 18 (1989), 391-6.

<sup>5</sup> Juliette Day, *The Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem: Fourth- and Fifth-Century Evidence from Palestine, Syria, and Egypt* (Burlington, 2007), 138.

*Constitutions* are derived, then I remain intrigued by the old hypothesis of J. M. Hanssens that the *Apostolic Tradition* itself had an Alexandrian origin!<sup>6</sup>

While Day is careful to avoid implying an Egyptian influence on Jerusalem, her findings do link Jerusalem's baptismal liturgy at least to the *Canons of Hippolytus*, a uniquely Egyptian re-working of the baptismal ritual of the *Apostolic Tradition*. And, as Johnson points out, given Day's suggestion that the baptismal prayers and practices described in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* a closer look at the possibility of a shared source may be in order. In any case, it is sufficient to say that scholars' understanding of the early development of early Christian liturgy – early Egyptian liturgical practice in particular – has advanced significantly in the forty years since Cuming's initial proposal.<sup>7</sup>

In this article, I build on Day and Johnson's recent work by examining and comparing the eucharistic rites in the liturgical texts that they have studied for their baptismal information.<sup>8</sup> In other words, I will begin re-considering the relationship between early Alexandrian and early Hagiopolite eucharistic prayers, starting with the set of prayers suggested by Johnson and Day. First, I will discuss some significant similarities between the eucharistic rite described in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* of Jerusalem, on the one hand, and the eucharistic rite of the *Apostolic Tradition* (and the associated evidence in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Canons of Hippolytus*), on the other. Then, I will highlight some important differences that suggest we look outside of the West Syrian liturgical family for the origins of at least some of the Hagiopolite eucharistical material. Finally, I will explain how the study of this topic opens the door for a re-consideration of Cuming's argument for Egyptian influence on the liturgy of fourth-century Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup> Maxwell Johnson, 'Baptism and Chrismation in Third- and Fourth-Century Egypt: The State of the Question', *Worship* 88 (2014), 311-32.

<sup>7</sup> See Paul F. Bradshaw, 'Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition: Eastern or Western?', in Maxwell E. Johnson (ed.), *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings in Christian Initiation*, (Collegeville, 1995), 7-16; Maxwell E. Johnson, *Liturgy in Early Christian Egypt*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 33 (Bramcote and Nottingham, 1993); and C.W. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From its Origins to 451 C.E.* (Leiden, 1990). Some recent studies that offer new insight into eucharistical material include Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 249 (Rome, 1995); Alistair C. Stewart, *Two Early Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, *Joint Liturgical Studies* 70 (Cambridge, 2010); Michael Zheltov, 'The Anaphora and the Thanksgiving Prayer from the Barcelona Papyrus: An Underestimated Testimony to the Anaphoral History in the Fourth Century', *VC* 62 (2008), 467-504.

<sup>8</sup> Juliette Day, 'The Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem: A Source for the Baptismal Liturgy of Mid-Fourth-Century Jerusalem', in Paul F. Bradshaw (ed.), *Further Essays in Early Eastern Initiation: Early Syrian Baptismal Liturgy*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 78 (Cambridge, 2014), 24-56; M. Johnson, 'Christian Initiation in Fourth-Century Jerusalem and Recent Developments in the Study of the Sources', *EO* 26 (2009), 143-61.

## II. Dating and provenance

As I move to examine major similarities in the texts, let me first discuss the geographical provenance and dating of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* of Jerusalem and the *Apostolic Tradition* (as well as its associated texts). According to Juliette Day's analysis, the *Mystagogical Catecheses* are dateable to 397 at the earliest. She argues that these *Catecheses* are probably not from the hand of Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem, because they do not appear to be consistent with the liturgy or theology of the *Baptismal Catecheses* (whose Cyrilline authorship is undisputed).<sup>9</sup> Alexis Doval, however, has upheld the traditional attribution of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* to Cyril; and Abraham Terian has argued in support of his thesis that the *Letter of Macarius* is from Macarius I of Jerusalem, and that the rites described in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* are therefore witnessed to – though perhaps in an early form – already by 335.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Maxwell Johnson has pointed out that, despite Day's argument that the *Mystagogical Catecheses* cannot be dated to the late fourth-century (i.e., to any time before 397), 'the supporting documents she cites – the *Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis*, the *Canons of Hippolytus*, and the *Apostolic Constitutions* – are themselves also mid- to late-fourth-century documents'.<sup>11</sup>

The main liturgical texts associated with the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* are the *Canons of Hippolytus*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and the reconstructed text of the *Apostolic Tradition* itself.<sup>12</sup> The *Canons of Hippolytus* are most likely Egyptian in origin and have been dated to the mid-fourth century, between 336 and 340.<sup>13</sup> The *Apostolic Constitutions*, on the other hand, are associated with the West Syrian anaphoral tradition and date to the late 370s or early 380s.<sup>14</sup> The *Apostolic Tradition* itself is a much more complicated text and more difficult to date. The introduction to the most recently reconstructed text, as edited by Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson, and Edward Phillips, argues that, like other known church orders, the existing translations of the *Apostolic Tradition* are best understood as 'living literature' (a term borrowed from Marcel Metzger), that is, as composite texts with older liturgical structures and traditions into which newer prayers, rules, and theological interpretations

<sup>9</sup> J. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy* (2007), 23.

<sup>10</sup> A. Terian, *Macarius of Jerusalem* (2008), 49.

<sup>11</sup> Maxwell E. Johnson, introduction to his forthcoming translation of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 35.

<sup>12</sup> The *Testamentum Domini* is also associated with the *Apostolic Tradition*, but because of its later date, I have omitted it from consideration in this article. For a brief summary of scholarship on the *Testamentum Domini*, see P. Bradshaw, *Search* (2002), 86-7.

<sup>13</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw (ed.), *The Canons of Hippolytus*, trans. Carol Bebawi, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 2 (Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> P. Bradshaw, *Search* (2002), 85.

have been edited (sometimes well and sometimes rather poorly).<sup>15</sup> And while the difficulty remains of determining exactly what is old and what is new in the church orders, many scholars agree that the earliest strata of the *Apostolic Tradition* not only lie behind the later versions of that text, but also provided source material for the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (along with other, later texts like the *Testamentum Domini*).<sup>16</sup>

### III. Some similarities

In the relevant texts, there are five portions that describe the rite and anaphora of the eucharist in detail: *Mystagogical Catecheses* 4 and 5, *Apostolic Tradition* 4 and 21, and *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.<sup>17</sup> While a helpful source for studying baptism, the *Canons of Hippolytus* offer us very little information on the eucharist – and no description of the anaphora at all. Indeed, after describing portions of the liturgy leading up to the anaphora, the text concludes the opening dialogue with these words: 'After that, [the bishop] says the prayer and completes the liturgy'.<sup>18</sup> (This is, of course, quite unhelpful.) *Apostolic Constitutions* 8 presents a much longer and more detailed description of the eucharist, which most scholars agree is at least partially based on the material in *Apostolic Tradition* 4.<sup>19</sup> As for the reconstructed text of the *Apostolic Tradition*, it includes two differently focused descriptions of the eucharist: one in Chapter 4, in which the elements of the eucharistic rite and the anaphora are described, and another in Chapter 21, in which we find an almost catechetical explanation of the antitypes of bread and wine where a description of the anaphora might otherwise have fallen.

Two key parallels emerge from these texts. First, we find similar material related to an institution narrative – or at least a formulation like an institution narrative. Second, the texts show a similar mystagogical mode of reflection, insofar as they share a description of the eucharistic elements as 'antitypes'.

<sup>15</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 2002), 13.

<sup>16</sup> P. Bradshaw, M. Johnson and L. Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition* (2002), 9-11.

<sup>17</sup> While *Apostolic Constitutions* 7 provides a description of a Eucharistic prayer, it does not seem to be related to the family of texts associated with the *Apostolic Tradition*. It is therefore an unhelpful point of comparison for this study. For a longer discussion of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, see P. Bradshaw, *Search* (2002), 84-6; W. Jardine Grisbrooke (trans. and ed.), *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students*, Alcuin/Grow Liturgical Study (Bramcote, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> *Canons of Hippolytus* 3. All translations of this document are from C. Bebawi (trans.), *Canons of Hippolytus* (2010).

<sup>19</sup> Enrico Mazza, *The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer*, trans. Ronald E. Lane (Collegeville, 1995), 129.

The first of these two parallels can be seen in *Mystagogical Catecheses* 4, which begins with an apparent allusion to *1Cor.* 11:23-5:

... in the night when he was betrayed our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body'. And taking a cup and giving thanks, he said, 'Take, drink; this is my blood'.<sup>20</sup>

However, as Emmanuel Cutrone and Massey Shepherd have pointed out, this is not a direct quotation of *1Cor.* 11:23-5. Rather, the mystagogue's opening 'quotation' is in fact an amalgamation of *1Cor.* 11:23-5 and *Matth.* 26:26-8.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the clear and well-developed parallelism between the bread/body and the wine/blood suggests not an early scriptural account of the Last Supper, but a fairly developed liturgical institution narrative that matches other institution narratives in the West Syrian family. This is made evident by comparing the direct quotation from *1Cor.* 11:23-5 with a similar liturgical formulation from the *Apostolic Tradition*. Here, for example, is what we find in the Latin version of the *Apostolic Tradition*:

... who when he was being handed over to voluntary suffering ... taking bread and giving thanks to you, he said: 'Take, eat; this is my body that will be broken for you'. Likewise also the cup, saying: 'This is my blood that is shed for you'.<sup>22</sup>

While *1Cor.* 11:23-5 reads:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'this is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'.

Even a brief comparison of the two texts reveals clear differences between the poetic, parallel formulation of the liturgical formulation, and the narrative description of the last supper provided by the apostle Paul. Both liturgical formulations lack mention of the 'new covenant' highlighted by *1Cor.* 25. Likewise, both drop Christ's command to, 'Do this in remembrance of me'.

Yet, despite the clear similarity between these two texts, using this parallel to determine lines of influence between the liturgy represented by the *Apostolic Tradition* and the liturgy represented by the *Mystagogical Catecheses* presents serious difficulties; and we should note two here. First, Bradshaw,

<sup>20</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses* 4.1. English translations are from F.L. Cross (trans.), *St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: Procatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses* (London, 1951).

<sup>21</sup> Emmanuel J. Cutrone, *Saving Presence in the Mystagogical Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem* (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1975), 116; Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., 'Eusebius and the Liturgy of Saint James', *Yearbook of Liturgical Studies* IV (1963), 122.

<sup>22</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 4.8-9. The Coptic and Arabic versions lack this passage. The Ethiopic version is virtually identical to the Latin.

Johnson, and Phillips argue that the institution narrative of the *Apostolic Tradition* is likely a later interpolation into an older layer of the text.<sup>23</sup> And second, the 'institution narrative' in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* seems not to have been used in the eucharistic anaphora at all. There remains some debate, of course, but many scholars now agree that it is unlikely that the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* knew an anaphora that included an institution narrative.<sup>24</sup>

Second, the texts share a similar style, with both texts using the Mystagogical terminology of 'antitype' to interpret the offering of bread and wine in the eucharist. *Apostolic Tradition* 21, for example, interrupts its description of the bishop giving thanks to interpret the elements in this way:

... let him give thanks [over] the bread for the representation (which the Greek calls 'antitype') of the body of Christ, and over the cup mixed with wine for the antitype (which the Greek calls 'likeness') of the blood...<sup>25</sup>

In this rather odd passage from the *Apostolic Tradition* we find a second key parallel with the *Mystagogical Catecheses* – specifically, with Chapter 5 of that work, in which the mystagogue says the following about the bread and wine: 'For we are bidden to taste, not bread and wine, but the *antitype* of the body and blood of Christ'.<sup>26</sup> The use of this technical term fits well with the typological interests of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, but fits awkwardly, at best, into the *Apostolic Tradition*'s rubrics for how the eucharistic rituals should proceed. Indeed, according to Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips, this almost certainly 'reflects either a reworking of the Greek behind this section or an editorial interpolation'.<sup>27</sup> I agree that some amount of reworking or editorializing is likely here, for the inclusion of the phrase 'which the Greek calls...'<sup>28</sup> would otherwise be unintelligible.

Since this portion of the *Apostolic Tradition* represents a later (possibly fourth-century) interpolation, we cannot draw any conclusions about influence – even geographical influence. Perhaps what we can see, however, is the way in which two distinct liturgical centers grappled with how to include and/or interpret the institution narrative and the change effected in the bread and wine through the epiclesis. Such an approach is particularly interesting in light of Day's suggestion that, while a comparison of these early texts may not solve the question of geographical lines of influence, it may yet help us to determine

<sup>23</sup> P. Bradshaw, M. Johnson and L. Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition* (2002), 46.

<sup>24</sup> For a summary of this argument, see Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem, The Early Church Fathers* (New York, 2002), 42-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 21,27.

<sup>26</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5.

<sup>27</sup> P. Bradshaw, M. Johnson and L. Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition* (2002), 129.

<sup>28</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 21,27.

that the *Mystagogical Catecheses* are a unique reworking of the source behind the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Canons of Hippolytus*.<sup>29</sup>

A structural comparison of the eucharistic rites described in *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5, *Apostolic Constitutions* 8, and *Apostolic Tradition* 4, shows third a possible (though less certain) point of similarity. Granted, the structure of the *Apostolic Tradition*'s eucharistic ritual first appears significantly different from that of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, as the former includes the words of institution and a developed anamnesis, both of which are lacking in the latter. However, when those elements of the *Apostolic Tradition* that are likely to be later interpolations are removed, the two sources seem to share a similar tripartite structure that moves from praise, through offering, to petition. The structures of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, the *Apostolic Tradition*, and the *Apostolic Constitutions* are as follows (with later interpolations into the *Apostolic Tradition* noted in brackets):

<i>Mystagogical Catecheses</i>	<i>Apostolic Tradition</i>	<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>
Sursum Corda	Sursum Corda	Sursum Corda
Praise for Creation	Praise for Redemption	Praise/Thanksgiving
Sanctus		Sanctus
		Post-Sanctus (Praise)
Epiclesis/Oblation	[Words of Institution]	Words of Institution
	[Anamnesis]	Anamnesis
	Oblation/Offering	
Intercessions For the Living For the Dead	Epiclesis/Petition for Communicants	Epiclesis
		Intercessions

If we look first at the structure of the eucharistic rite known to the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, it begins with (1) praise for creation; then moves to (2) an epiclesis that the mystagogue characterizes as 'the perfection' of 'the spiritual sacrifice'<sup>30</sup>; then concludes with (3) intercessions for the living and the dead. When we compare that structure with, the earliest core of the

<sup>29</sup> J. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy* (2007), 138.

<sup>30</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5.8.

*Apostolic Tradition*, it also includes (1) a preface that offers praise for redemption, followed by (2) an offering clause, followed by (3) an epiclesis that petitions the Holy Spirit on behalf of the communicants. This proposal is further supported by Enrico Mazza's suggestion that the *Apostolic Tradition*'s offering of 'the bread and cup' existed *prior* to the later interpolation of the anamnesis.<sup>31</sup>

As we move toward a discussion of noteworthy differences between the *Mystagogical Catecheses* and these West Syrian liturgical texts, it is noteworthy that Johnson has identified two other texts in which a similar tripartite pattern also seems to be found: *Strasbourg Papyrus* and the *Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis*, both of which are most closely related to the Egyptian anaphoral tradition (not the West Syrian).<sup>32</sup> As for *Apostolic Constitutions* 8, it represents a later, significantly developed reworking of the *Apostolic Tradition*.<sup>33</sup> It may thus be ruled out as an influence on the Hagiopolite rite. Once again, however, we may see here how similar, though far from identical, sources show eucho-logical development based on a shared core.

#### IV. Noteworthy differences

To this point, our argument has pointed toward parallels in the texts of the *Apostolic Tradition*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and the *Mystagogical Catecheses* – parallels that could support the hypothesis that the liturgy witnessed to by the *Mystagogical Catecheses* originated in the West Syrian family. An additional aspect of these *Catecheses* – namely, the lack of the 'full-fill' (*plērēs ... plērōson*) structure commonly found in Egyptian epicleses – has also been marshaled to support a West Syrian provenance. Nevertheless, some key differences between the eucharistic rite described in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* and the liturgical texts of the West Syrian branches of the *Apostolic Tradition*'s family tree (particularly in relation to the epiclesis) suggest that we should take another look at Cuming's proposed Egyptian connection. And while no relevant material can be found in the *Canons of Hippolytus* (*i.e.*, the text that has been so useful for drawing out parallels between the baptismal material in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* and the Egyptian reworking of the *Apostolic Tradition*), there are several other Egyptian texts (the *Strasbourg Papyrus*,<sup>34</sup> the *Deir Balyzeh Papyrus*,<sup>35</sup> the

<sup>31</sup> E. Mazza, *Origins* (1995), 129.

<sup>32</sup> P. Bradshaw, M. Johnson and L. Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition* (2002), 46.

<sup>33</sup> Rachel Graves, 'The Anaphora of the Eighth Book of the Apostolic Constitutions', in Paul F. Bradshaw (ed.), *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers* (Collegeville, 1997), 173-94.

<sup>34</sup> M. Andrieu and P. Collomp, 'Fragments sur papyrus de l'Anaphore de saint Marc', *Revue des sciences religieuses* 8 (1928), 489-515.

<sup>35</sup> C.H. Roberts and B. Capelle, *An Early Euchologium: The Dêr-Balizeh Papyrus, Enlarged and Re-Edited*, Bibliothèque du Muséon 23 (Leuven, 1949).

*Barcelona Papyrus*,<sup>36</sup> and the *Prayers of Sarapion*,<sup>37</sup> to name only a few) that may be employed for further study of this topic.

The first verbal and structural difference appears in the Preface unit of *Mystagogical Catecheses 5* and *Apostolic Tradition 4* (the latter of which lacks a true Sanctus). Although the Preface prayers of both texts begin with thanksgiving, the contents of these thanksgivings are noticeably different. The *Apostolic Tradition* begins with thanks for the gift of *redemption* through Jesus Christ: 'We render thanks to you, God, through your beloved Child (*pais*) Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as saviour and redeemer and angel of your will...'<sup>38</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses 5*, on the other hand, focuses on thanksgiving for *creation*: 'After this [*i.e.*, the opening dialogue] we make mention of heaven and earth and sea; of the sun and moon; of the stars and all the creation...'<sup>39</sup> This praise for creation bears a striking resemblance not to the *Apostolic Tradition*, but to texts like the *Strasbourg Papyrus*, which begins by giving thanks to '... [you who made] heaven [and] all that is in [it, the earth and what is on earth,] seas and rivers and [all that is in] them...'<sup>40</sup> The *Deir Balyzeh Papyrus* offers another parallel from the Alexandrian euchological family: 'We call upon you, master, pantokrator ... who made all things from what was not, and bringing all things forth into being, and containing [all things], alone being uncontained, [who] measure the heaven and the earth, their boundaries, the seas, springs, rivers, the flows of the waters...'<sup>41</sup> Both texts originating in the Alexandrian euchological tradition praise God for creation in strikingly similar terms, including the heavens, the earth, and the waters on the earth. And both texts bear a striking resemblance to the mystagogue's description of thanksgiving that includes the heaven, the earth, the sea, and various facets of those features of creation.

A second difference is the aforementioned lack of a clear Sanctus unit in *Apostolic Tradition 4*; and while this lack may simply point to a phase of anaphoral development that predates the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, it allows us to rule out the *Apostolic Tradition* as a source for the Sanctus unit of the anaphora described in *Mystagogical Catecheses 5*. Moreover, in light of Robert Taft's study of the Sanctus, in which he argues for an Egyptian origin of the Sanctus unit (without the Benedictus) around the mid-fourth century, it may be the case that Egypt provided Jerusalem with the Sanctus unit that concludes the praise for creation.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> M. Zheltov, 'Barcelona Papyrus' (2008), 467-504.

<sup>37</sup> M. Johnson, *Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis* (1995).

<sup>38</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 4,4.

<sup>39</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5,6.

<sup>40</sup> English translations of Strasbourg Gr. 254 are from R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville, 1980), 52-4.

<sup>41</sup> English translations of the *Deir Balyzeh Papyrus* are from Alistair C. Stewart, *Early Egyptian Liturgical Papyri* (2010).

<sup>42</sup> Robert F. Taft, 'The Interpolation of the Sanctus into the Anaphora: When and Where? A Review of the Dossier, Part I', *OCP* 57 (1991), 83-121.

Another important difference between the Hagiopolite eucharist as reported in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* and the eucharistic rite of the *Apostolic Tradition* is the presence of an early 'change' epiclesis in the former – which, as John Paul Abdelsayed has noted, is 'virtually identical to the Egyptian tripartite requests found in the Barcelona Papyrus, Louvain Papyrus, and Deir Balyzeh Papyrus'.<sup>43</sup> The 'send' invocation of the *Apostolic Tradition* initially appears to be similar to what we find in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*: 'Then, having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual hymns, we call upon the merciful God to send forth (*exaposteilai*) His Holy Spirit...'<sup>44</sup> Gabriele Winkler, however, has persuasively identified this invocation as a later, Greek interpolation that replaced earlier, Syrian requests for the Holy Spirit to 'come' or 'dwell'.<sup>45</sup> In addition, *Apostolic Tradition* 4's request for the sending of the Holy Spirit asks for a pneumatological benefit: namely, that the communicants might partake of the 'fullness of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>46</sup> The epiclesis of *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5, on the other hand, specifically requests that the Holy Spirit effect a change in the elements, so that the communicants might receive the 'body and blood of Christ'.<sup>47</sup> Finally, although *Apostolic Constitutions* 8 includes a similar request that the Holy Spirit transform the elements into the body and blood of Christ, there is not a clear verbal parallel; for *Apostolic Constitutions* 8 uses the verb *apophainein*, whereas *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5 uses the verb *poiein*.

More attention should also be paid to parallels between the intercessory unit of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* and the intercessions of Egyptian anaphorae, though I have not been able to undertake this task in the present article. Suffice it to say that while the *Apostolic Constitutions* contain a lengthy set of intercessions that occur in roughly the same location as the intercessory unit of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, I remain intrigued by the arguments of Cuming and Fenwick, who suggest that the intercessions of the Egyptian tradition (*Egyptian Basil* and *Egyptian Mark*) underlie the form and structure of the intercessions in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> John Paul Abdelsayed, 'Liturgical Exodus in Reverse: A Reevaluation of the Egyptian Elements in the Jerusalem Liturgy', in Maxwell E. Johnson (ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West: Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis* (Collegeville, 2010), 139-60.

<sup>44</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5,7. As noted previously, this part of *Apostolic Tradition* 4 only survives in the Latin and Ethiopic versions.

<sup>45</sup> Gabriele Winkler, *Das Sanctus: Über den Ursprung und die Anfänge des Sanctus und sein Fortwirken*, OCA 267 (Rome, 2002). See *ead.*, 'Nochmals zu den Anfängen der Epiklese und des Sanctus im Eucharistischen Hochgebet', *TQ* 174 (1994), 214-31.

<sup>46</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 4,12.

<sup>47</sup> *Mystagogical Catecheses* 5,7.

<sup>48</sup> John R.K. Fenwick, *Fourth-Century Anaphoral Construction Techniques*, *Grove Liturgical Studies* 45 (1986), 26-8.

## V. Conclusion

No clear lines of influence can be determined from so short a study. But my findings here, taken together with the baptismal parallels already established between the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, the *Apostolic Tradition*, the *Canons of Hippolytus*, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, call for continued pursuit of Day's suggestion that the *Mystagogical Catecheses* may be a uniquely Hagiopolite reworking of earlier material used by the West Syrian and Egyptian relatives of the *Apostolic Tradition*. In addition, while there is no absolutely certain structural parallel between the oldest core of the *Apostolic Tradition* and the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, I remain open to Maxwell Johnson's suggestion that perhaps the *Apostolic Tradition* and the *Strasbourg Papyrus* – both of which share a tripartite structure moving from praise, through offering, to petition – may yet prove to be connected in some way. A much larger study will be necessary to determine *how* the earliest strata of the *Apostolic Tradition* might serve as a bridge between Egyptian and Hagiopolite liturgical material. Nevertheless, this initial foray into the eucharistic material, together with the baptismal studies already offered by Juliette Day and Maxwell Johnson, suggests that it is time to revisit the notion of 'Egyptian elements in the liturgy of Jerusalem'.

# The Post-Sanctus in the East Syrian Anaphoras

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## ABSTRACT

The preservation of most of the Post-Sanctus in the fragmentary sixth-century Anaphora, in relation to which some preliminary questions were addressed in my article at the last Patristics Conference (published in *SP* 64 [2013], 105-9), makes possible a comparative study of this section in all four extant East Syrian Anaphoras. This paper offers a comparison of the contents of each Post-Sanctus, and examines significant areas of agreement, as well as features which are unique to and distinctive of each Anaphora. A few suggestive parallels in West Syrian Anaphoras are also noted.

There are four extant East Syrian Eucharistic Prayers or Anaphoras, of which three are still in current use. The oldest is that of Addai and Mari (hereafter *Addai and Mari*).<sup>1</sup> The other two in current use are those ascribed to Theodore and Nestorius (hereafter *Theodore* and *Nestorius*).<sup>2</sup> The fourth is the fragmentary text published by R.H. Connolly,<sup>3</sup> hereafter designated *Fragment*. In relation to the last I gave some preliminary consideration to the questions normally raised in the introduction to an edition in my article from the last International Conference on Patristic Studies,<sup>4</sup> in which I indicated that most of the Post-Sanctus of this Anaphora is extant, although its ending may be lost in a substantial lacuna at the bottom of column VI of the manuscript. Since this section is the longest and best preserved section of this Anaphora, it is possible to offer a comparative study of this section in all four of the East Syrian Anaphoras.

The Post-Sanctus is clearly delineated at its beginning by the fact that it follows immediately on the Sanctus. In the Syrian Anaphoras generally there are two forms of linkage to the Post-Sanctus. One picks up the word 'holy' itself, and develops this description of the Godhead. The other picks up a reference to the heavenly hosts who sing the Sanctus continually, and joins the worship of the earthly congregation to that being offered in heaven. Of the four East

<sup>1</sup> Cited here from Anthony Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Cited here from Bryan D. Spinks, *Mar Nestorius and Mar Theodore The Interpreter: The Forgotten Eucharistic Prayers of East Syria*, Alcuin-GROW Joint Liturgical Studies 45 (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Connolly, 'Sixth-Century Fragments of an East-Syrian Anaphora', *Oriens Christianus* NS 12-4 (1925), 99-128.

<sup>4</sup> A. Gelston, 'A Fragmentary Sixth-Century East Syrian Anaphora', *SP* 64 (2013), 105-9.

Syrian Anaphoras *Addai and Mari* has only the second form of linkage: 'And with these heavenly hosts we give thee thanks...' *Theodore* follows the first form: 'Truly O Lord you are Holy and you are glorious for ever and ever...', as does *Fragment*: 'Holy are you, and glorious and great is your name...' It should be noted, however, that both *Theodore* and *Fragment* include the theme of joining in the heavenly worship in the immediate introduction to the Sanctus. *Theodore* also resumes this theme a little later in the Post-Sanctus: 'And before your great and venerable Name we kneel and worship, and with us also all the companies of heaven glorify and confess your unspeakable grace'. *Nestorius* interestingly combines both forms of linkage at the beginning of the Post-Sanctus: 'And with these heavenly hosts we also, good Lord and God, merciful Father: we call out and say: Holy are you in truth and glorious are you indeed'.

The relatively brief Post-Sanctus in *Addai and Mari* consists entirely of thanksgiving for God's gracious acts towards humanity, with one specific reference to the incarnation for the purpose of redemption: 'Thou didst assume our humanity that thou mightest restore us to life by thy divinity'. The rest of the paragraph rehearses the saving acts of God in terms of the human experience of divine grace and its effect on the human condition, a feature which recurs to some extent in each of the other Anaphoras. Unlike the other Anaphoras *Addai and Mari* does not include in this section a sequential account of the saving acts (passion, death, resurrection and ascension), although there is a brief summary immediately before the Epiclesis. The Post-Sanctus itself closes with an interim doxology, after which there is a clear break in the prayer.<sup>5</sup>

The Post-Sanctus in the other three Anaphoras follows a broadly similar outline, although they differ considerably in detail. *Theodore* and *Nestorius* each begin with a trinitarian development of the theme of divine holiness. *Fragment*, on the other hand, follows up the theme of divine holiness with an extended passage on the incomparable nature of God, with reference to many other divine titles and attributes, to which a partial parallel may be found in the Preface in *Nestorius*. *Theodore* proceeds next with a brief passage on creation and providence, followed by a longer passage on the incarnation of the Logos for the salvation of humanity. *Nestorius* proceeds directly from the trinitarian passage to the incarnation of the Logos. *Fragment* has a longer section on creation and providence, including a special passage on the creation of the human race, its supreme place within creation, and God's special grace towards humanity, leading to the divine intervention for our salvation. At this point in *Fragment* there follows the only substantial lacuna (of practically seven lines of text) in the Post-Sanctus. Where the text resumes it is in the course of an account of the incarnation. In all three Anaphoras the treatment of the incarnation leads into

<sup>5</sup> Doxologies of a more incidental nature may be found in the Post-Sanctus and the Institution Narrative in *Theodore*, in the Post-Sanctus in *Fragment*, and in both the Preface and the Institution Narrative in *Nestorius*.

a commemoration of the crucifixion and resurrection, and, in the case of *Nestorius* and *Fragment*, also of the ascension. This is the cue for the transition to the Institution Narrative, and thus marks the end of the Post-Sanctus.<sup>6</sup>

The Post-Sanctus is delineated at its end by the beginning of the next section of the Anaphora, which in the Syrian rites is generally an Institution Narrative, normally appended to an account of the redemptive acts of Christ, to which it forms a natural sequel. *Theodore*, *Nestorius* and *Fragment* all fall within this general pattern, appending their Institution Narratives directly to their commemoration of the saving acts of Christ. The Narrative in *Fragment* is of particular interest. Although it is not a full-blown Institution Narrative, and in particular lacks the dominical words, it serves the same purpose in the structure of the Anaphora as in *Theodore* and *Nestorius*, and delineates the end of the Post-Sanctus in the same way.<sup>7</sup> *Addai and Mari*, however, follows a different pattern. We have already seen that its Post-Sanctus ends with an interim doxology, marking a distinct break within the prayer. The next section, however, includes the ideas of remembrance and commemoration, and the allusion to the dominical command ‘as thou hast taught us’. It seems reasonable to say that this Anaphora makes a comparable transition from the Post-Sanctus, even though there is no formal Institution Narrative, and no direct link between the thanksgiving and the institution itself.

In the remainder of this paper we shall examine correspondences of the three later East Syrian Anaphoras firstly with *Addai and Mari*, and secondly with several of the West Syrian Anaphoras. In his translations of *Theodore* and *Nestorius* Spinks indicates by underlining and italics possible material common with respectively *Addai and Mari* and the Greek Anaphoras of *Chrysostom*, *Basil* and *James*.

There is no doubt that both *Theodore* and *Nestorius* incorporate material from *Addai and Mari*. In addition to the parallels highlighted by Spinks, see the analysis I presented twenty years ago in an article not easily accessible,<sup>8</sup> concluding that, while there are many more parallels to *Addai and Mari* in *Theodore* than in *Nestorius*, and the degree of verbal agreement is also much closer in *Theodore*, each of the later Anaphoras has some material exclusively in common with *Addai and Mari*, suggesting that it has been used independently as a source in the composition of each of them. By contrast there is very little significant verbal agreement with *Addai and Mari* in the Post-Sanctus of *Fragment*. Apart from references to the name of God, which are characteristic

<sup>6</sup> Fuller outlines of the contents of the Post-Sanctus in these three Anaphoras may be found in B. Spinks, *Mar Nestorius* (1999), 14 (*Nestorius*) and 23-4 (*Theodore*), and A. Gelston, ‘A Fragmentary Anaphora’ (2013), 109 (*Fragment*).

<sup>7</sup> See my account of this section in A. Gelston, ‘A Fragmentary Anaphora’ (2013), 107-8.

<sup>8</sup> A. Gelston, ‘The Relationship of the anaphoras of Theodore and Nestorius to that of Addai and Mari’, in George Karukaparampil (ed.), *Tuvaik: Studies in Honour of Rev. Jacob Vellian*, Syrian Churches Series XVI (Kottayam, 1995), 20-6.

of all the East Syrian Anaphoras, only two expressions are suggestive of a possible direct dependence. One is the use of the verb ‘exalt’ with humanity as its object: ‘exalt our low estate’ in *Addai and Mari*,<sup>9</sup> and ‘exalted us’ in *Fragment*.<sup>10</sup> The other is the term ‘helps’ or ‘benefits’ (ܠܒܝܢܐ).<sup>11</sup> On the other hand there are several unusual uses of Syriac words in *Fragment*: ܠܡܢܐ in the sense of ‘mention’ of God, rather than the Eucharistic anamnesis, ܠܡܢܐܢܐ in the sense of an ‘account’ of God’s being, rather than of a narrative, and ܠܡܢܐܢܐ ܠܐ in the sense of the ‘immutability’ of God’s grace rather than of his nature.<sup>12</sup> The overall effect of these details is to suggest that *Fragment* is a much more distant relative to *Addai and Mari* than either *Theodore* or *Nestorius*.

In the case of *Theodore* and *Nestorius* some manuscripts have colophons recording that Mar Aba the Catholicos rendered (ܐܘܪܘܟܐ) the Anaphoras from Greek into Syriac, which at first sight suggests that they were originally Greek compositions, and were translated into Syriac by Mar Aba. There is much, however, to suggest that they were in fact originally composed in Syriac. Spinks<sup>13</sup> gives a thorough discussion of the problem, concluding that ‘redacted’ is perhaps the most appropriate translation of ܐܘܪܘܟܐ. In that case the colophons probably reflect at least the incorporation of some material from Greek Anaphoras in *Theodore* and *Nestorius*. It is not easy to evaluate the evidence of these parallels, because many can be explained as common allusions to biblical or credal texts, while others may be regarded as deriving from the common stock of liturgical expressions.

One suggestive phrase is found in the Preface of *Chrysostom*: ‘You brought us out of non-existence into existence’.<sup>14</sup> Similarly the Preface of *Nestorius* includes the statement: ‘For from nothing you brought us to be’,<sup>15</sup> while similar statements are found in the Post-Sanctus of *Theodore*: ‘For you have made us from nothing’,<sup>16</sup> and in that of *Fragment*: ‘Your creation, which the command of your will called and brought from nothing’.<sup>17</sup> There is nothing comparable in *Addai and Mari*.

The most suggestive parallel, however, is to be found in the transition from the Post-Sanctus to the Institution Narrative. *Basil* appends to the commemoration

<sup>9</sup> A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer* (1992), 51, line 25.

<sup>10</sup> Fol. 21b, column 2, line 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Addai and Mari*: A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer* (1992), 51, line 31; *Fragment*: fol. 21b, column 2, line 19.

<sup>12</sup> Fol. 21a, column 2, respectively lines 7, 9 and 14.

<sup>13</sup> B. Spinks, *Mar Nestorius* (1999), 9-11, 19-22.

<sup>14</sup> Citations from the Greek Anaphoras are taken from R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and reformed*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York, 1987), hereafter *PEER*; here at p. 132.

<sup>15</sup> B. Spinks, *Mar Nestorius* (1999), 28.

<sup>16</sup> B. Spinks, *Mar Nestorius* (1999), 35.

<sup>17</sup> Fol. 21b, column 1, lines 3-5 (my translation).

of the saving acts of Christ at the end of the Post-Sanctus the following passage: ‘And he left us memorials of his saving passion, these things which we have set forth according to his commandments. For when he was about to go out to his voluntary and laudable and life-giving death, in the night in which he gave himself up for the life of the world, he took bread...’<sup>18</sup>. *James* has a similar passage: ‘And when he was about to endure his voluntary [and life-giving] death [on the cross], the sinless for us sinners, in the night when he was betrayed, [or rather handed himself over,] for the life and salvation of the world, he took bread...’<sup>19</sup>

At precisely the same point at the end of the Post-Sanctus *Nestorius* has the following passage: ‘and left us the commemoration of salvation, this mystery which we offer before you. For when the time arrived in which [he was about to suffer and draw near to death, in that night in which] he was delivered up for the life of the world, ... he introduced his own Passover before he died, this which we perform as his commemoration as he handed it down to us, ... he took bread ...’<sup>20</sup> The corresponding passage in *Theodore* has little in common with *Basil* and *Nestorius*. *Fragment*, on the other hand, does show some similarity to *Basil* and *Nestorius*: ‘And because he was about to be taken up from our place and exalted to the place of the spiritual beings from which he had come down, he left in our hands a pledge of his holy body, ... For before the time of his crucifixion and the hour in which he was about to be glorified he took bread...’<sup>21</sup>

It is not easy to assess the relationship between the parallel passages in *Basil*, *James*, *Nestorius* and *Fragment*. *Nestorius* is undoubtedly closer to *Basil*, and may well have derived some text from *Basil*, although interpolating other material of its own. *Fragment*, on the other hand, seems again to be a more distant relative. One detail common to all four texts is the concept of the coming of the significant time. This is emphasized in *Fragment* by the repetition of ‘about to be’ (ܐܘܪܘܚܐ)<sup>22</sup>. There may be distant echoes here of such New Testament passages as *Luke* 9:51, *John* 13:1 and *1Cor.* 11:23, although there are no direct verbal parallels. Another detail common to *Basil*, *Nestorius* and *Fragment* is the gift of the Eucharist to his disciples by Jesus before his passion. This evidence seems sufficient to establish some influence of the West Syrian Anaphoras in *Fragment* as well as in *Theodore* and *Nestorius*.

<sup>18</sup> *PEER*, 118-9.

<sup>19</sup> *PEER*, 91.

<sup>20</sup> B. Spinks, *Mar Nestorius* (1999), 30. The line in square brackets (my translation) is present in most manuscripts, but absent, probably as a result of homoioteleuton of the word ܐܘܪܘܚܐ (= ‘in which’), from the Mar Esa’ya text, and also from the Urmiah text which Spinks used as a basis for his translation.

<sup>21</sup> Fol. 20a, column 1, lines 20-5 and 27-30 (my translation from A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer* [1992], 75).

<sup>22</sup> This word occurs in most manuscripts of *Nestorius* in the line in square brackets in the quotation above. The corresponding Greek word in *Basil* and *James* is μέλλων.

One phenomenon already observed in passing is that a particular theme may appear in different sections in different Anaphoras, or even be repeated in more than one section in a particular Anaphora. There is often some variation in the location of similar material between the Preface and the Post-Sanctus. In addition to the instances already mentioned we may note the phrase 'for ever the same' applied to God at the beginning of the Preface in *Nestorius* and *Chrysostom*, and near the beginning of the Post-Sanctus in *Fragment*<sup>23</sup>. In view of the total loss of the Preface in *Fragment* the possibility arises that in a complete text further parallels might have been found in that Anaphora.

<sup>23</sup> Fol. 21a, column 2, lines 4-5.

# Breaking Boundaries: The Cosmic Dimension of Worship

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## ABSTRACT

Basil of Caesarea's *Letter 207*, to the clergy of Neocaesarea, tackles a quarrel between the parties. Although the underlying differences are doctrinal, the immediate points of contention are the singing of psalms and Cappadocian monasticism. A strong theme of heavenly citizenship runs through the *Letter* and is traced from Basil's first mention of the monastics to the quotation from the hymn of *Isaiah 26* with which he opens the description of a service at which psalms are sung. Though undoubtedly functioning here as a rhetorical device contrasting orderly monastic life with the disorganised attacks of his opponents, this concept lies at the heart of Basil's view of monasticism. He sees his monastics as citizens of heaven in the sense of living the ideal Christian life in which worship is central. Thus the theme of heavenly citizenship fits with ideas that associate human worship with that of angels. This association draws on a well-established Christian idea which may well have had Jewish origins, and which begins with the author of *Hebrews*, being adopted and developed by later writers. The concept has its full development in the hymn of Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1786, Gregory of Nyssa's exposition of *Psalms 150* as the eschatological union of human and angelic worship, and the poetry of Gregory Nazianzen in which that eschatological future is seen as breaking through into the present.

In a letter dated to the later summer of 375 CE, Basil the Great of Cappadocia undertakes a defence to charges levelled against him by some among the clergy of Neo-Caesarea.<sup>1</sup> One of the points of criticism relates to the monastics, both men and women, whom Basil has established in Cappadocia. Rather than an attempt to continue a debate with its nominal recipients, a debate which has hitherto proved fruitless, the letter is, I suggest, intended as what Philip Esler terms an act of *legitimation*.<sup>2</sup> This term refers to an explanation and justification of a social institution, after its establishment, aimed at its rank-and-file membership, in this case, Basil's monastic followers, the main purpose of such an act being, as Esler explains, integration: 'Each individual in the institutional

<sup>1</sup> Dating by Roy J. Deferrari (ed. and trans.), *Saint Basil, Letters III*, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1926), 180-93, although Anna Silvas suggests that it was written the following year, Anna M. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, 2008), 73-4.

<sup>2</sup> Philip F. Esler, 'The Socio-Redaction Criticism of Luke-Acts', in David G. Horrell (ed.), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (Edinburgh, 1999), 123-50, 142-3.

order must feel that his life, in its various stages, is meaningful, that his biography makes sense in this institution’.

In replying to this particular criticism Basil introduces a theme of heavenly citizenship which runs through the whole of the letter. ‘I want you to know’, he says, ‘that I pray to have corps of both men and women, whose citizenship is in heaven’ (Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι ὅτι ἡμεῖς εὐχόμεθα καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν συντάγματα ἔχειν, ὧν τὸ πολίτευμά ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς), quoting *Philippians*.<sup>3</sup>

A little later, introducing the topic of early morning psalm singing which seems to have been another point of contention, he writes, ‘among us the people rise early from the night to go to the house of prayer’ (Ἐκ νυκτὸς γὰρ ὀρθρίζει παρ’ ἡμῖν ὁ λαὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τῆς προσευχῆς).<sup>4</sup> This can be identified as a reference to *Isaiah* 26: ‘My spirit rises early from the night to you, O God, because of the light of your ordinances upon the earth’ (Ἐκ νυκτὸς ὀρθρίζει τὸ πνεῦμά μου πρὸς σὲ ὁ Θεός, διότι φῶς τὰ προστάγματά σου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).<sup>5</sup> This chapter of *Isaiah* is a hymn which Basil would certainly have interpreted in eschatological terms. It begins: ‘Behold a strong city ... open the gates, let a people enter that preserves righteousness and truth’ (ἰδοὺ πόλις ἰσχυρά, καὶ σωτήριον θήσει τεῖχος καὶ περίτειχος. ἀνοίξατε πύλας, εἰσελθέτω λαὸς φυλάσσων δικαιοσύνην καὶ φυλάσσων ἀλήθειαν).<sup>6</sup> Despite the eschatological nature of this hymn, it’s association with the previous, present-tense, claim of heavenly citizenship strongly suggests that the Cappadocian monastics are *now* the ‘people’ of the heavenly city, those who ‘preserve righteousness and truth’. And we should note that the psalm-singing in which they are engaged is liturgy, *λειτουργία*, the performance of public service owed by a citizenship to its city.

In making an association of heavenly citizenship with worship, Basil is drawing on an established concept for which early Christianity found endorsement in the vision of *Isaiah*: ‘Seraphs were in attendance ... and one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory”’.<sup>7</sup> What angels do, humanity must imitate and this remains a key text for earthly worship, while forming the basis for a view that links such worship to angelic practice.

Certainly heavenly worship, the task of angels, can be seen as providing an example for earthly practice. Thus the author of the first letter of Clement, quoting *Isaiah* 6:3, seems to be exhorting his readers to imitate the worship of angels, ‘let us mark the whole host of his angels, how they stand by and

<sup>3</sup> Basil, *Letter* 207.2.31; *Saint Basil, Letters*, 3, 184-6; my translation; and see *Phil.* 3:20.

<sup>4</sup> Basil, *Letter* 207.3.4; *Saint Basil, Letters*, 3, 186; my translation.

<sup>5</sup> *Is.* 26:9, LXX, my translation.

<sup>6</sup> *Is.* 26:1-2, LXX, my translation.

<sup>7</sup> *Is.* 6:2, 3, NRSV.

minister to his will'.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, at an early stage of Christian history, Paul uses words, very possibly taken from a Christian hymn, which also quotes *Isaiah*: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear', though Paul, or his hymnologist, directs the submission to Jesus Christ and expands on 'every' with the words, 'in heaven and on earth and under the earth'.<sup>9</sup> The intention of this insertion is to emphasise the universal nature of the homage using the language and concepts of the time.<sup>10</sup> The three adjectives, ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, though neuter, clearly designate rational beings since only such can acknowledge divine supremacy, thus 'the writer describes angels, human beings and demons as joining together in an act of worship'.<sup>11</sup>

The author of *Hebrews*, perhaps less universalist, expands the idea in other ways: 'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ... and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect'.<sup>12</sup> While this passage, like that from *Philippians*, certainly looks forward to an eschatological future, the use of the perfect tense, 'you have approached' (προσεληλύθατε), suggests that that future is breaking through into the present. If we accept the view that *Hebrews* was originally a sermon, then these words were presumably first delivered in the context of Christian worship, presenting this earthly act as united with the heavenly adoration of angels and saints.<sup>13</sup> Once again, we encounter an exercise in legitimation, and here on a grand scale, providing considerable support, not only for the prayers but also the faith, of those attending, as Ellen Muehlberger points out:

As the author [of *Hebrews*] populated his imagined community with a heavenly city, an infinity of angels, and even God himself, he also loaded the message to those reading the text: though they might lose heart, they should be reassured by the gathered number of those whom are part of their community – on high and of high number. The assumption that there was an angelic cohort, available in heaven, allowed writers like the author of *Hebrews* to manifest a latent majority, existing invisibly behind the apparent paucity of believers.<sup>14</sup>

Origen develops the idea by uniting angelic and human prayer: 'Not only does the High Priest [Jesus Christ] pray together with those whose prayer is genuine but so also do the angels ... and likewise the souls of the departed

<sup>8</sup> 1Clem. 34:6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Is. 45:23; Phil. 2:10.

<sup>10</sup> Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary 43, revised by Ralph P. Martin (Nashville, 2004), 127-8; Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, Mi, 1983), 257-65.

<sup>11</sup> G.F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (2004), 128.

<sup>12</sup> Heb. 12:22-3, NRSV.

<sup>13</sup> For *Hebrews* as sermon see e.g. Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Oxford, 2004), 411.

<sup>14</sup> Ellen Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* (Oxford, 2013), 181-2.

saints who have fallen asleep'.<sup>15</sup> To this he adds the concept of an angelic sponsor: 'Each man's angel ... always beholding the face of the Father which is in heaven and gazing on the divinity of him who created us, prays with us'.<sup>16</sup>

Such beliefs were, however, not exclusively Christian. Thus the Qumran *Community Rule*, speaking of 'God's chosen ones' (presumably the community itself) comments that God 'has caused them to inherit the lot of the Holy Ones. He has joined their assembly to the Sons of Heaven'.<sup>17</sup> Similarly the *Apostolic Tradition*, in some versions, suggests that in the middle of the night, 'all the hosts of angels worship with the souls of the righteous'.<sup>18</sup> Bradshaw, Johnson, and Phillips add the suggestion that, behind the expression 'the tradition of the elders' quoted in *Apostolic Tradition* to justify this claim, 'lie Jewish legends about the praise of God by the angels and all the orders of creation'.<sup>19</sup>

Further evidence for the idea of the joint worship of mankind with angels as a Christian concept based on Jewish beliefs, is found in the prayers of allegedly Jewish origin found in *Apostolic Constitutions*. One of these, after describing heavens, seas, and mankind praising God, passes on to 'the flaming army of angels' whose various orders and songs are detailed.<sup>20</sup> The prayer continues: 'And Israel your earthly assembly from the nations, vying night and day with the heavenly powers, sings with a full heart and willing spirit' (Ἰσραὴλ δέ, ἡ ἐπίγειός σου Ἐκκλησία ἡ ἐξ ἔθνῶν, ταῖς κατ' οὐρανὸν δυνάμεσιν ἀμιλλωμένη νυκτὶ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν καρδίᾳ πλήρει καὶ ψυχῇ θελοῦσῃ ψάλλει).<sup>21</sup>

By the fourth-century Cyril of Jerusalem encouraged the people of his flock to envision a community of angels in order to give authority to his theological positions, to inspire certain behaviours, and 'to bring angels into their presence as they participated in rituals'.<sup>22</sup> In particular, the central action of the Eucharist was associated with angelic worship by the use of the song of the Seraphim. 'As Cyril explained, by repeating the words of the angels, Christians celebrating the ritual became "participants" (κοινωνοί) in the heavenly retinue'.<sup>23</sup> Likewise

<sup>15</sup> Origen, *De oratione* 11.1, Eric George Jay (trans. and notes), *Origen's Treatise on Prayer* (London, 1954), 111.

<sup>16</sup> Origen, *De oratione*, 11.5, E.G. Jay, *Origen's Treatise* (1954), 114.

<sup>17</sup> IQS.11.8, Geza Vermes (trans.), *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London, 1998), 115.

<sup>18</sup> *Apostolic Tradition* 41.15 in Latin, Sahidic, Arabic, Ethiopic, and the *Canons of Hippolytus*, see Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson and Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition. A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 2002), 198-201.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 212.

<sup>20</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.35.1-10; D.A. Fiensy (intro.) and D.R. Darnell (trans.), 'Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 2* (London, 1985), 669-97.

<sup>21</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.35.4.

<sup>22</sup> E. Muehlberger, *Angels* (2013), 186.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 187; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis* 5.6, Auguste Piédagnel (ed.), Pierre Paris (French trans.), *Catéchèses mystagogiques, Cyrille de Jérusalem*, Sources Chrétiennes 126 (Paris, 1966), 152-4.

Theodore of Mopsuestia ‘used similar imaginative techniques to make Christian rituals into multi-layered, multitemporal events’, Muehlberger, suggests, adding that Theodore ‘directed Christians to see the rituals they watched as traces of another more important reality: the ongoing heavenly service they would join at the resurrection’.<sup>24</sup> John Chrysostom, however, sees angels as attendees at the celebration of the earthly Eucharist: ‘When he [the priest] invokes the Holy Spirit and offers that awful sacrifice ... At that moment, angels attend the priest, and the whole dais and sanctuary are thronged with heavenly powers in honour of Him who lies there’.<sup>25</sup>

In this tradition, Gregory of Nyssa exhorts those who are presumably baptismal candidates: ‘Proclaim with us those things which also the six-winged Seraphim sing as they hymn with the perfect Christians’ (Φθέγγξαι μεθ’ ἡμῶν ἐκεῖνα, ἃ καὶ τὰ ἑξαπτέρυγα Σεραφίμ μετὰ τῶν τελείων Χριστιανῶν ὑμνοῦντα λέγει).<sup>26</sup> The meaning of τελείων here, is not completely certain. It is possible to take it as ‘complete’ or, for a human being, ‘full-grown’ and referring to established members of the congregation. Gregory, however, sees the goal (τέλος) of human existence as blessedness, as indicated by the very first word of the book of *Psalms*, ‘blessed’ (μακάριος).<sup>27</sup> Further, noting that he contrasts ‘you’ and ‘us’ with the Seraphim and the τέλειοι, it appears that, like the author of *Hebrews* and Origen, he understands departed saints (‘the spirits of the righteous made perfect’) as joining the heavenly chorus. Thus ‘perfect’ (or perhaps ‘perfected’) as a translation for τελείων is to be preferred, and Gregory here is seeing angels and saints as worshiping in parallel to mortals, rather than attending and participating in the earthly baptism.

Gregory of Nyssa also looks forward to an eschatological joining of human and angelic worship in his treatment of *Ps.* 150:5: ‘Praise him with tuneful cymbals’ (ἐν κυμβάλοις εὐήχοις). ‘I take this to mean the union of our nature with the angels ... For such a combination, I mean of the angelic with the human, when human nature is again exalted to its original condition, will produce that sweet sound of thanksgiving through their meeting with one another. And through one another and with one another they will sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God for his love of humanity which will be heard throughout the universe’.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> E. Muehlberger, *Angels* (2013), 188, 189.

<sup>25</sup> John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 6.4, in *John Chrysostom, Six books on the Priesthood*, trans. and intro. Graham Neville (Crestwood, NY, 1964), 140-1.

<sup>26</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Adversus eos qui differunt baptismum oratio*, GNO X 2.362.16-7 (*Sermones* v. 2 pt. 3), my translation.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *In Inscriptiones Psalmorum* 1.1 (5), GNO V 25.11, translation from Ronald E. Heine (Introduction, Translation and Notes), *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms* (Oxford, 1995), 84.

<sup>28</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Inscriptiones* 1.9 (117), GNO V 66.14-23, translation from R.E. Heine, *Inscriptions* (1995), 121.

Two passages, however, provide the image of a much closer connection between earthly and heavenly worship. The first of these is found in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1786, a fragment of a Christian hymn.<sup>29</sup> As regards the date of this, Charles Cosgrove, having surveyed the evidence, concludes, ‘considering together the evidence of handwriting (third-century and not early fourth), lapse of time before re-use of a piece of papyrus (probably before 300), and the internal evidence (more closely associated with traditions of the fourth-century than the third), we may incline to a date close to the end of the third-century’.<sup>30</sup> Although the small fragment of papyrus is incomplete, Cosgrove argues that ‘the hymn was originally probably not much longer than what we have, consisting perhaps of only the five partially intact manuscript lines that have come down to us’.<sup>31</sup>

The hymn, as we have it, begins with a call for cosmic stillness, a common theme for Greek (pagan) hymns, but which is also found in Jewish tradition.<sup>32</sup> Then, accepting Cosgrove’s reconstruction of the text and translation, we have in lines 3 to 5:

... ὑμνοῦντων δ’ ἡμῶν [π]ατέρα χυιὸν ἁγίον πνεῦμα πᾶσα δυνάμεις ἐπιφωνού-  
των ἀμήν ἀμήν, κράτος αἴνος [ἀεὶ καὶ δόξα θεῶ] δ[ωτ]ῆ[ρι] μόνω[ι] [πάν]των  
ἀγαθῶν, ἀμήν ἀμήν.

... While we hymn Father and Son and Holy Spirit, let all the powers answer, ‘Amen, amen. Strength, praise [and glory forever to God], the sole giver of all good things. Amen, amen’.<sup>33</sup>

The ‘powers’ (δυνάμεις) are clearly angels.<sup>34</sup> Indeed what follows is very similar to the angelic hymn of *Rev.* 7:12. ‘While we hymn’, again a common way of introducing Greek hymns, also makes the hymn self-referential and in a way which is deictic; that is, as Cosgrove points out, ‘referring to the here and now of the poem’s performance’.<sup>35</sup> Intriguingly this deictic self-referentiality carries the main weight of this short hymn’s substance; the praise offered to God being sung by the earthly congregation, is actually expressed as an angelic response to that same praise. The net effect is that, while this is a hymn

<sup>29</sup> P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 15 (London, 1922), 21-5; Charles H. Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary* (Tübingen, 2011); A.W.J. Holleman, ‘The Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1786 and the Relationship between Ancient Greek and Early Christian Music’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), 1-17; E.J. Wellesz, ‘The Earliest Example of Christian Hymnody’, *The Classical Quarterly* 39 (1945), 34-45.

<sup>30</sup> C.H. Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn* (2011), 130.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 65.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 39-44.

<sup>33</sup> Greek text and translation from C.H. Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn* (2011), 37.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 49-50.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 73, deictic self-referentiality being discussed fully in the pages 73-81.

of communal praise, the community is expanded to be much greater than the local congregation or even that of the earthly church.

A later example, from Gregory Nazianzen, appears to describe a vigil at which monastic choirs of men and women sing psalms, invoking angelic response:

Τὸ δ' οὖν ἀεὶ πᾶσιν τε γνωριμώτατον,  
 Ὅρᾳς ἀγρόπνους παρθένων ψαλμοδίας  
 Ἄνδρῶν, γυναικῶν, φύσεως λελησμένων·  
 Οἶων θ' ὄσων τε, καὶ ὄσον θεουμένων!  
 Σύμφωνον, ἀντίφωνον ἀγγέλων στάσιν  
 Δισσῆν, ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τεταγμένην,  
 Θείας ὕμνοδὸν ἀξίας καὶ φύσεως;<sup>36</sup>

What is surely always well known to everyone:  
 you see the wakeful psalmodies of virgins,  
 men and women, forgetful of the general order of nature;  
 what people these are, how many and how God-inspired,  
 a two-fold rank of angels, harmonious and sounding in answer,  
 arrayed both above and below,  
 singing hymns of God's majesty and nature!<sup>37</sup>

Here we see a move from earlier ideas in which earthly worship imitates or parallels that of heaven, or looks forward to an eschatological future, and which even goes beyond the concept of angels attending silently upon an earthly Eucharist. Here, as in Oxyrhynchus 1786, communal praise includes the angels as participants in human worship, and humanity as equal partners in the angelic ('harmonious and sounding in answer'). There is even a suggestion here that the earthly singers are not merely participating in heavenly worship, or sharing with the angelic community, but are somehow transformed into angels: 'a two-fold rank of angels ... arrayed both above and below'.

There is a timeless element to this, or rather, one that is beyond time. Robert Taft criticises those who regard the liturgy of the hours as "a sanctification of time" distinct from the "eschatological" Eucharist'.<sup>38</sup> On the contrary, he claims, 'the Liturgy of the Hours, like all Christian liturgy, is an eschatological proclamation of the salvation received in Christ ... the Liturgy of the Hours – indeed, all liturgy – is beyond time'.<sup>39</sup>

Thus heavenly worship, initially seen as worship by angels, became, from the time of Hebrews on, the worship by both angels and saints. This provides not merely a model to be imitated by earthly mortals, but a goal to be aimed

<sup>36</sup> Gregory Nazianzen, *Carmina moralia* 10 (*De virtute*), PG 37, 746.11-747.3.

<sup>37</sup> My translation.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West, the Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd Revised Edition (Collegeville, Mn, 1993), 334.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 359.

for in the eschatological future – full participation in the continuous adoration of heaven.

These last two reasons for worship additionally provide particular justification for a Daily Office of worship. Baptism and Eucharist provide a solid basis for the cult but suffer from two shortcomings. While they certainly offer some opportunity for the formative aspect of worship, that aspect is necessarily reduced by the concentration on their essential procedures. Secondly, and more importantly, they are inescapably earthbound by their nature and symbolism, the Eschaton renders them unnecessary. The Daily Office of praise, however, already mirrors the practice of angels. Gregory of Nyssa offers a psalm-based worship which grows progressively towards the future worship of heaven, while Gregory Nazianzen sees that future as somehow breaking through into the present.

# The Sequence of the First Four Sessions of the Council of Chalcedon

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## ABSTRACT

In his preparatory work for his edition of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon Eduard Schwartz argued that the sequence of the first four sessions in the oldest Greek version of the *acta* (*versio antiqua*) was incorrect and that the sixth century Latin text, assembled, edited and translated by Rusticus (*versio antiqua correctata atque a Rustico edita*), provided the correct ordering. In a 1971 article (*Kleronomia* 3, 259-84), E. Chrysos argued persuasively that the revised order proposed by Schwartz violates the internal evidence of the texts of the sessions themselves, and that the date of the third session needed to be emended. This confusing situation needs to be examined once more, especially in light of the acceptance of Schwartz' sequence in the English translation of the *acta* of Chalcedon by R. Price and M. Gaddis (Translated texts for Historians volume 45 [Liverpool, 2005]). The belief that the oldest Greek text, produced shortly after the council itself, must be corrected on the basis of a Latin translation produced a century later cannot stand. Instead, the most elegant solution to the problem is simply to swap the dates for the second and third sessions in the Greek manuscript to conform to the logical sequence. By so doing, one is led to rather unsettling conclusions not only about the way in which the imperial commissioners operated to make Dioscorus of Alexandria the sole scapegoat for the actions of the Second Council of Ephesus in 449, but also about the propagandistic function of the *acta* themselves.

In his prefatory work to his edition of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon Eduard Schwartz argued that the sequence of the first four sessions in the oldest Greek version of the *acta*, the *versio antiqua*, was incorrect.<sup>1</sup> Instead, the sixth century Latin text, assembled, edited and translated by the western monk Rusticus *apropos* the Three Chapters Controversy, provided the original ordering

<sup>1</sup> For a general discussion of the sequence for all of the *acta* of Chalcedon, see E. Schwartz' discussion in the *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* (henceforth ACO) II 1.3, pp. xxii-xxx (*prae-fatio*). For an English translation of the *acta*, along with illuminating introductions and commentary, see now R. Price and M. Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols. (Liverpool, 2005) (henceforth Price and Gaddis). The author would like to thank John Vanderspoel and Timothy Barnes for sharing their thoughts on the sequence of sessions. Any errors or omissions in the present argument, however, is the responsibility of the author alone.

of these sessions.<sup>2</sup> At issue was the placement of the Trial of Dioscorus and the Discussion of the Faith. Schwartz and almost all modern scholars following him have adopted the sequence of Rusticus that swaps sessions two and three, as they are listed in the oldest Greek version, and thereby puts the Trial of Dioscorus as the third session, and the Debate over the Faith.<sup>3</sup> In a 1971 article Evangelos Chrysos argued persuasively that the revised order proposed by Schwartz violates not only the internal evidence of the texts of the sessions themselves, and, less convincingly, that the date of the third session needed to be emended.<sup>4</sup> This confusing situation needs to be examined once more, especially in light of the acceptance of Schwartz' sequence in the enormously influential English translation of the *acta* of Chalcedon by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis published in the Liverpool Translated Texts for Historians series.<sup>5</sup> The belief that the oldest Greek text, produced shortly after the council itself, must be corrected on the basis of a Latin translation produced a century later should not stand unquestioned. As will be argued, whether the Trial of Dioscorus is placed as the second or third session is not otiose, but instead has implications not only for the interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon, but of the ecclesiastical politics in the years 448 to 451 CE.

The *acta* of Chalcedon occupy some four hefty volumes in Schwartz's magisterial edition, and comprise three volumes in the English translation by Richard Price and Michael Gaddis. This astonishing density of primary documentation for two months in the year 451 led Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, only half jokingly, to say once that this council was better documented than any other event in the ancient world!<sup>6</sup> Yet one ought not to identify the textual magnitude of the *acta* with transparency or candour. Let us think no longer that

<sup>2</sup> On Rusticus, see E. Schwartz in ACO II 3.3 xii-xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> *praefatio*, ACO II 1, p. vii; and *praefatio*, ACO II 3.2, pp. vi-vii. Schwartz' chronology has been almost universally adopted. See, e.g., the studies of F.X. Murphy, *Peter Speaks Through Leo* (Washington, D.C., 1952), 121 n. 1; R.V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Study* (London, 1953), 109; G. Bardy in A. Fliche and V. Martin (eds), *Histoire de l'Eglise* (Paris, 1948), vol. 4, 231 n. 2, and more recently by Michael Whitby's translation of Evagrius, *HE* II 4, p. 69 n. 45. Before Schwartz wrote, both Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles* (Paris, 1693-1717), XV 916 n. 45; and C.J. Hefele, translated into French and revised by H. Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles* (Paris, 1908), vol. 2.2, 685 n. 2 believed that the sequence of the Greek *acta* had to be reversed.

<sup>4</sup> E. Chrysos, 'Η ΔΙΑΤΑΞΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΞΑΑΚΗΔΟΝΙ ΟΥΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΗΣ ΣΥΝΟΔΟΥ', *Kleronomia* 3 (1971), 259-84. Chrysos' arguments have not been widely adopted, much less cited. Notable exceptions are Peter L'Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* (Crestwood NY, 1996), 190 and by A. de Halleux, 'Le vingt-huitième canon de Chalcedoine', *SP* 19 (1989), 28-35, 28 n. 2, both cited in Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 2 n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> See especially, Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 1-2 for a brief discussion of the sequence of the *acta*.

<sup>6</sup> G.E.M. de Ste Croix, 'The Council of Chalcedon with additions by Michael Whitby', in M. Whitby and J. Streeter (eds), *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Oxford, 2006), 259-319, 259.

they were verbatim transcripts of the proceedings.<sup>7</sup> Instead they were the all-too-human creation of imperial scribes who selected what to record to shape the resulting *acta* according to wishes of the architects of the council. What is more, the acts themselves were also not particularly well disseminated or read. As a consequence, even in antiquity there was considerable difficulty in establishing the correct text of the *acta*. In a letter to the former papal legate and trusted eastern informant Julian of Chios dated 11 March 453, pope Leo acknowledged that it was difficult to understand precisely what had gone on in the individual sessions of the Council of Chalcedon:<sup>8</sup>

We have but a very poor idea of the synodal proceedings that took place in the city of Chalcedon on each day because of the difference of language; hence we enjoin your fraternity especially that you have the whole gathered together in one codex, and done into Latin in the best translation possible, so that we may no longer have doubts about any part of the proceeding.

*gestorum synodalium quae omnibus diebus concilii in Chalchodonensi ciuitate confecta sunt, parum clara propter linguae diuersitatem apud nos habetur instructio et ideo fraternitati tuae specialiter niungo ut in unum codicem uniuersa facias congregari, in Latinum scilicet sermonem absolutissima interpretatione translata, ut in nulla parte actionum dubitare possimus neque ullo modo esse possit ambiguum quod ad plenam intellegentiam te fuerit studente perductum.*

Leo's confusion was not for lack of apparent effort by the eastern emperor Marcian. Not only had imperial notaries carefully and exclusively controlled the transcribing and editing of the text, but Marcian, through his bishop Anatolius, dispatched a Greek text of the *acta* to Rome with two representatives, Lucian, bishop of Bizye and the deacon Basil shortly after the close of Chalcedon.<sup>9</sup> Leo and his associates, however, were unable to deal with the Greek text and the *acta* were deposited, unread, in a papal archive (perhaps the intended result of Marcian's dispatch of such an immense Greek text to Rome). The Herculean labour of editing and translation into Latin had to wait until almost a century later when the monk Rusticus, a relative of pope Virgilius and in exile from the west for his opposition to the Three Chapters, collated this early Greek text with other, supposedly superior Greek texts available to him in the monastery of the pro-Chalcedonian *Akoimetai* in Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> His implicit goal

<sup>7</sup> On omission, deliberate or accidental, in the conciliar *acta*, see R. Price, 'Truth, omission, and fiction in the acts of Chalcedon', in R. Price and Michael Whitby (eds), *Chalcedon in context* (Liverpool, 2009), 92-106.

<sup>8</sup> Leo, *Ep.* 113, p. 67.1-6 (ACO II 4 no. 60, pp. 65-7).

<sup>9</sup> Anatolius of Constantinople to Leo of Rome: ACO II 1, 248-50.

<sup>10</sup> Both Facundus and Liberatus, western authors working in Latin, adopt the same sequence as Rusticus. Facundus, *Ad Iustinianum* V 3.10 (p. 141.78-81): *In secunda quoque actione, quae in codicibus quidem post tertiam scribitur, fuit autem eodem consulatu, VI Idus Octobris, in qua de statutis fidei tractatus incipit, centesimus et undecimus Theodoretus sedet.* Liberatus, *Brev.* 13 (ACO II 5, p. 120).

was to exonerate the Council of Chalcedon from the accusations of its opponents, the entrenched supporters of ‘the one incarnate nature’, who saw Dioscorus of Alexandria as unjustly deposed by the crypto-Nestorian supporters of ‘the two natures’.

That the first session of Chalcedon opened on 8 October presents no problem; this exceptionally long session, at which *acta* from the synods and councils of 448 and 449 were read, required the assembled bishops and imperial officials to stay in the church of St. Euphemia late into the night. At the close of this first session the imperial commissioners and senators ordered that ‘on the next day’ (τῆ ὑστεραία) a precise investigation of the faith take place:<sup>11</sup>

On the question of the orthodox and catholic faith we decree that a more exact examination must take place more completely when the council meets tomorrow.

Οἱ ἐνδοξότατοι ἄρχοντες καὶ ἡ ὑπερφυῆς σύγκλητος εἶπον· Περὶ μὲν τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως καὶ καθολικῆς τελειώτερον συνόδου γινομένης τῆ ὑστεραία ἀκριβεστέραν ἐξέτασιν δεῖν γενέσθαι συνορῶμεν.

Immediately afterwards, these same officials declared Dioscorus and the five other leaders of the Second Council of Ephesus deposed, pending the approval of the emperor, which, we must assume, was a mere formality.<sup>12</sup> Despite the shouts of approval recorded from some eastern bishops in the church, and the contrite cries from the Illyrians, no formal vote was taken to approve these depositions.<sup>13</sup> The commissioners passed over their obvious violation of conciliar procedure and proceeded to demand of all the bishops that they prepare a statement of faith consistent with the faith of the emperor, a faith as would later be revealed, that had to contain explicitly the controversial formula ‘in two natures’. This task would take several days, so the imperial commissioners were overly optimistic when they scheduled a session to discuss the faith the next day. As it turned out, there would be no session on 9 October at all. Instead, sessions are recorded on 10 and 13 October, the sequence of which is in question, followed by a fourth session securely dated to 17 October.

Although it passes unobserved by most commentators, the bishops faced a very serious problem at the close of the first session, one that demanded immediate attention. Dioscorus had not been deposed by any vote of the bishops, but rather by fiat of the imperial commissioners. Such a deposition could not possibly stand up to even minimum standards of conciliar procedure; a bishop could only be deposed by a council of his peers.<sup>14</sup> Though Price and Gaddis

<sup>11</sup> *Actio* I 1068, ACO II 1, p. 195, English trans. Price and Gaddis vol. 1, 364. The underlining is the author’s own.

<sup>12</sup> *Actio* I 1068-72, ACO II 1, pp. 195-6.

<sup>13</sup> The Illyrians: *Actio* I 1070, ACO II 1, p. 196.

<sup>14</sup> This principle, though not formally attested until 355, obtained even during the reign of Constantine. T. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 174.

state that ‘the need for a full trial of Dioscorus was not immediately apparent’, nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>15</sup> What was urgently needed was precisely a vote by the bishops to remove Dioscorus properly *before* any discussion of the faith. As was later demonstrated in the text of the *acta* themselves, the majority of bishops was uncomfortable with any talk of ‘in two natures’ and preferred to let things stand with ‘out of two natures’, a formula that Cyril of Alexandria had used alongside ‘the one incarnate nature’, both of which a good follower of Cyril like Dioscorus would heartily have approved.<sup>16</sup> When left to their own devices by the imperial commissioners, the bishops produced a first statement of belief in the fifth session of 22 October, the text of which was tellingly suppressed in the *acta* of Chalcedon, which omitted any reference to ‘in two natures’.<sup>17</sup>

The session that deposed Dioscorus (either the second or the third depending on the text of *acta*) was unique even by the standards of Chalcedon, a council presided over not by bishops but by imperial officials: it was the *only* session at which the imperial commissioners, who effectively ran the council, were not present. Instead the session was left to the papal legates to superintend and had at its core no discussion of Dioscorus’ orthodoxy, but consisted only of a series of four scurrilous written accusations leveled against him by disgruntled clergy in Alexandria. They contained only accusations of personal and financial impropriety, and were made, one surmises, by those supporters of the previous bishop, Cyril, who found themselves disenfranchised under Dioscorus.<sup>18</sup> It is important also to note that Juvenal, Thalassius, Eusebius, Basil and Eustathius, all of whom had been deposed along with Dioscorus at the end of the first session, were now in attendance at his trial *in absentia*. The fact that these bishops who had been held culpable along with Dioscorus for the events of 449 could again attend without being reinstated argues for the fact that it had been the

<sup>15</sup> Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Cyril uses ‘out of two natures’ in his *First Letter to Succensus* written ca. 434. Cyril *Ep.* 45, ACO I 1.6, p. 153-4. Cyril’s mature position was presented in his *Second Letter to Succensus* as ‘the one incarnate nature’, the central formula of Monophysitism. Cyril, *Ep.* 46, ACO I 1.6, pp. 160-1. The two formulations were closely linked in the minds of the followers of Cyril, like Dioscorus, who rejected all talk of two natures after the union as tantamount to Nestorianism. On the position of these followers of Cyril and his mature position in ecclesiastical politics before Chalcedon, see G. Bevan and P.T.R. Gray, ‘The Trial of Eutyches: A New Interpretation’, *BZ* 101 (2008/2009), 1-42.

<sup>17</sup> *Actio* V 4-12, ACO II 1.2, pp. 123[319]-124[320]. The *acta* indicate that ‘all the other bishops of the holy oecumenical council’ were also in attendance, but what this means is not clear. Only 58 members in the session are actually named, a number hardly representative of the whole council. *Actio* V 1, ACO II 1.2, pp. 121[317]-123[319].

<sup>18</sup> See also Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 32-3, who offer weak grounds for Dioscorus’ removal on doctrinal grounds. Excluding vague references of Dioscorus’ heresy in letters sent after the session, the principal accusation appears to be that he shared the heresy of Eutyches. But for Eutyches as a misguided follower of Cyril, not the founder of an eponymous heresy, see G. Bevan and P.T.R. Gray, ‘The Trial of Eutyches: A New Interpretation’ (2008/2009).

intention all along of the architects of the council to isolate the bishop of Alexandria from his erstwhile supporters.

It is unimaginable that Dioscorus traveled from Egypt along with his supporters to be sidelined before any substantive discussion of the faith; the emperor had doubtless assured him that he would be treated fairly.<sup>19</sup> The bishop of Alexandria must have been taken aback when Theodoret of Cyrillus walked into the council chambers shortly after the opening of the first session, for he had been deposed at what was at that point a still legitimate council at Ephesus in 449; this turn-around indicated the shape of things to come. Though he requested that the faith be considered by the whole council (*Actio* I, 22), the commissioners ignored his request and pressed on to the reading of the *acta* of Second Ephesus. When he was abruptly deposed by the commissioners at the end of this reading, he must truly have been stunned. This breach of faith on the part of the emperor and his subordinates doubtless explains their absence when the case of Dioscorus came up. They wanted there to be no doubt that the bishops had the final decision on Dioscorus. The trial of Dioscorus, however, was not well subscribed: only about 200 of the 365 bishops present at the council showed up to vote. Those who supported Dioscorus – the Illyrians and Egyptians – were simply excluded from the session. Tellingly, though, Juvenal, Thalassius, Eusebius, Basil and Eustathius, all of whom had been deposed by fiat of the commissioners at the end of the first session, were allowed to attend the Trial of Dioscorus. The bishop of Alexandria would be the sole scape-goat for the decisions of the Second Council of Ephesus. But where to place the trial of the Dioscorus relative to the other, official sessions, is a difficult question.

Though having the trial of Dioscorus as the second session of the council, the Greek manuscripts and earliest Latin one still assign it the date of 13 October, one that puts it *after* the discussion of the faith on 10 October. In other words, the dates assigned the sessions in the headings are the reverse of their sequence in the Greek manuscript (the proposed sequence of Chrysos, discussed below, is included in the third column):

	Greek <i>acta</i>	Latin <i>acta</i>	Chrysos
1 <sup>st</sup> Session	8 October	8 October	8 October
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session	13 October (Trial of Dioscorus)	10 October (Discussion of Faith)	10 October (Discussion of Faith)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Session	10 October (Discussion of Faith)	13 October (Trial of Dioscorus)	14 October (Trial of Dioscorus)
4 <sup>th</sup> Session	17 October	17 October	17 October

<sup>19</sup> The letter of invitation to Dioscorus does not survive, although the general invitation to the council from Marican is preserved: *Sacra* of Marican: *Epist. coll. M* 13, ACO II 1, pp. 27-9. In a constitution dated 13 July 451 and preserved as *Codex Justinianus* 1.12.5, Marican also forbade disturbances inside churches as well as tumultuous demonstrations outside.

The more reliable internal evidence is equivocal at first blush. At the opening of the Discussion of the Faith, set as either the second or third session, the imperial commissioners say that in the previous session (τῆι προτεραΐαι συνόδωι) they had ordered the bishops to write up a confession of faith:<sup>20</sup>

... the most magnificent and glorious officials and the exalted senate said: ‘At the previous session an investigation was made into the deposition of Flavian of devout memory and of the most devout Bishop Eusebius. It was evident to all that the inquiry proceeded in accordance with justice and due process, and it was then proved that they had been deposed in a manner both cruel and improper’.

οἱ μεγαλοπρεπέστατοι καὶ ἐνδοξότατοι ἄρχοντες καὶ ἡ ὑπερφυῆς σύγκλητος εἶπον· Τῆι προτεραΐαι συνόδωι περὶ τῆς κατὰ Φλαβιανὸν τὸν τῆς εὐλαβοῦς μνήμης καὶ Εὐσέβιον τὸν ἐδλαβέστατον ἐπίσκοπον καθαιρέσεως ἡ ζήτησις ἐγένετο καὶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν φανερόν κατέστη ὅπως [καὶ] δικαίως καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τὰ τῆς ἐξετάσεως προέβη καὶ ἀπεδείχθησαν τότε ὡμῶς καὶ μὴ προσηκόντως καθαιρεθέντες.

But this reference is inconclusive, however, since the commissioners cannot mean the session of the previous day, for there was none regardless of whether the session fell on 10 or 13 October. I would suggest they are referring here to the last session at which they, the imperial commissioners, were present. Since they were not present at the Trial of Dioscorus, they probably would not have figured that session into their reckoning at all.

A more decisive chronological reference comes at the end of the Discussion of the Faith when the imperial commissioners state that the council should adjourn for five days. If the Discussion of the Faith took place 10 October, the council should have convened on 14 October by this reckoning. But we know it actually reconvened on 17 October, exactly five days, counting inclusively, from 13 October. This is strong evidence that the discussion of faith actually took place on 13 October, not 10 October as the manuscript heading says. A second piece of evidence argues in favour of this sequence. When Dioscorus was requested a second time to attend the session to consider his case, he replied as follows:<sup>21</sup>

Having collected myself and considered what is advantageous, I make this reply. At the previous meeting of the council (ἐν τῆι πρὸ ταύτης συνόδωι) the most magnificent officials who were in session took certain decisions after a full discussion of each point. Since a second (Δευτέρα) meeting of the council summons me to a revision of the aforesaid, I request that the great officials and the sacred senate, who attended the council previously (πρώην) should also attend now, so that these same decisions can be reconsidered in their presence.

<sup>20</sup> *Actio* III (Greek) 2, ACO II 1.2, pp. 77[273].27-78[274].3. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis vol. 2, 9. The underlining is the author’s own.

<sup>21</sup> *Actio* II (Greek) 22, ACO II 1.2, p. 11[207].24-9. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 45. The underlining is the author’s own.

συναγαγὼν ἑμαυτὸν καὶ γνοὺς τὸ συμφέρον τάδε ἀποκρίνομαι· ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ πρὸ ταύτης συνόδῳ καθεζόμενοι οἱ μεγαλοπρεπέστατοι ἄρχοντες ὄρισαν φανερὰ μετὰ πολλὴν ἐκάστου διαλαλίαν, νῦν δὲ Δευτέρα με καλεῖ σύνοδος εἰς τὴν τῶν προειρημένων ἀνασκευὴν, παρακαλῶ τοὺς καὶ πρώην ἐν τῇ συνόδῳ παραγενομένους μεγάλους ἄρχοντας καὶ τὴν ἱεράν σύγκλητον καὶ νῦν παρῆναι, ἵνα πάλιν ἐπ’ αὐτῶν τὰ αὐτὰ γυμνασθῆι.

Price and Gaddis dismiss this passage as having no importance since Dioscorus may well be ignoring the Discussion of the Faith that he did not attend and instead counts the present session only as the second, when in fact it is the third. Yet this is a very unnatural reading of the Greek that emphatically puts the session after the first and explicitly calls it the second; it is wholly different from the chronological uncertainty in the statement of the imperial commissioners when they refer to ‘the previous session’. The word πρώην, though often carrying the general meaning of ‘earlier’, can also denote more precisely ‘the day before yesterday’.<sup>22</sup> If Dioscorus were speaking on 13 October, the first session would have taken place some five days earlier, but if he were speaking on 10 October the first session would have indeed been two days earlier. The final piece of evidence, the remark of John of Germanicia to Dioscorus when the latter was summoned a third time, clinches this interpretation:<sup>23</sup>

John bishop of Germanicia said: ‘It has been three days since, according to the decree of our most pious and Christ-loving emperor, the most magnificent and glorious officials and the sacred senate with the holy council carried out an examination of the offences alleged against your religiousness by the most God-beloved Eusebius; and having condemned your religiousness, they put you under sentence, if this should be pleasing to the most holy bishops, who have been entrusted by the Lord God with delivering it’.

Ἰωάννης ἐπίσκοπος Γερμανικείας εἶπεν· πρὸ τριῶν ἡμερῶν κατὰ θέσπισμα τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου καὶ φιλοχρίστου βασιλέως ἡμῶν οἱ μεγαλοπρεπέστατοι καὶ ἐνδοξότατοι ἄρχοντες καὶ ἡ ἱερά σύγκλητος μετὰ τῆς ἁγίας συνόδου τὴν ἐξέτασιν τῶν ἐπαγομένων τῇ θεοσεβείᾳ σου ἁμαρτημάτων παρὰ τοῦ θεοσεβεστάτου ἐπισκόπου Εὐσεβίου ἐποίησαντο καὶ καταψηφισάμενοι τῆς θεοσεβείας σου ὑπὸ ἀπόφασιν σε πεποιήκασιν, εἰ τοῦτο παρασταίῃ τοῖς ταύτην ἐπάγειν παρὰ τοῦ δεσπότη τοῦ θεοῦ πεπιστευμένοις ἁγιωτάτοις ἐπισκόποις.

Notwithstanding Price and Gaddis’ special pleading that the chronological reference is a ‘loose use of “three” for a small indefinite number’ (citing Lampe PGL 1042 F), it can only reasonably mean that the trial of Dioscorus took place on 10 October, three days after the first session. I would propose

<sup>22</sup> See H.G. Liddell and R.S. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised and augmented by H.S. Jones (Oxford, 1968) (=LSJ) and G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), *A patristic Greek lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) (=PGL), s.v. πρώην.

<sup>23</sup> *Actio* II (Greek) 78, ACO II 1.2, p. 26[222].30-6. Engl. trans Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 66-7. The underlining is the author’s own.

that the following sequence of the *acta* makes the most sense of the evidence internal to the *acta* themselves:

1 <sup>st</sup> Session	8 October
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session	10 October (Trial of Dioscorus)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Session	13 October (Discussion of the Faith)
4 <sup>th</sup> Session	17 October

There remains, however, a problem with following the Greek *acta* that is not addressed by simply swapping the dates of 10 October and 13 October in the headings.

A letter appended to the Trial of Dioscorus and addressed to Dioscorus himself by the council indicates that Dioscorus was deposed on Saturday 13 October:<sup>24</sup>

On account of your contempt for the divine canons and your disobedience to this holy and ecumenical council, because, in addition to the other crimes for which you have been convicted, you did not present yourself even when summoned a third time by this holy and great council according to the divine canons to answer the charges brought against you, know that on the present thirteenth day of the month of October you are deposed from the episcopate by the holy and ecumenical council and deprived of all ecclesiastical rank.

Γίνωσκε σαυτὸν διὰ τὴν κατὰ τῶν θείων κανόνων ὑπεροψίαν καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀπειθειάν σου τὴν περὶ τὴν ἁγίαν ταύτην καὶ οἰκουμενικὴν σύνοδον, ὑπὲρ ὧν πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις σου πλημμελήμασιν οἷς ἐάλως, καὶ τρίτον κληθεῖς παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας ταύτης καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου κατὰ τοὺς θείους κανόνας ἐπὶ τῷ ἀποκρίνασθαι τοῖς ἐπαγομένοις σοι οὐκ ἀπήντησας, Ὀκτωβρίου μηνὸς τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος τρισκαιδεκάτη παρὰ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου καθαιρεῖσθαι τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς καὶ παντὸς ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ θεσμοῦ ὑπάρχειν ἀλλότριον.

Chrysos avoided this problem by moving the Discussion of the Faith to 14 October (see the table above). This date of 14 October finds support in the Greek text of the fourth session that speaks of the discussion of the faith taking place on 14 October, one day before the Ides of October:<sup>25</sup>

... yesterday, which is Saturday, the thirteenth day of the present month of October...  
κατὰ τὴν χθὲς ἡμέραν, ἣτις ἐστὶ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος μηνὸς Ὀκτωβρίου τρισκαιδεκάτη ἡμέραι σαββάτου...

<sup>24</sup> *Actio* II (Greek) 99, ACO II 1.2, pp. 41[237].37-42[238].3. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, pp. 112-3. The underlining is the author's own.

<sup>25</sup> *Actio* II (Greek) 99, ACO II 1.2, pp. 41[237].37-42[238].3. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 113.

Rusticus, however, emended the passage so as to put it on 10 October, consistent with its position as the second session:<sup>26</sup>

Veronicianus the hallowed secretary read from another record of the proceedings at Chalcedon one day before the Ides of October in the consulship of our lord Marcian perpetual Augustus and the one to be designated, after the rest.

*BERONICIANUS VIR DEVOTUS SECRETARIUS EX ALIA SCHEDA [GESTORUM] RECITAVIT EORUM QUAE ACTA SUNT consulatu domini nostri Marciani perpetui augusti et eius qui fuerit nuntiatus, sexto Id Octob Chalcedone post alia legit.*

Chrysos' ingenious suggestion, however, fails to take into account the very precise period of five days assigned by the imperial commissioners to work on the statement of belief. The solution to this chronological conundrum is not immediately clear, although it has no bearing on the larger issue of the *sequence* of the sessions. It could be that the text of the letters in the *versio antiqua* were modified to agree with the (incorrect) date of 13 October given in the session heading.

If we do accept at least the ordering of the sessions in the Greek *acta* as I suggest, then the calls for the exile of Dioscorus by the bishops at the end of the third session make more sense. Exile was an imperial matter and could only take place once a bishop had been formally deposed by his peers; it was only natural that at this point the bishops, identified as those from Constantinople, would appeal to the imperial commissioners attending the session that they secure an imperial order to have Dioscorus exiled.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, other bishops in attendance, identified as Illyrians, called for Dioscorus to be reinstated, a fact that Price and Gaddis claims indisputable evidence that the trial of Dioscorus had not yet taken place. This last argument profoundly misunderstands Marcian's intentions for the council. Both Thalassius and Juvenal, who had been deposed along with Dioscorus at the end of the first session, were restored in the fourth session so it was not impossible to restore Dioscorus as well. Indeed, Dioscorus and his supporters must have thought that he would be restored as well, for a public notice was put up in Chalcedon to say that the rumours spread by Dioscorus that he would be restored were completely false. The Trial of Dioscorus itself was a sham, a bald-faced attempt to traduce his character on remove him for reasons other than his faith. The slanderous *libelli* of accusation read into the minutes were never examined and Dioscorus was removed on a technicality, that he had not heeded the three canonical summonses to attend. Dioscorus himself explained why this was the case: imperial guards were preventing him from attending. The emperor's purpose is clear enough: to prevent Dioscorus from ever entering into a discussion of the faith where he could publicly champion the Cyrillian *formulae* 'out of two natures' and 'one nature', *formulae* most bishops in attendance seemed to approved, at least when not pressurized by the imperial commissioners. Dioscorus would

<sup>26</sup> *Actio* IV 3, ACO II 1.2, p. 93[289].3-5. The underlining is the author's own.

<sup>27</sup> See note 14 above on this point.

not have been cowed by the imperial representatives to adopt the imperial position of ‘in two natures’, an unmistakably Nestorian formula.

The relationship between the sequence of the session and the imperial strategy should now be apparent. In the fifth session on 22 October the issue at stake was clearly raised. By this time, the bishops had put together their individual confessions and produced a collective *definitio fidei* that no longer survives. The imperial commissioners complained that this document only spoke of Christ as being ‘out of two natures’; if Dioscorus had condemned Flavian for believing in two natures after the incarnation, ‘out of two natures’ was insufficient to condemn the ‘heresy’ of Dioscorus (and of Eutyches). When Anatolius, the bishop of Constantinople, reminded the commissioners that Dioscorus had not been condemned for his faith, but for failing to obey the summons of the council, the commissioners did not pursue the point, for they knew what was at stake in this remark:<sup>28</sup>

The most magnificent and glorious officials said: ‘Dioscorus said that the reason for Flavian’s deposition was that he said there are two natures, but the definition has “from two natures”’.

Anatolius the most devout archbishop of Constantinople said: ‘It was not because of the faith that Dioscorus was deposed. He was deposed because he broke off communion with the lord Archbishop Leo and was summoned a third time and did not come’.

The most glorious officials said: ‘Do you accept the letter of Archbishop Leo?’

Ἀνατόλιος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως εἶπεν· Διὰ πίστιν οὐ καθιρέθη Διόσκορος, ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ ἀκοινωνησίαν ἐποίησεν τῷ κυρίῳ Λέοντι τῷ ἀρχιεπισκόπῳ καὶ τρίτον ἐκλήθη καὶ οὐκ ἦλθεν, διὰ τοῦτο καθιρέθη. Οἱ ἐνδοξότατοι ἄρχοντες εἶπον· Τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου Λέοντος καταδέχεσθε;

If ‘out of two natures’ was the faith of Dioscorus, then it was also the faith of a majority of the bishops present when they cried out, led by Eusebius of Dorylaeum (actually an opponent of Dioscorus, no less), that their first draft of the faith was sufficient:<sup>29</sup>

The most devout bishops exclaimed: ‘Another definition must not be produced. Nothing is lacking in the definition’.

Eusebius the most devout bishop of Dorylaeum said: ‘Another definition must not be produced’.

Οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι ἐβόησαν· Ἄλλος ὄρος οὐ γίνεται. οὐδὲν λείπει τῷ ὄρῳ. Εὐσέβιος ὁ εὐλαβέστατος ἐπίσκοπος Δορυλαίου εἶπεν· Ἄλλος ὄρος οὐ γίνεται.

This was the crux of the problem faced by Marcian and the other architects of Chalcedon. Had Dioscorus been allowed to submit his confession of faith – the deposition of Dioscorus at the end of the first session could not have prevented him from doing so, as it was illegitimate –, he almost certainly would

<sup>28</sup> *Actio* V 14-5, ACO II 1.2, p. 124[320].14-9. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 198.

<sup>29</sup> *Actio* V 18-9, ACO II 1.2, p. 124[320].24-6. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis, vol. 2, 198.

have found himself in agreement with a majority of his peers. Consequently, the accusations leveled against Dioscorus would have been dismissed as a put-up job, comparable to the very similar accusations made against Cyril of Alexandria 20 years earlier.<sup>30</sup> It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to scapegoat Dioscorus for Second Ephesus after the ‘quite detailed investigation’ (ἀκριβεστέραν ἐξέτασιν) of the faith promised by the commissioners at the end of the first session.<sup>31</sup> This reasoning explains why the two letters appended to the trial that place Dioscorus deposition are dated to 13 October, the day of the discussion of faith. The formal notice of deposition was delayed until the return of the imperial commissioners to cement the impression that Dioscorus was deposed for doctrinal reasons.

By changing the sequence of sessions two and three the compilers of the *acta* gave the impression to the reader that if Dioscorus was deposed *after* the discussion of the faith, he was deposed *because* of his faith. This swap was difficult for the compilers of the Greek *acta* to accomplish, working as they were not long after the council itself, and they confined themselves to changing surreptitiously the dates at the beginning of the two sessions and in the order of deposition issued to Dioscorus. Not until the sixth century, however, was this earlier deception completed by Rusticus in his Latin translation. The intention of Rusticus and his colleagues are further clarified by the addition of a letter of the council to Valentinian and Marcian that makes it clear that Dioscorus was deposed for doctrinal reasons: both for his support of the heresy of Eutyches and for his rejection of Leo’s *Tome*.<sup>32</sup> This letter is not to be found in the Greek *acta*, and was likely composed by the papal legates alone in Latin and sent to the West under the name of the whole council. Rather than providing an impartial record of the proceedings, the *acta* use a calculated arrangement of authentic documents and records to lead the reader to a spurious conclusion. In this sense, they are a very modern form of propaganda.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cyril notes in a letter that several Alexandria clerics resident in Constantinople – Chairemon, Victor and Sophronas – whom he refers to as ‘the dung of the city’, had leveled against him accusations of misappropriating church funds. Cyril, *Ep.* 4, *Coll. Vat.* 22, ACO I 1.1, pp. 110-2. On these accusations in the context of the First Council of Ephesus, see also the influential study of E. Schwartz, ‘Cyril und der Mönch Viktor’, *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 208.4 (1928), 1-51.

<sup>31</sup> *Actio* I 1068, ACO II 1, p. 195. Engl. trans. Price and Gaddis vol. 1, 364.

<sup>32</sup> *Actio* III[II] 98, ACO II 3.2, pp. 83[342]-84[343].

<sup>33</sup> Similar problems exist with the sequence of the *acta* concerning the rights of Constantinople and the so-called ‘28<sup>th</sup> canon’. See on this F.X. Murphy, *Peter Speaks Through Leo* (1952), 125 n. 1, where it is shown that Schwartz has again got the sequence of the sessions wrong. The sequence of the later sessions needs to be reconsidered in light of the problems with the first four, particularly the way in which the lay officials who ran the meeting outmaneuvered the papal delegates much as they did Dioscorus. On this see E. Chrysos, ‘Η ΔΙΑΤΑΞΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΩΝ’ (1971), 275-8 and 283-4, who argues for the manipulation of the *acta* by the compilers. See Price and Gaddis, vol. 3, 62-3 and 67-73.

## **ORIENTALIA**



# Just Deserts: Origen's Lingering Influence on Divine Justice in the Hagiographies of John of Ephesus

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## ABSTRACT

*The Lives of the Eastern Saints* by John of Ephesus has been received as a twilight reminiscence of the Miaphysite community in Syria. This article challenges that notion through the examination of John's role as Justinian's 'Converter of Pagans', and the influence of Origen's theologies on hagiographical renderings of retributive justice. The article works at the intersection of contemporary theological influence and imperially inspired identity making. Re-reading John's narrative mosaic, with attention to the fact that his saints are carefully selected and highly stylized, raises interesting questions: Citing John's close ties to Justinian, why did John depict his Miaphysite saints as literary heroes? Given the charged nature of Origen's theology – and prior condemnation – do John's vignettes play a role in crafting a tradition that defeats restorative theology (*apokatastasis*)? How do these themes relate to Justinian's concept of divine justice and why is this exemplified in the lives of John's Syrian saints? This article argues for a nuanced perspective on hagiography that is increasingly political and theological. John infuses his saints with providential power and divine justice, rendering an idealized world of holiness that conflates divine and imperial justice, condemns unfashionable theologies, emphasizes an estranged community's saints, and is deferential to imperial interests. Whether John's intentions are realized is up for debate. We can, however, read his work with amplified meaning, supplementing our perspectives on the Syrian holy man and his role in the shaping of later Christian traditions.

John of Ephesus is an intriguing figure, representing the unique merging of power from ecclesiastical office, political connection, and partisan social interest. His hagiographical contribution comes in the form of a sizable compilation, presumably gathered from his own and others' personal histories and subsequent experiences as an appointed official of Justinian in the Syrian territories.

My recent research has focused on the question of *apokatastasis* in Origen-sympathizing communities and how this relates to a growing interest in retributive justice in the hagiographies. If we compare the hagiographies of John with earlier compilations, including the *Lausiaca History* of Palladius, Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria*, or Cyril of Scythopolis's *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, some unpredictable developments emerge. Focusing on the particular

saints' response to adversity, we see a rendering of power that hints at three themes. John's saints are: (1) deeply concerned with justice and retribution; (2) driven by themes of this-worldly power; and (3) focused on conversion, especially of the pagan. This article asks what if any influence the condemnation of Origen's teachings, and John's proximal relationship to Justinian had on the style of hagiography found in the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*? It will argue that even if Origen was not the primary motivator for developing alternative theological matrices of retribution, thereafter applied through the representation of the saint, he cannot be discounted as completely irrelevant to John's thinking and subsequent hagiographical writers.

The hagiography of John of Ephesus has been thoughtfully explored by Susan Harvey in her 1990 monograph, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis*.<sup>1</sup> Harvey rigorously examines the Syrian context, the Miaphysite theological concerns, and the literary topoi that emerge in a socio-historical approach to the work. I am deeply indebted to her research as well as Peter Brown's treatment of the Christian text in late antiquity. In an insightful piece on Christianization Brown states: 'On the issue of texts as evidence, I think that we have come to realize the extent to which the texts themselves were part of the process of Christianization. They can not be treated as neutral evidence for a process that happened, as it were, outside themselves. They were part of the process itself'.<sup>2</sup> It is with this concept, and added layer of interpretive context, that we now turn to the fascinating work of John of Ephesus, examining how his saints are used to formulate and promulgate particular messages of piety and justice.

To characterize the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* I will focus on just a few brief examples. The first is from his initial hagiographical vignette. I think his choice to give pride of place here is no accident; the saint embodies many of the work's prominent themes. The saint's name is Habib and he is a champion of the cheated layman. In the story, Habib calls on a debt holder to converse with him over his unfair actions in dealing with his client. Fleeing from the holy man, the debt holder dies that very evening, showing the power of God in the holy Habib. A later, similar story, follows the same trajectory except the wrongdoer goads Habib, saying, 'will not this fellow go and sit in his monastery and be quiet? For see! He comes out and wanders about to eat and drink'.<sup>3</sup> This takes Habib back a step, but does not stop him from calling forth divine judgment

<sup>1</sup> Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Brown, 'Conversion and Christianization in Late Antiquity: The Case of Augustine', in Richard Lim and Carole Straw (eds), *The Past before Us: The Challenge of Historiographies of Late Antiquity* (Turnhout, 2004), 103-17, 107. See also Andrea Sterk, "'Representing" Mission from Below: Historians as Interpreters and Agents of Christianization', *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 79 (2010), 271-304, 273.

<sup>3</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, E.W. Brooks (trans.), *Patrologia Orientalis* 82 (Turnhout, 2003), 1, 17:9.

on the man. Habib prays, 'do with him as your grace knows how'.<sup>4</sup> With this the Lord 'smote him, and half of him became withered, one of his eyes and one of his arms, and the whole of his side, and one of his feet, and he fell into grievous affliction'.<sup>5</sup> The offender finds out that the punishment is for his actions and sends out his agents asking for the saint's prayers. Habib gives his reply through his disciple saying, 'go, my son; we for our part will not close the door, and pray for him. But the rest of the sentence has gone forth against him, that he shall depart from life; and this we cannot reverse'.<sup>6</sup> In Habib we see the image of a socially connected monk, embodying justice and working within God's power to apply retribution in immediate forms. The retribution is not regularly geared toward reconciliation, but is usually seen as irreversible, once it is pronounced. Although there are instances of reversal and forgiveness in John's work, this does not appear to be the norm.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, his saints are rarely seen powerless in the face of adversity, that is, these are not the martyr saints of Palladios, witnessing with their lives of struggle.<sup>8</sup> Examining the factors that have impacted these literary developments, we can point to several intriguing aspects. Certainly the position of the Christian in society had undergone a radical transformation. Christians occupied nearly every prestigious post in the Byzantine world. A good bit of theology had also changed; theology that was deeply influential on Palladios, but from which John of Ephesus seems eager to distance himself.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that if John's work was to be read as a reminiscence of the faithful Miaphysites in persecution, he does not present them as the otherworld-focused, suffering people of God that Palladios depicted.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1, PO 17:9-10.

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

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See story of Z'ura, who brings the king back to life, *ibid.* 2, PO 17:25. See also the forgiven man in chapter 32, *ibid.* 32, PO 18:586.

<sup>8</sup> For Palladios providence was something that worked to show the monk the right path to take in a situation. The example of Paul the Simple shows this feature at work. Upon returning from the field without warning, he catches his wife 'carrying on shamefully' with another man. Palladios maintains that this was providence that allowed him to see the way that was best. Paul remarks: 'Good, all right, it does not matter to me. Jesus help me, I will have nothing more to do with her. Go, have her and her children, too; I am going off to be a monk'. Palladios, *The Lausiak History* (New York, 1964), 22.1, 77. See also the fascinating story of Potamiaena in an earlier section where Palladios describes the torture of a righteous woman. He states: 'And being let down little by little over the space of an hour, she died as the boiling pitch reached her neck'. God's retribution for the offending party is never explored. In this case Palladios is concerned only with highlighting her virtue, and not with the judgment of those wicked torturers who snuffed her life. *Ibid.* 3.4, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Jerome accuses him of teaching Origenist theologies in his fifty-first epistle. *Ibid.* n. 320, 198.

<sup>10</sup> This could indeed be due to the different persecuting party, a Christian sect versus a Pagan government.

A second figure worth mentioning is Simeon the Mountaineer. Simeon wanders the mountains enjoying the pure air of God's creation until one day he happens upon a pagan community living heedless lives, shirking their paternal religion. Simeon takes it upon himself to correct the misguided community, employing all sorts of remarkable actions. The pinnacle of the story is when he sequesters the youth of the town and forcibly tonsures them. Simeon says to the parents, 'allow all the little ones to receive a present today, and we will bless them and speak with them ... and thus they may remember it as long as they live'.<sup>11</sup> To the children he clarified the request with enticements, 'you will receive presents, and we will mix them for you. Remain all of you'.<sup>12</sup>

Some ninety children stayed and Simeon closed the doors and separated out a third of them. The remainder of the ninety was held in a separate room. Simeon soothed them with blandishments and began shaving the boys and girls who he had selected. The displeasure of the parents is embodied in two figures that came forward and rejected the action. Simeon, laughing through their response, warns them of the outcome they will reap and three days later the boys died.

Although Simeon would have made an abysmal parent, we can conclude a few details about his tactical qualities as a saint: first, he was willing to employ trickery to accomplish his (or God's) will, championing an outcome that superseded the methods; second – and more importantly – the ascetic had power to secure life and effect death – or at the very least foresee it coming.

In Simeon we see the interest in conversion of pagans, and the warning embodied for those who do not heed God's messengers. The impact of the story is deeply related to John's own actions as a converter of pagans in Syria. The monk could forcefully convert towns as they saw fit, calling forth dire consequences for those who resisted their power. Here, retributive justice, rather than restoration, appears to be the new standard for saintly comportment.

With these two vignettes as examples, I will turn now to a lingering question: did Origen's theology have some effect on the flavor of hagiography represented in John of Ephesus? Although a proposition that holds John's style of hagiography as deeply contingent on Origen's condemnation would be facile, to deny some influence is equally misguided. We could read John's work as a distancing from one of his more prominent teachings of restoration – *apokatastasis*. Historians will note the contemporary condemnation of Origen by Justinian in his edict of 543 AD, in response to pressure from Ephrem of Antioch, Peter of Jerusalem and the Roman Legate Pelagius.<sup>13</sup> Section eleven of Justinian's Anathemas states: 'If anyone says or thinks that the punishment

<sup>11</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (2003), 16, PO 17:242.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* He was indicating some type of drink or food with this.

<sup>13</sup> Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Wilmington, 1983), 233.

of demons and of impious men is only temporary, and will one day have an end, and that a restoration (*ἀποκατάστασις*) will take place of demons and of impious men, let him be anathema'.<sup>14</sup> If we compare the many hagiographical compilations leading up to John of Ephesus, who are either Origen sympathizing or indifferent, we receive a different flavor of retribution embodied in the ascetics' lives, one which is often reversed and concerned to teach and restore the enemy. There are certainly exceptions, but the majority of instances play out according to this model.<sup>15</sup>

If we take a moment to compare a story from Theodoret of Cyr, who predates John by a century or so, a very different style of justice unfolds. Theodoret tells us of a man who pretended to be dead so that his friends could secure money for his burial from the saintly James of Nisibis.<sup>16</sup> James effectively kills the man by praying that his soul would go on and join the choir of the righteous. James later brings the man back to life and Theodoret apparently feels compelled to explain this in comparison to harsher moments in Christian history. Comparing James to Peter in the *Acts of the Apostles* chapter five story where Ananias and Sapphira are killed, Theodoret expounds, 'while the divine Apostle did not release the dead from their misfortune – for terror was needed in the first stage of proclaiming salvation – James, who was full of the grace of an Apostle, both applied chastisement as the occasion demanded and then swiftly revoked it, since he knew this was what would benefit the wrongdoers'.<sup>17</sup> If we accept the notion that John's saints are rather more retributive, and far less willing to restore the wrongdoer, we should also ask why this development occurred in John's work and how it was linked to the theological and social influences of the mid-sixth century.

I think, with many scholars, that John of Ephesus was not so estranged from the imperial family as his differing theological views from Justinian would suggest. This leaves us with a hagiography that might signal a more prescriptive paradigm, rather than simply a commemorative piece of literature. Here I would cite John's role as 'converter of pagans', his rather peaceful tone toward Justinian, and his comments about reconciliation in several of his lives.<sup>18</sup> If we consider the number of monks that were likely *endemountes*, or 'in residence' in the capital during and after Theodora's life as empress, we are left with a very interesting picture of the Chalcedonian/anti-Chalcedonian communities and their interactions.

<sup>14</sup> Justinian, 'The Anathematisms of the Emperor Justinian Against Origen', in Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Version II* 14 (Grand Rapids, 1978), 619-20, 620.

<sup>15</sup> See Palladios of Galatia, Theodoret of Cyr, and Cyril of Scythopolis.

<sup>16</sup> Theodoret of Cyr, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. R.M. Price (Kalamazoo, 1985), 1.13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 1.

<sup>18</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (2003), 25, PO 18:338.

John's proximity to the emperor had a decided impact on his hagiographical rendering of the holy men of Syria. It is programmatic, exemplifying the power of the holy men to convert the pagans in Syria. It is also pro-Miaphysite insofar as it records and acknowledges the struggles of these communities under Justinian's uncle, Justin I. We might add here that any imperially rooted communication with the slightest hope of reconciliation, whether hagiography or not, would *have* to highlight the plight of the Miaphysites if it was to gain any hearers in those communities.<sup>19</sup> And finally, it is largely retributive – as in the case of Habib and Simeon's judgments, which cause death that is not reversed – marking a distancing in this world from a contested Origenian theological position of restoration (*apokatastasis*).

In consideration of Justinian's own jurisprudential reforms, we see John's monks solving social issues and rendering judgment in civil cases. Justinian begins the first book of his *Institutes*, with a simple definition of Justice: 'Justice is the constant and perpetual wish to render every one his due'.<sup>20</sup> Although this could certainly be read as focused on the afterlife, the thrust of Justinian's own imperial existence was to accomplish the glory and will of God in his earthly, Byzantine kingdom, mirroring the glory of that eternal one. The monks embodied retribution in a way that distanced them from any notion of earthly restoration. God's judgment was characterized as swift and rarely reversed as it was in Palladius, Theodoret, and Cyril of Scythopolis's hagiographies.

It is possible that John of Ephesus simply had a penchant for retributive flare in his choice of hagiographies. It is unlikely, however, that this just happened to be the type of hagiography that was being circulated at the time. Cyril of Scythopolis' contemporary compilation would also prove otherwise. Hagiography is far more influenced by the author than this model would suggest.<sup>21</sup> A more compelling notion is that hagiography was changing and several factors, including Origen, were at play in this change.

Harvey follows Brooks' dating of John's *Lives* to 566 AD, explaining that it was likely drafted in his Constantinopolitan monastery.<sup>22</sup> The later revisions

<sup>19</sup> Justinian made several moves in his lifetime to facilitate reconciliation of the two communities. See Fergus Millar, 'Rome, Constantinople and the Near Eastern Church Under Justinian: Two Synods of C.E. 536', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008), 62-82.

<sup>20</sup> *Iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuens*. Paul Krueger *et al.*, *Corpus juris civilis* (Berlin, 1888), Foreword, Liber Primus, 1. Translation from Thomas Collett Sandars, *The Institutes of Justinian with English Introduction, Translation and Notes*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, 1917).

<sup>21</sup> Consider for example Athanasius' influential rendering of Anthony. Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, Robert C. Gregg (trans.) (New York, 1980). See also my article on John of Ephesus: Todd E. French, 'Many Truths, One Story: John of Ephesus's Lives of the Eastern Saints', in Rico Monge, Kerry P.C. San Chirico and Rachel Smith (eds), *Hagiography and Religious Truth: Case Studies in the Abrahamic and Dharmic Traditions* (London, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> Peregrine Horden points out this detail. Harvey states: 'The collection probably was written while John was living in his monastery outside Constantinople. John became leader of the

in 567 AD and 568 AD that Brooks argues for would have been undertaken in the first few years of the reign of Justinian's successor.<sup>23</sup> I have argued elsewhere for an earlier date, citing Brooks' description of his personal chronology as 'an almost insoluble puzzle'.<sup>24</sup> If we acknowledge the possibility of an earlier date, John's text makes greater sense in comparison to his later extant work, the *Ecclesiastical History*, which is deeply impacted by the duress of John Scholasticus' Miaphysite persecutions.<sup>25</sup> John's work in the *Lives* appears far more committed to reconciliation among the theological parties; its concern is oriented toward conversion and differentiation from the Pagan. To read the *Lives* as commemorative of the championed ascetics amidst persecution does offer a coherent perspective on the compilation, but raises questions as to why John would include such peaceful language for a known Chalcedonian Emperor like Justinian.<sup>26</sup> If John's *Lives* are moved up chronologically to a time when he was an agent of Justinian, his work becomes far more intelligible. As Justinian was condemning Origen's theologies of reconciliation, John was crafting a hagiography that matched. The saint meted retributive justice akin to Justinian's legal program, while reconciling and remembering a Miaphysite community that had been alienated by Justinian's predecessor.

In conclusion, John's saints are powerful figures, bordering on heroic in their ability to rescue the underdog, apply divinely ordained retribution, and secure the Christian faith in contested regions. The style John employs most prominently, often rendering the punishments irreversible, indicates either a general change in sentiment regarding how justice was to be understood, or an innovation fueled by changing theological considerations and condemnations. An earlier date for John's compilation would reinforce his role as Justinian's agent, willing to work toward the emperor's goals of a just empire in which the Miaphysites were peacefully reconciled, the Pagans were emphatically condemned, and heretical teachings, like Origen's controversial *apokatastasis*, were socially defeated through hagiographical influence. Whatever date is chosen, whether during or after Justinian's reign, John's message appears to be as prescriptive as it is commemorative, a truly crafted, and perhaps *crafting*, hagiographical compilation.

Monophysites there in 566. The *Lives* appear to have been written between 566 and 568'. S.A. Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis* (1990), 164 n. 62. Peregrine Horden, Review of 'Asceticism and Society in Crisis. John of Ephesus and The Lives of the Eastern Saints. By Susan Ashbrook Harvey', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1994), 490.

<sup>23</sup> Brooks does not cite where he finds this idea but is likely reliant on Dyakonov's 1908 biography.

<sup>24</sup> T. French, 'Many Truths, One Story' (2016). John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (2003), PO, Intro. III.

<sup>25</sup> John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, J. Payne Smith (trans.) (Oxford, 1860), I 3, 3.

<sup>26</sup> It is certainly possible that he might be juxtaposing Justinian's peaceful reign with his successor.



# Dialogue between Death and the Devil in Saint Ephrem the Syrian and Saint Romanos the Melodist

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, I will be examining two dialogues between Death and the Demon. These dialogues are found in the writings of St. Ephrem the Syriac and St. Romanos the Melodist. My hypothesis is that Romanos owes more to Ephrem than is usually believed. How so? Ephrem wrote in Syriac; Romanos wrote in Greek even though he was a native of modern day Turkey where Ephrem had been born, lived, died. In addition, both writers employ a poetic form of writing through means of which they convey their theology: called *memre* with respect to Ephrem and *kontakion* with respect to Romanos. To what extent was Romanos inspired by Ephrem to use this poetic form for theological expression? Are there common themes that can be discerned in the dialogues of Ephrem and Romanos?

‘The Harrowing of Hades’ can be read in a beautiful icon called ‘ἡ ἀνάστασις’, the Resurrection. In the center of the icon stands the resurrected Christ surrounded by an almond-shaped mandorla, indicating the full deification of humanity in his person: flesh divinized and no longer subject to eternal death. At Christ’s feet lay crisscrossed over each other the now broken gates of Hades under which we can see the bound figure of the devil. Around his wrists and legs are the locks and chains that he had previously used to bind the human race. On each side of the triumphant Christ, we see Adam and Eve being pulled out of their tombs by the risen Savior’s hands, a scene witnessed by the prophets, kings, and righteous ones of Israel now delivered from the power of Hades and safely delivered into the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to this scene, a number of ancient authors imagined a dialogue between death and the devil over what is happening and why things have turned out so badly for humanity’s enemies. These dialogues between death and the devil can be found in several writings: the *Acta Pilati 2: The Gospel of Nicodemus*

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Weisner, ‘The Harrowing of Hades’, *Inside the Vatican* (Urbi et Orbi Communications, May 15, 2015), 51-2.

(mid-4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), the Nisibean hymns of Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 A.D.),<sup>2</sup> and the *kontakia*<sup>3</sup> of Romanos the Melodist (490-556 A.D.).<sup>4</sup> In Ephrem and Romanos in particular, these dialogues between death and the devil are particularly dramatic and rich in psychological insight as the two enemies of mankind praise each other, together lament over the fate that has befallen them, blame each other, show pity or no pity for one another, boast of their feats to each other, but, in the end, recognize that Christ's victory over them is complete.

Even though Ephrem wrote in Syriac, and Romanos in Greek, recent scholarship demonstrates that Romanos owes more to his Syriac predecessor than earlier generations of scholars – and even some contemporary ones – were and are willing to admit.<sup>5,6</sup> In this paper, I will argue that Romanos does indeed owe a great deal to the influence of Ephrem. This debt can be seen, in particular, in their dialogues between death and the Devil. First, a brief biographical sketch of each writer will help us to enter more fully into their relationship.

Ephrem was born in around the year 306 A.D. in the region of Nisibis in the Roman province of Syria (modern-day Turkey) probably of Christian parents. As was the custom at the time, he was probably baptized as a young man. With the exception of the last ten years of his life, he lived in Nisibis where he served as deacon to a series of remarkable bishops. In 363 A.D., as part of a peace

<sup>2</sup> Dialogues between the Devil and Death are found in *Carmina Nisibena* (hereafter referred to as *CN*) 35-42, 52-68 and especially 35-6, and 39. See J. Teixidor, 'Le thème de la descente aux enfers chez saint Ephrem', *L'Orient Syrien* 6 (1961), 25-40.

<sup>3</sup> Dialogues between the Devil and Death appear in the following *kontakia* (hereafter referred to as *K.*): *On the Raising of Lazarus I, On the Crucifixion, On the Victory of the Cross, On the Resurrection II, On the Resurrection III, On the Resurrection V.*

<sup>4</sup> Dialogues between Death and the Devil are not unique to the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Ephrem and Romanos. Similar exchanges can be found in Pseudo-Eusebius [sometimes referred to as Eusebius of Alexandria], Homily 1 (see PG 86, 509-26), *ibid.*, Homily 3 (see PG 86, 384-406); attributed to St. John Chrysostom, 'Homily on the Passion of Christ' (see PG 62, 721-4).

<sup>5</sup> See J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris, 1977): 'De fait, il n'y a rien dans la poésie syriaque qui puisse être directement assimilé au kontakion. Celui-ci, jusqu'à preuve du contraire, passe à juste titre pour une création originale du génie grec, dont les éléments sont complexes'. And yet, regarding the theme of the descent into hell, Grosdidier de Matons writes: 'Tous deux – le premier surtout – se rattachent par Origène à la tradition des Apologistes; tous deux aussi sont familiers aux poètes syriens, dont Romanos a largement subi l'influence.' *Romanos le Mélode, Hymnes IV*, SC 128 (Paris, 1967), 149.

<sup>6</sup> See William Petersen, 'The Dependence of Romanos the Melodist upon the Syriac Ephrem: Its Importance for the Origin of the Kontakion', *VC* 39 (1965), 171-87; *id.*, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus as Sources of Romanos the Melodist*, CSCO 475 (Louvain, 1985); *id.*, 'The Dependence of Romanos the Melodist upon the Syriac Ephraem', *SP* 18.4 (1990), 274-81; Sebastian Brock, 'From Ephrem to Romanos', *SP* 20 (1989), 139-51; Lucas van Rompay, 'Romanos Le Mélode: Un poète syrien à Constantinople', in Jan Den Boeft and Antonius Hilhorst (eds), *The Early Christian Poetry: A Collection of Essays* (Leiden and New York, 1993), 283-96; Ephrem Lash, *On the Life of Christ. Kontakia: Chanted Sermons by the Great Sixth-Century Poet and Singer* (San Francisco, 1995), xxx.

treaty between Rome and Persia, Nisibis fell into Persian hands. Many Christians fled Nisibis, among them Ephrem, moving further west. Ephrem settled in the semi-hellenized city of Edessa. It was there that Ephrem wrote the largest part of his surviving work, and it was from there that his fame aspread to the West, to the Greek-speaking world. St. Jerome, writing only a few decades after Ephrem's death, already knew some of the Greek translations of his work. Ephrem died on June 9, 373 A.D. while ministering to those suffering from the plague.<sup>7</sup>

Romanos was born in around 485 A.D., roughly 112 years after the death of Ephrem, in the bilingual city of Emessa in the province of Syria.<sup>8</sup> Was Romanos a Greek or Syriac speaker? One of the Byzantine hymns used on Romanos' feast day describes him as 'one of the Hebrew race'.<sup>9</sup> Because of this description, some have tentatively concluded that Romanos was born Jewish and later converted to Christianity. But R.J. Schrock offers another tantalizing possibility: that the word 'Hebrew' in the hymn might be nothing more than an adjective to mean that Romanos was 'a non-Greek-speaking "Syrian"'.<sup>10</sup> Given the linguistic and cultural complexities of Ephrem and Romanos' world in which Syria played an important role in the life of the Church and the Empire, Lucas Van Rompay prefers to think of Romanos not so much as a stray Syrian completely absorbed by the Greek culture, but, quite simply, as a Syrian poet in Constantinople.<sup>11</sup> Schrock and Van Rompay's speculations add yet another dimension to the relationship between Ephrem and Romanos which we will explore later in more detail. At some point, Romanos went to Berytus (modern-day Beirut) where he was a deacon. From there, he moved to Constantinople where he served at the church of the Theotokos in the neighborhood of Kyros.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Sebastian Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit. Studies Supplementary to Sobornost* 4 (Friends of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1975), 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> For evidence of Romanos' bilingualism, see 'Semitisms', Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani, Cantica Genuina*, xvi, n. 1: e.g., Romanos' scansion often require Hebrew names to be scanned as in Hebrew, not Greek. Romanos also sometimes translates Hebrew words, e.g., 'Hosanna!' into Greek in his hymns, after having given the Hebrew first. See W. Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus* (1985), 3 n. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Γένος μὲν ἕξ Ἑβραίων: see Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode* (1967), 169. This phrase is found in the second and third strophes in Romanos' feast day hymn. See also S. Pétridès, 'Office inédit de saint Romain le Mélode', *BZ* 11 (1902), 358-69. See also Majorie Carpenter, annotator and translator of *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist I: On the Person of Christ* (Columbia, 1970), xiv, n. 6.

<sup>10</sup> R.J. Schrock, *Sacred Songs from the Byzantine Pulpit: Romanos the Melodist* (Florida, 1995), 5.

<sup>11</sup> Lucas van Rompay, 'Romanos le Mélode: Un poète syrien à Constantinople' (1993), 296: 'C'est dans ce contexte qu'il faut situer Romanos, dans une période caractérisée par une grande complexité culturelle, où la Syrie avait un rôle important dans la vie de l'Eglise et de l'Empire. Aussi Romanos n'est-il pas un Syrien égaré absorbé par la culture grecque, mais tout simplement ... un poète syrien à Constantinople'.

<sup>12</sup> Ἐν τοῖς κύριον: see Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Melode, Hymnes I*, SC 128 (Paris, 1964), 15.

There he became famous for his new poetic genre of hymns, called kontakia, which he composed in Greek.<sup>13</sup> After years of distinguished service to the church in Constantinople, he died in *ca.* 555 A.D.

In addition to geography and language, other elements indicate a relationship between Romanos and Ephrem. I had been reading the works of Ephrem for a number of years. When I discovered Romanos and began reading him, I remember saying to myself: ‘My God, this is like Ephrem!’ My initial impressions were confirmed time and again. Words were given to my wordless impressions by William Petersen in an essay entitled ‘The Dependence of Romanos the Melodist upon the Syriac Ephrem’.<sup>14</sup> In his article, Petersen refers to the earlier work of P. Maas who noted seven morphological features which were identical with one or the other of the three main types of Syriac poetry: the *sugītā*, the *maḏrāšā*, and the *memrā*.<sup>15</sup> These features are as follows: 1) the acrostic is a Semitic invention, obligatory in the *sugītā*; 2) the refrain is obligatory in the *maḏrāšā*; 3) dialogue is integral to the *sugītā*; 4) the *sugītā* handles biblical themes in a dramatic fashion; 5) the *memrā* is a metrical sermon; 6) Syrian metres are based on this principle in Romanos’ kontakia. In other words, we find both poetic morphology and literary dependence on Syriac of stressed accents; 7) in the *maḏrāšā*, the metrical system is complex.<sup>16</sup>

Anyone familiar with Romanos will no doubt see all seven of these Syriac poetic features.<sup>17</sup> Sebastian Brock adds a yet another feature to Maas’ morphology. While he agrees that the kontakia were inspired by a Syriac model, especially the *maḏrāšā*, this model was nonetheless ‘adapted by the Greek language in a number of different ways, most notably by the introduction of homotony, a feature absent from its Syriac model’.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, there is one more feature that is not often mentioned in the literature on the relationship between Ephrem and Romanos. This feature is Romanos’ use of the word οἶκος (written as ἦχος) to denote a ‘strophe’. This usage is a clear innovation with respect to classical Greek poetry.<sup>19</sup> According

<sup>13</sup> See W. Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus* (1985), 1-3.

<sup>14</sup> Published in *Patristic and Text-Critical Studies*. In Jans Krans and Joseph Verheyden (eds), *The Collected Essays of William L. Petersen* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), 152-60.

<sup>15</sup> See Paul Maas, ‘Das Kontakion’, *BZ* 19 (1910), 285-306, 290.

<sup>16</sup> W. Petersen, ‘The Dependence’ (1990), 154 n. 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 155.

<sup>18</sup> Sebastian Brock, ‘From Ephrem to Romanos’, in *From Ephrem to Romanos: Interactions between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 1999), 140-51, esp. 141.

<sup>19</sup> For a more complete study of this phenomenon, see Cyril Aslanov, ‘Bayt (‘House’) as ‘Strophe’ in Hebrew, Byzantine and Near Eastern Poetry’, *Le Muséon* 121 (2008), 297-310. Aslanov writes that both the Greek and the Syriac words can have the metaphorical meaning of either ‘house’ or ‘relay post’ (305). See also M. Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos* (1970), xv and E. Lash, *On the Life of Christ* (1995), xxx.

to S. Averincev,<sup>20</sup> it is most likely a literal translation of the Syriac word *bayt* which is also used in Syriac poetry to mean a 'strophe'.

In light of these common features, coupled with his textual studies of Ephrem and Romanos,

William Petersen considers the literary dependence of Romanos with respect to Syriac Ephrem as having been established.<sup>21</sup> This sentiment is echoed by Sebastian Brock who concludes that, '[i]t is no longer necessary to hypothesize this dependence, as some scholars have done, nor is it necessary to base it on grounds as subjective and elusive as alleged metrical similarities, as others have done, for the literary dependence of Romanos upon Syriac Ephrem is a demonstrable fact'.<sup>22</sup>

Of these various features of Greek and Syriac poetry outlined above, Brock highlights the dialogue in particular.<sup>23</sup> It is in the third of five forms of dialogue found in Syriac poetry – where the dialogue is incorporated into a bare narrative skeleton – that Brock locates most of Ephrem's dialogues between the Devil and Death, with most in his *maḏrāšā*, a few in his *sugītā*, and none in his *memrā*.<sup>24</sup> This structure, he observes, is found in a number of Romanos' *kontakia* as well, 'including that on the Cross, where the theme is that of the Descent into the Underworld, as in Ephrem's *maḏrāšā* just mentioned'.<sup>25</sup>

Time does not allow for a detailed examination of the relationship between Ephrem and Romanos regarding their dialogues between Death and the Devil. For the moment, we will have to content ourselves with looking at some general themes shared by our two authors.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See S. Averincev, *Поэтика ранневизантийской литературы* (The Poetics of Early Byzantine Literature) (Moscow, 1997), 246.

<sup>21</sup> See William Petersen, 'Romanos and the Diatessaron: Readings and Methods', *NTS* 29 (1983), 484-50, esp. 503-4; *id.*, 'The Dependence' (1990), esp. 183-84; *id.*, *The Diatessaron* (1985), esp. 152-68 and 197.

<sup>22</sup> Sebastian Brock, 'The Dependence of Romanos the Melodist upon the Syriac Ephrem', *SP* 18.4 (1990), 152-60, esp. 160. For a more complete study of the texts, see W. Petersen, *The Diatessaron* (1985); for further parallels between Ephrem and Romanos, see T.W. Wehofer, 'Untersuchungen zum Lied des Romanos auf die Wiederkunft des Herrn', *Sitzungsber. d. phil.-hist. Kl.* (Vienna, 1907), 20-108 and Gustav Soyter, *BD* (Heidelberg, 1930).

<sup>23</sup> See *ibid.* 141. For a more detailed discussion, with a proposed five-fold typology, see Sebastian Brock, 'Dramatic Dialogue Poems', in *Symposium Syriacum IV*, OCA 229 (Rome, 1987), 135-47.

<sup>24</sup> See *ibid.* 142.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 142.

<sup>26</sup> There exist other parallels between Ephrem and Romanos that go beyond the scope of this article. T.W. Wehofer, 'Untersuchungen' (1907), points out strophe by strophe similarities between Ephrem and Romanos when they write of the Second Coming. See Wehofer, 'Untersuchungen' (1907), 20-108. The case for Romanos' use of Ephrem as source from the use of the original title to the closing prayer is, according to Gustav Soyter, conclusive. See Soyter, *BD* (1930), 61-2. I owe this observation to M. Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos* (1970), 370.

Unlike other authors who describe Christ's harrowing of Hades,<sup>27</sup> Ephrem and Romanos share a number of common theological convictions concerning the devil, death, Sheol, Christ's descent into hell, and the fate of the just.<sup>28</sup>

Both Ephrem and Romanos treat the harrowing of Hades as the total victory of Christ over death. While other Judeo-Christian authors writing on this theme treat the harrowing of Hades historically, that is, as the fact of the salvation of the just of the Old Testament, Ephrem and Romanos' approach is more theological. They focus less on the historical fact of the salvation of the just than on the victory of Christ itself. This victory obtains not only for the souls of the just imprisoned in Hell, but for their bodies as well.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Adam brought sin and death into the world, the Second Adam, Christ, brings life in its perfection, totality, and plenitude. Because of sin the world died; by virtue of the resurrection, the world lives.

This total victory over sin and death is, of course, a disaster for Death and the Devil. Either in dialogue with Christ, or in dialogue with each other, they lament the loss of their power over humankind<sup>30</sup> and over the subterranean world to which humankind has been consigned and confined. For its part, Death sees itself as humankind's benefactor,<sup>31</sup> not its enemy. Death's taste for human souls is voracious. But when Christ dies on the Cross, death suffers severe indigestion which forces it to vomit forth the dead whom it thought were forever to remain in its stomach.<sup>32</sup> In the end, none of the faithful is left inside Death;<sup>33</sup> Hades is emptied of its just tenants,<sup>34</sup> and, beginning with Adam, are raised in glory.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, *The Testament of the Twelve Apostles, The Gospel of Bartholomew, Pseudo-Eusebius, Pseudo-Chrysostom, Acta Pilati, The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle, The Gospel of Peter, Pseudo-Jeremiah*.

<sup>28</sup> I owe the following insights to Javier Teixidor, 'Le thème de la descente aux enfers chez saint Ephrem', *OS* 6 (1961), 25-40.

<sup>29</sup> See CN 69:1-28 and K. 70:13, 75:11.

<sup>30</sup> See CN 42:1-7, K. 64:14.

<sup>31</sup> See CN 38:1-7, 52:13, 68:16-23 K. 67:6.

<sup>32</sup> CN 35:6 and 15, 71:14, 73:3-4,6 and 15; K. 70:9-11, 73:3-4 and 6, 75:7 and 9.

<sup>33</sup> CN 52:27, K. 67:6, 70:16.

<sup>34</sup> CN 37:1-11 41:15-6.

## *Qnoma* in Narsai: Anticipating *Energeia*

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### ABSTRACT

The term *qnoma* is tied to the term *kyana* (or, ‘nature’), when talking about the two natures in Christ in East Syriac (Dyophysite) discourse. This term has been variously translated from the Syriac as ‘person’ (resulting in accusation of ‘two persons’) or as ‘hypostasis’ (resulting in an accusation of a quaternity rather than a Trinity). In the course of this article, it will be shown that Narsai’s (fl. c. 440s-c. 500) use of *qnoma* is more complicated than some translators imply. Narsai seems to be the first Syriac writer we have preserved who uses *qnoma* extensively to render Christological (as opposed to previous Trinitarian) ideas. Narsai’s use shows a unique blending of ideas from both Ephrem and Theodore of Mopsuestia into a new synthesis that was to have a major impact on later East Syriac creeds and writers, especially on Babai the Great (fl. c. 590s-c. 628). Narsai uses *qnoma* to describe what activities of each underlying nature can be seen or observed in the actions of the one *parsopa* of the Incarnate Christ. Thus, his concern is to show the reality of the humanity and the divinity in the observable *energeia* of Christ as described in Scripture.

Narsai (fl. 440s-c. 503) serves as the ‘Harp of the Spirit’ in East Syrian tradition who welded together the Trinitarian thought of Ephrem with the Christological arguments of Theodore of Mopsuestia.<sup>1</sup> His *memre* make up a full third of the East Syrian *Khudra*, and his influence can be seen in the writings and ideas of his descendants at the School of Nisibis, for which he was the first head. Narsai’s work can be grouped into those composed at Edessa before the closure of the School of the Persians under Zeno and those composed in Nisibis after the closure. Adam Becker sees all of those hymns identified as from Edessa have controversies with those ‘who confuse’ or ‘mingle the natures’. This fits with pro-Cyril parties which Becker sees as being *within* the School of the Persians (as opposed to being outsiders from, say, the School of the Armenians). The metrical homily on the Epiphany seems to date from near

<sup>1</sup> See Agus G. Satyaputra, ‘Reexamining Narsai’s Christology: On the Two Natures of Christ’, *Stulos Theological Journal* 6 (1998), 23-32; Lucas Van Rompay, ‘Humanity’s Sin in Paradise: Ephrem, Jacob of Sarug, and Narsai in Conversation’, *Analecta Gorgiana* 1050 (Piscataway, NJ, 2011), 199-217; Thomas Kuzhuppil, *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah: A Theological Study of Narsai’s Interpretation of Isaiah* 6, IPAPUL (Roma, 2006).

the time of the Latrocinium, or Second Council of Ephesus, in 449, as can be seen in 509-510: 'Eutyches I am not afraid of because he aims amiss;/ and by the Egyptian, I am not humbled because he has conquered by impudence'. Eutyches seems to be a present danger, not past, and the Egyptian could be a reference to Cyril's successor Dioscorus (who used similar tactics of bribery and mob action against an Antiochene Patriarch of Constantinople [Flavian] as had Cyril [against Nestorius] and as had Theophilus [against John Chrysostom]), either of which fits one who 'has conquered by impudence', a slam on the dubious proceedings at each Council of Ephesus.<sup>2</sup> The power of Eutyches may point more strongly to the late 440s around the time of the Latrocinium, since after 451 and Chalcedon, the present danger would have been somewhat lessened. This conclusion is supported by Narsai's *memre* on the Nativity (125-32; PO 40.1, 45 McLeod),<sup>3</sup> which invoke Eutyches and 'the Egyptian' to 'stand up' 'with his [Eutyches'] disciples ... Let there also stand up with him the insolent ones who (live) in our day' (129). Since here he clearly indicates the later time, not the present threat, this homily can be dated to after the fall of Eutyches and Dioscorus. If the *memre* on the Epiphany was likewise later, one would expect a different form of address like the one here on the Nativity.

This short communication is aimed at contributing to the discussion of how to render East Syriac Christological terms in the fourth through eighth centuries. As Sebastian Brock, R.H. Connelly, and W.A. Wigram have argued, and as the Common Christological Declaration between the Vatican and the East Syrians concluded, the East Syrian churches were not 'Nestorian' in the sense of arguing for two sons, two hypostases, or a Quaternity.<sup>4</sup> The *crux* (pardon the pun) of the problem lies with how to render the term *qnuma* or *qnome* which is used in the Christological formulae as 'two natures and their *qnume*' or 'two

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (London, 2000), 181. Russell also notes the bribery used to get some bishops to agree to the *Twelve Anathemas*, such as one bishop being given 'rich gifts of tapestries, carpets and inlaid furniture, and, if he joined the Cyrillian camp, two hundred pounds of gold' (131). See 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*, Divinations (Philadelphia, 2006); *id.* (ed.), *Sources for the Study of the School of Nisibis: Translated with an introduction*, Translated Texts for Historians 50 (Liverpool, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Frederick G. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, The Early Church Fathers (London and New York, 2009); see also *id.*, 'Theodore of Mopsuestia's Understanding of Two *Hypostaseis* and Two *Prosopa* Coinciding in One Common *Prosopon*', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18 (2010), 393-424; *id.*, 'Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai', *Theological Studies* 42 (1981), 458-68.

<sup>4</sup> Sebastian Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the Fifth to Early Seventh Centuries: Preliminary Considerations and Materials', in *id.* (ed.), *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature and Theology*, Variorum (Hampshire, 1992), 125-42; *id.*, 'The "Nestorian" Church: A Lamentable Misnomer', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78 (1996), 23-35; R.H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai: Translated into English with an Introduction* (Cambridge, 1909); W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church 100-640 A.D.* (Piscataway, NJ, 2004, original 1908).

natures and two *qnuma*'. In the past, *qnuma* has been rendered as 'Person' which causes great confusion when '*parsopa*' is also rendered as 'person' (McLeod has since 1979 argued for transliteration of the term<sup>5</sup>); or rendered as 'hypostasis' (Abramowski,<sup>6</sup> who likewise in her still unpublished 600+ page book on the Christology of the Church of the East has argued for transliteration). Both translations are problematic for predetermining the conversation in favor of two sons.

As those who have followed recent debates on the Leontii, Maximus the Confessor, or John Damascene know, even the Greek term '*hypostasis*' is problematic in its fluidity and different uses by different authors.<sup>7</sup> While *qnuma* can be used as the Severan equivalent of *hypostasis* in later West Syriac authors (as equivalent to *hypostasis* which is strongly related to *ousia* and *physis*), in East Syriac the term is used as something which helps identify a nature (*kyana*, *physis*) but not as the equivalent of nature. Frequently in Narsai, *itya* and *ituta* are used where one would expect *ousia* in the Greek context, with some difference of nuance. *Usiya* transliterated from Greek appears in other authors, but then as referring not to any Essence, but only to the divine. *Ituta* often serves that purpose in Narsai. *Kyana*, or nature, the equivalent of Greek *physis* stands as the abstracted reality tying together things of a category (their genus, not species): so all humans share a nature, angels another, animals another, *etc.* But that abstraction, for it to exist in reality, requires identifiable features, characteristics, or operations. *Qnuma* in East Syriac writers is often used as a way of articulating the perceptible aspect of a nature. However, the chain of awareness begins with the *parsopa*, the face or person we can see, to the *qnuma* which is often more qualities we might associate as personality traits: thus later for Babai, *qnuma* can be both the operations or activities which distinguish or identify the nature in aggregate (for humans, passibility, mortality, empathy, *etc.*) but can also be those actions a nature does which point back towards the nature. The *parsopa* are those qnomic features which distinguish the particular person from another: what separates Peter from Paul is not just their looks or size, but their personality traits, disposition, *etc.* From those actions we can infer backwards to the humanness of Peter or the humanness of Paul but it is

<sup>5</sup> Frederick G. McLeod, *Narsai's metrical homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension: critical edition of the Syriac text and English translation*, PO 40.1 (Turnhout, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Luise Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman (ed. and trans.), *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1972).

<sup>7</sup> As far back as 1987, Joseph Lienhard introduced the categories miahypostatic and dyophypostatic to refer to the fourth century bifurcation of *ousia-hypostasis*: if God is one in *ousia* and *ousia* is equivalent to *hypostasis*, then God has only one *hypostasis*, too; if Father and Son share an *ousia*, but possess or are different *hypostaseis*, then these terms are not equivalent as the first anathema of Nicaea articulated. See J. Lienhard, 'The "Arian" Controversy: Some Categories Reconsidered', *Theological Studies* 48 (1987), 415-37.

because we have seen of their *qnuma* that we can so infer. Narsai seems to be the first Syriac writer to use *qnuma* in this way of Christological speculation and he uses it mainly of the incarnate one: From his actions we can reason backwards that two natures, one human and one divine, are present in the One Lord Jesus Christ. So in his *Homily on the Mysteries*, he uses a litany of evidence: He fell asleep in his humanity, but stilled the storm in his divinity; he wept for Lazarus in his humanity, but raised him in his divinity. We will unpack this by turning to specific examples.

Narsai wrote in metrical homilies like Ephrem, and while he sometimes used Ephrem's seven-syllable line, he favored twelve-syllable distichs as his preferred form. This poetical form necessitated short-hands in his *memre* when he refers to the two natures, which, fortunately, he explains for his audience: 'The "Word" is the Nature of the Divine Essence; and the "Body", the nature of the humanity' (*Homily* 81). As McLeod goes on to note, '... to speak of the acts of the Word or of the Second Adam is to refer to their specific natures' (PO 40.1, 25). 'According to Narsai's way of conceiving this, to assert that the indwelling is in the order of person [here, he means "*qnuma*"], that is, that the Word and the Second Adam together form one *qnuma* is to assert that one nature has been changed into the other or both into a third. For Narsai, this is blasphemous' (PO 40.1, 26).

In Narsai's vision, which he extends from Theodore, since humanity uniquely combines the corporeal and spiritual realms, it binds all of reality together.<sup>8</sup> Thus, through the Second Adam, not only is all of humanity glorified, but so too is all of creation. The Second Adam's role can be seen when Narsai writes: 'In body and soul, the Second Adam is equal with the (First) Adam;/ but in authority, he is the Lord of Adam and his offspring' (57-8; PO 40.1, 75 McLeod). The two natures in Christ are central to Narsai because without a full human nature, humanity and the created order cannot be raised up and glorified, and without the divinity it cannot be saved and renewed. To demonstrate the two natures, he writes: 'His nature testifies that he is an adamite from earthly beings;/ but the name of his authority cries out and proclaims that he is divine. He is earthly because of (his) human body and soul,/ and he is heavenly because he has become the dwelling place for the God of the universe' (67-70; PO 40.1, 75 McLeod). Narsai's focus on the recreation of humanity and the renewal of all through Christ can be seen in his homilies, where the glorification of Christ's humanity is the prototype and precursor to the glorification of the rest of humanity. The Incarnation of the Second Adam is thus the start of the renewal, but if there was only the Incarnation, no one else would be saved.

Humans learn to imitate and be like Christ and are transformed in so doing, according to Narsai. Once people had been nurtured by the prophets and

<sup>8</sup> See Frederick G. McLeod, 'Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai', *Theological Studies* 42 (1981), 458-68.

observance of Torah and prepared, the Word could assume humanity and glorify them: ‘It is flesh which has been exalted and has acquired power by means of the (Divine) Essence [ܩܢܘܡܐ/*ituta*]’ (215; PO 40.1, 83 McLeod) ... ‘A corporeal being the Divine (good) pleasure put on;/ and he conquered and made his fellow men conquer by the power of his Assumer./.../ <sup>220</sup>... through his sacrifice he purifies the (sinful) stains of his fellow men./.../... at the consummation of the ages he will appear and free all’ (217-8, 220, 222; PO 40.1, 85 McLeod).

Narsai has Jesus answer John the Baptizer with the rationale:

... I am being baptized as one deficient and in need of mercy,/ so that I may fill up in my [ܩܢܘܡܐ/*qnoma*] (what is) lacking in the human race./ From the (same) race that has succumbed to sin I am also .../... I am paying for the bond that Adam wrote in Eden (245-8; PO 40.1, 85 McLeod).

Rather, *qnoma* here applies to the human nature, not the unified Incarnate One. As we saw in the introduction Narsai does carefully balance actions or activities which point towards the human or divine natures. That here it applies only to the humanity and not the divinity can be seen in the preceding verse 245: ‘I am being baptized as one deficient and in need of mercy’; it is the human nature which is being transformed so that all of humanity can also be renewed. That this is so can be seen in what follows, for the next 26 verses Narsai carefully balances each line so that one is about the human nature and *qnoma* followed by a line about the divine nature and *qnoma*. It is essential that the Incarnate One be fully human so that the divine nature and *qnoma* can redeem and fix it, in order to save the rest of humanity. If a full human nature were not present, then the remainder of humanity could not be saved.

From the (same) clay that passions have overwhelmed is my structure. (H)

<sup>250</sup>... I am heating our weak clay in the water of the Spirit. (D)

I am from the (same) lineage that death has swallowed and defrauded of its life. (H)

... I am descending in mystery into the water and raising it up. (D)

I am a member of the race that is captive to the evil one on its own accord. (H)

I will go forth (to) bring back our captive race from the rebel. (D)/.../.../

The comely image of our bodily structure has been tarnished and worn away. (H)

I will descend (to) scour away the filth of iniquity from its features. (D)

In a crucible of water, I will mold our supreme image;

<sup>260</sup>and instead of fire, I will breathe in it a spirit of life

If I do not scour away its filth in my own ܩܢܘܡܐ/*qnoma*, it will not be purified; (H)

And if it does not descend with me to baptism, it will not receive pardon’. (D).... (249-62; PO 40.1, 87 McLeod)

Verses 259-60 break this structure to call attention to the recreation taking place, concluding with a reference to humanity’s *qnoma* once again: the characteristics or properties of that *qnoma* must be scoured since ‘if it does not descend with me to baptism, it will not receive pardon’.

Speaking to John, the Incarnate One can thus speak of the role of the divine *qnoma* in redeeming the human: 'I will be baptized by you in water as in a grave;/And I will bring mortality down with me and up (again)./<sup>275</sup>I shall now be baptized as one who is in need of purification;/ And after a while, I will show my power by purifying those unclean' (273-6; PO 40.1, 87 McLeod). Each *qnoma* is thus the manifestation of the underlying nature; for Narsai, the *qnoma* are the activities or characteristics of each nature which are perceptible to us in salvation history. He thus preserves the distinction between the hidden, where essence and nature would be, and the revealed where, since we cannot perceive the essence or nature, we instead are able to perceive the activities of each nature in history. Since we can perceive these activities, we can infer the continuing presence of both natures. The process of 'knowing' for Narsai thus begins with the 'One', the person of Christ, and works its way backwards through inference. All of Christ's actions as preserved in Scripture thus reveal God's intention and plan for salvation, which continue to play out in the Sacramental life of the Church.<sup>9</sup>

The balancing of the two natures is noteworthy because it follows from the *activities* associated with each nature. The *qnoma* in Narsai thus anticipates the seventh century Byzantine use of *energeia* to refer to the operations or activities of each nature. Each *qnoma* is thus a force or activity/operation which reveals the underlying nature to the observer. This is much like gravity where, as a force, its effects can be perceived and its existence inferred, but it is not perceived directly (*e.g.*, one cannot smell or see gravity itself, only its effects or its operations).<sup>10</sup> If this reading of Narsai is correct, as a theologian, Narsai is over a century and a half ahead of his time. The significance of this lies in his soteriology, the full human activity reveals that the full human nature is redeemed by the divine nature. This action points towards what the divinity does for the rest of humanity via the sacraments.

This is why Narsai's address to his adversaries in 325-366 is so vitriolic: those who would deny the two nature's have no adequate way of drawing this lesson and so lead others away from salvation. Since the Divine has no need of forgiveness, nor can it be exalted, anointed, or infused with grace the only purpose of the Baptism is to forgive, anoint, exalt, and infuse with grace the

<sup>9</sup> See R.H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai: Translated into English with an Introduction* (Cambridge, 1909), on Homily XVII 'On the Mysteries' where all *raze*/mysteries point to the one *raza*/mystery of God and participating in the *raze*/mysteries/sacraments enables us to journey towards God through our transformation (Connolly's translation is on 1-32).

<sup>10</sup> In the *Book of Union* of Babai the semantic range has expanded for *qnoma* to include not just the *energeiai* or operations, but also more static 'characteristics'. In a forthcoming paper I have argued that for Babai *qnoma* is more like light: it can be both a particle and a wave and corresponds more to the English 'manifest': it both reveals the underlying factor in actions/operations (*i.e.*, it 'manifests' itself) but also refers to the characteristics inferred about the underlying nature *as revealed* (*i.e.*, the 'manifestation' of those properties).

human nature (the assumed – not the Assumer), so that all of humanity can be redeemed by it. He writes:

He was a man in body and soul, save for iniquity;/ and He anointed him with the Spirit; .../By the name of ‘man’, I call him because of his body;/ and the name of ‘God’, I give him because of his rank./<sup>455</sup>One (ܩܢܘܡܐ) I call the Word and the Body, the Son of God:/ one (ܩܢܘܡܐ) in the (Divine) Essence because he (can)not be parted by division./ The natures I have distinguished by the name of two. It was not sons!/ As one I know the Son of the (Divine) Essence and the body who is from us!/... And if the heretics wrong me with calumny,/ <sup>470</sup>let these show who it is who was baptized and (whom) the Spirit anointed. (451-8, 469-70; PO 40.1, 99 McLeod).

Narsai is thus very careful about the activities of each in a way which anticipates the one *energeia*, two *energeiai* debate of a hundred and sixty years later in the seventh century, while still emphasizing the unity of the Incarnate One in a way which parallels the arguments in Leo’s contemporaneous *Tome*.

This balancing can be seen further in his *memre* on the Nativity: <sup>406</sup>Consider attentively and confess with us the two have become one./ <sup>407</sup>The Word and the Body .../.../ <sup>408</sup>“The Word” he has written “became flesh”. (He did) not (say) according to Nature./ ... the Hidden in the visible one’ (406-10; PO 40.1, 63 McLeod); <sup>412</sup>for it is not possible that He came to be and dwelt in His *qnoma*./ <sup>413</sup>One can dwell in another in perfect love;/ <sup>414</sup>but how can one dwell in his own *qnoma*?’ (PO 40.1, 63 McLeod). The idea seems to be that it is contradictory to say one can have *qnoma* inside *qnoma*; one can dwell in another ‘in love’ also an activity, but a *qnoma* cannot be inside another *qnoma*. If we return to a physics’ analogy, two forces as charges can get near each other but cannot occupy the same space: two negatives or two positives repel and a positive or negative attract, but they cannot occupy the same space.<sup>11</sup>

In Narsai, there is much work to be done on his influences, impact, and on his theology as a whole.

Later, in the same metrical homily, he writes: <sup>439</sup>(It is) not a division of Son and son (that) my thoughts have conceived./ <sup>440</sup>Let the heretics not find fault with the distinction of my words!/ <sup>441</sup>Two natures (ܩܢܘܡܐ) I have said which

<sup>11</sup> Gerri L. Verschuur, *Hidden Attraction: The History and Mystery of Magnetism* (New York, 1993), 6-8 points to the ancient Greek and Roman use of magnetic lodestones. These objects are naturally magnetic and people by late Antiquity were well-aware of the properties of repelling and attracting objects. Filings of metallic dust were often used to illustrate the attractive and repellant properties. In this respect, Narsai, in his setting at a school would have been able to use just such an analogy: the two types of *qnoma* corresponding to each nature would be evident in the two types of force: attraction (+) and repulsion (-): the metallic filings of each could not be made to occupy the same space and hence, by analogy, a *qnoma* cannot occupy another *qnoma*. For more on ancient understanding and use of magnetism and loadstones, see Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* 7.910-6, 1042-7, discussed in Richard Wallace, “‘Amaze Your Friends!’ Lucretius on Magnets’, *Greece & Rome* 43 (1996), 178-87.

are distinct from one another./<sup>442</sup>(It is) not two persons/faces (فتى حفا) (that) I am introducing.../ <sup>443</sup>As one, I know the Word of the Father and the Body who is from us./<sup>445</sup>One confession without division my mind offers /.../ <sup>447</sup>The natures (حنفا) I have distinguished because of the passion and the glories;/ <sup>448</sup>one are the passible and the Impassible, the Word and the Body!’ (439-48; PO 40.1, 65 McLeod).

In the *Homily on the Passion* 263-340 (PO 40.1, 115-8 McLeod) is a refutation of Eutyches again based on Christ’s prayer in Gesthemene before his arrest, the same inferences being made that Maximus the Confessor uses to argue for two operations in *Ambigua* 41, at the height of the seventh century.

<sup>270</sup>Who is it who prayed from suffering: O wise man who lacks reason,/ <sup>272</sup>and whom did the spiritual one strengthen? ...<sup>302</sup>Do not abase the Word of the Father ...<sup>304</sup>Do not make the Only-Begotten (to be) in need: of help from one whom he has fashioned!/<sup>313</sup>It is the corporeal one who was praying: <sup>314</sup>because he was the one in need of aid,/ <sup>315</sup>The passible one was afraid of sufferings: <sup>316</sup>because sufferings accompany his nature./ <sup>317</sup>A member of our race was making supplication: <sup>318</sup>for himself and his companions./.../ <sup>321</sup>He is the one who was afraid of death: <sup>322</sup>because he saw that his nature was mortal./.../ <sup>325</sup>Truly he prayed and was afraid... <sup>327</sup>And truly a spiritual one was empowering him.

The rationale for the full presence of both natures in their *qnome* in Narsai is his concept, inherited from the early Syriac tradition, of renewal and recreation of all things through the Incarnation and all of the acts accomplished: Incarnation, death and resurrection. At the end of the *memre* on the Passion (658-777; PO 40.1, 129-33 McLeod) ‘To inferior was our mortal nature: to be a redeemer for itself/ and so the Self-Existent (ܘܘܘܘܘ) put on our nature/.../ in order to raise up Adam from his fallen state;/And with the armor with which Adam succumbed; the Self-Existent granted victory to a son of Adam/... and through the power of the (Divine) Essence: the mortal one conquered and was raised (to life) ... and by his death and by his resurrection: our whole nature died and is alive./ He made him (to be) a garment for his hidden (Nature): and a mirror for us mortals/ in order that by the faculties of (our) soul we might see: His hidden (Divine Nature) in the garment of our body...’ In his *Homily on the Resurrection*, he elaborates (275-84; PO 40.1, 155 McLeod), <sup>275</sup>‘He died for the sake of all and gave life to the universe, as he had promised/.../The Second Adam died in his nature as befitted mortals and crucified with him mortality and gave it life by his life./.../and opened a way for mortality to vitality’.

# Rufinus the Silver Merchant's Miaphysite Refutation of Leontius of Byzantium's *Epaporemata* (CPG 6814): A Rediscovered Syriac Text

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## ABSTRACT

A sixth-century miaphysite layman named Rufinus the silver merchant wrote a refutation of Leontius of Byzantium's polemical treatise known as the *Epaporemata* (CPG 6814), which was directed against the Christology of Severus of Antioch and his followers. Rufinus quoted seventeen chapters in full from Leontius' work, each of which was followed by his own miaphysite counter-arguments. The original Greek text of Rufinus' treatise appears to have been lost, but at a later time (perhaps the seventh century) this work was translated into Syriac, and a single manuscript of this text has recently been rediscovered. The Syriac text of Rufinus is an important early witness to the text of Leontius' *Epaporemata*, as well as a rare example of a lay-contribution to the christological debates of the sixth century, which throws light on the theological education of wealthy laypeople. In passing, Rufinus also identifies the addressee of a letter by Theodoret (CPG 6278), previously thought to have been John of Aegeae, but now plausibly to be identified as the *Comes domesticorum* Flavius Sporacius.

Most Syriac specialists are aware that histories of Syriac literature produced by scholars from within the Syriac literary tradition frequently refer to texts and authors unknown to the standard bibliographies and research tools produced by European scholars. Often these texts are medieval and post-medieval in date, but just occasionally they include texts from earlier periods. In this short article I wish to draw attention to one such text, which was first discovered by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch and savant Ignatios Aphrem Barsaum (1887-1957) and was briefly described in his 1943 history of literature and sciences entitled *The Scattered Pearls*.<sup>1</sup> The text in question is a treatise of 17 chapters (totalling

<sup>1</sup> The first Arabic edition, *Kitāb al-lu'lu' al-manthūr fī tārīkh al-'ulūm wa-al-ādāb al-suryānīyah*, was published in Homs in 1943, and a second edition was published in Aleppo in 1956, and this latter has been frequently reprinted. A Syriac translation, *Ktōbō d-Berūlē bdirē d-'al mardut yulfōnē suryōyē hdirē*, of the second edition was produced by Mor Philoxenos Yohanna Dolabani (1885-1969) and published in Qamishli in 1967, and this was reprinted by the Bar Hebraeus Verlag in Glane/Losser in 1992. This Syriac translation includes much extra information added by Dolabani. The second Arabic edition was translated into English by Matti Moosa, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences* (Piscataway, 2003). For further detail

6000 words) in which an anti-Chalcedonian layman named Rufinus seeks to refute the Chalcedonian Christology of a writer named in the text as Leontius of Jerusalem (but who, as I will show, is to be identified as Leontius of Byzantium). It was composed in Greek, probably in the sixth century, and was later translated into Syriac, perhaps in the seventh century.

Barsaum's knowledge of this text and its author was entirely derived from a single manuscript in the Saffron monastery, Deir al-Za'faran, in Mardin, south east Turkey, which he dated to the fifteenth century on the basis of its script, although it may have been written a little later than this. Descriptions of the manuscript can be found in the catalogues of the Deir al-Za'faran manuscripts produced by Barsaum and by Dolabani,<sup>2</sup> but it now appears to have been transferred to the library of the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, where it is numbered MS 404.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, images of the manuscript have been made available for study through the excellent manuscript digitization initiative of the Hill Museum and Monastic Library, in co-operation with the authorities of the Syrian Orthodox Church,<sup>4</sup> to both of whom I offer my sincere thanks.<sup>5</sup>

The manuscript has lost its beginning, including all but the last folio of the first three quires, and also the final pages. Hence no colophon has been preserved. The manuscript contains a collection of (often fragmentary) polemical texts: it begins with the final pages of a work of Christological refutations, and then has part of an anonymous treatise on the soul (apparently translated from Greek), and a translation of Ps.-Aristotle 'On the Soul' often ascribed to Sergius of Reš'aina (d. 536),<sup>6</sup> then further theological refutations, then the work by Rufinus (apparently preserved in its entirety), and finally a collection of extracts from the theological and poetical works of the thirteenth-century Syriac polymath Barhebraeus (d. 1286).

see David G.K. Taylor, review of Moosa's translation, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 9 (2006), 224-30. For Rufinus see entry §74, 312.

<sup>2</sup> In Moosa's translation of Barsaum, *Scattered Pearls*, the manuscript is identified as Za'faran MS 131, but this appears to be an error. There is a brief description of the manuscript in Arabic in Ignatius Aphrem Barsaum, *Deyrul-Zafaran Manuscripts*, مرقبات زافاران (M'arat Šaidnaya, 2008), 154, where it is numbered as MS 90. There is a far more detailed description of the contents (in Syriac) in the hand-written catalogue of Filoxinos Y. Dolabani, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in Za'faran Monastery (Dairo dMor Hananyo)*, Syriac Patrimony 9 (Aleppo, 1994), 368-76, where it is numbered MS 96. The manuscript was clearly copied from a damaged exemplar (or exemplars) since it leaves blank pages when large sections of the original were lost or damaged.

<sup>3</sup> The individual pages have been numbered in pencil, and Rufinus' refutation is on pages 216-77.

<sup>4</sup> See <<http://www.hmml.org>>.

<sup>5</sup> Particular thanks are due to Adam McCollum from HMML, who tracked the text down for me among a mass of digitized manuscripts, despite the fact that it had not yet been catalogued, and had a different manuscript number (and library location!) from the details with which I had supplied him.

<sup>6</sup> See Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 168; Khalil Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* (Beirut, 1948), 20. It is one of the texts preserved in BL Add. 14658 (§9, folio 122a).

The splendid Syriac title of Rufinus' treatise is: ܫܪܝܘܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܫܐ ܕܠܘܘܢܬܐ ܕܝܪܘܫܠܡܝܘܬܐ (*šrōyō da-zqurō da-gwōgay d-Lewōntī 'urīšlemōyō*), which was translated by Barsaam and Moosa as *'The Destruction of the Spider's Web woven by Leontius of Jerusalem'*. The term translated here as 'destruction' is *šrōyō*, which is the Syriac translation of the Greek *διάλυσις*.<sup>7</sup> Both terms have the sense of 'loosing', 'dissolution', 'undoing', as well as 'refutation'. So in both Greek and Syriac there is a word play here, rather lost in English, of 'unpicking' a spider's web, and also of logical 'refutation'.

The heading of the treatise states that it was 'produced by a certain Rufinus, an orthodox layman (and) *argyroprates*'.<sup>8</sup> Literally, of course, *argyroprates* (*ἀργυροπράτης*) means 'seller of silver', Barsaam's 'silver merchant', whereas the artisan who worked with silver, a silversmith, was usually described as an *argyrokopos* (*ἀργυροκόπος*). The entry for *argyroprates* in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* states that 'in the 6<sup>th</sup> C[entury it] primarily designated a moneylender',<sup>9</sup> and so was the equivalent of the Latin *argentarius*. Indeed, the emperor Justinian I devoted three laws to governing the financial activities of the *argyropratai*.<sup>10</sup> However, it appears that the primary sense of 'seller of silver' never quite disappeared. This is clear not only from later literary references, such as the tenth-century *Book of the Eparch* (where the guild of *argyropratai* also appears to act as inspectors of silver),<sup>11</sup> but also from two pieces of sixth-century silver, a lamp and a paten, which were found in the so-called 'Stuma treasure'.<sup>12</sup> These objects are inscribed with the name of their donor, 'Sergius, tribune and *argyroprates*',<sup>13</sup> and Marlia Mango has suggested in her catalogue that *tribounos* should be understood here as a title given to an official in a state silver factory.<sup>14</sup> I have found no trace of Rufinus in other sources, epigraphic,

<sup>7</sup> The seventeen chapters of the treatise, as will be discussed below, each have an opening citation of Leontius, followed by the refutation of Rufinus headed by the term *šrōyō*. In chapter 6 this refutation is headed: ܕܝܐܠܝܣܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܫܐ, 'dialysis, that is *šrōyō*'.

<sup>8</sup> ܒܝܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܫܐ ܕܠܘܘܢܬܐ ܕܝܪܘܫܠܡܝܘܬܐ (*bīd l-'nōš Rufīnō, 'ōlmōyō 'urtōdōksō 'argurōpraīš*).

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Cutler and Alexander Kazhdan, 'Argyroprates', in Alexander Kazhdan *et alii*, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), I 165.

<sup>10</sup> See Jean G. Platon, *Les banquiers dans la législation de Justinien* (Paris, 1912).

<sup>11</sup> See Johannes Koder, *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen* (Vienna, 1991), chapter 2; and Edwin H. Freshfield, *Roman Law in the Later Roman Empire. Byzantine Guilds, Professional and Commercial. Ordinances of Leo VI, c. 895, from the Book of the Eparch* (Cambridge, 1938).

<sup>12</sup> Marlia Mundell Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, 1986), 155-64, objects 33, 34. For further discussion see Susan A. Boyd and Marlia Mundell Mango (eds), *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (Washington, D.C., 1992).

<sup>13</sup> Ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς κ[αί] σωτηρίας Σεργίου τριβ[ούνου] κ[αί] ἀργυροπράτου...

<sup>14</sup> M. Mundell Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium* (1986), 156. See also Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais, 'Noms de métiers dans les inscriptions de la Syrie antique', *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 13 (2002), 247-64, 251-2.

manuscript, or historical, and so we can only conclude that he was undoubtedly a wealthy layman, and possibly, like Sergius, a minor state official.

In his note on Rufinus, Barsaüm suggested that ‘he may have been a native of Antioch from the family of Rufina’. A quick search reveals that this information was taken from the entry for the name ‘Rufinus’ in Payne Smith’s *Thesaurus Syriacus*,<sup>15</sup> where there is a cross reference to Wright’s catalogue of the Syriac manuscripts in the British Library.<sup>16</sup> When this is followed up it turns out that the phrase ‘of the house of Rufinus of Antioch’ is taken from the description of the author of the anti-Chalcedonian *Plerophoriae*, a disciple and biographer of Peter the Iberian better known to us as John Rufus, who was born in Arabia circa 450.<sup>17</sup> So this evidence for the tentative geographical location of Rufinus can be safely rejected. Whether Rufinus did indeed come from Antioch and Greek-speaking Syria, or from elsewhere, such as Constantinople, I am unable to say.

Unfortunately the treatise itself has no literary introduction – a lack or omission which is quite unusual in the Syriac literary tradition<sup>18</sup> – and neither are there any autobiographical details or any references to contemporaries in the text. So at this point it is time to turn from the author to the text itself.

As mentioned above, the treatise is divided into 17 numbered chapters. Each chapter begins with a citation of the text being refuted, and this is followed by a longer passage of refutation. The Syriac translation closely follows the structure and wording of its Greek original, in a manner that is familiar to anyone who has worked on seventh-century Syriac translations of Greek,<sup>19</sup> and this enabled the identification of the text being refuted. It is the work attributed to Leontius of Byzantium which is titled ‘Proposals and definitions offered as objections against those who deny the double reality of the divine and human

<sup>15</sup> Robert Payne Smith, *Thesaurus syriacus* (Oxford, 1868-1901), II 3870, ܪܘܦܝܢܝ.

<sup>16</sup> William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838* (London, 1870-1872), III 1104 (BL Add. 14650, Wright 949, folio 90a, §11).

<sup>17</sup> ‘*Plerophoriae*, or Testimonies and revelations given by God to the Saints, concerning the heresy of the Diphysites and the transgression of Chalcedon, written by one of the disciples of Peter the Iberian whose name is priest John of the house of Rufinus of Antioch (ܝܫܘܥ ܪܘܦܝܢܝ ܪܘܦܝܢܝ ܪܘܦܝܢܝ ܪܘܦܝܢܝ ܪܘܦܝܢܝ ܪܘܦܝܢܝ), bishop of Maiuma of Gaza’. The text was edited by François Nau, *Jean Rufus, évêque de Maiouma. Plerophories, témoignages et révélations contre le Concile de Chalcedoine*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 8.1 (Paris, 1912). See Jan-Eric Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (2nd ed.; Piscataway, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> See Eva Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface*, *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia* 11 (Uppsala, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> See Sebastian Brock, ‘Towards a history of Syriac translation technique’, in R. Lavenant, ed., *III Symposium Syriacum*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (Rome, 1983), 1-14. For details of the translation techniques see T. Skat Rørdam, ‘Dissertatio de regulis grammaticis quas secutus est Paulus Tellensis in veteri testamento ex graeco syriace vertendo’, in his *Libri Iudicum et Ruth secundum versionem Syriaco-Hexaplaem* (Copenhagen, 1861), 1-59; Daniel King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle’s Categories: Text, Translation and Commentary*, *Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus* 21 (Leiden, 2010), 39-79.

nature in the one Christ, after the union',<sup>20</sup> but which is usually referred to as the *Epaporemata* (CPG 6814). It was later incorporated into an eighth-century anti-monothelite florilegium known as the *Doctrina Patrum* where it was given a new title: 'The Thirty Chapters against Severus'.<sup>21</sup>

The *Epaporemata*, which was probably written in the mid-530s,<sup>22</sup> appears to be the third anti-miaphysite work produced by Leontius of Byzantium, following his *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* (CPG 6813) and his *Epilyseis* or *Solutiones Argumentorum Severi* (CPG 6815), and, as Daley has pointed out,<sup>23</sup> to a large extent it summarizes the arguments contained in them. It does not appear to have been included in Leontius' own edition of his collected works, which he produced before 544, but it did subsequently get inserted (along with the *Epilyseis*) into manuscripts of this collection (whether by him, or by a later editor is unknown), between the *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* and the *Contra Aphthartodocetae*,<sup>24</sup> which are still labelled Books I and II.

John Lamoreaux memorably described the *Epaporemata* as 'a highly abstract and extremely laconic series of syllogisms directed against the Monophysites'.<sup>25</sup> And yet Brian Daley has argued that, despite this, 'it seems to have been Leontius's best known work in the Byzantine world'.<sup>26</sup> It was known and cited by John of Damascus,<sup>27</sup> and from the *Doctrina Patrum* it made its way into Euthymius Zigabenus' (d. after 1118) *Panoplia Dogmatica*.<sup>28</sup>

The *Epaporemata* was critically edited by Brian Daley in his Oxford doctoral thesis of 1978,<sup>29</sup> in which, for the *Epaporemata*, the key manuscript witnesses were both produced in the second quarter of the tenth century. They are Vaticanus Graecus 2195 (= V), and Oxford, Laudianus Graecus 92<sup>B</sup> (= O), although this latter manuscript is defective for part of the text.<sup>30</sup> The *Patrologia Graeca*

<sup>20</sup> Ἐπαπορήματα ὑποθετικά τε καὶ ὀριστικά πρὸς τοὺς ἀρνούμενους ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ Χριστῷ, μετὰ τὴν ἕνωσιν, τὴν διττὴν τῆς θείας τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἀλήθειαν. This is the title found in the main manuscripts of Leontius' writings.

<sup>21</sup> Τὰ τριάκοντα κεφάλαια κατὰ Σευήρου.

<sup>22</sup> Brian E. Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium: A Critical Edition of his Works, with Prolegomena* (D.Phil. Thesis: University of Oxford, 1978), xxxix.

<sup>23</sup> B.E. Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium* (1978), xxxix.

<sup>24</sup> See Marcel Richard, 'Léonce de Byzance était-il origéniste?' *Revue des études byzantines* 5 (1947), 31-66, 36; reprinted in *id.*, *Opera minora* II (Louvain, 1976), no. 57.

<sup>25</sup> John C. Lamoreaux, 'An Arabic version of Leontius of Byzantium's Thirty Chapters', *Le Muséon* 108 (1995), 343-65, 344.

<sup>26</sup> B.E. Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium* (1978), xxxix.

<sup>27</sup> In his *contra Jacobitas*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. IV, PTS 22 (Berlin, 1981), 109-53, §63; see PG 94, 1436-501, 1468C-D.

<sup>28</sup> *Panoplia Dogmatica* XVI (PG 130, 1068B-1073B).

<sup>29</sup> Brian E. Daley, *Leontius of Byzantium* (1978).

<sup>30</sup> Ms. O has lost the start of *Epaporemata* up to the end of chapter 8, and breaks off again from chapter 20 to the middle of chapter 25.

edition by Migne<sup>31</sup> was based on a single manuscript of the *Doctrina Patrum*,<sup>32</sup> which was fully edited by Diekamp in 1907.<sup>33</sup> Since Daley's edition, John Lamoreaux has published a melkite Arabic version of the *Epaporemata*,<sup>34</sup> translated from Greek, although the quality of the translation varies.<sup>35</sup> The Arabic version is preserved in one manuscript of 1654 A.D., and another of the early eighteenth century. Lamoreaux does not date the translation, but he does demonstrate that it was translated from a Greek exemplar similar to V, and not the version found in the *Doctrina Patrum*.

Examination of Rufinus' text makes it clear that he cited an entire chapter of Leontius' *Epaporemata* at the beginning of each of his sections, and so the text-critical interest of this early witness to the *Epaporemata*, preserved in a form of Syriac which mirrors the Greek source, should be evident. However, Rufinus does not refute all 30 chapters of the *Epaporemata*, but only 17 of them, as identified in the table.

Rufinus	<i>Epap.</i>
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	5
5	8
6	9

Rufinus	<i>Epap.</i>
7	10
8	11
9	13
10	14
11	18
12	19

Rufinus	<i>Epap.</i>
13	21
14	22
15	23
16	25
17	27

Table. Correspondence of chapters in Rufinus and the *Epaporemata*

As can be seen, the cited chapters of the *Epaporemata* are all included in their original order. It is not certain why some chapters were included and others omitted, but it has to be said that there is much repetition and redundancy in Leontius' work, and some of the chapters omitted (such as 4 and 12) seem to fall into this category.

Comparison of the Syriac text of Leontius' chapters with Daley's edition reveals that, like the Arabic version, it is usually in agreement with the text of

<sup>31</sup> Jacques-Paul Migne, *Leontii Byzantini opera omnia*, PG 86b (Paris, 1865), 1901B-1916B. There is also an Italian translation: Carlo Dell'Osso, *Leonzio di Bisanzio: Le opere. Introduzione, traduzione e note*, Collana di testi patristici 161 (Rome, 2001), 157-69.

<sup>32</sup> Ms. A (Vat. Gr. 2200), supplemented by chapter 9 from John of Damascus, *Contra Jacobitas* (see note 27 above).

<sup>33</sup> Franz Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi. Ein griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des siebenten und achten Jahrhunderts* (Münster, 1907), 155-64.

<sup>34</sup> John C. Lamoreaux, 'An Arabic Version of Leontius of Byzantium's Thirty Chapters' (1995).

<sup>35</sup> The treatise was transmitted anonymously in the Arabic manuscripts.

V and O against the *Doctrina Patrum* manuscripts. This is immediately obvious from the ordering of chapters 9 and 10, which is reversed in two of the three *Doctrina Patrum* manuscripts (CD), whereas in the third (A) chapter 9 is omitted. In other cases it sides with V against O, or O against V. It occasionally agrees with V where Daley emends the text against V. It even has some passages where it agrees with the *Doctrina Patrum* manuscripts ACD against VO. This suggests that it derives from an old branch of the Greek tradition that is independent of VO, but which was the ancestor of the *Doctrina Patrum* text tradition. This is clearly of some textual importance for the study of the *Epaporemata*.

It is perhaps a little disquieting that the current title of the Syriac text attributes the *Epaporemata* to ‘Leontius of Jerusalem’ (he is not mentioned again by name within Rufinus’ treatise). The manuscripts VO simply refer to ‘Leontius the monk’, or ‘Leontius the ascetic’, *etc.*, whereas the *Doctrina Patrum* and Euthymius Zigabenus cite him as Leontius of Byzantium (Λεόντιος ὁ Βυζάντιος). The long history of confusion about the various Chalcedonian scholars of the sixth century named Leontius is well known, and need not be rehearsed here.<sup>36</sup> Given the overlap of the arguments of the *Epaporemata* with the other writings of Leontius of Byzantium, there seems no compelling reason at present to suggest that the attribution of this text needs to be reconsidered. Rather, the Syriac title simply bears witness to the fact that the confusion about the identities of the Chalcedonian writers named Leontius stretches back to the seventh century.<sup>37</sup>

Turning to Rufinus’ refutations, it is perhaps fair to say that we are not dealing here with a theologian of the sophistication of Severus. This is a rare example of popular theology, of lay-engagement in Christological discussion. We are often told in the patristic handbooks that in the great eastern cities of the Roman Empire ordinary citizens passionately engaged in the latest theological and christological debates. Well here at last is a concrete example of such engagement, albeit produced by a wealthy and educated man rather than a simple baker or carpenter.

Rufinus frequently addresses Leontius directly in his refutations, using the second person (but never his name). He then seeks to refute Leontius’ syllogisms with his own logical reasoning. A full exploration of his arguments, and an assessment of his theological reasoning powers will have to await the full edition and translation of this text which I am now preparing, but it is noteworthy, for example, that Rufinus regularly equates ‘nature’ (φύσις / *kyānā*) and ‘hypostasis’ (ὑπόστασις / *qnōmā*), suggesting that they are interchangeable.

<sup>36</sup> See Marcel Richard, ‘Léonce de Jérusalem et Léonce de Byzance’, *Mélanges de science religieuse* 1 (1944), 35-88; reprinted in *id.*, *Opera minora* III (Louvain, 1977), no. 59;

<sup>37</sup> It is, of course, also possible that ‘of Jerusalem’ was added to Leontius’ name during the Syriac transmission history of Rufinus’ refutation. But even so, this is more likely to have occurred at an early stage, rather than later when knowledge of ancient opponents decreased markedly.



debate in the sixth century, and demonstrates that some polemical literature was actually read by the opponents it criticised, and was not simply produced for internal sectarian consumption. Since Rufinus also cited the full text of Leontius in each passage he sought to refute, it is an important witness to the earliest text of Leontius' *Epaporemata*. Finally, the text has the added interest that it was produced by a layman, who was by profession a silver merchant. I am strongly aware that in the modern Syrian Orthodox community, especially in the European diaspora, jewellers and goldsmiths continue to play an important role in community leadership. Although my work on this interesting short text has only just begun, I hope that this article will demonstrate why the work of their professional and confessional ancestor deserves an edition and translation.



# Pride in the Thought of Isaac of Nineveh

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## ABSTRACT

In his writings, Isaac of Nineveh (Church of the East, 7<sup>th</sup> century) outlines a phenomenology of pride. He identifies two forms of pride: the first results from a presumption concerning one's ascetic virtue, and the second concerns one's knowledge. This article focuses on this latter form of pride, through a close reading of passages selected from Isaac's corpus. A particular emphasis is placed on the specific Syriac terms which Isaac employs. The article highlights the fact that the origin of a pride rooted in a presumption of knowledge is a misunderstanding of one's ontological status. From this misunderstanding follows an incapacity to acknowledge what Isaac considers to be the real. As a consequence, a divergence between conceptions and facts takes place. 'Practice', which is a labour of body and soul that necessarily implies a relationship with suffering, and 'rule' and 'law', which Isaac interprets as the rules of ascetic life, set a limit to the misunderstanding of one's status in which pride is rooted, leading the subject back to what Isaac calls 'the boundary of the creatures'. This makes it possible for one to gain access to an adequate relationship with reality. In this way, the subject can have a space which is his/her own, and can acknowledge the space which is proper to God.

The theme of humility in the thought of Isaac of Nineveh has attracted the attention of scholars in the last couple of decades. Alfeyev's and Chialà's studies both devote space to it,<sup>1</sup> and it is one of the themes for which Isaac is now known beyond the monastic and academic *milieux*.

This article intends to be an introduction to the theme of pride, the attitude that contrasts with humility, in Isaac's thought, a topic that I am studying for my doctoral thesis on Isaac's understanding of the *finitude* of human beings.

Isaac rarely provides definitions of pride. He constantly outlines, however, a phenomenology of pride, which alludes to the creaturely dimension which constitutes its ontological background.

<sup>1</sup> See Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian* (Kalamazoo-Spencer, 2000), 111-28; Sabino Chialà, *Dall'asceti eremitica alla misericordia infinita. Ricerche su Isacco di Ninive e la sua fortuna* (Firenze, 2002), 236-43; on this theme see also Gregory Mansour, 'Humility according to St. Isaac of Nineveh', *Diakonia* 28 (1995), 181-6; Paolo Bettiolo, "'Avec la charité comme but". Dieu et création dans la méditation d'Isaac de Ninive', *Irénikon* 63 (1990), 323-45; Patrik Hagman, *The Asceticism of Isaac of Nineveh* (Oxford, 2010), 189-96.

After a brief overview of the vocabulary he uses, I will proceed to an analysis of this phenomenology of pride, and to some suggestions about its possible interpretation.

Isaac employs different terms when speaking of pride.<sup>2</sup> The most common ones are related to the notions of ‘elevation’ and ‘height’, with ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*rāmūtā*) ‘pride’, literally, ‘elevation’, and ܐܬܪܝܢܐ (*ettrim*) ‘to exalt oneself’, literally, ‘to go up’.<sup>3</sup> Humility, ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*makikutā*), from ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*makik*), ‘low’, indicates, conversely, a non-elevated position. Another set of terms has to do with the sense of one’s connection with oneself, with ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*masbrānutā*), which means ‘opinion’ but it can in this context be translated as ‘a high, excessive opinion of oneself’, or ‘presumption’, and ܐܘܪܐܗ (*amrah*), ‘to dare’, a verb which Isaac uses to point at the action of venturing into something one is not ready for, something higher than where one is really standing.<sup>4</sup>

But what is pride for Isaac? In one of his descriptions, he makes it the subject of the verb in the sentence, attributing to pride an active role, thus highlighting first of all its power, its control over the person: ‘Pride cannot perceive that it walks in darkness and it cannot know understanding and wisdom. In its thoughts it lifts itself up *above* (ܠܘܠܐ, *l’el*) everything, but it is poorer and lower than everything’.<sup>5</sup>

The person in the grip of pride attributes to him/herself the excellence of his/her ascetical and spiritual achievements due to a presumption of might, Isaac says, and in doing so, denies God and his help.<sup>6</sup> The kind of knowledge (ܠܘܡܘܬܐ, *ida’tā*) characterised by pride ‘attributes to itself all things that happen, and not to God, if they are good (lit: acceptable)’.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, pride leads oneself to take a place which belongs to God, and to look at oneself as the

<sup>2</sup> I have based this preliminary survey on Isaac’s edited works and on the manuscript syr. e. 7 (Bodleian Library, Oxford) for the *Centuries* of knowledge, which is the third section of the *Second Part*, still unedited. For the *First Part* see: *Mar Isaacus Ninivita. De perfectione religiosa*, ed. Paul Bedjan (Paris and Leipzig, 1909); for the *Second Part: Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian). ‘The Second Part’, Chapters IV-XLI*, ed. Sebastian Brock, 2 vols., CSCO 554-5, Scr. Syri 224-5 (Louvain, 1995); for the *Third Part: Isacco di Ninive. Terza collezione*, ed. Sabino Chialà, 2 vols., CSCO 637-8, Scr. Syri 246-7 (Louvain, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Other terms related to ‘elevation’ are ܐܬܪܝܢܐ (*eštaqal*), ‘to lift oneself up’; ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*šū’lāyā*), ‘arrogance, exaltation’; ܐܬܪܝܢܐ (*et’alī*) ‘to exalt oneself’.

<sup>4</sup> Another possible category is that of an external manifestation of pride, of ‘being puffed up’, with ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*hutrā*) and ܠܘܡܘܬܐ (*htirutā*), ‘haughtiness’.

<sup>5</sup> I 16, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 133. The translations of Isaac’s passages are mine, prepared taking into account the available translations in modern languages.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. *Centuries* II 21; I 36 *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 275.

<sup>7</sup> I 51, *ibid.* 371. This happens at the level of what Isaac calls ‘the first degree of knowledge’, characterised by the ‘love of the body’, a knowledge ignorant of God’s providence and of the spiritual dimension hidden in things, mundane, which always looks for solutions of its own and where the subject fears for his/her body’s integrity. For a discussion of the ‘three degrees of knowledge’, see footnote 17. For a perspective about the role of fear for the body in Isaac, see P. Hagman, *The Asceticism* (2010), 112-9.

origin of might, excellence, perfection. This, however, happens only in the mind of the person: ‘in its thoughts’, Isaac said, not in reality.

Isaac identifies two forms of pride, which concern two different aspects of the spiritual life: the first, ‘the virtue of conduct’, comes necessarily before the second, ‘the conduct of the mind and knowledge’.<sup>8</sup> Of those who ‘depart in their mind from the path of humility’,<sup>9</sup> Isaac says: ‘those who exalt themselves in the virtue of [their] conducts, the majority of them falls into disgraceful lasciviousness. But those [who exalt themselves] in knowledge and the conduct of the mind [fall] into blasphemy concerning divine things or into damage to the intellect’,<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See I 58, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 411. Here Isaac does not say what ‘virtue of conducts’ and ‘conduct of the mind and knowledge’ exactly mean. However, this distinction evokes both Evagrius’ distinction between *praktiké* and *gnostiké* (for an introduction to this topic, see Antoine and Claire Guillaumont, ‘Évagre le Pontique’, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire. Tome IV 2* [Paris, 1961], 1738-9), and the different reasons for pride (ascetical excellence/spiritual wisdom) given in some episodes of the *Lausiac History* (see footnote 10) – a work influenced by Evagrius’ thought, see René Draguet, ‘L’“Histoire Lausiaque”, une œuvre écrite dans l’esprit d’Évagre’, *Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique* 41 (1946), 321-64; 42 (1947), 5-49. Simultaneously, there are connections with John the Solitary’s tripartite understanding of spiritual life, as suggested by the mention of the ‘conduct of the mind’, for a brief introduction to John, see Bruce Bradley, ‘Jean le Solitaire’, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire. Tome VIII* (Paris, 1974), 764-72, 768-71; Paul Harb, ‘Doctrine spirituelle de Jean le Solitaire’, *Parole de l’Orient*, 2 (1971), 225-60. On this topic however, which would require an in-depth semantic study, it should be kept in mind that Isaac’s texts are ‘experiential’ and *in vivo*, so the variability of the expressions is inevitable and the boundaries between things are not immovable. For a synthetic description of the different ‘conducts’, see I 40 *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 303. For an introduction to Evagrius’ and John’s influence on Isaac, see Robert Beulay, *La Lumière sans forme* (Chevetogne, 1987), 16-34, 95-125 (also on other East Syriac spiritual writers); S. Chialà, *Dall’asceti* (2002), 101-13. For some initial findings on their influence on Isaac’s terminology, see Brock’s introduction to his edition of the *Second Part* (IV-XLI): *Isaac of Nineveh. The Second Part*, ed. Sebastian Brock, CSCO 555, Scr. Syri 225 (Leuven, 1995), xxxviii-xxxix; see also Sebastian Brock, ‘Discerning the Evagrian in the writings of Isaac of Nineveh’, *Adamantius* 15 (2009), 60-72; for Evagrius’ influence: Sabino Chialà, ‘Evagrio il Pontico negli scritti di Isacco di Ninive’, *Adamantius* 15 (2009), 73-84; Paul Géhin, ‘La dette d’Isaac de Ninive envers Évagre le Pontique’, *Connaissance des Pères de l’Eglise* 119 (2010), 40-5; Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, ‘The Limit of the Mind (NOYΣ): Pure Prayer according to Evagrius Ponticus and Isaac of Nineveh’, *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 15 (2011), 291-321. For John’s influence: Élie Khalifé-Hachem, ‘Isaac de Ninive’, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire. Tome VII* (Paris, 1971), 2043-51; *id.*, ‘La prière pure et la prière spirituelle selon Isaac de Ninive’, in François Graffin (ed.), *Mémorial Mgr Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis (1898-1968), fondateur et directeur de L’Orient Syrien (1956-1967)* (Louvain, 1969), 157-73.

<sup>9</sup> I 58 *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 411.

<sup>10</sup> I 58, *ibid.* 411. Similar ideas recur in other places: see e.g. I 17, *ibid.* 139; I 45, *ibid.* 322. These two possibilities – lasciviousness and ‘damage to the intellect’ – are the two consequences of pride according to the *Lausiac History*. In particular, Palladius speaks of different ascetics who fell into pride: Valens, Hero, Ptolemy, Abraham, Stephen, Eucarpus. They either fall into lasciviousness and dissolute living or are mentally damaged. There is also a further story, where Evagrius and Palladius question Paphnutius, a wise and accomplished elder, on the reasons for that, where the two possibilities are explicitly mentioned. That Isaac read and used the *Lausiac*

ܠܘܒܐ<sup>11</sup> (*nekyānā*) or ܠܘܒܐܐ ܠܗܘܢܐ<sup>12</sup> (*ṭaryutā d-hawnā*) i.e. damage to the faculty which is intended both for the contemplation of God and for an adequate relationship with external reality, since it is, as Isaac writes, ‘the ruler of the senses’.<sup>13</sup> Here, I will mainly focus on this latter form of pride.

The ‘damage’ to the intellect, a concept which recurs in various episodes of the *Lausiatic History*<sup>14</sup> which inspired Isaac, points to a loss of mental integrity which can ultimately assume the form of madness.<sup>15</sup> The phenomenology of pride which Isaac outlines makes it possible to understand the meaning of this event and its origin. Moreover, with a phenomenology of a pride rooted in a presumption of knowledge, Isaac touches powerfully upon the fundamental theological issue of the creature’s challenge to the Creator.

I intend to demonstrate that for Isaac this form of pride is rooted in a misunderstanding of one’s ontological status, in a non-correspondence of one’s conceptions to reality, and in an eager desire for spiritual knowledge,<sup>16</sup> freedom, and joy, which is, for him, inappropriate and undeserved, because it is

*History* in his interpretation of pride can be inferred both from similarities in the thought and the language and from the fact that Isaac mentions ‘Ptolemy the Egyptian’ in *Centuries* III 86 (see footnote 61) and he refers to Palladius’ stories in II 14,41-2, *Isaac of Nineveh. ‘The Second Part’*, ed. S. Brock (Louvain, 1995), I 69-70, II 79-80. For the Syriac *Lausiatic History*, see *The Book of Paradise, being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus and Others. The Syriac Texts according to the Recension of ‘Anan-Isho’ of Beth ‘Abhe*, ed. Ernest Alfred Budge, 2 vols. (London 1904), I 195-201; II 164-9 (Valens, Hero, Ptolemy, Abraham); I 265-72; II 217-22 (Palladius’ and Evagrius’ question and Paphnutius’ answer); I 400-6 (Stephen, Eucarpus). The Syriac text of Stephen and Eucarpus’ stories, which are not found in Greek, is not in Budge’s edition. For this text, see *Les formes syriaques de la matière de l’Histoire Lausiaque*, ed. René Draguet, 4 vols., CSCO 389-90, 398-9, Scr. Syri 169-70, 173-4 (Louvain, 1978), CSCO 398, Scr. Syri 173, pp. 365-72.

<sup>11</sup> From ܠܘܒܐ (*nkā*), to harm, hurt, injure. This idea and language recurs in the *Lausiatic History*’s stories of the fallen monks. See *The Book of Paradise*, ed. E.A.W. Budge (1904), I 197; II 165 (Valens); I 201; II 169 (Abraham); I 266; II 218 (Palladius’ and Evagrius’ question); I 405; 406 (Eucarpus). See also *Les formes syriaques*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 398, Scr. Syri 173 (1978), 370; 371 (Eucarpus).

<sup>12</sup> From ܠܘܒܐܐ (*trā*), to strike, assail. The expression is not listed in dictionaries, except in Brockelmann, where the only example is Isaac’s passage. The closeness to the other expression and the meaning of the verb allow us to hypothesise a similar meaning.

<sup>13</sup> I 70, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 484

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>15</sup> The ideas is also Evagian: see e.g. *Praktikos* 14 (15) in BL Add. 14578 (S1), William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the Year 1838*, Part II (London, 1871), n. 567, 445-9. The link between Palladius’ stories and Evagrius’ thought has been highlighted by Driscoll: see Jeremy Driscoll, ‘Evagrius and Paphnutius on the causes for abandonment by God’, *Studia Monastica* 39 (1997), 259-86. In this context, Driscoll also focused on the relevance of the distinction between a pride centred on ‘practice’ and a pride centred on ‘knowledge’, the connection pride-madness, and the link between pride and the refusal of ‘practice’, which is also found in Isaac.

<sup>16</sup> Here, I do not use the words ‘spiritual knowledge’ according to Isaac’s usage, but in their current meaning.

rooted in this misunderstanding. Madness, then, would stand only at the extreme end of the spectrum of this misunderstanding.

In his discussion of the ‘three degrees of knowledge’,<sup>17</sup> Isaac speaks of its highest degree – that ‘of the Spirit’<sup>18</sup> – as ‘a cessation of the soul from labour, and a type of the world [lit: that] to come’.<sup>19</sup> It is a knowledge which is not cognitive, but a knowledge of spiritual mysteries through revelations.<sup>20</sup> When it is ‘swallowed up by faith’,<sup>21</sup> as Isaac writes, it is knowledge of God by experience, in ‘wonder’. Proper to ‘the world to come’, this knowledge is granted here by grace, and only rarely, and only to the person who has passed through ‘practice’, which should precede it.<sup>22</sup>

‘Practice’, *ܦܘܠܗܢܐ* (*pulḥānā*),<sup>23</sup> a word which literally means ‘work, labour’, is a purification from the passions, but this should not be understood just as

<sup>17</sup> See I 51, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 360-77. According to what Isaac writes in this homily, there are three degrees of knowledge: of the body, of the soul, of the spirit – a vision influenced by John the Solitary. With regard to spiritual life, they are, for Isaac, ‘outside nature’, proper of ‘nature’, and ‘above nature’. The first form of knowledge is ‘common knowledge’ (see footnote 7): it is needed if one is to function in the world, and it is dominated by fear for the body’s integrity. The second kind of knowledge acknowledges God and corresponds to ascetic engagement. The third is a moment where human knowledge is transformed: it is ‘swallowed up’ by faith, and it becomes experience of spiritual mysteries and ultimately, of God. In I 52 Isaac approaches the theme from a different perspective, which evokes Evagrius’ distinction between the different moments of *gnostiké*: he calls ‘spiritual knowledge’ the knowledge of the noetic powers hidden within things and of the incorporeal natures and ‘not-knowledge’ the state above this, which concerns ‘the Essence’: see I 52, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 377-9. In I 44 Isaac speaks of ‘spiritual knowledge’ and of a ‘faith of vision’ born of it, see I 44, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 318-21, while in *Centuries* III 49 he speaks of a ‘spiritual knowledge’ which is knowledge of the Essence. Isaac’s way of thinking is experiential, and therefore the fact that he uses these terms in different ways does not necessarily imply contradictions. In any case, for him, the highest form of knowledge is beyond human nature, beyond creaturalty: on this theme see Paolo Bettiolo, ‘Povertà e conoscenza. Appunti sulle Centurie gnostiche della tradizione evagriana in Siria’, *Parole de l’Orient* 15 (1988-9), 107-25. When Isaac refers to ‘knowledge’ in the context of pride, he seems to refer to all kinds of ‘knowledge’ beyond ‘practice’. About ‘knowledge’ in Isaac, see H. Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World* (2000), 256-68, S. Chialà, *Dall’ascesi* (2002), 135-41; Serafim Seppälä, ‘The Idea of Knowledge in East Syrian Mysticism’, *Studia Orientalia* 101 (2007), 265-77; see also Valentin Vesa, ‘The Threefold divine Knowledge in the Discourses of St. Isaac of Nineveh. General Introduction’, *Theologia Orthodoxa* 58 (2013), 147-59.

<sup>18</sup> See I 51, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 374.

<sup>19</sup> I 51, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 375.

<sup>20</sup> The topic of revelations in Isaac has been explored by Bettiolo: see Paolo Bettiolo, ‘Révélations et visions dans l’œuvre d’Isaac de Ninive: le cadre d’école d’un enseignement spirituel’, in Alain Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques* (Paris, 2011), 99-119.

<sup>21</sup> See I 51, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 373-4

<sup>22</sup> ‘Practice’ corresponds to the second degree of knowledge. On this see *The ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian*, transl. Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Boston, 2011), 573-4 (Glossary).

<sup>23</sup> I found that Isaac also uses *ܣܘܪܘܬܐ* (*sā’urutā*), literally ‘action, operation, practice’, with a similar meaning (see e.g. *Centuries* I 56). A detailed study on the theme of ‘practice/labour’ and the terminology Isaac uses still needs to be done.

‘ascetic practices’: it is a labour which involves the body and the soul,<sup>24</sup> and the toil of a relationship with all that is tough and difficult to bear, through which one necessarily passes, for Isaac, when one assumes on oneself the weight of a purification from the passions.<sup>25</sup> And it implies, inevitably, ‘afflictions’ and ‘sorrows’.

This purification should not be understood merely as a moral issue, but also as a learning of one’s capacity for vision, which leads to an adequate relationship with reality, where ‘adequate’ should be understood as corresponding to what presents itself as real:<sup>26</sup> the passions, Isaac says, are ‘like dense substances that, when they are placed between the light (*i.e.* the mind’s ordinary sight) and that which is seen, prevent it from discerning things’.<sup>27</sup> A mind which is not seized by passions then, sees things as they are, just as a passionate mind departs, in different ways and to varying extents, from reality. To see what is real, one cannot bypass ‘practice’.

Isaac writes:

Whoever, before the exercise of the first part (*i.e.* practice), goes beyond the bounds of the second (*i.e.* theoria) because of its sweetness, with an eager desire (...) prepares wrath to blow against him, because before (...) having healed the infirmity of his thoughts by the endurance of the toil and the shame of the cross, he dared to fantasise in his intellect about the glory of the cross.<sup>28</sup>

And again:

Those who snatch knowledge with violence, with violence they are snatched towards pride,

<sup>24</sup> See *e.g.* *Centuries IV* 27; *Centuries III* 52.

<sup>25</sup> See *e.g.* I 28, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 202-5; I 59, *id.*, 414-9.

<sup>26</sup> Concerning ‘purification’, Seppälä underlined that in the East Syriac mystics this should not be understood just as ‘an ethical or moral improvement’, but also as an ‘enlightenment in one’s world-view, which leads one to look at it from the perspective of *totality*, *i.e.* of God. See S. Seppälä, ‘The Idea of Knowledge’ (2007), 271. Although Seppälä’s observation invites agreement, I focus on a further possibility, which stresses the ontological perspective.

<sup>27</sup> I 67, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 472: ‘The mind is the spiritual organ of sense which has been made receptive of visual power, like the pupil of the corporeal eyes in which sensible light is poured. Noetic sight is natural knowledge which is united by a power with the constitution of nature, that which is called natural light. The holy power is grace, the sun which makes possible to discern things which are placed between the light (*i.e.* normal sight) and that which is seen. While natures are things which are intermediate, distinguishable for vision by the light, passions are like dense substances which, when they are placed between the light and that which is seen, prevent it from discerning things. Purity is the cleansing of the noetic air, in whose bosom the spiritual nature [which is] in us takes wing’.

<sup>28</sup> I 2, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 15-6. A passage discussing a similar dynamic is found in I 76, *id.*, 521-2.

because

they assail [knowledge] without practice. But this means that instead of the truth, they snatch an appearance.<sup>29</sup>

Pride then, which removes practice, seizes only an appearance. It looks for knowledge, but it is, for Isaac, a ‘passion of the soul’, ‘a wandering without knowledge’.<sup>30</sup>

However, although one can attain a certain purification, this remains for Isaac ‘the world of practice as long as one is alive’,<sup>31</sup> a place where there is no ‘perfect rest from afflictions’,<sup>32</sup> in the sense that complete perfection cannot be grasped by a human being. Pride attempts, or ‘dares’, as Isaac says, to bypass afflictions and difficulties, in an impatient desire for spiritual knowledge, joy, and boundless freedom, which is, however, inappropriate, greedy, undeserved, since it forgets that which Isaac considers to be the factual reality of this world and of the human being. ‘If there is one who (...) teaches you a single order full of joy without interruption, know that he leads you out of the path of God’,<sup>33</sup> Isaac writes. And of the fall of Lucifer, Isaac says: ‘From the desire for freedom the thought of wickedness began in creatures’,<sup>34</sup> a desire which Isaac interprets as the pretention of living without any limitation, without ‘rule’ and law’,<sup>35</sup> of refusing to place oneself ‘under them’, *ܬܗܝܬ* (*thēt*), a word which can be contrasted with pride placing itself ‘above everything’, *ܐܠܐ* (*l’el*).<sup>36</sup> Thus Isaac writes:

That morning star which rose at dawn,<sup>37</sup> because in his eyes it was diminishing to be under a rule according to the boundary of the creatures, from that moment it was

<sup>29</sup> *Centuries* I 25: ‘Those who snatch knowledge with violence, with violence they are snatched towards pride, and the more they apply their mind [to it], [the more] they are darkened. But those in whose impulses knowledge enters and dwells are brought low towards the depth of humility and they receive in themselves, clearly, the persuasion which gives joy’; *Centuries* I 26: ‘Those who snatch knowledge with violence [are] those who assail it without practice, but this means that instead of the truth they snatch an appearance. But [knowledge] dwells of its own [volition] in the impulses of those who became crucified in their life and who breathe life from within death’.

<sup>30</sup> See *Centuries* IV 27.

<sup>31</sup> I 28, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 203.

<sup>32</sup> I 28, *ibid.* 203. For an introduction to the topic of suffering in Isaac, see my ‘La passione secondo Isacco di Ninive’, *Adamantius* 21 (2015), 341-52.

<sup>33</sup> *Centuries* IV 26; see also *Centuries* IV 23.

<sup>34</sup> *Centuries* III 88.

<sup>35</sup> See *Centuries* III 88: ‘At the beginning he demands to all those whose ways are led astray and [who] began to be caught in his net, to love freedom and to go out from [being] under a rule and a law, because at that time he can sow in them his own things’.

<sup>36</sup> See I 16, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 133 and, in this paper, page 138.

<sup>37</sup> *Is.* 14:12 (LXX).

abandoned<sup>38</sup> by that power that was upholding it, and it fell like a lightning<sup>39</sup> from its glory.<sup>40</sup>

To this desire without limits, ignorant of law and rule, corresponds a serious misunderstanding of one's ontological status: forgetting that status of 'according to the boundary of the creatures' which Isaac mentioned.

It means mistaking this 'imperfect world'<sup>41</sup> for the location of a glory which does not belong to it, and falling into a lack of attention to the real condition of human beings – marked, for Isaac, by passions, imperfection, mortality, 'the weight of the flesh', 'inclination',<sup>42</sup> and an 'untranscendable ignorance', as Bettiolio wrote in his article 'Prigionieri dello Spirito'.<sup>43</sup>

The fact of being 'according to the boundary of the creatures' is protected by 'rule' and 'law', which Isaac interprets as the rules of ascetic life,<sup>44</sup> and by 'submission' to them – and this, also when one is pure, and an advanced father.<sup>45</sup>

Isaac says:

Let us keep the boundary of submission, my brothers, so as not to fall into the hands of the demon of pride and hence be abandoned by that Providence which holds and surrounds us (...), so that we might know that we are creatures and we might not desire that freedom which is proper only for the Creator.<sup>46</sup>

Here, the root of the misunderstanding shines clearly: mistaking one's creaturely space for that of the Creator.

<sup>38</sup> The theme of 'abandonment (ܡܫܬܒܩܢܘܬܐ, *meštabqānūtā*)' is essential in Isaac's writings. On this, see H. Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World* (2000), 101-9. I am analysing this theme for my DPhil dissertation.

<sup>39</sup> *Luke* 10:18.

<sup>40</sup> *Centuries* III 87.

<sup>41</sup> See I 51, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 376: 'There is no perfect freedom in an imperfect world'.

<sup>42</sup> See *e.g.* I 51, *ibid.* 375.

<sup>43</sup> See Paolo Bettiolio, "'Prigionieri dello Spirito". Libertà creaturale ed eschaton in Isacco di Ninive e nelle sue fonti', in Stefano Gasparri (ed.), *Alto Medioevo Mediterraneo* (Firenze, 2005), 15-40, 26 (First publication in *Annali di scienze religiose* 4 [1999], 343-63). In this article, Bettiolio highlights the importance, in Isaac, of a dimension of distance between God and all created beings, which only God can reduce or bridge.

<sup>44</sup> See II 14, *Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian). 'The Second Part'*, ed. S. Brock (1995), I 56-72; II 66-83. In this discourse, which deals with prayer and the necessity of keeping its outward forms, Isaac also criticises 'Messalian' tendencies. On this topic, see Patrik Hagman, 'St Isaac of Nineveh and the Messalians', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Mystik – Metapher – Bild. Beiträge des VII. Makarios-Symposium* (Göttingen, 2007), 55-66; Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, "'Neither Beginning nor End": the Messalian Imaginaire and Syriac Asceticism', *Adamantius* 19 (2013), 222-39, 228-31.

<sup>45</sup> See II 14,22, *ibid.* I 62; II 73: 'But for this [reason] the blessed Fathers compelled themselves, like servants, to keep a law, because of the fear of pride'.

<sup>46</sup> *Centuries* III 89. Here Isaac speaks of being tempted by lasciviousness as a consequence of 'abandonment', but the same dynamic is valid for all forms of pride.



phenomenology of pride, where it can be interpreted as the consequence of the misunderstanding previously mentioned: ‘deception [follows] presumption’, he says.<sup>60</sup> The ‘complete going astray of the intellect’, then, would just be the extreme expression of a more general ‘going astray’, of a ‘departure’ from reality.

This complete going astray is exemplified by the story, in Isaac’s *Centuries*, of Ptolemy the Egyptian,<sup>61</sup> who was completely abandoned into the hands of the demons. The story, inspired by the *Lausiatic History*, reads as follows:

If the solitary is raised to the throne of Divinity through revelations, if he despises the psalms, he will be delivered up into the hands of the demons. The boundary of pride begins from here in a human being, when he thinks high things of himself. ‘Your rank surpasses now [the rank of] those who make use of the psalms’, thus Satan spoke to Ptolemy the Egyptian, when he appeared to him in that impure revelation – Palladius says in the ‘Book of Paradise’. ‘Do not bring your soul to naught through the office of the psalms, and do not torment your body through bodily labours, but labour only in the labours of the soul, and gaze continually at me in your mind, and I will show you my glory’. And in this way he was mocked by the demons<sup>62</sup> and he was abandoned by God, so that [the demons] were even lifting him up and dashing him against the ground when he was abandoned in their hands.

This being ‘lifted up’ and ‘dashed against the ground’ by external forces which dominate the subject synthesises all the phenomenology of pride outlined by Isaac. Only ‘with difficulty’, Isaac concludes, Ptolemy ‘regained his mind (lit: he came back to his intellect)’.

## Conclusions

All the phenomenology of pride which Isaac outlines aims at setting a limit to the misunderstanding of oneself which is at the root of this story.

Only by careful attention to not forgetting ‘the exaltedness of the Divine Nature, and the earthiness of one’s nature’,<sup>63</sup> as Isaac calls it, can this be possible.

I 405 and *Les formes syriaques de la matière de l’Histoire Lausiague*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 398, Scr. Syri 173 (1978), 370 (Eucarpus: ‘the error of the Deceiver’).

<sup>60</sup> See I 65, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita*, ed. P. Bedjan (1909), 448-9; *Centuries* II 50; *Centuries* IV 26.

<sup>61</sup> *Centuries* III 86. The story is inspired by the *Lausiatic History*. In Palladius’ work, Ptolemy is one of the ascetics who fell into pride. Isaac however, though calling his character ‘Ptolemy’, is not inspired by Palladius’ Ptolemy, but takes elements and entire passages from the story of Eucarpus – another monk who fell into pride – whose story is found in the *Lausiatic History*. See *The Book of Paradise*, ed. E.A.W. Budge (1904), 403-6; *Les formes syriaques*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 398, Scr. Syri 173 (1978), 368-72.

<sup>62</sup> The idea of being ‘mocked by the demons’ is found in the *Lausiatic History*: see *The Book of Paradise*, ed. E.A.W. Budge (1904), I 195; II 164 (Valens); I 406 (Eucarpus); See *Les formes syriaques*, ed. R. Draguet, CSCO 398, Scr. Syri 173 (1978), 372.

<sup>63</sup> It is the attitude that contrasts that of the ascetics of Palladius’ stories, who ‘adopted different forms of pride, and as a result they mingled with [their] prayer an insult to God, and they forgot

From the attention to one's ontological status the need for practice arises, but also the capacity to see what is real and stability of mind. This stability is made possible by one's abiding in a space which is 'one's own', creatural, opened up by the renunciation of the attempt to steal God's space.

'Rule' and 'law', then, which delimit the space, identify this 'space of one's own', they make its existence possible.

This creatural space can then have an 'above' – God – and a 'below' – the demonic universe which no longer invades the space of the subject.



## The Divine Vision in Isaac of Niniveh and the East Syriac Christology

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### ABSTRACT

One of the most important themes in Isaac of Niniveh's discourses is the concept of divine vision. His ascetic endeavour aims to experiencing the presence of God, described as *theoria* (stupor), vision, or wonder. So, Isaac makes an interesting synthesis between Evagrius, Theodore of Mopsuestia and John the Solitary (eventually also Pseudo-Macarius). The concept of vision has been largely discussed in the frame of the dyophysite Christology of the East Syriac of the 7-8<sup>th</sup> centuries. That specific theological context reveals various debates between an academic scholastic theology and a monastic charismatic theology, concentrated directly on the problem of spiritual life. The aim of this research points to identifying the relation between the concept of divine vision in Isaac of Niniveh and the official theology in the East Syriac Church of that specific time.

One of the salient themes in Isaac of Niniveh's discourses is the concept of divine vision. In this frame, the ascetic endeavour he speaks about aims at experiencing the presence of God, described mostly by the concepts: *theoria* (contemplation), vision and wonder. The concept of divine vision has been largely discussed in the context of the dyophysite Christology of the East Syriac Church of the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially referring to the council of Catholicos Timothy I (787). Its decisions anathematise those who assert that the human nature of Christ can see His divinity, and, in consequence, a human being can see God. This final thesis came against the mystics' assertion to see God, a constant of monastic theology.

That specific theological context reveals various debates around the problem of divine vision. One can identify two perspectives and, perhaps, two types of theology – one, dominated by a scholastic system, represented mostly by theologians and church leaders, for whom it was difficult to accept any visionary experience, and a second one, more intuitive, professed by charismatic monastics, for whom the divine vision was the very aim of spiritual life.

The scope of this research focuses on identifying the relation between the concept of divine vision in Isaac of Niniveh and the official theology of the East Syriac Church of his time. The article is divided into three parts. Firstly

we will give a short retrospection of the problem with regards to some important Byzantine authors that will give us a general image of its evolution. Then, the second part will take the discussion further into the Syriac milieu, narrowing the research onto Isaac's specific theological context. The third part is dedicated to the analysis of the concept in Isaac's writings, in particular in its most important forms: *theoria*, vision/revelation, and wonder. Finally, we will draw some conclusions regarding Isaac's place in the general landscape of the East Syriac contemporary theology.

### The concept of vision in the Byzantine tradition

We will give a retrospection of the issue with regard to some important Patristic authors in the development of Isaac's monastic theology. The first important representative of the Antiochene School is Theodore of Mopsuestia. We remember his theory of the two contrary states (one characterised by corruptibility, mutability, passibility and mortality and the other one by incorruptibility, immutability, impassibility and immortality). He does not really speak about the concept of vision, but about the ways of revelation of the nature of God under a form adapted and close to human's capacity, in the corporeal Man Jesus. It is by this means by which divinity acts. The possibility of divine vision is reflected in seeing in His image, which is the humanity of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Evagrius, a second important author for Isaac's theology, equalises the concept of 'gnostic man' to 'the seer man'.<sup>2</sup> During pure prayer, the light of the Trinity shines in the spirit of the purified human, and the 'nous' becomes the place of God, the image of God in the temple. In the process of seeing God, the mind understands itself as the place of God and a receptacle of the Trinitarian light. It is a bare mind 'consummated in the vision of itself, having merited communion in the contemplation of the Holy Trinity'.<sup>3</sup> It sees itself as the sapphire of the sky.

In reference to the Messalian movements, we will also evoke the case of Pseudo-Macarius and his 'Spiritual Homilies'. He points to a clear distinction between the philosophical knowledge out of reasoning and the divine knowledge of the faithful. Contrary to Evagrius' intellectualistic system, Macarius' mystic vision has an affective character; it is addressed to the senses. Here knowledge means consciousness. As the Word is clothed in humanity, so what is human must be clothed in the Spirit. The experience of the divine is described as food, drink, sweetness. He establishes a hierarchy and a spiritual evolution

<sup>1</sup> *Les homélies catéchétiques de Theodore de Mopsueste*, ed. R. Tonneau and R. Devreesse, *Studi e Testi* 145 (Vatican, 1949), 185.

<sup>2</sup> *Cent.* VII 26, W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus* (Berlin, 1912), 481.

<sup>3</sup> *Cent.* III 6, W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus* (1912), 193.

from the category of people who ‘feel’ to the one who ‘experience illumination’<sup>4</sup> by means of visions. These two stages reach their peak in the revelation<sup>5</sup> of the divine mysteries in the soul.<sup>6</sup> There is a common element here – Macarius speaks as well about the essential light<sup>7</sup> of the divinity in the soul – and yet he describes a completely different concept. When, for Evagrius, there is a stable vision of the essential light, Macarius speaks about the fire of grace kindled by the Spirit in the heart, this time, not in the mind as in Evagrius’ case, that follows the fluctuations of the will. Regarding the object of vision, the Macarian language is not dogmatically precise. In *Homily 34*, one reads that in life after death ‘we are all transformed into the divine nature’, a passage followed by the mention of light: ‘all repose in a single light’.<sup>8</sup>

Another author who seems to occupy the middle position between the previous two with regard to divine vision is Diadoch of Photike. His spiritual doctrine points to the invisible God and his energies<sup>9</sup> and the union with God in love at the level of the inward senses – heart, spirit and soul. Diadoch, while using a language of perception, is tributary to Macarius. And yet, he opposes the sensual mysticism of the Messalians by arguing that the glory of God does not appear visibly.<sup>10</sup> Throughout history, God has been seen visibly, the Formless one in the form of glory, in the form of his will. Finally, the Byzantine author distinguishes between gnosis and theology. The former one refers to the process of teaching, while the latter one evokes an experience of union with God, a partaking of the essential light, through intellectual recollection at the level of the heart.<sup>11</sup> One can identify here a middle way between intellectual mysticism and mysticism of the heart, engaging human integrally.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> φωτισμός.

<sup>5</sup> ἀποκάλυψις.

<sup>6</sup> *Homily 7, 5-6*, Pseudo Macario, *Spirito e fuoco* (Bose, Qiqajon, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> ὑποστατικοῦ φωτός.

<sup>8</sup> *Homily 34,1*.

<sup>9</sup> Δυνάμεις or ἐνέργειαι.

<sup>10</sup> Diadochus of Photice, *Spiritual Works*, SC 5 (Paris, 1966), *Cent.* 36, p. 105.

<sup>11</sup> *Cent.* 59, p. 119.

<sup>12</sup> This person is very interesting in the Palamite dispute of the fourteenth century, next to Evagrius and Isaac of Niniveh. Antonio Rigo argues that Gregory Palamas, when speaking about the illuminative condition, quotes Evagrius (‘La condition de l’intellect est une hauteur intelligible semblable à la couleur du ciel dans laquelle pendent le temps de la prière vient la lumière de la Sainte Trinité’, *Reflection 4 and 2*), Diadochus of Photike (‘Quand l’intellect a commencé à goûter, dans un sentiment profond la bonté du Saint Esprit, alors nous devons savoir que la grâce commence à peindre la ressemblance par-dessous l’image ... la perfection de celle-ci nous ne la connaîtront que par l’illumination’, *Cent.* 89) and Isaac of Niniveh (‘During prayer the mind puts off the old man and puts on the new man by grace, then it also sees its steadfastness resembling the sapphire or the colour of heaven, as the place of God was called by the elders of Israel to whom it appeared in the mountain ... Prayer is steadfastness of mind which is terminated only by the light of the Holy Trinity through ecstasy’, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Niniveh translated from Bedjan’s Syriac text with the introduction and registers* by A.J. Wansinck, Nieuwe reeks,

## The concept of divine vision in the Syriac tradition

We will go a step further with this theme into the Syriac milieu. The first important author in dealing with divine vision is Ephraim the Syrian. Using an apophatic language to interpret Moses' life, he argues that, while having the vision of God's glory, he had the consciousness that seeing means not seeing and knowing means not knowing. Human being cannot see God's essence, but his glory, because of God's condescendence by which he proportioned the vision of his glory to the human capacity of pertaining.<sup>13</sup>

Another important author is Narsai. For him, human beings are not able to see God Himself whose glory is too high, as divinity cannot be seen by his creation. Christ, resplendent of glory, will make human beings able 'to see without seeing' the hidden Being. The latter one remains the 'Holy of Holies', inaccessible and transcendent, while the former is associated with the 'holy', that is Christ's body, visible for the rational creation. Christ's humanity, principle of divine essence among us, will be like an image for the exterior senses of the invisible divinity and, at the noetic level, it will provide certain knowledge of essence that remains invisible.<sup>14</sup>

We will add another important example, Babai the Great, a radical East Syriac conservative theologian. He speaks about a gradual knowledge of God. By means of symbols and images, God reveals his justice and providence in the saints and more in Christ, where the plenitude of divinity dwells. Then, borrowing the Evagrian language, he speaks about the perception of God in creation, the knowledge of the intelligible beings by the elevation of the soul above the earthly reality, the contemplation of the corporeal and incorporeal intelligible beings and, finally, the knowledge of the Son, who surpasses all other knowledge by the unique knowledge of the Trinity, that is not really a vision. It is about the glory and the light of Christ's face, mirror and image of the divine essence, perceived in the intellections of corporeal and incorporeal creatures<sup>15</sup> and in the Scriptures. Finally he uses an apophatic language

Deel XXIII 1 [Wiesbaden, 1969] [abbreviated I], 22 / Syriac; 32 / Greek); for the Syriac text see Paul Bedjan (ed.), *De perfectione religiosa* (Paris, Leipzig, 1909) (abbreviated B). What is interesting here is the fact that Palamas, while replying to his opponents on the concept of the divine light vision and the possibility of contemplation, he quotes all these three authors in different places. This might take us to the conclusion that there is a kinship between them in matter of expressing the spiritual conduct, in particular the divine vision; for details see Antonio Rigo, 'De l'apologie à l'évocation de l'expérience mystique. Évagre le pontique, Isaac le Syrien et Diadoque de Photicé dans les œuvres de Grégoire Palamas et dans la controverse palamite', in *Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen* (Berlin, New York, 2012), 85-108.

<sup>13</sup> See E. Beck, 'Ephrem', *DS* XXVII, col. 792-3.

<sup>14</sup> For details see Philippe Gignoux, 'Les doctrines eschatologiques de Narsai', *Oriens Syrien* 12 (1967), 23-54.

<sup>15</sup> Commenting on the Evagrian sentence V 57 (KG), Babai asserts: 'Je comprends que, comme nous sommes limités en ce que concerne la contemplation dans ce monde, il considère

following Pseudo-Dionysius when he speaks about un-knowledge and union in the cloud with One who is unknowable. In fact, there is no knowledge, but a look without the desire of knowing, a loving conscience of the absolute transcendence of God, constituting for human beings the supreme and beatific delectation.<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Hazzaya is a name of reference regarding the concept of vision. The concept of mirror is present also in his works applied to Christ's humanity vis-à-vis the revelation of the Word (the Son). We will quote a significant paragraph: 'For the rational beings, visible and invisible, the humanity of Our Lord will be a mirror in which one is going to see God the Word who sojourns in them'.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the ambivalence nature–glory in his mystical system, one can argue that he does not indicate a sharp distinction between them as he arrives at speaking indiscriminately about nature, glory and royalty of Christ.<sup>18</sup> However, he establishes an interesting hierarchy of light in the line of his tripartite spiritual life and he assigns the colour of the sky (zephyr) to the limit of the somatic stage, then the colour of crystal to the psychic stage and adds the entrance into the spiritual stage where one achieves the vision of the formless light of the Trinity.<sup>19</sup>

que nous sommes totalement (incapable) de contempler les incorporels; c'est pour cela qu'il dit « regarderons » parce que maintenant, même si quelqu'un est parfait dans sa connaissance et lumineux dans sa vision (ܐܘܘܢ) selon le bienheureux Paul, celui-là voit, pour sa consolation, peu du beaucoup et comme dans un miroir, tandis que la plénitude de la connaissance sera reçue par tous les rationnels dans le monde nouveau, par certains pour leur jouissance, par d'autres pour leurs tourments', Babai the Great, *Commentaire aux Centuries Gnostique*, in *Evagrius Ponticus*, ed. W. Frankenberg (Berlin, 1912), 342-3. One can observe here that for Babai there is a partial vision of God in the world, but the perfect knowledge (ܐܘܘܢ ܕܘܘܘܢܐ) is going to be achieved in the eschatological reality. Anyhow it is not about the vision of the divine nature, but the mystiques of light, that is the divine light present in creation.

<sup>16</sup> See Robert Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha, mystique syro-oriental du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Théologie historique* 83 (Paris, 1990), 434-7.

<sup>17</sup> *Cent.* 6,8, see R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (1990), 457 : 'Pour tous les êtres rationnels, visibles et invisibles, l'humanité de Notre Seigneur sera un miroir dans lequel ils verront Dieu le Verbe qui habite en eux'.

<sup>18</sup> R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (1990), 449. But, his biographer, Nestorius of Nuhadra, when speaking about the spiritual vision, clearly underlines that it is not about seeing the nature, but the divine glory. I will quote two short examples to support that: 'Rallegra il cuore dei giusti con una visione spirituale (ܐܘܘܢܐ ܐܘܘܢܐ) di cui per la loro volontà si sono privati ... A questi saggi che dicono con furore, non sapendo: "Come si vede (ܐܘܘܢܐ) la natura divina (ܐܘܘܢܐ ܐܘܘܢܐ)?"', risponderò: "O incredulo, non dico che è vista la natura, ma la gloria della sua grandezza ... luce (ܐܘܘܢܐ) della Santa Trinità"', 'Sull'inizio del movimento della grazia divina' §7, 9, see Vittorio Berti, 'Grazia, visione e natura in Nestorio di Nuhadra, solitario e vescovo siro-orientale', *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 10 (2005), 219-57, 237-8 (241-2).

<sup>19</sup> See V. Berti, 'Grazia, visione e natura in Nestorio di Nuhadra, solitario e vescovo siro-orientale' (2005), 253-4.

John Dalyatha seems to be very courageous in expressing the possibility of Christ's humanity to see his divinity.<sup>20</sup> In this perspective, Christ is the icon and the knowledge of the Father not only in his divinity, but in his humanity as well. Therefore, Christ's humanity has access to his divinity and, in consequence, humans too have access to God's divinity.<sup>21</sup> There are mainly three theses on which he builds his perspective. Firstly, he uses a concept common for eastern Mystics – the mirror and the 'vision in the mirror' of the soul that means the faithful reflection of the Prototype, safeguarding its transcendence. For a perfect vision, one needs to achieve limpidity. Secondly, in the same line, the divine vision occurs in what he calls 'obscure light' and this takes us further to the difference between the nature and the divine glory. Robert Beulay, in his monograph dedicated to John Dalyatha, underlines that, eight times in his work, he points to the difference between the nature and the glory of God.<sup>22</sup> In order to support this idea he frequently borrows the image of the fire, commonly ascribed to the Alexandrine authors, and he states that as the operation of the fire is hidden, so the nature of God, while the action of the fire is visible, so is the glory of God.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the divinity operates and makes itself visible by its glory. He also employs the image of the sun and its rays to express the same distinction.<sup>24</sup> And thirdly, the divine vision occurs by the means of Christ's glorified humanity. Christ is the garment of the Father and the medium of His revelation in the world. To support this idea he uses the image of the fire that needs matter to manifest itself visibly. Similarly, the noetic eye cannot see the divine nature without the temple of humanity in Christ,<sup>25</sup> transfigured on the Tabor Mountain and glorified at the resurrection. It is about the spiritualised body of Christ penetrated by the formless light, liberated from any material limitation and composition, able to dwell in the human's heart.

Finally, before going to Isaac's vision, we will focus shortly on Timothy I's perspective on the topic under discussion. The very theme of the council of 787 was to condemn those representatives who supported the theological idea of the possibility that the man assumed from Mary 'sees' the eternal Lord. The gathering excommunicated all who believed that it was possible for man to have an ocular or intellectual vision of the eternal Verb in this world or in

<sup>20</sup> His position places him outside the theological principles of his own Church, see R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (1990), 440.

<sup>21</sup> *Homily 25*, in R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (1990), 511-4.

<sup>22</sup> R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (1990), 447.

<sup>23</sup> 'De même que le feu manifeste aux yeux son opération, de même Dieu montre sa gloire aux êtres rationnels qui sont purs', *Cent. 1.17*, H. 31b, trans. R. Beulay, *L'enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha* (1990), 448.

<sup>24</sup> *Cent. 1.27*, H. 32a.

<sup>25</sup> *Cent. 1.27*, H. 31a.

the world to come.<sup>26</sup> And yet, one can observe that Timothy accepts a kind of speculative and intellectual vision of God's glory, by means of an experiential reading of Scripture, in order to achieve the knowledge of Christ's royalty. The soul knows and sees only in relation to the body, it is functional only within this paradigm. The resurrection does not cancel the composite character of humanity, interpreted at general or particular level and the distinction between Creator and creation is going to be manifest in the eschatological time as well.

Despite that, there are evident biblical eschatological texts that the patriarch could not ignore. One of them refers to Christ's transfiguration on Mount Tabor. In a letter to the priests of Basra he writes:

If you like to go up with him [Christ] to Mount Tabor, so also join the sons of the mystery of the kingdom of heavens. Be Peter, James and John. Look at Him! He is transfigured, and his face has become like the sun, and his cloths are white and shine as white as men on earth never can become. Do you see there the image of a servant and a master, or rather one glory of mastery and filiation, just like one light in the sun and its sphere?<sup>27</sup>

Vittorio Berti shows that Patriarch Timothy uses the event of Tabor to express the possibility of knowing the kingship of Christ by means of the vision of the divine glory. He further argues that, circumscribed by a scholastic theology, Timothy develops the idea of an intellectual and speculative vision out of Scripture. The Tabor moment ensures the possibility for human beings to partake in the divine glory by means of Christ's body. Nonetheless, this glory is created, as pertaining to the body of Jesus, and remains composite. Therefore his concept of vision refers to the deified humanity of Christ.<sup>28</sup>

### The concept of vision in Isaac's writings

Regarding Isaac's Christological teaching, one can say that the sharp distinction between the natures in the tradition of Theodore is not really present in his writings. The uncreated Word and the created man Jesus are one and the same

<sup>26</sup> Élie bar Šennaya, *Kitab-al-Majalis*, see Khalil Samir, 'Entretien d'Élie de Nisibe avec le vizir Ibn' Alī sur l'unité et la trinité', *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979), 31-117, 90 n. 17.

<sup>27</sup> *Timothei patriarchae I Epistulae*, ed. Oskar Braun, CSCO 74, 75 (Louvain, 1914/1915) (Lettres), 192, trad. Latin, 131-2: 'Si tu veux, monte avec lui [Christ] sur le mont Tabor, et joins-toi aux fils du mystère du Royaume des Cieux. Sois Pierre, Jacques et Jean. Regarde-le! Il est transfiguré, et son visage est devenu comme le soleil, et ses vêtements sont blancs et brillent comme jamais les hommes sur la terre ne peuvent blanchir. Est-ce que tu vois là une image du serviteur et du seigneur, ou plutôt la gloire une de la seigneurie et de la filiation, comme la lumière une dans le soleil et dans sa sphère' (own trans.).

<sup>28</sup> For details see Vittorio Berti, 'Le débat sur la vision de Dieu et la condamnation des mystiques par Timothée I<sup>er</sup>: la perspective du patriarche', in Alain Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques* (Paris, 2011), 151-78, 171-3.

person. Consequently, the union of Christ, which denotes the man assumed to the Trinity through union with the Word represents the fundament for the perfect mingling of the saints with God.<sup>29</sup> Salvation can be described as the process of human nature's ascension to the divine light and glory of the divinity by following Christ who, by His union, deified human nature.

But the distinction between Creator and creation specific to the East Syriac theology is clearly present in his discourses. If we are to quote only one short fragment it will suffice to argue this idea: 'The truth is hidden in his nature for everything he created and the rational beings, created by him, are living far away from it'. And yet, in the following lines, he accepts that in the eschatology the truth will be revealed, but not its limit which is 'hidden in his Essence'.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the entire ascetical work leads to the perception of the eschatological realities in what Isaac calls 'theoria', 'vision' and 'wonder'. In the third collection, one can find a paragraph where Isaac asserts that by prayer human beings can attain the vision of the kingdom in Christ: 'By means of converse in prayer, He has brought us near to the vision<sup>31</sup> of the Heavenly Kingdom and continual meditation of what is in it'<sup>32</sup> in the adoration of the Spirit in Christ offered to the Father. The adoration of the Spirit or the spiritual prayer is achieved 'in the mind by its stirrings'.<sup>33</sup> Isaac defines it as 'uninterrupted stupor<sup>34</sup> on account of God ... that happens in the places without corporeal realities ... wonder<sup>35</sup> is its minister and, instead of faith providing the wings for prayer, there is the true vision<sup>36</sup> of that in which consists our kingdom and our glory'.<sup>37</sup>

We identify in the quotations above three important concepts employed by Isaac in order to express the spiritual stage – stirrings, wonder and vision. The type of knowledge at this level is described as admiration before the heavenly realities by means of these cognitive forms that surpass the normal human way of knowing. There 'the whole truth'<sup>38</sup> concerning God the Creator will be achieved. At this point he clearly points to the distinction between God's nature,<sup>39</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *The second part. Chapters IV-XLI*, ed. Sebastian Brock, CSCO 224-5 (Leuven, 1995) (abbreviated II), 7,3.

<sup>30</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ II, 3.1, 2; the same terminology at Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentarius in Evangelium Iohannis Apostoli*, ed. Jacques Marie Vosté (Paris, 1940), 248, 294.

<sup>31</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>32</sup> Isacco di Ninive, *Terza collezione*, ed. Sabino Chialà, CSCO 637 (Leuven, 2011), 346-7 (abbreviated III), 3, 32.

<sup>33</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>34</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>35</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>36</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ ܠܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>37</sup> III 3, 33.

<sup>38</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>39</sup> ܠܗܘܬܐ. The same idea is expressed in the first collection: 'According as a man becomes perfect in his relation to God, he will follow Him closely. In the world of truth, He will show His face, not however the face of His essence' (I, 45, p. 217; B, 324).

that remains inaccessible and transcendent, and His glory<sup>40</sup> and love<sup>41</sup> for humans, accessible to humans. The quantitative criterion for knowledge disappears as well as the petition in prayer, which has its very role of leading the mind 'to wander in the Essence of God and in the knowledge of His care for us'. In technical terms we call this Economy and Theology. What is accessible for humans and pertains to the life to come is described by Isaac as kingdom, glory, greatness, magnificence, power of His essence. The result will be the clothing of people in God's light. This state of knowledge takes human beings to the filial quality regarding the relation to the Father.<sup>42</sup> The necessary instrument to achieve this eschatological knowledge is faith, not simply in its primary sense, but more as a result of the collaboration between human beings' ability and active participation, on the one side, and the divine intervention on the other side.<sup>43</sup>

On the concept of 'theoria',<sup>44</sup> its origin use and history, Sebastian Brock dedicated a detailed study.<sup>45</sup> From the very beginning, he argues the only Syriac early writers who used it were John the Solitary and Philoxenus of Mabbug. The wide spreading of the concept occurred thanks to the Syriac translation of Evagrius and the Dionysian Corpus. Among the East Syriac writers who used

<sup>40</sup> 

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<sup>42</sup> III 3, 38-9.

<sup>43</sup> I 43, p. 210 (B, 315).

<sup>44</sup> The Western translators, opting for the term 'contemplation', are forced to acknowledge their inability to display the entire contents of the original term. André Louf, 'Introduction', in *Isaac le syrien, Œuvres complètes 41: Discours récemment découvertes*, trans. André Louf, Spiritualité Orientale 81 (Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 2003), 83, claims that by 'theoria' of which Isaac speaks he refers to the highest stage of spiritual knowledge, while 'contemplation' refers mostly to human ascetical labour of the noetic faculty. Dana Miller, 'Translator's Introduction: A Historical Account of the Life and Writings of the Saint Isaac the Syrian', in Dana Miller (trans.), *The Ascetical Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian* (Boston, 1984), cx-cxi, states that 'contemplation' presupposes a deep psychological connotation, referring to the creation of images in imaginations or reflections, in connection with specific meditations on creation and the divine things, while 'theoria' describes the work of the Spirit in the intellect, which makes human beings to deepen the mysteries of God and creation, hidden to the rational human mind. She calls this knowledge supra-conceptual and defines it as revelation from above. For this reason she renders the term 'theoria' by 'divine vision'. Placide Deseille, 'Introduction', in *Saint Isaac le syrien, Discours ascétiques* (Monastère Saint-Antoine-le-Grand, Monastère de Solan, 2011), 46-7, tries to describe this concept by using the expression of J. Maritain, *Les Degrés du savoir*, in *Œuvres complètes IV* (Fribourg-Paris, 1983), 732-3 n. 41, 'knowledge by connaturality', having as starting point Isaac's description as 'divine vision in the mirror of human's soul', a concept familiar to some other Church writers, in particular Gregory of Nyssa. The soul is able to know God by going deep into itself, as within it one identifies the divine image. For that the purification of the intellect is also necessary. In consequence, love is intellection. In Isaac's case, this connaturality of the soul with God (not in a Platonic sense) resides in the love of the neighbour, up to assuming his suffering, as well as his corrupted state.

<sup>45</sup> 'Some Uses of the Term *theoria* in the Writings of Isaac of Niniveh', *Parole de l'Orient* 20 (1995-1996), 407-19.

it frequently he mentions Sahdona, Babai, Gregory of Cyprus, Isaac of Niniveh, Dadisho and Simon Taibuteh. Regarding Isaac, he employs the term more than 150 times, in the singular, in general, and, occasionally, in the plural.<sup>46</sup>

Isaac himself explains to his readers the concept as ‘vision of the spirit’,<sup>47</sup> or ‘non apperceptible mental revelation’,<sup>48</sup> ‘profoundness of the soul’s vision / depth of psychic sight’,<sup>49</sup> ‘apprehension of the divine mysteries’<sup>50</sup> which are hidden in the things spoken.<sup>51</sup> We will quote a suggestive fragment from Isaac’s discourse where he deals with this concept. He establishes a synonymy of terms when describing the spiritual conduct: ‘(Spiritual prayer) ... is inner sight<sup>52</sup> and not the impulse and the beseeching of prayer ... from there it will conduct them by contemplation,<sup>53</sup> which is interpreted spiritual sight’.<sup>54</sup>

Following Evagrius’ stages, Isaac speaks about the ‘contemplation of nature’<sup>55</sup> and ‘divine Providence’,<sup>56</sup> ‘contemplation of the soul’,<sup>57</sup> ‘angelic *theoria*’,<sup>58</sup> ‘heavenly *theoria*’<sup>59</sup> and the *theoria* or the vision of God,<sup>60</sup> when the intellect is moved without senses by the spiritual powers. He calls this ‘unitary / solitary knowledge’. The hierarchy of this cognitive form is given, according to Isaac, by the insights that accompany every moment.<sup>61</sup> If bodily conduct purifies the body from material passions,<sup>62</sup> mental discipline cleanses the soul from impulses<sup>63</sup> and changes their affectable nature into motions of contemplation.<sup>64</sup> This last state leads the soul to the ‘nakedness of the mind’,<sup>65</sup> associated with ‘immaterial contemplation’.<sup>66</sup> At this stage, the mind is elevated to what

<sup>46</sup> For details see Sebastian Brock, ‘Discerning the Evagrian in the writings of Isaac of Niniveh: a preliminary investigation’, *Adamantius* 15 (2009), 60-72 and Sabino Chialà, ‘Evagrio il Pontico negli scritti di Isacco di Ninive’, *Adamantius* 15 (2009), 73-84.

<sup>47</sup> ܘܐܝܢ ܟܕܘܫ ‘spiritual sight’ (Wensinck); I 35, p. 175 (B, 260).

<sup>48</sup> ܟܘܡܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܠܐܝܢ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ; literally – ‘of the intellect’, I 20, p. 109 (B, 161).

<sup>49</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܕܝܘܠܘܬܐ; I 15, p. 87 (B, 128).

<sup>50</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܕܝܘܠܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>51</sup> I 2, p. 12 (B, 17).

<sup>52</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>53</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>54</sup> ܘܐܝܢ ܟܕܘܫ; I 35, pp. 174-5 (B, 160).

<sup>55</sup> III 6,2.

<sup>56</sup> III 1,7,17.

<sup>57</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ; III 9,2.

<sup>58</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ; II 3,3,90.

<sup>59</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ; I 43, p. 345 (B, 307).

<sup>60</sup> III 2,7; 5,17.

<sup>61</sup> III 9, 19.

<sup>62</sup> By bodily labors, personal work.

<sup>63</sup> It is the work of the heart, the incessant meditation on the judgment and providence, incessant prayer of heart and the domain of inner affections.

<sup>64</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>65</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ.

<sup>66</sup> ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ ܟܘܠܝܗܘܬܐ.

Isaac calls ‘primordial spiritual contemplation’,<sup>67</sup> described as ‘sight of unspeakable glory’<sup>68</sup> of the eschatological reality. This occurs with the saints who achieve ‘personal contemplation’.<sup>69</sup> The sight<sup>70</sup> will be further spiritual.<sup>71</sup> Here Isaac correlates the concept of vision with that of knowledge when he names this spiritual contemplation ‘solitary / unitary knowledge’<sup>72</sup> that, occasionally, is described with ‘stupor / wonder’<sup>73</sup> before God. All these technical phrases seem to describe a single reality – the order of the future state after the resurrection.<sup>74</sup>

From the text above, one can draw some general observations regarding this concept. Firstly, ‘*theoria*’ pertains to natural knowledge, derived out of nature and due to angelic revelations, on the one hand, as well as to spiritual knowledge, that is the vision of God. We will give one example from the second collection, the third *centuria*, where Isaac indicates a qualitative difference between the ‘revelation of spiritual knowledge’<sup>75</sup> and the corporeal contemplation and the contemplation of incorporeals.<sup>76</sup> If the last two categories pertain to created beings, the first one is generated by the revelations of the future world.<sup>77</sup> He courageously describes it as ‘knowledge of the Essence’.<sup>78</sup> He indicates it in the singular, while the other forms are given in the plural, suggesting its full objective character – ‘knowledge of the One,<sup>79</sup> in amazement,<sup>80</sup> without being interrupted’, or the ‘vision of the Holy Trinity’,<sup>81</sup> the limit of any cognitive revelation.<sup>82</sup>

Isaac joins the attribute ‘immaterial’, as referring to the noetic faculties as well as to the absence of any material impulses. He successively underlines that ‘*theoria*’ is spiritual, indicating the source, and adds the attribute ‘primordial’, which probably refers to an originary state. This spiritual *theoria* points to partaking of God’s ineffable glory,<sup>83</sup> as anticipation of the life to come. Finally,

<sup>67</sup> ܘܐܝܢ ܚܘܒܪܐ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>68</sup> ܘܠܘܬܐ ܠܝ ܠܘܒܐܝ ܠܘܘ; see the presence of glory in the context of the discussion above.

<sup>69</sup> ܐܘܬܘܪܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>70</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>71</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐܝܢ.

<sup>72</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>73</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>74</sup> I 50, pp. 202-3 (B, 303-4).

<sup>75</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>76</sup> ܘܐܝܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܘܒܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>77</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܘܒܐܝܢ ܠܘܒܐܝܢ ܐܘܪܝܘܬܐܝܢ.

<sup>78</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐܝܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>79</sup> ܘܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>80</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>81</sup> ܚܝܘܬܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐܝܢ ܚܝܘܬܐ.

<sup>82</sup> II 3.3, 48-9.

<sup>83</sup> Salient theme of the theological contemporary dispute.

*theoria*, as amazement<sup>84</sup> before God, is ‘monadic knowledge’,<sup>85</sup> the highest cognitive state.

Next to ‘*theoria*’, in the same terminological sphere, there are two other forms of knowledge related to it, which Isaac calls simply ‘vision’ (רְאוּיָה) correlated with ‘revelation’ (רְעוּלָה), occasionally regarded as synonymous, both referring to an immediate contact with spiritual realities. There is still one semantic difference highlighted by Isaac, revelation is a larger concept that encompasses vision. The first one is always linked with intelligible things and achieved at the noetic level, while the latter pertains more to the senses and occurs in similitudes. Divine sight<sup>86</sup> is defined by Isaac as ‘imperceptible mental revelation’<sup>87</sup> and the divine revelation<sup>88</sup> ‘emotion’<sup>89</sup> of the mind by spiritual understanding,<sup>90</sup> concerning the divine being’.<sup>91</sup>

Isaac identifies two qualitative types of revelations: about the New World – which concerns the transformation of created (visible and invisible) experience into the light of an eschatological reality, revealed to the mind by various insights,<sup>92</sup> as the result of continual reflection on them; and of the New World, which concerns the divine nature of the divine majesty. The first category of revelations seems to come closer to what Isaac calls ‘vision’; its epistemology presupposes analogy. This one can only give sense about divine action, but it is not the exact truth, while the latter, by means of insights with no mental analogy points to the knowledge around the divine nature. This experience is given very rarely.

In the first collection, Isaac dedicates an entire discourse to the revelation with respect to natural knowledge, based on the ‘study of wisdom’, ‘intellectual labour’ and ‘mental investigation’. One can identify a clear epistemology: ‘revelation

<sup>84</sup> Wensinck translates ‘*temha*’ with ‘ecstasy’, but more proper is stupor / wonder, as Isaac does not really use the concept of ecstasy, but more ‘*entasis*’.

<sup>85</sup> רְאוּיָה רְעוּלָה.

<sup>86</sup> רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה.

<sup>87</sup> רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה.

<sup>88</sup> רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה.

<sup>89</sup> רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה; we prefer ‘impulse’ that does not involve a psychological connotation.

<sup>90</sup> רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה.

<sup>91</sup> רְעוּלָה רְעוּלָה.

<sup>92</sup> רְעוּלָה. It encompasses a whole semantic spectrum, such as intuition, sense, understanding, not referring to a strict rational knowledge, but involving the direct action of the Holy Spirit. One particularity of this form of knowledge is that it begins from a material reality (meditating on Scripture or the mystery of salvation, II 3.2,14) and meets either the revelations of angels or of the Holy Spirit Himself (II 3.3,91). In French – ‘intuition’ (insight), while in Italian – ‘comprehension’ (understanding). One can say that the ‘insight’ is a short immediate contact with the eschatological reality. According to Isaac’s perception, this occurs when one reaches the perfection in the stage of the soul, as a foretaste and guarantee of the spiritual stage. This experience lasts very short time and makes the mind motionless (II 20,19).



revelations come from top to bottom,<sup>112</sup> from the highest hosts to those closer to humans. We will give two examples from Isaac's second collection. In the third *centuria*, Isaac asserts that the angelic revelation occurs through dreams or senses.<sup>113</sup> A few paragraphs later Isaac adds some nuances when it comes to the revelations of angels. Again he argues the idea that, generally, these kinds of revelation occur through senses, but he indicates a difference between the revelations and the contemplation<sup>114</sup> of angels that occurs 'in a hidden way and by means of the impulses of thinking<sup>115</sup> moved by the illumination<sup>116</sup> spread in us'. The vision of angels is achieved in the movements of thoughts in silence. To strengthen his opinion, he quotes Evagrius who places the spiritual vision on the top of the qualitative revelational evolution: 'The holy angels, when they come close to us, fill us with spiritual vision,<sup>117</sup> that is with illuminations<sup>118</sup> and intellections<sup>119</sup> and contemplation<sup>120</sup> of different kinds'.<sup>121</sup> This final stage occurs at the inner level and characterises the 'spiritual man'.<sup>122</sup>

Another form of vision – generally rendered by two quite synonymous terms – **ἄνωμα** and **ἄνωμα**, is 'wonder' (amazement, awe, stupor, occasionally ecstasy<sup>123</sup>). These terms refer mostly to the highest stage of spiritual life – the spiritual stage, the contemplation in silence of the divine mystery of God, when the senses are suspended, as well as any type of movement. We will quote a fragment that supports this idea: 'On account of these kinds of labour performed in wisdom, the saints are deemed worthy of ecstasy (**ἄνωμα**) caused by divine revelation,<sup>124</sup> which is exalted above fleshly thought'.<sup>125</sup>

Isaac argues that this condition involves the intellect, the mind, the thought or thinking. For example, in what he calls mystical 'overshadowing'<sup>126</sup> of the Holy Spirit, the intellect (**ἄνωμα**) 'is sized and dilated in a sense of wonder (**ἄνωμα**) in a kind of divine revelation'.<sup>127</sup> Wonders occur as a consequence of the fact that the divinity cannot be grasped by human's natural faculties and

<sup>112</sup> II 3.3, 56-7.

<sup>113</sup> II 3.3, 59.

<sup>114</sup> **ἄνωμα**.

<sup>115</sup> **ἄνωμα ἄνωμα**.

<sup>116</sup> **ἄνωμα ἄνωμα**.

<sup>117</sup> **ἄνωμα ἄνωμα**.

<sup>118</sup> **ἄνωμα**.

<sup>119</sup> **ἄνωμα**.

<sup>120</sup> **ἄνωμα ἄνωμα**.

<sup>121</sup> II, 3.3, 91-2.

<sup>122</sup> **ἄνωμα ἄνωμα**.

<sup>123</sup> Wensinck translates this term with 'ecstasy' – going out, a well-known mystical concept, despite the fact Isaac uses more the concept of 'entasis' – going in.

<sup>124</sup> **ἄνωμα ἄνωμα**.

<sup>125</sup> I 80, p. 349 (B, 369).

<sup>126</sup> I 54, p. 261-2 (B, 390-1).

<sup>127</sup> II 16,5; II 22,6; In II 3,60, Isaac uses **ἄνωμα**, **ἄνωμα** and **ἄνωμα** without any distinction between them.

require the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. One can read in the third collection: ‘As often as the mind seeks to look on what is hidden, falls short of it because of its mind (ܠܘܘܢ) being concealed; and (the mind) it may, with these properties, observe as in a wonder (ܠܝܘܢܐ) that Nature which cannot be comprehended naturally, whether by vision (ܠܝܘܢܐ), intellect (ܠܘܘܢ) or thought (ܠܘܘܢܐ)’.<sup>128</sup> This time, Isaac associates ‘wonder’ with ‘mind’, ‘intellect’ and ‘thought’. Other times the concept also appears referring to ‘thinking’ (ܠܘܘܢܐ). The knowledge of truth is achieved in the mind’s state of wonder, as illustrated in this paragraph: ‘We call “truth” the right reflection on God, which stems from Him, upon which someone stumbles in one’s mind / thinking (ܠܘܘܢܐ), in a kind of state of wonder (ܠܘܘܢܐ) – at spiritual mysteries’.<sup>129</sup>

The state of ‘wonder’ is directly connected with prayer<sup>130</sup> or meditation on the future things or God’s nature,<sup>131</sup> on providence<sup>132</sup> or God’s mercy.<sup>133</sup> It turns itself into spiritual contemplation when there is no prayer, no meditation, or any other kind of movement. This stage corresponds to what Isaac calls the ‘spiritual man’s’ state,<sup>134</sup> being a ‘prisoner’ of God’s grace<sup>135</sup> and love.<sup>136</sup>

‘Amazement’ (awe) (ܠܝܘܢܐ) follows the same path: it involves the intellect,<sup>137</sup> the mind,<sup>138</sup> and thinking;<sup>139</sup> it starts from prayer<sup>140</sup> and meditation on God,<sup>141</sup> creation,<sup>142</sup> Economy<sup>143</sup> and providence;<sup>144</sup> yet, it is an action of the Holy Spirit<sup>145</sup> that makes the heart a ‘prisoner’<sup>146</sup> and silences all emotions. André Louf, as well as Serafim Seppälä, advocates a qualitative succession of the states described by the two terms discussed above. If ‘amazement’ (ܠܝܘܢܐ) points to a perception that comes from meditation on the work of God, creation and providence, ‘wonder’ (ܠܘܘܢܐ) highlights the primacy of the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, as anticipation of the future reality, prepared by the

<sup>128</sup> III 4,3.

<sup>129</sup> II 8,1.

<sup>130</sup> II 35,1; I 22.

<sup>131</sup> II 3,3,49.

<sup>132</sup> II 35,3.

<sup>133</sup> III 11,27.

<sup>134</sup> ܠܘܘܢܐ ܠܘܘܢܐ; II 3,3,92.

<sup>135</sup> II 1,32.

<sup>136</sup> II 20,20.

<sup>137</sup> III 2,27.

<sup>138</sup> II 3,2,10; 14,24.

<sup>139</sup> II 3,2,89; 4,66.

<sup>140</sup> I 3, p. 31 (B, 43).

<sup>141</sup> II 1,42; II, 3,1,86; III 3,6.

<sup>142</sup> II 36,1.

<sup>143</sup> II 3,4,48; 21,13.

<sup>144</sup> II 30,7; III 12,20.

<sup>145</sup> II 3,2,89.

<sup>146</sup> II 3,1,88; II 3,4,48.

former. And yet, this suggested difference is not clearly expressed in Isaac's discourses.<sup>147</sup>

## Conclusion

Finally, we will draw some kind of a short conclusion. Regarding the Christological language, Isaac is faithful to his own East Syriac tradition. And yet the way he uses it gives space to express the possibility of having the spiritual experience of seeing God. This process is expressed mostly by three concepts – *theoria*, vision (and revelation) and wonder/stupor. All three of them pertain to the spiritual conduct (the last stage of Isaac's tripartite schema) and are generated by the direct intervention of the Spirit. The possibility of reaching this experience resides, on the one hand, on God's revelation, and, on the other hand, on human's creational ability to have access to it. To express it differently, one can speak about what we technically call divine Economy, respectively, theological anthropology, that stand at the very base of Isaac's mystics.

Then the object of vision, despite the flexibility of language, refers to God's glory and his essential light, anticipating the vocabulary of the later hesychast disputes. Finally, the scope of this experience, from an ontological point of view, refers to human transformation in the frame of the anthropological evolution, from image to likeness, and, from an eschatological perspective it envisages not a personal perfection, but an incorporation in a meta-theological reality.

<sup>147</sup> It seems that André Louf and Serafim Seppälä are the only scholars to support a qualitative difference between the two terms in Isaac's writings. Louf advocates that the root 'tmh' is connected with 'torpor', when the parts of the body become rigid and the gaze fixed; while the root 'thr' is normally translated with 'to marvel', 'to admire'. His conclusion shows that if the latter one is more common and normally generated by human efforts (reading, meditation, participation at liturgical office), the former one is the result of the direct intervention of the Spirit and anticipates the reality of the life to come. For details see: A. Louf, '*Temha – stupore e tavra – meraviglia negli scritti di Isacco di Ninive*', in *La grande stagione della mistica sirio-orientale (VI-VII secolo)*, Centro Ambrosiano (Milano, 2009), 93-117 and S. Seppälä, 'In Speechless Ecstasy: Expression and Interpretation of Mystical Experience in Classical Syriac and Sufi Literature', *Studia Orientalia* 98 (2003), 77-80.

## ***Colossians 1:15* in the Christological Reflection of East Syrian Authors**

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### ABSTRACT

As R. Cantalamessa has shown in his research on the Patristic tradition on *Col. 1:15* (Cristo 'immagine di Dio', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 16 [1980], 181-212, 345-80), there are two lines of interpretation, one from Irenaeus, Tertullian, Marcel of Ancyra, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the other from Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocian fathers, Hilary and John Chrysostom. Especially with Babai the Great in the 7th century, but also already in Narsai, or later in Isho'yahb II and Timothy I, this Biblical passage has a specific significance in the Christology of East Syrian authors. The article analyzes how *Col. 1:15*, crucial for Christology, is interpreted in the East Syrian tradition.

In 1980 Raniero Cantalamessa published his analysis on the Patristic traditions of Christ as *eikon* of God.<sup>1</sup> It is with intention that Cantalamessa spoke of 'traditions' in plural. He could show that there are two main lines, or two archetypes ('archetipi'<sup>2</sup>), as he called it, of all later development, on the interpretation of *Col. 1:15*, more precisely on the first part of the verse, that 'the son of His love' (v. 13), *i.e.* Christ, 'is image of the invisible God'. The question arises: Who is the 'image of God' here, the eternal Logos, or the incarnate Logos insofar as he is man, see *Gen. 1:26* ('He created man as image of God')? The two lines of interpretation start with a) the position of Irenaeus and Tertullian on the one hand, and b) the position of Origen on the other hand. The structure found by Cantalamessa is the following:<sup>3</sup>

From Paul there are two lines: the first with Irenaeus and Tertullian followed by Marcellus of Ancyra, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Nestorius, the second after Origen splitting up in two lines, a) Arius and Asterius, b) Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Hilary of Poitiers, John Chrysostom.

<sup>1</sup> R. Cantalamessa, 'Cristo « immagine di Dio ». Le tradizioni patristiche su Colossesi I,15', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 16 (1980), 181-212, 345-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 182.

<sup>3</sup> R. Cantalamessa, 'Cristo « immagine di Dio ». Le tradizioni patristiche su Colossesi I,15' (1980), 372.

In this contribution I would like to supplement the first line (after Nestorius) with Narsai, Babai († c. 628), ʿĪṣōʿyahb II (628-646), Timothy I (780-823). Before dealing with the characteristics of this scheme, a few words on the history of research, because Cantalamessa was not the only one studying the Patristic exegesis of *Col.* 1:15.

## 1. Research on Patristic exegesis on *Col.* 1:15

Grillmeier in his second edition of the English version 'Christ in Christian Tradition' vol. 1 (1975), 23-5 is dealing with the hymn of *Col.* 1:15-20 (first giving the basic exegetic results, and then hinting at the Arian controversy and Marcellus of Ancyra). But in the first German Version of vol. 1 (1979), 96-121, he included already a rather lengthy and dense chapter:<sup>4</sup> '3) Zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Kol 1,15-20' and presented Plato's use of *eikon*, Philo's reinterpretations, Irenaeus of Lyons, Gregory of Elvira, Clement of Alexandria joining the line of Philo, then Origen with his teaching of *eikon*, Alexander of Alexandria, the Arian controversy, Athanasius, Marcellus of Ancyra, Gregory of Nyssa, and finally Theodore of Mopsuestia, whose interpretation, according to Grillmeier,<sup>5</sup> is very remarkable since it is the most closest to the original meaning of the scripture, among all the patristic interpretations.

Already at the same time the article of Frederick McLeod was published, an expert and editor of Narsai, with the title 'Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai', a part of his thesis on Narsai in Rome from 1968.<sup>6</sup> Obviously independently from Cantalamessa, he found similar lines. Later, McLeod published studies on Theodore of Mopsuestia,<sup>7</sup> whom Narsai took as his own teacher and master.

Now to this has to be added the theological dissertation of Colette Pasquet on the interpretation of *Gen.* 1:26 (man as God's image) in the East Syriac tradition.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This is but a minor example of numerous cases in which the English version of vol. 1 of Christ in Christian Tradition of 1975 is in a lamentable way outdated – the German version of 1979 counts 829 pages, while the second English version is only 599 pages, not to speak of further additions and re-workings in the three following editions of the German version, in 1982, 1990 and 2004.

<sup>5</sup> A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* 1 (Freiburg i.B. a.o., 1990, 3rd edition), 117: 'sie ist sehr bemerkenswert, weil sie von allen patristischen Interpretationen bis hin zu seiner Zeit dem eigentliche Schriftsinn am nächsten kommt'.

<sup>6</sup> F.G. McLeod, *The Soteriology of Narsai* (Rome, Pont. Inst. Orientale, Diss., 1968); *id.*, 'Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai', *Theological Studies* 42 (1981), 458-68.

<sup>7</sup> These later books of F.G. McLeod are: *The image of God in the Antiochene tradition* (Washington, 1999); *The Roles of Christ's humanity in salvation. Insights from Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, 2005); *Theodore of Mopsuestia* (London, New York, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> C. Pasquet, *L'homme, image de Dieu, seigneur de l'univers. L'interprétation de Gn 1,26 dans la tradition syriaque orientale* (Lille, 2006) (Diss. theol.).

She analyzed the interpretation of *Gen. 1:26* in Ephrem, Narsai, the *Genesis Commentary of Diyarbakir* (prob. first half of 8th c.), Isho' bar Nun, the successor of Timothy I, Theodore bar Koni, Ishodad of Merv in the 9th century. She offers a scheme on *Col. 1:15* in the authors of her study.<sup>9</sup>

What is the result if the analysis of Cantalamessa is pursued – his original intention<sup>10</sup> to present a comprehensive study on the Patristic exegesis of *Col. 1:15* was not realized.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Cantalamessa's result

### 2.1. *The tradition of Irenaeus and of Antioch*

The position of Irenaeus can be characterized in the following way: The image of God is Christ the incarnate Word or Logos. Man was created according to the image of God, insofar as he was created according to the model of the incarnate Word. Therefore the true meaning of the image of God in man remains concealed till the coming of Christ and becomes manifest only in incarnation.

In which regard is the incarnate Word the model of man? According to Orbe,<sup>12</sup> the ideal man for Irenaeus was not the flesh of the Savior as such, but the flesh perfected and transformed by the spirit (in Christ). The model thus is the Resurrected Christ.

For Irenaeus every discourse on the image of God has to start with *Gen. 1:26-7*:

For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created, wherefore also he did easily lose the similitude. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, He confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> C. Pasquet, *L'homme, image de Dieu, seigneur de l'univers* (2006), 715-6.

<sup>10</sup> See A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* 1 (1990, 3rd edition), 103 n. 287, mentioning: 'C. bereitet eine umfassendere Studie zum Thema vor'.

<sup>11</sup> Probably because of his nomination as 'Preacher to the Papal Household' in 1980, when he also resigned as professor of ancient Christian history and as the director of the Department of Religious Sciences at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan.

<sup>12</sup> A. Orbe, *Antropología de San Ireneo* (Madrid, 1969), 104: The model according to which man was formed (see *Gen. 2:7*) is not simply the incarnated Word (nor the flesh or humanity of the Word) but the glorified flesh of the Word, the glorious humanity of Jesus. See Iren., *Adv. haer.* V 36,3.

<sup>13</sup> *Adv. haer.* V 16,2. See *Adv. haer.* IV 33,4: 'But who else is superior to, and more eminent than, that man who was formed after the likeness of God, except the Son of God, after whose image man was created?'

The Greek fragments (of this passage preserved in John of Damascus) have ὁμοίωσις where the Latin speaks of *similitudo dei*, and εἰκὼν for Latin *imago*.<sup>14</sup> Now, it is clear, that the Father of the Son is invisible, but visible is the son of the Father.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the son is an image of God insofar as in him the invisible face of the Father becomes visible. This visibility is connected exclusively with the incarnation.

The tradition of Irenaeus and of Antioch can be summarized as follows: This tradition interprets *imago Dei* of *Col. 1:15* in the light of the title ‘second Adam’ of *1Cor. 15:45ff*. Man (with soul and body) was created according the image of the incarnate God. The role of this image is to reveal the invisible Father.

This is in view of the *oikonomia*. Besides, a correlation is the moral aspect, the *imitatio Christi*, in order to recapitulate the image of God in man through imitation or assimilation to Christ in his passion in obedience to God.

## 2.2. The Alexandrian tradition

In contrast, the Alexandrians interpret *imago Dei* in view of the title Logos.

Here, Christ as God, or the pre-existent Word/Logos is the image of God. According to this image of the Logos/Word, man was created in *nous* and *anima*. This image of God is invisible, spiritual, and recognizable only for the spirit (*mens*). Here *theologia* (Trinitarian theology) is the focus more than *oikonomia* (Christology).

After the Arian controversy – because of the perfect equality of the Son with the Father in essence – this title ‘image of God’ is replaced by *homoousios*, and in the moral sense by the idea of contemplation and *homoiosis Theou*. The image transmits through nature in which is incarnated the image of God (that is, immortality) to man by participation.

*Imago dei* is, so the view of Cantalamessa, certainly Pauline, since it is used exactly in *2Cor. 4:4*. But *imago dei* has to be looked at together with the name ‘the new Adam’ of *1Cor. 15:45ff*. In both cases the first man of *Gen. 1:27* and the second man of *1Cor 15:45* are confronted: Adam is seen as the *typus futuri*.

<sup>14</sup> See John of Damascus, *Frg. 5* (Holl, 77); FC 8/5, ed. N. Brox, 134-46. On the difference between *similitudo* and *imago* see A. Orbe, *Antropología* (1969), 118-48; also Y. de Andia, *Homo vivens. Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l’homme selon Irénée de Lyon* (Paris, 1986), 68-70.

<sup>15</sup> *Adv. haer.* IV 6,6: ‘... through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable, was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father’.

### 3. Syriac authors

#### 3.1. Narsai († 502/3)

Narsai was ‘a devoted first-generation disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia’<sup>16</sup> and the head of the school of Edessa and founder and head of the School of Nisibis. In fact, Narsai<sup>17</sup> sees himself as a disciple of Theodore: ‘What I have learnt to stammer, I have learnt from him, and in contact with him, I acquired the manner to deal with the meditation of the (divine) words’.<sup>18</sup> The dependance from Theodore was studied by Gignoux.<sup>19</sup> McLeod believes that Narsai is propagating Theodore of Mopsuestia’s teaching on image.<sup>20</sup>

Narsai’s understanding of the verse *Gen. 1:27*, that ‘God created man in His image’ can be explained, following McLeod,<sup>21</sup> in this way: unlike the views of Origen, Cyril of Alexandria, and Gregory of Nyssa, who consider – each in their own way – man’s image to be the divine element in man’s rational soul, for Narsai ‘image’ refers ‘to the whole of man’s corporate nature of soul and body’. Explicitly, McLeod states: ‘Man’s dignity as God’s image plays a central role in Narsai’s thought.’

While Alexandrian tradition situates God’s image in the spiritual part of the human person,<sup>22</sup> in contrast, Narsai (*Hom. I* McLeod = *Hom. 66* Mingana) explains: The creator called man ‘his image’ but ‘in a metaphorical sense in relationship to His majesty, because everything that is made is far inferior to the (Divine) Essence’.<sup>23</sup> He sees man’s role as the bond of the universe: ‘His image He extolled with the name of image in order that in him He might bind all (creatures), so that (all) might acquire love for His knowledge by means of His image’.<sup>24</sup> ‘... in his fashioning, He revealed to creatures the power of His hidden (Divine Nature), (while), in his renewal, He showed them the wealth of His love’.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>16</sup> F.G. McLeod, ‘Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai’ (1981), 458.

<sup>17</sup> See *Histor. Nest. IX*: ed. A. Scher, PO 7, 114-5. Narsai is called tongue of the Orient, ‘langue d’Orient’.

<sup>18</sup> *Hom. XI* (on the Nestorian teachers): F. Martin, ‘Homélie de Narsès sur les trois docteurs nestoriens’, *JA* 14 (1899), 475,13f.; 15 (1900), 506.

<sup>19</sup> Ph. Gignoux, *Homélie de Narsai sur la création. Édition critique du texte syriaque. Introduction et traduction française*, PO 34 (1968), 470-95.

<sup>20</sup> F.G. McLeod, ‘Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai’ (1981), 458 n. 5.

<sup>21</sup> F.G. McLeod, *Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. Critical Edition of Syriac Text. English translation*, PO 40 (1979), Introduction, 23 n. 85.

<sup>22</sup> F.G. McLeod, ‘Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai’ (1981), 459.

<sup>23</sup> *Hom. I* 19-20: McLeod, PO 40, 39.

<sup>24</sup> *Hom. I* 23-4: McLeod, PO 40, 39.

<sup>25</sup> *Hom. II* 45: McLeod, PO 40, 73.

The soteriological framework of Narsai's Christology can be summarized in this way:<sup>26</sup>

God is transcendent by nature and cannot be known as he is, man not only reveals the divinity but serves as the way that other creatures can truly know and love their God. Thus, when Adam sins, he subverts his role as image and bond. To restore all to His knowledge and love and to fulfill the eternal salvific plan, God the Father sent His Word to dwell within the Second Adam and redeem the universe through his death. As such, the Second Adam is the true image and bond uniting all creation to its creator.

The concepts of man as God's image and as the bond uniting the material and spiritual worlds are therefore central. For both concepts Narsai is indebted to Theodore.

Man as bond of the universe: when creating man with a soul and a body, God made him a participant in the angelic and the non-rational worlds: by his body, man is related to all corporeal beings; and by his rational soul, he is akin to the angels. As such, man is the bond and keystone of unity within creation.<sup>27</sup> Christ then is the image and bond 'par excellence', 'the one in whom all of creation is recapitulated and united to the Divinity'.

Both concepts, bond of the universe and image of God, go together: 'As bond of the universe, man horizontally unites the spiritual and corporeal worlds and, as image, vertically unites both with God'.<sup>28</sup> Such idea is already present in Theodore of Mopsuestia, when in his commentary on *Genesis* he explains: "'He created him to the image of God" [*Gen.* 1:26], in order to indicate that all things are gathered in him (*sc.* the man) ... God needs nothing and is not visible, they [*sc.* creatures] offer the glory that is due to [God] by the attention they show this one who needs it and is visible to everyone'.<sup>29</sup>

In Narsai's interpretation of *Col.* 1:15 it has to be noted that Adam is not God's image in the primary sense. The Creator 'called the first Adam by the name of image in a secondary sense. The image in reality is the Messiah, the second Adam'.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the promises to Adam were realized in the Messiah.

<sup>26</sup> F.G. McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension*, PO 40 (1979), Introduction, 23.

<sup>27</sup> See *ibid.* 23 n. 86.

<sup>28</sup> F.G. McLeod, 'Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai' (1981), 461.

<sup>29</sup> E. Sachau, *Theodori Mopsuesteni Fragmenta syriaca* (Lipsiae, 1869), 15. Engl. Translation: F.G. McLeod, 'Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai' (1981), 461 n. 20.

<sup>30</sup> *Hom.* III 294-9; Gignoux, PO 34, 603. (*Hom.* 62 Mingana = *Hom.* III Gignoux). The whole section *Hom.* III 281-99, was given the headline 'Définition de l'image de Dieu' by Gignoux.

### 3.2. Babai the Great († c. 628)

In his great Christological opus *De unione* the systematic theologian of the Church of the East quoted *Col. 1:15* ten times explicitly.<sup>31</sup> The following chapters are involved: III 10 (87) a demonstration with clear examples when the union of Christ's divinity and humanity to one *parsopa* happened (82-99/88-123); III 11 (102) how to speak of God that he dwelt distinctly and unitedly in his man? The right of the First-born; IV 17 (135) the difference between *qnoma* and *parsopa*; VI 20 (166, 170, 178) the names of Christ, of His divinity, of His humanity and of the union and their significance; VI 21 (191, 197, 202) the significance of these and other names, like assumption, dwelling, temple, clothing, adhesion, union.

III 10 (87 / 94) Explaining the union of Christ's divinity and humanity to one *parsopa*, Babai wrote that 'already at the beginning of the formation of the "man of our Lord" took place his assumption, his union, his unction, his inhabitation, his connection with the God Logos, who took him to his *prosopon* and to his *united image* of invisibility in this adorable oikonomia', followed by a quotation of *Col. 1:15* as confirmation. – It is important and remarkable that Babai always makes clear that the image of God in Christ is – in contrast to Adam – the *united image* (translated by Vaschalde: *unitive*)! However, this is at the same time typical Antiochene.<sup>32</sup>

Babai underlines in III 11 (102 / 127), that for Christ alone it was distinctly said, 'He is the image of the invisible God', that he might show the greatness of his exaltation and his honor which is in one Lordship and worship.

In IV 17 (135 / 168) Babai quotes *Col. 1:15* as a confirmation when he states: The man of our Lord<sup>33</sup> has taken *prosopikōs* that which belongs to the Godhead according to nature, namely the name of filiation, of honor, of adoration.

It is no surprise that the title 'image of the invisible God' is mentioned three times in the chapter on names (VI 20) alone. The title 'image of the invisible God' is a name of the humanity of Christ, that is, of the manhood united with the Word of God. Here Babai explains clearly: 'For he is *in truth*, as we have said above, the Image and Likeness of the invisible God [*imago et forma Dei invisibilis*] in all that belongs to him. It is not non-unitedly, as Adam, the father

<sup>31</sup> Edition of A. Vaschalde, *Babai Magni Liber de unione* = CSCO 79, 80 (Syr. II 61) (Rome, Paris, 1915). In the following we cite the book, chapter, page in the Latin version CSCO 80, page in the Syriac text CSCO 79. Quotations of *Col. 1:15* on p. 87 (III 10), 102 (III 11), 113 (IV 14), 135 (IV 17), 166, 170, 178, 191, 197, 202, according to the register of Vaschalde in CSCO 80, with p. 113 and 178 citing a whole passage *Col. 1:12-5*.

<sup>32</sup> Already observed by R. Cantalamessa, 'Cristo « immagine di Dio ». Le tradizioni patristiche su Colossesi I,15' (1980), 377.

<sup>33</sup> For this expression, see L. Abramowski, '„Der Mensch unseres Herrn“. Ein Beitrag zur Markell-Frage', in Tinatin Khidesheli, Nestor Kavvadas (eds), *Bau und Schrift. Studien zur Archäologie und Literatur des antiken Christentums. FS Seeliger*, JAC.E 12 (Münster, 2015), 207-19.

of children, is named the image and likeness because he alone is the *bond of all creatures*, but thus: in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily [Col. 2:9].

For Babai it is clear that the statement, 'he is the Image of the invisible God', is said 'concerning his manhood unitedly' (VI 20, 166 / 206).

### 3.3. *Īšō'yahb II (catholicos 628-646)*

Catholicos Īšō'yahb II (628-646) in his Christological letter explicitly quotes Col. 1:15.<sup>34</sup> The letter was written before 628, when he was still bishop of Balad in Bet 'Arbāyé, if we follow the dating of the editor Louis Sako,<sup>35</sup> and was addressed to a monk Abraham of Bet Mādāyé, who passed by a monastery near Mossul.

First, Īšō'yahb explained the classical Christological teaching of the East Syrians (79): 'The eternal *qnoma* of God Word united with the *qnoma* of our humanity, but not in the manner that it was formed first and then united with it, but so that at the same time its assumption, and formation, and union were realized'. Then he rejects other misunderstandings (80): the aim of the assumption was not to perfect his nature and his *qnoma*, but to reveal himself. By the assumption the human nature was not destroyed, but rescued and raised.

What was the motif for God the Word to be clothed (*lbaš*) in our body and to unite to our nature? In the answer to this question, the author turns to the 'image' (82): the motif was to pay the debt of Adam, to restore its original image and to install man as heir of the glory which he had lost by the transgression of the commandment.

Subsequently, the specific teaching of the East Syrians is deployed: The mystery of the Trinity was hidden from the creatures. By no creature it could be disclosed. The divine image, imprinted in our nature, had become contemptible by the transgression of the commandment (85). Instead that this image (that is, man) would have been adored by creatures as image of dominion (*mārūta*), it was voluntarily enslaved, and worshipped even creatures (86). But in future, the prototype is offered a perfect adoration by his image (89). Now it is a perfect and incorruptible image in which his prototype dwells in a definite indwelling (92).

As confirmation Īšō'yahb then quotes Col. 1:15 that our Lord Christ is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of all creation (94). Finally he concludes: So it is important to preserve in Christ nature and *qnoma* of his divinity without alteration or change for God's revelation and knowledge.

<sup>34</sup> Critical edition by Louis R.M. Sako, *Lettre christologique du patriarche syro-oriental Isō'yahb de Gdālā (628-646)* (Rome, 1983), fol. 38r, § 94, p. 151. In the following we give the number of the §.

<sup>35</sup> Sako, *Lettre*, 94-5.

Likewise, one must preserve in him the nature of his humanity without mixing or blending (96).

Thus the citation of *Col. 1:15* is used within a traditional East Syriac explanation of the history of salvation.

#### 3.4. *Timothy I the Great (780-823)*

In Braun's edition of Timothy's letters, we find only in ep. 36 ad Nasr II the statement that "he is image of the invisible God" is not the same as "Firstborn of all creatures".<sup>36</sup>

In his letter to the monks of Mar Maron, Timothy quotes *Col. 1:15* explicitly at a prominent stage, at the end of his long part on Christology,<sup>37</sup> when he tries to summarize it. Timothy quotes both parts of *Col. 1:15*, he is image of the invisible God and Firstborn of all creatures:

*Et verbum etiam est tamquam carnis hypostasis, non per meram operationem et sanctificationem sicut apud prophetas, sed per hypostasim propriam et singularem quam dixi, et per unam personam infixam in utroque immobiliter, in verbo naturaliter, tamquam consubstantiale patri, in carne sua unitive, tamquam imago naturalem absconsionis eius qui est 'imago dei invisibilis, primogenitus omnium creaturarum' (Col. 1:15).*

In conclusion, we see that at least at the beginning of the seventh century, *Col. 1:15* is a standard citation in explanations of the Christological teaching in the East Syriac tradition. This Christological title is applied to the united humanity of Christ.

<sup>36</sup> Braun, CSCO 31 (II 67), 173.

<sup>37</sup> Critical edition by Raphaël J. Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I* (Città del Vaticano, 1956), 106 (syr. 689).



# Automated Syriac Script Charts

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## ABSTRACT

After assembling a database of over 71,000 Syriac letters, a digital humanities team has developed a system of automated script charts. This system allows a user to create customized charts showing the chronological development of the Syriac script. Currently containing 65% and soon to have over 95% of early, securely dated Syriac manuscripts in its database, this digital humanities project will help human paleographers more accurately date ancient manuscripts. The project's long term goal is to provide similar resources in other languages as well.

For the last four years a digital humanities team has been using recent advances in digital handwriting analysis to help match Syriac manuscripts written by the same scribe. It envisions the final product as follows: Using a simple web interface a scholar can upload a facsimile copy of a few manuscript pages. After the user helped it identify a few letters, the computer would compare the letter forms in the test document with the manuscripts in its database. It would then list those documents whose handwriting was closest to the scribe of the test manuscript and note any that might be written by the same scribe. It would also compare the test manuscript to those with dated colophons to help establish a likely composition date. With the help of an Andrew Mellon grant, the team created a working prototype of this system that is extremely successful in matching Syriac scribal hands. This is not, however, the focus of this particular paper. Rather, this paper focuses on a spin off from this main digital paleography project which should be the first publically accessible product to come from this collaboration.

As part of the larger project, a team of assistants has uploaded pages from 250 Syriac manuscripts and, using a Java based interface, has identified for the computer over 71,000 Syriac letters. This dataset currently includes 65% and will soon have just under 95% of all known Syriac manuscripts securely dated to before the eleventh century.<sup>1</sup> Having the world's largest database of Syriac

<sup>1</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, 'A Tentative Checklist of Dated Syriac Manuscripts up to 1300', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 15.1 (Winter, 2012), np.

letters allows the team to rapidly develop specific paleographic resources, one of which – dynamic script charting – is the focus of this paper.

Currently to date a Syriac manuscript one consults Hatch's 1946 *Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts*.<sup>2</sup> Hatch's *Album*, however, only shows whole manuscript pages. But usually, one does not want to compare whole manuscript pages but individual letters. Heaven help one align an olaph in a test manuscript with the image in Hatch, repeat this for dozens of pages, and then try to remember those similarities as one proceeds to the other 21 Syriac letters. Now, if one is working with Armenian manuscripts, one has better luck. For, in this case, the most recent paleography book compiles the letters into a giant chronological chart.<sup>3</sup> But what if a scholar wants to only examine a given script style? What if the researcher wishes to limit the search chronologically, geographically, or wants to correlate the development of one letter form with another? One simply cannot do that with a one-size-fits-all chart.

Yet this digital humanities project already has tens of thousands of individual letter images from dated manuscripts. With this, it is amazingly simple for the computer to display a chart according to custom specifications. One can limit the chart to a given chronological range, script, or dozens of other parameters. The result is a customizable, automatically generated script chart. Such a chart not only allows one to more easily compare a test document to those of known dates, it also allows one to better examine the overall development of Syriac scripts.

In addition to a better visualization of Syriac script, the project's script charts have two further advantages over those created by non-digital means. First, as part of the larger digital paleography project, the system takes all examples in its database of a given letter, say five thousand olaphs, and produces a weighted mean. This creates a standard against which all other olaphs can be quantified in terms of their direction and distance from the 'average' olaph. Right now the system does the same thing with each letter in the automatically generated script charts. That is, the computer first takes all its examples of a letter from a given scribe, say 15 olaphs from the scribe of *British Library Additional 12,150*, combines these to find that particular scribe's average olaph, and then finds an example of an actual olaph from *BL. Add. 12,150* that's closest to that average so that the computer displays in the chart a letter example which is especially representative of that particular scribe's handwriting.

The second feature that is currently being developed is to have the computer alert the user to those letter forms that vary the most during the specific time period and script style the user is interested in. So, for example, a yod is a yod is a yod regardless of when a document was written. There is so little scribal

<sup>2</sup> William Henry Paine Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston, 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Michael E. Stone, Dickran Kouymjian and Henning Lehmann, *Album of Armenian Paleography* (Aarhus, 2002).

variation that a paleographer generally will find yods unhelpful when trying to date a document. But what letters vary the most at a given time is often less obvious. For example, among 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans it turns out that the letter that varies the most is a capital G followed by a lower case b and in third place an upper case N.<sup>4</sup> Historians simply do not know what letters varied most in fifth- through seventh-century Estrangelo or among writers of tenth- through thirteenth-century Serto. But this digital system should soon be able to answer just those sort of questions and help the human paleographer focus on those letters most important for their particular inquiry.

As part of a much larger digital humanities project, dynamic script charting is particularly appealing because there are no technical hurdles to overcome; it simply capitalizes on the project's extensive script database. Very soon one will be able to automatically create customizable, early Syriac script charts reflecting 95% of all known securely dated manuscripts. This tool also illustrates perhaps the most important feature of the larger project, its exportability from Syriac into other language groups. Although it would require a new database, in the case of dynamic script charting, with just a few hours of coding the interface could be customized for other languages such as Latin, Greek, and Arabic. Similarly, the goal of the overall project is to produce a digital tool that could be extended into other languages as well.

<sup>4</sup> Bin Zhang, Sargur N. Srihari and Sangjik Lee, 'Individuality of Handwritten Characters', *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition* (2003), 1089.



# Cataloguing the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Monastery of the Syrians: A Preliminary Report

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## ABSTRACT

In December 2013, I inaugurated a project to catalogue the Coptic and Arabic manuscripts at the Monastery of the Syrians in Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt. As of March 2016, my team and I had produced entries for 230 out of approximately 900 manuscripts. The purpose of this article is to present a preliminary report on our findings. First, I will summarize the contents of the collection, classified by the monastery into eight divisions: biblical texts (*kutub muqaddasah*), commentaries (*tafāsīr*), church canons (*qawānīn*), theology (*lāhūt*), ascetic literature (*nusukiyāt*), saints' lives and sermons (*mayāmīr*), liturgy (*tuqūs*) and Coptic language (*luḡḡah qibṭīyah*). Second, I will introduce our cataloguing method and present a case study: a thirteenth-century Coptic-Arabic manuscript containing the *Psalms*, assorted biblical and liturgical prayers, and the early Christian correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar. This manuscript is important for historical, textual, and codicological reasons. First, it was funded in Cairo by the well-known medieval literary patron al-Amjad Ibn al-'Assāl and produced in 1255 CE by his personal scribe Gabriel, who later became Coptic Pope Gabriel III (fl. 1268-1271). Second, its bilingual text of the Jesus-Abgar correspondence preserves the second oldest extant copy of that work in Arabic. Third, in the late eighteenth century, the manuscript was divided, with the *Psalms* bound in one volume (classified under biblical texts as MS 11) and the rest relegated to a second volume (classified under liturgical texts as MS 383). Our cataloguing work has allowed us to reunite the two halves codicologically and reconstruct their shared history.

## Introduction

In 2013, as an extension of my work as executive director of the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project (2006 to present), I initiated a complementary project to catalogue the Coptic and Arabic manuscripts at the Monastery of the Syrians (Dayr al-Suryān) in Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt. Funded and sponsored by the Simpson Endowment at Yale, this new project has drawn on the collaboration of seven other text experts and one photographer from the United States, Germany, Australia, and Egypt. Through March 2016, my team and

I completed six on-site seasons: we had logged approximately 1700 person-hours in the library and produced catalogue entries for 230 out of the almost 900 manuscripts in the Coptic and Arabic collections. This work has been facilitated by the kind hospitality of Bishop Mattā'us the abbot of the monastery, Father Bigoul the head librarian, and Father Azer (Lazarus) the deputy librarian, as well as by the rest of the monks and staff at the Monastery of the Syrians.

The purpose of this article is to present a preliminary report on our findings. First, I will summarize the contents of the collection. Second, I will introduce our cataloguing method and present a case study focusing on a thirteenth-century Coptic-Arabic manuscript containing the Psalms and assorted other materials. Finally, in my conclusion, I will touch briefly on our plans for the future, including possible plans to digitize the collection.

### The Contents of the Collection

The contents of the collection were previously classified by the monastery into eight genre subdivisions: biblical texts (*kutub muqaddasah*), commentaries (*tafāsīr*), church canons (*qawānīn*), theology (*lāhūt*), ascetic literature (*nusukīyāt*), saints' lives and sermons (*mayāmīr*), liturgy (*tuqūs*), and Coptic language (*lughah qibṭīyah*). In the appendix, I provide a general distribution of these categories according to the library's current classification system, including a large section of miscellaneous texts. Due to the large number of manuscripts involved, the published catalogue itself will comprise multiple volumes and will involve a new numbering system: each manuscript will be registered according to number (correlated with genre grouping) as well as by language. Most of the manuscripts in the miscellaneous section, as well as a smaller number of manuscripts in the other sections, will need to be reassigned as a result of our clarification of their contents.

At present, there are plans to publish the catalogue in as many as six volumes in the Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia series (Peeters Press). Volume One will contain sections on Coptic and Arabic biblical texts (*al-kutub al-muqaddasah*), and Coptic language resources such as grammars and lexica (*al-lughah al-qibṭīyah*). Catalogue entries for MSS 1-61 and 667-673 were completed and their contents revised and prepared for final formatting, proofreading, and copyediting. The next step will be the writing of an introduction on the history of the monastic library, its contents, and our cataloguing methodology.

Volume Two will catalogue Arabic commentaries (*tafāsīr*), church canons (*qawānīn*), and theology (*lāhūt*, *i.e.* the Christian Arabic theological heritage). Entries for MSS 62-99, 100-111b, and 112-152 were completed and have undergone revision in preparation for publication as well.

Volumes Three and Four will document ascetic treatises (*nusukīyāt*) and the Arabic genre of *mayāmīr*, which consists of a mix of sermons, saints' lives, and monastic sayings collections. Toward the end of our June 2015 season we began cataloguing the ascetic treatises, and that work continued in March 2016. At this stage, we have completed only a few sample entries for the *mayāmīr*.

Volumes Five and Six will be dedicated to the Coptic and Coptic-Arabic liturgical texts (*tuqūs*), quite an undertaking given the vast number of such manuscripts preserved in the collection. Team members Youhanna Nessim Youssef and Mary Farag have begun making inroads into this corpus, starting with the Psalmodias and Euchologia.<sup>1</sup>

The Coptic (and bilingual Coptic-Arabic) materials in the collection are restricted to the manuscripts containing biblical, linguistic, and liturgical texts. The plan for publication outlined above would mean that the Coptic language materials will be concentrated principally in volumes one, five, and six.

### Cataloguing Methodology and a Case Study

Over our first six seasons, we established a clear and consistent set of methods with regard to criteria for inclusion and for the recording of manuscript contents. First, we decided not to catalogue any manuscripts dated 1900 or later. This means that the Coptic and Arabic materials catalogued will range in date from *circa* the ninth or tenth century CE to the end of the nineteenth century. Second, we developed a standard template for the recording of data. This template includes nine fields of entry. From top to bottom, these are:

- 1) MS number(s) and genre
- 2) Summary of contents
- 3) Date, language, script, and material
- 4) Scribe, patron/owner, restorer
- 5) Colophons, endowments, tables of contents
- 6) Pages and numbering
- 7) Dimensions, area of writing, lines per page
- 8) Cover and condition of MS
- 9) Other observations on scribal practice or readers' insertions

To illustrate how this works in practice, let me turn to a case study. My focus here will be a thirteenth-century Coptic-Arabic manuscript containing the *Psalms*. Currently identified as MS 11, this copy of the *Psalms* is important for historical, textual, and codicological reasons. First, it is one of the earliest

<sup>1</sup> Plans are also underway to sponsor a smaller, supplemental catalogue of the Ethiopic manuscripts at Dayr al-Suryān. At current count, these manuscripts total sixteen in number (four biblical texts, one saint's life, and eleven liturgical volumes).

Coptic manuscripts in the collection, copied by a monk named Ghubrīyāl (Gabriel) on 1 Abīb, AM 971, or 1255 CE. It was restored (re-bound) near the end of the eighteenth century, in the year 1794 or 1795 by a priest named Yūḥannā (John), one of the monks at the Monastery of the Syrians. What makes this volume especially interesting is that another manuscript in the collection (MS 383) was also copied by a scribe who identifies himself as ‘Gabriel the monk’ (*Ghubriyāl al-rāhib*), and was restored and re-bound by a monk from the monastery named John (*Yuḥannā*). In each of these two manuscripts, the scribe has marked the beginning of each ten-leaf quire with a Greek number, and when we examined the sequence of those quire numbers, it quickly became clear that these two manuscripts were originally two parts of a single manuscript, written by Gabriel the scribe, but divided and re-bound in two separate volumes (with almost identical leather covers) during John’s eighteenth-century restoration of the text. As originally organized, the *Psalms* were followed in sequence by the contents of MS 383, which contains twelve odes or prayers of biblical prophets and kings, four prayers associated with monastic church fathers from Syria (Ephrem, Simeon Stylites, Isaac of Nineveh, and Ephrem again), a series of liturgical prayers associated with different hours and occasions, a bilingual version of the apocryphal correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar, and finally eight prayers attributed to Severus of Antioch. Here we see how biblical, apocryphal, and liturgical texts were juxtaposed in a typical medieval Coptic manuscript.

As to historical importance, however, two details are worthy of special note. First, the correspondence between Jesus and Abgar has Coptic and Arabic versions aligned in parallel columns. As it turns out, the Arabic version of this text is the second oldest extant copy of that work in the language, behind only a copy preserved at Mount Sinai, probably dated to the late twelfth century CE (although this dating is not without considerable complication).<sup>2</sup> The only two current published Arabic editions of the Jesus-Abgar correspondence are based on a seventeenth-century manuscript in the Vatican and an undated ‘modern’

<sup>2</sup> Sin. Ar. 45, 5 (late twelfth century CE). The original catalogue of Arabic manuscripts listed the date as 1233 CE (*Stud. Sin.* III, 85), but the introduction to a later volume revised this estimate and moved the date more than four centuries earlier to 799 CE (AH 183) on the basis of a colophon following another work in the same manuscript. Graf (*GCAL* I, 238-9, note 4), however, notes that this early date does not reflect the dating of the manuscript as a whole. The colophon in question was probably associated only with that particular work, which was bound together with later materials and did not belong to the scribe or editor responsible for the final product. Based on another facsimile of the manuscript (*Stud. Sin.* XII, Taf. XI, p. 21), Graf (*GCAL* I, 239, note 4) settles on 1175 CE as the probable date, a figure that he calculated on the basis of a chronological note in the text indicating that 6683 ‘years of the world’ had passed when the note was written (the Byzantine *anno mundi* 6683 corresponds to 1175 CE). But even if this note is determined to be decisive on this question, the specific date of 1175 CE should be taken with a grain of salt since there was some variation in medieval scribal calculations. Nonetheless, the late twelfth century is probably a safe bet.

manuscript in the Library of Columbia College.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the copy from the Monastery of the Syrians could and should play an important role for our understanding of the early transmission of the text in Arabic.

Second, the scribe Gabriel is in fact a very important figure in the history of medieval Coptic Christianity. This importance can be measured in two ways, in terms of his scribal activity and his larger career. The colophon on the recto of folio 207 in the second volume of the manuscript (MS 383) not only provides the date according to both the Coptic and Islamic calendars (AM 971; AH 653; = 1255 CE), it also communicates the fact that Gabriel copied the text in the house of al-Amjad Ibn al-‘Assāl, and that al-Amjad funded the endeavour. Now, al-Amjad was part of a well-known thirteenth-century Cairene family of theologians, scribes, and literary patrons. He and his brothers, known collectively the ‘sons of al-‘Assāl’ (in Arabic, *Awlād al-‘Assāl*) played an instrumental role in the Christian Arabic ‘Golden Age’ of the thirteenth century – composing original works, funding scribal activity, and personally overseeing a healthy commerce and transfer of manuscripts between Cairo and Damascus. The fact that Gabriel was the personal scribe of al-Amjad places him at the center of this commerce, and this two-part manuscript containing the Psalms and other works dated to 1255 CE gives us a vivid glimpse into the scribal activity that served as the engine of this literary and cultural renaissance. By the time he produced his manuscript of the *Psalms*, Gabriel had been active as a scribe for decades. Indeed, the library at the Monastery of the Syrians contains another manuscript from his pen: it is a copy of *The Noetic Paradise* (*al-Firdaws al-‘aqlī*) dated twenty years earlier to 1235 CE.<sup>4</sup> Finally, we know that Gabriel’s career extended for over a decade and a half after he produced this copy of the *Psalms*. But Gabriel would not end his career as a scribe. Thirteen years after completing this manuscript, he would go on to become Pope Gabriel III, the seventy-seventh Alexandrian patriarch, serving in office for four years, from 1268 to 1271.<sup>5</sup> In this text, then, we have the personal signature of this future pope, in both Coptic and Arabic script.

<sup>3</sup> Vat. Ar. 51, ff. 57r-58v: ed. L.-J. Tixeront, *Les origines de l’Église d’Édesse et la légende d’Abgar. Étude critique suivie de deux textes orientaux inédits* (Paris, 1888), 197-9 (text), 200-1 (French trans.). MS in the Library of Columbia College: ed. R.J.H. Gottheil, ‘An Arabic Version of the Abgar-Legend’, *Hebraica* 7 (1890/1891), 268-77 (270-5 text; 275-7 English trans.). In the Columbia College manuscript, the end of the text is missing. See also Brit. Mus. Or. 4402 ff. 55v-56r (1846 CE): ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, ‘*Gharshunitica* – Abgar and Jesus’ Letters in the Arabic Version of Michael the Syrian’s Chronicle (Brit. Mus. Or. 4402 ff. 55<sup>v</sup>–56<sup>r</sup>)’, in *Sonderdruck aus Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Bruns and H.O. Luthé (Wiesbaden, 2013), 329-45 (331-2 Garshuni text; 332-3 English trans.; 344 Syriac text; 345 English trans.).

<sup>4</sup> Dayr al-Suryān MS 215 (dated 1235 CE). This manuscript is formerly listed under catalogue numbers 56/11-KΔ and Lähūt 48 (see Graf, *GCAL* I, 413-4).

<sup>5</sup> On Gabriel as pope, see Mark N. Swanson, *The Coptic Papacy in Islamic Egypt, 641–1517* (Cairo and New York, 2010), 97-100. According to Swanson’s reading of the historical accounts

## Conclusion

Gabriel's manuscript is just the tip of the iceberg, only one example from the hundreds of volumes comprising the full collection at Dayr al-Suryān. Given the task at hand, we expect that our cataloguing efforts will continue over the coming decade. My team's work follows upon the immense contributions of Lucas Van Rompay and Sebastian Brock, whose labors on site from 2000 to 2007 resulted in the publication of a *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian* (2014).<sup>6</sup> Our work also follows upon the indispensable efforts of Elizabeth Sobczynski and the Levantine Foundation (UK), who sponsored the construction of a new, state-of-the-art library and conservation laboratory (inaugurated at the monastery in 2013) and who oversee ongoing physical conservation of threatened manuscripts in the collection. In addition to our own cataloguing work, another important step will be a large-scale digitization effort.<sup>7</sup> To this end, preliminary consultations involving experts from Yale and the Biblioteca Alexandrina took place at the university and at the monastery in April and June, 2015. It is my hope that this extraordinary manuscript collection will begin to be made available to researchers online sometime in the not-too-distant future.

(see p. 200, note 16), Gabriel was deposed as pope in 1271 but remained alive and active in ascetic and pastoral endeavors until 1274.

<sup>6</sup> Sebastian P. Brock and Lucas Van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 227 (Leuven, 2014). The Syriac collection includes 48 manuscripts and around 250 small fragments.

<sup>7</sup> On the possibilities and complications related to this digitization effort, see Stephen J. Davis, 'Manuscripts, Monks, and *Mufattishīn*: Digital Access and Concerns of Cultural Heritage in the Yale Monastic Archaeology Project', in C. Clivaz, D. Hamidović and S. Savant (eds), *Digital Biblical Studies 2: Digital Humanities, Epistemology and Visualization* (Leiden, forthcoming).

APPENDIX (with information updated as of March 2016)

**1. Seasons and Team Members**

**December 2013 (1 week)**

Stephen J. Davis, Yale University (1wk)

**March 2014 (3 weeks)**

Stephen J. Davis (3wks)

Mark N. Swanson, Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago (3wks)

Samuel Moawad, University of Münster (1wk)

Thomas Schmidt, Ph.D. student, Yale University (2wks)

Ramy Nair Marcos, M.A.R. graduate, Yale University (1wk)

**December 2014–January 2015 (3.5 weeks)**

Stephen J. Davis (2wks)

Mark N. Swanson (2wks)

C. J. Uy, Ph.D. student, Stanford University (2 wks)

Youhanna Nessim Youssef, Australian Catholic University (1.5wks)

**March 2015 (1.5 weeks)**

Stephen J. Davis (1.5wks)

**June 2015 (2 weeks)**

Stephen J. Davis (2wks)

Mark N. Swanson (2wks)

Youhanna Nessim Youssef (2wks)

Rofy Samuel Rozfy (photographer) (1wk)

**February–March 2016 (2 weeks)**

Stephen J. Davis (1wk)

Mary Farag, Ph.D. student, Yale University (1wk)

Youhanna Nessim Youssef (2wks)

**2. Contents of the Collection (according to the current library organization)**

- Biblical Texts (*kutub muqaddasah*), 1-61, Coptic and Arabic (completed by Davis)
- Commentaries (*tafāsīr*), 62-99, Arabic (completed by Davis, Schmidt, Marcos, and Uy)
- Canons (*qawānīn*), 100-111b, Arabic (completed by Moawad and Davis)
- Theology (*lāhūt*), 112-152, Arabic (completed by Swanson and Davis)
- Ascetic Literature (*nusukīyāt*), 197-250, Arabic (started by Davis and Swanson)
- Saints' Lives and Sermons (*mayāmir*), 251-321, Arabic (started by Davis)
- Liturgy (*tuqūs*), 322-666, Coptic and Arabic (started by Youssef, Farag and Davis)
- Coptic Language (*lughah qibḥiyah*), 667-673, Coptic and Arabic (completed by Davis)
- Miscellaneous Texts, 674-863 (and counting), Arabic (started by Davis)

**3. Tentative Plans for Publication (6 volumes)**

Volume 1: Biblical Texts, with Coptic Grammars and Lexica

Volume 2: Commentaries, Canons, and Theology

Volumes 3 and 4: Ascetic Treatises, Sermons, and Saints' Lives

Volumes 5 and 6: Liturgical Texts



# A Newly Attributed Coptic *Encomium* on Saint Stephen (BHO 1093)<sup>1</sup>

Damien LABADIE, EPHE, Paris, France

## ABSTRACT

The Coptic text recorded under the inventory number 1093 in the Bollandists' *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* (henceforth BHO 1093) has never received much scholarly attention. Preserved in five fragmentary Coptic manuscripts, this text is an anonymous *encomium* in honor of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Philological reconstruction enables us to ascribe this text to the bishop Theodosius of Jerusalem, although its authenticity remains highly doubtful. A careful analysis of its contents reveals that this sermon focuses on a well-known pilgrim site, the *diakonikon* (sacristy) of the Holy Sion Church in Jerusalem, where Stephen's relics were first deposited after their translation from the village of Kaphar Gamala in 415. The author praises the *diakonikon* as a holy *martyrium* where numerous miracles happen. Recounting at length two of those miracles, the author then describes a vision during which he saw a heavenly liturgy led by Stephen the archdeacon and the apostle John. This text appears to be without any parallel in Patristic literature and, though late, is a unique witness to the devotional practices performed in the *diakonikon*. I will focus on philological issues, particularly on the editing of the Coptic manuscripts, and on historical topics related to late Antique sanctuaries and holy sites in Jerusalem.

Among the Coptic texts devoted to Stephen,<sup>2</sup> the first Christian martyr and the central figure of chapters six and seven of the biblical *Acts of the Apostles*, stands

<sup>1</sup> I am really indebted to Alin Suciu and Nathalie Bosson for their invaluable help in this dossier. Alin Suciu is credited for relating the Berlin Staatsbibliothek 1614 bis (14, 3) manuscript to BHO 1093; I thank him for having pointed out to me this newly found fragment. I heartily thank Nathalie Bosson for her most precious help in establishing the edition of the Coptic text. I also thank Muriel Debié for her close reading of my paper and her useful suggestions. As we finished writing this article for the next volume of the *Studia Patristica*, we learnt that Alin Suciu was about to publish an article on the very same text in the *Analecta Bollandiana*: Alin Suciu, 'The Question of the Authorship of the *Historia Stephani protomartyris* (BHO 1093; CANT 302; *Clavis coptica* 0491): Theodosius of Jerusalem, Abba Isaiah, the monk Romanus and Peter the Iberian', *Analecta Bollandiana* 134 (2016), 279-82. Unfortunately, I could not have access to a copy of this article in due time.

<sup>2</sup> Apart from BHO 1093, we know a Coptic *Vita* (BHO 1086), edited and translated by Yassa 'Abd Al-Massih, 'A Coptic Apocryphon of Saint Stephen the Archdeacon', *Le Muséon* 70 (1957), 329-47 and an unedited fragment of a Coptic translation of Gregory of Nyssa's *Encomium in s.*

a Sahidic Coptic *encomium* which the Bollandists list as number 1093 in their *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*.<sup>3</sup> This text is preserved in five different manuscripts, belonging originally to one and only codex, which can be dated back to the tenth century.<sup>4</sup> The text was partly edited by Henri Munier on the basis of a manuscript from Cairo (CGC 9234)<sup>5</sup> and by Ignazio Guidi from a manuscript belonging to the Vatican library (Vat. Borgia Cop. 109, cassetta XXV, fasc. 123).<sup>6</sup> Adding three other manuscripts, which were discovered by Coptologists, I am currently preparing a complete new edition and translation of this text.

Here is a list of the manuscript witnesses, reshuffled according to the Coptic page numbers and the narrative sequence of the text:

- 1) pp. ? / ? : Paris Bibl. Nat. Copte 131<sup>7</sup> (20)<sup>7</sup>; Berlin Staatsbibliothek 1614 bis (14, 3)<sup>8</sup>
- 2) pp. 55-8: Cairo CGC 9234, fol. 2 and 3 (ed. H. Munier 1916, 32-5)
- 3) pp. 61 / 62: Vat. Borgia Copto 109 (Zoega CXXIII), fol. 1 (ed. I. Guidi 1887, 50-1)
- 4) pp. [63 / 64]: Cairo CGC 9234, fol. 1 (ed. H. Munier 1916, 31-2)
- 5) pp. 65 / 66: Vat. Borgia Copto 109 (Zoega CXXIII), fol. 2 (ed. I. Guidi 1887, 51-2)
- 6) pp. ? / ? : Cairo CGC 9234, fol. 4 (ed. H. Munier 1916, 36)
- 7) pp. 95 / 96: Vienna Papyrussammlung K 9492<sup>9</sup>

*Stephanum protomartyrem I* (CPG 3186); see Enzo Lucchesi, 'Un fragment sahidique du premier panégyrique d'Étienne le protomartyr par Grégoire de Nysse', *Analecta Bollandiana* 124 (2006), 11-3.

<sup>3</sup> Socii Bollandiani, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* (Brussels, 1910), 239. This text is also designated as *Clavis Apocrypha Novi Testamenti* 302 and *Clavis Coptica* 0491.

<sup>4</sup> As for the dating of the manuscript, see Alin Suci, 'À propos de la datation du manuscrit contenant le Grand Euchologe du Monastère Blanc', *VC* 65 (2011), 189-98.

<sup>5</sup> Henri Munier, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire. Manuscrits coptes* (Cairo, 1916), 30-5.

<sup>6</sup> Ignazio Guidi, 'Frammenti Copti', *Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei, ser. 4, Rendiconti III* (1887, 1<sup>st</sup> semestre), 50-2. The manuscript is listed under number 123 in Zoega's catalogue; see Jürgen Zoega, *Catalogus codicum Copticorum manu scriptorum qui Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur* (Rome, 1810), 228.

<sup>7</sup> Jürgen Horn was the first to relate the Paris fragment to BHO 1093. See Jürgen Horn, 'Der erste Märtyrer. Zu einem Topos der koptischen Märtyrerliteratur (mit zwei Anhängen)', in Guntram Koch (ed.), *Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst und Kultur des Orients* (Wiesbaden, 1982), 31-55, especially 53; see Émile Porcher, 'Analyse des manuscrits coptes 131<sup>1-8</sup> de la Bibliothèque nationale avec indications des textes bibliques (suite et fin)', *Revue d'égyptologie* 2 (1936), 65-123, especially 99 for a short description of this folio.

<sup>8</sup> It was partly edited by Paola Buzi in Alessandro Bausi (ed.), *Coptic manuscripts 7: The manuscripts of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, part 4: Homiletic and liturgical manuscripts from the White Monastery with two documents from Thebes and two Old-Nubian manuscripts* (Stuttgart, 2014), 179.

<sup>9</sup> See Enzo Lucchesi, 'À propos d'un encomion copte sur Étienne le protomartyr (BHO 1093)', *Analecta Bollandiana* 101 (1983), 421-2.

I also decided to edit another small fragment, the British Library Ms Oriental 6954 (51), belonging to the same codex but containing, most probably, a few lines of another text.<sup>10</sup> According to the page numbers ([3] / 4), this text appears before BHO 1093 in the manuscript. This small fragment seems to describe the discovery of Stephen's relics, but this remains highly hypothetical.

The text is a laudatory sermon, an *encomium*,<sup>11</sup> which narrates a series of miracles that happened in Stephen's sanctuary, though we do not know precisely what sanctuary it might be. We know for sure, according to the first fragmentary lines of the text, that its author is a bishop of Jerusalem. To put it in a nutshell, the content of BHO 1093 is as follows:

- a) Title and prologue
- b) First miracle story (robbery from a *diakonikon*, or sacristy)
- c) Second miracle story (healing of a rich citizen from Gaza)
- d) Vision of a heavenly liturgy
- e) The miracle at the pool of Bethesda (see *John* 5:1-9)
- f) Theophanies in the Old Testament

Following the prologue, there is a first miracle story telling the robbery of precious liturgical vessels from the *diakonikon* (διακονικόν), which is the sacristy or vestry, of Stephen's sanctuary. The robber is then arrested by Stephen, who had appeared to him in the guise of a soldier. Stephen punishes the robber, who then confesses to his sins and converts to Christianity. A second and fragmentary miracle story tells of the healing of a rich citizen of Gaza, thanks to the precious and holy oil that he obtained from Stephen's sanctuary. We are then told about a vision of a certain Isaiah, abbot of the monastery of Saint Romanos; this vision describes a heavenly liturgy in which Stephen and the apostle John celebrate the Eucharist. Then, in a fragmentary portion of the Cairo manuscript, the narrator draws a comparison between Jesus' miraculous healing at the pool of Bethesda in the *Gospel of John* and Stephen's healing powers. Finally, the narrator recalls the theophanies of the Old Testament and declares that Stephen saw God truly, in truth (*h<sup>e</sup>n oume* in Coptic)<sup>12</sup> whereas prophets in the Old Testament did not behold God face to face but saw him only as a blazing fire, a storm or a pillar of cloud.

Due to the very fragmentary state of the manuscripts, only a small part of this sermon has been preserved. Yet this text contains interesting historical evidence. According to the narrator, this sermon was delivered during 'a great feast' (*noč 'nša* in Coptic). Elsewhere in the text, the Coptic narrator uses the

<sup>10</sup> Concerning this fragment, see Bentley Layton, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired Since the Year 1906* (London, 1987), 183-4.

<sup>11</sup> Due to the very special place given to miracles, Jürgen Horn describes this text as a 'mirakulöses Enkomion'; see J. Horn, 'Der erste Märtyrer' (1982), 54 n. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Allusion to *Acts* 7:55-6.

more technical Greek term *σύναξις* to describe this feast.<sup>13</sup> This great celebration is certainly the annual feast or commemoration of Saint Stephen, which is traditionally performed on the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh of December.<sup>14</sup> According to ancient liturgical documents, the annual feast of Stephen was celebrated in Jerusalem in a very special place, the *diakonikon* of the church of the Holy Sion.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, when Stephen's relics were discovered in 415 AD in Kephar Gamala, a small Palestinian village,<sup>16</sup> they were first transferred to the *diakonikon* of the church of the Holy Sion in Jerusalem.<sup>17</sup> Hence, the feast of Saint Stephen was usually celebrated in that shrine. Indeed, the *diakonikon* was not really a storage place for liturgical vessels but a real chapel and a notorious pilgrim site.<sup>18</sup> And it is now no wonder why the first miracle story in our text tells about a robbery in the *diakonikon* of Stephen's sanctuary. This *diakonikon* is not any *diakonikon*. It is most probably the *diakonikon* located in the Holy Sion. To sum up, this text is probably a sermon that the bishop of Jerusalem delivered on the occasion of the celebration of Saint Stephen, the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh of December. He delivered his speech in the *diakonikon* of the Holy Sion, praising this sanctuary on account of the numerous miracles that happened around the martyr's relics.

Can we identify this mysterious bishop of Jerusalem, the author of this homily? In our text, the bishop says that he knows the great Isaiah, who is the archimandrite or abbot of the monastery of Abba Romanos.<sup>19</sup> It is likely that we can identify this Isaiah with Isaiah of Scetis, a famous Egyptian monk of

<sup>13</sup> See Vat. Borgia Copto 109 (Zoega CXXIII), fol. 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen is celebrated on the twenty-sixth in the West whereas his feast is generally on the twenty-seventh in the East. Nevertheless, Stephen was still commemorated on the twenty-sixth of December in some eastern Christian communities in the sixth century, notably among miaphysite Christians. This discrepancy certainly depends on the date of the Christmas celebration. See Louis Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien. Études sur la liturgie latine avant Charlemagne* (Paris, 1920), 281-4.

<sup>15</sup> For witnesses to this traditional location for the celebration of Stephen's annual feast, see the great lectionary of Jerusalem, edited by Michel Tarchnischvili, *Le grand lectionnaire de l'Église de Jérusalem*, CSCO 188 (Louvain, 1959), 9 and CSCO 189 (Louvain, 1959), 15. See also Pierre Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient. Histoire et géographie, des origines à la conquête arabe* (Paris, 2011), 258.

<sup>16</sup> The invention of Stephen's relics is told in a well-known document, the *Epistle of Lucian*, which narrates how Gamaliel, Paul's master (see *Acts* 5:34; 22:3), appeared to a priest named Lucien in December 415 AD and revealed to him the hidden place where Stephen's relics were buried. For the Latin version of this text, which is probably the earliest recension, see Stefan Vanderlinden's critical edition, 'Revelatio Sancti Stephani (BHL 7850-7856)', *Revue des études byzantines* 4 (1946), 178-217.

<sup>17</sup> The *diakonikon* as a sanctuary for Stephen's relics is mentioned in the Greek text BHG 1649, edited by Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας* (Saint-Petersburg, 1898) V 40 (ἐν τῷ διακονικῷ τῆς ἁγίας Σιών).

<sup>18</sup> See Józef Tadeusz Milik, 'Notes d'épigraphie et de topographie palestiniennes', *Revue Biblique* 67 (1960), 354-67, especially 361.

<sup>19</sup> See Cairo CGC 9234, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>.

the fifth century who lived in Palestine.<sup>20</sup> According to his life, preserved in Syriac, Isaiah left Egypt in the 440s AD, lived as a hermit in the region of Eleutheropolis and then built his own convent near Gaza. Besides we know that the monastery of Romanos, founded by the miaphysite monk Romanos in 457 AD, was located near Eleutheropolis.<sup>21</sup> We may assume that Isaiah, while living in the desert near Eleutheropolis, met the monk Romanos and moved into his monastery. Unfortunately, the available sources do not mention such a fact and we cannot even assert that Isaiah ever became abbot of this monastery. On the other hand, we can assume that the association of Isaiah with the monastery of Saint Romanos might be a mere hagiographical device on the part of the author. As a staunch advocate of anti-Chalcedonian doctrines, Isaiah could be easily associated with the monastery of Romanos, one of the most famous strongholds of Palestinian miaphysitism in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>22</sup>

The author of our sermon seems to evince natural affinities with famous Palestinian miaphysites like Romanos and Isaiah. We can therefore suppose that the author might be Theodosius of Jerusalem, who was a miaphysite bishop of Jerusalem between 451 and 453 AD.<sup>23</sup> As a monk, he took part in the riots that led to the expulsion of bishop Juvenal, who had surprisingly and finally agreed to the dogmas of the council of Chalcedon. Theodosius was then appointed as bishop of Jerusalem, ruled for only twenty months and was finally expelled by the Roman emperor Marcian. Given the historical and chronological evidence provided by the *encomium*, there are good reasons to suggest that the author could be Theodosius. The mention of Abba Isaiah in BHO 1093 may confirm this authorship: Isaiah of Scetis lived near Gaza, where Peter the Iberian was appointed as bishop of Maiuma, near Gaza, by Theodosius of Jerusalem himself.<sup>24</sup>

Two other Coptic texts are ascribed to Theodosius of Jerusalem. The first is an *encomium* praising Victor, son of Romanos,<sup>25</sup> and the second is a collection of miracle stories about Saint George and his sanctuary in Joppe (or Jaffa) in Palestine. This second work, preserved in Bohairic Coptic, was edited by

<sup>20</sup> His *Vita* is known in a Syriac version. It was edited in 1907 by Ernest Walter Brooks, *Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum*, I; see CSCO 7 (Paris, 1907), 3-16 for the Syriac text and CSCO 8 (Paris, 1907), 3-10 for a Latin translation.

<sup>21</sup> About the monk Romanos and his monastery, see Siméon Vailhé, 'Répertoire alphabétique des monastères de Palestine', *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 5 (1900), 272-92, especially 272-73.

<sup>22</sup> According to Lorenzo Perrone, the Gaza region remained a stronghold of the miaphysite party until the reign of the emperor Justinian; see Lorenzo Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche* (Brescia, 1980), 119.

<sup>23</sup> As regards this historical episode, see Ernest Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950), 209-79, especially 247-57.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Cornelia B. Horn and Robert R. Phenix, *John Rufus: The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus* (Atlanta, 2008), 76-9.

<sup>25</sup> Urbain Bouriant, 'L'éloge de l'Apa Victor, fils de Romanos', *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire* 8 (1893), 145-268.

Ernest Wallis Budge in 1888.<sup>26</sup> This latter work deserves special attention. Indeed, the third miracle that is recalled in this sermon tells about the robbery of precious materials from George's sanctuary.<sup>27</sup> After stealing valuable vessels, the robber is captured by George, who appeared to him in the guise of a soldier. The saint chastises the offender who eventually confesses to his sins and converts to Christianity. A close reading of the text reveals that the plot and the dialogues are exactly the same as in the first miracle story contained in BHO 1093. There are convincing reasons to ascribe the two sermons to the same and only author and to feel entitled to restore the name 'Theodosius' (*Theodosios*) in the lacuna of the first folio containing the lost title and author's name of the text.

Nevertheless, we are inclined to think that BHO 1093 was not a genuine sermon written down by bishop Theodosius himself. First of all, the other two sermons ascribed to Theodosius, the *encomium* on Victor and the miracles of Saint George, are unanimously thought to be late Coptic forgeries.<sup>28</sup> As for the language and style of these three extant works, there is no clear indication that they were translated from a Greek source. Secondly, the purely Coptic character of the text is also confirmed by chronological evidence. Indeed, in the prologue, this sermon is said to have been uttered on the month of *Paope*, which runs from the eleventh of October to the tenth of November according to our Gregorian calendar. Unfortunately, no feast of Saint Stephen is recorded in the months of October and November among the extant liturgical and hagiographical sources, even in Coptic ones. The anonymous author does not seem to be aware of the usual date of the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh of December and has mistakenly set the saint's feast on a date that was not recognized in Jerusalem in the fifth century AD. In fact, as early as the mid-fifth century, saint Stephen was already commemorated in Palestine on the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh of December.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, it is hardly conceivable that Theodosius, who was bishop for less than two years and lived in a very troubled age, could have written such a sermon, all the more so since Theodosius left no Greek homilies. Finally, never do we find any evidence in our sources of the existence of a close relationship between Theodosius and the monk Isaiah of Scetis, as is claimed in the text. The association of these two towering figures

<sup>26</sup> Ernest Wallis Budge, *The Martyrdom and Miracles of Saint George of Cappadocia* (London, 1888), 38-82 for the Coptic text and 236-74 for an English translation.

<sup>27</sup> The third miracle is on p. 52-6 and p. 248-52 in E.W. Budge's edition and translation.

<sup>28</sup> Tito Orlandi, 'Theodosius of Jerusalem', in Aziz Suryal Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1991), VII 2242: 'The Coptic tradition remembers him among the opponents of Chalcedonian doctrine. However, the two works attributed to him are late forgeries of the period of the cycles'. In a private communication, Alin Suciu also suggested to me that our Coptic *encomium* is most certainly a pseudepigraphical work.

<sup>29</sup> See Athanase Renoux, *Le codex arménien Jérusalem 121. Introduction aux origines de la liturgie hiérosolymitaine*, PO 35 (Turnhout, 1969), 37-40.

of Christian miaphysitism seems like another *topos* devised by the anonymous Coptic author of our *encomium*.

Like the *encomium* on Victor and the miracles of Saint George, the *encomium* on Saint Stephen is most probably a spurious Coptic work attributed to Theodosius, whose memory was cherished by Egyptian Christians on account of his miaphysite leanings and his short exile in Egypt after he was deposed.<sup>30</sup> However, our text is far from being mere fiction. The fairly accurate details concerning the *diakonikon* of the Holy Sion clearly show that the author had some historical knowledge of the cult of Saint Stephen in Palestine. Above all, this sermon witnesses to the great popularity of the *diakonikon* as a pilgrim site even as far as Coptic Egypt.

<sup>30</sup> On Theodosius' stay in Egypt at the behest of emperor Marcian, see *De obitu Theodosii*, 2. See also E. Honigmann, 'Juvenal of Jerusalem' (1950), 256.



# Die armenische Übersetzung der pseudo-athanasianischen Homilie *De passione et cruce domini* (CPG 2247)

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## ABSTRACT

The pseudo-Athanasian homily *De passione et cruce domini* is known to specialists by a Syrian, the most recently discovered Coptic fragment and an Armenian translation. In Armenian, the homily is attested by three *corpora* of Athanasius, and thus the Armenian manuscript tradition takes it as of Athanasian authorship. Two of these codices are found in the manuscript collection of the Mechitharist Congregation of Vienna under the numbers 629 (19<sup>th</sup> century) and 648 (14<sup>th</sup> century), and one in the Library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem under the number 3494 (1816). The Armenian translation (in all three codices) reveals a text gap: in the Armenian, §§ 18-24 of the Greek text is missing. The more recent manuscripts show linguistic or theological ‘changes’ as opposed to the older ones, whose text is closer to the Greek original. Such ‘corrections’ can, on the one hand, be regarded as ‘writing errors’, but on the other hand, as intentional alterations. If the latter, the questions would arise: Why? Out of which interest? By whom and for whom? When? The language of the translation has characteristics of the classical age as well as of the hellenophile school, so that one could opt for pre-hellenophile school.

## Einführung

Die dem Fachpublikum bekannte pseudathanasianische Homilie *De passione et cruce domini* kennt, neben der syrischen<sup>1</sup> und dem zuletzt aufgefundenen koptischen Fragment<sup>2</sup>, auch eine armenische Übersetzung, wird darin Athanasius zugeschrieben und ist eine der wenigen armenischen Übersetzungen der (pseudo-)athanasianischen Texte, die bisher noch nicht veröffentlicht wurde<sup>3</sup>.

Eine Untersuchung dieser Homilie liegt uns unter anderem auch durch den Artikel „Eine pseudo-athanasianische Osterpredigt (CPG II 2247) über die

<sup>1</sup> Siehe *Athanasiana syriaca III. De cruce et passione*, Hg. Robert W. Thomson, CSCO 324, Syr 142 (Louvain, 1972), 89-138, 153-9; CSCO 325, Syr 143 (Louvain, 1972), 61-96, 107-12.

<sup>2</sup> Siehe Alin Suci, ‘The Borgian Coptic Manuscripts in Naples: Supplementary Identifications and Notes to a Recently Published Catalogue’, *OCP* 77 (2011), 299-325, 303.

<sup>3</sup> Ich bereite zur Zeit den kritischen Text vor, der im Laufe des Jahres 2017 erscheint.

Wahrheit Gottes und ihre Erfüllung“ von Hubertus R. Drobner<sup>4</sup> vor, in dem man sich auch über die früheren Studien<sup>5</sup> über diese Homilie einen Überblick verschaffen kann. H. Drobner nimmt ausschließlich die ersten zehn Kapitel der Homilie in Betracht. Er bezeichnet sie als Osterpredigt im weiteren Sinn, nach V. Hugger „Die Homilie will am Karfreitag gehalten sein (201C τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην ἀπέβη σήμερον); sie lehnt sich an *Matth. 27:33 ff* als Bibeltext an“<sup>6</sup>. K. Hoss gibt die folgende knappe Inhaltsbeschreibung der Homilie:

Auf Grund der Schriftstelle *Matth. 27, 33 ff.* redet der Verfasser in c. 1-10 von dem Charakter der alttestamentlichen Weissagung; er verfiicht ihre Untrüglichkeit c. 1 und 2, 7 und 8 und verwahrt sich gegen die falsche Ansicht, als sei die Weissagung selber die Ursache ihrer Erfüllung c. 9 f. Dazwischen hinein finden sich paränetische Exkurse: c. 3 handelt von der Verpflichtung, Gelübde zu halten, c. 4-6 von dem Verbot des Eides. C. 10-28, der Hauptteil, ist einer allegorischen Ausdeutung einer Reihe von Vorgängen, Handlungen und Worten beim Tode Christi gewidmet, c. 29-31 wird auf die segensreichen, überall sichtbaren Folgen dieses Todes hingewiesen, c. 32 f. ein Ausfall gegen die Juden in Scene gesetzt und c. 34 mit einer Paränese geschlossen<sup>7</sup>.

Hoss ist hier unverändert wiedergegeben, um dem Leser einerseits den Homilieinhalt in Kürze darzustellen, andererseits den Abschnitt zu verdeutlichen, der, wie es unten angegeben wird, im Armenischen fehlt.

Das Ziel der folgenden Darstellung ist nicht die Erörterung der Echtheitsfragen ([pseudo]-athanasianische Verfasserschaft, Abfassungszeit und -ort) der Homilie. Die armenische Übersetzung lässt allerdings hinsichtlich der erwähnten Probleme einige Bemerkungen zu, die hier nur am Rahmen angedeutet werden.

## Handschriftliche Überlieferung

Die Homilie ist im Armenischen durch drei Athanasius-Korpora bezeugt und damit stimmt die armenische handschriftliche Überlieferung der athanasianischen Verfasserschaft dieser Schrift zu: mit wenigen Ausnahmen<sup>8</sup> sind alle Schriften dieser Sammlungen im Titel ausdrücklich mit „Desselben Athanasius, des (Erz)Bischofs von Alexandrien“<sup>9</sup> eingeleitet. In allen drei Handschriften

<sup>4</sup> In Lionel R. Wickham und Caroline P. Bammel (Hg.), *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 19 (Leiden, New York und Köln, 1993), 43-51.

<sup>5</sup> Siehe *ibid.* 43-4.

<sup>6</sup> V. Hugger, 'Mai's Lukaskommentar und der Traktat De passione athanasianisches Gut?', *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 43 (1919), 727-41, 735.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Hoss, *Studien über das Schrifttum und Theologie des Athanasius auf Grund einer Echtheitsuntersuchung von Athanasius contra gentes und de incarnatione* (Freiburg i. B., Leipzig und Tübingen, 1899), 96-7.

<sup>8</sup> Nur mit Նորիի (dt. desselben), ohne explizite Erwähnung des Namens des Athanasius.

<sup>9</sup> Die Titulatur variiert oder weggelassen wird.

stellt die Homilie die 16.<sup>10</sup> Einheit dar. Das gilt auch für das Kolophon von „17+5“ Schriften<sup>11</sup>, wodurch die Homilie in die Liste der Übersetzungen eingeordnet wird, die „von den ersten Übersetzern durchgeführt wurden“ (sc. 5. Jh.). Zwei dieser Kodizes befinden sich in der Handschriftensammlung der Mechitharistenkongregation von Wien unter den Nummern 629 (19. Jh.) und 648 (14. Jh. [?]), einer in der Bibliothek des armenischen Patriarchats von Jerusalem unter der Nummer 3494 (1816)<sup>12</sup>, wobei die erst- und letztgenannten denselben Archetypus haben, der laut dem Kolophon<sup>13</sup> aus dem Jahre 1726 stammt. Somit ziehen sich zwei Überlieferungslinien: eine ist der Cod. Vind. 648 aus dem wahrscheinlich 14. Jh. und die zweite wird durch Cod. Vind. 629 und Cod. Hierosol. 3494 bis 1726 zurückverfolgt. Im Cod. Vind. 629 machte der Schreiber selbst Notizen in den Marginalien, in denen er mit einer anderen Handschrift seinen Text verglich. Da der Jerusalemer Kodex dieselbe Linie darstellt, kann er nicht der zweite Kodex sein. Allerdings unterstützt der Cod. Vind. 648 die in den Marginalien aufgeführten Lesarten auch nicht, aber sie kommen seinen Textvarianten nahe. Sollte dieser Kodex dem Schreiber als Kollationstext zur Verfügung gestanden haben, fragt man sich, warum der Schreiber nur einige bzw. nur diese Lesarten notierte. Sollte es nicht der Fall gewesen sein, dann gab es noch eine andere Handschrift, die heute nicht mehr vorhanden ist.

Die Untersuchung dieses Textes, sowie der anderen (*Sermo contra omnes haereses* [CPG 2251], *De divina doctrina mystagogiae catechumenorum*<sup>14</sup>), die nur durch diese drei Kodizes bezeugt sind, führt im Endeffekt zur genaueren Bestimmung der Beziehung der beiden Überlieferungslinien.

Eine Beobachtung hinsichtlich des Schreibers oder besser der Schreiber des Cod. Vind. 648: da Fol. 129b eine andere Handschrift besitzt und vergleichbar mehr Schreibfehler auf diesem Folio aufweisbar sind, muss man den Schluss ziehen, dass der Schreiber diese Seite höchstwahrscheinlich seinem Schüler abzuschreiben vertraute, der aber seine Aufgabe nicht mit Auszeichnung meisterte.

<sup>10</sup> Cod. Hierosol. 3494 führt eigene Numerierung, laut der diese Homilie die 15. (im Marginalium: dt.) Einheit darstellt: Die Handschrift zählt *Ad Serapionem* I und II unter einer Einheit auf.

<sup>11</sup> Siehe Garegin Zarbhanalean, *Catalogue des anciennes traductions arméniennes (siècles IV-XIII)* (Venezia, 1889), 287-8; Esayi Tayec'i, *S. Athanasii patriarchae Alexandriae homiliae, epistulae et controuersiae* (Venedig, 1907), v-vi; Fred. C. Conybeare, *The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and of Timothy and Aquila*, *Anecdota Oxoniensia Classical Series* 8 (Oxford, 1898), x; Robert Pierce Casey, 'Armenian Manuscripts of St. Athanasius of Alexandria', *HTR* 24 (1931), 43-59, 51-2.

<sup>12</sup> Beschreibung der Handschriften siehe *Katalog der armenischen Handschriften in der Mechitharisten-Bibliothek zu Wien*, Hg. Pater Hamazasp Oskian, Bd. II (Wien, 1963), 111-3, 133-4; *Grand Catalogue of St. James Manuscripts*, Hg. Archbishop Norair Bogharian, vol. X (Jerusalem, 1990), 462-4; Anahit Avagyan, *Die armenische Athanasius-Überlieferung: Das auf Armenisch unter dem Namen des Athanasius von Alexandria tradierte Schrifttum*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 69 (Berlin und Boston, 2014), 18-24.

<sup>13</sup> Die Kopisten des Cod. Vind. 629 und des Cod. Hierosol. 3494 schrieben das Kolophon ihres Originals mit ab. Siehe N. Bogharian, *Grand Catalogue X* (1990), 463.

<sup>14</sup> Siehe A. Avagyan, *Die armenische Athanasius-Überlieferung* (2014), 134-6.

## Armenisch-griechischer Textvergleich

Die armenische Übersetzung (in allen drei Kodizes) weist eine Textlücke im Vergleich mit dem griechischen Text auf. Das Armenische hört im § 18 nach dem ersten Satz auf: Լ վիրաւորեցաւ in Cod. Vind. 648 und Cod. Hierosol. 3494 oder Լ վիրաւորեալ լինէր + առակէ քան թէ վիրաւորէր im Cod. Vind. 629 (PG 28, 216D καὶ μάλλον ἐπλήττετο ἢ ἐπληττεν) und setzt sich wieder in der Mitte des § 24 (PG 28, 228A τις εἶχεν, ὁρῶν τὰ τηλικαῦτα, ὅτι οὐ πρὸς ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ πρὸς Θεὸν ἀντιμάχεται) fort: Կ ունէր սեւասելով զայնքանս առ մարդիկ, այլ առ Աստուած ընդդիմացեալ՝ մարտնչի.

Die jüngeren Handschriften weisen sprachliche oder auch theologische „Veränderungen“ gegenüber der älteren auf, derer Text näher dem griechischen Original steht, z. B.

- PG 28, 205B οἱ ὡς ἄνθρωποι ἀποθνήσκοντες, θεοποιηθῶμεν,

Cod. Vind. 648, fol. 131b զի մեք ոյք իբրև գմարդիկ մեռեալք, եղիցուք աստուածացեալք (dt. damit wir, die wir als Menschen gestorben sind, vergöttlicht werden);

Cod. Hierosol. 3494, fol. 343 und Cod. Vind. 629, fol. 180b զի մեք ոյք իբրև գմարմին անմահին եղիցուք աստուածացեալք (dt. damit wir, die wir als Leib des Unsterblichen vergöttlicht werden).

Der Text des Cod. Vind. 648 ist eine wörtliche Übertragung des Griechischen, in den Cod. Hierosol. 3494 und Cod. Vind. 629 steht aber գմարմին անմահին (dt. der Leib des Unsterblichen) anstelle von գմարդիկ մեռեալք (dt. die Menschen gestorben). Ich schließe momentan nicht aus, dass dies als „Schreibfehler“ angesehen werden kann, aber möchte meine andere Auffassung dieser Stelle erläutern: Mir scheint, dass die zweite Textvariante im veränderten Satz durch den Vergleich mit dem Leib des Unsterblichen (sc. Christi) unsere Vergöttlichung betonen will, d.h. wir werden vergöttlicht, wie der Leib Christi vergöttlicht wurde. Dürfte ich hier Recht haben, sind wohl solche „Korrekturen“ absichtlich vorgenommen wurden: Die Fragen würden dann lauten: warum? aus welchem Interesse? von wem? für wen? und wann? Als agierende Person käme hier nur der Schreiber des Archetypus von Cod. Hierosol. 3494 und Cod. Vind. 629<sup>15</sup> in Frage, über seine Motive aber könnte ich bei heutigem Stand der Textstudien nur spekulieren.

- PG 28, 205B καὶ αὐτὸς ἔμενεν ἀπαθής

Cod. Vind. 648, fol. 131b Լ ինքն մնաց անմահ, անախտ և անչարչարելի: (Und er selber blieb unsterblich, sündlos und leidensunfähig)

Cod. Hierosol. 3494, fol. 343 / Cod. Vind. 629, fol. 180b om. անմահ

<sup>15</sup> Sollte sich herausstellen, dass Cod. Vind. 629 eine Abschrift des Cod. Hierosol. 3494 sei, dann der Schreiber des letzteren Kodex.

Gewiss ist der armenische Text hier als deskriptive Übersetzung anzunehmen, aber der Übersetzer fügt *անմահ* (unsterblich) und *անախոս* (sündlos) hinzu, indem er den vorherigen Absatz noch einmal summiert.

Im Folgenden werden anhand einiger Beispiele weitere Bemerkungen zur Sprache der Übersetzung aufgeführt<sup>16</sup>: sie weist Eigenschaften sowohl des klassischen Zeitalters als auch der hellenophilen Schule auf, so dass man sich für die prähellenophile Schule entscheiden könnte:

#### a. Kopie der Präfixe, Suffixe und der Wortzusammensetzungen

§ 6 նախասացելոցն τοῖς προλεχθεῖσιν

§ 6 սնարկապէս ἀνθρωπικώτερον

§ 13 բացառապարակէր զնախանսն և զնախանսն τὴν ἐπιβουλήν ἐξήγευ

§ 16 պարագրեցուցին περιετίθουσιν

§ 6 այլ մեզ բան նորա որգունակ և վերագոյն արտաճառեցի, փոխանակ երդման ան Բժնարտուրիւնն լինի: *ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ /wie ich oben ausgesagt habe/ ἀντὶ ὄρκου πρὸς ἀλήθειαν γίνεται.*

Das letzte Beispiel ist besonders interessant, denn genau der Teil, der im Griechischen nicht belegt ist, ist stark vom Griechischen beeinflusst. In der Armenologie ist mehrfach darüber gesprochen worden, dass Gräzismen nicht nur in den übersetzten Texten vorkommen, sondern auch in den eigentlichen Werken der klassisch-armenischen Literatur. Und dieser Satz kann auch als ein Beispiel des Letztgesagten angesehen werden.

#### b. Deskriptive Wiedergabe

§ 10 կանխալ յառաջագոյն ետես προέβλεπεν ետես om. Cod. Vind. 648

§ 15 Բղամիր (Cod. Hierosol. 3494 / Cod. Vind. 629) Բղամիր (Cod. Vind. 648) *χλαμύδα* vgl. § 16 Բղամիրի (Cod. Vind. 648) *χλαμύδι*

Hier hat man einen anderen Fall, wo die jüngere Überlieferung bereits die armenisierte Form Բղամիր innehat, und die ältere Handschrift noch zwischen der Wortkopie Բղամիր und einer Zwischenform Բղամիր schwankt.

Ich habe diese wenigen Beispiele angebracht, im Text sind natürlich noch mehr Gräzismen enthalten.

## Die Rezeption der Homilie

In ihrer im Juli 2014 abgeschlossenen Promotionsarbeit über das *Encomium in s. crucem* von Davit dem Unbesiegbaren (Anhaght) zeigt Armine Melkonyan,

<sup>16</sup> Die ausführliche Darstellung der Ergebnisse des griechisch-armenischen Textvergleichs sowie der Überlieferungsgeschichte erfolgt bei der kritischen Ausgabe. Siehe Anmerkung 3.

dass die von Davit hinsichtlich von Golgotha verwendete Phrase gegenüber derjenigen der Homilie ähnlich ist<sup>17</sup>:

Vgl. Davit, *Encomium in s. cruce*

Զի գագարն Գողգոթայ, տեղի կառափելոյ, և շիրիմ առաջին մարդոյն յերբայեցուցն ասացեալ:<sup>18</sup>

mit *De passione et cruce domini* 12

Cod. Vind. 648, fol. 132a Ուստի ո՛չ այլ ուրեք չարչարի և ոչ յայլում տեղուջ խաչի, երբ ոչ ի Գողգոթայն վայրի, գորմէ երբայեցուց վարդապետ ասեն Անդ գոլ գերեզմանն Ագամայ, Բանգի անդ գնա յետ անիծիցն թաղել հաստատեալ ստուգեն

Cod. Hierosol. 3494, fol. 344 / Cod. Vind. 629, fol. 181ab յայլումն՝ այլումն՝ Գողգոթայն] Գագարան

Es liegt noch ein Kommentar aus dem 12. Jh. zum *Encomium* von Davit von Nerses dem Begnadeten (Shnorhali) vor, in dem ausführlich die erwähnte Stelle auslegt wird. Da der Text dieses Kommentars zur Zeit zum ersten Mal zum Druck von A. Melkonyan vorbereitet wird und ihre ersten Rückschlüsse noch ausstehen, kann ich hier nicht näher auf dieses Thema eingehen. Hier möchte ich nur vorläufig schlussfolgern, falls Davit tatsächlich die armenische Übersetzung dieser Homilie kannte (er hätte genauso gut mit dem griechischen Original und in Alexandrien vertraut sein können), dann ist die Homilie wohl sehr früh ins Armenische übertragen worden.

### Anstelle der Schlussfolgerung: Die Quellen der Homilie und die Homilie als Quelle

In den „Studien“ bewies Karl Hoss, dass „die Homilie, besonders in Nr. 11, aber auch 12. 14. 20. 26-31 aus der Apologie<sup>19</sup>, der vita Antonii, der ep. ad episc. aeg. und dem 10. Osterfestbrief wörtliche Zitate bringt und in weiten Strecken ganz in Gedankengängen der Apologie läuft“<sup>20</sup>. Selbstverständlich akzeptiert V. Hugger diese offensichtlichen Übereinstimmungen, vielmehr, er fügt weitere zu<sup>21</sup>,

<sup>17</sup> Armine Melkonyan, *Encomium on the Theoleptic Holy Cross by David the Invincible and its Commentaries (Historical and Theological Analysis)* [Դավիթ Անհաղթի «Ներբողեան ի սուրբ խաչն աստուածընկալ» երկը և դրա մեկնությունները (պատմագիտական և աստվածաբանական վերլուծություն)] (Yerevan, 2014 [dissertation unpublished]), 139.

<sup>18</sup> *Writings of Koryun Vardapet, Mambre Vercanol and Davit' Anyatt'* [Գորիւն Վարդապետի, Մամբրէի Վերձանողի և Դարի Անյատի մատենագրութիւնք] (Venedig, 1833), 109.

<sup>19</sup> Als Apologie bezeichnet Karl Hoss und ihm folgend auch V. Hugger das Doppelwerk *Contra gentes/De incarnatione Verbi*.

<sup>20</sup> V. Hugger, 'Mai's Lukaskommentar und der Traktat De passione' (1919), 732-3.

<sup>21</sup> Siehe *ibid.* 734.

aber er lehnt den Beschluss von K. Hoss, die Homilie sei ein genuin athanasianisches Werk, ab<sup>22</sup>.

Die Schriften, mit denen die Homilie durch K. Hoss und V. Hugger in Zusammenhang gebracht wird, gehören in die Reihe der echten Athanasiana und stammen aus der Zeit des Trierer Exils: 335-337, nicht selten vorgeschlagen auch aus früherer oder späterer Zeit (*Contra gentes/De incarnatione Verbi*)<sup>23</sup>, aus dem Zeitraum zwischen 356-362<sup>24</sup> (*Vita Antonii*), aus dem Jahr 356 oder 361<sup>25</sup> (*Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae*) und aus dem Jahr 338<sup>26</sup> (10. Osterfestbrief). Damit ist das Fazit von V. Hugger, das auch H. Drobner zitiert (S. 43), plausibel:

A. [sc. Athanasius – A. Avagyan] kommt als Verfasser der Homilie nicht in Betracht. Der Verfasser ist ein in Palästina wohnender, großer Verehrer des Heiligen, der dessen Schriften mit seltenem Eifer studiert und geplündert hat. Es ist nicht undenkbar, daß außer den nachgewiesenen Stellen noch andere, verloren gegangenen Schriften entnommene Zitate in der Homilie stecken. Manche Partien tragen zweifellos athanasianisches Gepräge. Aber zur Gewißheit können wir beim dermaligen Stand unseres Wissens ebensowenig gelangen, wie über die Abfassungszeit. Doch dürfte sie nicht weit über das 4. Jahrhundert hinausgehen.<sup>27</sup>

Folglich sind die oben genannten Schriften des Athanasius Quellen der Homilie *De passione et cruce domini* und die von V. Hugger vermutete Datierung der Homilie mit „nicht weit über das 4. Jahrhundert hinausgehend“ erlaubt eine solche Annahme.

Man gelangt zu einer anderen Vermutung, wenn eine frühere Datierung der Homilie angezweifelt und die Homilie selbst als Quelle für ein pseudo-athanasianisches Werk betrachtet wird: Mehrfach wurde die Zitierung der Homilie durch den *Sermo maior de fide / Epistula ad Antiochenos* (CPG 2803) aus der Reihe der unauthentischen oder *dubia* verlautbart<sup>28</sup>. H. Drobner schlägt als Entstehungszeit der Homilie den Zeitraum nach der Abfassung des *Sermo maior de fide* und vor 350<sup>29</sup> vor. Aus diesem Grund wären zumindest die *Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae* und die *Vita Antonii* aus den Quellen der Homilie zu streichen. Da aber solche Feststellung noch ausschließlich auf einer Hypothese basiert – Datierungen der Schriften sind mindestens nicht endgültig – möchte

<sup>22</sup> Siehe *ibid.* 735-41.

<sup>23</sup> Siehe Uta Heil, 'Das apologetische Doppelwerk', in Peter Gemeinhardt (Hg.), *Athanasius Handbuch* (Tübingen, 2011), 166-75, 166-8.

<sup>24</sup> Siehe Dmitrij Bumazhnov, 'Monastische Schriften', in *ibid.* 255-65, 256.

<sup>25</sup> Siehe Uta Heil, 'Epistula ad episcopos Aegypti et Libyae', in *ibid.* 218-21, 218.

<sup>26</sup> Siehe Rudolf Lorenz, *Der zehnte Osterfestbrief des Athanasius von Alexandrien: Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen* (Berlin und New York, 1986), 30.

<sup>27</sup> V. Hugger, 'Mai's Lukaskommentar und der Traktat De passione' (1919), 741.

<sup>28</sup> Siehe H. Drobner, 'Eine pseudo-athanasianische Osterpredigt' (1993), 43-4. Hier auch die Angaben zu den Studien über den *Sermo maior de fide*.

<sup>29</sup> Siehe *ibid.* 44.

ich hier meine These nur als Frage aufwerfen: Wäre es nicht richtig, Athanasius von Alexandrien zum eigentlichen Autor der Homilie *De passione et cruce domini* heranzuziehen? Mit dem Ausblick darauf, dass nur auf diese Weise ihm seine eigene Homilie zur Zitierung und als Quelle für seine weiteren Schriften zur Verfügung stünde, und der Verfasser des *Sermo maior de fide*, wer auch immer er sein sollte, aus ihr zitieren konnte.

In den Homilietext sind einige ausserkanonische Themen bzw. Legenden, z. B. in § 12: Leiden und Kreuzigung Jesu fanden an Golgotha statt, wo auch Adams Grabstelle sei („Schatzhöhle“; Origenes), oder selten vorkommende Themen, z. B. in § 13: die Frau des Pilatus träumte, dass derjenige, der von Pilatus gerichtet wurde, Gott ist (*Matth. 27:19* (matthäisches Sondergut); Nikodemus-Evangelium II; Athanasius, *Ad Maximum Philosophum* 1), eingebettet:

Vgl. *Ad Maximum Philosophum* 1

Νιψαμένῳ γὰρ τῷ Πιλάτῳ καὶ καταλαβομένῳ τὴν συκοφαντίαν τῶν τότε Ἰουδαίων, οὐκ ἔτι ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ ὁ Κύριος, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐχρημάτιζε τῇ τούτου γυναικί, ἵνα μὴ ἐν λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ ἐν δυνάμει πιστεύηται ὁ κρινόμενος εἶναι Θεός.<sup>30</sup>

mit *De passione et cruce domini* 13

Καὶ τὸ οὕτως δὲ τὸν Πιλάτον ἀπολογεῖσθαι, οὐδὲν ἦν ἕτερον, ἢ πιστεῦσαι τὸν κρινόμενον εἶναι Θεόν. Ἀμέλει, κρινόμενος ὑπὸ Πιλάτου, ἐχρημάτιζε τῇ τούτου γυναικί· ἵνα τῇ μὲν σιωπῇ τὴν ἀνδρίαν καταπλαγῇ· τῷ δὲ χρηματισμῷ γινώσκη, ὅτι οὐκ ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ Θεὸν κρίνει.<sup>31</sup>

Die offensichtlichen Übereinstimmungen in den Formulierungen können auf die Abhängigkeit der beiden Texte voneinander deuten<sup>32</sup>. Nimmt man die von H. Drobner vorgeschlagene Datierung der Homilie mit „jedenfalls vor 350“ an, so ist sie als Quelle auch für *Ad Maximum* zu betrachten, denn diese *Epistula* wurde 370/1 verfasst.

<sup>30</sup> PG 26, 1085A.

<sup>31</sup> PG 28, 209A.

<sup>32</sup> Meines Wissens wurde die Übereinstimmung dieser Stelle noch in keiner Studie aufgeführt.

**CRITICA ET PHILOLOGICA**



# The Gothic Palimpsest of Bologna

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## ABSTRACT

In 2013, a newly discovered addition to the very limited corpus of the Gothic language was published. This fragmentary manuscript, the *scriptio inferior* of a palimpsest, contains fragments of theological writing with extensive citation of the Old and New Testaments, likely one or two sermons. The *editio princeps*, a subsequent reading, and further analysis have concentrated on the identification of the cited passages, comparison to the Gothic Bible as we have it, the significance for textual criticism, and the presence of new linguistic forms. This article evaluates what can be said about the theological content of the document(s), with special reference to the ‘Homoianism’ of the Goths.

In 2013, the *editio princeps* appeared of a fragmentary document in the Gothic language, the first to be discovered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a palimpsest, written over by a half-uncial *De civitate Dei*, and was discovered in a church archive in Bologna. The first edition was prepared by two Italian scholars, and was published in the journal of their university, *Aevum*.<sup>1</sup> It contained a transcription of the Gothic, a translation into Italian, the identification of sources, and other observations about the manuscript. Professors Finazzi and Tornaghi, the initial investigators, made widely available their high quality photographs of the parchment folios for others to examine. It was however further autoptic examination by Professor Falluomini which resulted in improved readings. These were published in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*<sup>2</sup> in 2014, along with a translation into German. Given the paucity of sources for the Gothic language, the new find was immediately the object of study in centres of historic linguistics such as Oxford and Leiden, and the focus of all publications has been philological. The present treatment will consider the relevance of the find to historical theology.

The text, referred to as ‘the Bologna Fragments’ or the *Gotica Bononiensa*, is difficult to characterize. Its four folio sides contain extensive but fragmentary

<sup>1</sup> R.B. Finazzi and P. Tornaghi, ‘*Gotica Bononiensa*: Analisi linguistica e filologica di un nuovo documento’, *Aevum* 87 (2013), 113-55.

<sup>2</sup> C. Falluomini, ‘Zum gotischen Fragment aus Bologna’, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 143 (2014), 281-305.

citations of the Gothic Bible, reading both the Old and New Testaments in a Christian way. The document thus declares itself to be unquestionably Christian. In their fragmentary state, however, they do not convey their status as exhortation or argumentation, let alone their position (if any) within theological disputation. The quotations are sometimes introduced by statements like ‘as the prophet said’, or by rhetorical questions. They touch on faith, the sin of pride, and unbelief. When they apostrophize, it is God who is addressed, but there is a human audience strongly implied. Indeed, the first folio of the text calls upon God to save the author and his hearers, making his own the words of the psalmists, prophets, and Apostle Paul. The theme is developed towards God’s unique ability to save, and His interventions on behalf of Noah, Lot, the Children of Israel, the young men in the fiery furnace, and culminating in Peter addressing Jesus, walking on the water.

The second folio, which could of course represent an entirely different text in the same mysterious genre, talks of Satan, and his pride. Unbelief in God is then denounced, and rejected as incompatible with a selection of Divine actions in the Scriptures. Those who do not believe are analogized to wolves in sheep’s clothing, such as Cain, Pharaoh, or Nebuchadnezzar.

The text may represent a sermon, though the virtuoso deployment of Scriptural texts with only occasional citations would surely have gone over the heads of normal people. It could be a draft, assembling quotations for a more detailed, lost text, though the use of expensive parchment makes this somewhat unlikely in a world where papyrus and slate were widely available. There is occasionally a stream-of-consciousness quality to the argumentation, as when after mentioning Peter’s cry ‘save me’ (1 Verso 23), the author digresses to say that of Peter Luke also related ‘send to Joppa and call Simon who is called Peter’ (1 Verso 25-6) – a passage with no relevance to the theme as far as we can discern it.

An important section of the text begins with a quotation of *Psalm 14 qab unfrops in hairtin seinamma’ nist gup* ‘the fool says in his heart, “There is no God”’ (2 Recto 18-9). The speaker is said to be the same as the ‘wicked man’ of *Ps.* 36:2, and in turn the ‘enemy’ of *Matth.* 13:28, and ultimately identified as the devil. The fool’s negative declaration is then transformed into a protasis, *jabai nist gup...*, which can be translated ‘if there is no God...’, but also perhaps ‘if it was not God...’ A catena of rhetorical questions is thus introduced: ‘If there is no God, who told you that name?’ (It is unclear whether it is the name of God or the devil that is meant). ‘If there is no God, of whom [is written] “God made man”? ... of whom did Isaiah say, “Behold a virgin shall conceive...”’ etc.

While these verses appear to be directed against Satan, one may assume they were meant to be primarily relevant to other hearers or readers. Indeed, the New Testament does not portray demons or the devil as ignorant of God (most clearly at *James* 2:19). Nor it is likely that Scriptural citations were deployed to convince an unbeliever, real or imaginary, of God’s reality. Some of the

selected texts could be arguing against a Jewish reading of the Scriptures, most notably the association of ‘Emmanuel’ from *Isaiah* with undisputed divine action. There were certainly Jews in the Ostrogothic kingdom, and they were occasionally the object of state policy,<sup>3</sup> as well as pressure to convert.<sup>4</sup> A document in Gothic cannot have been intended directly for a Jewish audience, however.

Any question of Gothic theology makes us think automatically of the ‘Homoianism’ with which Gothic politics and churchmen were historically associated. The Bologna Fragments contain no direct treatment of Trinitarian issues, which would be the only sure ground for discerning Homoianism. In the Bologna Fragments, moreover, any distinction among the Persons of the Trinity is elided or avoided.

When considering Divine actions the Scriptures (especially the Old Testament) ascribe generically to God, a Trinitarian theologian can either attempt to distinguish among the operations of the Persons, or treat them as having worked co-operatively. The Bologna Fragments may at first glance appear to opt for the latter course. At 1 Verso 7-9, the author prays to God, who saved Noah: *nasei mik f(rauj)a þuei nauel us swaleikamma midja sweipainais watin g[a]nasides* ‘Save me, O Lord, Thou Who saved Noah out of such water of the deluge.’ At 2 Recto 25-6, the author refers to the culmination of the Creation: *jabai nist g(u)þ bi hvana .[.]þn..[.]s..[.]þ. gatawida g(u)þ þana mannan*, ‘If it is not God, of whom .... “God made man”?’

However, even in Scriptural passages where the Second Person of the Trinity is clearly indicated, the Bologna Fragments often refer generically to ‘God’. The actions of the incarnate Christ are thus described: 1 Verso 21-3: ... *þuei ja[h p]aitr[u] sagqanana standandan in marein ganasides...* ‘... Thou Who saved sinking Peter standing in the sea...’ Indeed, the Incarnation itself is treated thus, in a passage previously mentioned: 2 Verso 6-9: *jabai nist g(u)þ bi hvana qaqþ esaeias sai magaps in kilþein ganimiþ jah gabairiþ sunu jah haitan<d> namo is inmanuel þatei ist gaskeiriþ miþ unsis g(u)þ* ‘If it is not God, of whom quoth Isaiah, ‘see, a maiden conceives in womb and bears a son; and they call his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted “God-with-us”?’

It may be suggested that all of the references be held primarily to refer to the Second Person. After all, it is through Him that all things are made in both *John’s Gospel* and the Nicene Creed. Indeed, the statement in the deathbed creed of the greatest of Gothic churchmen, Wulfila, is stronger still: *Credo ... in unigenitum filium eius, dominum et deum nostrum, opificem et factorem universe creature* ‘I believe ... in His only-begotten Son, our Lord and God,

<sup>3</sup> See J. Moorhead, *Theodoric in Italy* (Oxford, 1992), 97-100 and P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy* (Cambridge, 1997), 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, B. Brennan, ‘The Conversion of the Jews of Clermont in AD 576’, *JTS* 36 (1985), 320-37.

creator and maker of all things'.<sup>5</sup> No doubt related to this is Wulfila's further statement that the Father is the 'God of our God'. God the Father is beyond all human or material doings; the Son creates and rules the world.

This interpretation of the Bologna Fragment is not unproblematic, however. Consider 1 Recto 11-3 *ufar þuk f(rau)ja nih airus nih agg[i]lus nih andbahts nih ahma ak silba f(rau)ja qam du nasjan unsis* 'Above thee, O Lord, [is] neither messenger nor angel nor servant [*i.e.* prophet] nor spirit; but the Lord Himself came to save us'. Evidently, this passage expands upon the Septuagint version of *Isa.* 63:9 (οὐ πρέσβυς οὐδὲ ἄγγελος ἀλλ' αὐτὸς κύριος ἔσωσεν αὐτούς, 'not a messenger nor an angel but the Lord himself saved them'). To speak of the Lord Himself coming to save is, in a Christian context, to speak of the Incarnation, and therefore of the Second Person of the Trinity. How then to reconcile to this the *ufar þuk*? Is God the Father not spirit / *ahma* (*John* 4:24), which the author has added to the passage? In the context of a hierarchical Trinity, this complicates identification of the Son with all citations of God. Even if *ahma* was used in a sense that did not include the Father, such usage does not suggest a careful guarding against misinterpretation. Trinitarian theology seems to have been far from the author's mind.

Thus, definite Homoian theological indices are not likely to be found in the Bologna Fragments, though further attention may yield further clues. Furthermore, even when a sustained argument can be detected, as in the *jabai nist guþ* example, the significance and intended interlocutors remain unclear. One important conclusion may be drawn, however: the author's inattention to the theology of the Trinity suggests distance from controversy on the subject. Such distance could arise in either a Homoian or a Nicene context, but is noteworthy to find in Gothic in either case. The Bologna Fragments may offer a window into Gothic Christianity as it was practiced away from the headline disputes for which scholarship remembers it.

<sup>5</sup> Latin in R. Gryson, *Scolies ariennes sur le Concile d'Aquilée*, SC 267 (Paris, 1980), 250; English translation by James Marchand, *Auxentius on Wulfila*: <<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/texts/auxentius.trans.html>>, accessed December 2015. Another version is presented in P. Heather and J. Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool, 1991).

# Proverbe (*paroimia*) et *cursus* spirituel : l'apport de l'Épitomé de la Chaîne de Procope

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## ABSTRACT

Procopius' *Catena on the Proverbs* provides a selection of patristic passages of great interest. The first point is that the catenist gathers many testimonies showing the posterity of an exegesis elaborated in the third century by Origen in his *Commentary on the Song of the Songs*. According to this Alexandrian tradition, the Christian interpreters are allowed to associate the *Proverbs*, attributed to the wise Salomon, to the first steps of a spiritual *cursus* (ethics and logics), copying the program of the Platonic schools. Then, this article shows that beyond conceptual dependence, Origen's heirs have developed their own meditation on the spiritual *cursus* inaugurated by the *Proverbs*, through the use of a rhetorical definition of the *paroimia* as 'a saying to be read along the road'. However, not only the patristic authors are making a creative reading of a rather simple collection of sentences. The inquiry shows that the catenist himself rewrites his material to make it more fitted to the precise purpose of his *Catena*. As a conclusion, my article stresses the fact that studying this particular form of transmission of the Father's works is not only a way to collect some *membra disiecta* dealing with a similar subject, but it allows us to see how tradition is an active process of appropriation.

## L'association des *Proverbes* à la première partie d'un *cursus* philosophique christianisé

Dans le prologue de son Commentaire sur le *Cantique des cantiques* Origène est le premier exégète à associer chacun des trois ouvrages de Salomon aux différentes étapes d'une formation spirituelle à la doctrine du Christ – l'éthique et la logique, la physique et la théologie<sup>1</sup>. En faisant cela, comme l'a rappelé P. Hadot<sup>2</sup>, Origène s'est fait l'héritier d'une conception de la philosophie comme *cursus*, élaborée au contact de milieux scolaires grecs, *cursus* qu'il a

<sup>1</sup> Avec des variantes. Voir Origène, *In Canticum Canticorum*, in *Origenes Werke VIII*, éd. Wilhelm A. Baehrens, GCS 30 (Leipzig, 1925), 75-9.

<sup>2</sup> Dans ces écoles, la formation philosophique reposait sur un programme et un ordre de lecture 'pédagogique' des Dialogues de Platon, lequel s'ouvrit, sous l'influence du néoplatonisme, aux œuvres d'Aristote. Voir Pierre Hadot, 'Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité', *MusHelv* 36 (1979), 213-21, repris dans *id.*, *Discours et mode de vie philosophique*, Le goût des idées (Paris, 2014), 40-52.

christianisé et appliqué aux écrits sapientiaux. Sous la plume de l'Alexandrin, la place qu'occupaient les *Proverbes* dans l'économie du corpus salomonien était désormais identifiée au temps de l'enseignement éthique et logique.

Cette exégèse origénienne est extrêmement discrète dans l'Épitomé de la Chaîne de Procope sur les *Proverbes*<sup>3</sup> : aucun des éléments de démonstration qui figuraient dans le prologue du Commentaire sur le *Cantique* d'Origène n'y apparaît. Pour le commentaire du *Prou.* I, 1 on y trouve en effet un seul développement – le premier toutefois – où Basile de Césarée en cinq lignes résume quelques cinq pages d'exégèse origénienne<sup>4</sup>. Dans un énoncé succinct et en des termes peu techniques, le Livre des Proverbes est décrit comme une παιδευσις ἡθῶν, une 'instruction morale', l'Ecclésiaste comme φυσιολογίας ἀπτόμενος, 'touchant à la connaissance de la nature', le Cantique, enfin, comme τρόπον τῆς τῶν ψυχῶν τελειότητος, 'mode de perfection des âmes' :

< De Basile. > Il y a trois ouvrages composés par le très sage Salomon : le Proverbe est instruction morale, redressement des passions et ensemble de préceptes ramassés sur ce qu'il faut faire ; l'Ecclésiaste, qui touche à la connaissance de la nature, révèle la vanité de la vie présente ; quant au Cantique des cantiques, il expose le mode de perfection des âmes sous la figure de l'Époux et de l'Épouse, puisqu'il renferme la familiarité de l'âme avec le Dieu Verbe.<sup>5</sup>

Si le thème apparaît de manière discrète, il est toutefois passé chez l'ensemble des auteurs cités dans la Chaîne, qu'on en trouve trace à l'intérieur même de celle-ci ou dans d'autres de leurs Commentaires<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Les auteurs représentés dans l'Épitomé de la Chaîne de Procope sont, par ordre d'apparition : Basile de Césarée, Évagre le Pontique, Didyme et Origène. J'ai entrepris l'édition critique de ce corpus d'extraits exégétiques. Dans le présent article toutes les traductions sont les miennes.

<sup>4</sup> Le caténiste puise dans l'Homélie *In principium Prouerbiorum* de Basile de Césarée qui compte quelques éléments supplémentaires, mais la formulation de l'exégèse origénienne reste synthétique : voir PG 31, 388 A5-B6.

<sup>5</sup> < Βασιλείου. > Τρεῖς εἰσι τοῦ σοφωτάτου Σολομώντος αἱ πραγματεῖαι· ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν Παροιμία, παιδευσις ἐστὶν ἡθῶν καὶ παθῶν ἐπανόρθωσις καὶ τῶν πρακτέων ὑποθήκαι πυκναί· ὁ δὲ Ἐκκλησιαστής, φυσιολογίας ἀπτόμενος, ἀποκαλύπτει τοῦ παρόντος βίου τὸ μάταιον τὸ δὲ Ἄισμα τῶν ἁσμάτων τὸν τρόπον ὑποδείκνυσι τῆς τῶν ψυχῶν τελειότητος ἐν σχήματι νυμφίου καὶ νύμφης, πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον τῆς ψυχῆς περιέχον οἰκείωσιν. (Épitomé I, 1)

<sup>6</sup> Voir Épitomé 22, 35 : 'D'Évagre. Toute la doctrine de l'Écriture (πᾶσα ἡ γραφικὴ πραγματεία) se divise en parties éthique, physique et théologique (εἰς ἠθικὴν καὶ φυσικὴν καὶ θεολογικὴν) ; et les Proverbes se rapportent à la première, l'Ecclésiaste à la deuxième, le Cantique des cantiques à la troisième' ; et Didyme l'Aveugle, *Commentaire sur l'Ecclésiaste*, dans *Didymos der Blinde, Kommentar zum Ecclesiastes*, éd. Gerhard Binder et Leo Liesenborghs, 5 vols. (Bonn, 1979), I, 1 codex p. 5.31-6.12. Il faut remarquer que Didyme rapporte le *Cantique* aux ὑπὲρ τὰ φυσικά, une terminologie néoplatonicienne d'emploi assez rare qui a ceci de singulier qu'elle substitue à la préposition μετὰ à valeur chronologique, ailleurs habituelle, la préposition ὑπὲρ qui a une valeur axiologique : les objets considérés par la métaphysique sont proprement *supérieurs*.

Même à l'époque du caténiste, l'exégèse origénienne reste connue. Elle est en effet à l'œuvre dans une reformulation par le caténiste d'une scholie d'Évagre qu'on connaît par ailleurs en tradition directe :

Scholie 2 en tradition directe : Le 'royaume d'Israël', c'est la science spirituelle [...] qui *dévoile* (*ἀποκαλύπτουσα*) la contemplation portant sur la morale, la physique et la théologie (*περὶ ἠθικῆς καὶ φυσικῆς καὶ θεολογικῆς*).<sup>7</sup>

dans la Chaîne de Procope : Le 'royaume d'Israël' c'est la science spirituelle [...] qui *dissimule* (*ἀποκρύπτουσα*) la contemplation portant sur la philosophie morale et logique (*περὶ ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ λογικῆς*).<sup>8</sup>

Le caténiste est intervenu deux fois. Alors que la définition d'Évagre porte sur la 'science spirituelle', dans la Chaîne, la substitution du verbe ἀποκαλύπτω par ἀποκρύπτω adapte la définition au contexte spécifique des *Proverbes* puisque le vocabulaire de la κρύψις est sans cesse employé dans des définitions chrétiennes de la *paroimia* – la suite de l'article éclairera ce point. La seconde modification a adapté la définition d'Évagre dans l'ordre philosophique. Dans la tradition directe, on avait en effet : 'éthique, physique et théologie', soit la définition du *cursus* ; dans la tradition indirecte : 'philosophie éthique et logique', soit *précisément* la définition origénienne du proverbe au sein de ce *cursus*. Ces substitutions ne relèvent donc pas de l'arbitraire, mais sont au contraire l'expression frappante d'une activité délibérée du caténiste.

Si le thème de l'association du proverbe salomonien à l'éthique et à la logique est présent de manière relativement discrète dans la Chaîne, le noyau fondamental d'une telle exégèse – celui qui associe la lecture des *Proverbes* à un processus d'acquisition de la connaissance – a cependant massivement nourri le commentaire des Pères de tradition alexandrine qui y sont représentés. Il apparaît en effet comme la clef herméneutique d'une réflexion très fournie sur le sens de la *paroimia* qui offre une reformulation imagée du thème du *cursus*.

### Une reformulation imagée du thème du *cursus*

Basile procède par antithèse et oppose une définition grecque du proverbe, de type scolaire, à une conception chrétienne. Selon l'étymologie scolaire, que Basile évoque, les proverbes seraient des paroles échangées le long du chemin, *παρὰ ὁδόν* – par identification des termes οἶμος et ὁδός : *παροιμία* < *παρὰ*

<sup>7</sup> Voir Évagre le Pontique, *Scholies aux Proverbes*, éd. Paul Géhin, Sources Chrétiennes 340 (Paris, 1987), 90-1.

<sup>8</sup> Εὐαγρίου. Βασιλεία δὲ Ἰσραὴλ γινώσκει πνευματικὴ τοὺς περὶ θεοῦ καὶ ἀσωμάτων καὶ σωμάτων καὶ προνοίας περιέχουσα λόγους ἢ τὴν περὶ ἠθικῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ λογικῆς ἀποκρύπτουσα θεωρίαν. (Épitomé 1, 13)

οἶμον < παρὰ ὁδόν<sup>9</sup>. Leur désignation remonterait à une série de bons mots échangés dans la rue à certaines occasions de la vie :

De Basile. Le terme ‘proverbes’ (*paroimiai*) s’applique chez les gens du dehors aux paroles qui jouissent d’une certaine popularité et à celles qui sont très souvent employées dans les rues (*hodois*). En effet la rue (*hodos*) est un chant (*oimos*). De là vient qu’on définit le ‘proverbe’ (*paroimia*) comme une expression échangée le long du chemin (*rhēma parodion*), rebattue par l’usage qu’en fait la multitude et dont l’emploi, d’un petit nombre de contextes, peut être transposé à un plus grand nombre du même genre.<sup>10</sup>

À cette définition de type scolaire, Basile oppose en apparence une nouvelle définition entièrement appuyée sur le témoignage scripturaire :

< De Basile. > Eh bien chez nous il s’agit d’une parole profitable présentant une relative obscurité, qui par suite contient de l’utilité et beaucoup de sens dans sa profondeur. De là vient que le Seigneur dit : ‘Cela, je vous l’ai dit en proverbes (ἐν παροιμίαις) : vient l’heure où je ne vous parlerai plus en proverbes (ἐν παροιμίαις), mais ouvertement (παρρησία λαλήσω ὑμῖν)’ (*Jean* 16:25), dans la mesure où ce qui est dit en proverbes (τοῦ παροιμιακοῦ λόγου) n’a pas un sens ouvertement exprimé (τὸ πεπαρρησιασμένον τῆς διανοίας οὐκ ἔχοντος).<sup>11</sup>

On a donc un nouveau sens fondé sur l’autorité de l’*Évangile de Jean* où la *paroimia* est opposée à la *parrhēsia*, au fait de ‘parler ouvertement’<sup>12</sup>. C’est cette référence à *Jean* qui a inspiré aux auteurs de la Chaîne et jusqu’au catédiste lui-même, comme je l’ai dit, des caractérisations de la *paroimia* où abonde le vocabulaire de l’ἄσαφεία et de la κρύψις, de l’occultation délibérée du sens.

On trouve ensuite dans la Chaîne des variations autour de ce thème d’un langage dissimulé. Basile oppose deux niveaux de sens : un niveau manifeste et un niveau latent. Avec un auteur comme Évagre, dont la pensée est plus

<sup>9</sup> Cette étymologie scolaire est considérée comme fautive par Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1968), II 783, s.v. οἶμη.

<sup>10</sup> Βασιλείου. Τὸ τῶν παροιμιῶν ὄνομα ἐπὶ τῶν δημωδωστέρων παρὰ τοῖς ἔξω τάττεται λόγων καὶ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς λαλουμένων ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλείστον· οἶμος γὰρ ἡ ὁδός· ὅθεν καὶ τὴν παροιμίαν ὀρίζονται ῥῆμα παρόδιον τετριμμένον ἐν τῇ χρήσει τῶν πολλῶν καὶ ἀπὸ ὀλίγων ἐπὶ πλείονα ὁμοία μεταληφθῆναι δυνάμενον. (Épitomé 1, 2)

<sup>11</sup> < Βασιλείου. > Παρ’ ἡμῖν τοῖνον λόγος ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος μετ’ ἐπικρύψεως μετρίας, αὐτόθεν ἔχων τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ πολλὴν τὴν ἐν τῷ βαθεῖ διάνοιαν. Ὅθεν καὶ ὁ κύριος· ‘Ταῦτα’, φησί, ‘λελάληκα ἐν παροιμίαις· ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὐκέτι ἐν παροιμίαις, ἀλλὰ παρρησία λαλήσω ὑμῖν’, ὡς τοῦ παροιμιακοῦ λόγου τὸ πεπαρρησιασμένον τῆς διανοίας οὐκ ἔχοντος. (Épitomé 1, 5)

<sup>12</sup> Voir également *Jean* 10:6 : Ταύτην τὴν παροιμίαν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τίνα ἦν ἢ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς, ‘Jésus leur dit ce *proverbe*, mais eux ne comprirent pas ce qu’il leur disait’ ; et 16:29 : Ἴδε νῦν ἐν παρρησίᾳ λαλεῖς καὶ παροιμίαν οὐδεμίαν λέγεις, ‘Voici que maintenant tu parles *ouvertement* et ne t’exprime plus en *proverbes*’. À l’exception de 2*Pierre* 2:22 où παροιμία a le sens courant de ‘proverbe’, on dénombre seulement trois occurrences du terme dans le NT, ceux qu’on trouve dans l’*Évangile de Jean* et que nous citons.

systématique, la *paroimia*, considérée comme un système de renvoi entre le sensible et l'intelligible, est identifiée à l'allégorie :

D'Évagre. Pour nous le 'proverbe' est une parole qui désigne au moyen de réalités sensibles des réalités intelligibles.<sup>13</sup>

Didyme, enfin, qui envisage la dissimulation du sens dans ce qu'elle a de délibéré au sein d'un processus initiatique, introduit une thématique mystérique :

De Didyme. De même que la partie manifeste des mystères, qui se trouve être aussi sa partie sensible, nous la dissimulons derrière des lieux où l'on ne peut pénétrer, derrière murs d'enceinte et tentures, [...] de même nous dissimulons aussi les mystères des paroles (τὰ ἐν λόγοις μυστήρια) au moyen de paroles plus obscures.<sup>14</sup>

L'image de l'enceinte sacrée de l'église et de ses tentures montre que la réflexion autour de l'occultation du sens s'élabore sur un mode figuré.

Or au moment même où Basile dit s'écarter du sens grec, il demeure influencé par une tradition d'interprétation très ancienne qui associe écrits brefs et densité de contenu, tradition déjà formulée de manière imagée par Plutarque dans le *De Pythiae oraculis*. Dans ce traité Plutarque identifie les sentences des Sept Sages à un ruisseau : lit resserré, surface opaque, mais profondeur de sens<sup>15</sup>. Ainsi, alors que l'élaboration d'un sens chrétien semble se construire sur une antithèse, le retour à la tradition grecque suggère, au contraire, une permanence.

Par ailleurs, alors que Basile dit s'éloigner de l'étymologie scolaire de la *paroimia* – comme parole dispensée *παρὰ ὁδόν*, 'le long du chemin' –, les auteurs de la Chaîne la réinvestissent silencieusement. On le voit notamment dans un extrait de Didyme qui est fortement imprégné de cette tradition d'interprétation profane :

< De Didyme. > En effet, pour ceux qui font chemin vers Dieu (τοῖς γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὁδὸν ποιούμενοις) < le proverbe > devient un guide (ὁδηγός) à peu près semblable au modèle [allusion probable à la borne miliaire<sup>16</sup>], puisqu'il redonne forces à ceux qui

<sup>13</sup> Εὐαγρίου. Καθ' ἡμᾶς δὲ λόγος δι' αἰσθητῶν πραγμάτων σημαίων πράγματα νοητά. (Épitomé 1, 3)

<sup>14</sup> Διδύμου. Ἡ λόγος ἀσαφεία τὸ σαφὲς ἐπικρύπτων ἢ λόγος ἐπιεκκεκρυμμένως ἐμφαίνων τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Ὡσπερ δὲ τὰ ἐμφανῆ τῶν μυστηρίων, ἃ καὶ αἰσθητὰ τυγχάνει, ἀδύτοις καὶ περιβόλοις καὶ παραπετάσμασι κρύπτομεν, [...] οὕτω καὶ τὰ ἐν λόγοις μυστήρια διὰ λόγων ἀσφαλεστέρων ἀποκρυπτόμεθα. Οὕτω γὰρ ἂν τις τῶν σκοτεινῶς καὶ συνεστραμμένως εἰρημένον πόνω τὴν ἔρευναν ποιησάμενος ἀσφαλῆ τῶν λεχθέντων τὴν εὐρεσιν σχήσει. (Épitomé 1, 4)

<sup>15</sup> Plutarque, *De Pythiae oraculis*, 408 D-F.

<sup>16</sup> On attribue à un certain Diogenianos de datation controversée la remarque grammaticale suivante : Τὴν παροιμίαν ὀνομάζεσθαι φασι τινες ἀπὸ τῶν οἴμων· οὕτω δὲ αἱ ὁδοὶ ἐκαλοῦντο. Οἱ δ' ἄνθρωποι, ὅσα κοινωφελῆ εὕρισκον, ταῦτα κατὰ λεωφόρους ὁδοὺς ἀνέγραφον ὑπὲρ τοῦ πλείονος ἐντυγχάνοντας τῆς ὀφελείας μεταλαμβάνειν· οὕτω καὶ τὰ τῶν σοφῶν ἀποφθέγματα γνωθῆναι φασι, καὶ τὰ Πυθαγορικά παραγγέλματα, 'Certains disent que le "proverbe" (*paroimia*) tire son nom des "chants" (*oimoi*) : c'est ainsi qu'ils appelaient les "chemins" (*hodoi*). Tout ce qu'on trouvait d'utile à la communauté, on l'écrivait le long des chemins fréquentés pour qu'un

sont fatigués par la longueur du chemin (διὰ τὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ μῆκος) et les exhorte à lire ces proverbes-ci plutôt que les proverbes populaires.<sup>17</sup>

On a là une reprise de l'interprétation profane, mais décalée, avec un passage à la spiritualisation du chemin, selon une image répandue, attestée dès Platon<sup>18</sup>.

Origène se montre également attentif à cette image dans son commentaire du *Prou.* I, 20 ('Sagesse dans les chemins de sortie [ἐν ἐξόδοις] est célébrée [ὑμνεῖται] ; sur ceux qui sont larges [ἐν δὲ πλατειαίς], elle s'exprime ouvertement [παρρησίαν ἄγει]') :

D'Origène. C'est-à-dire : ceux qui aujourd'hui voient comme en miroir et en énigme, quand ils sortiront de là (ἐξιόντες ἐντεῦθεν), verront < la sagesse > face à face (voir 1*Cor* 13:12) et parleront de celle-ci de manière pure.<sup>19</sup>

L'Alexandrin est resté sensible à l'étymologie scolaire – ἐξιόντες – et à la spiritualisation qu'on voyait déjà apparaître dans les extraits de Didyme : l'issue du chemin – ἔξοδος – introduit dans une connaissance complète et sans intermédiaire dont Origène rend compte selon une terminologie paulinienne.

Par le retour à l'étymologie scolaire de la *paroimia* – parole dispensée *παρὰ ὁδόν*, 'le long du chemin' –, et par une circulation entre les deux traditions, profane et chrétienne, la Chaîne de Procope offre une reformulation imagée du thème origénien présent dans le prologue du Commentaire sur le *Cantique*, celui du *cursus* spirituel.

Cette reformulation témoigne d'un rapport particulier des exégètes aux Écritures : le commentaire n'est pas au service du texte, mais c'est l'inverse qui s'est produit. L'exemple du proverbe liminaire témoigne, si besoin est, de ce que l'exégèse alexandrine a élaboré un système herméneutique qui a créé les conditions d'une richesse du sens.

Mieux encore, à considérer cette forme particulière de tradition indirecte qu'est la tradition caténaire, l'enrichissement est double, à mon sens : à la fois parce que le texte commenté est un texte limité, et parce que, comme en témoigne l'intervention du caténiste que j'ai mise en évidence, cette tradition est active. On en conclura qu'elle est, elle aussi, un lieu de production de sens.

grand nombre, en les lisant, en tire profit : c'est ainsi également que les apophtegmes des sages furent connus, dit-on, comme les préceptes de Pythagore'. (*Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum*, éd. Friedrich G. Schneidewin et Ernst L. von Leutsch, 2 vols. (Göttingen, 1839), I, 177.1-6).

<sup>17</sup> < Διδύμου. > Τοῖς γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὁδὸν ποιουμένοις, ὁδηγὸς γίνεται παραπλησίως τῷ ὑποδείγματι, τοὺς κάμνοντας διὰ τὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ μῆκος ἀνακτωμένη καὶ ταύταις μᾶλλον ἢ ταῖς δημόδεσι παροιμίαις κεχρησθαι προτροπομένη. Ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσι καὶ δημῶδει πρὸς Σαῦλον ἐχρήσατο παροιμίᾳ, λέγων· 'Σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν', ἥτις ἐστὶν ἑλληνικὴ παροιμία. (Épitomé 1, 6)

<sup>18</sup> Voir notamment Platon, *Rép.* 532 e et Plotin, *Enn.* VI, 9, 4, 11-6.

<sup>19</sup> Ὁριγένους. Ἦθουν 'οἱ νῦν ὁρῶντες ὡς ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ καὶ αἰνίγματι', ἐξιόντες ἐντεῦθεν, πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον ὁρῶντες καθαρῶς ταύτην λαλήσουσιν. (Épitomé 1, 75)

## *Lector inueniet*: A Commonplace of Late Antiquity

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### ABSTRACT

At *Amartigenia* 624-626, the Spanish poet Prudentius addresses his reader and says that s/he can find confirmation of what he says in the Bible (*lector ... quod loquor inuenies*). This passage has been much discussed, and we know that Prudentius brings the inherent difficulties of reading into the foreground of his anti-heretical poem. Even though the reader's invention was a commonplace in late antiquity, the specific context of Prudentius's address has not been noticed: the phrase *lector inueniet* and closely related expressions were used commonly around the end of the fourth century to direct the reader's active engagement with the text. The phrase was used in Christian and secular contexts, and the uses of this commonplace reflect the variety of ways in which reading was presented in late antiquity. They also give us a better idea of how Prudentius would have been understood by contemporary readers. The phrase *lector inueniet* was used by Macrobius, Augustine, Jerome, and Tiberius Donatus, among others. A careful look at these passages shows that a range of modifiers were appended to the word *lector*, to emphasize different aspects of the reading that was required. In addition to contemporary Latin parallels, this paper considers some earlier uses of similar language in Latin, as well as Greek parallels.

In *Amartigenia*<sup>1</sup> 624-7, Aurelius Clemens Prudentius made a direct appeal to his reader:

*Sanctum, lector, percense uolumen,  
quod loquor inuenies dominum dixisse profanis  
uera obiectantem mortalibus: Ex patre nam uos  
esse meo genitos pietas (ait) ipsa probaret ac pietatis opus.*

Survey, reader, the holy roll,  
what I say, you will find that the lord said it  
as he cast the truth at profane mortals: For that you were born  
(he said) from my father, piety and its works would prove it.

<sup>1</sup> I follow Cunningham's edition in using the spelling of the Greek title found in the manuscripts of Prudentius and in Gennadius (*Hieronymus Liber de uiris illustribus – Gennadius Liber de uiris illustribus*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Texte und Untersuchungen* 14.1 [Leipzig, 1896], 66). Mieczysław Brożek does not discuss the spelling of *Amartigenia* in his article 'De librorum Prudentii inscriptionibus graecis', *Eos* 71 (1983), 191-7.

Because Prudentius only loosely adapts the scriptures (*John* 8:42 is similar in sense), Catherine Conybeare has argued that Prudentius in this passage was ‘manipulating the reading of the *sanctum uolumen* and blurring the boundaries between his own literary production and the scriptures’.<sup>2</sup> She has shown that Prudentius brings the inherent difficulties of reading into the foreground of his anti-heretical poem, and the passage has been widely discussed because it is the only place that Prudentius addresses his reader (*lector*) as such.<sup>3</sup> Scholars have not, however, noticed that the reader’s invention became a commonplace around the turn of the fifth century, when a range of similar expressions were used to direct the reader’s active engagement with the text. Such references to readers suggest their prominence in late antiquity as well as the range of contemporary approaches to reading.<sup>4</sup> We will begin with a full review of *lector inueniet* (and similar phrases) in Macrobius, because he provides a good indication of the different ways to invoke the reader and also because in his case (but not in others) I was able to confirm the results of electronic searches by a thorough reading of the *Saturnalia* and *In somnium Scipionis*. We will then consider the range of other examples and partially similar Greek expressions. The goal is to show that Prudentius’ address would have been understood within the context of contemporary appeals to the reader’s discovery. In this particular form, such appeals do not seem to occur in earlier periods, but they quickly became conventional.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Conybeare, ‘SANCTUM, LECTOR, PERCENSE VOLUMEN: Snakes, Readers, and the Whole Text, in Prudentius’s *Hamartigenia*’, in William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran (eds), *The Early Christian Book* (Washington, D.C., 2007), 225-40, 234.

<sup>3</sup> See Marc Mastrangelo, *The Roman Self in Late Antiquity: Prudentius and the Poetics of the Soul* (Baltimore, MD, 2008), 5; Anthony Dykes, *Reading Sin in the World: The Hamartigenia of Prudentius and the Vocation of the Responsible Reader* (Cambridge, 2011), 104, 109 and 119; and Martha Malamud, *The Origin of Sin: An English Translation* (Ithaca, NY, 2011), 32 n. 90. Mastrangelo notes that ‘*inuenies* is common in patristic prose for reading and studying scripture’ and that it also appears earlier in Seneca the Younger; he concludes: ‘The difference between pagan and Christian is clear since Prudentius and his fellow Christians see all literature as based on a quotable, citable sacred text, whereas the pagans cited authoritative texts much less frequently’ (179 n. 19). As will become clear, I do not think that this language can be used to support that claim.

<sup>4</sup> For the context see Aaron Peltari, *The Space That Remains: Reading Latin Poetry in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY, 2014); Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA, 2006); and Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA, 1996). On the various forms of reading current in the Republican and Augustan periods, see Holt N. Parker, ‘Books and Reading Latin Poetry’, in William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (eds), *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2009), 186-299.

## 1. Macrobius and the reader's discovery

Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius used the exact phrase *lector inueniet* four times in his surviving writing.<sup>5</sup> In each case, the phrase references a source or directs the reader to a specific passage under discussion.<sup>6</sup> In *Saturnalia* book one Macrobius says that the reader can find in Granius Licinianus (the author of a post-Hadrianic historical compendium) the explanation for why market days are public holidays:

*Causam uero huius uarietatis apud Granium Licinianum libro secundo diligens lector inueniet.* (1.16.30)

But the diligent reader will find the reason for this difference in Granius Licinianus book two.

But the diligent reader<sup>7</sup> does not have far to look: Macrobius goes on in the next sentence to provide the relevant details from Granius (*Ait enim...*). Similarly, in book three, Macrobius says that Cato can be used to explain why Vergil calls Mezentius *contemptor deorum*:

*Sed ueram huius contumacissimi nominis causam in primo libro Originum Catonis diligens lector inueniet.* (Sat. 3.5.10)

But the diligent reader will find the true reason for this insulting name in the first book of Cato's *Origines*.

Again, Macrobius goes on to quote the relevant passage from Cato (*Ait enim Mezentium...*). In book five, Macrobius saves space by directing the reader to look up specific passages in Homer and Vergil:

*Et cursorum certamen utrobique simile. Et quia uersibus est apud utrumque numerosis, locum loco similem lector inueniet. Initia haec sunt...* (Sat. 5.7.4)

And the contest in running is similar in each place. And because it takes up a number of lines in each of them, the reader will find the similar passages. These are the beginnings...

Macrobius makes very similar comments before two of the next three passages he presents.<sup>8</sup> At *In somnium Scipionis* 2.5.28, Macrobius uses a similar

<sup>5</sup> On Macrobius and the dating of his works (*Saturnalia* written probably in the 430s, after the *In somnium Scipionis*), I follow Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), 231-9.

<sup>6</sup> For stimulating notes on source citations in the ancient world, see Alan Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford, 2004), especially 24-32, 106-23, and 321-34.

<sup>7</sup> On *diligentia* and the *diligens lector* in Macrobius, see Robert Kaster, 'Macrobius and Servius: Verecundia and the Grammarian's Function', *HSCP* 84 (1980), 220-62, 235. On Jerome's *prudens lector*, see below note 20. Another paper could consider the various adjectives applied to *lector* including *amicus* (Ovid), *studiosus* (Martial), *scrupulosus* (Apuleius), *fidelis* (Augustine) and *adentior* (Claudianus Mamertus).

<sup>8</sup> *Si uelis comparare certantes sagittis, inuenies haec utriusque principia...* (5.7.6) and *Capita locorum, ubi longa narratio est, dixisse sufficiet, ut quid unde natum sit lector inueniat* (5.7.7).

phrase to suggest that any reader should be able to interpret Cicero as he does (in a passage discussing geography):

*Haec omnia non otiosus lector in tam paucis uerbis Ciceronis inueniet.*

A non-lazy reader will find all of this in the words of Cicero, so few as they are.

This follows a lengthy discussion, and Macrobius goes on to discuss the specific lines that provide verbal confirmation for his interpretation. Throughout his writings, therefore, Macrobius directs the reader's attention to a relevant passage and our attention to the reader's involvement. He does so even in the *Saturnalia*, where each reference to the reader breaks the dramatic illusion of the dialogue.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these exact words, Macrobius used other closely related vocabulary to refer to the reader's involvement. In some cases, he continues to point out passages that the reader can follow up at will. Thus, in a discussion of gluttony, Macrobius quotes Varro (*Res rusticae* 3.12.5) on the practice of fattening up hares; he also refers readers to the same author for an even more surprising story about snails fattened for the market.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, in comparing storms from the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*, Macrobius says that because the passages are lengthy he will include only the beginnings so that the one who wants to read them will have their source (*uersus, quoniam utrobique multi sunt, non inserui; qui uolet legere ex hoc uersu habebit exordium, Sat. 5.4.4*). In both passages, the phrase *qui uolet legere* is parallel to *lector*, and references to seeking (*quaerere*) or to a beginning (*exordium*) take the place of finding (*inuenire*).

Macrobius also uses overlapping vocabulary to describe situations in which the reader has a somewhat more significant role and is presented as extending the author's interpretations. After mentioning a passage in which Vergil uses anger to arouse the reader's emotion, the character Eusebius says that the one who looks will find many similar passages (*et alia plura similia qui quaerit inueniet, Sat. 4.5.8*). In book six, the character Servius ends his discussion of passages from Vergil by saying that the diligent reader will note other similar ones: the day would fail him if he tried to pursue all of Vergil's new figures (*dies me deficiet si omnia persequi a Vergilio figurata uelim, sed ex his quae dicta sunt omnia similia lector diligens adnotabit, Sat. 6.6.20*).<sup>11</sup> The reader's

<sup>9</sup> Because they did seem not to fit *Saturnalia's* symposiastic setting, such references to the reader were used by H.D. Jocelyn to decry Macrobius' 'plagiarism', 'Ancient Scholarship and Virgil's Use of Republican Latin Poetry. I', *CQ* 14 (1964), 280-95, 287-8. Needless to say, I think that these are genuinely Macrobian elements in Macrobius.

<sup>10</sup> *Verba ipsa qui uolet legere, ubi quaerere debeat indicauit (Sat. 3.13.15)*. For the snails, see *Res rusticae* 3.14.5.

<sup>11</sup> For examples of Macrobius referring the reader to similar passages, see also *adde ... et quicquid in singulis paene uersibus diligens lector agnoscit (Sat. 5.14.8)* and *et ne obtundam nota referendo, mille sententiarum talium aut in ore sunt singulorum aut obuiae intentioni legentis occurrunt (Sat. 5.16.8)*.

real independence may be rather limited in these passages, but that was not always the case. After a long list of parallel passages in Homer and Vergil, the character Eustathius says that he will allow readers to pass judgment on each of them:

*et haec quidem iudicio legentium relinquenda sunt, ut ipsi aestiment quid debeant de utriusque collatione sentire. (Sat. 5.11.1)*

These indeed ought be left to the judgment of readers, for them to decide what they should think about the comparison of them both.

Although Eustathius goes on to offer his own judgment on some other passages, we can see that Macrobius (with his long lists of parallels) offered space for his readers and for reading. Throughout his writings, Macrobius invoked his reader's invention and judgment; in most cases he did so in order to direct his reader's attention to a certain text or way of reading; in a few cases he suggested that his readers would make their own judgments and find similar passages on their own. In this regard, he was similar to the authors of ancient commentaries who offered their readers a range of interpretations from which to choose.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. The range of *Lector inueniet*

Beginning in the fourth century there are plenty of examples to show Latin writers describing or enacting the discoveries of their readers, using *lector* or *lectio* and a form of *inuenire* to do so. This is in contrast to earlier examples, which I have found to be only partially similar, like the following reference in Aulus Gellius: *Qui exempla horum uerborum requirit ... inueniet ea in M. Tullii secunda Antonianarum* ('Anyone looking for examples of these words ... will find them in Marcus Tullius's second Antonine').<sup>13</sup> Although Gellius clearly has the reader in mind, he does not mention him or her explicitly. The surviving evidence suggests that the phrase *lector inueniet* became commonplace only in the fourth century. Sometimes the reader would verify the text, sometimes the reader would find new material, and sometimes the reader would make his or her own decisions. I found most of the examples below by searching two electronic databases, the *Library of Latin Texts* and the *Biblioteca Teubneriana Latina*.

The phrase *lector inueniet* could refer in a broad way to the reader's active discovery. Jerome said that the reader could find a fuller exposition of the topic under discussion in his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicle* (*quem locum in Chronica eiusdem Eusebii ... diligens lector plenius edissertum poterit inuenire*).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See Raymond J. Starr, 'The Flexibility of Literary Meaning and the Role of the Reader in Roman Antiquity', *Latomus* 60 (2001), 433-45.

<sup>13</sup> Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 6.11.3; see also 11.18.12 and 12.6.3.

<sup>14</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarii in Danielem prophetam* 3.9.24 (CChr.SL 75A, 876).

Rufinus said that Jerome had translated Origen in such a way that the Latin reader would find nothing in him contrary to the faith (*ut nihil in illis quod a fide nostra discrepet Latinus lector inueniat*).<sup>15</sup> Augustine, after explaining why John 3:30 (*Illud oportet crescere me autem minui*) could not be about physical growth and before launching into a discussion of the mystery to be understood, paused for effect: *magis illud inuenit lectio quam aspectio* ('Reading discovers that more than looking at it').<sup>16</sup> The phrase reveals Augustine's rhetoric, but it also shows the link between reading and discovery, along with the use of *lectio* as 'interpretation' (being related to extended consideration rather than first appearances).<sup>17</sup> Reading as a kind of discovery points to the rhetorical bases of education in late antiquity and from an emphasis on forensic performance to an interest in bookish interpretation.<sup>18</sup>

More specifically, the reader was sometimes asked to verify the author's words, by considering a written text (as in Macrobius) or by looking within themselves to the truth. An early parallel comes from the surviving version of Aelius Donatus' commentary on Terence's *Adelphoe*, in a gloss on the question that the character Demea would use to reproach his brother Micio (*Quid agis, Micio?*):

*Reminiscere lectionem et inuenies huiusmodi interrogationem uel inuentionis principio conuenire uel obiurgationis.*<sup>19</sup>

Remember your reading and you will find that a question of this kind belongs to the beginning either of a criticism or a reproach.

Rather than naming the reader or citing a specific source, the commentator asked 'you' to remember your rhetorical reading. However, Donatus' student Jerome said specifically that the prudent reader would be the one to recognize the originality of his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicle* (*prudens statim lector inueniet*).<sup>20</sup> In discussing *Psalm* 106, Jerome could not be

<sup>15</sup> Rufinus, *Praefationes in libros Origenis Periarchon*, praef. in librum 1, 2 (CChr.SL 20, 245-6). Jerome quotes the passage at *Apologia contra Rufinum* 1.3 and 1.4 (CChr.SL 79, 4) and at *Epistula Hieronymi aduersus Rufinum* 12 (CChr.SL 79, 85). Rufinus quotes himself at *Apologia contra Hieronymum* 2.49 (CChr.SL 20, 121). On the controversy in question, see Catherine M. Chin, 'Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives: Translation as Origenism', *JECS* 18 (2010), 617-47.

<sup>16</sup> Augustinus, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV* 14.4 (CChr.SL 36, 143).

<sup>17</sup> On this meaning of *lectio*, see *TLL* s.v. *lectio*, 7.2.1082.84-1083.17 (Beikircher).

<sup>18</sup> On *inuentio*, see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric* (Leiden, 1998), §§ 260-1 and Manfred Kienpointner, 'Invention', in Gert Ueding (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* (Tübingen, 1992-2015), vol. 4, 561-87. On the use of rhetoric in interpretation, see Karla Pollmann, *Doctrina christiana: Untersuchungen zu den Anfängen der christlichen Hermeneutik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Augustinus* (Fribourg, 1996), 245-9.

<sup>19</sup> Donatus, *Ad Adelphoe* 1.1.35 (Wessner II 20).

<sup>20</sup> Hieronymus, *Praefatio in Eusebii Caesariensis Onomasticon* (Helm, 3). Megan Hale Williams showed how Jerome used an ideal *prudens lector* to validate his project of scriptural exegesis, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago, 2006), 235-40.

bothered to quote the third or fourth time that the Psalmist says *confiteantur Domino*; instead, readers can do the work for themselves: *et postea dicitur hoc ipsum: prudens lector inueniat*.<sup>21</sup> Here and elsewhere the writer assumed that the reader would bring knowledge and diligence to the questions at hand.<sup>22</sup> More abstractly, Zeno of Verona (preaching in the second half of the fourth century) told the reader to raise his or her senses and to find the truth: *Age, excita sensum, lector, inuenies ueritatem*.<sup>23</sup> By applying logic to the reading of the scriptures, Zeno explained, the reader would come to understand.<sup>24</sup>

In other passages, authors say that readers will be able to find similar explanations or passages on their own. Thus Tiberius Claudius Donatus – in interpreting the sentence *quid non mortalia pectora cogis, auri sacra fames* (*Aen.* 3.56-7) – gave examples of cupidity’s effect on soldiers, spouses, sailors, relatives, allies,<sup>25</sup> and friends. Then he said that there were so many other applications of the lines that it was impossible to explain them all:

*Demimus intellegendi uiam, cetera lector inueniet, quae tanta sunt uno uersu conclusa, ut haec libris explicari non possent*.<sup>26</sup>

We provided a path for understanding, the reader will find others, which are so enclosed in a single verse that they could not be explained even in volumes.

Claudius Donatus seems to have written his *Interpretationes Vergilianae* in the second half of the fourth century, at the same time as or a generation before the other authors who include such references to the reader’s discovery. Like Claudius Donatus, Jerome said that he could add countless examples but that he would include only a few and allow the reader to find similar ones on his or her own:

*Poteram super hoc innumerabilia exempla congerere, et omnem lacessentis procacitatem, testimoniorum nube celare; uerum adhuc pauca subiiciam, ut his similia ipse sibi lector inueniat*.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Hieronymus, *Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos* 106.16 (CChr.SL 78, 199).

<sup>22</sup> Similar appeals to the reader include Hieronymus, *Commentarii ad Ephesios* (PL 26, 456), Ambrosius, *De spiritu sancto* 3.10.63 (CSEL 79.9, 176), Julian in Augustinus, *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 1.13 (CSEL 85.1, 12), and Iulianus Aecclanensis, *Expositio libri Iob*, praef. (CChr.SL 88, 4).

<sup>23</sup> *Tractatus* 2.4.3 (CChr.SL 22, 159).

<sup>24</sup> Compare Augustinus, *De trinitate* 14.7 (CChr.SL 50A, 434): *Id agunt et litterae quae de his rebus conscriptae sunt, quas res duce ratione ueras esse inuenit lector, non quas ueras esse credit ei qui scripsit sicut legitur historia, sed quas ueras esse etiam ipse inuenit siue apud se siue in ipsa mentis duce ueritate*.

<sup>25</sup> In this passage, Georges prints *foederum* (‘treaties’) with the manuscripts, but *foederatorum* is surely better for sound and sense.

<sup>26</sup> Tiberius Claudius Donatus (Georges I 272).

<sup>27</sup> *Aduersus Heluidium de Mariae uirginitate perpetua* 7 (PL 23, 199).

Parallel expressions appear in Jerome's translation of Didymus' work on the Holy Spirit (*et multa his similia, quae in Euangelio obseruans lector inueniet*)<sup>28</sup> and in the pseudo-Augustinian *Solutiones diuersarum quaestionum* (*Similia uero curiosus lector inueniet*).<sup>29</sup> An instance of the commonplace in Eucherius of Lyons is instructive if perhaps extreme. The last chapter of his work on allegorical interpretation treats number. After giving a series of numerical interpretations from scripture, it concludes with a brief note to the reader:

*Hos igitur certos sacrosque numeros exempli tantum causa protulimus. Sunt uero praeter eos plurimi uel paene omnes sacrati qui quomodo fiant ipse diuinae lectionis scrutator inuenies.*<sup>30</sup>

So we produced these certain and sacred numbers only as an example. Besides them most or even all the rest are sacred – which, how they are made so, you as an investigator of the divine readings will discover.

In these and similar cases the reader plays a more active role, continuing the work of interpretation that the writer did not, or could not, complete.

Like Macrobius, Jerome sometimes advertised his reliance on the reader's judgment.<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of *Letter* 20 (to Damasus) on the meaning of the word 'Osanna', Jerome explained that he would allow the reader to decide:

*Igitur, ut diximus, ipsa Hebraea uerba ponenda sunt et omnium interpretum opinio digerenda, quo facilius, quid super hoc sentiendum sit, ex retractatione cunctorum ipse sibi lector inueniat.*<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, as we said, the Hebrew words themselves should be presented and the opinions of all the interpreters considered so that it will be easier for the reader to discover for himself or herself what to think about it from the reconsideration of all of them.

Rather than trying to provide a definitive answer to a thorny problem, Jerome collated the relevant evidence and left the rest of the work to the reader. This is another case where the reader's discovery involves more than simply retrieving information or extending the writer's interpretation.

As the evidence seems to show, the phrase *lector inueniet* came into use toward the end of the fourth century. It continued to appear throughout the Middle Ages, as we might expect of language found in Jerome, Augustine, and Macrobius. Was it used by earlier authors whose works are now lost? We cannot know, but the early examples from Aulus Gellius, Aelius Donatus, and Zeno of Verona (a reference to reading followed by *inuenies*) could have been

<sup>28</sup> *De spiritu sancto* 115 (SC 386).

<sup>29</sup> [Augustinus], *Solutiones diuersarum quaestionum* 28 (CChr.SL 90).

<sup>30</sup> Eucherius, *Formulae spiritalis intellegentia* 10 (CChr.SL 66, 76).

<sup>31</sup> On Jerome's commentary writing and his readers, see R.J. Starr, 'Flexibility of Literary Meaning' (2001), 435-7.

<sup>32</sup> Hieronymus, *Epistulae* 20.2 (CSEL 54.1, 105).

precursors to Jerome's precise *lector inueniet*. Two related pieces of evidence can help to frame the reader's discovery: Jerome's apparent allusion to a famous passage from Terentianus Maurus and a few partial Greek parallels.

### 3. Jerome and Terentianus Maurus on the fate of books

At the end of his poetical *De syllabis*, Terentianus Maurus is anxious for the reception of his work. Perhaps someone else will find more examples, and the reader will become impatient:

*Forsitan hunc aliquis uerbosum dicere librum  
non dubitet; forsan multo praestantior alter  
pauca reperta putet, cum plura inuenerit ipse;  
deses et impatiens nimis haec obscura putabit:  
pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli.*<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps someone would be quick to say that this book is wordy; perhaps someone else, being far superior, would think I've learned too little, since he will discover more; the slow and impatient will think it all obscure: the ability of the reader determines the fate of the book.<sup>34</sup>

Terentianus' fate was to be forgotten, despite the continuing influence of his most famous sentence. He mentioned discovery in the context of rivals who might complain about the length of the book or material that he had missed. Jerome seems to allude to this passage at the beginning of the preface to book 12 of his *Commentarii in Esaiam*. The preface, which was written to Eustochium and is typically defensive, begins with a wry comment on the vagaries of publication. Jerome reversed Terentianus' phrase to say that authors are the ones to find their readers. In doing so he flattered the discernment of Eustochium and his own probity as an author.

*Nullus tam imperitus scriptor est qui lectorem non inueniat similem sui, multoque pars maior est milesias fabellas reuoluentium, quam platonis libros.*<sup>35</sup>

There is no writer so inexpert that he will not find a reader like himself, and there are many more who unroll the Milesian tales than the books of Plato.

In contrast to Terentianus, Jerome said that the author was the one who determines the book's fate (and that the fate of highbrow literature was to find a smaller audience). At the same time, Jerome reverses the phrase *lector inueniet*, as the reader becomes the object of the verb and the subject is now

<sup>33</sup> Terentianus Maurus, *De litteris, de syllabis, de metris* 1282-6 (Cignolo).

<sup>34</sup> Literally, 'books have their fate according to the reader's grasp'.

<sup>35</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarii in Esaiam* (CChr.SL 73A, 465).

the writer. In this limited case, there seems to have been a development in the relation between discovery and reading: In the third century Terentianus described the fate of books in terms of the reader's ability. The reader's discovery became a topos in the fourth century. And in the early fifth century Jerome reversed both ideas to say that writers found readers who were worthy of their effort. In other words, Jerome seems to be responding to the contemporary trend (visible elsewhere in his own writing) of privileging the reader's role in activating or evaluating the text.

#### 4. The Greek reader's discovery

As is well known the grammatical and exegetical traditions in Latin were heavily indebted to Greek exemplars. Was there a Greek predecessor for the phrase *lector inueniet*? I was able to find authors who talk about exegetical discovery (εὑρεσις) but not in combination with ἀκροατής (hearer, reader), ἀναγνώστης (reader), or a form of ἀναγιγνώσκω (recognize, read). The evidence points to similarities but no exact equivalent: In his commentary on *Psalms*, Eusebius offered cross-references to three other *Psalms* 'which you will find looking on your own' (ἄπερ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἐπιζητήσας εὑρήσεις).<sup>36</sup> There is an obvious resemblance to the references discussed above from Jerome and Macrobius. Readers would probably also remember Jesus' ζητεῖτε καὶ εὑρήσετε ('search, and you will find') from *Matth.* 7:7. John Chrysostom paused in his exposition of *Genesis* 1 to say: 'If anyone would want to consider all of this sensibly, he or she will find an order and logic in everything created' (Καὶ εἴ τις εὐγνωμόνως ἅπαντα σκοπεῖν βούλοιο, εὑρήσει ἐν ἅπασιν τοῖς δημιουργηθεῖσι τάξιν τινὰ καὶ λόγον).<sup>37</sup> Cyril of Alexandria – in explaining that the first and second persons of the Trinity are different in number but equal in divinity – says that if anyone examines carefully the Holy Scripture, he or she will find confirmation of this (Εἴ τις ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάσαι τὴν θείαν Γραφήν, εὑρήσει...).<sup>38</sup> Like Macrobius, Cyril went on to provide the confirmation that he had found, just in case the reader was not up to the task. In short, we have evidence for the reader's discovery as a topic in late antique Greek exegetical writing, but not in the same form.

Instead of referring to the reader, Greek authors spoke of the one who would search, consider, or examine the text. The most common word for reader was ἀκροατής even though its primary meaning was 'listener'.<sup>39</sup> The word

<sup>36</sup> Eusebius, *Commentaria in Psalmos* (PG 23, 1216).

<sup>37</sup> Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in Genesin* 11.2 (PG 53, 91).

<sup>38</sup> Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* 110 (PG 75, 184).

<sup>39</sup> See *Diccionario Griego-Español (DGE)* s.v. ἀκροατής along with René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia* (Cambridge,

ἀναγνώστης was used in the sense of a trained reader or religious officiant, as was *lector* in Latin.<sup>40</sup> René Nünlist has shown that in ancient literary criticism Greek auditors were described as actively filling in the gaps in the texts that they read.<sup>41</sup> In invoking their readers, Latin authors had the advantage perhaps of an agent noun that allowed a range of meanings derived from the physical process of picking out the letters on the page. The difference in vocabulary may help to explain why the Greek authors cited here continued to use periphrases to describe who it was that would make the discoveries in their texts. These parallel passages in Greek suggest (1) that readers were commonly described as making discoveries on their own, (2) that the specific phrase *lector inueniet* is more distinct and seems to show that the reader's discovery was a trending topic near the end of the fourth century, and (3) that the Latin word *lector* served as a useful container for the various forms of reading current throughout antiquity. Professional, private, devotional or otherwise, the Latin reader was known by a single name.

## 5. Conclusion

We began with Prudentius' address to his reader, to check the sacred volume and to find the words of the Lord. The phrase is unique in the extant poetry of Prudentius, but a number of parallel and contemporary examples show that such a reference would not have been unexpected. In some of the parallel examples the reader is directed to a relevant passage in another place; in others the writer assumes that the reader is a bit more autonomous and will either make decisions or find similar passages on their own. Contemporary readers would presumably have recognized this context for the poet's reference and for his metaphrastic extension of the Gospel text. Whether they would have thought that Prudentius was subverting standard practice is a different question. That is, they may have taken the poet's invention as a model for their own exegesis, or they may have been cautious of how the poet re-wrote the sacred text. In either case, we should understand the reader's invention as a commonplace current around the end of the fourth century. Separate topics for future discussion include the Latin vocabulary of reading and the re-use of rhetorical *inventio* as an interpretative category.

2009), 12 n. 41, who refers to Dirk M. Schenkeveld, 'Prose Usages of Ἀκούειν "To Read"', *CQ* 42 (1992), 129-41.

<sup>40</sup> See *DGE* s.v. ἀναγνώστης and *TLL* s.v. *lector*, 7.2.1091.54-1093.33 (Beikircher).

<sup>41</sup> R. Nünlist, *Ancient Critic at Work* (Cambridge, 2009), 157-73.



# The Poetics of Christian History in Late Antiquity<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

How do Christians write history in late Antiquity? The question is often answered with reference to specifically Christian genres of historiography and to the Christian theology of history. Both approaches generate problems and the present article explores a new approach, namely the identification of a late antique, Christian poetics of history. The term designates the presuppositions that guide the transition from reality to text. I identify three features that define the late antique poetics of history: doubt as to the capacity of rhetoric (and more generally language) to describe reality; an understanding of the narrative as a synecdoche of reality; and a view of reality as impenetrable to man. I illustrate this by drawing on the works of Orosius (early 5<sup>th</sup> c.), John of Ephesus (end of 6<sup>th</sup> c.), Procopius (middle of 6<sup>th</sup> c.) and Agathias (end of 6<sup>th</sup> c.) and argue that the poetics is the product of both cultural circumstances and theological presuppositions which interconnect and influence each other. In doing so, the article argues against the tendency to see the Christian writing of history as a mere translation of a theology of history into historiography, and suggests that we should avoid conceiving of such a theology of history as an essence that travels, as it were, unaltered through time.

How do Christians write history in late Antiquity? The question arises from two considerations. First, writing history means representing reality, and Christianity is considered to have had a fundamental impact on the late antique world view. In historiography we expect, therefore, to be able to witness that transformation.<sup>2</sup> Second, Christianity is commonly defined as a historical religion, with God entering history through the Incarnation and setting out a plan that leads mankind to the Second Coming.<sup>3</sup> On such an understanding of Christianity, writing history implies, on the part of a late antique Christian, close engagement

<sup>1</sup> The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013) / ERC Grant Agreement n. 313153 and from the Flemish Research Fund.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Averil Cameron, 'Remaking the Past', in G. Bowersock *et al.* (eds), *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 1-20; Hervé Inglebert, *Interpretatio christiana: les mutations des savoirs (cosmographie, géographie, ethnographie, histoire) dans l'antiquité chrétienne (30-630 après J.-C.)*, Collection des études augustiniennes Sér. Antiquité (Paris, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> A classic statement is Christopher Dawson, 'The Christian View of History', *New Blackfriars* 32 (1951), 312-27.

with, and reflection on, God's grand scheme of things. As such, the question is obviously related to a grander question that has exercised scholarship a lot: What is the Christian view of history? This article answers this question only indirectly, by suggesting that we should avoid identifying the answer to my initial question with the response to this more general question. I shall go even further and, using the example of Late Antiquity, argue that it is mistaken to construct a single essence of 'the' Christian view of history which manifests itself throughout Western history for the past two millennia, and of which the late antique view would be one illustration. Rather, I understand Christianity as a spiritual and social actor that offers a series of impulses which, in interaction with other social forces, can translate into a variety of cultural manifestations, which, obviously, change over time.

## Forms

How do, then, Christians write history in late Antiquity? One obvious way of trying to answer the question is by looking at actual historiographical production. Certain genres then appear to be closely linked to the rise of Christianity, such as ecclesiastical historiography and chronicles. But, as R. Burgess and M. Kulikowski have demonstrated, chronicles are a Hellenistic and Roman genre, which was appropriated by Christians but not Christian by nature. Ecclesiastical historiography is more obviously Christian, but it was clearly inspired by other, classical forms of historiography and many ecclesiastical historians do not consider their activity fundamentally different from that of classical history.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in late Antiquity Christians also write history in a classicising form, taking Thucydides and Herodotus as models. If one privileges ecclesiastical history as the paradigmatic form of writing history as a Christian in Late Antiquity, the question inevitably arises as to what, if any, impact Christianity had on classicising works: does the use of classical language imply also the adoption of classical forms of explanation, like references to Tyche or are such references just classical formulae for divine Providence? These are debates that are not yet fully settled, as the still current identification of classical form with paganism illustrates.<sup>5</sup> As the example of classicising history shows, the impact of Christianity may not be directly visible, but is it therefore not present? Simply looking at historiographical forms, that is, genres, may thus only yield very superficial answers.

<sup>4</sup> Richard W. Burgess, and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD. Vol. 1: A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from its Origins to the High Middle Ages*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 33 (Turnhout, 2013), 63-98; Peter Van Nuffelen, *Un héritage de paix et de piété: étude sur les histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et de Sozomène*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 142 (Leuven, 2004), 163-94.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2004).

## Theology of history

Another way of answering the question is to say that precisely because late ancient Christianity has very definite ideas about God's plan, Christians do not really write history. This view is particularly clearly formulated in the following citation from Dieter Timpe's work on Eusebius:

The Eusebian *Church History* follows in its intention and core outlines Christian chronological writing; just like this, it does not require or enhance an interest in real history, but, instead, it wants to explain the entire realm of world history as a history of salvation, the fulfillment of the promise, and as a meaningful real context in which the individual has its place and task. Church history is not a concrete and special historical object among other possible, and, in any case, no contradiction to profane history, but potentially a world history from the point of view of salvation history; it traces the revealed ways of divine providence with men.<sup>6</sup>

Christian historiography is, then, a non-history for it is not interested in 'real history', but interprets everything in the light of a preconceived general idea, namely that all is part of God's plan. In other words, Christian historiography is *deus ex machina* all the way long: it does not explain events, but explains them away. The implication of Timpe's view is that only classicising history in Late Antiquity is real historiography. In his 2004 article on the end of ancient historiography, Mischa Meier draws indeed that conclusion: ancient historiography ends when at the end of the sixth century historians abandon immanent causality for divine causality. He argues that the dramatic events of the sixth century (namely invasions by the Bulgars and the Persians, earthquakes, and the plague of 541) were impossible to fit into traditional explanatory frameworks used in ancient historiography. Immanent causality was abandoned in favour of divine causality:

This led to the absurdity of one of the central concerns of ancient historiography, namely, the ability to explain and interpret historical processes through the production of causal chains, which had been postulated by Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, and many others. Classicising historiography thus could no longer live up to its most important goal and was consequently abandoned.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Dieter Timpe, *Römische Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte*, Hans-Lietzmann-Vorlesungen 5 (Berlin, 2001), 108: 'Die eusebianische Kirchengeschichte folgt in ihren Intentionen und mit ihren Grundgedanken der christlichen Chronistik; wie diese fordert und fördert sie kein Interesse an realer Geschichte, aber will den Gesamttraum der Weltgeschichte als heilsgeschichtlichen Weg der Erfüllung des Verheissenen erklären und als sinnvollen Realzusammenhang, in dem der einzelne seinen Platz und Aufgabe hat, verständlich machen. Kirchengeschichte ist kein konkreter und spezieller historischer Gegenstand neben anderen möglichen und erst recht kein Gegensatz zu profaner Geschichte, sondern potentiell Weltgeschichte unter heilsgeschichtlichem Aspekt; sie zeichnet die geoffenbarten Wege der göttlichen Vorsehung mit den Menschen nach' (here and in the following own trans.).

<sup>7</sup> 'Damit wurde eines der zentralen Anliegen antiker Geschichtsschreibung, nämlich die von Herodot, Thukydides, Polybios und vielen anderen postulierte Fähigkeit, historische Prozesse

Church historians, by contrast, rely on God as an explanation:

For church historians, the framework of the contingent that they are able to explain, is thus substantially reduced, since everything finally finds an explanation in God and even the entire earthly history leads into the kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup>

This is a somewhat problematic and schematic position, especially given the fact that Christian historians always included immanent, human causality too and had reflected much on how to calibrate immanent and divine causality.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Christian historians never reduced everything to divine causality.<sup>10</sup> In this context, it is important to note that Meier's model implies that Christian classicising historians, such as Procopius and Agathias, remain virtually untouched by Christian conceptions of history. At any rate, it is clear that, on such an understanding, Christianity harbours an extremely strong view of history, according to which all is an expression of God's plan, but this comes at the cost of an inability to see reality for what it is.<sup>11</sup>

Timpe and Meier start out from what is a widely shared understanding of Christianity in late Antiquity, namely that its engagement with history expresses itself primarily in a theology of history. We can all rehearse by heart what scholarship considers to be the essential features of such a theology: history is a process directed by God towards the Parousia, the meaning of which is revealed in the foundational event of the Incarnation. The brief formula would

durch Herstellung von Kausalketten erklären und deuten zu können, ad absurdum geführt. Die klassizistische Historiographie konnte so ihrem wichtigsten Ziel nicht mehr gerecht werden und wurde konsequenterweise schliesslich aufgegeben', Mischa Meier, 'Prokop, Agathias, die Pest und das "Ende" der antiken Historiographie. Naturkatastrophen und Geschichtsschreibung in der ausgehenden Spätantike', *Historische Zeitschrift* 278 (2004), 281-310, 284.

<sup>8</sup> 'Für Kirchenhistoriker ist der Rahmen des ausdeutbar Kontingenten somit erheblich reduziert, da alles schliesslich in Gott eine Erklärung findet und sogar die gesamte irdische Geschichte auf das Reich Gottes zuläuft', M. Meier, 'Prokop, Agathias' (2004), 285.

<sup>9</sup> Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle*, preface and Agathias, *Histories* 1.1.2-5.

<sup>10</sup> P. Van Nuffelen, *Un héritage* (2004), 293-311. Note Teresa Morgan, 'Eusebius of Caesarea and Christian Historiography', *Athenaeum* 93 (2005), 193-208, who argues that among church historians only Eusebius developed a truly divine causality.

<sup>11</sup> For variations on this view, see Georges Florovsky, 'The Predicament of the Christian Historian', in Walter Leibrecht (ed.), *Religion and Culture. Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich* (New York, 1959), 140-66; Friedrich Vittinghoff, 'Zum geschichtlichen Selbstverständnis der Spätantike', *Historische Zeitschrift* 198 (1964), 529-73; Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987), 9, 16-8; Friedhelm Winkelmann, 'Grundprobleme christlicher Historiographie in ihrer Frühphase (Eusebios von Kaisareia und Orosius)', *Jahrbuch der Oesterreichischen Byzantinistik* 42 (1992), 13-28; Roland Kany, 'Tempora Christiana. Vom Umgang des antiken Christentums mit Geschichte', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 10 (2007), 564-79; Marco Formisano, 'Grand Finale. Orosius' *Historiae Adversus Paganos* or the Subversion of History', in Henriette Harich-Schwarzbauer and Karla Pollmann (eds), *Der Fall Roms und seine Wiederauferstehungen in Antike und Mittelalter*, Millennium-Studien 40 (Berlin and New York, 2013), 153-76, 161. Note the rare dissenting voice of Gerald A. Press, *The Development of the Idea of History in Antiquity* (Kingston, 1982), 125.

be that history has a beginning and an end, which give meaning to the whole of it.<sup>12</sup> There are, I think, two problems with this.

First, the usual understanding of Patristic theology of history is heavily influenced by a modern understanding of history. Indeed, the three features that R. Koselleck attributes to the modern conception of history (the identification of narrative and events by a single term, history; the idea that history constitutes an intrinsic unity; and that there is progress in history) are all usually projected onto the Patristic view of history.<sup>13</sup> Unless we simply opt for the view that Christianity harbours a proto-modern view of history, or that modernity is essentially Christian in nature, we face the task of distinguishing the modern and Christian view of history. In fact, scholars have added considerable nuance to the traditional formulation of the Patristic view of history,<sup>14</sup> but this rarely reaches the less theoretically informed modern historian, who, when faced with a Patristic theology of history, feels the same aversion as he would feel for Marxist philosophy of history. Indeed, Timpe's rejection of Patristic theology of history is a reflection of the modern rejection of philosophies of history in general, in particular of the Hegelian streak, which are seen to imperil the independence of historiography as a scholarly discipline.<sup>15</sup> In doing so, Timpe projects unconsciously the modern understanding of historiography as a pragmatic, fact-finding discipline onto ancient historiography, and reduces late antique historiography to a properly medieval discipline in the vulgar sense of the word.

If, then, there is room for additional nuance in formulating the Patristic theology of history, this is not the road I shall be taking here. Indeed, a second, methodological problem lurks underneath traditional approaches to the late antique view on history. The Christian theology of history is constructed by scholars on the basis of what they think is the New Testament view. It is defined as an essence that seems to travel through time unaltered. We are thus faced with a disjunction, between a theological essence and cultural epiphenomena,

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Marco Di Branco, *Storie arabe di Grecia e di Romani. La Grecia e Roma nella storiografia arabo-islamica medievale* (Pisa, 2009), 15-32; Hans-Werner Goetz, *Gott und die Welt: Religiöse Vorstellungen des frühen und hohen Mittelalters* (Berlin, 2011), 215-35; James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2014), 79-80: 'Christianity was a religion with a "complete" narrative, contained between a firm beginning and ending which projected meaning, if not onto everything that happened, then at least onto the temporal space in which it occurred. History was salvation history'.

<sup>13</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 757 (Frankfurt am Main, 2013, 8th ed.).

<sup>14</sup> Esp. Wolfram Kinzig, *Novitas Christiana: Die Idee des Fortschritts in der Alten Kirche bis Eusebius*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 58 (Göttingen, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> This division of tasks is usually shared by philosophers: see, e.g., Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit. 3: Le temps raconté* (Paris, 1991), 228, who assigns the meaning of a 'trace' to 'historian-philosopher' and not to a 'historian-scholar'. One wonders if such a division of labour is truly a correct description of what the historian does.

whereby scholars seem to prefer to disregard the epiphenomena to maintain the essence. The possibility that Christian historiography might contain original theologies of history seems to occur rarely. On the contrary, Christian histories are usually analysed for the degree to which they reflect what we think is the Christian theology of history.<sup>16</sup> On a methodological level, this downplays the cultural phenomenon that is Christianity too in favour of its supposed theological essence and it amounts to rather impoverished thinking of how a religion presents itself in culture. We need, in other words, an analysis that does justice to historiography in its own right as a cultural expression of Christianity.

Indeed, theological and philosophical studies on the Christian theology of history tend to rely, albeit implicitly, on a disjunction between a theological kernel and its historical realisation. To demonstrate this, I wish to take a brief look at two classics of the genre, written by Jean Daniélou and Karl Löwith. Both responded to the rise of communism and to Nazism, two movements that claimed to understand the march of history. Their responses, by contrast, go clearly into different directions. Daniélou re-affirms a millennial tradition of theology of history, and re-emphasises sacred over secular history. Löwith stresses how that same tradition has moved away from its roots. Arguably, one recognises here a Catholic and a Protestant mode of dealing with the past.

A Jesuit and a scholar of patristics, Jean Daniélou published his *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire* in 1953. He underlines the foundational nature of history to Christianity: 'Le christianisme est d'abord un événement historique, l'incarnation de Jésus-Christ'.<sup>17</sup> An essential feature of Christianity is hence to reveal a God who is active in time, as well as putting forward a concept of history which is essentially also an eschatology. Daniélou contrasts this with the Greek idea of an immobile divine being and a cyclical view of time. Such an opposition can be disputed, but the argument underlines the novelty of Christianity, for which history has a beginning and an end, both of which define the meaning of history. Moreover, the essence of history lies in sacred history, in the particular dealings of God with His people, and not in secular events. Then a problem presents itself. Historiography, arguably a prime way of engaging with history, is a relatively late and very minor genre in pre-Nicene Christianity. Daniélou underlines that the early Christians did not appreciate their own originality and thought that after the Incarnation nothing new happened.<sup>18</sup> For a theologian, the ignorance of early Christians about the essence of their faith may need not cause much trouble, and even less so for a Catholic one, who can see the development of tradition as a further revelation

<sup>16</sup> See P. Van Nuffelen, *Un heritage* (2004), 87-161, concluding that they do so only partially.

<sup>17</sup> Jean Daniélou, *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire* (Paris, 1953), 109: 'Christianity is first of all a historical event, the incarnation of Jesus Christ'.

<sup>18</sup> J. Daniélou, *Essai* (1953), 10.

of the faith. The supposed theological essence thus finds only a late expression in the Patristic view of history, which are, then, merely a late revelation of earlier insights.

Another, roughly contemporary, famous reflection on the theology of history is Karl Löwith's *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*.<sup>19</sup> The work is usually summarised as arguing that modern philosophies of history are secularised versions of Christian theologies of history, but this falls short of its actual argument. Löwith also argues that secularised philosophies of history, such as that of Hegel and the various versions of Marxism have a much stronger idea of the progress in history and of the possibility to discern a predictable plan in its course. The further one goes back in time to the Christian sources of such views, the less certain and pronounced the idea of a plan of God becomes. The radical conclusion is that the bible does not have a theology of history. Löwith pointedly chose as title for his work not *Heilsgeschichte und Weltgeschehen*, a title that would have been applicable to Daniélou's book: it is not sacred history that gives sense to what happens in the world but the sacred event, the incarnation, that allows to weather world history. Löwith's underlying aim was as political as was Erik Peterson's *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (1935) in the realm of political thought: to argue against the dangers of modern philosophies of history by demonstrating that they deviate from their origins.

As much as Daniélou's *Essai, Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen* also relies on a disjunction between theological essence and historical manifestation. As philosophy of history is the outcome of the history of theology, but not rooted in the Bible itself, it is, at best, a bastard child of Christianity, not a true expression of the nature of Christianity. Striking in Löwith's book is that his understanding of the Christian view of history is nevertheless not fundamentally different from that of Daniélou: it is fundamentally *Heilsgeschichte* and the *eschaton* ultimately determines everything. The meaning of history and its aim are ultimately identical. The main difference lies in that fact that the locus for the expression of this view is not theology or historiography anymore but prophecy: 'Den Juden und Christen bedeutet Geschichte vor allem Heilsgeschichte. Als solches ist sie das Anliegen von Propheten und Predigern'.<sup>20</sup> As such, the Christian view of history is fundamentally tilted towards the future.

<sup>19</sup> Karl Löwith, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen. Zur Kritik der Geschichtsphilosophie, Sämtliche Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1983) (English original 1949; German version 1953).

<sup>20</sup> K. Löwith, *Weltgeschichte* (1949), 1: 'For Jews and Christians, history means first and foremost history of salvation. As such it is the remit of prophets and preachers'. Obviously, rejection of a theology of history is not the prerogative of Protestant thinkers. For a Catholic perspective, see Michel de Certeau, *L'étranger ou l'union dans la différence* (Paris, 2007, original edition 1969), 122.

## The poetics of history

The scholarship surveyed in the previous section suggests a widespread unease regarding the relationship between the supposed essence of Christianity's view on history and its historical manifestations, leading to the series of negative judgements we have encountered. I doubt we will be able to escape this situation if we continue to conceive of Patristic views on history as true or denatured expressions of an original theology of history that predates all cultural manifestations. I therefore propose to take a different approach.

In order to answer my initial question, How do Christians write history in late Antiquity?, in a more fruitful way, I propose to start our investigation from works of historiography and not from a predefined theology of history. We shall come back to what extent both approaches yield results that can be reconciled. Here I wish to focus on what is typical for history, namely its referential nature. History purports to state something about the world, past and present, and thus seeks to represent reality in language. Historians tend to reflect little on the transition from reality to text precisely because it is part of the very nature of the writing of history. Yet it is never an obvious transition, as stated by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière:

Démontrer, dans la langue commune, que les documents et les courbes composent un sens et tel sens, supposera toujours un choix quant aux pouvoirs de la langue et de ses enchaînements. ... le problème n'est donc pas de savoir si l'historien doit ou non faire de la littérature mais laquelle il fait.<sup>21</sup>

This choice as to what language can do, one may call the poetics of history. It is, quite literally, what makes history. The term poetics is often interpreted in an intraliterary sense and is then defined as a theory of literary forms. This is, for example, the way recent work on the aesthetics of late Antiquity understands the term. That type of scholarship is interested in how narrative or poetry is shaped, but refuses to consider such literary form the expression of a particular world view. It is seen as the product of literary developments. I shall argue, by contrast, that representation of reality reflects a certain mode of understanding reality. To explain this, we need to briefly go back to a classic of scholarship.

Rancière is inspired by Erich Auerbach's 1953 *Mimesis*, about the representation of reality in Western literature. Auerbach argued that classical literature was marked by a division of styles, whereby humble subjects could only be

<sup>21</sup> Jacques Rancière, *Les noms de l'histoire. Essai de poétique du savoir*, La librairie du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris, 1992), 203: 'Demonstrate, in ordinary language, that the documents and curves have a meaning and that particular meaning, always presupposes a choice as to the powers of the language and its concatenations ... The problem is therefore not to know if the historian has to practice literature or not, but which type of literature he practices'.

represented in humble genres such as comedy and satire, and elevated ones were expressed through the use of rhetoric. Only with the advent of modern realism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was this division abolished, but the distant origin of this transgression is Christianity. According to Auerbach, the Incarnation and the story of Jesus' life, events that are at once humble and elevated, overcame the ancient division of styles. Whereas ancient historiography was composed in high rhetoric and was unable to include the humble on its own terms, in late Antiquity, by contrast, classical rhetoric comes under pressure and low elements creep into both pagan and Christian texts. If Christianity, then, drew attention to reality, its representation was not of the same nature as that of modern realism. According to Auerbach, Christianity focuses on the real, higher reality behind daily reality, a higher reality that he calls *figura*.<sup>22</sup>

Auerbach is also one of the sources of inspiration for the scholars of late Antiquity who are busy identifying the aesthetic paradigm of late ancient literature. In two important respects, however, they differ from Auerbach. First, they have retreated to the safe territory of literature, taking representation in an intra-literary sense, that is, they do not analyse the representation of reality but how narrative is shaped by literary tools. Second, they downplay the role attributed to Christianity by Auerbach.<sup>23</sup> Whilst one need not follow Auerbach in the precise formulation of his views, the following pages argue that, as far as the preceding two points are concerned, his intuition is right. First, how a historical narrative (or, for that matter, any other narrative) is shaped presupposes an idea of what reality is and how it can be known. And second: the understanding of God and the world influences the way history is written.

In the following sections I argue that the late antique, Christian poetics of history consists of three, interrelated elements: doubt as to the capacity of rhetoric (and more generally language) to describe reality, an understanding of the narrative as a synecdoche of reality, and a view of reality as impenetrable to man. I shall illustrate this by drawing on the works of Orosius (early 5<sup>th</sup> c.), John of Ephesus (end of 6<sup>th</sup> c.), Procopius (middle of 6<sup>th</sup> c.) and Agathias (end of 6<sup>th</sup> c.) and argue that this poetics is the product of both cultural circumstances and theological presuppositions which interconnect and influence each other.

<sup>22</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Bern and Munich, 1971, 5th ed.), 73-7, 516.

<sup>23</sup> Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1989) most explicitly argues against Auerbach. For further literary scholarship, see, e.g., Michael John Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, 1989); Marco Formisano, 'Towards an Aesthetic Paradigm of Late Antiquity', *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007), 277-84.

### Can rhetoric represent reality?

The first feature is doubt as to the capacity of rhetoric to represent reality adequately. I say doubt, not rejection, for we are dealing with the destabilisation of the classical rhetorical paradigm but not its full abandonment. Indeed, writing according to the rules of rhetoric remains the cultural norm as it had been in the centuries before, but it cannot be done anymore in a self-evident manner: rhetoric is unmasked as a cultural form of representing reality, but one for which there is not yet a real alternative.

This can be very well sensed in the history of Orosius. The work is obviously polemical and attacks the glorious view pagans have of the Roman past and draws attention to the vast bloodshed that the Roman empire caused. Orosius has a clear sense of where the problem lies: the glorious view of the Roman past is so deeply engrained in Roman rhetorical education that it has become almost a second nature for its elite. In one famous passage, he compares his pagan contemporaries to a man who wakes up to a somewhat cold morning and exclaims that the cold is worse than what Hannibal had to endure in the Alps.<sup>24</sup> This is more than a mere sweep at his opponents: Orosius suggests that their perception of reality is fundamentally determined and, crucially, distorted by rhetorical education. Rhetoric, then, appears not as a neutral technique to represent reality, but as a culturally determined one, and, one that, moreover, misrepresents reality. Orosius seeks to undermine this *habitus* by representing the events as they really happened, in all their gory detail. If, at first sight, Orosius discloses the problematic nature of rhetoric, he does not fully subvert the rhetorical paradigm: indeed, in order to represent reality as it truly happened, he relies on pathos – an obviously rhetorical form. The *Historiae* produce, thus, a paradox: they identify rhetoric's power of distortion and its social origins, yet re-adopt rhetoric to attack that very rhetoric. There is doubt about the rhetorical paradigm, but it cannot be abandoned.<sup>25</sup>

The same feature can be found in the Syriac Church history of John of Ephesus. John was an important player in the developing Miaphysite Church of the second half of the sixth century. He experienced the renewed persecution of his Church under Justin II (565-578, started 571), before witnessing its internal conflict around Paul the Black of Antioch (550-575). The third part of his ecclesiastical history covers that troubled period. This third part is also the only one that is (almost) fully preserved; parts I and II, which narrated the history from Caesar to Justinian, have to be reconstructed on the basis of later chronicles. The third part of his history is therefore a highly emotional narrative, in which John of Ephesus is very present as an author and an actor, for he narrates

<sup>24</sup> Orosius, *Histories*, 4, pr.8-10.

<sup>25</sup> For further detail, see Peter Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford, 2012).



mould in which the author is an actor (names such as Thucydides, Xenophon, and Ammianus come to mind). In these histories, the author as historical actor is clearly subordinated to the author as narrator, either by narrating about oneself in the third person or by restricting one's presence in the narrative to episodes. The narrative continues to comply with the rules of composition. In John, by contrast, the actor dominates the author: as an author, John miserably fails because he does not allow rules of composition to come between himself and the events. As a narrator, he does not rise above the events. On the contrary, his narrative directly reflects the tragedy of the events, which are, so John suggests, unmediated by rhetorical composition.

Such doubts about the rhetorical ideal of classical culture can be easily related to wider doubts Christians had about the value of classical high culture. From very early on, Christians had questioned the necessity to use high language in order to express truths: indeed, had not the New Testament been written in ordinary language? The critical reflection in Christian communities about the nature and necessity of 'pagan' education is the cultural humus from which Orosius sprang. Part and parcel of a society that continued to value traditional, rhetorical education, Christian historians could not but see the culturally and socially determined origins of that education, without ever fully being able to abandon it.<sup>28</sup> It opens up the field of historiography to players that by their very linguistic inability would have been excluded in the past: indeed, in the sixth century, Jordanes writes his histories without seemingly knowing a genitive from an ablative. This would scarcely have been possible in the second century AD, when Lucian laments the excess of high culture on the part of contemporary historians.

Does this doubt remain restricted to works that explicitly proclaim their Christianity, as those of Orosius and John? The answer is no. We can find similar ideas in Procopius, the model of classicising historiography, too. There, however, the doubt is situated on an even more profound level: Procopius' history of Justinian's wars betray a consciousness of the difficulty in matching language and reality.

The *Wars* of Procopius are the model of classicising history.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to a superficial perception, Procopius never indulges in the idea that classicising language is fully adequate to describe reality. In fact, from its very first pages, the *Wars* engage in a reflection on the relationship between language and reality. Both parts of the equation are seen as being subject to change, change which is, by and large, man-made. Procopius signals a certain carelessness in man regarding the original meaning of words, as in this passage on the meaning of *foedera*:

<sup>28</sup> See Peter Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 4 (Tübingen, 2007) with further references.

<sup>29</sup> This section relies on Peter Van Nuffelen, 'The wor(l)ds of Procopius', in C. Lillington-Martin and E. Turquoise (eds), *Procopius: Literary and Historical Approaches* (Farnham, 2017).

For the Romans call *foedera* the treaties with enemies. There is no impediment now to all to claim this name, as time does not demand that appellations are kept for what they originally were developed but, reality continuously turning around to where people want it to go, people who care little for how things were called previously by them.<sup>30</sup>

The passage betrays a set of basic assumptions, namely that names were originally suited for the reality they then designated, and that reality changes under the influence of man, who is careless about the original meaning of names. Indeed, the deviation from basic meanings is usually seen as something negative. For Procopius, then, language and reality change.

If change is one major factor, the other issue at stake is the value judgement present in language. In his discussion of the truce between Romans and Persians of 545 (renewed in 551), whereby the Romans became effectively tributary to the Persians, Procopius remarks that the Romans chose to abandon yearly payments in favour of a single payment: 'For the vile name, not reality, is what people mostly are wont to be ashamed of'.<sup>31</sup>

More profoundly, language can be consciously used to impose a value judgement on change itself. This is the point made by the critique Procopius levels in his preface against people who apply derogatory Homeric names to contemporary soldiers. Such people, it seems, are the ultras of classicism: they project an image of decline onto contemporary society and express it by using ultraclassical, that is, Homeric, names.<sup>32</sup>

These ideas can be pursued throughout the *Wars*, thus never allowing the relationship between world and word to fully stabilise. Language is never fully adequate to describe reality. Here we encounter a similar doubt as to the power of language as we found in Orosius and John of Ephesus. Whereas in these historians it expressed itself in a questioning of the power of rhetoric, Procopius rather sees the problem as one of language in general and locates its origin in man's inability to stick to original meanings in a changing world.

Although he identifies himself with the rhetorical tradition that Orosius and John doubt, I would still dare to suggest that Procopius' reflection on the limits of language sprang from the same source as their doubts about rhetoric. Choosing to write in classicising language, Procopius could not but be aware of the Christian discourse that questioned its value. In Procopius, however, the doubt is transferred from rhetoric to language itself.

<sup>30</sup> Procopius, *Wars* 4.11.4: φοίδερὰ γὰρ τὰς πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους σπονδὰς καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι. τὸ δὲ νῦν ἅπανσι τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου ἐπιβατεύειν οὐκ ἐν κωλύμῃ ἐστί, τοῦ χρόνου τὰς προσηγορίας ἐφ' ὧν τέθινται ἡκιστα ἀξιοῦντος τηρεῖν, ἀλλὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀεὶ περιφερομένων, ἧ ταῦτα ἄγειν ἐθέλουσιν ἄνθρωποι, τῶν πρόσθεν αὐτοῖς ὀνομασμένων ὀλιγορῶντες.

<sup>31</sup> Procopius, *Wars* 8.15.7: τὰ γὰρ αἰσχρὰ ὀνόματα, οὐ τὰ πράγματα, εἰώθασιν ἄνθρωποι ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον αἰσχύνεσθαι.

<sup>32</sup> Procopius, *Wars* 1.1.6-8.

## Reality exceeds language

The second feature of the poetics of history is the idea that narrative is only a synecdoche of reality. By this, I mean that reality is seen as fundamentally exceeding the narrative, which is unable to weld the events into a coherent and understandable textual unity that would count as an exact representation of events. The narrative fails to control reality and reality irrupts into the narrative. Narrative can only occasionally accommodate such an invasion of reality and it must therefore concentrate on a selection of episodes. These give the reader a flavour of what all the events were like. Obviously, classical historians also selected the events they wished to represent but their selection was welded into a unity, so that the work would have the coherence of a human body.<sup>33</sup> One does not need to be widely read in late ancient historiography to notice its somewhat episodic and disjointed nature, if measured by classical standards: it is one of the eternal problems the interpreters of Gregory of Tours grapple with.<sup>34</sup> The scenic or episodic nature of late ancient narrative has regularly been highlighted by scholars,<sup>35</sup> but we should resist the temptation to see this as a mere aesthetic: it is also the reflection of an awareness of the problem to make language and reality fit. Indeed, this second feature of the poetics is, arguably, logically entailed in the first one. If the first questions the power of language to grasp reality, now reality cannot be made to fit into narrative without serious loss.

The admission of John of Ephesus that his narrative is disordered hints at this lack of unity: his history has become one of episodes and a repetitious one at that. The disorder of reality that John had experienced himself did not allow him to rise above the *mêlée*: his history reflects the disorder of his memory and of how information reached him or was not allowed to reach him. As I have stated above, precisely this episodic and disordered character is the basis on which the narrative bases its claim to great truthfulness. The text reflects the reality of persecution precisely by not giving a comprehensive account.

<sup>33</sup> Konrad Heldmann, *Sine ira et studio. Das Subjektivitätsprinzip der römischen Geschichtsschreibung und das Selbstverständnis antiker Historiker*, *Zetemata* 139 (Munich, 2011), 33, with reference to Horace, *Ars poetica* 1-43, Lucian, *How history should be written* 23, Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* 10.2.

<sup>34</sup> See Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* (Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>35</sup> J.M. Pizarro, *Rhetoric of the Scene* (1989); M.J. Roberts, *Jeweled Style* (1989) and 'The Treatment of Narrative in Late Antique Literature', *Philologus* 132 (1988), 181-95; Giselle de Nie, *Poetics of Wonder. Testimonies of the New Christian Miracles in the Late Antique Latin World*, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages* 31 (Turnhout, 2011).

A similar idea is expressed more explicitly by Orosius. He admits to being unable to live up to the traditional demands of clarity and brevity.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, trying to represent reality as it is, leads to disorder:

I have woven an inextricable hurdle of confused history and entwined the uncertain courses of wars waged here and there with a mad fury, having followed them with words from their traces. And, as I see it, I have written about these in a so much more disordered way as I have tried to maintain their order.<sup>37</sup>

Reality, then, cannot be forced into the straightjacket of rhetoric unless one is willing to pay a price; conversely, a truthful representation of reality leads to the violation of the rules of rhetoric. Orosius' narrative is episodic too. Although his history teems with names and events, which are for most of the time just briefly mentioned, Orosius only intermittently offers his readers pathetic descriptions of events: full reality is only offered from time to time, as otherwise the limits of the narrative would simply explode.

### Reality is impenetrable to man

Christian historians, then, seem to have serious trouble with living up to the high demands of classical high style. This is not a new insight, but I have underscored that this reflects fundamental doubts as to how the transition from reality to language can be made. The third feature of the poetics of history, the impenetrable nature of reality to man, provides a justification for these doubts. I shall illustrate this by looking, again, at Procopius, and at Agathias.

We have noticed that Procopius expresses doubt about the possibility to match world and word. His doubts are, in fact, reduplicated on another level, that of man's capacity to comprehend events. Procopius regularly expresses doubts about man's capacity to understand what is going on.<sup>38</sup> One illustration is his comment on the remarkable way in which the Vandal army missed the invading Roman one on its way to Decimum in 533:

In this struggle, I came to wonder about the divine and the human: God, seeing future events from afar, sets out how He sees fit that events should come to pass, whereas

<sup>36</sup> Orosius, *Histories* 3.pr.3.

<sup>37</sup> Orosius, *Histories* 3.2.9: *Contexui indigestae historiae inextricabilem cratem atque incertos bellorum orbis huc et illuc lymphatico furore gestorum uerbis e uestigio secutus inplucui, quoniam tanto, ut uideo, inordinatus scripsi, quanto magis ordinem custodiui.*

<sup>38</sup> See Arnaldo Momigliano, 'L'età del trapasso fra storiografia antica e storiografia medievale (320-550 d.C.)', in *id.*, *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1975), 49-71, 60; Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), 114; Dariusz Brodka, *Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie: Studien zu Prokopios von Kaisareia, Agathias von Myrina und Theophylaktos Simokattes*, *Studien und Texte zur Byzantinistik* 5 (Frankfurt, 2004), 41-5, 158.

man, erring or deciding the right thing, does not know that he has failed, if it happens to be that way, or that he has acted correctly, so that a path is made by Fortune, carrying everything to what had been decided on beforehand.<sup>39</sup>

God is capable of understanding reality fully and of foreseeing events, whereas man cannot even know what results his own actions will bring. Elsewhere, indeed, Procopius underlines that only a man favoured by Fortune can judge reality correctly and act on this knowledge.<sup>40</sup> The focus in Procopius' narrative is therefore on the vicissitudes of foresight: good characters succeed in analysing reality correctly and decide on a proper course of action, whereas evil or weak ones are unable to do so. Typical for the *Wars* is that only one person really succeeds in predicting the course of events and thus taking proper action, namely Belisarius.

Procopius' acknowledgement of the gap between language and reality is thus predicated on man's weakness. He has limited capacities to understand reality and is therefore not able to control and influence events as one would hope. Control, however, is predicated on virtue and exercised through language. Reality, then, slips through man's hands, not just because language is never fully adequate, but also because man himself is not fully adequate. Hence, the world in Procopius appears as unpredictable and hard to penetrate.

The same theme of the hardship of foresight can be found in Agathias, where its success is even more explicitly predicated on virtue. Throughout the first two books of the *Historiai*, a contrast emerges between the 'barbarians' (Goths, Alamanni, and Franks<sup>41</sup>) and the Byzantine commander Narses. Whilst the former usually are arrogant and therefore miscalculate the future, taking their wishes for facts, Narses is clever, pious, and virtuous, and succeeds in identifying the true factors that drive events.<sup>42</sup> His virtue is such that he even succeeds in better understanding reality than the Alamanni with far less information than they. Agathias is fairly explicit on why this is the case: Narses' virtue and piety is rewarded with divine favour.<sup>43</sup> Conversely, sin is the cause of evil and lack of success.<sup>44</sup>

If we would halt our analysis here, Agathias would appear as a naive believer in an almost mechanical connection between virtue and success. Yet, he is also aware of the fact that we can never fully be sure if virtue has led to success and vice to divine punishment: towards the end of the *Histories* Agathias

<sup>39</sup> Procopius, *Wars* 3.18.2: ἐμοὶ δὲ τὰ τε θεῖα καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια ἐν τῷ πόνῳ τοῦτ' ἐπῆλθε θαυμάσαι, ὅπως ὁ μὲν θεός, πόρρωθεν ὄρων τὰ ἐσόμενα, ὑπογράφει ὅπῃ ποτὲ αὐτῷ τὰ πράγματα δοκεῖ ἀποβῆσθαι, οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἢ σφαλλόμενοι ἢ τὰ δέοντα βουλευόμενοι οὐκ ἴσασιν ὅτι ἐπταισάν τι, ἂν οὕτω τύχοι, ἢ ὀρθῶς ἔδρασαν, ἵνα γένηται τῇ τύχῃ τρίβος, φέρουσα πάντως ἐπὶ τὰ πρότερον δεδογμένα.

<sup>40</sup> Procopius, *Wars* 3.18.2, 7.13.17; see also Procopius, *Wars* 2.22.32, 3.19.25.

<sup>41</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 1.4.4, 1.5.2, 1.6.5, 2.3.5, 2.12.5.

<sup>42</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 2.4.3, 2.7.5, 2.9.1.

<sup>43</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 2.9.1: Ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῷ Ναρσῆι τύχης τε αἰσίας κυρήσαντι καὶ τὸ πρακτέον ἄριστα μηχανησαμένῳ ἅπαντα ἐξ δέον ἀπέβη.

<sup>44</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 1.1.2-5.

remarks that a violent death is not a proof of an evil personality.<sup>45</sup> This last point is significant, as it explicitly contrasts with the famous story of Solon and Croesus in Herodotus of which the message is that one can only judge at the very end of one's life if one is happy. This much is not even possible for a Christian historian. At one point, indeed, Agathias states that the ultimate understanding of why some thrive and others not, is a matter of theology and not of history.<sup>46</sup> We encounter here, as in Procopius, the idea of limits to men's knowledge. In fact, the theme pervades the work. It has been noted that Agathias emphasises the limits of human knowledge, for example in arguing against the idea that Aristotelian theories of earthquakes can explain the phenomenon entirely.<sup>47</sup> This remark has sometimes been taken as typical for a Christian, Byzantine rejection of ancient science.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the remark should be seen in the light of his rejection of all theories, such as astrology and divination, that promise certainty. Reality can never fully be grasped by man.

Procopius and Agathias, then, strongly highlight how reality remains impenetrable for man. Our limited capacities make it hard to assess a situation correctly and to act properly. Virtue can help to reduce uncertainty, but man is not perfect and can thus rarely fully grasp what is going on. Reality thus exceeds not just narrative but, more generally, our human capacities to understand it. Indeed, the uncertainties of the interpretation of reality are in Procopius and Agathias primarily situated on the level of action, that is, on the level of the events described, rather than on that of the narrative itself. Action, even more than narrative, is hampered by man's inability to fathom reality.

Why would one write history if reality constantly slips through one's hands? One may think of cultural factors such as the prestige of being seen as an author who manages to reveal at least some truths about the past. Indeed, Procopius presents himself as a particularly good interpreter of signs.<sup>49</sup> Yet the emphasis on human sinfulness provides a more profound answer that connects the poetics of history with the theological understanding of the world. All authors discussed adhere to the common belief that God intervenes in reality in response to our sins. This mechanism of retribution remains opaque to human understanding: we know that it is present in reality, but we can never be sure if particular events are punishments for particular sins. Not only has man limited capacities, but God also remains inscrutable. Yet precisely what makes history impenetrable also renders attention for it absolutely necessary: if events can be signs of divine anger, we should pay close attention to what is going on in reality. History is, then, both difficult to penetrate and necessary to look at.

<sup>45</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 5.4.4-5, 5.10.7.

<sup>46</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 5.10.7.

<sup>47</sup> Agathias, *Histories* 2.15.

<sup>48</sup> Norman H. Baynes, 'The Thought-World of East Rome', in *id.*, *Byzantine Studies* (London, 1955), 24-46, 24.

<sup>49</sup> Procopius, *Wars* 3.15.35, 5.24.35.

Contrary to the assertion by D. Timpe that Christians are not interested in real history, therefore, we can affirm that for theological reasons they have a great interest in real history, because it may give us signs. At the same time, the often repeated assessment that late antique historiography is more superficial in that it probes less what we call the 'real' causes of events (social and political dynamics) finds its roots here too: late ancient Christian historiography knows that we can only scratch the surface of reality. By contrast, it asks with much more insistence what the meaning is of events – whereby meaning means how it relates to me, as a sinful individual. Whereas modern scholarship tends to distinguish the causality of events from the assessment of their meaning, leaving the latter to philosophers whilst attributing the former to historians, ancient thought did not make that distinction: if God sends us signs through barbarian invasions, He obviously is a cause too. This does not make things easier to understand, as it throws up the question how human and divine causality interact. To us divine causality may seem a confusion of categories, but that is our problem, not that of late ancient historians.

## Conclusions

One may object that my treatment is as episodic as the poetics of history I have reconstructed and that not all features seem to be present in every single history. I freely admit that the proof of the pudding is in the eating and that further study of particular texts is needed to give further substance to the model proposed here. That not all features are equally present in each work worries me less. Rather, the specific circumstances of composition of each work cause that work to foreground certain features and to obscure others: an apologetic history as that of Orosius may be less inclined to express fundamental doubts about man's capacity to grasp reality than the lukewarm supporter of Justinian's conquest that was Procopius.

This last remark relates to the wider methodological point I have wished to make. The Christian poetics of history in Late Antiquity is the product of an entanglement of culture and theology. It results from the espousal of particular beliefs about God, about his relation to the world, and about the limits of human knowledge, as well as from the cultural doubts introduced by Christianity regarding rhetoric as a culturally determined mode of the use of language. These cultural doubts can be seen to be ultimately rooted in theology too, as the choice of a simple language to express the New Testament truths presupposes that particular ways of communication are privileged by God. But all of this was subject to cultural transformation and could only assume the forms we have encountered in confrontation with ancient culture in which rhetoric was the prime form of expression. We should therefore avoid answering my initial question (How do Christians write history?) by just looking at how historians conform to what we think is the essence of Patristic theology of history.

This then throws up a final question: What is, then, the relationship between the poetics of history and the theology of history? Are they two distinct enterprises? This is partially true, as historians were happy to defer to theology for answers to ultimate questions and clearly saw writing history and doing theology as two separate intellectual undertakings.<sup>50</sup> Yet the two can be brought together. Let us briefly look at Augustine's thought on history, to take just one prominent example. Augustine is aware of the imperfection of verbal communication and the lack of transparency of what is being said.<sup>51</sup> Certainty can only be gained about sacred history, that is, about what is narrated in the Bible, for only the Bible is written by God, who is not subject to our limitations.<sup>52</sup> For other periods of time (in particular our own), we can never be sure if we can pinpoint God's hand.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, it is one thing to accept that history is a unity subject to God's will and leading up to the end of times, and another thing to be able to identify signs of this process and to assign to specific events particular roles in God's plan.<sup>54</sup> Such a theology of history is fully compatible with the poetics I have sketched: the texts just discussed focus indeed on the period 'in between', not on sacred history, and are written in full awareness of man's limitations.

It is, I would suggest, the influence of the modern belief in the power of reason that has led to us surreptitiously project the apparent Patristic certainty about the grand lines of the theology of history to the specific course of events after the Incarnation. Indeed, modern philosophies of history reject the uncertainty that we find so prominent in late ancient historians and they arrogate themselves the authority to define the position of each event within the progress of mankind. It is a temptation we should try to avoid, for, as I have hoped to have shown, it distorts our understanding of how Christians wrote history in Late Antiquity.

<sup>50</sup> For references see Peter Van Nuffelen, 'Theology vs. Genre? Tradition as Universal Historiography in Late Antiquity', in P. Lidell and A. Fear (eds), *Universal Historiography in Antiquity and Beyond* (London, 2010), 190-212, 191-4. See also Agathias, *Histories* 5.10.7 and Beda Venerabilis, *Ecclesiastical History*, pr. with Walter Goffart, 'Beda's Vera Lex Historiae Explained', *Anglo-Saxon England* 34 (2005), 111-6.

<sup>51</sup> Augustin, *De magistro* 11.37, with Christophe Ligota, 'La foi historique: Histoire et connaissance de l'histoire chez S. Augustin', *Revue des Etudes augustiniennes* 43 (1997), 111-71, 131-2. See also Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400 – 1500*, Historical Approaches (Manchester, 2012), 272-84 on Boethius.

<sup>52</sup> Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages. Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (Cambridge, 1991), 233: 'Only biblical expression – and only, ultimately, in its original languages – could claim complete coincidence between true event and true representation'.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Markus, *Saeculum. History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970), 159; Johannes van Oort, 'The End Is Now: Augustine on History and Eschatology', *HTS Theologische studies/Theological Studies* 68 (2012), 1-7, 2.

<sup>54</sup> C. Ligota, 'La foi historique' (1997), 138; Christophe Horn, 'Geschichtsdarstellung, Geschichtsphilosophie und Geschichtsbewusstsein', in Christoph Horn (ed.), *Augustinus. De Civitate Dei*, *Klassiker auslegen* 11 (Berlin, 1997), 171-93, 191-2.



# Languages of Christianity in Late Antiquity: Between Universalism and Cultural Superiority

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## ABSTRACT

The following essay focuses on Greek patristic authors of the second to the fifth century. I explore their views on the role of language in the spread of Christianity and on the possibility of transmitting Christian ideas to foreigners in their native tongues. This analysis allows me to highlight and to contextualize the main points of the cultural dialogue between representatives of two different trends in Christianity of the time: the so-called ‘Christian universalists’ and those who could be labeled as ‘cultural isolationists’. That debate then produced a distinct rhetoric of differentiation in the Christian discourse on the speakers of foreign languages as attested in the hagiographic texts of the sixth century.

In the *Life of Eutychios, the Patriarch of Constantinople* written at the end of the sixth century, its author, Eustratios the presbyter, described the Church Council against the Three-Chapter Controversy, which took place in 553, and alluded to the gathering of the apostles on the day of Pentecost: ‘So “as the crowd gathered and was perplexed” (*Acts* 2:6), they were listening as he [Eutychios] spoke in a different tongue against the tongues, the foreign tongues, of heretics, – for the upright [tongue] that speaks against [a tongue] that utters perversions is different by its own manner of speech [διαλέκτω] – that is, by the upright confession of his faith against those who speak unrighteousness in pride against God Most High’.<sup>1</sup> The allusion to Pentecost was a commonplace in the description of the Church councils. But in this account, the more important fact is that the *topos* of apostolic speaking in foreign languages was applied to the speakers of the same tongue, Greek, but to those who were split by theological controversy. The manner of expression of an ‘orthodox’ speaker was represented as a different language when compared to the speech of a ‘heretic’; the borderlines of identity, confessional in this case, were constructed within the monolingual group via a rhetoric usually associated with foreign speakers. That example of a definitely manipulative use of foreign-language rhetoric implies the existence of certain images and tropes in Christian discourse which

<sup>1</sup> *Eustratii presbyteri vita Eutychii patriarchae Constantinopolitani*, ed. Carl Laga, CChr.SG 25 (Turnhout, 1992), 27, lines 763-9.

were usually associated with foreign speakers but could be deployed in other contexts. The passage quoted above invites us to think about the significance of foreign languages to patristic authors, and how speaking in a foreign language corresponded to being a Christian.

The role of language in late ancient Christianity has been problematized in recent works of numerous scholars: Fergus Millar, Roger Bagnall, Arietta Papaconstantinou, Hannah Cotton, T.V. Evans, Bas ter Haar Romeny, and Scott Johnson. Many agree that language was not initially an important factor of Christian identity.<sup>2</sup> The situation changed in the fifth and the sixth centuries but the exact nature of the change has been debated.<sup>3</sup> At the time of the Christological controversies, language choice came closer to being a marker of confessional identity than ever before, but the bond between languages and religious affiliations was not absolute. That allowed enough opportunities for religious identities to be constituted across the language boundaries as well as along them.

Before discussing the innovations Christianity introduced, it is worth noting the role language played as an identity factor in classical antiquity. The image of a barbarian as the paradigmatic other was well known in the ancient Greek literature.<sup>4</sup> Etymologically, it referred to one speaking an unintelligible language. The *topos* migrated to newly developing Christian discourse but underwent significant adaptations.<sup>5</sup> The transformations of the *topos* of barbarians in the works of patristic authors from the fourth to the eighth century were

<sup>2</sup> Fergus Millar, *Religion, Language and Community in the Roman Near East: Constantine to Muhammad* (Oxford, 2013); Nathanael Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge, 2013); Bas ter Haar Romeny, 'Christian Identities in the Middle East. Ethnicity, Ethnogenesis, and the Identity of Syriac Orthodox Christians', in Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, Richard Payne (eds), *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300-1100* (Farnham, 2012), 183-204.

<sup>3</sup> Fergus Millar, 'The Evolution of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Pre-Islamic Period: From Greek to Syriac?', *JECS* 21 (2013), 43-92; Scott Johnson, 'Introduction: The Social Presence of Greek in Eastern Christianity, 200-1200 CE', in *id.* (ed.), *Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Greek* (Farnham, 2015), 1-122.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Bacon, *Barbarians in Greek Tragedy* (New Haven, 1961); Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989); Thomas Harrison, 'Herodotus' Conception of Foreign Languages', *Histos* 2 (1998), 1-45; Rosaria Munson, *Black Doves Speak: Herodotus and the Languages of Barbarians* (Washington, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> On barbarian identity: Yves Dauge, *Le barbare: Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation* (Bruxelles, 1981); Peter Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity. Image, Reality, and Transformation', in Richard Miles (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999), 234-58; Stephen Mitchell, Geoffrey Greatrex (eds), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* (London, 2000); Greg Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West* (Chichester, 2011); Ralph Mathisen, Danuta Shanzer (eds), *Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World: Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2011).

highlighted in the article by Gerhard Podskalsky, but the issue deserves further exploration.<sup>6</sup>

In the present study, my aim is to trace and contextualize the evolution of the views of Greek Christian authors on foreign or 'barbarian' languages and on the possibility of transmitting Christian ideas to barbarians in their own tongues. The analysis raises the questions of the extent to which the Christian elite groups became sensitive to the world's multilingualism, and whether this multilingualism was regarded as a hindrance to spreading Christianity. I shall first review how the Bible speaks about foreign languages and their speakers. Second, I will examine the linguistic ideas expressed in the works of early Christian writers (Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen). Third, I will focus on the innovations that were introduced by Eusebius of Caesarea. Finally, I will study the views on barbarian languages and Christian faith in the works of Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.

## 1. Biblical background

In contrast to the Jewish and Islamic traditions, Christianity could hardly insist on the importance of the original language of the divine message. While Jesus spoke a dialect of Aramaic, the original tongue of the majority of the Old Testament books was Hebrew, and the canonical Gospels and Epistles were written in Greek. Christian intellectuals demonstrated a rather welcoming attitude to translations of the Bible, except for instances when translations were associated with non-Orthodox doctrines. In the Christian tradition, the divine message was not usually thought to be bound to a specific language, be it Aramaic, Greek, or Hebrew.

The attitude to the multiplicity of languages in the biblical narrative is ambiguous. On the one hand, the multiplicity of languages was not part of God's original design of the Universe. God is said to have punished the arrogance of those who built the Tower of Babel by 'confusing their tongues' – *i.e.*, giving them mutually incomprehensible languages. On the other hand, one of the most obvious interpretations of *Acts 2* implies that the apostles began to speak in real foreign tongues. That enabled them to go abroad and to preach the gospel to all nations; that also implied that the divine message was transmitted through the apostles directly in all languages.

The Bible was the important point of reference when one needed to characterize speakers of foreign tongues. Those references were sometimes used tendentiously, as we have seen in the *Life of Eutychios*. Moreover, they could

<sup>6</sup> Gerhard Podskalsky, 'Die Sicht der Barbarenvölker in der spätgriechischen Patristik', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 51 (1985), 330-51; see also Sergey Ivanov, *Vizantiiskoe missionerstvo: Možno li sdelat iz 'varvara' khristianina?* (Moscow, 2003), 23-6.

be deployed to justify the diametrically opposite views. For example, *Col.* 3:11, 'there is no distinction between Greek and Jew', allowed Christians to argue in favor of inclusiveness and welcoming attitude to everybody without regard to their ethnic or linguistic backgrounds. On the contrary, *Matth.* 7:6, 'do not throw your pearls before swine', could be read as an exhortation to pursue cultural protectionism and isolationism; although originally this comment specifically aimed against those who were not of the House of Israel, it could be potentially readdressed to various other ethnic and religious groups. With this diversity of options at hand, authorial choice depended on the historical context and specific purposes of a narration. Nevertheless, none of the writers that we shall discuss below built their argument on these obvious biblical passages. While still quoting *Acts* 2 occasionally, they made little use of the Babel story or Pauline passages referring to ethnic and linguistic divisions. For them, classical models of representation of barbarians seem to be more influential than biblical ones.

## 2. Early Christian writers

The views of Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen on foreign languages should be considered in their proper historical context, *i.e.* within a broader discussion of the second century about Christianity as a barbarian philosophy that had incorporated the ancient traditions of wisdom and disclosed their genuine meaning through the revelation of Christ. Post-Hellenistic thinkers entertained the idea about the superiority of barbarian wisdom over Greek philosophy,<sup>7</sup> but Christianity promoted it further.

In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin Martyr depicted Christianity as a universal religion and attempted to dissociate it from the more culturally exclusive Judaism.<sup>8</sup> He presented the wishful, rather than real, picture of triumphant Christianity that embraced the entire *oikoumene* and claimed that it was known among all the peoples, Greeks and barbarians. He did not mention their tongues specifically, which might suggest that he did not consider foreign languages a hindrance to Christianity's advancement. Moreover, Justin implied that prayers and thanksgiving offered to Christ were effective regardless of the languages in which they were pronounced.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Gillian Clark, 'Translate into Greek: Porphyry of Tyre on the New Barbarians', in R. Miles (ed.), *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (1999), 112-32, 121-6.

<sup>8</sup> David Rokeah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* (Leiden, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Just., *dial.* 117.5, in *Die ältesten Apologeten: Texte mit kurzen Einleitungen*, ed. Edgar Goodspeed (Göttingen, 1914), 90-265, 235; see also Tert., *iud.* 7.4 in *Tertulliani Adversus Iudaeos*, ed. Hermann Tränkle (Wiesbaden, 1964), 14.

Tatian, Justin's younger contemporary, was involved in a literary exchange with members of the traditional Greco-Roman elite.<sup>10</sup> In the opening lines of the *Address to the Greeks*, he argued for the superiority of barbarians over "Ἕλληνες"<sup>11</sup> and affirmed that the pure way of life of the former ensured their access to the divine. Tatian pointed out the lack of the unity of the Greek language and its mixing with βαρβαραῖς φωναῖς.<sup>12</sup> The last remark does not indicate the author's negative attitude to barbarian languages, but his skepticism about the alleged purity of Greek. Tatian questioned the role language played as a group identity factor for "Ἕλληνες and the validity of the binary opposition between them and barbarians. His attempts to underplay the contrast of languages attest that language was not a decisive attribute of Christian identity for him.

In *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus stated that idea more explicitly. He asserted that despite the difference in language, barbarians joined the Christian faith and advanced more than those to whom the Scriptures were given in their native tongue. The very idea of barbarism, as the inability to produce clear and intelligible speech, was subverted by Irenaeus: 'They [barbarians] please God, having their conversation in all righteousness, chastity, and wisdom'.<sup>13</sup> He affirmed that Christianity appeals equally to all the peoples regardless of their languages.<sup>14</sup> Language barriers were not considered to be an impediment for Christianity, and language was not presented as a significant factor of Christian identity. Irenaeus pointed out that the Churches established among the different peoples confessed the same views.<sup>15</sup> In other words, he celebrated the spread of Christianity among barbarians, highlighted their success, and subverted the classical understanding of barbarism.

Clement of Alexandria thought along the same lines as Tatian did earlier and further developed the idea of Christianity as the ultimate form of the barbarian philosophy. In the *Stromata*, Clement compiled what must have been understood by his audience as the massive evidence for the originality of the barbarian philosophy and arts, and their superiority over Greek wisdom. That referred primarily to the Hebrew philosophy, but not exclusively. Clement's barbarians included Egyptians, Babylonians, and various other non-Greek peoples of the ancient world.<sup>16</sup> Clement was one of the first Christian authors who articulated

<sup>10</sup> Emily Hunt, *Christianity in the Second Century: The Case of Tatian* (London, 2003); William Petersen, 'Tatian the Assyrian', in Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (eds), *A Companion to Second-Century Christian "Heretics"* (Leiden, 2005), 125-58.

<sup>11</sup> Tat., *orat.* 1.1, in *Die ältesten Apologeten*, ed. E. Goodspeed (1914), 268-305, 268.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 268-9.

<sup>13</sup> Iren., *haer.* 3.4.2, in Irénée de Lyon, *Contre les hérésies*, ed. Adelin Rousseau, 10 vols., SC 100.1, 100.2, 152, 153, 210, 211, 263, 264, 293, 294 (Paris, 1965), SC 211, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Iren., *haer.* 1.10.2, in *ibid.* SC 264, 158.

<sup>15</sup> Iren., *haer.* 1.10.2, in *ibid.* SC 264, 158.

<sup>16</sup> Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 2005).

the opinion that barbarian languages were first, original, and possessing a special power: 'But the first and generic barbarous tongues have the words naturally; therefore, men confess that the prayers uttered in a barbarian tongue are more powerful'.<sup>17</sup>

Origen's theory of language was formed under the complex influence of Greek philosophical and grammatical ideas and Jewish exegetical traditions. Origen held nominalist (as opposed to conventionalist) views on the nature of language.<sup>18</sup> He followed Plato in the affirming that 'names' reflect the nature of things, and rejected Aristotle's ideas that words came as a result of an agreement.<sup>19</sup> Words do not represent or imitate things but indicate their deepest meaning and nature. At that point, Origen's ideas converged smoothly with views that a number of Jewish exegetical traditions upheld about the special power associated with the divine names.<sup>20</sup> For Origen, the original language was a creation of God and had been once used by all people (the pre-Babel state of humanity).<sup>21</sup> Origen did not elaborate on the history of human languages, but their transcendental origins are evident from the way magic formulae work in different tongues. He explained that magic formulae were appropriated differently by 'fathers of languages' (πατέρες τῶν διαλέκτων, a distinct expression of Origen, that might refer to Plato's οἱ τιθέμενοι τὰ ὀνόματα);<sup>22</sup> therefore, incantations that address ethnic pagan gods are effective in their original tongues only.<sup>23</sup> The names of the ethnic deities could not be translated into other languages; otherwise, they lose their power.<sup>24</sup> The attributes of God in the Jewish tradition, such as 'Sabaoth' or 'Adonai', are untranslatable also.<sup>25</sup> However, the Christian God is not an ethnic deity and stays above all languages. The names of deities in different languages cannot be applied to God; the general appellation 'God' is more suitable.<sup>26</sup> These statements suggest that, for Origen, all languages, either Greek or barbarian, have access to the supernatural in their

<sup>17</sup> Clem., *str.* 1, 21, 143, 6, in *Clemens Alexandrinus*, ed. Otto Stählin, 4 vols., GCS 12, 15, 17, 39 (Berlin, 1972-1980), 2, 89; on Clement's views on language: David Robertson, *Word and Meaning in Ancient Alexandria: Theories of Language from Philo to Plotinus* (Aldershot, 2008), 29-44.

<sup>18</sup> Naomi Janowitz, 'Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius', *History of Religions* 30 (1991), 359-72.

<sup>19</sup> Or., *cels.* 5.45.7-16, in *Origène. Contre Celse*, ed. Marcel Borret, 4 vols., SC 132, 136, 147, 150 (Paris, 1967-1969), 3, 130.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Martin, 'Origen's Theory of Language and the First Two Columns of the Hexapla', *HTR* 97 (2004), 1-9, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Or., *cels.* 5.30.1-3, in *ibid.* 3, 88.

<sup>22</sup> Or., *cels.* 5.45.12, in *ibid.* 3, 130; Plat., *Crat.*, in *Platonis Opera*, ed. John Burnet, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1900), 401, b7.

<sup>23</sup> Or., *cels.* 1.24.29-37, in *ibid.* 1, 138.

<sup>24</sup> Or., *cels.* 1.25.28-35, in *ibid.* 1, 142.

<sup>25</sup> Or., *cels.* 1.24.25-9, in *ibid.* 1, 138.

<sup>26</sup> Or., *cels.* 5.46.19-21, in *ibid.* 3, 134.

own ways. Yet genuine Christians stay above the language division; they pray to God in their own languages, and ὁ πάσης διαλέκτου κύριος hears every tongue.<sup>27</sup>

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that language did not play a significant role as a marker of distinctly Christian identity in early Christian thought and that the multiplicity of languages was not considered as an impediment to the spread of Christianity. The languages of barbarians were presented as a valid means to communicate with the divine.

### 3. Eusebius of Caesarea

When Constantine's turn to Christianity made Christians, as a group, an integral part of the Roman society,<sup>28</sup> the Christian discourse on barbarians was also revised.<sup>29</sup> Christians ceased to be considered as outsiders from the imperial perspective; they were less likely to claim the barbarian heritage as their own and to associate it with purity and wisdom. With the growing presence of Christians among the state's elite and the formation of the imperial Church, Christian writers re-defined barbarians, the enemies of Rome, as the enemies of the Church. In contrast to the earlier representation of Christianity as a barbarian philosophy, barbarians started to be regarded as a symbolic other in the Christian universe and were deprived of human and civil qualities.

Eusebius of Caesarea's writings mark a turning point in the transformation of discursive practices. He explicitly contrasted the Christian Roman empire and barbarian outsiders and described the latter as savage and arrogant people who would only benefit from being conquered, so that they could enjoy Roman liberty.<sup>30</sup> The *topos* of cruel barbarians was borrowed from the pre-Christian literature but was successfully adapted to the new realities.

Unlike early Christian writers, who did not consider the multiplicity of languages as a factor that could impede the expansion of Christianity, Eusebius emphasized the significance of linguistic barriers. He was one of the first authors who acknowledged the fact that the apostles must have possessed adequate knowledge of foreign languages in order to preach the gospel to other nations.<sup>31</sup> He described apostles as 'unable to speak or understand any other language but

<sup>27</sup> Or., *cels.* 8.37.7-19, in *ibid.* 4, 256.

<sup>28</sup> Johannes Roldanus, *The Church in the Age of Constantine: The Theological Challenges* (London, 2006), 11-6, 41-4.

<sup>29</sup> P. Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity' (1999), 234-58; W.R. Jones, 'The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971), 376-407.

<sup>30</sup> Eus., *v.C.* 4.6, in *Eusebius Werke I. Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, ed. Friedhelm Winkelmann, GCS 7 (Leipzig, 1975), 121-2.

<sup>31</sup> Eus., *d.e.* 3.7.10-1, in *Eusebius Werke VI. Die Demonstratio evangelica*, ed. Ivar Heikel, GCS 23 (Leipzig, 1913), 142.

their own tongue',<sup>32</sup> and still they preached the Gospel to 'those, who were the speakers of foreign languages'.<sup>33</sup> Eusebius did not explicitly ascribe their success to the apostolic gift of tongues. His attention to languages and problems apostles must have faced, however, highlighted the beginning of significant changes in Christian discourse, such as the growth of the linguistic awareness, to which Eusebius bore witness to and certainly contributed.

#### 4. Authors of the fourth and fifth centuries

The hostile attitude to barbarians became more evident in the works of the Christian and non-Christian writers from the last quarter of the fourth century onwards (the philosopher-bishop Synesius of Cyrene, the rhetorician Themistius, and the historian Zosimus<sup>34</sup>), when 'the gap between rhetoric and reality was stretched seemingly to breaking-point as Roman hegemony in Europe was overthrown'.<sup>35</sup> To a great extent that change of narrative representation of barbarians reflected the fear and insecurity of the generations that witnessed the invasions of Germanic peoples, as well as Alans, Avars, Huns, and Slavs, into Roman territories. The process involved the re-definition of the concept of barbarism in Christian discourse. A certain fragmentation took place. Instead of being only theoretically familiar with barbarians, the majority of Christian intellectuals were more likely now to be exposed to direct interactions with them. Personal experiences of communication with individuals or groups recognized as barbarians informed the works of Christian authors and shaped their views on barbarian languages and on their capacity to express the divine messages. Occasionally, some of them, as Salvian of Marseilles, argued that the success of barbarians reflected God's will and His punishment for vices of the Romans.<sup>36</sup> That position, however, never became a part of the mainstream Christian ideology.

Gregory Nazianzen was from the generation that witnessed the invasion of the Goths, who crossed the Danube in 376 and were allowed to settle on the Roman territories as *foederati*. The subsequent revolt and war culminated in the battle of Adrianople (378), in which the emperor Valens was killed. As a result, the Goths established their presence on the northern borders as a power with which Rome always had to reckon. The Goths' presence in Constantinople, Asia Minor, and Syria was growing.

<sup>32</sup> Eus., *d.e.* 3.5.67, in *ibid.* 123; Eus., *d.e.* 3.4.44, in *ibid.* 118-9; Eus., *d.e.* 3.4.45.11, in *ibid.* 119.

<sup>33</sup> Eus., *d.e.* 3.7.18.6-7, in *ibid.* 143; Eus., *d.e.* 3.4.45, in *ibid.* 119; Eus., *d.e.* 3.7.15, in *ibid.* 143.

<sup>34</sup> G. Podskalsky, 'Die Sicht der Barbarenvölker' (1985), 337-9.

<sup>35</sup> P. Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity' (1999), 242-3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 244.

Gregory was not personally involved in the dramatic events on the Danube, but his tenure in Constantinople made him well aware of the challenges that the empire faced in the early 380s. Yet his own struggle was for the unity of the Church. He considered barbarian invasions as a retribution for the heretical attacks on Trinitarian theology and the internal disintegration of Christianity. In *Oration 33*, he compared the cruelty of those who were involved in the Church conflict with that of the barbarians engaged in the war with the empire. Gregory rebuked his opponents for attacking not foreigners and people of a different language, but their fellow Christians.<sup>37</sup> That remark is particularly revealing in regard to Gregory's attitude to foreign languages. It implies that he considered the fight between speakers of different languages as excusable to a certain degree but ardently condemned strife among Christians. In other words, language was acknowledged as such a marker of differentiation between the self and the other, where hostility might be expected.

Students of Chrysostom frequently mention his positive attitude to barbarians, although his image as an ardent barbarophile could be misleading.<sup>38</sup> The main episodes of his interaction with barbarians included the encounters with the Aramaic speakers in Antioch and his missionary activities and preaching to the Goths as an archbishop of Constantinople. The latter should be contextualized within Chrysostom's attempts to convert the Arian populace of the capital into Nicene orthodoxy. In the sermon addressed to the Goths, he asserted that there was no difference between Greeks or Romans and barbarians in the Church.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, as Chris de Wet demonstrates, this sermon is still quite 'paternalistic and patronizing'.<sup>40</sup> Chrysostom was unable to think outside the dichotomy between Roman and barbarian and frequently employed the rhetoric of differentiation and cultural hegemony. Jonathan Stanfill argues that this homily was intended for Chrysostom's fellow Roman Christians as a defense of his barbarian mission.<sup>41</sup>

This double-standard approach to barbarians can be detected in Chrysostom's earlier works. In the homilies *Ad populum Antiochenum* 19 (387) and *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 8 (388-390), he represented Antioch as a Greek-speaking

<sup>37</sup> Gr. Naz., *or.* 33.2, in PG 36, 216, lines 23-33.

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Stanfill, *Embracing the Barbarian: John Chrysostom's Pastoral Care of the Goths*, Dissertation (Fordham University, 2015); *id.* 'John Chrysostom's Gothic Parish and the Politics of Space', *SP* 67 (2013), 345-9; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1990); Chris L. de Wet, 'John Chrysostom and the Mission to the Goths: Rhetorical and Ethical Perspectives', *HTS Theological Studies* 68.1 (2012), #1220 <<http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/1220/2314>>; González Blanco, 'San Juan Crisóstomo ante el problema bárbaro', *Miscelánea Comillas* 69 (1978), 263-99.

<sup>39</sup> Chrys., *Homilia habita postquam presbyter Gothus*, in PG 63, 499-510.

<sup>40</sup> C. de Wet, 'John Chrysostom' (2012); see also: J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops* (1990), 169-70.

<sup>41</sup> J. Stanfill, *Embracing the Barbarian* (2015).

city and mentioned Aramaic speakers from the countryside who came to his church, ‘people foreign to us in language, but in harmony with us concerning the faith’.<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, Chrysostom glorified their simplicity and Christian virtues; he argued that these Aramaic-speakers possessed true philosophy and were engaged in the divine teaching. On the other hand, he could hardly conceal the feeling that they still were inferior. He put them as an example of piety for his Greek-speaking congregation, who had allegedly lapsed into a corrupted life. This quite artificial opposition, as Tina Shepardson demonstrates,<sup>43</sup> was used by Chrysostom as a convenient tool to shame his Greek audience by pointing to people he (and his audience) considered inferior in terms of civilization who behave, nonetheless, more morally.

Chrysostom’s views on foreign languages were as ambivalent as his attitude to barbarians. The problem of language did not appear to bother Chrysostom very much. He preached in the Gothic church through an interpreter,<sup>44</sup> probably considering that as an acceptable way to address a congregation. In the Antiochian sermons mentioned above, he exhorted his audience to pay no attention to the difference in language.<sup>45</sup> Yet, the Aramaic language was referred to as ‘barbarian’.<sup>46</sup> The ability to speak the doctrines of the faith was considered proper to Greek speakers while Aramaic speakers taught in the language of deeds,<sup>47</sup> which was more eloquent than words.<sup>48</sup> That demonstrates that while Chrysostom followed the earlier writers presenting Christianity as a barbarian philosophy and celebrated the moral purity of the Aramaic-speaking rustics,<sup>49</sup> he still resorted to the rhetoric of differentiation and cultural hegemony. He accentuated the differences between Greek and Aramaic speakers and was uncertain about the ability of the latter to teach Christianity through language. Chrysostom’s approach to the Gothic language was broadly similar, although differed in details. As Chris de Wet shows, Chrysostom attempted to convert the heretical other into the orthodox self, and the process implied giving those individuals both distinct voice and language in Christian discourse.<sup>50</sup> According

<sup>42</sup> Chrys., *stat.* 19.1, in PG 49, 188, lines 47-9; see also Chrys., *stat.* 19.2, in *ibid.* 190, lines 51-5.

<sup>43</sup> Tina Shepardson, ‘Meaningful Meetings: Constructing Linguistic Difference in and around Late Antique Antioch’, in M. Doerfler, E. Fiano and K. Smith (eds), *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium*, Eastern Christian Studies 20 (Leuven, 2015), 79-90.

<sup>44</sup> Thdt., *h.e.* 5.30-1, in *Theodoret, Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Léon Parmentier, GCS 44 (Berlin, 1954), 330-1.

<sup>45</sup> Chrys., *catech* 8.2.4, in *Jean Chrysostome. Huit catéchèses baptismales*, ed. Antoine Wenger, SC 50 (Paris, 1970), 248.

<sup>46</sup> Chrys., *catech* 8.2.6, in *ibid.* 248.

<sup>47</sup> Chrys., *catech* 8.2.7-9, in *ibid.* 248.

<sup>48</sup> Chrys., *catech* 8.3.5, in *ibid.* 249.

<sup>49</sup> On Christianity as the barbarian philosophy: Chrys., *hom. in Jo.* 2.2, in PG 59, 31.

<sup>50</sup> C. de Wet, ‘John Chrysostom’ (2012).

to Theodoret, Chrysostom provided the Goths with Gothic-speaking clergy and praised them for having the scriptures in their native language.<sup>51</sup>

Chrysostom's commentaries on the gift of tongues (*Acts 2*) is another way to approach his attitude to foreign languages. On the one hand, Chrysostom affirmed that the apostles preached the gospel in other languages implying that all languages were equally capable of transmitting the divine message. He repeated Paul's statement that there was no language without meaning (*1Cor. 14:10*).<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Chrysostom underplayed the practical significance of the gift as a means to reach foreign speakers. He asserted that the gift had expired by his time, because it became useless when Christians had learned to believe without the support of an observable pledge, such as signs and miracles, while in the early church days, speaking in tongues had functioned as a visible manifestation of the spiritual gifts for encouragement of newly converted people.<sup>53</sup>

The analysis of the references to foreign speakers in Chrysostom's homilies demonstrates that Chrysostom acknowledged the language and ability to speak of those whose orthodoxy and orthopraxy he sought to establish, *i.e.* the Greek-speaking populace of Antioch and the Goths in Constantinople. The ability meaningfully to use a certain language in the church was inseparable from being an orthodox self. However, the examples in which the difference in language was emphasized despite the apparent unity of faith indicate that Chrysostom employed the rhetoric of differentiation and largely remained within the classical opposition of Greeks and barbarians.

As compared with Chrysostom, Theodoret of Cyrrhus was significantly more exposed to cross-linguistic interactions in his everyday experience. He had an intimate knowledge of the Syriac language but chose to write in Greek. Yet references to the use of Syriac are prominent in his writings. They performed a wide range of functions in the narrative: from being a rhetorical technique that helped to construct the image of a Christian philosopher<sup>54</sup> to a designation of followers of Marcion's heresy.<sup>55</sup> The profound engagement with both Greek and Syriac cultures influenced Theodoret's views on languages. He was one of

<sup>51</sup> Thdt., *h.e.* 5.30-1, in *Theodoret, Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Léon Parmentier and Felix Scheidweiler, GCS 44 (Berlin, 1954), 330.

<sup>52</sup> Chrys., *hom. in I Cor.* 35.2, in PG 61, 298.

<sup>53</sup> Chrys., *pent.* 1.4, in PG 50, 459-60; Chrys., *hom. in Ac. princ.* 3.4, in PG 51, 92-3; Chrys., *hom. in I Cor.* 29.1, in PG 61, 239; Chrys., *hom. in Ac.* 40.1-2, PG 60, 283-4.

<sup>54</sup> Derek Krueger, 'Typological Figuration in Theodoret of Cyrrhus's Religious History and the Art of Postbiblical Narrative', *JECs* 5 (1997), 393-419; *id.* 'Writing as Devotion: Hagiographical Composition and the Cult of the Saints in Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Cyril of Scythopolis', *Church History* 66 (1997), 707-19; Cristian Gașpar, 'An Oriental in Greek Dress: The Making of a Perfect Christian Philosopher in the Philotheos Historia of Theodoret of Cyrrhus', *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 14 (2008), 193-229.

<sup>55</sup> Theresa Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor, 2002), 75; *ead.*, 'The Devil Spoke Syriac to Me: Theodoret in Syria', in S. Mitchell, G. Greatrex

the rare Christian writers of the fifth century who argued for the unity of the human race in spite of differences in languages. The attempts to demonstrate that a barbarian was able to become a perfect Christian philosopher made Theodoret's stand close to that of early Christian writers.

Theodoret, an emphatic supporter of Semitic Christianity, achieved a perfect mastery in the Attic dialect and was at home with the culture of *paideia*. That enabled him to speak with the representatives of Greek philosophy on equal terms and to criticize them for their intellectual self-confidence and arrogant attitude to barbarians.<sup>56</sup> He asserted that language differences did not impede one's ability to reach Christian perfection: 'The diversity of languages does not inflict any damage on human nature. In fact, among Greeks and barbarians alike it is possible to see both practitioners of virtue and devotees of vice'.<sup>57</sup> Theodoret insisted that all the languages were equally suitable to preach the gospel and that the apostolic gift of languages proved to be useful for the evangelization of foreigners.<sup>58</sup>

According to Theodoret, the diversity of languages could not challenge the existential unity of humankind. Yet by the mid-fifth century, that position was no longer part of mainstream Christian discourse. The dominant imperial ideology expressed a hostile attitude to barbarians. Even if some authors, like Chrysostom, held seemingly positive views, their condescending tone betrayed the importance they attached to linguistic and cultural differences. A number of Christian geographical, historical, and missionary narratives passed over in silence the language barriers between Greek- and Latin-speaking citizens of the empire and other peoples they interacted with.<sup>59</sup> All these apparently opposite rhetorical strategies, – from emphasizing the language differences to ignoring them, – worked, in fact, toward the same result: to alienate foreign language speakers from mainstream Christian discourse and thus to call into question their chances to become real Christians. On the contrary, Theodoret allowed Semitic Christianity to speak on its own behalf within the narrative composed in Greek. That made him an outstanding figure among the Greek Christian writers of the fifth century.

(eds), *Ethnicity and Culture* (2000), 253-65; Johnson, 'Introduction: The Social Presence of Greek' (2015), XVI.

<sup>56</sup> Thdt., *affect.* 5.64, in *Théodoret de Cyr. Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*, ed. Pierre Canivet, 2 vols., SC 57 (Paris, 1958), 1, 247, lines 4-10; Thdt., *affect.* 5.69, in *ibid.* 249, lines 2-4.

<sup>57</sup> Thdt., *affect.* 5.58, in *ibid.* 245, lines 9-11; Thdt., *affect.* 5.59, in *ibid.* 245, lines 17-8; Thdt., *affect.* 5.60, in *ibid.* 246, lines 2-9; Thdt., *affect.* 5.66, in *ibid.* 248, lines 5-9; Thdt., *affect.* 5.71, in *ibid.* 249, lines 12-4.

<sup>58</sup> Thdt., *1 Cor.* 14.2, in PG 82, 337D.

<sup>59</sup> S. Ivanov, *Vizantiiskoe missionerstvo* (2003), 70-2.

## Conclusion

The article has highlighted the main points of cultural dialogue between two trends in Christian discourse of the second to the fifth centuries: the so-called ‘Christian universalists’ and those who could be labeled as ‘cultural isolationists’. The central issue of that dialogue was the role of language as a factor of specifically Christian identity and the possibility of communicating Christian ideas to foreigners in their native tongues. I conclude with an anecdotal but illustrative example from the *Life of Daniel the Stylite* that demonstrates the attitude of the Greek representatives of the official church to foreign speakers. When Daniel, a native Syrian, went to the Bosphorus and stood up on his pillar, the local ‘simple-minded priests’ became envious and complained to the patriarch of Constantinople: ‘Some man, having come from we do not know where, has shut himself in our neighborhood, and he is attracting people to him, although he is a heretic. But he is a Syrian by birth and so we are unable to converse with him’. In that particular case, the hagiographer chose to de-escalate the conflict and made the patriarch give the conciliatory answer: ‘If you do not understand his language, how do you know that he is a heretic?’<sup>60</sup> Yet the reasoning of the priests implied that foreign language speakers were heretics by default. Although the text referred to Syriac Christianity in the fifth and the sixth centuries, when language choice indeed came closer to being a marker of confessional identity, by that time the rhetoric of alienation of foreign language speakers had already been well established in Greek patristic discourse. The idea that speakers of foreign languages could not be genuine Christians sounded natural within that discourse. Occasionally, the logic of that argument was reversed, as we have observed in the *Life of Eutychios*, where the foreign-language rhetoric was applied to the speakers of the same language in order to emphasize the confessional differences.

The attitude of the priests in the *Life of Daniel the Stylite* could not be farther from the universalist approach of the first Christian authors, such as Justin, Tatian, Irenaeus, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria. Those intellectuals aspired to represent Christianity as a universal religion and insisted that linguistic and cultural differences could not impede one’s ability to become a genuine Christian. All languages were declared equally capable of transmitting the divine messages. Theodoret held those views later in the fifth century when the different approach dominated, that of ‘cultural isolationists’. The latter argued that Christianity provided its adepts with an inherent superiority that could not be shared with the outsiders. Within that paradigm, foreign languages were considered among the factors that could limit one’s access to the Christian truth. The presence of a Greek other, *i.e.* a sacred text or a representative of the

<sup>60</sup> *Vita antiquior Danielis Stylitae* 17, in *Les saints stylites*, H. Delehay, SH 14 (Brussels, 1923), 17, lines 8-14.

Church, was deemed desirable to discover the deepest meaning of Christianity. Eusebius was one of the first Christian writers who highlighted the cultural clash between the newly-Christianized empire and the barbarian outsiders. He made use of the traditional *topos* of barbarians borrowed from the Greek classical literature and adapted it to the new Christian context. Unlike the earlier writers, Eusebius was keenly aware of language barriers and described the linguistic difficulties apostles must have faced during their preaching. The threat of barbarian invasions was partially responsible for the hostile attitude to the speakers of a different language. A number of barbarian peoples had followed the Arian doctrine, and that also contributed to their image as 'defective' Christians. As a result, by the sixth century, a wide range of rhetorical techniques was available to patristic authors to alienate foreign speakers, including emphasizing the language differences as well as ignoring them.

# Reading the Self by Reading the Other: A Hermeneutical Key to the Reading of Sacred Texts in Late Antiquity and Byzantium

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## ABSTRACT

One hermeneutical key to understanding how Late Antique and Byzantine readers read sacred texts can be found in realizing that texts were often read self-biographically. While it has been demonstrated that Constantine, for example, could be seen as a new David, and that Gregory of Nyssa could find in the life of Basil the life of Moses, this article will argue that it was not uncommon for the Christian to find in the Scriptures his own life, played out centuries before. The theological principle that the Old Testament Scriptures already offered the typological life of Christ meant that the life of the Christian following in the steps of Christ was similarly to be found in Scripture. By examining two examples of such activity more closely, I argue that such practices were more widespread, and a natural extension of this fundamental typological claim.

The question of *how* one read in late antiquity and beyond in Byzantium has received considerable attention.<sup>1</sup> Readers and hearers of sacred texts were expected to profit from them, but the means by which they profited from them varied.<sup>2</sup> One hermeneutic employed and which has been overlooked was to read one's own life into the sacred text in order to help make sense of it, an act that was simultaneously complicated and facilitated by a continuing acknowledgment of the limitations of the written word.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Guglielmo Cavallo, *Lire à Byzance* (Paris, 2006); Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, 2011); Floris Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry, 1025-1081* (Oxford, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> By now the word 'Scripture', has been realized as a notoriously difficult term to define. See here the important work William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge, 1987), who inaugurated new ways of looking at orality and Scripture. Following him have been several others who have reconsidered how a 'Scripture' comes to be 'Scripture' in a given community, and what implications can be drawn from studying a text's pre-history in oral transmission prior to its having achieved a final written form.

<sup>3</sup> By 'static sacred stories' I mean that the details of a perceived sacred story (scriptural or other) remain more or less the same from one telling of that story to the next, regardless if minute details such as word choice made by the story teller alter.

In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates explains to Phaedrus that,

writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.<sup>4</sup>

Authors in the late antique world continued repeating Socrates' warnings regarding language and the written word in one fashion or another. Basil wrote in a letter to his friend Gregory that, 'every theological expression is inferior to the thought of the speaker and inferior to the desire of the questioner ... because language is too weak to convey the mind's thoughts'.<sup>5</sup> John Chrysostom regarded it as blameworthy that Christians stood in need of the written word at all, and though he regarded it a necessity he stated it was 'the second best course' when compared with instruction by means of the grace of the spirit.<sup>6</sup>

A common claim for the purpose of engaging with sacred texts (whether by reading, listening, or reciting) was to create in the student a longing for God.<sup>7</sup> Such longing, it was argued, made it possible to pray more deeply, and, ultimately, led to the purification of the mind, and vision of God (*theoria*). To take one example, St. Isaac the Syrian, whose works became widely known in Byzantium after the 9<sup>th</sup> century writes: 'Devote yourself to the reading of the Divine Scriptures, which reveal to a person the most vivid vision of the Divine majesty, even if you do not immediately taste of the sweetness of their thoughts, since your mind has not yet been cleansed and has not distanced itself from material things'.<sup>8</sup> For Isaac, a pure mind was requisite in order to open the

<sup>4</sup> Paul Ryan, *Plato's Phaedrus: A Commentary for Greek Readers* (Norman, 2012), xxii-xxiii, 315-7. Plato's own views on the written word were even starker: 'No man of intelligence will venture to express his philosophical views in language, especially not in language that is unchangeable, which is true of that which is set down in written characters' ὄν ἔνεκα νοῦν ἔχων οὐδεὶς τολμήσει ποτὲ εἰς αὐτὸ τίθῃναι τὰ νενοημένα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα εἰς ἀμετακίνητον, ὃ δὴ πάσχει τὰ γεγραμμένα τύποις, *Letter 7* in Plato, *Platonis Opera*, ed. John Burnet (Oxford, 1903), 343a. The letter has traditionally been ascribed to Plato, only occasionally questioned.

<sup>5</sup> Basil, *Letters* (Cambridge, MA, 1926), *Letter 7*, 44-5: ... πᾶσα θεολογικὴ φωνὴ ἐλάττων μὲν ἔστι τῆς διανοίας τοῦ λέγοντος, ἐλάττων δὲ τῆς τοῦ ἐπιζητούντος ἐπιθυμίας, διότι ὁ λόγος ἀσθενέστερόν πως πέφυκε διακονεῖσθαι τοῖς νοουμένοις.

<sup>6</sup> PG 57, 13a. 1st Homily on Matthew. Also see Stelian Tofană, 'John Chrysostom's View on Reading and Interpreting The Scripture. A Critical Assessment', *Sacra Scripta* 2 (2008), 165-81, for further places where John makes the same point.

<sup>7</sup> See for example, Gerald Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware (trans. and eds), *The Philokalia: The Complete Text* (London, 1983-1995), II 349, and III 123.

<sup>8</sup> For the translation of Isaac's works into Greek, see Sebastian Brock, 'Syriac into Greek at Mar Saba: The Translation of St. Isaac the Syrian', in Joseph Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage*

Scriptures to those who read them. And yet paradoxically, we find often repeated the claim that without a pure mind, one cannot understand the Scriptures. Athanasius of Alexandria is perhaps the most frequently quoted to make this point:

But for searching the Scriptures and a true understanding of them, it is necessary to have a good life, and a pure soul (ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς), and virtue in accordance with Christ; so that the nous, leading the way through, may be able to understand, and to comprehend them, insofar as it is feasible for human nature to learn about the word of God. For without a pure mind (καθαρᾶς διανοίας) and modeling life after the saints, it is not possible to comprehend the words of holy people.<sup>9</sup>

Purity of mind, therefore is not only that which the reader seeks to acquire through reading the text, but also necessary for understanding it.<sup>10</sup> Finally, and perhaps most ironically, it is the very acquisition of a pure mind that would appear to render the Scriptures of no longer any need. Again, Chrysostom tells us in several places that God spoke to both the Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles directly, and without recourse to means of the written word, ‘finding their mind pure’ (καθαρὰν εὐρίσκων αὐτῶν τὴν διάνοιαν).<sup>11</sup> It is specifically because mankind fell into wickedness that God made recourse to speak through the written word, that man might again acquire a pure mind. Similarly, Isaac the Syrian and Symeon the New Theologian repeat the idea that he who has acquired spiritual knowledge of the Scriptures will no longer need the book to guide him.<sup>12</sup>

*in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Leuven, 2001), 201-8. For the translation above, see Isaac the Syrian, *The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2011), 149. A critical edition of the Greek text of St. Isaac’s Ascetical Homilies has recently been produced by Marcel Pirard and published by Iviron Monastery on Mt. Athos. I have not had the opportunity to consult this text. The English translation offered by Holy Transfiguration Monastery is a composite translation making use of the Syriac, Greek, and Latin manuscript traditions.

<sup>9</sup> Athanase d’Alexandrie, *Incarnation du Verbe*, ed. and trans. by Charles Kannengiesser (Paris, 1973), 466-9 (translation is mine). Ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὴν ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν ἔρευναν καὶ γνῶσιν ἀληθῆ, χρεια βίου καλοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς καὶ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν ἀρετῆς, ἵνα δι’ αὐτῆς ὁδεύσας ὁ νοῦς τυχεῖν ὧν ὀρέγεται καὶ καταλαβεῖν δυναθῆ, καθ’ ὅσον ἐφικτόν ἐστι τῇ ἀνθρώπων φύσει περὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου μανθάνειν. Ἄνευ γὰρ καθαρᾶς διανοίας καὶ τῆς πρὸς τοὺς ἁγίους τοῦ βίου μιμήσεως, οὐκ ἂν τις καταλαβεῖν δυναθῆ τὸς τῶν ἁγίων λόγους.

<sup>10</sup> Among others, see Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality* (South Canaan, 2003), 224, and references there to Maximus and others.

<sup>11</sup> PG 57, 13a.

<sup>12</sup> For St. Symeon, see Theodore Stylianopoulos, ‘Holy Scripture, Interpretation, and Spiritual Cognition in St. Symeon the New Theologian’, *GOTR* 46 (2001), 3-34, 14-7. St. Isaac says: ‘Until a man has received the Comforter, he requires the divine Scriptures to imprint the memory of good in his heart, to keep his striving for good constantly renewed by continual reading, and to preserve his soul ... When the power of the Spirit has penetrated the noetic powers of the active soul, then in place of the law of the Scriptures [*i.e.* written word], the commandments of the Spirit

One possible way to make sense of how exhortation to reading the text to acquire a pure mind was simultaneously made with the claim that the text cannot be understood without a pure mind is if texts were read typologically not only with respect to Christ, but self-biographically, a perhaps natural consequence of the former. Following the Apostle Paul, typological readings of the Hebrew Scriptures proliferated among theologians and the events, stories, and prophecies that take place there were seen as none other than the events of Christ's life played out over and again.<sup>13</sup> While it was more common to see a particular event from the life of Christ as a fulfillment of a prophecy, sometimes scriptural stories were mapped wholesale onto the life of Christ, with the consequence being that these were then seen as proto-biographies of him.<sup>14</sup> Jon Levenson has shown that the Gospel authors understood a number of the stories in *Genesis* to specifically replay a type of death and resurrection of a beloved son, and that the Gospel writers made use of this motif to their own ends in narrating the life of Christ. It was common practice to see in other figures such as Jonah, Joshua, Moses and Elijah, types of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

In this view, the sacred text becomes the dynamic preservation of prophetic, spirit-filled witness accounts of future events, and in particular the life of the Christ. The lives of the individual prophets are themselves biographical portraits of either the whole or a part of Christ's life. As Gregory the Great says in his introduction to his commentary on the book of *Job*,

... Abel comes to show us innocence, Enoch to teach purity of practice, Noah, to win admittance for lessons of endurance in hope and in work, Abraham to manifest obedience, Isaac, to show an example of chastity in wedded life, Jacob to introduce patience in labor, Joseph for the repaying evil with favor of a good turn, Moses for the showing forth of mildness, Joshua to form us to confidence against difficulties, Job to show us patience amid afflictions.<sup>16</sup>

Gregory points here to persons of the Scriptures who displayed various aspects of the personality of Christ, and can be viewed as participants in the

take root in his heart and a man is secretly taught by the Spirit and needs no help from sensory matter', Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homilies*, 176-7.

<sup>13</sup> To see how Paul reads the Scriptures according to the Spirit (*Pneuma*) as opposed to reading them according to the letter (*gramma*), see John D. Dawson, 'Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Christian Identity in Boyarin, Auerbach, and Frei', *Modern Theology* 14 (1998), 181-96.

<sup>14</sup> The most obvious of these was perhaps the life of Jonah, which Christ himself used in the Gospel of *Matth.* 12:38-45.

<sup>15</sup> For the identification of *Genesis* stories as types of deaths and resurrections of sons, see Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, 1995). It was not Levenson's intent to show that Old Testament stories prefigure the life of Christ, but his efforts demonstrate how closely Christ's life mirrored the series of stories about fathers and sons in *Genesis*, and he argues how strongly such images would have resonated in Jewish expectations of the Messiah in the first century C.E.

<sup>16</sup> PL 75, 524B. Translation is from Gregory the Great, *Morals of the Book of Job by St. Gregory the Great*, trans. J.H. Parker (Oxford, 1844), 25.

life of Christ prior to the Incarnation. They are thus exemplars in and of themselves for the recipient to learn from, follow, and make his own. They are therefore also mirrors against which the recipient can measure his own progress in the life in Christ.

Likewise, when Gregory of Nyssa offers an apology to his reader in his prologue to his *Life of Moses* for why the reader should examine the lives of Old Testament figures seemingly so far removed from the reader in life and context, he does so by referring to the virtue in those Prophets' lives, and not because by studying them he will better understand Christ, although admittedly this is doubtless implicit.<sup>17</sup> They can, however, be seen as a direct inspiration to the reader, and a model by which anyone who lives the life in Christ can live.

Christian recipients of the lives of the Prophets and their prophecies were exhorted to live life in emulation of Christ, and consequently understood the pre-written scriptural history of the life of Christ as the pre-written history of the life of his own person. Studies in Byzantine hymnography have recently shown how flexible hymnographers have been with the biblical text, in effect re-writing the text in an effort to preserve what they saw as its intended meaning. In particular, hymns often locate Christ in the Old Testament in God's many appearances to the Prophets, and Old Testament figures are presented as proto-Christians.<sup>18</sup> Byzantine hymns frequently place the chanter(s) (who represent[s] the congregation) within the action of the life of a Prophet or sinner, or one of the other historical figures contemporary with the Prophet or Christ. For example, phrases such as, 'let us add our lamentation to the lamentation of Jacob, and let us weep with him for Joseph' as well as 'may your lamp shine brightly, O my soul; and, like the lamps of the five virgins, may it overflow with the oil of compassion' appear often in liturgical texts.<sup>19</sup> The *Kontakia* of Romanos the Melodist, many of which were particularly well-received often employ such tactics, particularly in the refrains, where the faithful are made to stand in the place of the Samaritan woman, the Apostle Thomas, the Leper or the Harlot as the chanter repeats a particular phrase in the first person, as though it were he who was talking to Christ in front of him.<sup>20</sup> The consequence of such hymns, however, is that the biblical stories become in the life of the readers/listeners partly biographical. Their stories become the stories of the readers, and the

<sup>17</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. A.J. Malherbe and E. Ferguson (New York, 1978), 32-3 and 136.

<sup>18</sup> Bogdan G. Bucur, 'Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies in Byzantine Hymnography: Rewritten Bible?', *Theological Studies* 68 (2007), 92-112.

<sup>19</sup> Space prohibits a full demonstration of this. The interested reader is referred to the *Lenten Triodion* as a good single source where many such hymnographic texts are collected. These two references here appear on pages 513 and 521 respectively. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware (eds), *The Lenten Triodion* (New Canaan, 1978).

<sup>20</sup> For a selection of these in translation, see Ephrem Lash, *On the Life of Christ: Chanted Sermons by the Great Sixth Century Poet and Singer St. Romanos* (New Haven, 2010).

prophet's or repentant sinner's historical life lives within the contemporary community.

That not only hymnographers expressed themselves in this way but also authors of what we might call less poetic works has been argued in several places. Eusebius and Gregory of Nyssa recast the lives of Constantine and Basil of Caesarea as the life of Moses, and collections such as Theodoret's *Religious History* and the anonymous *History of the Monks of Egypt* served to re-enact Scripture in the modern world.<sup>21</sup> Not only were figures contemporary to the late antique world cast in the light of biblical heroes by contemporaneous hagiographers, but hagiographers used contemporary figures and their lives as evidence of the proof of biblical accounts. As one scholar has said, 'Basil was a modern Moses, and to that his brother [Gregory] could attest; the implication was that Moses had been a biblical Basil'.<sup>22</sup> The application made by authors of the fourth century of biblical figures to the lives of their fellow contemporary Christians was consistent with hymnographers' efforts to similarly identify in Abraham, Job, Moses or Elijah, the life of Christ.

All of this is possible, of course, because readers conceived of the lives as one and the same, offering different lessons for different circumstances. Gregory's *Life of Moses* served the broader function of indicating to the faithful that Scripture was being lived out in the current day in their own lives. As Gregory of Nyssa had said, the goal of scriptural interpretation was to find 'beneficial meanings' in the texts. In his commentary on the *Song of Songs* he states that, 'when it comes to the insightful reading (*theoria*) of such passages that comes via the elevated sense (*anagoge*), we shall not beg to differ at all about its name – whether one wishes to call it *tropologia*, *allegoria*, or anything else – but only about whether it contains meanings that are beneficial.'<sup>23</sup>

Yet it was seen as no simple thing to see the beneficial meaning in the Scriptures, and the question of how to find the beneficial meaning of a sacred text plagued the Byzantines, while demons interfered in the effort.<sup>24</sup> Self-biographical readings of the scriptures made possible the reading of texts by persons of

<sup>21</sup> See Michael S. Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography* (Cambridge, 2008), and Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia, 2004), 34.

<sup>22</sup> M.S. Williams, *Authorised Lives* (2008), 225. Williams similarly points out that Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* works to prove the biblical account of the life of Moses (226 n. 4).

<sup>23</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Song of Songs*, Prologue to Commentary. Translation by Margaret M. Mitchell, in *Paul, the Corinthians and the Birth of Christian Hermeneutics* (Cambridge, 2010), 1.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, John Climacus, who wrote: 'At the beginning, some of the unclean demons instruct us in the interpretation of the Divine Scriptures. And they are particularly fond of behaving in this way in the case of vainglorious people and of those who have been educated in secular studies, so that by gradually deceiving them, they may lead them into heresy and blasphemy...' John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent by St. John Climacus* (Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 2001), 185 (PG 88, 1065D-1068A).

perceived impurity that were in turn thought only comprehensible with a pure mind. The reader could only have been all too unaware of when certain passages of Scripture pertained to him.

Understood as the biography of Christ and implicitly as the pre-written history of every Christian, the reader or hearer entered into a sacred text as Gregory did to find 'beneficial meanings'. For the reader, or hearer, however, this was difficult. This is why Augustine was so pained that he could not see Ambrose 'face to face' in order to ask of him the questions he had of the Scriptures.<sup>25</sup> While he understood his own life and journey to be a mirror against which every other soul was also journeying, he also understood that beneficial meanings were hard to discern. In the absence of Ambrose, Augustine regarded Paul as central to his own growth and development.<sup>26</sup> The Scriptures for him had become biographical but not self-biographical, and it did not help him enough to think as he did that interpretation of Scripture had to be performed, since he still needed to know how to perform it.<sup>27</sup>

The confluence theologians and hymnographers engaged in efforts to place the reader in the context of the scriptural past indicates that many hearers and readers were engaged in the process of receiving sacred texts as self-biographical. By reading the lives of others one read one's own life, and by performing the lives of others in liturgical arrangements, the performer not only re-performed the lives of past historical figures, but in fact lived the past historical figures in his own life, anew.

<sup>25</sup> *Confessions* 5.14-6.3.

<sup>26</sup> Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge, 1997).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 271.



## **HISTORICA**



# Teaching Religion in Late Antiquity: Divine and Human Agency

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## ABSTRACT

Who is the teacher when religion is taught? When Christianity established the catechumenate, it was obviously assumed that initiating people into Christian faith and life involved a learning process within which human beings interact as teachers and pupils. Augustine, however, named Christ the primordial teacher and the church his school, thus suggesting that religion proper can only be taught by a divine teacher – but, admittedly, not without human preachers and catechists. The article investigates this relationship between divine and human agency in texts belonging to the late antique catechumenate, written by, among others, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Augustine. It thus seeks to clarify how earlier concepts of a divine pedagogy in, *e.g.*, Clement of Alexandria and Origen were adapted to the institutionalized catechumenate of Late Antiquity and helped to develop a special didactic of teaching (Christian) religion.

## I. Introduction

Is it possible to teach religion? Certainly it is: if it were not, departments of Religious Studies would be out of work without the possibility to teach – and investigate and discuss – religious matters. Therefore, as long as ‘religion’ is understood as a special domain of knowledge (like history, sociology, or biology), there is no problem with teaching religion at all.

But it is not that easy when it comes to practicing religion, that is, when one endeavors to teach people to encounter divine beings in an adequate manner. Of course, one might instruct other people how to behave rightly in a sacred building, how to participate in rituals, how to answer correctly when being interrogated about one’s own religious affiliation. But according to a Christian understanding of God, man, and world, being religious is not limited to these aspects. Christian religion requires faith in God and in Christ. And if Augustine was right that it is faith that seeks understanding – and not the other way round –, the question arises whether faith can be taught, and if so, by whom and in which way. Does one decide to be faithful by virtue of the human will? Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria, *e.g.*, are known to have held such

a view which was still quite influential in late antique catechesis.<sup>1</sup> But at the same time, Clement argued that Christ himself was the primordial teacher of mankind.<sup>2</sup> Origen concurred with a view of the history of salvation as a pedagogical process.<sup>3</sup> Thus the question is not so easily settled: is teaching religion a human enterprise, or is it effected by divine agency?

This question was obviously most urgent with respect to the catechumenate which aimed at preparing people for baptism by teaching them religion. There are not many reflections on what might be called didactics of religion; in most cases, it was taken as a given that teaching religion was possible and meaningful. Let us have a look at a few exceptions.

## II. Why should one like to teach religion? A look at the beginnings

It is beyond question that religion *was* taught in early Christianity. Jews and pagans were instructed in Christian faith and, after they had acquired the necessary knowledge and behavior, they were baptized and thus received into the community of the faithful. This is not at all surprising, given the last commandment of the risen Jesus Christ to his disciples:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you (*Matth.* 28:19-20).

Thus, βαπτίζειν is framed by μαθητεύειν and διδάσκειν: who wants to belong to the Christians enters a community of teachers and pupils and receives education, as Jesus himself had acted as a teacher.<sup>4</sup> The question remains whether one has to be taught the faith *before* being baptized or whether the educational aspect *follows* the initiation into the Christian community. Does baptism already require an educated faith and thus a conscious assent to the Christian belief in God, or does faith precede intellectual formation?

Jesus, as it seems, was not so clear about this. But the early Christians were. In the second and third centuries, the catechumenate – as far as we are justified

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. haer.* 4.37.5; among many passages in Clement of Alexandria's writings, see esp. *Str.* 2.9.2-3; 2.11.1; 2.27.4.

<sup>2</sup> See Judith Kovacs, 'Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria', *JCS* 9 (2001), 3-25.

<sup>3</sup> See Everett Ferguson, 'Divine Pedagogy: Origen's Use of the Imagery of Education', in *id.* (ed.), *Christian Teaching. Studies in Honor of LeMoine G. Lewis* (Abilene, 1981), 343-62 and Peter Gemeinhardt, 'Glaube, Bildung, Theologie. Ein Spannungsfeld im frühchristlichen Alexandria', in Tobias Georges, Reinhard Feldmeier and Felix Albrecht (eds), *Alexandria, Civitatum Orbis Mediterranei Scripta 1* (Tübingen, 2013), 445-73.

<sup>4</sup> See now Reinhard Feldmeier, 'Gottessohn und Lehrer – Jesus von Nazareth', in Tobias Georges, Jens Scheiner and Ilina Tanaseanu-Döbler (eds), *Bedeutende Lehrerfiguren. Von Platon bis Hasan al-Banna* (Tübingen, 2015), 37-62.

in speaking of such an institution – endured several years and included not only a scrutinization of moral behavior but also a deliberate act of choice when applying for baptism. According to the baptismal rite in the *Apostolic Tradition*, a newly baptized Christian should ‘act as he was taught and make progress in piety’.<sup>5</sup> Tertullian claimed that *Matth.* 19:14 (‘Let the little children come to me’) should not be taken at face-value:

They may come when they are grown-up; they may come when they have learnt and have been taught where to go; they may become Christians as soon as they are able to know Christ ... Should one act more carefully in secular affairs and trust someone with divine goods who would not be trusted with human ones?<sup>6</sup>

Thus, for Tertullian and most of his contemporaries, education comes first as a human action before receiving the divine grace in baptism and living accordingly in a Christian manner.

### III. On teaching and not teaching the faith: Cyril of Jerusalem

In the fourth century, as has frequently been noticed, preparation for baptism got a new shape. ‘Catechumens’ now were those who participated in the regular services and listened to the sermons, but they were not yet admitted to the eucharist. Only when they formally enrolled for baptism, they got a special instruction during Lent. The rapid growth of the parishes necessitated a reduction of the preparatory time; as bishop Gaudentius of Brescia put it, people converted to Christianity ‘with the speed of a spinning wheel’.<sup>7</sup> But Jesus’ commandment to teach and baptize remained decisive – baptism was framed by teaching. Religious education not only imparted knowledge of faith and moral behavior but, once the newly baptized had joined the ‘community of saints’, he received ‘mystagogical’ catecheses which were held in the Easter week. Such mystagogical catecheses are to be found among the writings of, e.g., Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose of Milan.

Any of these catechetical enterprises, be it pre- or post-baptismal, presupposed at least an implicit answer to the question: who is active in this process?

<sup>5</sup> *Trad. ap.* 21: *faciens quae didicit et proficiens in pietate*. For the background see Gilbert Ostdiek, ‘Catechechumen. Christianity’, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* 4 (2012), 1057-60.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, *De bapt.* 18.5: *Veniant ergo dum adolescent, dum discunt, dum quo ueniant decentur; fiant Christiani cum Christum nosse potuerint! ... Cautius agetur in saecularibus, ut cui substantia terrena non creditur diuina credatur?*

<sup>7</sup> Gaudentius, *Sermo* 8.25: *Constat autem populum gentium ex errore idolatriae, ubi olim fuerat deuolutus, nunc ad Christianae ueritatis cultum celeritate rotae cuiusdam properare currentis*. For the late ancient catechumenate in general, see Marcel Metzger *et al.*, ‘Katechumenat’, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 20 (2004), 497-574.

Cyril, in his *Introductory Catechesis* (held c. 350), displays however some explicit didactic reflection:

Let me compare the catechizing to a building. Unless we methodically bind and joint the whole structure together, we shall have leaks and dry rot, and all our previous exertions will be wasted. No, stone must be laid upon stone in regular sequence, and corner follow corner, jutting edges must be planed away; and so the perfect structure rises. I bring you as it were the stones of knowledge; you must be instructed in the doctrine of the living God, of the Judgment, of Christ, of the Resurrection. Many things have to be said in order, which are now being touched upon at random but will then be brought together into harmonious system. Unless you achieve this unity of design, holding the beginning and the sequel in your mind together, the builder may do his best, but your house will be a ruin.<sup>8</sup>

But who is the builder? In order to clarify this, Cyril distinguishes between two kinds of faith: Concerning the ‘dogmatic belief’, the ‘assent to some truth’,<sup>9</sup> it is the person who conducts the catechetical instruction. But, according to Cyril, there is also faith as a gift of God,<sup>10</sup> and both kinds of faith are open to ‘learning and professing’.<sup>11</sup> Learning the faith through intellect and through inspiration work together, and thus one can indeed teach religion, but only to a certain extent: Faith is open to didactic reflection, but it also exceeds didactics.

#### IV. Education, love and joy: Augustine

A few decades later, Augustine offers an even more elaborated concept of a didactics of religion. Immediately after his own conversion and baptism in 386, he set out to develop a Christianized curriculum of the Liberal Arts, which remained fragmentary. When the former rhetor however became bishop in 396,

<sup>8</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatech.* 11: Νόμισόν μοι οἰκοδομήν εἶναι τὴν κατήχησιν· ἐὰν μὴ κατ’ ἀκολουθίαν δεσμοῖς οἰκοδομῆς ἀρμολογήσωμεν τὸν δόμον, ἵνα μὴ εὐρεθῇ τι χαῦνον, καὶ σαθρὰ γένηται ἡ οἰκοδομή, οὐδὲν ὄφελος οὐδὲ τοῦ προτέρου κόπου· ἀλλὰ δεῖ κατ’ ἀκολουθίαν λίθον μὲν λίθῳ ἀκολουθεῖν, καὶ γωνίαν γωνία ἐπεσθαι· ἀποξεόντων δὲ [ἡμῶν] τὰ περιττά, οὕτως τελείαν οἰκοδομήν ἀναβαίνειν· οὕτω προσφερόμεν σοι λίθους ὥσπερ γνώσεως· δεῖ ἀκούειν τὰ περὶ Θεοῦ ζῶντος· δεῖ ἀκούειν τὰ περὶ κρίσεως· δεῖ ἀκούειν τὰ περὶ Χριστοῦ· δεῖ ἀκούειν τὰ περὶ ἀναστάσεως· καὶ πολλὰ ἐστὶν ἀκολουθῶς λεγόμενα, νῦν μὲν σποράδην εἰρημένα, τότε δὲ καθ’ ἀρμονίαν προσφερόμενα· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ συνάψῃς ἐν τῷ ἐνί, καὶ μνημονεύσῃς τῶν πρώτων καὶ τῶν δευτέρων, ὁ μὲν οἰκοδομῶν οἰκοδομεῖ, σὺ δὲ σαθρὰν ἕξεις τὴν οἰκοδομήν. These and the following translations are taken from: *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, vol. 1, *The Fathers of the Church* 64 (Washington, D.C., 1969).

<sup>9</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 5.10: Ἔστι μὲν γὰρ ἐν εἶδος τῆς πίστεως, τὸ δογματικόν, συγκατάθεσιν ψυχῆς ἔχον περὶ τοῦδέ τινος.

<sup>10</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 5.11: Δεύτερον δὲ ἐστὶν εἶδος πίστεως, τὸ ἐν χάριτος μέρει παρὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ δωρούμενον.

<sup>11</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 5.12: Πίστιν δὲ ἐν μαθήσει καὶ ἀπαγγελία κτήσαι καὶ τήρησον μόνην.

Augustine started to advocate a new notion of ‘school’: he envisaged Christians as educated people, but their erudition should be acquired ‘in the school of the heavenly teacher’.<sup>12</sup> Instead of classical (pagan) grammar, rhetoric or philosophy, they should be acquainted with the ‘literature of Christ’, that is, the Holy Scriptures.<sup>13</sup> Here, the catechumens should learn ‘to love God for God’s sake and the neighbor for God’s sake’ and thus advance in holiness, because he who has obtained wisdom will be holy, as Augustine put it in *On Christian Doctrine*.<sup>14</sup>

But how can an ecclesiastical teacher, himself a human being, lead his flock to holiness? Certainly, he can not simply ‘make’ them holy, but he is able to pave the way, and that’s what the human teacher himself has to learn. In his writing *On the First Catechetical Instruction*, Augustine explains how teaching religion works on the human side. Of course, anybody who aims at instructing others must possess a good command of rhetoric, but it is more important to obey the authority of the Bible and the double commandment of love.<sup>15</sup> For just like God loves mankind, the teacher shall love his hearer, ‘and so give all your instructions that he to whom you speak by hearing may believe, and by believing may hope, and by hoping may love’.<sup>16</sup> And if the teacher himself radiates the divine love about which he talks, then he will not be explaining something *about* religion but witnessing to what he believes and what has taken possession of him. Teaching religion is, for Augustine, a matter of personal involvement.

In this respect, the emperor Julian precisely hit the point who tried to expel Christian teachers from the public schools, since, due to their own religious affiliation, they could not teach the classical school-texts and in doing so, duly recommend the pagan Gods which figured prominently in these texts.<sup>17</sup> Tertullian had argued in the same way, but from a Christian perspective, nearly two centuries before. Both were however mistaken in that they presupposed that Christians and pagans alike would view the public schools as a place of religious confessionalism. Still, it is worth remarking that Augustine echoed this critical view on Christians as teachers in public schools in his

<sup>12</sup> Augustine, *Sermo* 52.4.13: *eruditus in schola magistri caelestis*.

<sup>13</sup> Augustin, *Sermo* 270.1; for more details, see Peter Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 41 (Tübingen, 2007), 452-3.

<sup>14</sup> Augustine, *De doct. christ.* 2.7.10-1.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *De catech. rud.* 8.12. Translations are taken from: *St. Augustine: The First Catechetical Instruction*, trans. Joseph P. Christopher, Ancient Christian Writers 2 (Westminster MD and London, 1962). For the following, the seminal study is William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville MN, 1995; rev. ed. 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Augustine, *De catech. rud.* 4.8: *Hac ergo dilectione tibi tamquam fine proposito, quo referas omnia quae dicis, quidquid narras ita narra, ut ille cui loqueris audiendo credat, credendo speret, sperando amet.*

<sup>17</sup> See P. Gemeinhardt, ‘Pagane Bildung’ (2007), 351-67 and, for the following reference to Tertullian, *ibid.* 64-9.

*Confessions*.<sup>18</sup> And a few years later, in *On the First Catechetical Instruction*, he leaves no doubt that only a faithful teacher can instruct other people in the Christian faith.

But teaching religion, according to Augustine, is even more: it is a joyful thing. For if the catechetical instruction is successful, the catechumen will not only know about God but will find delight in this knowledge, and this will be effected by the teacher's own attitude:

For if in the case of material wealth 'God loves a cheerful giver' (2*Cor.* 9:7), how much more in that of spiritual? But that the catechist may have this cheerfulness in the hour of need depends on the mercy of Him who has given these commandments.<sup>19</sup>

There is indeed a reciprocal relation between catechist and catechumen: While the latter 'is listening to God through us',<sup>20</sup> this has also repercussions for him who is entrusted with teaching religion:

For so great is the power of sympathy, that when people are affected by us as we speak and we by them as they learn, we dwell each in the other and thus both they, as it were, speak in us what they hear, while we, after a fashion, learn in them what we teach.<sup>21</sup>

For Augustine, religion can be taught because God himself is the teacher, but he relies on human assistance. Religious education means learning in a dialogical manner vis-à-vis to God, be it in the introductory catechesis or in the service for the whole parish. At church, the faithful participate in the 'school of Christ', for only at face-value it is the bishop who speaks:

Christ is teaching, his reading desk is in heaven ... but his school is on earth, and his school is his body. The head is teaching his limbs.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Thus Augustine, *Confessions* 9.2.2, following Cicero, *De oratore* 3.14.55; see Christian Tornau, 'Augustinus und das "hidden curriculum". Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis des Kirchenvaters zum Bildungswesen seiner Zeit', *Hermes* 130 (2002), 316-37, 330.

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, *De catech. rud.* 2.4: *Si enim in pecunia corporali, quanto magis in spirituali hilarem datorem diligit deus? sed haec hilaritas ad horam ut adsit, eius est misericordiae qui ista praecepit.*

<sup>20</sup> Augustine, *De catech. rud.* 7.11: *ille qui nos audit, immo per nos audit deum.*

<sup>21</sup> Augustine, *De catech. rud.* 12.17: *tantum enim ualet animi compatientis affectus, ut cum illi afficiuntur nobis loquentibus, et nos illis discentibus, habitemus in inuicem; atque ita et illi quae audiunt quasi loquantur in nobis, et nos in illis discamus quodam modo quae docemus.*

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *Disc. Christ.* 15: *Christus est qui docet; cathedram in caelo habet ... schola ipsius in terra est, et schola ipsius corpus ipsius est. caput docet membra sua.* For Christ as the heavenly teacher in Augustine, see Basil Studer, 'Die Kirche als « Schule des Herrn » bei Augustinus von Hippo', in Georg Schöllgen (ed.), *Stimuli. Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Ernst Dassmann, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergänzungsband 23* (Münster, 1996), 485-98.

## V. Conclusion

To sum up: For the late antique catechists whose writings we have examined (or at least mentioned in passing), religion can be taught, but this is due to Christ as the primordial teacher. Thus, teaching is no one-way road but appears as interrelation of teachers and pupils who jointly enter into a catechetical dialogue (at least in Augustine's theory!). Since divine agency is crucial to this pedagogical enterprise, human teaching is at the same time rendered possible *and* limited. Divine and human agency are inextricably intertwined in this process. This is of course a position to be found not in all late antique catechetical texts, but since both Cyril and Augustine are at the same time practitioners and theorists of teaching religion (and this is also true for, *e.g.*, John Chrysostom<sup>23</sup>), it is remarkable that they reflected how divine and human agency are related in the catechetical enterprise. Thus, already in Late Antiquity we find something that in contemporary pedagogics of religion is called a paradox: Faith, as a gift of God's grace, is not simply available to human beings; thus we have to teach what we cannot teach (but we also cannot do away with teaching, since Jesus' commandment is fundamental for the Christian religion of all kinds). According to the patristic authors whose texts were have briefly examined, we should know about this paradox and then continue with teaching – and while teaching, remember the promise of joint cheerfulness of both teachers and pupils in the pedagogical process.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See now David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: the Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> The present paper has been written with support of the Collaborative Research Centre 1136 "Education and Religion in Cultures of the Mediterranean and Its Environment from Antiquity to Medieval Times and Classical Islam", funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).



# Constantine, Aurelian, and Aphaca

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## ABSTRACT

The claim by Eusebius of Caesarea that Constantine I ordered the destruction of the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca because of sexual misconduct there (*Vit. Const.* 3.55) has normally been accepted at face-value. It is arguable, however, that Constantine's main reason for ordering its destruction may have been because of an oracle there which had risen to prominence during the reign of Aurelian and may have played some role in provoking his persecution of Christians. It is also arguable that he may have sought to justify the destruction of this shrine in terms of respect for the cult of Sol rather than on any moral or Christian basis.

In his *Vita Constantini* which he composed towards the end of his life c. 339, bishop Eusebius of Caesarea describes how Constantine I ordered the destruction of five specific places of pagan worship, the temple of Aphrodite in Jerusalem (*Vit. Const.* 3.26), an altar and associated statues at Mamre in Palestine (*Vit. Const.* 3.53), a grove and precinct at Aphaca in Phoenicia (*Vit. Const.* 3.55), the temple of Asclepius at Aigai in Cilicia (*Vit. Const.* 3.56), and the temple of Aphrodite at Heliopolis in Phoenicia (*Vit. Const.* 3.58).<sup>1</sup> In each case, he also explains why Constantine acted in the manner that he did. Hence he claims that Constantine ordered the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem because it was built over the cave in which Christ had been entombed after his crucifixion and death, and of the altar and statues at Mamre because they were desecrating the spot where the Old Testament prophet Moses had once received three divine visitors prefiguring the Christian Trinity (*Gen.* 18:1-33). In both

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius also describes the destruction of the shrine at Aphaca in a speech which he delivered in praise of Constantine at Constantinople in 336, although this description does not actually mention Aphaca by name (*De laud. Const.* 8.5-7). It is not entirely clear that Constantine did order the destruction of the temple at Heliopolis. It is only the heading to *Vit. Const.* 3.58 which mentions destruction as such, but Eusebius did not compose the headings to this work. It remains possible, therefore, that the idea that the temple at Heliopolis was destroyed may be no more than a careless assumption by the editor who revised Eusebius' text for publication shortly after his death. One should also note that, while the testimony of Libanius proves the continued visitation of Aigai after the death of Constantine I (*Or.* 30.39), this does not in itself disprove Eusebius' claim about the destruction visited on this site, since pilgrims may have continued to visit this site despite its ruined state.

of these cases, Constantine not only freed the holy site from its desecration by a pagan place of worship, but also ordered the erection of a new church on the spot. In the case of the two sites in Phoenicia, however, Eusebius would have us believe that Constantine acted for reasons of morality, to put an end both to the deviant sexual practices of effeminate men at Aphaca, among other things, and to the sexual misconduct of wives and daughters at Heliopolis. Finally, he claims that Constantine ordered the destruction of the temple at Aigai because the fame of the cures allegedly worked there was drawing people away from Christianity and into pagan error.

It is noteworthy that four of the five above-mentioned sites are clustered within a relatively small area, within Palestine and the neighbouring region of Phoenicia, so the suspicion must be that Eusebius' decision to illustrate Constantine's actions against the temples by means of these examples was primarily determined by the limited nature and number of the sources or contacts available to him.<sup>2</sup> The probability is that Constantine acted against a much larger variety of sites scattered throughout the eastern half of the empire at least, even if one cannot now identify these sites or whatever criteria he used in deciding to destroy them in particular while so many other temples were left standing.<sup>3</sup> For example, one may contrast his destruction of the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca to the continued survival of the temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria until the late fifth century when it was finally converted into a church.<sup>4</sup> Hence it is clear that, whatever else motivated Constantine in his destruction of the shrine at Aphaca, he did not do so as part of some sustained campaign against the cult of Aphrodite in particular.

<sup>2</sup> His choice of examples was also limited by the fact that there was far less actual destruction of temples than he would presumably have liked, even within Palestine itself. See D. Bar, 'Continuity and Change in the Cultic Topography of Late Antique Palestine', in J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 2008), 275-98. B.H. Wamington, 'Did Constantine have "Religious Advisers?"', *SP* 19 (1989), 117-29, 126-7, suggests that Eusebius himself may have petitioned Constantine to do something about the sites at Aphaca and Heliopolis, perhaps at the prompting of a friend such as bishop Paulinus of Tyre. A limestone mold depicts Aphrodite of Aphaca on one side, and the angels appearing at Mamre on the other, to suggest that these sites enjoyed equal regional prominence and attracted many of the same merchants. See R.H. Cline, 'A Two-Sided Mold and the Entrepreneurial Spirit of Pilgrimage Souvenir Production in Late Antique Syria-Palestine', *JLA* 7 (2014), 28-48.

<sup>3</sup> B. Caseau, 'The Fate of Rural Temples in Late Antiquity and the Christianisation of the Countryside', in W. Bowden, L. Lavan and C. Machado (eds), *Recent Research on the Late Antique Countryside* (Leiden, 2004), 105-44, 122, detects a deliberate targeting of 'out-of-the-way' temples, but this still leaves the question of why these particular 'out-of-the-way' temples were targeted.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. R. Cormack, 'The Temple as the Cathedral', in K.T. Erim and C.M. Roueché (eds), *Aphrodisias Papers: Recent Work on Architecture and Sculpture* (Ann Arbor, 1990), 75-88; A. Chaniotis, 'The Conversion of the Temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Context', in J. Hahn, S. Emmel and U. Gotter (eds), *From Temple to Church* (2008), 243-73.

The purpose of this article is to argue that Eusebius probably misrepresents Constantine's real reason for acting against the grove and precinct at Aphaca, not necessarily deliberately, but because the probability is that he simply repeats Constantine's own rhetoric in this matter, where Constantine had been careful to conceal his real reasons for acting as he did. Curiously, most recent commentators on the reign of Constantine have accepted Eusebius' explanation of Constantine's action both there and at Heliopolis almost entirely at face value.<sup>5</sup> It ought to be clear, however, that the charges against the inhabitants of both sites are typical of the rhetoric of sexual misconduct which various groups had long used against their perceived enemies, not least in matters of religion, whether pagan against Jew and Christian, or Christian against pagan.<sup>6</sup> A key point here is that Eusebius specifically reports that Constantine sent a personal letter to the people of Heliopolis urging them to turn aside from their sexual misconduct (*Vit. Const.* 3.58.2), and it is likely that he drew much of his knowledge of the situation at Aphaca from the same or similar letter. However, it was almost inevitable that Constantine, or any other Christian apologist, should have resorted to such rhetoric when describing allegations against two sites associated with the cult of Aphrodite in particular. Hence any reader of Eusebius' account of the destruction of the shrine at Aphaca must ask, first, whether his probable source, Constantine, really believed his own rhetoric in this matter, and, second, whether Eusebius' account properly respects the fullness of his source in this matter, that is, whether he may have excluded some other charge – perhaps the main charge even – that Constantine had made against the shrine at Aphaca after some initial sexual rhetoric.

One hardly needs to emphasize that Eusebius had his own religious and political agendas for writing as he did, and that he was more than capable of shaping his source material to suit these agendas, whether omitting inconvenient facts

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 671; S. Bradbury, 'Constantine and the Problem of Anti-Pagan Legislation in the Fourth Century', *CPh* 89 (1994), 120-39, 123; A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, *Eusebius. Life of Constantine: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford, 1999), 303; B. Caseau, 'The Fate of Rural Temples in Late Antiquity and the Christianisation of the Countryside' (2004), 122; C.M. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (London, 2004), 250; A.D. Lee, 'Traditional Religions', in N. Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge, 2006), 159-79, 174; J.M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2008), 129; P. Stephenson, *Constantine: Unconquered Emperor, Christian Victor* (London, 2009), 176; T.D. Barnes, *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2011), 129; J. Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (Cambridge, 2012), 265; D.S. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford, 2013), 276.

<sup>6</sup> On the rhetorical nature of these charges, S.L. Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2008), 270-6. She also makes the point that Eusebius never actually refers to sacred prostitution as such either at Aphaca or Heliopolis, although many modern commentators read this into his text. On this tradition of sexual accusations, see J.W. Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (New York, 2006).

or subtly altering the details of other events to better suit his purpose.<sup>7</sup> There were also restrictions on what he could include in his text for reasons of space, if nothing else. Here one should compare the modern reception of his account of the destruction of the temple of Aigai to that of his account of the destruction of the shrine at Aphaca. At one level, his explanation for Constantine's destruction of the temple at Aigai seems painfully truthful. Certainly, it is difficult to believe that he can have taken any pleasure in admitting that the cult of Asclepius there was proving so successful in drawing people away from Christianity that Constantine felt that he had to take unusually strong action against it. However, it is noteworthy that Eusebius says nothing about the strong association between the pagan sage Apollonius of Tyana and this shrine.<sup>8</sup> Pagan apologists such as the philosopher Porphyry and, more recently, Sossianus Hierocles, had tried to present Apollonius as a better wonder-worker, and person, than Christ himself, and such material had played a large part in shaping the intellectual debate leading to the outbreak of the great persecution against Christians under Diocletian in 303.<sup>9</sup> Hence there is now widespread recognition that Constantine had probably acted against the temple of Aigai as much to punish the continued commemoration of Apollonius as to end potential competition from the cult of Asclepius.<sup>10</sup> Yet Eusebius does not explicitly acknowledge the association between the temple of Asclepius at Aigai and the memory of Apollonius of Tyana, or the role that this may have played in deciding Constantine to target this temple.<sup>11</sup> This is noteworthy because even if his immediate source for the destruction of the temple at Aigai did not itself mention this association, someone of his education and interests should surely have known of it anyway. So if Eusebius can pass so quietly over this probable factor in the

<sup>7</sup> See T.G. Elliott, 'Eusebian Frauds in the *Vita Constantini*', *Phoenix* 45 (1991), 162-71; S.G. Hall, 'Some Constantinian Documents in the *Vita Constantini*', in S.N.C. Lieu and D. Montserrat (eds), *Constantine: History, Historiography and Legend* (London, 1998), 86-103.

<sup>8</sup> The young Apollonius had learned philosophy in the temple at Aigai (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7).

<sup>9</sup> On the role of Hierocles in supporting the persecution of Christians, see T.D. Barnes, 'Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the "Great Persecution"', *HSCPh* 80 (1976), 239-52. It has traditionally been held that Eusebius of Caesarea was the author of the *Contra Hieroclem*, a reply to Hierocles' writing against the Christians, because it was transmitted under his name. However, it is now widely accepted that this was the work of some other Eusebius. See A.P. Johnson, 'The Author of the *Against Hierocles*: A Response to Borzi and Jones', *JTS* 64 (2013), 574-94.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (1986), 671; A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, *Eusebius* (1999), 303; A.D. Lee, 'Traditional Religions' (2006), 174; J.M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (2008), 128; P. Stephenson, *Constantine* (2009), 176; T.D. Barnes, *Constantine* (2011), 129; J. Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (2012), 266; D.S. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (2013), 276.

<sup>11</sup> He does refer to this temple in passing once as 'the vaunted wonder of the noble philosophers' (*Vit. Const.* 3.56.2), but does not actually explain who these philosophers were.

destruction of the temple at Aigai, what else might he be failing to disclose about the destruction of other pagan sites also?

One cannot discount the possibility that Constantine really was influenced to some extent at least in his action against the shrine at Aphaca by allegations of sexual misconduct exactly as Eusebius describes, but any investigation by him of these allegations would probably have shown that there was little or nothing to them. Indeed, Eusebius himself makes the point that no-one could find out what was being done at Aphaca, because no respectable man dared set foot there (*Vit. Const.* 3.55.3), where this sounds very much like a clumsy admission that the allegations of sexual misconduct had been investigated, but that no reliable witnesses could be found to substantiate them. Hence one needs to investigate what other factors, if any, may have persuaded Constantine to act against the shrine there, in addition to whatever vague suspicions he may have harboured about the cult of Aphrodite more generally. The key point here is that the shrine at Aphaca was closely associated with an oracle, a place at which divine advice or prophecy was sought. After his description of the first war waged by the emperor Aurelian against the Palmyrenes culminating in the surrender of Palmyra during the summer of 272, Zosimus interrupts his narrative to describe how two oracles had prophesized the defeat of the Palmyrenes. In the first case, he describes how the oracle of Apollo Sarpedonius at Seleucia in Cilicia had issued verses rejecting the Palmyrenes and prophesizing their defeat by Aurelian.<sup>12</sup> In the second case, he describes how Aphrodite used a pond next to her temple at Aphaca as the means by which to reject the Palmyrenes and reveal thereby their coming defeat:

Καὶ ἕτερον δὲ Παλμυρηνοῖς συνήνεχθη τοιοῦτον· Ἄφακα χωρίον ἐστὶν μέσον Ἡλιουπόλεως τε καὶ Βύβλου, καθ' ὃ ναὸς Ἀφροδίτης Ἀφακίτιδος ἵδρυται· τούτου πλησίον λίμνη τις ἔστιν οἰκουῖα χειροποιήτῳ δεξαμενῇ· κατὰ μὲν οὖν τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ τοὺς πλησιάζοντας τόπους πῦρ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀέρος λαμπάδος ἢ σφαίρας φαίνεται δίκην, συνόδων ἐν τῷ τόπῳ χρόνοις τακτοῖς γινομένων, ὅπερ καὶ μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐφαίνετο χρόνων. Ἐν δὲ τῇ λίμνῃ εἰς τιμὴν τῆς θεοῦ δῶρα προσέφερον οἱ συνιόντες ἕκ τε χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου πεποιημένα, καὶ ὑφάσματα μέντοι λίνου τε καὶ βύσσου καὶ ἄλλης ὕλης τιμιωτέρας· καὶ εἰ μὲν δεκτὰ ἐφάνη, παραπλησίως τοῖς βάρεσι καὶ τὰ ὑφάσματα κατεδύετο, εἰ δὲ ἄδεκτα καὶ ἀπόβλητα, αὐτὰ τε ἦν ἰδεῖν ἐπιπλέοντα τῷ ὕδατι τὰ ὑφάσματα καὶ εἰ τί περ ἦν ἐν χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρῳ καὶ ἄλλαις ὕλαις, αἷς φύσις οὐκ αἰωρεῖσθαι ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος ἀλλὰ καταδύεσθαι. Τῶν Παλμυρηνῶν τοίνυν ἐν τῷ πρὸ τῆς καθαιρέσεως ἔτει συνελθόντων ἐν τῷ τῆς ἑορτῆς καιρῷ καὶ εἰς τιμὴν τῆς θεοῦ δῶρα χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου καὶ ὑφασμάτων κατὰ τῆς λίμνης ἀφέντων, πάντων τε τοῦ βάθους καταδύντων, κατὰ τὸ ἐχόμενον ἔτος ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἑορτῆς ὤφθησαν αἰωρούμενα πάντα, τῆς θεοῦ διὰ τούτου τὰ ἐσόμενα δηλωσάσης. Ἡ μὲν οὖν εἰς Ῥωμαίους εὐμένεια τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἱερᾶς ἀγιστείας φυλαττομένης τοιαύτη·

<sup>12</sup> Zosimus, *Hist. nov.* 1.57. On this oracle, see T.S. MacKay, 'The Major Sanctuaries of Pamphylia and Cilicia', *ANRW* II 18.3 (1990), 2045-129, 2110-3.

Something else happened to the Palmyrenes. At Aphaca, between Heliopolis and Byblos, there is a temple to Aphrodite Aphacitis, near which is a pond like an artificial tank. By the temple and in its environs, a fire like a lamp or a sphere burns in the air when people assemble here at certain times, as used to happen quite recently. The people gathered there used to throw into the pond in honour of the goddess gifts of gold and silver or clothing of linen, silk and other precious material, and if they were accepted the light and heavy things both sank, but if rejected both the cloth and anything of gold, silver or other material which naturally sinks could be seen floating on the water. The Palmyrenes in the year before their overthrow came to the festival and in honour of the goddess threw gifts of gold, silver and cloth into the pond. They all sank to the bottom, but in the following year at the same festival, they were all seen floating. Thus the goddess revealed the future, and such was the gods' kindness to the Romans as long as they carefully maintained the sacred rites.<sup>13</sup>

The emphasis placed by Zosimus on this event, presumably reflecting the emphasis of his source Eunapius of Sardis, suggests that this omen was probably regarded as an important event at the time. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that Aurelian seems to have commemorated it on his coinage. For about a year from late 274 to November 275, the mint at Rome struck a denarius depicting the bust of the empress Severina on the obverse and a standing goddess Venus on the reverse.<sup>14</sup> Venus here is surrounded by the legend VENVS FELIX 'Venus the Happy', and holds something in her outstretched right-hand, but it is not immediately clear what this object is. Most examples of this type are rather crude and seem to depict an object consisting of a globular form set upon a triangular form. While standing in this position, Venus had traditionally been shown holding an apple, a helmet, or a Victoriola, although she was normally identified as VICTRIX when holding either the helmet or the Victoriola, and as GENETRIX while holding the apple.<sup>15</sup> In this case, Webb tentatively identifies this mysterious object as a seated figure, perhaps Cupid, while Estiot tentatively identifies it as an apple.<sup>16</sup> However, this apparent figure cannot represent Cupid because it has no wings. Indeed, it never seems to be depicted with anything even vaguely resembling an appendage, whether wings, arms, or legs. As for its identification as an apple, this could explain the globular form

<sup>13</sup> Zosimus, *Hist. nov.* 1.58, ed. F. Paschoud, *Zosime. Histoire Nouvelle*, Tome 1 (Livres I et II) (Paris, 1971), 51-2, trans. R.T. Ridley, *Zosimus, New History: A Translation with Commentary* (Canberra, 1982), 18-9.

<sup>14</sup> S. Estiot, *Monnaies de l'Empire romain. XII.1: D'Aurélien à Florian (270-276 après J.-C.)* (Strasbourg, 2004), 300-8, dates the production of this type from a 10<sup>th</sup> emission at Rome in late 274 to a 12<sup>th</sup> emission about September to November 275.

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. P.H. Webb, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. V, part I (London, 1927), Salonina (joint reign), nos. 12, 36, 42, 48, 50, 55, 56, 61 for Venus Genetrix with apple, and nos. 4, 13, 37 for Venus Victrix with helmet.

<sup>16</sup> P.H. Webb, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. V, part I (1927), 316: 'Holding a seated figure (Cupid?)'; S. Estiot, *Monnaies de l'Empire romain. XII.1: D'Aurélien à Florian (270-276 après J.-C.)* (2004), 163: 'Tenant un objet peu identifiable (pomme?)'.

on top, but it does not explain the triangular form below it, nor, most importantly, why there was such a sudden change in the depiction of Venus' apple, if this is what this object really was. Fortunately, an unusually well-struck and well-preserved specimen of this type reveals that this object actually consists of a plain globe from whose lower half two lines descend over what seems to be a circular container of some sort.<sup>17</sup> Given that Venus is the Roman equivalent of the goddess Aphrodite, the similarity between the depiction of a globe shining down over a container on the VENVS FELIX reverse type and the above description of a burning sphere accustomed to appear near a pond resembling an artificial tank at the temple at Aphrodite at Aphaca, suggests that the coins of this type depict Venus holding the symbols of her cult at Aphaca, the burning sphere and water tank, in commemoration of her support for Aurelian in his war against the Palmyrenes as demonstrated by the incident just described. This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that none of Aurelian's successors ever issued this type again, but reverted instead to the traditional imagery depicting Venus holding an apple, a helmet, or a Victoriola.<sup>18</sup>

The realization that the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca was the site of an oracle that had risen to great prominence about the time of Constantine's own birth sets his decision to destroy the same in a new context. The obvious first question concerns his general attitude towards oracles, and this can best be described as hostile. The main reason for this was that pagan oracles had played a large part in persuading Diocletian and his colleagues to persecute Christianity. In a letter to the provincials of the east which he probably composed shortly after his defeat of Licinius in 324, Constantine blames an oracle of Apollo for persuading Diocletian to initiate the persecution of Christians, where this oracle is probably identifiable as an oracle of Apollo at Daphne near Antioch in Syria which seems to have persuaded Diocletian to drive all Christians from the court and military service in 299.<sup>19</sup> Again, when Diocletian was hesitating whether to begin a more general persecution of Christians in 303, he sent a *haruspex* to the oracle of Apollo at Didyma near Miletus, and received a reply which seems to have encouraged such action (Lact., *De mort pers.* 11.7). It is not surprising, therefore, that one of Constantine's first measures following his conquest of the eastern empire in 324 was to forbid the consultation of oracles (*Vit. Const.* 2.45). Furthermore, when he ordered the confiscation of temple treasures throughout the same territory, he also stripped the oracle of Apollo at Delphi of its major treasures, which he then used to adorn his new hippodrome in

<sup>17</sup> See D. Woods, 'Aurelian and the Mark VSV: Some Neglected Possibilities', *NC* 173 (2013), 137-49, 141-2 and pl. 31,6-7.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. P.H. Webb, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. V, part II (London, 1933), *Magnia Urbica*, nos. 336-8, 350-1 for Venus Genetrix with apple, and nos. 342-4, 347 for Venus Victrix with helmet.

<sup>19</sup> Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 2.50-1. See E.D. Digeser, 'An Oracle of Apollo at Daphne and the Great Persecution', *CPh* 99 (2004), 57-77.

Constantinople, despite the fact that Delphi was located in territory which he had already controlled since 317.<sup>20</sup> Hence Constantine may have been hostile towards the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca on general grounds alone, as a result of his hostility towards all oracles because of the role played by some of them at least in provoking the Diocletianic persecution of Christians. Indeed, even if his own experience of the role of the pagan oracles in provoking the Diocletianic persecution was not enough to stir him to action against such sites, it is probable that various Christian advisors or contacts would also have pushed him to action in this matter, not least perhaps Eusebius of Caesarea himself who regarded the continuation of these oracles as a major threat to the uniqueness of biblical prophecy.<sup>21</sup> However, there may have been more to Constantine's hostility towards the shrine at Aphaca than general factors of this type. There is no evidence that the oracle at Aphaca played any part in provoking Diocletian to act as he did in 299 and 303, but it is important to remember that he was not the only emperor ever to have persecuted Christians. Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 7.30.20-1) and Lactantius (*De mort. pers.* 6.1-3) agree in depicting Aurelian as the last emperor to have persecuted the Christians before Diocletian. More importantly, Constantine himself seems to identify Aurelian as a persecutor when, in a speech which he probably delivered at Nicomedia in April 325, he includes his name among those whom God punished with a violent death for their persecution of the church.<sup>22</sup> The reality of Aurelian's persecution of the church has been questioned again recently, but on tenuous grounds.<sup>23</sup> It is no more surprising that he should have changed his policy from toleration to persecution after about five years of rule than that Diocletian should have begun to do so after about 15 years of rule.<sup>24</sup> As for the alleged impracticality of any attempt by Aurelian to persecute the Christians because it would have caused disorder at a time when the empire could ill afford it, the same objection remains equally true in the case of Diocletian's

<sup>20</sup> Eusebius (*Vit. Const.* 3.54.2) and Zosimus (*Hist. nov.* 2.31.1) report the transfer of tripods from Delphi to Constantinople, which reference probably includes the so-called serpent column, surviving there even today. See S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge, 2004), 224-5.

<sup>21</sup> A. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism* (Leiden, 2000), 137-64.

<sup>22</sup> *Or. ad Sanctos* 24. For a summary of the modern debate concerning the date and location of the delivery of this speech, see T.D. Barnes, *Constantine* (2011), 113-20.

<sup>23</sup> See P. Hurley, 'Some Thoughts on the Emperor Aurelian as "Persecutor"', *CW* 106 (2012), 75-89.

<sup>24</sup> The principal evidence for his toleration of Christianity consists of his decision to hear an appeal by the opponents of Paul of Samosata concerning his continued occupation of church property at Antioch in Syria. See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.30.19. Strictly speaking, it is not clear whether one should date his involvement in this matter to the beginning of his reign in 270 or to the period of his first presence in Syria in 272. See F. Millar, 'Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian: The Church, Local Culture and Political Allegiance in Third-Century Syria', *JRS* 61 (1971), 1-17, 14-6.

actions in 299 and 303, but he proceeded with them nonetheless. Next, it cannot be claimed that Lactantius and Eusebius are inconsistent with one another in that the declaration by the first that Aurelian's bloody orders had not yet reached the further provinces, so implying that they had at least reached those provinces nearer at hand, seems to contradict the latter's statement that Aurelian had not yet actually signed the relevant orders when he died. Their slightly different accounts simply reflect different regional viewpoints, since Lactantius was writing for the Latin-speaking West, which Aurelian had just left at the time of his assassination in Thrace, and where he may be presumed to have begun his persecution of the church, while Eusebius was writing rather for the Greek-speaking East, specifically his local church in greater Syria, which escaped unaffected precisely because, as Lactantius admits, it was one of the further regions from the emperor at the time. Finally, the suggestion that Lactantius and Eusebius both invented the story that Aurelian was a persecutor of the church in order to curry favour with the emperor Constantine, who was representing himself as a descendant of his predecessor Claudius Gothicus, does not convince because there is no evidence of any enmity between Aurelian and his predecessor who actually died a natural death during a major epidemic.

On the basis of the sparse surviving evidence, it is impossible to reach any firm conclusion as to why, just before his assassination, Aurelian decided to persecute the Church. Certainly, Eusebius' brief claim that he was moved by certain advice to do so does not really tell us anything useful. However, if, as I have suggested above, his coinage during his last year celebrated the support shown by the oracle at Aphaca for his war against the Palmyrenes, then he would likely have been open to receiving whatever other signs, or interpretations of signs, that the same oracle may also have offered him. It is possible, therefore, that the oracle at Aphaca may have played some part in convincing Aurelian to persecute the church when he did finally decide to do so. This is not to claim that Christians would ever have hurled items into the pond at Aphaca as offerings to Aphrodite, but others may have hurled in items which had formerly belonged to Christians, or were marked with Christian symbols, in order to test the goddess' apparent reaction to the same. In this way, the priests of the oracle of Aphaca may have anticipated the roles of the priests of the oracles at Daphne and Didyma under Diocletian in encouraging action against the Christians. Whether they actually did this or not, however, it is easy to understand why Constantine may have suspected them of having done so, and have wanted to punish them accordingly. Indeed, it is interesting that Eusebius should specifically record that Constantine destroyed the various dedications at the shrine of Aphaca (*Vit. Const.* 3.55.4) as if these had somehow attracted his special attention. The possibility that he deliberately sought out whatever dedications Aurelian (or Severina) had made to the shrine in thanksgiving for its continued support and advice deserves serious consideration here.

The suggestion that Constantine destroyed the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca because of the presence there of an oracle which had recently risen to prominence during the reign of Aurelian is plausible, but it is not the only possibility. It assumes that Eusebius' basic presentation of Constantine's character is correct, and that he acted against the temples in the way that he did because they outraged his Christian sensibilities in some way or other. In reality, however, Constantine's public imagery and behaviour was a lot more nuanced or ambiguous than Eusebius is willing to admit, and aspects of solar monotheism may have lingered until the end of his reign.<sup>25</sup> In this context, it is worth highlighting a curious remark by Eusebius that, when Constantine noticed the sexual deviancy practiced at Aphaca, he decided to act because he did not think such a shrine worthy of the rays of the sun:

ἀλλ' οὐχὶ καὶ βασιλέα τὸν μέγαν οἶά τ' ἦν τὰ τῆδε δρώμενα λανθάνειν, αὐτοπτήσας δὲ καὶ ταῦτα βασιλικῆ προμηθείᾳ οὐκ ἄξιον εἶναι ἡλίου ἀγῶν τὸν τοιόνδε νεῶν ἔκρινεν, αὐτοῖς δ' ἀφιερῶμασιν ἐκ βάθρων τὸ πᾶν ἀφανισθῆναι κελεύει·

But what was practised there could not also escape the notice of the great emperor. Having observed even these things for himself with imperial forethought, he decided that such a shrine was not fit to see the sun's light, and ordered the whole to be entirely demolished, dedications and all.<sup>26</sup>

At one level, this phrase may be no more than a simple metaphor intended to express the belief that the shrine did not deserve to be allowed to continue to exist. Certainly, there is no reason to believe that Eusebius himself intended anything else by this expression. But is this Eusebius' own expression? And if not, has he accurately conveyed what its original author meant by it?

As already noted above, it is likely that Eusebius drew much of his knowledge of the situation at Aphaca from a letter such as Constantine wrote to the people of Heliopolis. Indeed, it has even been suggested that the reference to 'imperial forethought' at the start of the sentence above 'echoes the language of an imperial rescript'.<sup>27</sup> Hence it is arguable that the claim that the shrine at Aphaca was not worthy of the rays of the sun may represent Constantine's own language. This raises the possibility that Constantine may have meant this phrase in some sort of religious sense, and that he may have justified his action against the shrine at Aphaca on the basis that the behaviour there was offensive to the god Helios, or Sol. If one identifies Helios here simply as the sun in the

<sup>25</sup> See M. Wallraff, 'Constantine's Devotion to the Sun after 324', *SP* 34 (2001), 256-69. The chief evidence for this consists of the bronze statue of Helios reworked as that of Constantine and set upon a porphyry column at the centre of his new capital of Constantinople, and the consecration coinage issued after his death.

<sup>26</sup> Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.55.4, ed. F. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantins* (Berlin, 1975), 109, trans. A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, *Eusebius* (1999), 144-5.

<sup>27</sup> D.S. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (2013), 276.

sky, and his rays as the normal light of the sun, then it is difficult to understand what was so different about the site at Aphaca that it deserved to be treated in the way that it was. After all, the same sun continued to shine down upon other shrines or temples of Aphrodite scattered throughout the empire. However, there is an alternative possibility, that Constantine may have intended his words in reference to the fiery sphere that was accustomed to appear at Aphaca, that is, he may have considered this as some form of manifestation of the sun. Its fiery nature, spherical shape, and appearance in the sky, may all have encouraged Constantine towards this conclusion, and in so doing he may well have been following the precedent set by Aurelian himself also, famous for his devotion to Sol.<sup>28</sup> It is possible, therefore, that Constantine may have ordered the destruction of the shrine at Aphaca, with the exception perhaps of whatever part was immediately associated with this fiery sphere, in order to separate the cult of this object from the cult of Aphrodite, and did so because he regarded this sphere as some form of manifestation of the sun. Perhaps he acted in this way because he still retained some genuine respect for the cult of the sun. It is more likely, however, that he would only have been using this apparent manifestation of the sun as a pretext for the destruction of the shrine of Aphrodite. The bulk of the imperial army probably remained relatively untouched by Christianity, even during Constantine's later years, but they would have been long accustomed to the enhanced respect shown to Sol, and to solar monotheism even.<sup>29</sup> Hence Constantine would probably have felt it more prudent to order the soldiers into action against the shrine of Aphrodite with vague language to the effect than this was in defence of the dignity of Sol rather than to admit that this was really in response to an offence against his Christianity. Furthermore, the same factor may also have influenced his action against the shrine of Aphrodite at Heliopolis 'The City of the Sun', the fact that it would have been relatively easy to justify his attack upon this shrine also in terms of his defence of the dignity of Sol, whatever his real motivation.

It is natural to ask why Constantine did not target the sites of other pagan oracles in the way that he seems to have targeted the shrine at Aphaca, and there is no easy answer to this question, except perhaps that one should be wary of creating an over-arching policy from varied responses to different petitions scattered over space and time. Each site, or incident, should be considered on its own merits. In this case, one is tempted to ask why Constantine did not treat

<sup>28</sup> On Aurelian's devotion to Sol, see e.g. G.H. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Leiden, 1972), 131-61.

<sup>29</sup> Eusebius reports that Constantine required non-Christian soldiers to celebrate Sunday, or rather the Day of the Sun, by means of a monotheistic prayer acknowledging a God and King who is probably identifiable as Sol Invictus (*Vit. Const.* 4.19-20). See A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, *Eusebius* (1999), 318. This story probably only relates to the garrison of Constantinople, but if Constantine felt it necessary to make this concession there, then he presumably felt even less confident about the commitment of the troops in the provinces to his new religious policies.

the oracle of Apollo at Didyma in the same way that he treated the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca. Perhaps the use of sexual rhetoric was regarded as less credible against the shrine of Apollo rather than that of Aphrodite, perhaps the traditional association of Apollo with the sun made it too difficult to justify the destruction of his shrine by alleging some opposition between their cults, or perhaps no-one actually petitioned the emperor in respect of the shrine at Didyma in the way they had in respect of that at Aphaca. The fact that the common people had already occupied a large part of the shrine at Didyma, since its temporary conversion into a fortress and refuge against the Goths during the 260s, may also have afforded it some protection.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that, when the mid-fifth century historian Sozomen was summarizing Eusebius' account of Constantine's actions against the pagan sites, he added some extra material explaining why the pagans held the temple at Aphaca in such awe:

ἐν Ἀφάκοις δὲ κατ' ἐπικλήσιν τινα καὶ ῥητὴν ἡμέραν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκρωρείας τοῦ Λιβάνου πῦρ διαΐσσον καθάπερ ἀστὴρ εἰς τὸν παρακείμενον ποταμὸν ἔδυνεν. ἔλεγον δὲ τοῦτο τὴν Οὐρανίαν εἶναι, ὡδὶ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καλοῦντες.

And at Aphaca, on a certain prayer being said on a given day, a fire like a star rushed from the top of Lebanon and plunged into the nearby river; they claimed that this was Urania, as they call Aphrodite.<sup>31</sup>

His description of a fire like a star that descended from the top of Mount Lebanon before sinking into the river Adonis clearly represents a variant account of the fiery sphere as described by Zosimus above. Sozomen was from Bethelia near Gaza in Palestine (*Hist. eccl.* 5.15.14), and there is no reason why he should have been any better informed about the cultic activities at Aphaca than Eusebius was, certainly not when he was writing about a century later than him, when whatever fame the shrine Aphaca may once have enjoyed had long since ceased. Hence Eusebius ought to have been aware of all this, and more, but, for whatever reason, he chose not to mention it in his description of Constantine's destruction of the shrine at Aphaca.

In conclusion, while Constantine did not hesitate to resort to the standard sexual rhetoric in order to justify action against the shrine of Aphrodite at Aphaca, nor Eusebius to report the same, this action is probably best explained in the context of Constantine's hostility towards pagan oracles, and the presence of an oracle at Aphaca. The advantage of sexual rhetoric was that both pagan and Christian had long been accustomed to use it against their perceived enemies, so that its use did not mark Constantine's commands in this matter as driven by a specifically Christian zeal. Furthermore, he may well have reinforced

<sup>30</sup> P. Athanassiadi, 'The Fate of Oracles in Late Antiquity: Didyma and Delphi', *DChAE* 15 (1989-90), 271-8, 272-3.

<sup>31</sup> Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.5.5, ed. J. Bidez, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1995), 57.

his instructions to his troops in this matter by an appeal to the dignity of the sun, further obscuring his true motivation. The result was the destruction of the shrine of Aphrodite and a reduced threat to the reputation of biblical or Christian prophecy as the only true prophecy, since this provided yet another pleasing proof that, as Eusebius liked to gloat, none of the pagan oracles were even able to predict their own destruction (*De laud. Const.* 9.3-6).



# Procedural Similarities between Fourth- and Fifth-Century Christian Synods and the Roman Senates: Myth, Politics or Cultural Identity?

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## ABSTRACT

The article argues that the similar patterns in synodical and senatorial proceedings were not a (deliberate) emulation or imposition of practices of the Senate Houses (in Rome or Constantinople). Rather, both exemplify some of the communication strategies that allowed collective demonstrations of assent or dissent to be recorded, re-interpreted and used to support, for example, an intended self-representation of Senate, synods and their relation to imperial identity. To do so, it brings together recent results of the research on the late antique argumentative use of supposed verbatim accounts, and the textual representation of unanimous collective decision-making. Thus, it shows that the recurring patterns found in their extant proceedings do not point to a genuine similarity between the recorded synodical and conciliar events linked to an emulation of the Roman prototypes by a Christian Church. These often mentioned claims followed from the work of scholars who systematised, for example, Roman and Canon Law, while they elaborated on *Reichssynoden*, episcopal jurisprudence and a *Reichskirche* assimilated into the empire since Constantine. They extrapolated, from select sources taken as a cohesive whole, general models for the proceedings of what they considered established institutions. However, their schematic representations do not account for the manifold and changeable character of early Christian synods and so-called Church Councils, nor for the procedures adopted at the sessions in the Senate Houses. The article links this to the current picture of regional and diachronic social variations of the working of religious and administrative bodies, and especially to the classical discursive conventions and polemic or apologetic character of the proceedings. The models come out of scholarly constructs, which rely on anachronistic or timeless concepts such as democracy, law codes, orthodoxy, papacy and paganism in the broad context of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity. Thus, it tempers the notions that Councils and Senates were extraordinary decision-making bodies that followed well-established traditions and had paramount influence and authority.

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Do sessions of Christian synods fit into the same pattern as the sessions of the Roman Senate? The issue lurks behind the discussions of Christian-pagan contacts, familiarity with classical *paideia* and the Roman administrative structures found in current context-oriented approaches to the sources for proceedings of Christian synods. Classical modes of forensic argumentation and rhetoric are relevant for their study, and have allowed scholars to develop general models for the proceedings of church councils which pointed to similar patterns in both.<sup>2</sup> They extrapolated them from a rather small number of sources, which were considered foundational for the disciplines of Roman and Canon law, and authoritative and representative for the less well or undocumented sessions.<sup>3</sup> However, increasing evidence now shows that legal practice in the Roman Empire was largely multi-legal, with a number of recognised sources of local legislation coexisting with imperial legislation, which was not as dominant as its ennoblement in Latin or Greek eulogy and polemics alike and its predominance in epigraphy suggest.<sup>4</sup>

Proceedings of an assembly were written evidence of the ‘action’ of the members.<sup>5</sup> Collectively they ‘acted’ in that they decided to depose, condemn, present, extol, issue a rule, a law, a canon, and perform this ‘action’. It could come into existence without being a real event. An oral or written register, such as a *senatus consultum* or an inscription or a message which listed canons and the synod issuing them, articulated the ‘action’, and linked it to an agent. The publication was intrinsic to the ‘action’ since as a representational body, the participants did not act only on their own behalf. Witnessing the ‘action’ and conveying witnessing statements and documents, proceedings of non-imperial decision-making instances could serve as arguments to obtain favourable imperial attention, not least when the decision-making process and ruling overlapped with imperial interests or imperial enforcement was sought for.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The relation between the scholars who elaborated the models of classical or patristic procedures and the trends in Canon and Roman law, as well as their influence on modern scholars are discussed in David Wagschal, *Law and Legality in the Greek East: the Byzantine Canonical Tradition, 381-883*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2015), 1-8.

<sup>3</sup> See Richard Price, ‘The development of a Chalcedonian identity in Byzantium (451-553)’, *Church History and Religious Culture* 89 (2009), 307-25, 323.

<sup>4</sup> See, with an overview of recognised sources of local legislation, Caroline Humfress, ‘Law’s empire: Roman universalism and legal practice’, in Paul J. du Plessis (ed.), *New Frontiers: Law and Society in the Roman World* (Edinburgh, 2013), 73-101, 88-90. See also Elizabeth A. Meyer, ‘Diplomatics, law and romanisation in the documents from the Judaeian desert’, in John W. Cairns and Paul J. du Plessis (eds), *Beyond Dogmatics: Law and Society in the Roman World*, Edinburgh Studies in Law 3 (Edinburgh, 2007), 53-82, 59-60, 73.

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion on the approach to ancient texts as narratives, see Jörg Rüpke, ‘Narratives as a lens into lived ancient religion, individual agency and collective identity’, *RRE* 1 (2015), 289-96.

<sup>6</sup> This model of judicial appeal was particularly vulnerable to forgeries, as can be seen in the conflict about ecclesiastical supervision over the churches of Illyricum Orientale between Constantinople and Rome at the turn of the fifth-century. See Geoffrey Dunn, ‘The church of Rome

Similarities between senatorial and synodical proceedings reflect the use by editors, redactors, compilers and copyists of similar discursive strategies, and can be related to their shared cultural setting, in which a persuasive discourse and other means of emotional or material influence had significant leverage and control on power and decision-making. The texts cannot be taken at face value, as if they were verbatim and accurate representations of the actions, statements and feelings of the participants.<sup>7</sup> The existence of witnesses, written testimonia or evidence was common but possibly an empty claim.<sup>8</sup> Contemporary and later readers could identify it and filter if necessary or desired, but also give the appearance of accepting when wanted. They inform us of what was at that time a plausible representation for those who produced them, so as to hopefully seem plausible for the intended audience too.

Personal and group interests were at play at each step affecting the selection, redaction and presentation of the material.<sup>9</sup> Neither the taking of minutes nor the edition of stenographic records and other annotations to proceedings or collections seem to have happened regularly, even in the regions from which most papyrological evidence comes.<sup>10</sup> When peers or people were informed of

as a court of appeal in the early fifth century: The evidence of Innocent I and the Illyrian churches', *JEH* 64 (2013), 679-99, 697.

<sup>7</sup> The creation and presentation of consensus and unanimity is more often dealt with in German, French and Italian scholarship than in Anglophone publications. See, for example, Fergus Millar, *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic*, Jerome Lectures 22nd ser. (Ann Arbor, 1998); *id.*, *The Roman Republic in Political Thought*, Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures (Hanover, 2002); Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and Henry Heitmann-Gordon, *Reconstructing the Roman Republic: An Ancient Political Culture and Modern Research* (Princeton, N.J., 2010); Egon Flaig, *Die Mehrheitsentscheidung: Entstehung und kulturelle Dynamik*, Historische Semantik 1 (Paderborn, 2013). Most authors focus on the Republic and Early Empire, and therefore seldom discuss the growing references to the superiority of autocratic modes of decision-making over collective deliberation, or the relation of Christian synods with Roman practices. On some ritual practices of consensus in Christian synods, see Ulrich Wiemer, 'Voces populi. Akklamationen als Surrogat politischer Partizipation im spätrömischen Reich', in Egon Flaig and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (eds), *Genesis und Dynamiken der Mehrheitsentscheidung*, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs 85 (München, 2013), 173-202, 182-3.

<sup>8</sup> See Richard Price, Phil Booth and Catherine Cubitt (eds), *The Acts of the Lateran Synod of 649*, Translated Texts for Historians 61 (Liverpool, 2014), 66-8.

<sup>9</sup> Interests which affected historiography, legal codification and conciliar proceedings are addressed by Anthony Kaldellis, 'The Byzantine role in the making of the corpus of classical Greek historiography: A preliminary investigation', *JHS* 132 (2012), 71-85; Benet Salway, 'The publication and application of the Theodosian Code', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome – Antiquité* 125 (2013), en ligne: <<http://mefra.revues.org/1754>>; Thomas Graumann, 'Distribution of texts and communication-networks in the Nestorian controversy', in *Comunicazione e ricezione del documento cristiano in epoca tardoantica: XXXII Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana: Roma, 8-10 maggio 2003*, SEA 90 (Roma, 2004), 227-38.

<sup>10</sup> The small number and the concentration in some areas, such as Egypt, of the directly transmitted proceedings of decision-making events, such as city councils, provoke scepticism as to their representativeness. See Rudolf Haensch, 'Typisch römisch? Die Gerichtsprotokolle der in Aegyptus und den übrigen östlichen Provinzen tätigen Vertreter Roms. Das Zeugnis von Papyri

the event and its decisions in writing, letters and lists sufficed. Most examples posed as being 'for the record', were actually directed at holders of authority, usually imperial, as if they might or should be interested in parts of the *modus operandi*. References to the registration of minutes and textual handling of documents during the event supported the claims of authenticity and truthfulness of the edited proceedings. They are not more complete, factual or reliable accounts than first-hand or historiographic narratives of similar episodes such as Eusebius' on Nicaea, Symachus and Sidonius Apollinaris' imperial panegyrics and Socrates or Sozomen.<sup>11</sup> Edited minutes were sometimes 'published', that is, copies were circulated mostly as attachments, sometimes placed in collections like the Theodosian Code, the *Collectio Vaticana* or Palladius' codex. In this collection, *acta* were no longer documents attesting the performance of a synodical 'action' to support demands for its acceptance and enforcement, but counted as texts attacking 'Arianism' both doctrinally (D) and ecclesiastically (E). The minutes of the Synod of Aquleia (381) followed *De trinitate* (D), *De synodis* (E) and *Contra Auxentium* (E) by Hilary of Poitiers, and *De fide* (D) by Ambrose. Subsequently both the *acta* and *De fide* served like a *libellus* on which a bishop, such as Maximinus, could comment on in the margins in defence of his 'Arian' positions, confronting the procedures.<sup>12</sup> At the first 'publication' of the minutes in the Acts of Ephesus I and in the Theodosian Code, which seem prime evidence for the proceedings of Senates and Councils, the editors were above all intent in gaining imperial support and widespread acceptance of the views voiced by all.<sup>13</sup> The imperial backing they had or received

und Inschriften', in Henning Börm, Norbert Ehrhardt and Josef Wiesehöfer (eds), *Monumentum et Instrumentum Inscriptum: Beschriftete Objekte aus Kaiserzeit und Spätantike als historische Zeugnisse. Festschrift für Peter Weiss zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 2008), 117-25. On minute-making in pre-Nicene synods, see Evangelos K. Chrysos, 'Die Akten des Konzils von Konstantinopel I (381)', in Gerhard Wirth, Karl-Heinz Schwarte and Johannes Heinrichs (eds), *Romanitas – Christianitas: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Literatur der römischen Kaiserzeit. Johannes Straub zum 70. Geburtstag am 18. Oktober 1982 gewidmet* (Berlin, 1982), 426-35.

<sup>11</sup> See Philippe Blaudeau and Peter Van Nuffelen (eds), *L'historiographie tardo-antique et la transmission des savoirs. Millennium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.* 55 (Berlin, 2015); Lieve Van Hoof and Peter van Nuffelen (eds), *Literature and Society in the Fourth Century AD: Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self*, Mnemosyne Supplements 373 (Leiden, 2014). Literary representations dwell on the unusual or exceptional incidents, rather than the normal practice, and often presupposed a distinction between narrated fact and reality. Keeping in mind the actual linguistic and cultural diversity of political and legal practices, see Clifford Ando, *Roman Social Imaginaries: Language and Thought in Contexts of Empire*, Robson Classical Lectures (Toronto, 2015), 6, 66.

<sup>12</sup> Neil McLynn, 'From Palladius to Maximinus: Passing the Arian torch', *J ECS* 4 (1996), 477-93; see also, with care, Rita Lizzi Testa, '«inter christianos etiam gentilitatis cultores sed et veteris legis studiosi audientiae sint adhibendi»: The impact of the theological controversies on the intellectual life of Late Antiquity', *Adamantius* 19 (2013), 276-89.

<sup>13</sup> See Lorena Atzeri, *Gesta senatus Romani de Theodosiano publicando. Il Codice Teodosiano e la sua diffusione ufficiale in Occidente*, Freiburger Rechtsgeschichtliche Abhandlungen N.F. 58 (Berlin, 2008), 264-86.

subsequently actually sanctioned the balance of emperor's and bishops' or senators' spheres of influence and action, portrayed in the content of the minutes and of their presentation to the court.

In extant senatorial and synodical proceedings, the overall argumentative structure and several rhetorical *topoi* have enough recurring features and significant similarities between them to allow the construction of general patterns from excerpts from disparate places and centuries, for which causative relations between the structure of decision-making at both institutions can be posited.<sup>14</sup> They even seem more plausible now, considering the ever-growing prosopographical and socio-cultural attestation of Christians, particularly bishops' training as legal experts, or connections with jurists, members of the administration and senators involved in legal codification projects or the emperors' *consilia*.<sup>15</sup> These contexts, in which synodical and senatorial proceedings were redacted, were hardly taken into account when scholars assumed a model existed and was followed,<sup>16</sup> relying instead on two giants, Roman Law and

<sup>14</sup> References to the classical studies and the categories they proposed can be found in Heinz Ohme, 'Sources of the Greek Canon Law to the Quinisext Council (692): Councils and Church Fathers', in Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington (eds), *The History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law to 1500*, History of Medieval Canon Law (Washington, D.C., 2012), 24-114, 70. Some more references and a representative case of reliance on earlier scholarship to claim that Christian synods took on the model of Roman law are found in Ramsay MacMullen, *Voting about God in Early Church Councils* (New Haven, 2006), 124 (endnote 21). Since the scholars largely assumed the existence and use of the tradition since the inception of the practice of church councils, their models are inextricable of their views on the relation between the bishops and Constantine, and their account of the Council of Nicaea. Their patterns reflect therefore their views on imperial and ecclesiastic jurisdiction, as expressed in theories about *Reichssynoden*, episcopal jurisprudence and a *Reichskirche* assimilated into the empire since Constantine.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Severus of Antioch's schooling in jurisprudence was detailed by Zacharias of Mitylene, a lawyer himself: 'Life' of Severus, 67, 126; Sebastian P. Brock and Brian Fitzgerald (eds), *Zacharias. Two Early Lives of Severos, Patriarch of Antioch*, TTH 59 (Liverpool, 2013), 61, 84. See also Adam M. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 48 (Berkeley, 2011), 49-52, 144-8; and Luise Marion Frenkel, "'Dear prefect, Stop the ill rumour!' – John of Antioch's tactics to counter Cyrillian propaganda after the Council of Ephesus I", *SP 72* (2014), 257-67. On the balance between the checks on power ambitions and expertly received imperial legal sanction for the local control and power of the Alexandrian see on social, religious, economical and juridical matters Philippe Blaudeau, 'Puissance ecclésiastique, puissance sociale: le siège alexandrin au prisme du Code théodosien et des Constitutions sirmondiennes', in Jean-Jacques Aubert and Philippe Blanchard (eds), *Droit, religion et société dans le Code Théodosien. Troisième Journées d'Etude sur le Code Théodosien (Neuchâtel, 15-17 février 2007)*, Université de Neuchâtel, Recueil de travaux publiés par la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines 55 (Genève, 2009), 87-110, 102, 106.

<sup>16</sup> See Jan Willem Tellegen and Olga Tellegen-Couperus, 'Artes urbanae. Roman law and rhetoric', in P.J. Du Plessis (ed.), *New Frontiers* (2013), 31-50, 32. It applies *mutatis mutandis* to 'primitive Christian' synods and Canon Law. See also R. Malcom Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill, 2006), 150; also Clifford Ando, *Law, Language, and Empire in the Roman Tradition*, Empire and after (Philadelphia, 2011), 81-114.

Imperial Church, for which the *Acta* in Mansi<sup>17</sup> and the *Codex Theodosianus* stand as epitomes of their procedures.

The frequent claims by senators and Christians of abiding by tradition and not innovating primarily realised rather than instantiated the tradition by identifying elements of their social, religious, political and cultural identity and authority with it. They were not pointing to a prototype, which a scholar can identify and reconstruct. Furthermore, the institutions and position-holders mentioned in the sources had some intrinsic power, but only partial control and influence of the social input of the masses. Much depended on ritual interactions and their written representation, in which unanimity, unison and consensus figured prominently. The canonical juridical, literary and patristic studies largely missed such dimensions, since they presupposed a ‘political history necessarily focused via prosopography on the alignments and conflicts among its members’,<sup>18</sup> which led to an inadequate understanding of ancient secular, religious and canon laws, and of the arbitration of decision-making by non-judicial institutions.<sup>19</sup>

### Senatorial proceedings

Most sources about the Republic have a marked imperial veneer and ahistorical presuppositions which became ingrained in literature and history. What had been local characteristics and personal opinions, were deemed traditional and replaced a plurality of meanings. The Republican Roman Senate served as the authoritative reference for the social and political survival of the senatorial aristocracy in the Empire and in Late Antiquity, and for the relation of emperors with it. Both referred to their largely similar images of Republican meetings in the Senate House. This image is to some extent attested in the *Acta Senatus* in the Theodosian Code, but it is not an emblematic example of the practices of the Senate during the Republic or the early Empire. It was composed using an imperial and senatorial perspective of a Classical Rome which had been developing for almost half a millennium, as had the social balance, political importance, decision-making and legislation of the emperors and of the Roman Senate(s).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Domenico Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence, Venice and Paris, 1759-1798).

<sup>18</sup> Nathan Rosenstein, ‘Review of *Reconstructing the Roman Republic: An Ancient Political Culture and Modern Research*. By Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp’, *Classical World* 105 (2012), 276-7, 276.

<sup>19</sup> Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, ‘„Performative turn“ meets „spatial turn“’, in *id.*, Dietrich Boschung and Claudia Sode (eds), *Raum und Performanz: Rituale in Residenzen von der Antike bis 1815* (Stuttgart, 2015), 15-74.

<sup>20</sup> See Jill Diana Harries, ‘Roman law from city state to world empire’, in Jeroen Duindam, Jill Diana Harries, Caroline Humfress and Hurvitz Nimrod (eds), *Law and Empire: Ideas, Practices, Actors, Rulers & Elites 3* (Leiden, 2013), 45-61; Matthew Roller, ‘The difference an Emperor makes: Notes on the reception of the Republican Senate in the Imperial age’, *Classical Receptions*

The overarching agenda which predominates in the extant texts was not in conflict with the existence of an ongoing regional variety and the imperial responsiveness to it.<sup>21</sup> Echoing the written and oral memory of the past, the historically inaccurate representation was a rhetorical tool, employed in politics, justice, philosophy and education, and the *Acta Senatus* was true to that tradition, blending with it late antique features, such as acclamations and discourses, to convey the criticism or praise, requests or demands which they supposedly recorded.

## Christian Synods

A greater variety of actions is attributed to Christian synods in late antique texts. In relation to the duration of a synod, the texts assign actions and words to bishops and religious dignitaries, balancing their collective, ‘conciliar’, and individual identities. Practices varied regionally and were specific to the matter at hand.<sup>22</sup> The narratives and minutes reflect this poorly. Instead, the conciliar ‘action’ was presented more regularly as consensual with the increased authority of some synods which seemed to have decided or issued lists of canons thus. It did not necessarily involve decision-making meetings or dialogue and debate,<sup>23</sup> which were mentioned in imperial demands and invitations to synods, such as Ephesus 431.<sup>24</sup> In reply the editors of the Cyrillian proceedings used, as a discursive strategy, tropes with which the senatorial aristocracy was also presenting requests to the rulers, for example, in minutes, letters and inscriptions. It does not imply that they had followed the model of the Roman Senate or its practice, rather that they employed its late antique discursive strategies

*Journal 7* (2015), 11-30; John Noël Dillon, ‘The inflation of rank and privilege – regulating precedence in the fourth century A.D.’, in Johannes Wienand (ed.), *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD* (Oxford, 2015), 42-66.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the diversity of Constantius II’s pro-Nicene initiatives, analysed in Steffen Diefenbach, ‘A vain quest for unity: creeds and political (dis)integration in the reign of Constantius II’, in J. Wienand (ed.), *Contested Monarchy* (2015), 353-79, 363.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Ralph W. Mathisen, ‘Church councils and local authority: the development of Gallic *libri canonum* during Late Antiquity’, in Carol Harrison, Caroline Humfress, Isabella Sandwell and Gillian Clark (eds), *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Oxford, 2014), 175-93.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Graumann, ‘Theologische Diskussion und Entscheidung auf Synoden: Verfahrensformen und -erwartungen’, in Uta Heil and Annette von Stockhausen (eds), *Die Synoden im trinitarischen Streit [The Synods in the Trinitarian Dispute]*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 177 (Berlin, forth.).

<sup>24</sup> The argument could be elaborated *mutatis mutandis* for the Conference of Carthage in 411, for example. See *id.*, ‘Altkirchliche Synoden zwischen theologischer Disputation und rechtlichem Disput’, in Christoph Dartmann, Andreas Nikolaus Pietsch and Sita Steckel (eds), *Ecclesia disputans. Die Konfliktpaxis vormoderner Synoden zwischen Religion und Politik*, Historische Zeitschrift / Beihefte N. F. 67 (Berlin and Boston, 2015), 35-60, 39-41.

when seeking imperial enforcement of their decision, whether by the emperor or a high ranking official. Theological polemics were presented in terms of social unrest.<sup>25</sup> However, the Cyrillian writings, supported by minutes, were not enough to report that the imperially desired synod had taken place successfully. The synods were faced with renewed demands for dialogue and debate. Gradually, some of the decisions of each side received imperial endorsement, especially with the *Formula of Reunion* in 433, and at the turn of the mid-fifth-century, Alexandrian clerks and imperial officers alike redacted conciliar proceedings in a manner similar to the minutes of the Cyrillian sessions. By the time some synods became Councils of the Church, the genre had become the prevailing practice, but hardly a compelling norm.<sup>26</sup>

The purpose and intended readership of imperial and late antique elite representations of sessions of the Roman Senates, including the *Acta Senatus*, and minutes in the extant collections of synodical documents, largely account for the shared features which have been thought of as typical of their traditions in contrast to their actual diversity. The reception and transmission in the next millennium of late antique texts and the religious and political developments in both East and West are indispensable to explain the relative homogeneity of the accounts and the criteria for choosing a number of examples as reliable and true evidence.<sup>27</sup> In the Byzantine Roman East, the balance of power continued not to be attested in the political ideologies repeatedly advanced in the erudite literature linked to imperial power. The people and emperors of Byzantium shared the sovereignty realising what they claimed had been done in the Roman

<sup>25</sup> The links with controversies on matters which fell outside the scope of Roman Law of a substantial part of the sources for physical aggression and unrest in Late Antiquity has often been overseen in the abundant literature on religious violence. The reliability of the accounts and a discussion of earlier literature, but little on the role of the reference to violence in the argument of the text, considered in its original historical context, can be found, for example, on pages 18-24, 87-9 and 124-7 of Albert C. Geljon and Riemer Roukema (eds), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 125 (Leiden and Boston, 2014). Religion was often only a smokescreen for violence provoked by social or political tensions, as discussed in Johannes Hahn, 'The challenge of religious violence: imperial ideology and policy in the fourth century', in J. Wienand (ed.), *Contested Monarchy* (2015), 379-404, 386. For some examples drawn from the collection of the Council of Ephesus, see L.M. Frenkel, "'Dear prefect'" (2014), 266-7.

<sup>26</sup> Proceedings of late antique synodical sessions were only one part of the documentation, as discussed by Andreas Weckwerth, *Ablauf, Organisation und Selbstverständnis westlicher antiker Synoden im Spiegel ihrer Akten*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergänzungsband, Kleine Reihe 5 (Münster, 2010), 18-25. For the ongoing variety of synodical procedures in Byzantium, see Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, '*He ton pleionon psephos*. Der Mehrheitsbeschluss in der Synode von Konstantinopel in spätbyzantinischer Zeit – Normen, Strukturen, Prozesse', in E. Flaig and E. Müller-Luckner (eds), *Genesis und Dynamiken* (2013), 203-28.

<sup>27</sup> See Richard Price, 'Truth, omission, and fiction in the acts of Chalcedon', in *id.* and Mary Whitby (eds), *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400-700*, Translated Texts for Historians. Contexts 1 (Liverpool, 2009), 92-106, 99-100.

Republic, but had never had historical reality.<sup>28</sup> In this context, texts which referred to the traditions and authority of the Roman Republic and Empire and the Christian synods helped to corroborate the views and *topoi* in erudite literature to which scholars turned first.

The resulting images were far removed from the tensions which had led Senates and Synods to occasionally strive for imperial endorsement. They did not reflect that the proceedings had been prepared for the sake of interacting with the imperial administration. Instead of an accurate representation of the event, both attested the performance of a session to serve as argument of authority for the validity of their 'action', not least by its alleged intrinsic unanimity and universality. Awareness of the rhetorical and discursive dimension of the self-representation of late antique representative collective bodies, which regularly presented their 'actions' as unanimous, is essential to research the texts in the *acta conciliorum* and their relation to the reception of patristic literature in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and current societies, and to understand earlier scholarship.

<sup>28</sup> See Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), 86-8, 149-61. However, Byzantium can hardly be called a 'Byzantine Republic', since that would assume that a tradition of the Roman Senate existed and that it operated the way in which it did during the Roman Republic.



# Travelling and Trading in the Greek Fathers: Faraway Lands, Peoples and Products

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## ABSTRACT

This article discusses the view of overseas travel and trading in the writings of four of the Greek Fathers. Their perception of geographical space and of overseas lands in particular is examined. The accuracy of information provided is considered, with reference to known difficulties/ambiguities of the time. A comparison is made between the treatment of the theme of travelling overseas with the equivalent of travelling to neighboring lands.

A number of passages are used, in order to extract (mainly indirect) information on the fathers' views on the culture of travelling and travellers, on merchants and trading, as well as on goods and products. The context, in which this information is given, and the role that the literary genre plays is also examined.

This article examines the Greek fathers' perception of travelling. A number of passages referring to journeys, roads, lands, products and travellers are examined, but commentaries on biblical passages dealing with travelling (such as the commentaries on the *Acts*) are excluded. As the aim is to examine the fathers' own perception of travelling, the material examined concerns information on their contemporary practices and facts. The passages come from the three Cappadocians, the two Gregories and Basil, as well as from John Chrysostom.

The case examined as representative of these authors' attitude towards overseas lands is that of the Far East and especially the eastern part of the Silk Route. The material focuses principally on China and India, as the two most important extremities of the Silk Route and major producers of silk, a commodity of high importance, frequently mentioned by our authors. All four writers mention China and India several times. Almost always these references are in connection with trading, mainly the products, the merchants and the trading routes, since the actual lands and their peoples do not come up.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ethnography *per se* is not of great concern in the Fathers, as might be expected. A few passages of ethnographic interest are found, mainly scattered in commentaries on appropriate texts, or letters. For a general review of ethnography in the period's literature – though mainly in historiographical texts – see Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature. Empire and after* (Philadelphia, 2013), especially 1-25. Generally

Since this part of the world did not play a practical role in our authors' – and their audiences' – lives, references to countries like China and India are rather infrequent. They occur mainly in figurative speech, typically as synonyms for 'remote'; for instance, in describing a difficult and long sea voyage, or as a typical destination for maritime commerce.<sup>2</sup>

There is no record of any of our authors travelling to these lands. Thus, as far as we know, their knowledge of that part of the world is second hand. To the four of them these lands are impressively distant, rarely visited, difficult to reach and exotic. Since they lived in cities either on the main or secondary roads of the Silk Route, they were probably acquainted with people who had actually visited these countries. It is improbable, though, that they had a close relationship with any such traveller.<sup>3</sup> Apart from this type of general and figurative mention, the little factual information provided in our texts represents contemporary collective perception and stereotypes, rather than knowledge acquired through personal experience or study. Thus, not really bordering on fictional, they are still of little historical value.

The usage of place names such as India, Iberia, Britain, Arabia and Mauritania to denote the extremities of the *oikoumenē* is very common in most writers of the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Gregory of Nyssa in his *Encomium* for his

on sources about travelling merchants, although mainly of the middle byzantine period, see Nicolas Oikonomides, 'Les marchands qui voyagent, ceux qui ne voyagent pas et la pénurie de textes géographiques byzantins', in Alain Dierkens, Jean-Marie Sansterre and Jean-Louis Küpper (eds), *Voyages et voyageurs à Byzance et en Occident du VI<sup>e</sup> au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Actes du colloque international organisé par la Section d'Hismire de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles en collaboration avec le Département des Sciences Historiques de l'Université de Liège (5-7 mai 1994)*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège 278 (Liège, 1999), 307-19.

<sup>2</sup> Several examples can be cited. For instance, Gregory of Nyssa in *De oratione Dominica* collectively addressing merchants: 'But you, you trade in India and you risk sailing foreign seas' (Σὺ δὲ εἰς Ἰνδοῦς ἐμπορεύῃ, καὶ βαρβαρικῇ παρακινδυνεύεις θαλάσση), *Gregor's Bischof's von Nyssa Abhandlung von der Erschaffung des Menschen und fünf Reden auf das Gebet*, ed. Franz Oehler (Leipzig, 1859), 280.5-9.

<sup>3</sup> No evidence suggests that any of them was particularly close to merchants. Nor are there such individuals among those with whom they corresponded. However, there was a constant movement of persons in varying degrees, not only of traders, but also of the general population due to raids and general instability. For an overview of such movements at the time see Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (London, 2015), 45-62.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Proof of this is that both Indians and Britons see it (the sun) of the same size (σημεῖον δέ, ὅτι καὶ Ἰνδοὶ καὶ Βρεττανοὶ τὸν ἴσον βλέπουσιν), *Basile de Césarée, Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, ed. Stanislas Giet, SC 26, 2nd edition (Paris, 1968), 6.9.28-9. In all the Greek works of the Roman period, Iberia denotes either the Roman province in Georgia or the Iberian Peninsula. The word only occurs very few times in our writers. Considering their geographical proximity, its most common usage is to describe the Asian province. Further qualification is usually employed for Spain; e.g. 'that vast, tremendous to sail sea, the one engulfing the British island and western Iberia' (τὸ μέγα ἐκεῖνο καὶ ἀτόλμητον πλωτήρσι πέλαγος, τὸ τὴν Βρεττανικὴν νῆσον καὶ τοὺς ἑσπερίους Ἰβήρας περιπτυσσόμενον), *ibid.* 4.4.17-9. Chrysostom refers to the Iberian Peninsula as 'Spain'.

brother Basil describes the course of the sun as ‘expanding from the mountains of Persia to Britain and the edge of the Ocean’.<sup>5</sup>

Both China and India come up regularly as designated countries of origin for their products. Designating a commercial product by its geographical origin was not uncommon, particularly for luxurious goods, the exotic origin of which further increased their value. Products arriving from China and India are typically exotic and luxurious. Silk, spices, incense, ivory, gold and gems are named as coming from China and India, but also Persia and Arabia.<sup>6</sup> In fact, even within the borders of the Empire, long distance trade involved luxurious, rare, indigenous goods, because the cost of the transportation could only be justified for hard-to-find, expensive merchandise.<sup>7</sup>

Silkworms were brought in the Byzantine Empire almost a century after the period examined here. The average Byzantine, therefore, had not witnessed the production of silk at the time.<sup>8</sup> However, the land Silk Route was at its peak and Antioch was the eastern extreme of the main route before breaking into its by-roads.<sup>9</sup> As a result, several merchants carrying silk would either end their trip there, or stay for a short while before departing for Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria or elsewhere.

Mystery and fascination surrounded silk production, this particularly soft fabric made by insects. Chrysostom has often presented the process as unattractive, no doubt – at least partially – due to his general loathing for luxury: ‘regarding silk clothes? Can’t you realize that they are threads made by worms

<sup>5</sup> ὁ τοῦ ἡλίου δρόμος ἐκ τῶν τῆς Περσίδος ὄρων εἰς Βρεττανούς τε καὶ τὰ ἔσχατα τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ παρατείνων, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera IX, Sermones*, ed. Günter Heil *et al.* (Leiden, 1967), 1:14.11-2.

<sup>6</sup> The actual name for China Σηρικὴ or Σήρων χώρα is synonymous with silk. Other common geographical denominations are gems from India and perfumes from Arabia.

<sup>7</sup> On supply and demand of relevant products, and their distribution, as well as commercial exchanges between the Roman Empire and the lands in question see Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris and Richard Saller (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge, 2007), IV 423 and 574-87.

<sup>8</sup> However, products and raw materials imported from outside the empire (such as silk) were often worked on in major cities (Chrysostom’s Antioch would have been one of them, as well as Constantinople) on the Silk Route, before being forwarded further down the road. In other cases, these cities served as collection points for further distribution of goods. See Susan E. Alcock, ‘The Eastern Mediterranean’, in Walter Scheidel *et al.* (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History* (2007), VI 683 and 690.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance Chrysostom’s homilies *On the Statues*, PG 49, 197-8: For it is indeed probable that both the merchants who mix with you, and others who arrive from this place will report all these matters. When, therefore, many persons in the way of encomium mention the harbours of other cities, or the markets, or the abundance of wares, enable those who come from hence to say, that there is that at Antioch, which is to be seen in no other city. (καὶ γὰρ εἰκός, καὶ ὑμῖν ἐπιμιγνυμένους ἐμπόρους, καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἐτέρους ἀφικνουμένους ταῦτα ἀπαγγέλλειν ἅπαντα. Ὅταν οὖν ἄλλας πόλεις ἐγκωμιάζοντες πολλοὶ λιμένας λέγωσι, καὶ ἀγοράν, καὶ ἀφθονίαν ὀνίων, δότε τοῖς ἐντεῦθεν ἀφικνουμένοις λέγειν, ὅτι ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, τοῦτο οὐδαμοῦ τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων ἔστιν), English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 9, 698.

and inventions of barbarians?’<sup>10</sup> and ‘you boast about things made and destroyed by worms; for it is said that some insects from India that make these threads’.<sup>11</sup>

Another issue is raised in the latter passage. By calling the silk worm ‘Indian’ he does not necessarily locate the origin of silk in India (China still had by far larger production). Basil clarifies that an Indian worm makes silk, which is produced in China. Therefore in this case, the word ‘Indian’ does not denote origin. Basil is also less hostile than Chrysostom towards wearing silk clothes: ‘Such stories are recounted also regarding the Indian horned worm; ... When you, women, get down to work on them and unreel the yarns, I mean the ones sent to you by the Seres to make soft garments, thinking of the transformation of this animal...’<sup>12</sup>

The horned worm that Basil refers to must be the common silkworm used by the Chinese. The Indian silk worm (which also exists) does not have horns and was probably not used for production in the fourth century.<sup>13</sup> Aristotle mentions a horned worm, and he could be the source of Basil and John, but the geographical definition ‘Indian silkworm’ appears first in third century Alexandrian authors.<sup>14</sup> Thus the report by Basil and John could be partly of

<sup>10</sup> διὰ τὰ ἱμάτια τὰ σηρικὰ; Εἶτα οὐκ ἐννοεῖς, ὅτι σκωλήκων εἰσὶν ἐκεῖνα νήματα, καὶ βαρβάρων ἀνθρώπων εὐρέματα, *On the Beginning of the Acts*, PG 51, 66-8.

<sup>11</sup> καυχᾶ ἐπὶ πράγματι, ὃ σκώληκες τίκτουσι, καὶ ἀπολλύουσι· λέγονται γὰρ Ἰνδικὰ τινα ζωῦφια εἶναι, ὅθεν τὰ νήματα ταῦτα κατασκευάζεται, *On First Timothy*, PG 62, 513.

<sup>12</sup> Ὅποια καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰνδικοῦ σκώληκος ἱστορεῖται τοῦ κερασφόρου· ... Ὅταν οὖν καθέζησθε τὴν τούτων ἐργασίαν ἀναπνιζόμενοι, αἱ γυναῖκες, τὰ νήματα λέγω ἃ πέμπουσιν ὑμῖν οἱ Σῆρες πρὸς τὴν τῶν μαλακῶν ἐνδυμάτων κατασκευὴν, μεμνημένοι τῆς κατὰ τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο μεταβολῆς... Basil de Césarée, *Homiliae*, 8,8.16-23.

<sup>13</sup> James Yates, *Textrinum Antiquorum: An Account of the Art of Weaving among the Ancients* (London, 1843), 164.

<sup>14</sup> ‘From one particular large grub, which has as it were horns, and in other respects differs from grubs in general, there comes, by a metamorphosis of the grub, first a caterpillar, then the cocoon, then the necydales; and the creature passes through all these transformations within six months’ (Ἐκ δὲ τινος σκώληκος μεγάλου, ὃς ἔχει οἶον κέρατα καὶ διαφέρει τῶν ἄλλων, γίνεται πρῶτον μὲν μεταβάλλοντος τοῦ σκώληκος κάμπη, ἔπειτα βομβυλῆς, ἐκ δὲ τούτου νεκυδαλός· ἐν ἑξὲς δὲ μηνὶ μεταβάλλει ταύτας τὰς μορφὰς πάσας), Aristotle, *Histoire des animaux*, ed. Pierre Louis (Paris, 1968), 551b.9-13; English translation by D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, *A History of Animals* (Oxford, 1910). Among the Alexandrian authors who call the silkworm ‘Indian’ is Aelius Herodianus in *General Prosody*: ‘the Indian nation, where silk, the luxurious garments come from’ (ἔθνος Ἰνδικόν, ὅθεν σηρικὰ τὰ πολυτελεῖ ἱμάτια), *Grammatici Graeci 3.1*, ed. August Lentz (Leipzig, 1867), 398.1. Also Clement of Alexandria: ‘They may be permitted to use softer clothes, provided they put out of the way fabrics foolishly thin, and of curious texture in weaving; bidding farewell to embroidery of gold and Indian silks and elaborate Bombyces (silks), which is at first a worm...’ (χρῆσθαι τοῖς ὑφάσμασιν μόνον τὰς μεμωρημένας λεπτοργίας καὶ τὰς ἐν ταῖς ὑφαῖς περιέργους πλοκάς ἐκποδὸν μεθιστόντας, νῆμα χρυσοῦ καὶ σῆρας Ἰνδικοῦ καὶ τοὺς περιέργους βόμβυκας χαιρεῖν ἐῶντας. Σκώληξ φύεται τὸ πρῶτον...), Clément d’Alexandrie, *Le pédagogue*, ed. Henri-Iréné Marrou and Claude Mondésert, SC 108 (Paris, 1965), 107.3-4; English translation from ANF, vol. 2, 565.

Alexandrian origin. In all other contemporary sources silk is overwhelmingly Chinese.

Perhaps the large number of Indian traders are to blame for the confusion, or even the general trading with the Indian subcontinent along with other less distant lands, such as Persia and Arabia, for other luxury goods. For instance, Chrysostom notes: ‘What could one say about the luxury of scents from India, from Arabia, from Persia; the solids ones, the liquid ones, the ointments, the incense; the expenditure for all these is large and senseless’.<sup>15</sup> Gregory of Nyssa also mentions the Indian luxury trade: ‘[the merchant] will not cross the Indian seas to trade ivory’.<sup>16</sup>

It is worth noting that Chrysostom in the same homily also exhibits some interest in the regulation of prices in the markets: And that this is the case and something is valuable for its rarity rather than its nature: ‘There are products that we consider cheap but are valuable in Cappadocia and even more prized to Serians than our most expensive things, where these clothes come from. And many such products can be found in scent-producing Arabia and India, where there are gems’.<sup>17</sup>

Who were those people who carried silk, gems, scent? How did they travel and what did they encounter on their way? With the exception of Thomas the Apostle visiting India mentioned by Gregory of Nazianzus in *Oration* 33, there are no other references to missions to the lands in question.<sup>18</sup> Nor is there any mention of officials travelling on business. Thus, in our texts it is mainly merchants who do the travelling. Conversely, in all four authors, a merchant’s travels are almost always to remote places. Merchants of these products are

<sup>15</sup> Τί ἄν τις εἶποι τὴν τῶν ἁρωμάτων πολυτέλειαν, τῶν Ἰνδικῶν, τῶν Ἀραβικῶν, τῶν Περσικῶν, τῶν ξηρῶν, τῶν ὑγρῶν, τῶν μύρων, τῶν θυμιαμάτων, ἅπερ ἅπαντα δαπάνην ἔχει πολλὴν καὶ ἀνόητον, *On First Timothy*, PG 62, 513.

<sup>16</sup> οὐκ Ἰνδικὰ περάσει πελάγη, ἵνα τὰ τῶν ἐλεφάντων ὁστὰ ἐμπορεύσηται, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera V. In Sextum Psalmum. In Ecclesiasten Homiliae*, ed. Paul J. Alexander (Leiden, 1962), 326.11-6.

<sup>17</sup> Καὶ ὅτι οὕτως ἐστί, καὶ τῷ σπανίῳ τιμᾶται, ἀλλ’ οὐ τῇ φύσει· εἰσὶν καρποὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν εὐτελεῖς, ἐν δὲ τῇ Καππαδοκῶν χώρα τίμιοι, καὶ τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν τιμίων πολυτελέστεροι πάλιν ἐν τῇ Σηρῶν χώρα ἕτεροι, ὅθεν τὰ ἱμάτια ταῦτα. Ἐν δὲ τῇ ἁρωματοφόρῳ Ἀραβία καὶ Ἰνδία, ἐνθα εἰσὶν οἱ λίθοι, πολλὰ τοιαῦτα ἔστιν εὑρεῖν, PG 62, 596.

<sup>18</sup> *Against the Arians and concerning himself*, PG 36, 228: τι Παύλω κοινὸν πρὸς τὰ ἔθνη, Λουκᾷ πρὸς Ἀχαιοὺς, Ἀνδρέᾳ πρὸς τὴν Ἡπειρον, Ἰωάννῃ πρὸς Ἐφεσον, Θωμᾷ πρὸς Ἰνδικήν, Μάρκῳ πρὸς Ἰταλίαν (‘what has Paul in common with the Gentiles, Luke with Achaia, Andrew with Epirus, John with Ephesus, Thomas with India, Marc with Italy’), English translation from *NPNF*, second series, vol. 7, 665. The apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* (or its tradition, which was widespread among Syriac Christianity) was apparently known to Gregory of Nazianzus. On the equivalent passage in Eusebius, who does not match Thomas with India, as well as on other accounts regarding the part of the world allocated to Thomas in the *sortes apostolorum*, see Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, *Literary Territories: Cartographical Thinking in Late Antiquity* (New York, 2016), 93-5.

mentioned with various grades of approval in our texts, but their voyages *per se* are less controversial.

Traders come up routinely in metaphors. It is important to note that, when there is a geographical connection to their travels (either directly, or through products, routes and means of travel), this is almost always to overseas, remote places (mainly Arabia, India, China). They are depicted as entrepreneurs, travelling in faraway lands, almost always by sea. Often, especially in Chrysostom, they represent greed, corruption and wealth. The general attitude towards merchants is one of disapproval, along with the general condemnation of the desire for wealth. Dishonesty and fraud are their sins and their profit is tainted by not being a product of hard work.<sup>19</sup> In contrast to this attitude, it appears that maritime traders are occasionally spared from this criticism. No text explains this differentiation, nor can one tell whether it is conscious. In many cases where travelling is mentioned in connection with commerce, merchants to faraway exotic places, or those trading exotic goods, are respected for their courage, perseverance and achievement. This part of their trade is viewed with sympathy. As if the long and perilous journey and the exotic merchandise purify their commercial activity.<sup>20</sup>

In his first homily *On Ephesians* Chrysostom offers valuable insight into the time's perception of wealth and the negative light under which its bearers are viewed:

The merchant too wishes to get rich; but he doth not allow his wish to stop with the thought of it; no, he fits out a ship, and gets together sailors, and engages a pilot, and furnishes the vessel with all other stores, and borrows money, and crosses the sea, and goes away into a strange land, and endures many dangers, and all the rest which they know who sail the sea.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> A condensed account of the time's perception and treatment of wealth by the Church can be found in Wendy Mayer, 'Poverty and generosity toward the Poor in the Time of John Chrysostom', also Francine Cardman, 'Poverty and Wealth as Theater: John Chrysostom's Homilies on Lazarus and the Rich Man' and Efthalia Makris Walsh, 'Wealthy and Impoverished Widows in the Writings of St. John Chrysostom', all three in Susan R. Holman (ed.), *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2008), 165-280. Especially on merchants, and the way they were perceived diachronically from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages is presented – based largely on hagiographical texts – in Aggeliki Laiou, 'Trade, Profit, and Salvation in the Late Patristic and the Byzantine Period', *ibid.* 243-66 and, especially regarding acceptable and evil profit, 254.

<sup>20</sup> It is commonplace in Christian literature of the times to identify risk and profit as the main traits of commerce and to consider the latter to be an important part of a city's well-being, often relieving merchants from the moral hazards that profit brings, *ibid.* 252-3.

<sup>21</sup> Καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἔμπορος θέλει πλουτεῖν, ἀλλ' οὐ μέχρι τῆς διανοίας τὸ θέλειν ἴστησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλοῖον κατασκευάζεται, καὶ συνάγει ναύτας, καὶ παρακαλεῖ κυβερνήτην, καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν κατασκευάζει τὸ πλοῖον, καὶ χρυσίον δανείζεται, καὶ περὶ πέλαγος, καὶ εἰς ξένην ἄπεισι γῆν, καὶ κινδύνους ὑπομένει πολλούς, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ἅπερ ἴσασιν οἱ τὴν θάλατταν πλέοντες, *On the Gospel of John*, PG 59, 28; English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 14, 16. Along the same lines, there are several other passages. Chrysostom also uses merchants as an

Silk merchants are not included among the wealthy:

Surely this is not wealth: wealth consists in possessing what is thine own. He that is in possession of the goods of others, never can be a wealthy man; since at that rate even your very silk venders, who receive their goods as a consignment from others, would be the wealthiest and the richest of men. Though for the time, indeed, it is theirs, still we do not call them wealthy. And why forsooth? Because they are in possession of what belongs to others. For though the piece itself happens to be theirs, still the money it is worth is not theirs. Nay, and even if the money is in their hands, still this is not wealth.<sup>22</sup>

These merchants travel on different routes and through various countries, but specific descriptions of either are a rarity in our texts. The authors' geographical knowledge is hardly to blame for that. They all went through first class education and, when such information is offered it seems reasonably accurate. This lack of information on geography is in line with the general – and often literary or rhetorical – character of these references. Nevertheless, our authors occasionally reproduce misnomers, geographical misperceptions or issues of the times. One such occasion is a disagreement of contemporary sources as to which sea off the coast of western Africa and/or the Arab Peninsula is called 'Red Sea'.<sup>23</sup> In Basil's *On Hexaemeron* Ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα means the sea on the eastern side of Egypt, but he clearly has a wider area in mind, when he says that Ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα is part of the Indian Ocean.<sup>24</sup> A few lines further down,

example on how to handle difficulties: No merchant who was away once and lost his load quit sailing; he goes back to the water and the waves and crosses the high seas and regains his wealth. Οὐδεις ἔμπορος ἅπαξ ναυαγίῳ περιπεσὼν καὶ τὸν φόρτον ἀπολέσας, ἀπέστη τοῦ πλεῖν, ἀλλὰ πάλιν τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὰ κύματα καὶ τὰ μακρὰ διαπερῶν πελάγη καὶ τὸν πρότερον ἀνακτᾶται πλοῦτον, Jean Chrysostome, *A Théodore*, ed. Jean Dumortier, SC 117 (Paris, 1966), 1.12-6. The same metaphor is also used in several other examples can be found in all our writers (note, for instance, the Phoenician merchants who saved Gregory of Nazianzus from a storm).

<sup>22</sup> Καὶ μὴν τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστι πλοῦτος, ἀλλὰ τὸ τὰ ἴδια κατέχειν· ὁ δὲ τὰ ἀλλότρια ἔχων, οὐκ ἂν εἴη πλούσιος· ἐπεὶ οὕτω γε ἂν καὶ οἱ τὰ σηρικὰ πωλοῦντες, ἱμάτια παρ' ἐτέρων λαμβάνοντες, καὶ εὐπορώτεροι καὶ πλουσιώτεροι πάντων λέγοιντο ἂν· καίτοι γε αὐτῶν ἔστι τέως, ἀλλ' ὅμως αὐτοὺς οὐ καλοῦμεν πλουσίους. Τί δήποτε; Ὅτι τὰ ἀλλότρια ἔχουσιν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν τυγχάνει, ἀλλ' ἡ τιμὴ οὐκ αὐτῶν· εἰ δὲ καὶ ἡ τιμὴ αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' οὗτος πλοῦτος οὐκ ἔστι, *On Ephesians*, PG 62, 22, English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 13, 114.

<sup>23</sup> For an account of the Red Sea in the Greek tradition, see Glen A. Fritz, *The Lost Sea of the Exodus: A Modern Geographical Analysis*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Texas State University, 2006), 94-110.

<sup>24</sup> *Basil de Césarée, Homiliae*, 4.3.33-7: 'For what would prevent the Red Sea from invading the whole of Egypt, which lies lower, and uniting itself to the other sea which bathes its shores, were it not fettered by the fiat of the Creator? And if I say that Egypt is lower than the Red Sea, it is because experience has convinced us of it every time that an attempt has been made to join the sea of Egypt to the Indian Ocean, of which the Red Sea is a part' (Ἐπεὶ τί ἐκόλυε τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν πᾶσαν τὴν Αἴγυπτον κοιλοτέραν οὖσαν ἑαυτῆς ἐπελθεῖν, καὶ συναφθῆναι τῷ παρακειμένῳ τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ πελάγει, εἰ μὴ τῷ προστάγματι ἦν πεπεδημένη τοῦ κτίσαντος; Ὅτι γὰρ ταπεινότερα τῆς ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης ἡ Αἴγυπτος, ἔργῳ ἐπεισαν ἡμᾶς οἱ θελήσαντες ἀλλήλοισι τὰ πελάγη συνάψαι, τὸ τε Αἰγύπτιον καὶ τὸ Ἰνδικόν, ἐν ᾧ ἡ ἐρυθρὰ ἔστι θάλασσα),

it is obvious that what he calls Ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα coincides with today's Red Sea, discharging into the Mediterranean. Thus, the conflicting account regarding Ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα in Basil, concerns its size and its extent rather than its location.

In another well-known geographical issue of the time, where several authors use the name 'India' for a part of Africa (somewhere between Upper Egypt and Ethiopia), our authors do not seem to deviate from the common perception that 'India' denotes the subcontinent in Asia.<sup>25</sup> Gregory of Nyssa barely mentions India and, when he does, he only states that ivory is imported from there. This reference is not helpful in determining which of the two Indias he means, as ivory was imported from both the subcontinent and Africa.<sup>26</sup>

Gregory of Nazianzus, on the other hand, by mentioning India as the place where Thomas spread Christianity, most probably identifies it with the subcontinent.<sup>27</sup>

Basil, writing from Alexandria to Eustathius the philosopher, mentions in a joking way that the furthest he could have gone was the Indian city of Nysa.<sup>28</sup> At the time, Eustathius was in Persia, while Basil was in Alexandria. Apart from a mythical city in Africa, no other Nysa is known there and it is therefore unlikely that by India he means Ethiopia. The best known Nysa at the time was indeed located in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>29</sup> Basil also mentions that Soufeir in India is the best-known place where gems are found. Soufeir as a source of gems seems to have entered collective perception (used as a standard comparison 'as valuable as the gems of Soufeir') in the Christian Era.<sup>30</sup>

English translation in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 8, 293. In the same work, he calls the Red Sea Αἰγύπτιον κόλπον (*ibid.* 7.2.35).

<sup>25</sup> On the use of India in other late antique authors see S.F. Johnson, *Literary Territories* (2016), 133-5.

<sup>26</sup> *On Ecclesiastes*, in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* V 326.13.

<sup>27</sup> View probably taken from the *Acts of Thomas*, where it is held that Thomas spread the gospel in India and died there. Among our writers, only Gregory of Nazianzus holds this version (fully in his *Oration* 25). Clement, Origen and even Chrysostom (who says that he died in Edessa) disagree.

<sup>28</sup> I really think that unless, like some tame beast, I had followed a bough held out to me till I was quite worn out, you would have been driven on and on beyond Indian Nyssa, or any more remote region, and wandered about out there (Δοκῶ γάρ μοι, εἰ μὴ ὥσπερ τι θρέμμα θαλλῶ προδεικνυμένῳ ἐπόμενος ἀπηγόρευσα, ἐπέκεινα ἄν σε καὶ Νύσσης τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἐλθεῖν ἀγόμενον, καί, εἴ τι ἔσχατον τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς οἰκουμένης χωρίον, καὶ τοῦτο ἐπιπλανηθῆναι), Saint Basile, *Lettres*, ed. Yves Courtonne (Paris, 1957), 1:1.30-4; English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 8, 358.

<sup>29</sup> Note that the Nyssa in Cappadocia is usually spelled with only one 'σ'.

<sup>30</sup> [They] are more precious than all unsmelted gold and the most expensive gem, which is thought to be in Soufeir. It appears that such a land called Soufeir exists in India, where the most precious of stones are produced (παντὸς ἀπύρου χρυσοῦ ἐσσονται τιμώτεροι καὶ παντὸς λίθου τιμιωτάτου, ὃς δοκεῖ ἐν τῇ Σουφεῖρ εὐρίσκεισθαι. Ἔοικε δὲ χώραν τινὰ λέγειν ἐν τῷ ἔθνει τῷ Ἰνδικῷ τὴν Σουφεῖρ, περὶ ἣν οἱ πολυτίμητοι τῶν λίθων πεφύκασιν γίνεσθαι), San Basilio, *Commento al profeta Isaia*, ed. Pietro Trevisan (Turin, 1939) 1,13.269.10-4.

Another phenomenon encountered in overseas travelling that also receives imaginary, stereotypical descriptions, is piracy. Pirates sailing the seas are mentioned only figuratively, in metaphors and not routinely. Perhaps the most interesting instance comes from Chrysostom's *On the Priesthood*: 'In fact it is just as if some pilot had pirates sailing with him in his ship, perpetually plotting every hour against him, and the sailors, and marines. And if he should prefer favor with such men to his own salvation, accepting unworthy candidates, he will have God for his enemy in their stead; and what could be more dreadful than that?'<sup>31</sup> The only piece of practical information that Chrysostom offers about pirates' *modus operandi* is still basic and general enough to be recognized as common sense: pirates only attack ships on their return journey, when they are full of valuable goods worth looting.

These countries and cities sitting on the Silk Road, along with their peoples and visitors are treated in our texts with some kind of awe, most likely due to their distance and inaccessibility. They had heard stories about fearless merchants travelling to, from and through them, carrying valuable exotic goods. References to these lands almost always – to varying degrees – touch upon the theme of commercial activity. These references are non-specific: little detail is given on the route and scenery, the countries themselves, the climate, the peoples and their habits.<sup>32</sup> Even less are personal views expressed, but rather many stereotypes and unimpressive points of general knowledge.<sup>33</sup> Yet is this also

<sup>31</sup> εἴ τις κυβερνήτης ἔνδον ἐν τῇ νηϊ τῇ πλεούσῃ πειρατὰς ἔχοι συμπλέοντας καὶ αὐτῶ καὶ τοῖς ναύταις καὶ τοῖς ἐπιβάταις συνεχῶς καὶ καθ' ἐκάστην ἐπιβουλεύοντας ὄραν. Ἄν δὲ τὴν πρὸς ἐκείνους χάριν προτιμῆσθαι τῆς αὐτοῦ σωτηρίας, δεξάμενος οὐδ' οὐκ ἔδει, ἔξει μὲν τὸν Θεὸν ἄντ' ἐκείνων ἐχθρόν, οὐ τί γένοιτ' ἄν χαλεπώτερον, Jean Chrysostome, *Sur le sacerdoce*, ed. Anne-Marie Malingrey, SC 272 (Paris, 1980), 3.11.130-5; English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 9, 78. Another example comes from his homilies *On Genesis* (PG 53, 283): 'Just like the pirates at sea, when they encounter a ship loaded with a great cargo and carrying ineffable wealth, then they show extreme treachery and they go about to sink the entire load and leave the sailors bare and helpless' (Καθάπερ γὰρ οἱ κατὰ θάλατταν πειραταί, ἐπειδὴν ἴδωσι ναῦν πολλῶν φορτίων πεπληρωμένην, καὶ πλοῦτον ἄφατον ἐπαγομένην, τότε μάλιστα πολλὴν τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν ἐπιδείκνυνται, ὥστε πάντα καταδῶσαι τὸν φόρτον, καὶ γυμνοὺς καὶ ἐρήμους τοὺς ἐμπλέοντας καταστήσαι).

<sup>32</sup> There are, of course, instances where more concrete information is provided on places and routes related to the eastern trade, but these are almost always in a different context. For example, Gregory of Nazianzus gives a relatively detailed description of Ctesiphon, a major Sassanian city on the silk-road (*Against Julian* 2, PG 35, 676 onwards). This is done in a historical context (describing the Roman-Sassanid wars) deriving from a plethora of possible sources, since many historians provide details on the city. The somewhat more detailed description is dictated by the content of the work rather than the subject of Ctesiphon.

<sup>33</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus offers an interesting view into such stereotypes of the times: 'and where does initiation and rites derive from if not from the Tracians? The call will convince you. Doesn't sacrificing come from the Chaldeans or maybe Cyprians? Astronomy from the Babylonians? Geometry from the Egyptians? The art of magic is it not Persian? From whom do you hear about dream divination, if not from the Telmessians? And from whom do you hear about augury? No other than the Phrygians, the first ones to study the flight and movements of birds?'

the case for journeys to less distant lands, where our authors themselves, or many of their acquaintances would travel much more often? As a matter of comparison with the treatment that they receive in our texts, we now turn to neighboring, but still foreign, lands in our authors. Provinces within their reach, where their affairs would have taken them occasionally such as Thrace, Armenia and Syria, or even Italy and Egypt, occur in their writings in a different light.<sup>34</sup>

As with India and China, the names of adjoining lands also crop up in figurative speech, in metaphors denoting, not long distance in this case, but relative vicinity. Chrysostom writes to a presbyter in his *Letter 78*: ‘The reputation of your love and disposition reached all the way to Armenia and Cappadocia and even farther’.<sup>35</sup> However, in most of our writers’ works, references to Armenia are mainly of a more pragmatic type, indicating a deeper knowledge of the land. Gregory of Nyssa in his *Homily Concerning the Forty Martyrs* writes: ‘For the season was winter and the location was Armenia, the neighbouring country, known for its heavy winter’. He goes on for several lines to describe winter in Armenia and to explain that the cold does not allow vineyards to grow there and he continues: ‘[That Armenian] who has not travelled far enough, is curious about grapes, in the same way we are curious about the products of India. There, the farmer plows the ground, while there is still snow on it, and snow arrives before harvest time. And the farmer when ripping is bared from his garmends if not holding tight to them, due to the force of the winds’.<sup>36</sup>

The parallel drawn between the amazement of an Armenian, who wonders about grapes in the same way that Gregory’s fellow Cappadocians wonder about the products of India, is of particular interest for our discussion. It appears that, just as India and China are synonymous with luxurious exotic products, Armenia is renowned for its cold weather. Chrysostom, while in exile, writes

(αὐτὸ δὲ πόθεν σοι τὸ μνεῖσθαι, καὶ τὸ μνεῖν, καὶ τὸ θρησκευεῖν; Οὐ παρὰ Θρακῶν, καὶ ἡ κληῖσις πειθέτω σε; Τὸ θύειν δὲ οὐ παρὰ Χαλδαίων, εἶτ’ οὖν Κυπρίων; Τὸ ἀστρονομεῖν δὲ οὐ Βαβυλώνιον; Τὸ δὲ γεωμετρεῖν οὐκ Αἰγύπτιον; Τὸ δὲ μαγεύειν οὐ Περσικόν; Τὴν δὲ δι’ ὄνειρων μαντικὴν τίνων ἢ Τελμησέων ἀκούεις; Τὴν οἰωνιστικὴν δὲ τίνων; οὐκ ἄλλων ἢ Φρυγῶν, τῶν πρώτων περιεργασαμένων ὀρνίθων πτησίν τε καὶ κινήματα), *Against Julian 1*, PG 35, 645.

<sup>34</sup> It would not be difficult to defend the decision to treat Armenia as ‘overseas’, seen from a Cappadocian’s perspective. However, the modern reader should note that Armenia was still several days’ travel from Caesarea and weeks away from Constantinople and Antioch, all through high mountains and difficult conditions.

<sup>35</sup> οὐ μέχρι τῆς Ἀρμενίας μόνον, οὐδὲ τῆς Καππαδόκων χώρας, ἀλλὰ καὶ πορρωτέρω, τῆς ἀγάπης σου καὶ τῆς διαθέσεως ... ἡ φήμη παραγέγονε, PG 52, 650.

<sup>36</sup> ὁ μὲν γὰρ καιρός, ἦν χειμὼν ὁ δὲ τόπος, Ἀρμενία, ἡ πρόσοικος χώρα, ὡς ἴστε, δυσχεῖμερο. ... καὶ ὁ μὴ μακρὰν ἐκδημήσας, βότρυν οὐκ οἶδεν· ἐρωτᾷ δὲ περὶ σταφυλῆς οὗτος, ὡς ἡμεῖς περὶ τῶν παρ’ Ἰνδοῖς γινομένων. Ἐκεῖ χιόνος οὖσης ἀνατέμνει τὴν γῆν ὁ σπείρων, καὶ τὸν ἄμητον καταλαμβάνει νιφάς· καὶ τὸν θεριστὴν ἀποδούουσιν ἄνემοι, ἂν μὴ σφόδρα καταδήσας ἑαυτὸν τοῖς ἱματίοις, πρὸς τὴν βίαν τῶν πνευμάτων διαγωνίσσεται, PG 46, 777.

to Olympias: ‘Yet I have survived all these things, and now I am in sound health, and great security, so that all Armenians are astonished that with such a feeble and flimsy frame as mine I can support such an intolerable amount of cold, or that I can breathe at all, when those who are habituated to the winter are suffering from it in no common degree’.<sup>37</sup>

Our authors also comment on the inhabitants of these countries, something absent in their descriptions of travels to the Far East. It is indeed possible that Gregory Nazianzen had never met a Chinese person. However he had met a few Armenians and he had a firm opinion on the Armenian people collectively. He mentions in his *Funeral Oration for Basil* that he finds Armenians very crafty and cunning: ‘I find Armenians to be not a simple race but rather slinky and cunning’.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Gregory himself says of Armenia: ‘... your homeland the cradle of excellence, Armenia, where many have excelled’.<sup>39</sup>

Chrysostom’s account of his journey to his second exile is probably the most detailed description of travelling in these countries. The voyage is narrated piecemeal in a number of his numerous letters. The part of his trip between Nicaea and Caesarea is very well documented. We read about the road, the scenery, his escort, and local customs when receiving visitors, inns by the roadside and facilities offered. We also read his many complaints about the climate, the weather, the remoteness of the place, the pains of a sick person on the move. It is one of the few accounts, where the journey is in itself (one of) the subject(s) of the letters, hence all the detail. But it is also a matter of how deep an impression the trip made and the effect recounting it would have on his readers.

This account is strongly affected by his personal state. It is a sad time, as he makes his way into exile. The rough road and the inhospitable scenery, though already familiar to him, are exaggerated by his fear of seclusion. A lot of what he describes turns out to be commonplace in travel literature describing hardships, where authors, typically from the capital, complain about everything when travelling in the provinces (road, weather, ill health, even a description of an inn room, where the air was so full of fire smoke that it made the eyes hurt).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> ἀλλὰ ταῦτα πάντα διεφύγομεν καὶ νῦν ἔσμεν ἐν ὑγιείᾳ καὶ ἀσφαλείᾳ πολλῇ, ὡς καὶ Ἀρμενίους πάντας ἐκπλήττεσθαι ὅτι ἐν οὕτως ἀσθενεῖ σώματι καὶ ἀραχνῶδει οὕτως ἀφόρητον φέρω κρυμόν, ὅτι ἀναπνεῖν δύναμαι, τῶν ἐθάδων τοῦ χειμῶνος οὐ τὰ τυχόντα ἐντεῦθεν πασχόντων. Jean Chrysostome, *Lettres à Olympias*, ed. Anne-Marie Malingrey, SC 13, 2nd edition (Paris, 1968), 17.4.11-5; English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 9, 409.

<sup>38</sup> οὐχ ἀπλοῦν γένος εὐρίσκω τοὺς Ἀρμενίους, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν κρυπτόν τι καὶ ὑφαλον, Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours funèbres en l'honneur de son frère Césaire et de Basile de Césarée*, ed. Fernand Boulenger (Paris, 1908), 17.2.1-2.

<sup>39</sup> *Carmina* 2.2.1, PG 37, 1471. The poem, of course, is written for Hellenius, an Armenian.

<sup>40</sup> Catia Galatariotou, ‘Travel and Perception in Byzantium’, *DOP* 47 (1993), 221-41, 226-30. The article offers a thorough analysis of such complaints by three Constantinopolitan authors and the role of their ‘cultural bias’ towards the provinces. Chrysostom’s letters are full of complaints about the harsh weather and rough landscape of inaccessible Armenian sites, where he was exiled. The most detailed descriptions are offered in his *17 Letters to Olympias*. The theme of complaining

Among our authors, the practicalities of travelling in these lands are handled with the attitude of an experienced traveler. They write of the weather, time and means of transport, the condition of the roads, and possible dangers. One example comes from Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Statues*. Following the famous riot of 387 Bishop Flavian travels from Antioch to Constantinople. He rushes there in order to reach the emperor before the imperial delegates. The journey itself is not of interest to John and his audience, but it is the difficulties encountered during the journey that allows Flavian to arrive in time:

Those who carried the evil tidings ... are yet delayed in the midst of their journey. So many hindrances and impediments have arisen; and they have left their horses, and are now proceeding in vehicles; whence their arrival must of necessity be retarded ... Men who had been familiar with such journeys all their lives, and whose constant business it was to ride on horseback, now broke down through the fatigue of this very riding.<sup>41</sup>

We are told, thus, that horses are substantially quicker than carriages and so are professional couriers as riders. We are not told, however, what happened to the horses forcing the riders to seek alternative means of transport.

Basil appears confident and knowledgeable in giving advice to presbyter Dorotheus in Rome: 'I cannot understand how it is that no one has told you that the road to Rome is wholly impracticable in winter, the country between Constantinople and our own regions being full of enemies'.<sup>42</sup>

Gregory of Nazianzus' experience of travelling from Alexandria to Athens and encountering a storm is a well-known episode. In particular the account in his autobiographical poems is considered a fine piece of literature, an exercise in rhetorical composition, of which the sea storm was a common theme.<sup>43</sup> Although the descriptions are rather long, the focus is on building up a dramatic atmosphere rather than providing information on practical matters of seafaring and travelling. The account of the same incident in his *On the Death of his Father* (PG 35, 1024-5) is not much different. Once more, travelling is not an end in itself. On the contrary, only details relevant to the scope of the work

about distant lands and the trip to them is a literary motif in epistolography and especially in 'exile letters'.

<sup>41</sup> οἱ τὴν πονηρὰν κομίζοντες ἀγγελίαν ... κατὰ μέσσην ἔτι διατρίβουσι τὴν ὁδόν· τοσαῦτα αὐτοῖς κωλύματα καὶ ἐμπόδια γέγονε, καὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἀφέντες ὀχήματα ἐλαύνουσι νῦν, ὅθεν ἀνάγκη πᾶσα βραδυτέραν αὐτοῖς γενέσθαι τὴν ἐκεῖσε ἄφιξιν. ... Ἄνθρωποι τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον τοιαύταις συντραφέντες ἀποδημίαις, καὶ τοῦτο ἔργον ἔχοντες ἵππους ἐλαύνειν διηνεκῶς, νῦν ὑπ' αὐτῆς τῆς ἰππασίας συντριβέντες ὑστέρησαν, PG 49, 83, English translation in *NPNF*, first series, vol. 9, 543.

<sup>42</sup> Τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ Ῥώμην ὁδὸν οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως οὐδεὶς ἀνήγγειλε τῇ συνέσει ὑμῶν ὅτι ἐν τῷ χειμῶνι παντελῶς ἔστιν ἄπορος, τῆς μεταξὺ χώρας ἀπὸ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ὄρων πολεμίων πεπληρωμένης, Saint Basile, *Lettres* (1961), 2:215.1.8-12; English translation in *NPNF*, second series, vol. 8, 719.

<sup>43</sup> *Carmina* 2.1.1 lines 307-21, PG 37, 993-4 and 2.1.2 lines 121-209, PG 37, 1038-9.

are offered, whether this is a rhetorical effect, or an emphasis on the spiritual weight of the experience, a life-changing one for Gregory.

Very rarely do we find comments (other than very general metaphors) to contribute to our knowledge of the land road network. Gregory of Nyssa, in *Life of Moses*, writes:

Along the royal highway ... for there is danger for the traveller to slide off the road. Just like if two cliffs on either side of a narrow pathway, it is dangerous for those passing to get off the road either side, having deviated from the middle (and possibly falling into the chasm following the diversion).<sup>44</sup>

An interesting comment about how a very busy road looks on the occasion of a celebration comes from Gregory of Nyssa: 'The crowds arriving hastily never ceases, the road leading there resembling ants with some moving upwards and others giving way to those moving forward'.<sup>45</sup> Chrysostom in a simile explains to his audience the function of stopping en route: 'There are places to stop and inns on the highways, allowing travellers to rest and recover and go on with their travels'.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusions

It appears that in the works examined in this study there are two distinct categories of references to travelling. The first one concerns travelling to remote lands, such as India and China. It involves non-specific, generalized descriptions of these lands and their products, but not of their people. In almost all instances the lands are mentioned in connection with some aspect of commerce. The journey is an adventure worth pursuing, filled with dangers and difficulties, raising the traveler to a higher moral status. These exotic lands export some of the most valuable products, in which case they are viewed with a hint of admiration. And finally, these references are found overwhelmingly in orations and other exegetical works, as well as in hagiographical works.

The second category of references concerns nearby lands, such as Armenia and Syria. They are much more specific in their descriptions, filled with details about the lands, the people, the conditions of travel in the area, as well as with

<sup>44</sup> τῆς βασιλικῆς λεωφόρου ... Ἐπισηφαλῆς γὰρ ἢ ἐπὶ τὰ πλάγια παρατροπῇ τῷ ὁδεύοντι. Ὡσπερ γὰρ εἰ δύο κρημνοὶ μίαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἄκρας ῥαχίας ἀτραπὸν ἀποστενοῖεν, κίνδυνός ἐστι τῷ διὰ ταύτης βαίνοντι ἔνθεν ἢ ἔνθεν παρατραπήναι τοῦ μέσου (ἴσως γὰρ ἐκατέρωθεν τὸ ἐκ τοῦ κρημοῦ βάραθρον τὴν ἐκτροπὴν διαδέχεται), PG 2, 287.

<sup>45</sup> οὐδέποτε λήγει τῶν κατὰ σπουδὴν ἀφικνουμένων τὸ πλῆθος, τῶν μυρμηκῶν δὲ σώζει τὴν ὁμοιότητα ἢ ἐπὶ τὰδε φέρουσα λεωφόρος, τῶν μὲν ἀνιόντων, τῶν δὲ ὑποχωρούντων τοῖς ἐρχομένοις, *Encomium on Saint Theodore*, PG 46, 745.

<sup>46</sup> ἐν ταῖς λεωφόροις εἰσὶ σταθμοὶ καὶ καταγῶγια, ὥστε τοὺς ὁδίτας κεκμηκότας διαναπαύεσθαι, καὶ τῶν πόνων λήγοντας, οὕτω πάλιν ἄπτεσθαι τῆς ὁδοπορίας, *On Genesis*, PG 53, 92.

anecdotes, revealing first (or at least second)-hand experience by the authors. This type of information is found largely in our authors' correspondence, although place names are mentioned often in other works.

It is probably an exaggeration to argue that there is a strict duality in travel descriptions in the Fathers, *i.e.* the mythical impression of the Far East as opposed to the merely unimpressive Cappadocia and Armenia. There are other passages, where other lands (*e.g.* Egypt and Ethiopia) are referred to in a more detailed way than China and India. And even in terms of neighbouring lands, different degrees of familiarity on the part of the author with the land are evident. However, the general conclusion that there are distinctively different traits and that more remote lands receive more dissociated description, still stands.

Moreover, the genre of each work is a decisive factor for the type of descriptions and narrations included and, therefore, affects the way travelling is presented. Although epistles have a more personal touch and practical purpose, exegetical orations are still works holding to a literal approach of facts. As for the encomia, they are hagiographical works that have given us some of the most valuable travel descriptions.

None of our writers produces what is traditionally regarded as 'travel literature' and their writing about travelling is rather incidental, one of the reasons why their accounts are useful to us for the collective perception of their times and their personal attitude.

# Historians, Bishops, Amulets, Scribes, and Rites: Interpreting a Christian Practice

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## ABSTRACT

The year 2015 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Association Internationale d'Études Patristiques (AIEP) / International Association of Patristic Studies (IAPS). It is an opportune moment to reflect on the intersection of scholarly disciplines and approaches in the field of patristics today. To do so, I shall draw on my current research programme, an investigation of the ways in which the customary practice of making and wearing amulets became 'Christian'. At first glance, it may appear that the practice has little to do with patristics, except in so far as it elicited comment or disapproval from ancient church authorities. However, the material record reveals a more complex dynamic, since scribes who prepared amulets were familiar with Christian prayer, liturgy, and scriptures. The evidence presses one to reflect on what it meant to be 'Christian' in Late Antiquity and on how purveyors of amulets received and modulated institutional modes of expressing what it meant to be 'Christian'. The evidence also obliges one to draw on the many disciplines or sub-fields that currently constitute the field of patristics, illustrating how indispensable they are to the interpretative process.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Association Internationale d'Études Patristiques (AIEP) / International Association of Patristic Studies (IAPS).<sup>1</sup> Michele Pellegrino first proposed the creation of an association during the Fourth International Conference on Patristic Studies in 1963. After a few years of informal discussion and consultation, the Association was founded at a colloquium convened at the Sorbonne on 26 June 1965, with a provisional Executive Committee comprising Henri-Irénée Marrou, President; Jacques Fontaines, Secretary; Pieter G. van der Nat, Treasurer; and Kurt Aland and Frank L. Cross, Vice-Presidents. Finally, during the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies in 1967 the Association was formally constituted with a duly elected Executive Committee and Council. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> On the circumstances in which the Association was founded, see Adolph Martin Ritter, 'The Origins of AIEP', in Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, Theodore de Bruyn and Carol Harrison (eds), *Patristic Studies in the Twenty-first Century: Proceedings of an International Conference to Mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Association of Patristic Studies* (Turnhout, 2015), 195-207. On the subsequent history of the Association, see Angelo Di Berardino, 'The Development of AIEP/IAPS', in *ibid.* 209-20.

Association's connection with this conference goes back to its very beginnings. I therefore welcome the occasion to acknowledge what this conference has given to the life of the Association over the years.

When the Association was established, it resolved not to take the place of institutions, publications, and conferences already in existence.<sup>2</sup> Consequently its members gather in various national, regional, and international conferences, as well as in scholarly meetings on specific topics. On the whole this arrangement has worked well, since it responds to the scholarly interests, cultural ties, and economic circumstances of members around the world. But we do need to meet one another, not only to attend to the business of the Association but, more importantly, to enliven collaboration and friendship. This conference has been, and remains, the venue where most of the Association's members meet each other. Only the Directors, Mrs Frost, and their many collaborators truly know what it takes to organize this meeting and publish its proceedings. But we are in their debt, as we have been to their predecessors. So on behalf of the Association, I say, 'Thank you'.

When I was invited to give this lecture, my first thought was to review the thirty-eight issues of the *Bulletin d'information et de liaison* published by the Association between 1968 and 2014.<sup>3</sup> As I perused the entries over the years, it was interesting to see the work of scholars first appear and then develop, and to observe trends or currents in research. It was also interesting to see what disciplines or areas of study were covered. The first issue of the *Bulletin* listed research under three general headings: 'histoire', 'langue et littérature', and 'auteurs'. Although the sub-headings, determined by the interests of the members at that time, were not comprehensive, they still encompassed multiple disciplines or sub-fields, such as 'hagiographie', 'liturgie', 'art et archéologie', 'prosopographie', 'papyrologie', and 'études de mots (grecs et latins)'.<sup>4</sup> In 1980, when publication of the *Bulletin* resumed after a seven-year hiatus, the general headings had become four: 'histoire du christianisme ancien', 'langues et littérature chrétiennes', 'la Bible et les Pères', and 'auteurs et textes' – a structure that has endured to this day. The organization of sub-fields was more systematic, and the scope of many of the sub-headings had become broader.<sup>5</sup> For example, the plurality of ancient Christianity was acknowledged with 'histoires des communautés chrétiennes' (expanded to 'histoire des communautés, des institutions, des périodes, des régions' in the next issue) and 'liturgies' (previously singular, now plural). The rubric for theology both widened and

<sup>2</sup> Article 1 of the Statutes, adopted in 1965.

<sup>3</sup> The first four were published in 1968, 1970, 1971, and 1973. Publication resumed with no. 5 in 1980. Since then a *Bulletin* has been published every year. However, the enumeration is not continuous, since in some years an *Annuaire* is published in addition to a *Bulletin* and gives its own number in the series.

<sup>4</sup> *Bulletin d'information et de liaison* 1 (1968), 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Bulletin d'information et de liaison* 5 (1980), 3.

shifted from 'Christologie' to 'histoire des doctrines'. Oriental languages were explicitly recognized with 'histoire des langues classiques et orientales' (expanded to 'histoire des langues et des littératures classiques et orientales' in the next issue). 'Christianisme et Judaïsme' and 'textes gnostiques' (expanded to 'gnose, manichéisme, etc.' in the next issue) made their début under the general heading 'la Bible et les Pères'. And the afterlife of the field was acknowledged in 'Patristique et Humanisme, Renaissance et Réforme' ('Patristique et Moyen Âge' being added in the next issue). In 1982 'christianisme et société dans l'Antiquité tardive' appeared.<sup>6</sup> Since then there have been only a few changes to the structure of the *Bulletin*, though the number of studies recorded has increased substantially.

In short, already in its earliest years the field of study that the Association was founded to advance comprised multiple disciplines, interests, and approaches. Over time these disciplines, interests, and approaches have become more numerous, multi-faceted, and inter-related. This is how we, collectively, constitute the field, since the *Bulletin* is simply a record of the current publications and projects of the members of the Association. The current constitution of the field in fact reveals how indispensable the sub-fields are to understanding the peoples, cultures, and movements that we study. This is, I expect, an unexceptional observation, one to which most of us would readily assent because we in fact rely on the work of our colleagues in many areas that lie outside our own expertise. Nevertheless, I am prompted to make it by a chance remark made after I gave a paper about a year ago on the subject that will be the focus of my lecture – what we can learn from incantations and amulets with Christian elements about the 'lived' expression of Christian devotion in late antique Egypt.<sup>7</sup> A colleague (and friend) remarked afterwards (half in jest): 'You don't do patristics!' The comment took me by surprise, but it also started me thinking, as unexpected questions or remarks from our audiences often do. What do incantations and amulets have to do with patristics, or vice versa?<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Bulletin d'information et de liaison* 7 (1982), 3.

<sup>7</sup> By 'incantations' I mean texts that appeal to or adjure supernatural powers to heal, protect, constrain, or avenge, and by 'amulets' I mean objects that are worn, affixed, or deposited for healing, protective, or propitious purposes. Since amulets may be written with texts (such as passages from scripture) that are not, strictly speaking, incantations, I use both terms in what follows.

<sup>8</sup> The following abbreviations are used in this paper: *PGM* = *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, ed. Karl Preisendanz and Albert Henrichs, 2 vols, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Stuttgart, 1974-1975); *Suppl. Mag.* = *Supplementum Magicum*, ed. Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, 2 vols, *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 16 (Opladen, 1991-1992). Papyrological editions are abbreviated according to John F. Oates, Roger S. Bagnall, Sarah J. Clackson, Alexandra A. O'Brien, Joshua D. Sosin, Terry G. Wilfong and Klaas A. Worp, *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, <<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>>, July 2015. When an item in *PGM* or *Suppl. Mag.* was previously published in a papyrological edition, the reference is given in parentheses after the reference to *PGM* or *Suppl. Mag.*

If one takes into consideration discourse on ‘magic’, ‘magicians’, incantations, and amulets in early Christian literature, the answer to that question is: ‘Quite a lot’. Since incantations and amulets were widely used in the ancient world, they and their purveyors appear with some frequency in the discourses of elites. There is now a substantial body of literature on not only what Christian writers say about incantations and amulets,<sup>9</sup> but also the design and effects of their rhetoric on the subject,<sup>10</sup> whether that be to disqualify an opponent, as in the case of, say, Irenaeus;<sup>11</sup> or to distinguish Christian exorcism from contemporary sorcery, as in the case of Origen;<sup>12</sup> or to establish the boundaries of Christian conduct, as in the case of Augustine and John Chrysostom;<sup>13</sup> or to contrast the power of an apostle or saint from that of a magician or sorcerer, as in apocryphal acts and saints’ lives.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For overviews see Norbert Brox, ‘Magie und Aberglaube an den Anfängen des Christentums’, *TThZ* 83 (1974), 157-80; Francis C.R. Thee, *Julius Africanus and the Early Christian View of Magic*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 19 (Tübingen, 1984), 316-448; Hennie F. Stander, ‘Amulets and the Church Fathers’, *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 75 (1993), 55-66; Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London, 2001), 273-321; Silke Trzcionka, *Magic and the Supernatural in Fourth-Century Syria* (London and New York, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, and Stereotype in the Ancient World* (New York, 2007), 107-41; Dayna S. Kalleres, ‘Drunken Hags with Amulets and Prostitutes with Erotic Spells: The Re-Feminization of Magic in Late Antique Christian Homilies’, in Kimberly B. Stratton and Dayna S. Kalleres (eds), *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World* (New York, 2014), 219-51.

<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.13.1, 1.23.1, 1.23.4, 1.23.5, 1.24.5, 1.25.3, in *Irénée de Lyon, Contre les hérésies, Livre I, Tome II*, ed. Adelin Rousseau et Louis Doutreleau, SC 264 (Paris, 1979), 186-8, 312, 318, 320, 330, 336. See Guilia Sfameni Gasparro, ‘Eretici e maghi in Ireneo: l’accusa di magia come strumento della polemico anti-agnostica’, in Rossana Barcellona and Teresa Sardella (eds), *Munera amicitiae: studi di storia e cultura sulla tarda antichità offerti a Salvatore Pricoco* (Soveria Mannelli, 2003), 471-501.

<sup>12</sup> Origen, *Cels.* 1.6, in *Origène, Contre Celse*, Tome I, ed. Marcel Borret, SC 132 (Paris, 1967), 90-2; *Cels.* 6.38-40, in *Origène, Contre Celse*, Tome III, ed. Marcel Borret, SC 147 (Paris, 1969), 270-6. See Guilia Sfameni Gasparro, ‘Origène e la magia: teoria e prassi’, in Lorenzo Peronne with P. Bernardino and D. Marchini (eds), *Origeniana octava: Origen and the Alexandrian tradition / Origène e la tradizione alessandrina. Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27-31 August 2001*, 2 vols. (Leuven, 2003), I 733-56.

<sup>13</sup> Augustine, *Serm.* 318.3 (PL 38, 1439-40); *Serm.* 328.8 (PLS 2, 801); *Serm.* 335D.3-5 (PLS 2, 778-80); *Serm.* 360F.7, in *Augustin d’Hippone, Vingt-six sermons au peuple d’Afrique*, ed. François Dolbeau, Collection des Études augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 147 (Paris, 1996), 215; John Chrysostom, *Hom.* 8 in *Col.* 5 (PG 62, 357-8); *Hom.* 12 in *1 Cor.* 7 (PG 61, 105-6).

<sup>14</sup> Gérard Poupon, ‘L’Accusation de magie dans les Actes apocryphes’, in François Bovon *et al.* (eds), *Les Actes apocryphes des apôtres: christianisme et monde païen*, Publications de la Faculté de théologie de l’Université de Genève 4 (Geneva, 1981), 71-85; Jan N. Bremmer, ‘Magic in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles’, in *id.* and Jan R. Veenstra (eds), *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 1 (Leuven, 2002), 51-70; H.J. Magoulias, ‘The Lives of Byzantine Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries A.D.: Sorcery, Relics and Icons’, *Byz* 37 (1967), 228-69; John Wortley, ‘Some Light on Magic and Magicians in Late Antiquity’, *GRBS* 42 (2001), 289-307; S. Trzcionka, *Magic* (2007), 43-5, 88-91, 148-51.

As you might anticipate, this discourse is usually critical of the practice and its purveyors.<sup>15</sup> When the use of incantations comes up in polemical writing, Christian writers (like their non-Christian counterparts) typically highlight the harmful and reprehensible forms of the practice: coercive and antagonistic incantations meant to handicap a competitor, obtain a lover, arouse sexual desire, avenge a wrong, and the like.<sup>16</sup> When the desired end is not so evidently objectionable, as with amulets meant to protect from evil or heal from sickness, the problem lies ultimately in the demonic agents behind these techniques, who alternately deceive or ensnare people by their power.<sup>17</sup> For bishops and councils striving in the fourth and fifth centuries to extricate Christians from ambient mores,<sup>18</sup> amulets and their makers are outside the boundary demarcating what is Christian.<sup>19</sup> Christians who use or make amulets have not adequately separated themselves from the thinking, customs, and social networks of their contemporaries (and their supposedly former selves).

But the sermons of bishops and the lives of saints show that the marking and maintaining of boundaries was a dynamic, interactive, and unsettled process. Chrysostom gives us the following imaginary dialogue with a Christian mother who applies an incantation to her sick child:

Tell me, then, if someone says: 'Take him [the sick child] to an idol's temple, and he will live', would you allow it? 'No', she says. 'Why not?' 'Because he is urging me to commit idolatry. In this case, there is no idolatry, but only incantation', she says.<sup>20</sup>

And in one of several sermons where Augustine compares those who refuse an amulet when they are gravely ill to the martyrs of times past,<sup>21</sup> he has family and

<sup>15</sup> For the most part, incantations and amulets are subsumed under the larger discursive fields of 'magic' and 'sorcery'; for overviews, see F.C.R. Thee, *Julius Africanus* (1984), 316-448; Bernd-Christian Otto, *Magie: Rezeptions- und diskursgeschichtliche Analysen von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 57 (Berlin, 2011), 273-336.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Tatian, *Orat.* 17, in *Tatiani Oratio ad Graecos*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, PTS 43 (Berlin, 1995), 36; Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 1.43 (CSEL 4, 29).

<sup>17</sup> F.C.R. Thee, *Julius Africanus* (1984), 330, 336-8, 349-50, 356, 373-4, 378-81, 404-6, 418, 425-6, 431-2; B.-C. Otto, *Magie* (1995), 299-304.

<sup>18</sup> M.W. Dickie, *Magic* (2001), 257-62.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., *Trad. ap.* 16.14, in *Der koptische Text der Kirchenordnung Hippolyts*, ed. Walter Till and Johannes Leipoldt, TU 58 (Berlin, 1954), 12; see Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 2002), 12. *Const. apost.* 8.32.11, in *Les constitutions apostoliques*, Tome III, ed. Marcel Metzger, SC 336 (Paris, 1987), 238. *Can. Hipp.* 15 (PO 31.2, 368-70); see P.F. Bradshaw, M.E. Johnson and L.E. Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 19. C. Laod., *Can.* 36, in Périclès-Pierre Joannou, *Discipline générale antique (IV<sup>e</sup>-IX<sup>e</sup> s.)*, vol. 1.2, *Les canons des synodes particuliers* (Vatican, 1962), 145. Ferrandus of Carthage, *Breu. can.* 110, in *Concilia Africae a. 345-525*, ed. Charles Munier, CChr.SL 149 (Turnhout, 1974), 296.

<sup>20</sup> John Chrysostom, *Hom. 8 in Col.* 5 (PG 62, 358).

<sup>21</sup> See n. 13 above.

friends attending at the bedside defend customary practices by saying that people who use or offer such remedies are Christians, no less:

But the one who says, 'I won't do it' ... well, he gets this answer from the one who is suggesting it: 'Do it, and you'll get well. So-and-so and Such-and-such did it. What? Aren't they Christians? Aren't they believers? Don't they hurry off to church? And yet they did it and got well. So-and-so did it and was cured immediately. Don't you know Such-and-such, that he's a Christian, a believer? Look, he did it, and he got well'.<sup>22</sup>

In the end, bishops like Augustine and Chrysostom meet their people part-way and accept, if not recommend, Christian substitutes for customary practices, such as making the sign of the cross, wearing a gospel (or rather, a portion of the gospel), or keeping a gospel by one's bed.<sup>23</sup> Saints and monks, too, are reported to use similar means to combat demons and help people: making the sign of the cross,<sup>24</sup> reciting scripture,<sup>25</sup> applying water or oil that has been blessed.<sup>26</sup>

Informative and revealing as these sources are, their discourses are *about* people who make or use amulets. They are unavoidably partial as witnesses to the practices of Christians. If we are seeking a more complex understanding of what Christians did and how they viewed what they did, we must reach outside of the world as it is constructed in any one discourse. Thus, when reading early Christian sources, we may juxtapose the perspectives and insights gained from different genres, or we may read between the lines or against the grain, interrogating our sources and our readings of them.<sup>27</sup> When material evidence exists

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *Serm.* 335D.3 (PLS 2, 778); English translation: *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Part III, *Sermons*, vol. 9, *Sermons 306-340A*, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, 1994), 230.

<sup>23</sup> John Chrysostom, *Hom.* 72 in *Mt.* 2 (PG 58, 669); *Stat.* 19.14 (PG 49, 196); Augustine, *Tract. Io.* 7.12.1, in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini in Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*, ed. Radbodus Willems, CChr.SL 36 (Turnhout, 1954), 73. See Peter Stockmeier, *Theologie und Kult des Kreuzes bei Johannes Chrysostomus: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Kreuzes im 4. Jahrhundert*, Trierer Theologische Studien 18 (Trier, 1966), 240, 248-51; H.F. Stander, 'Amulets' (1993), 65-6.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., Athanasius of Alexandria, *V. Anton.* 35.2-3, 78.5, in *Athanase d'Alexandrie, Vie d'Antoine*, ed. Gerard J.M. Bartelink, SC 400 (Paris, 2004), 230, 334; Jerome, *V. Hil.* 3.8, 8.8, in *Jérôme, Trois vies de moines (Paul, Malchus, Hilarion)*, ed. Edgardo Martín Morales and Pierre Leclerc, SC 508 (Paris, 2007), 222-4, 234.

<sup>25</sup> Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York, 1993), 122-5; David Brakke, 'Introduction', in Evagrius of Pontus, *Talking Back: A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons*, Cistercian Studies Series 229, trans. David Brakke (Collegeville, 2009), 14-23.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., *Hist. mon.* 1.12, 1.16, in *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, ed. André-Jean Festugière, SH 34 (Brussels, 1961), 12-5; Palladius, *H. Laus.* 12.1, 18.11, 18.22, in *The Lausiac History of Palladius*, ed. Cuthbert Butler, Texts and Studies 6.2 (Cambridge, 1904), 35, 51, 54-5; Shenoute, Acephalous work A14, §§255-59, in *Shenute: Contra Origenistas*, ed. Tito Orlandi (Rome, 1985), 20; Jerome, *V. Hil.* 20.2, 22.6, 32.2, SC 508, 266, 274, 294.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., the essays in K.B. Stratton and D.S. Kalleres, *Daughters of Hecate* (2014), Part II.

and is relevant, we may juxtapose the witness of the literary record with the witness of the material record. In either case, we may encounter contradiction, incoherence, or simple gaps, as well as corroboration or complementarity.<sup>28</sup> And in both cases – but perhaps more obviously in the latter case – we are motivated to turn to a wider array of disciplines and expertise to arrive at a more complete view of the practice described from a partial perspective by any one of our given sources. This, at least, has been my experience as I turned from the literary sources to the material record to understand what people did when they produced or used amulets in the increasingly Christian world of late antique Egypt.

We have many examples of incantations and amulets with Christian elements among the papyri and parchments of Egypt.<sup>29</sup> What we find is, not surprisingly, a mix. Let us consider, for the moment, only protective or healing amulets written in Greek. Some correspond to the substitutes prescribed above. They are written with passages from scripture, particularly those known to protect, such as LXX Ps. 90,<sup>30</sup> the Lord's Prayer,<sup>31</sup> and the opening words or other passages from the gospels or the psalms<sup>32</sup> – and these often in combination. Often such scriptural passages are recited along with an invocation, petition, or adjuration.<sup>33</sup> Occasionally the incantation takes the form of a Christian prayer devoid of customary forms of adjuration.<sup>34</sup> But usually the incantation incorporates one or more customary adjurations. Sometimes the idiom is entirely Christian.<sup>35</sup> Other times it is not: Christ is invoked alongside a Greco-Egyptian

<sup>28</sup> With regard to material evidence, see Robin M. Jensen, 'Integrating Material and Visual Evidence into Early Christian Studies: Approaches, Benefits, and Potential Problems', in B. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, T.S. de Bruyn and C. Harrison (eds), *Patristic Studies in the Twenty-first Century* (2015), 549-69.

<sup>29</sup> Theodore S. de Bruyn and Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 48 (2011), 163-216.

<sup>30</sup> Juan Chapa, 'Su demoni e angeli: il Salmo 90 nel suo contesto', in Guido Bastianini and Angelo Casanova (eds), *I papiri letterari cristiani: atti del convegno internazionale di studi in memoria di Mario Naldini, Firenze, 10-11 Giugno 2010* (Florence, 2011), 59-90. In the list at the end of this excellent overview, the cross-references to T.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets' (2011), were based on an enumeration prior to publication; they cannot be relied upon.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas J. Kraus, 'Manuscripts with the Lord's Prayer – They Are More Than Simply Witnesses to That Text Itself', in Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas (eds), *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*, Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 2 (Leiden, 2006), 227-66; Brice C. Jones, *New Testament Texts on Greek Amulets from Late Antiquity* (London, 2016), 77-127 (nos. 4-14).

<sup>32</sup> Joseph E. Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt: Text, Typology, and Theory*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 84 (Tübingen, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> E.g., BKT VI 7.1; MPER N.S. XVII 10; PGM P5b (P.Oxy. VIII 1151); PGM P5c (P.Cair. Cat. 10696); PGM P9 (BGU III 954); PGM P17 (P.Iand. I 6) = P.Giss.Lit. 5.4; P.Köln VIII 340; Suppl. Mag. I 26 = BKT IX 206; Suppl. Mag. I 29 (P.Princ. II 107); Suppl. Mag. I 36.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., PGM P9 (BGU III 954); Suppl. Mag. I 31 (P.Turner 49) = BKT IX 134.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., Suppl. Mag. I 22 (P.Amst. I 26); Suppl. Mag. I 25 (P.Prag. I 6).

deity,<sup>36</sup> or is simply named in what is otherwise an altogether traditional adjuration.<sup>37</sup> Often the visual features are Christian: crosses, staurograms, christograms,<sup>38</sup> ΧΜΓ.<sup>39</sup> But customary visual and oral elements – esoteric words, sounds, shapes, and signs – can also be present.<sup>40</sup> And, of course, the entire pool of materials that have survived from the period includes customary Greco-Egyptian incantations and amulets of various kinds without any Christian elements.

This material gives us a more concrete, variegated idea of the sorts of inscribed amulets Christians and their non-Christian neighbours might have worn. Since they are written by people and for people living at the time, they bring us closer to what some people, at least, did to protect themselves or others from evil and sickness. They reveal something of the interactive process of altering the production and use of amulets within an increasingly Christian context. More precisely, they reveal how scribes from various backgrounds worked within traditions available to them to reproduce or create incantations that they and their clients believed would remedy the problem at hand. As Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke observe in the first issue of *Religion in the Roman Empire*, a new journal dedicated to exploring the concept of ‘lived ancient religion’, ‘most of the evidence at our disposal is best to be interpreted neither as “authentic” individual expression nor as institutional “survival”, but as media, as the result of a “culture created in interaction”’.<sup>41</sup>

The scribes who prepared incantations and amulets were inevitably shaped and constrained by the culture, norms, habits, rituals, and reciprocities of the social groups to which they belonged.<sup>42</sup> They were moulded by schooling and scribal training,<sup>43</sup> as well as, in some cases, employment as a writer of docu-

<sup>36</sup> E.g., *Suppl. Mag.* I 34.

<sup>37</sup> E.g., PGM P6a (*P.Oxy.* VIII 1152); *Suppl. Mag.* I 20.

<sup>38</sup> T.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, ‘Greek Amulets’ (2011), Table 1, last column.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., *MPER* N.S. IV 11 (above verses from the Psalms); PGM P3 (*P.Osl.* I 5) (above an incantation; see below); P.J. Sijpesteijn, ‘Weiner Melange’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 40 (1980), 91-110, 94-6 (above an incantation); Brent Nongbri, ‘The Lord’s Prayer and ΧΜΓ: Two Christian Papyrus Amulets’, *HTS* 104 (2011), 59-68, 64-8 (alone).

<sup>40</sup> E.g., PGM P3 (*P.Osl.* I 5); PGM P11; *P.Köln* VIII 340; *P.Oxy.* LXV 4469; *SPP* XX 294; *Suppl. Mag.* I 20; *Suppl. Mag.* I 21 (*P.Köln* VI 257); *Suppl. Mag.* I 23 (*P.Haun.* III 51); *Suppl. Mag.* I 27.

<sup>41</sup> Rubina Raja and Jörg Rüpke, ‘Appropriating Religion: Methodological Issues in Testing the “Lived Ancient Religion” Approach’, *Religion in the Roman Empire* 1 (2015), 11-9, 17.

<sup>42</sup> On the social confines of individual religious practice in antiquity, see Fritz Graf, ‘Individual and Common Cult: Epigraphic Reflections’, in Jörg Rüpke (ed.), *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2013), 115-35, 131-3; Greg Woolf, ‘Ritual and the Individual in Roman Religion’, in *ibid.* 136-60, 153-5; Johan Leemans, ‘Individualization and the Cult of the Martyrs: Examples from Asia Minor in the Fourth Century’, in *ibid.* 186-212, 206-7.

<sup>43</sup> For overviews see Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, *American Studies in Papyrology* 36 (Atlanta, 1996); *ead.*, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, 2001).

ments or a copier of books, or clerical or monastic formation. Some had technical expertise in the preparation of remedies; they had become more or less familiar with customary forms of invocation and adjuration, whether by oral transmission or from written sources. Some were also familiar with the phraseology of Christian prayer, either by participating in services or from liturgical books. And again, some were intimately acquainted with the scriptures, probably as a result of the daily routine of scriptural reading, recitation, and prayer.<sup>44</sup> All these circumstances and qualities had ramifications. The scribe who wrote incantations in a wholly Christian idiom or who turned to scripture for protective passages was evidently working within different social and cultural parameters than the scribe who wrote customary incantations with sporadic Christian elements or in a mainly Greco-Egyptian idiom. Moreover, even within such putative groups we find considerable diversity.

How these variables might play out in the production of an incantation or amulet, and the interpretative choices that the final products pose for us today, can be nicely illustrated by a few examples. I have selected three groups of amulets that manifest different facets of the dynamic intersection between incantations, scribes, and rites. The first raises questions about what it meant for someone or something to be 'Christian'. The second requires us to think about the traditions scribes worked with (or within) and how they modulated those traditions, at times inadvertently. The third obliges us to confront two different ways scribes incorporated a Christian ritual in an incantation and to explore what that difference might signify.

Our first group consists of amulets against scorpions, an ever-present danger in Egypt and a long-standing target of phylacteries.<sup>45</sup> We have three amulets from Oxyrhynchus, *PGM XXVIIIa-c* (*P.Oxy.* XVI 2061-3),<sup>46</sup> that use the same basic formula: an invocation, 'Hôr Hôr Phôr Phôr Iaô Sabaôth Adônai Salaman Tarchi (in various permutations), followed by an adjuration, 'I bind you, Artemisian scorpion'. They are written quickly and sometimes carelessly by different scribes from the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>47</sup> Obviously this was a customary incantation against scorpions that was passed on orally, to judge by

<sup>44</sup> On daily services observed by clergy and laity (as well as monks), see Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Collegeville, 1993), 31-56. On monastic recitation of scripture, both private and communal, see *ibid.* 57-91.

<sup>45</sup> Marcus N. Tod, 'The Scorpion in Graeco-Roman Egypt', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 25 (1939), 55-61; Ildikó Maaßen, 'Schlangen- und Skorpionbeschwörung über die Jahrtausende', in Andrea Jördens (ed.), *Ägyptische Magie und ihre Umwelt*, PHILIPPIKA - Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen / Contributions to the Study of Ancient World Cultures 80 (Wiesbaden, 2015), 171-87.

<sup>46</sup> Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt and Harold I. Bell (eds), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 16 (London, 1924), 274.

<sup>47</sup> Images at <[www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk](http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk)> (Oxyrhynchus Online). For the assigned dates, see *P.Oxy.* XVI, p. 274.

the phonetic and variable spellings of the scribes. One of the scribes wrote a line of three crosses at the head of the incantation.<sup>48</sup> The cursive writing of this amulet, which has been assigned to the sixth century, is typical of scribes who wrote documents of various types – contracts, receipts, and the like.<sup>49</sup> Producing amulets may have been one of many writing tasks for which this scribe was employed.<sup>50</sup> If so, what significance did the invocation have for the scribe? Should we infer from its repeated use in amulets over several centuries that the string of names no longer evoked notions of particular deities but was simply an effective chant against scorpions?<sup>51</sup> And then, what was the salience of the three crosses for the scribe? By the sixth century it was common to precede the first line of a letter or a document with a cross.<sup>52</sup> Were crosses, too, now customary, like the incantation?<sup>53</sup> Should we infer from the crosses that the scribe was a Christian? What, in fact, did it mean to be ‘Christian’? These are all questions raised by the composition and execution of this amulet. They require us to make choices that will, inevitably, shape our interpretation of the artefact, its producer, and the context of production.

We have another amulet of this type that is more elaborate, *PGM P3 (P.Oslo I 5)*.<sup>54</sup> It consists of the ‘Hôr Hôr’ sequence, an extended adjuration binding the Artemisian scorpion to protect a house and its inhabitants from various threats ‘in the name of the most high God’, a series of *voces magicae*, and a Christian

<sup>48</sup> *P.Oxy.* XVI 2063.1.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., *P.Col.* VIII 244 (sixth century) in Hermann Harrauer, *Handbuch der griechischen Paläographie*, Bibliothek des Buchwesens 20, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 2010), I 455-7 (text 256), II 246 (plate 242).

<sup>50</sup> John G. Gager (ed.), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York, 1992), 123 n. 12.

<sup>51</sup> For instances of Greco-Egyptian names that have lost their original meaning in Jewish amulets, see Gideon Bohak, ‘Some “Mass Produced” Scorpion-Amulets from the Cairo Genizeh’, in Zuleika Rodgers, Margaret Daly-Denton and Anne Fitzpatrick (eds), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 132 (Leiden, 2009), 35-49.

<sup>52</sup> On initial crosses in letters, see Lincoln H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus*, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 39 (Leiden, 2012), 43-4, 310-1. For initial crosses in documents, see, e.g., H. Harrauer, *Handbuch* (2010), I, texts 215, 227, 234, 237, 242, 244, 248-9, 250-1, 254-5.

<sup>53</sup> For two quite different amulets headed by three crosses (one with only Christian elements, the other with Christian and Greco-Egyptian elements), see Dierk Wortmann, ‘Neue magische Texte’, *BaJ* 168 (1968), 56-111, 106 (P.Köln inv. 521av); Dierk Wortmann, ‘Der weisse Wolf: Ein christliches Fieberamulett der Kölner Papyrussammlung’, *Philologus* 107 (1963), 157-61, republished in *Suppl. Mag.* I 34.

<sup>54</sup> Samson Eitrem and Anton Fridrichsen, ‘Ein christliches Amulett auf Papyrus’, *Forhandlinger i Videnskabselskabet i Christiania* 1 (1921), 3-22; Samson Eitrem, ‘A New Christian Amulet’, *Aegyptus* 3 (1922), 66-7; Friedrich Preisigke (ed.), *Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, vol. 3 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1926-1927), 69 (no. 6584); Ulrich Wilcken, ‘Referate’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 7 (1924), 67-160, 113; Samson Eitrem (ed.), *Papyri Osloenses*, vol. 1: *Magical Papyri* (Oslo, 1925), 21.

injunction. The incantation is carefully written in a fairly regular, informal semi-cursive hand that has been assigned to the fourth or fifth century.<sup>55</sup> There are no phonetic spellings or orthographical irregularities. In fact, the hand could well have been used to copy books.<sup>56</sup> The scribe almost certainly copied the incantation from an exemplar because the names in the invocation are spelled correctly and the *voces magicæ* replicate a series found in another amulet.<sup>57</sup> At the head of the text the scribe wrote ΧΜΓ, a Christian sequence whose precise meaning remains a matter of dispute,<sup>58</sup> but often appears at the top of letters and documents in late antique Egypt.<sup>59</sup> The concluding injunction reads: ‘Be on guard, O Lord, son of David according to the flesh, the one born of the holy virgin Mary, O holy, most high God, of the Holy Spirit. Glory to you, O heavenly king. Amen’.<sup>60</sup> The text ends with a series of Christian symbols, α+ω Ϡ Α+Ω ιχθυσ.<sup>61</sup> The phrasing of the injunction, identifying the ‘son of David’ with ‘the most high God’, is in keeping with Alexandrian christology in the fifth century.<sup>62</sup> Whoever added the injunction to the customary incantation – whether the writer of the amulet or the writer of the exemplar – must have been familiar with invocations or acclamations of the Egyptian church, possibly from a liturgical book, not just from attending services. Should we infer, therefore, that the writer was a Christian cleric? We surely cannot rule out

<sup>55</sup> Image at <<http://ub-prod01-imgs.uio.no/OPES/jpg/303r.jpg>> (Oslo Papyri Electronic System).

<sup>56</sup> Compare, e.g., Guglielmo Cavallo and Herwig Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300-800*, Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 47 (London, 1987), 46-7 (no. 19a; *PSI* XIV 1371, mid-fifth century).

<sup>57</sup> Robert W. Daniel, ‘Some ΦΥΛΑΚΤΗΡΙΑ’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 25 (1977), 145-54, 150-3; *Suppl. Mag.* I 15.1-5 comm.

<sup>58</sup> For bibliography and discussion, see F. Mitthof (ed.), *Griechische Texte XVI: Neue Dokumente aus römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Verwaltung und Reichsgeschichte*, Corpus Papyrorum Raineri XXIII (Vienna, 2002), 217 (*CPR* XXIII 34.1 comm.); B. Nongbri, ‘The Lord’s Prayer and ΧΜΓ’ (2011), 66-8.

<sup>59</sup> F. Mitthof, *Griechische Texte XVI* (2002), 218; L.H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians* (2012), 47-8, 311.

<sup>60</sup> Lines 8-11: φύλαξον, κύριε, υἱὲ τοῦ Ἰδαυῖδ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ τεχθεὶς ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας παρθένου ἸΜαρίας, ἄγιε, ὑψίστε θεέ, ἐξ ἁγίου πνεύματος, δόξα σοι, ἰ οὐράνιε βασιλεῦ. ἀμήν.

<sup>61</sup> The cross between the uncial *alpha* and *omega* is in the form of an Egyptian life-sign (*crux ansata*); the left, right, and lower arms of the cross are triangular, whereas the top arm is clearly round. On the use of the Egyptian life-sign by Christians in Egypt, see Maria Cramer, *Das altägyptische Lebenszeichen [ankh] im christlichen (koptischen) Ägypten: Eine kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Studie*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wiesbaden, 1955).

<sup>62</sup> The phrase ‘son of David according to the flesh’ echoes Paul’s usage at *Rom.* 1:3. For Cyril of Alexandria’s interpretation of the phrase in documents submitted to the imperial court prior to the Council of Ephesus, see, e.g., Cyril of Alexandria, *Thds.* 26, 44-5, in *Concilium universale ephesenum*, ed. Eduard Schwartz, ACO 1.1.1.1 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927), 58-9, 72. See also his explanation of the children greeting Jesus with the acclamation ‘Hosanna to the son of David’ (*Matth.* 21:9) at Cyril of Alexandria, *Arcad.* 108, in *Concilium universale ephesenum*, ed. Eduard Schwartz, ACO 1.1.1.5 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927), 89, where he explains how appropriate it is that the ‘son of David’ is acclaimed as Lord and God (as in the doxology in our papyrus).

that possibility. Certainly the symbols that frame the incantation – XMG and  $\alpha+\omega$   $\text{⚡}$   $\text{A}+\text{W}$   $\overline{\text{I}\chi\theta\upsilon\varsigma}$  – point to a generally Christian milieu. What then do we make of the combination of the customary and the Christian in this instance? The detail of the incantation and the care and accuracy of the transcription suggest that the customary and Christian elements had more than a perfunctory salience. What does this particular combination tell us about what it meant for someone or something to be ‘Christian’?

The next set of incantations illustrate how traditions are altered in the process of transmission, complicating the interpretative process. Each amulet has an acclamation that appears to simplify or alter doxological traditions known to us from literary sources. Each prompts us to think about the milieu that the scribe inhabited, how doxological traditions were formed and transmitted in that milieu, and how interaction between scribe and tradition created the particular cultural product that we have before us.

My first example is an amulet against fever from Oxyrhynchus, *PGM* P5a (*P.Oxy.* VI 924).<sup>63</sup> It is written in a compressed semi-cursive that Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, the papyrus’ first editors, assigned to the fourth century.<sup>64</sup> It was prepared for a certain Aria, described in the incantation as ‘a slave of the living God’ whose faith, according to the incantation, is one of the reasons she should be protected from fever.<sup>65</sup> The acclamation appears at the end of the text in a visual scheme.<sup>66</sup> In the centre of the scheme is a cross with *alpha* and *omega* in the two lower quadrants. At the left end of the line is the *nomen sacrum* for ‘Jesus’ in the genitive ( $\overline{\text{I}\omega}$ ); at the right end, the *nomen sacrum* for ‘Christ’ in the genitive ( $\overline{\chi\upsilon}$ ). Between these two *nomina sacra* are the words ‘Father, Son, Mother’ ( $\text{πατήρ υἱός μήτηρ}$ ). Above the line there is a hole in the papyrus; the missing text ends in *iota sigma*. Below the line, on either side of the cross, are the words ‘Holy Spirit’ (with ‘Spirit’ written as a *nomen*

<sup>63</sup> Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (eds), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 6 (London, 1908), 289-90; Magali De Haro Sanchez, ‘Le vocabulaire de la pathologie et de la thérapeutique dans les papyrus iatromagiques grecs: fièvres, traumatismes et “épilepsie”’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 47 (2010), 131-53, 135. The transcription by Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayment (eds), *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources* (Waco, 2015), 341-3 (no. 94), and the new edition by Franco Maltomini, ‘PGM P 5a rivisitato’, *Galenos*, 9 (2015), 229-34, appeared after this manuscript was completed.

<sup>64</sup> Image at M. De Haro Sanchez, ‘Le vocabulaire’ (2010), 136.

<sup>65</sup> Lines 9-11:  $\text{καὶ κατὰ τὴν πίσ- | τιν ἀπτήξ ὅτι δούλη ἐστὶν | τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ τοῦ ζῶντος}$ . The expression ‘slave of the living God’ is used of Daniel in Theodotion’s translation (*Dan.* 6:21) (and later commentaries quoting that version) and of Thekla (by herself) in *A. Paul. et Thecl.* 37, in *Acta apostolorum apocrypha post Constantinum Tischendorf*, vol. 1, ed. Richard A. Lipsius (1891; repr. Hildesheim, 1972), 235-71, 263. More common in amulets, with and without Christian elements, is the expression ‘slave’ of God. See, e.g., *PGM* XII.71; *PGM* XIII.637; *PGM* P5b.10, 29 (*P.Oxy.* VIII 1151); *PGM* P5c.4, 10 (*P.Cair.Cat.* 10696); *PGM* P6d.4; *PGM* P9.8, 29 (*BGU* III 954).

<sup>66</sup> Lines 14-8.

*sacrum*:  $\overline{\pi\nu\alpha}$  ἄγιος [read ἄγιον]), and below that is the name ‘Abraxas’. Circling the left, top, and right sides of the cross are six dots, and flanking the scheme are the seven vowels written vertically in two columns,  $\alpha \varepsilon$  (traces only)  $\eta \iota$  along the left and  $\omicron \upsilon \omega$  along the right

This arrangement, which Grenfell and Hunt characterized as ‘Gnostic’ but did not translate, has been read in two ways. Carl Wessely rendered it: ‘Père de Jésus. Fils. Mère de Christ’,<sup>67</sup> which is how it has been read in recent transcriptions of the text.<sup>68</sup> Karl Preisendanz, on the other hand, proposed [δύναμι] ις for the word in the lacuna, which he read together with Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ, yielding: ‘Power of Jesus Christ. Father, Son, Mother’.<sup>69</sup> Preisendanz’s reconstruction, which in my view had the stronger palaeographical basis,<sup>70</sup> has now been confirmed with the publication of two additional amulets written by the same scribe and bearing the same scheme.<sup>71</sup> What is the import of this outcome? Well, instead of a rare early witness to the Marian epithet ‘Mother of Christ’, we have the triad ‘Father, Son, Mother’. The question is, what are we to make of ‘Father’ and ‘Mother’ on either side of ‘Son’? It has been suggested that ‘Mother’ refers to the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup> But then why is the Holy Spirit named in the next line?

A supreme heavenly triad is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Sethian traditions,<sup>73</sup> and in some versions of the Sethian system, the Holy Spirit is presented as a figure immediately below the supreme triad,<sup>74</sup> as in our papyrus.

<sup>67</sup> Carl Wessely, ‘Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrits sur papyrus II’, PO 18 (1924), 341-509, 402.

<sup>68</sup> M. De Haro Sanchez, ‘Le vocabulaire’ (2010), 135; L.H. Blumell and T.A. Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus* (2015), 342.

<sup>69</sup> PGM P5a.15.

<sup>70</sup> At line 14 one can make out the lower left corner of *delta* at the beginning of the gap and the upper right tip of *mu* at the end of the gap: δ[ύνα]μις; see, e.g., the initial *delta* in δεδοξασμέν[ον] at line 13 and the *mu* in καθημε- at line 3. The intervening space is sufficient for five letters. At line 15 the larger size of the *nomina sacra*  $\overline{\iota\omega}$  and  $\overline{\chi\upsilon}$  suggests that they should be read together and not in continuous sequence with the intervening words. Moreover, ἡ δύναμις [Ἰη]σοῦ Χριστοῦ appears along with staurograms, each with  $\alpha \omega$ , above an adjuration against sickness in another amulet, *Suppl. Mag.* I 22.1 (*P. Amst.* I 26). See now F. Maltomini, ‘PGM P 5a rivisitato’ (2015), 233.

<sup>71</sup> *P.Oxy.* LXXXII 5306 and 5307, edited by Franco Maltomini and published in 2016 after the manuscript of this paper was completed.

<sup>72</sup> Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (eds), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco, 1994), 39; for supporting evidence, see Roberta Mazza, ‘P.Oxy. XI, 1384: medicina, rituali di guarigione e cristianesimi nell’Egitto tardoantico’, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 24/2 (2007), 437-62, 449-50.

<sup>73</sup> Alexander Böhlig, ‘Triade und Trinität in den Schriften von Nag Hammadi’, in Bentley Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. 2, *Sethian Gnosticism*, Studies in the History of Religions 41 (Leiden, 1981), 617-34; John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition*, Bibliothéque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section ‘études’ 6 (Leuven, 2001), 60-4.

<sup>74</sup> J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism* (2001), 288.

The members of the Sethian triad are given various names,<sup>75</sup> but in one Christianizing strand of the tradition, they are identified as Father, Mother, and Son.<sup>76</sup> Normally Mother is in the second position,<sup>77</sup> unlike the sequence in our papyrus. But there are exceptions. In *Melchizedek* (NH IX,1) 5.23-6.10, ‘a basically Christian work which has been Sethianized’,<sup>78</sup> the first three acclamations in a ‘thrice holy’ litany are addressed to the Father of All, an incomplete name that appears to refer to the Son, and the Mother of the aeons, Barbelo.<sup>79</sup> In the end, however, we must admit that in its simplicity and its sequence, the triad in our papyrus does not correspond exactly to the more elaborate Sethian litanies.

This ‘irregularity’ may be compared with another one. It appears in a papyrus assigned, like the one we just considered, to the fourth century, *PGM P16* (*P.Ross. Georg. I 23*).<sup>80</sup> The text is an appeal to God for help against a certain Theodosios – a Christian instance of a type of incantation called a ‘prayer for justice’.<sup>81</sup> Across the top of the papyrus the scribe wrote the acclamation: ‘Holy Trinity, holy Trinity, holy Trinity’. The prayer – if one accepts the first editor’s reconstruction<sup>82</sup> – is addressed to the Lord ‘through the martyrs’. The petitioner bewails the suffering he or she has borne at the hands of Theodosios: ‘Nothing but hostilities have I suffered from his tyrannical behaviour ... Such wrong has he done to me!’ The petitioner’s only hope is ‘the power of God and the testimony for us through the saints’; he or she pleads with God to stand by him or her rather than with Theodosios. The appeal concludes with a trinitarian confession: ‘For there is

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 255-301.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 284-90.

<sup>77</sup> E.g., *Ap. John* (NH II,1 9.10-11; BG 2 19; NH III,1 13.15-6), in *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502.2*, ed. Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, NH(M)S 33 (Leiden, 1995), 54-5; *Gos. Eg.* (NH III,2 41.9; NH IV,2 50.25-6), in *Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2: The Gospel of the Egyptians (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit)*, ed. Alexander Böhlig and Frederik Wisse, NH(M)S 4 (Leiden, 1975), 54-5.

<sup>78</sup> J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism* (2001), 101.

<sup>79</sup> *Melch.* (NH IX,1 5.23-7), in *Melchisédek (NH IX,1): oblation, baptême et vision dans la gnose séthienne*, ed. Wolf-Peter Funk, trans. Jean-Pierre Mahé, comm. Claudio Gianotto, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section ‘textes’ 28 (Laval, Louvain, and Paris, 2001), 72, with 132. See J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism* (2001), 176-7.

<sup>80</sup> P. Jernstedt, ‘Christliche Beschwörung’, in Gregor Zereteli and Otto Krueger (eds), *Literarische Texte, Papyri russischer und georgischer Sammlungen* (P.Ross.-Georg.) 1 (Tiflis, 1925; repr. Amsterdam, 1966), 161-3. Image at <<http://papyri.info/apis/hermitage.apis.21>> (Papyri.info).

<sup>81</sup> Henk Versnel has argued for and analysed this class of incantations in numerous publications, *inter alia*, H.S. Versnel, ‘Beyond Cursing: The Appeal to Justice in Judicial Prayers’, in Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (eds), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York, 1991), 60-106; *id.*, ‘Prayers for Justice, East and West: Recent Finds and Publications since 1990’, in Richard Gordon and Francisco Marco Simón (eds), *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept. – 1st Oct. 2005* (Boston, 2010), 275-354.

<sup>82</sup> Lines 2-3: διὰ τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων [ν εὔχομαι τῷ] | κ(υρί)ῳ. The scribe’s writing would have to be compact (as in line 1) for the proposed reconstruction to fit in the remaining space, assuming that the right edge of the papyrus originally extended at least as far as it does at line 5.

only one Lord, [only one] God, in the Son [and] in the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, amen'.<sup>83</sup> Below this the scribe wrote three amens, three staurograms, and three-fold 'Lord', something we see in other incantations.<sup>84</sup> Originally there was more writing, but the papyrus breaks off.

Now, orthodox Christian parlance would lead one to expect the confession to read 'in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit',<sup>85</sup> not 'in the Son and in the Father and in the Holy Spirit'. What should one make of the irregular order here, unique even among amulets with trinitarian acclamations and doxologies?<sup>86</sup> Was it simply a 'slip'? If so, who would have made such a 'slip'? Not a Christian cleric, presumably; it is hard to imagine a cleric altering the order of such an established doxology. Was the scribe unfamiliar with Christian parlance? Possibly; but even so, the scribe is still knowledgeable enough to begin with a three-fold acclamation to the 'holy Trinity'. If the fourth-century date assigned to the papyrus is correct,<sup>87</sup> this itself is significant. Could the sequence be a melding of the usual form of Christian doxology prior to the Arian controversy, whereby praise was offered through the Son to the Father in the Holy Spirit, with a coordinate form adopted in reaction to that controversy?<sup>88</sup> In Egypt the older form of doxology can be found in the mid-fourth-century euchologion attributed to Sarapion.<sup>89</sup> But toward the end of the fourth century that form of doxology was combined with or replaced by a coordinate form, praise now being offered to the Father 'through and with' the Son or simply 'with' the Son.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Lines 19-23: ὅτι μόνος κύριος, [μ]όν[ος] | θεός ἔστι ἐν [υ]ῖῳ [καί] | ἐν πατρὶ καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύ- | ματι καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἑὼνα[ς] | εἰς τῶν ἑὼνας, ἀμήν, correcting the first editor's reading ἐν τῷ πατρὶ at line 21.

<sup>84</sup> For three amens, see *P.Bon.* I 9.8; *P.Köln* IV 171.8; *P.Köln* VIII 340, side a, fr. B.13. For three staurograms, see *PGM* P19.6 (*PSI* VI 719); *Suppl. Mag.* I 27.6; *Suppl. Mag.* I 34 head of text; *Suppl. Mag.* I 59v.1 (*P.Ups.* 8); Csaba A. La'da and Amphilochios Papatomas, 'A Greek Papyrus Amulet from the Duke Collection with Biblical Excerpts', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 41 (2004), 93-113, 97-8 (P.Duke inv. 778r.1, v.26); Wortmann, 'Neue magische Texte' (1968), 106 (P.Köln inv. 521av.1). For three-fold 'Lord', see *Suppl. Mag.* II 61.3 (also a prayer for justice).

<sup>85</sup> See, e.g., Theodoret of Cyr, *Exp. rect. fid.* 2, 7, in *Corpus apologetarum Christianorum saeculi secundi*, ed. J.C.T. Otto, vol. 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Jena, 1880), 4-6, 26.

<sup>86</sup> For amulets with the regular trinitarian sequence, see, e.g., *BKT* VI 7.1.1; *PGM* P5d.1-2 (*P.Lond.Lit.* 231); *PGM* P10.40-1; *PGM* P12.1, for whose text see now Cornelia E. Römer, 'Gebet und Bannzauber des Severus von Antiochia gegen den Biss giftiger Tiere, oder: Maltomini hatte recht', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 168 (2009), 209-12; *PGM* P15a.17-22 (*P.Ross.Georg.* I 24); *PGM* P19.5-6 (*PSI* VI 719); *Suppl. Mag.* I 21.1-2 (*P.Köln* VI 257); *Suppl. Mag.* I 31.4 (*P.Turner* 49) = *BKT* IX 134; *Suppl. Mag.* I 36.1.

<sup>87</sup> P. Jernstedt, 'Christliche Beschwörung' (1925 = 1966), 161; compare G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands* (1987), 26-7 (no. 9a; P.Cornell inv. II 38, 388 CE).

<sup>88</sup> Alfred Stuiber, 'Doxologie', *RACH* 4 (1959), 210-26.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. A. Peeler (Staten Island, 1965), 23-4, 150-1.

<sup>90</sup> J.A. Jungmann, *The Place of Christ* (1965), 184-6, 192-3; Jean Michel Hanssens, *La liturgie d'Hippolyte: documents et études* (Rome, 1970), 190-1; Geoffrey J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St Mark*, *OCA* 24 (Rome, 1990), 79.

However one answers these questions, the papyrus is evidence of how ‘non-official’ formulations vary from ‘official’ ones. Anomalies like the simplified Sethian acclamation or the irregular trinitarian doxology press us to think about what happens to official idioms when they are absorbed and reiterated by adherents or observers of a tradition. What sort of lives did official idioms in fact have in everyday practices and why did they take the shape they did? Somehow these formulations entered the vocabulary of these scribes, perhaps by participation in a community and its rituals, perhaps by more indirect channels. We may posit association with or derivation from an official idiom and its ritual context, but did the writers experience such resonance or affiliation? Perhaps; perhaps not. We cannot know. For the writers of these amulets, the acclamation or doxology was valid and powerful as it was phrased.

My final set of amulets is a pair that each begin with an acclamatory form of the second article of the Christian creed. I have argued elsewhere that these sorts of acclamations derive from Christian rituals of exorcism; that christological summaries, already used in ad-hoc exorcisms in the second century, continued to be so used in later centuries.<sup>91</sup> If this is correct, these amulets constitute rare witnesses to the phrasing of such acclamations. We know, as well, that one of the reasons the faithful were exhorted to learn the creed from memory was so that they would be able to recite it when they were assailed by the devil or beset by illness.<sup>92</sup> So it is not surprising that a form of the creed is recited in amulets against fevers and evil spirits.<sup>93</sup>

One amulet, *Suppl. Mag.* I 35 (*P.Batav.* 20),<sup>94</sup> assigned to the sixth century, reads as follows: ‘Christ was proclaimed in advance. Christ appeared. Christ suffered. Christ died. Christ was raised. Christ was taken up. Christ reigns. Christ saves Vibius, whom Gennaia bore, from all fever and from all shivering,

<sup>91</sup> Theodore S. de Bruyn, ‘What Did Ancient Christians Say When They Exorcised Demons? Inferences from Spells and Amulets’, in Wendy Mayer and Geoffrey D. Dunn (eds), *Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Essays in Honour of Pauline Allen* (Leiden, 2015), 64-82.

<sup>92</sup> Ambrose, *expl. symb.* 9, in *Ambroise de Milan, Des sacrements, Des mystères, Explication du symbole*, ed. Bernard Botte, SC 25 bis (Paris, 2007), 56-8. I am grateful to Gillian Clark for bringing this to my attention. In both East and West, catechumens preparing for baptism memorized the creed and recited it in a rite prior to their baptism; see Paul L. Gavilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l’Église ancienne*, trans. Françoise Lhoest, Nina Mojaïsky and Anne-Marie Gueit (Paris, 2007), 208-9, 231, 298-9, 304.

<sup>93</sup> In addition to the two discussed below, see *Suppl. Mag.* I 31 (*P.Turner* 49) = *BKT* IX 134, an amulet against fever, headache, every malignity, and every evil spirit, which opens with the second article of the creed.

<sup>94</sup> P.W.A.Th. Van Der Laan, ‘Amulette chrétienne contre la fièvre’, in E. Boswinkel and P.W. Pestman (eds), *Textes grecs, démotiques et bilingues (P. L. Bat. 19)*, *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* 19 (Leiden, 1978), 96-102 (volume now abbreviated as *P.Batav.*).

daily, quotidian, now now, quickly quickly'.<sup>95</sup> Each statement of the acclamation is preceded by a staurogram (*tau-rho* or  $\text{✠}$ ) and given its own line, replicating visually, as it were, the action of signing oneself with the cross and then proclaiming the creed.<sup>96</sup> The entire text is preceded and followed by a line of seven crosses (only four remain from the top line). The scribe wrote in a practiced, though untidy, cursive hand.<sup>97</sup> The combination of the staurogram with Χριστός written as a *nomen sacrum* ( $\text{✠}\overline{\chi\varsigma}$ ) shows the scribe to be at ease with Christian conventions: a single stroke rises from the bottom left of the *rho* to form the cross bar of the staurogram and the diagonal of *chi*.

We may compare this amulet with a similar one assigned to the fifth century, *Suppl. Mag.* I 23 (*P.Haun.* III 51).<sup>98</sup> It has a bipartite structure. The first part has an acclamatory creed similar to the one we have just seen. It culminates in the injunction: 'You too, fever with shivering, flee from Kale, who wears this phylactery'.<sup>99</sup> The scribe, who wrote in a rather deliberate upright majuscule hand,<sup>100</sup> inadvertently drops a few letters in these lines.<sup>101</sup> He also writes 'Christ' out in full, but this may not be significant, since in documents and letters scribes did not always use *nomina sacra*. The second part of the amulet has a drawing of a stele, with the letters *sigma* and *eta* (ζςς ζς ηη η) written inside, flanked by two eight-pointed stars, one of the more common esoteric symbols (*charaktêres*) used in incantations.<sup>102</sup> The invocation accompanying these visual elements reads: 'Holy stele and mighty *charaktêres*, chase away the fever with shivering from Kale, who wears this amulet, now now now, quickly quickly quickly'.<sup>103</sup> In Greco-Roman Egypt, stelae engraved with dei-

<sup>95</sup> Lines 1-14:  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) προεξ[ηρύχθη] |  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) ἐφάνη |  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) ἐπαθεν |  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) ἀπέθανεν |  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) ἀνγέρθη |  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) ἀνελήμφθη |  $\text{✠}$  Χ(ριστὸς) βασιλεύει | Χ(ριστὸς) σώζει Οὐίβιον, | ὄν ἔτεκεν Γενναία, | ἀπὸ παντὸς πυρετοῦ | καὶ παντὸς ῥίγους | [ ] ἀμφημερινοῦ, | καθημερινοῦ, | ἦδη ἦδη, ταχὺ ταχὺ.

<sup>96</sup> For the action of signing and reciting, see, e.g., Ambrose, *expl. symb.* 3, 8, SC 25 bis, 48, 56.

<sup>97</sup> E. Boswinkel and P.W. Pestman, *Textes grecs* (1978), plate XIV.

<sup>98</sup> TAGE Larson and Adam Bülow-Jacobsen (eds), *Papyri Graecae Haunienses. Fasciculus tertius (P. Haun. III, 45-69): Subliterary Texts and Byzantine Documents from Egypt* (Bonn, 1985), 31-7; *Suppl. Mag.* I 23.

<sup>99</sup> Lines 1-9: ✠ Χριστὸς ἐγεννήθη, ἀμήν. | Χριστὸς ἐσταυρόθη, ἀμήν. | Χριστὸς ἐτάφη, ἀμήν. | Χριστὸς ἀνέστη, ἀμήν<ν>. | γεγέρθη κρῖνε ζῶντας | καὶ νεκρούς. φύγε καὶ σοί, | ῥιγοπυρέτιν, ἀπὸ Καλῆς | τῆς φορούσης τὸ φυλ<α>κτῆ- | ριον τοῦτο.

<sup>100</sup> T. Larson and A. Bülow-Jacobsen, *Papyri Graecae Haunienses* (1985), 31 and plate III.

<sup>101</sup> Supplied at n. 99 between angled brackets.

<sup>102</sup> For an introduction to *charaktêres*, see Richard Gordon, 'Signa nova et inaudita: The Theory and Practice of Invented Signs (*charaktêres*) in Graeco-Egyptian Magical Texts', *MNH: Revista internacional de investigación sobre magia y astrología antiguas* 11 (2011), 15-44; *id.*, 'Charaktêres between Antiquity and Renaissance: Transmission and Re-Invention', in Véronique Dasen and Jean-Michel Spieser (eds), *Les savoirs magiques et leur transmission de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Florence, 2014), 253-300.

<sup>103</sup> Lines 10-7: ἅγια | στήλη | καὶ εἰς- | χυροὶ χαρακτῆραις, ἀπο- | διδύχεται τὸ ῥιγοπύρετον | ἀπὸ Καλῆς τῆς φορούσης | τὸ φυλακτῆριον τοῦτο, | ἦδε ἦδε ἦδε, ταχὺ ταχὺ ταχὺ.

ties and inscribed with hieroglyphs, found in temple courts and other public places, were widely regarded as sources of protection and healing.<sup>104</sup> The power attributed to these objects is apparent, for instance, from recipes for incantations that name a temple stele as their source or, more often, refer to the incantation that is to be spoken or written as a ‘stele’.<sup>105</sup> The amulet we are considering attests to this graphically and ritually by drawing and then invoking an inscribed stele.<sup>106</sup> It was also customary to invoke *charaktêres* directly to perform the desired task. The practice is attested most frequently in curse tablets,<sup>107</sup> but also surfaces in another amulet against fever with Christian elements.<sup>108</sup>

Both of these amulets in fact employ a customary adjuration, as the phrasing of the injunction with its accelerating formula – ‘now now, quickly quickly’ – shows. But the second amulet is more obviously syncretistic than the first. (I use ‘syncretistic’ in the sense proposed by David Frankfurter to refer to an assemblage of symbols and discourses that is an expression of indigenous agency, often experimental, in maintaining and developing meaning in a context of cultural change.<sup>109</sup>) We could regard the second amulet as an instance of a purveyor or a client hedging their bets by invoking both new and old sources of protection.<sup>110</sup> But is the combination of Christian and Greco-Egyptian invocations *just* a technique? Could it also reflect socially shared but inarticulate notions of what is appropriate in a given situation, whereby an Egyptian might have combined ethnic custom with Christian devotion without perceiving a shift in religious register, much the way that Augustine and Chrysostom describe, but with disapproval?<sup>111</sup> We would like to know how these two invocations resonated with peoples’ senses of who they were and how they should conduct themselves in a collectivist, traditional society.<sup>112</sup> The

<sup>104</sup> David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, 1998), 47-9.

<sup>105</sup> For ‘stele’ referring to source: *PGM* VIII.41-3. For ‘stele’ referring to incantation: *PGM* IV.1115, 1167, 2567-9, 3245-7, V.95, 422-3, XIII.54, 61, 127, 131-2, 425, 566-7, 684-5, 688.

<sup>106</sup> See Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, ‘The Interplay between Image and Text on Greek Amulets Containing Christian Elements from Late Antique Egypt’, in Dietrich Boschung and Jan M. Bremmer (eds), *The Materiality of Magic*, *Morphomata* 20 (Munich, 2015), 271-92, 278-80.

<sup>107</sup> See the references at *Suppl. Mag.* I 21.10-12 comm.

<sup>108</sup> *Suppl. Mag.* I 21 (*P.Köln* VI 257).

<sup>109</sup> David Frankfurter, ‘Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt’, *J ECS* 11 (2003), 339-85, 343.

<sup>110</sup> See, e.g., *Suppl. Mag.* I 34.

<sup>111</sup> On the difference and tension between the *habitus* or practice of people and the ideology and rules of normative discourse (drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu), see Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge, 2007), 11-20, especially 17-8.

<sup>112</sup> See Mikael Tellbe, ‘Identity and Prayer’, in Reidar Hvalvik and Karl Olav Sandnes (eds), *Early Christian Prayer and Identity Formation*, WUNT 336 (Tübingen, 2014), 13-34, 13-7; Yitzhak Hen, ‘The Early Medieval West’, in David J. Collins (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, 2015), 183-206, 197.

invocations certainly suggest a more complex layering of identities than normative discourse allowed, since both the Christian credo and the ‘holy stele and mighty *charaktères*’ were salient for the scribe (and, possibly, the client) of the second amulet.<sup>113</sup> Although we cannot know how these two scribes viewed what they were doing, we must allow for the possibility that both of them regarded themselves and their remedies to be ‘Christian’. Christian expression is not delimited by normative discourse and practice, even if it may be shaped by and related to them.

In the past few decades there has been something of a turn toward ‘lived religion’ among scholars working in various disciplines of religious studies in Europe and North America.<sup>114</sup> The approach has its roots in post-World War II efforts to describe the diverse religious practices of people who belonged nominally to an established religious tradition and to understand how these practices related to formal institutional practices (and vice versa).<sup>115</sup> This was followed by efforts to understand what it means to be ‘religious’ when most of the population stop participating in formal religious activities but many people nevertheless continue to be religious in individual or new ways, as is the situation in Europe and North America.<sup>116</sup> The approach has been motivated, as well, by dissatisfaction with measures of religious identity or activity used in quantitative surveys that do not capture the multi-faceted ways in which people are religious.<sup>117</sup> The result has been studies that combine ethnography – close description of what people, as individuals or in groups, do and say when they are acting, implicitly or explicitly, in a religious manner – and conceptual reflection – a critique of concepts previously used to describe people’s activities

<sup>113</sup> For an analysis of situations in which Christian identity was not salient or did not take precedence, see Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithaca, 2012), 1-5, 74-9.

<sup>114</sup> Some of the principal contributions can be found in David D. Hall (ed.), *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton, 1997); Nancy T. Ammerman (ed.), *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford, 2007); Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford, 2008); Guiseppe Giordan and William H. Swatos, Jr. (eds), *Religion, Spirituality, and Everyday Practice* (Dordrecht and New York, 2011). See also Mary Jo Neitz, ‘Lived Religion: Signposts of Where We Have Been and Where We Can Go from Here’, in G. Giordan and W.H. Swatos, Jr., *Religion, Spirituality, and Everyday Practice* (2011), 45-55.

<sup>115</sup> Daniëlle Hervieu-Léger, ‘“What Scripture Tells Me”: Spontaneity and Regulation within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal’, in D.D. Hall, *Lived Religion in America* (1997), 22-40, 22-4.

<sup>116</sup> D. Hervieu-Léger, ‘“What Scripture Tells Me”’ (1997), 24-7; Nancy T. Ammerman, ‘Introduction: Observing Modern Religious Lives’, in N.T. Ammerman, *Everyday Religion* (2007), 3-18, 3-4. On the resilience of official religious institutions and norms, however, see Isacco Turina, ‘From Institution to Spirituality and Back: Or, Why We Should Be Cautious About the “Spiritual Turn”’, in G. Giordan and W.H. Swatos, Jr., *Religion, Spirituality, and Everyday Practice* (2011), 181-9.

<sup>117</sup> M.B. McGuire, *Lived Religion* (2008), 3-5; N.T. Ammerman, ‘Introduction’ (2007), 6.

and a search for concepts that do so more adequately.<sup>118</sup> As it is now applied to antiquity, the approach seeks to bring into full relief how people's religious practices are located in everyday activities, expressed in bodily acts, engaged with material objects, embedded in social settings and groupings, different for women and children than for men, related to but not determined by institutional religious activities, drawing on ethnic traditions, eclectic and incoherent and pragmatic.<sup>119</sup>

Such description of everyday practices, I would submit, is valuable in and of itself, for past cultures as well as present ones. The amulets discussed above illustrate how the study of everyday practices can enrich and complicate our understanding of how Christians embodied, expressed, and shaped belief and practice in Late Antiquity. Because the incantations are idiosyncratic and specific, as well as formulaic and patterned, they reveal dimensions of individuality that are part of the ongoing activity of reproducing or reshaping a traditional practice. At the same time they provoke questions – sometimes questions that are ultimately unanswerable – about the dynamics of religious activity and expression in Late Antiquity. Amulets that combine, in different ways, Greco-Egyptian and Christian elements lead us to ask what salience those elements might have had, who might have written them, and why they might have written them as they did. If the only amulets against scorpions we had were the three from Oxyrhynchus that reproduce the commonplace 'Hôr Hôr' incantation, we might answer such questions differently than we would when confronted with the comparable but more elaborate amulet in the Oslo collection, which has a more pronounced and deliberate Christian frame. We can no longer recover the circumstances in which this 'innovative de-traditionalization' of a customary formula happened,<sup>120</sup> but we have the evidence that it occurred and, what is more, a trace of the doxological idiom of the milieu in which it occurred. The second set of amulets remind us that in everyday practice acclamations were likely simple and possibly 'irregular' in comparison to their counterparts in liturgical books or theological treatises. They also press us to think about where the acclamations might have originated, since acclamations acquire authority through their proclamation in collective gatherings, and how they might have been 'individualized'. So too, amulets that incorporate an acclamatory Christian

<sup>118</sup> See, e.g., David D. Hall, 'Introduction', in D.D. Hall, *Lived Religion in America* (1997), vii-xiii; Robert Orsi, 'Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion', in *ibid.* 3-21; N.T. Ammerman, 'Introduction' (2007), 5-15; M.B. McGuire, *Lived Religion* (2008), 11-6, 185-213.

<sup>119</sup> R. Raja and J. Rüpke, 'Appropriating Religion' (2015), 13-5. See, e.g., the essays in Virginia Burrus (ed.), *Late Ancient Christianity, A People's History of Christianity 2* (Minneapolis, 2005), and Derek Krueger (ed.), *Byzantine Christianity, A People's History of Christianity 3* (Minneapolis, 2006).

<sup>120</sup> On the social process of 'innovative de-traditionalization', whereby individuals depart from traditional norms in their actions, see Jörg Rüpke, 'Individualization and Individuation as Concepts for Historical Research', in J. Rüpke, *Individual* (2013), 3-38, 7-8.

creed lead us to ask where and why such creeds were recited by Christians (for protection or to exorcize) in order to understand how they might have made their way into amulets. And here too, the amulet which combines a creedal acclamation with an invocation of a stele and *charaktères* invites us to reflect on why the scribe juxtaposed two idioms and whether the shift had any religious significance for the scribe. We may posit explanations with more or less confidence, but in the end the questions a practice raises about what we are studying and the assumptions we bring to that study may be the most valuable dividend a practice pays us as students of ancient Christianity.

I would like to conclude by returning to where I began, the fiftieth anniversary of the International Association of Patristic Studies and the scope of its field of study. I have argued that investigation of everyday practices not only belongs to the field of study but is indispensable to it, since such practices expose the complexity of Christian devotion and identity, which were shaped by various collectivities and customs, including but not limited to institutional Christian instruction and ritual. I would add that this sort of inquiry inevitably draws on the array of disciplines, approaches, and expertise that constitute the field of patristics. Thus the study of amulets – their writing, formulation, and wearing – takes one into the domains of ancient culture, papyrology, palaeography, liturgical studies, scripture studies, homiletics, hagiography, ritual studies, and more. And this is merely illustrative of what is true for much of our work.

It is worth noting that many of the areas of study that we rely upon to populate the world of Late Antiquity and understand what people thought and did at that time have been part of the life of the Association since its inception. Obviously, the field has not stood still. Disciplines that have long been a part of the field have evolved, and disciplines that traditionally have not been a part of the field are making their presence felt. If anything, the field is more diverse now than it was fifty years ago, as one can see from accounts of the state of the field given at a conference held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Association.<sup>121</sup> Our institutional histories, linguistic competencies, confessional identities, cultural interests, and theoretical proclivities – to name only a few features – generate differences in our work that the classification system the Association uses to record our research does not and never will capture. Nevertheless, I trust that the founders of the Association would have been pleased to see how durable their concept of the field as an interdisciplinary one has been, even if they could not have anticipated all that we now collectively bring to bear on the field. Theirs is a resilient and capacious legacy.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> B. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, T.S. de Bruyn and C. Harrison (eds), *Patristic Studies in the Twenty-first Century* (2015), 55-193.

<sup>122</sup> The above article draws on material discussed in more detail in Theodore de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts* (Oxford, 2017), esp. 95-6, 131-2, 207-10, 223-5, reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.



# **Educated Susanna: Female *Orans*, Sarcophagi, and the Typology of Woman Wisdom in Late Antique Art and Iconography**

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## ABSTRACT

Although there has been an abundance of textual analysis on the *Book of Daniel* and Susanna's narrative, there has been little attempt in late ancient art history to analyze the iconography of Susanna in connection with the typology of Woman Wisdom and the representation of deceased Christian female figures. The development and conflation of these typological elements on early Christian sarcophagi and memorial art are largely unconsidered, especially in light of their shared iconographic heritage. This article addresses these shortfalls by examining artistic evidence, Sapiential texts and patristic commentaries, including a new translation of a previously unpublished papyrus manuscript by Didymus the Blind (*Commentary on the Psalms* 26.1-29.1 trans. Lincoln Blumell, forthcoming), to demonstrate the nuanced uses and popularity of the Susanna story during late antiquity. Fourth-century sarcophagi and memorial gold glass, including examples held at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, are examined in this article. This evidence demonstrates that late antique Christians used the type of Susanna, not only as a trope for divine salvific intervention or as an archetype for conjugal fidelity, but also as a model for female literacy and education, exemplary components of Christian piety.

Although there has been an abundance of textual analysis on the *Book of Daniel* and the narrative of Susanna and the Elders,<sup>1</sup> there has been little attempt in late antique art history to analyze the iconography of Susanna in connection with the typology of Woman Wisdom and representations of deceased Christian female figures. The development and conflation of these typological elements on late antique Christian sarcophagi and memorial artifacts are largely unconsidered. This article begins to address these shortfalls by examining artistic evidence, sapiential texts, and patristic sources.

<sup>1</sup> See J.J. Collins, Peter W. Flint, Cameron VanEpps, *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (Leiden and Boston, 2001); Dan W. Clanton, *The Good, the Bold and the Beautiful* (New York and London, 2006); Ellen Spolsky (ed.), *The Judgment of Susanna: Authority and Witness* (Atlanta, GA, 1996).

### Pre-Christian precedents and literary structures

Although many scholars believe (including Origen) that Susanna was originally a Hebrew or Aramaic composition,<sup>2</sup> the earliest surviving account of Susanna is the Old Greek, a re-edited text in the first-century BCE by Jewish scholars critical of flaws in the Septuagint-Daniel who used superior manuscripts dating to the late second century BCE.<sup>3</sup> This first-century edit of the *Book of Daniel* presented a symmetrical and intricately symbolic text that placed the story of Susanna as the first in a series of narrative accounts associated with the young Daniel. This narrative sequence was most familiar to the earliest Christians.

This account of Susanna and her encounter with the boy prophet inaugurated the series of events that eventually leads to the defeat of idolatry in exilic Persia. Catherine Brown Tkacz has shown that this Pre-Christian version of the text is the one adopted by Theodotion, used by the earliest Christians, and referenced in the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> It isn't until the third century CE that Origen appropriates the Theodotion text and, as Susanna Drake has pointed out, assigned the Susanna narrative last in chapter order to demonstrate her persecution as a prefiguration of the holy church, with Jews being set up as the primary offenders.<sup>5</sup> By reordering the story out of sequence, it was possible for Origen to elaborate on the differences, deviances, and tyranny of the Jews against the Christians for his own agenda. Jerome follows after Origen's example when he translates *Daniel* (ca. 394) in the Vulgate and he too shunts Susanna to the penultimate position, extinguishing the pre-Christian order of the story.

When Origen and Jerome reordered the narrative accounts, the ordeals of Susanna, the three youths in the furnace, and Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den are arranged anachronistically and their thematic meanings are disoriented or lost. It is no wonder that in later versions of the bible, Susanna's account is misunderstood and either entirely removed from the canon or counted as apocryphal text. When the Susanna narrative is restored to its principal position in the pre-Christian Jewish account, the structure of the *Book of Daniel* clearly points to themes of restoration and deliverance for Israel from the Babylonian diaspora.

Without unpacking the entire argument for the pre-Christian structure of the *Daniel* text, I wish to specifically highlight the inaugural themes that are inherent in the Susanna account and describe the inter-textual correlations between

<sup>2</sup> Susanna Drake, *Slandering the Jew: Sexuality and Difference in Early Christian Texts* (Philadelphia, 2013), 60-1.

<sup>3</sup> S. Drake, *Slandering the Jew* (2013), 60-1.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'Susanna as a Type of Christ', *Studies in Iconography* 20 (1999), 101-53.

<sup>5</sup> S. Drake, *Slandering the Jew* (2013), 62-5.

Susanna, Woman Wisdom, and the imitation of Susanna in memorial iconography during late antiquity. These same themes appear in the context of sarcophagi and private art designated for the memorial of the dead. Remarkably, it is material culture that helps clarify and inform us with regard to how earliest Christians understood and adapted Susanna iconography to their advantage and legitimized their place in the world.

The placement of Susanna at the beginning of *Daniel* introduces themes of law, rightful kingdom, judgment, and wisdom into the story of *Daniel*. Catherine Tkacz equates Susanna and her wise acts in parallel to the wise youths sent to the fiery furnace and the wise Daniel who eventually evangelizes even the Persian King simultaneous to defeating idolatry.<sup>6</sup> She also presents the figure of Susanna as a type for Jesus in His Passion, a type that plays out in a few examples like the Brescia Casket or a sarcophagus from Arles where Susanna is shown judged in parallel scenes to Pilate's judgment of Christ,<sup>7</sup> however this parallel is rather limited in its iterations. What has not been recognized before in textual scholarship is that the story of Susanna as the first narrative in *Daniel* parallels with wisdom literature in *Proverbs*.

Formulated as fatherly instruction to his son, *Proverbs* 1 identifies and warns against actions that parallel those of the Elders in motivation and corrupt execution. Verses 7 to 9 introduce the beginning of knowledge, including a specific reference to the inaugural instruction of the father and the law of the mother.

<sup>7</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

<sup>8</sup> My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

<sup>9</sup> For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Verses 10 through 19 resonate with exhortations against the invitations of sinful men that are common themes between the experience of the wise son and the circumstance of wise Susanna.

<sup>10</sup> My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

<sup>11</sup> If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:

<sup>12</sup> Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:

<sup>13</sup> We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:

<sup>14</sup> Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

<sup>15</sup> My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

<sup>16</sup> For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

<sup>17</sup> Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Brown Tkacz, 'Susanna and the Pre-Christian Book of Daniel: Structure and Meaning', *Heythrop Journal* 49 (2009), 181-96, 183.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Brown Tkacz, *The Key to the Brescia Casket: Typology and the Early Christian Imagination* (Paris, 2002), 63-107.

<sup>18</sup> And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

<sup>19</sup> So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

If sinners entice thee, consent thou not; sinners lay in wait, lurk privily for the innocent; seek precious substance through spoil, seek to have; each cast lots together, seeking to collaborate in their evil doings; their feet run to evil, make haste to shed blood, and their ways will end in their own ruin. The grand parallel becomes even more poignant and compelling for the figure of Susanna when we find her acts and attributes aligning with the figure of Wisdom, introduced in the very next verses.

Wisdom, in *Prov.* 1:20-3 is found in the streets, in the chief places, in the gates, asking 'how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorners delight in their scorning (malice), and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you'. Interestingly enough, when Susanna is depicted on sarcophagi, gold glasses, and other memorial art, she is shown in the metaphorical gate. She nearly always is shown framed within architectural elements and divisions, which helps define the setting for her storyline, but also sets her figure apart from other narratives. Susanna is also shown in the proverbial chief places. As a woman of status, her figure is often set between columns with a parapetasma or cloth of honor stretched behind her. She is even depicted within the gates of her garden, often flanked by two or more trees to symbolize the larger scene. Susanna is presented in honorific ways in visual representation just as she was introduced at the beginning of the *Book of Daniel*. I suggest that this conflation of text and image is significant because it helps us to see and understand Susanna at the beginning of *Daniel's* knowledge, she demonstrates for *Daniel* Wisdom personified. In fact, she has become a type of Woman Wisdom within the late antique world.

### **Susanna, female *orans*, and Woman Wisdom iconographic types**

An extensive look at the iconographic body of Susanna figures depicted in early Christian art can help inform the ways that female iconography was used. I submit that there are multiple types that are represented in the body of Susanna and used by and for late antique Christian women as they imitated her in life and death. Keeping the iconography of Susanna as the central focus, it is important to identify her as she appears on objects used for memorial decoration in a number of different scene types.

First, Susanna is sometimes shown alone between two trees. Fourth-century gold glass often featured Susanna. Glass plates and bowls could be used for ritual memorial meals and to seal and decorate the outside of individual loculi



Fig. 1. Susanna orant, Glass Plate detail, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England, 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD. Author's photograph.

in the Roman catacombs. Oxford's Ashmolean Museum holds fragments of a glass plate (fig. 1) that clearly show Susanna standing orant, dressed in striped garments similar to those of Hebrew origin, coiffed, and wearing a flowing veil.<sup>8</sup> Two trees flank her as distinct garden symbols that play a role in her biblical narrative. Additionally, a gold glass medallion and a 7-in. diameter disc or plate, show Susanna in this same guise. Both are held by the British Museum, date to the late third or fourth century, with provenance in Rome and the German Rhineland.

Susanna is also featured as the lone female orant figure on an incised plate from Podogoritza now held at the Hermitage, St. Petersburg (fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> Apart from her name inscription and supplication that she be delivered from the false charge, she is indistinguishable from other female orant figures that appear anonymously in the catacombs and sarcophagi fragments. I have literally photographed hundreds of these types as evidence for the conflation of Susanna as Woman Wisdom with figures of the deceased in memorial association. It is my suggestion that a closer and tighter examination of the orant figures found

<sup>8</sup> These gold glasses were brought to my attention by Susan Walker, Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, during the spring 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Levi, 'The Podogoritza Cup', *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963), 55-60.



Fig. 2. Podgoritza Cup, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia, 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD. Edmond Le Blant, *Étude sur les sarcophages d'Arles* (Paris, 1878), pl. xxxv.



Fig. 3. Homblières Cup, Louvre Museum, Paris, France, c. 380-420 AD. Drawing from the *Gazette Archéologique*, 1884, pl. 32.



Fig. 4. Arcosolium of Celerina, Catacomb of Praetextatus, Rome, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. AD. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie Chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 15 pt. 1 (Paris, 1924), p. 1749.

within the context of death and memorial continue to be investigated, particularly when they feature attributes like trees or *scrinia*, attributes that are closely tied to the visual and textual narrative of Susanna. In fact, that is exactly the direction this preliminary research intends to pursue.

As a second type, Susanna is shown between two elders, sometimes with trees or garden elements included, other times without. Earliest examples of this type are found in the frescos from the Catacombs of Priscilla and Peter and Marcellino and also on sarcophagi where bearded, even aged men, peer around trees to gaze on Susanna.<sup>10</sup> Susanna is depicted fully clothed as a pious Roman matron, not bathing, but praying in her garden. This clear distinction between Susanna's pious acts and the lecherous acts of the Elders underscores the early Christian attention to upstanding social mores that clearly aligned with Roman standards for virtuous and powerful female types. In fact, only one example with nude Susanna comes to mind, the singular, fourth-century glass vessel of Homblieres, housed today in the Louvre (fig. 3).

As a third type, Susanna can also be represented in the mode of an anti-heretical allegory by depicting her as an innocent sheep to the slaughter. This

<sup>10</sup> Depictions in these early catacombs show the Elders as young men without beards while sarcophagi almost always depict the Elders as bearded men, hunching and peering at Susanna.



Fig. 5. Susanna and the Elders, sarcophagus lid detail, 2<sup>nd</sup> third of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD, Pio Cristiano, Vatican Museum, Rome. Author's photograph.

type appears on a frescoed panel just below the Arcosolium of Celerina in the Catacomb of Pretestato, Rome (fig. 4). While the scene is clearly displaying Susanna as a type of Christ, it can also be read as the Elder wolves, ready to devour the fledgling church, a theme that seems to fascinate third-century writers such as Hippolytus and Origen who elaborate on the sexual violation of a chaste and pious woman (Susanna) to plot out the position of the Church in relation to her opponents.<sup>11</sup> Hippolytus, and even more savagely, Origen presented Jews as the specific threat to Christians through acts of sexual violence.<sup>12</sup>

A fourth type shows the full narrative sequence to include the temptation of Susanna, the accusation by the Elders, the Elders' condemnation, and Susanna's Absolution. For example, these appear together as a continuous narrative in the Greek Chapel of the Priscilla catacombs and in some semblance on sarcophagus fronts and lids held by the Vatican Museum in the Pio Cristiano. One such sarcophagus has adapted the continuous narrative as composite scenes of Susanna in her garden, with a scrinium or scroll box at her feet, an elder peering around one of the trees while Susanna gazes toward Daniel, enthroned (fig. 5).

The fifth recognizable type shows the Elders executed or judged as a stand-alone scene. In keeping with Susanna's narrative as the inaugural event in establishing Daniel as a prophet, we find her depicted with Daniel who is seated on the judgment seat. In reproductions of the dome decoration from Santa Costanza, Susanna stands in the foreground with the book of the law in her left hand while her right hand gestures in oration (fig. 6). Daniel is seated in the background on a raised dais while the Elders, having been found guilty, are being exited away.

<sup>11</sup> S. Drake, *Slandering the Jew* (2013), 74.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 59-60.

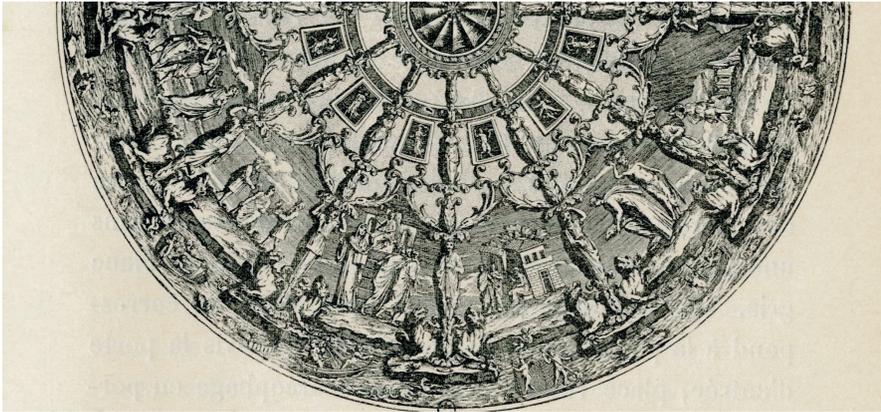


Fig. 6. Susanna Judged Before Daniel, Mosaic, Santa Costanza, Rome, c. 340-74 AD. Gustave Clausse, *Basiliques et mosaïques chrétiennes: Italie-Sicile* (Paris, 1893), p. 121.

While Daniel has made the ultimate decision in the case, he is shown in the background with Susanna in the foreground as wise victor. Daniel has been merely clever in deducing the true offenders.<sup>13</sup> It is Susanna's figure that stands 'at the gate' as the philosopher-Woman Wisdom, received by Daniel and then well-served by him for the continuation of his prophetic narrative.

Finally, the sixth Susanna type is unique among sarcophagi. While it is common to see multiple scenes combined to describe the continual narrative, only the Gerona sarcophagus exclusively focuses on the history of Susanna. In fact, this is one of the rare sarcophagi that feature a single narrative in all of late antiquity. The Gerona sarcophagus features five scenes in the Susanna narrative and is meant to be read from right to left (fig. 7). The frieze which measures h. 56 cm by l. 208 cm, is set into the wall of the sanctuary overlooking the altar in the Church of St. Felix in Girona, Spain. A female figure, veiled, is in a half-orant position holding a book or perhaps a capsula. Two trees flank her and two male figures gaze at her and perhaps gesture to her to follow them. This first scene depicts Susanna as larger in scale to her other recurring figures in the rest of the scenes. I suggest that this scene correlates well with the first scene in the Susanna narrative, but may also be read as the figure of the deceased in the guise of wise Susanna with an honorary parapetasma behind her. It may also be the case that the artist recognized the need to reduce the figure size in order to accommodate the rest of the narrative in the allotted space, or perhaps this scene

<sup>13</sup> Eleanore Stump, 'Susanna and the Elders: Wisdom and Folly', in Ellen Spolsky (ed.), *The Judgement of Susanna: Authority and Witness* (Atlanta, GA, 1996), 85-100, 99-100.



Fig. 7. Susanna and the Elders, Girona Sarcophagus, Church of St. Felix, Girona, Spain, 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD. Photo: Thomas Curtis.

was the first to be carved on an unfinished sarcophagus, with the rest of the iconography chosen later, thus dictating the reversal of reading order right to left, rather than left to right when the patron commissioned the entire history of Susanna. This would be particularly intriguing situational evidence as this scene would then have been recognized as familiar to the Susanna narrative within its own historical and iconographic context.

The next scene shows a more diminutive and de-veiled Susanna set within an architectural structure. Here Susanna has been formally taken by the Elders and publically accused of adultery. Notice that she still retains the *capsa* or round scroll box at her feet, a clear indicator of her knowledge of the law of God. Also two small figures, one male one female, stand behind the elders, perhaps associated with Susanna's parents, who taught her the law of the Lord in parallel to the son who was taught in *Prov.* 1:9-10 the instruction of the father and the law of the mother.

The story quickly evolves as the false Elders are officially seated on fald-stools with footstools. They point and accuse her in the company of her community indicated by the multitude of figures gathered around them. Enter Daniel, whose hand is on the head of veiled Susanna with the two elders in the background. Following the true discernment and judgment by Daniel, the two elders are driven forward to their end by a figure with a sword, perhaps a wingless angel of the Lord or righteous Elder as noted by his garb, stature, and absence of military dress of a soldier or guard. Another beardless figure stands in the background of the accused Elders, perhaps Daniel or another angel.

All of these types are demonstrated in many examples which also deserve a more careful unpacking than may be accomplished here in this paper, but they start to introduce the complexity of seeing and understanding the iconography of Susanna.

### Wisdom: Design, patterns, and correlations

Susanna's history is underscored by themes of law and judgment, themes that grow hazy when we focus on the element of sexual distraction in her account. Susanna becomes the great wise foil against which the folly of the Elders is held constant. These themes are dependent upon understanding the inaugural typology of Wisdom as present in the body and mind of Susanna and its conflation with the representation of the deceased *orans* in memorial art.

Educated in the Law of Moses by her parents, Susanna's learned status and her beauty are combined in her desirable matronly state as the wife of Joachim. Her house and household are the *locus* of mysteries, of knowledge, of the law. Her own words from her beginning to her end articulate a special knowledge of God, his mysteries and his ways. Described in Susanna (*Daniel* 13) verses 3 and 42, Susanna articulates how she has come to know God and that God knows hidden things.

<sup>3</sup> For her parents being just, had instructed their daughter according to the law of Moses.

<sup>42</sup> Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said: O eternal God, who knowest hidden things, who knowest all things before they come to pass<sup>14</sup>

How does she know? In the guise of Woman Wisdom, she knows because she was with him from the beginning.

The pre-createdness of Wisdom is parsed out in the poetic form of *Prov.* 8: 22-31.

<sup>22</sup> The LORD possessed me *in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.*

<sup>23</sup> *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.*

<sup>24</sup> *When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.*

<sup>25</sup> *Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:*

<sup>26</sup> *While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.*

<sup>27</sup> *When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:*

<sup>28</sup> *When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:*

<sup>29</sup> *When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:*

<sup>30</sup> *Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;*

<sup>14</sup> *Daniel* 13, Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition (DRA).

<sup>31</sup> Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.<sup>15</sup>

One of God's primary mysteries is to exercise his arm in the impossible situation in order to reveal himself to the righteous. In four short verses in the Susanna account we see the series of events set in divine motion that ultimately result in Susanna's deliverance in *Dan.* 13:42-5:

42 Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said: *O eternal God, who knowest hidden things*, who knowest all things before they come to pass,

43 Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me: and behold I must die, whereas I have done none of these things, which these men have maliciously forged against me.

44 *And the Lord heard her voice.*

45 And when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young boy, whose name was Daniel.

Not only does Susanna evoke wisdom in calling upon God, even if it results in death, she becomes Wisdom in act and attribute. As Woman Wisdom is the consort of God through from creation and were present with God from the beginning, he would immediately respond to her need for aid, she is his delight and companion. Even so, as Susanna exhibits the guise of Wisdom, she too calls upon God and is immediately saved.

There are two genres that Wisdom literature typically follows. First, the encomium or speech of praise and second, the exhortatory discourse used to persuade or convince someone to a particular course of action.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly enough, Christian sarcophagi could also function in these same ways; lauding the life of the deceased while also calling the living to emulation, even if it was to an idealized type.

Idealized Woman Wisdom related to the socioeconomic world of the Persian-period Palestine, an obscure period to be sure.<sup>17</sup> However, the reception of the literature of the era was a point of familiarity for early Christians. Wisdom literature was available within certain circles of women and was used in their practical and intellectual development. Women are endorsed within early Christian sources as the spiritual equals to men.<sup>18</sup> However, their intellect and will as components of their spirituality are far less conspicuous. In Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*, there is evidence that Sapiential scripture was a major

<sup>15</sup> *Prov.* 8:22-31, King James Version, my emphasis added. Wisdom's relationship to YHWH is not as clear as it might first seem. It is ambiguous whether she was a priori with YHWH or if she was created; if she also participates in creation as a 'master artisan' or if she is in a more submissive role. See Christine Roy Yoder, *Wisdom as a Woman of Substance* (Berlin and New York, 2001), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Lester L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon* (Sheffield, 1997), 26.

<sup>17</sup> C. Yoder, *Wisdom as a Woman* (2001), 11-2.

<sup>18</sup> Patricia Ranft, *A Woman's Way* (New York, 2000), 26.

part of the education of Macrina the Younger by her mother Emmelia.<sup>19</sup> Gregory notes that under Emmelia's tutelage, Macrina was spared the flippancy, fickleness and irreverent model of female behavior described in traditional pagan poetry, including the epics like the Iliad and the Odyssey that feature women like Helen, whose actions cause social instability and war. Instead, she was instructed in scripture stories and above all, 'the Wisdom of Solomon'.<sup>20</sup> Contextual tension is created through the rejection of pagan models and the adaptation of wisdom types. This tension, along with other Patristic argument, demonstrates that this issue infiltrated early Christian consciousness and factored into private lay piety as well as patristic discourse. Woman Wisdom was not a figure at the whim of capricious gods and goddesses, she was in the beginning with the One True God of Israel, before he had performed any act of creation. Although Woman Wisdom can be read as a type of hypostasis of God's wisdom,<sup>21</sup> the fact remains that she is still formed and personified as a woman, with attention given to personal and even quotidian association of her attributes with women in the real world.

Wisdom literature as scripture was accessible and presented for its practical and conducive model for a moral life. Macrina was taught the ways of Woman Wisdom, not as a figure separate from herself, but as an embodiment of who she might become, even who she was expected to become, namely, the woman-philosopher *par excellence* in emulation of her own beloved grandmother. Additionally, sapiential text included guidance on socioeconomic matters and the relative abundance necessary to maintain a fortified household, not only for the maintenance of the household, but a household that could act as a kind of defense against folly, stupidity and wickedness as demonstrated in *Proverbs* 31.

Clearly, Woman Wisdom found in *Proverbs* is a complex, multivalent female figure. She is elusive and sought after in one moment and as intimate and familiar as a lover in the next.<sup>22</sup> While wisdom is discussed as having divine status in *Proverbs* and other wisdom literature, she is also readily associated with the *realia* of women, as a bearer and source for material wealth, status, honor and well-being. She is the embodiment of the Greek concept of Sophrosyne, a self-contained agent of divine action, her attributes spring up and provide substance, even as a tree of life. Likewise is Susanna, also familiar with wisdom, becomes its embodiment, standing at the gate, armed with text and the word in the very moment in which her actions decide her fate.

<sup>19</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina*, trans. W.K. Lowther Clarke (London, 1916), 22.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina* (1916), 22.

<sup>21</sup> The hypostatic form of wisdom has long been the occupation for scholars of biblical studies with the predominant interpretation paralleling female divinities from ancient near eastern cultures such as Ishtar, Maat, a hellenized form of Isis, and Asherah. See C. Yoder, *Wisdom as a Woman* (2001), 3-13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

### Patristic evidences

The guise of Susanna is relevant beyond an esoteric or even Christological interpretation. She is first recognizable as a woman, often used within the earliest extant Christian commentaries by Hippolytus and Origen in the third century as an allegory for the prefigured Church.<sup>23</sup> Susanna Drake has effectively shown how Hippolytus capitalized on the Susanna narrative to condemn and excoriate the perceived enemies of the church, especially Jewish persecutors.<sup>24</sup> Origen will continue on this theme, presenting Susanna as the helpless, vulnerable type of sufferer to be held up as a submissive victor over the licentious cruelty of her accusers, but this is not always how she is depicted in art. One aspect of her patristic heritage that has not been examined closely in art historical evidence is the fact that Susanna was used as an exemplar in even ordinary ways, especially in advocating for the education of women as noted earlier. If the study of patristic sources reveals so much bias and subjective use of scripture sources in textual commentary, then the question of subjective interpretation also arises concerning similar iconographic narratives in art. We can isolate ideas in text relative to a singular writer and their audience, especially within an ecclesiastical context. However, the situation becomes infinitely more complex and possibly subversively personal when private patrons amongst the Christian laity appropriate those same themes.

By the fourth century there is a recognizable shift in the way Susanna is discussed. The focus is less on her presentation as victim and more on how she acts as an exemplar. Although some scholars would limit her example to that of sexual propriety in the face of danger,<sup>25</sup> the representations on sarcophagi would indicate other foci. Susanna, even in her garden, is shown dressed as a matron exercising *paideia*, wearing her stola and palla, with scrolls either in her hand or with a scrinium or scroll box near her feet.

Patristic rhetoric also changes its tone with an emphasis on Susanna's *sophrosyne* or wisdom and excellence in character and soundness in mind. In this way, Susanna is associated with right-minded action and self-embodied wisdom. Clement of Alexandria had clearly set a precedent for Susanna's association with *sophrosyne* when he identified her among women capable of exceptional dignity.<sup>26</sup> There is no reason to doubt that fathers like Methodius and then Asterius of Amasea didn't regularly encourage female devotees to follow Susanna's

<sup>23</sup> Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel* I 12, 33.

<sup>24</sup> S. Drake, *Slandering the Jew* (2013), 60-5.

<sup>25</sup> Kathryn A. Smith, 'Inventing Marital Chastity: the Iconography of Susanna and the Elders in Early Christian Art', *The Oxford Art Journal* 16 (1993), 1, 3-24.

<sup>26</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 4.19. Annewies van den Hoek and Claude Mondesert (eds), *Les Stromates*, SC 463 (Paris, 2001), 254.

example. Asterius in *Homily 6.7* encouraged, ‘women, emulate Susanna: in this way you will guard (your) Sophrosyne with courage as she did hers’.<sup>27</sup>

A recent translation of a fragmentary *Psalms Commentary 26:10-29:1* dating to the late fifth century by Didymus the Blind as been brought to light by my colleague, Lincoln Blumell. The papyrus is in possession of the Special Collections Library at Brigham Young University. BYU acquired the papyrus in 1983 and it will be published shortly in a German papyrological series. The fourth-century commentary compares Susanna to Joseph of Egypt and specifically mentions the will and wisdom of their souls:

‘Do not deliver me up to the souls of those that afflict me’.

‘To the souls of those that afflict’: one is delivered up when someone leaves him to their wills or to their souls [abandons their will]. Joseph was not delivered up to the soul of the Egyptian woman who sought him and who wanted to coerce him. Nor was Susanna delivered up to the souls of those elders who raged against her, that is, she was not conquered by their carnal desires.

Did not the elders rise up as unjust witnesses against Susanna, did not the Egyptian woman against Joseph? Therefore, as unjust men rise up against the righteous man, so, too, all the evil powers and the devil himself. For they give testimony, and all they who hold false doctrines are unjust witnesses, giving false testimony against the truth: ‘For we can do nothing against the truth but for the truth’, as they wise say.<sup>28</sup>

That the will is mentioned as an attribute of wisdom in connection with Susanna aligns well with the way she is depicted in late antiquity. It is typical to discuss Susanna as an exemplar of chastity and patience in suffering because these elements are made apparent in the text, but there are additional markers in art and iconography that point toward Susanna as an exemplar of something much larger, more powerful, more impactful. Susanna is wise because she can judge her actions in relation to their goodness. Her virtue or moral strength has a direct relationship to her intellect and will. Her intellect is excellent because it is connected to her capable and right-minded theology, the source of her salvation.

### **Conclusion: Establishing a new typological matrix**

There has been much critical engagement with the text of Susanna. The narrative provides the reader/viewer with many compelling themes, which include power and its abuse, female sexuality, voyeurism and viewership, moral dilemma, and merciful justice and punishment.<sup>29</sup> However, I contend that there

<sup>27</sup> Asterius, *Homily 6*, in C. Datema (ed.), *Asterius of Amasea: Homilies I-XIV: Text, Introduction, and Notes* (Leiden, 1970), 59-64, 63.

<sup>28</sup> Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on the Psalms 26.1-29.1*, trans. Lincoln Blumell, forthcoming.

<sup>29</sup> D. Clanton, *The Good, The Bold* (2006), 3.

are equally compelling iconographic elements that were visually primary to the Susanna narrative that demonstrate the powerful trope of Wisdom, presented for mimesis by early Christian women. This is, of course, an image for emulation that is quite separate from the overt rendering of their sexuality. For the first time, in the field of art history, the iconography of Susanna as it is presented on sarcophagi and memorial art must take into consideration the elements of *rotuli* and *scrinia* in association with female orant figures, Susanna, and the typology of Woman Wisdom.

It seems probable that the grand conflation of types previously identified with Susanna, female *orans*, and Woman Wisdom motivated and contributed to the modeling of each other. To look for origins in radically different sources seems at odds with iconographic pattern and with the text itself and its interpretation. Part of the confusion surrounding female figures on Christian sarcophagi defined as the deceased is due to the ambiguous nature of female types. Sometimes the figure can be identified as the deceased because of inscription, but more often we have assumed this is the type because of no other positive identification. What has been demonstrated briefly here is that there was purposeful blurring, obscuring, blending, conflating to the figure of the female orant.

To date, no single study brings together the extant representations of Susanna in early Christian art precisely because no single iconic type exists. However, the types presented here within memorial art demonstrate that there are images of deceased female orant figures and figures of Susanna that may have been mis-interpreted because of the variety of similar types. Furthermore, what has been mis-understood is that each type points to a rather poignant conflation of Susanna as Woman Wisdom, and as everywoman, remarkably a figure more commonly depicted within the context of memorial and death than previously understood.

If it is a good reader that makes the good book, then surely even the illiterate viewer of images during late antiquity was a great reader. Patrons and artists imbedded the profoundest layers of meaning into some of the most succinct iconographies and images that often moved beyond narrative its simplest form and evoked sophisticated and nuanced sub-texts. This is especially poignant method when iconography was employed in the realm of death and in the service of memorialization. The image of Susanna holding a scroll or codex, or with a scrinium or capsula at her feet has precedent in images of the Roman philosopher type, even within the pastoral setting where knowledge and wisdom converge in the realm of death as is evident in pastoral elegies dating back to Theocritus and the third century BC.

Finally, it is important to note that Susanna was not symbolically saved nor purified in ignorance. The symbolism of wisdom in the objects of capsula and scrinium are also necessary to understanding Susanna's association with Wisdom and the Word. The theme of wisdom in connection with Susanna runs deeper than the textual record of her storyline or its manipulation for later

ecclesiastical agendas. By restoring Susanna to her rightful inaugural place at the beginning of the account of *Daniel*, she is also found at the beginning of the restoration of scattered Israel. She is partner, companion, and warrior with God in Israel's return from the diaspora, and Christianity's exit from obscurity. When sarcophagi feature orant female figures with scroll boxes it is easy to equate them with the matronly philosopher type. As images of Susanna also fit this type, it is easy to see how this typology was probably read and understood by early Christian women who were already impacting the legitimization of Christianity in the world. They could look too, to Susanna, educated in the law of God, acting as Woman Wisdom to martial their own efforts in the cause of Christianity, and to be memorialized for them.



# Contesting the Legacy and Patronage of Saint Cyprian in Vandal Carthage

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## ABSTRACT

The Vandal period of African Christianity has long existed as a sort of Dark Ages in which the primary narratives of the Church are flush with persecution, exile, and destruction. Nevertheless, a notable surge of interest in the history of the Vandals in recent decades has prompted revisionist work that has broadened the purview of scholarship well beyond the paradigm Victor of Vita offers. Amid such work, the state-supported Homoian Church has begun to emerge as something more than a one-dimensional body of heretical barbarian persecutors. Some recent studies have highlighted how the Homoian Church sought to establish itself as a genuinely 'African' communion that appealed to a broad cross-section of the population. Along these lines, this study explores a selection of homilies from three anonymous preachers of the Vandal period (a Homoian bishop and two Nicene clerics) which provide a first-hand glimpse into an ecclesial rivalry in which both churches sought to leverage the legacy and authority of Saint Cyprian as each strived to establish its communion as the rightful heir of the African Christian tradition. As this study offers fresh testimony to our understanding of religious life in Vandal Carthage, it will ultimately contend that conventional characterisations of the Vandal kingdom as an era of decline and persecution for African Christianity must yield to interpretations that are more attentive to the growing evidence for the prosperity, credibility, and popularity of the Homoian church in North Africa.

On 13 September 533 CE the priests of the orthodox (*i.e.*, Homoian) Church at Carthage were busily preparing the memorial basilica of Saint Cyprian for the celebrations of the martyr's festival to occur on the following day. They cleaned the sanctuary; they hung up the most beautiful of the votive offerings that worshippers had brought to the suburban basilica; they made ready the liturgical lamps; and they brought out from the storehouses various decorative treasures that had accumulated over the site's long history as a center of devotion to Africa's most celebrated episcopal martyr. We are informed that the clergy prepared and arranged everything with great exactness. They took great pride, no doubt, in the nine decades of oversight that Homoian church leaders had piously bestowed on the memorial basilica and its widely popular festival celebrations. These priests likely attributed much of the longstanding success and prosperity of the Vandal's Christian kingdom to their faithful cultivation

of Saint Cyprian's favor and intercessions. And as the king's brother led an army out of Carthage to address a military threat to the kingdom, they almost certainly saw their preparations for the *Cypriana* as critical to the prospect of yet another Vandal victory.

This glimpse into the life of the Homoian African Church survives, of course, because the Vandals failed to meet the challenge of the invading Byzantine army of Belisarius; and the general's historian, Procopius, recorded these details about the 'Arian' priests to accentuate his narrative of the Byzantine conquest as a providential liberation of Catholic orthodoxy from the domination of the heretics (*Bell. Vand.* I 21, 17-25). For soon after the clergy's preparations for the *Cypriana* were complete, the Homoian priests fled Carthage as news spread of the looming Byzantine conquest of the unguarded city. And accordingly, as Procopius informs us, the 'Catholic' priests were suddenly free to restore the city's veneration of its greatest saint to the care of the 'true Church' as they presided over the festivities the Homoian priests had unknowingly been preparing for them. Procopius offers this episode as the fulfillment of a recurring dream that several Nicene African Christians reported experiencing during the long heretical usurpation of their saint's cult. In the dream, Cyprian urged his discouraged brethren not to be anxious about his 'Arian' captivity and reassured them that he would eventually avenge himself and his Church. In fulfillment of this promise, Cyprian had liberated and restored his cult to the Nicene Catholic faith before the arrival of Belisarius' army.

For scholars of Vandal North Africa, glimpses such as this into the everyday life of the Homoian African Church are exceedingly rare and – as with Procopius' testimony – are typically filtered through polemical lenses. Unfortunately, whatever contributions the Vandal state-supported Church may have made to the development of African Christianity during its ninety-four years of ecclesial power, such matters have left little trace in the historical record that survived the conquest of the Vandal kingdom. It is not surprising then that historical accounts of Vandal Africa have traditionally followed the lead of the pro-Nicene African Christians who wrote from the margins during this period. This means, of course, that the Vandal epoch of African Christianity has long existed as a sort of Arian Dark Ages in which the primary narratives of church history are flush with persecution, exile, and destruction. In particular, Victor of Vita's polemical history of anti-Nicene persecution established a trajectory of historiography for this period that continues to set the tone and parameters for most modern scholarship.<sup>1</sup> This is why, for example, it remains common for historians to identify the Homoian ecclesial fellowship in Vandal Africa as 'Arian':

<sup>1</sup> For the persistent influence of Victor's polemical narration of the Vandal period in shaping scholarship, even in spite of greater attentiveness to the author's rhetorical agenda, see Eric Fournier, *Victor of Vita and the Vandal 'Persecution': Interpreting Exile in Late Antiquity* (PhD diss., UC Santa Barbara, 2008), 13-25.

a polemical designation of choice for Nicene writers like Victor; but a label that leaders of the state-supported Church considered false and slanderous.<sup>2</sup>

Although it remains difficult to shake Victor's interpretive paradigm, a notable surge in revisionist scholarship on the Vandal kingdom has appeared in recent years that points to a much more complex and interesting situation on the ground.<sup>3</sup> Amid such work, the state-supported Homoian Church has begun to emerge as something more than a one-dimensional body of persecuting barbarian heretics. Some scholars have begun instead to draw attention to indications in the historical record that the Homoian fellowship achieved considerable success in establishing itself as a genuinely 'African' communion that appealed to a broad cross-section of the population.<sup>4</sup>

One of the important impetuses for this revisionist work on Vandal Africa has come from the discovery – or rather, recovery – of unexploited patristic texts. Scholars have begun to wade through the numerous anonymous and pseudo-epigraphic texts on the fringes of the Latin patristic tradition searching for signs of late-antique African provenances. In most cases, some combination of the following factors has served as an invitation to scholars to assess the possible attributions of these texts to Vandal Africa: the author displays a Homoian theological orientation, his scriptural citations resonate with the *Vetus Latina* biblical tradition, his arguments employ quotations from or allusions to the literary and homiletic traditions of African Christianity, and the work includes historical references or allusions that fit well with the political and cultural milieu of the Vandal kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, when historians such as Leslie Dossey succeed – as she has – in convincingly ascribing an anonymous *Commentary on Job* to a Homoian author from early sixth-century North Africa, a new voice is introduced into historical narrations of the Vandal period that helps scholars to lift the veil cast by Victor's polemical historiography.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the present study we employ the terms 'homoian' and 'nicene' to differentiate between the two primary rival ecclesial fellowships in Vandal Africa. Both sects generally self-identified as the 'catholics' (e.g., Vict. Vit., *Hist. pers.* III 1). For the designation 'homoian' see Uta Heil, "The Homoians" and Robin Whelan, "Arianism in Africa", in Guido Berndt, Roland Steinacher (eds), *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed* (Surrey, 2014), 84-114; 239-55.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Yves Moderan, 'Une Guerre de Religion: Les Deux Églises d'Afrique à l'époque Vandale', *Antiquité Tardive* 11 (2003), 21-44; Andy Merrills (ed.), *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa* (London, 2004); Fournier, 'Victor of Vita' (2008); Andy Merrills, Richard Miles, *The Vandals* (West Sussex, 2010); Jonathan Conant, *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 439-700* (Cambridge, UK, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> A. Merrills, R. Miles, *The Vandals* (2010), 196-200.

<sup>5</sup> See Leslie Dossey, *Peasants and Empire in Christian North Africa* (Berkeley, 2010), 162-7; 293-6.

<sup>6</sup> L. Dossey, 'The Last Days of Vandal Africa: An Arian Commentary on Job and its Historical Context', *JThS* n.s. 54 (2003), 60-138.

The present study is offered as a contribution to these recent efforts to recover the religious realities of Vandal Africa by exploring the works of three anonymous preachers whose homilies show signs of African provenances. The theological orientation of the first of these preachers demonstrates that he is a Homoian cleric; the latter two led congregations in the Nicene church during the so-called 'Arian captivity' of the cult of Saint Cyprian. To my knowledge, none of these anonymous texts have received sustained attention as evidence for the religious life of Vandal North Africa; nor have they been translated into a modern language. In what follows, we shall highlight the ways each of these preachers attempted to leverage the legacy and cult of Saint Cyprian in order to bolster their church's standing over and against their chief ecclesial rival. Ultimately, we shall see that these homilies show clear signs of sharing a Carthaginian milieu, point toward a rivalry between the Homoian and Nicene churches in which both sides sought to establish themselves as the true heir to historic African Christianity, and suggest that Homoian church leaders enjoyed a decisive advantage in popular support because of their control of the capital's cult of Saint Cyprian. Let us turn first to the preaching of the Homoian cleric.

### *Collectio Arriana Veronensis*

The *Collectio Arriana Veronensis*, a late fifth/early sixth century manuscript located in the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona, includes among its works a homogenous group of anonymous sermons that seem to have circulated together.<sup>7</sup> The Homoian orientation of this ancient manuscript, which compiles a variety of different texts to serve as a study aid for clergy, lacks any overtly polemical edge and so it avoided detection through the centuries as it rode the coattails of the homiletic legacy of Maximus of Turin. In 1922, Bernard Capelle was the first to notice the Homoian character of these texts and to refute any association with Maximus. He opted instead to identify the compilation of texts with the Illyrian Homoian bishop Maximinus, who is best known for his public debate with Augustine around 428 during a visit to North Africa.<sup>8</sup> When Roger Gryson developed a critical edition of the *Collectio Arriana Veronensis* in 1982, he affirmed Capelle's ascription of these works to Homoian Christians, but rejected his opportunistic attribution of all the manuscript's sermons to

<sup>7</sup> This brief overview of the *Collectio Arriana Veronensis* relies on the foundational work of Roger Gryson: *Scripta Arriana Latina, 1: Collectio Veronensis, scholia in Concilium Aquileiense, fragmenta in Lucam rescripta, fragmenta theologica rescripta*, Chr.SL 87 (Turnhout, 1982), vii-xxvi; *Le recueil arien de Vérone (MS. LI de la Bibliothèque capitulaire et feuillets inédits de la collection Giustiniani Recanati): Étude codicologique et paléographique*, Instrumenta Patristica 13 (The Hague, 1982), 7-29; 60-71; 117.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Capelle, 'Un homiliaire de l'évêque arien Maximin', *Revue bénédictine* 34 (1922), 81-108.

Maximinus. Instead, Gryson suggested Vandal Africa as the most plausible provenance for the manuscript's homogenous group of sermons which includes 15 homilies devoted to certain festal days in an ecclesial calendar (CChr.SL 87, 47-92) and two lengthy apologetic sermons directed against the pagans (CChr.SL 87, 118-40) and against the Jews (CChr.SL 87, 93-117) respectively. Gryson's suggestion of a Vandal African provenance was based primarily on resonances with the African homiletic tradition and Scriptural citations from the *Vetus Latina*.

In spite of Gryson's proposed attribution, some scholars have casually associated these sermons with the Homoian Ostrogothic kingdom in Northern Italy because of the geographic background of the manuscript's composition.<sup>9</sup> Others have accepted Gryson's provenance in passing; but no scholar to my knowledge has attempted to confirm his suggestion and/or explore the potential value of this group of sermons for the study of Christianity in Vandal North Africa. The following analysis moves decisively down such a path by highlighting the fundamental significance of Saint Cyprian to this Homoian preacher's homiletic efforts. A careful examination of these texts demonstrates that, apart from Scripture, Cyprian's works are by far the author's most prominent source and inspiration. Direct citations and allusions from the legendary bishop of Carthage pervade the group of sermons. In all, Cyprian's works make their way into eleven of the fifteen festal homilies; and the preacher's two apologetic sermons draw liberally on the saint's apologetic writings.

We shall limit our examination here to just a few of the more revealing passages from the *Contra paganos* sermon and to three of the festal homilies (those devoted to the feast of Saint Cyprian, a feast celebrating 'all the martyrs', and Easter). Collectively, these texts reveal well the nature of the preacher's preoccupation with Cyprian and illustrate how he sought to utilize the saint's stature and authority to establish the Homoian ecclesial fellowship as the rightful heir of the African Church.

*Contra paganos* lacks any genuine originality as a work of Christian apologetics, but this address is no shrinking violet. No other sermon from Latin antiquity addressing the errors of paganism – with the possible exception of Augustine's filibuster sermon from 404 (Dolbeau 26) – can match its dogged persistence, lively style, and breadth of attack. The sermon's references to various forms of pagan worship as everyday realities and the preacher's enthusiastic dialogical rhetoric give the impression that the divine patronage of the traditional gods remained a real challenge for Church leaders. At the very least the text attests to the preacher's resolve to establish himself as a formidable defender of the Christian faith.

<sup>9</sup> For example see Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (New York, 1997), 242.

The apologetic arguments in *Contra paganos* unfold in two movements. The first of these is a thorough deconstruction of pagan belief and practices oriented around passages from Scripture and Cyprian's apologetic treatises, *Ad Demetrianum* and *Quod idola dii non sint*. At two critical junctures in this refutation, *Contra paganos* relies explicitly on the saint's authority to drive home his point. First, at the conclusion of his effort to emphasize the lifelessness of cult statues that cannot defend themselves against any threats, the preacher caps off his remarks with the following quotation:

And therefore Saint Cyprian says rightly to the pagan Demetrianus, 'one should be ashamed that you worship those things whom you yourself defend; one should be ashamed that you hope for help from those whom you yourselves protect from danger. Or how certainly can they be superior to worshippers who are not able to defend themselves or their worshippers?' (CChr.SL 87, 124, III 5)

As he closes out this first section of the sermon's arguments, the preacher musters a final flourish of ridicule against the mortality of pagan gods with a rhetorical question: 'If the gods were born back in the day, why then are they not still being born today?' He invokes the Carthaginian saint again for his punchline: 'Perhaps, as Saint Cyprian used to say, "either Jupiter grew old or the fertility of Juno has ceased"' (CChr.SL 87, 128, IV 9).

After exposing the errors of pagan worship the preacher turns in the second section of *Contra paganos* to expressing with great precision, the Church's doctrine of God over and against the paganism he has just refuted and, more subtly and implicitly, against Nicaean theology. For it is in the second part of the sermon that the Homoian orientation of the preacher emerges most clearly. And to articulate his Homoean doctrine as the orthodox truth of the ancient African Church, he leads with the authority of its greatest saint. He presents a subtly edited version of Cyprian's anti-pagan apologetic formulations of an uncompromising monotheism as the saint's primary confession of faith on the nature of God. He declares as follows:

... most beloved brethren, let us speak of that which is true and discuss the solemn obligations of our faith. For just as Cyprian has confessed, 'there is, accordingly, one Lord, God of all things, for sublimity certainly cannot have a colleague, since He alone has authority'. [*This one God the Church has come to know and worship*], 'who by his word orders all things whatsoever that exist', [*by his wisdom fashions,*] 'by his reason dispenses, by his strength completes. This one God is too bright and cannot be seen by sight; he is too pure to be comprehended by touch; he is too great to be estimated by perception. And therefore we estimate him worthily in this way when we say he is beyond all measure' (CChr.SL 87, 131-2, VII 1; cf. *Quod Idol.* 8-9).

After quoting additional passages from *Quod idola dii non sunt* to reinforce the 'invisible and incomprehensible' nature of the one true God, the preacher invokes biblical proof texts to reinforce the subordinationist nature of Christ as integral to the conception of God he has presented as the traditional orthodoxy

of Saint Cyprian and his Church (132-4, VII 3-5). Elaborating further on his Homoian doctrine of the Trinity, the preacher eventually draws his apologetic sermon to a close with a subordinationist doxology, which by the fifth century had in its basic form become distinctive to the liturgies of the Homoian Churches: 'And let us always render honor to the everlasting and invisible God, *through* his eternal and blessed son ... worshipping and confessing him *in* the Holy Spirit...' (CChr.SL 87, 140, X 2).

Let us now consider this preacher's three festal homilies that are most relevant for discerning his reliance on and appreciation for saint Cyprian, beginning with the address he preached on the saint's feast day.<sup>10</sup> By the fifth century Cyprian the martyr was extremely popular throughout much of the western empire and so it would not be unusual for the anniversary of his martyrdom to receive attention in ecclesial calendars beyond Carthage. For instance, the saint is included in the poetry of Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola; and the sermons of Maximus of Turin include two addresses delivered on Cyprian's feast day.<sup>11</sup> In such cases, the saint is clearly venerated as a foreign martyr; while homilies preached in his honor typically resemble those of Maximus who, after mentioning the anniversary of Cyprian's martyrdom, immediately turns in both sermons to general exhortations on the Christian life that never mention the martyr again. The Cyprianic festal homily from the Verona collection, in contrast, exhibits a much more intimate and consistent interest in the saint – an interest that, much like several other sermons in this collection and the two Nicaean homilies we shall discuss below, resonates best with a Carthaginian milieu.

Consider for example, the revealing nature and tone of the preacher's opening flourish of rhetoric in this homily. He declares:

... the day is here and has begun to shine upon us, brothers and sisters, the anniversary of the holy martyr Cyprian. Let the solemnity that we owe on this renowned day be celebrated for the honor of the martyr. The delightfulness of the time produces for us a more bountiful enjoyment and the flush of the harvest season unites us to the bloodshed of our martyr (*martyris nostri*). The winepress of the Church has received the holy martyr's blood that was vowed and from it has filled the Church with radiant blossoms imbued with so great a fragrance of sweetness. The Lord God has weaved garland crowns on his head mingled together in numerous layers with lilies and roses; this is both white lilies for his labor and purple roses for his passion. This bishop, by divine election, and martyr both diligently preserved the discipline of the flock of Christ *and* received the triumphal palm from the Lord for the merit of his confession (CChr.SL 87, 80-1, XII 1).

We note three significant observations here. First, the description of Saint Cyprian as 'our martyr' is a designation that obviously implies a special association

<sup>10</sup> *De natale sancti Cypriani* (CChr.SL 87, 80-2); *De natale omnium martyrum, item alius* (CChr.SL 87, 87-92); *In Sancto Pascha* (CChr.SL 87, 56-9).

<sup>11</sup> Prudentius, *Perist.* 13; Paulinus, *Carm.* 19, 141ff.; Maximus of Turin, *Sermones* 10-1.

between the saint and the preacher's congregation. Secondly, the homily's metaphorical use of the winepress (*torcular*) is not insignificant. The usage of *torcular* in this way was not common in patristic literature. But as any veteran reader of Augustine knows, the bishop of Hippo was very fond of this metaphor for the church and martyrdom, using it several dozen times in his works.<sup>12</sup> Yet, in light of this preacher's penchant for drawing material from the works of Cyprian (including elsewhere in this homily), it is perhaps more likely that he is following Cyprian's lead here; for the saint likewise utilized *torcular* metaphorically several times when reflecting on Christian martyrdom.<sup>13</sup> Finally, this passage places a strong emphasis on the fact that Cyprian's sainthood was not merely a product of his courageous martyrdom. Cyprian has received a crown of *both* purple roses *and* white lilies to symbolize the heroic diligence that he exhibited in shepherding the 'flock of Christ' in Carthage before he traveled the path of martyrdom. Very rarely do any sources for the cult of Cyprian outside of Carthage praise the saint equally for his achievements as a martyr and a bishop. This approach is very common however in homilies preached in the Carthaginian milieu on the saint's feast day as Augustine's sermons and the two Nicene homilies discussed below attest. It is likewise tempting to read the somewhat gratuitous aside in this passage about Cyprian having been a 'bishop by divine election' as somehow a self-serving one if this preacher is himself a bishop of Carthage.

The significance of Saint Cyprian to our preacher is similarly illustrated in a festal homily delivered in honor of a vaguely defined group of 'blessed martyrs' who are also called 'holy friends of the Lord'; and from whom our preacher encourages his parishioners to 'request anything they faithfully require' (CChr.SL 87, 87-8, XV 1). Whatever the precise make-up of this group, which perhaps represents all of the city's chief martyrs, Cyprian is the only saint named during the course of the sermon. What else is particularly noteworthy here is the extent to which various excerpts from Cyprian's works provide the essential backbone for the homily's reflections on the merits of martyrdom. The preacher begins his address by reading a passage from Cyprian's treatise, *De mortalitate*. He draws extensively on Cyprian's rhetoric of martyrdom from *Epistle 58* as the sermon proceeds. And finally, he quotes Cyprian by name from the latter's comments in the *Acta proconsularia* to help him interpret one of his primary Scriptural texts.

We conclude the examination of our Homoian preacher with a passage from his homily on the Paschal feast, which again shows him employing Cyprian's authority in order to establish his church's doctrine as the essence of traditional African orthodoxy. Toward the end of the address, he works into his theological reflection on the Incarnation an otherwise innocuous quotation from Cyprian's

<sup>12</sup> See for example Augustine, *En. Ps.* VIII 3ff.; *En. Ps.* LV 3ff.; *En Ps.* LXXX 1ff.; *Sermo* 15.

<sup>13</sup> See, in particular, *Epist.* 37.

treatise *On Patience*: ‘It is as Saint Cyprian says, the same Lord who came therefore also *from the sublimity of heaven, descending to the earth, did not refuse as the son of God to assume the flesh of humanity and, though himself not a sinner, to bear the sins of others*’ (CChr.SL 87, 58, III 4). The preacher then continues with his exposition without ever clarifying where the citation – and thus authority – of Cyprian ends and his own Homoian reflections begin. And so when he proceeds to declare the following, his audience would be justified – though incorrect – in assuming that this too had come from Cyprian’s pen: ‘(On the cross, Jesus) commended his spirit to the father so that he could demonstrate that he is always subject to the father inasmuch as his good was brought forth by *the Good*, his piety by *the Pious*, his fruitfulness by *the Fruitful one*’. The homily then concludes, as all of the sermons in this group do, with the seal of the Homoian doxology.

### **Pseudo-Victor, *Homilia de s. Cypriano episcopo et martyre* (PL 58, 265-8)**

The first of our anonymous homilies preached by Nicene clergy has come down to us among the works of Victor of Vita. This little address ‘*On Saint Cyprian, bishop and martyr*’ was delivered on the saint’s natal feast day at some point during the Vandal kingdom. As one might expect from a homily of this sort preached by an African Nicene cleric who no longer had access to Cyprian’s memorial basilica, the preaching strikes a very different tone and focus from the Homoian homily already discussed. The Nicene preacher opens his address pleasantly enough, but the rhetoric takes a sudden and gloomy turn as he attempts to assuage the grief, anxiety, confusion, and doubt that his congregation felt in the face of the ‘Arian’s’ ongoing control of the cult of Saint Cyprian: ‘Today the natal feasts of the blessed Cyprian compel us to offer the customary sermon. For who can remain silent about the virtues of such a great martyr, who can be silent regarding his glory, or who doesn’t wish to narrate his merits – lest (it is) by chance those (of us) who now mourn deeply the loss of his personal home’ (PL 58, 265, LVIII 1). While continuing in this vein of lament, the remainder of the sermon is essentially an effort to set the record straight regarding potential misconceptions about Saint Cyprian’s perspective, status, and efficacy amid the ‘Arian’ captivity of his cult.

First, the Nicene preacher vigorously emphasizes the fact that the saint, in his heavenly glory, is not at all pleased with the ‘Arian’ Church’s control of his relics. Rather, he mourns this captivity deeply. Likewise, we are told, Cyprian grieves the great injury done to his Church: its ‘people wounded, clergy scattered, priesthood exiled, chastity lost, modesty violated, the sanctuary polluted, and altars profaned’. The preacher goes on to inform his congregation that ‘it is with profound pain that the priest searches for his people, the pastor for his flock, the father for his fatherland, the martyr for faith. The barbarian

used to be destroyed, whereas now the citizen is regarded as extinct. The perfidious didn't use to possess the altars, now the faithful man mourns having been excluded (from them)' (PL 58, 265, LVIII 1). Drawing inspiration from Cyprian's *De lapsis*, the preacher's allusions in these passages are also intended to remind his audience both that the saint grieves over apostasy and that his pastoral nature is such that he cares deeply for and feels obligated to the lapsed and downtrodden among his people. It is tempting to read this characterization as a warning and consolation to Nicene parishioners who perhaps regularly crossed sectarian lines and participated in Homoian liturgies in order to gain direct access to the holy presence of Saint Cyprian's relics.

Such may likewise be the motivation behind the preacher's subsequent assurance to his congregation that they need not despair that the 'Arian' captivity of the saint's cult has cut them off from the efficacious power of Cyprian's relics. He declares as follows:

Let us, who have been saved by the remedies of hope because of the living Christ, not be extinguished by the misfortune of despair. Blessed Cyprian, who is held captive among us, is free in God and with God; and he, who on earth seems to be enslaved, in heaven is reigning. He himself aids, he does not fail us; on behalf of sins he is present as a just patron with the just Judge; he prevails upon the pious king as a virtuous advocate (PL 58, 266, LVIII 2).

Continuing in this same vein, the preacher reiterates Cyprian's displeasure with the Arian stewardship of his cult and emphasizes how vigorously the saint is persistently pleading with God to liberate the Church from its 'Arian' captivity. Indeed, the saint is even portrayed as getting a bit cheeky with God in his pleading:

(Cyprian) says to the Lord: Lord, why have you handed your house over to (your) adversaries, to the enemies of your inheritance? Why (have you handed over) holy things to the profane, why clean things to the polluted, and why the sheep to the wolves? ... Lord, why have you allowed the limbs, which have confessed you, to be taken captive? Why have you disregarded in such contempt the witness of blood, whom you had elevated to such great honor ... Where is your name, where is your glory, where is your strength? By saying these things, the nations blaspheme who attack you as much as us. Take action: why have you fallen asleep, Lord? Take action and may you indeed drive them into oblivion. Restore your glory to yourself, restore your land to your people, restore my bones to me; so that as you triumph and your enemies are destroyed, we may also rejoice in our sanctuaries with our clerical order presiding (PL 58, 266, LVIII 2).

### **Pseudo-Fulgentius, *De sancto Cypriano martyre* (PL 65, 740-1)**

Our second anonymous homily preached by a Nicene cleric has survived among a group of sermons attributed to the African bishop, Fulgentius. Once again we are in the presence of an address offered on the feast day of Saint Cyprian. The text alludes to the widespread recognition that this season of the

year has come to revolve around this celebration. As with the pseudo-Victor homily, the preacher is clearly paying homage to the saint as an exile from the latter's memorial basilica. He likewise invokes Cyprian's saintly merits as both a martyr and episcopal shepherd. Yet, the tone and purpose of this homily is dramatically different. Rather than offering a lament on the 'Arian' captivity and a defense of the saint's continued credibility and efficaciousness as a heavenly patron of the Nicene Church, this address champions Cyprian's patient endurance both as a Christian whose daily submission to God's will prepared him to face persecution and as a bishop who, in spite of persecution and exile, continued to devote meticulous pastoral care to his flock in spite of his physical absence.

While the exhortation to follow Cyprian's model of patient endurance was no doubt an important message for all Nicene Christians during this period of marginalization, one suspects the homily's sustained focus on the saint's period of exile before his martyrdom and on his pastoral vigilance and success in shepherding his flock during this period of absence has a more particular purpose. Assuming this homily was delivered during one of the periods in which many of the Nicene clerics were living in state-mandated exile, it is attractive to interpret the preacher's uncommon focus here as an effort both to defend the clerics' decision to choose exile, as opposed to martyrdom, and to bolster the pastoral authority and attentiveness of exiled priests and bishops in relation to their flocks whose future could be undermined by their prolonged absence. By holding out Saint Cyprian's choice to take on state-mandated exile as a way to maintain his meticulous pastoral care for his flock during a period of persecution, the preacher provided the Nicene clergy with a Cyprianic precedent for their actions. Just as Saint Cyprian had once had to endure exile in order to care for the African Church and protect it from wolves, so now the exiled Nicene clergy were following in his holy footsteps.

## Conclusion

This brief and preliminary study of our anonymous preachers' efforts to leverage the legacy of Saint Cyprian yields three primary conclusions. First, the significance of Cyprian's authority for each of these three preachers as they address their situations, and the fact that their appreciation for the saint focuses as much on his roles as bishop and patron as it does on his martyrdom, tips the scales decisively in favor of a Vandal African provenance for these texts. In fact, it is attractive to assume our anonymous preachers were operating in particular within a Carthaginian milieu. It is certainly most plausible to conclude that the Homoian preacher was a bishop of the state-supported Church at Carthage. His persistent attempts to establish Homoian orthodoxy as the Cyprianic confession of faith, his intimate associations with the cult of Saint Cyprian, his

treatment of Cyprian as both saintly martyr and bishop, and his wide-ranging dependence on Cyprian's literary corpus are matters easiest to explain if he was preaching as an Homoian bishop of Carthage. And indeed, it is hard to imagine a Homoian bishop outside of the Vandal capital earning sufficient clout as a preacher for his sermons to attract interest in Northern Italy, as this group of sermons did.

The second noteworthy conclusion here is that, just as during the Donatist controversy, the afterlife of Cyprian continued to be a critical touchstone in the Vandal period for ecclesial communions seeking to establish their credibility as the one true African Church. What is particularly noteworthy, of course, is that the Homoian clergy were no less preoccupied with contending for this credibility than their rivals. If our Homoian preacher is at all representative, then in contrast to conventional scholarly assumptions about the Vandal-supported Church, its Homoian leaders were keen to cultivate a robust African identity rooted in the cult and authority of Saint Cyprian. The Homoian sermons examined here suggest that, rather than existing as a foreign, persecuting ecclesial body, this preacher and his congregation were very comfortable as *African* Christians. In truth, we find this Homoian bishop of Carthage confidently promoting his ecclesial fellowship not through overt and defensive polemics against Nicene Christianity, but by taking up the time-honored episcopal function of Christian apologist against pagans and Jews, by grounding his Homoian theological convictions in the authority of his esteemed episcopal predecessor, and by serving as custodian of the city's massively popular cult of Saint Cyprian.

This leads us to the third and final conclusion that emerges from our study. If, as the sermons from the *Collectio Arriana Veronensis* suggest, the Homoian clergy became increasingly adroit and successful at establishing their church as the rightful and legitimate heir to the Cyprianic legacy, this reality would have presented African Nicaeans with a far more vexing challenge than Victor's portrayal of persecution. The homilies of our two Nicene preachers support the likelihood that this was the reality they faced. Both texts suggest that it was very difficult for the African Nicene communion to compete – in the vicinity of Carthage at least – with a well-resourced, state supported Homoian Church that confidently assumed the mantle of historic African Christianity and the corresponding monumental infrastructure. In particular, the pseudo-Victor homily makes very clear that we should not underestimate the significance of the Homoian Church's nearly century-long control and promotion of the esteemed cult of Saint Cyprian for establishing its credibility and success among the populace as the genuine heir of the African Christian tradition. As the anguished and defensive rhetoric of the pseudo-Victor homily attests, the continuing prosperity and popularity of Cyprian's cult under Vandal stewardship served as a powerful and compelling apologetic for the Homoian communion's claims to be the one true African Church. This homily also helps us

to understand why Procopius was so keen to emphasize that the Carthaginian saint had finally vindicated Nicene claims to his cult and legacy by restoring his memorial basilica to the Nicene clergy even before the Byzantine army laid siege to the capital.

In the end, this study contributes to what we suspect will be an increasingly revisionist picture of religious life in Vandal Carthage; one in which scholars will be increasingly forced to admit that the Nicene Church operated on the margins of what was likely a very vibrant and prosperous century of development for African Christianity. Returning full circle to Procopius' account of the Homoian priests meticulously preparing the saint's basilica for the *Cypriana*, one wonders whether their sense of pride was partly owing to ambitious embellishments that their Church may have made to the cultic site during the Vandal epoch to accommodate broader participation in the saint's veneration. Such a prospect is becoming very plausible in light of recent archaeological work that suggests the Vandals may have presided over a significant surge in ecclesial construction, rather than initiating a period of stagnation and decline.<sup>14</sup> Procopius lauds the fact that the Nicene priests were able to profit from the work the fleeing Homoian clergy had undertaken in preparation for Saint Cyprian's festival. In light of the realities emerging from the various revisionist trajectories of scholarship, this incident may very well provide an analogy for broader historical questions about the fate of Christianity during the Vandal era. When the Nicene clergy regained power after the Byzantine conquest, did they perhaps take the reins of an African Christianity that thanks to the work of the Homoian Church was grander, more prosperous, and more popular than it had been when they were forced to surrender their power to the Vandals a century earlier? In light of the testimony our anonymous preachers offer, this is certainly a fair question.

<sup>14</sup> See Ralf Bockmann, *Capital Continuous: A Study of Vandal Carthage and Central North Africa from an Archaeological Perspective* (Wiesbaden, 2013).



# The Fathers of the Church and their Role in Promoting Christian Constructions in *Hispania*

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## ABSTRACT

The Fathers of the Church excelled in ancient times for their euergetic activity, specifically in developing, constructing or monumentalizing Christian buildings. Ambrose of Milan in the West or Gregory of Nyssa in the East might offer a general idea of the determination of a bishop when facing the challenge of reorganizing urban and rural landscapes through the increasing presence of Christian constructions. *Hispania* cannot be considered out of this phenomenon for any reasons. In fact, since the lower imperial centuries are attested cases of Church Fathers are attested who were involved in building activities; nevertheless, the heyday of the relationship between patristic and architecture occurred during the Visigoth centuries (VI-VII). This splendor came personally from the hand of such prominent figures as Ildefonsus of Toledo, Martin of Dumium, Fructuosus of Braga or several of the usually called Holy Fathers of Merida, to name just a few ones. Which ones are the Fathers of the Church who promoted Christian buildings in *Hispania* then? What types of buildings were the preferred ones? Which ones were the main motivations to promote this sort of euergetism? All these and many other aspects will be analyzed through this analytical *status quaestionis* on the subject for *Hispania*.

Our knowledge of Christianity's first centuries is being enhanced day by day thanks to Patristics and Archaeology (*Patres et Petrae*) research, among that of other disciplines. Although written sources and stones follow their own parallel paths, fortunately they do converge in certain – and few – facts and events, which enable considerable steps forward in our understanding and reconstruction of our history. Archaeology, especially in the past few years, has unveiled the remainders of Early Christian buildings, some few of them susceptible to being linked to the existing patristic literature. Therefore, through this analysis, our aim is to offer a brief overview on the pregnant role of the Fathers of the Church in *Hispania* in matters related to the promotion, construction, monumentalization and restoration of Christian buildings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author is a member of the GRAT (Grup de Recerques en Antiguitat Tardana), a Late Antiquity Research Group of University of Barcelona. This study was conducted as a part of research project HAR2013-42584-P, whose principal investigator is Dr. Josep Vilella Masana.

<sup>2</sup> This topic, related in particular to *Hispania*, has been recently investigated, even without remarking the specific role of Patristics. See M. Ángeles Utrero Agudo, F. José Moreno Martín,

This phenomenon took place on a global scale; the examples of Ambrose of Milan in the West and Gregory of Nyssa in the East allow us to understand the prominence of these Fathers in outlining urban and rural landscapes through Christian buildings. *Hispania* was not at all removed from this historical process, and it is worthy noting how some of its most relevant Christian figures – who in turn would become Fathers – also play an important role in promoting and constructing these holy sites.

Our proposal's starting point is the classification of these items by Diocletian provinces. These ones consisted in the ecclesiastic buildings constructed by the Hispanic Fathers, known not only from the councils but from other written sources too (letters, *vitae*, etc.), epigraphy<sup>3</sup> and from archaeology. In other words, after having undertaken a thorough digging of all available sources the facts are on the table, so to be able to proceed to formulate a series of questions and an overall assessment. I shall outline that my investigation has reached up to the period of the Muslim invasion of *Hispania*, which took place some 75 years after the death of Isidore of Sevilla (a. 636), who, as it is well known, is the last Western Father of the Church together with Beda.

Taking a geographic overview along the Diocletian provinces, the following items from North to South are:

## Gallaecia

The most charismatic Father of this remotest North-Western province of Hispania was Martin of Braga (510/15-580), of Pannonian/Eastern origin, who around the mid-6<sup>th</sup> Century founded the monastery of Dumium, near *Bracara Augusta*. Dumium was an important monastic place, which contributed to the spread of Christianity in *Gallaecia* and the conversion to Catholicism of its Suebi Arian king. It is not just another monastery: inside the building were translated, among other things, works from Greek to Latin, thus becoming a major centre for Eastern Christian diffusion in the West.<sup>4</sup> To Martin is attributed the

'Evergetism among the Bishops of Hispania between the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: A Dialogue between Archaeological and Documentary Sources', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23 (2015), 97-131. Also, the topic has been investigated by us in Jordina Sales-Carbonell, *Arqueologia de les seus episcopals tardoantigues al territori català -253-713-* (Barcelona, 2011), and *Las construcciones cristianas de la Tarraconensis durante la Antigüedad Tardía. Topografía, arqueología e historia* (Barcelona, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> José Vives Gatell, *Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda* (Barcelona, 1969) (= *ICERV*); Daniel Rico Camps, 'Arquitectura y epigrafía en la Antigüedad Tardía. Testimonios hispanos', *Pyrenae* 40 (2009), 7-53.

<sup>4</sup> Alberto Ferreiro, 'The missionary of St. Martin of Braga in 6<sup>th</sup> century Galicia', *Studia Monastica* 23 (1981), 11-26; Santiago Fernández Ardanaz, 'Monaquismo oriental en la Hispania de los siglos VI-X', *Antigüedad y Cristianismo XVI* (1999), 203-14; J. Sales-Carbonell, 'Dumium (monastery)', *Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (in press).

foundation of Samo's monastery as a part of the process of Christianisation of the Galaican rural areas.

Further on, during the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, Fructuosus of Braga (595-655), a Cenobite, took on significant founding activities in the Western part of the Iberian Peninsula, from North to South, encompassing *Gallaecia*, *Baetica* and *Lusitania*. He is estimated to have founded around twenty monasteries,<sup>5</sup> which obviously implies associated construction activities of which there is virtually no archaeological information. At the time he became Bishop of Braga, he promoted the construction of a basilica that is today known as San Fructuoso de Montelius, next to which he was buried.<sup>6</sup>

A singular and outstanding case to be considered deals with Valerius of El Bierzo, a 7<sup>th</sup> century rigorist ascete who in his writings reports the construction of chapels lead by privates within his dominions. Within one of the most famous episodes Valerius is welcomed by the Galaican owner Ricimirus and hosted in a cell next to the *fundus* chapel's altar. Ricimirus, in order to honour Valerius, decides the construction of a bigger chapel, a decision despised by the eremite, considering it the work of the Devil.<sup>7</sup> For this reason, Valerius not only does not promote Christian constructions, but he disdains and refutes them.

## Tarraconensis

John of Biclaram, bishop of *Gerunda*, has been our focus on the *Tarraconensis* province who, after 586<sup>8</sup> founded a monastery (*Biclarum*) in nowadays Girona or Tarragona (scholars do not agree about the localization). It is still impossible to determine if John was already a bishop when this foundation occurred.

In *Barcino*, its Bishop Quiricus built a monastery during the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, right next to the tomb of Saint Eulalia of Barcelona, according to a hymn.<sup>9</sup> His topographical localization might correspond to the nowadays

<sup>5</sup> *Vita Fructuosi*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, *La vida de San Fructuoso de Braga: estudio y edición crítica* (Braga, 1974) (BHL 3194). Some known monasteries funded by Fructuosus are, for instance: Complutum, Rughianense, S. Felix of Visonia, Nono and Peonensis.

<sup>6</sup> *Vita Fructuosi*, 19, 1-11.

<sup>7</sup> Valerius Bergidensis, *Ordo querimoniae*, 25, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, *Valerio del Bierzo. Su persona. Su obra* (León, 2006), 257-9; Roger Collins, 'The "Autobiographical" Works of Valerius of Bierzo: their Structure and Purpose', in Antonino González Blanco (ed.), *Los Visigodos: historia y civilización. Actas de la Semana Internacional de Estudios Visigóticos (Madrid - Toledo - Alcalá de Henares, 21-25 de octubre de 1985)* (Murcia, 1986), 425-42.

<sup>8</sup> Julio Campos, *Juan de Biclamo, obispo de Gerona. Su vida y su obra* (Madrid, 1960), 21. See J. Sales-Carbonell, *Las construcciones* (2012), 244.

<sup>9</sup> *Hymnus de sancta Eulalia*, 13, ed. Clemens Blume, *Hymnodia Gotica. Die Mozarabischen Hymnen des alt-spanischen Ritus*, *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* 27 (Leipzig, 1897), 167-8:

known place Santa María del Mar, due to the *inventio* through the Carolingian bishop Frodoino of Eulalia's tomb (877).<sup>10</sup>

Along the area between *Ilerda* and *Caesaraugusta* (nowadays El Pueyo de Araguás), Saint Victorinus, an eremite who inhabited a cave in the area, founded the Asán monastery,<sup>11</sup> which ended up spreading a network of monastic foundations whose name and location are still unknown.<sup>12</sup>

The monastery Saint Toribius of Liébana, well known since the Middle Ages, would be located under the St. Martin's patronate during his foundation in the 6<sup>th</sup> century presumably by Toribius, bishop of Palencia, here together with other clergymen.<sup>13</sup> The foundation of the monastery by the Palentine bishop is more likely to be a presumed attribution than a true fact, as the biographical facts referred to Toribius<sup>14</sup> do not allow to affirm this notice transmitted by historiography.

## Cartaginensis

In *Complutum*, where Bishop Asterius had a leading role in the *inventio* of Iustus and Pastor (a. 380/392), we are lead to think that perhaps Paulinus of Nola and his wife Terasia undertook some kind of euergetic activity along their child's burial (a. 392) among local martyrs Justus and Pastor.<sup>15</sup> An ascetic and ordained priest in *Barcino* (393), as we know Paulinus was to hold the mitre of Nola, he had promoted the building of one of the most famous basilica sites

*Inter haec admixtus ipse / conquirat et Quiricus / Qui tui locum sepulcri / regulis monasticis / Ad honorem consecravit / sempiterni numinis.*

<sup>10</sup> See Ángel Fábrega Grau, *Santa Eulalia de Barcelona: revisión de un problema histórico* (Roma, 1958); *id.*, 'El nacimiento del cristianismo en Barcelona', *Cuadernos de Arqueología e Historia de la Ciudad* 3 (1962), 61-87; J. Sales-Carbonell, 'Santa María de las Arenas, Santa María del Mar y el anfiteatro romano de Barcelona', *Revista d'Arqueologia de Ponent* 21 (2011), 63-76.

<sup>11</sup> Venantius Fortunatus, *Epitaphium Victoriani abbatis de monasterio Asanae*, ed. Fr. Leo, MGH aa, 4, 1 (Berlin, 1881), 87 (*ICERV* 283): *plurima per patriam monachorum examina fundens*.

<sup>12</sup> Pablo de la Cruz Díaz Martínez, 'La estructura de la propiedad en la España tardoantigua: el ejemplo del monasterio de Asán', *Studia Zamorensia Historica* 6 (1985), 348-52; Enrique Ariño Gil and Pablo de la Cruz Díaz Martínez, 'Poblamiento y organización del espacio. La Tarraconense pirenaica en el siglo VI', *Antiquité Tardive* 11 (2003), 223-37; J. Sales-Carbonell and Natalia Salazar Ortiz, 'The pre-Pyrenees of Lleida in Late Antiquity: Christianization processes of a landscape in the *Tarraconensis*', *Revista d'Arqueologia de Ponent* 23 (2013), 27-44. See also J. Sales-Carbonell, *Las construcciones* (2012), 86-7.

<sup>13</sup> Ursicino Domínguez del Val, *Historia de la antigua literatura latina hispano-cristiana V* (Madrid, 2002), 8-9.

<sup>14</sup> Josep Vilella Masana, 'PCBE: Hispania', *Medieval Prosopography. History and Collective Biography* 19 (1998), 169-72.

<sup>15</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmina* XXXI 605-10, ed. Wilhelm von Hartel, CSEL 30 (Prague, Wien, Leipzig, 1894). See Margarita Vallejo Girvés, 'Complutum en las fuentes de la antigüedad tardía', in Luís García Moreno and Sebastián Rascón Marqués (eds), *Complutum y las ciudades hispanas en la antigüedad tardía*, *Acta Antiqua Complutensia* I (Alcalá de Henares, 1999), 203-24.

in the West around the tomb of Saint Felix<sup>16</sup> – which makes us reasonably believe he could have undertaken some sort of construction in Hispania, in particular in *Complutum*, where his child was buried.

Near Toledo, St. Ildephonsus, as abbot of the Agali monastery, founded a nun's convent (did he perhaps push forward its construction?).<sup>17</sup> On other occasions, the promotion of such buildings did not necessarily entail its construction, but singing and praising them. Such is the case of Eugenius, also bishop of Toledo in 7<sup>th</sup> century, when he penned his poems *In basilica sancti Felicis quae est in Tatanesio* (Totanes, Toledo), *De basilica sancti Emiliani* (most likely for the church where Saint Emilian was found, in the monastery of San Millan de Suso - La Rioja -), *De basilica Sancti Vincenti quae est CaesarAugustae ubi cruor eius dicitur effluxisse*, and *De basilica Sanctorum Decem et Octo Martyrum*<sup>18</sup> (Zaragoza).

In the Mediterranean city of Valencia, its bishop Justinian built – or, better, re-built – the episcopal complex<sup>19</sup> during the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise, he built temples and restored old buildings, as recorded in his epitaph and in *De viris illustribus* of Isidore of Seville,<sup>20</sup> for which Justinian has often been included among the Fathers of the Church, despite having not written any doctrinal work of his own.

## Lusitania

As far as Lusitania is concerned, in the capital Merida, the Bishop Fidel (560-570) – one of the Holy Fathers of Merida – restored the *domus episcopi* – constructed a new *atrium Ecclesiae* – and enlarged the basilica of Saint Eulalia;

<sup>16</sup> Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmina* XXVII 360-595; XXVIII; XXX.

<sup>17</sup> Iulianus Toletanus, *Beati Ildephonsi Elogium*, ed. José Carlos Martín Iglesias and Valeriano Yarza Urquiola, CChr.SL 115 A-B, vol. 2 (Turnhout, 2014), 3-5. A copious amount of hispanic bishops, not included in the list of Fathers, founded monasteries: e.g., Agapius of Córdoba founded the monastery of San Zoilo (a. 613), Ermefredus of Lugo the monastery of Samos (a. 650), etc. A recent and fairly complete list is available in M.A. Utrero Agudo, F.J. Moreno Martín, 'Evergetism' (2015), 97-131.

<sup>18</sup> Eugenius Toletanus, *Carmina* IX-XII, ed. Fridericus Vollmer, MGH aa 14 (Berlin, 1905), 239-42. Actually, Eugenius' poems constitute an *unicum* along the Hispanic Christian building, as rightly observed by Rico Camps: 'el gusto por este tipo de dilaciones admirativas se reservó para las proezas de la ingeniería civil. Las virtudes formales de la obra sagrada sólo se alaban ocasionalmente y con un laconismo extremo, recurriendo a los trillados tópicos de la altura y la luz' (Rico Camps, 'Arquitectura y epigrafía' [2009], 31).

<sup>19</sup> Albert Ribera Lacomba and Miquel Rosselló Mesquida, 'El primer grupo episcopal de Valencia', in Albert Ribera Lacomba (ed.), *Los orígenes del cristianismo en Valencia y su entorno* (Valencia, 2000), 165-85.

<sup>20</sup> *CIL* II2/14, 89; *ICERV* 279: *noba templa construens uetustaque restaurans*; Isidorus, *De viris illustribus* XX, ed. Carmen Codoñer, *El 'De viris illustribus' de Isidoro de Sevilla. Estudio y edición crítica* (Salamanca, 1964), 145.

while Masona (c. 573-c. 606) built basilicas, monasteries and a *Xenodochium* for pilgrims, which was – to everyone’s delight – unearthed by archaeologists in 1989.<sup>21</sup> These references to Merida appear in the valuable patristic *opusculum* named as *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*.<sup>22</sup>

## Baetica

As for *Baetica*, the great Isidorus of Sevilla does not seem as if he had promoted any building, despite his role and influence as metropolitan and main constructor of the Visigothic court –which would make it likely that he did undertake some sort of construction activity of which no sources are available. Notwithstanding, his work *Etymologiae* includes a chapter on holy buildings, in particular in the 15<sup>th</sup> book.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, his brother Leandro of Sevilla, a predecessor in the bishopric, had written a rule for nuns and had kick-started education and clerical training,<sup>24</sup> after which he is considered to have had some important construction role or another, although not specifically documented.

## Insulae balearis

Although the Balearic Islands were not considered always part of *Hispania*, and despite being often left apart, they are extremely interesting because in them – and more specifically in the island of Minorca, there is an early documented evidence of a synagogue being converted into a church<sup>25</sup> by orders of Bishop Severus (a. 418), a ‘conversion’ which owed a lot to the arrival of relics from the recently found body of Saint Stephen in Palestine. The episode is to

<sup>21</sup> Pedro Mateos Cruz, ‘Identificación del *xenodochium* fundado por Masona en Mérida’, in *IV Reunión d’Arqueologia Cristiana Hispànica – Lisboa, oct. 1992* (Barcelona, 1995), 309-16.

<sup>22</sup> *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium* IV 6; V 3, ed. Antonio Maya Sánchez, CChr.SL 116 (Turnhout, 1992), 36-8, 50-2: *Post non multum uero temporis interuallo sedis dirute fabricam restaurit ac pulcrius Deo opitulante patrauit [...] Tum deinde mirum dispositionis modum basilicam sanctissime uirginis Eulalie restaurans in melius in ipso sacratissimo temple celsa turrium fastigia produxit in arce [...] Deinde xinodocium fabricauit magnisque patrimoniis ditauit constitutisque ministris uel medicis peregrinorum et egrotantium husibus deseruire preceptum talemque preceptum dedit.*

<sup>23</sup> Isidorus, *Etymologiae* XV 4, ed. Wallace Martin Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum siue Originum* I-II (Oxford, 1911), without pagination: *De aedificiis et agris* 4. *De aedificiis sacris.*

<sup>24</sup> Isidorus, *De uiris illustribus* XXVIII 15-20 (150).

<sup>25</sup> Josep Amengual Batlle, *Els orígens del cristianisme a les Balears* I-II (Mallorca, 1992), 166-7; *id.*, ‘Vestigis d’edificia a les cartes de Consenci i Sever’, in *III Reunión d’Arqueologia Cristiana Hispànica – Maó, sept. 1988* (Barcelona, 1994), 489-99.

be found in an encyclical letter written by Severus himself, where it is describes how the synagogue was demolished in order to build a Christian basilica in its place.<sup>26</sup>

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After this geographical tour, it can be inferred how the episcopal *dignitas* was overwhelming among the Fathers of the Church in Hispania who, in one way or another, promoted Christian buildings. This should come as no surprise if considered the definition of ‘Fathers of the Church’ associated with the bishopric during the post-Nicene period, when the beginning of the construction of churches can be detected. Nor does this stand against the known information in the other provinces of the Empire,<sup>27</sup> where the first community leaders – the bishops – were responsible for safeguarding and enabling a minimal infrastructure for their communities, and therefore were also the main figures behind the promotion and running of these temples.

Obviously, there were many more bishops who promoted Christian constructions in Hispania (which are missing from our text), but it should be remembered that we limited our description to the Fathers of the Church. This said, we also see in a smaller proportion, other Fathers of the Church who were not bishops but abbots and even ascets (as Victorinus of Asán). We also have a non-Hispanic Father, that is Paulinus of Nola, who most likely undertook some activity in Hispania. And, if the investigation of previous studies should be followed, one should include in this analysis King Sisebut inside the Hispanic Patristic Corpus, who is thought to have built two basilicas.<sup>28</sup>

What motivations were behind this type of euergetism then? In as much as the bishop was the leading promoter, it seems clear that one main motivation to build Christian sites was the control over the physical and human landscape, both rural and urban. This control cannot be achieved overnight, but without doubt the increasing presence of Christian buildings in the skyline gives an idea of the new situation and leads the way towards a new Medieval society, a process that in *Hispania* will be swiftly interrupted by the advent of the Muslim

<sup>26</sup> *Severus Minoricensis, Epistula de conuersione Iudaeorum apud Minorcam insulam meritis sancti Stephani facta* XIII 12-3, ed. Scott Bradbury, *Severus of Minorca. Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (Oxford, 1996): *Igitur posteaquam, iudaeis cedentibus, synagoga poiti sumus, nullus ex ea quicquam non dico abstulit, sed nec cogitauit diripere. Omnia eius ornamenta, exceptis tamen libris atque argento, cum ipsa pariter ignis absumpsit.*

<sup>27</sup> For instance, in *Palestina and Arabia*: Leah Di Segni, ‘Epigraphic documentation on building in the provinces of Palestina and Arabia, 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> c.’, in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East II*, JRA Supplementary Series 31 (Rhode Island, 1999), 149-78.

<sup>28</sup> Eulogius Cordobensis, *Liber apologeticus Martyrum* 16, ed. Ioannes Gil, *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, II (Madrid, 1973), 483-4: *et Sisebutus Toletu regale culmen obtinuit. Ecclesia beati Euphrasii apud Iliturgi urbem super tumulum eius aedificatur; Toletu quoque beatae Leocadiae aula miro opere iubente praedicto principe culminea alto extenditur.*

invasion in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century (and this Muslim occupation of *Hispania* lasted little over a century in some parts, but over 8 centuries in others).

What type of construction was preferred by the Hispanic Fathers? It should come as no surprise to see that urban basilicas and monasteries were the most actively promoted constructions. On the other hand, no rural basilicas are accounted for, a fact that is equally unsurprising once we acknowledge the private character of the greater part of these churches found in the countryside – the very least, in terms of their foundation. Monasteries are the preferred foundations and buildings of these Fathers during what we might call the pre-episcopal stage (as seen in the cases of Fructuosus of Braga and St. Ildefonsus of Toledo), while at the time these Fathers had become bishops, they then focused on building urban and suburban basilicas. One exception stands out, that of Quiricus of Barcelona, who being a bishop built a monastery by the tomb of a martyr; or John of Biclaram, who probably in the same circumstances also founded a monastery. Suburban basilicas, associated to necropolis and martyr sites, do not appear to be an especially relevant focus of attention for the Hispanic Fathers, although we do find an exception to this in the martyr basilica of Eulalia of Merida (as seen before) or the basilica where Fructuosus of Braga had been buried.

In general, a natural interest for constructions related to episcopal representation can be observed: especially the main basilica, but also the *baptisterium* and the *domus episcopi*. Finally, a lingering promotion of a *Xenodocium* is documented in Merida (*VSPE*) in order to assist the influx of pilgrims who were visiting the tomb of Eulalia. The substitution of a synagogue for a church in Mahon (Balearic Islands) is striking, although there is no doubt that further cases existed.<sup>29</sup>

To sum up, in *Hispania* since the Late Empire the evidence of Fathers who were involved in construction activities is broadly attested, although it will only be later on during the Visigothic centuries (6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>) when the splendour between patristic and architecture takes hold, with characters such as Ildephon-sus of Toledo, Martin of Dumium, Fructuosus of Braga or some of the more broadly named *Holy Fathers of Mérida*. In opposition to this general tendency, there is a documented case of a charismatic father, Valerius of El Bierzo, who not only did not build, but either became, through his acts and doctrine, into the paradigmatic antithesis of a Christian building promoter, as he considered the euergetical activity (when focused to improve or enlarge an already built Church) a Devil's work.

Nevertheless, it is still unknown about other leading Fathers such as Ossius of Cordoba, Pacian of Barcelona or Gregory of Elvira. However, the variety of known building activities – most likely to be a rather small percentage over the

<sup>29</sup> For instance, the probably one in a *fundus* called *Miliana* owned by Jews in *Passió Mantii*, 7-9, ed. Pilar Riesco Chueca, *Pasionario hispánico* (Sevilla, 1995), 329-31.

total – would contribute to the material transformation of the Roman topography. This analysis proves therefore that, beyond their theological and doctrinal contributions, the Fathers were either in *Hispania* an active promoter of Christian edifices or lead the architectural panorama on a large scale, starring a decisive position within the changes that swept through the urban and rural landscapes of the Middle Ages.



# **The Significance of the Senses: An Exploration into the Multi-Sensory Experience of Faith for the Lay Population of Christianity during the Fourth and Fifth Centuries C.E.**

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## ABSTRACT

Sense perception in relation to faith, specifically within the post-legalisation context of late antiquity, is an area that has been increasingly studied since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During this time a particular trend in modern, patristic scholarship has emerged: the ‘material or corporeal turn’.<sup>1</sup> This ‘turn’ refers to a shift in Christianity’s physical sensibility as occurring post-legalisation, marking late antique as distinct from earlier Christianity. In *The Art of Listening* Carol Harrison makes a useful distinction between the two terms ‘material’ and ‘corporeal’.<sup>2</sup> This article works from the premise that these two terms are separate and distinct. Following its legalisation Christianity certainly underwent a ‘material turn’. Legalisation had a truly positive effect upon the relationship between the religion and materiality. The corporeality of the Christian faith however had been inherent since its beginnings and as such Christianity cannot be accurately referred to as taking a ‘corporeal turn’ following its legalisation. Christianity did however enjoy a revived employment and an intensified engagement of the body and its senses post-313 C.E. This article asks, how did such employment and engagement of the body and its senses impact upon the formulation of the early Christians’ faith? This article will explore the ‘multi-sensory experience of faith’ defined as ‘the way in which the senses actively participated in formulating the faith of the early Christians’ specifically within the later rites of initiation. I argue that in late antiquity the physical, bodily senses were considered to be intrinsically formational, transformational and revelatory. The rite of initiation existed as a complete assault of the senses: it was through the senses that the catechumen’s faith was formed during the rite, impressed upon his/her mind, heart and soul and sealed by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> This scholarly concept has been advanced by Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (California, 2006); Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (California, 2000) and Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2013), 33-6.

## **Introduction: Why explore faith from the vantage point of sense perception?**

Utter ambivalence, severe apprehension and grave discomfort aptly describe early Christian attitudes towards the physical, bodily senses. From its very beginnings Christianity was a religion fundamentally uncertain about the body and significantly ill at ease with its sensorium, precisely because the senses presented Christians with a double-edged predicament. On the one hand, the senses were recognised by the earliest Christians as that which bound them to the material world, dictated enslavement to temporal and spatial limitations and ultimately prohibited a full and true experience of God. Whilst prior to the Fall it was believed that human beings enjoyed a direct spiritual perception of God, however, as a result of sin humanity entered into the corporeal realm in which the inferior and indirect means of sensory perception prevailed. The senses therefore drew attention to humanity's inherent imperfection and served as a consistent reminder of human 'fallenness'. On the other hand, the senses were acknowledged, quite remarkably, as the medium through which God had revealed Himself to humanity and transformed human beings. Christ approached humanity through corporeality, within the material world, thus making it the precise situation in which human beings were able to encounter and perceive the divine.

Within the fourth century this acute degree of ambiguity surrounding the role of the physical senses was further accentuated. Following the conversion of Constantine in 312 C.E. and the subsequent legalisation of Christianity by the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E. a tension between preaching and practice became evident.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the educated religious elite taught the lay Christian population the significance of physical experience and the importance of the body, they themselves practised and praised asceticism as the new ideal. The ascetic movement was notably accompanied by the lingering tendency to define Christianity as a religion, which was fundamentally hostile to the body and physical experience. The extant texts detailing fourth century Christian worship and practice are predominantly from the religious elite. As a consequence, the experience of faith specifically by means of sense perception, which was the pathway for the majority of early Christians, is largely undocumented and unexplored in the literature of late antiquity. Thus this paper explores faith from the vantage point of sense perception, in an attempt to uncover a different kind of experience and ultimately to make a start from the standpoint of the silent, lay majority of late antique Christianity.

<sup>3</sup> Both Christian and pagan writers support the popular narrative that Constantine declared himself a Christian shortly after his decisive victory at Milvian Bridge, to the north of Rome over Maxentius, on October 28<sup>th</sup> 312 C.E. Debate remains over why or when this conversion took place. This study accepts Alister E. McGrath's assertion that 'whatever the reasons for the conversion and no matter whether it dates from before or after the battle of the Milvian Bridge, the reality and consequences of this conversion are not in doubt', *Christianity: An Introduction* (Chichester, 2015), 129.

## The historical context

During the fourth and fifth centuries the Christian rites of initiation developed into highly elaborate, striking and indeed formidable multi-sensory experiences shrouded by the *disciplina arcani*. The practice served to conceal the sacred mysteries, that is, the sacraments of the Christian faith from the uninitiated. The early Fathers believed that an individual was considered incapable of receiving the knowledge of Christianity profitably without first experiencing the mystery of the sacraments themselves. It was considered necessary that faith preceded a reasoned account, therefore the catechumen's experience of initiation was explained and rationalised to them in the week following the ceremony. Hence the experience of being initiated into the Church was wholly a sensory experience in which the individual's Christian faith was formed. Within the late antique church the 'Mass of the Catechumens' preceded the 'Mass of the Faithful'. Thus those who had not yet been baptised were required to depart from the Church before the Eucharistic part of the liturgy took place. This division served to intensify the curiosity of the catechumens, causing anticipation and suspense to accrue amongst the catechumens in the preceding weeks. The actual experience of baptism was therefore one of heightened drama, similar to a theatrical performance in which the catechumen was the protagonist. Throughout initiation the story of faith was spectacularly re-enacted with each of the mysteries of the Christian faith being graphically and superbly revealed to the catechumen. At each stage of the initiation ceremony the catechumen's senses were engaged, incited and assaulted; each sense was intended to inform another, weaving an intricate web of interrelated sensory experiences. Of course in baptism, as in other circumstances, individuals rarely perceive or experience things by means of one of the senses. The five senses will however be addressed individually, in connection with one particular stage of initiation, in order to demonstrate the significant role each played in the overall multi-sensory experience.

## Sound – the Creed

The catechumen's multi-sensory experience of initiation began with the formal process of 'handing over' and 'handing back' the Creed – a highly rigorous and demanding auditory event in which the individual was expected to both hear and be heard. The Creed was a precisely worded formula and in the exact wording of the Creed existed a sacred composition reserved in its totality for the ears of the initiates. The sense of sound was thus understood to be intrinsically revelatory, as on hearing the Creed the awe-inspiring edifice of the Christian Scriptures was revealed to the catechumen. The catechumen was therefore restricted from both writing down the words of the Creed and speaking the

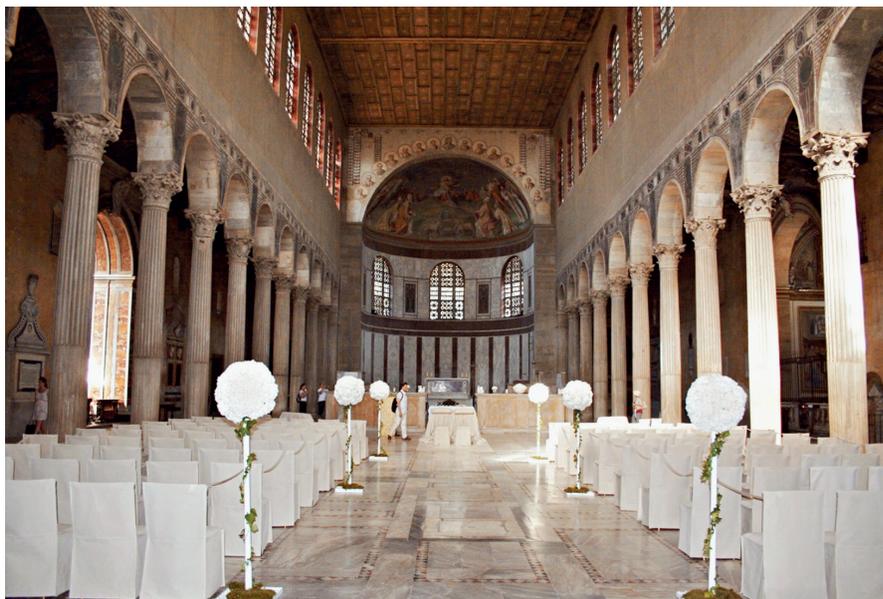


Figure 1. The interior of the Basilica Santa Sabina, Rome (author's own).

formula in front of the uninitiated. The words of the Creed were typically 'handed over' to the catechumen by the bishop at the end of the fourth week of Lent, two weeks before Easter: the bishop distinctively recited the Creed phrase by phrase, in order that the catechumen not only heard but carefully listened to the sacred words. The bishop's slow and clear voice would have reverberated effectively within the stone, brick and marble interiors of early Churches such as Santa Sabina (Figure 1), amplifying and intensifying both the sound of the sacred words and the auditory experience of the individual. The 'handing over' of the Creed thus drew the catechumen into an interpersonal and even intimate dimension of the sacrament: through their echoes the words of the Creed came to physically surround the catechumen and as such the individual became literally caught up in the sacramental event. The auditory experience of receiving the Creed was thus both impressive and emotive; with the words themselves being endowed with power the experience was designed to make the listener physically tremble in excitement and awe.

Once the words had been disclosed to the catechumen the bishop delivered a series of sermons, designed to expound the meaning of the Creed and thus clarify the importance of that which the individual had just heard.<sup>4</sup> Finally the

<sup>4</sup> Cyril devotes 13 out of his 18 Catechetical Lectures to a clause-by-clause exposition of the Creed.

catechumen would have listened attentively as the bishop recommended various techniques designed to assist the individual in memorising the Creed, the most common of which being the exercise of repeatedly listening to and then reciting back the sacred words. The bishop thus advised the catechumen to both regularly hear as well as speak the Creed in order to commit it to memory. In this way the words of the Creed were intended to echo within the catechumen's soul just as they had done within the walls of the Church in which they were first received. The intervening week between the 'handing over' and the 'handing back' of the Creed was designated as the set time for the catechumen to learn and memorise the words. With the help of his/her sponsors the catechumen was expected to spend the week persistently and scrupulously committing the Creed to memory until they felt the words become permanently engraved upon their mind and inscribed upon their heart. The terms 'inscribe' and 'engrave' were used by Cyril of Jerusalem in his pre-baptismal instruction to the catechumens, in order to emphasise the importance of this requirement and the extent to which it was necessary to carry it out:<sup>5</sup> '[I] want you to memorise it word for word, and to recite it very carefully among yourselves. Do not write it down on paper, but inscribe it in your memories and in your hearts [...] listen to the Creed and memorise it [...] "hold fast to the traditions" (2Thess. 2:15) which will now be entrusted to you; and engrave them on "the tablet of your heart" (Prov. 7:3)'.<sup>6</sup>

The desired effect of such action was to allow the words of the Creed to effectively impress themselves upon the mind of the catechumen, forming the foundation of the Christian faith within the heart of the individual. The 'handing back' ceremony thus acted as the catechumen's opportunity to publically demonstrate to the rest of the faithful community that he/she had inscribed the Creed upon his/her memory and thus engraved it upon his/her heart. Subsequently, it was by means of the public recitation of the Creed, 'as by a password', that the catechumen was 'recognised' as a member of the Church fellowship.<sup>7</sup> The sound of the words of the Creed thus marked the beginning of the individual's transformation from that of a catechumen into a Christian. Through the auditory sensation of the Creed a space of divine presence, of encounter and exchange was established and opened to the individual as they began their transition from outside to within the faithful community.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine alternatively referred to the Creed as being written 'in' the catechumens' hearts, *Sermon 212.2*.

<sup>6</sup> Cyril, *Catecheses*, 5.12, Edward S.J. Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minnesota, 1994), 113-4.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine, *Sermon 214.12*, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 38 (Washington, D.C., 1947), 142.

## Sight – the font

The rite of initiation was in many ways a visually charged event. The interiors of the early Churches were not only lavishly decorated with mosaics and frescoes depicting Jesus, renowned Christian figures and biblical stories, but also carefully constructed, so as to, utilise the effects of both natural and candle light. Striking ocular experiences were employed as visual cues to explore the significant, theological motives of baptism, the most prominent visual cue being the shape and appearance of the baptismal font. The font had been reserved from the eyes of the catechumen up until this point, in order that it may be revealed at the precise moment at which it would achieve its maximum impact. The shapes of baptismal fonts characteristically resembled either that of a tomb, coffin or grave and thus were symbolically and theologically connected with death and the afterlife. Or alternatively they were cruciform-shaped, evoking the paschal symbolism of initiation and enabling the catechumen to identify with the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ. The structural designs of fourth and fifth century baptismal fonts concretely reflected the teaching that baptism was a transition from death to life, which entailed the catechumen being reborn and thus brought to new life through and in Christ. The catechumen's first visual experience of the font was therefore both shocking and alarming, as on seeing the font for the first time it dawned upon the individual that the open tomb before them was their own. The individual realised that they must soon willingly go to their grave, as in order share 'in the likeness'<sup>8</sup> of Christ's resurrection the catechumen must first participate 'in the likeness'<sup>9</sup> of his death and burial.

As the rite progressed the catechumen would have watched as the bishop consecrated the waters in the font: the catechumen would have seen the bishop first perform an exorcism to drive the devil out of the water, followed by the invocation of the Trinity (the prayer over the water). Ambrose explains the significance of these actions to his catechumens in his First Sermon on the Sacraments: '[W]hat is the meaning of this? You saw the water, but not all waters have a curative power: only that water has it which has the grace of Christ. There is a difference between the matter and the consecration, between the action and its effect. The action belongs to the water, its effect to the Holy Spirit. The water does not heal unless the Spirit descends and consecrates the water'.<sup>10</sup> That which the catechumen physically saw take place during their baptism was not all that occurred, as the catechumen was not simply baptised with water but baptised by the Holy Spirit. The action of the water in cleansing

<sup>8</sup> Cyril, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 2.7, Edward S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London, 2000), 175.

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

<sup>10</sup> Ambrose, *On the Sacraments*, 1.5.15, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Rites* (1994), 105.

the body, which was physically seen by the catechumen, had a counter-part, an effect that was not visible to the human eye, that is, 'salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>11</sup> Ambrose develops this point further with the following explanation: '[Y]ou saw all you could see with your eyes of the body, all that is open to human sight. You saw what is seen, but not what is done. What is unseen is much greater than what is seen: "because the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (2*Cor.* 4:18)'.<sup>12</sup>

In his third Catecheses Cyril of Jerusalem refers to baptism as a process of purification that is two-fold; incorporating and giving significance to both the actions of baptism (that which is seen) and their effects (that which is unseen). Cyril explains that a two-fold process is necessary 'since human beings have a double nature and are composed of soul and body'; logically 'the purification is two-fold also'.<sup>13</sup> The spiritual transformation from death to life, which the catechumen underwent during baptism was mirrored and heightened by their physical transition from darkness to light: the rite began in the darkness of night and ended with the first light of day. The structural design of early Churches typically included a dominant central axis, called the nave, which led the eyes of the catechumen from the entrance to the apse. Clerestory windows were located high up on either side of the central axis, so as to provide direct lighting into the nave (Figure 2, 3). The Church would have been lit by candlelight as the catechumen entered, with their vision limited the usually subordinate senses of touch, smell, taste and sound were sharpened and intensified. However, as the catechumen arose from the baptismal font for the final time the first light of day would have begun to stream into the room. As the light danced on the glass tiles of the many mosaics the walls within which they stood would have shimmered and appeared as if to float. In this way the catechumen was guided visually through their spiritual transformation: the opulent effect, which lighting had within the interiors of early churches made the completion of the catechumen's transformation unmistakably clear.

### **Touch – the triple immersion**

The 'baptism proper'<sup>14</sup> was an experience intended to be highly somatic for the catechumen, involving a triple immersion into the baptismal waters. At each moment the catechumen's body was physically touched, an experience which was intended to resonate throughout every aspect of their being, touching their

<sup>11</sup> Cyril, *Catecheses*, 3.4, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 90.

<sup>12</sup> Ambrose, *On the Sacraments*, 1.3.15, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Rites* (1994), 104.

<sup>13</sup> Cyril, *Catecheses*, 3.4, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 90.

<sup>14</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, 2009), 478.



Figure 2. The interior of the Basilica San Bartolomeo, Rome (author's own).



Figure 3. The interior of the Basilica Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome (author's own).

soul, heart and mind in an intangible, yet palpable way. Prior to the commencement of this process the catechumen was instructed to strip naked, so as to ensure no material barrier would separate the catechumen's body from the baptismal waters. Hence the catechumen was required to present their body as vulnerable and physically exposed, a point made explicitly clear by Zeno of Verona: '[Y]ou will indeed go down naked into the font'.<sup>15</sup> Baptismal nudity

<sup>15</sup> Zeno of Verona, *Invitatio fontis*, 1.23, Gordon P. Jeanes, *The Day Has Come!: Easter and Baptism in Zeno of Verona* (Collegeville, 1995), 178.

was intended to bring to the foreground certain theological motifs, whilst dramatically heightening the somatic experience of the catechumen.<sup>16</sup> This point is evidenced in the words of Theodore of Mopsuestia;

Then you come forward to be baptised. First you strip completely. Originally Adam was ‘naked and not ashamed’ (*Gen.* 2:25) but once he had disobeyed the commandment and become mortal he needed a covering; you, on the other hand, are to present yourself for baptism in order to be born again and become immortal in anticipation, and so you must first take off your clothes.<sup>17</sup>

Theodore clearly identified the catechumen’s removal of clothing as representing the eradication of their old identity in anticipation of ‘receiving the cover of immortality’.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Augustine exhorted his catechumens to strip off their old clothes which signified their old nature, so as to prepare themselves to be clothed with new, white garments symbolic of their new life in Christ.<sup>19</sup> For Cyril however, baptismal nudity had further theological value as it provided a means to identifying with Christ on the cross setting the tone for the ‘baptism proper’;<sup>20</sup> ‘[O]nce you had taken it (your tunic) off, you were naked, in this way imitating Christ naked on the cross, who in his nakedness “disarmed the principalities and powers” and boldly “triumphed over them” on the tree of the cross’.<sup>21</sup> Through the ‘baptism proper’<sup>22</sup> the catechumen further identified with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.<sup>23</sup> The majority of the Fathers describe the process as involving the bishop laying his hand upon the catechumen’s head and plunging the individual into the baptismal waters three consecutive times.<sup>24</sup> Each of the three submersions was preceded by a question. Ambrose explains the process aptly;

You were asked: ‘Do you believe in God the Father almighty?’ You replied: ‘I believe’, and you were immersed: that is buried. You were asked for the second time: ‘Do you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and in his cross?’ You replied: ‘I believe’, and you

<sup>16</sup> Baptismal nudity is evidenced extensively in the baptismal homilies of late antiquity. Cyril, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 2.2, 20.2; Zeno of Verona, *Invitatio fontis*, 1.23; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Baptismal Homilies*, 3.8; John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions*, 2.24. This argument is supported by Laurie Guy, “‘Naked’ Baptism in the Early Church: The Rhetoric and the Reality”, *The Journal of Religious History* 27 (2003), 133-42, 134; Robin M. Jensen, *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism* (Leiden, 2011), 158.

<sup>17</sup> Theodore, *Baptismal Homilies*, 3.8, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Rites* (1994), 184-5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 3.26, 185.

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, *Sermon* 216.2.

<sup>20</sup> E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 478.

<sup>21</sup> Cyril, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 2.2, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 173.

<sup>22</sup> E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 478.

<sup>23</sup> Cyril, *Catecheses*, 3.12.

<sup>24</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem is the exception, *Mystagogic Catechesis*, 2.4 specifies that the catechumen submerged themselves into the baptismal waters. Additionally, there appears to not have been a triple confession, one preceding each of the submersions, but rather a single confession of the Trinity before the triple submersion

were immersed: which means that you were buried with Christ. For one who is buried with Christ rises again with Christ. You were asked a third time: 'Do you believe also in the Holy Spirit?' You replied: 'I believe', and you were immersed a third time, so that the threefold confession might absolve the manifold lapses of the past.<sup>25</sup>

The catechumen would have been fully submerged and thus would have felt the baptismal waters completely encompass his/her body. Each time the catechumen was thrust into the water by the bishop, they would have felt the cool water cover their body followed by the cold air of dusk as they arose. The triple immersion thus created a tactile, somatic experience that was rooted at the heart of the rite of initiation and which notably pointed beyond itself to a greater, yet imperceptible experience. Whilst the waters touched, encapsulated and thus baptised the body of the catechumen, the Holy Spirit touched and thus baptised the catechumen's soul. What the catechumen felt was therefore not simply the waters, but the presence of the divine touching their soul – this point is explicated by Cyril; '[F]or just as one immersed in the waters in Baptism is completely encompassed by the water, so they too were completely baptised by the Spirit. The water encompasses the body externally, but the Holy Spirit baptises the soul perfectly within'.<sup>26</sup> Touch to the early Christian mind was therefore associated with power, healing and perfecting, which was rooted in the healing ministry of Jesus who restored life through touch. The Bishop's hands became associated with the healing touch of Jesus. As Augustine explains the 'laying on of the hands'<sup>27</sup> developed as the rite especially associated with the gift of the Holy Spirit: 'The Holy Spirit is given by the imposition of hands in the Catholic church only'.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, as Zach Thomas argues 'touch became a symbol for the interaction between levels'<sup>29</sup>, the laying on of hands represented a prayer specifically for the imparting of the seven gifts of the Spirit.<sup>30</sup> As the individual arose from the baptismal waters for the final time their cold, wet bodies were rewarded with the texture of delicate cloth as they were covered with white garments.

## Smell – holy oil

During the fourth and fifth centuries scented oils gained sacramental usage within Christian worship and practice. The use of holy oil flourished within the rites of initiation, resulting in the ceremony becoming a highly odoriferous

<sup>25</sup> Ambrose, *On the Sacraments*, 2.7.20, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Rites* (1994), 118.

<sup>26</sup> Cyril, *Catecheses*, 17.14, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 64 (Washington, D.C., 2000), 105.

<sup>27</sup> Augustine, *On Baptism*, 5.23.33, Rev. J.R. King in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1, 4, ed. Philip. Schaff (Peabody, MA, 1994 [reprint]), 461.

<sup>28</sup> Augustine, *On Baptism*, 3.16.21, *ibid.* 442.

<sup>29</sup> Zach Thomas, *Healing Touch: The Church's Forgotten Language* (Louisville, 1994), 30.

<sup>30</sup> Augustine, *Sermon* 249.3.

affair throughout which the individual was assaulted by powerful and pervasive, yet fleeting scents. Cyril of Jerusalem spoke exceptionally vividly to his catechumens of the smells they should expect to encounter during the course of their baptism: '[A]lready dear candidates for enlightenment, the scent of blessedness has come upon you; already you are gathering spiritual flowers to weave into heavenly crowns; already the perfume of the Holy Spirit has breathed over you'.<sup>31</sup>

It is important to note that the catechumens of the fourth and fifth century would have unconsciously brought to their experience of baptism a whole reserve of understanding and knowledge of scents, along with a wealth of previous olfactory experience. As Constance Classen et al. argues 'smell is a cultural and hence a social and historical phenomenon'.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the ancient Christians would have shared in the common olfactory sensibilities and practices of the time. Susan Ashbrook Harvey argues that 'Christianity emerged in a world where smells mattered',<sup>33</sup> where good smells were associated with all that was positive in life and beyond, whilst bad smells were associated with all that was negative. As a consequence, it can be argued that early Christianity utilised the common, cultural orientation towards smells for its own ritualistic purposes. Christianity certainly demonstrated a heightened interest in the fragrant substance of holy oil and the olfactory experiences, which resulted from their employment within the rites.

The role of scent in the rite of initiation is most clearly recognised in the ritual distinction drawn between the oils used for the pre- and the post-baptismal anointing. Whilst plain olive oil was typically used for the pre-baptismal anointing of the catechumens, perfumed Myron or chrism (holy oil) was generally preserved for the post-baptismal anointing of the newly baptised individuals.<sup>34</sup> The catechumen's sense of smell would have been particularly incited during the post-baptismal anointing. This stark olfactory shift from unscented to scented oil was intended to guide the individual through the rite of initiation, granting perceptible form to the invisible transformation they underwent. Scents lack clear boundaries and possess the ability to transgress boundaries; they are disembodied, undefined and elusive. It was due this precise nature of scents that they were able to act as effective instruments of transformation during the rite of initiation. Therefore, as Holly Dugan argues olfaction 'blurred distinctions between bodily boundaries and environments' and as such 'though external to the body' scents were able to pervade the individual's physical exterior.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Cyril, *Procatechesis*, 25, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 79.

<sup>32</sup> Constance Classen et al., *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London, 1994), 3.

<sup>33</sup> S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting* (2006), 1.

<sup>34</sup> Whilst this was the case for the majority of the fathers Chrysostom notably chose to use perfumed Myron during the second pre-immersion anointing.

<sup>35</sup> Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, 2011), 11.

The individual's perfumed condition following their anointing signified a state of grace, a state of being within the human-divine encounter and as such a bridging of worlds between which qualities could be transferred. Cyril of Jerusalem devoted an entire lecture to explicating the power and function of the holy oil used specifically in the baptismal rite. Cyril rooted his understanding in the baptism of Christ explaining that when Christ came up out of the river Jordan he was anointed, though it was not 'a human anointing with bodily olive-oil or *muron*',<sup>36</sup> but rather by God with the 'the Holy Spirit [...] the oil of gladness'.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, when candidates undergo baptism and are anointed with holy oil, they become 'partakers and fellows of Christ',<sup>38</sup> precisely because they have been 'imbued with divine presence'.<sup>39</sup> This point is evidenced in Cyril's *Mystagogical Catecheses*;

For just as after the invocation of the Holy Spirit the Eucharistic bread is no longer ordinary bread, but the body of Christ, so too with the invocation this holy *muron* is no longer ordinary or, so to say common ointment, but Christ's grace which imparts to us his own divinity through the presence of the Holy Spirit. To symbolize this truth you are anointed on your forehead and on you other senses. Your body is anointed with the visible *muron*, while your soul is sanctified by the life-giving Spirit.<sup>40</sup>

The lingering fragrance of the holy oil was intended to exist as a reminder to the individual of the transformation they had undergone and the human-divine encounter within which they now existed.

### Taste – the Eucharist

The culmination of the individual's multi-sensory experience of initiation was marked by their participation in the highly gustatory event of the congregation's weekly Eucharistic celebrations. Up until this moment the sacrament had remained faithfully concealed from the individual, hence on approaching the altar for the first time the newly baptised would have been overcome by feelings of joy, anticipation and awe. As Everett Ferguson explains, the individual's first experience of the Eucharist was understood to represent their 'acceptance into the fellowship of the Church' and thus indicate the Church's recognition of such individuals as 'new Christians'.<sup>41</sup> The individual's first Eucharist therefore marked the completion of their transformation in identity,

<sup>36</sup> Cyril, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 3.2, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 176.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 177.

<sup>38</sup> Cyril, *Mysatogical Catecheses*, 3.3, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting* (2006), 265.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

<sup>40</sup> Cyril, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 3.3, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 177.

<sup>41</sup> E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 890; 674.

with the sense of taste acting as an indicator of spiritual maturity. At the altar the individual was presented with broken bread and wine mixed with water, which they were instructed to eat and drink. The bishop would have urged the new Christian to experience the taste of the Eucharist proleptically as that which they consumed was not merely bread and wine, but in fact the body and blood of Christ. In his *Mystagogical Catecheses* Cyril of Jerusalem invited his catechumens to ‘taste and see [...] the goodness of the Lord’.<sup>42</sup> This invitation was however accompanied by a warning against entrusting judgement to the bodily palate. Rather the catechumen should entrust their ‘unwavering faith’, for in tasting, they did not taste bread and wine, ‘but the antitypical Body and Blood of Christ’.<sup>43</sup> At this point it became clear to the individual that prior to their baptism they were unable to partake in the Eucharistic celebrations precisely because faith was required to comprehend the sacrament. Augustine who quotes Isaiah 7 in Sermon 272 evidences this point; ‘Unless you believe, you will not understand’ (*Is.* 7:9)<sup>44</sup> As it is through baptism that an individual’s faith is formed it logically follows that the mystery of the Eucharist should remain concealed from the individual until the conclusion of their initiation. Thus it was only once the catechumen’s baptism had been completed, that is, once their faith had been fully formed, impressed upon their mind, heart and soul and sealed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that the bread and wine became the flesh of Christ to the mouth of the individual.

It was therefore through the sense of taste that Christ’s presence was established during the Eucharist, in an immediate and intimate manner. Ella Johnson argues that the sense of taste acts as the medium through which human beings are able to ‘make the most direct physical contact with the body of God’, as: ‘[T]o taste the body of God in Eucharistic communion is to gain wisdom of God’.<sup>45</sup> The sense of taste therefore established ‘a communion with the divine’<sup>46</sup>, as on ingesting the sacramental food the individual’s physical body was penetrated by divine presence. It was understood that on tasting the sacramental food the individual became fully incorporated into the body of Christ. Therefore, it was specifically through the sense of taste that the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ was fully disclosed to the individual. The Apostolic tradition also distinctively describes the initial Eucharistic meal of the newly baptised as including a mixture of milk and honey, indicative of the Promised Land. Hence through baptism individuals were understood to have become ‘the

<sup>42</sup> Cyril, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, 5.20, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Cyril* (2000), 186.

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

<sup>44</sup> Augustine, *Sermon 272.1, The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 95 (Washington, D.C., 1997), 494.

<sup>45</sup> Ella Johnson, ‘To taste (Sapere) Wisdom (Sapientia): Eucharistic Devotion in the Writings of Gertrude of Helfta’, *Viator* 44 (2013), 175-99, 176.

<sup>46</sup> Bissera V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium* (Pennsylvania, 2010), 51.

heirs of the promise<sup>47</sup> with the sweet taste of the milk and honey during the Eucharist giving them ‘a foretaste of its fulfilment’.<sup>48</sup> The human body therefore became the location for and the manifestation of the human-divine encounter. As Heidi Oberholtzer Lee argues, the physical body served ‘as the locus of change and the external proof of an internal metamorphosis of the soul’.<sup>49</sup> During the ‘baptism proper’<sup>50</sup> the individual was understood to have died with Christ and been reborn through him into new life; it was through the Eucharist that the eternal and ceaseless nature of the individual’s new life in Christ was confirmed. This point is evidenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia who refers to the sacramental bread and wine as the ‘food of immortality’<sup>51</sup> stating: ‘Since we have received sacramental birth through the death of Christ our Lord, it is fitting that we should also receive from his death the food of immortality’.<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

During the rite of initiation the catechumen became physically caught up in a dramatic re-enactment of the story of faith, which had a formational and transformational effect upon their identity. As Edward Yarnold explains, ‘the procedure seems to be calculated explicitly to stir up emotions of spiritual exaltation and awe, which will help to make of baptism a life-long profound conversion’.<sup>53</sup> Through the catechumen’s sensory experiences and their visceral, embodied response the catechumen was able to encounter God and gain knowledge of Him. Thus bodily sensation was understood to be intrinsically revelatory, pointing beyond the spectacle of baptism itself.

<sup>47</sup> John D.M. Derrett, *Studies in the New Testament: The Sea-Change of the Old Testament in the New* (Leiden, 1989), 182.

<sup>48</sup> Aime G. Martimort, *The Sacraments* (Collegeville, 1988), 61.

<sup>49</sup> Heidi Oberholtzer Lee, ‘“The Hungry Soul”: Sacramental Appetite and the Transformation of Taste in Early American Travel Writing’, *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 3 (2005), 65-93, 93.

<sup>50</sup> E. Ferguson, *Baptism* (2009), 478.

<sup>51</sup> Theodore, *Baptismal Homilies*, 4.6, E.S.J. Yarnold, *Rites* (1994), 204.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> E.S.J. Yarnold, *Rites* (1994), 60.



# *Adventus, Occursus, and the Christianization of Rome*

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## ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of his well-publicized vision (and eventual conversion), Constantine again made history, though on a lesser scale, when he supposedly refused to ascend the Capitol to offer sacrifices as the culmination of what seems to have been an *adventus* (an arrival ceremony) at Rome. After Constantine, the *adventus* at Rome was ostensibly Christianized as offending religious elements were steadily removed and replaced by Christian equivalents – sacrifices were supplanted by prayer and the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol was replaced by St. Peter's. If, however, one looks to the *occursus*, the assembly of Romans that greeted the arriving dignitary, a less radical story may be told. The composition of the welcoming party is especially revealing as ancient descriptions of *adventus* ceremonies construed the *occursus* as a civic self-presentation, as a kind of urban image whose transformations may also map other changes, even if only conceptually. That is to say, if the *occursus* represented the city, even if only in the imagination of the author, audience(s), and even readers, an examination of its gradual Christianization reveals something about the Christianization of Rome. From Constantine to Honorius, the *occursus* seems to have remained remarkably traditional: the senate and the Roman people (SPQR) sometimes accompanied by colorfully described others greeted arriving rulers. Descriptions of the *occursus* first changed only in 500 when bishop Symmachus joined SPQR to greet the Ostrogoth king Theodoric, after a disputed episcopal election resolved in favor of Symmachus by Theodoric. In the near century between Honorius and Theodoric, Rome had changed: in particular, the bishop managed to achieve a measure parity with the extravagantly wealthy traditional aristocracy, and so his presence in the *occursus* would have been 'natural' or, at least, unsurprising. After Theodoric's arrival, the increasingly scarce evidence reveals an increasingly Christianized *occursus*, culminating in the arrival of Constans II in 663, who was greeted by the pope and his clergy in place of the now defunct Senate. While Constantine may have abandoned the Capitol, much of the remaining ceremony remained deeply classical into the long Late Antiquity, revealing a conservative and extended process of Christianization, at least in the literary imagination if not also in ceremonial practice.

Though victorious generals, civic leaders, republican dynasts, and early emperors had long been ceremoniously greeted upon their return to Rome, the *adventus* ceremony at Rome seems to have become more prominent or, at least, more frequently described in late antiquity when emperors were no longer

normally resident in the city.<sup>1</sup> In a ‘typical’ imperial arrival ceremony, a group of civic dignitaries and a large swath of citizens welcomed the arriving ruler outside the city walls, conducted him to the Forum where he addressed the assembled crowds, led him up to the Capitol where he would give thanks to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Rome’s sovereign god, and then escorted him to the Palatine, the seat of the imperial palace. Such a ritualized arrival was thought to encapsulate Roman political ideology in a stylized display of relations between ruler and ruled, the consensus of the ruled, the importance of the *pax deorum*, and Rome as *fons et origo* of Roman imperium.<sup>2</sup>

Constantine may have broken with tradition in 312, 315, or 326 when he seemingly refused to ascend the Capitol to honor Jupiter. This ceremonial rupture fundamentally altered the arrival ceremony, or so it is thought. After Constantine, the *adventus* at Rome was ostensibly Christianized as offending religious elements, like sacrifices on the Capitol, were steadily removed and replaced by Christian equivalents, like a visit to St. Peter’s in place of the temple of Capitoline Jupiter. However, looking away from the bright lights of imperial political theater, a consideration of the *occursus*, the assembly of Romans that greeted the arriving ruler which descriptions of *adventus* ceremonies typically construe as a symbolic representation or image of the city, suggests a less radical and much more drawn out process.

From Constantine to Honorius, the *occursus* was nearly always conjured as the Senate and Roman People (SPQR) with or without assorted others. Only in 500 did the *occursus* begin to change with the addition of the bishop, who had during the course of the fifth century achieved financial and ceremonial parity with the super-rich traditional aristocracy of Rome, while the itinerary may also have changed with the addition of an extramural stop at St. Peter’s. By the

<sup>1</sup> See Hendrik Dey, *The Afterlife of the Roman City: Architecture and Ceremony in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2014), esp. 57-64, on the importance of the *adventus* procession and its urban stage in late antiquity.

<sup>2</sup> On the *adventus* generally, see Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 1* (Berkeley, 1981), 17-89; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge, 1986); Pierre Dufraigne, *Adventus Augusti, Adventus Christi: Recherche sur l’exploitation idéologique et littéraire d’un cérémonial dans l’antiquité tardive*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 141 (Paris, 1994); and Joachim Lehnen, *Adventus Principis: Untersuchungen zu Sinngehalt und Zeremoniell der Kaiserankunft in den Städten des Imperium Romanum*, Prismata 7 (Frankfurt am Main, 1996). For the *adventus* at Rome in particular, see Stéphane Benoist, *Rome, le prince et la Cité: Pouvoir impérial et cérémonies publiques (I<sup>er</sup> siècle av. – début du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle apr. J.-C.)*, Le Nœud Gordien (Paris, 2005), 25-101; Mark Humphries, ‘From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, Space, and Authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great’, in Kate Cooper and Julia Hillner (eds), *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900* (Cambridge, 2007), 21-58; and Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner, ‘Trajan und die symbolische Kommunikation bei kaiserlichen Rombesuchen in der Spätantike’, in Ralf Berwald and Christian Witschel (eds), *Rom in der Spätantike: Historische Erinnerung im städtischen Raum*, HABES 51 (Stuttgart, 2012), 33-59.

mid-seventh century, after the final demise of the Senate of Rome as an institution by the end of the sixth century, the bishop and his clergy comprised the entire *occursus*, which certainly led the emperor Constans II to St. Peter's. The bishop of Rome seems to have had to wait even longer, until 799, for his own fully ritualized arrival ceremony – though bishops were greeted by ad hoc crowds as early as the mid-fourth century. By contrast, bishops and even relics by the late-fourth century and emperors by the mid-fifth century were welcomed by Christianized *adventus* ceremonies elsewhere, notably Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> While Constantine may have abandoned the Capitol, much of the remaining ceremony at Rome remained deeply classical into the long Late Antiquity, revealing a conservative and extended process of Christianization, at least in the literary imagination if not also in ceremonial practice.

### I. Constantine, the Capitol, and the *occursus*

After his 'epochal' vision before the equally epic battle of the Milvian bridge, Constantine might have made history again, though on a much smaller scale, when he seemingly refused to ascend the Capitol during what *might* have been an *adventus*. According to Zosimus (*ca.* 500), a 'pagan' historian with a keen dislike of Constantine:

When an ancestral festival arrived during which it was necessary for the army to go up to the Capitol and perform the customary rites, for fear of the soldiers Constantine took part in the festival; but when the Egyptian [perhaps code for Osius of Cordoba, Constantine's advisor on Christianity] sent him an apparition which reviled without restraint this ascent to the Capitol, he stood aloof from the sacred rites and aroused the hatred of the senate and the people.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to a phantom from the Egyptian, Constantine may also have been moved by Christian episcopal sentiments like canon 59 ascribed to the Synod of Elvira (*ca.* 309 CE), which forbade any Christian to ascend the Capitol to view the image or to sacrifice like a 'pagan' (meaning, of course, that some self-identified Christians did just that).<sup>5</sup> Whatever Constantine's motivations,

<sup>3</sup> See n. 40 below for bishops and relics; and Const. Por., *De cer.* 416-7, ed. J. Rieske, CSHB (Bonn, 1829) for what may be the earliest Christianized imperial *adventus* during the accession ceremony of emperor Leo I (457) at Constantinople based on, it seems, a ceremony from the first half of the fourth century; on which see Franz Alto Bauer, 'Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity', *AAAH* 15 (2001), 27-59, esp. 40-6.

<sup>4</sup> Zos. 2.29.5, ed. François Paschoud (Paris, 2003); on which see the debate between Augusto Fraschetti, *La conversione: Da Roma pagana a Roma cristiana* (Rome, 1999), 9-75; and François Paschoud, *Eunape, Olympiodore, Zosime: Scripta Minora: Recueil d'articles, avec addenda, corrigenda, mise à jour et indices*, *Munera* 24 (Bari, 2006), 67, 273-83, and 339-51.

<sup>5</sup> Concilium Eliberritanum canon 59, ed. Gonzalo Martínez Díez and Félix Rodríguez, *Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra. Serie canónica* 4 (Madrid, 1984), on which see Hamilton Hess, *The Early*

Zosimus insists that in 326 CE (though the event may have taken place in 312 or 315 or 326) Constantine refused to mount the Capitol with his soldiers for an ‘ancestral festival’ of some sort. The presence of soldiers suggests an arrival and/or triumphal ceremony as soldiers were not commonly involved in ceremonies on the Capitol, though it is all uncertain.

Along with a public address in the Forum, the possession of the imperial palace on the Palatine, and the provision of games, shows, and races, climbing up the Capitol had been a key component of the *adventus* ceremony since at least 57 BCE when ‘the Roman people honored [Cicero] with an escort from the gate to the Capitol and then to [his] house’, upon his return from exile.<sup>6</sup> The arrival of Commodus in Rome in 180 CE neatly encapsulates the full gamut of a ‘typical’ *adventus* according to the not always reliable Herodian:

as [Commodus] drew nearer to Rome, the whole senate and population of the city were so anxious to be the first to see their new, noble emperor that they could not restrain themselves from coming quite a distance from the city to meet him, carrying garlands of bay leaves and all the seasonal flowers they could bring ... On his entry into Rome, after going up to the temple of Jupiter and to the other temples, he made his grateful acknowledgments to the senate and the soldiers who had been left stationed in Rome for the loyalty they had shown. Then he went to the palace.<sup>7</sup>

In brief, SPQR greeted Commodus, escorted him to the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, and listened to an oration by Commodus probably in the Forum, before the emperor took possession of the palace.

Not long before Constantine’s epochal vision, the emperor Maximian also ascended the Capitol during his arrival ceremony in 299 according to an anonymous panegyricist of 307 who conjured the scene:

The Roman people greeted you [the emperor] with such joy, and in such numbers, that when they conceived a passion to convey you to the lap of Capitoline Jupiter, if only with their eyes, they scarcely allowed you through the gates, such was the press.<sup>8</sup>

*Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford, 2002), 40-2 who notes that canons 22-81 may be later additions.

<sup>6</sup> Cic., *Dom.* 76, ed. N.H. Watts, LCL 158 (Cambridge, MA, 1923) and see also Cic., *Att.* 4.1.5. On the republican *adventus* see Christian Ronning, ‘Stadteinzüge in der Zeit der römischen Republik: Die Zeremonie des *Adventus* und ihre politische Bedeutung’, in Christian Ronning (ed.), *Einblicke in die Antike: Orte – Praktiken – Strukturen* (Munich, 2006), 57-86, who contends ascending the Capitol was a standard element; Jan Meister, ‘Adventus und Profectio: aristokratisches Prestige, Bindungswesen und Raumkonzepte im republikanischen und frühkaiserzeitlichen Rom’, *Museum Helveticum* 70 (2013), 33-56; and Trevor Luke, *Ushering in a New Republic: Theologies of Arrival at Rome in the First Century BCE* (Ann Arbor, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Herodian 1.7.3 and 6, ed. and trans. C.R. Whittaker, LCL 454 (Cambridge, MA, 1969).

<sup>8</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 7(6).8.7, ed. and trans. C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers, *The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 21 (Berkeley, 1994); on which see C.E.V. Nixon, ‘The Panegyric of 307 and Maximian’s Visits to Rome’, *Phoenix* 35 (1981), 70-6.

Only the Roman people figured in this *occursus* description, the senate was oddly omitted, but the traditional visit to the Capitol featured prominently. And so Constantine's supposed abandonment of the Capitol breached long-standing Roman tradition, which both angered SPQR and forever changed the ritual by which rulers were welcomed to the Eternal City.<sup>9</sup>

If, however, one looks outside the Servian or Aurelian wall to the *occursus*, the assembly of Romans that greeted the arriving dignitary, a less radical story may be told. As a seemingly carefully curated group, the *occursus* was typically construed as a representation of the city. The categories used to enumerate its composition thereby reveal something essential about the conceptualization of the city. As Sabine MacCormack argued, '[in Menander's third-century rhetorical manual], as also in panegyrics and elsewhere, the people are enumerated in groups according to age on the one hand, and to official status on the other, and these were also the groupings according to which they would appear in a welcoming procession. The ruler thus encountered an orderly and organized body of citizens, headed by their dignitaries, with whom business could be transacted. At the same time, the enumeration serves to indicate that everyone was present, that this body of people was in position to express that *consensus omnium* which was fundamental to most classical and late antique theories about legitimate government'.<sup>10</sup>

For example, after his victory at Actium in 31 BCE, the senate of Rome voted 'that when [Octavian] should enter the city the Vestal Virgins and the senate and the people with their wives and children should go out to meet him'. Even though Octavian, soon-to-be Augustus, declined the honor, an *occursus* comprised of the Vestals and SPQR with their families was intended to represent the city in its entirety, which also demonstrated Rome's acceptance of Octavian's authority.<sup>11</sup> SPQR is, of course, a very traditional symbol for Rome and one that Zosimus could still employ about five centuries later to capture Roman displeasure and Constantine's failure to achieve the *consensus omnium*.

The almost talismanic invocation of SPQR suggests that MacCormack's equation of performed *occursus* with described or represented *occursus* should be examined: authors have their own agendas, limitations, and literary traditions and so one may be rightly skeptical about the historical accuracy of any description of a ritual or ceremony.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately, in this case, whether or not

<sup>9</sup> N. 4 above. According to SHA *Hel.* 15.7, Elagabalus did not ascend the Capitol for his consular inauguration, which is often construed as a veiled critique of Constantine's refusal, e.g. F. Paschoud, *Eunape, Olympiodore, Zosime* (2006), 347-8 and John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000), 74-5 n. 22.

<sup>10</sup> S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony* (1981), 21.

<sup>11</sup> Dio Cass. 51.19.2, ed. and trans. Ernest Cary, LCL 83 (Cambridge, MA, 1917) and Dio Cass. 51.20.4: honor declined.

<sup>12</sup> Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual* (Princeton, 2001) and Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

the performed *occursus* matched the textual one does not (greatly) impact the *occursus* as an image of the city. That is, in this analysis whether or not a ‘numerous throng of the people’ and an impressive ‘entourage of senators’ actually accompanied the victorious Constantine into Rome after the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, as an anonymous orator in 313, who seems to have had uneven information about the entry, would have it, matters less than the fact that the ceremony was *interpreted* that way during a live oratorical performance and then *remembered* that way by later readers.<sup>13</sup> If the *occursus* represented the city, even if only in the imagination of the author and so also the cultural memory of his audience(s), an examination of its gradual Christianization reveals something about the Christianization of Rome over the very long, *longue durée* – a story stretching from Constantine’s *adventus* in 312 to the arrival of emperor Constans II in 663 and even beyond.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, the *occursus* of literary memory, at least, remained remarkably traditional as SPQR sometimes accompanied by other groups continued to greet arriving rulers. Writing within a few years of the battle of the Milvian bridge, Lactantius succinctly declared ‘with great joy emperor Constantine was received by the senate and Roman people’.<sup>14</sup> According to Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Ecclesiastical History*, first composed around the same time (*ca.* 315), ‘[Constantine] entered Rome with hymns of triumph and all the senators and other persons of great note, together with women and quite young children and all the Roman people’.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in 321 the orator Nazarius evoked the ‘greatest rejoicing of the senate and people of Rome’ during that same entry.<sup>16</sup> Later still, Eusebius returned again to this same scene in his *Life of Constantine* (after 337):

Immediately all the members of the senate and the other persons there of fame and distinction, as if released from a cage, and all the people of Rome, gave him a bright-eyed welcome with spontaneous acclamations and unbounded joy. Men with their wives and children and countless slaves with unrestrained cheers pronounced him their redeemer, savior, and benefactor.<sup>17</sup>

Whether or not SPQR and variously described others actually greeted Constantine after he had defeated Maxentius, within a year that image had been inscribed in the memory and subsequently the myth of the battle of the Milvian Bridge.<sup>18</sup> Although Constantine’s famous vision and his victory may have

<sup>13</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 12(9).19.1, ed. and trans. C.E.V. Nixon and B. Saylor (1994); on which see S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony* (1981), 34.

<sup>14</sup> Lact., *DMP* 44.10, ed. J.L. Creed, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford, 1984).

<sup>15</sup> Euseb., *HE* 9.9.9, ed. and trans. J.E.L. Oulton, LCL 265 (Cambridge, MA, 1932).

<sup>16</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).30.4, ed. and trans. Nixon and Rodgers (1994).

<sup>17</sup> Euseb., *Vit. Const.* 1.39.2, ed. Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke 1.1: Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*<sup>2</sup>, GCS (1991) and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> See Raymond Van Dam, *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge* (Cambridge, 2011).

inaugurated a new era in certain ways, the social imagination that buttressed his *adventus* in 312 and/or its subsequent memorialization remained firmly rooted in a traditional republican understanding of Rome. If SPQR welcomed the emperor Constantine, at least in the rhetorical and literary imagination, then SPQR was still a or even the symbol of Rome.

## II. The *occursus* after Constantine

In a much, much less celebrated *adventus*, the empress Eusebia, wife of Constantius II, arrived at Rome in 354 where, according to a panegyric by the future emperor Julian, ‘the people and senate welcomed her with rejoicings’.<sup>19</sup> A scant three years later, Constantius II himself staged a remarkable *adventus* at Rome – or at least, the remarkable rhetoric of Ammianus Marcellinus makes it seem so – when he was also greeted (by a much more colorfully described) SPQR:

And when [Constantius] was nearing the city, as he beheld with calm countenance the dutiful attendance of the senate and the august likenesses of the patrician stock ... And when he turned from them to the populace, he was amazed to see in what crowds men of every type had flocked from all quarters to Rome.<sup>20</sup>

Though Ammianus pictured an elaborate *occursus* with senators carrying, it seems, masks or busts of their ancestors and a cosmopolitan populace drawn from all the peoples of the empire to match the elaborate imperial entry, SPQR still stood at the heart of the ceremony.

Unfortunately, the orator Pacatus did not describe in any detail ‘the impression [Theodosius] made on the first day [he] entered the city’, in 389.<sup>21</sup> The court poet Claudian, by contrast, left a series of captivating portrayals of *adventus* of Honorius. In 396, the emperor made his way to Rome to assume his third

<sup>19</sup> Julian, *Or.* 3.129c, ed. and trans. Wilmer Wright, LCL 13 (Cambridge, MA, 1913).

<sup>20</sup> Amm. Marc. 16.10.5-6, ed. and trans. John C. Rolfe, LCL 300 (Cambridge, MA, 1950). From a large literature, see e.g. Ramsay MacMullen, ‘Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus’, *ABull* 46 (1964), 435-55; Yves-Marie Duval, ‘Remarques sur la venue à Rome de l’empereur Constance II en 357 d’après Ammien Marcellin (XVI 10,1-20)’, *Caesarodunum* 5 (1970), 299-305; Robert Owen Edbrooke, ‘The Visit of Constantius II to Rome in 357 and Its Effect on the Pagan Roman Senatorial Aristocracy’, *AJPh* 97 (1976), 40-61; Richard Klein, ‘Der Rombesuch des Kaisers Konstantius II im Jahre 357’, *Athenaeum* 57 (1979), 98-115; Marianne Sághy, ‘The *Adventus* of Constantius II to Rome 357 A.D.’, in Balázs Nagy and Marcell Sebők (eds), *The man of many devices, who wandered full many ways...: Festschrift in honor of János M. Bak* (Budapest, 1999), 148-59; J. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (2000), 71-5; Gavin Kelley, ‘The New Rome and the Old: Ammianus Marcellinus’ Silences on Constantinople’, *CQ* 53 (2003), 588-607, esp. 598-603; Joan Bjørnebye, ‘Ammianus and Constantius’ *Adventus* – Rome from Site to Sight’, *AAAH* 26 (2013), 31-46; and works cited above in n. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Pan. Lat. 2(12).47.3, ed. and trans. C.E.V. Nixon and B. Saylor (1994).

consulship, where he was greeted by an eager crowd and lines of soldiers, but not, it seems, the senate:

How many youths, how many matrons set modesty aside in eagerness to see you? Austere greybeards struggle with boys for places from which to see you in the tender embraces of your sire, born through the midst of Rome on a triumphal chariot decked but with the shade of a simple laurel branch ... On every side stretches the host of plumed warriors, each hymning your praises in his own tongue.<sup>22</sup>

Claudian even imagined thousands thronging the via Flaminia in 400 to wait for Stilicho.<sup>23</sup> In 404 for his sixth consulship, Honorius once again headed to Rome, where his arrival took on epic proportions. Or rather, Claudian might have ‘foreseen’ exuberant crowds as the speech may well have been composed in advance in order to deliver it on the very day of the arrival after Honorius had taken possession of the imperial palace. Even if written beforehand, Claudian still offered an interpretation of the just completed procession, framing it in a specific way for the emperor and the audience:

All the space ... was filled by a crowd that wore a single face; you could see the ground flooded with waves of men and the high buildings ablaze with matrons. Young men rejoice in an emperor as young as themselves; old men dismiss the distant past and count their destiny happy that they have lived to see such a day ... The women marveled ceaselessly at the unmatched bloom upon his cheeks, at his hair crowned with the diadem, at limbs that reflected the green light from his jewel-studded consular robe, at his strong shoulders and at his neck which soaring through oriental emeralds, could match in beauty that of Lyaeus; and the innocent maiden, the blush of simple modesty burning on her cheek, lets her eye rove over every detail.<sup>24</sup>

Normally, as Claudian implied, the senate would have accompanied the emperor as he entered the city, though in this case, ‘[Honorius] would not permit Rome’s conscript father to march before his chariot’, which may have been a gesture of goodwill toward the senate, releasing it from a possibly onerous duty, though exclusion from such a prominent ceremony might rather have been a snub.<sup>25</sup> Either way, the presence of the senate was expected and so its absence required explanation. Though the *occursus*, and so Rome itself, was not presented as SPQR, these eroticized *adventus* portrayals did still enumerate the entirety of Rome, in which no specifically Christian element appears.

After Honorius the *adventus* ceremony continued, but after Claudian the prominence of the ceremony waned, especially in panegyric. According to Sabine

<sup>22</sup> Claud., *Cons. Hon.* III 126-30, ed. and trans. (adapted) Maurice Platnauer, LCL 135 (Cambridge, MA, 1922).

<sup>23</sup> Claud., *Stil.* 2.397.

<sup>24</sup> Claud., *Cons. Hon.* VI 543-65, ed. and trans. Michael Dewar (Oxford, 1996); on which see Gregor Kalas, *The Restoration of the Roman Forum in Late Antiquity: Transforming Public Space* (Austin, TX, 2015), 90-6.

<sup>25</sup> Claud., *Cons. Hon.* VI 551, ed. and trans. Dewar (1996) with commentary on pp. 365-6.

MacCormack, ‘what occurred was a change in perception of the nature of imperial dominion, and in this perception *adventus* no longer played the crucial role that it had played ... [There was] a breakdown of tradition’.<sup>26</sup> That is, the ceremony was no longer a useful canvas on which to paint the portrait of proper imperial rule – and so references to and descriptions of the *adventus* and its *occursus* largely disappear, though not completely.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the fifth century, western emperors were more often resident in Rome, perhaps obviating the opportunities for and the significance of the *adventus* ceremony.<sup>28</sup>

### III. Christianizing the *occursus*

Nearly a century after Claudian’s dramatic conjuration of Honorius’ epic arrival, during which time the western empire witnessed its last resident emperor, the *adventus* at Rome and more importantly its *occursus* surfaces again – albeit with a Christian twist. In 500, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth king, went to Rome in part to express his support for the embattled bishop of Rome Symmachus who was caught in a disputed election with Laurence. The *occursus*, unsurprisingly, was described as SPQR with, however, the notable addition of bishop Symmachus, the earliest instance of the Christianization of the ceremony, at least to judge from the increasingly scanty evidence.<sup>29</sup> According to the Anonymous Valesianus:

King Theodoric went to Rome and met Saint Peter with as much reverence as if he himself were a Catholic. Pope Symmachus and the entire senate and people of Rome amid general rejoicing met him outside the city. Then coming to Rome and entering it, he appeared in the senate, and addressed the people at the Palm.<sup>30</sup>

In this *adventus*, the bishop of Rome headed an otherwise traditional *occursus*. At the same time, the passage hints that St. Peter’s basilica in the Vatican might have served as an extremely belated substitute for the temple of Capitoline Jupiter, nearly two centuries after its initial ‘abandonment’.<sup>31</sup> That is, only in 500 did the *adventus* ‘invent’ or perform a Christianizing Rome, a bricolage of

<sup>26</sup> S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony* (1981), 63.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Prosper, *Chron.* c. 1263, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH: AA, Chron. Min. (Berlin, 1892), 1.468: Honorius enters Rome in triumph in 416 with the deposed usurper Attalus leading his chariot.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Gillett, ‘Rome, Ravenna and the Last Western Emperors’, *PBSR* 69 (2001), 131-67.

<sup>29</sup> Massimiliano Vitiello, *Momenti di Roma ostrogota: aduentus, feste, politica*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 188 (Stuttgart, 2005) on the *adventus*; and Kristina Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antique Italy: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere* (Cambridge, 2012), 212-45 on the Laurentian schism.

<sup>30</sup> *Anon. Val.* 12.65-6, ed. and trans. John C. Rolfe, LCL 331 (Cambridge, MA, 1939).

<sup>31</sup> Paolo Liverani, ‘Dal trionfo pagano all’adventus cristiano: Percorsi della Roma imperiale’, *AAC* 18 (2007), 385-400.

the classical and the Christian so characteristic of Rome during the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>32</sup> However, the anonymous biographer of bishop Fulgentius described the same pandemonium at Rome in 500, for which Fulgentius was present, in deeply classical terms: 'It was a time of great celebration in the city; the presence of king Theodoric brought great rejoicing to the Roman senate and people'.<sup>33</sup> Whatever sources the biographer may or may not have had, Rome was still well captured by SPQR.

The purpose of the royal visit, to bolster Symmachus' position, certainly explains, in part, the presence of the bishop in this particular *occurus*. Specific political circumstances aside, the appearance of the bishop in an *occurus* would have been increasingly likely by the late fifth century when the episcopal administration achieved a certain level of parity (in terms of wealth and public prominence in particular) with Rome's super-rich traditional elites.<sup>34</sup> Thus by 500, the bishop was a preeminent urban political figure who would have warranted a place in the symbolic image of Rome embodied by the *occurus*.

The bishop, however, was apparently not guaranteed a place in the welcoming party. It seems that the very classicizing Ostrogoth kings, or their aristocratic bureaucrats, preferred classicizing arrival ceremonies. According to Cassiodorus, in 536, king Theodahad was set to come to Rome, in preparation for which Maximus, the *vicarius*, needed to construct carefully a bridge of boats over the Tiber. If successful, Maximus would be specially recognized in the *occurus* in the presence of outstanding senators. As Cassiodorus imagined it, the *occurus* would comprise Rome's leading men, but seemingly not bishop Agapetus (who would likely have already been on an embassy to Constantinople on behalf of Theodahad), though perhaps a deacon stood in for the bishop in the actual ceremony.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Jacob A. Latham, 'The Making of a Papal Rome: Gregory I and the *letania septiformis*', in Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Burlington, VT, 2009), 293-304, esp. 293-4.

<sup>33</sup> *Vita Fulgentii* 9, ed. G.-G. Lapeyre (Paris, 1929) and trans. Robert Eno, FOTC 95 (Washington, D.C., 1997).

<sup>34</sup> On the late fifth century as a turning point, see e.g. Thomas F.X. Noble, 'Theodoric and the Papacy', in *Teodorico il Grande e i Goti d'Italia: Atti del XIII congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1993), 395-423 and *id.*, 'The Roman Elite', *AAAH* 17 (2003), 13-25; Federico Marazzi, 'Rome in Transition', in Julia H.M. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West*, *The Medieval Mediterranean* 28 (Leiden, 2000), 21-41; Jacob A. Latham, 'From Literal to Spiritual Soldiers of Christ: Disputed Episcopal Elections and the Advent of Christian Processions in Late Antique Rome', *Church History* 81 (2012), 298-327, esp. 301-7 and 318-21; and K. Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority* (2012), 60-1. See Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005), 155-68, on aristocratic wealth.

<sup>35</sup> Cassiod., *Var.* 12.19, on which see M. Vitiello, *Momenti di Roma ostrogota* (2005), 95-130 and *id.*, *Theodahad: A Platonic King at the Collapse of Ostrogothic Italy* (Toronto, 2014), 132-9, who suggests that a deacon stood in for the absent bishop.

After another huge temporal leap, over a century and a half this time, to the late-seventh century after Justinian's re-conquest and the Lombard wars decimated late classical Rome and its aristocracy, the increasingly scarce evidence for the *adventus* at Rome reveals an increasingly Christianized *occursus*. According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, a serial biography of the bishops of Rome and a powerful instrument of institutional memory, in 663

the Apostolicus [pope Vitalian] went to meet [emperor Constans II] with his clergy at the sixth mile-marker from Rome and welcomed him. On the same day the emperor traveled to St Peter's for prayer and there he presented a gift.<sup>36</sup>

Paul the Deacon, in the late eighth-century, imagined the scene in slightly more classicizing terms:

At the sixth mile-stone from the city, pope Vitalian came to meet him with his priests and the Roman people. When the Augustus had reached the threshold of St. Peter, he offered a *pallium* woven with gold.<sup>37</sup>

By the late-sixth century after 50 years of intermittent but continuous warfare, the senate of Rome no longer existed as an institution, even though individual senators seem to have lived in Rome into the early seventh century.<sup>38</sup> The papal curia survived as the sole civic body. At this point, Rome had changed and so too would the *occursus*: the bishop and his clergy now took the place of the senate and aristocrats in both governing the city *and* symbolizing it in civic ceremony.

#### IV. Conclusion

The evidentiary base is indeed flimsy, but what there is suggests that it took an incredibly long time for the *adventus* at Rome, a venerable symbolic practice, to change. As a ritual image of the city, the *adventus* and in particular its

<sup>36</sup> *Liber Pontificalis vita LXXVIII Vitalianus* (= LP 78.2), ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris, 1886) and trans. Raymond Davis, TTH 6<sup>2</sup> (Liverpool, 2000); on which see Peter Llewellyn, 'Constans II and the Roman Church: A Possible Instance of Imperial Pressure', *Byzantion* 46 (1976), 120-6; and Panagiotis Antonopoulos, 'Emperor Constans II's Intervention in Italy and its Ideological Significance', in Johannes Koder and Ioannis Stouraitis (eds), *Byzantine War Ideology Between Roman Imperial Concept And Christian Religion: Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Vienna, 19-21 Mai 2011)*, Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 30 (Vienna, 2012), 27-31.

<sup>37</sup> Paul. Diac., *Hist. Long.* 5.11-12, ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz, MGH SS rer. Lang. 1 (Hanover, 1878).

<sup>38</sup> Ernest Stein, 'La disparition du sénat de Rome à la fin du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle', *BAB* 25 (1939), 308-22; André Chastagnol, 'La fin du sénat de Rome', in Claude Lepelley (ed.), *La fin de la cité antique et le début de la cité médiévale* (Bari, 1996), 345-54; Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000, Second Edition*, The Making of Europe (Oxford, 2003), 194-5; and L. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (2005), 203-9.

*occursus* indexed the city, suggesting how it was conceived or imagined, offering a glimpse of its social and political contours. While Constantine *may* have abandoned the Capitol in the early fourth century, much of the remaining *adventus* ceremony remained deeply classical well into the (really) long Late Antiquity. It took almost 200 years for the bishop of Rome to earn a place in the late antique Roman social imagination as embodied in the *occursus*. From Constantine in 313 to Theodoric in 500, the *occursus* retained its classical shape. Theodoric had come to Rome to demonstrate his support for the embattled bishop Symmachus and so the bishop's presence was only to be expected. Moreover, the episcopacy of Rome had also attained a certain equality with classical aristocratic institutions and traditions, making the bishop a likely candidate for inclusion anyway.

It took almost another 200 years before the bishop came to dominate that social imagination in Constant II's arrival in 663 – even though the pope and his administration had already come to dominate Rome. Surprisingly, the bishop of Rome seems to have had to wait until 799 to be greeted with similarly spectacular pageantry, though as early as the third or the fourth century, bishops of Rome were rather unceremoniously hailed in an ad hoc and ill-defined manner by the Roman people.<sup>39</sup> The *adventus* was Christianized earlier elsewhere. From Constantinople to Antioch, the relics of bishop Meletius of Antioch were welcomed at each city by chanted psalms in 381; at Rouen, Victricius imagined the arrival of relics from Ambrose as a full blown Christian *adventus* in 396; at Carthage, catholic and Donatist bishops staged competing *adventus* ceremonies in 411.<sup>40</sup> At Rome, the situation was rather different due largely, it seems, to the continued and lavish patronage of Roman civic and spectacle traditions

<sup>39</sup> LP 98.18-9 (Leo III), ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris, 1892). See P. Dufraigne, *Adventus Augusti* (1994), 268-72; Susan Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial at Rome in the Twelfth Century*, Henry Bradshaw Society, Subsidia 4 (London, 2002), 41-6; and Pablo Fuentes Hinojo, 'Adventus Praesulis: Consenso Social y Rituales de Poder en el Mundo Urbano de la Antigüedad Tardía', *SHHA* 29 (2011), 293-339, 305-6, on possible (but unpersuasive) early examples of episcopal *adventus* at Rome.

<sup>40</sup> Soz., *HE* 7.10, ed. A.-J. Festugière, B. Grillet and G. Sabbah, SC 516 (Paris, 2008); on which see Wendy Mayer, 'Welcoming the Stranger in the Mediterranean East: Syria and Constantinople', *JAEMA* 5 (2009), 89-106, 99-100; and also H. Dey, *Afterlife of the Roman City* (2015), 83-4 on other relic *adventus* at Constantinople; Vitricius, *De laude sanctorum*, ed. R. Demeulenaere, CChr.SL 64 (Turnhout, 1985); on which see Gillian Clark, 'Translating Relics: Victricius of Rouen and Fourth-Century Debate', *EME* 10 (2001), 161-76; and, on relic *adventus* more broadly, Kenneth Holm and Gary Vikan, 'The Trier Ivory, *Adventus* Ceremonial, and the Relics of St. Stephen', *DOP* 33 (1979), 115-33; and August., *Ad Donatistas post collationem* 25.43, ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 53 (Vienna, 1910), and *Gesta conlationis Carthaginensis* 1.14.7-11 and 1.29.1-4, ed. S. Lancel, SC 194-5, 224 and 373 (Paris, 1972-91). On the Christianization of the *adventus* generally, see S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony* (1984), 33-89; M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory* (1986), 100-11; and esp. P. Dufraigne, *Adventus Augusti* (1994), 249-325.

by its elite, which still dominated the public sphere.<sup>41</sup> Only after Justinian's re-conquest of Italy and the subsequent Lombard wars, which devastated Rome's aristocracy, was the ritual thoroughly Christianized, which suggests that Rome, or at least its social imagination, remained persistently classical into the mid-sixth and perhaps even into the early seventh century. Even though many standard works still envision a rather rapid Christianization of Rome after the conversion of Constantine, a feat supposedly accomplished by the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, this analysis of the *occursus* reveals a conservative and extremely extended process stretching over centuries, at least in the imagination and cultural memory if not also in ceremonial practice.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> J. Latham, 'From Literal to Spiritual' (2012), and *id.*, 'Battling Bishops, the Roman Aristocracy, and the Contestation of Civic Space in Late Antique Rome', in Jordan Rosenblum, Lily Young and Nathaniel DesRosiers (eds), *Religious Competition in the Third Century CE: Jews, Christians, and the Greco-Roman World*, JAJ Supplements 15 (Göttingen, 2014), 126-37.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Charles Pietri, *Roma Christiana: Recherches sur l'Eglise de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte (311-440)*, BEFAR 224 (Rome, 1976), esp. 1653 emphasizing the period between Damasus and Leo I (366-440); Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308* (Princeton, 1980), 33; *id.*, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley, 1983), 94; Michele Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2002), who argues that the aristocracy had overwhelmingly converted to Christianity by the early-fifth century; and Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), esp. 783-801, whose search for 'pagans' in the late-fourth century turned up only Christians.



# The Orthodoxy of Emperor Justinian's Christian Faith as a Matter of Roman Law (CJ I,1,5-8)

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## ABSTRACT

Justinian, as Roman Emperor (527-567), is less known for his role in defining and delimiting the orthodoxy of the Christian faith in the sixth century, which he decreed mostly in the form of imperial Edicts as normative faith for the entire Roman Empire, thus causing the loss of many civil rights. The Roman law and hence, Justinian's ecclesiastical law, acquired a new functionality which served the juridical protection of the orthodoxy of the Christian faith and its adherents. However, not all forms of Christianity enjoyed imperial juridical protection, rather, only that form of orthodoxy of the Christian doctrine which, beginning with the Council of Nicaea in 325, had been officially defined and fixed by the Church Fathers and had become normative due to imperial support, a fact which can be clearly demonstrated by Justinian's Edicts of faith, too. My contribution focuses on why, in which manner and to what extent Justinian could define and delimit the orthodoxy of 'his Christian faith', departing from the texts of his imperial Edicts of faith in *Codex Justinianus* (I 1,5-8). I also look into the *Sitz im Leben*, but also into the role played by 'his orthodoxy' in the context of the Christological doctrinal debates of the sixth century. As a conclusion, I would like to suggest that we cannot affirm a very discretionary power of the Christian emperors in Late Antiquity in matters of faith, nor can we identify Justinian's imperial Edicts of faith as the keynote of Caesaropapism, as John B. Bury suggested.

## Preliminaries

In Novel 132, dated April 4 in the year 544, Justinian stated:

We believe that the first and greatest good of all people is *the right confession* (ὀρθὴν ὁμολογίαν) *of the true and immaculate faith of the Christians* (τῆς ἀληθοῦς καὶ ἀμωμίου τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστεως), such that it has to be strengthened in all respects (τὸ διὰ πάντων), and all the holy priests of the inhabited world (τῆς οἰκουμένης) in unanimity (εἰς ὁμόνοιαν) must come together (συναφθῆναι) and in one voice (ὁμοφώνως) confess and preach *the right faith of the Christians* (τὴν ὀρθὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστιν ὁμολογεῖν τε καὶ κηρύττειν), and any reason invented by heretics must be removed, as is shown both in my various writings and in my edicts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My translation. Πρῶτον εἶναι καὶ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις πιστεύομεν τὴν τῆς ἀληθοῦς καὶ ἀμωμίου τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστεως ὀρθὴν ὁμολογίαν, εἰς τὸ διὰ πάντων αὐτῆ

There are many other such citations which contain similar phrases.<sup>2</sup>

In this programmatic quotation, one can apprehend the special importance which Justinian (527-567), as from God *in Persona* appointed Christian Emperor, like no other emperor before him, attached to the correct confession and preaching of the Christian faith, which had to be strengthened and protected through all means possible, including the Roman Imperial civil legislation. This was possible in Late Antiquity due to the paradigm shift caused by the so-called

κρατύνεσθαι, και πάντα τοὺς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὁσιωτάτους ἱερέας εἰς ὁμόνοιαν συναφθῆναι και ὁμοφώνως τὴν ὀρθὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστιν ὁμολογεῖν τε και κηρύττειν, και πᾶσαν πρόφασιν παρὰ τῶν αἱρετικῶν ἐφευρισκομένην ἀφαιρεθῆναι· ὅπερ δεικνύται ἐκ τῶν παρ' ἡμῶν διαφόρως γραφέντων λόγων τε και ἰδικτῶν, *Emperor Justinian, Novel 132*, in Rudolf Schoell and Guilelmus Kroll (eds), *Corpus Juris Civilis: Novellae*, Vol. III (Berlin, 1895), 665-6, 665,7-16; See also the similar translation by Fred H. Blume, <<http://www.uwoy.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/novels/121-140/index.html>> (accessed 05/08/2015). See also S.P. Scott, *The Civil Law*, Vol. 17 (New York, 1932), 132.

<sup>2</sup> In other theological works of Justinian, for example in the *Contra monophysitas* from the year 542, he also claimed: Πρώτην εἶναι σωτηρίαν ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις ἡγουμένα τὴν τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως ὁμολογίαν, μάλιστα τοῖς τὸν μονήρη βίον ἀνελομένοις. My translation: 'We hold that first and foremost for the salvation of all men is the *confession of the right faith*, all the more so for those who have taken up a solitary life', *Emperor Justinian, Contra monophysitas*, in Eduard Schwartz (ed.), *Drei dogmatische Schriften Justinians*, ABAW.PH 18 (München, 1939), 6-44, 7,4-5; See also Kenneth Paul Wesche, *On the Person of Christ. The Christology of Emperor Justinian* (Crestwood, New York, 1991), 27. Similar expressions can be found in other *Novellae* of Justinian, but also in *Codex Justinianus I, 1-13*, in Paul Krüger, *Corpus Juris Civilis: Codex Justinianus*, Vol. II (Berlin, 1892), 5-67. In order to make more evident the extraordinary importance which Justinian attached to the orthodoxy of the Christian faith, which was a *conditio-sine-qua-non* for its unity and preservation, I will provide some examples, mainly from his *Novels*: *Nov. 45*, Schoell-Kroll, 277,31-2: ἡ ὀρθὴ και ἀμόμητος ἡμῶν κατέλαμψε πίστις; *Nov. 45*, Schoell-Kroll, 279,23-5: τὸ γὰρ πολίτευμα τὸ ἡμέτερον ὀρθὸν τέ ἐστι και ἡδὴ μεστὸν τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως, πάσης αἰρέσεως ἄλλης εἰκότως μεμισημένης; *Nov. 79*, Schoell-Kroll, 388,11-2: τινὲς γὰρ τὴν τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως σεμνότητα βουλόμενοι διαφθεῖρουν [...]; *Nov. 109*, Schoell-Kroll, 518,17-8: ἡμεῖς δὲ βουλόμενοι τοὺς τὴν ὀρθοδόξον ἀσπάζομένους πίστιν; *Nov. 109*, Schoell-Kroll, 519,30-5: και εἰ μὴ εὖροιεν αὐτὰς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως οὖσας και μεταλαμβανούσας τῆς ἀχράντου και προσκυνητῆς κοινωνίας ἐν τῇ ἀγιωτάτῃ καθολικῇ και ἀποστολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παρὰ τῶν σεβασμιωτάτων ταύτης ἱερέων, ταύταις μὴ συγχωρεῖν ἀπολαύειν τῶν ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων διατάξεων προνομίων; *Nov. 115*, Schoell-Kroll, 542,37-543,2: εἰ δὲ και οἱ παῖδες και οἱ ἐγγύτατοι ἀδγνάται ἢ κογνάται τῆς κοινωνίας τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως ξένοι τυγχάνοιεν [...]; *Nov. 123*, Schoell-Kroll, 594,10: ἀλλ' εἰδότες αὐτοὺς τῆς ὀρθῆς και καθολικῆς πίστεως; *Nov. 123*, Schoell-Kroll, 620,10: εἰ ὀρθῆς πίστεως και βίου καλοῦ τοῦτον εἶναι γνοίη; *Nov. 129*, Schoell-Kroll, 647,20-2; 24-6: πλὴν εἰ μὴ τοὺς πρὸς τοὺς κλήρους ἐφ' ἑκατέρω θέματι καλουμένους τῆς ὀρθῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν εἶναι πίστεως συμβῆ [...] ἐπειδὴν μὴ τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως τὸ λαμβάνον πρόσωπον εἶη; *Nov. 137*, Schoell-Kroll, 697,3-4; 11-3: ἀλλ' εἰδότες αὐτοὺς τῆς ὀρθῆς και καθολικῆς πίστεως και σεμνοῦ βίου και ἔπερ τὸ τριακοστὸν ἔτος εἶναι, [...] ἀπαιτεῖσθαι δὲ πρότερον τὸν μέλλοντα χειροτονεῖσθαι παρὰ τοῦ χειροτονούντος λίβελλον μεθ' ὑπογραφῆς ἰδίας περιέχοντα τὰ περὶ τῆς ὀρθῆς αὐτοῦ πίστεως; *Nov. 144*, Schoell-Kroll, 710,14-5: ταῖς δὲ αὐταῖς ὑπάγομεν ποιναῖς και τοὺς ἀσεβῆ προστασίαν κατὰ τῆς ὀρθῆς τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστεως τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ἀπονέμοντας.

*conversio Constantinii* in 312/313<sup>3</sup> which led to the emperor's direct and unhesitant involvement in the doctrinal matters of the Christian faith. In fact, we are dealing with an unanticipated *Rückkoppelungseffekt*, which not even the Church Fathers had foreseen, and which, in its turn, generated a sort of boomerang effect, namely the limitation of the imperial power on matters of defining and delimiting the orthodoxy of the Christian faith.

Justinian himself experienced this reality when he issued a series of imperial edicts on the Christian faith. Inevitably, Justinian had to assume and identify himself with one form or another of Christianity, that is, either with the orthodoxy or the heresy of the Christian faith. These were ecclesiastical, rather than imperial categorial notions, defined and established exclusively by the Church through its normative instruments: certain Church Fathers and certain ecclesiastical councils, subsequently called ecumenical.

Justinian is less known for his active and unique role in 'defining' and 'delimiting' the orthodoxy of the Christian faith which he decreed mostly in the form of imperial Edicts as normative faith for the entire Roman Empire, thus also causing the loss of many civil rights.<sup>4</sup>

The Roman civil law, and hence, Justinian's ecclesiastical law, like that of Theodosius the Emperor, acquired a functionality which ensured the juridical protection of the orthodoxy of the Christian faith and thus, of its followers. This means that not all forms of Christianity enjoyed imperial juridical protection, but only that form of the Christian doctrine which embodied the normative orthodoxy of the Christian faith officially recognized empire-wide. However, this normative orthodoxy, in its turn, had been officially defined, fixed and established beginning with the Council of Nicaea in 325, only by the Church through the Church Fathers and ecumenical councils up to Justinian. This orthodoxy of the Christian faith became normative empire-wide due to imperial

<sup>3</sup> More about the *konstantinische Wende* and its implication thereafter, see Klaus M. Girardet, *Der Kaiser und sein Gott. Das Christentum im Denken und in der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen* (Berlin, 2010), 44-88; *id.*, *Die Konstantinische Wende. Voraussetzungen und geistige Grundlagen der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Großen* (Darmstadt, 2006); H.A. Drake, 'The Impact of Constantine on Christianity', in Noel Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge, 2007), 111-36, 113-6; Ekkehard Mühlenberg (ed.), *Die konstantinische Wende*, VWGTh 13 (Gütersloh, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> For example, the right to inheritance was established based on this principle. The implementation of this principle of faith in the private Roman law may have had harmful consequences. It seems that the most affected were those who did not adhere to this principle, namely the heretics. However, it is not totally sure if this categorial principle of faith could be totally put into practice, if it could be maximized. Some of Justinian's laws deplore the non-observance of its implementation. However, one thing is sure, namely that certain Novels and laws in Justinian's *Codex* clearly stipulate on the basis of which principle the Roman law could be applied. On this topic, see more *CJ I 5* entitled: *De haereticis et manichaeis et samaritis*. Only 11 laws, from law 12 to 22, are composed by Justinian; The Novels which address this issue directly are: *Novel 42* (13 August 536), *Novel 45* (18 Aug. 537), *Novel 109* (7 May 541), *Novel 115* (1 Feb. 542), *Novel 131* (18 March 545), *Novel 144 C1* (18 May 572 = *Novel 129* issued on 15 June 551).

support, a fact which can be clearly demonstrated by Justinian's edicts of faith. In fact, Justinian's entire imperial ecclesiastical legislation is based on this principle of normative orthodoxy of the Christian faith.

My contribution focuses mainly on the manner and the extent to which Justinian could define and delimit the orthodoxy of 'his Christian faith' at all, taking as basis the four texts of his imperial Edicts (*CJ I 1,5-8*) in *Codex Justinianus*.<sup>5</sup>

Firstly, I will describe very briefly the historical context and the *Sitz im Leben* of these texts. Secondly, I will highlight Justinian's main theological Christological statements.

As a conclusion, this very short inquiry should also answer questions such as: what does Justinian regulate, what does he actually legislate when he issues laws whose content refers to the orthodoxy of the Christian faith? What kind of orthodoxy is he dealing with? Is it an imperial, personal discretionary and deliberative orthodoxy? Is this fact really a sign of Caesaropapism, as John B. Bury suggested in the case of Justinian?<sup>6</sup>

## 1. A short historical context of Justinian's edicts of faith and their *Sitz im Leben*

Unlike the *Codex Theodosianus*, in which Theodosius' ecclesiastical legislation and edicts of faith were placed at the end,<sup>7</sup> the *Codex Iustinianus repetitae praelectionis* which, in fact, was replacing the one issued in the year 527,<sup>8</sup> and became effective on 25 December 534,<sup>9</sup> begins with the *Jus Ecclesiasticum*.<sup>10</sup> This ecclesiastical law starts by clearly defining what Justinian understands to

<sup>5</sup> *Codex Justinianus*, ed. by Paul Krüger, Vol. II (Berlin, 1892). His four edicts/letters of faith are preceded by four other texts which belong to the following emperors: the first one is the famous edict of faith *Cunctos populos* of the emperors Gratianus, Valentinianus and Theodosius (*CJ I 1,1*, in Krüger, 5) in 380, followed by one other edict also written by them, *Nullus haereticis mysteriorum* in 381 (*CJ I 1,2*, in Krüger, 5). The third edict against Porphyry and Nestorius in 448 belongs only to the emperors Valentinianus and Theodosius (*CJ I 1,3*, in Krüger, 5-6), and the last edict in 452 on the ban to discuss in public and question the Chalcedonian *Expositio fide* belongs to Emperor Marcian (*CJ I 1,4*, in Krüger, 6). All these imperial edicts had been assumed and incorporated in the *Codex* from the beginning, a fact which reveals Justinian's theological direction, just like all the other emperors before him. In this way, Justinian clearly proves that he belonged to a certain theological-imperial tradition of faith.

<sup>6</sup> J.B. Bury identified them as 'the most characteristic manifestation of Justinianian Caesaropapism', and also as 'the keynote of Caesaropapism'. John B. Bury, *A History of the Late Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (380 A.D. to 800 A.D.)*, Vol. II (Amsterdam, 1966), 5; *ibid.* fn. 1, 4.

<sup>7</sup> See *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen (Berlin, 1905), XVI 1-11, 833-906; See also Clyde Pharr [et al.], *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, 1952), 440-76.

<sup>8</sup> See the Emperor Justinians Constitutions: *Haec, quae necessario resp. Suma rei publicae*, in Krüger (1892), *CJ I 1-3*.

<sup>9</sup> See the Emperor Justinians Constitution: *Cordi nobis est*.

<sup>10</sup> See *CJ I 1-13*, in Krüger (1892), 5-67.

be the principle of the orthodoxy of the Christian faith, bearing a generic title: *De summa trinitate et de fide catholica et ut nemo de ea publice contendere audeat*.

The edicts concerned here are: The Edict of Faith from 527 A.D.,<sup>11</sup> issued by Justinian once he ascended to the throne on 1 April; the other three, namely The Edict of Faith *Ad populos* from 15 March 533 A.D.,<sup>12</sup> the Edict of Faith *Ad Epiphanium* from 26 March 533 A.D.,<sup>13</sup> and The Edict of Faith *Ad Joanneum II. Papam* von 6 June 533 A.D.,<sup>14</sup> were composed and issued on different days/months but in the same year 533, based on the theological realities of his time. They were conferred the status of law, which had to be observed.<sup>15</sup> However, it is interesting to note that at the end of these edicts, no direct civil or ecclesiastical penalties were decreed. Still, if one reads and considers Justinian's edicts from the viewpoint of his entire ecclesiastical legislation, then indeed one acknowledges an inextricable connection among them.

These edicts fall in the second phase of Justinian's political-imperial<sup>16</sup> theological activity starting in the year 527, when he became sole emperor, until 536. At his initiative, within this period, two ecclesiastical-theological events took place, which are reflected in his edicts: the so-called *Collatio cum Severianis* in 532,<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *CJ* I 1,5, in *ibid.* 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> *CJ* I 1,6, in *ibid.* 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> *CJ* I 1,7, in *ibid.* 8-10.

<sup>14</sup> *CJ* I 1,8, in *ibid.* 10-2, 11,7-24. Here, we are referring to a response of Pope John II to Justinian's letter dated 6th June 533. The Pope, however, replies to him almost one year later, on 25th March 534.

<sup>15</sup> For more on this, see by Hamilcar S. Alivisatos, *Die kirchliche Gesetzgebung des Kaisers Justinian I.*, NSGTK 17 (Berlin, 1913), 21-5; Jakob Speigl, 'Formula Iustiniani. Kircheneinigung mit kaiserlichen Glaubensbekenntnissen (Codex Iustinianus I 1, 5-8)', *OS* 44 (1995), 105-34.

<sup>16</sup> From a political-imperial point of view, the period between 527 and 536 is characterized by a series of successful events. Justinian carries out a number of wars with the help of his generals Belisarius and Narses, such as those against the Vandals, the Goths, the Persians, etc., with the aim of reconquering the lost Roman territories. The Nika Riot in January 532 falls within this same period. Moreover, it is also now that he begins erecting the Hagia Sophia and other ecclesiastical structures. Last but not least, Justinian embarks on his work of codification of the entire Roman law, known to us today under the name *Corpus Juris Civilis*. For a general updated overview on this, see Hartmut Leppin, *Justinian. Das christliche Experiment* (Stuttgart, 2011); James A. Evans, *The Emperor Justinian and the Byzantine Empire* (London, 2005); *id.*, *The Age of Justinian. The Circumstances of Imperial Power* (London, 1996); Michael Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005); Mischa Meier, *Justinian. Herrschaft, Reich, und Religion* (München, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> See Sebastian Brock, 'The Conversations with die Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)', *OCP* 47 (1981), 87-121; Jakob Speigl, 'Das Religionsgespräch mit den severianischen Bischöfen in Konstantinopel im Jahre 532', *AHC* 16 (1984), 264-85; Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche: Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 2/2 (Freiburg, 1989), 244-62, 361-3; Christian Lange, *Mia Energeia. Untersuchungen zur Einigungspolitik des Kaisers Heraclius und des Patriarchen Sergius von Constantinople*, STAC 66 (Tübingen, 2012), 292-314.

and the Synod of 536,<sup>18</sup> both in Constantinople. Moreover, these two events overlapped and intertwined with two other extremely refined theological-Christological disputes, namely, the so-called Theopaschite-Christological controversy,<sup>19</sup> as an inter-Chalcedonian controversy,<sup>20</sup> and the dispute on *Aphtharsia*, that is, on the incorruptibility of the body of Christ, as an internal Miaphysite dispute.<sup>21</sup>

Two basic motives seem to underlie Justinian's imperial texts. The first was to suggest a minimal theological consensus both to adversaries, the so-called Myaphysites, and the supporters of the Council of Chalcedon, the so-called Diophysites, without affecting or harming the normative orthodoxy of the Christian faith previously established by the Church Fathers and the four ecumenical councils. By this, Justinian practically proposed a minimalistic interpretation of the Chalcedonian definition in the light of Cyrillian Christology, while at the same time preserving the theological-Christological directions outlined at the third Ecumenical Council in 431, in the case of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology, as well as at the fourth Ecumenical Council in 451, for the Chalcedonian *definitio fidei*.

The second motive underlying his first two edicts,<sup>22</sup> according to their prefaces, was to confess publicly by decree of law his imperial theological position at his coronation as emperor,<sup>23</sup> as well as subsequently, to all the people of the Imperium Romanum. By contrast, the last two edicts take the form of informative and apologetic letters, assuring both the Patriarch of Constantinople, Epiphanius, as well as Pope John II of the orthodoxy of his Christian faith, and

<sup>18</sup> See Fergus Millar, 'Rome, Constantinople and the Near Eastern Church under Justinian: Two Synods of C.E. 536', *JRS* 98 (2008), 62-82; Jakob Speigl, 'Die Synode von 536 in Konstantinopel', *OS* 43 (1994), 105-53; A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus* (1989), 2/2, 363-72; C. Lange, *Mia Energeia* (2012), 339-64.

<sup>19</sup> This dispute is eminently Christological, and should not be mistaken for the classical Theopaschite dispute in the 2nd, respectively 3rd century, in its various forms of the Patripassionist, Sabellianist or Dochetist dispute. See Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God. The Dialectics of Patristic Thought*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2004), 64-100.

<sup>20</sup> On this Christological dispute with Theopaschite nuances, see especially: Eduard Schwartz, *De monachis Scythicis*, in ACO IV/2, I-XIII; François Glorie, 'Prolegomena', in CCh.SL 85A (Turnhout, 1978), XXIII-XLI; Viktor Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der 'skythischen Kontroverse'* (Paderborn, 1935), 127-67; A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus* (1989), 2/2, 333-59; Dana Iuliana Viezure, 'On the Origins of the Unus de Trinitate controversy', in *Annual of Medieval Studies at Central European University Budapest* 10 (2004), 9-19; *ead.*, *Verbum crucis, virtus dei: A Study of Theopaschism from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to the Age of Justinian*. Unpublished doctoral thesis (Toronto, 2009); John Anthony McGuckin, 'The "Theopaschite Confession" (Text and Historical Context). A Study in the Cyrilline re-interpretation of Chalcedon', *JEH* 35 (1984), 239-55.

<sup>21</sup> See the dispute between Severus of Antioch, respectively his followers, also called Severians, and Julian, the Bishop of Halicarnassus, respectively his followers, called Julianists. More at A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus* (1989), 2/2, 25-6; 97-116.

<sup>22</sup> *CJ I* 1,5-6, in Krüger, 6-8.

<sup>23</sup> *CJ I* 1,5, in *ibid.* 6.

the repudiation of anyone who opposed it, as did, for example, the Akoimetæ (unsleeping) monks in the Constantinopolitan monastery.<sup>24</sup> His purpose was to preserve and protect the orthodoxy and unity of the Christian faith. This, in its turn, served the *salus publica*.

## 2. Justinian's main theological Christological statements

All in all, these imperial theological texts, indeed, include recognized Christological confessions of faith in several short synthesized versions, which take the form of declaratory confessions of faith. These versions, however, do not differ essentially from one another in their main Christological message, but only in the length of their text and the subsequent additions made to them, depending on whom they were addressed to and which problem they dealt with. These additions do not contradict Justinian's initial message, nor do they exclude one another. These versions must be read in the key of their complementarity, rather than mutual exclusion or textual dichotomy. In order to better illustrate the structural content of the edicts of faith in the *Codex Justinianus*, I will briefly recapitulate their main theological ideas.

Only the first two edicts of faith, after their prooimions, begin with a very short confession of the classical Trinitarian dogma which employs, in fact, the terminology of the Cappadocian Fathers, who were normative for the orthodoxy of the Trinitarian dogma.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, Justinian confesses the consubstantiality, that is, both the ontological identity of the Father with the Son and the Spirit and the distinctiveness of the Trinitarian persons. To him, One is three and three is One.<sup>26</sup>

The other two texts<sup>27</sup> do not contain any Trinitarian confession of faith, but begin directly with the Christological one.

<sup>24</sup> *CJ I 1,6*, in *ibid.* 7. See also *CJ I 1,7*, in *ibid.* 8; *CJ I 1,8*, in *ibid.* 11. Through the indefinite pronoun τινάς (certain persons) in *CJ I 1,6* [Krüger, 7] respectively *CJ I 7* [Krüger, 8] Justinian makes direct reference to the Akoimetæ (sleepless) monks who resided in Constantinople. They were known for their uncompromising position towards the Chalcedonian *Expositio fidei*. For this reason, Justinian characterizes them as Nestorians, but also as Eutychians, and deplores their disturbance of the unity of faith, as well as the teachings they propagated. More about Akoimetæ see by Rudolf Riedinger, 'Akoimeten', *TRE II* (1978), 148-53.

<sup>25</sup> It is well known that the Cappadocian Fathers contributed substantially to the shaping of the Trinitarian teaching, which was subsequently approved of, confessed in the Constantinopolitan creed, and made normative. See John Behr, *The Nicene Faith. The Formation of Christian Theology*, vol. 2 (New York, 2004); Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Πιστεύοντες γὰρ εἰς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα μίαν οὐσίαν ἐν τρισὶν ὑποστάσεσι προσκυνούμεν, μίαν θεότητα, μίαν δύναμιν, τριάδα ὁμοούσιον, *CJ I 1,5*, in Krüger, 6; See also *CJ I 1,6*, in *ibid.* 7.

<sup>27</sup> See *CJ I 1,7-8*, in *ibid.* 8-11.

However, the essence of Justinian's theological texts lies in 'his' Christological confession of faith, as it had been established by the four ecumenical councils, using their terminology, but avoiding very clearly specifically Chalcedonian terminology, like ἐν δύο φύσεσιν, ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως, φύσις or πρόσωπον. Instead, he makes use of the so-called Cyrillian terminology or expressions, especially: καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἕνωσιν,<sup>28</sup> ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτόν.<sup>29</sup>

In short, Justinian confesses the unity and uniqueness of the Person of Christ, who is also the Logos of God, and the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father, as he is true God of true God; he also confesses the double birth of Christ, *i.e.*, of the Holy Spirit and of Virgin Mary, that he became human, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, was buried and rose again on the third day.<sup>30</sup>

Starting from the recognition of the two natures in Jesus Christ, Justinian acknowledges, in accord with Cyril of Alexandria, both the capacity of the divine nature for unsuffering, as well as the capacity for suffering which is characteristic only to the human nature.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, both the miracles and the sufferings which he endured in the body of his own free will belong to Jesus Christ. Justinian confesses the double

<sup>28</sup> This phrase is used twice, in *CJ I 1,6* [in Krüger, 7] and in *CJ I 1,7* [*ibid.* 9]. It does not exist in *CJ I 1,5* [*ibid.* 6-7].

<sup>29</sup> This phrase ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτόν, employed in all four edict-texts was found not merely in the definition of Chalcedon or of the other ecumenical councils. Rather, it was used by Cyril of Alexandria, too, who developed a hermeneutic of this expression. In this way, he wanted to emphasize and defend the unity/uniqueness of the divine Logos in the body, after birth. See the *Second Letter* and *The Third Letter* of Cyril of Alexandria to Nestorius, in Norman P. Tanner S.J. (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, vol. 1 (London, 1990), 40-4; 50-61; Further abbr.: *CODengl.*

<sup>30</sup> An example of that, see this excerpt of his Christological Confession of faith from *Ad Populos*: Ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν ὁμολογοῦμεν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν μονογενῆ υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ ἀληθινόν, τὸν πρὸ αἰῶνων καὶ ἀχρόνως ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα, τὸν συναΐδιον τῷ πατρὶ, τὸν ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, σαρκωθῆναι ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ τῆς ἁγίας ἐνδόξου ἀειπαρθένου καὶ θεοτόκου Μαρίας καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαι σταυρόν τε ὑπομείναι ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, ταφῆναι τε καὶ ἀναστῆναι τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ἐνός καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τὰ τε θαύματα καὶ τὰ πάθη, ἄπερ ἐκουσίως ὑπέμεινεν σαρκί, γινώσκοντες. Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον τὸν θεὸν λόγον καὶ ἄλλον τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπιστάμεθα, ἀλλ' ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα καὶ ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν τὸν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. ὡς γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν θεότητι τέλειος, οὕτως ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι τέλειος. τὴν γὰρ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἕνωσιν δεχόμεθα καὶ ὁμολογοῦμεν. ἔμεινε γὰρ τριάς ἢ τριάς καὶ σαρκωθέντος τοῦ ἐνός τῆς τριάδος θεοῦ λόγου· οὔτε γὰρ τετάρτου προσώπου προσθήκην ἐπιδέχεται ἡ ἁγία τριάς. *CJ I 1,6*, in Krüger, 7; See also *CJ I 1,5*, in *ibid.* 6-7; *CJ I 7*, in *ibid.* 7; *CJ I 8*, in *ibid.* 11.

<sup>31</sup> See *The Second Letter* by Cyril of Alexandria, in *CODengl.*, 42,20-43,3; see also *The Third Letter* by Cyril, in *CODengl.*, 53,32-54,16. Similarly, Justinian in *Ad populos*: ἐνός καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τὰ τε θαύματα καὶ τὰ πάθη, ἄπερ ἐκουσίως ὑπέμεινεν σαρκί, γινώσκοντες, *CJ I 1,6* [Krüger, 7/ right column]; See also *CJ I 1,5* (*ibid.* 6/ right column). In *CJ I 1,7* he even states this twice (*ibid.* 9/ left column); See also *CJ I 1,8* (*ibid.* 11/ left column).

consubstantiality of Jesus Christ with the Father, as God, as his Logos, according to his divine nature, and with us, according to the human nature.

He was incarnate and possessed a rational soul and a body. Justinian acknowledges the integrity of the two natures. He also admits and confesses without reservation the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, just like Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>32</sup> Jesus Christ, as the Logos of the Father, but also as Christ, is one and the same, even if he was incarnate and became man. The Word of God is one of the Trinity (καὶ σαρκωθέντος τοῦ ἑνὸς τῆς τριάδος θεοῦ λόγου), and the Trinity remains Trinity even after the Logos of the Father had become incarnate. Through the incarnation of the Logos no further fourth person is added to the Trinity. Justinian also confesses the Mariological dogmas of Cyril of Alexandria, for instance, the Virgin Mary as birth-giver of God, bearing the name Theotokos.

Furthermore, he confesses that Jesus Christ is one of the Trinity who suffered in the body (σταυρωθέντα ἓνα εἶναι τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου τριάδος).<sup>33</sup> This idea had its origins in *Ad Armenios*, the letter of Proclus, the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>34</sup> In addition, this Theopaschite-Christological formula became the leitmotiv of the Scythian Monks for the right interpretation of the Chalcedonian *Expositio fidei*, and was subsequently assumed and adopted by Justinian, receiving synodic recognition in 553.<sup>35</sup>

After the Christological confession, he anathematizes the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches especially, but also those of Apolinarius and all those who followed their teachings, and clearly distances himself from them.<sup>36</sup> He then acknowledges the four ecumenical councils in their integrity, and restates briefly their resolutions, a fact which is mentioned only in *Ad Epiphanius*.<sup>37</sup> If we were

<sup>32</sup> *The Second Letter* by Cyril of Alexandria, in *CODengl.*, 41,24-9; 43,15-6; *The Third Letter* by Cyril of Alexandria, in *CODengl.*, 52,41-4; 58,16-9; 59,23-9.

<sup>33</sup> In *CJ I* 1,5 Justinian does not mention this phrase. It only exists in *CJ I* 1,6 [Krüger, 8/ left column]; Both in *CJ I* 1,7 (*ibid.* 8-9) and in the letter addressed to the Pope (*CJ I* 1,8, in Krüger, 11) Justinian employs the Christological-Theopaschite phrase twice.

<sup>34</sup> On this see V. Schurr, *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius* (1935), 181-97; Josef Rist, *Proklos von Konstantinopel und sein Tomus ad Armenios: Untersuchungen zu Leben und Wirken eines konstantinopolitanischen Bischofs des V. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, 1933).

<sup>35</sup> See The 10th Anathema of the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (553), *CODengl.*, 118,37-41.

<sup>36</sup> See for example *CJ I* 1,6, in Krüger, 8: Τούτων τοίνυν οὕτως ἐχόντων ἀναθεματίζομεν πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν, ἐξαίρετως δὲ Νεστόριον τὸν ἀνθρωπολάτρην καὶ τοὺς τὰ αὐτοῦ φρονήσαντας ἢ φρονοῦντας, [...]. Ἀναθεματίζομεν δὲ καὶ Εὐτυχέα τὸν φρενοβλαβῆ καὶ τοὺς τὰ αὐτοῦ φρονήσαντας ἢ φρονοῦντας, [...]. Τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ Ἀπολλινάριον τὸν ψυχοφθόρον καὶ τοὺς τὰ αὐτοῦ φρονήσαντα ἢ φρονοῦντας, τοὺς ἄνουν λέγοντας τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ θεὸν ἡμῶν καὶ σύγχυσιν ἦτοι φυρμὸν εἰσάγοντας τῇ ἐνανθρωπήσει τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ πάντας τοὺς τὰ αὐτῶν φρονήσαντας ἢ φρονοῦντας.

<sup>37</sup> See *CJ I* 1,7, in Krüger, 9: [...] ἀκολουθοῦντες διὰ πάντων ταῖς ἁγίαις τέτρασι συνόδοις καὶ τοῖς παρ' ἐκάστης αὐτῶν διατυπωθεῖσι, τουτέστι τῆς τε ἐν Νικαίᾳ τῶν τη' καὶ τῆς ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ βασιλευούσῃ πόλει τῶν ρν', καὶ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ προτέρας καὶ τῆς ἐν Χαλκηδόνι,

to compare Zeno's *Henotikon* issued on 28 July 482,<sup>38</sup> which, in its turn, generated a 35-year schism between Rome and Constantinople,<sup>39</sup> called by Ditmar Winkler 'the schism of Pope Felix I (II)',<sup>40</sup> and Justinian's edicts of faith in his Codex, which were composed by himself, unlike Zeno's *Imperial Henotikon*, which had been composed by Accacius Patriarch of Constantinople, we can thus observe a clear-cut difference between these imperial edicts of faith, despite the striking similarity between the terminologies they employed.

### 3. Conclusion

The principle underlying the right confession of the true and immaculate faith, that is, the orthodoxy of the Christian faith stated by Justinian in Novel 132 of the year 544, was more than a principle of political maneuver for that moment, and also more than a tactic for his religious policies. One argument in support of this would be not just his edicts, previously enumerated, but also his theological works themselves on the one hand, and the perseverance with which he fought for the preservation of this principle and its goal, on the other hand. The very content of his edicts of faith in *CJ I 1,5-8* suggests that Justinian does not regulate or, even more than that, define or delimit a new calculated orthodoxy of the Christian faith himself, nor does he invent any orthodoxy of the Imperial Christian faith, according to the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*.

Therefore, his very imperial power to define, delimit and dictate on matters of Christian faith was extremely limited. Rather, there was no room for such a thing, since defining, delimiting and regulating the orthodoxy of the Christian faith was not the emperor's prerogative. This appanage belonged entirely to the Christian Sacerdotium, that is, to the Church and its normative instruments:

δῆλον πᾶσι καθεστῶτος, ὅτι τὸν πᾶσι τοῖς ἅμα ἡμῖν πιστοῖς τῆς ἁγίας καθολικῆς καὶ ἀποστολικῆς ἐκκλησίας παραδοθέντα ὄρον τῆς πίστεως, [...].

<sup>38</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica – Kirchengeschichte*, ed. and trans. by Adelheid Hübner, FC 57/2 (Turnhout, 2007), III 14, 358-65. See also The Deacon *Liberatus* of Carthage, *Breviarium*, in ACO II/5, 98,30-141,13, 127,17-129,2; Ps.-Zacharia, *Historia Ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, CSCO 87, Scriptorum Syri 41, ed. by Ernest W. Brooks (Paris, 1919), V, 8, 227,9-231,10; Engl. trans.: Geoffrey Greatrex [et al.] (eds), *The Chronical of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor. Church and War in Late Antiquity*, TTH 55 (Liverpool, 2011), 198-201.

<sup>39</sup> See also Eduard Schwartz (ed.), *Publizistische Sammlungen zum Acacianischen Schisma*, ABAW 10 (München, 1934); see also Jan-Markus Kötter, *Zwischen Kaisern und Aposteln: Das Akakianische Schisma (485-519) als kirchlicher Ordnungskonflikt der Spätantike* (Stuttgart, 2013); Christiane Fraisse-Coué, 'Die zunehmende Entfremdung zwischen Ost und West (451-518)', in Norbert Brox [et al.] (eds), *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion, Politik, Kultur: Der lateinische Westen und der byzantinische Osten (431-642)*, Vol. 3, Sonderausgabe (Freiburg, 2005), 158-210, 180-203.

<sup>40</sup> Dietmar Winkler, *Koptische Kirche und Reichskirche: Altes Schisma und neuer Dialog*, IThS 48 (Innsbruck a.o., 1997), 127.

certain normative Church Fathers and certain normative church councils, later considered ecumenical.

Therefore, even Emperor Justinian, when he issued decrees of faith, did nothing but legislate the orthodoxy of the Christian faith which had already been previously defined, delimited and established by the normative bodies of the Church. The Emperor in Late Antiquity in general, and Justinian, in particular, could do no more than adopt, as the ultimate instance of appeal, either the already established orthodoxy of the Christian faith, or other theological-Christological convictions.

However, this fact also entailed juridical consequences. In Justinian's case, one may not speak of an imperial, personal, discretionary, and deliberative orthodoxy of the Christian faith. Nor can his edicts be interpreted as 'a sign of Caesaropapism', as John B. Bury suggested. Firstly, the term is a misleading nineteenth century construct, which leads to an anachronistic reading of Justinian's real intentions. Secondly, this term cannot be used with reference to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, when it denoted other political-religious relations between the Imperium and the Christian Sacerdotium, respectively between the Emperor and the Bishops.

We cannot affirm with precision a very discretionary power of the Christian emperors in Late Antiquity in matters of faith, nor can we identify Justinian's imperial Edicts of faith as keynote of Caesaropapism.



# Charity Before Division: The Strange Case of Severinus of Noricum and the Pseudo-Evangelisation of the Rugians<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Severinus of Noricum (c. 410-482)'s strategy to facilitate the spread of Christianity in the Late Roman Balkans is atypical among Late Antique holy men. Despite being given such titles as 'the Apostle of Noricum' by later authors, the Severinus offered to us in the *Vita Sancti Severini* elicits very few, if any, doctrinal conversions. Instead, the *Vita Sancti Severini* presents a mode of evangelisation that dramatically de-emphasises doctrine and emphasises Christian unity and charity. This can be seen most clearly in Severinus' interactions with the Arian Rugians. Unlike earlier holy men, many of whom preached the shunning of heretics, Severinus disregards doctrinal differences in favour of a strategy that employs miracles to illustrate that Christ could help all people. This study will begin by examining a number of attempts to evangelise peoples within and without the Roman Empire during the Late Roman period, including Ulfila's efforts along the Danubian frontier and Ambrose of Milan's efforts in Northern Italy. Then, the context of the Late Roman Balkans, particularly in Noricum and its surroundings, will be examined. Subsequently, the *Vita Sancti Severini* and the career of Severinus will be discussed. Finally, the mode of evangelization proffered by Severinus will be scrutinised, particularly its use and results among the Rugians. It will be shown that Severinus' pseudo-evangelisation of the Rugians, which stressed charity before division, was atypical among Late Antique holy men, and that this pseudo-evangelisation met with minimal success.

## Charity Before Division<sup>2</sup>

Severinus of Noricum (c. 410-482)'s strategy to facilitate the spread of Christianity in the Late Roman Balkans is atypical among Late Antique holy

<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this short communication were given at the Seventeenth International Patristics Conference and at the Second Annual Workshop of the Postgraduate and Early Career Late Antiquity Network. I would like to express my gratitude to all of those who provided comments, questions, and criticisms on the days mentioned; hopefully, they have been answered in this article. I would also like to convey a special thanks to my doctoral supervisor, Prof. Mark Humphries; both for his valuable feedback in the composition of this paper, and for his continued support of my scholarly efforts.

<sup>2</sup> I use the terms 'Nicene' and 'Arian' to refer to the two main Christian groups during this period. I understand the problems with these terms, and I use them solely for simplicity's sake.

men. Despite being given such titles as ‘the Apostle of Noricum’ by later authors, the Severinus offered to us in Eugippius’ *Commemoratorium* elicits very few, if any, doctrinal conversions. Instead, the *Commemoratorium* presents a mode of evangelisation that dramatically de-emphasises doctrine and emphasises instead Christian charity and fraternity. For this reason, I call this mode of evangelisation ‘pseudo-evangelisation’, because it does not result in any doctrinal conversions; it only results in conversions of heart. This can be seen most clearly in Severinus’ interactions with the Arian Rugians. Unlike earlier Christian missionaries, Severinus disregards doctrinal differences in favour of a strategy that employs miracles to illustrate that Christ could help all people.

This study will begin by briefly examining a number of attempts to evangelise peoples within and without the Roman Empire during the Late Roman period, especially barbarians. I will then illustrate that doctrinal differences have traditionally loomed large in views of the barbarians, because so many of them were Arians. Then, Eugippius’ *Commemoratorium* will be reviewed, including some of its idiosyncrasies and its context. Finally, the mode of evangelisation proffered by Severinus will be scrutinized, particularly its use and results among the Rugians. From this process, it will be shown that Severinus’ pseudo-evangelisation of the Rugians, an atypical approach among Late Antique holy men that stressed charity before division, when it was successful at all, was usually only a short-term, temporary success, but as a practical matter only the rare long term success.

In first calling his disciples, Christ tells them that he will make his followers ‘fishers of men’.<sup>3</sup> This call to evangelisation played a very important role in the development and spread of Christianity in the Roman (and barbarian) world. In order to assess how Severinus’ interactions with the Rugians comport with the rest of Christian tradition, one must first look at examples of how earlier Christians undertook evangelisation among the barbarians.

A prime example of the more typical evangelisation is the career of Ulfila (d. 383), the Arian bishop of the Goths. According to his disciple, Auxentius of Durostorum, Ulfila was a ‘preacher of truth’ who ‘never shrank from preaching quite openly and without any room for doubt’.<sup>4</sup> Ulfila ‘corrected the people of the Goths’ and ‘showed the Christians among them to be truly Christians, and multiplied their numbers’.<sup>5</sup> Further, Ulfila ‘asserted that all heretics were not Christians but Antichrists’ and, as a ‘declared enemy of heretics’, Ulfila ‘strove to repel their wicked doctrines and to edify the people of God’.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Matth.* 4:19.

<sup>4</sup> Auxentius of Durostorum, ‘Life of Ulfila (Fragmentary Epistle)’, trans. (and ed.) Peter Heather and John Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, Translated Texts for Historians 11 (Liverpool, 1991), 137 (24 [42]).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 141 (35[57]).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 139 (19[49]).

Another example is Nicetas (c. 335-414), the Nicene bishop of Remesiana. A late contemporary of Ulfila, (their episcopal careers overlapped for more than a decade), Nicetas was dubbed ‘apostle to the Dacians’ by Paulinus of Nola due to the former’s extensive missionary activities, although it is debated whether Nicetas’ Dacian converts were barbarians who had already settled within the Empire.<sup>7</sup> As part of his evangelical mission, Nicetas wrote a guide to Nicene Christianity and the errors of the pagans and heretics called the *Libelli Instructionis*, which sadly only survives in fragments.<sup>8</sup>

The final example of the traditional approach that I will discuss by way of introduction is that of Saba (d. 372), a Gothic martyr and Nicene Christian. According to his hagiographer, Saba ‘[spoke peaceably] to all on behalf of truth, reproaching the idolaters’.<sup>9</sup> On a number of occasions, Saba ‘speaks out’ in defense of Christianity despite risk of torture and death.<sup>10</sup> Although Saba differs from the earlier examples and Severinus by primarily dealing with pagan barbarians rather than Arians, his *Passio* is a telling example of the importance to which Christians held evangelisation. These examples present an image of evangelisation that is both militant and necessary, holding doctrine to be important.

There is also the matter of the Nicene Roman’s views on the barbarian question. Simply, in a Nicene Roman’s view of the barbarians, doctrinal differences were thought to be of great importance. For many Nicene Romans living in Italy and its environs during the fifth and sixth centuries, the perspective of Ambrose (337-397), bishop of Milan, on this matter was significant.

Ambrose’s episcopal career involved a number of disputes with Arian Christians, and many of these disputes centered on the Balkans and barbarian invasions. For this specific matter of the barbarians and doctrinal differences, Ambrose’s *De fide* is crucial. The *De fide*, a work ostensibly written in response to a request from the Emperor Gratian that Ambrose defend his Nicene Christianity, both sets forth Ambrose’s doctrinal beliefs, pillories his Arian detractors, and attempts to convert the emperor to Nicene Christianity.

Ambrose makes a number of arguments in the *De fide*, two of which are of import to this discussion. First, Ambrose argues that the dominance of Arian Christianity in the Balkans was leading to barbarian invasions and that the Roman Empire could only be saved through Nicene Christianity.<sup>11</sup> As part of this argument, Ambrose explicitly connected the Goths with the Gog of *Genesis*,

<sup>7</sup> Paulinus of Nola, *Sancti Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Opera, Pars II: Carmina*, ed. Guilelmus de Hartel, CSEL 30 (Vienna, 1894), xvii.

<sup>8</sup> A.E. Burns, *Niceta of Remesiana: His Life and Works* (Cambridge, 1905), lix-lx.

<sup>9</sup> ‘The Passion of St. Saba the Goth’, trans. (and ed.) Peter Heather and John Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, Translated Texts for Historians 11 (Liverpool, 1991), 103 (II 1).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 106 (III 4), for one of a number of examples.

<sup>11</sup> Ambrose of Milan, *De fide ad Gratianum Augustum*, ed. Otto Faller, CSEL 78 (Vienna, 1962), 2.16.139-40.

*Ezekiel*, and *Apocalypse – Gog iste Gothus est*.<sup>12</sup> This connection presented Gratian's victory over the Goths as a *fait accompli* due to Gratian's (implied by Ambrose) support of Nicene Christianity. Second, Ambrose equates the Goths with Arians in general. Both the Goths and the Arians living in the Roman Balkans are 'bloodthirsty ... neighbors' who have jeopardized the safety of the Empire.<sup>13</sup> Further, Arians are 'black dogs' and 'creatures of the Devil' who should 'speed ... to his [the Devil's] abode'.<sup>14</sup>

The arguments of Ambrose are undoubtedly significant to the topic of this article because Eugippius connects the *Commemoratorium* with Milan, Ambrose, and, strangely (for reasons that will be discussed below), Ambrose's disputes with the Arians in Milan. For example, Eugippius describes Severinus acquiring the relics of the Milanese martyrs Gervasius and Protasius.<sup>15</sup> This is important, as Ambrose's discovery of these relics in Milan led to his greatest triumph over the Arian Christians in the city.<sup>16</sup>

We now turn our attention to the pseudo-evangelisation of the Rugians in Eugippius' *Commemoratorium*. The *Commemoratorium* is a 46-chapter work that is intended to provide a record of the important miracles and events in the life and death of the holy man called Severinus of Noricum. The *Commemoratorium* was written by Eugippius, a follower of Severinus and a Norican.<sup>17</sup> He is also one of the refugees from Noricum who helped to move Severinus' body to its final resting place at a monastery at Castellum Lucullanum on the bay of Naples.<sup>18</sup> Although Eugippius did not title his work a 'life' (he only called it a *commemoratorium*), modern scholarship has consistently called it the *Vita Sancti Severini*. This title, however, is somewhat misleading, as the work is not actually a life of Severinus. Instead, the *Commemoratorium* is a work sent with a covering letter from Eugippius to the deacon Paschasius, ostensibly for Paschasius to write a more complete 'life of Severinus' from the materials assembled by Eugippius.<sup>19</sup>

Although Eugippius terms his work a *commemoratorium*, or means of remembrance, he includes nothing of Severinus' life or background prior to the holy man's entrance into the area between Noricum and Pannonia late in the holy man's life.<sup>20</sup> It also includes a number of events after the death of the holy man, including: a war between two barbarian armies, the exodus of a group of

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 2.16.138.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 2.16.140.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 1.47, 2.119.

<sup>15</sup> Eugippius, *Vita Severini*, ed. Hermannus Sauppe, MGH I 2 (Berlin, 1961), 9.2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford, 1995), 219-23.

<sup>17</sup> Eugippius, *Vita Severini* 43.9.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 44.7.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*, *Ad Paschasium*, in *Vita Severini*, ed. Hermannus Sauppe, MGH I 2 (Berlin, 1961), 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 3, 11.

Norican refugees – including Eugippius – into Italy, and the subsequent internment of the holy man’s remains in Eugippius’ monastery at Castellum Lucullanum.<sup>21</sup> Eugippius later became the abbot of that monastery.

Eugippius wrote the *Commemoratorium* in the early sixth century in the context of Ostrogothic Italy, a territory made up predominantly of Nicene Christians but with a ruling class mainly made up of Arian non-Romans. Although Eugippius protests that he is unlearned in his letter to Paschasius – and his Latin somewhat bears this out – he was well connected to the Empire’s *intelligentsia* and wrote a number of works, including a compilation of excerpts of Augustine of Hippo and, according to Isidore of Seville, a monastic rule.<sup>22</sup>

This finally brings us to Severinus’ pseudo-evangelisation of the Rugians. The Rugians were one of a number of barbarian groups who invaded Noricum in the fifth century. They, like the Ostrogoths in Eugippius’ Italy, were also predominantly Arian Christians. If acting as a typical, traditional missionary and holy man, one would expect Severinus to react to the Rugians with hostility, as they were both heterodox and invading Noricum and disturbing the lives of the Nicene Christian Romans to whom Severinus was ministering. Instead, according to Eugippius, Severinus greets the Rugians largely with charity. It is true that Severinus performs a number of miracles that lead to the death and capture of a number of Rugians, but this, as will be explained further, is due to their failure to follow Severinus’ teachings on charity and Christian friendship.

Severinus interacts with the Rugians on a number of occasions throughout the *Commemoratorium*. In one instance, a Rugian widow and her invalid son come to Eugippius to ask for assistance.<sup>23</sup> Instead of asking the woman and her son to convert to Severinus’ conception of orthodoxy, the holy man only asks that the woman give alms to the poor.<sup>24</sup> When the Rugian woman completed this task, Severinus performed a miracle and healed the woman’s son.<sup>25</sup> As a result, Eugippius notes that ‘the whole people of the Rugians’ began to come to Severinus in order to give him honor and to ask for the holy man’s assistance in all of their troubles.<sup>26</sup> Many of these interactions involved the leaders of the Rugians. For example, Flaccitheus, the first *rex* of the Rugi that Severinus encounters, comes to Severinus in order to ask the holy man to protect him from hostile Goths from Pannonia.<sup>27</sup> Severinus begins to respond how one would expect that Ambrose would respond to a similar request from an Arian barbarian: by bemoaning their doctrinal differences. Severinus, however, goes

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*, *Vita Severini*, ed. H. Sauppe (1961), 1.1, 44.1-46.6.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*, *Ad Paschasium*, ed. H. Sauppe (1961), 4; Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden, 2003), 112.

<sup>23</sup> Eugippius, *Vita Severini*, ed. H. Sauppe (1961), 6.1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 6.2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 6.3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 6.5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 5.1.

on to say that these differences are not important enough to stop him from helping Flaccitheus. He proceeds to help Flaccitheus with his problems and admonishes him to practice charity to all people.<sup>28</sup> Eugippius then relates that Flaccitheus came to Severinus on a number of subsequent occasions, and that Flaccitheus took Severinus' admonition to charity seriously and lived out the rest of his days in 'perfect peace'.<sup>29</sup> This pattern repeats throughout Severinus' interactions with the Rugians: he asks them to convert to Christian fraternity and charity before helping them, instead of withholding assistance in order to pressure the Rugians to convert doctrinally to Nicene Christianity. Severinus holds charity to be more important than division.

How successful was this pseudo-evangelisation? We have already seen that, on occasion, it worked. Sadly, that occasion seems to have been the exception to the rule. In most occasions, the novel approach practiced by Severinus failed. Rather than transformation, he ended up performing a miracle in order to punish the Rugians for failing to act with charity. A prime example of this is Severinus' first major interaction with Flaccitheus' son, Feletheus, also called Feva, and Giso, Feva's 'cruel' wife.<sup>30</sup> Severinus learned that Giso was rebaptising and harshly treating the Nicene Christian Noricans near the city of Favianis.<sup>31</sup> When Severinus implored Giso to desist in these actions, she rebuked him. In return, Severinus miraculously caused Feva and Giso's son, Fredericus, also called Ferderuchus, to be kidnapped.<sup>32</sup> Giso then repented and her son was returned to her.<sup>33</sup>

Other failures are recorded as well. For example, Severinus' pseudo-evangelisation failed to stop the Rugians from ransacking the region after his death and forcing the Noricans to flee into Italy. Also, a Rugian leader, Ferderuchus, that Severinus had attempted to convert to Christian charity destroys Severinus' resting place in Noricum. Ferderuchus is the same Rugian Severinus had caused to be kidnapped as a child. Although at one point Ferderuchus seemed to have adopted Christian charity, he reverted to his destructive ways after the holy man's death and destroyed the holy man's church, ransacked his tomb, and stole the goods that were to be distributed to the poor.<sup>34</sup> These failures suggest that Severinus' pseudo-evangelisation failed to have any lasting impact.

One could also ask, though, if Severinus' interactions with the Arian Rugians differed from his dealings with the Nicene population of Noricum. According to the *Commemoratorium*, there was no difference – Severinus cared about actions, not beliefs. For example, near a Roman fort called Cucullis, Severinus

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 5.2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 5.4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 40.1.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 8.1-2.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 8.3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 8.4-5.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 44.1-3.

assists the population in dealing with a plague of locusts. He asks the people to gather in the local church and to repent of their sins and to promise to give alms.<sup>35</sup> One resident of the area, however, only came to the church in order to receive communion; he spent the rest of his day attempting to personally protect his crop. In response, his crop is destroyed while the rest of the town's crop was miraculously preserved.<sup>36</sup> The message is clear: receiving the Eucharist is not enough to merit salvation. On another occasion, near Boiotro, Severinus' pseudo-evangelisation is visited upon his own monks. He found three of his monks to be 'infected with ... pride' and asked them to repent. When the monks refused, Severinus punished the monks with the 'paternal flail' of God: demonic possession.<sup>37</sup> Similar instances are found throughout the *Commemoratorium*. Severinus cared more about acting as a Christian than believing as a Christian, more about charity than doctrinal division.

Interestingly, and I think tellingly, Severinus' de-emphasis of doctrine and emphasis of Christian charity does not even extend to Eugippius, his disciple, author of the *Commemoratorium*, and the abbot of the monastery where Severinus' remains were interred. For example, Eugippius calls the Rugians 'heretics' on a number of occasions.<sup>38</sup> If Severinus failed to persuade even his own disciple, can one call his pseudo-evangelisation a success?

One can argue that, at least during his career in Noricum and its environs, Severinus' pseudo-evangelisation was largely successful. This can be seen in Eugippius' highlighting of Noricum's spiral into chaos after the holy man's death. Throughout the *Commemoratorium*, Eugippius describes Severinus' power over the barbarians, particularly the Rugians. Through his pseudo-evangelisation, Severinus gains power over the barbarians and is able to stall the destruction of Noricum and the exodus of the Nicene Romans from the region. Eugippius states that the Rugians greatly respected Severinus.<sup>39</sup> Eugippius also relates that the barbarians that Severinus encountered in Noricum and its environs were terrified of him. For example, the leader of the Alamanni 'trembled' before Severinus.<sup>40</sup> Severinus also orders Odovacar, a leader of the Goths and a Rugian, to complete a task for him, and Odovacar 'gladly obeyed'.<sup>41</sup> Further, after Ferderuchus' sacking of Severinus' tomb, it is Odovacar that comes to the rescue (by means of a miracle from Severinus) and defeats Ferderuchus' army.<sup>42</sup> This argument, however, does not change the conclusion. The success was still only short lived.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 12.3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 12.4.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 36.1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 8.1, for an example of Eugippius calling the Rugians 'heretics'.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 7.5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 19.2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 32.1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 44.4.

Christianity is a religion built upon evangelisation. In Eugippius' *Commemoratorium*, the reader is presented with a mode of evangelisation that is both novel and, for the most part, not able to promote long-term success in the Christian tradition: a mode of evangelisation that de-emphasises doctrine and emphasises Christian charity and fraternity. This article has discussed a number of examples of evangelisation in the early Christian church, and it has shown that these examples largely agree with each other, emphasising the necessity of missionary activity and the doctrinal conversion of those who are not wholly orthodox. Unlike these examples of traditional evangelisation, Severinus of Noricum implements a mode of evangelisation among the Rugians that disregards their Arianism and emphasises their unity with Severinus in Christ. Although this pseudo-evangelisation failed to take hold among the Rugians, and even Severinus' own disciples, after the holy man's death, it was still an ambitious, although not particularly successful, take on Christian evangelism.

# **Die Konstruktion christlicher Identität. Funktion und Bedeutung der Apostasie im antiken Christentum (4.-6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.)**

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## ABSTRACT

In recent decades, classical scholars often focused their studies of Late Antiquity on the relationship between Christian and non-Christian identities. They analysed the change from one group to another and tried to determine the relevant identity markers for insiders or outsiders, the boundaries between Christians and pagans. In this growing field of religious identity studies an important Christian category was discounted: apostasy.

However, apostasy is an important marker for the separation of the Christians from their non-Christian environment, comparable to heresy and schism. The apostasy concept enables to define what it means to be a Christian in a society which was formed by a non-Christian majority, also after Constantine the Great.

The present article analyses the function and significance of the concept of apostasy in late antique Christianity, especially in the time after the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It discusses different meanings of apostasy, illustrates their significance in Christian parishes, and points out aspects of the field in theology, discipline, and pastoral care.

## I

Die altentumswissenschaftliche Forschung hat sich in den vergangenen Jahren intensiv mit Aufbau und Konstruktion einer spezifisch christlichen Identität<sup>1</sup> in der Spätantike auseinandergesetzt. Fragen der Integration und Abgrenzung der frühen Christen in der antiken Gesellschaft wurden erörtert; dabei versuchte man, das Verhältnis zur nichtchristlichen Umwelt und die von so manchen Christen gelebten partiellen Doppelidentitäten, den Wechsel von einem zum anderen Bekenntnis, mit verschiedenen Begriffen näher zu fassen: Charles Guignebert prägte bereits in den 20er Jahren des vergangenen Jahrhunderts den

<sup>1</sup> Zum Begriff vgl. Bernd Estel, 'Identität', *HRWG* 3 (1993), 193-210, bes. 203-6; Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the early Christian Era* (London, 2009), 28-41 sowie Éric Rebillard, *Christians and their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa 200/450 CE* (Ithaca und London, 2012).

Terminus der ‚Demi-Chrétiens‘,<sup>2</sup> Maijastina Kahlos gebrauchte in ihrer grundlegenden Monographie ‚Debate and dialogue. Christian and pagan cultures c. 360-430‘ aus dem Jahr 2007 den Begriff ‚incerti‘,<sup>3</sup> und Peter Gemeinhardt sprach in einem rezenten Beitrag von ‚Mischexistenzen‘,<sup>4</sup> um das Phänomen genauer zu bestimmen.

Vor dem Hintergrund einer derart in den letzten Jahren intensiv geführten Forschungsdiskussion über christliche Identität(en) in der Spätantike muss es erstaunen, dass dabei ein Terminus kaum berücksichtigt wurde, nämlich der der Apostasie. Dabei erfüllt gerade das Konzept der Apostasie, vergleichbar dem der Häresie und des Schismas im innerchristlichen Bereich, in der Abgrenzung der Christen nach außen eine wichtige Funktion: Es erlaubt die Definition des spezifisch Christlichen in einer auch weit nach der sog. Konstantinischen Wende mehrheitlich pagan geprägten Umwelt.

Neben Erwähnungen in kirchenhistorischen Überblickswerken<sup>5</sup> und einzelnen Aufsätzen<sup>6</sup> ist in jüngerer Zeit zum Thema nur Stephen G. Wilsons Monographie ‚Leaving the fold. Apostates and defectors in Antiquity‘ erschienen.<sup>7</sup> Instruktiv, wenn auch nur teilweise mit dem Thema der Apostasie befasst, ist ein jüngerer Sammelband zur Christianisierung der antiken Welt: ‚Le problème de la christianisation du monde antique‘ aus dem Jahr 2010.<sup>8</sup>

Der folgende Beitrag untersucht das Phänomen der Apostasie maßgeblich unter zwei Fragestellungen: In einem ersten Schritt sollen zunächst, ausgehend vom Terminus der Apostasie, verschiedene Definitionen untersucht und so eine nähere Bestimmung des Glaubensabfalls aus den spätantiken Quellen heraus erarbeitet werden (II); in einem zweiten Schritt soll dann, im Anschluss an eine knappe Darstellung der Verbreitung des Glaubensabfalls in spätantiken Gemeinden, der Frage nachgegangen werden, welche Funktion, welche Bedeutung dem Apostasiekonzept in der konkreten Gemeindesituation zukommt (III). Abschließend soll die inhaltliche Breite des Apostasiekonzepts aufgezeigt und auf künftige Fragestellungen der Forschung hingewiesen werden (IV).

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. Charles Guignebert, ‚Les Demi-Chrétiens et leur place dans l’église antique‘, *RHR* 88 (1923), 65-102.

<sup>3</sup> Vgl. Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430* (Aldershot, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. Peter Gemeinhardt, ‚Staatsreligion, Volkskirche oder Gemeinschaft der Heiligen? Das Christentum in der Spätantike. Eine Standortbestimmung‘, *ZAC* 12 (2009), 453-76, hier 457.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. Karl Baus and Eugen Ewig, *Die Reichskirche nach Konstantin dem Großen I: Die Kirche von Nikaia bis Chalkedon*, Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte 2, 1 (Freiburg, 1973), 344; Karl Suso Frank, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Alten Kirche. Mitarbeit Dr. Elisabeth Grünbeck*, 3. Ausg. (Paderborn und München, 2002), 385 (Beschreibung des Phänomens ohne Nennung des Terminus).

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. Georg Schöllgen, ‚Pegasios Apostata. Zum Verständnis von „Apostasie“ in der zweiten Hälfte des vierten Jahrhunderts‘, *JAC* 47 (2004), 58-80.

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. Stephen G. Wilson, *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity* (Minneapolis, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Vgl. Hervé Inglebert, Sylvain Destephen und Bruno Dumézil (Hrsg.), *Le problème de la christianisation du monde antique*, Textes, images et monuments de l’antiquité au haut Moyen Âge 10 (Paris, 2010).

## II

Der Terminus technicus ‚Apostasie‘ prägt sich im antiken Christentum erst allmählich zur Bezeichnung des Glaubensabfalls aus. Ἀποστασία (bzw., in jüngerer Bildung, ἀπόστασις) wird von ἀφίστημι, ‚wegtreten / abfallen / abstehen‘,<sup>9</sup> abgeleitet. Nichtchristlich bedeutet das Wort ‚Aufstand‘ bzw. ‚Rebellion‘.<sup>10</sup>

Die Etymologie des griechischen Wortes ist für seine Verwendung in der Bedeutung ‚Abfall vom christlichen Glauben‘ und die Ausprägung des Apostasiekonzepts bestimmend; als charakteristisches Merkmal des Glaubensabfalls gilt zunächst allgemein ein ‚Abwenden‘, ein ‚Zurückweichen‘ von Gott (und der Kirche). So schreibt Clemens von Alexandrien, die erste Seligpreisung (Mt. 5:3) gelte denjenigen, die den bösen Gedanken, ‚die von Gott abwichen‘, nicht folgten,<sup>11</sup> und Gregor von Nyssa erklärt den Ungehorsam Evas gegenüber den Geboten Gottes als Ausdruck ihrer Apostasie, als äußeres Anzeichen der Abwendung von Gott.<sup>12</sup>

Lateinische Autoren setzen die Etymologie des Wortes ebenfalls voraus. Für den Ambrosiaster besteht der Glaubensabfall in einer Abwendung von Gott ([...], *ut a deo sevocet*).<sup>13</sup> Augustinus verwendet bereits das von *apostasia* abgeleitete Verb *apostatare* und greift nicht mehr ausschließlich auf Umschreibungen zurück.<sup>14</sup> In *De musica* und ebenso in *De libero arbitrio* zitiert er *Sir. 10:14 Vulg.: Apostatare a deo* und führt aus, dass die Abwendung von Gott den Anfang des menschlichen Hochmuts markiere.<sup>15</sup>

Ausgehend von dieser terminologischen, notwendig unspezifischen Bestimmung der Apostasie als Abwendung von Gott lässt sich in den Quellen eine doppelte Ausprägung des Apostasiekonzepts aufzeigen, die man mit den Kategorien einer ‚engeren‘ und ‚weiteren‘ Vorstellung vom Glaubensabfall bestimmen kann.

In der kirchlichen Disziplin, in den Kanones frühchristlicher Synoden und den Bestimmungen römisch-bischöflicher Schreiben, kommt eine ‚engere‘ Verwendung des Apostasiekonzepts zum Tragen, die den Glaubensabfall am Götzendienst, der Idolatrie, festmacht. Beispielhaft für viele andere Textzeugen wird hier ein kurzer Abschnitt aus der sog. ersten Dekretale des römischen Bischofs Siricius zitiert.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Henry G. Liddel und Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9. Ausg. (Oxford, 1968), 291 s. v. ἀφίστημι; Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 278 s. v. ἀφίστημι.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Plut., *Galba* 1; Dion. Hal. 7,1 sowie Pierre de Labriolle, ‚Apostasie‘, *RAC* 1 (1950), 550.

<sup>11</sup> Clem. Alex., *str.* 2,15,68,1 (GCS Clem. Alex. 2, 149 Stählin / Früchtel / Treu).

<sup>12</sup> Gr. Nyss., *Eun.* 3,10,16 (GregNyssOp 2, 295 Jaeger); vgl. Gr. Nyss., *in inscr. Ps.* 5 (GregNyssOp 5, 39 Mc Donough).

<sup>13</sup> Ambrosiast., *in Col.* 2,12,2 (CSEL 81,3, 184 Vogels).

<sup>14</sup> Vgl. Georg Lehnert, ‚apostato‘, *ThLZ* 2 (1900/1906), 253; Caes. Arel., *serm.* 79,2 (CChr.SL 103, 327 Morin): *Quid est, apostatare, nisi a deo discedere?*

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. Aug., *mus.* 6,13,40 (PL 32, 1184); *lib. arb.* 3,25,76 (CChr.SL 29, 320 Green) mit Zitat von *Sir. 10:14 Vulg.*

Siricius formuliert im Schreiben an seinen hispanischen Amtskollegen Himerius von Tarragona im Jahr 385 folgende Bestimmung:

*Adiectum est etiam quosdam christianos ad apostasiam, quod dici nefas est, transeuntes et idolorum cultu et sacrificiorum contaminatione profanatos.*

*Quos a Christi corpore et sanguine, quod dudum redempti fuerant renascendo, iubemus abscidi.*<sup>16</sup>

„Auch ist angemerkt worden, dass gewisse Christen zur Apostasie – was schon ein Frevel ist, es überhaupt auszusprechen – abgefallen und sowohl durch die Verehrung von Götzen als auch durch die Befleckung mit Opfern entweiht worden sind. Wir ordnen an, diese von Leib und Blut Christi, durch den sie schon lange zur Wiedergeburt erlöst worden waren, fernzuhalten“.

Siricius beruft sich auf den Bericht des Himerius (*adiectum est*), der ihm den Glaubensabfall in seiner nicht mehr erhaltenen Anfrage schilderte. Die Junktur *et idolorum cultus et sacrificiorum contaminatio* ist als Explikation des voranstehenden *quosdam christianos ad apostasiam* (...) *transeuntes* zu interpretieren:<sup>17</sup> Die Apostasie besteht im Götzendienst; er ist der Tatbestand, durch den der Glaubensabfall als vollzogen gilt.<sup>18</sup>

Neben dieser ‚engeren‘ Verwendung des Apostasiekonzepts (Glaubensabfall besteht im konkreten Götzendienst) findet sich in der patristischen Literatur auch eine ‚weitere‘ Verwendung, die die vorgestellte etymologische Bedeutung des Apostasiebegriffs voraussetzt und vor allem für die theologische Einordnung des Phänomens bedeutsam ist.

Sie begegnet, neben ersten Belegen im Barnabasbrief<sup>19</sup> und in Tertullians *De idololatria*<sup>20</sup> aus dem 2. und 3. Jahrhundert, u. a. bei Ambrosius und Augustinus. Apostasie ereignet sich hiernach in jeder Sünde, die immer auch unter Berücksichtigung der Etymologie des Wortes eine Abwendung von Gott darstellt.

Ambrosius formuliert in seinem Kommentar zu Ps. 118:

*Praevaricatores aestimavi omnes peccatores terrae, (...). Recte praevaricator dicitur qui discedit a domino; denique Graece a discedendo apostata nominatur.*<sup>21</sup>

„Alle Sünder der Erde habe ich für Abtrünnige gehalten. (...). Zu Recht wird der als Abtrünniger bezeichnet, der sich vom Herrn abwendet; schließlich nennt man ihn auf Griechisch aufgrund seiner Abwendung einen Apostaten“.

<sup>16</sup> Sir., ep. 1,3 (90 Zechiel-Eckes).

<sup>17</sup> Vgl. Christian Horning, *Directa ad decessorem: Ein kirchenhistorisch-philologischer Kommentar zur ersten Dekretale des Siricius von Rom*, JAC.E KIRihe 8 (Münster, 2011), 113.

<sup>18</sup> Vgl. *ibid.* 113.

<sup>19</sup> Vgl. Barn., ep. 16,7 (Schriften des Urchristentums 2, 184 Wengst).

<sup>20</sup> Vgl. Tert., *idol.* 1,5 (CChr.SL 2, 1101f. Reifferscheid / Wissowa).

<sup>21</sup> Vgl. Ambr., in Ps. 118,15,33,1 (CSEL 62, 348 Petschenig / Zelzer).

Ambrosius recurriert auf die griechische Bedeutung von *apostata*. Als Abtrünniger gilt ihm nicht nur wie zuvor Siricius der ‚engere‘ Götzendiener, sondern überhaupt der Sünder, der im Vollzug der Sünde immer auch von Gott abfalle. Gleichsam in einer Erweiterung des engeren Begriffs des Götzendienstes wird damit jede Sünde, auch die nur geistige, zur Idolatrie.

In der spätantiken christlichen Literatur changiert demnach das Apostasieverständnis zwischen einer ‚engeren‘ und einer ‚weiteren‘ Bedeutung. Dabei lässt sich beobachten, dass besonders in kirchendisziplinären Dokumenten, in den Kanones frühchristlicher Synoden<sup>22</sup> und den Schreiben römischer Bischöfe,<sup>23</sup> eine ‚engere‘ Verwendung vorherrscht, während das Apostasieverständnis im Rahmen theologischer Erörterungen (u. a. in Traktaten und Predigten) durchaus ‚weiter‘ ist.<sup>24</sup> In der römischen Rechtssprache bezieht sich *apostasia* bzw. *apostatatare* stets konkret auf idolatrische kultische Praktiken, die Glaubensabfall bedeuten und ab 381 auch von staatlicher Seite strafbewährt sind.<sup>25</sup>

Hinsichtlich der Terminologie ist anzumerken, dass der ‚Glaubensabfall‘ nie exklusiv mit *Ἀποστασία* (auch *ἀπόστασις*) bzw. *apostasia* und davon abgeleiteten Verben bezeichnet wird. ‚Untechnische‘ Umschreibungen finden sich im gesamten hier zu berücksichtigenden Zeitraum, auch nachdem ab dem 4. Jahrhundert das Wort ‚Apostasie‘ zunehmend auf den christlichen Glaubensabfall eingeschränkt wird und als *Terminus technicus* zur Verfügung steht.<sup>26</sup>

### III

Geht man von den voranstehend diskutierten Apostasiedefinitionen aus, dann ist der Glaubensabfall in den spätantiken Gemeinden kein Randphänomen.

<sup>22</sup> Vgl. beispielsweise C Ancyr. vJ. 314 cn. 1f. 8f. (118f. 121 Benešević, Synagoga L titularum); C Laod. (4. Jh.) cn. 35 (110f. Benešević, Synagoga L titularum); C Agath. vJ. 506 cn. 42 (CChr.SL 148, 210f. Munier) = C Venet. vJ. 461/491 cn. 16 (CChr.SL 148, 156 Munier); C Aurelian. vJ. 541 cn. 15 (CChr.SL 148A, 136 De Clercq).

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. beispielsweise Innoc., *ep.* 17,5,11 (PL 20, 533f.); Gelas., *ep.* = Coll. Avell. 100,3 (CSEL 35,1, 454 Guenther).

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. Rufin. / Or., *comm. in Rom.* 6,3 (464 Hammond Bammel): *Nam et ipse diabolus sine dubio peccati servus est, quippe qui discessit a servitute iustitiae et in conspectu domini omnipotentis rebellavit, propter quod et apostata appellatus est*; Aug., *vera rel.* 14,27 (CChr.SL 32, 204 Daur): *Defectus autem iste, quod peccatum vocatur*; Caes. Arel., *serm.* 79,2 (CChr.SL 103, 327 Morin): *Quid est, apostatare, nisi a deo discedere?* sowie o. Anm. 11-3.

<sup>25</sup> Vgl. Cod. Theod. 16,7,2 praef. vJ. 383 (1,2, 884 Krueger / Mommsen): *Christianis ac fidelibus, qui ad paganos ritus cultusque migrarunt, omnem in quamcumque personam testamenti condendi interdicimus potestatem, ut sint absque iure romano*; Cod. Theod. 16,7,3 vJ. 383 (1,2, 884 Krueger / Mommsen): *Christianorum ad aras et templa migrantium negata testandi licentia vindicamus admissum*.

<sup>26</sup> Vgl. Georg Lehnert, ‚apostato‘, 253; Nancy Gauthier, ‚La notion d’apostat dans l’occident Latin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle‘, in Jean-Michel Poinssotte (Hrsg.), *Les Chrétiens face à leurs adversaires dans l’occident Latin au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rouen, 2001), 129-42.

Nach den Zeugnissen des Johannes Chrysostomus für Antiochien und Caesarius von Arles für Südgallien sind die Christen allenthalben vom Glaubensabfall bedroht.

Johannes opponiert in zahlreichen Predigten gegen Formen nichtchristlichen ‚Aberglaubens‘, die eher beiläufig im christlichen Lebenswandel beibehalten werden und doch formal Götzendienst und damit Apostasie bedeuten.<sup>27</sup> So achten Christen bei dem Beginn von Unternehmungen auf das Schreien des Esels und das Krähen des Hahns.<sup>28</sup> Eng verbunden mit magischen Vorstellungen ist auch das Tragen von Amuletten, gegen das nicht nur Johannes wiederholt einschreitet.<sup>29</sup> Gemeinantik erhofft man sich von ihnen eine apotropäische Wirkung und trägt sie am Körper, versehen mit Sprüchen und Formeln.<sup>30</sup> Für Johannes sind diese Bräuche dem Teufel zuzuschreiben; sie sind gefährlicher Götzendienst und damit Abfall von der wahren Religion.<sup>31</sup>

Caesarius von Arles<sup>32</sup> erwähnt in seinen Predigten an mehreren Stellen, dass Christen am fünften Tag der Woche aus Verehrung gegenüber Jupiter ihre Arbeit ruhen lassen. Frauen wollten an diesem Tag weder Webstuhl noch Spindel bedienen,<sup>33</sup> und auch Männer unterbrächen die Arbeit.<sup>34</sup> Unter den Christen bestehen heidnische Quell- und Baumkulte fort.<sup>35</sup> Sie begeben sich, wie ihre nichtchristlichen Nachbarn, zu Bäumen, um Gelübde abzulegen, und zu Quellen, um Gebete zu sprechen.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. Markus Striedl, *Antiker Volksglaube bei Johannes Chrysostomus* (Diss. Würzburg, 1948); John H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), bes. 224-42; Pietro Rentinck, *La cura pastorale in Antiochia nel IV secolo*, AnGr 178 (Roma, 1970); Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2007), 63-90.

<sup>28</sup> Chrys., in *Eph. hom.* 12,3 (PG 62, 92).

<sup>29</sup> Vgl. Franz Eckstein and Jan H. Waszink, ‚Amulett‘, *RAC* 1 (1950), 397-411, hier 407f.

<sup>30</sup> Zu christlichen Amuletten und ihren Formen vgl. *ibid.* 407-10.

<sup>31</sup> Chrys. in *Eph. hom.* 12,3 (PG 62, 92): Σπουδάσωμεν, μηδέποτε μήτε αὐτοὶ ταύτη ἀλῶναι τῇ δουλείᾳ, καὶ εἴ τις ἡμῖν τῶν φίλων ἐάλωκε, διαρρήξωμεν αὐτοῦ τὰ δεσμά, ἀποδώσωμεν αὐτὸν τῆς χαλεποτάτης καὶ καταγελάστου ταύτης εἰρκτῆς, εὐλοτον αὐτὸν ἐργασώμεθα πρὸς τὸν δρόμον τὸν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν (...).

<sup>32</sup> Vgl. Henry G.J. Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France during the Sixth Century*, AnGr 51 (Romae, 1950); Guillaume Konda, *Le discernement et la malice des pratiques superstitieuses d'après les sermons de S. Césaire d'Arles* (Roma, 1970); William E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul*, CSMLT 4, 22 (Cambridge, 1994), bes. 201-43.

<sup>33</sup> Caes. Arel., *serm.* 52,2 (CChr.SL 103, 230f. Morin): (...) *dicantur adhuc esse aliquae mulieres infelices, quae in honore Iovis quinta feria nec telam nec fusum facere vellent.*

<sup>34</sup> Caes. Arel. *serm.* 13,5 (CChr.SL 103, 68 Morin): *Isti enim infelices et miseri, qui in honore Iovis quinta feria opera non faciunt (...).*

<sup>35</sup> Vgl. G. Konda, *Discernement* (1970), 20-5.

<sup>36</sup> Vgl. Caes. Arel., *serm.* 14,4 (CChr.SL 103, 71 Morin): *Nolite ad arbores vota reddere; nolite ad fontes orare; serm.* 53,1 (CChr.SL 103, 233 Morin).

Die Beispiele aus den Predigten des Johannes Chrysostomus und des Caesarius von Arles stehen exemplarisch für eine Fülle weiterer Zeugnisse. Sie verdeutlichen, dass die Christen bis weit in das 6. Jahrhundert hinein nichtchristliche Bräuche und Kulte pflegen. Oftmals offenbar, ohne dass ihnen die formale Unvereinbarkeit von christlichem Bekenntnis und nichtchristlicher Religion einsichtig gewesen wäre. Magische Gesänge, sog. *incantationes*, die u. a. in der Medizin angewendet werden, verteidigt ein Christ, der wegen seiner heidnischen Praxis zur Rede gestellt worden war, so: Ἐνταῦθα δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν εἰδωλολατρεία, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς ἐπωδή (‚Hier liegt überhaupt keine Idolatrie vor, sondern nur Gesang‘).<sup>37</sup>

Die Predigten des Johannes Chrysostomus und des Caesarius von Arles lassen erkennen, dass die Gläubigen in das gesellschaftliche Leben ihrer nichtchristlichen Umwelt integriert sind und sie trotz ihres christlichen Bekenntnisses an deren Festen teilnehmen. Sie grenzen sich nicht ab, so dass die lebensweltlichen Unterschiede zwischen Christen und Nichtchristen fließend sind.

Gerade aber dort, wo Gläubige den Exklusivitätsanspruch des Christentums zurückweisen, also neben ihrer christlichen weitere gleichberechtigte (Teil-)Identitäten (als philosophisch Interessierte, Tradenten überkommener Bräuche und Anhänger antiker Kulte) führen und diese ihrem Selbstzeugnis nach miteinander für vereinbar halten, wird die Apostasie funktional zu einer wichtigen Kategorie. Sie dient der Kirche dazu, Christliches von Nichtchristlichem unterscheidbar zu machen und Formen der (auch unbewussten) Devianz überhaupt erst beschreiben zu können.

Der Begriff ‚Apostasie‘ intendiert angesichts der ‚grey areas‘<sup>38</sup> zwischen Christlichem und Nichtchristlichem scharfe Abgrenzungen.<sup>39</sup> Er wird zu einer Schlüsselkategorie christlicher Identität innerhalb eines kirchlichen Diskurses, der, so scheint es, umso entschiedener geführt wird, je unschärfer in nachkonstantinischer Zeit die Grenzen zwischen Christen und Nichtchristen werden.

#### IV

Die Bedeutung der Kategorie Apostasie wird auch greifbar in der intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Phänomen in theologischen Traktaten, in Bestimmungen der kirchlichen Disziplin und spätantiker Predigtliteratur. Auf sie soll abschließend hingewiesen werden.

<sup>37</sup> Chrys., in *Col. hom.* 8,5 (PG 62, 358).

<sup>38</sup> M. Kahlos, *Debate* (2007), 26.

<sup>39</sup> Guy G. Stroumsa nennt es ein Charakteristikum des frühen Christentums, dass ihm ‚clear-cut patterns of self-definition‘ fehlten (ders., ‚Tertullian and the limits of tolerance‘, in ders. und Graham N. Stanton [Hrsg.], *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* [Cambridge, 1998], 173-84, hier 180).

Im Rahmen der frühchristlichen Theologie wird die Apostasie dabei in die Heilsgeschichte eingeordnet. Die Beschäftigung mit ihr gerät in die Nähe christlicher Historiographie, Diabolologie und Dämonologie: Als erster Apostat gilt einhellig der Teufel; seinem Fall von Gott folgte im Paradies der Sündenfall des Menschen (*Gen.* 3). Der weitere Verlauf der Geschichte wird einerseits als Verführungsgeschichte gedeutet, andererseits als Zeit menschlicher Bewährung. Ihr wird in den meisten Theologien der Kirchenväter eine pädagogische Funktion zugeschrieben.<sup>40</sup>

Der Disziplin gilt die Apostasie als Hauptsünde. Bereits Tertullian bezeichnet den Götzendienst, den Tatbestand des Glaubensabfalls, als das *principale crimen humani generis*.<sup>41</sup>

Das kirchliche Recht behandelt, wie hier nicht weiter aufgezeigt werden kann, überaus differenziert verschiedene *causae* der Apostasie. Neben der Beteiligung von Christen am heidnischen Kult, die offensichtlich den Tatbestand des Glaubensabfalls erfüllt, thematisiert es detailliert einzelne heidnische Bräuche, die von Christen weiter gepflegt werden.<sup>42</sup>

Und schließlich zeigt sich, dass die kirchliche Pastoral in der konkreten Situation frühchristlicher Gemeinden darum bemüht ist, die Gefahr des Glaubensabfalls durch verschiedene Strategien überhaupt zu minimieren, dabei aber offenbar angesichts der großen Anzahl disziplinärer Verstöße nicht auf das kirchliche Recht rekurren kann. Die Predigten eines Johannes Chrysostomus und eines Caesarius von Arles sind daher der Paränese zuzurechnen; sie wollen den heidnischen Einfluss zurückdrängen (Depaganisierung) und gleichzeitig eine spezifisch christliche Religiosität aufbauen (Christianisierung).

Die Bedeutung der Apostasie, die derart in der spätantiken Theologie, Disziplin und Pastoral aufscheint, steht in einem offenkundigen Gegensatz zur Aufarbeitung des Phänomens in der bisherigen Forschung. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Glaubensabfall blieb hier allzu oft auf die ersten drei Jahrhunderte und die Zeiten der Christenverfolgungen beschränkt;<sup>43</sup> die nachkonstantinische Zeit geriet demgegenüber kaum oder überhaupt nicht in den Blick, obwohl die

<sup>40</sup> Vgl. u. a. Or., *princ.* 1,5 (GCS Orig. 5, 68-78 Koetschau); Rufin. / Or., *comm. in Rom.* 5,12-4 (382-90 Hammond Bammel); Ambr., *parad.* 12,54f. (CSEL 32,1, 311-3 Schenkl); Aug., *gen. c. Manich.* 2,14,20f. (PL 34, 206f.); *gen. ad litt.* 11,13 (CSEL 28,1, 346 Zycha); *civ.* 12,1. 6-8 (CChr.SL 48, 355f. 359-63 Dombart / Kalb) (über die gefallenen Engel).

<sup>41</sup> Tert., *idol.* 1,1 (CChr.SL 2, 1101 Reifferscheid / Wissowa).

<sup>42</sup> Zu den Grundzügen einer kirchendisziplinären Bewertung der Apostasie vgl. Basil. *cn.* 81 = *ep.* 217,81 (2, 215 Courtonne); Gr. Nyss., *ep. cn.* 1f. (GregNyssOp 3,5, 4f. Mühlberg).

<sup>43</sup> Vgl. Andreas Alföldi, 'Zu den Christenverfolgungen in der Mitte des 3. Jahrhunderts', *Klio* 31 (1938), 323-48; Jacques Moreau, *Die Christenverfolgung im Römischen Reich*, AWR 2 (Berlin, 1961); Henri Grégoire, *Les persécutions dans l'empire romain*, MAB.L 2, 56, 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bruxelles, 1964); Rudolf Freudenberger, *Das Verhalten der römischen Behörden gegen die Christen im 2. Jahrhundert dargestellt am Brief des Plinius an Trajan und den Reskripten Trajans und Hadrians*, MBPF 52 (München, 1967).

Bedeutung des Apostasiekonzepts gerade ab dem 4. Jahrhundert zunimmt. Ähnlich den innerchristlichen Abgrenzungsbegriffen Häresie und Schisma dient das Apostasiekonzept ganz wesentlich der Definition christlicher Identität und ist daher für die Konstruktion des spezifisch Christlichen von viel grundlegender Bedeutung, als es bisher in der Forschung erkannt wurde.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Zur Apostasie im spätantiken Christentum ist vom Verfasser im letzten Jahr eine Monographie vorgelegt worden: Christian Horning, *Apostasie im antiken Christentum. Studien zum Glaubensabfall in altkirchlicher Theologie, Disziplin und Pastoral (4.-7. Jahrhundert n. Chr.)*, SVigChr 138 (Leiden, 2016).



# Growing Evidence of Christianity's Establishment in China in the Late-Patristic Era

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## ABSTRACT

The arrival of Christianity at Xi'an, capital of the Tang Dynasty in 635 AD is increasingly well known. The mission was led by a Syriac monk and was granted a warm reception at the imperial court. This occasion and a hundred and fifty years of subsequent history were memorialized on a stone stele erected in 781. It can still be seen at the 'Museum of Steles' in Xi'an, China. The story of early Christianity in China is being expatiated through research in Chinese dynastic records, manuscript material, and archaeological remains. In the summer of 2014, I traveled through much of China guided by prominent archaeologists. The intent was to review evidence for early Christianity. I saw a large proportion of the material upon which the story is being written. However, I was also shown some discoveries which are not familiar outside of China. This communication will introduce a selection of the material, supporting the narrative with photographs I took on site.

## Introduction

It may turn out that the month of March, 1993 was very important in Christian historiography. Professor Ken Parry, then at the University of Manchester, convened a conference entitled 'Nestorius and His Legacy'. An impressive array of scholars was assembled to focus on what we now call 'The Church of the East'.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings, with a few additional papers and under a different title, were eventually published as one complete issue of the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*.<sup>2</sup> This, in fact, was a significant act of remediation. In spite of the accessibility of very old and very diverse sources, for example,

<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley, called this Christian denomination 'The Holy Eastern Church' in 1842 in the letters commendatory he gave to the Rev. G.P. Badger when he was sending Badger to see how the Church of England might help it. It is still, mistakenly, widely referred to as 'Nestorianism'. More recently it has also been called *Jingjiao*, using its name as it appears in Chinese sources. In this article I will use either '*Jingjiao*' or 'Church of the East'. However, the name 'Nestorianism' or derivatives may appear in quotations. See also Sebastian P. Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church: A Lamentable Misnomer', *BJRL* 78 (1996), 23-35 and Ronald A.N. Kydd, 'Timothy I Looks at His Church', *SP* 72 (2014), 269-78.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Church of the East', *BJRL* 78, 3 (1996).

Cosmas Indicopleustes,<sup>3</sup> the Muslim *Diyārāt* Books,<sup>4</sup> and Marco Polo,<sup>5</sup> the western world and the western Church have largely overlooked anything Christian east of Syria, north of India, and which was before 1400 AD. For example, eminent French sinologist, Jacques Gernet, spoke dismissively of Christianity as it existed in China between the early seventh century and the mid-fourteenth century. He referred to the periods of particular significance, first under the Tang and then under the Yuan, saying: '[T]hese episodes are no more than historical curiosities'.<sup>6</sup>

Having become very interested in early Christianity in Asia at about the same time as Parry's meeting in Manchester, Professor Peter L. Hofrichter of the University of Salzburg organized a conference which met there in 2003. It included scholars from a wide range of disciplines, among them some Chinese academics. This conference has spawned a series of several more gatherings with the next conference scheduled to meet in June, 2016.

There were also two books published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which caught the attention of a wider public than academic writing usually does. They were Martin Palmer's *The Jesus Sutras: Rediscovering the Lost Scrolls of Taoist Christianity*<sup>7</sup> and Philip Jenkins' *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – and How It Died*.<sup>8</sup> However, there have been many other authors who preceded them, and through combined efforts the West is ever so slowly becoming aware of the early Christian East.<sup>9</sup>

In 2014 I had the opportunity to travel through much of China under the direction of Chinese archaeologists. In an attempt to review the evidence of the presence of Christianity in China prior to 1400 AD, I was taken to sixteen public and private museums, to the sites of eight ancient cities which once had

<sup>3</sup> E.L. Winstedt (ed.), *The Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes* [6<sup>th</sup> century] (Cambridge, 1909), <<https://archive.org>> (accessed July 7, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Hilary Kilpatrick, 'Monasteries through Muslim Eyes: the *Diyārāt* Books' [4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries], in David Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule* (Leiden, 2003), 19-37.

<sup>5</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo* [13<sup>th</sup> century] (Ware, Hertfordshire, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, Janet Lloyd (trans.) (Cambridge, 1990), 248 n. 3.

<sup>7</sup> (New York, 2001). This work has met stiff criticism on several points.

<sup>8</sup> (New York, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> The 200-page bibliography accompanying the proceedings from one of the early Salzburg conferences demonstrated that scores of people are writing on the subject, including many Chinese: Roman Malek and Peter Hofrichter (eds), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia*, Collectanea Serica (Sankt Augustin, 2005), 498-698. Among the earliest was Li Zhizao, *Du jingjiaobei shu hou* (*After Reading the Inscription of the Nestorian Tablet*), (Hangzhou, 1625). George Percy Badger was one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century authors: *The Nestorians and Their Rituals* (London, 1852), <[babel.hathitrust.org](http://babel.hathitrust.org)> (accessed July 7, 2015), and Samuel Hugh Moffett provided an excellent overview in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: *A History of Christianity in Asia: Volume I: Beginnings to 1500* (Maryknoll, NY, 2008).

a Christian presence, and to three ancient Christian monasteries.<sup>10</sup> In this article I am focusing on early Christianity in China, restricting the view to the region of Luoyang, one of the great ancient capitals of China. My thesis is that two recently discovered artifacts provide remarkable insights into religious life in general and into the Church of the East, specifically in the area around Luoyang, Henan Province, China c. 800 AD.

In developing the argument, I will take three steps. First, I will place the artifacts in question in their historiographic context. This will involve a brief review of the kinds of evidence currently available to speak to the question of Christianity in China. Second, I will discuss the artifacts themselves. Third, I will explore some of the implications these materials have for the story of Christianity in China.

### Historiographical context

Reaching as far back anywhere in the human story as I am attempting to do here carries an immense responsibility to find adequate sources to construct a narrative with an acceptable measure of probability. That applies to China, too, in spite of its assumed civilization, millennia old, and its relatively advanced cultural and literary development.<sup>11</sup> And when one is looking at something like Christianity in China, which has never been anything more than a minority within the wider society regardless of the large, actual numbers, the challenge is much greater.

First, there is a body of literary material coming from within the early Christian community, but it is frustratingly small. Primary among what can be assembled is the so-called 'Nestorian Stele'. It was originally erected in one of the early Chinese capitals, now called Xi'an, in 781 AD, and it is still on display there. Its 1,756 Chinese characters and accompanying Syriac script provide the basic source of information we have of the first 150 years of Christian history in China – 635-781 AD.<sup>12</sup> A second commemorative inscription was

<sup>10</sup> We also visited eleven temples of various other religious groups.

<sup>11</sup> On sources of Chinese history, see Denis Twitchett, 'Introduction', in *Sui and T'ang China, 589-906, Part I*, The Cambridge History of China (Cambridge, 1979), 1-47 and 'Chinese Social History from the Seventh to the Tenth Centuries. The Tunhuang Documents and Their Implications', *Past & Present* 35 (1966), 28-53, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/649965>> (accessed September 25, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Among the many discussions of the stele's text, I find Li Tang's most helpful. She commented on the content of the stele's inscription, and reviewed the discussion of this artifact's value as an historical document, concluding 'The genuineness of the Nestorian Tablet was firmly established. Opinions against it are heard no more': *A Study of the History of Nestorian Christianity in China and Its Literature in Chinese: Together with a New English Translation of the Dunhuang Nestorian Documents*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., European University Studies 27, Asian and African Studies 87 (Frankfurt, 2004), 19-22.

found in Luoyang in 2006. It dates to 814 AD, is inscribed on a ‘spiritual pillar’,<sup>13</sup> and while showing many similarities to the earlier Xi’an stele also provides information about the Christian community in Luoyang not readily available elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> In addition there is a large number of liturgical fragments that have survived,<sup>15</sup> but the writings which have captured the most attention are six documents which were found in one of several hundred Buddhist caves, the Magao Grottoes, near Dunhuang, a former caravan stop in the Gansu province of China.<sup>16</sup> This is not the place to launch into an analysis, but discussions surrounding them continue to be intense.<sup>17</sup>

Alongside the texts of the steles and the limited number of other documents which have survived from the Christian communities, there is information to be gathered from official Chinese documents. For example, with regard to the establishment of Christianity in China one of the prime records of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) offers this statement: ‘The Persian monk Aluoben (Alopen), has come afar to our capital and presented the sacred books and doctrines. Having carefully examined the teaching of this doctrine, it was found to be very mysterious. Its established principles are to be beneficial to all things and men and suitable to be propagated. Therefore a monastery should be set up at Yiningfang with twenty-one monks to it’.<sup>18</sup>

Then one hundred years later, when the imperial court decided the Christians would benefit from a name change, the same source conveyed the following: ‘The Persian scriptural teachings come from the Da Qin [the eastern part of the Roman empire], and with time have become well-established in China. When a church is established, it adopts a name and this should state the religion’s origins. Persian temples in the capital cities should therefore change their

<sup>13</sup> A Buddhist sculptural form popular during the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD).

<sup>14</sup> See Li Tang, ‘A Preliminary Study on the *Jingjiao* Inscription of Luoyang: Text Analysis, Commentary and English Translation’, in Dietmar W. Winkler and Li Tang (eds), *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters: Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia*, *Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica* 1 (Wien, 2009), 107-33.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Mark Dickens, ‘The Importance of the Psalter at Turfan’, <[www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)>.

<sup>16</sup> See Matteo Nicolini-Zani, ‘Past and Current Research on Tang *Jingjiao* Documents: A Survey’, in R. Malek and P. Hofrichter (eds), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East* (2006), 23-44.

<sup>17</sup> Lin Wushu and Rong Xinjiang, ‘Doubts Concerning the Authenticity of Two Nestorian Christian Documents Unearthed at Dunhuang from the Li’, *China Archaeology and Art Digest* 1/1 (1996), 5-14. We will return to these later. To them at least one other manuscript should be added. It was introduced by Shinichi Muto in ‘Syriac Christian Thought in a Newly Discovered Manuscript in Khara-Khoto’, a paper read at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on The Church of the East in China and Central Asia, June 4-9, 2009, Salzburg, Austria. I have been unable to secure the book in which it was published.

<sup>18</sup> *The Notabilia of the Tang Dynasty (Tang huiyao)* Vol. 49 (Beijing), 864, quoted in Li Tang, *History of Nestorian Christianity* (Frankfurt, 2004), 23.

names to East Roman churches. This change should be implemented in all prefectures of the empire'.<sup>19</sup>

This body of written material, coming from both within and from outside Christian groups is extremely important. Some of the official records of the Tang dynasty and the stele in Xi'an occasionally corroborate each other making reference to the same events and people, lending credence to the narrative of the stele. Unfortunately, a widely accepted analysis of the documents from Dunhuang remains elusive. Among other considerations, the absence of a social, historical, philosophical, or religious context which might be determined through examining a wide range of other written material from both within and from outside the Church of the East makes a clear understanding of these documents onerous.

To augment this rather limited collection of literary material related to the ancient Church of the East, one can also turn to archaeology.<sup>20</sup> Archaeologists, and others competent in the discipline, have certainly been active in attempting to gather material related to early Christianity in Central Asia and China. I note briefly the work of Christoph Baumer,<sup>21</sup> Niu Ruji,<sup>22</sup> and Samuel Lieu and associates.<sup>23</sup> All of these have been able to make major contributions to our understanding of early Christianity in the region. They and many others have added significantly to the body of relevant archaeological material which began to build in the late nineteenth century. I notice, however, that a large proportion of the published discoveries come from a later time in the story of early

<sup>19</sup> Lin Wushu and Rong Xinjiang, 'Doubts Concerning Authenticity', *China Archaeology and Art Digest* 1/1 (1996), 12. They also point out that the same statement is to be found in lines 15-17 on the Nestorian Tablet in Xi'an, saying both secular and church sources, therefore, are able to provide documentary evidence that firmly agrees on this point.

<sup>20</sup> Toward the end of his life, Denis Sinor, the late doyen of Central Asian studies, commented regarding the future of work in the region. He regarded archaeology as the discipline most likely to produce important discoveries: 'Reflections on the History and Historiography of the Nomad Empires of Central Asia', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung* 58 (2005), 6. However, he moderated that by observing that for Central Asia archaeological finds have been quantitatively insignificant and that finds of that nature seldom convert readily to history: D. Sinor, 'Reflections' (2005), 6. Michael D. Frachetti has recently demonstrated the significance archaeology can have in the area, this time in interpreting the lifeways of Central Asian pastoralists. See *Pastoralist Landscapes and Social Interaction in Bronze Age Eurasia* (Berkeley, 2008) and 'Migration Concepts in Central Eurasian Archaeology', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011), 195-212, doi.10.146/annurev-anthro-091309-145939 (accessed April 18, 2013). See also a review of Frachetti's work by Rebecca Beardmore, *Central Asian Survey* 29 (2010), 231-3.

<sup>21</sup> Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (New York, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Niu Ruji, *La Croix-Lotus Inscription et Manuscrits Nestoriens en Écriture Syriacque Découverts in Chine (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècles)* (Shanghai, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> Samuel N.C. Lieu, Lance Eccles, Majella Franzmann, Iain Gardner and Ken Parry, *Medieval Christian and Manichaean Remains from Quanzhou (Zayton)*, *Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum*, Series Archaeologica et Iconographica 2 (Turnhout, 2012).

Christianity in China, specifically from the Yuan period – 1270-1368 AD. I will draw attention to this again later in the article.

## The artifacts

The Longmen Grottoes (lit. *Dragon's Gate Grottoes*) in Henan Province form one of the primary exemplars of Buddhist art in China and one of the most popular destinations of both Chinese and foreigners interested in the culture of the Middle Kingdom. Stretching one kilometre along the east and west banks of the Yi River south of Luoyang, they are made up of 1,400 caves containing 100,000 statues of the Buddha and his followers. At great expense to aristocratic donors and through the efforts of hundreds of thousands of labourers, most of the caves and statues were created between the late fifth and the mid-eighth centuries.

Above the grottoes on both sides of the river stand the Longmen Mountains. Adding together the discoveries made on both the east and the west mountains, approximately forty small, three-dimensional niches there have been identified. It has been confirmed that they were made during the Tang dynasty. They were created as burial sites, or columbaria for ashes from cremations, for Buddhist monks and lay people.<sup>24</sup> What makes this significant in this study is a series of five niches found high on the mountain on the east side of the river with one having the image of a cross incised in the rock above it.

While conducting an exploration/survey of this mountain in 2009, archaeologist Jiao Jianhui noticed the cross. Examination of the site has not yet been completed,<sup>25</sup> but Jian has already made careful measurements of this particular niche and observations of the other four niches. He pointed out that this cross is similar to crosses found on the stele in Xi'an and on the pillar in Luoyang. This led him to conclude that 'the cross indicates that the person buried was a Nestorian believer'.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, the date to be assigned to this artifact is important. In his article on the discovery, Jiao stated that these niches should be dated to during the Tang Dynasty (618-907).<sup>27</sup> However, he offered the opinion to me directly that it might be possible to date it more accurately to the early eighth century.<sup>28</sup> That

<sup>24</sup> Jiao Jianhui, 'The Nestorian Relic of Hongshigou Valley in Longmen Grottoes and the Related Issues' (Longmen Shiku Hongshiqou Tangdai Jingjiao Yiji Diaocha Ji Xiangguan Wenti Tanta), *Studies of the Cave Temples (Shiku Si Yanjiu)* 4 (2013), 19.

<sup>25</sup> I have informal assurance from Sun Yingmin, Director of the Henan Provincial Cultural Heritage Bureau that it will be completed by 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Jian J., 'Nestorian Relic' (2013), 20.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 20. He based his assessment on the confirmed dating assigned to the other niches in the area.

<sup>28</sup> My visit to the site was on June 19, 2014.



would place it before the An Lushan rebellion, which broke out in 755, previous to which time the Tang Dynasty was at its zenith.<sup>29</sup>

The second artifact on which I am focusing is in the 'Luoyang Museum of Epigraphs and Stone Rubbings', a private museum located on the third floor of a shopping centre in Luoyang.<sup>30</sup> Upon arriving, I was introduced to the owner and to Mr. Ly Patrick. Mr. Ly showed us rubbings of two particular stones and then at my request took us to the stones themselves.<sup>31</sup> He also provided a recently published article by Mao Yangguang dealing with the stones.

The two tombstones had been excavated in 2010 in Luoyang.<sup>32</sup> One is devoted to Hua Xian, the husband, and the other to his wife, identified as Ms.

<sup>29</sup> On the An Lushan rebellion see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, London Oriental Series 4 (London, 1955).

<sup>30</sup> I was taken there by Mr. Liu Yangfei, Secretary of the Dingding Gate Museum in Luoyang, who had organized my visit to Luoyang.

<sup>31</sup> I have a picture of only the man's tombstone.

<sup>32</sup> Mao Yangguang, 'A Preliminary Research on the Newly Excavated Tombstone Inscriptions of Hua Xian, a Nestorian in Luoyang, and His Wife Anshi' (*Luoyang Xin Chutu Tangdai Jingjiaotu Huaxian Jiqi Qi Anshi Muzhi Chutan*), *The Western Regions Studies (Xiyu Yanjiu)* 2 (2014), 85.

An. Mao Yangguang argued that her last name suggested a connection with the Sogdians from Central Asia.<sup>33</sup>

Mao argued that the stone showed that Hua Xian was a strong member of the local Christian community. He was widely respected for showing a high level of, first, filial awareness, then of righteousness, and, finally, of a sense of justice. He was spoken of as serving *Jingzan*, which Mao identified as a respectful name for Jesus.<sup>34</sup> Mao also drew attention to a statement on the tombstone which said that with the death of Hua the local church ‘lost the voice of *Hua Xia*’. Mao suggested that this showed that Hua had played an important role in the community.<sup>35</sup> The stone devoted to Ms. An extols her virtue throughout.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the stones provide specific years for the deaths of Hua Xian and Ms. An. He died in 827 at age 71 and she in 821, age 58.<sup>37</sup>

## Implications

The implications of these two artifacts, or pieces of evidence, are not surprising, but they are important. The stele in Xi’an and the official materials of the Tang dynasty have given us a framework within which we can attempt to conceptualize life in Christian communities during the Tang. These two artifacts carry us deeper. They are both funerary, and they move us into actual human experience. The tombstones even provided some names and sketched the characters of a husband and wife. So while on the grand scale we must proceed with caution as we try to span the gaps in the Christian story in China here are individual human beings introduced to us with some care and affection.

Summarizing what they show us, first, these artifacts make it clear that Christianity was to be found in the region of Luoyang c. 800 AD. In itself, this is certainly not unexpected. In the very first decree related to *Jingjiao* issued in 638 it is clearly stated that it was appropriate to propagate the religion. As an early phase of that mission, monks began to translate their scriptures, and a monastery was established in the capital. Shortly thereafter decrees indicate

<sup>33</sup> Mao Y., ‘Preliminary Research’ (2014), 86. That conforms well with Li Tang and others who have made a case for a strong component of sinicized Sogdians in Luoyang in the ninth century. See Li Tang, ‘A Preliminary Study on the *Jingjiao* Inscription of Luoyang: Text Analysis, Commentary, and English Translation’, in R. Malek and P. Hofrichter (eds), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East* (2006), 130. On the Sogdians, see Jonathan Karam Skaff, ‘The Sogdian Trade Dispersion in East Turkestan during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46 (2003), 475-524.

<sup>34</sup> Mao Y., ‘Preliminary Research’ (2014), 87. However, in his research Wang Ding did not find that name used for Jesus: ‘Remnants of Christianity from Chinese Central Asia in Medieval Ages’, in R. Malek and P. Hofrichter (eds), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East* (2006), 149-62.

<sup>35</sup> Mao Y., ‘Preliminary Research’ (2014), 88.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

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

that *Jingjiao* had spread to all of the provinces of China and established a presence in a very large number (hundreds) of cities.<sup>38</sup> This picture corresponds well with a comment made by Lin Wushu: 'Of the three foreign religions in Tang China [Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Christianity (the Church of the East or *Jingjiao*)] Nestorianism was the most successful in its missionary work, largely because its priests relied on their own efforts rather than on some external power, and through its efforts among the upper echelons of society it was politely received by China's rulers'.<sup>39</sup> Difficult times were ahead,<sup>40</sup> but it would survive.

Returning the focus to the area of Luoyang, MaoYangguang cited the 'Chronicles of Henan' (*Henan Zhi*) stating that *Jingjiao* was established not only in Luoyang but also in *Xiushan Fang*, which, according to the stones, was the subdivision in which Hua Xi'an and his wife lived.<sup>41</sup> When the time came for an imperially-ordered name change for the Christian group, the church or churches in the Luoyang area conformed, and the governmental decree affirmed their presence.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, *Jingjiao* was there.

This is methodologically significant. A chronology drawn from literary sources is here affirmed by concrete, datable materials, one piece *in situ* and the other preserved for display. The date established is late eighth/early ninth century. In addition to confirming a credible date range, this is noteworthy in the light of East Asian research into Christianity. As noted above,<sup>43</sup> by far the largest proportion of archaeological discoveries related to the Church of the East in China dates from the Yuan dynastic period. The material presented here comes from a time three to four hundred years earlier. The discoveries presented by Jiao, Ly, and Mao are truly significant.

Second, the tombstones show that there seems to have been at least one Han<sup>44</sup> person among the Christians in the Luoyang region, and quite possibly

<sup>38</sup> Li Tang, *Study of the History of Nestorian Christianity in China* (2004), 91.

<sup>39</sup> Lin Wushu, 'A General Discussion of the Tang Policy Towards Three Persian Religions Manichaeism, Nestorianism and Zoroastrianism' [Abridged English translation], *China Archaeology and Art Digest* 4/1 (2000), 109.

<sup>40</sup> Particularly under Empress Wu Zetian – *ibid.* 92.

<sup>41</sup> Mao Y., 'Preliminary Research' (2014), 88.

<sup>42</sup> Lin W. and Rong X., 'Doubts Concerning Authenticity', *China Archaeology and Art* 1/1 (1996), 12.

<sup>43</sup> pp. 445-446.

<sup>44</sup> The racial designation 'Han' is very important in China. Widely-recognized commentator on China, Martin Jacques, said 'Today ... China sees and projects itself as an overwhelmingly homogeneous nation, with over 91 per cent of the population defined as Han Chinese', adding later, 'Like all racial categories, the Han Chinese – a product of the gradual fusion of many different races – is an imagined group' with roots in the long history of Chinese civilization: *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*, 2nd ed. (London, 2012), 297. I highlight this because there has been some scepticism regarding whether or not the Church of the East gained converts from among the Han Chinese. Referring to Jacques Gernet again as an example of this, he said that Christianity (or 'Nestorianism' as he

there were more. Having worked carefully with the tombstone inscriptions Mao Yanguang was prepared to say, 'Hua Xian was probably a Han person',<sup>45</sup> and he went on to show that he and his family 'completely abided by the behavioural norms of the Han people'.<sup>46</sup> In itself, this ought not to be surprising either. For much of the Church of the East's early history in China the court did not seem particularly troubled by whatever its ethnic composition happened to be. Lin Wushu was prepared to go so far as to say: 'The court exercised a very favourable policy towards the Nestorian Church'.<sup>47</sup> The grounds for Lin's opinion are fairly impressive. First, he pointed out that there never was an order issued prohibiting Han people from joining the Christian church as there were with reference to both Zoroastrianism and Manicheism.<sup>48</sup> Second, he provided a list of Christian priests who enjoyed the favour of the Tang court. It included: Yisi, who held key positions in the military and intelligence under Prince Guo Ziyi; Chong, recipient of the title 'Miracle-worker Chong the First' from Emperor Xian and of a material reward for having cured him of an ailment in one session; Aluohan who engaged in military and diplomatic service, and Li Su (Wenzhen) whose family served the court while he himself was an astronomer, eventually becoming Director of the State Observatory as well as administrator of a strategically-located, prefecture-level city.<sup>49</sup> The names of these priests suggest that they may have been Han people themselves.<sup>50</sup>

The third implication of the material we have been examining is particularly interesting. It points to a close relationship between Christians and Buddhists in Luoyang c. 800. On the basis of funerary practices in the area with which he was familiar, Jiao Jianhui, drew attention to the similarity of Christian and Buddhist niches. They varied in size within both groups, but the contours in both settings were basically the same. Even the position of the cross above one Christian niche compared closely to the locations of religious symbols etched on Buddhist graves. Jiao observed that what the Christians had done in caring for their dead was, 'similar with "Tupi" (the cremation of a monk's corpse) in Buddhism'.<sup>51</sup> Jiao was not prepared to make a final statement as to who was

called it) '[R]emained the religion of merchants of Syrian origin'. *China and the Christian Impact* (1990), 248 n. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Mao Y., 'Preliminary Research' (2014), 89.

<sup>46</sup> There was one feature of Hua Xian's behaviour as a Han person that seemed unusual enough to Mao for him to draw attention to it. The woman Hua married seems to have had a Sogdian background, and in this respect, he differed from most Han men. *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Lin W., 'Tang Policy Towards Three Persian Religions' (2000), 108.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 108-9.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel Lieu found epigraphical evidence for the presence of Han Chinese within the Christian community at a somewhat later time in Quanzhou in southern China: 'The Church of the East in Quanzhou', in *Medieval Christian and Manichaean Remains* (2012), 34.

<sup>51</sup> Jian J., 'Nestorian Relic' (2013), 20.

borrowing from whom,<sup>52</sup> but at the same time he recognized the influence that Buddhism wielded as the dominant religion in the area.<sup>53</sup>

The closeness of the relationship between Buddhists and Christians at about the same time has also been noted by Lin Wushu, but with reference to activities in the other Tang capital, Xi'an. He commented on the well-known occasion when Jingjing, the author of the text on the Xi'an stele, collaborated with Prajna, a Buddhist monk, to translate a Sanskrit Buddhist text. The undertaking was a complete failure, and the emperor, probably De Zong, brought the collaboration to an end by ordering them to focus attention on their own religions and not to harass each other.<sup>54</sup>

Finally, the question of intimacy between Buddhists and Christians is also central to the tombstones about which Mao Yangguang writes. The author of the inscriptions on the tombstones was Wenjian, a Buddhist monk from the Shengshan Temple, Luoyang. This temple was close to the community in which Hua Xian and his family lived. The inscription makes it clear that Wenjian and the Hua family enjoyed a very deep relationship. There had even been a time in the past during which the Christian family had cared for him, and in

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* There is also evidence of a similar burial practice being followed somewhat later at the Magao Grottoes near Dunhuang: Peng Jinzhang, 'Nestorian Relics Newly Discovered at Dunhuang-Also on the Nestorian Documents and Banners Unearthed from the Library Cave' (*Dunhuang Xin Faxian de Jingjiao Yiwu-Jianshu Cangjingdon Suochu Jingjiao Wenxian yu Hua-fan*), *Dunhuang Research (Dunhuang Yanjiu)* 3 (2013), 52.

<sup>53</sup> He added that the discovery of the Christian priest Aluohan's tombstone in Luoyang early in the twentieth century showed that Christians also used more common burial practices of digging graves and erecting mounds for the dead: Jiao J., 'Nestorian Relic' (2013), 20.

<sup>54</sup> Lin W., 'Tang Policy Towards Three Persian Religions' (2000), 108. Chen Haiyu has seen the hands of the same two monks, Jingjing and Prajna, in other translation projects. Finding parallels between sections of a Christian text and a Buddhist document, both of which were produced in Xi'an with the Buddhist sutra somewhat later than the Christian (Matteo Nicolini-Zani dated the Christian document to c. 781, roughly contemporaneous with the erection of the stele in Xi'an, 'Past and Current Research on Tang *Jingjiao* Documents [2006], 35). Chen suggested that the two used the same sentence structure and some technical terms to interpret their own religious teachings. He then postulated a highly reciprocal scenario in which Christians got help from Chinese scholars to produce texts from which Buddhists monks then borrowed features to translate their own sutras: Chen Haiyu, 'The Connection Between *Jingjiao* and Buddhist Texts in Late Tang China', in R. Malek and P. Hofrichter (eds), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East* (2006), 112. However, toward the end of his paper Chen said: '[I]t is clear that the Chinese *jingjiao* text explicitly interpreted *jingjiao* ideas, even if it was indebted to the polishing of the Chinese *literati*', *Ibid.* 113. What Chen had in mind is collaboration, but not adulteration. Benoit Vermander, S.J. made a very interesting comment on the atmosphere of collaboration described above: 'Because the Nestorians were able (or compelled) to rely on religious specialists for finding an adequate vocabulary and world-vision in which to express themselves they were also able, first to elaborate a specific theological synthesis, second to permeate their translators' religious convictions. Though they have disappeared from the scene they have prepared an in-depth reception of Christ's figure and teaching in China'. 'The Impact of Nestorianism on Contemporary Chinese Theology', in R. Malek and P. Hofrichter (eds), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East* (2006), 191.

the flow of the relationship, he had acquired some knowledge of Christian beliefs.<sup>55</sup>

Sharing life in its difficult moments, labouring together in the tedious and painstaking task of translating, and even influencing each other at the sensitive time of death – there is much to suggest that the lives of at least some Christians and some Buddhists were intimately intertwined. Whatever would happen in the future, around 800 AD in Luoyang the interactions between at least some adherents of these two religions were marked by toleration and respect.

## Conclusion

Interest in the ancient Church of the East, *Jingjiao*, has certainly gained momentum. Outstanding work is being done in many disciplines by scholars around the world. A problem common to everyone who works on the ancient past confronts those focused on the Church of the East in its early life across Asia – how do we find what we need to teach us what we want to know?

The two artifacts I have discussed in this article play an important role. They underline and support the literary allusions to the presence of Christianity in the area around Luoyang, Henan Province in c. 800 AD, but they offer even more than that. One provides information of how some Christians at that time and place dealt with the reality of death, and the other introduces people with a meaningful level of intimacy. Beyond this, we are given some indication of what the ethnic composition of the Christian community might have been and we have been permitted to sense the warmth of feeling that existed between some members of the Church of the East and at least one Buddhist. In other words, these artifacts flesh out our understanding of the religious life of a central part of China at the end of the eighth century and the beginning of the ninth.

<sup>55</sup> Mao Y., 'Preliminary Research' (2014), 89.

# **‘Aristotelian’ as a *Lingua Franca*: Rationality in Christian Self-Representation under the ‘Abbasids**

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## ABSTRACT

Christian writings in Arabic are likely the most neglected corpus of the medieval period. One might blame colonial historiographies for having tinged narratives of anything east of the Bosphorus during (and since!) the ‘middle’ Ages with a sense of the ‘exotic,’ as well as exerting considerable force on the representation, misrepresentation, or non-representation of Eastern Christians in general. It is the object of the following article to offer a brief glimpse of a counternarrative in the works by giving voice to an Arabic-writing Christian, Theodore Abū Qurrah (d. *ca.* 820), and his representation of Christianity under the ‘Abbasids. This ephemeral glimpse has the potential to destabilize numerous cherished tropes of colonial discourse and controvert contemporary perceptions of the events that followed upon the Islamic conquest of formerly Roman territory. To that effect, I exposit how, under the ‘Abbasids and particularly as an extension of the settings known as majlis (where, by the patronage and safe-conduct of the Caliphs, Christians and Jews could openly debate with Muslims about their faith), Abū Qurrah defended the rationality of Christianity through Aristotelian logic (that he was able to presuppose ‘Aristotelian’ as a lingua franca at all is itself fascinating). I look specifically at his argumentation in favor of points shared with Muslims, like God’s existence, but also at his effort to shape Muslim perceptions of Christians as a group whose tenets, like the doctrine of the Trinity, could be rationally defended without requiring recourse to their own Scriptures.

## Introduction

It is no exaggeration to observe that Arabic Christian writings represent the largest corpus of Christian literary output in the two thousand years of the religion’s history that has suffered the greatest neglect relative to its volume. Oversight of the events and conditions of Christians following the Islamic conquests of the eastern themes of the Roman Empire during the rule of Herakleios (r. 610-641) and his successors is not only widespread, but systematically perpetuated by a dearth of academic and financial support to dedicate attention to Christians in that particular period and geographical region. Indeed – and not without some irony, it is far more common to find scholars in academic

positions dedicated to the study of Islamic history, theology, and culture making remarkable contributions to the field of Arabic Christian studies than scholars of patristic or medieval Christianity. By contrast, even though in recent decades the study of Syriac Christianity has been enlivened and even recognized as a field deserving of separately-appointed professors who specialize in it, hardly any analogue can be found in the Western hemisphere with regard to Arabic Christianity, despite the fact that Christian output in Arabic is at least equal to, if not vaster than, that in Syriac. Perhaps herein one may find the distant phantom legacy of the narrative tropes and character representations created during the Crusading era and thereafter that have, to put it mildly, plagued Western perceptions of all things ‘Oriental’ (meant with the worst possible connotation), including Christians, up the present day. More specifically, a comprehensive reception history of Arabic Christian thought in the West – or better, its lack of a significant reception history – must still be written and the underlying causes for its endemic neglect exposed. Regrettably, this brief piece can only hint at a few aforementioned suspicions for which Arabic Christian writings have hardly been treated in the Western academy and attempt to advance a potential avenue for counteracting or destabilizing some of these inimical structures on the most basic level.

The present essay aims to make a minor contribution to the fledgling field of Arabic Christian studies by devoting particular attention to a crucial segment of Theodore Abu Qurrah’s *On the Existence of God and the True Religion*<sup>1</sup> in order to elucidate his appropriation of Aristotelian philosophy in his attempt to represent Christianity as a rational religion to his interfaith interlocutors. This essay hopes, however, simultaneously to show that the radical otherness, the presumed discursive illegibility of the Christian Arabic other, is ill-founded by showing one of the most prominent Christians who wrote in Arabic to be deploying a recognizable Aristotelian scheme in his defense of Christianity’s rationality. This essay’s title contains the phrase “‘Aristotelian” as a *lingua franca*’ not only because Aristotle’s works were already common intellectual currency during Abu Qurrah’s time and could be relied on as a system of logical communication with non-Christians who held different religious beliefs, but also because this *lingua franca* can function as a diachronically recognizable mode of communication, encompassing even our contemporary audiences in its capacious folds. By way of illustrating this bridge, I will argue in this essay that when Abu Qurrah sought to establish that Christianity was the rational religion, he did so on the basis of a creative appropriation of what could be generally termed the *lingua franca* of Aristotelian thought by which appeal to one’s own sacred texts for support in an argument could be bypassed.

<sup>1</sup> Ignace Dick (ed.), *Théodore Abuqurra: Traité de l’existence du Créateur et de la vraie religion*, Patrimoine arabe chrétien 3 (Rome, 1982), 200-58. [Henceforth: Dick].

## 1. How to discover the true religion: The setup of valid premises in Aristotelian demonstrative science

Aristotle's system of logic has become so prevalent and influential that it would be virtually impossible to trace or understand the development of Western or Middle Eastern intellectual history without reference to the Peripatetic's works. One of Aristotle's greatest contributions to logic was the demonstration (*ἀπόδειξις*), to which he also refers as the 'demonstrative science' (*ἀποδεικτική ἐπιστήμη*),<sup>2</sup> a kind of syllogism<sup>3</sup> by which scientific, rather than doxological, knowledge can be established. Perhaps it is germane to highlight that this, along with the more extended syllogistic, was the dominant paradigm of the science of logic for roughly a millennium and a half, even if it underwent several revisions and criticisms in the process, including some by a Syrian Christian who wrote in Arabic, Yahya ibn 'Adi al-Mantiqi ('the Logician'). Abu Qurrah's time was no exception. Aristotle's system seems to have had sufficient widespread acceptability that the bishop of Haran could readily rely on it in order to demonstrate his religion's rationality without needing recourse to his holy books, which latter move he explicitly rejects as necessary to making his case.<sup>4</sup> Since space would not allow to recount even in the broadest outlines the Arabic reception of Aristotle that forms the backdrop of Abu Qurrah's time and argument, we kindly refer the reader to the footnotes to pursue in further depth the background against which this investigation takes place and refer directly to the Stagirite's works, safely, I think, presupposing that they were well known in Abu Qurrah's milieu and to the Christian himself.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> E.g. *Posterior Analytics*, 71b20.

<sup>3</sup> *Posterior Analytics*, 71b17-8

<sup>4</sup> Dick, 217-8.

<sup>5</sup> For further reference, see this highly abbreviated list of useful works: P. Lettinck, *Aristotle's Physics and its Reception in the Arabic World* (Leiden, 1994) and *Aristotle's Meteorology and its Reception in the Arabic World* (Leiden, 1999); M. Aouad, 'La Rhétorique. Tradition syriaque et arabe', in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques* I (Paris, 1989), 455-72; R. Arnzen, *Aristoteles' De Anima. Eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung, Arabischer Text nebst Kommentar in Quellengeschichtlichen Studien und Glossaren* (Leiden, 1998). A. Badawi, *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe* (Paris, 1968); A. Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitab al-Shifa'. A Milestone of Western Metaphysical Thought* (Leiden, 2006); D.L. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Leiden, 1990); H. Daiber, 'Salient Trends of the Arabic Aristotle', in G. Endress and R. Kruk (eds), *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism, Studies of the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences dedicated to H.J. Drossart Lulofs on his ninetieth birthday* (Leiden, 1997), 29-41; C. D'Ancona, 'La Teologia neoplatonica di "Aristotele" e gli inizi della filosofia arabo-musulmana', in R. Goulet and U. Rudolph (eds), *Entre Orient et Occident. La philosophie et la science gréco-romaines dans le monde arabe*, *Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* 57 (Geneva, 2011), 135-90; Kh. El-Rouayheb, 'Logic in the Arabic and Islamic World', in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500* (Dordrecht a.o., 2011), 686-92; G. Endress, 'Grammatik und Logik. Arabische

Abu Qurrah's purpose in the second part of *On the Existence of God and the True Religion* is to determine what requirements reason and nature teach must be true about God and the true religion and to find out what religion – if any – conforms precisely to these requirements. In order to do so, he tells a picturesque story involving himself and representatives of 'eight or nine'<sup>6</sup> religions in one vignette and a king, his son, and a wise physician in the other. In the first vignette of the story,<sup>7</sup> he grows up on a mountain, far from all others, and when he descends, he is told by representatives of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, *etc.* something about God, something about what one must and must not do, and something about the punishments and rewards to which one is liable in the future life based on one's behavior in the present one. In the second vignette,<sup>8</sup> when the king's son falls ill, his adversaries, otherwise unable to harm the ruler due to his might, decide to make their move. The king sends a messenger with a letter that includes his own description, the habits by which the son first fell ill and how to recover, and what steps he must take in order to remain in good health. When the king's messenger arrives, however, so have all of the enemies', dumbfounding the son, who turns to his physician to solve his problem.

The physician knows, as corresponds with his position, something about what prescriptions are likely to cure the son and which not; he can also determine the veracity of the messengers by comparing the descriptions of the king contained in their letters to those character traits he sees in the son, who shares his father's attributes.<sup>9</sup> After the physician has determined who the true messenger is, Abu Qurrah explains his parable in a way generally reminiscent of Jesus' explanations of his own. The king, of course, is God; the son stands for Adam and his progeny; the son's illness is the neglect of the mind, sin, Adam's expulsion from Paradise, and the mind's inclination to this world's concerns, 'after the manner of beasts' (مثل البهائم);<sup>10</sup> the physician is the mind (العقل); and

Philologie und griechische Philosophie im Widerstreit', in *Sprachphilosophie in Antike und Mittelalter* (1986), 166-299 and 'L'Aristote Arabe. Réception, autorité et transformation du Premier Maître', in *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale* 23 (1997), 1-42; D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden, 1988); H. Hugonnard-Roche, 'L'Organon. Tradition syriaque et arabe', in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques I* (Paris, 1989), 502-28 and 'La tradizione della logica aristotelica', in *Storia della scienza*, vol. IV, session I. *La scienza siriana* (Rome, 2001), 16-26; F.E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus: The Oriental Translations and Commentaries on the Aristotelian Corpus* (Leiden, 1968); M. Ullmann, *Die Nikomachische Ethik des Aristoteles in arabischer Übersetzung*, vols. I, II (Wiesbaden, 2011-2).

<sup>6</sup> Dick, 217.

<sup>7</sup> Dick, 200-10.

<sup>8</sup> Dick, 211-6.

<sup>9</sup> Dick, 215-6.

<sup>10</sup> Dick, 216.

the false messengers are the adversaries of humanity, the devils (الشياطين).<sup>11</sup> Then, applying the moral of the story, we should look to the dilemma concerning the religions that claim to be true, but not by reference to their holy books; rather, we should ‘put the books to a side and ask the mind’.<sup>12</sup>

The way in which Abu Qurrah ‘asks the mind’<sup>13</sup> relies on an implicit Aristotelian structure of demonstration. The first step the Christian takes is generally reminiscent of the ‘six conditions’ a premise in a demonstration (to be treated following) must satisfy when we ask the mind ‘how the attributes of God, which the senses do not see and the minds do not comprehend, can be known by taking human nature as the point of departure’.<sup>14</sup> Having taken it as a point of departure, he inquires further how nature itself can teach us about good, evil, what is laudable and what is punishable, and finally, about the eternal boon or damnation in the afterlife that is consequent upon our actions (for the modest aims of this essay, however, we will focus solely on the argument regarding the knowledge of God). So, rather than beginning as one may be inclined to do, namely, with what one’s religion might say on the subject, he refers to something that is generally accepted among his audiences. The parallel can be found by referring to the Stagirite directly.

In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle establishes the necessary conditions premises must fulfill in order for a demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) to be valid: ‘If, consequently, knowing scientifically (τὸ ἐπίστασθαι) is such as we have posited, it is also necessary that scientific demonstration take place (εἶναι) on the basis of [premises that are] *true* (1), *primary* (2), and *immediate* (3), also *better known* (4), *logically prior* (5), and *causative* (6) of the conclusion, for thus they will also be the suitable (οἰκεῖται) first principles of what is being demonstrated (τοῦ δεικνυμένου)’.<sup>15</sup> Theodore’s starting points or premises could hardly be contested based on some of the presuppositions of his interfaith interlocutors, particularly Christians and Muslims, to whom the treatise is most likely addressed. That is, it would be hard to imagine someone defending that God’s attributes are, for example, better known than humanity’s, or that they are immediate. Indeed, it does seem that human attributes have to be primary (that is, there is no other knowledge from which what is primary derives) in the premise in order to infer on their basis something about God and if so, some of the other conditions follow, like logical priority and causality. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Abu Qurrah’s setup of the demonstration, however, is not so much that he sets it up on a general Aristotelian schema, but the fact that

<sup>11</sup> Dick, 217.

<sup>12</sup> وندع الكتب ناجية. ونسأل العقل. Dick, 218.

<sup>13</sup> It is altogether likely that Abu Qurrah envisions here the sense of νοῦς, meaning a kind of intellectual or rational intuition, that Aristotle promotes in *Posterior Analytics*, 88b34-6, 89a1-2, and 100b5-16.

<sup>14</sup> كيف عرفت صفات الله التي لا تبصرها الحواس ولا تدركها العقول، من شبه طبيعة الإنسان. Dick, 218.

<sup>15</sup> *Posterior Analytics*, 71b19-23. The numerical additions and emphases are mine.

he feels no need to justify the setup itself, deeming it, in Aristotelian logical terms, ‘self-evident’ (ἐναργής) and thus not up for contention by any reasonable adversary since it is logically also true.

## 2. Aristotelian analogical reasoning: God and humanity

After Abu Qurrah has set up the premises through his picturesque story and established the parameters for finding out the true religion generally, he deploys yet another – quite suitable – method of Aristotelian logic,<sup>16</sup> commonly referred to today as analogical reasoning. His objective is to investigate more specific aspects of his argumentation in the section we can idiomatically translate as ‘What the Mind Has To Say concerning God’s Attributes’.<sup>17</sup> In that section, he uses this analogical method in order to infer demonstrative similarities between God and humanity and then proceeds to infer what is good and bad for humans on a moral level on the basis of human nature.<sup>18</sup> In order to determine God’s attributes and how he is to be worshipped,<sup>19</sup> he relies on a Judeo-Christian Scriptural idea, namely, that humans are made in God’s image and likeness, according to *Gen. 1:26-7*.<sup>20</sup> But this idea is famously not found in the Qur’an and is certainly not a particularly orthodox idea in Islamic theology, especially after al-Ghazali. A hypothetical Muslim interlocutor would be skeptical, perhaps unimpressed, if presented with the idea that humans are made in God’s likeness, which idea Abu Qurrah explicitly mentions.<sup>21</sup> But it is exactly for such an interlocutor that Aristotle recommends the use of analogy in the *Topics*,<sup>22</sup> that is, one with whom the universal or major of a syllogism cannot be easily agreed upon. One must, therefore, proceed by analogy in order to establish a more secure foundation for further inductions, as Theodore cleverly does.

That the bishop now assumes less of a common ground than he did in the foregoing part can be readily seen insofar as he provides more worked-out justifications for the claims he makes in the conventional Arabic disputational model introduced by نقول (we say).<sup>23</sup> When he sets up the possibility that there

<sup>16</sup> See for the laying out of method and instantiations: *Topics*, 100a18-101a4 and 107b38-108a14.

<sup>17</sup> ما يقوله العقل في صفات الله Dick, 219.

<sup>18</sup> Díck, 219-39.

<sup>19</sup> Dick, 219.

<sup>20</sup> Abu Qurrah refers explicitly to this passage in Dick, 228.

<sup>21</sup> Dick, 220.

<sup>22</sup> Generally, *Topics*, 100a18-101a19.

<sup>23</sup> This model can be found in other authors, to mention but one, al-Ghazali’s *On the Incoherence of the Philosophers* is framed in precisely such a way. We cite the following example drawn from the Fourth Discussion entitled وجود الصانع للعالم الاستدلال على وجود الصانع للعالم في بيان عجزهم عن الاستدلال على وجود الصانع للعالم. . . . فرقان. al-Ghazali, *On the Incoherence of the Philosophers: A Parallel English-Arabic Text*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, 2000), 78.

is an analogy between God and humans, by which ‘we are able to see God, who is not seen, along with his attributes’,<sup>24</sup> Abu Qurrah senses the need to offer an explanation. He compares the idea to a man who sees his face in a mirror and can recognize something about himself even if the face in the mirror is different from his own. Or perhaps, if two friends looked in a mirror, the one who knows his friend’s face would be able to recognize his friend’s face in the mirror, and then his own by inference.<sup>25</sup> Now, although the faces in the mirror are not exactly alike – and indeed, Theodore repeatedly says the real one transcends (يرتفع) and is the opposite (الخلافا) of the mirrored one – something can still be found out about the man’s attributes by looking in the mirror just as something about God can be found out by looking at Adam’s nature and his virtues in which God’s are mirrored.<sup>26</sup>

Abu Qurrah divides in two what can be known about God on the basis of Adam as his image. The first division concerns humanity’s virtues and how these can yield knowledge about God. Theodore considers the knowledge to be derived as an epistemological process by which ‘we know him in truth’ (عرفناه بحقّ),<sup>27</sup> most likely echoing the common understanding of Aristotelian ἐπιστήμη as ‘true knowledge’. By a process of analogical reasoning we can determine certain truths about God by seeing virtues (فواضل), rather than vices (مناقص), in ourselves.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the bishop is careful to add, God is the source of the virtues and they come to us from God.<sup>29</sup> Herein initially – and particularly later when he broaches the topic of deification by participation,<sup>30</sup> rather than by nature – we can see Theodore squarely situated in the Christian discursive tradition that had integrated the strands of late Platonism and its lengthy tradition of commentaries on Aristotelian texts with the Christology and apophatic theology of great Greek-writing luminaries like Gregory the Theologian, Dionysios, and Maximos. But it is specifically Aristotelian analogical reasoning that Abu Qurrah employs here in order to establish one of the crucial premises by which he will later argue in favor of the idea of a triune God.

The second division concerns the existence of God and some of his additional attributes, all of them epistemically – not, of course, ontologically – derivative from Adam’s nature. We see, for example, God’s existence on the basis of Adam’s.<sup>31</sup> God’s existence, however, like everything else we see in Adam’s nature, transcends and is contrary to what we see in Adam’s nature.

<sup>24</sup> Dick, 219. تستطيع أن تُبصر الله الذي لا يُبصر، مع صافته

<sup>25</sup> Dick, 220.

<sup>26</sup> Dick, 220-1.

<sup>27</sup> Dick, 220.

<sup>28</sup> Dick, 220.

<sup>29</sup> Dick, 221.

<sup>30</sup> Dick, 237, 251-2.

<sup>31</sup> Dick, 221.

Life, knowledge,<sup>32</sup> wisdom – all of these Adam has, but he acquires them gradually, over time, as they change and develop, and eventually all of them are lost in death.<sup>33</sup> Naturally, this is not the case with God, in whom these attributes are eternal and unchanging. But it is precisely here that Abu Qurrah has made his interstitial move by linking two crucial elements of an argument ultimately aiming at demonstrating that Christianity is the rational religion. The first is the assumption that comparing God and humans analogically is valid; the second is the assertion of God's unchanging nature.

### 3. Categories, syllogisms, and the defense of trinitarianism

Perhaps until the last point most of Theodore's hypothetical interlocutors could have been amenable to his method, even if a Muslim theologian would have likely disputed the acceptability of comparing humanity and God. But he shows his hand in the next segment of his argument by relying on a clearly Aristotelian syllogistic structure that is blatantly pro-Christian. The syllogism might be diagrammed in abbreviated form as follows:

P1: If we can know something about God on the basis of human nature; and  
 P2: If what we know about God is what we see in human virtue; and  
 P3: If human headship and begetting are considered supreme human virtues;

Then: We can know that God's supreme attributes are headship and begetting.<sup>34</sup>

Abu Qurrah's most likely target here is one of the best-known Qur'anic passages rejecting the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the Surah al-'Ikhlas' (112:1-4): 'Say: God himself is One, God the Everlasting, he neither begets nor is he begotten, nor is there anyone equal to him'.<sup>35</sup> The root for 'begetting' (ولد) employed by both is the same, while headship (رئيسا) functions as an additional element to set up the procession of the Holy Spirit.

The second element of the previous paragraph, God's unchanging nature, forms the theological *sine qua non* by which God's headship and begetting are preserved perfect, since they 'were not by means of a female or intercourse, and there was no pregnancy, and no upbringing, and no antecedence; on the

<sup>32</sup> It is very likely indicative of Aristotelian epistemology that Abu Qurrah considers that knowledge comes to us through the senses, a distinctly Aristotelian teaching in direct opposition to the Platonic recollection theory. For an in-depth study see T. Kiefer, *Aristotle's Theory of Knowledge* (London, 2009), especially Section III.

<sup>33</sup> Dick, 222-3.

<sup>34</sup> Dick, 224-5.

<sup>35</sup> قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ. اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

contrary, they are in logical simultaneity’.<sup>36</sup> That is to say, there is no *change* in God, despite this begetting and headship, since this is the eternal condition and subsistence of the Trinitarian Deity. The key operative term here is directly drawn from Aristotle’s *Categories*: *μεα/ῦμα*.<sup>37</sup> I may have over translated the word as ‘logical simultaneity’, but my aim is to bring out the sense in which Abu Qurrah understands the concept in order to defend both the essential oneness of God (a frequent trope in Muslim-Christian-Jewish theological disputational sessions or *majlis*) and his Trinitarian subsistence. Particularly important for the background is Aristotle’s own elucidation of the term: ‘And simultaneity in nature [refers to] as many things as correlate according to the sequence of being, but the one of which is in no way causative of the being of the other’.<sup>38</sup> In this scheme, the Son’s eternal begottenness and the Spirit’s eternal procession are not *ontologically* secondary to the Father’s subsistence, since the Father’s Fatherhood is ontologically simultaneous with the Son’s Sonness and the Spirit’s Spiritness. In other words, the being of the three hypostases is simultaneous, since the Father would not be the Father without the Son nor would the Son be the Son without the Father even though he exercises headship in the Trinity. Thus, the Trinitarian hypostasis cannot be envisioned separate from one another and must, therefore, be ontologically simultaneous.

The Christian knows instinctively that the comparison between God and Adam will not stand without some specific attention to foreseeable objections, so he resorts to the most overt syllogistic structure in the entire piece to establish the tenability of begetting and headship in God. The syllogistic structure,<sup>39</sup> expanded and complete with counterproof, is as follows:

P1: If all virtues lesser than begetting and headship are in God; and

P2: If Adam is like God relative to the lesser virtues; and

P3: If Adam has the virtues of begetting and headship;

Then: The virtues of begetting and headship are in God;

Otherwise: Adam would be better than God, possessing two virtues God does not, but this is patently absurd.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Dick, 225 (the addition of *tanwin* ليس بأثنى ولا جماع، ولا حمل، ولا تربية ولا سبق. ولكنهم معاً. *fatha* on *mea* is mine).

<sup>37</sup> So Aristotle: ἅμα δὲ λέγεται ἀπλῶς μὲν καὶ κυριώτατα ὧν ἡ γένεσις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ χρόνῳ· οὐδέτερον γὰρ πρότερον οὐδὲ ὕστερόν ἐστιν· ἅμα δὲ κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ταῦτα λέγεται. *Categories*, 14b24–6. For comparison, see the translation of Aristotle’s *Categories* in Badawi: «معاً» يقال على الإطلاق والتحقيق في الشئيين إذا كانا تكونهما في زمان واحد بعينه، فإنه ليس واحد منهما متقدماً ولا متأخراً؛ يقال معاً على الإطلاق والتحقيق في الشئيين إذا كانا and Georr: «معاً» في الزمان. يقال معاً على الإطلاق والتحقيق في الشئيين إذا كانا تكونهما في زمان واحد بعينه؛ فإنه ليس واحد منهما متقدماً ولا متأخراً. وهذان يقال فيهما إنهما «معاً» في الزمان. تكونهما في زمان واحد بعينه؛ فإنه ليس واحد منهما متقدماً ولا متأخراً. وهذان يقال فيهما إنهما معاً في الزمان.  
<sup>38</sup> φύσει δὲ ἅμα ὅσα ἀντιστρέφει μὲν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ εἶναι ἀκολουθησιν, μηδαμῶς δὲ αἴτιον θάτερον θατέρῳ τοῦ εἶναι ἐστιν. *Categories*, 14b27–9.

<sup>39</sup> The structure is reminiscent of those to be found in the *Prior Analytics*.

<sup>40</sup> Dick, 226.

Theodore here is responding to a possible specific counterclaim, that God and Adam do not resemble each other with regard to the virtues of headship and begetting in particular. But it does not seem, all the same, that the Christian addresses the fact that someone might simply find his entire analogical reasoning invalid or inadequate to begin with. God's transcendence might be a major impediment to this analogical reasoning, one not unknown or unexplored by numerous Christians of the Greek tradition before him.

Nevertheless, even if the Qur'an does not explicitly mention that humans were created in God's image and after his likeness and does not thereby give warrant for this comparison, Abu Qurrah is not debating with post-Ghazali Muslims who would have been presumably more forceful on this point. And even in such a scenario, one can hardly argue that Theodore is incautious in his analogy, since he repeatedly qualifies his analogical reasoning by inserting – quite formulaically – the trope that God transcends and is opposite to Adam.<sup>41</sup> Thus, whatever is known about God on the basis of his analogical reasoning is subject to the major qualification that it is only known qualifiedly by yielding a negation of what can be known about humans, not a positive assertion of God's intra-ontological predicates. Theodore will go on to draw his conclusion, namely, that based on what reason has taught in the foregoing, only Christianity can be the rational religion, since it alone believes in a deity wherein the excellences (or virtues) of begetting and headship can be found.<sup>42</sup> Based on the intellectual resources available to him, Abu Qurrah's argumentation cannot be accused of a dearth of intellectual rigor nor can he be impugned that his position is inconsistent with the parameters he selectively chose to represent his creed to those who were likely to question its plausibility.

## Conclusion

This essay has attempted to elucidate Theodore Abu Qurrah's use of an Aristotelian philosophical apparatus in order to demonstrate the rationality of the Christian faith, particularly with regard to its belief in a Trinitarian God. In order to do so, we have discovered and explained three structures the Christian deploys in order to make his case. First, he establishes valid premises by fulfilling, rather tacitly, the six conditions necessary for an Aristotelian demonstration (*ἀπόδειξις*), as derived from the *Posterior Analytics*. Second, he resorts to the analogical reasoning characteristic of Aristotle's *Topics* in order to draw a meaningful parallel between God and humanity so that he can identify some of God's attributes. Third, he employs the category of logical simultaneity from the *Categories* in order to counter possible objections about the Father's begetting

<sup>41</sup> To refer to a few, see Dick, 220, 224, 225.

<sup>42</sup> Dick, 240.

of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit as being impediments to God's oneness. He does so specifically, since on the basis of his second move he has found that the attributes of headship and begetting belong to God but must, nevertheless, be qualified in order to preclude the danger of tritheism. To that end, he addresses one particular objection, namely, that the virtues of headship and begetting may not be in God, by means of a classical Aristotelian syllogism, drawn, in all likelihood, from the general syllogistic structure described in the *Prior Analytics*. He concludes on the basis of his investigation that the Gospel alone contains what we can discover about God by recourse to reason and human nature.

Theodore's discussion seems to be cautious on several fronts; particularly he presents an orthodox case of Christian Trinitarianism while providing sufficient qualifications about his analogical reasoning that a Muslim interlocutor may not be immediately turned off to the discussion. Thus, Abu Qurrah's argumentation could carry some considerable weight relative to the horizon of possibilities available to his audience. I have tried to show how his constant underlying operative structure is recognizably Aristotelian and could be made to function as a *lingua franca* the bishop could deploy to find some manner of common ground with those whose religious views differed from his own. Perhaps his opponents would not have conceded some of his premises, but they would likely still have operated within the same logical schema.

In the foregoing we might see the implicit widespread acceptability of framing a problematic in distinctly Aristotelian modalities of investigation. Indeed, one of the striking features of the work is the silent presence of an Aristotelian philosophy that is not followed in a slavish way that could betray one's lack of fluency or comfort in handling it. But this attests to the depth and subtlety with which the Peripatetic's thought had already been absorbed, relatively early, by Arabic thought. As a consequence, the Stagirite's system is detectable not as a bright-burning luminary, but as an invisible body that exercises its gravitational pull on whatever comes within the sphere of its logical influence. It has therefore seemed inappropriate to me to elucidate Abu Qurrah's argumentation without also considering his implicit, but extensive, use of Aristotelian philosophy, since it is equally the structure to which his opponents would have recurred in order to refute him. Perhaps we may close by saying that even if his argumentation has not quite convinced us of the rationality of Christianity, it has nevertheless shown that we share a similar language of logic, plausibility, and expression of the intellect with an eighth-century Arab Christian, one that bridges our cultures and times in a strangely familiar way.

