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Special Issue Reprint

Patristics

Essays from Australia

Edited by
Garry Trompf

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Patristics: Essays from Australia

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Guest Editor

Garry Trompf

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About the Editor

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Editorial

Introduction, with Highlights in the History of Australian Patristic Studies

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The core focus of the study of Patristics (generally also called Patrology) has been the teachings and practices of the so-called Fathers and Mothers of the early Christian Church (or the leading exponents of the Christian Faith, primarily from after the times of Jesus of Nazareth and the writings of the New Testament to the so-called Early Middle Ages (or the emergence of Islam) (e.g., Louth 2023; cf. Fessler [1850–1851] 1890–1896; Tixeront [1905–1912] 1928–1931; Quasten 1950–1986). Over and above the intricate yet humdrum history of the preserving, copying, and correcting of manuscripts through medieval times, there were milestones in the early development of Patristic study. These included the collecting of discarded or marginalized Christian and classical writings extracted by Photius (*ca*. 810–895), Patriarch of Constantinople, in his *Bibliotheca*; the critical techniques from the Italian Renaissance (*ca*. 1400–1520s) to isolate the best manuscripts, favour preserved Greek texts over Latin translations, and detect forgeries and spurious ascriptions (e.g., Lorenzo Valla, *De Falso credita* [1440]); to develop printing houses for Oriental languages (e.g., the Maronites from 1610); and especially the organized amassing of theological, historical, and hagiographical writings by Protestant and Catholic scholars in modern times, to shore up their doctrinal defences during and after the Reformation (see Fraenkel 1961, esp. pp. 255–59 on Trimethius, Melanchthon, Bellarmine). The Elizabethan Anglican bishop John Jewel (1522–1571) defined the crucial period of study to be the five hundred years after the primitive church (*Works* [1845 edn.] vol. 1, p. 20; Haugaard 1979, p. 37), pre-empting the late critical humanist work of Georg Calixtus (1586–1656) to arrive at a Catholic–Protestant consensus about the matter in early modern days (*Discurs* [1652], esp. sect. 90–96; cf. Callisen 2010, pp. 61–67). Lutheran Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) penned the first monograph entitled *Patrologia* (post. pub. 1653) in his accounts of the lives and thoughts of many doctors of the Church, patriotically celebrating German figures. This was while the Jesuit Bollandist school started the huge Catholic work on the lives of the Saints, from 1643, and was well before the publication of the huge, ostensibly "complete" corpus of *Patrologiae* of Latin and Greek Fathers and Mothers of the Church was made accessible from the mid-nineteenth century, mainly under the direction of Catholic priest Jacques Paul Migne (1800–1875) (see Migne 1844–1891, 1857–1891). Around the turn of the twentieth century, other landmark monographs of Patrology appeared (e.g., from Protestant von Harnack (1885–1890) to Catholics Bardenhewer [1894] 1906) and Tixeront (1918), and there were further Patrological series (Harnack's *Griechischen Christlichen Schrifsteller* (GCS) 1891-, *Patrologiae Syriaca* and *Orientalis* [eds. Graffin 1894–1926, 1904–2002], respectively; cf. also Urbina 1958), collected volumes of translations, followed by collections of critical editions of Patristic writings that have been inspired by this rich and long inheritance up to this day.

Indeed, modern Patristics is grounded in establishing, critically editing, and better comprehending an enormous received body of texts, and those involved in it have wrestled with a variety of awkward issues over the years. Perhaps the most sensitive questions faced through the centuries concerned variations in transmitted Biblical texts (see Metzger and

Editorial Committee 1971). However, all sorts of critical issues were also to arise about the inherited works and ploys of the Fathers. Scholars have had to ask, for some pertinent examples, whether newly converted Lactantius, tutor to Constantine's son Crispus, deliberately misquoted the pagan classics (Antonio da Rho, *Dialogi tres in Lactantium* [1445]); whether the famous "comma" referring to the Father, Word, and Holy Spirit "three in one" is authentic to 1 John 5:8, and thus putting the Trinity in the New Testament (early questioned, e.g., by Isaac Newton's *Two Letters* [pub. 1754] to John Locke); whether cosmologically oriented theologian Origen really authored the intriguing Adamantius dialogue that, for centuries, had been incautiously placed among his works (Hort 1877, p. 41); whether pioneer church historian Eusebius used already 'doctored' texts when relaying Josephus's account of Jesus or the Edessan archival record of Armenia's Abgar V's letter to Jesus (Pines 1971; Trompf 2023, p. 6); and so on. Commentators have had the embarrassing task of distinguishing theological parties but putting late names on them: of around ten positions adopted by followers of the di-theistic-looking 'heretical' teachings of Arius (*flor*. 310s); for instance, the epithet 'semi-Arians' was imposed by their contemporary critics, and 'neo-Arians' only by moderns (cf. Hanson 2005). Only in recent times, moreover, have scholars and clerics had to derive the special nomenclature Miaphysitism from seventh-century Syrian theology, found nowhere in virtually all prior Patristic studies, to distinguish groups once said to be Monophysite when they did not really teach the hard-line Christological definition (promulgated by alleged heresiarch Eutyches of Constantinople [*flor*. 440s) that Christ had only a divine nature (e.g., Wood 2010, p. 18; Michelson 2014; Hainthaler 2015). *Pace* all these kinds of nettles, over the centuries studying the Church Fathers and Mothers was overwhelmingly carried out in sacral and ecclesial ambiences, especially in seminaries and monasteries, with those involved cherishing and defending holy truths, upholding Church dogmas (some formulated in creed and liturgy) that led to anathemas and statements of schism or special inter-church relationships. Eventually, by the nineteenth century, histories tried encapsulating the whole process for wider audiences, from the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Newman [1845] 1960) by Oxonian late-Catholic John Henry Newman to the tracings by Norwegian Anathon Aall of the "Logos idea" (Aall 1896–1899), i.e., that cosmic ordering principle important for both philosophers and theologians (with the latter acknowledging Christ as the personal Logos/Word, as well the subject of the Gospel [John 1:1; Col. 1:5, 25, etc.]).

By now, certainly, Patristics has been opened up as a discipline that can be engaged with in the worldwide forum of scholarship, after a lengthy story of entanglements. The general shift was probably first initiated by pressure during the Reformation to consider church history as but a part of general history (Philipp Melanchthon) (Klempt 1960, esp. pp. 5–88). While veneration of holy relics continued in Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, the sense of significance in what had been forgotten as "Christian Antiquities" grew, triggered in the West especially by Antonio Bosio's exploration of the Roman catacombs (cf. *Roma sotterranea*, 1632), beginning a process that has since resulted in great museum displays of these antiquities (e.g., Smith and Cheetham 1875; British Museum [1903] 1921, pp. 24–39, 56–144) and a myriad of exhibitions in significant churches and other spaces around the globe (cf. Caraher and Pettegrew 2019). Thus, Patristics slowly became more distinctly part of wider ancient history awaiting critical study. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) was central to this transition, with his "quite Roman" as well as Enlightenment attitudes, implying that the Christian "religion" and the Gothic "barbarians", whose leadership was inspired by Arian missionaries, were key culprits in the downfall of the old Western Roman Empire (by 476) (Maas 2012, p. 70; cf. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* [1776], chs, 21, 26, 71). Prolonged wrangling has followed his arguments, and still today, we see tension between those extolling past ancient imperial glories and

those happy to see them 'dead and buried', with the Roman *Pax* even denigrated as an excuse for genocide (e.g., Holland 2023). Differing opinions, growing interactions between Patristic scholars and ancient historians (most often Byzantinists) kept increasing, and the debates laid the basis for pressures to include keen awareness of ancient Christian bodies of knowledge in the study of Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and early medieval times, and for research into the Fathers and Mothers of the Church to be sensibly contextualized in pre-modern societies. Meanwhile, scholars desiring so are free to advocate for the Fathers' ancient theological insights, and to demonstrate how relevant they can be to modern survival and clarity of purpose. A leading Australian Patristics scholar Ken(neth) Parry (2019, pp. vii-ix, 3–12) (*flor*. 1990–2020s), in his edited *Wiley-Blackwell Handbook to Patristic Studies*, has preserved the centrality for Patrology of ancient Christian authoritative voices (from Irenaeus to John Damascene and beyond), and of studying them within the diverse contexts of Church life and practice (asceticism, readiness of martyrdom, celebration of the Saints, liturgies, setting Easter and feast days, hymns, poetry, etc.) up to our time. But, as an ancient historian, he shows how Patristics spills over into the study of Late Antique philosophies (e.g., Anagnostou-Laoutides and Parry 2022), art (Parry 1996), diverse cultures (2010), and dynastic histories (Dzino and Parry 2014). By knowing controversies from the distant past, moreover, work could be performed to help in inter-church relations to pass beyond earlier misunderstandings and iron out their differences (see below on Stormon; cf. Gribben 2002), and to explore possibilities for up-to-date and more relevant styles on engaging in Patristics (following, e.g., "Neo-Patristics", Metaphysical Patristics, etc. (Gallaher 2011; Adrahtas 2024) and relevant interdisciplinary work (e.g., Costache 2013).

By feat of increasing attitudinal flexibilities, and with the questioning of old dogmas and the openly 'secular scrutiny of the sacred', Patrology might seem to be wrested out of its ecclesial closets and uncomfortably exposed to new styles of criticism. Women, for example, might well be irritated by its very top-heavy concern with male minds (cf., e.g., Neil and Garland 2013; Mayer and Elmer 2014), queer theorists suspicious about its degrees of tolerance toward sexual diversity (e.g., Boswell 1980), pacifistic souls abhorred by episodes of "mad monks" behaving violently (see Gaddis 2005, pp. 151–207), social critics pointing out diatribes against the Jews (e.g., Garroway 2022), with critical theorists alleging its protagonists have been bastions of pastoral (typically episcopal) power (Foucault 1980), etc. Paradoxically, however, although they wanted a unifying orthodoxy (right opinion), various Fathers were so well informed about religious diversities that they laid the long-term basis for the sociology of new religious movements (Trompf 1987, pp. 96–98), and when the Reformation fractured Western Europe, the beginning of modern studies of the history of heresies (other opinions) saw mystic Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714) dare to contend there was some grain of truth in all deviations from the mainstream Faith (*Unpartheyische . . . Ketzer-Historie* 1699), opening up the possibility, as we see it today, of a tolerated religious plurality as well as the study of all religions with greater equanimity. And, at this point in time, moreover, Patristics has never been more welcoming to active engagement among contesting, scientismic, non-religious, or non-Christian souls. These are interesting times, in which the very wellsprings of nations and cultures once deeply affected by the Christian faith have been neglected, and need re-examining to see how much current ideal standards of social life still owe themselves to the Church Fathers and Mothers, and how an osmotic process of forgetfulness buries them in collective memories, because they are seriously 'religious' in a changing world distancing itself from institutional religiosities. The authors of this book reflect a diversity of world-views found in that island-like southern Continent, Australia, which has experienced many of the recently felt disinclinations to spend time on apparently decrepit "elders", who laboured on a multitude of obscure texts long after the 33-year old Great One died on a cross. Indeed, Australia's

scattered inhabitants have a reputation (if over-exaggerated) for a blunt "godlessness" (Breward 1988). Still, in current global affairs, Australians possess an internationally enviable tradition of social justice and egalitarian suspicion of misused power, as if old desert ascetics and voices raised for high and pure ideals amid ancient urban dust have still been producing very long-term effects.

And so, we come to consider Patristics in Australia, preparing readers for the Australian contributions to the discipline that fill the pages which follow. To set the stage, in this introductory piece, I will explore the foundations of the discipline in the great Southern Continent, and then briefly assess the 'state of play' at the turn of the third millennium, as the authors are introduced.

1. The Foundations of Patristics in Australia (to AD 2000)

Modern Australia began through British colonization, thus first inheriting connections with Western Catholic, Protestant, and Enlightenment strands of scholarship. In the earlier days of penal colonies and pioneering attempts at public education (to *ca.* 1840), expectedly, there was little room for scholarly writing and researching ancient texts. Change came slowly as far as probing early Church Fathers and Mothers was concerned. Who, at least, brought *potential* for studying them? Why, monks, of course, and the myriad voices 'still speaking' in the books of the libraries they brought with them. After decades of official anti-Catholic strategies during the convict years, a breakthrough came when, to end 50 years in the wilderness, Australian Catholics had their first Bishop, in 1835: John Bede Polding (1794–1877), and he was an English Benedictine (soon to be continent-wide Archbishop and Metropolitan). His vision for the Catholics was one combining mission with *learning*, and since this was too idealistic for the general circumstances (and eventually unpopular, especially among a large and growing Irish constituency), Polding had to sadly face the reality that old-style (sixth-century!) "Benedictinism neither produced a crop of eminent theologians . . . nor encouraged a broad education for teachers of Catholic children" (Nairn 1967, p. 344). And he had tried so hard to recruit monks for Australia, even from the European Continent (e.g., Kavenagh 1974, 2005). The library in the monastic 'seminary' next to St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, however, slowly laid the basis (from 1837 to 1857) of a key resource for Patristics for eastern Australia (Murphy 1921, p. 50). In the West of the continent, an extraordinary monastic library was built up much more rapidly (from 1846), due to connections with Spain under Benedictine missioner (later Bishop) Rosendo Salvado (1814–1900), and this collection remains, if isolated and 131 km away from Perth, a treasure trove for the history of Patristics to this day (McPhee 1979). Why, Patristics in Australia could have had Aboriginal beginnings, since Salvado sent four young indigenous novices to train for the priesthood in Europe. One, Francis Xavier Conaci (d. 1853), received a silver medal for success in seminary examinations and was a most promising scholar; Pope Pius IX, when ordaining him, expressed hopes for Conaci as a new "Xavier of Australia." Alas, none of these monks returned to New Norcia to work, but all fell ill and died (Salvado [1851] 1977, pp. 90, 98, 123–24, 237–88; Pattel-Gray and Trompf 1993, p. 173).

The Benedictine heritage took a long time to have its effect on local Patristic scholarship. The original Sydney seminary collection was moved into the grand St. Patrick's College overlooking Manly, Sydney, in 1889 (Fletcher 1980), and the Benedictines eventually produced an important pertinent periodical, *Tjurunga* (from 1971, using a desert Aboriginal name for *sacra*). Its editing was shared between Sydney and Melbourne, and not a few monks displayed their flair for Patristics (with, e.g., Cistercian Michael Casey, New Norcia Benedictine David Barry, Sylvestrine Michael Kelly and, of late, Good Samaritan sister Carmel Posa impressive among them); and in Western Australia, *New Norcia Studies* began in 1993. The following year saw an Ecumenical Conference in Rome on the

fifth-century Father John Cassian, jointly initiated by Sydney Benedictines and Methodists (pub. Bondi et al. 1995–1996).

Of the thousands of priests graduating from Manly (which was Australia's "central national seminary" until 1922 [Livingston 1977, p. 254]), all would have been exposed to some class in Patristics, especially considering the stimulus to study the Fathers by Pius XII's wartime Encyclical *Divino affluente* Spiritu (1943) (Pollard 1960, p. 138). In the 1950s, Patrology I and II, followed by History of Dogmas, were required courses in a three-year sequence to attain a Baccalaureate and then Licentiate in Theology (using the Latin handbook *Enchiridion Patristicum* by Jesuit Rouet de Journel [1922] 1953), with the Doctorate in Theology (authorized in 1958) requiring close study of a Patristic text in its original language (Crittenden 2024). Yet, theses were not expected to be substantial and, in any case, no one emerged a notable Patrologist. Admittedly, Alberico Jacovone (1936-) and David Walker (1938-) were insightful enough expositors, the former on Pope Leo the Great's sacramental thought (in Italian, Jacovone 1966), and the latter on Cassian's moral theology (Walker 1966), but their careers were constrained by humdrum institutional service, with Jacovone training teachers and Walker rising to an episcopate. Prof. David Coffey (1938-) was perhaps the exception, earning an impressive St. Patrick's doctorate on 'proto-philosophical' issues in John the Evangelist (Coffey 1960; cf. Walsh 1998, p. 261); he later studied under the renowned theologian Karl Rahner in Germany, and was required to probe a whole range of Patristic views in trying to apprehend the Trinity (Coffey 1999, esp. pp. 33–45; cf. Ormerod 1988; Crittenden 2020).

Over a century had passed, and the field of study we are interested in here barely left a footprint in Australian Catholic thought, probably because the Fathers were assumed to be an "auxiliary" building-block for Dogmatic Theology or Church History (Crittenden 2008, pp. 126–29). In the Protestant story, the general dearth was comparable and the reasons more that the controversies of the early churches were covered in Church History (e.g., by the widely read Lietzmann [1932] 1961). But two interesting figures on the Australian scene deserve comment. Ulster-Scot-born Samuel Angus (1881–1943), for nearly 30 years Professor of New Testament and Historical Theology at St. Andrews [Presbyterian] College at the University of Sydney (USyd), could not have written those famous books on *The Mystery Religions and Christianity* (Angus 1925) and *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World* (Angus 1929) without a wide-ranging knowledge the Fathers, who reported on various Mediterranean cults and Gnostics, and engaged with Late Antique philosophers. A Christian Platonist, committed to "a Jesus stripped of Christological speculation and mythology" (expressed in German higher criticism and the History of Religions school he favoured), Angus successfully defended himself from heresy charges in the 1930s using copious quotations from the Fathers, especially in Latin (Emilsen 1991, pp. 61, 212–29, 240–45 and ns.). Whatever one makes of the fuss, Angus single-handedly put the reality and potential of Australian contributions to Patristic Studies on the world map, even though his stance linked back more to Gottfried Arnold's fair-minded approach to heresies than to Patrology more classically defined (Trompf 2019, p. 31).

Angus's doctorate was taken at Princeton—on Latin sources of Augustine's *City of God* (Angus 1906), a decisively Patristic topic—and his major inspirations were strikingly German (especially from Adolf Deissmann); but after the Second World War, another (somewhat forgotten) figure sign-posted what were to become 'Oxbridge' links to motivate most Australians' aspirants to engage fully and publish in the field. This was English-born Robert Pretty (1904–1985), a young Congregationalist lay minister sent westward from Tasmania, who took an honours Arts degree at the University of Western Australia in the early 1940s. Returning to the east, by 1964, he had been awarded a DD from the prestigious Melbourne College of Divinity (see below), and had achieved membership of the same

United Faculty of Theology or inter-denominational Protestant Theological Hall, with its precious Gillespie Library, where Angus had worked during the war years. In that circle, Pretty held the Lecturership in Ecclesiastical History, School of Divinity, USyd (from 1962) (Barnes 1997, pp. xi–xiii), Such a School, as one also did in the University of Queensland (UQld), allowed Divinity to be taken by way of 'professional' degrees outside of the mainstream educational profile before the year 2000 cf., e.g., (Turney et al. 1991–1995, vol. 1, p. 520; vol. 2, p. 170; University of Queensland 1968, p. 2). Significantly, Pretty appears to have written the first truly 'home-grown' Patristics doctorate in Australia, a translation and editing of the Adamantius Dialogue (GCS 1; see above), which he convincingly ascribed to Methodius of Olympus (to *ca*. 300) instead of to Origen. The dissertation was examined by none other than Frank Leslie Cross (1900–1968), the actual founder of the famed International Oxford Conferences on Patristic Studies (from 1951 on), and by this stamp of approval, Pretty heralded an intellectual connection that was crucial for the flourishing of Australian Patristics in our generation. Lost when first submitted to an American publisher, this author found Pretty's thesis wilting away in a dingy, dusty corner of the Methodists' Leigh College Library, and brought it out into the light of day (Pretty 1997).

Meanwhile, with the thawing of Catholic–Protestant relations (from the early 1950s) and the onset of the Second Vatican Council (in the 1960s), cross-traditional interactions were going to enhance possibilities for Patristics research. As soon as Manly ceased to be Australia-wide (1922), Dr Daniel Mannix (1864–1963), controversial Irish-born Archbishop of Melbourne for over 40 years, promptly placed seminary training there under the guidance of the already well-established Jesuits (an Order revered for its high standards of learning, with Victoria being the seat of the Australian Province for the Society of Jesus since 1860) (Murphy 1948, pp. 128–29; Bygott 1980, pp. 21–23, 308–9). In time, the 1960s saw increasing teaching collaboration between Jesuit and mainline Protestant theological halls, and the United Faculty of Theology (UFT) was born in 1969, with a sharing of resources within the impressive Dalton-McCaughey Library, Ormond College, bordering the University of Melbourne, in 1971 (Breward 1999). Out of this productive relationship, the University of Divinity was to be ratified by the Victorian Parliament, much later, in 2016, though in fact its foundations lie in that venerable Protestant, officially accredited degree-granting institution called the Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD), inaugurated in 1910 (Sherlock 2016). The UFT had become increasingly ecumenical, having its first Catholic President by 1976. Catholic Orders, collaborating in a fruitful educational programme of the Yarra Theological Union from 1972, readily joined the UFT and became a college of the new university after that.

It might seem in these transitions, Catholic scholarly attention to the Fathers would outshine Protestant work, were it not for the fact the first genuine *doyen* of Australian Patristics turns out to be a Methodist! We refer to Eric Osborn (1922–2007), Professor of New Testament and Early Church History at Queen's College, University of Melbourne, a very learned (if somewhat fractious) exemplar giving promise of high standards during the negotiations for the UFT (cf. Trompf 2016, p. 235). At this point, we should clarify that the overwhelming focus of Protestant church scholars of the ancient materials was always the New Testament (within Biblical Studies), and that tendency, upon the impact of Vatican II, was also significantly showing up in the balance of Catholic interests. Conservative, Evangelical, and 'sectarian' Protestants always remained strongly Bible-focused (the Baptists and Restorationists, for indicative examples, not setting traditional store by the early Ecumenical Councils of the Church and their Creeds, and showing little interest in the Patristic period apart from Donatism (e.g., Littell 1964, pp. 55–75).[1] Why also, in South Australia, at the Australian Lutheran Theological College—the obvious place, given so many German *immigrés*, for such an institution to be (from 1921)—the dogmatic textbook

chiefly used begins with New Testament Theology and then all-too suddenly jumps past the Fathers and Mothers into systematized statements of doctrine formulated by the milestone 1847 Missouri Synod (Mueller [1934] 1955). And so, when it first made its appearance in Melbourne, Eric Osborn's *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (Osborn 1957) stood out like a strange nine-pin. 'Bible Christians' at the time would not know what to make of it, Clement sometimes looking like a pagan philosopher and a Gnostic heretic. Osborn's was the first monograph on a Christian Father to be penned by an Australian, if basically the product of a doctorate in Cambridge (UK), under Henry Chadwick (1920–2008), the very man who was to succeed Frank Cross as host of the Oxford Conferences (from 1967). Osborn's study was too ahead of its time for one to know how it could be used for southern hemispheric tertiary studies, at least in the Protestant circles dominant in Australia. Over the next 50 years, though, he established himself as one of the most consistent producers of monographs on Patristics anywhere in the world (e.g., Osborn 1973, 1981, 1997, 2001).

The only Catholic scholar comparable to Osborn in his emergence was the West Australian Jesuit Edward J. Stormon (1912–1992), who returned home with an unfinished doctoral thesis from Oxford (1953, on ideas of spiritual renewal in the Middle English text *The Pearl* and in Shakespeare, under the great J.R.R. Tolkien), and was immediately sent back to keep serving in secondary school! (*Catholic Weekly* 26 February 1953, p. 2). Fortunately he was soon invited to join the Jesuit Theological College in Melbourne, since he had earlier taken a Master's degree (on English mystic Richard Rolle) at the University there. By the late 1960s, Stormon was turning attention to the major interest of his career, concerning the tail-end of Byzantine Studies, perhaps even of Patristics, on how to heal the Eastern/Western Church differences working through traditional credal and dogmatic differences (e.g., Stormon 1977, 1981, 1985, 1987; cf. Strong 2016, p. 445). At one point or another, this author enjoyed being taught by both Osborn and Stormon as an undergraduate; although it should be clarified again that neither of these eminents were, for most of their lifetimes, established academics teaching about religion within secular university departments. They worked from residential colleges on the margins: teaching religion at the University of Melbourne (UMelb) was debarred by parliamentary act, and only in later years could these two really feel they had achieved parity with the mainstream academic community. Indeed, as far as one can tell, the first course in a plainly secular Australian university setting which had Patristic Studies in its title ('Biblical and Patristic Studies') was conducted in the Classics Department in 1969 at the University of Western Australia (UWA), the nation's first "free university" that Pretty also cherished (Barnes 1997, p. xi). The course was put up at the behest of Prof. Melvyn Austin, being cooperatively taught by Stormon—returned from Melbourne to be Head of St Thomas More (residential] College, UWA, and soon to start translating the Salvado memoirs (see St. Thomas More College 2012, p. 10; cf. Salvado [1851] 1977)—and by the present author (fresh back from Oxford after studying under Chadwick, Cross and the Jesuits!).

However, to say that the Patristic period was not studied under the secular rules of UMelb is not completely true. In 1959, Scottish-born John Bowman (1916–2006), an accomplished New Testament scholar (D.Phil. [Oxon.]), was appointed to the Chair of Semitic Studies within the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, and by the mid-sixties he had modified the previous curriculum focus on languages by introducing courses with content both cultural and archeological. In his first year, he had founded *Abr-Nahrain* (now *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*), the first periodical (with supplementary volumes) admitting Patristic scholarship to be published overseas under Australian auspices (by Brill, Leiden; then Peeters, Louvain); and by 1961 came a likewise welcoming local departmental annual *Milla wa-Milla* (Sagona 2006, p. 62). One departmental course was on Christianity, particularly "the development of Eastern Christianity", and one teacher, Edinburgh-educated

Baptist George Bolster (d. 1970), taught a class on early Patristic *testimonia* to the New Testament texts (which this author attended in 1962), and Bolster was apparently the first to be called "Lecturer in Comparative Religion" in Australia (from 1963) (cf. *Victorian Baptist Witness* 5 July 1962, p. 11; University of Melbourne 1964a, p. 57, 1964b, p. 194). Both adept at Syriaca and Judaica, Bowman and Bolster cultivated significant doctorates on 'Eastern Christian' Patristic topics, a pioneering one by Brian Colless (1936-), down from Sydney, on John Saba, an eighth-century Syrian mystic (1969); and another by (adventurous Lutheran farmer!) Carl Loeliger (1935–2023), a mammoth dissertation (Loeliger 1970) on key theological terms used in the *Peshitta* (fourth-century Syriac Bible) in translating the Pauline Epistles, with copious references to Ephrem of Nisibis (*flor*. 350s). Colless cut his teeth publishing in Australia (cf. Colless 1968, p. 83), yet by 1970 was ensconced at Massey University, and thereupon plied his rigorous Eastern-oriented Patristic Studies in New Zealand. Loeliger, for his effort, was appointed as one of the two first Lecturers in Religious Studies in the country (1971), though offshore in pre-independent Papua/New Guinea, where he served sixteen years and then returned permanently to the family farm. Back in Melbourne, Bowman was working prodigiously to endow the Baillieu (UMelb) Library with rare works to do with Eastern Christianity (see Bowman 1976, p. 5), helping to match the treasures in the nation's first great open collection at the Public Library of Victoria, Melbourne city (founded 1853), rich in Aegyptaica and Byzantina (hard copies of the whole massive *Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae* for example, only available there). At Melbourne's Anglican Evangelical Ridley College (close to UMelb), one could also goggle at the home of Bible translator Vice-Principal Francis Andersen (1923–2020), wall-to-wall full of books, and find at least one academic who could start teaching you Church Slavonic and probe the fate of Hebrew Biblical texts down to Origen's *Hexapla*, before he took off to Berkeley and later returned to take the Foundation Chair of Religious Studies at the University of Queensland (1981–1988) in the state of his birth (cf. Conrad and Newing 1987).

Our allusion to the sources of Byzantium's history reminds one that the seeds of Australian Byzantine Studies were first sewn in the Classics Department at Melbourne, with the enthusiasms of Roger Scott (1938-) and encouraged by incoming Professor (New Zealand-born) Graeme Clarke (1934–2023) from 1969 (Moffatt 2006, p. xv; cf. Jackson et al. 2023). These two colleagues have been twin giants in Patristic and Byzantine research to our day, Scott especially on the sixth century chronicler John Malalas (e.g., Jeffreys et al. 1986) and Clarke on the Letters of the St. Cyprian, third-century bishop of Carthage (e.g., Clarke 1984–1989). Yet, we are not to forget a younger, equally inspired female party, Ann Moffatt (1941-) who, like Clarke, transferred from Melbourne to the Classics Department at the Australian National University (ANU) and played a crucial role in establishing the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies (AABS) and its first Conference in 1978 (from which moot the still-continuing monograph series *Byzantina Australiensia* was born (Jeffreys et al. 1981) (remembering here, of course, that Byzantine history goes well beyond 800 CE, as one possible cut-off point for the Patristic period). With reference to ANU again, where Clarke coordinated important Australian work on Patristic historiography from the Humanities Research Centre (Clarke et al. 1990), one also recalls his co-worker in Classics Revd Dr Evan Burge (1933–2003), who edited works (Burge et al. 1971) by Martianus Capella (a founder of the early Western university system of learning [*flor*. 480s]), and then that brilliant, if diffident product of Classics at the University of Queensland, Robert Barnes (1947-), whom the present author found assiduously reading Gibbon on board ship in preparation to read Theology at Oxford in 1965. If he later fell dejected when undertaking doctoral work at Harvard, involving a soulless, computerized lexicon of Clement of Alexandria, Barnes returned to settle down to in Canberra (Classics, ANU). Teaching *inter alia* Elizabeth

Minchin (1943-), and being a valued colleague of Clarke's (Professor 1982–1992)—a duo of outstanding leaders in the Australian Academy of Humanities and strong sponsors of studies in ancient Christianity—Barnes eventually bequeathed an extraordinary Patristics collection to ANU's Chifley Library valued at millions of dollars (e.g., Minchin 2022; cf. Minchin and Jackson 2017). Personally reflecting, this author was familiar with almost all of the people in Melbourne, Perth, and Canberra who formed part of the disparate foundation period of Australian Patristics described here, and my own 1974 ANU doctoral thesis in the History of Ideas, which had not a little Classical and Patristic material in it (Trompf 1979), benefited greatly from the standards of scholarship set at Canberra.

Back in Sydney, one impressive way to avoid the secular cramp that inhibited Patristics was to create a university and, in particular, a department, that freed itself from religious restrictions. I refer to Macquarie University (founded in 1964), and its Department of Ancient History, perhaps for a time the biggest of its kind anywhere and unique in the wide scope of its subject matter, and developed above all under its New-Zealand-born Foundation Professor Edwin Arthur Judge (1928-) from its virtual inception in 1969 (cf. Hillard et al. 1998) to its unfortunate devolvement into the general History Department in 2020. Although Judge was more interested in New Testament times, his pioneering study of the social configuration of early Christians (Judge 1960) and papers on the Jewish/Greek (Jerusalem/Athens) divide in early Christianity (and in Western culture) (Judge 2023, pp. 105–15) fed into the Patristic arena, indeed Judge penned a well-known paper (Judge 1977) on the earliest known archaeological reference to a (Christian) monk (Grk. *monachos*) in a papyrus letter from Egypt dated 324. His tireless sponsorship of early Christian Studies (courses taking in the Christianity in Late Antiquity, early Christian varieties and 'heresies', etc.), his advocacies of the Society for the Study of early Christianity (SSEC) with its Newsletter (1970-) and of the collection of early Christian objects and papyri at Macquarie's Ancient History Documentary Research Centre (AHDRC) (later part of the university History Museum), were simply extraordinary (cf. Judge 2023).

Judge had a talent for engaging a diversity of voices in the study of early Christianity. Earlier at Sydney, as one of the founders of the (by-now famous) *Journal of Religious History* (1960-), he was quick to help solicit important papers on Patristic topics from around the nation: from Davis McCaughey, at Victoria's Ormond College, for example, early as an Australian scholar to assess the importance of the Nag Hammadi discoveries for studying Gnosticism (McCaughey 1960); and Ian Gilman (UQld) on Church triumphalism under Constantine (Gilman 1961). A similar facility and body of concerns reflect in work by two of Judge's supportive co-lecturers from 1970: Bruce Harris (1921–2022), the first person earning a classics doctorate from a New Zealand university, who became Foundation President of the SSEC (Harris and Hutchinson 1990; Judge 2020), and Alanna Emmett [-Nobbs] (1944-) papyrus scholar (e.g., Emmett 1985) and pace-setter in studies of Patristic historiography, who also benefited from working with associate (and Catholic) researcher Brian Croke (1951-) (Croke and Emmett 1983). Raoul Mortley, arriving not long thereafter, truly consolidated the foundation group (see below), but other relevant figures (among an impressive cluster of ancient historians) at Macquarie can hardly go unmentioned: founding Editor of AHDRC's *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (1981-) Greg Horsley (1951-), for one, who later transferred his Macquarie legacy to the University of New England (UNE, 1995 on), and Samuel Lieu (1950-), for another, who took Judge's chair in 1996 and, in the same year, co-directed the UNESCO-sponsored *Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum*, for publishing primary texts of and studies on the most widespread alternative faith that challenged that of the early Fathers.

Judge always has been, mind you, a deeply Evangelical soul, and more focused on social and moral history than on philosophy. Yet, for a fair time (1973–1986), Macquarie

enjoyed the appointment of a more philosophically minded scholar of early Christianity and Late Antiquity. Now, if you were performing your fieldwork at the Oxford Conferences in the 1970s and 1980s, as soon as it was clear you were an Australian, Asian scholars would make a particular point of naming Patristics stars from the Antipodes whom they most venerated. For the first decade, it was Osborn; for the second, it was Sydney-born Raoul Mortley (1944-). Behold, like Osborn, Mortley also wrote his 1971 doctorate on Clement of Alexandria, but the differences were that he took his degree from the University of Strasbourg, wrote it in French, and concentrated on the issue of "religious knowledge" (*connaissance religieuse*) (Mortley 1973). In the early 1980s, Mortley was already writing in both English and French about negative or apophatic theology, beginning in 1981, when he dialogued with Osborn, Stormon, and visiting Jarislav Pelikan (1923–2006), the last a renowned (Slavo-)American patrologist and expositor of the *Christian Tradition* (Pelikan 1971–1989) (Dockrill and Mortley 1981, pp. 5–12, 49–78, 211; cf. Mortley 1982, 1986]). And Mortley expanded his interests both to the Platonic tradition (Mortley 1988), and also to Gnosticism (e.g., Mortley 1981) in a manner shared by the present author (e.g., Trompf 1989). His approach combines the History of Ideas with consideration of philosophical and theological viability of non-Christian Greek-writing thinkers (such as Plotinus), who had a striking influence on various Fathers (including on Augustine in the Latin West). Mortley's working contacts in France with scholars researching on Neoplatonism and the Hermetic corpus were impeccable, and through 1986, he served as Research Director in Philosophy at the grand Centre Nationale de Recherché Scientifique in Paris. In Australia, interestingly, his most important contacts for Patristics study were found at the University of Newcastle (160 km north of Sydney).

In Newcastle lay the twin 'power-houses' behind the noted Supplementary Numbers to the Australasian classics journal *Prudentia* (founded 1969, focusing on Graeco-Roman "intellectual history"). These two protagonists were classicist Professor Godfrey Tanner (1927–2002) and philosopher Dr David Dockrill (1936–2018), who ensured that separately edited supplements to *Prudentia* encouraged Patristics and studies of Hellenistic philosophical influences on Christianity, *inter alia* providing an important forum for the historical philosophy Mortley cultivated (thus with Dockrill 1981) and a mental seedbed for the younger (English-born) Harold Tarrant (1946-) as pursuer of comparable interests (e.g., Tarrant 1988). Indeed, Tanner's tradition in Classics (Lee et al. 1993; Lee 2002) helped attract both Mortley and Tanner to Newcastle (both in 1993, the former as Vice Chancellor). As for *Prudentia*, its indicative importance as an institution truly showed in the next decade with a Greek (and Greek Orthodox) contribution on "an old faith" in a new land (Chryssavgis 1994). And why not now consider the Greeks? They seem best coming next in our *tour d'horizon*.

Another way to avert Australian secularity and create space for Patrology in the Antipodes was through the vitality of ethno-religious scholarly life borne from afar. The Greeks are of overwhelming significance in Australia, since Melbourne is putatively the third-largest Greek city in the world! However, Sydney remains a key focal point, and the choice was made to found an Orthodox seminary there, rather than in Victoria (proposed in 1981 and founded in 1986), as St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College. The Dean of this establishment, from its beginnings to his death, was Stylianos Harkianakis (1935–2019), who had been appointed Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia in 1975, and who came directly from the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of Vlatadon, where he held ecclesiastical authority over the affairs of the Holy Mountain of Athos. Now, the manuscript holdings and libraries of Mount Athos are among the richest for Patristic Studies anywhere in the world, and Stylianos had been co-founder and later President of the Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies at Vlatadon, and was instrumental in the

digitization of the Athos collections for public research from Thessaloniki, thus forging a 'prize pathway' for Australians researching the field (now online: https://ror.org/000ffa622 (accessed on 31 January 2024); cf. also Adrahtas et al. 2020).

We should not exaggerate the leg-work the Archbishop put into the cultivation of Patristic study as a figurehead (Stylianos 2007, pp. 6–36); for much was left to his at-times reluctant personal assistant Adelaide-born Revd Deacon Dr John Chryssavgis (1958-), who had taken a degree in Theology at the University of Athens and a coveted DPhil in Patristics at Oxford (Chryssavgis 1983, the first Greek-Australian and apparently the first Australian male to do so [cf. below]). Joined by a few doughty teaching supporters (especially [English-born] Drs. Guy Freeland and Harry Simmons), they constructed and taught a viable seminary programme, negotiated for degree accreditation through securing membership of the interdenominational consortium the Sydney College of Divinity (SCD. founded 1983), built up the St Andrew's library, started the significant college journal *Phronema* (edited first by Freeland from 1986), and all the while confirmed the importance of Patristics and early Church History in their curriculum (Chryssavgis and Chryssavgis 1985). Early in his immense output of publications, John Chryssavgis was developing connections between monastic and Australian desert spirituality (Ferguson and Chryssavgis 1990, pp. 52–62, 109–19; cf. 1983). He daringly expounded Orthodoxy outside in-house periodical literature (e.g., Chryssavgis 1988a, 1988b, 1994), and taught Studies in Religion at USyd, not only Divinity. His interest in translating the Greek Fathers inspired New Zealander-cum-Australian Roman Catholic Robert Charles Hill (1931–2007) to re-publish and publish much of his extraordinary output of more than 30 translations (earlier, e.g., Hill 1986–1992), this time at Holy Cross Orthodox [College] Press, Boston (Pearse 2015, pp. 1–3), where Chryssavgis became Professor of Theology (esp. 1995–2002).

The figure of Charles Hill (1931–2007), one the great Western Catholic translators of the Fathers (and also commentator), should remind us that one other key way to create a space for Patristics in the over-secularized tertiary sector was to create a religion-based, indeed Christian University, which was achieved in 1991, with the amalgamation of four Catholic teachers colleges of Eastern Australia into the Australian Catholic University (ACU, now with nine campuses). Hill was already lecturing on New Testament and Patristic subjects in the Catholic College of Education in New South Wales by 1980, having earned degrees, including a doctorate at the Angelicum in Rome during the 1960s (pub. Hill 1981) when he was a Christian Brother) (*Sydney Morning Herald* 15 May, 2007). Hill, co-founder of the ACU's Centre for Early Christian Studies (1991) helped put Australian Patristics on the map internationally not only by his contribution to the Oxford conferences (see above), but as well to the American (if more atmospherically Catholic) equivalent North American Patristics Society (NAPS, 1974-) conferences, held annually at Loyola University, Chicago (Pearse 2015, p. 2). Against this background, a still more accredited Catholic University scholar was to begin making her mark.

Pauline Allen (1948-), born in Brisbane, and, after undergraduate studies at UQld, Classics Honours and a Master's at UNE, completed a crucial Oxford DPhil in Patristics—apparently the first Australian to achieve this, and significantly as a woman—written on the sixth-century church historian Evagrius Scholasticus at Oxford (in 1977), under Chadwick and Peter Brown. She revised and published her thesis as a post-doctoral student from an institution quite unusual for a young Australian female scholar: the celebrated Catholic University of Leuven/Louvain, Belgium (Allen 1981). That set the tone for her extraordinary career, for, after lecturing in Amsterdam and enjoying Humboldt Fellowships in Frankfurt, she returned to Australia in 1986, to Queensland's Catholic McCauley College, and soon became Head of the then Department of Religion and Philosophy at the new ACU, Brisbane campus, from 1992. Allen co-founded the Centre of Early Christian Studies

the year before (with Hill and Raymond Canning [1947-], the last an Augustinian scholar [esp. Canning 1993] also at ACU's Brisbane campus), and she went on to guide the Centre's important book series. Already in the 1980s and 1990s, she was consolidating her work on late Antique Christian historiography (e.g., Allen 1987), and set the agendas most prominent in her research output to come: Patristic pastoral leadership and homiletics (Datema and Allen 1981) and gender issues, first arising from her study of the Byzantine empire under Justinian and Theodora (Garlick et al. 1992, pp. 85–104). By the early 1990s, and under Allen's direction as an Adjunct to UQld, the budding classicist (and Lutheran) Wendy Mayer (1960-) was starting her research in comparable arenas at UQld (Mayer 1996, and leading to Allen and Mayer 1997). Mayer had been Andersen's Research Assistant in the 1980s, and one of the few undergraduates ever to take a double, two-year Honours degree in ancient Latin and Greek; Geoffrey Dunn and Bronwen Neil followed in her footsteps (see below), with Neil taking an ACU doctorate under Allen on Maximus the Confessor (cf. *ACU Chronicle* 4, 5, July 1995, p. 14; and see Allen and Neil 1999). In this momentous cluster of female scholars at Brisbane we should also honour ancient and medieval historian Lynda Garland (1955-), who moved for a long time south to UNE (before Horsley, and joining Anna Silvas (1999)), and edited a collection first approximating to an 'Essays on Patristics in Australia' volume (Garland 1997) from an AABS conference at Armidale in 1993. And, we can hardly forget Majella Franzmann (1952-), for, although completing her doctorate on a pre-Patristic Text (The Odes of Solomon, a text adapted by early Gnostics, and already being researched by UQld's eminent Michael Lattke [1942–2023] from 1979 in his German days), Franzmann became absorbed in Gnosticism generally, and was earliest among Australian scholars to tackle Mandaism (Franzmann 1989).

Before the millennium's end, the last feature in the foundation period of Australian Patristics was looming: the presence of researchers and publications from the Eastern (more obviously Eastern Orthodox) Churches alongside the growing multiculturalism of Australian scholarship. A good indicator is the appointment of the eminent Copt and Foundation Professor of Semitic Studies, USyd (in 1979), Rifaat Ebied (1938-), who had graduated from Cairo University, but worked for ten years at the University of Leeds before coming to Australia for the rest of his career. He had already collaborated with the English Arabist Michael Young (for a time at Melbourne's Middle Eastern Studies department) in translating some Patristic materials from Arabic (e.g., Ebied and Young 1973). Commanding over four classical Semitic languages, at Sydney, he gamely stressed Christian Syriac influence on Arabic before the Umayyad period (Ebied 1983), and cooperated in translation work on the sixth-century Patriarch of Callinicum (Ebied et al. 1981; Ebied et al. 1996). Ebied took his Professorship to "provide a service to the ethnic communities of Sydney" (Connell et al. 1995, p. 156), and his ready linguistic engagement has helped bring leaders of Eastern churches and other traditions in Australia into the ambit of Patristic study. Furthermore, his involvement with the Oxford-based ARAM Society of Syro-Mesopotamian Studies has facilitated publication of Australian scholarship in its journal (begun 1989).

2. The State of Australian Patristics at the Turn of the New Millennium, and an Introduction to Our Authors' Contributions

The state of Patristics studies in the early decades of the twenty-first century has already been treated well enough elsewhere (Neil 2015; Costache 2025). By around 2010, virtually all of the sectors contributing to the founding of Australian Patristics were alive and well. Benedictines were still involved (e.g., Kelly 2004), the St. Patrick's heritage was occasionally instantiated and recognized (e.g., Coffey 1999; cf. Ormerod 2015, esp. pp. 133–43), and various Catholic clerical contributions show up (e.g., Hackett 2011, pp. 40–65). In Melbourne, Middle Eastern Studies at UMelb had devolved into other departments, but Roger

Scott has held the flag high in Classics with important work on earlier Byzantine chronicles (e.g., Scott 2018; cf. Burke 2006), and is still active on Late Antique recorders (collaborating with UMelb's John Burke and Paul Tuffin at the University of Adelaide). One might say Victorian-raised classicist David Runia (1951-) (an Alexandrian philosophy and Philo specialist, and leading editor of the *Studia Philonica Annual*) helped carry on Osborn's legacy at Queen's College (UMelb), when arriving from a prestigious Professorship at Leiden to take up the college Mastership in 2001 (cf. Runia 2007). The arrival from Britain of classics Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides to Monash University (2006–2017) filled out this impression, since she wrote extensively on Clement of Alexandria (e.g., Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022). The University of Divinity (UDiv) formed in 2016, and came to engage such Patristic experts as Wendy Mayer (e.g., Mayer and Elmer 2014), Lisa Agaiby (e.g., Agaiby and Vivian 2021),[2] and Adam Cooper (2005) in a multi-campus, Australia-wide (but largely Victoria-based) institution. The Melbourne-to-Canberra Classics transplant discussed earlier also truly blossomed at the ANU, especially with the assessment of third century Christianity for the re-edited *Cambridge Ancient History* by Graeme Clarke and his masterful study of Roman African Christianity (Clarke 2005, 2014).

In New South Wales, Parry had been steadily taking over the role of leading general Patrologist at Macquarie (e.g., Parry et al. 1999; Parry 2007; and see above), and by 2014 had been appointed editor of the new Brill series *Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity* (Neil 2015, p. 156). In the spirit of Melbourne's Bowman, Macquarie's Sam Lieu floated a local series, *Studia Antiqua Australiensia*, as an organ of the AHDRC, yet with an overseas publisher (Brepols, at Turnhout), a real signal to the international importance of Australian Patristics, with Choat (2006) and Neil (2006) from the same intellectual hotspot authoring the first volumes. Lieu expanded Ancient History staff, including 'Manichaeist' Gunner Mikkelsen (see Lieu and Mikkelsen 2016) and epigrapher Paul McKechnie (from Auckland, New Zealand) (e.g., McKechnie 2019), and played a focusing role with the *Fontes Manichaeorum* and related Silk Road archeology for researchers in other universities (Mikkelsen and Parry 2022). Such included Iain Gardner, who brought his budding Manichaean studies from Manchester first to Edith Cowan University, Western Australia; and then to Studies in Religion at USyd (e.g., Gardner 1995; Gardner and Lieuand 2004), and Majella Franzmann, especially at UQld, Curtin University (again in the West) and, at last, at USyd also (e.g., Franzmann 2003; Scopello and Franzmann [2014] 2022). At Sydney again, the present author completed his volume on the retributive mentalities of early Christian historians (Trompf 2000), later collaborating with Macquarie's Mikkelsen to produce *The Gnostic World* (Trompf et al. 2019), Mikkelsen's editing role crucial for the first third of the volume, on the Patristic period. And, we are not to forget other incursions at Sydney, with Macquarie-connected Catholic Education Commissioner Brian Croke still considered a leading figure on Late Antique historiography (Croke 2007), and with others at work in USyd (cf. Cusack 1995; Sharpe 2014, pp. 40–47).

As for the Greek Orthodox St Andrews faculty, Chryssavgis had left Australia from 1995, and wrote voluminously outside the country, but others relevant scholars emerged who were connected to the college, including Prof. Vrasidas Karalis (e.g., Karalis 2012) and Dr Vassilios Adrahtas (e.g., Adrahtas 2020), two important heads of Greek cultural studies in Australia, the former long at USyd, the latter more recently at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), along with Andrew Mellas (e.g., Mellas and Gador-Whyte 2020 [see below]), Dimitri Kepreotes, Philip Karialtis, and Bernard Doherty (the last only as a student before a promising academic career elsewhere). From this same stable emerged the scholar pre-eminent today among Australia's Orthodox Patrologists, the Very Rev. Dr (Romanian Orthodox) Protopresbyter and SCD Associate Professor Doru Costache, working in the Antipodes from 2005. Costache is held in high honour for organizing

cross-confessional Patristic conferences at St Andrews during the 2010s (Cooper 2016), assisted by emergent scholars Chris and Mario Baghos (e.g., Costache and Baghos 2017), and he remains of great significance for his brilliant studies into Patristic theologies of Creation (Costache 2021); for his bold stamp of institutional independence in setting up the Australian Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies (AIOCS); and for researching as the first Selby Old Fellow of the Religious History of the Orthodox Christian Faith at the University of Sydney. Two significant younger products of St Andrews also showed an independent spirit, and are currently Associate Professors. Doherty took a 2012 Macquarie doctorate on Montanism (under McKechnie) (Doherty 2012), and secured an appointment at Sturt University (Canberra campus); while Mario Baghos, who earned his 2014 PhD at USyd on Byzantine city symbolism (under Cusack, pub. Baghos 2021), has recently moved to University of Notre Dame (UND, Sydney) where, *inter alia*, there has also appeared Kevin Wagner (e.g., Neil et al. 2019), an unusual representative of the Theophaneia school of Patristics, stressing Hebraic over Greek roots of ancient Christian theology (*à la* Alexander Golitzin; see Orlov 2020). Among the Copts, if Dean Susan Agaiby (of St Athanasius College) has given noticeable representation in Melbourne's UDiv, Dr Wagdy Samir (2022) is an emerging figure at Sydney, now co-directing AIOCS, after securing a prize-winning SCD doctorate under Costache and in part by Ebied (who are both teachers at St Cyril's Coptic Orthodox Theological College). From 2022, also note that the Byzantine Music School of Australia (BMSA, started in Melbourne) has had its most active published scholars (such as Vasilios Psilacos) connected to St Andrews in Sydney.

To the north, both Mortley and Tarrant proved themselves as world-leading authorities on the Hellenistic philosophers most influential on Christian theology, Mortley on Plotinus (e.g., Mortley 2013) and Tarrant on Proclus (e.g., Tarrant 2006), at Bond University, southern Queensland, and at Newcastle, respectively. The Newcastle connection with *Prudentia* faded, perhaps, but *Colloquium*, another 'trans-Tasman' journal founded in Auckland two years after it in 1971, increasingly took aboard authors in Australian Patristics. Further north at ACU in Queensland, flying exceptionally high, Pauline Allen established herself as the veritable *doyenne* of Patristics in Australia. By the late 2010s, she had "produced 33 books—variously sole-authored, critical editions of ancient texts, translations. . .edited volumes", etc., in the field. For 2003–2007, she was President of the Association International d'Études Patristiques, the first woman, "the first Australian ever to achieve that distinction, and in fact the first ever non-European to be elected even to the Executive"; and by 2016, she sat among the handful of Australian scholars ever to become Corresponding Fellows of the British Academy (University of New England 2017, p. 2). A great inspirer of Patristic research (Dunn and Mayer 2015), an important cluster of Australian Patristic researchers either worked with Allen in Brisbane or joined ACU's Biblical and Early Christian Studies (ECS) Research Team. All Patrologists in their own right, *inter alia* they included in Queensland Bronwen Neil (e.g., Neil and Allen 2015), David Sim (Sim and Allen 2012), Lawrence Cross (Mayer et al. 2006), Geoffrey Dunn (e.g., Dunn 2007, before emigrating to Durham), Raymond Laird [2008] 2017, and, of course, Wendy Mayer (see above sect., 1); and in Melbourne, Stephen Carlson (2021), Michael Champion, Matthew Crawford, Sarah Gador-Whyte, and (Redemptorist) Michael Kelly. Among the prestigious women involved, Allen was to become Research Professor in Early Christian Studies in the Institute for Religion and Critical Enquiry (from 2014), though ACU restructuring affected her projects very adversely and the ECS monograph series has been recently transferred to SCD. Mayer was appointed to UDiv (but based in Adelaide), and has elevated the institution's level of Patristics research greatly since 2017. Neil left to hold the Chair of Ancient History at Macquarie (from 2017), and is the current President of AABS and editor of *Byzantina Australiensia*, with Anagnostou leaving Monash also for Macquarie in the

same year. Garland returned from UNE (leaving the learned company of Horsley (2017) and Silvas (2005)) back to UQld, in the School of Historical and Philosophical Enquiry (an institute housing scholars (Philip Almond and Peter Harrison) who had shown interest in early modern British explorations of the Fathers, especially by Cambridge Platonists.

The injection of Middle Eastern cultural riches facilitated by Copt Rif Ebied at USyd was epitomized by both his own widening body of writings and translations of Syriac texts (e.g., Ebied and Teule 2004; cf. Hunter 2023), and cooperation with Syriac Orthodox Antiochene Patriarchal-Vicar Mor Malatius Malki Malki (Ebied et al. 2020); and also by the large opus of authoritative Mandaean scholar Prof. Brikha Nasoraia (esp. Nasoraia 2023) who started in Australia under Ebied's supervision, allowing the prospective foundation of a *Fontes Mandaeorum* series. Copts Agaiby, Seumas Macdonald (2016), Mina Sami, and more recently Samir, with Lebanese Maronites Yuhanna Azize (2017, esp. pp. 147–94) and Peter El Khouri (2017), have also caused notice. Participation of still broader ethnicities involve ANU's Korean David Kim (e.g., Kim 2016), Filipino-Australian, Cambridge-trained Alexander Abecina (2023) (e.g., working in a Secondary School setting), let alone Eastern European scholars such as Russian Catholic Lawrence Cross and Doru Costache.

We look forward to Ken Parry's deeper surveying of this cultural panorama. And, if there is still relatively little interest in Patristics among conservative or sectarian Protestants, a clustering of figures has emerged at last, mostly writing on predictable subjects. Baptist Edwina Murphy (who firms up Patristics at the Australian College of Theology), and continuing Presbyterian Ruth Sutcliffe both work on Donatist North Africa (Murphy 2018; Sutcliffe 2022), while among Restorationists William Tabbernee (2009) handle Montanism and Keith Thompson (2019) the Trinity.[3]

The contributions to this Special Issue all reflect different aspects of the aforegoing history of developing Patristic Studies in Australia. Intriguingly, it has turned out that most of the authors are from New South Wales. Over the last twenty years, the centre of gravity in Patristic study has shifted from Queensland to Victoria, and now northward again so there is presently a real hive of activity in and around Sydney at this point, and this collection has picked up on the impetus of the moment. While there was no lack of interest from scholars around Australia to join in, different pressures have strangely prevented a wider continental involvement; although the ethnic diversity of the authors is truly marked and indicative of the cultural riches of Sydney's current intellectual vibrancy.

The order of the articles has something of a logical progression about it. Most of the cast have already been 'placed' in my Introduction, and it will be fairly easy to gauge their significance. Their topics, addressing matters listed in a nutshell in the Table of Contents, are all highly pertinent to the field. To start, on the basis of their previous writings, experienced Patrologist and Greek-Australian social theorist **Vassilios Adrahtas** (mainly UNSW), considers a fundamental matter of Patristic **Philosophy**, unravelling the arguments of John Damascene (d. 749) for the *existence of God*. A rising star in the field and daring explorer of the science/theology interface, Romanian-Australian **Doru Costache** (SCD) handles Patristic (and also medieval) **Cosmology** or theologies of *Creation*, predominantly focused on Genesis passages from the beginning of in the Old Testament, which still have implications for modern approaches to Nature. New Zealand-born **Keith Thompson** (UND) enters the field laterally, as an eminent Professor of Law, valiantly researches a hoary matter of classic Christian **Doctrine**, tracing the early development of the Patristic formulations of the *Trinity*. Next in line are two Macquarie University ancient historians breaking new ground in exploring the socio-political dimensions of Patristic study. **Im/Piety** (or the key issue of whether religion upholds or threatens preconceived social life) is tackled by Greek-Australian **Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides** on Clement of Alexandria's defence of Christianity as the best basis for *social order*, even preferred over Plato. And **Bronwen Neil**, in her

new senior Professorial role, addresses ancient religion and **Politics**, showing how *dreams* legitimated both pagan and Christian emperors in the immediate post-Constantinian period. Testy questions of **Authorship**, in the chosen case of one so-called Celsus, who is challenged by Origen in his famed apologetic tract, have British-born specialist in ancient philosophy **Harold Tarrant** (UNewcastle) play cunning detective over whom, in the complex Late Antique world of competing worldviews and artful *pseudonyms*, this Celsus might be. The crucial importance of **Translation** in context of Patristic theological divisions is well illustrated by Copt and wide-ranging Semitic scholar **Rifaat Ebied** (Usyd) in displaying what happens when major Greek-writing Fathers are *quoted* in Syriac, so that we revisit them afresh in old controversies, as well as see how their thoughts were re-deployed in the Tritheist controversy of the sixth century. **Bernard Doherty**, directing a School of Theology (SturtU[Canberra]), provides the paper most concentrated on **Archeology** and epigraphy, testing the so-called Eumenian formula of funerary imprecations in late antique Phrygia as signs of *popular Christianity* and acculturative processes. Korean-born **David Kim** (ANU), an authority on the Gospel of Thomas from the Nag Hammadi finds in Egypt, deftly probes signs of the early community of James mediated through the text called the *Apocryphon of James*, two Coptic versions of which are clear enough products of so-named '**Gnosticism**' or Gnostic *heresies*; whereas Iraqi-born **Brikha Nasoraia**, actually the first Head of a world religion residing in Australia, that of **Mandaeism**, explores the early ongoing *group interactions* between the followers of John the Baptist (Mandaeans or Sabians), and those of Jesus and Mani. **Joseph (Yuhanna) Azize**, priest and ecclesial expositor in the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, stresses **Monasticism** or Near Eastern monastic lineages in his brave *reconstruction* of Maronite history during the early centuries; while Metropolitan **Malatius Malki Malki**, Patriarchal Vicar of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Australia, offers the most detailed account yet of (the non-monastic ascetic) **Orders** of the 'Sons and Daughters of the Covenant' in the Antiochene tradition (especially in the fourth century). **Carole Cusack** (USyd) handles the issue of **early** Christian **Mission**, by a skilful re-assessment of Wulfila, 'apostle' to the Goths, and of the controversies about his labours among 'barbarians'. And, to help round out matters we find two Greek Australians and an Egypian-Australian on contemporary issues, **Dimitri Kepreotes** (StAndrewsTC), scholar of Greek educational history, considers **Pedagogy**, or the struggles of teaching the field in the Antipodes. **Mario Baghos** (UNotreDame[Syd]) and **Wagdy Samir** (AIOCS) tackle issues more at the 'tail-end' of Patrology. The former examiners **Confessionalism**, or the consequence of long-term separation between large church traditions because, after the Fall of Byzantium, the East/West schism could not be healed, and Reformed Protestant/Orthodox dialogue stalled. The latter considers **Modernity**, comparing ancient with twentieth-century Coptic commentary on a canonical Gospel. Altogether we have in what follows a fitting display of great interest, variety, intellectual power, and multicultural cooperation to introduce Patristics in Australia.

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Notes

[1] Although concerns for the theology of persecution, the "golden-tongued" 'proto-evangelical' preaching of Patriarch John Chrysostom, and for ancient Christian millenarian ideas, could show up as time went on (e.g., Tabbernee 1997).

[2] This [Copto]-Australian-Californian working combination has historical interest, since both also rely on pioneering work by Douglas Burton-Christie (1993), who was the present author's student at the University of California in 1975.

[3] We should remember relevant Australian scholars who carried out major work after leaving Australia or outside the country. Aside from Chryssavgis and Dunn (see above), I think of Michael Stone (Hebrew U) on ancient Armenia;, Judith Lieu (UOxon) on early Fathers; Erica Hunter (UCantab) on Mandaeans; Rosamond McKitterick (UCantab) on Carolingiana [the author's student at UWA]; and Philip Esler (St AndrewsU and Gloucestershire) editing *The Early Christian World*. Others, such as Bill Leadbetter (on Constantine and prior emperors), left the field for other interests.

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Article

John Damascene's Arguments about the Existence of God: A Logico-Philosophical and Religio-Hermeneutic Approach

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Abstract: The *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* is perhaps the most logically structured and inspired work not only in the oeuvre of the seventh-to-eighth-century theologian John Damascene, but most likely throughout the entire Greek Patristic literature. As such, the *Exact Exposition* definitely presents some quite intriguing features, such as the prolific use of logical distinctions, syllogisms, or full-fledged arguments, to name a few. Regarding the latter, John Damascene's use of certain arguments in order to prove the existence of God not only hold a unique place in Byzantine theology but have also exercised a tremendous influence on Eastern Orthodox apologetics. However, what I would call his rationalization agenda comes not only with merits but with faults as well. It is to both these that the present study draws attention by evaluating them logico-philosophically and interpreting them religio-hermeneutically. What is of special interest is the fact that John Damascene's logical faults are the most interesting parts of his theologizing.

Keywords: existence of God; proofs; syllogisms; ontology; gnoseology; cosmology; divine revelation

Introduction: Aim, Scope, and Methodology

This study aims at exploring in detail a specific aspect of John Damascene's theological engagement with logic. In particular, it approaches his interest in the argumentative function of logic, inasmuch as the latter pertains to the question of the existence of God. The use of logic in his work is well known and acknowledged, while the arguments about the existence of God that he employed are regarded as the most telling examples of this type of reasoning in the Greek Patristic literature. The reference text of this study is the *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, perhaps the most famous among the works of John Damascene (late 660s–early 740s),[1] and more specifically, Chapters 3 and 4 in the first section of this work.[2]

The use of logic in the work of the Damascene has mostly been studied from a historiographical point of view, and to the extent that it perpetuated or not the traits of formal logic, as the latter had developed by the end of Late Antiquity. In this light, John Damascene has more often than not been seen as an unoriginal compiler.[3] Furthermore, his arguments about the existence of God have prompted a range of reactions, from approbation to indifference to criticism.[4] In this study, an attempt has been made to put forward a much more complex and nuanced picture concerning John Damascene's relationship with the logical part of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition,[5] and thus offer a more balanced and accurate estimation of his contribution to the history of ideas.[6]

It is true that in recent times, scholarship (Louth 2001; Ierodiakonou 2002; Žunjić 2015; Ables 2015) has come to appreciate more and more, albeit in a rather reserved manner, John Damascene as a philosopher—especially a logician. This body of literature either focuses on contextualizing John's work within his own tradition or is interested mainly in tracing historiographically the connections between his work and ancient Greek philosophy. Although in themselves these are totally important and necessary approaches, the present study is devoted to an investigation that has hardly been undertaken. Furthermore,

whereas the connection with ancient Greek philosophy is quite often the crux of my critical comments, I have to say in advance that there is not much on what the Damascene owes to previous thinkers within the Patristic tradition. This is a huge topic of historical information that would definitely enhance and broaden what I believe to be the contribution of the present, very focused philosophical and hermeneutic analysis, but that arena of discussion lies beyond the limits and the intention of the present study.

Moreover, the present study aspires to propose an original analysis of John Damascene's theological arguments through a combined application of philosophical and religious studies' (*religionswissenschaftliche*) methodologies. With regard to the former, the study focuses on the field of formal logic via perspectives of logical semantics and logical syntax, whereas with regard to the latter—which is most prominent in the endnotes section—the perspective is hermeneutical, drawing much on the phenomenology of hierophanic experience as delineated in the work of Mircea Eliade.[7]

1. John Damascene's Prelude

In the manuscript tradition of the *Exact Exposition* (ed. Kotter [*Patr. Text. u. Stud*. 12]), the title of Chapter 3 is quite indicative: "apodeixis, hoti esti theos" ("a proof that God exists"). And indeed, this chapter deals with the so-called cosmological argument about the existence of God; an argument that the Damascene seems to have already presented in a very concise form in the very first chapter of the *Exact Exposition*.[8] What is very intriguing here is the fact that before delving into the first of his arguments about the existence of God, the Damascene makes a brief introduction, which despite sounding somewhat rhetorical does pose a number of crucial questions concerning the notion of the provability of the existence of the Divine. In particular, after a generic mentioning of the fact that the affirmation of the existence of God constitutes, more or less, a given in world religiosity,[9] the Damascene goes on to acknowledge the limited and circumstantial, one could say, presence of atheism. Thus, the first problem that must be resolved is how one should go about explaining the emergence of atheism—in other words, what is the reason behind the negation of the existence of God, even if it is to be deemed limited?[10]

To this question, the Damascene puts forward an answer which unfolds in the guise of two causes. More specifically, he seems to have in mind an efficient cause, hinted at by the phrase "hê tou ponêrou kakia" ("the wickedness of the evil one") (*JD II*, 10:5–6),[11] and a formal cause, implied by the expressions "alogôtaton" ("most irrational"), "pantôn kakôn kakiston" ("the worst of calamities"), "tês apôleias barathron" ("the abyss of perdition") and "aphrosynên" ("mindlessness") (10:6–7).[12] Thus, in this Aristotelian manner,[13] atheism is regarded by the Damascene as an ontological phenomenon, that is, as a phenomenon that pertains to the total distortion of the human condition at the gnoseological, moral, and religious levels.

The gnoseological aspect of atheism is of particular interest, since for the Damascene, the negation of the existence of God has no rational basis whatsoever; it is something "most irrational". But this assertion sounds not just exaggerated but also unreasonable: how or why would the negation of the existence of God be seen as illogical, if humans make it on the grounds of this or that syllogism and/or argument? In the worst case, it could be deemed logically faulty, but not non-logical.[14] Nevertheless, this assertion on the part of the Damascene should be hermeneutically approached from the ontological perspective I just mentioned in the previous paragraph. In other words, it should be approached in light of the premise that reason constitutes an ontological condition and is not simply an instrumental or technical rationality.[15]

As with such a condition, reasoning does not function independently but has a broader axiological—or even, one could say, deontological—character, which means that it co-functions with all other aspects of human ontology. To put it another way, this means that it is reason itself that postulates the founding of the ontological on something broader than the latter, something which—precisely for not being part of the ontological order—constitutes "the wholly other" ("das ganz Andere").[16] In light of these presuppositions,

the rationalistic negation of the existence of God negates in effect the ontological order of reasoning, that is, the very postulate of reasoning regarding its own transcendental founding—its founding on something that transcends it.[17]

But what are the practical ramifications of all this or, put differently, what turns one to atheism? How and why does one become an atheist? Once again, the answer the Damascene puts forward is twofold, stating that the cause of atheism is moral deficiency, on the one hand, and a lack of religious experience on the other. Conversely, this implies that the affirmation of the existence of the Divine is placed by the Damascene within the context of asceticism (broadly conceived); no one can activate in a positive way their possibility of knowing the existence of God—that is, the so-called natural revelation—without previously or at the same time being cleansed from passions and receiving divine illumination.

These introductory remarks to the proper arguments that cover Chapters 3 and 4 of the *Exact Exposition* are of particular importance in the sense that they make it clear—at least, as far as the logical point of view is concerned—that by mentioning "apodeixis" ("proof", "demonstration") in the title of Chapter 3, John Damascene has in mind a gnoseological framework that is different to that of rationalism. And this is all the more so, even though the logic of the syllogisms within the text is supposed to be rigorous, as I will attempt to show in what follows. Hence, the "proofs" or "arguments" that are to be found in Chapters 3 and 4 should not be regarded so much as strict rationalistic syllogisms, but rather as conditional lines of reasoning.[18]

2. The Ontological Argument

In the second paragraph of Chapter 3 of the *Exact Exposition*, one finds the first proof/argument about the existence of God, which in light of the well-known typology of such proofs/arguments has to be put under the category of the ontological argument.[19] This is corroborated by the fact that the Damascene analyses the semantics of the notions involved in his presentation "kata ton tês akolouthias logon" ("according to the logic of their coherence") (*SJD II*, 11:25).[20] But to ascertain this, one must take a close look at the stages of the whole argument. And to begin with, the Damascene starts with the assertion "panta ta onta ê ktista estin ê aktista" ("all beings are either created or uncreated") (11:22),[21] which in itself is neither a given nor a self-evident truth, since it is theologically conditioned as it presupposes the notion of creation.

At the same time, it is precisely this conditional character of the proposition that makes it sound self-contradictory, for it associates the binary "created"—"uncreated" with the term "Being". What I am saying is that if the "created" and the "uncreated" come as specific notions under "Being" as a generic notion, then how is the absolute ontological difference between them—according to theology—supposed to be sustained?[22] It seems that the Damascene himself recognizes that the proposition under discussion is logically problematic, and that is the reason he goes on by adding all the lines of reasoning that start with the hypothesis "ei men oun ktista" ("so, if they are created") and end with the clause "pantôs kai ktista" ("then necessarily they will be created as well").[23] Otherwise, the whole circular reasoning, which is evident here, has no meaning at all. So, John's ontological argument, although based on the proposition being discussed, does not unfold directly from the latter "according to the logic of [its] coherence", but goes into a digression to substantiate itself, and only then returns to the initial proposition to draw the necessary implications from it.

The entire digression that is supposed to substantiate the initial proposition revolves basically around the notion of "tropê" ("turn", "change").[24] This is a notion which according to the Damascene has two noteworthy features. First, it is founded upon the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* and second, it establishes a series of logical distinctions or otherwise, a dialectics of circumscribing and hierarchizing a series of related notions. The Damascene states emphatically "ôn gar to einai apo tropês êrxato, tauta têi tropêi hypokeisetai pantôs" ("for whatever came to be through change, that will be subject to change by necessity") (*SJD II*, 11:23–24). In other words, he is saying that "change" is what it is due to the condition of

creatio ex nihilo; reality changes and turns to this or that, precisely because it has come out of nothing.

This assertion about change is logically problematic to say the least, for how can one talk about change without presupposing some kind of substance instead of nothing? It seems that the only way to overcome the gap between Being and non-Being is to use the notion of change imaginatively. But this definitely implies that the Damascene's line of reasoning presents here a definite logical inconsistency. However, this is only half the truth, for the notion of change is further explored and analyzed by him—in a rather Aristotelian manner—into the notions of decay ("phtheiromena") and corruption ("alloioumena"), on the one hand, or the notions of corruption ("alloiousthai"), movement ("kinêsthai"), and alteration ("metaballesthai"), on the other.[25] And the relevant distinctions go on. The intelligible ("noêta") are juxtaposed to the sensible ("hosa hypo tên hêmeteran aisthêsin"), whereas further categorizations are put forward based on "proairesis" ("volition")[26] with regard to the intelligibles as to their progression to or withdrawal from the good ("tên en tôi kalôi prokopên kai tên ek tou kalou apophoitêsin"), or when it comes to the sensibles, categorizations are based on modalities such as becoming, decay, increase ("auxêsin"), decrease ("meiôsin"), change in quality ("tên kata poiotêta metabolên"), or spatial movement ("tên topikên kinêsin").[27]

Before proceeding to the core of John Damascene's ontological argument about the existence of God, we should mention two peripheral but nevertheless significant parameters that the text implies, namely the notion of rational sequence and the semantics between attributes and Being. As I have already mentioned, the Damascene uses the phrase "according to the logic of their coherence" to denote the cohesion that characterizes the meanings of a notion, and thus the logical consistency that informs the transition from one to the other. On the other hand, immediately after mentioning logical coherence, the Damascene states the following: "ôn gar to einai enantion, toutôn kai o tou pôs einai logos enantios, êgoun hai idiotêtes" ("for those that have their being oppositional to one another, also have the way of their being oppositional, that is, their attributes") (*SJD II*, 11:25–27). Such a statement of course maintains the logical semantic equivalence between (an) essence and (its) attributes,[28] an equivalence, to be sure, that cannot override the onto-gnoseo-logical primacy of essence as a most generic notion.[29] The latter can only be overridden within the context of onto-THEO-logical experience, since in the latter the primacy belongs to "das ganz Andere", in light of which essences, genera, natures, and species become one and the same.[30]

The Damascene's digression on "tropê" concludes with the phrase "trepta toinyn onta pantôs kai ktista" ("thus, if they are subject to change, then necessarily they will be created as well") (*SJD II*, 11:33–34).[31] And immediately afterwards, the main syllogism of the ontological argument starts, which can be represented as follows:

(i) created beings = things that have been made ⇒ the Maker,

so (ii) the Maker = uncreated (Being),

but because (iii) changeable beings = sensible and intelligible/created beings,

and because (iv) the Maker (as uncreated) ≠ sensible and intelligible,

(v) the Maker = unchanging (Being) ⇒

(vi) unchanging (Being) = God (for "God" does not belong to the set "sensible & intelligible").[32]

Proposition *(i)* could be seen as a kind of tautology, but that would be so evident a mistake that one cannot imagine the Damascene not having the discernment to avoid it. It seems more reasonable to assume that he probably had in mind the logical problems that might arise due to the synthesis of different worldviews[33]—it is for this reason that John Damascene defines the created as that which has been made out of nothing.[34] In any case, proposition *(i)* suffers logically with regard to "pantôs" ("necessarily"), since the latter implies createdness as a necessary condition of reality. But createdness—precisely because it is a given only in a context such as that of Christianity—is but a sufficient condition of reality.

With regard to proposition *(ii)*, one could say that it is valid in light of the law of contradiction. In particular, the way in which the relationship between *(i)* and *(ii)* is articulated consists of a combination of a concise syllogism (the so-called "enthymeme") and the contradiction between "created" and "uncreated". In other words, what we have here is basically a simple categorical syllogism of the fourth figure (aee), wherein the middle term is the predicate in the first premise and the subject in the second.

(1a) created beings = things that have been made,

and (1b) things that have been made ≠ the Maker,

so (2) the Maker ≠ created beings.

And this is where the first stage of the argument concludes. The second stage includes propositions *(iii)*, *(iv)*, and *(v)*. To be sure, *(iii)* and *(iv)* are not actually phrased by the Damascene, but they are presupposed. More specifically, the second stage is none other than the first one, whereby "created" and "uncreated" are replaced by "changeable" and "unchanging", respectively. In other words, at this point the Christian understanding of the "created" as "trepton" is more than clear. Thus, regarding the logical strength of the argument, one could say that there is no progress within the whole syllogism—the latter at best remains "akolouthias logos" (a "line of reasoning"). However, a new aspect is added, and that is the negation of a *regressus ad infinitum* on the part of the Damascene.[35]

The third and final stage of the argument is the most inadequate one. First, it is articulated in the guise of a question, something that renders it even more cryptic in terms of logic.[36] Perhaps its interrogative form is due to the fact that is does not follow from the previous propositions. In light of the text itself, this stage consists of one and only one proposition, that is, proposition *(vi)*. But in order for the latter to be sustained, the entire digression on "tropê"—which we have already seen—is required, for it is only through that digression that everything coming under the category of "changeable" is presented—God being the only exception. Consequently, the latter cannot cover on its own the only other existing semantic set, namely the semantic set of the "unchanging".

What is finally proved through this argument? Undoubtedly, what is not proved is the existence of God. Moreover, the final proposition *(vi)* asserts that God is unchanging, not that God exists, or to put is otherwise, that if God exists, God is unchanging. But this is a typical case of *petitio principii*. Now, if there is truly something that happens to be proved through all this reasoning of the Damascene, it is the following: God is the only unchanging Maker of the world. But this assertion cannot but mean two things. First, the end-result of an attempt to verify the coherence and the consistency of a series of terms. In other words, if we talk about God, then we are compelled to characterize him as (1) the only one, (2) unchanging, and (3) the Maker in relation to the world. But for something like this, no argument or proof is really needed, since a simple dialectic of notions would suffice. On the other hand, the aforementioned final assertion of the argument is none other than the articulation of Christian self-consciousness regarding the Divine, in juxtaposition to the polytheistic understanding of the Divine, as well as to its ancient Greek (philosophical) rendering.[37]

3. The Cosmological Argument

In the third and fourth paragraphs of Chapter 3 of the *Exact Exposition*, the Damascene revisits natural revelation, and for that matter in a manner similar to the one he referred to in Chapter 1, that is, in the guise of the cosmological argument about the existence of God.[38] It is noteworthy that this particular argument is the only one that can be found in the New Testament,[39] and thus the first that was adopted by Christianity.[40] The Damascene of course articulates it in a much more elaborate and peculiar form. More specifically, although in Chapter 1 of the *Exact Exposition*, the Damascene had only mentioned "ktisis" ("creating"), "synochê" ("coherence"), and "kybernêsis" ("governing") (*SJD II*, 7:15–16), at this point he adds two more aspects, namely "syntêrêsis" ("maintaining") and "pronoia" ("providence") ("syntêrôn kai aei pronooumenos") (11:40).[41]

At first, these terms seem to function self-evidently as proofs but in reality, things are quite different; the questions that follow indicate that there are two basic syllogisms underlying John Damascene's text, one based on the idea of totality and another one based on the notion of order.[42] Indeed, we could assume that the second syllogism is a continuation of the first one, in the sense that it expands and elaborates further on it. This has to be so, otherwise the first syllogism would finish with the hypothetical conclusion that there is some kind of "pantodynamos dynamis" ("all-powerful power"), something that does not fulfil the explicit aim of the whole argument, namely that God exists ("esti theos"), and this only takes place at the end of the second syllogism. For the entire first syllogism, see *SJD II*, 11:40–43.

3.1. Syllogism I

The first syllogism seems to have the following structure: *(i) opposition is observed in nature, but (ii) nature constitutes a totality, and thus (iii) something other, different, and greater than nature makes possible the overcoming of opposition. To be sure, this syllogism presents a number of problems*. First, according to the text, "nature" in proposition (i) consists of the elements of fire, water, air, and earth, that is, the four foundational elements that make up all beings, as ancient Greek philosophy would put it.[43] These elements, as the phrasing of the Damascene makes perfectly clear, are in pair oppositional to one another. But this in itself undermines the presupposed absolute opposition within the field of nature; in other words, opposition is not dominant in nature, after all. But if that is the case, then from a logical point of view, the position expressed via proposition (i) is significantly undermined, meaning opposition is true to the same extent that non-opposition is true.

Secondly, the aforementioned syllogism is based upon the incompatibility between opposition [proposition *(i)*] and totality [proposition *(ii)*]. However, before we proceed with the analysis of this assumed incompatibility, one needs to consider the cardinal notion that sustains proposition *(ii)*. As I have already noted, this is the notion of totality. The latter can be inferred from the phrase "eis enos kosmou symplêrôsin" ("to the completion of a single world"), inasmuch of course as "completion" cannot be conceived without postulating totality. To be sure, in the *Exact Exposition*, the idea of totality is mediated by different conceptualizations,[44] as for instance the conceptualization of unity in this case ["to. . . a single", "synelêlythasi" ("come together", "concur")]. In other words, John Damascene regards nature as a totality in light of the unity of its constituent parts; a unity which in turn renders possible both coherence ["adialytoi" ("indissoluble") and "synebibase" ("brought together")] and harmony ("kosmos").

At this point it is worth pointing out two aspects of the syllogism under discussion, one negative and one positive from a logical point of view. The former consists of what the Damascene assumes to be the contradictory nature of the relationship between opposition and totality/unity. But something like this is anything but self-evident, since from a logical point of view, the notion of opposition should not be confused with the notion of contradiction[45]—something already pointed out emphatically in the onto-logical thought of Heraclitus.[46] On the other hand, what looks like a dialectical lack on the part of the Damascene is not absolute. His text does not run against dialectics in general, but against a specific type of dialectics in the sense that for him, elements contradictory to one another cannot produce dialectically a totality by themselves. Thus, in order for a contradictory condition to be overcome, an additional factor has to enter the dialectical process. In other words, John Damascene puts forward a certain understanding of dialectics as follows: *contradiction + synthetic factor* $\Rightarrow$ *transcendence*.[47]

Regarding the conclusion of the first syllogism, that is, proposition *(iii)*, I would say that the latter is basically the aforementioned type of dialectics, where the synthetic factor is identified with some "all-powerful power". In other words, this means that the dialectical transcendence herein is realized via a synthetic factor that is transcendent over the elements of the world.[48] Nevertheless, this kind of transcendence is by no means self-evident as a necessary condition of dialectical transcendence.[49] However, the argument

under discussion is concluded at this very stage, for the "all-powerful power" involved is identified by the Damascene with God. Notwithstanding, it seems that the rather impersonal register of his thinking/phrasing at this point is not satisfactory and thus he goes on to a second syllogism. In conclusion, I could assert that the first syllogism of the Damascene's cosmological argument, instead of proving the existence of God, suggests a certain version of dialectics.

3.2. Syllogism II

The second syllogism of the cosmological argument is based, as we have already noticed, on the notion of order. The latter is a notion analyzed into other more specific notions, which as we will see further on in this study, play a specific role in the context of the overall syllogism. The notional analysis undertaken by the Damascene sees the content of order as synthesis ["emixe" ("fused", "combined")], distinction ["emerise" ("allocated", "divided")], motion, and regularity.[50] In light of this, I would present the syllogism as follows:

(i) nature involves order, that is, synthesis, distinction, movement, and regularity,

but (ii) nature does not produce these by itself,

meaning (iii) that they come from another source ⇒

(iv) that this other source is the creator of nature.[51]

Considering proposition *(i)*, I would say that the position it makes is totally correct in the sense that it reflects the manner in which consciousness understands nature. However, this manner is intrinsically related to the degree that consciousness understands nature, which means that if a further degree of understanding nature is accomplished, then it might change—totally or partially—the very manner in which nature is understood.[52] Thus, proposition *(i)* can only be accepted as relatively or partially correct. On the other hand, considering proposition *(ii)* brings one face to face with a number of logical problems. To be sure, this proposition is not explicitly phrased by John Damascene, but one can regard it as a given. Furthermore, in effect, the proposition under discussion is but a (negative) re-phrasing of proposition *(iii)* in syllogism I. This can be ascertained through the textual allusion to nature via the pairs already dealt with in syllogism I, namely, earth–air and fire–water, as well as through the rhetorical question "tis tauta emixe kai emerise?" ("who combined and brought these together?"), which in turn takes one back to the dialectical transcendence of syllogism I. Thus, proposition *(ii)* includes—in one way or another—all the logical problems that I discussed above in relation to syllogism I.

The transition to proposition *(iii)* presupposes a certain application of induction. More specifically, it is as if the Damascene means that if one can see in each and every thing synthesis, distinction, movement, and most of all, regularity, we accept immediately that someone [that is, "ho technitês" ("the artisan")] is the cause of all these, by the same token and in the case of nature in general, we should accept that someone has placed "logos" (=regularity) in everything ("enthenta pasi").[53] Undoubtedly, all this inductive reasoning ends in a reasonable hypothesis, but by no means does it constitute a logical proof.[54] But how is "the artisan" of nature identified with the "pepoiêkota tauta kai eis to einai paragagonta" ("the one that made these and brought them into Being")? On what exactly does John Damascene establish this transition? In my opinion, the crucial factor in this connection is the term used, i.e., "logos".

Looking into the matter in more detail, I would maintain that the Damascene goes ahead with the aforementioned transition, but then he immediately articulates an extension, so to speak, of the entire syllogism. This extension presents itself as a *reductio ad absurdum*.[55] In particular, the whole thing looks as follows:

(i) "the artisan" is the creator,

but (ii) let us say that it is not the creator,

> *then (iii) who could it be? ⇒ the only option is to say that "the artisan" is "to automaton" (=mere chance").*[56]

But let us consider the issue further:

> *Let us concede (iv) that the production of nature can be ascribed to mere chance,*
>
> *(v) that the order of nature can be ascribed to mere chance, and*
>
> *(vi) that the maintenance of nature within "logos" can be ascribed to mere chance.*
>
> *But the last proposition constitutes a contradictio in adjecto, since "logos" and "to automaton" are incompatible to one another.*[57]

Proposition *(iii)* of this seeming *reductio ad absurdum* takes for granted that if one does not refer nature to a creator, then the only alternative is to accept mere chance. This position looks correct in general, but what stops one short of identifying mere chance as the creator?[58] In other words, at this stage, the cosmological argument could indeed be said to lend itself to the idea that mere chance could be defined as the creator. But in this scenario, the Damascene's reasoning could not have been articulated the way it is in *(iv)–(vi)*. Which premise would be the alternative to the premise '"the artisan" is "to automaton"'? One presumably could say God, but this is what the syllogism is supposed to prove in the first place. Consequently, the latter possibility could not be part of the syllogism, for then the whole reasoning of the Damascene would beg the question. It seems, nevertheless, that he does fall into this fallacy, and so one should speak in this connection not so much about a valid *reductio ad absurdum*, but about an exclusion of mere chance from the conclusion of the argument.[59]

Propositions *(iv)* and *(v)* are not actually confirmed by the Damascene, but he somehow bypasses them in order to get to the crucial point of his reasoning, which as I mentioned earlier is "logos". For him, regularity—because that is what "logos" signifies here with all the nuances that regularity encompasses—is incompatible to mere chance. But is this true? From a logical point of view, could one say that the relationship between "logos" and "to automaton" is determined by the law of contradiction? This is true for the pair "logos"/"alogon" (=without reason), but should we identify "alogon" with "to automaton"? In my opinion, such a position cannot be maintained, but John Damascene accepts it as valid. This choice of his, although false from a logical point of view, is extremely interesting in relation to something else—again from a logical point of view! It relates God with "logos".[60] Termed differently, at the end of his alleged proof, the Damascene reaches his objective, which is God, thanks to "logos", but this happens only inasmuch as "logos" already refers conceptually to God.

In summary, I would maintain that syllogism II of John Damascene's cosmological argument about the existence of God ultimately proves two things: first, that mere chance cannot be the creator that the Damascene has in mind, that is, mere chance does not satisfy the requirement "tode to pan systêsamenos kai synechôn kai syntêrôn kai aei pronooumenos" ("the one who constituted this totality and maintains and sustains and forever provides for it") (*SJD II*, 11:39–40) and second, that God constitutes the foundation of "logos" or, differently, that God constitutes the postulate of "logos". In both cases, however, it seems that the Damascene puts forward—as in the case of his ontological argument—an articulation of Christian self-consciousness against the Hellenic intellectual legacy.

4. An Argument about the Impossibility of Arguments: The Case of "According to Essence and Nature"

After the two arguments in Chapter 3, the title of Chapter 4 "peri tou ti esti theos, hoti akatalêpton" ("On what God is, which is incomprehensible") seems to have no relation with any attempt towards argumentation.[61] In reality, though, the Damascene goes on with his argumentative endeavour, but as the title shows—indirectly, yet evidently—he now turns to a negative argumentation; his objective now is to prove not a possibility but an impossibility.

The topic of the Chapter under discussion starts with a necessary clarification and in particular, with the logical distinction between "hoti estin" and "ti estin" ("that something is" and "what something is", respectively).[62] The former is the subject of the arguments that the Damascene has articulated thus far, whereas the latter introduces the subject of his argumentative reasoning in Chapter 4. And this reasoning focuses on "what [God] is", namely the "ousian kai physin" ("essence and nature") of God,[63] which the Damascene characterizes as "akatalêpton. . .pantelôs kai agnôston" ("totally incomprehensible. . .and unknown"). But suddenly, his entire focus seems to disappear, for as soon as he expresses his absolutely negative gnoseological perspective, he starts discussing a different kind of "dêlon" ("evident"), i.e., one that refers to "asômaton" ("incorporeality"). To put it alternatively, whereas the Damascene was talking about absolute un-knowing, suddenly he talks about knowing. Nevertheless, this is not a contradiction or discrepancy, but a necessary argumentative digression.

Characterizing the essence of God as "totally incomprehensible. . .and unknown", John Damascene has to provide some clarification if he wants to proceed. This is absolutely necessary, since for centuries, ancient Greek philosophy knew the Divine as a "sôma" ("body").[64] So, the Damascene needs to challenge that perception and to prove that the Divine is "asômaton" ("bodiless"). And this he attempts through the following three ways: (1) a sequence of notions, (2) evidence from the Holy Scriptures, and (3) a special use of the cosmological argument.

4.1. Sequence of Notions

By analyzing the notion of "asômaton", John Damascene mentions a series of apophatic notions, namely "to apeiron kai aoriston kai aschêmatiston kai anaphes kai aoraton kai haploun kai asyntheton" ("the infinite and indefinite and formless and intangible and invisible and uncomplicated and uncompounded") (*SJD II*, 12:4–5). Indeed, it looks like he is mentioning these notions because according to him, one entails the other, and in the end, all of them entail the notion of "asômaton". But to what extent can such a line of reasoning be regarded as logically valid? To what extent can it claim to be a proof? Regarding the first question, we cannot challenge the logical validity of this notional sequence, that is, the coherence between the notions presented to the extent, of course, that they actually relate to one another. Notwithstanding that, one has to admit that the value of this notional sequence consists of the dialectics of the notions involved, i.e., the strict circumscription of their mutual relationships. However, the Damascene's text is about something different; he focuses on the proving aspect of the notional sequence. And this brings us to the second aforementioned question, which can be answered as follows: the sequence/coherence of the apophatic notions used by John Damascene proves nothing, or better yet, proves only that each notion relates to the others in a certain manner. But by no means does this prove that one of them—in this case, "asômaton"—is true with regard to something.

What is noteworthy in the Damascene's notional sequence is the use of the term "asyntheton"; furthermore, the broader syllogism concludes with a major premise about synthesis as follows: "synthesis gar archê machês, machê de diastaseôs, diastasis de lyseôs, lysis de allotrion theou pantelôs" ("for synthesis is the beginning of clash; clash is the beginning of separation; separation is the beginning of dissolution; and dissolution is totally foreign to God") (*II*, 12:7–8). This position includes, in its own distinctive way, an entire notional sequence, so that the rendering of God as "asômaton" can be corroborated. But this time, the notions involved are not apophatic but cataphatic. Moreover, it seems that this specific notional sequence is not entirely valid from a logical point of view, in the sense that the notions involved do not necessarily entail one another. What somehow sustains the notional sequence is the image of an organism ("sômatos") that seems to condition John Damascene's thought.[65] But the noteworthy element I mentioned at the beginning of the present paragraph consists mainly in the conceptualization of synthesis; the Damascene could be seen as an advocate of a conspicuously anti-dialectical logic. However, given the

image that conditions his understanding of synthesis, the specific anti-dialectical attitude of the Damascene cannot but be deemed relative and limited.

4.2. Evidence from the Holy Scriptures

John Damascene continues with his argumentative digression by invoking *Jer*. 23:24. What is especially noteworthy here is that the Holy Scriptures are utilized as a point of reference so that logical conclusions can be produced. At this point, it is the dialectical attitude of the Damascene that is astounding; he synthesizes what strictly speaking is not of the logical order (the word of God in the Holy Scriptures) with what constitutes a strictly logical demand (a syllogism on the basis of the formal principles of thinking).[66] Nevertheless, the big question herein is whether the Damascene simply invokes the Holy Scriptures or substantiates them logically. If it is the latter, then his dialectical attitude comes forth as much more integral. But it seems that both take place at the same time. As a believer, John Damascene starts from the conviction that the Holy Scriptures are true, but simultaneously, he consciously seeks to establish their truth logically.

4.3. Special Use of the Cosmological Argument

In the third paragraph of Chapter 4, the Damascene completes the refutation of the ancient Greek conception of the Divine as "asômaton". This is realized through a special use of the cosmological argument, namely the latter, instead of proving the existence of God, facilitates the argument that God is not a "sôma". More specifically, John Damascene starts his reasoning with the thesis of the position he wants to refute. This position has a fifth element, i.e., the sky, which is immaterial.[67] First, the Damascene describes the phrase "aylon sôma" as "adynaton" ("impossible"), that is, as logically invalid and in particular, as a *contradictio in terminis*. However, he concedes further on to accept the so-called "pempton sôma"[68] as a hypothesis, and this is how he embarks upon his proper argument in the guise of a *regressus finitus*.

> *(i) the fifth element moves,*
>
> *so (ii) it is subject to a principle of motion,*
>
> *which (iii) is subject to another principle, and so forth, until one gets to the ultimate principle,*
>
> *which (iv) is unmoving by being the ultimate (principle of motion)* (for the entire phrasing of the syllogism, see *SJD II*, 12:14–19).

At this point, the first part of the syllogism finishes, which is worth considering in more detail from a logical syntax point of view.

First, proposition *(i)* is not self-evident, and this is the reason why John Damascene presents it as a necessary ("pantôs") hypothesis. But in what sense is it necessary? Here, one should recognize that the logical consistency of the text is problematic: the Damascene accepts, on the one hand, that the fifth element is the sky, but on the other hand, he distinguishes between the two in order to substantiate what he regards as a necessary hypothesis, namely that the fifth element moves—exactly as the sky, since they are one and the same! But all this is a more than obvious logical error, for the analogical argument goes against the law of identity. Furthermore, the transition from proposition *(i)* to proposition *(ii)* is possible in light of the principle that says that "pan. . . kinoumenon hyph' heterou kineitai" ("everything. . . that moves is moved by something else"), which ostensibly is a variation of the law of causality. But, as it is well known, strictly speaking, the latter does not belong to the logical but to the epistemological order (See Gallow 2022)—without that implying that from a logical point of view, it does not constitute a certain (explanatory or interpretative) articulation of the relationship between cause and result. Thus, the Damascene's transition, although not arbitrary, cannot be regarded as uncontested.

The Damascene's argument continues with propositions *(iii)* and *(iv)* via the *regressus finitus* and ends with the famous Aristotelian theory of the prime mover ("prôton kinoun akinêton"). The latter is identified on the part of John Damascene with the Christian

concept of the Divine, that is, a synthesis is put forward between ancient Greek thought and Christian faith. The crucial point in this synthesis is the final stage of the first part of the syllogism, which by no means is imposed by some rule of logic. Nevertheless, the identification that takes place has immense significance in terms of logic; it exemplifies the dialectical manner in which the Damascene understands the logical combining of different cultural elements.

The argumentative digression of Chapter 4 is completed in the second part of the syllogism as follows:

> *(i) "kinoumenon" ("something being moved") = "en topôi perigrapton" ("something described as being in place") ⇒ body,*
>
> *and if (ii) "akinêton" ("something that does not move") = "asômaton",*
>
> *and (iii) "theion" ("the Divine") = "akinêton",*
>
> *then (iv) "theion" = "asômaton".*[69]

Before I proceed to the logical appreciation of the particulars of this part of the syllogism, I think that an overall appreciation of it in light of the Damascene's synthetic/dialectical methodology is needed. More specifically, whereas the first part of the syllogism achieves the synthesis between the ancient Greek and Christian elements via an eclectic manner that does not allow any opposition between the constituent parts, the second part—which is equally synthetic, since it constitutes an integral part of the entire syllogism—does allow for such an opposition; the final conclusion, namely that the Divine is incorporeal would be, as I have already noted, a peculiar *contradictio in adjecto* for the ancient Greek mind. However, the second part of the syllogism does not remain at the level of opposition but proceeds to the stage of transcendence through the production of an entirely different formation.

Let us now examine the logical status of the particulars of the part of the syllogism under discussion. Proposition *(i)* is based upon the idea of movement, and this is so because the second part of the syllogism depends fundamentally on the first part. Thus, the notion "sôma" is in effect determined by the notion of movement. However, certain problems emerge at this point. While in proposition *(i)*, the combination of "sôma" and "topos" (ultimately, whatever is limited) is totally valid, the combination of "topos" and "kinêsis" is not self-evident. "Topos" ("place") is a necessary and sufficient condition of "kinêsis", but "kinêsis" is only a sufficient condition of "topos". In other words, place or whatever is limited, that is, circumscription as such, do not presuppose movement; in the sequence "movement → place → body", the first element is not a requirement, but it is introduced—especially as a criterion—for only in this way is it feasible to connect the two parts of the syllogism and, by extension, complete the proving aspect of the latter.

Regarding the end of the syllogism, it is remarkable that John Damascene, by a combined use of the laws of identity and contradiction, produces proposition (ii)[70] and, via the conclusion of the first part of the syllogism, proposition *(iv)*.[71] Finally, the argumentative digression of Chapter 4 demonstrates that the *Exact Exposition*, once again, features a use of logic that is formally consistent yet at the same time problematic.

Conclusions

In the present study, a set of conclusions can be formulated with certainty. First, what has been demonstrated is the fact that as far as the logical point of view is concerned, when John Damascene talks about "apodeixis" ("proof"), what he has in mind is a gnoseological framework that is quite different to that of rationalism. Second, through his ontological argument about the existence of God, what he actually achieves is to put forward a thorough articulation of Christian self-consciousness regarding the Divine, and for that matter in juxtaposition to the polytheistic understanding of the Sacred or its ancient Greek philosophical rendering. Third, John Damascene's cosmological argument about the existence of God ultimately proves two things. On the one hand, that mere chance cannot be the creator that Christians have in mind and on the other hand, that God constitutes the foundation of

> "logos", or to phrase it otherwise, that God constitutes the postulate of "logos". In both cases, however, it seems that John Damascene—as in the case of his ontological argument—basically articulates Christian self-consciousness against the Hellenic intellectual legacy. Lastly, from my limited but indicative analysis of the *Exact Exposition*, it can be affirmed that in this *magnum opus* of his, John Damascene exhibits a use of formal logic that is intriguing and problematic at once.

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Notes

1 Regarding the chronological problems related to the life and work of John Damascene, see Kontouma (2015) and Adrahtas (2015).

2 The first section or "book" of the *Exact Exposition* comprises Chapters 1–14 and goes back to the division of the work carried out by Burgundio de Pisa in the twelfth century. The relevant arguments actually cover Chapters 5–7 as well, but the material therein refers mostly to the existence of God as Trinity. The present study will not deal with this specific topic but will limit itself to the more general arguments about the existence of God.

3 See, for example, Studer (1956); Richter (1964); and moderately, Oehler (1964). For an opposite view, see moderately Tatakis (1949) and Siasos (1989). For a very recent and major shift in the understanding of John Damascene as an original thinker, see Ables (2022b).

4 Criticism is especially the case with modern Orthodox theologians, at least from the 1960s onwards. This is not limited to John Damascene's arguments but involves the arguments about the existence of God in general. A concomitant trend is the virtual absence of monographs on the subject in modern Greek Orthodox theology. For a conspicuous exception, see Adrahtas (2001a).

5 This has been the research focus in Adrahtas (2001b).

6 For this contribution, see, for example, Buytaert (1953), Svoronos (1987), Adrahtas (2003), and especially Markov (2015).

7 See, for instance, the seminal Eliade 1965. Details regarding my adaptation of Eliade's hierophanic approach can be found in Adrahtas (2001c).

8 In Chapter 1 [*SJD II*, 7:14–15 (hereafter *SJD*, standing for *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* vol. 2 [where in find *Exdosis Akribês tês orthodoxou Pisteôs*], first number indicating page(s) and the other(s) indicating lines), he writes: "pasi gar ê gnosis tou einai theon hyp'autou physikôs egkatespartai" ("for in everyone the knowledge that God exists has been planted naturally by Him"). In Chapter 3 (*SJD II*, 10:4–5), he writes with a slight variation: "ê gnosis tou einai theon physikôs hêmin egkatespartai" ("the knowledge that God exists has been planted naturally in us"). Both assertions point towards the so-called "natural revelation", which in turn constitutes the basis for the formulation of natural theology. For the latter in general, see Manning et al. (2013), and for its presence in Eastern Orthodox theology, see Bradshaw and Swinburne (2021), wherein one can find substantial information on the patristic argumentation regarding the existence of God (see, for example, Fokin (2021)).

9 John Damascene refers to Judaism and Christianity when he writes (*SJD II*, 10:2–3) "tois men tas hagias graphas dehomenois, tên te palaian kai kainên diathêkên" ("to those who accept the Holy Scriptures, the Old and the New Testament"), and to the so-called "polytheistic religions" when he writes (*JD II*, 10:3–4) "tois tôn hellênôn pleistois" ("to most of the Hellenes"). Here, we have a version of the so-called "historico-religious argument" (or *e consensu omnium*), which is presented indirectly as an aspect of "natural revelation".

10 The very fact that the Damascene starts (in Chapter 3 of the *Exact Exposition*) his reference to theology proper by dealing with the problem of atheism exemplifies that for him, the negation of the existence of God constitutes a major *theological* problem. Furthermore, the logical approach to atheism on his part and even more so, the placing of this kind of approach at the beginning of his systematic theological work, seem to imply that theology constitutes an inherently rational activity. In other words, whenever God talk begins with the reasonable refutation of the negation of the existence of God, that is, by exemplifying the rationality of the God question, then such talk is presented in its entirety as an activity that is conditioned by rational aspects. From a different perspective, if one were to regard the God question as the major question of the philosophy of religion, then it could be maintained that this question constitutes a kind of prolegomena to all theological systems. For the latter remark, see Nissiotis (1986).

11 At this point, we can see at work the methodology of logical distinctions/divisions. To be sure, both this distinction and numerous others that we find in John Damascene's *opus magnum* "The Fountain of Knowledge" (*Pêgê Gnôseôs*), of which the *Exact Exposition* is the third and last part, constitutes specific distinctions which are different from the fundamental theological distinctions in Chapter 2 of the *Exact Exposition*. This particular distinction follows the Aristotelian tradition on causality, though without using the relevant terminology. One could say that the Damascene does not limit himself to the efficient and formal causes, but also

hints at the material cause, inasmuch as he mentions "*to automaton*" ("mere chance") further on in Chapter 3, and also that for him, "apôleia" ("perdition") constitutes the final cause of atheism.

12 Herein the formal cause is presented by the Damascene as a complex set, something that in practise is a further application of the logical process of division. It is worth noting that the gnoseological, moral, and religious dimensions of the formal cause of atheism are understood by John Damascene as different aspects of a single phenomenon. Especially, the words used in the case of the religious aspect, such as "katagagein" ("descending"), "barathron", "phôs" ("light"), "bythos" ("the depth"), "anêgon" ("lifted"), and "eskotismenous" ("those being in darkness"), utilize the ancient and widely known hierophanic symbolism of light versus darkness and ascent versus descent. For this symbolism, see Eliade (1959).

13 For a very detailed exploration of causality in the work of Aristotle, see Falcon (2023).

14 Inasmuch as the negation of the existence of God is realized by the human being as an *animal rationale*—even if not always according to the laws of a certain rationality. About the different versions of rationality, see, e.g., Batens (1992).

15 For the distinction between reason as an ontological condition (also known traditionally as intellect) and reason as instrumental/technical rationality, in a theological context, especially as formulated in the thought of Paul Tillich, see Smith (2017, pp. 29–107).

16 For the term, see the magisterial Otto (2014). The Damascene's ontological, i.e., metaphysical, as well as axiological and deontological, understanding of reason continues a great part of ancient Greek logical theory—with the exception, most likely, of the Sophist movement. Regarding Plato, it has been noted that "he is undoubtedly the first great thinker in the field of the philosophy of logic. He treats at some length. . . important questions, which arise as soon as we begin to reflect on the nature of logic. . . It must be understood, however, that Plato does not address himself directly to these questions. . . They have emerged clearly only after centuries of reflection; and as we read Plato, it seems to us that they are still obscured for him *by the metaphysical and epistemological questions with which they are inextricably interwoven*" (Kneale and Kneale 1971, p. 17; my emphasis). Furthermore, regarding Aristotle, one should have in mind that "much of the doctrine of the Categories *must be regarded as metaphysical rather than logical*" (ibid., p. 25; my emphasis). Lastly, the axiological/deontological dimensions of reason have been tellingly put forward by Neo-Kantianism (see, e.g., Heis (2018)).

17 In this connection, I find quite pertinent the following: "Without God reason is not, in a superficial sense, simply 'atheistic'. By negating God *truly*, in whatever manner, reason subverts itself. 'Atheistic reason' is not simply 'atheistic'. It ceases being reason as well. . . Without God reason *is not*" (Papapetros 1979, pp. 263–64; my translation; author's emphasis).

18 Ultimately, the notion of what is logically true/correct is produced socio-historically. Thus, even if the ontological/metaphysical presuppositions of reason may not be accepted, the socially and historically conditional character of reason is a given. In this sense, rationality does not constitute an independent feature. On the other hand, however, rationalism is constructed as an absolutization at the level of theory; it defines what is logically true/correct in an ideocratic way, thus overlooking its socio-historical relativity. Phrased differently, whereas rationality comes under the major hierophany of a given culture, rationalism constitutes itself the major hierophany of a given culture. For the difference between rationality and rationalism, see Begzos (1990).

19 For a long-time standard anthology regarding the ontological argument, see Plantinga (1965). For interesting and rigorous discussions, see Leftow (2005) and Lowe (2007). This particular argument in the work of John Damascene could be regarded as a precursor of the classic ontological argument by Anselm of Canterbury (1033/4-1109).

20 That it does constitute a genuine ontological argument can be ascertained (1) from the fact that it is based on the multifaceted semantics of the definitions involved (cf. Kneale and Kneale (1971, p. 358)) and (2) because other known arguments about the existence of God do not seem to satisfy the manner in which the reasoning in Chapter 2 is structured. Nevertheless, to be sure, in comparison to Anselm, the Damascene's argument presents a much less adequate logical structure.

21 At this point, the Damascene's reasoning presupposes an exclusive disjunction ($p \veebar q$). This means that p and q must be mutually exclusive. Of course, for the Damascene, no issue of verifying such a mutual exclusivity is posed therein, since it is already a given within the notions involved. Thus, the true significance of his premise consists of being a specific answer to the question of Being.

22 The exclusive disjunction seen above corresponds more to $(\exists x)$: $p(x)$ and $(\exists x)$: $q(x)$ rather than to $(\exists p)$: $x(p)$ and $(\exists q)$: $x(q)$. The former denotes that logically x = *Being* comes under p = *created* and q = *uncreated*, whereas the latter denotes that p and q come under x. The fact that the Damascene opts for the former can be seen indirectly from the way in which he defines "Being" in his *Dialectica*. "Being is a self-existing reality, not in need of something else in order to be constituted, or a reality that is unable to be in itself but has its existence in something else" (*SJD I* [ed. Kotter], 77:100–104). This definition, I believe, would not have been possible if the Damascene did not have in mind the Creator ("aktiston") and the created ("ktiston"). Although from a logical point of view, the "the self-existing" ("authyparkton") and what is "unable to be in itself" ("mê kath' heauto dynamenon einai") refer, respectively, to essence and attribute (cf. *SJD I*, 57:3–58:13; 59:55–60; 77:104–107, 117–120), the Damascene regards them as different orders of Being. It might be that "'Being' is a common name for all beings" (*SJD I*, 57:3–4), but the latter do not come under the former as if they were genus and species, respectively (cf. *SJD I*, 77:109–115). In effect, the latter (i.e., beings) are simply related to the former (i.e., Being). I believe that this construction of the logical order corresponds perfectly well to the theological distinction "aktiston"–"ktiston". In other words, John Damascene's logic is the logic of his theology.

[23] For the entire line of reasoning, see the passage in *SJD II*, 22–34.

[24] In light of this, "tropê" is logically equivalent to "ktiston" (cf. *SJD II*, 46:16). But here, it is worth asking whether such a conceptualization is akin to ancient Greek ontology. In my view, the answer must be negative; although ancient Greek metaphysics is quite familiar with the notion of "tropê", the special meaning reserved for the latter is that of "gignesthai" ("Becoming"). But "gignesthai" is the other and at the same time the inadequate side of "Being"; its aspect is in terms of sensory experience. This means that ancient Greek "Being" is firstly and basically determined in light of the intelligible (the "noêton"); something *is* to the degree that it is an object of the intellect to the degree that it is represented noetically. Termed differently, the significance of the term "tropê" in John Damascene's text consists of its peculiar theological function. It points to the dynamics/linearity of Christian historical consciousness against the static-ness/circularity of ancient Greek ontology. For the latter dichotomy, see Eliade (1965).

[25] The distinction decay ("phtheiromena") and corruption ("alloioumena") comes first and the distinction corruption ("alloiousthai"), movement ("kinêsthai"), and alteration ("mataballesthai") follow. In this manner, John Damascene seems to semantically treat "tropê" as a genus with two partially different species. But why does he do something like this, instead of dividing one "tropê" into a number of species? I think that at this point, the dialectics of John Damascene unwittingly reflect the history of "gignesthai" in ancient Greek thought, and how it developed from the Presocratics to Plato to Aristotle.

[26] This is a term derived from Aristotelian ethics (Steiger 2014). This is noteworthy for at this point, the Damascene puts forward once again the co-functionality of ethics and logic. In particular, in the light of ethics, he suggests criteria of logical modality. For an introduction to the modal logic of Aristotle, see Patterson (1995). For the modal logic of the Megarian School, see Hartmann et al. (2017); for the Stoics in this connection, see Bobzien (1986). To be sure, in ancient Greek logical theory, modality is not determined by ethics, while clearly it does in the case for the Damascene. The modal understanding put forward by the latter has axiological preconditions that stem from the experience of divine revelation. It does not refer—simply or primarily—to the necessary, the contingent, the possible, or the impossible, for these belong to the onto-gnoseo-logical range that moves between (absolute) possibility and (circumstantial) impossibility. On the contrary, the onto-THEO-logical range is constituted beyond possibility and impossibility; it emerges when the latter is experienced as fullness thanks to "das ganz Andere". Thus, in this context, the criterion for determining the modality of premises is the degree (cf. *SJD II*, 11:31) to which one realizes the fullness of the ontological.

[27] The mentioning of quality and spatiality is an indirect yet clear reference to Aristotle's categories in his works Categories and On Interpretation (*Aristotelis Categoriae et Liber de Interpretatione* (ed. Minio-Paluello [Oxf. Class. Texts]) 25:5–33:38 and 14:8–14).

[28] In this connection, John Damascene definitely has in mind what he writes in Chapter 14 of his *Dialectica* (*SJD I*, 84:16–17): "idion esti, ho panti kai monôi tôi eidei kai aei hyparchei" ("a characteristic feature is what exists only and always in the entire species"). In this sense, the followning is also true (*SJD I*, 85:28–29): "katêgorountai gar ta idia tôn eidôn, ôn idia esti, alla kai ta eidê katêgorountai tôn idiôn autôn" ("for the characteristic features are predicated to the species of which they are characteristic features, but then also the species are predicated to their characteristic features").

[29] Much has been written on the ontological primacy or not of essence in the context of theology. In my view, the entire issue is misplaced inasmuch as the primacy or not of essence remains at the onto-gnoseo-logical level. If theology constitutes the linguistic and logical mediation of onto-THEO-logical experience, then the primacy under discussion belongs neither to essence nor to hypostasis, but to "das ganz Andere", which dialectically synthesizes essence and hypostasis.

[30] This is what has been aptly dubbed "patristic paradigm shift". On this, see the pertinent remarks in Plexidas (2001, pp. 59–91).

[31] It should be noted that in this connection, "necessarily" is arbitrary; it is only true in the case of a particular *Weltanschauung*, namely the Christian one. But then the logical inference is undermined. It is also worth noting that the Damascene has already maintained (*SJD II*, 11:22–23) the reverse as well, i.e., that "ei men oun ktista, pantôs kai trepta" ("if they are created, then necessarily they will be subject to change"). This means that for him, there is a logical semantic equivalence between "trepton" *(t)* and "ktiston" *(k)*: $t \equiv k$. However, in ancient Greek philosophy "trepton" might be, or is not necessarily, "ktiston": $\sim\Box\,(t \supset k)$. This *peculiar necessity* is posited as such only within onto-THEO-logical experience. Thus, from a formal logic perspective, there is a discrepancy here; the Damascene starts and finishes his "tropê" digression in a logically inadequate manner, or better yet, by putting forward a different logic. But in any case, this position of John Damascene demonstrates the intrinsic logical problems that emerge when different worldviews get to be synthesized.

[32] For the actual wording in John Damascene's text, see *SJD II*, 1134–37.

[33] In particular, proposition *(i)* represents a synthesis between "ktiston" as understood in ancient Greek thought, that is, what is in a general sense produced, and "ktiston" as understood in Christianity, that is, what has been produced *ex nihilo*. To be sure, the problem in this connection lies in the idea of nothingness. While ancient Greek philosophy does know this idea (cf. Niarchos 1985), which could function as a basis for a synthesis with Christianity, it is an idea totally different from the one we find in Christianity. The former is gnoseological, whereas the latter constitutes the negative of the idea of a God who is transcendent over the world. For a comparison between the Christian and the non-Christian idea of nothingness, see Matsoukas (1986, pp. 35–58).

[34] And this is precisely the meaning of the Christian "trepton", hence the need to have a digression on changeability before the proper argument. For a detailed presentation of the Christian teaching on "trepton", see Matsoukas (1994, pp. 209–20).

35 This particular logical method pertains—at least, historically—to the cosmological argument and not to the ontological. Thus, one could maintain that in his line of reasoning, the Damascene combines elements of the former with elements of the latter; in other words, the famous "chain of causes" with the semantic coherence of notions.

36 The cryptic character of the final stage of the argument runs against the need for clarity from a logical point of view, a fact that indirectly shows that this stage of the Damascene's argument constitutes a logical leap. In practise, the Damascene's "God" is not inferred from the premises of the syllogism, but is identical with the notion of "atrepton" ("unchanging") that is used within the syllogism.

37 At this point, one could reasonably pose the following question: writing in the eighth century, which adherents of polytheism could John Damascene possibly have in mind? If he is not just aspiring to render his text as encyclopedic as possible, then I would dare say that indirectly, he refers to Manichaeism, which in a syncreti(sti)c manner that accommodated both polytheism (for instance, the dualism of good and evil) and aspects of ancient Greek philosophizing (for instance, aeons as a transmutation of Platonic onto-gnoseo-logy). Moreover, Manichaeism constitutes a constant adversary in the Damascene's polemical works. For the latter remark, see Ables (2022a).

38 For the cosmological argument in general, see Rowe (1975) and Craig (1980). Aristotle is the first to have put forward this argument in full-fledged form, whereas Thomas Aquinas is the one who gave it its classic standing. The relationship of the Damascene's cosmological argument to that of Aristotle's seems to be an eclectic one, that the Damascene's Christian self-consciousness requires him to make certain modifications, such as dispensing with the ancient Greek understanding of eternity, cosmic circularity, and the causal inherent unity between the Divine and the world. Furthermore, one could dare say that in some ways, John Damascene constitutes an in-between moment in the development of the cosmological argument from Aristotle to Thomas Aquinas—albeit in a rather simple and compact fashion compared to them.

39 More specifically, at Heb 3:4 and Rom 1:19–20, admittedly in a very compact fashion in the former and rather indirectly in the latter.

40 The fact that initially Christianity adopted (and, by extension, adapted) only the cosmological argument and not other types of arguments about the existence of God must be due to some special reason. The historical dialogue that was by necessity inaugurated between Christianity and Hellenism could not but lead to the former appropriating elements of the strong cultural legacy of the latter. Thus, it seems that the cosmos/world came forward as the most familiar such element, and this is because within the context of the onto-THEO-logical experience, Being emerges as a creation of the Divine. In other words, the "God" of Christianity is primarily and mainly a Creator, which means that any argument about God's existence must be constructed in relation to the existence of the cosmos/world. In light of this, one could say that Christianity did not just adopt the cosmological argument and it did not just make certain modifications to its structure, but all the more rendered it the Christian argument about the existence of God *par excellence*.

41 Here, one can trace the clear and substantial influence of Stoicism. To be sure, the entire third paragraph could be endorsed by a Stoic, if the mentioning of "ktisis" was excluded and the much-cherished-by-the-Stoics theory about the *telos* of nature was included. This is all the more noteworthy, given the pantheistic character of Stoicism. What I want to emphasize here is the fact that John Damascene makes his own an onto-logical schema that presupposes and entails a self-consciousness totally different from that of the Christian experience of revelation. Nevertheless, theology as the mediation of onto-THEO-logical experience can accommodate the Stoic onto-logical schema by re-interpreting it via a rupture, firstly, and a re-constitution afterwards. The rupture is effected through the negation of nature as the Divine and a logos in itself, whereas the re-constitution is realized through the notion of "ktisis" and hence the Divine as a principle beyond nature. Termed differently, paragraph 3 of Chapter 3 of the *Exact Exposition* could be said to exemplify, from a history of philosophy perspective, the intrinsically dialectic manner in which logic is re-constituted within the context and in the light of onto-THEO-logical experience.

42 According to the text (*SJD II*, 11:41), "eis enos kosmou symplêrôsin" ("to the completion of a single world"). In my view, both "kosmos" (=harmony) and "symplêrôsis" (=movement towards fullness) imply the idea of totality, comprising harmony and fullness in the world that are unthinkable at the level of parts, since the Damascene designates the latter as "enantia" (opposed) to one another. On the other hand, order is denoted via the questions "ti to taxan?" ("which is the one that imposed order?") and "tinos to taxai?" ("to which does the imposition of order belong?") [*SJD II*, 11:44; 12:51], as well as through "kybernêsis", "logon entheis pasi" ("having placed logos in everything") and "kath' hous hypestê logous" ("according to the logoi in which things originally came to exist") [*SJD II*, 11:48; 12:52].

43 The first who mentioned them was Empedocles (see Kingsley and Parry (2020)). In his philosophy, they are called "rizomata" ("rootings") and they are understood as the foundational elements that are irreducible to one another and from which everything comes via the appropriate combination.

44 The most important among those conceptualizations are the following: "hen" ("one"), "tauton" ("same"), "koinon" ("common"), "monas" ("singularity"), "homoion" ("similar"), "teleion" ("perfect"), "syntheton" ("synthetic"), and "periechon" ("that which includes").

45 The first to point this out was Aristotle (*Analytica Priora et Posteriora* (ed. Ross [Oxf. Class. Texts]) 116:12–13), who stated "antiphasis de antithesis hês ouk esti metaxy kath' heautên" ("contradiction is an opposition which in itself has no middle").

46 For the dialectical onto-logy of Heraclitus, see, for example, Axelos (1962).

47 I use the term "synthetic" for in the modern version of dialectics; "synthesis" constitutes the basic element objective of the entire methodology. This of course does not entail that the Damascene's negative evaluation of synthesis (see, for instance, *SJD II*, 12:7–8) is overlooked. But it should be noted that John Damascene entertains himself a very positive use of the term within his theological thought, and more specifically, within his Christology (see *SJD II*, 135:104–136:109). The Damascene regards, on the one hand, synthesis as a specific understanding of unity and on the other, accepts a typology of synthesis that allows him to make the necessary logical divisions and use particular meanings of the term, depending on context. At this point, the meaning that he has in mind is described as "hê de kata synthesin henosis estin hê eis allêla tôn merôn chôris afanismou perichorêsis" ("unity according to synthesis is the coinherence between parts that does not lead to their destruction") [*SJD II*, 135:104–136:106]. In light of this definition, since there is no destruction, "perichorêsis" is logically/semantically equivalent to transcendence.

48 This kind of transcendence constitutes a rupture of the monistic/cyclical naturalism we find in Hellenism. Also, the Divine synthetic factor is primarily and mainly transcendent, not because it is notionally constituted through gnoseological transcendence, but because it is constituted as a peculiar condition of transcendence. In the first case, it would not be but relatively transcendent, whereas in the second case, it signifies human impossibility and its fullness, or to put it differently, impossibility as fullness thanks to the presence of "das ganz Andere".

49 Ostensibly, there are as many types of transcendence as there are paradigms of self-realization. Each of them reflects a different experience of existence, as well. The Christian type of transcendence consists essentially of its peculiar historicity, that is, in a certain attitude within and over historical temporality. This differentiates it fundamentally from ancient Greek transcendence, which as monistic/cyclical, consists of a certain positioning within the natural world. For the latter, see Farouki (1996).

50 Here, John Damascene definitely has in mind the notion of regularity, for he writes about "alêktou phoras" ("endless cyclical moving") and "to pan pheretai te kai diexagetai" ("everything is both moving cyclically and taking place repeatedly"). Furthermore, it is only in light of regularity that his negation of mere chance in what follows makes sense.

51 For the entire phrasing of syllogism II in the Damascene's text, see *SJD II*, 11:44–12:50. Regarding syllogism II within its broader contextuality as allowing one to trace an incipient form of Thomas Aquinas' *quinque viae*, see Adrahtas (2001b, p. 71 (n. 186)).

52 The manner of understanding (and not just explaining) nature is subject to change, either in the form of Karl Popper's "gradual process" or the form of Thomas Kuhn's "scientific revolutions"; the paradigm of science constitutes a relationship with natural reality, a relationship that is produced along with broader cultural changes. Regarding the latter, significant is the role played by the degree, that is, the range of the relationship between humans and natural reality. Crucial in this connection is the fact that the understanding of nature is not so much the emergence of an objectivity as it is a projection of a thought model on nature. Michael Polanyi, in particular, has emphasized the radically qualitative character of scientific knowledge in his theory about "personal knowledge". For an introduction to these thinkers, see McGrath (1999, pp. 76–86).

53 This entails that in effect, John Damascene's syllogism II is made up of two parts. It is the first one that constitutes an induction, in the sense of moving from the particular to the generic. The presence of induction at this point is due to the idea of regularity, which the Damascene has already presupposed.

54 This part of the syllogism belongs to the category of incomplete induction and thus it can only be regarded as probable. On induction, see Hawthorne (2024).

55 This extension is basically the second part of syllogism II, which from a logical point of view, constitutes an indirect proof.

56 In Chapter 39 of the *Exact Exposition*, the Damascene distinguishes between "tychê" (=luck) and "automaton" (*SJD II*, 96:14–21). However, both come as species under the notion of "symptôsis" ("coincidence"), which means that they are not to be seen as radically different. The Damascene's distinction herein is of Aristotelian provenance, according to which the difference between "tychê" and "automaton" lies in the fact that they more or less have different fields of reference; "tychê" refers basically to things that happen in the sphere of human life, while "automaton" refers to what takes place in the sphere of nature.

57 This is not true in the case of ancient Greek philosophy—at least, not in the manner that it is in the case of the Christian *Weltanschauung*. For the ancient Greeks, "tychê" and "to automaton" are not always contradictory to logos. In the context of the monistic structure of Being, everything abides by the law of causal relationships, regardless of the fact that the latter may be impenetrable, unknown, or obscure. On the contrary, for Christian consciousness, Being is "trepton", which means that the only essence it has is its propensity towards non-Being. Its logos, that is, the very fact that it presents causal relationships, does not stem from within Being but is derived from the transcendent creator. In this respect, once again we come across a fundamental inversion, namely "tychê" and "to automaton" do not constitute the noetic (pre)condition of Being, but constitute the very essence of Being, while logos is not the gnoseological decoding of "tychê" and "to automaton", but their transcendence.

58 This is precisely what the Atomists and Epicureans did in ancient Greece. See the cosmological teaching of these two schools in Kirk et al. (1957) and Long (1974), respectively.

59 In the context of the cosmological argument per se, it is not possible to sustain such an exclusion. Furthermore, the aim of the Damascene throughout the text is to prove not the cause of creation but the existence of God. Nevertheless, being intrinsically related to the ontological argument, the cosmological could not accept in practise a position whereby the creator and "to automaton" are identified. To be sure, the exclusion under discussion does not constitute, as it may seem at first an arbitrary logical vacuum, it does work within the context of a certain conceptualization of "to automaton". In particular, for onto-THEO-logical thought, the latter is *per definitionem* other than the creator. Hence, at this point, John Damascene writes

based on the logical consistency between the notions of a given system that has been constructed *logically* as the inversion of onto-gnoseo-logical thinking.

60 This connection is a commonplace both in Hellenism and in Christianity. Ancient Greek philosophy in its entirety has been aptly characterized as a transition from myth to rationality (see the classic Nestle (1940)). But if this transition did not entail the invalidation of religiosity, then in reality, the emergence of rational thinking signalled the shift of the hierophanic centre within ancient Greek civilisation, where logic became the new *locus* of the Divine. On the other hand, Christian thinking about Christ as the logos of God signalled a corresponding rational performance of religiosity. The Damascene's position about the relation between God and logos is in practise a confirmation of the synthesis that took place between the transcendent God of Judaism and the immanent logos of Hellenism.

61 That this is not so can be inferred directly from the beginning of Chapter 5 (*SJD II*, 13:2–3), where it is stated "hoti men esti theos, ikanôs apodedeiktai, *kai* hoti akatalêptos estin hê ousia autou" ("that God exists, has adequately been demonstrated, *and* that his essence is incomprehensible"; my emphasis). It is also evident, indirectly, from the very structure of this chapter. To put it otherwise, if Chapter 3 involves proving aspects of Chapter 1, then Chapter 4 involves proving aspects of Chapter 2. In this manner, the first four chapters of the *Exact Exposition* are intertwined in pairs of synthetic and analytic articulations; ultimately the Damascene's arguments/proofs are but analyses/explanations.

62 Theologically, this distinction is not an original insight on the part of John Damascene, but goes back to Basil of Caesarea (ed. Moutsoulas [*BEPES*, 52], 175:23–25), who said "ou gar hê tou ti estin exereunêsis, all' hê tou hoti estin homologia tên sôtêrian hêmin paraskeuazei" ("for not the exploration regarding *what He is*, but the confession *that He is* provides us with salvation", my emphasis). More specifically, the distinction "what something is" is dialectically intertwined with other distinctions as well; "the category *ti estin* is opposed in the Damascene to other categories such as *to en tini*, *to pou*, *to pote*, etc." (Rozemond 1959, p. 18, my translation and emphasis).

63 John Damascene regards the two notions as identical (that is, with the same signified). However, this is due to the context of divine revelation and not a formal truth. For example, in ancient Greek logical theory, these terms are not identical, but synonymous or equivalent. This is something that the Damascene is aware of (see *SJD I*, 93: chp. 31, pp. 3–6). He does not regard "ousia" and "physis" simply as synonymous but as identical points to the rupture of onto-logical thinking in light of onto-THEO-logical revelation. In this respect, the Damascene does not negate synonymity but transcends it. For this rupture–transcendence, see cf. Siasos (1989, pp. 31–56).

64 See Adrahtas (2001b, p. 78 (n. 206)): for bibliographical details regarding the somatic nature of the Divine according to the Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics.

65 The terms "lysis" and "analysis" are intrinsically related to the meaning of "sôma". Consequently, their use by the Damascene herein is quite expected, given that his objective is to prove "asômaton". By maintaining that "sôma", as subject to "lysis" and "analysis", is incompatible to God, "asômaton" is suggested as compatible, since it is equivalent to the contradictory genus under which "sôma" comes, i.e., "synthesis". In this manner, however, the sequence of cataphatic terms continues the sequence of apophatic terms, and for that matter, in a circular fashion. In other words, we are dealing here with a typical case of *petitio principii*. Moreover, when "asômaton" has been reduced to "asyntheton", the implied image of an organism—which easily can be reduced to "synthesis"—gives the impression that it facilitates, even though from a negative perspective, what needs to be proved, namely "asômaton". Of course, all this reasoning does not prove anything apart from the fact that the notion of "sôma" is incompatible to God because this is what the onto-THEO-logical experience of Being requires. However, in the context of a different experience, for instance, the experience of monistic unity, things work quite differently. On the other hand, one could ask the following: what is the purpose of this endless, so to speak, line of notions? I would dare say that it serves no other purpose but the Christian criticism of Hellenism, and for that matter, on the basis of the latter's own notions. And this is a criticism that ends in appropriating dialectically ancient Greek notions.

66 This dialectic constitutes in effect the logical mediation of language with regard to the primary content of divine revelation. The Holy Scriptures as the word of God constitute basically the language of divine revelation. In this respect, they are of the rational but not of the logical order. The Holy Scriptures constitute the first mediation/interpretation of divine revelation, which consequently is broadened towards the direction of a second mediation/re-interpretation on the basis of logical thinking. This shift from one mediation to the other is required, primarily and mainly due to historical reasons—both diachronically and synchronically theology as language is in a state of interaction with its historical contextuality, an interaction that allows it to become a unifying principle of a given historicity, on the one hand, and a way of understanding the latter in light of the meaning of language, on the other. Thus, the dialectics between theological language and logic leads each time to a new use of language that unites the past with the present (cf. typology as a means of hermeneutics or the schema of "Divine Economy") and also to an explanation of divine revelation that aims at interpreting the historical present.

67 In Chapter 17 of the *Exact Exposition*, the Damascene puts forward the view that only the Divine is truly "aylon" and "asômaton" (*SJD II*, 45:12–14). Thus, the notion of materiality is logically/semantically equivalent to that of changeability and createdness; put differently, it is understood as the absolute condition of created beings. On the contrary, in the context of the monistic experience of Being, immateriality constitutes the absolute condition of reality; it does not constitute simply a set of beings, but the ontic order (being-ness) itself. Both the intelligible and the sensible belong to this order. Christianity will adopt this *Weltanschauung* completely but at the same time, will modify it by introducing a transcendent principle. The introduction of such a principle

will bring about a dialectics between transcendence and immanence; a dialectics that will eventually lead to the inversion of immanence. The latter will turn from an absolute into a relative condition of Being.

[68] Although this teaching is based on the cosmology of Aristotle, the very expression "pempton sôma" is not attested in the works of Aristotle; neither in Theophrastus, who does mention though "theion sôma" ("divine body"). See During (1966).

[69] For the entire phrasing of the syllogism, which is a simple categorical syllogism of the first figure (*aaa*), the major premise of which is based on a certain notional sequence, see *SJD II*, 12:19–21.

[70] *p (i) [=("kinoumenon" = "sôma")] ≠ p (ii) [=("akinêton" = "asômaton")].*

[71] *p (ii) [=("akinêton" = "asômaton")] ∧ p (iii) [="theion" = "akinêton")] ⇒ p (iv) [=("theion" = "asômaton")].*

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Transitions in Patristic Cosmology: From Cosmophobia to Universe-(Re)Making

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Abstract: The field of Patristics, or early Christian and Mediaeval Studies, traditionally works along the lines of historical and literary criticism. But this method is not always useful, especially when it comes to complex objects and circumstances. No wonder the current trend of replacing it, more often than not, by interdisciplinary frameworks. The article begins accordingly by reviewing three interdisciplinary frameworks, namely, the "socio-historical method", "Deep Time", and archaeological theorist Roland Fletcher's "transitions", highlighting their suitability for a comprehensive approach to Patristic cosmology. Here, cosmology should not be taken in the narrow sense of contemporary science. It means both a way of representing reality—a worldview—and a way of inhabiting the world. The present article analyses the evolution of the early Christian and mediaeval perception of the environment and the cosmos in Greek sources, pointing to successive transitions from apprehension (cosmophobia) to a keen interest in understanding nature to the thought that holiness represents a universe-(re)making agency. It addresses relevant historical and social circumstances, but proposes that the above transitions were triggered by internal or existential factors as well, and not only external, thus complementing Fletcher's outline, which focuses upon external catalysts, such as economy and technology.

Keywords: ambiguous perceptions; cosmic impact; environmental impact; holiness; interdisciplinary studies; optimistic worldview; pessimistic worldview; Patristic cosmology

1. Methodological Prolegomena

For the purposes of understanding the cultural, historical, intellectual, and social ramifications of the topics they discuss, contemporary humanities scholars, including Studies in Religion researchers, often adopt interdisciplinary approaches. In a similar manner, the scholars of early Christian and mediaeval thinking, including of Patristic studies, which are relevant here, implement methods from various fields (Ashbrook Harvey and Hunter 2008; Esler 2017; Mitchell and Young 2006; Parry 2015). Sometimes, new frameworks emerge from this methodological crossbreeding, of which the "socio-historical method" is currently the prevalent approach (Slade 2020; Frachetti et al. 2023). This method tends to replace the reductionist "historical-critical" preferences of previous generations. It considers the complexities of religious phenomena through a multifocal lens (economics, material culture, social frameworks, etc.) that conduces to comprehensive and nuanced understandings. This approach is extremely useful for my endeavor to examine the intellectual quantum leaps, as it were, of the early Christian and mediaeval thinkers—also known as Patristic authors—in regard to representing the world and the function of their communities within the grand scheme of things. Equally useful is the "Deep Time" approach, which studies cultural, historical, religious, and social evolutions against the backdrop of environmental, planetary, and cosmic realities (Buikstra 2019; Glikson and Groves 2016; Ialenti 2020). In what follows, I exercise along the lines of these two interdisciplinary methods, which complement each other, but I do so tacitly, without making recourse to their specialized literature. As far as I can tell, that literature does not engage the topic under consideration.

What makes necessary this combined approach is the scope of my analysis. Specifically, the early Christian and mediaeval thinkers—together with the communities to which they belonged—did not locate their experience either primarily or exclusively within built environments. As we have known for a while now, corresponding to most religious communities of past ages, Christians lived in the natural world, in the cosmos, not only within socio-historical contexts (Eliade 1959, pp. 17, 62). Theirs was a "world-accepting" culture, to paraphrase Albert Schweitzer (Schweitzer 1998, pp. 150, 202). Archaeologists have established that the early Christian experience included a "web of relations" where the human, the manufactured, and the environmental belonged together (Caraher and Pettegrew 2019, pp. 22–23). True, Christians viewed themselves as not belonging anywhere, but they nevertheless dwelt in the world and believed that their very presence impacted the earthly environment and the cosmos in its entirety (Costache 2021, pp. 27–60, 329–64). Accordingly, their attitude to culture, society, and the values derived from their being in the world (Young 2004, p. 100). It follows that to examine Patristic representations of the natural world is of the essence for grasping related social and cultural attitudes. Against this backdrop, the present analysis requires both the socio-historical method and the Deep Time approach.

It is noteworthy that studies of Patristic cosmology, understood as a way of representing reality and the manner of inhabiting the world, are not entirely missing (Blowers 2012; Costache 2021; Köckert 2009; Lollar 2013; Rizzerio 1996). This is an important development, a point of departure from the customary view of the ancient and the mediaeval "world" as culture, material or otherwise, a view that ignores the world as perceived and inhabited by the believers of ages past (see, e.g., Esler 2017, where the world as cosmos receives no attention). The present study draws upon the contributions of the scholars that represent the positive development mentioned just above. It does so, however, through the lens of interdisciplinary methods—such as the socio-historical and the Deep Time approaches—which most of those scholars have not tested.

The method I follow here engages yet another element, Roland Fletcher's idea of "transitions" (Fletcher 1995, 2019), which represents a special case of socio-historical analysis. Fletcher engaged archaeological, economical, and demographic data for the assessment of the history of civilization after the last ice age. This method allowed him to identify three postglacial transitions or revolutions—agricultural, urban, and industrial—that occurred as a result of factors such as technological innovation, land use, and social dynamics. The same interdisciplinary lens makes possible to predict with a high degree of probability the upcoming fourth civilizational shift and, depending on the accuracy of our intuition regarding technological advancement, further evolutions in the far future (Fletcher 2019, pp. 176–77). Therefore, the transitions are about considering the past for the purposes of understanding "where we are today, and where we are headed next" (Fletcher 2019, p. 171). The signs of an imminent transition are already obvious in the materials we use and the technology at hand. Specifically, Fletcher believes the fourth shift will represent the outcome of combining information technology and organic life, which will pave the way for the colonization of the galaxy without the aid of machines (Fletcher 1995, pp. 3–8, 16–17; Fletcher 2019, p. 178).

Of interest, here, is Fletcher's view of the future as bringing with it something I would call spiritual transitions. By spiritual, I understand humankind's gradual transformation as a species from within, existentially, not only due to its technologically mediated interaction with the world. This transformation, I propose, will lead to a corresponding change of the cosmos, also from within, through the agency of the spiritually changed humanity. In saying this, I draw on some of my earlier research (Costache 2015, pp. 381–85; Costache 2016, pp. 28–33; Costache 2021, pp. 350–57). The nature of this transformation is not beyond our intuition. To use an analogy from physics, humankind's and the world's "regime" will change as the state of a substance does. The early Christians referred to this change in terms of a diaphanous materiality of the human body and of the world itself in the eschatological future (1 Corinthians 15:40–44; Revelation 21:10–13, 18–26), a glorious transformation that

will begin with humankind, or rather "God's children" as its representatives, and will then permeate the whole of the Creation (Romans 8:19–23). Fletcher does not refer to future transitions as spiritual and as effected from within, existentially. He discusses contextual or external factors, including the impact of technology upon human nature and the way future humans will master the space–time continuum. Nevertheless, while the two of us contemplate transformation from different vantage points, the idea is the same, at least in regard to outcomes. Taken together, Fletcher's views and my own complement each other by considering future evolutions—human and cosmic—as prompted by internal and external factors. And there is an obvious point of convergence between our views, that is, the conviction that humanity undergoes a process of becoming, from an environmentally managing agent, a cosmogonic one, for want of a better word. In short, and considering this matter panoramically, humankind will progress from the growing capacity to use the universe's stuff to the capacity of making universes, or at least of remaking them—perhaps along the lines of what physicists imagined in regard to the final anthropic principle (Barrow and Tipler 1986, pp. 658–77).

It is within complex frameworks such as the above that the present study tackles matters of the Patristic representation of reality, or cosmology, in the Greek-speaking Christian tradition. My discourse unfolds in two steps. First, and constituting the largest part of this article, I summarize early Christian perceptions of reality (from the first to the fifth century), amounting to a series of cultural shifts from cosmophobia to appreciating the world to constructive approaches to it. This summary highlights the impact of contextual factors upon the early Christian mindset, such as historical and social. Second, I show that—alongside the circumstances that prompted these successive changes of perception—more elusive factors were at play, such as experiences of spiritual transformation, which inspired thoughts about humankind's cosmogonic potential. Thoughts to that effect are found in sources from the early Christian centuries until later in the Byzantine era. Here, as mentioned above, the term "transitions" is deployed in Fletcher's dynamic sense, but it foremost refers to a process of inner transformation whose reverberations are then felt far and wide. In addressing these matters, I hope to show that the intuitions of certain Patristic authors about the nature of reality and humanity's cosmic function anticipate current ways of thinking. To understand these intuitions requires, for that matter, interdisciplinary examination.

2. Early Christian and Mediaeval Representations of Reality

The early Christian and the mediaeval views of the cosmos and of the Christian community within it were overall characterized by confidence and optimism. What must have inspired this attitude were Scriptural passages such as the narrative of the star that marked Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:1–2,9–10) and his proclamation as Logos, Creator of the universe (John 1:1–3), or as Lord who holds all things together (Colossians 1:15–17; Hebrews 1:1–3). Since their Teacher was the "head" or the Master of all, who bridged the gaps between things visible and invisible (Colossians 1:18–20), to the extent that even cosmic phenomena such as the nativity star paid him homage, Christian disciples had nothing to fear in, and from, the material world (John 16:33; Romans 8:38–39; cf. John 14:30 on the "ruler of this world"). This understanding did not make them unrealistic about the complexities of nature, however, including its dangerous side (Costache 2022a, pp. 13–17; Hall 2002, pp. 31–32), but in principle their worldview remained positive.

This optimistic worldview was enshrined in the visual culture of those times—from the second-century acronym ΙΧΘΥΣ, together with its corresponding symbolic rendition as a fish in the art of Rome's catacombs, to the zodiacal iconography of Jesus Christ *Pantokrator* ("he-who-holds-the universe") of the later Byzantine centuries. The catacomb acronym represents a doctrinal statement about Jesus' identity, which in Greek reads Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ, meaning "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior" (Daniélou 1964, pp. 50–51). Christians rendered this statement both in its acronymic form, ΙΧΘΥΣ, which forms the Alexandrian Greek word for "fish" (ἰχθύς), and by drawing a fish. What is interesting about this acronym is the hidden rationale behind it. The identity of Jesus could have been

phrased in other ways, and the New Testament gives various possibilities (Philippians 2:5–11; Matthew 16:16; John 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16). The fact that in the second century Christians had set on the acronym IXΘΥΣ for proclaiming his identity, together with its visual representation as fish, denotes a complex worldview (Hegedus 2007, pp. 268, 363), along the lines of what I have sketched above. In short, their way of looking at reality centered upon Jesus as Creator and Master of the universe, his birth being considered a crucial cosmogonic event. After all, a star marked it. What is interesting is that Jesus' assumed time of birth corresponds to the transition to a new astrological age, from Aries/Ram to Pisces/Fishes, which age, given the precession of the equinoxes, would expand for about 2150 years (MacKinnell 2011, pp. 77–97). It stands to reason that the early Christians chose the symbol of the fish as a means for communicating their faith convictions within the cultural context of that era. More precisely, they chose a statement about Jesus' identity, IXΘΥΣ, that matched the new zodiacal age of Pisces. And, by combining Jesus' identity with the zodiacal transition in the symbol of the fish, Christians signaled their interest in matters cosmic and their view of themselves as agents of this new astrological age.

The same conviction led, after many centuries, to the iconographical depiction of Jesus as the center of the universe, *Pantokrator*, with the Byzantines representing him surrounded by disciples, angels, and the zodiacal signs (Lemcool 2020, pp. 479, 486; Tutkovski 2010, pp. 282, 284–86), sometimes only by the last (Barral i Altet 2015, pp. 231–32).

2.1. A Time of Ambiguity

But the Patristic views of the cosmos are not of one piece. Differences occurred and, at times, the optimistic stance discussed above was abandoned for the contrary view (Costache 2021, pp. 11–14). In what follows, I focus primarily upon attitudes recorded from the early second century to the early fifth century, corresponding to the time frame of Late Antiquity. Byzantine thinkers, such as John Climacus (d. *ca* 649), Maximus the Confessor (d. 662), and Symeon the New Theologian (d. 1022), will make cameo appearances. Within that span of history are obvious, as we shall soon discover, successive shifts of perspective. These went from cosmophobia, or nervous apprehensions about the world in the sense of E. R. Dodds' "age of anxiety" (Dodds 1990), to appreciation for the earthly environment and to a desire to comprehend the universe and its natural workings along the lines of "natural philosophy" (as science was known at the time). What caused these attitude shifts are social, historical, economical, and cultural circumstances—which later were joined by technological factors, as is the case of church architecture, which had a profound impact upon the Christian worldview in the Middle Ages (Ivanovici 2016, pp. 213–16).[1] These factors worked as external catalysts of certain internal processes pertaining to the Christian ethos, primarily the pursuit of holiness in the sense discussed by Peter Brown (Brown 1983). In return, we shall see below that the relevant internal processes, amounting to existential transformations, conditioned Christians' *manner* of inhabiting the world, which they understood as having existential and environmental resonance. The impact of such processes remained unnoticed for a time, but was not altogether missed. The relevant circumstances related to a major turn in Roman politics, from persecuting Christianity for a couple of centuries to proclaiming it imperial religion in the fourth century (Hall 2006, pp. 470–72; Leadbetter 2017, pp. 220–26, 235–40; Siker 2017, pp. 207–12). This turn encouraged Christians to overcome their occasional suspicion and reluctance, mainly caused by persecution and social marginalization, and to adopt, decisively, the positive outlook discussed in the foregoing.

I must now turn to the early Christian shifting attitudes to the world, understood as humankind's immediate environment and as the cosmos at large. Several main phases can be identified.

In the first decades of their history, despite the New Testament materials reviewed above and the belief that they represented the new astrological age, Christians were ambiguous about things of the world. The reasons prompting their prudence were complex, ranging from the conviction that the eschatological times and the end of all things were near

(1 Corinthians 16:22; Revelation 22:10) to the psychological impact of Roman persecutions (Romans 8:36; Revelation 13:5–8), as shown earlier. There was no point in caring about a world that was about to expire, especially one whose representatives, the Roman authorities, were hostile. No wonder even an author who ultimately nurtured a positive worldview, the anonymous writer of *Letter to Diognetus* (the second half of the second century) (Costache 2021, pp. 52–58), gave voice to the shared sentiment of his coreligionists: "Christians sojourn in a perishable world, but await heavenly imperishability" (using Ehrman ed. [Loeb, vol. 1], 6.8 [My trans.]). Awareness of the ephemeral character of the world is apparent in this statement. By contrast, the world to come, "heavenly", or rather eschatological, is undying. This is a relatively pessimistic stance, signifying that consistent values and permanent happiness are impossible in the world. This conviction led many early Christians to see themselves "within the world as though arrested in a prison" (*Diognetus* 6.7). In analyzing these passages, elsewhere I discussed a series of cultural factors that influenced this view of things, from the ontological pessimism of contemporary ways of thinking to the association of the world with dubious, unethical practices (Costache 2021, pp. 48–52). Of further note is the sense of precariousness many Christians experienced in a cosmos that was largely unknown, dangerous, and uncontrollable (Allen and Neil 2021, pp. 72–86; Braudel 1996, pp. 35, 38; Horden and Purcell 2000, pp. 298–341; Izdebski et al. 2016).

2.2. The Optimistic Turn

What we found out so far is that the early Christian movement was ambivalent about the world, complexly understood as the broader society, the natural environment, and the cosmic backdrop. Apprehension was not the dominant sentiment; no wonder a positive worldview incrementally replaced it. This optimistic turn led to a different perception of animals and their habitats, usually considered dangerous (Grant 1999; Lazaris 2016). This counts as the first cultural transition of the Christian worldview. True, several authors, from Ignatius of Antioch (d. *ca* 110) to the writer of *Diognetus* himself, and from Irenaeus of Lyon (d. *ca* 200) to Clement of Alexandria (d. *ca* 215), had been already presenting the cosmos as a welcoming home (Costache 2021, pp. 2–3, 6, 12, 16, etc.). Even when they deplored the dire circumstances Christians experienced, their message was unequivocally one of hope. These examples attest to a positive attitude even before the change in Roman politics, undoubtedly motivated by pastoral rationale, that is, to ease the anxiety believers experienced at that time (Costache 2021, p. 61). To that end, they guided their audiences towards considering the world through the lens of familiar images, such as the liturgy, the sacred hymns, and the choirs of the congregation.

For example, Ignatius compared the musical harmony of the church assembly and the equally melodious celestial scenery that orbited the "new star" of the Logos incarnate. As a result, in liturgical fashion, "the other stars, together with the sun and the moon, became a chorus for the (new) star whose light surpassed all the others" (*Letter to the Ephesians* [ed. Ehrman (Loeb, vol. 1)], 19.2). For Ignatius, the Church and the cosmos mirrored each other—a perception that Irenaeus and Clement shared and developed. Specifically, they viewed the universe as a divinely written melody and as an orchestra and a chorus that interpret the score. Not unlike contemporary cosmologists who represent the universe as music,[2] these early Christian authors depicted the cosmos as melodiously attuned. For instance, Irenaeus pointed out that when we consider "the many and various" parts of the cosmos "together with the whole of the Creation, they are harmonious and consonant", they make "one harmonious melody", the way the strings of the lyre do (Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies* [eds. Rousseau and Doutrelleau (Srces Chrét. [=SC] 294] 2.25.2). In the same vein, and marking a step forward in the theological grasp of reality, Clement mentioned the "Logos of God" who "together with the Holy Spirit brings to harmony this world and the small cosmos, that is, the human being with its soul and body", and so "plays hymns to God on this polyphonic instrument" (Clement, *Exhortation to the Gentiles* (ed. Mondésert [SC 2] 1.5.3). Melodic or rather liturgical imagery was instrumental towards representing the world as a welcoming home for everyone—including Christian believers—and as

a theologically meaningful space (Costache 2021, pp. 65–76, 77–80, 83–96). To measure the impact of this strategy in terms of easing the mind of believers is impossible. What matters, however, is that this approach marks a clear turn towards a positive Christian worldview.

But was the inherent optimism of the Christian mindset, earlier discussed, sufficient for prompting this development? I would suggest that it was not, and that other factors were at play, too. What helped these authors to overcome the reluctance of some quarters is the doctrine of Creation, in the light of which the world, no matter how mysterious and threatening, is God's dwelling (Blowers 2008; Blowers 2012, pp. 67–78; May 2006). It must have also been helpful that Philo (d. *ca* 50 CE), the honorary church father of early Christianity, paved the way for this shift by crossbreeding Pythagorean and Platonic cosmology with the liturgical rhythms of Alexandria's first century CE synagogues (Ferguson 2019; Runia 1993, pp. 37–43). This cultural intersection generated a sense of the universe as familiar and meaningful for believers.[3] Either way, the relevant outcome of this shift of perception was an increasingly optimistic assessment of the world. It should not come as a surprise that John Chrysostom (d. 407) could depict the earthly environment in a poetically endearing fashion. In his words, the earth "has become mother and nurse for us. It is from it that we receive food and find enjoyment in all other things. To it we shall return, since for us it is both homeland and tomb" (*Homilies on Genesis* [Patr. Graec. vol. 53] 9.77.26–30). This positive stance illustrates what I consider a Patristic variant of anthropic cosmology (Costache 2021, pp. 344–49, 357–63).

2.3. Contemplative Approaches

This optimistic turn boosted the interest of Christians in understanding the universe, leading to the second cultural transition, or major shift of perception. At first, they adopted and adapted classical systems of nature contemplation (Wilson Nightingale 2004), developing methods that combined established approaches and elements pertaining to the ecclesial ethos. Then, they began to consider reality through multifocal, interdisciplinary lenses, after the fashion of natural philosophy, but in conversation with the Scriptural doctrine of Creation (Wirzba 2016). This second shift entails advancement from accommodating a variety of viewpoints on the cosmos—from philosophical to Scriptural and from scientific to theological—to actively exploring it. Let me detail the elements of this transition.

The melodic depiction of the cosmos, earlier discussed, presupposes contemplative undertakings that certain early Christian thinkers exercised with assiduity. One cannot grasp melodious or meaningful patterns without reflecting on nature—as Abraham did, in Clement's rewriting of Genesis 22:3–4, by taking in "the sight of beautiful things" all around him, for example (*Stromata* [eds. Stählin et al. (Griech. Christ. Schrift. 15)] 5.11.73.2–3)—without comparing the complex world of liturgical music and the ordered universe. No wonder, very soon, Clement and, in his footsteps, Origen of Alexandria (d. *ca* 253), felt the need to develop distinctly Christian forms of nature contemplation. Both admired Philo, more or less openly, emulating his interest in the cosmos and in the available natural sciences (Runia 1993, pp. 132–83; Scott 1991, p. 104). And, like him, they considered scientific information integral to all contemplative undertakings. But they made clear that, to become theologically meaningful, a further step is required, namely, hermeneutic deciphering (Blowers 2012, pp. 315–35). Thus, the world must be interpreted just as Scripture does. To articulate a theological worldview, in fact, Scripture itself has to be deployed as an interpretative tool of nature—or what Blowers (2002) calls seeing the world in the mirror of Scripture. But the use of Scripture as a hermeneutical lens was insufficient for an insightful contemplation of reality. Always in Philo's footsteps (cf. *On the Contemplative Life* [ed. Colson (Loeb)] 8), Clement and Origen considered the holiness of the interpreter, or the interpreter as a holy person, essential for the contemplation of nature (Blowers 2012, pp. 316–18; Costache 2021, pp. 113–15, 121–23, 138–39). I will not delve much into this matter at this stage, apart from highlighting the role of the holy person as inherent to the early Christian way of relating to the world (Brown 1971, 1983). The figure of the holy person heralds the most radical shift—transformation—to which I shall turn in due course.

Before that, a few words about the method of nature contemplation are in order. Origen gives a straightforward description of the method in regard to Scriptural interpretation, but it appears that he applied the same to the contemplation of nature (Costache 2021, pp. 139–68; Tzamalikos 2006, pp. 48–60). For example, he mentioned the importance of consistency in deploying an interdisciplinary method about any object of reflection, whether ethical, physical, or theological in nature (*Commentary on Genesis* [ed. Metzler (Werke, vol. 1.1)] 9.154.12–156.31). By "physical", both he and the Platonic tradition to which he belonged referred to what more commonly is called natural philosophy, the ancient correspondent of the modern natural sciences. In short, his method is about advancement from the immediate to the ethical to the spiritual senses. The elements of Clement's method, in turn, can only be pieced together from scattered references; he never discusses it openly. In short, Clement's method works along the lines of description, interpretation, and vision, as the passage on Abraham, earlier mentioned, partially shows (Costache 2021, pp. 114–38).

What matters is that both authors followed similar threefold schemas. Significant differences between their approaches are patent, however, of which the most notable being Origen's emphasis on contemplating the cosmos in the mirror of Scripture (Blowers 2012, pp. 153–54, 318–19). In this vein, Charlotte Köckert (2009, pp. 240–92, 258–59) proved that what undergirded Origen's nature contemplation derived almost exclusively from his view of the Genesis narrative of Creation. Clement, too, considered the Scriptures a framework for the contemplation of nature. In his words, "according to the rule of truth pertaining to gnostic tradition, the discourse on nature—or rather the highest vision—begins with the exposition on cosmogony and then ascends to the theological perspective" (*Stromata* 4.1.3.2). Laura Rizzerio (1996, pp. 43–76) produced an exhaustive analysis of this passage. Noteworthy is the phrase "the exposition on cosmogony", which refers to Genesis (Blowers 2012, pp. 37, 317). Thus, the Christian theological worldview entails contemplating the cosmos through the lens of Genesis. This authenticated lens, divinely inspired, facilitates a perception of things from above, from God's vantage point, "the highest vision". This is the province of the contemplative who is situated in God's proximity, the saint. But what stands out at this juncture is that, while Origen interpreted the world by commenting on Genesis, for Clement the Book of Genesis is not the object of interpretation; it is a hermeneutical prerequisite, the framework for interpreting the universe.

Of great interest is that, before he undertook to assess reality in theological fashion, Clement devised a step-by-step approach that begins with the scientific analysis of nature—according to the available sciences—and continues with an interpretation that draws on the Church's world, with its hymns, scriptures, and rhythms. This ecclesial contextualization corresponds to what I have brought to the fore above, in regard to musical imagery, and so I will not repeat it here. Nevertheless, it could be useful to briefly consider the scientific dimension of the method. For example, Clement refers to four branches of physics, or natural philosophy: science as research into what and how things are; the theoretical science of the species and categories, both general and particular; the science of relations between things and their connection to the whole, or the universe; and what we could call noetic science, which includes the invisible aspect of reality towards a fuller understanding (*Stromateis* 2.17.76.2). This effort to develop a method of natural contemplation places him among the pioneers of science in Late Antiquity (Costache 2021, pp. 129–30; Scott 1991, pp. 106–7).

I could not find a single passage where Clement says upfront that scientific enquiry and the theological interpretation complement each other, but his recurrent references to both denote an interdisciplinary cast of mind. The same can be inferred from his preferred Old Testament examples, Abraham and Moses (*Stromateis* 1.23.153.2–5; 4.6.40.3), whom he understood as both trained in the classical curricular disciplines and steeped in theological knowledge (Costache 2021, pp. 113, 117–18, 122–25; Rizzerio 1996, pp. 150–81). Especially his depiction of Abraham is relevant, as the patriarch, in Clement's rewriting of the story, progressed from astronomy to theology—"becoming a sage and a God-lover instead of a naturalist"—without abandoning the scientific study of nature (*Stromateis* 5.1.8.5–6;

6.10.80.3). In short, Clement's method of natural contemplation advances from grasping natural phenomena with scientific rigor to interpreting reality in ecclesial fashion to viewing the cosmos theologically, from the divine vantage point. Contemplation from the divine viewpoint is the province of the holy person (Costache 2021, pp. 128–35). While Origen appears to have been aware of Clement's step-by-step approach to things, and definitely shared in his conviction that the contemplation of nature requires holiness (Crouzel 1985, pp. 139–40, 160), he was less interested in incorporating scientific information into his method (Costache 2021, pp. 157–60). What matters, at this stage, is that the early Christian methods of nature contemplation marked an important step forward towards an optimistic stance in regard to the world.

2.4. Christian Natural Philosophy

Clement's more systematic approach to nature contemplation, as well as Theophilus of Antioch's (d. *ca* 180) earlier attempt at engaging Genesis 1 in polemical conversation with ancient natural philosophy (Louth 2020, pp. 69–71; Louth 2009, p. 43), set the tone for later developments. Several fourth-century Christian theologians, among whom the most prominent are Basil of Caesarea (d. *ca* 379) and Gregory of Nyssa (d. *ca* 395), went beyond this contemplative integration of perspectives by venturing into the land of natural philosophy. Both worked towards what can be called a Christian cosmology, though their intentions might have been more complex than this. While this cosmology developed against the backdrop of Scriptural exegesis (both authors wrote commentaries on the Genesis narrative of Creation) and polemical stances (both had undertaken to prove the superiority of Christian cosmology to other representations of reality), the sense that they enjoyed researching the natural world as scientists is inescapable (Costache 2021, pp. 223–41, 292–97, 309–26; Karamanolis and Schwartz 2008; Louth 2020, pp. 72–79).

That this is so transpires, for example, through Basil's sense that where Scripture remains silent, the reader should fill the gaps in the account of the universe's order by drawing upon external knowledge, namely, the available sciences. In his words,

> When he (namely, Moses) said, "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth", he passed over in silence many things, such as water, air, and fire, out of which (created beings) happen to be produced. All these (elements) which completed the cosmos obviously existed, beyond any doubt, but the story left them out so that our mind can exercise its skills by inferring the rest from little pointers. (*Homilies on the Hexaemeron* [ed. Giet (SC 26)] 2.3.14–19).

This passage brings to the fore Basil's implicit conviction that the natural sciences have their role to play in our quest for understanding the universe. The reader of Genesis is supposed to draw on various sources of knowledge in order to reach a comprehensive view of the cosmos, especially when the Scriptures remain silent. In turn, Gregory applied a double interpretation to the same narrative, showing that the reader can discern a theological dimension—largely confined to the first verse—and then a human perspective that relies upon the sciences and organizes the items in logical sequence. His favorite illustration of the two dimensions was the diffusion of light, a natural phenomenon (*An Apology for the Hexaemeron* [ed. Drobner] 8–9, 64–74), which he articulated into what elsewhere I called Creation as a single event and as multiple events (Costache 2021, pp. 316–26). In short, theologically perceived, light and the universe are fully unified; when, however, they are gazed upon from a human perspective, they are a multitude of events and objects. The two perspectives complement each other in building a theory of everything, as it were, able to account for the whole and the parts.

Many early Christian thinkers showed similar interests in the cosmos and nature more broadly (see Lazaris 2016; Pelikan 1993; Wallace-Hadrill 1968), and so also did their Byzantine progeny (Costache 2015; Costache 2020; Lazaris 2020).

2.5. Transformations

While the short time frame under consideration here, from the first to the fifth century, is dwarfed by the longue durée of the past historical transitions Fletcher discusses, let alone Deep Time's aeons, I submit that the relevant developments can still be considered through a similar lens. Early and mediaeval Christians underwent successive transitions in regard to their view of the cosmos and, as we shall find out in the remaining part of this study, their own place within the world and experience of it. All this occurred under the pressure of internal and external factors, and at a swift pace. But speed should not be a problem for us. After all, we should expect transitions to occur at shorter and shorter intervals (Fletcher 2019, p. 178). And it appears that the main internal factor mentioned above—the quest for holiness, which amounts to a spiritual "spin" of human life and activity, to use another physical metaphor—proves to be a more effective catalyst of change than the economical, historical, social, and technological factors that caused earlier civilizational transitions. It is true, spiritual achievements are neither characteristic of large populations nor obvious on a grand scale; no wonder research in the area of environmental history does not pay attention to them (see Griffiths and Robin 1997; Jordan Heckscher 2013; Mauch and Robin 2014); they are not inconsequential either. It is to this matter that I now turn.

The positive appraisal of the cosmos discussed in the previous sections became increasingly dominant in the fourth century, after the Romans ceased persecuting the Church. This is the major contextual factor that facilitated the next shift—or perhaps merely made possible its unhindered manifestation. Specifically, building on the positive presuppositions discussed in the foregoing, Christians realized the significance of their presence in the world, their capacity and duty to interact with it creatively, even before the Roman change of policies.

To return for a moment to *Diognetus*, we find there the stunning assertion that "Christians are in the world what the soul is in the body" (6.1). This is to say that they infuse life into the world the way the soul keeps the body alive. Related to this, several lines later the anonymous writer daringly suggests that Christians contribute to the stability of the universe. Textually, "they preserve the cosmos" in existence (ibid., 6.7). The claim is audacious—perhaps more than the usual definitions of anthropic cosmology, where the parameters of the universe are conditioned for ("the universe must have those properties which allow life to develop within it at some stage in its history") and by ("observers are necessary to bring the universe into being") humankind's existence (Barrow and Tipler 1986, pp. 15–22). Thus, despite being marginalized and persecuted, Christians are the agents of Christ the Logos, the *Pantokrator*, working alongside him for the wellbeing of the world. Said otherwise, metaphorically, in light of my earlier note, they are fishes, working together with the fish, Jesus Christ, ΙΧΘΥΣ, under the new zodiacal age of Pisces. *Diognetus* does not explain how Christians perform this cosmic service, but the fact that no explanation is given indicates a known fact, at least among the members of that community.

The clarification of how Christians might contribute to the stability of the universe comes, indirectly, from Origen, who reiterated this stance. He pointed out several times that, as William Rusch (2009, pp. 321–23) shows, believers' spiritual endeavors amount to an efficient prayer by which they invoke God's healing power over the Creation. The idea was not new. Already Justin Martyr (d. *ca* 165), again without providing an explanation, asserted that the prayers of Christians sustain the world in existence (*Second Apology* [eds. Minns and Parvis] 7.1). Echoes of this view reverberate throughout the early Christian tradition (Costache 2021, pp. 45–48), for example in Serapion of Thmuis (d. *ca* 362), Gregory the Theologian (d. *ca* 389), and John Climacus. Specifically, Serapion referred to the prayers of Egyptian monks as enabling the stability of the earthly ecosystem (*Letter to the Monks* [trans Herbel]); Climacus mentioned the "energy" of prayer as the "support of the world" (*Ladder of Divine Ascent* [ed Patr. Graec. vol. 88] 28); while Gregory believed that his reconstituted community brought back to life the city of Constantinople, which was spiritually dead (*Concerning His Own Life* [ed. White (Camb. Med. Class. 6] 583–91). Against this backdrop, the assertion of *Diognetus* regarding Christians' efficient presence

presupposes that the virtuous life—especially its ascetic, contemplative, and prayerful dimensions—has an environmental and cosmic impact. It is the waves of virtue, or holy living, that render the presence of Christians into an effective factor, environmentally and cosmically.

The transformative and impactful dimension of the quest for holiness comes to the fore. This is one of the most important contributions of the early Christian tradition, so far little researched, and of immediate relevance to my topic.

The above and other authors were aware of the ontological and cosmological significance of living a holy life. It appears that what they had in mind was no common activity, whether under the guise of prayer for the world or some undertaking pertaining to environmental management. It is true that care for the natural environment—especially for animals, including wild and supposedly dangerous ones—is abundantly documented in Patristic sources (Costache 2016; Keselopoulos 2001; Schaefer 2009, pp. 149–64). Nevertheless, from Justin and the author of *Diognetus* to John Climacus and beyond, Patristic wisdom alludes to processes that unfold in the background of things visible—the quantum level of reality, if you will—a kind of mystical influence exercised by the presence of spiritually advanced people, akin to the workings of divine activity in the universe. For the Logos of God works in the infrastructure of reality, not at the surface. For instance, Clement talks about the Logos' active presence in terms of a fundamental song—*cantus firmus*—that permeates everywhere, establishing, shaping, and transforming the universe.[4] Later Christian authors and Byzantine iconography[5] depict holy persons in like manner, namely, making a positive dent in the fabric of reality, existentially, environmentally, and cosmically. Hagiographical accounts show the saints defying whatever we think we know of human nature and this world, revealing aspects of nature which most people ignore. Evidence of such experiences has been accumulating in history, causing wonder to confessedly agnostic thinkers of our age (Eire 2023). No wonder the same transformed people were able of surprising, incredible feats. For example, the early monastic writers mentioned wild animals behaving unexpectedly tamely around the saints (Chryssavgis 2003, pp. 85–87; Costache 2016, pp. 30–31, 34–36; Theokritoff 2009, pp. 93–154). Later, on a grander scale, Maximus the Confessor depicted the remaking of the universe in humankind's image and likeness, provided humankind remakes itself in the image and likeness of God (Costache 2015, pp. 381–85, 388–90). But one of the best illustrations of this experience undoubtedly remains Symeon the New Theologian's, who described a wholly transfigured universe, transformed in proportion to the existential or internal changes the saints underwent. As a result, his eschatological universe is diaphanous, embodied light (*The First Ethical Discourse* [ed. Darrouzès (SC 122]) 4–7). These witnesses point to one conclusion, that is, internal changes lead to accelerated transformations of the world, from the immediate natural environment to the cosmos at large. The prospect is astonishing. But to grasp the contours of the early Christian and mediaeval view of reality and of inhabiting the world is impossible without considering it.

While *Diognetus* does not connect holiness and the cosmic agency of Christians, at least not explicitly, later sources, as we have seen just above, make plain that significant changes occur when people walk on the path of holy life. These changes are internal or existential, the direct outcome of people's proximity to God (Foltz 2014, pp. 3–6, 11–12, 20, 135–36). They go from physiological to morphological to functional (Costache 2022b, pp. 66–73) and, relevant here, affect the matrix of reality, the universe itself. In the case of holy persons, the saints—to paraphrase Barrow and Tipler (1986, pp. 22–23)—the quantum signature of conscious life becomes already obvious, long before the far future state of the universe. The saints seem to be tapping into the atomic weak force—"its ability to transform fundamental particles into each other", as Lewis and Barnes (2019, p. 197) describe it—in order to (re)make the universe. And while these two (ibid., p. 209) do not list the saints among the "other forces" at work in the background of cosmic reality, evidence points to their impactful presence. The saints are, by all intents and purposes, Fletcher's universe makers.

3. Conclusions

The early Christians and their mediaeval progeny experienced in a very short time frame a series of shifts of attitude with regard to representing the cosmos and their own place within it, whose causes are both internal and external. These changes of perception—from fearing the world to embracing it and on to desiring to know it—paved the way for a spiritual transition, in the sense Fletcher uses this term, but having at its core the human person's existential transformation in the presence of God and without the aid of technology. For the spiritual life is free of technological aids (Maximus, *Ambigua* [ed. Constas, vol. 1] 45.5). We have seen above that this change leaves physical and cosmic footprints. What all this amounts to is that Fletcher's long time frame needed by a technological society to reach the threshold of the fourth transition can be achieved in a heartbeat, as it were; history can go to warp speed in circumstances related to the human person's inner transformation.

Before I finish, however, I must ask one question: Were these changes, or transitions, perceived as such by the Patristic thinkers themselves? I would respond in the affirmative. To give two classical examples, Gregory the Theologian, for instance, remarked on three shifts in humankind's history, intellectual and existential in nature, which he called "earthquakes". These were transitioning from polytheism to monotheism, from monotheism to the Trinitarian faith, and from the current state of flux to the completion of all things at the end time (Oration [ed. Gallay. SC 250] 31.25; see Baghos 2013). This is to say that shifts in mentality lead to ontological changes. In the same vein, Maximus the Confessor mentioned two great phases of history, namely, the aeons that prepared the incarnation, for God to become a human being, and the aeons reserved for deification, for humankind to become divine (*Responses to Thalassius* [ed. Laga and Steel. (Corp. Christ. Ser. Graec. 7)] 22.4–65; Wood 2022). Furthermore, Maximus, in the footsteps of Clement and the author known as Dionysius the Areopagite, described the same process by way of a threefold schema that applied to both rational and irrational beings, all of which are called to future glory in the form of the third stage (Maximus, *Chapters on Love* [ed. Ceresa-Gastaldo (Verb. Sen. 3)] 3.25.1–12; see Costache 2017). In this light, behind the scenes of Fletcher's external processes of technological advancement and land management hide deeper undercurrents of the human experience, which are equally impactful, though their outcomes might not be immediately obvious. Either way, Fletcher's interdisciplinary concept of transitions provides structure for our grasp of Patristic cosmology, understood as ways of representing the cosmos and of inhabiting the world.

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Notes

1 Typical for the Byzantine representation of reality through the lens of church architecture is Maximus the Confessor's "symbolic contemplation" in *The Mystagogy* (ed. Boudignon [Corp. Christ. Ser. Graec. 69]), 2.210–57 (see on this, briefly, Louth 2023, pp. 288–89).

2 E.g., "the universe is a symphony of strings; and the Mind of God can be viewed as cosmic music vibrating through hyperspace" (Kaku 2006, p. 356).

3 See Philo's reference to "the lyre with seven strings, which is analogous to the chorus of the planets" (*On the Creation* [ed. Cohn, vol. 1] 126.3–4).

4 In Clement's words, "this pure song, the support of the whole and the harmony of all, brought this universe to a harmonious measure by expanding from centres to boundaries and from extremities to things in the middle" (*Exhortation* 1.5.2).

5 See, for instance, the transfigured landscapes presented here: https://www.betsyporter.com/landscape/ (accessed on 6 August 2023).

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Essay

The Origins of the Christian Idea of Trinity: Answering Jewish Charges of Heresy; Exhorting Pagans against Polytheism; Countering False Gnostics

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Abstract: In this essay I explain that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was first developed as a response to Jewish claims of Christian apostasy and polytheism. At the beginning of Christianity, most of its converts were observant Jews. The Jewish authorities took steps to reclaim their lost sheep and to stem the flow of departures. Their primary intellectual ammunition in that effort was the claim that the Christians were polytheists, because they claimed to believe in two Gods–the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Christians' apostasy was manifest by simple referring to the Mosaic commandment that righteous Israel should have only one God. This Jewish accusation of polytheism also neatly answered the inflammatory Christian charge that the Jews had crucified God and raised significant doubt about their claims of a special resurrection. The doctrine of the Trinity answered all those criticisms. God and Jesus Christ together were the one true God. But the nature of that oneness took some time to work out, and it is within a process of contending with pagan philosophical arguments and intra-Christian heretical positions, that a Christian doctrine of the Trinity begins to congeal. The work of Ante-Nicene Fathers—Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Novatian, and others—whose voices we allow to be heard below—contain a trajectory of ideas that explain how the tri-unity is expressed in the momentous Creeds of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (381).

Keywords: Patristics; Trinity; Heresy; Judaism; Paganism; Christianity; one substance; homoousios

1. Introduction

It is beyond the scope of this essay to explain how the idea of monotheism became the established doctrine of Judaism by the time of the coming of Christ. In any case, I have done that elsewhere (Thompson 2019, pp. 13–42). Different sects had developed in Israel after the Israelite (re-)possession of their earlier homeland in Canaan, but all of those sects were united in their recognition of the laws given through Moses, including the prohibition against worshipping other gods. The prophecies of a Messiah to come grew over the centuries, but Jesus of Nazareth did not satisfy the criteria in those prophecies set out for the Israelites remaining in Judah by his time, primarily because he had suffered an ignominious death and had not redeemed the nation from its occupied status. The suggestion that Jesus was not only the promised Messiah, but that he was also the Son of God was blasphemous, if not seditious, since it threatened the established religious and political order. The claim that he had been resurrected after his crucifixion was exasperating since it unravelled Jesus' death as an end to the disturbance, and there was no obvious and tidy way to shut down the new claims.

In this essay I first emphasize the charge that the Christians were polytheists became the central plank in Jewish intellectual and theological efforts to deny the ongoing claims of Jesus' Messiahship and resurrection. The accusation of Christian polytheism also answered the inflammatory claim that in crucifying Jesus, the Jews had killed their God and rightful King. The reason why the polytheism charge became the most effective anti-Christian

weapon of the Jews, was because it squashed Christian claims of Jesus' Messiahship, Godhood and resurrection all at the same time. If there was only one God, which was theology in which all the original Christians were deeply indoctrinated, then Jesus could not be He. And if Jesus was not God as he claimed, then the Messiahship claim was also fraudulent, as was the claim of resurrection which no-one but his biased followers claimed to have witnessed. It was an effective and foundational challenge because it was so rhetorically simple and difficult to rebut. Simple denial of the polytheism charge was tantamount to an admission that Jesus was not divine after all, and it was complicated to explain his oneness with the Father when every Jewish schoolboy had been taught that it was sinful to acknowledge more than one God.

Anders Runesson has suggested that interaction between Christians and Jews was generally positive between the first and fifth centuries, though he conceded that even if it is fictive, Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* was based on a real issue between the two different religions (Runesson 2017, pp. 250–55). But in the same volume on *The Early Christian World* (edited by Philip Esler), James Aitken observed that the Jews treated the Christians in the same way as the Samaritans, and there was a curse on heretics (*minim*) because of the desirability of a unified nation, and Aitken conceded that "there appear[ed to be] a genuine Jewish propaganda against Christians" to which Justin Martyr responded in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (Aitken 2017, p. 88). Claudia Setzer's work on *Jewish Responses to Early Christians* probes much further. She traces both positive and negative Jewish reactions to Christians from Jews between 30 and 150 C.E. through New Testament scripture (and particularly the Epistles of Paul) and into the writings of the Ante-Nicene fathers. She considered the existence of the *Birkat ha-Minim* curse in rabbinic literature as "a general wish for the destruction of heretics" but save in the Gospel of John (Setzer 1994, p. 89 refers to John 9:22; 12:42–43; 16:2–3) she found 'no evidence' that the curse was used for the permanent expulsion of people from the synagogue, and therefore she does not consider it was significant evidence of Jewish persecution of believers in Jesus Christ (Setzer 90), noting that some commentators think Justin Martyr's commentary about this curse is biased (141, 160). Her observations allow that "law-observant Jewish Christians might have been acceptable to some Jews throughout this entire period" (182), but that generally speaking "the vast majority of reactions to Christianity attributed to the Jews are negative" (ibid.). Those reactions ranged from verbal antagonism (65, 138–142 referring to Acts 2:13, 15 and 18:5–6; 19:9), through the disciplinary expulsion from the synagogue, floggings (reported by Paul in 2 Cor 11:24–26), to spontaneous mob violence, the use of official Jewish and Roman channels for legal prosecution, and even murder (Setzer 1994, pp. 58–74, 87–93, 143). But of the three modern authors just discussed who note Jewish antipathy towards Christians, none have considered how the doctrine of the Trinity began in and developed from this context.

While admittedly the Trinity doctrine was probably not a 'conversion tool' like the claims of Jesus' Messiahship and resurrection, I argue that it certainly answered Jewish theological criticism and protected the convictions of the early Christian converts. I explain the development of this doctrine in four Parts.

In Section 2, I briefly review the antipathy that existed between the early Christians and the majority of Jews who did not join the new Christian movement. In Section 3, I outline the development of the idea of the Trinity in the early Church (Ante-Nicene) Fathers. I do not treat every nuance of that development, but I identify the germs of the idea that were postulated by Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, and Clement of Alexandria in the second century A.D. In Section 4, I spend more time with Tertullian and Origen because these latter two and particularly Tertullian are considered to be the authors of orthodox Trinitarian doctrine. But as that discussion reveals, Tertullian's ideas are uncontroversial save for his innovative idea 'one substance'- that the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit went not just to purpose, but also in some way which he could not explain, to substance (*una substantia* = one and the same underlying Being). Excepting this feature, the more mysterious/mystical aspects of Trinitarianism come later in Saint

Augustine. That is because Tertullian did not write just to rebut the Jewish theological challenge that had subsided by the third century: he also wrote to rebut various heretical ideas about Jesus and God that were growing out of the existing Trinitarian responses to the Jews. Though Origen disagreed with Tertullian's idea that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were somehow "of one substance," the Nicene bishops in their credal formulation of AD 325), did not, although what the Greek translation into *Homoousios* ("of the same essential Being") meant to any of them is not clear, and came to be a matter of ongoing debate (even to this day!)

In Section 5, I briefly survey the contributions of Irenaeus and his disciple Hippolytus (mainly from the second century) along with Novatian and Gregory of Thaumaturgus (in the third). I conclude that the Trinity doctrine was developed to answer insightful Jewish theological criticism that challenged the foundations of Christian faith. Rather than simply disavow their orthodox Jewish theological ancestry (as early Christians might have done if they had known that Christianity would numerically trump Judaism within three centuries), the post-Apostolic Christian Fathers tried to explain the divine Father/Son/Spirit relationship. While those explanations led some to excess, even those named as heretics remained convinced that Jesus was God and that he was one with the Father in a mysterious way not easily understood or explained by mortal man without divine help.

2. Early Conflict between Christians and Jews

I herewith briefly review the material in the writings of the pre-Nicene Fathers which confirm the Jewish evidence, found especially in the Talmud[s], that the Rabbis at the time of Christianity's advent considered Christians "bad men" or heretics (*Talmud Yerushalmi* [= *Jerusalem Talmud,* using Schwab ed.] 168). Orthodox Jewish antipathy towards Christianity had many levels, we need to realize, and theology was just one of the battlefields. The martyrdom of Stephen, Saul's crusade to rid the world of the Christian menace and the various intrigues to later discredit or eliminate him, are recorded Christian anecdotes that suggest that this war became a matter of life and death for both sides. For orthodox Jews living during the ministries of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the assertions of 'the Christians' (Acts 11:26) constituted 'heresy'; the perversion of the law of Moses, the doctrine of God and the Davidic Messiah into a Galilean cult that deified a Nazarene carpenter's son. Like all 'Reformations,' it was at first resisted as the rebellion of a charlatan. Heresy was treason and heretics (*minim*) or 'blasphemers' (*khilul*) were capitally punishable under rabbinical law (e.g., Mishnah: Sanhedrin 6:4; 7:5;10:1, 11:5–6; Talmud Bavli [= Babylonian Talmud, Davidson ed.] 26b:17) while among early Christians for the equivalent (note *hairetikos* in Tit. 3:16) only shunning was prescribed. Part of the Christian kerygma, of course, involved disparaging Rabbinism through the 'corrective' teachings that Jesus Christ had outlined in His Sermon on the Mount. The Law of Moses was about love, reconciliation and forgiveness–about brotherly kindness and quiet charity rather than ritual punishment for technical violations of the Oral Law and self-serving public religious observance to be seen of men (Jesus himself announcing this difference in Matt 23:23 implicitly referring to Hosea 6:6; 12:6 and Micah 6:8). The Rabbis defended their traditions with all the tools at their disposal and they turned blind eyes towards the excesses of their 'religious policers' who breached the Roman secular law by ferreting out many Christians to despatch them (most significantly, see Acts 7:57–8:1; Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaica* 20, 20).

At a theological level, the Rabbis' war was waged with doctrine and claims to orthodoxy. The Christians' deification of Jesus Christ (earliest in the hymn quoted by Paul in Phil. 2:16–11, with Hunter 1961, pp. 40–42) was exposed as a form of polytheism barely removed from the Roman practice of Caesar worship. And theologically, it was this charge of polytheism that stung the early Christians the most. Jewish monotheism had become their badge of civilization, honour and identity. Jewish monotheism distinguished the one true and living religion that was Judaism from the idolatry of the Greeks and Romans that accommodated every savage cult in the empire in the interests of a homogenized multicultural hedonism. Monotheism had become the Jewish badge of righteous

honour; a quiet yet very visible and self-serving emblem of peculiar but royal difference (see Frey et al. 2007).

At first, the Christians did not know how to respond to the derisive epithets that were hurled at them. To be called Christian, was at first not a term of respect, but it became so as these mostly converted Jews found a familiar spirit in their persecuted peculiarity (I Peter 12:9; yet cf. Deut 14:2). But an adequate intellectual response to the charge of polytheism took longer to develop since there was no simple answer to the charge that Christians were just one more example of polytheist infidels.

Theological Battle Lines

In his twelfth century magnum opus, the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides wrote that "Jesus the Nazarene. . .[was] a greater stumbling block" (*Hilkhot Melakhim* 11:10–12) to the Jews than anything else in their history. The Messiah was supposed to redeem, save and gather Israel, but this would-be Messiah had caused other nations to scatter, humiliate and destroy her and to replace the Torah rather than to strengthen the commandments.

Maimonides' work was retrospective. Christoph Ochs (2013, p. 2) captures the original Christian theological problem more exactly when he writes that the identity of Jesus was a paradox for the early Christians:

> It would have been far easier to abandon the intellectual embarrassment of a divine-human Christ in favor of a purely human or purely divine Jesus.

Ochs observes that "the question of how Jesus came to be understood as divine is much debated" but that the belief was well established by the end of the second century (2–3), and this belief is what has taken "center stage over the discussion of his Messiahship" (5). Quoting Michael Whyshogrod (1996, pp. 195, 197–98), Ochs says that

> [t]he divinity of Jesus has been rejected by all Jewish (and Muslim) authors as incompatible with true monotheism and [as] possibly idolatrous (Ochs 5).

He notes Robert Chazan's agreement that the Christian doctrine of Jesus' incarnation receives "the harshest Jewish criticism of all" (Chazan 2004, p. 349). That is because the Christian doctrine of incarnation is central to "the definition of God's nature and holiness" (Ochs, 6). Jewish polemicists argued that it belittled God to suggest he had entered into a woman's body to be "born into the world like other men" (Ochs 2013, p. 6, citing Lasker 1977, pp. 107–8). For Christians this humility did not detract from God's dignity at all but rather ennobled Him (see earliest Phil. 2:7–8), yet for Jews, the very suggestion was a crime of *lèse majesté*, the greatest heresy of all and thus a treason.

The point of Ochs' work is to show that the New Testament Gospel of Matthew was written as "the gospel for the Jews." Matthew wrote to convince Jews from their own Old Testament scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth was Jesus Christ (right from the start in 1:1a, 23) or in other words, their long-awaited Messiah. But Ochs also explains that the Jews used the Gospel interpretations of the Old Testament scriptures against the Christians—as for example, when they answered the Christian interpretations of the word "virgin" in Isaiah 7–9, to explain contextually that the words from which it was translated could also mean "maid" or "young woman."

Ochs says that the Jewish scholars "were not merely defensive, [but]. . .actively sought out. . .debate with Christians" (Ochs 16). On the one hand, the Christians used Jewish scripture as a proselyting tool to win Jewish converts for Christ, and on the other hand, the Jews would use the 'faulty' Christian interpretations to win back their misguided brothers and sisters to the true faith of their fathers. Just as the Christians developed interpretations of the Old Testament to explain the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, so scholarly Jews made themselves familiar with the Christian New Testament Gospels and Letters for their own polemical purposes (Ochs 17–18). While this process developed over centuries and became very complicated and detailed during the Middle Ages, it began during the early Christian era. As Marvin Pate (2011, p. 120) writes,

> the Ante-Nicene church fathers had to assume the role of apologists refuting the claims made against Christianity by Judaism on the one hand and by the Roman Empire on the other hand. Judaism, with its tenacious commitment to monotheism, accused Christianity of polytheism – worshipping two gods (Christ and God) and even three gods (the Trinity).

Pate says the Christians were in trouble with the Romans because they denied the imperial cult which upheld Caesar as the Lord "through which all religions derived their meaning." For first century Jews, the Christian claims that Christ was divine simply contradicted monotheism. Pate says that when Jesus referred to himself as "the great I am" (Mark 14:61–64), the High Priest Caiaphas rent his priestly garment because Jesus had committed blasphemy by making himself equal with God. More cautious because of the risk of offence to the Jews and the death penalty under sectarian law, Paul and John were both at pains to explain that "Christ's deity did not compromise the *Shema*, Israel's great confession of monotheism" (referring to Deut 6:4 as honoured by Paul in 1 Cor 8:4–6 and perhaps by John in Revelation 4–5). This Jewish antipathy towards Christianity's doctrine of Jesus' divinity continued into the second and third centuries and is manifested in the early Patristic period by Samaritan -'Gentile' Justin Martyr (AD 100–166 AD) in his famous Dialogus (=*Dialogue with Trophy* [the Jew] (see *Ante-Nicene Fathers, The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, Coxe edn., vol. 1, pp. 194–270), probably written in Ephesus (Osborn 1973, pp. 6–8). Trypho's very Jewish accusation against Christianity is that 'if Jesus is God, then the Christians must be polytheists.' Justin responded much as Matthew had done in his gospel and by explaining among other arguments, that Jesus was the angel of the Lord–God–who appeared to Abraham, Jacob and Joshua ([chs.] 56, 58, 61, 128). But he did not use the language of the Trinity. Rather he explained that though Jesus Christ is divine ("light from the Sun," "fire from fire" [128]), He is not the same as the Lord God and is subject to Him (129; 141). For Justin Martyr, though Jesus is distinct from God in person, He is one with God in will because they have precisely the same purposes and because He does God's bidding as His subordinate (139–141).

Initially, the Christian response to the Jewish charge of polytheism was thematically that there was no polytheism. Jesus Christ and the Lord God (and for that matter, the Holy Spirit) were separate and distinct individuals who were united in all their purposes. As we shall see, the language of the Trinity was first used by Clement of Alexandria in the second century to explain this very specific kind of 'unity of purpose' (Roberts 1924, pp. 23–24), but Trinitarian doctrine was not 'maturely formulated' until late in the third century before the Councils at Nicaea (in 325) and Constantinople (381) settled it into a Creed that all Christians were called to affirm in conconcordance (Kelly 1960a, pp. 211–16; 301–4).

3. The Development of the Idea of Trinity

3.1. Justin Martyr

In the writings of Justin Martyr that have survived, he responded to official persecution of Christians on two fronts. In his *First Apology,* he sought to distinguish Christian theology and practice from the Jewish misinformation that was the cause of their persecution by the Roman authorities as seditious heretics. And, secondly, in his *Dialogue* (as above) he explained the different Jewish and Christian conceptions of God from their common Scriptures.

While we may wonder whether Justin was wise to criticize his Jewish theological cousins when he sought tolerance from the Roman secular lords over both religious groups, he clearly believed that the Jewish and Christian doctrines about God were distinct and different. For the Jews, there was only one God. For the Christians, the Maker of all things and his Son Jesus Christ, were separate and distinct but were in one purpose. Justin's understanding of the Christian doctrine of God has an ironical side, since the Christian Councils in the fourth century sought to re-align the doctrine of God in the two faiths so that both had only one God. Justin Martyr's teaching that God and Christ were distinct might appear like an exercise in 'pagan' philosophical speculation (Engelhardt 1878, pp. 127–31;

cf. Lebreton 1910, p. 585a), but he is also accepted as an authentic Ante–Nicene Father of Christianity and his understanding of the Christian doctrine of God in the second century is largely accepted as assisting in the development of that doctrine. Like the Apostle Paul and others in the New Testament before him (e.g., 2 Thess. 2:3; I Cor 11:18; Gal 1:6; 1 John 2:18; 4:1; Jude) the concerns to keep apostolic teaching are clear but the arguments are not always authoritatively resolved doctrinally, and the extant writings of Justin 'do not give a well-round picture' to clinch later expectations of theological impeccability (Quasten 1950, p. 207).

3.2. Justin's Apologia Prima [First Apology] to the Romans

Justin wrote his *First Apology* (=[1] *Apologia pro Christianis*) to defend Christianity before the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius his family, Senate and counsellors (for easy reference, see Coxe edn. vol. 1, pp. 163–87). Writing as a philosopher in Rome in the 150s (Barnard 1967, p. 19), he demanded that the Emperor order a judicial investigation into the conduct and faith of the Christians so that "traditional opinions" caused by "irrational impulse or evil rumours" about them might be put to rest ([chs.] 1–3). This context did not require substantial discussion of the nature and differences between Christian and Jewish doctrines, but Justin explained the doctrine of Christ thoroughly to rebut misinformation that might have come to the Emperor from other sources. He denied the charge that Christians were atheists (6), and noted that similar mischaracterization of the teaching of Socrates had led to his "death, as an atheist and a profane person [who was]. . .introducing new divinities" (5). Christians were god-fearing patriots taught to obey the established secular authorities. Their doctrine that Jesus Christ was born the Son of God, ought not be the subject of persecution since Roman religion also held that Jupiter had sons (21). But Justin differentiated the Christian idea of God from that of the Jews so that the Romans might understand their differences and treat them separately and respectfully. He said that the Jews worshipped a "nameless God" who spoke to Moses, whereas Christians worshipped Jesus as the Christ or Messiah and as the Son of God (63). Neither Justin's denigration of Jewish theology, nor the reasons why he so wrote to Caesar are important in our context, but his blunt description of their differences in theology, are. The Jews believed that there was only one God, not two as Justin asserted for the Christians. This was the point of difference in their theology that Justin wanted the Emperor and his advisers to understand. For Justin, this difference proved that the Jews were not really "acquainted with the Father [of the Universe]" because they did not know that He had a Son (ibid.).

3.3. Writing to the Jews (the Dialogue with Trypho)

While there is debate as to whether Trypho was a real Jewish rabbi (such as Tarphon of Ephesus, so, e.g., Kiefer 2012) or a fictional character Justin invented to present his message (e.g., Setzer 1994, p. 215), no one questions the authenticity of Justin's reply or theology.

Justin's core message was that there is no polytheism in Christianity. Let us explore his arguments further than we have already. He discussed Moses' account of Abraham's experience "under the oak in Mamre" (Gen 13:18):

> He who appeared to Abraham. . .is God, sent with two angels in His company to judge Sodom by Another who remains ever in the super-celestial places, invisible to all men, holding personal intercourse with none, [and] whom [Justin] believe[s] to be the Maker and Father of all things ([ch.] 56).

But Trypho and his colleagues disagreed with Justin's assertion that these passages proved "that there is any other God or Lord, or that the Holy Spirit says so, besides the Maker of all things." Justin replied, as Pate has observed above, that there is "another God and Lord subject to the Maker of all things; who is also called an Angel, because He announces to men whatsoever the Maker of all things–above whom there is no other God–wishes to announce to them" (ibid.). Again, Trypho does not accept Justin's interpretation and says rather that God "appeared to [Abraham] before the vision of the three," and that

the "three whom the Scripture calls men, were angels; two of them sent to destroy Sodom, and one to announce the joyful tidings to Sarah, that she would have a son" (ibid.).

In Justin's account of the dialogue, he tries to explain again and in more detail. He says that this one angel that Trypho had said was sent to proclaim the joyful tidings of Sarah's pregnancy with Isaac, returns and is called God in the scriptural text when He counsels Abraham to accept Sarah's wish that Hagar and her son should leave lest there be a contest over entitlement to Abraham's inheritance. While Trypho concedes that Justin has shown him that the "angel" who originally announced Sarah's pregnancy was indeed the Creator of all things manifest in angelic or human form, Justin is not satisfied with Trypho's concession and tries to show him from the Psalms, that the angel/god/man who made the pregnancy announcement to Abraham is distinct from God, the Maker of all things, though not in will (ibid.). Justin's efforts to persuade Trypho and his companions from the Psalms that there is more than one being called God in the Hebrew scriptures, are no more successful than his explanation of Abraham's experience under the oaks of Mamre.

What is clear from all Justin Martyr's efforts to persuade Trypho, is that Justin believed that God and Christ are separate and distinct beings, but that they are unified in their will and purpose. Christ does the bidding of the Father or Maker of all things. For Justin, Jesus is the God or Lord "who received commission from the Lord who (remains) in the heavens" (ibid.).

In the continuing dialogue, Justin and Trypho discuss what the Hebrew Scriptures about the visit to Abraham at Mamre mean when they say that all three who met Abraham ate the food he set before them, and they discuss without any final agreement, God's dealing with Jacob and Moses (125–129). Justin insists that the "God who appeared to Abraham, and is minister to God the Maker of all things" (56), is Jesus Christ who was "born of the Virgin, [and] became man, of like passions with all" (85) of us. For Justin, Jesus Christ was begotten of God the Maker before all other creatures and is variously called by the Holy Spirit, "the Glory of the Lord,,.. the Son,. . . Wisdom,. . . an Angel,. . .God. . . [and] Lord and Logos" (61). When Jesus Christ "appeared in human form to Joshua the son of Nave (Nun), "He call[ed] Himself Captain" (ibid.). "He can be called by all those names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was begotten by the Father by an act of will; just as we see happening among ourselves" (ibid.) when we will to do something.

Justin also cites the words "let Us make man after our image and likeness" as another argument in favour of his separate identification of the Father and the Son (ibid. 62). For Justin, God the Maker, did not say this to Himself. That is, unlike the English Monarch, Elizabeth II, the God who is Maker of all things does not use the pronoun 'we' when speaking only of Himself. When explaining the creation with the "Let Us" words, the God who is Maker of all things "conversed with someone who was numerically distinct from Himself" (ibid.).

According to Justin's account, after this explanation, Trypho conceded that Justin had proven a separation between Father and Son (or Angel) in the Hebrew scriptures and they then went on to discuss Christ's incarnation in the flesh. Justin's interpretation of the words "let us make man after our image and likeness" from Genesis is different from that of the Rabbi Samlaï discussed in the Jerusalem Talmud (Thompson 2019, pp. 80–82). But it is not necessary to try and reconcile these different interpretations. Writing before the Christian Councils of the fourth century AD, Justin Martyr believed that God, Christ and perhaps, the Holy Spirit, were separate and distinct.

But Justin Martyr was not the only Ante-Nicene Father who wrote about the Christian doctrine of God in the second century A.D., and the others did not agree with him on all points.

3.4. Theophilus (with Athenagoras)

Theophilus is reputed to have been the sixth Bishop of Antioch from *ca.* AD 168 until his death between 181 and 185 (see Coxe edn. vol. 2, p. 88; Rogers 2000, pp. 4–14). He

is recognized as the first person to have used the term "Trinity" of the Christian God in written literature. But his mention was brief. Thus:

> In like manner also the three days which were before the luminaries, are types of the Trinity (*trias*) of God, and His Word, and His wisdom. And the fourth is the type of man, who needs light, that so there may be God, the Word, wisdom, man.
>
> (*Apologia ad Autolycum* [= *Apology to Autolycus*] Bk 2 [otherwise known as the *Syngramma*] [sect.] 15)

The context surrounding this quotation does not help us understand what Theophilus meant. In discussion with his pagan friend Autolycus, he seems to be comparing a Trinity of God, the Word, and Wisdom, to the first three Days of the Biblical story of Creation, to confirm the Christian God is the repository of Reason and Wisdom (two attributes of God earlier introduced at 1.3–4). Although Christian commentators have suggested that Theophilus was referring to God, Christ (the Word) and the Holy Spirit (Wisdom) as the Trinity in what is now the classically understood sense, it is not clear in Theophilus' other writing or in contemporary literature that these references would have been taken at the time to signify the triune Christian God. Other surviving second century literature does not use the word Trinity. The most that can be said, is that Theophilus spoke of only one God. While Theophilus' God is not separated from Christ or the Holy Spirit (the latter extolled as the Inspirer of prophets [2.9]), Christ and the Holy Spirit are not mentioned and not in such a way that we can infer that Theophilus saw them as one and the same Christian God whom he constantly upholds. The one possible reference to Christ as God is oblique; when Theophilus asseverates that God "made all things out of nothing. . .[and] willed to make man by whom He might be known," He does so with inside assistance; that is, through "His own Word [Logos] internal within His own bowels, [He] begat Him [the Logos], emitting Him along with His own Wisdom before all things. . .as a Helper (Grk. *hupourgon*) in the things that were created by Him" (2.10). In this way Theophilus is exegeting and revising John 1:1. (Rogers 2000, p. 96), not deferring to Plato's demiurge (*Timaeus* 30D) but with Word and Wisdom looking to be subordinate Agents of God (cf. Marcus 1963).

Even while discussing the separate emanation of the Word from God (and by implication of Wisdom as the Holy Spirit) (cf. also 2.22), Theophilus basically retreats to the idea that there is but one God. He says that "He is called the beginning or governing principle (*archē*) . . . being Spirit of God, and governing principle and wisdom, and power of the highest, [which] came down upon the prophets" (2.10). To counter his pagan friend's polytheism, Theophilus repeats that God created all things including Man, and while he mentions the use of "Us" in Genesis 1:26, 27 (2.13–18), he makes no comment on the significance of this plural pronoun (unlike Justin and other apologists of the early Christian era). However, for Theophilus, God is clearly unembodied, and he clarifies that talk of God walking in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8) is simply figurative (2.22). The essence of Theophilus' message to his idol worshipping friend, is that Christianity must be true because it relies upon Jewish history, and because this background is earlier and can be traced by its distortions in Greek literature, and because pagan "writers who spoke of the multiplicity of gods came at length back to the doctrine of the unity of God" (2.38). Interestingly, Theophilus is making a defensibly Jewish point in the end, suitable also in exchanges with unconverted Hebrews: there was only one Creator; Moses had temporal priority over Hesiod and of course Plato (Greek-writing Jews such as Philo Judaeus and Josephus had argued as much); and if we find in Theophilus an allowance for the 'extension' of God in Word and Wisdom, had not Philo already been teaching this in advance in Alexandria? (see, e.g., Dodd 1963, pp. 54–73). But in his *Apology* Theophilus' attention is on convincing the Gentiles, not fending off Jewish accusations. "Theophilus takes a very similar approach to a near contemporary apologist, Athenagoras of Athens (*flor*. 170s) who answered common pagan accusations that Christians were atheists by declaring "we acknowledge one God," indeed "astonishingly speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

. . . in union and distinction" yet without using the term *trias* (*Apologia* 10; cf. Quasten 1950, p. 233).

3.5. Clement of Alexandria

A generation after Justin, Theophilus and Athenagoras, we discover in Clement (*ca*. 150–215), Athenian-born[?] founder-figure of a famed Christian School of Theology and Philosophy in Alexandria (Osborn 1957, pp. 3–7), and in remnants of some early liturgies linked to him, usages seeming to carry the classic, by-now modern meaning of the word Trinity. But since they come so soon after Justin and his stress that the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit was one of purpose only, we must be careful not to impose later paradigms on what Clement meant. The phrase "Holy Trinity" appears in his miscellaneous writings or *Stromata* (Grk, *Stromateis)* (see Coxe edn., vol. 2, pp. 299–568). In Book 5, in the long chapter 14 (Stählin edn., vol. 2, pp. 390–420) and in the context of his case for saying the Greeks had plagiarized their history from the Hebrews (as Theophilus also maintained beforehand), what Clement wrote of the Trinity when adjudging that Plato's coupling of the "Father and Son" was in completely Hebrew terms. He first quoted Plato to make his point, and comments on the mode of the great philosopher's thought

> in invoking by oath, with not illiterate gravity, and with all culture, the sister of gravity, God the author of all, and invoking Him by oath as the Lord, the Father of the Leader, and author; whom if we study with a truly philosophical spirit, we shall know (Stählin 395, cf. Plato, *Epistulae* 6).

Clement says that in Plato's address in *Timaeus* (written *ca*. 360 BC) he "evokes the creator, Father, speaking thus"

> Ye god of gods, of whom I am Father; and the Creator of your works (*Tim*. 41A)

and elsewhere

> Around the king of all, all things are, and because of Him are all things; and he [or that] is the cause of all good things; and around the second are the things second in order; and around the third, the third (*Epist*. 2).

Clement says that he

> understands [from Plato in these passages] nothing else than the Holy Trinity (Grk. *hagian triada*) to be meant; for the third is the Holy Spirit, and the Son is the second, by whom all things were made according to the will of the Father (Stählin 395).

Clement does not use the term "Trinity" again in the remaining works attributed to him. By itself, Clement's commentary is not very helpful since the Jews had become emphatic monotheists by this time. Yet when Clement suggests that Plato plagiarized the idea of Father and Son from the Jews, it appears that the Alexandrian believed a separation between Father and Son was already postulated in the theology of Judaism during Plato's lifetime.

If Clement was writing to explain and justify Christianity as a religion for educated Greeks and Romans in the late second century AD, and cited Plato (and other Greek philosophers) to prove concurrence between Greek philosophy and pre-Christian Jewish theology as part of his argument, his reference to the Trinity seems out of place. Not only was Jewish theology becoming thoroughly monotheistic in Plato's time, but the idea that it contained elements of Trinity seems misjudged or anachronistic. Even if Clement was arguing that the origins of Christian Trinitarian theology could be discerned by thoughtful Greeks in the philosophy they had developed from a Mosaic theology, this does not really explain the curious argument. Rather, what Clement's use of Trinity in the *Stromata* perhaps best shows is that Trinitarian language was *already commonplace* among the Christians of his time and so it was a natural part of his reasoning. But Clement does not explain what he meant when he wrote of the *hagia triada,* and we would have to say this particular referencing was ambiguous. For while it may mean that he saw three different aspects of God present in the creation accounts available to him, his words do not reveal whether he

believed that the Father and Son were separate beings, united only in their purposes, or whether they were more substantially united in the later Nicene sense (see also Osborn 1957, esp. 38–44).

In his pedagogical work (*Paedagogus*, roughly translated as 'the Instructor' or 'the Tutor') (see Coxe edn., vol. 2, pp. 209–96), Clement explained that Jesus Christ's primary role on earth was to be the teacher or pattern for all mankind. All Christians are Christ's children, chickens or sheep (ibid, pp. 209–15), and Christ was the guiding God of the Old Testament (1. 6–8). But once again, and probably because Clement was more concerned to explain Christianity to his Gentile contemporaries, he did not write enough to answer the question whether he believed that God and Christ were separate or substantially united. When he touched that issue writing to Gentiles, he was ambiguous. The following quotations demonstrate:

> [O]ur Instructor is like His Father God, whose Son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion; God in the form of Man, stainless, the minister of His Father's will, the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father's right hand, and with the form of God is God (1. 2).
>
> And Man has been proved to be loveable; consequently Man is loved by God. For how shall he not be loved for whose sake the only-begotten Son is sent from the Father's bosom (compare Theophilus' metaphor "bowels"), the Word of faith, the faith which is superabundant; the Lord Himself distinctly confessing and saying, "For the Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me"? (3 [with John 16:27]).

Quoting Isaiah, Clement wrote

> Here am I, and the children that God hath given me (5 [with Isa 8:18]).

and he observed that

> Isaac . . . was a type of the Lord, a child as a son; for he was the son of Abraham, as Christ the Son of God (ibid. [with Gen 22]).

Clement also wrote that

> Since Scripture calls the infant children lambs, it has also called Him–God the Word–who became Man for our sakes, and who wished in all points to be made like to us–'the Lamb of God'–Him, namely, that is the Son of God, the child of the Father (ibid. [with John 1:29]).

and that

> The universal Father is one, and one the universal Word; and the Holy Spirit is one and the same everywhere, and one is the only virgin mother (6).

Finally, from many other Clementine examples that could be used, he wrote

> the Father of all alone is perfect, for the Son is in Him, and the Father is in the Son; it is time for us in due course to say who our Instructor is.
>
> He is called Jesus. . ..the holy God Jesus, the Word, who is the guide of all humanity. The loving God Himself is our Instructor . . .[who] provided sufficiently for the people in the wilderness. . ..He who appeared to Abraham (7).

There are elements of modern Trinitarian doctrine in several of these passages but it is not clear that Clement had anything more in mind than the same kind of oneness between Christ and the Father that Christ had sought for his disciples in His intercessory prayer in John 17. As one reviews this coverage, indeed, one is left with a vague concern that the single reference to *hagia triada* may not even have been Clement's at all, but an interpolation, leaving one guessing.

The possibility of later interpolation was referenced by Cleveland Coxe when writing about fragments of an early liturgy also attributed to Clement. Writing as the Note Editor for the second volume of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, *The Writings of the Fathers Down to AD*

325 that deals with the authenticity of these materials, Coxe ([1885] 2004a, vol. 7, p. 533) opined that:

> The age ascribed to these [liturgical] documents depends very much on the temperament and inclination of the inquirer. Those who have great reverence for them think that they must have had an apostolic origin, that they contain the apostolic forms, first handed down by tradition, and then committed to writing, but they allow that there is a certain amount of interpolation and addition of a date later than the Nicene Council. Such words as 'consubstantial' and 'mother of God' bear indisputable witness to this. Others think that there is no real historical proof of their early existence at all – that they all belong to a later date, and bear evident marks of having been written long after the age of the apostles.

Coxe concluded "[t]here can scarcely be a doubt that they were not committed to writing till a comparatively late day" (ibid.).

That possibly being the case, it may not be wise to accept that Clement clearly believed in the Trinitarian nature of God in the early third century, or that the Nicene-like understanding of the triune God was common parlance in his time. That conclusion could also mean that traces of the Trinity idea are very far apart in the early centuries of Christian thought. But let us now turn westward to Tertullian of North Africa (*ca*. AD 160–225), a virtual contemporary to Clement to the east, to see whether we should re-think our assessment.

4. Tertullian and Origen

4.1. Tertullian

A certain irony surround Tertullian's relevant teaching. For while he is credited as the source of the doctrine that became foundational for Christianity at Nicaea (e.g., Coxe [1887] 2004c, vol. 3, pp. 4–5), there are other Christian commentators left troubled that he should be credited with that much authority (e.g., Roberts 1924, pp. 20–21, 23, 132, 136–37). His authority is drawn into question on one important account, that later in his career he dabbled in Montanism, an apparent (proto-Pentecostal-looking) heresy holding that direct revelation by the Holy Spirit had not ceased in the African churches (Roberts 1924, pp. 20–21). Since he apparently left opportunities in Rome because of this allegiance, might this be enough discredit his development of the doctrine of the Christian Church in an age when certainty was imperative? Tertullian's own inflexible view was that heretics should not even be allowed to read the Scriptures, let alone publish treatises about their meaning which could mislead the body of Christ (*De Praescriptione haereticorum* [=*The Prescription against Heretics*] [sect.] 19 [see Coxe [1887] 2004c, vol. 3, pp. 243–65]). The irony or anomaly just sits there, however, passed over because in orthodox Western Christianity what Tertullian wrote as the strongest original contributor of Trinitarian ideas has been welcomed as approved by the 325 Council of Nicaea, even if improved by the post-Nicene Cappadocian Fathers of the late fourth century (Roberts 1924, pp. 132, 136–37).

While there is debate about whether Tertullian knew Hebrew, or whether he simply preferred to rely on the Greek or Latin version of the apostolic writings, because there was as yet no canonized New Testament, he took the "Rule of Faith" as his surest guide. That is to say, he would not rely on anything unless he knew it had been "handed down from Christ through the apostles and the churches." In fact for him The Rule of Faith was the tradition "by which even the Scriptures were to be tried" (Roberts 1924, p. 18; Ferguson 2015, pp. 5–6). But as Robert Roberts problematized it, the

> Rule of Faith was not as 'constant' and 'immoveable and irreformable' as Tertullian would have us suppose . . . [for] Tertullian did not hesitate to import into it whatever was necessary to refute the views of heretics or to convey his own opinions (Roberts 1924, pp. 15–16).

While Tertullian adopted the "essentials [of the Rule of Faith] from his predecessors," he included as his own "additions"

> the priority of the Son to all creatures,. . . His agency in the work of the creation. . . and the qualification of the assertion of the Unity of God by the introduction of the notion of the divine *oikonomia* (ibid. p. 17).

Tertullian wrestled to provide definite answers to questions about the nature of the Christian God, but he was hamstrung by an absence of authoritative source material. He defended Christianity against Greek philosophy, Gnosticism and Marcionitism (13), but he improvised when he felt he had to and felt justified in doing so because the Holy Spirit was working in him, one suspects Montanist-style (cf. Chadwick [1863] 2017).

Roberts (1924, pp. 130–31) fairly asserts that two "passages in Tertullian's writings [in *The Apology* and *Against Praxeas*] . . . are of greatest importance for ascertaining his doctrine of the Trinity." In the first and shorter passage, Tertullian says his purpose is to make "a remark or two as to Christ's divinity" (*Apologia* [ch.] 21). He does not mention the Holy Spirit at all, but he does seek to explain how the Father and Son are one and that they are spirit. He observes that Christ's coming and birth were announced by God, and that Christ had no reason to be ashamed of either his paternal or his maternal origins, since his Father was God and his Mother was a virgin. Tertullian then continues:

> He proceeds forth from God, and in that procession He is generated; so that He is the Son of God, and is called God from unity of substance with God. For God, too, is a Spirit. Even when the ray is shot from the sun, it is still part of the parent mass; the sun will still be in the ray, because it is a ray of the sun–there is no division of substance, but merely an extension. Thus Christ is a Spirit of Spirit, and God of God, as light of light is kindled. The material matrix remains entire and unimpaired, though you derive from it any number of shoots possessed of its qualities; so too, that which has come forth out of God is at once God and the Son of God, and the two are one. In this way also, as He is Spirit of Spirit and God of God, He is made a second in manner of existence – in position, not in nature; and he did not withdraw from the original source, but went forth. This ray of God, then, as it was always foretold in ancient times, descending into a certain virgin, and made flesh in her womb is in His birth God and man united. The flesh formed by the Spirit is nourished, grows up to manhood, speaks, teaches, works, and is the Christ (ibid.).

Here Tertullian may have taken his cue about the God/Logos relationship from the influential gnosticizing Eastern thinker Tatian (AD 117–172) who taught in Rome (see Quasten 1950, pp. 220, 222), but Tertullian is clearer that the Logos is Jesus Christ and that His being the Creator or Logos was quite consistent with heathen philosophy (*Apol*. 21).

But for Roberts, it is Tertullian's later more detailed statement in *Adversus Praxean* (=*Against Praxeas*) (see Coxe [1887] 2004c, vol. 3, pp. 597–627) that is more significant. There Tertullian

> set[s] out the Trinitarian doctrine in a form, which despite its limitations and imperfections, supplied the framework for the later presentation of the doctrine at the Council of Nicaea, and by the Cappadocians (Roberts 1924, pp. 130–31).

In this case the Christian Father is not contending against Jewish monotheists or pagan polytheists but a Christian heretic who over-accentuated the unity of God to the point of asserting that God co-suffers with Christ, as at the crucifixion (Monarchianism and Patripassianism) (see Kelly 1960b, pp. 120–21). The views of Praxeas (who was also anti-Montanist) draws out Tertulllian's longer exposition of the Trinity:

> We . . . believe that there is one only God, but only under the following dispensation, or *oikonomia,* as it is called, that this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made. Him we believe to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin, and to have been born of her – being both Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and to have been called by the name of Jesus Christ; we believe Him to have suffered, died and been buried, according to the Scriptures,

> and, after He had been raised again by the Father and taken back to heaven, to be sitting at the right hand of the Father, and that He will come to judge the quick and the dead; who sent also from heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost. That this rule of faith has come down to us from the beginning of the Gospel, even before any of the older heretics, much more before Praxeas, a pretender of yesterday (*Adv. Prax*. [ch.] 2).

Tertullian then briefly explained Praxeas' error for holding that "one cannot believe in One Only God in any other way than by saying that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the very selfsame Person." This mistake, according to Tertullian, was to imply that

> one were not All, in that All are One, by unity (that is) of substance; while the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity (*Trinitas*), placing in their order the three Persons (*Personae*)– the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost: three, however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance (*substantia*), and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (ibid.).

Tertullian further clarified "how they are susceptible of number without division" (ibid.). En route, Tertullian could see how his defence of the Trinity could help fend off enduring Jewish criticism, not only correct contemporary Christian teachers who misunderstood the doctrine. As he put it, at times rather juristically,

> They are constantly throwing out against us that we are preachers of two gods and three gods, while they take to themselves pre-eminently the credit of being worshippers of One God; just as if the Unity itself with irrational deductions did not produce heresy, and the Trinity rationally considered constituted the truth. We, say they, maintain the Monarchy (or, sole government of God)... As for myself, however, if I have gleaned any knowledge of either language [Latin or Greek], I am sure that *monarchia* (or monarchy) has no other meaning than single and individual rule; but for all that, this monarchy does not, because it is the government of one, preclude him whose government it is, either from having a son, or from having made himself actually a son to himself, or from ministering his own monarchy by whatsoever agents he will... If moreover, there be a son belonging to him whose monarch it is, it does not forthwith become divided and cease to be a monarchy, if the son also be taken as a sharer in it; but it is as to its origin equally his, by whom it is communicated to the son; and being his, it is quite as much a monarch (or sole empire) since it is held together by two who are so inseparable. Therefore, inasmuch as the Divine Monarchy also is administered by so many legions and hosts of angels, according as it is written, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him;" [referring to Daniel 7:10] and since it has not from the circumstance ceased to be the rule of one (so as to no longer be a monarchy), because it is administered by so many thousands of powers, how comes it to pass that God should be thought to suffer division and severance in the Son and in the Holy Ghost, who have second and the third places assigned to them, and who are so closely joined with the Father in His substance, when He suffers no such (division and severance) in the multitude of so many angels? Do you really suppose that Those, who are naturally members of the Father's own substance, pledges of His love, instruments of His power itself and the entire system of His monarchy, are the overthrow and destruction thereof? ...the overthrow of a monarchy ... [rather occurs] when another dominion, which has a framework peculiar to itself (and is therefore a rival) is brought in over and above it: when, for example, some

> other god is introduced in opposition to the Creator, as in the opinions of Marcion; or when many gods are introduced, according to your [gnostic] Valentinuses and your [pagan] Prodicuses. Then it amounts to an overthrow of the Monarchy, since it involves the destruction of the Creator (3).

We could spend time on scholarly reactions to Tertullian's Trinitarianism. Most scholars make comparisons with the later Nicene Creed and find connections, although the orthodox usually ignore the material that is actually inconsistent with the Creed because he apparently asserts there was a time when Jesus did not exist (27). They also avoid some of his "less than perfect analogies" to the Trinity (sun, ray and apex; root, tree and fruit; well, spring and river), since "all figures of the Trinity" are inherently imperfect, and his images were left too unqualified (Roberts 1924, p. 133). Apart from differences of assessment over the years, in the seventeenth century, for example, Jesuit Dionysius Petavius unnerved, yet Anglican bishop George Bull defending; in the nineteenth Anglican bishop John Kaye wishing him to be less provocative, and Lutheran Adolf von Harnack finding his "economic Trinity" defective (pp. 133, 139). Tertullian himself seemed to expect further revelation to himself when he admitted that the mystery "which distributes the Unity into a Trinity" (*Adv. Prax*. 2) was still guarded, but that did not prevent him from attempting his account. His explanation was that there is an order between the three persons of the Trinity, and their difference is a difference in degree, form and aspect, rather than of condition, substance or power. But then he appears to contradict himself by saying that the difference of the three persons who make up the Trinity is one of substance, condition and power after all (cf. Osborn 1997, pp. 65–87).

Although Tertullian is said to have deplored Greek philosophy and Hellenism in general (remember his saying, what has Athens to do with Jerusalem? [*Praescr.* 7]), his discursive tools for explaining the Trinity mediate between abstraction and the deployment of (parable-like) analogies however imperfect those of a philosophical bent may find them. There is still the need to defend the oneness of the Christian God as images of the divine have been carried out of a Jewish base, and that background factor seems lurking and never forgotten in his method of approach (which is grounded in the 'whole Bible'). Yet in his context, much later than Justin, the heretical position of Praxeas has brought up old issues about monotheism within the Christian fold itself, and we can hardly deny that the genesis of strong monotheism and its persistence in Christian thought lies in the Jewish tradition. Praxean Monarchianism marks its covert force enduring in Christianity as successor to Judaism and its high conceptual and worshipful expectations of God's oneness. On close inspection, many of the Christian heresies of Ante-Nicene Christianity relate in different ways to what we may call the 'watershed' of Jewish criticism. Contemplate Adoptionism, Apollinarianism, Macedonianism, Marcionism, Sabellianism, Subordinationism—they all relate to issues about compromising the divine oneness. But Christians of whatever strand were persistent in not wanting to forego the latter-day miracle of their Lord, and Tertullian was the most cunning Latin mind to defend the new understanding of Divinity in the fast-growing, emergent Faith in Christ.

Tertullian wrote more about how the Son came forth from the Father, and in that sense his focus is similar to the Nicene creed, which unlike the Creed of Constantinople has no developed statement about belief in the Holy Spirit. We have identified the basics of Tertullian's Trinitarian theology, and quite apart from his formulation's possible effect on Nicaea and aside from further need to estimate the extent of influences upon him (probably mostly from Tatian), we can also see his innovation. Tertullian's original contribution was that the Father and Son were as unified in substance as they were in purpose. In Justin Martyr's understanding, a unity in purpose was sufficient to rebut Jewish criticism of Christian polytheism, but Tertullian felt the need to probe the unity of Father and Son more deeply because he was confronted by a heretical Monarchian, who might be said to revert to Judaism by swallowing up the roles of Son and Spirit in too narrow a monotheism. Tertullian explained the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in greater depth by his use of the word *substantia* (underlying being?): their unity extended to their very

substance. But the analogies which he preferred as explanatory devices do not really merge the personalities of the Father and the Son. On the one hand, a monarch is still a monarch even if he assigns his genetic son as an executive in the kingdom. On the other, a sun-ray is still made of the same substance as the sun from which it was sent forth even though it is physically separated from that source. The Father and Son were still separate personages as they had been in Justin Martyr's understanding, but their Oneness was deeper than in just a unity of purpose.

4.2. Origen

Like Tertullian, the famed Origen (185–254) was a prolific theologian whose reliability has been questioned because some of his views were later deemed heretical (even anathematized by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553). In an apologetic, rather pious tone, Cleveland Coxe laments the sad awkwardness, that

> before the great Synodical period (A.D. 325 to 451), while orthodoxy is marvelously maintained and witnessed to by Origen and Tertullian themselves, their errors, however serious, have never separated them from the grateful and loving regard of those upon whom their lives of heroic sorrow and suffering have conferred blessings unspeakable. . . . [but] the Church cannot leave their errors uncorrected (Coxe [1887] 2004b, vol. 4, p. 223).

In the West, in any case, Jerome (347–420) accused Origen about a century after his death as departing "from the Catholic Faith" in his high-profile work *De Principiis* (*On First Principles*) or was anxious that what Origen said in particular about the Trinity had been corrupted by his Latin translator Rufinus of Aquileia (*ca*. 345–410) (esp. *Contra Johannem* 29–36). A scholarly successor to Clement in Alexandria, however, Origen stood upon the shoulders of various predecessors, and in more recent scholarship there has been less concern to stress differences between Origen's version of the doctrine and what was ruled in the "Great Councils," than to acknowledge him as one of the builders of the "theological system that weds the church's three-fold understanding of God," systematizing and incorporating previous explanations on the matter (e.g., Nathan 2013, p. 1). Justin Martyr had defended Christianity against the charge of atheism by linking the "Logos" notion (with a triad of God, Logos and Psyche known in Stoicism and Platonism) with the Christian triad of Father, Son and Holy Ghost (cf. *Dialogus* 3–6). After him, Irenaeus (*flor*. 170s) and Hippolytus (*flor*. 200s), Tertullian and Clement, warn a vulnerable Church against various heresies distorting Christian belief in God as "both one and three." Yet their "Economic Trinitarianism" was confusing: even though sharpening the understanding of "the distinct individuality of the Logos immanent eternally in the Godhead," their general approach left unanswered questions about whether the Son, who began before the creation, somehow postdated the Father. Tertullian had certainly moved to resolve these conundrums by explaining that the Son and Holy Spirit shared in the *substantia* of the Godhead, but it was Origen's work to "harmonise. . .the Church's threefold understanding of God to the categories of Middle Platonism." Not happy about repeating others' varying thoughts Origen tackles the ambiguities head-on: by speculation, theological research and sheer effort of mind, he circumvents previous mind-sets to strike out on a new path. While he relies on Scripture and the Rule of Faith revered in tradition, he feels quite at liberty to speculate when there is a vacuum in understanding.

Following the first chapter of the Gospel of John (1:1–2), Henry Bettenson (1956, pp. 230–43) maintains that in *De Principiis* ([Bk.] 6 [ch.] 1)

> Origen explains that this one God is the God-in-Godself and his divinity is his own and not derived whereas the Logos is simply called God because his divinity, though real and true, is derived from the Supreme God. This Supreme God who is generating a Son and breathing forth the Spirit also constitutes a Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the triadic understanding of God which Christian faith confesses and which forms the basis of salvation (here conveniently summarized by Nathan 2013, p. 5).

But Origen is also confusing because, while his use of the term *hypostasis* (to "signify the distinct and individual existence of the members of the Triad") corresponds with Greek *prosopon* in Hippolytus and the Latin *persona* in Tertullian, it "can also refer to the being or substance of something and was identical with the Latin term *substantia*." But he does "break with predecessors" when he asserts that the Son and the Holy Spirit are co-eternal with the Father (*Princ.* 2. 6). For Bettenson (via Nathan 2013, p. 6) this is where Origen displays his originality. He has moved away from the Stoic idea of "the immanent expressed in the Logos," from which his predecessors had drawn their understanding of the Triad, and has found the co-eternality idea which resonated with the Council at Nicaea (see *Princ.* I,3,4). That original insight is best demonstrated with a quotation from *De Principiis* where Origen is concluding his chapter on how the Holy Spirit is a co-eternal part of the Godhead:

> Nothing in the Trinity can be greater or less, since the fountain of divinity alone contains all things by His Word and Reason, and by the Spirit of His mouth sanctifies all things which are worthy of sanctification. . . There is also a special working of God the Father, besides that by which He bestowed upon all things the gift of natural life. There is also a special ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to those upon whom he confers by nature the gift of reason, by means of which we are enabled to be rightly what we are. There is also another grace of the Holy Spirit, which is bestowed upon the deserving, through the ministry of Christ and the working of the Father, in proportion to the merits of those who are rendered capable of receiving it. . . From which it most clearly follows that there is no difference in the Trinity, but that which is called the gift of the Spirit is made known through the Son, and operated by God the Father . . . Having made these declarations regarding the Unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, let us return to the order in which we began this discussion. God the Father bestows upon all, existence; and participation in Christ, in respect of His being the word of reason, renders them rational beings. From which it follows that they are deserving either of praise or blame, because capable of virtue or vice. On this account, therefore, is the grace of the Holy Ghost present, that those beings which are not holy in their essence may be rendered holy by participating in it. Seeing then, that firstly, they derive their existence from God the Father; secondly, their rational nature from the Word; thirdly, their holiness from the Holy Spirit, -those. . ...will. . .by the ceaseless working of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in us, . . .be able at some future time. . .to behold the holy and blessed life (1,3,7–8).

Bettenson (1956, pp. 240–43) opines that Origen overstated the distinctions in the Trinity, the subordination of the Son and the limitations of the Holy Spirit too much for the later church. But he says that Origen still laid the theological foundations upon which Athanasius and the Cappadocians built the "great doctrinal formulas" which were sanctioned by the Great Councils.

5. Other Ante-Nicene Theologians: Novation and Gregory Thaumaturgus and Others

Other Ante-Nicene Fathers wrote about the nature of God and even about the Trinity, but none contributed as much to the Nicene doctrine as those discussed above. In Irenaeus, for example, as for Justin Martyr, there is no suggestion of a consubstantial being. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are separate and distinct but unified in purpose (Coxe edn., vol. 1, p. 329). Hippolytus (170–235 A.D.), a disciple of Irenaeus, expresses the Trinitarian idea that "[t]he Father decrees; the Word executes and the Son is manifested" (*Contra Noetum* [=*Against the Heresy of One Noetus*] 14) (Coxe [1886] 2004d, vol. 5, pp. 223–31). The context is not very Trinitarian but suggests that again, he was writing in response to early positions affected by Jewish criticism:

> If, then, the Word was with God, and was also God, what follows? Would one say that he speaks of two Gods? I shall not indeed speak of two Gods, but of one; of two Persons however, and of a third economy (disposition), viz., the grace of

> the Holy Ghost. For the Father indeed is One, but there are two Persons, because there is also the Son; and there is the third, the Holy Spirit. . .
>
> . . .The economy of harmony is led back to one God; for God is One. It is the Father who commands, and the Son who obeys, and the Holy Spirit who gives understanding: the Father who is above all, and the Son who is through all, and the Holy Spirit who is in all. And we cannot otherwise think of one God, but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit. For the Jews glorified (or gloried in) the Father, but gave Him not thanks, for they did not recognise the Son.

And then he summarizes:

> And by this He showed, that whosoever omitted any one of these, failed in glorifying God perfectly. For it is through this Trinity that the Father is glorified (ibid.).

In effect, Hippolytus uses the expression of Trinity against the heretic Noetus of Smyrna, a Patripassian (see Kelly 1960b, pp. 120–23), in much the same way he might counter the continuing criticism of the Jews. They failed to glorify the Father whom they purported to worship because they did not recognize, worship and glorify His Son. To fail to recognize Jesus Christ as the Father's Son and Agent was to deny the Father.

The most specific ante-Nicene Christian work on the Trinity was written by the later anti-Pope Novatian (200–258). *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*) (see Coxe [1886] 2004d, vol. 5, pp. 611–44), extensive on the subject, was written in the wake of the so-called Sabellian heresy (see Kelly 1960b, pp. 119–24) in *ca*. 257 some 20 years after Origen's *First Principles*. Although some have interpreted his move to set himself up as a rival Pope, subsequently causing schism and the excommunication of his supporters, more charitable interpreters insist we only have the story from his enemies, and have defended his orthodoxy. They maintain, in any case, that he was only ever deemed heretical in respect of church discipline, since he would not forgive and permit the re-baptism of those whose faith had once lapsed. We follow Coxe here, who in any case considers his "work upon the Trinity . . . a most valuable contribution to ante-Nicene theology" (Coxe [1886] 2004d, vol. 5 pp. 607–8).

In 31 chapters, Novatian sets forth from reason and the scriptures, the nature of God. God contains all things and is inexplicable ([ch.] 2); He is infinite (4); His anger, indignation and hatred are not human in nature (5); He does not have a bodily nature (6); but Jesus Christ was truly Man (10) and God also (11–6). It was Jesus Christ that appeared to Abraham and Jacob (18–19) (as Justin had taught). Christ is distinct from the Father (24–28) and suffered death while the Father did not (thus Novatian rejecting Patripasssianism) (24–25). But nonetheless there are *not* two Gods (29–31).

In Novatian we find a closer proximity to the Nicene formulations than in most earlier cases, and his reasoning stands out when contrasted with that ascribed to another third-century anti-Sabelllian writer Gregory Thaumaturgus (213–270). He was a disciple and apologist for Origen in the East who became the Bishop of New Caesarea. His Trinitarian reasoning is confusing and seems inconsistent (see (Coxe [1887] 2004b, vol. 4, pp. 228–29 [cf. vol. 6. 40–47]) and the problems may go back to scribal hands trying to gloss his work in the context of heated debate over Sabellius' 'monarchianist' teaching or that of Arius, who triggered Nicaea. For, on the one hand Gregory purportedly writes

> Some treat the Holy Trinity in an awful manner, when they confidently assert that there are not three persons, and introduce (the idea of) a person devoid of substance. Wherefore we clear ourselves of Sabellius, who says that the Father and the Son are the same . . . We foreswear this, because we believe that three persons – namely, Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are declared to possess the one Godhead; for the one divinity showing itself forth according to nature in the Trinity establishes the oneness of the nature. . . 'There is one God the Father' [Deut. 6:4]; and there is divinity hereditary in the Son, as it is written, 'The Word was God' [John 1:1b]. and there is divinity present according to nature in the

> Spirit – to wit, what subsists as the Spirit of God – according to Paul's statement, 'Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you' [1 Cor3:16]. Now the person in each declares the independent being and subsistence . . . wherefore, if the divinity may be spoken of as one in three persons, the trinity is established and the unity is not dissevered. . ..Wherefore if there is one God, and one Lord, and at the same time one person as one divinity in one lordship, how can credit be given to (this distinction in) the words 'of whom' and 'by whom' as has been said before? (Confessio Fidei (=*A Sectional Confession of Faith*) 7)/

But then he continues

> We acknowledge that the Son and the Spirit are consubstantial with the Father, and that the substance of the Trinity is one . . . And those who have fellowship with men that reject the consubstantiality as a doctrine foreign to the Scriptures, and speak of any of the persons in the Trinity as created, and separate [as Arius taught], that person from the one natural divinity, we hold as aliens (18).

The apparent inconsistency may lie in dubious or spurious scribal interference, probably introducing consubstantiality ex post facto Nicaea (see also Coxe [1885] 2004a, vol. 7, p. 533), and it is more likely that Gregory "believed" (as he testified just before the probable interpolation above):

> in one God, that is in one First Cause, the God of the law and of the Gospel, the just and good; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, true God, that is, Image of the true God, Maker of all things seen and unseen, Son of God and only-begotten Offspring, and Eternal Word, living and self-subsistent and active, always being with the Father, and in one Holy Spirit (*Confess*. 14).

Dionysius of Rome (d. AD 268), or someone in his name, also wrote briefly against the Sabellians in the same period (see Coxe [1885] 2004a, vol. 7, pp. 365–66). He was less anxious about faith in God as Three in One resulting in the kind of straitened monotheistic reaction associated with the Sabellians. But he was concerned that the "Church of God" could find itself worshipping "three powers and distinct substances (*hypostases*), and three deities, [and] destroy it[self]". For he said that "the doctrine that there are three gods is neither taught in the Old nor in the New Testament." He continued in what Trinitarian scholars must consider a very advanced vein, as if nipping Arius' errors in the bud, by asseverating:

> It is therefore not a trifling, but a very great impiety, to say that the Lord was in any wise made with hands. For if the Son was made, there was a time when He was not; but He always was, if, as He Himself declares, He is undoubtedly in the Father (*Contra Sabellianos* (=*Against the Sabellians*] 2).

This is a strong view more consistent with the anathemas after Nicaea against those who taught that the Logos was a "creature" (*ktisma*) and that there was a time when "He was not" (Kelly 1960a, p. 216).

6. Conclusions

And so I complete this analysis of the teachings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers concerning the nature of God.

To re-capitulate, in the first half of the second century, Justin Martyr maintained that God and Jesus Christ were separate and distinct individuals but that they were united in their purposes. He wrote to respond to Trypho's Jewish criticism that the Christians were polytheists and his appeal to the Hebrew Scriptures, that Christians worshipped more than one God. Further into the second century, Theophilus of Antioch was the first of the Christian writers to use the term "Trinity" (*trias*) but he did not use it in connection with God, Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit to explain their integral relationship. Rather, he used the term to persuade an intelligent pagan friend named Autolycus, that the Christian God was the repository of all Logic and Wisdom, hoping to build a bridge of understanding for his friend who was familiar with Greek philosophy.

A generation later, crossing over into the third century, Clement of Alexandria is said to have drawn the term "Trinity" (*triada*) further into Christian theology. His argument, apparently designed for interested pagan parties, was that Greek philosophical insights about great principles of Creation derive from the Hebrew Scripture and he was not engaged in a theological probing of the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, 700 miles away in Carthage, Clement's near contemporary Tertullian in Carthage was focused on rebutting contemporary in-house heresies and arrived at discursive formulae that foreshadowed and were used in the momentous Trinitarian statements of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds. Tertullian affirmed that the Son not only shared the same mind with the Father, but because he came forth from the Father, he was also of the same *substantia* (underlying being) even if the nature of that oneness had not been fully revealed. Though Tertullian did not directly respond to Jewish monotheistic criticisms of Christian belief about God, most of his writing corrected Christian apologists who had made mistakes while retorting to Jewish charges of Christian polytheism.

To the east, Tertullian's contemporary Origen, as Clement's disciple in Alexandria, summarized and systematized all that the predecessors he knew had written about the Trinity. Origen charted a new course by harmonizing previous views about "the Church's threefold understanding of God to the categories of Middle Platonism" (Nathan 2013, p. 4). He developed the Stoic paradigm of the immanence of the Godhead into the new idea that the three *hypostases* that comprised it, were co-eternal. While Origen made distinctions between the different persons in the Godhead that were set aside at Nicaea, his insights concerning their co-eternality resonated with those there who were called upon to resolve the Arian controversy. The major Nicene expressions correcting Arius' theology had all been seeded by the time that Tertullian and Origen finished their work. In this light, the Trinitarian formulations of Novation and Dionysius against the Sabellian heretics, and those attributed to Thaumaturgus, are less innovative than at first sight.

When the idea of the Trinity developed by the Ante-Nicene fathers is traced to its source, we find it originated as a response to Jewish alarm that the Christians were heretics (*minim*) because they believed in more than one God. As a resolution of this original problem, the idea that the Father or Maker and Jesus Christ were the same being (ontologically) may be detected in both Tertullian and Origen, with neither of them suggesting that the Father and Son are the same Person. For everyone earlier, Christ was completely unified with His Heavenly Father in purpose, but did His bidding. And in the Gospels Jesus sought that same oneness for all who believed what He taught. There was nothing of nirvana in Jesus' aspiration in His intercessory prayer, nor was there any suggestion of ontic identity between Father and Son. The Son sought simply to completely and exactly obey the Father, and to please Him.

This foundational understanding of the origin of the doctrine of the Trinity in response to Jewish criticism, bemused pagans and mistaken or heretical Christian teachers. It also provides the three-hundred-year-long contextual background to the Council of Nicaea and the crucial theological discussions that occurred during six weeks between May and July in AD 325.

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Article

Theōria as Cure for Impiety and Atheism in Plato's Laws and Clement of Alexandria

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Abstract: The article examines the impact of Plato's views on atheism and impiety, relayed in the *Laws*, on Clement of Alexandria. Clement employed the adjectives godless (*atheos*) and impious (*asebēs*) often in his writings as accusations against pagan philosophers and/or heretics, but also in his defence of Christians against the very charge of atheism on account of their rejection of pagan gods (*Stromata* 7.1; cf. Tertullian's *Apologia* 10). I argue that Clement, perceptive of Plato's defence of philosophical contemplation (*theōria*) and its civic benefits in the *Laws*, reworked the latter's association of disbelief with excessive confidence in fleshly pleasures (*Leges* 888A) in tandem with his stipulation of virtue as the civic goal of his ideal colonists of Magnesia who ought to attune to the divine principles of the cosmos. Thus, Clement promoted the concept of citizenship in the Heavenly kingdom, secured through contemplation and its ensuing impassibility. For Plato and Clement, atheism was the opposite of genuine engagement with divine truth and had no place in the ideal state. Although Clement associated the Church with peace, his views were adapted by Firmicus Maternus to sanction violent rhetoric against the pagans in the fourth century when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Keywords: atheism; impiety; Plato; *Laws*; Clement of Alexandria; heavenly citizenship; religious violence; Firmicus Maternus

Introduction

This article examines Plato's views on atheism and impiety,[1] as expounded in the *Laws* ([ed. Bury (Loeb)] 888A–D), and their reception by Clement of Alexandria whose theological legacy (using edns. from *Sources Chrét.*) shaped the early church and remains important to the Orthodox tradition to this day (cf. Yingling 2009, p. 93). I argue that Clement drew on Plato's *Laws* to defend Christians from the accusation of atheism that was allegedly levelled at them during the early days (*Stromata* [hereafter *Str*] [ed. Boulluec] 7.1.1.1–2).[2] Influenced by the civic context in which Plato rejected atheism,[3] Clement emphasized faith in the Christian God as a key credential for gaining entrance in the Heavenly kingdom. While Clement did eventually refer to pagans as atheists (*Protrepticus* [hereafter *Protr*] [ed. Mondésert] 10.93.1–2),[4] his refutation of their error remained a dialectical exercise of moderate tone (*Str* 4.1.2.3), typically urging the "ignorant" and "unjust" to convert to the Christian God. Clement's argument, in line with his own experience of the persecution of Christians at Alexandria under Septimius Severus, is nonviolent (*Protr* 10.93.1–2, with Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.1).[5] By the fourth century, however, Christian thinkers, likely inspired by the newly-found proximity of state and religion promoted under Constantine and his sons, employed explicitly violent language against the heterodox as a means of safeguarding the Christian faith (Van der Heever 2018, p. 302; Drake 2011; Whitmarsh 2015, pp. 163–70). Thus, in the final section of this essay, I discuss the adaptation of Clement's Plato-inspired views on impiety by Firmicus Maternus, a Christian polemicist who urged the emperors Constantius and Constans to stamp out paganism completely (Marcos 2013, pp. 9–10; Rüpke 2014, pp. 192–200). His aggressive language,

however, did not necessarily aim at instigating physical violence; when placed in context (Van Nuffelen 2020, pp. 517–19; cf. Mayer 2013; Bremmer 2014), Firmicus Maternus' opinions seem to be inspired by contemporary political realities, primarily by his need to command the attention of the emperor(s).

1. Defending Contemplation: Impiety and Atheism in Plato's Laws

In earlier dialogues, especially the *Euthyphro*[6] and the *Apology*,[7] Plato comments on Socrates' indictment for impiety and his subsequent execution in 399 BCE.[8] Plato spoke of the gods in abstract terms, promoting Socrates' *daimonion* and often citing tales about the traditional gods as examples of people's misapprehensions regarding what constitutes piety and/or impiety. In the late *Laws*, however, written in the shadow of his failed involvement in Sicilian politics (Brisson 2020; cf. Anagnostou-Laoutides 2020a), Plato unequivocally admitted the existence of gods, stating that "god controls everything, and alongside god, chance and occasion control all human affairs" (*Leges* [hereafter *Leg*] 709B7–8: Ὡς θεὸς μὲν πάντα, καὶ μετὰ θεοῦ τύχη καὶ καιρός, τἀνθρώπινα διακυβερνῶσι σύμπαντα). Further, he acknowledged the traditional pantheon (745B–E; 771D; 828B–D; 848D; 920D–921D; 946A–E), the gods of the Underworld and Moira (799D), as well as the cults of ancestors and heroes, all of which ought to be diligently honoured in the proposed colony of Magnesia. In the *Laws*, Plato described at length the legal code of the colony's constitution—a second model of the ideal city next to the Kallipolis of the *Republic* (hereafter *Resp*] [using ed. Shorey])[9] and its day-to-day application(s), designed to support the educational model of the city and its goal of enabling its citizens to attune to the divine principles of the cosmos.[10] Education in Magnesia relied on music as a main means of dispensing civic ethical training (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 12–13, 17). Since *nomos* meant both law and song/musical genre (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, p. 19, with n. 72) harmony, infused through civic education, should be also reflected in the laws of the city. Thus, the legal code of Magnesia was underpinned by profound belief in the existence of gods whose virtue the citizens ought to emulate (*Leg* 906A3–B4):

> Since we have agreed among us that heaven is full of many good things, but also of their opposites, and that the not good things are more numerous, we say that such a battle is immortal, and needs incredible alertness (φυλακῆς θαυμαστῆς δεομένη); for the gods and daemons are our allies (σύμμαχοι δὲ ἡμῖν) and we the possession of the gods and daemons (ἡμεῖς δ᾽ αὖ κτῆμα θεῶν καὶ δαιμόνων); and injustice and insolence combined with folly destroys us (φθείρει δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀδικία καὶ ὕβρις μετὰ ἀφροσύνης), but justice and thinking soundly saves us combined with the wisdom (σῴζει δὲ δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη μετὰ φρονήσεως) which resides in the animate powers of the gods (ἐν ταῖς τῶν θεῶν ἐμψύχοις οἰκοῦσαι δυνάμεσιν), while some small trace of them may be clearly seen here as also residing in us.

Plato's statement accords with his definition of the human mission to become as godlike as possible, as famously expounded in the *Theaetetus* (176B2–3),[11] but in the *Laws* Plato's conviction about the existence of the gods links human nature with political rule more explicitly, since the city-state provides the context in which citizens are required to nourish the divine elements of their souls. Thus, in *Leg* 712B5–8 Plato invoked "the presence of the God in the establishment of the state (Θεὸν δὴ πρὸς τὴν τῆς πόλεως κατασκευὴν ἐπικαλώμεθα), so that he may hearken, and hearkening he may come, propitious and kindly to us, to help us in developing the state and its laws" (ὁ δὲ ἀκούσειέν τε, καὶ ἀκούσας ἵλεως εὐμενής τε ἡμῖν ἔλθοι συνδιακοσμήσων τήν τε πόλιν καὶ τοὺς νόμους), while in 713A2–5 he added: "… if the State ought to be named after any such thing, it should be given the name of the God who truly rules over those who are sensible" (τὸ τοῦ ἀληθῶς τῶν τὸν νοῦν ἐχόντων δεσπόζοντος θεοῦ ὄνομα λέγεσθαι).

Accordingly, Plato famously referred to impiety as a disease dangerous for the city (888B10: ταύτην τὴν νόσον ἔχοντες), arising from "greed for pleasure" (888A4: ὑπὸ λαιμαργίας ἡδονῆς) and corrupting the minds of those suffering from it (888A7: τοῖς οὕτω τὴν διάνοιαν

διεφθαρμένοις). Plato distinguished three types of impious men:[12] atheists who deny the existence of gods altogether and hardly ever maintain their youthful delusion until later in life (888C2–3: τὸ μηδένα πώποτε λαβόντα […] ταύτην τὴν δόξαν περὶ θεῶν, ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν, διατελέσαι πρὸς γῆρας μείναντα ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ διανοήσει); those who believe that gods exist but do not care about men (888C5–6: τὸ τοὺς θεοὺς εἶναι μέν, φροντίζειν δὲ οὐδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων); and those who undermine the gods by thinking it is easy to bribe them with offerings (888C7–8: ὡς φροντίζουσι μέν, εὐπαραμύθητοι δ' εἰσὶν θύμασιν καὶ εὐχαῖς). Total denial of the gods is less common compared to the other two types of atheism. Importantly, the debate about the existence of the gods ought to be entrusted to the legislator (888C10–D6).[13]

Furthermore, Plato compares the lawgivers with musicians, and therefore with philosophers, whom he claims, were skilled in "the greatest form of music" (*Phaedo* [hereafter *Ph*] [ed. Fowler] 61A4–5; cf. *Resp* 591C1–D3; *Laches* 188D3–9; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2021a; 2022, p. 19 and n. 73; 2023). Plato was adamant that before becoming absolutely god-fearing (*Leg* 967D4–5: βεβαίως θεοσεβῆ), people ought to be convinced of two truths: first, "that the soul is oldest of all things that partake of generation" (967D6–7: ψυχή τε ὡς ἔστιν πρεσβύτατον ἁπάντων ὅσα γονῆς μετείληφεν), "and is immortal and rules over all bodies" (ἀθάνατόν τε ἄρχει τε δὴ σωμάτων πάντων); second, that "reason controls what exists among the stars" (967D10: τόν … ἐν τοῖς ἄστροις νοῦν τῶν ὄντων), and that "the connection of these things follows the principles of music" (967E2: τά τε κατὰ τὴν μοῦσαν τούτοις τῆς κοινωνίας) which societies should "apply by fitting together moral practices and customs" (967E3–5: χρήσηται πρὸς τὰ τῶν ἠθῶν ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ νόμιμα συναρμοττόντως), "while being able to give a rational explanation of all that admits of rational explanation" (ὅσα τε λόγον ἔχει, τούτων δυνατὸς ᾖ δοῦναι τὸν λόγον). Earlier in the dialogue Plato had noted that legislating the use of such music "would be the task of a god or godlike man" (657A10–11: τοῦτο δὲ θεοῦ ἢ θείου τινὸς ἀνδρὸς ἂν εἴη: cf. 669C–673D; 799A–B). Thus, Magnesia's legislators were also envisaged as philosophers since they were expected to engage in what philosophers typically dedicate their lives to—becoming godlike.

For Plato, the goal of becoming godlike during life involved limiting as much as possible the interference of the body in our perception of virtue as preparation for embracing the survival of the soul after death. Thus, philosophers, striving to exceed the confines of the senses so to "behold truth with the eyes of the soul alone" (*Ph* 66D10–E1: καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ θεατέον αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 23–29, with ns. 38–39), posed as the antithesis of atheists whose error, according to Plato, is rooted in their misplaced belief in materialism (*Leg* 891C–892B). Through constant and systematic contemplation, the philosophers (*Ph* 68C6–D1),[14] keen to participate in the politics of the heavenly city alone (*Resp* 592B),[15] were uniquely placed to advise the city on its progress. In Magnesia, philosophical *theōria*[16] would be practised by the Nocturnal Council and their designated *theōroi*. The members of the Council, we are told, would dedicate their lives to examining the ethical principles of law by studying the nature of virtue and its various manifestations, such as self-control, courage, justice, and wisdom (Leg 964B3–6; 965C9–D3; Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, p. 18). Above all, the members of the Council would be responsible for debating theological matters, starting with the vexed question about the existence of gods and our ability to grasp their powers (*Leg* 966C1–D3), and moving on to the issue of the divine origin of the soul and the rational principle that brought about the order of the universe (966D10–E5).[17] In addition, the Nocturnal Council would appoint citizens recognized for their wisdom as *theōroi*; the latter would be entrusted with tracing exceptional thinkers across good and bad cities for the privilege of conversing with them before reporting their opinions back to the Nocturnal Council for further deliberation (951B5-8). In essence, the *theōroi* would enable the regular reviewing of Magnesia's constitution with the additional input of their external discussants. Plato deems this kind of reflection (*theōria*) as paramount for maintaining the perfect status of the city.[18] Moreover, Plato made provisions for Magnesia's average citizens to engage in *theōria*, not only through their musical education, as discussed above (and highlighted in *Resp* 349C5-D2), but also through the

so-called Test of the Wine. Characterized as "Dionysus' *theōria*" (650A1), the Test was designed to encourage citizens to continuously monitor their ethical development.[19]

Notably, Plato insisted on the importance of addressing those who suffer from the disease of atheism "mildly and dispassionately" (*Leg* 888A: ἐν πραέσι λόγοις; 888A7-9: πράως, σβέσαντες τὸν θυμόν), like a father or a teacher trying to admonish or teach a child (888A1: νουθετῶν ἅμα διδάσκειν; 888A10: Ὦ παῖ), aiming first and foremost at persuading them (890D). Nevertheless, he was conscious that provisions ought to be made for the punishment of obstinate atheists. Plato distinguished between atheists by nature and those whose atheism was the result of being enslaved to desires (899D–900C; cf. 864B). He deemed the damage inflicted by the latter as graver, since tyrants tend to rise from among this group of atheists: such examples result in weakening the cohesion of the citizenry, undermining its identity, and clouding its moral orientation. In his view, again, those who believe that the gods are indifferent to humans or easily bribed do so either out of folly or because they are evil. In all cases, however, convicted atheists should be removed from the civic group. First, they should be punished by imprisonment, while also closely coached by the Nocturnal Council that would oversee their progress, aiming at persuading them to change their minds and be rehabilitated in society. If, however, all else failed, atheists should be punished by death (908B1–910D). Hence, while not the preferred solution, Plato did allow for violence against atheists to be enshrined in the laws of Magnesia as the ultimate means of safeguarding the city against their insolence.

Clement, a thorough reader of Plato, further developed the civic framework of faith as analysed in the *Laws*, arguing that Christians ought to defend the law entrusted to them by God in anticipation of gaining citizenship in the heavenly Kingdom (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 26–27).

2. Plato's *Laws*, Impiety and Atheism in Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria expanded on Plato's rejection of atheism by developing the notion of the heavenly city and its connection to our inner constitution in ways that, in my view, had a profound impact on the concept of citizenship in Christ, as a projection of Christian collective identity. Clement undertook a painstaking study of pagan intellectual traditions, in which Plato features prominently, often claiming that Greek philosophy was a corruption or an offshoot of the Mosaic Law.[20] The idea is introduced at the start of Clement's *Stromata*/*Stromateis*, a title that alludes etymologically to the "layers" of meaning that he proposed to uncover for his discerning readers.[21] According to Clement, "Moses was a prophet, a legislator, a military tactics expert, a war strategist, a politician, and a philosopher" (*Str* 1.24.158.1: Ἔστιν οὖν ὁ Μωυσῆς ἡμῖν προφητικός, νομοθετικός, τακτικός, στρατηγικός, πολιτικός, φιλόσοφος). His description aims to present Plato's connection of legislation and civic religion, as we saw it in the *Laws*, as originating in Mosaic law. After comparing the wisdom that orders the divine things to the political skill that rules human affairs (1.24.159.4–5: τὰ μὲν θεῖα ἡ σοφία, τὰ ἀνθρώπεια δὲ ἡ πολιτική), Clement portrayed God as "a king who rules according to the laws and possesses the skill to rule over willing subjects" (1.24.159.5–6: βασιλεὺς τοίνυν ἐστὶν ὁ ἄρχων κατὰ νόμους ὁ τὴν τοῦ ἄρχειν ἑκόντων ἐπιστήμην ἔχων). In a universe regulated by God's kingly skill, passions can be mastered through virtue and reason: by acquiring "self-restraint and moderation with holiness and sound knowledge with truth" (1.24.159.3–4: ἐγκράτειαν καὶ σωφροσύνην μεθ' ὁσιότητος καὶ γνῶσιν ἀγαθὴν μετ' ἀληθείας), the faithful attain piety toward God (τὸ τέλος εἰς εὐσέβειαν ἀναφέρων θεοῦ). Despite claiming that the Greeks are but children compared to the wisdom of the Jews, Clement cited both the *Statesman* and the *Laws* (the latter is, in fact, cited six times by name in the *Stromata*) in praise of Plato's appreciation that both natural and civic law derive from God.[22] Importantly, like Plato, Clement was explicit that the law 'attunes' (recognizing the affinity of the legislator and the musician, see below n. 22) and further 'conducts' those who follow it to God.[23] Accordingly, he explicitly compared a pagan city governed by law to the Church ruled

by the *logos*, making reference to the Heavenly model that inspired Plato's ideal state and (presumably) likewise the kingdom of God. Clement wrote (*Str* 4.26.172.2–3):

> For a city is an important thing (σπουδαῖον γὰρ ἡ πόλις), and the people a decorous body (καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἀστεῖόν τι σύστημα), and a multitude of men regulated by law as the Church by the Word (καὶ πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων ὑπὸ νόμου διοικούμενον, καθάπερ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑπὸ λόγου)—a city on earth impregnable, free from tyranny (ἀπολιόρκητος ἀτυράννητος πόλις ἐπὶ γῆς), a product of the divine will on earth as in heaven (θέλημα θεῖον ἐπὶ γῆς ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ). Images of this city the poets create with their pen (εἰκόνας τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ κτίζουσι γράφοντες). For the Hyperboreans, and the Arimaspian cities, and the Elysian plains, are polities of just men (αἱ γὰρ Ὑπερβόρεοι καὶ Ἀριμάσπειοι πόλεις καὶ τὰ Ἠλύσια πεδία δικαίων πολιτεύματα). And we know Plato's city placed as a pattern in heaven (ἴσμεν δὲ καὶ τὴν Πλάτωνος πόλιν παράδειγμα ἐν οὐρανῷ κειμένην).

Thus, Clement wishes for the spirit of Christ to transport him to the heavenly Jerusalem (*Str* 4.26.172.2: ἐγὼ δὲ ἂν εὐξαίμην τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ πτερῶσαί με εἰς τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τὴν ἐμήν). According to Clement, Plato's aspiration of becoming godlike was perfectly compatible with Scripture and the Mosaic Law (2.19.100.3–4; 5.14.94.3–95.20), and a sound way of achieving piety to the true God.[24] Furthermore, as I have argued elsewhere (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 26–27), Clement believed that the true gnostic (that is the wise Christian) would be conducted to the Heavenly kingdom through persistent practice of contemplation (*theōria*), which would act as purification from the senses, leading to impassibility.[25] Although Christian *theōria* ought to be mediated by faith,[26] the gnostic conducts himself like Plato's philosopher in the *Phaedrus*[27] and the *Phaedo* (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2021b, pp. 219–24; 2023, pp. 29–33). Thus, through *theoria* he is able to reach better places and perfect his citizenship in God (*Str* 4.25.155.2).[28] Plato had reiterated this idea emphatically in the *Laws*, where he asserted that "when the soul achieves union with divine virtue (ὁπόταν μὲν ἀρετῇ θείᾳ προσμείξασα), it becomes eminently virtuous (γίγνηται διαφερόντως τοιαύτη) and moves to an eminent region, transported by a holy road to another and better region" (διαφέροντα καὶ μετέβαλεν τόπον ἅγιον ὅλον, μετακομισθεῖσα εἰς ἀμείνω τινὰ τόπον ἕτερον; *Leg* 904D8–E1). Similarly, Clement affirmed in *Str* 7.3.13.1–2 that:

> the gnostic souls (τὰς γνωστικὰς ψυχάς) which surpass in the grandeur of contemplation the mode of life of each of the holy ranks (τῇ μεγαλοπρεπείᾳ τῆς θεωρίας ὑπερβαινούσας ἑκάστης ἁγίας τάξεως τὴν πολιτείαν), are assigned by lot among whom the blessed abodes of the gods (καθ' ἃς αἱ μακάριαι θεῶν οἰκήσεις διωρισμέναι διακεκλήρωνται), reckoned holy among the holy (ἁγίας ἐν ἁγίοις λογισθείσας), transferred entire from among the entire (μετακομισθείσας ὅλας ἐξ ὅλων), reaching places better than the better places (εἰς ἀμείνους ἀμεινόνων τόπων τόπους ἀφικομένας), embracing the divine vision (τὴν θεωρίαν ἀσπαζομένας τὴν θείαν) […] in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure insatiable vision which is the privilege of intensely loving souls (ἐναργῆ δὲ ὡς ἔνι μάλιστα καὶ ἀκριβῶς εἰλικρινῆ τὴν ἀκόρεστον ὑπερφυῶς ἀγαπώσαις ψυχαῖς ἑστιωμένας θέαν), holding festival through endless ages (ἀιδίως ἀίδιον εὐφροσύνην ἀκόρεστον καρπουμένας), remain honoured with the identity of all excellence (εἰς τοὺς ἀτελευτήτους αἰῶνας ταὐτότητι τῆς ὑπεροχῆς ἁπάσας τετιμημένας διαμένειν). Such is the vision attainable by the pure in heart (αὕτη τῶν καθαρῶν τῇ καρδίᾳ ἡ καταληπτικὴ θεωρία).

As Dominic O'Meara (2003, p. 162) notes,

> To become members of the Church, the 'initiated' must receive instruction in the 'divine way of life' (ἡ ἔνθεος πολιτεία) so as to live this life, purifying themselves of the life of vice (ἡ ἐν κακίᾳ πολιτεία). They thus require teaching and a moral reform, followed by purification which leads to a contemplative mode

> of life exemplified at its highest level, in the order of the 'initiated,' by the rank of monks.

In this context, Clement defined the purpose of book 7 of the *Stromata* as demonstrating that "the gnostic alone is truly pious" (7.1.1.1: μόνον ὄντως εἶναι θεοσεβῆ τὸν γνωστικόν), a notion he reiterated a paragraph later, where we read that the true Gnostic "alone is holy and pious, and worships the true God in a manner worthy of Him" (7.1.2.1: … μόνον τὸν γνωστικὸν ὅσιόν τε καὶ εὐσεβῆ, θεοπρεπῶς τὸν τῷ ὄντι θεὸν θρῃσκεύοντα). Accordingly, Clement attacked pagan philosophers as "unworthy of partaking of the power of believing" (7.1.1.2: μηδέπω ἀξίους ἑαυτοὺς μεταλαβεῖν τῆς τοῦ πιστεῦσαι δυνάμεως παρεσχήκασι). He further added (7.1.4.3) that,

> He … who is persuaded that God is omnipotent (ὁ τοίνυν θεὸν πεπεισμένος εἶναι παντοκράτορα) and has been instructed in the divine mysteries from His only-begotten Son (καὶ τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια παρὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς παιδὸς αὐτοῦ ἐκμαθών)," cannot be an atheist (πῶς οὗτος ἄθεος;). "An atheist is someone who believes that God does not exist (ἄθεος μὲν γὰρ ὁ μὴ νομίζων εἶναι θεόν) and is superstitious because he dreads the demons (δεισιδαίμων δὲ ὁ δεδιὼς τὰ δαιμόνια); it is him who deifies all things, both wood and stone (ὁ πάντα θειάζων καὶ ξύλον καὶ λίθον); and reduces to bondage spirit, and man who possesses the life of reason" (καὶ πνεῦμα ἄνθρωπον τὸν <μὴ> λογικῶς βιοῦντα καταδεδουλωμένον).

Clement employed the same rhetoric against those he regarded as heretics, such as those who followed Valentinus, Marcion, or Basilides, and many others (*Str* 7.17.108.1–2), whom he described as "mystagogues of the soul of the impious" (7.17.106.3: μυσταγωγοὶ τῆς τῶν ἀσεβῶν ψυχῆς). Their followers, he warned, will not enter the kingdom of God (7.17.106.1–2):

> Those, then, who adhere to impious words (Οἱ τοίνυν τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἁπτόμενοι λόγων) and dictate them to others (ἄλλοις τε ἐξάρχοντες), without applying the divine words correctly but erroneously (μηδὲ εὖ τοῖς λόγοις τοῖς θείοις, ἀλλὰ ἐξημαρτημένως συγχρώμενοι), neither themselves enter into the kingdom of heaven (οὔτε αὐτοὶ εἰσίασιν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν), nor allow those whom they have deceived to attain the truth (οὔτε οὓς ἐξηπάτησαν ἐῶσιν τυγχάνειν τῆς ἀληθείας).

Furthermore, Clement is of the opinion that the divine constitution (the *entheos politeia*) must be ruled by laws that aim to teach as much as to punish (1.27.171.1). Clement resorts once more to Plato and the *Laws* to support the view that "the unbeliever is one to whom voluntary falsehood is agreeable" (ὃ δὲ ἄπιστος, ᾧ φίλον ψεῦδος ἑκούσιον; *Str* 4.18.1–2).[29] Such men are senseless, faithless, and ignorant. Clement quotes *Laws* 730C4–7 (cf. 705A) where the Athenian Stranger claims that "the man who loves the voluntary lie is untrustworthy (ὁ δὲ ἄπιστος ᾧ φίλον ψεῦδος ἑκούσιον), while the man who loves the involuntary lie is senseless" (ὅτῳ δὲ ἀκούσιον, ἄνους),[30] adding that "everyone who is either faithless or foolish is friendless" (ἄφιλος γὰρ δὴ πᾶς ὅ γε ἄπιστος καὶ ἀμαθής). Such men corrode the coherence of the civic group. Unlike them, Clement argues (*Str* 4.18.3–4),

> those who believe in Christ both are and are called Chrestoi (good) (αὐτίκα οἱ εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότες χρηστοί τε εἰσὶ καὶ λέγονται), as those who are cared for by the true king are kingly (ὡς τῷ ὄντι βασιλικοὶ οἱ βασιλεῖ μεμελημένοι) … those who belong to Christ the King are kings, and those that are Christ's Christians (ὡς γὰρ οἱ σοφοὶ σοφίᾳ εἰσὶ σοφοὶ καὶ οἱ νόμιμοι νόμῳ νόμιμοι, οὕτως οἱ Χριστῷ βασιλεῖ βασιλεῖς καὶ οἱ Χριστοῦ Χριστιανοί).

Clement cites here Plato's authority once more to argue that "following the law" is a way to actively emulate God and achieve assimilation with him. Unlike the great natures that are free from passions and can immediately grasp the truth, average people must rely

on observing the law. Furthermore, the divine law trains man especially to self-restraint, laying this as the foundation of the virtues (cf. *Str* 1.24.159.3–6 cited above).

Thus, Clement follows Plato in associating impiety with faithlessness and atheism (see *Resp* 580A),[31] a heinous crime that lawgivers must eliminate from the ideal society, following the example of God who converts his enemies by chastising them. In *Stromata* 7.16.102.4–5 Clement insists that God, acting like a teacher or like a father (ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς τοῦ διδασκάλου ἢ τοῦ πατρὸς οἱ παῖδες), as we saw in Plato's *Laws*, does not punish but chastises. For, while punishment is retaliation for evil (ἔστι γὰρ ἡ τιμωρία κακοῦ ἀνταπόδοσις), chastisement is for our benefit, collectively and individually (κολάζει μέντοι πρὸς τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ τοῖς κολαζομένοις). Using Platonic vocabulary Clement explains that "the source of all transgressions are two, ignorance and weakness" (7.16.101.6: δύο εἰσὶν ἀρχαὶ πάσης ἁμαρτίας, ἄγνοια καὶ ἀσθένεια; cf. 7.16.102.6), and God intervenes as a doctor to heal those willing to lend their ears to him. The unabashed, Clement comments, "have the penalties that are on record" (7.16.105.6: ἔγγραφα ἔχουσι τὰ ἐπιτίμια). Of course, Clement realizes that fear of punishment or hope for reward are not genuine enough motives for the true Gnostic who aims to practice piety for the sake of the good alone (4.22.145.2),[32] nevertheless it is an efficient means of keeping the average Christian alert to the ever-lurking danger of sin.

Clement explicitly refers to fear of punishment as fundamental and deeply pedagogical (2.6.30.3–4),[33] especially since the divine plan involves the salvation of both believers and unbelievers (7.2.6.6); punishment is, in fact, presented as the way to conversion which is preferable to death. Citing once more Plato's *Laws* (=715E8–716A3), Clement further stresses the association of fear with the divine Law, referring to justice as the "avenger of those who rebel against the divine Law" (*Str* 2.22.132.2–3):

> Thus, he says in the *Laws* (ἐν τοῖς Νόμοις·); God indeed, as per the ancient saying (ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος), occupying the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things (ὁ μὲν δὴ θεός … ἀρχήν τε καὶ μέσα καὶ τελευτὴν τῶν πάντων ἔχων), brings them straight to their natural end while encircling them (εὐθεῖαν περαίνει κατὰ φύσιν περιπορευόμενος)· and he is always attended by justice (τῷ δὲ αἰεὶ ξυνέπεται δίκη), the avenger of those who rebel against the divine law (τῶν ἀπολειπομένων τοῦ θείου νόμου τιμωρός). You see how he also associates fear with the divine law (ὁρᾷς ὅπως καὶ αὐτὸς εὐλάβειαν προσάγει τῷ θείῳ νόμῳ).

Furthermore, while persistently discussing Plato's analysis of marriage laws, now elaborated with Scriptural examples, Clement summarizes the capital punishments for adultery, aimed at checking the impulsiveness of the passions (2.23.147.1: πρὸς ἀναστολὴν τῆς εὐεπιφορίας τῶν παθῶν), before concluding ominously that "the law is not at variance with the Gospel, but agrees with it" (2.23.147.2: οὐ δὴ μάχεται τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ ὁ νόμος, συνᾴδει δὲ αὐτῷ). Importantly, although in the *Protrepticus* Clement refers to the "peaceful soldiers of Christ" (*Protr* 11.116.3–4: τοὺς εἰρηνικοὺς στρατιώτας τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ), in *Stromata* 3.4.32.1 we are assured that those who disobey the laws become hated both "to human lawgivers and to the law of God" (ἤδη δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις νομοθέταις καὶ τῷ θείῳ νόμῳ ἀπεχθάνονται παρανόμως βιοῦν ἐπανηρημένοι); Clement cites here the Old Testament Book of Numbers (25:7–14; cf. 25:17) where "the man who thrust his spear into the fornicator is evidently blessed by God" (*Str* 3.4.32.2: ὁ γοῦν ἐκκεντήσας τὸν πόρνον εὐλογούμενος πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ δείκνυται ἐν τοῖς Ἀριθμοῖς). Similar views are expressed in Clement's fragments, for example his comments of the Epistle of Jude or the First Epistle of John 2.2, which at the same time illustrate the reception of his views in later Christianity; for example, Cassiodorus in the sixth century refers to Clement's comments in his *Adumbrationes in Epistolas Catholicas* (Dainese 2016).

3. Clement and the Violent Turn of Religious Rhetoric in Late Antiquity

Clement defined scepticism as the result of the "changeability and instability of the human mind" (*Str* 8.7.22.1–2: … ἓν μὲν τὸ πολύτροπον καὶ ἄστατον τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης γνώμης) in conjunction with "the discrepancy that exists in things" (δεύτερον δὲ ἡ ἐν

τοῖς οὖσι διαφωνία). This is why, Clement argued, God, "having equipped some of the barbarians with the commandments and some with philosophy" (7.2.11.2: τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἐντολάς, τοῖς δὲ φιλοσοφίαν παρασχὼν), "he shut up on all sides the disbelief in his advent" (συνέκλεισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν), "on account of which anyone who does not believe is inexcusable" (ὅθεν ἀναπολόγητός ἐστι πᾶς ὁ μὴ πιστεύσας).[34] Repentance is the only avenue Clement afforded to sinners to escape their predicament (*Str* 7.2.12.5). His position, embraced by members of his immediate circle such as his student Origen (*Contra Celsum* 1.71), was notably influential among Christian authors. Hence, Clement's views are well-known to Eusebius, certainly the fifth book of the *Stromata* that focuses on faith and is excerpted in *PE* 13.13, but also to Athanasius[35] and later to Cyril of Alexandria (Grant 1964). The latter adopts a notably hard line in his works, for example in his Commentary on John, determining that those who do not believe in Jesus are bound to "die in their sins".[36] Cyril's language is, on this occasion at least (Crawford 2023), notably hostile and threatening against those who do not believe in Jesus, anticipating the violent expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria in 415.[37] These were volatile times during which individuals and communities face numerous crises and feel the need to display their identities in dramatic ways (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2024). Furthermore, this is the time when Christianity, having found a champion in Constantine, is preoccupied with resolving its dogmatic disputes; the process left little room for the theological debates of the second and third centuries when Christianity posed as a philosophy, or rather as the "true philosophy" (Löhr 2010, pp. 168–70) and Christian teachers were confident in engaging with the intellectual traditions of the heterodox.[38]

In my view, these new circumstances that demanded of Christians to negotiate the ways in which the State would promote and even enforce Christianity dictate the style of Firmicus Maternus' polemic *Error of the Pagan Religions*. However, although he draws as we shall see on Clement and ultimately on Plato's views on atheism and impiety, Firmicus is more intent on attracting the attention of the emperors by using bold language. In his work, the philosopher assured the emperors that "ordered by the law of the Greatest God, your (i.e., their) severity should prosecute the evil deeds of idolatry" (29.1–2: *hoc vobis dei summi lege praecipitur, ut severitas vestra idolatriae facinus omnifariam persequatur*). Furthermore, closely paraphrasing the Book of Deuteronomy 13 on worshipping other gods[39] he urged the leaders of the Byzantine theocracy to:

> Hear and perceive with your holy senses what God commands you about this deed (*de isto facinore*): do not to pity either the son or the father, and through the loved members of a spouse, he thrusts the vindicating sword (*Nec filio iubet parci nec fratri, et per amata coniugis membra gladium vindicem ducit*). He also persecutes the friend with lofty severity and all the people are armed for breaking up the bodies of the sacrilegious (*Amicum quoque sublimi severitate persequitur, et ad discerpenda sacrilegorum corpora omnis populus armature*) (*Errore* 29.1 [ed. Oster, p. 133]).

The Old Testament God, Firmicus continues, further adapting Deuteronomy 13 (at 29.2 [p. 116])[40] sanctioned even the extermination of whole cities when suggestions of worshipping new, unfamiliar gods were put forward:

> killing (*interficiens*), you shall murder everyone who is in the city with a destruction by the sword (*necabis omnes quiqui sunt in civitate caede gladii*) and you shall burn the city with fire (*incendes civitatem igni*) and it shall be without habitation (*et erit sine habitaculo*) and nothing shall be built there forever (*non aedificabitur in aeternum*).

Notably, Clement, on whom Firmicus often relied (Turcan 1982, pp. 51–52; cf. Wagner 1971, p. 212, n. 5), quoted Deuteronomy 13:4 twice in the *Stromata* (2.19.100.3–101.1; 5.14.94.3–95.2), while discussing Plato's views on our aptitude to become godlike. The difference in tone between the verses quoted by Firmicus and Clement is striking. Clement, in his usual style, weaved together pagan philosophical tenets (especially Platonic), with

the Mosaic Law and Scriptural paradigms to defend the correlation of civic and divine law across intellectual traditions, with emphasis on the open-mindedness and peaceable nature of those perceptives of divine principles (*Str* 2.19.100.4):

> For the law says (φησὶ γὰρ ὁ νόμος), Walk after the Lord your God (ὀπίσω κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν πορεύεσθε) and keep my commandments (καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς μου φυλάξετε = Deut. 13.4). For the law defines assimilation (i.e., the Platonic assimilation) as following (τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἐξομοίωσιν ὁ νόμος ἀκολουθίαν ὀνομάζει)· and such following assimilates those who follow the law as far as possible (ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη ἀκολουθία κατὰ δύναμιν ἐξομοιοῖ).[41] Become, says the Lord, merciful and compassionate (γίνεσθε, φησὶν ὁ κύριος, ἐλεήμονες καὶ οἰκτίρμονες), like your heavenly father is compassionate (ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος οἰκτίρμων ἐστίν).

Despite using Proverbs 2:21–22 to warn his readers that "the transgressors shall be rooted out from the earth" (2.19.102.2–3: οἱ δὲ παρανομοῦντες ἐξολοθρευθήσονται ἀπ' αὐτῆς [i.e., τῆς γῆς]), Clement also insisted that it is "the image of God is really the man who does good" (2.19.102.2: τῷ γὰρ ὄντι εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος εὐεργετῶν). He also cited a prophecy according to which God ascertains that he will look "on him who is mild and gentle, and trembles at his words (2.19.101.2: ἐπιβλέψω … ἐπὶ τὸν πρᾷον καὶ ἡσύχιον καὶ τρέμοντά μου τοὺς λόγους). This assimilation, he continued, refers to people's ability to approximate the mind and reason of God (2.19.102.6: κατὰ νοῦν καὶ λογισμόν), rather than His appearance, and is reflected both on doing good and, importantly, on ruling over others (2.19.102.6–7: ᾧ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἄρχειν ὁμοιότητα προσηκόντως ὁ κύριος ἐνσφραγίζεται). Clement concludes his chapter with a reference of notable Platonic hue to the contribution of holy men to the management of cities and households (2.19.102.7: βουλαῖς γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ὁσίων εὖ μὲν οἰκοῦνται πόλεις, εὖ δ' οἶκος).

Clement also cited Deuteronomy 4:12 where Israel is reminded of their duty to be loyal to their God (*Str* 4.26.170.4):

> now what does God your Lord require of you (νῦν, Ἰσραήλ, τί κύριος ὁ θεός σου αἰτεῖται παρὰ σοῦ) but to fear God your Lord (φοβεῖσθαι κύριον τὸν θεόν σου) and walk in all His ways (καὶ πορεύεσθαι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ), and love Him (καὶ ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν) and worship Him alone? (καὶ λατρεύειν αὐτῷ μόνῳ).

However, not only did Clement cite here numerous additional paradigms from the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, and Plato (see *Str* 4.26.172.2–3 cited above), alongside pagan poets such as Euripides, always interspersed with examples from Scripture, but he insisted that it is Israel who has "the power of choosing salvation" (<τοῦτο> αἰτεῖται παρὰ σοῦ, τοῦ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχοντος ἑλέσθαι τὴν σωτηρίαν). Clement returned to the issue of free will in Book Five of the *Stromata*, claiming that faith is a choice: "for who is such a god-denier to disbelieve God and demand of him proof as from men?" (5.1.6.1: τίς οὖν οὕτως ἄθεος <ὡς> ἀπιστεῖν θεῷ καὶ τὰς ἀποδείξεις ὡς παρὰ ἀνθρώπων ἀπαιτεῖν τοῦ θεοῦ).[42] A few paragraphs later, Clement cited Deuteronomy once more, this time 6:4, reiterating to Israel that "God is one and you shall worship only Him" (*Str* 5.14.115.5: ἄκουε, φησίν, Ἰσραήλ, κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἷς ἐστιν, καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις). But Clement, "a particularly irenic thinker, who affirms seeds of truth wherever he finds them" (Kovacs 2009, p. 263), would have never gone so far as to imagine the imperial army led by Constantine and/or his sons, as the extended hand of the Lord's punishment against the heterodox (Gassman 2020, pp. 66–75). Unlike Firmicus Maternus who rejected vehemently philosophical allegories (Gassman 2020, pp. 57–61), intent "to develop a new approach to anti-pagan polemic, which treats Christianity and traditional cult as opposing theological and ritual systems" (Gassman 2020, p. 67), Clement repeatedly referred to Christianity as the "true philosophy" (*Str* 5.11.82.2).[43] Thus, it seems, by the time of Firmicus Maternus there was need for Christianity to be translated into clear-cut dicta that emphasized

its superiority and did not tolerate the interfaith erudition put on display by Clement and his followers.

Conclusions

As Socrates claims in the *Apology* (23D), people typically assumed that philosophers, too preoccupied with providing a rational explanation to everything and crafting fanciful arguments, "do not believe in gods" (θεοὺς μὴ νομίζειν). Plato seems to respond to this accusation in the *Laws* where he defends the civic benefits of philosophical contemplation, now entrusted in the Nocturnal Council and their appointed *theōroi.* He went further by inviting the average citizens to engage in this kind of *theōria* through the practical Test of Dionysus which would allow them to monitor their ethical stamina, while urging them to contribute to the city's goal of emulating the virtue of the gods reflected in the cosmic order.

Clement painstakingly employs Plato's views to counter-suggest the Kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem, as the ideal state that Christians should aspire to, provided they followed the law of the Christian God and were willingly faithful to him. However, contemplation, philosophical or Christian, is an activity that accords with the educated elites that typically claimed senatorial positions. From this perspective, the crowds incited to violence by Firmicus Maternus—unlikely to be trained, interested, or trusted with deciphering philosophical allegories, appear to be pawns in a battle between Senate and Church representatives vying for securing influence on the emperors (Gassman 2020, pp. 116–17).

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Notes

1 N.B.1 I am grateful to the three reviewers of the article for their generous and constructive feedback which has helped me sharpen my arguments. For a definition of atheism in Plato's *Laws* (understood as not believing in the existence of god/s), see Soneira Martínez (2020, pp. 313, 326) (with Soneira Martínez 2018, pp. 34–35; Roubekas 2014; Bremmer 2020a, p. 58) who prefers the term unbelief as more compatible with ancient religiosity: "The modern notion of atheism as a phenomenon outside of the religious sphere—or opposite to it—cannot be applied in Ancient Greece, nor can a romanticized view of it as a subversive phenomenon". Also see (Meert 2017, pp. 47–49) claiming that Plutarch (*Superst.* 165c) was the first ancient author to use the term ἀθεότης with a meaning close to that of modern atheism, in connection with *apistia* (disbelief) and the notion of denying divine Providence. Plutarch borrows *atheotēs* (meaning "godlessness" or "ungodliness") from Plato (for which see n. 4 below). Meert cites the work of (Fahr 1969; Buckley 1987; Rankin 1983). On ἀσέβεια and related terms meaning impiety in ancient Greece, see (Soneira Martínez 2020, p. 320) with n. 44 citing among others (Cohen 1988; Bowden 2015). Plato explores the meaning of impiety in the *Euthyphro* relating the events prior to Socrates' trial of 399 BCE.

2 Clement, *Stromata* [hereafter, *Str*], 7.1.1.1–2: "so that by learning who is a true Christian (τίς ἐστιν ὁ τῷ ὄντι Χριστιανός), the philosophers may realize their own ignorance (τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀμαθίας καταγνῶναι) in rashly and haphazardly persecuting the [Christian] name (εἰκῇ μὲν καὶ ὡς ἔτυχεν διώκοντας τοὔνομα), and falsely calling impious those who know the true God" (μάτην δὲ ἀθέους ἀποκαλοῦντας <τοὺς> τὸν τῷ ὄντι θεὸν ἐγνωκότας). See (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2020b, p. 81, n. 1) with more bibliography; also, (Kovacs 2016, pp. 337–41); however, as (Whitmarsh 2017, esp. p. 290) notes, "the accusation of atheism develops primarily within a Christian discourse, rather than being levelled at Christians from the outside".

3 As Meert (2017, p. 48) claims, in Plato's *Statesman* 309A *atheotēs* denotes lack of virtue and self-restraint. In the *Laws* (967A–B), again, Plato relates *atheotēs* to denying the immortality of the soul and naturalism; he further ascribes a combination of both meanings to the sophists in book 10 of the *Laws* (888D–889; 890A, 908C–908D). Buckley (1987, p. 9) and Rankin (1983, p. 135) stress the connection of ancient Greek atheism with "taking different views of deity from one's fellow citizens". For *atheos* in connection to impious behaviour toward organized Greek religion, see Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 4.164; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 151; Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 1036; Euripides, *Andromache* 491, relying here on (Meert 2017, p. 48, n. 106).

4 The text reads: "Let us convert and change (μετανοήσωμεν οὖν καὶ μεταστῶμεν) from ignorance to knowledge (ἐξ ἀμαθίας εἰς ἐπιστήμην), from insensibility to sensibility (ἐξ ἀφροσύνης εἰς φρόνησιν), from incontinence to continence (ἐξ ἀκρασίας εἰς ἐγκράτειαν), from injustice to justice (ἐξ ἀδικίας εἰς δικαιοσύνην), from atheism to God" (ἐξ ἀθεότητος εἰς θεόν); following (Bremmer 2007, pp. 21–22; Karamanolis 2012, 2021, p. 109); cf. (Herrero de Jáuregui 2008, pp. 19, 47, 145–47, 161, 184–85, 195–96, 245).

5 (Moss 2020, p. 584; Bremmer 2020b, pp. 58–59, ns. 65–66). Although Clement accuses those who refuse martyrdom as heretics with "an impious and cowardly love of life" (*Str* 4.4.16.3: τινὲς δὲ τῶν αἱρετικῶν τοῦ κυρίου παρακηκοότες ἀσεβῶς ἅμα καὶ δειλῶς φιλοζωοῦσι), he becomes increasingly critical of those too willing to become martyrs, trying to defend a middle position; (Middleton 2006, pp. 18–25, 28–30).

6 See *Euthyphro* 5D–6B with (Soneira Martínez 2020, pp. 322–3); cf. *Euthyphro* 15A; see also (Rosen 1968; Cohen 1971; Edwards 2016).

7 See *Apology* 35B–D with (Burnyeat 2012); Also see (Van Harten 2011, p. 182) with n. 43 on Socrates' belief that the gods are good; cf. (Lännström 2013; Filonik 2013, pp. 52–57).

8 (Bremmer 2007, pp. 14, 19; Whitmarsh 2015, pp. 91–99). On Socrates' trial, also see (Soneira Martínez 2020, p. 331, n. 112) citing (Ferguson 1913; Connor 1991; Brickhouse and Smith 1989, 2002, 2004; Ralkowski 2013).

9 I am very grateful to Prof. Daryl Kaytor for pointing out that while in the *Republic* we come across the famous myth of the Cave (514A–520A), the *Laws* begins precisely with three elderly men walking to the cave of Zeus on Mt Ida in Crete (625A–B). Thus, while it exceeds the scope of the present paper, it seems that Plato is here preoccupied with the same agenda as in the *Republic*.

10 Plato had developed the connection between the political and the natural cosmos already in the *Respublica* (hereafter *Resp*) (e.g., 430D–432A), while in the *Laws* he explicitly claims that the gods pitying human misery bestowed on them "the pleasurable perception of rhythm and harmony" as a means of ethical training (653C8–9: δεδωκότας τὴν ἔνρυθμόν τε καὶ ἐναρμόνιον αἴσθησιν μεθ' ἡδονῆς) which allows us to become the "fellow-dancers" (665A5: τοὺς θεοὺς συγχορευτὰς) of our divine choir leaders, Apollo, the Muses, and above all Dionysus (665A5–7); cf. *Leg* 653A7–654A5. Also see (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2021a, 2023, pp. 29–33).

11 Φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν· ὁμοίωσις δὲ δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι ("and to escape [from material bonds] is to become godlike, as much as possible; and to become godlike is to become just and blessed with wisdom"). See n. 24 below on Clement's reception of Plato's text.

12 *Leg* 885B7–10: Ἀλλὰ ἓν δή τι τῶν τριῶν πάσχων, ἢ τοῦτο, ὅπερ εἶπον, οὐχ ἡγούμενος, ἢ τὸ δεύτερον ὄντας οὐ φροντίζειν ἀνθρώπων, ἢ τρίτον εὐπαραμυθήτους εἶναι θυσίαις τε καὶ εὐχαῖς παραγομένους. Note that the first category is alluded to as "those who disagree with what I just said", without explicitly admitting the existence of atheists, something he adds a few lines further, at 885C6–11, with the excuse of an imagined counterargument: ταῦτα τάχ᾽ ἂν ἐρεσχηλοῦντες εἴποιεν … ἡμῶν γὰρ οἱ μὲν τὸ παράπαν θεοὺς οὐδαμῶς νομίζομεν, […], οἱ δὲ οἵους ὑμεῖς λέγετε ("let's imagine what they would say in derision … Some of us do not believe in gods at all; others believe in gods such as of the kind you mention").

13 The text reads: Περιμενεῖς, ἀνασκοπῶν εἴτε οὕτως εἴτε ἄλλως ἔχει, πυνθανόμενος παρά τε τῶν ἄλλων καὶ δὴ καὶ μάλιστα καὶ παρὰ τοῦ νομοθέτου ("wait, while considering whether the matter stands thus or otherwise, making enquiries alongside all others especially from the lawgiver" … πειρατέον γὰρ τῷ τοὺς νόμους σοι τιθέντι νῦν καὶ εἰς αὖθις διδάσκειν περὶ αὐτῶν τούτων ὡς ἔχει. ("… for it must be the task of him who sets the laws both now and in hereafter to instruct you how these matters stand").

14 Plato writes: Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡ σωφροσύνη, ἣν καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ ὀνομάζουσι σωφροσύνην, τὸ περὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας μὴ ἐπτοῆσθαι ἀλλ᾽ ὀλιγώρως ἔχειν καὶ κοσμίως, ἆρ᾽ οὐ τούτοις μόνοις προσήκει, τοῖς μάλιστα τοῦ σώματος ὀλιγωροῦσίν τε καὶ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ζῶσιν; ("therefore *sōphrosynē*, what the many also refer to as *sōphrosynē*, that is, not being excited by the passions but be indifferent to them and behaving in a seemly manner, does it not suit uniquely those who despise the body above all and pass their lives in philosophy?"). For philosophy as preparation for death, also, see *Ph*. 81A2: μελέτη θανάτου; cf. 63E9–64A8; 67E4). Socrates insists that only philosophers are keen to achieve the separation of the body from the soul; *Ph*. 65E6–66A8: ὀρθῶς, καὶ τὸ μελέτημα αὐτὸ τοῦτό ἐστιν τῶν φιλοσόφων, λύσις καὶ χωρισμὸς ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος· and 67d5–9: Λύειν δέ γε αὐτήν, […], προθυμοῦνται ἀεὶ μάλιστα καὶ μόνοι οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες.

15 The text reads: "… perhaps there is a pattern of it [i.e., the ideal city] laid up in heaven (ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται) for him who wishes to contemplate it (τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾶν) and so beholding to constitute himself its citizen (καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν). But it makes no difference whether it exists now or ever will come into being (διαφέρει δὲ οὐδὲν εἴτε που ἔστιν εἴτε ἔσται). The politics of this city only will be his and of none other" (τὰ γὰρ ταύτης μόνης ἂν πράξειεν, ἄλλης δὲ οὐδεμιᾶς).

16 (Hull 2019); for *theōria*/*epopteia* in the *Phaedrus* where Plato employs the language of the mysteries to refer to philosophical meditation, a necessary stage for gaining philosophical insight, see (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 10–12, 17–21) with more bibliography; also (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2024).

17 Given that in *Euthypho* 6A Socrates claims that his gods are perfectly just and good, the "debate" that Plato mentions here as a key duty of the Nocturnal Council is about ensuring that the city aligns constantly to divine virtue and the core belief in the existence and providence of the gods; cf. (McPherran 2010, p. 117). From this perspective, Plato's principle of philosophical/theological contemplation would be appealing for Clement.

18 (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, p. 17) citing *Leg* 951C3–5 where the Athenian Stranger concludes: "without this inspection and enquiry" (ἄνευ γὰρ ταύτης τῆς θεωρίας καὶ ζητήσεως), "the city will not remain perfect for ever" (οὐ μένει ποτὲ τελέως πόλις).

19 Plato encouraged the citizens to drink wine to determine their alcohol consumption limit. Fearful of the ridicule they would endure if seen drunk publicly, the citizens were likely to leave a dinner party before exceeding their limit. Thus, they would train

themselves in self-control initially with regard to wine drinking but gradually with regard to all civic matters. See (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 11–12).

20 *Str* 1.1.10.2: ἐν γοῦν τοῖς Νόμοις ὁ ἐξ Ἑβραίων φιλόσοφος Πλάτων κελεύει ("and do in the *Laws* Plato, the philosopher who learned from the Jews, commands …"); 1.22.150.1: κατηκολούθηκε δὲ καὶ ὁ Πλάτων τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς νομοθεσίᾳ (Plato also followed the laws imparted to us); 1.25.165.1–166.1: Πλάτων δὲ ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐκ τῶν Μωυσέως τὰ περὶ τὴν νομοθεσίαν ὠφεληθεὶς ("Plato the philosopher having benefited by the books of Moses about legislation …"). The notion is frequently repeated throughout the *Stromata*; e.g., *Str*.1.26.170.3; 1.28.176.1; cf. 5.5.28.4; 5.5.30.1; 5.11.67.3–4; 5.14.97.7).

21 Following Numenius, Clement presented Plato as a Pythagorean who spoke in allegories for fear of being misunderstood by the uninitiated; see Numenius, Frg. 24, *ll*. 57–62 (ed. Des Places, p. 64 = Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica [hereafter, PE] 14.5.7 = Patrol. Graec. [hereafter, PG] vol. 21, cols. 1197a6–13). Clement reported that Numenius (whom he also described as a Pythagorean) had compared Plato to "Moses speaking in Attic Greek" (*Str* 1.22.150.4 = Frg. 8 [p. 51]: τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων; cf. Eusebius. *PE* [col. 873b9–14]).

22 *Str* 1.29.182.1–2: "Whether then, it be the law which is received at birth (τὸν ἅμα τῇ γενέσει … νόμον) or that given afterwards (τὸν αὖθις δοθέντα), but from God (πλὴν ἐκ θεοῦ), both the law of nature and that of instruction are one (ὅ τε τῆς φύσεως ὅ τε τῆς μαθήσεως νόμος, εἷς). Thus, Plato also says in *The Statesman* that the lawgiver is one (ὡς καὶ Πλάτων ἐν τῷ Πολιτικῷ ἕνα τὸν νομοθέτην φησίν); and in *The Laws*, that he who shall understand music is one (ἐν δὲ τοῖς Νόμοις ἕνα τὸν συνήσοντα τῶν μουσικῶν); teaching by these words that the Word is one (διὰ τούτων διδάσκων τὸν λόγον εἶναι ἕνα), and God is one" (καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἕνα).

23 *Str* 1.26.167.1–2: καὶ τοῦτον κυρίως θεσμὸν (…) τὸν ὑπὸ θεοῦ διὰ Μωυσέως παραδεδομένον. ἔχει γοῦν τὴν ἀγωγὴν εἰς τὸ θεῖον; cf. 7.3.19.4–7.3.20.2: "For the laws of the state are perchance able to restrain bad actions (οἱ νόμοι γὰρ οἱ πολιτικοὶ μοχθηρὰς ἴσως πράξεις ἐπισχεῖν); but persuasive words, which but touch the surface (οἱ λόγοι οἱ πειστικοὶ ἐπιπόλαιοι ὄντες), cannot produce a scientific permanence of truth (οὐδὲ … ἐπιστημονικὴν τῆς ἀληθείας διαμονὴν παράσχοιεν ἄν). Greek philosophy, as it were, purges the soul, and prepares it beforehand for the reception of faith (φιλοσοφία δὲ ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ οἷον προκαθαίρει καὶ προεθίζει τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς παραδοχὴν πίστεως), on which Truth builds up the edifice of knowledge" (ἐφ' ᾗ τὴν γνῶσιν ἐποικοδομεῖ ἡ ἀλήθεια).

24 Clement presents Plato's *Theaetetus* (*Str* 2.9.45.4–7) as compatible with Matthias' now lost (gospel-like) *Paradoseis*, noting that one is assimilated to God "I mean, God our Saviour, having served the God of all things through his high priest, the Logos, by whom we distinguish which are the just and honest things according to the truth; for piety is a practice that follows and corresponds to God" (καθὸ καὶ ὁμοιοῦταί τις θεῷ, θεῷ λέγω τῷ σωτῆρι, θεραπεύων τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως λόγου, δι' οὗ καθορᾶται τὰ κατ' ἀλήθειαν καλὰ καὶ δίκαια. εὐσέβεια ἔστι πρᾶξις ἑπομένη καὶ ἀκόλουθος θεῷ). Clement returns to Plato's "escape/flight from the world" in *Str*. 2.22.133.3–4; cf. n. 11 above.

25 Clement refers to complete or perfect(ed) persons of faith as true Gnostics; see (Rankin 2022) discussing how Clement revamps the term that was typically reserved for those deemed heretics; cf. (Le Boulluec 2022). On the problem of Gnosticism in the early Church and Clement's response to it, see (Chadwick 1966, pp. 7–9, 53–64), and (Kovacs 1978) discussing the antithesis between Clement's true Gnostic and the Valentinian Gnostics who claimed superior access to gnosis unlike most Christians who simply followed the church's teaching and observed the inferior god of the law. For Clement, faith not gnosis/esoteric knowledge is the key to salvation. Also, see (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, p. 27) with *Str* 4.6.40.1: "when he who partakes gnostically of the holy quality (ὅταν … ὁ γνωστικῶς μετέχων τῆς ἁγίας ποιότητος), dedicates himself to contemplation (ἐνδιατρίψῃ τῇ θεωρίᾳ) by connecting purely with the divine (τῷ θείῳ καθαρῶς ὁμιλῶν), he comes closer to identifying with the state of impassibility" (προσεχέστερον ἐν ἕξει γίνεται ταὐτότητος ἀπαθοῦς). For more references in Clement insisting on the importance of *theōria* to see God "face to face" (*Str* 1.19.94.6; 5.11.74.1; 7.10.57.1 in (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, p. 24), also see *Str* 6.17.154.4; 6.17.155.3; 7.10.56.5–6 and 7.3.13.1–2 (cited below). Cf. *Str.* 5.11.67.2 where the gnostic's impassibility follows the example of Christ and the apostles. For gaining the heavenly kingdom through impassibility, see *Str* 3.6.59.2; 3.7.59.4; 3.15.99.4; 4.6.34.6.

26 In *Str*. 2.22.136.6, Clement argues that "through assimilation to God a man becomes as far as possible just and holy with insight" (τὴν ἐξομοίωσιν τοίνυν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὅσον οἷόν τε ἦν δίκαιον καὶ ὅσιον μετὰ φρονήσεως γενέσθαι), adding that "he lays down the aim of faith, for the end is the restitution of the promise which is effected by faith" (σκοπὸν τῆς πίστεως ὑποτίθεται, τέλος δὲ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἀποκατάστασιν). (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, pp. 26, 54, n. 93) for more references to how Clement distinguishes between the vanity of pagan philosophers and the true gnostic; cf. n. 34 below.

27 Socrates repeatedly refers to himself and those philosophizing as initiates (*Phaedrus* [hereafter, *Phdr*.] 249C8–9; 250B7–C1; 250E1; 251A3; 253C3) linking mystic *mania* with Dionysian *teleta*i (25B4: Διονύσου δὲ τελεστικήν … μανίαν). (Anagnostou-Laoutides 2022, p. 48, ns. 41–42).

28 The text reads: "Plato rightly says (εἰκότως οὖν καὶ Πλάτων … φησι) that the man who devotes himself to the contemplation of the ideas (τὸν τῶν ἰδεῶν θεωρητικὸν) will live as a god among men (θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ζήσεσθαί); now the mind is the place of ideas (νοῦς δὲ χώρα ἰδεῶν), and God is mind (νοῦς δὲ ὁ θεός). Thus, he has said (εἴρηκεν) that he who contemplates the unseen God (τὸν <οὖν> ἀοράτου θεοῦ θεωρητικὸν) lives as a god among men" (θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ζῶντα).

29 The whole text reads: "Plato the philosopher, too, says in the *Laws* (ἀλλὰ καὶ Πλάτων ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐν τοῖς Νόμοις … φησίν) that he who will be blessed and happy (τὸν μέλλοντα μακάριόν τε καὶ εὐδαίμονα γενέσθαι), must be right from the beginning

a partaker of the truth (τῆς ἀληθείας ἐξ ἀρχῆς εὐθὺς εἶναι μέτοχον χρῆναι), so as to live true for as long as possible (ἵν' ὡς πλεῖστον χρόνον ἀληθὴς ὢν διαβιῴη); for he is a man of faith (πιστὸς γάρ). But the unbeliever is one to whom voluntary falsehood is agreeable (ὃ δὲ ἄπιστος, ᾧ φίλον ψεῦδος ἑκούσιον); and the man to whom involuntary falsehood is agreeable is senseless (ὅτῳ δὲ ἀκούσιον, ἄνους); neither of which is desirable (ὧν οὐ ζῷον οὐδέτερον οὖν ζηλωτόν). For he who is devoid of friendliness, is faithless and ignorant" (ἄφιλος γὰρ πᾶς ὅ γε ἄπιστος καὶ ἀμαθής). (Osborn 1994, p. 5).

30 On the remarkable difference between Plato's endorsement of the "noble lie" in the *Republic* and his outright rejection of the voluntary lie in the *Laws*, see (Williams 2013, esp. p. 389) claiming that Plato ought to reject the use of lies/myths in Magnesia to make it more functional than his Kallipolis.

31 Cf. 580A discussing the qualities of the tyrannical man: ἀνάγκη καὶ εἶναι καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον γίγνεσθαι αὐτῷ ἢ πρότερον διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν φθονερῷ, ἀπίστῳ, ἀδίκῳ, ἀφίλῳ, ἀνοσίῳ καὶ πάσης κακίας πανδοκεῖ τε καὶ τροφεῖ ("he is necessarily and likely to become even more than before because of his power envious, faithless, unjust, friendless, impious, a vessel and nurse of all iniquity").

32 Clement writes: Ὁ δὲ ψιλῇ κλήσει καθὸ κέκληται ὑπακούων οὔτε διὰ φόβον οὔτε διὰ ἡδονὰς ἐπὶ τὴν γνῶσιν ἴεται· ("he who obeys the call, as he is called, plainly neither for fear, nor for pleasures, is on his way to knowledge").

33 The text reads: "For love (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀγάπη), because of its affability with faith (τῇ πρὸς τὴν πίστιν φιλίᾳ), makes men believers (τοὺς πιστοὺς ποιεῖ); and faith (ἡ δὲ πίστις), the foundation of love (ἔδρασμα ἀγάπης), advances in turn the doing of good (ἀντεπάγουσα τὴν εὐποιίαν); since fear (ὅτε καὶ ὁ … φόβος), the pedagogue of law (τοῦ νόμου παιδαγωγὸς), is also believed to be fear by those by whom it is believed" (ἀφ' ὧν πιστεύεται, καὶ φόβος εἶναι πιστεύεται); cf. *Str* 6.6.46.2–4: "since God's punishments are saving and pedagogical (ἐπεὶ σωτήριοι καὶ παιδευτικαὶ αἱ κολάσεις τοῦ θεοῦ), leading to conversion (εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν ἄγουσαι), and choosing the repentance of a sinner rather than his death (καὶ τὴν μετάνοιαν τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν θάνατον αἱρούμεναι); and the souls that are released from their bodies (τῶν σωμάτων ἀπηλλαγμένων ψυχῶν) are able to perceive these things more clearly (ταῦτα καθαρώτερον διορᾶν δυναμένων), despite being darkened by passions (κἂν πάθεσιν ἐπισκοτῶνται), because they are no longer obstructed by the flesh" (διὰ τὸ μηκέτι ἐπιπροσθεῖσθαι σαρκίῳ). Also, see (Van den Hoek 2016, pp. 183–85) on Clement's inspiration from Proverbs 1:7 referring to "fear of god as the beginning of wisdom" (ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος θεοῦ).

34 Thus, Clement continues, God "leads to perfection through faith through different pathways of progression, Greek as well as barbarian" (ἄγει γὰρ ἐξ ἑκατέρας προκοπῆς Ἑλληνικῆς τε καὶ βαρβάρου ἐπὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως τελείωσιν). However, he adds (*Str* 7.2.11.3) "If any of the Greeks (Εἰ δέ τις Ἑλλήνων), crossing over from Greek philosophy which arose beforehand (ὑπερβὰς τὸ προηγούμενον τῆς φιλοσοφίας τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς), embraced the true doctrine straightaway (εὐθέως ὥρμησεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀληθῆ διδασκαλίαν), (…), he left the others well behind him (ὑπερεδίσκευσεν οὗτος), since he has opted for the shortcut of salvation by faith that leads to perfection" (τὴν ἐπίτομον τῆς σωτηρίας διὰ πίστεως εἰς τελείωσιν ἑλόμενος).

35 Christian authors such as Athanasius also had independent knowledge of Plato; (Meijering 1968, pp. 114–31).

36 Cyril of Alexandria, *Evangelium Ioannis Commentaria* 2.18 (=John 8:24): Εἶπον οὖν ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν ("For I said that you will die in your sins"); on which he adds (2.19): δεῖν γὰρ πάντως ἐν ἁμαρτίαις ἀποθανεῖν τοὺς ἀπειθοῦντάς φησι, τὸ δὲ τεθνάναι πεφορτισμένον τοῖς πλημμελήμασιν, ὅτι φλογὶ τῇ παμφάγῳ παραδώσει τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴν, οὐκ ἀμφίλογον. Ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν ("for he said, that in any case those who disobey him will die in their sins, their death having been burdened by their errors, for it is beyond dispute that he will deliver the soul of man to the all-consuming fire. If you do not believe that I am (the Messiah), you will die in your sins"; my trans.).

37 Kaplow (2005), discusses three violent conflicts in the fourth and early fifth century Alexandria: one resulting in the death of the Arian bishop George of Cappadocia in 361 BCE, one resulting in the destruction of the Serapeum in 391 CE, and finally, the conflict of Cyril with the Alexandrian Jews resulting in the death of Hypatia. The author warns against placing these events "into a narrative of the triumph of Nicene Christianity", pointing instead to "an interplay of relations" between the various communities which are unable to "to resist retaliating and to turn the other cheek" (p. 2).

38 Löhr (2010, pp. 176–80, 185–87) also noting that once Christian philosophical schools stopped existing, an irreparable breakage happened between Christianity and practising the philosophical *bios*, an experience now reserved for monks and their ascetic life.

39 [LXX] Deut. 13:6–10: ἐὰν δὲ παρακαλέσῃ σε ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἐκ πατρός σου ἢ ἐκ μητρός σου ἢ ὁ υἱός σου ἢ ἡ θυγάτηρ σου ἢ ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἐν κόλπῳ σου ἢ ὁ φίλος ὁ ἴσος τῆς ψυχῆς σου λάθρᾳ λέγων βαδίσωμεν καὶ λατρεύσωμεν θεοῖς ἑτέροις οὓς οὐκ ᾔδεις σὺ καὶ οἱ πατέρες σου ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν περικύκλῳ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐγγιζόντων σοι ἢ τῶν μακρὰν ἀπὸ σοῦ ἀπ᾽ ἄκρου τῆς γῆς ἕως ἄκρου τῆς γῆς οὐ συνθελήσεις αὐτῷ καὶ οὐκ εἰσακούσῃ αὐτοῦ *καὶ οὐ φείσεται ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐπιποθήσεις ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ οὐδ᾽ οὐ μὴ σκεπάσῃς αὐτόν ἀναγγέλλων ἀναγγελεῖς περὶ αὐτοῦ αἱ χεῖρές σου ἔσονται ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐν πρώτοις ἀποκτεῖναι αὐτόν καὶ αἱ χεῖρες παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτῳ καὶ λιθοβολήσουσιν αὐτὸν ἐν λίθοις καὶ ἀποθανεῖται ὅτι ἐζήτησεν ἀποστῆσαί σε ἀπὸ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου τοῦ ἐξαγαγόντος σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας.* ("if your brother from your father or mother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you hold in your embrace, or the friend you love as yourself urges you, by asking you to deviate from your path and worship alien gods, unknown to you and your fathers, gods of nearby nations that live close to you or gods of far off nations from one side of the earth to the other, do not consent to them, do not obey them. *Your eye will not spare them, you will not be overwhelmed with emotion for them, you will not cover them. Revealing,*

you will reveal about them and your hands will be cast upon them to kill them first, and the hands of all the people will be cast upon them last. They will kill them by stoning, and they will die for they tried to stir you away from the Lord, your God who rescued you from the slavery of Egypt"; my trans. and my emphasis).

40 [LXX] Deut. 13:12–18: ἐὰν δὲ ἀκούσῃς ἐν μιᾷ τῶν πόλεών σου ὧν κύριος ὁ θεός σου δίδωσίν σοι κατοικεῖν σε ἐκεῖ λεγόντων ἐξήλθοσαν ἄνδρες παράνομοι ἐξ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀπέστησαν πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν λέγοντες πορευθῶμεν καὶ λατρεύσωμεν θεοῖς ἑτέροις οὓς οὐκ ᾔδειτε καὶ ἐρωτήσεις καὶ ἐραυνήσεις σφόδρα καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀληθὴς σαφῶς ὁ λόγος γεγένηται τὸ βδέλυγμα τοῦτο ἐν ὑμῖν ἀναιρῶν ἀνελεῖς πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐκείνῃ ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀναθέματι ἀναθεματεῖτε αὐτὴν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκῦλα αὐτῆς συνάξεις εἰς τὰς διόδους αὐτῆς καὶ ἐμπρήσεις τὴν πόλιν ἐν πυρὶ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκῦλα αὐτῆς πανδημεὶ ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου καὶ ἔσται ἀοίκητος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα οὐκ ἀνοικοδομηθήσεται ἔτι οὐ προσκολληθήσεται ἐν τῇ χειρί σου οὐδὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀναθέματος ἵνα ἀποστραφῇ κύριος ἀπὸ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ δώσει σοι ἔλεος καὶ ἐλεήσει σε καὶ πληθυνεῖ σε ὃν τρόπον ὤμοσεν κύριος τοῖς πατράσιν σου ἐὰν ἀκούσῃς τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου φυλάσσειν πάσας τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ὅσας ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαί σοι σήμερον ποιεῖν τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀρεστὸν ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου. ("If you hear reports that in one of the towns which the Lord your God gives you to inhabit unlawful men arose among you and led astray everyone living in the city, by saying, 'let us go and worship other gods', whom you have not known, then you must question and investigate it thoroughly, and if verify clearly that the report is true that this disgrace has been committed among you, you must take it upon yourself and put to the sword all who live in that town. You will devote the city and everything in it to destruction, and you will gather all its plunder in its streets, and you will burn the city and all its plunder by fire in one mass in the face of the lord your god. And this city will remain uninhabited forever and will not be rebuilt and none of the accursed things shall be found in your hands so that the Lord will turn from his fierce anger and will give you mercy and have compassion on you and increase your numbers in the way he swore to your fathers; if you listen to the voice of the lord your God to keep all of his commends that I give you today, do what is good and right in the eyes of the lord your god"; my trans).

41 Clement reiterates his views in *Str* 5.14.94.6–5.14.95.2: "if you wish to grasp the assimilation [to God] by another name (ἑτέρῳ δ' εἰ βούλει παραλαβεῖν ὀνόματι τὴν ἐξομοίωσιν), you will find it in Moses where it is called a divine following (εὕροις ἂν παρὰ τῷ Μωυσεῖ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν ὀνομαζομένην θείαν). For he says (φησὶ γάρ)· Walk after the Lord your God (ὀπίσω κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν πορεύεσθε), and keep His commandments (καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ φυλάξατε). And I regard all the virtuous (οἶμαι … πάντες οἱ ἐνάρετοι) as servants and followers of God (ἀκόλουθοι δ' … καὶ θεραπευταὶ θεοῦ). Hence the Stoics say that the end of philosophy is to live agreeable to nature (ἐντεῦθεν οἱ μὲν Στωϊκοὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς φιλοσοφίας τὸ ἀκολούθως τῇ φύσει ζῆν εἰρήκασι); and Plato, likeness to God, as we have shown in the second book of the Stromata" (Πλάτων δὲ ὁμοίωσιν θεῷ ὡς ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ παρεστήσαμεν Στρωματεῖ).

42 Clement argues that the gnostics arrive at faith through contemplation (*Str* 5.1.1.5: γνωστικοὶ δὲ οὐ λόγῳ, ἔργα ἀπογραφόμενοι, ἀλλ' αὐτῇ τῇ θεωρίᾳ); also, see 5.13.83.5 and esp. 5.1.7.1 on free choice: Ἐπεὶ δὲ οἳ μὲν ἄπιστοι, οἳ δὲ ἐριστικοί, οὐ πάντες τυγχάνουσι τῆς τελειότητος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ. οὔτε γὰρ ἄνευ προαιρέσεως τυχεῖν οἷόν τε … ("but since some people are unbelieving, and some are disputatious, not all achieve the perfection of the good. For it is not possible to attain it without free choice …").

43 See also *Str*. 5.11.67.2, citing Socrates' description of philosophy as preparation for death: καὶ μή τι εἰκότως μελέτη θανάτου διὰ τοῦτο εἴρηται τῷ Σωκράτει ἡ φιλοσοφία· ὁ γὰρ μήτε τὴν ὄψιν παρατιθέμενος ἐν τῷ διανοεῖσθαι μήτε τινὰ τῶν ἄλλων αἰσθήσεων ἐφελκόμενος, ἀλλ' αὐτῷ καθαρῷ τῷ νῷ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐντυγχάνων τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφίαν μέτεισιν; cf. n. 14 above; also, see *Str* 1.18.90.2; 1.29.182.3; 2.11.48.1; 3.18.110.3; 5.14.141.4; 6.1.1.1; 6.11.89.3, etc.

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Dream Divination in a Context of Social Disruption: Julian's Vision of the Two Trees

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Abstract: The late Roman discourse on divinatory dreams and their interpretation reflects a context of cultural fragmentation. The political turbulence of the 350s to 360s was due partly to the ongoing external war with the (Persian) Sasanians, but also to the internal struggle between the heirs of Constantine for rule over the Roman empire, still undergoing a process of Christianization when Julian was acclaimed Augustus in 360. A third arena of fragmentation was religious beliefs and practices during the 350s and 360s. The contested transformation of Rome in the religious sphere was the context of Julian's dynastic vision of the two trees, received in late 358 or 359.

Keywords: Constantine I; Constantius II; divination; dream interpretation; Julian; emperor; later Roman empire; neo-Platonism; revelations

1. Introduction

Dream narratives and their interpretation played a distinctive role in classical Greco-Roman culture as well as early Christianity and still exert a strong influence on many people, albeit a covert one. In the emerging Christian culture of the fourth century, the discourse of dreams and their interpretation was a useful tool for Roman emperors who wished to create and maintain religious conflict. Hesiod recorded practices of divination, including dream interpretation, among the very earliest Greeks (*Theogonia* 211–212). Classical scholar William Harris lamented the proliferation of these in the second and third centuries CE as evidence of a Greco-Roman culture that was increasingly susceptible to superstition, under the degrading influence of Christianity (Harris 2009). This kind of reaction has been questioned by various scholars, most notably by Gregor Weber (2000) and Juliette Harrisson (2013). Revealing the complexities, Driediger-Murphy and Eidinow (2019) offer an extensive and up-to-date bibliography on the various types of divination and experiences that proliferated in classical Antiquity, while Neil et al. (2019) have shown how Greek and Roman theophanies were adopted and adapted by monastic Christians of the neo-Platonist tradition in one significant Late Antique province: that of Egypt. The last three researchers highlight that a major purpose of dream narrative interpretation was to give leaders and their followers a sense that their destinies were divinely controlled, in the context of widespread social disruption. This purpose served the providential approach to history adopted both by Julian and his opponents. In this paper, I adduce the Platonist and Judeo-Christian practices of dream divination as a context for understanding one of Julian's earliest recorded visions, received after he was acclaimed as Caesar by the Gallic troop in 355 CE, but before his troops acclaimed him as Augustus in 360, culminating in his becoming sole ruler on the death of Constantius in November 361.

We will be arguing that Julian's dynastic dream is suggestive of cultural hybridism, combining the ancient Greco-Roman practices of dream divination and Judeo-Christian dream motifs. It is well known that, as a young Caesar, Julian had a vision of two trees, which he recounted in a letter (Epistula 14), written shortly before he became sole Emperor. Although the Greco-Roman tradition of dream interpretation could be used to reinforce

a unified Christian identity (Neil 2015), such as that shared by the supporters of Emperor Constantius II, it was also used to predict imperial appointment by non-Christians, like neo-Platonist Julian and his physician Oribasius (*Oxf. Class. Dict.* [1979] 2003, p. 1046). Both groups regarded dreams as a tool of Providence and divine revelation, although dream divination was condemned by Christian thinkers from the second century and by emperors from the time of Constantine I. Following eminent anthropologist Anthony Wallace, I read narrated dreams and visions as symptomatic of cultural fragmentation. In this reading, dreams indicate an attempt to revitalize Christian or pagan religious cultures "by reinterpreting its myths, rituals and symbols, which are deeply embedded in individuals". Wallace calls this phenomenon "mazeway reformulation" (Wallace 2003, pp. 19–29). After introducing Julian's vision briefly, I examine three reasons for Julian to attempt mazeway formulation through a dynastic vision: (1) the crisis of succession, (2) the ongoing conflict between Christianity and supporters of traditional Greco-Roman religion, and (3) the ongoing war with the Sasanians.

2. The Vision of Two Trees (*Epist.* 14)

Julian's letter about the vision of two trees starts by acknowledging a divinatory dream had by his physician. It was to this trusted advisor that Julian then revealed his vision of the two trees. Letter 14 dates to late 358 or 359, based on its mention of the recall of this advisor, named Salutius or Sallust[ius] (see *Epistulae*, *leges*, *poematia et fragmenta varia* [eds. Bidez and Cumont], 385D [using 4th ed. as *Oeuvres*, p. 23]), to whom Julian dedicated his fourth oration. Julian, then in Paris, wrote to his doctor Oribasius in Vienne. This was a time of great uncertainty for Julian, only a year or two before he was proclaimed Augustus in 360, when he was about to engage Constantius II in a conflict that lasted until the latter's unexpected death in November 361 (Bleckmann 2020).

Julian opens his letter with an allusion to the Homeric tradition of dream interpretation (English translations are my own unless otherwise specified):

> The divinely inspired Homer says of dreams that there are two gates, and that they are not equally trustworthy with regard to future events. But I think that this time, you have seen wisely what is to come, now if ever; for I myself today saw something of the same kind.
>
> Τῶν ὀνειράτων δύο πύλας εἶναί φησιν ὁ θεῖος Ὅμηρος, καὶ διάφορον εἶναι αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀποβησομένων πίστιν. ἐγὼ δὲ νομίζω σε νῦν, εἴπερ ποτὲ καὶ ἄλλοτε, σαφῶς ἑορακέναι περὶ τῶν μελλόντων· ἐθεασάμην γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς τοιοῦτον σήμερον. (*Epist.* 14 [384A-B] [pp. 20–21])

The twin dream gates were common knowledge for any educated Greek, as we see from frequent allusions to the distinction between unsubstantial dreams that pass through a gate of ivory, and those which will come to pass and travel through a gate of horn (Homer, *Odyssey* 19.560–69). In the Homeric *Iliad*, dreams were entities that came from Zeus (1.63–65). Julian then narrated a special kind of dream, the dynastic vision. This is the clearest example of Julian's understanding of himself as providentially ordained to rule. It is worth quoting his account of the dream-vision at length:

> I thought that a tall tree had been planted in a certain very spacious room, and that it was leaning down to the ground, while at its root had sprouted another tree, small and young and very flourishing. Now I was very anxious on behalf of the small tree, lest someone in pulling up the large one should pull it up as well. And in fact, when I came close, I saw that the tall tree was lying at full length on the ground, while the small one was still erect, but hung suspended away from the earth. Now when I saw this I said, in great anxiety, "Alas for this tall tree! There is a danger that not even its offspring will be saved."

> δένδρον γὰρ ὤμην ὑψηλὸν ἔν τινι τρικλίνῳ σφόδρα μεγάλῳ πεφυτευμένον εἰς ἔδαφος ῥέπειν, τῇ ῥίζῃ παραπεφυκότος ἑτέρου μικροῦ καὶ νεογενοῦς, ἀνθηροῦ λίαν. ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ τοῦ μικροῦ σφόδρα ἠγωνίων, μή τις αὐτὸ μετὰ τοῦ Cμεγάλου συναποσπάσῃ. καὶ τοίνυν ἐπειδὴ πλησίον ἐγενόμην, ὁρῶ τὸ μέγα μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκτεταμένον, τὸ μικρὸν δὲ ὀρθὸν μέν, μετέωρον δὲ ἀπὸ γῆς. ὡς οὖν εἶδον, ἀγωνιάσας ἔφην· "Οἴου δένδρου! κίνδυνός ἐστι μηδὲ τὴν παραφυάδα σωθῆναι" (384B-C [p. 21])

Here, the flourishing small tree was the future Augustus Julian, and the apparently felled larger tree suggested a neo-Flavian dynasty or a return to traditional Roman imperial values. Julian identified his guide to dream interpretation as "one who was altogether a stranger to me", possibly a circumlocution referring to the divine messenger Hermes, similar to the reference to "the stranger" in *Oration* 7, addressed to Heraclius the Cynic (430C-D; cf. 204A [ed. Wright, vol. 2]). In that oration of 362, Julian presented himself as the infant son of Helios and Athena (*Orat.* 7.230A) and Hermes as his guide to safety on the path that had killed his half-brothers. Their deaths had introduced a period of social disruption such as had not been seen since Constantine attained the imperial office. In *Letter* 14, the stranger interprets Julian's vision thus:

> Then one who was altogether a stranger to me said: "Look carefully and take courage. For since the root still remains in the earth, the smaller tree will be uninjured and will be established even more securely than before".
>
> καί τις ἀγνὼς ἐμοὶ παντελῶς: "ὅρα, ἔφησεν, ἀκριβῶς καὶ θάρρει· τῆς ῥίζης γὰρ ἐν τῇ γῇ μενούσης τὸ μικρότερον ἀβλαβὲς διαμενεῖ καὶ βεβαιότερον ἱδρυνθήσεται". (*Epist.* 14 [384C] [p. 21])

Julian ended his dream account with a disclaimer: "So much then for my dreams. God knows what they portend" (τὰ μὲν δὴ τῶν ὀνειράτων τοιαῦτα, θεὸς δὲ οἶδεν εἰς ὅτι φέρει) (384D). It was hazardous to put in writing that one had dreamt of the death of an emperor, and especially a blood relative. Seeking out the time of an emperor's death by any form of divination was an act of treason punishable by death, a penalty enforced by Constantius on several occasions.

3. A Succession Crisis for the Constantinian Dynasty

Constantine's son Constantius II was to die of fever on 3 November 361, leaving no children as his heir but the small tree, Julian. Julian himself had no living heirs, his wife Helena having suffered several miscarriages and borne a son who died soon after birth. That Julian was particularly sensitive about his lack of progeny was clear from the conspiracy theories that were circulating around the court, blaming Constantius' wife Eusebia for the death of Helena's baby, in the account of Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res gestarum* (16.10.18–19 [using Rolfe ed.]; with Helena's burial is described in 21.1.5; see Matthews (2008)). The fact that Helena was Constantius' sister only complicated matters. The internal crisis of Julian's challenge to the rule of Constantius II in the years after he was proclaimed Caesar had been accompanied by religious turbulence and the external crisis of war. War with the Sasanians had erupted again in 359, and Constantius was fighting on the eastern front. When Julian wrote to Oribasius, Constantius was busy reinterpreting cultural symbols in his own way, as we see in the silver *Missorium of Kerch* [Figure 1], where Constantius is depicted as a soldier on horseback preceded by victory. The continued use of Greco-Roman deities such as Victory (Latin *Victoria* or Greek *Nike*) on the coinage of Christian emperors up to Theodosius I is also testament to the use of mixed religious messages in the later fourth century.

Figure 1. The Triumph of Constantius II; the *Missorium of Kerch*.

The context of war increased the pressure on the sole emperor. Constantius travelled east in 360 to restore stability after the loss of several border fortresses. His mixed results in battle with the Persians made him hesitant to withdraw to Antioch for the winter (Hanaghan 2017, pp. 445–52). It was in this context of uncertainty that Constantius received several dreams and other omens regarding his own future and the threat posed by Julian. His attempts to persuade Julian to back down failed. When Julian claimed the rank of *Augustus* in the spring of 360, perhaps bolstered by the message he received in his vision of the two trees, war erupted between the two. Contemporary sources Libanius of Antioch and Ammianus (see *Res.* 16.12.64) were at pains to stress that the troops' acclamation of Julian in Paris had not been his own idea (Kaldellis 2005, pp. 652–53). Eunapius' biography of Oribasius of Pergamon—the same Oribasius who was the recipient of *Letter* 14—described him as one of Julian's accomplices in his attempt to "overturn the tyranny of Constantius" (in *Vitae sophistarum* [eds. Miles and Baltussen (Loeb)] 488.35–489.36, Eunapius using this clause twice in one passage).

Constantius II also enjoyed limited success in trying to shut down pagan divinatory practices with his laws prescribing the death penalty for those who performed or watched animal sacrifices. These naturally included haruspicy. Some pagan temples were shut down, but Constantius kept the role of *pontifex maximus* for himself and was deified after he died, just like his father Constantine I (Milner 2015, p. 196). He did not disband priestly colleges and ordered the election of high priests for the imperial cult in Caria and North Africa (Leone 2013). The *Roman Calendar of 354* is evidence that many traditional religious festivals were still being openly observed, or at the very least remembered by some officials in the 350s (Salzman 1991, pp. 227–28). The context of religious disruption is reflected in laws dating from the 350s that prescribed the death penalty for those who performed or attended Roman sacrifices, or worshipped "idols", the statues in Roman temples (Dijkstra 2021). Some temples were shut down, following edicts later collected in the *Codex Theodosianus Liber XVI*, with 25 laws in Book 16.10 alone. Under Constantius II, the Altar of Victory was removed from the Roman senate in 357, only to be restored by Julian (see *Relatio Symmachi* 5; cf. 3 (*Patrol. Lat.* vol. 18, col. 1008b; cf. 1007b)). Ordinary Christians engaged in the destruction, pillaging, and desecration of Greco-Roman temples, tombs, and monuments (Hahn 2011). However, many governors and magistrates maintained passive resistance to such policies, reflecting the continued popularity of traditional religion among the general populace. In the surviving books—covering the reigns of Constantius, Julian, and Jovian—of a larger Roman history, Ammianus recorded the worship of the traditional gods with sacrifices as still occurring in Rome and Alexandria in his own day, as did

Eunapius in his *Lives* of philosophers and Sophists (486-7.33-34). Ammianus and Eunapius shared Julian's belief that divine agency enabled prophecy through dreams, augury, and other kinds of omens. This was a very traditional Roman perspective, and one shared by Roman Christians.

A debate over the relationship between the members of the Trinity plagued the heirs of Constantine, who had convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 to condemn the so-called "Arians", who refused to confess that Christ was "of the same substance" (*homoousios*) as God the Father, instead insisting that Jesus was of a different substance altogether. Constantius introduced a new element to the ongoing Christological controversy by his adherence to a non-standard form of Christianity, known as Homoiousianism or semi-Arianism. In opposition to the Anomoean Creed which had emerged from the Council of Sirmium in 357, Constantius accepted the Homoiousians' proclamation that Jesus Christ was "like in substance" (*homoiousios*) to God but not of the same substance as his divine parent. Internal strife over doctrinal issues like this could be countered or mitigated by efforts to restrict non-Christian religious rites, which in this era included astrology and dream divination.

4. Conflicting Views on Providential Dreaming

At the same time as the empire was being Christianized, Julian was "Romanizing" (Den Hengst 2010). Divinatory dreaming was popular in pre-Christian Rome, at least from the first century BCE, and grew in the first to third centuries of the imperial period. From the adoption of Christianity by Constantine, prophetic dreams featured regularly in providential narratives of Roman history by late-antique panegyrists and historians. Such visions were harbingers of major events in the military, religious, and familial spheres of the Flavian dynasty (69–96 CE), particularly under Vespasian. Births, miscarriages, acclamations, and deaths rarely took place without being marked by some sort of prognostication (Weber 2000). A major purpose of dream narrative interpretation was to give leaders and their followers a sense that their destinies were divinely sanctioned and controlled, in the context of widespread social disruption.

The legend of Constantine's vision on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, and his subsequent triumphant entry into Rome under the sign of the cross, was celebrated in the accounts of the earliest church historians, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine* and Lactantius' *History of the Persecutors*. It was a dream that allegedly led Constantine I to seek out the bishop of Rome, Silvester, and to dedicate a large portion of Roman real estate to the church of Rome, a legend preserved in both Latin and Byzantine sources as the "donation of Constantine" (e.g., Kedrenos, *Synopsis Historiōn* or *Historiarum Compendium.* 302.1 [ed. Tartaglia, vol. 2). These visions of Constantine were recounted unquestioningly by the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas and repeated by George Kedrenos in his eleventh-century Chronicle (Scott 2018, p. 197). Kedrenos, a mediaeval collector of earlier sources, reported that Constantine saw his vision of the cross twice: first in the eighth hour of the day and again at night (301.2); and also that a dream inspired the newly Christian emperor to convert the temple of the Argonauts into a church (135.1). Other pious emperors received similar divine messages in dreams on the eve of battle, such as Theodosius before the Battle of Frigidus in 394, but Christians were careful to distinguish these from non-Christian oracles. Significantly, Julian received a prediction of his death in Phrygia through an oracle (Ammianus, *Res.* 25.3.9).

A Christian by upbringing but a Hellenist by preference, Julian found it useful to reinterpret cultural symbols and myths to deal with the public relations disaster of his dispute with Constantius. When he was proclaimed Caesar in 355, Julian was fresh from his studies of Plato and Stoicism, undertaken first in Athens and then in Pergamum. The Platonic tradition was far more open to the possibility of prophetic or mantic dreams than the psychobiological modelling of Aristotle, which was followed by Artemidorus, the famous third-century Ephesian dream interpreter closer to Julian's day (*Oneirocriticon* [eds. Harris-McCoy, pp. 35–36]). In his writings on the soul's relationship with the body,

Aristotle had regarded dreams as natural phenomena. Only rarely did events in the world coincide with the soul's perceptions in dreams. Plato, by contrast, had emphasized the natural sympathy between the soul, whose origins were divine, and cosmic forces, which allowed the virtuous to train their souls to glimpse the future in dreams. In adopting a Platonist view of the value of dreams and divinatory practices, Julian followed the lead of the Syrian philosopher Iamblichus (d. *ca*. 325), the founder of the school that Julian had attended in Pergamon (Athanassiadi [1992] 2015, pp. 7–13; Elm 2012, pp. 92–133). In 358, Julian had not yet embarked on any religious program of his own, but we can see the seeds of change in *Letter* 14.

There are several references to Providence and the gods in Julian's early letters to his friend, the philosopher Priscus, which makes it easier to understand his dream of the two trees. In *Letter* 11, he writes that he is recovering from a bad illness "by the grace of the one who sees all things" (τῇ τοῦ πάντα ἐφορῶντος προνοίᾳ) (425b [p. 18]). In *Letter* 13, he refers to the outcome of his illness again as under divine control:

> This, however, will turn out as the god sees fit; but I swear to you by him who is the cause and saviour of all my good fortune that I desire to live only that I may be some use to you. . . May divine Providence keep you safe for many years, my dearest and most beloved brother!
>
> ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ὅπως ἂν ᾖ τῷ θεῷ φίλον γενήσεται, ἐγὼ δὲ ὄμνυμί σοι τὸν πάντων ἀγαθῶν ἐμοὶ αἴτιον καὶ σωτῆρα, ὅτι διὰ τοῦτο ζῆν εὔχομαι, ἵν᾽ ὑμῖν τι χρήσιμος γένωμαι.... ἐρρωμένον σε ἡ θεία πρόνοια διαφυλάξειε πολλοῖς χρόνοις, ἀδελφὲ ποθεινότατε καὶ φιλικώτατε. (*ll.* 7–23) [p. 20])

The recognition of the hand of Providence in Julian's life and that of his closest friends is clear from these two letters, which dated to the period just prior to *Letter* 14's composition. The terms "the one who sees all things" (*Epist.* 11) and "the god" (13) could refer equally to the Christian God or to a pagan deity and may have been deliberately chosen for their ambiguity. While it is risky to read back into pre-361 sources on Julian's eventual rejection of Christianity, it is certain that divine Providence was a view shared by Christians.

5. Ammianus' Praise for Dreams and Other Forms of Divination

The positive value that Julian accorded to his dream in *Epist.* 14 is supported by passages from Ammianus, whose account of how Julian came to power was laudatory. Writing in the 380s, Ammianus focused his readers' attention on the dreams and visions of both Constantius and Julian to a singular degree. We could call Ammianus a historian of crisis, most particularly in his Julianic books (16–26), or even a biographer writing from the perspective of loss, as Michael Hanaghan has suggested (Hanaghan 2023). Sean Williams has shown the many ways in which Ammianus' account of Constantius as a tyrant sought to counter the Christians' polemic against Julian, including their criticism of his practice of augury, divination, and other forms of "sorcery" (Williams 2009, pp. 25–31). Ammianus, for example, describes how Constantius II had arrested people solely on the basis of their reported dreams (*Res.* 15.3.5–6; see Den Boeft 2006, pp. 43–45). He also relates that Julian's desire to attack Constantius was inspired by a dream "and from many prophetic signs, in which he was an adept, that the emperor would soon die" (*Res.* 21.1.6). In a long and approving digression on divinatory practices (*Res.* 21.1.7–14), Ammianus seeks to explain how human knowledge of the future worked. He attributed the arts of divination to the control of the goddess Themis. Augury and auspices were controlled not by birds but by the god who directed their flight and allowed the character of the future to be known (21.1.10). The minds of Sibyls, who foretold the future under divine inspiration, were prompted by sparks of the sun, called the "mind of the world" (21.1.11). Thus, natural phenomena such as voices from the heavens, various signs, thunder, lightning, thunderbolts, and falling stars, were accorded great significance (21.1.11).

Dreams were, for Ammianus, a sometime unreliable tool for telling the future, but he agreed with Aristotle that they could be trusted as portents, if the perception of the dreamer was not distracted:

> the belief in dreams would be strong and undoubted if the interpreters of them were never deceived; and sometimes, as Aristotle asserts [cf. *De Somno et vigilia* (*Parva Naturalia*) *3*], they are fixed and stable when the eye of the person, being soundly asleep, turns neither way, but looks straight forward.
>
> Somniorum autem rata fides et indubitabilis foret, ni ratiocinantes coniectura fallerentur interdum. Quae (ut Aristoteles affirmat) tum fixa sunt et stabilia, cum animantis altius quiescentis, ocularis pupula neutrubi inclinata, rectissime cernit. (Ammianus, *Res.* 21.1.12)

The variable results of divination were due to human inability to read signs correctly, not the fault of the gods (21.1.14). Ammianus cites Cicero's warning: "The gods show signs of coming events. With regard to these, if one errs, it is not the nature of the gods that is at fault, but man's interpretation" (see Cicero, *De Natura deorum*, 2.4.12; *De Divinatione* 1.52).

Towards the end of his life, Constantius also saw signs of his rule being about to end and linked them to "the changing of the times (*permutatio temporum*)", according to Ammianus (Bks 20–21). In 360, the emperor saw an abundance of rainbows fill the sky, which filled him with dread, since he recognized in them ill omens sent from heaven by the goddess Iris (20.11.30; and see Hanaghan 2017, pp. 447–48). Shortly afterwards, Constantius suffered a nightmare, in which his father placed in his lap a boy who took a globe from him (Ammianus, *Res.* 21.14.1). The globe represented the world and Constantius' power over it; the boy was his half-cousin, Julian. These visions did nothing to calm Constantius' state of mind. Fortunately for Julian, the impending battle was averted when Constantius became ill in Mopsuestia and died of fever on 3 November 361, allegedly naming Julian as his rightful successor before his death.

The need for secrecy drove Julian to seek reassurance for his own prospects through traditional methods of divination, such as augury and haruspicy or hepatoscopy—the study of the details of the innards of sacrificial animals, especially their livers, as Ammianus related:

> While Fortune's mutable phases were causing these occurrences in a different part of the world, Julian in the midst of his many occupations in Illyricum was constantly prying into the entrails of victims and watching the flight of birds, in his eagerness to foreknow the result of events; but he was perplexed by ambiguous and obscure predictions and continued to be uncertain of the future.
>
> Dum haec in diversa parte terrarum, Fortunae struunt volubiles casus, Iulianus inter multa, quae per Illyricum agitabat, exta rimabatur assidue, avesque suspiciens, praescire festinabat accidentium finem, sed responsis ambiguis et obscuris haerebat, futurorum incertus. (*Res.* 22.1.1)

Ammianus claimed that Julian knew about Constantius' death before anyone else, and cited this poetic revelation that Julian received in a dream at Vienne:

> At dread midnight a certain gleaming form appeared and recited to him plainly, as he lay not awake, the following heroic verses, repeating them several times; and relying on these, he believed that no difficulty would come upon him:
>
> "When Zeus the noble Aquarius' bound shall reach /
>
> And Saturn come to Virgo's twenty-fifth degree /
>
> Then shall Constantius, king of Asia, of this life /
>
> So sweet the end attain with heaviness and grief".

> horrore medio noctis, imago quaedam visa splendidior, hos ei versus heroos modo non vigilanti aperte edixit, eadem saepius replicando, quibus fretus nihil asperum sibi superesse existimabat:
>
> Ζεὺς ὅταν εἰς πλατὺ τέρμα μόλῃ κλυτοῦ ὑδροχόοιο,
>
> Παρθενικῆς δὲ Κρόνος μοίρῃ βαίνῃ ἐπὶ πέμπτῃεἰκοστῇ,
>
> βασιλεὺς Κωνστάντιος Ἀσίδος αἴης
>
> τέρμα φίλου βιοτοῦ στυγερὸν καὶ ἐπώδυνον ἕξει. (*Res.* 21.2.1)

The prompt demise of Constantius on 3 November allowed Julian to be crowned in the same month and so Julian's vision proved reliable. We turn now to a closer analysis of the symbols of the two trees in Julian's vision and their dynastic associations in the literature and dream dictionaries of Greece and scriptures of the ancient Near East.

6. The Greek and Near Eastern Traditions of Trees in Dynastic Dreams

The origins of the arboreal symbolism in Julian's dream of the two trees may be found in Greece and the Near East. The classical Greek literary tradition of dream interpretation associated arboreal imagery with dynastic aspirations. In Sophocles' play *Electra*, Clytemnestra dreamt of a flourishing limb, a symbol of Mycenaean power. While her husband Agamemnon was away in the Trojan War, she had taken his cousin as her lover. Electra's brother reports the vision that inspired fear in his mother Clytemnestra (Euripides, *Electra* 417–25). The flourishing limb here is Aegisthus, who would take power from Agamemnon when Clytemnestra killed her husband on his return from the war. The context of war is one of social disruption, and so this vision is analogous to the setting in which Julian's vision of the two trees occurred.

The spreading vine or flourishing tree as a portent of a great future leader appeared in another period of military conflict, documented in Herodotus' *History of the Persian Wars*. The vision provided an origin story for the Persian king Cyrus the Great (d. 530 BCE). The king of the Medes, Astyages, had a daughter, Mandanes, who married the Persian prince Cambyses. Astyages dreamt that his daughter had a vine spreading from her womb, one that took over the whole earth (Herodotus, *Historiae* 1.108 [ed. Wilson]). This was later read as presaging the fall of the kingdom of the Medes to Cyrus.

Another frightening dream was delivered on the eve of war to another eastern king; Xerxes I employed the same arboreal image, this time a spreading olive tree: "After this Xerxes, being now intent on the expedition, saw yet a third vision . . . Xerxes thought that he was crowned with an olive bough, the shoots of which spread over the whole earth, and presently the crown vanished from off his head where it was set". (ibid., 7.19.1). This vision was characterized as an "oriental" dream by Christopher Pelling (1996, p. 69), "both because of the familiarity with such symbolism as portending success and salvation and because of the frequency of the vine as an Achaemenid royal symbol".

The other source of wisdom concerning trees and the fall of dynasties came from the tradition of dream interpretation practiced in Babylon and Assyria, which was passed down in Jewish scriptures, such as in the book of the prophet Daniel. The book stems from a context of crisis for Jews in Judaea, under Seleucid attack in the second century BCE, led by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, although the text purporting to describe much older events (from the mid-sixth century BCE). We can safely assume that Julian, raised in the Christian court of Constantine I, would also have been familiar with "Daniel's" account of the dreams of the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. In that legend, the young interpreter Daniel identified the strong and lofty tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as the king, whose greatness had grown and reached to heaven, and whose dominion reached to the ends of the earth (Dan 4:19–22). The dream then took a downward turn for Nebuchadnezzar:

> The king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let

> him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him". (Dan: 4:23 [ESV])

Based on the dream, the young prophet Daniel predicted that the king would "be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. . .till you know that the Most High rules the kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes" (4:24–25). Daniel's reluctance to interpret the dream of Nebuchadnezzar is obvious in this re-telling, four centuries after the alleged events. Any omen that prophesied the death of a king was likely to redound negatively upon the interpreter. In spite of the prediction, Nebuchadnezzar's reign lasted for 43 years, until his death in 567 BCE. It was under his son that the neo-Babylonian empire was conquered in 539 BCE by the Achaemenid king, who established the First Persian Empire. Julian cited other Old Testament books, especially Genesis and Isaiah—the first book of prophets—in his tract against Christianity, *Contra Galilaeos*. Together with this knowledge of Christian scriptures, he even attended church on Epiphany to cover up his antipathy to Christianity (Ammianus, *Res.* 21.2.5; see Bowersock 1978, p. 56). Whether or not he had Nebuchadnezzar in mind, Julian's knowledge of the spreading vine or felled tree of classical Greek accounts of the Achaemenids would have given him an intellectual apparatus for interpreting his dream of the two trees.

7. Tree Symbolism in Ancient Greek Dreambooks

A third source for the symbolism of trees in dreams—along with classical Greek literature and Judeo-Christian scriptures—was the pagan tradition of dreambooks. These were prognostic tools that addressed "universal human uncertainties such as birth, health, dreams, weather and harvest" (see Liuzza 2010, p. viii). They enjoyed great popularity among Greeks and Romans, especially Artemidorus' *Oneirocriticon*, which hailed from second-century Asia Minor (using eds. Harris-McCoy). Artemidorus' commentary in five books, based on his professional experience as a dream interpreter, became the model for later dreambooks in the Byzantine era, which were slightly Christianized but maintained their amoral character, as Mavroudi (2002) and Oberhelman (2008) have conclusively demonstrated. The symbol of the withered vine or tree, from which a new shoot sprang, had dynastic associations in this rather secular tradition. In Book 2 of his major work, Artemidorus analyzes the meanings of various tree types that may be seen in dreams, from the olive—which may prophesy a wife, an athletic context, a public office, or freedom, but not for slaves—to box trees and rose laurels, which signify women who resemble prostitutes and are ill-groomed (*Oneir.* 2.25 [pp. 194–97]). For the remainder where the genus cannot be identified, the principle of similarity may be applied, forming an interpretation "based on the previous examples, always identifying properties that are similar to their outcomes. For in fact the interpretation of dreams is nothing other than the juxtaposition of similarities" (*Oneir.* 2.25 [pp. 196–97]). The principle of similarity is at work in Julian's interpretation of his vision and the unexplained vision of Oribasius, both of which were read as signaling that the demise of his rival Constantius was imminent. Artemidorus cautions that some trees are inherently good omens and others portend evil in the dreamer's future: "But when they [i.e., 'good' trees] are withered or upturned at the roots or struck by lightning or otherwise burnt by fire, they signify the opposite. And those that signify something grievous with respect to their outcomes, when they wither and are destroyed, bring about relatively profitable things" (*Oneir.* 2.25 [pp. 196–97]; cf. 2.10 [p. 169]).

In Julian's vision, the larger tree, Constantius, could be interpreted as a tree that was grievous in outcome. Its death foretold a profitable outcome to Julian and his supporters, at least. In Book 4, Artemidorus returns to interpreting the dream symbol of long-lived trees with the remark: "And those [trees] that live for a long time, in the case of appointments, are significant of delay, and in the case of illnesses are salubrious. This is likewise the case for those that sprout and grow slowly. And those that are the opposite are significant of opposite things" (ibid. 4.57 [pp. 350–51]).

We find similar treatments of trees in dreams in the *Dreambook of Daniel*, a simplified dream dictionary based on Artemidorus and ascribed to the Hebrew prophet Daniel, which may date as early as the fourth to seventh centuries and was translated into Latin. For example, "If you dream of trees being uprooted or being cut down, this means wars and the falling of animals and people". (*Dan.* 123, in Oberhelman 2008, p. 75). The later *Anonymous Dreambook* (*Anon. Oneir.* 57, in Oberhelman 2008, p. 170) echoed Artemidorus' interpretation. In the dreambook ascribed to Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (ruled 1391–1425), we find the same association: "very large trees are interpreted as noble and well-born men, and their falling down signifies death for such as man". (*On. Man. Pal.* 14, in Oberhelman 2008, p. 203). Within this well-attested web of oneiric associations of trees with worldly success, Julian's reading of his vision makes perfect sense: the little tree's survival, after the larger tree with which it shared a common root was felled, seemed to portend his future appointment as Augustus. However, the smallness of the tree and its uprootedness may also suggest that Julian felt a certain reluctance to embrace the sole rule that he insists was thrust upon him by the acclamation of his soldiers and accepted only unwillingly. Did the death of the big tree, who shared a common ancestor with him in Constantine I, cast some sort of shadow on Julian? Constantius died without an heir in 361, so there were no brothers or cousins to share rule with Julian. After the death of Julian's wife Helena in c. 360, leaving no living children, an heir of his own was less than likely. It may be justifiable to discern in his dream of the two trees a degree of early diffidence which is not usually associated with Julian's later actions.

8. Conclusions: The Significance of Julian's Vision of Two Trees

I have suggested that the discourse around dreams and visions, in which Julian participated for years before he was proclaimed emperor in 361 on the death of Constantius II, was a symptom of cultural fragmentation. I have interpreted Julian's dream narrative, preserved in *Letter* 14, as indicative of an attempt to revitalize religious culture by reinterpreting myths and symbols from the Hellenic past for a present that was characterized by chaos and conflict, due to external and internal imperial conflicts as well as the processes of Christianization that were transforming the Roman Empire in Julian's day. The practice of dream interpretation offered Julian an opportunity to shape his own destiny in the context of social and cultural disruption before the death of Constantius, and this practice was to become more common in the decades and centuries after Julian's demise in 363.

This reading of Julian's vision adduced three contexts that may have influenced Julian's interpretation of his dream of the two trees: the literary legacy of Homer, Herodotus, and Sophocles; the reading of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the book of Daniel; and the popular heritage of late-antique dreambooks. Like the Babylonian king's dream, Julian's dream of the large tree that bent to the earth foretold a living emperor's capitulation to a rival—in this case, Constantius' death before potential engagement in battle with Julian. Julian had not appointed a successor when he died from wounds sustained in battle in June 363. His successor Jovian ruled for only eight months and did not even make it to Constantinople. Ammianus attributed the election of Jovian to the blind goddess Fortuna (*Res.* 25.5.8). With his description of the raising of Jovian as if by chance, Ammianus implies that Providence was not on the side of the Roman Empire under Jovian as it had been under Julian, even if modern commentators such as Jan Willem Drijvers (2022) justifiably disagree.

An important literary feature of Julian's fourteenth letter is its circumlocutory style, which allowed Julian to relate the dream without any identifiable reference to its protagonists. The emperors Constantine and Constantius II are not mentioned by name, nor does Julian identify himself as the "little branch" that grew up to replace its ancestor. Under Roman law, any attempt to foretell the death of a ruler in the fourth century CE by dreams, casting horoscopes, or another form of divination was proscribed. Such attempts were deemed treasonous and had to be transmitted with extreme caution.

This brief overview of key texts on dreams and omens during the brief reign of Julian and the years leading up to it has shown that dream narratives and their interpretation played a major role in the political decision-making of both Constantius and Julian. In the contested intellectual world of Rome in the mid-fourth century, dreams were taken seriously as omens for the future and indications of divine blessing by both emperors, just as by their predecessor Constantine I. With roots in both classical Greco-Roman culture as well as early Christianity, the practice of oneirocriticism exerted a strong influence on many others in the Later Roman empire, including hagiographers, biographers, and historiographers. In the contested religious culture of the fourth century, the discourse of dreams and their interpretation was a useful tool for emperors who wished to create and maintain religious conflict, while representing their own election as providential. Julian may well have believed that he had been singled out for greatness in a dream. The discourse of personal revelation in dreams increased the sense of power of the individual but alienated those who fell outside the scope of the revelation. In this way, a discourse that aimed towards social cohesion instead caused more cultural fragmentation and religious conflict.

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Acknowledgments: Figure 1 is used from www.hermitagemuseum.org, courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Bowl, The Triumph of Constantius II. Eastern Mediterranean, mid-4th century. Silver, gilded and nielloed. Diameter, 24.9 cm, height 3.9 cm. Inv.no. 1820-79.

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Origen's 'Celsus': Questions of Identity

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Abstract: This article will investigate a certain similarity between Origen's response to Celsus' *True Logos* and the criticisms against Longinus' interpretation of the early pages of Plato's *Timaeus* made in Proclus' *Commentary* by a certain Origenes, usually held to be a pagan though without compelling evidence. Origen begins by assuming that 'Celsus' was an Epicurean of that name, even though it has long been obvious that 'Celsus' has adopted a Platonist point of view and that Origen's answers often rely on Plato's authority; in Proclus, Origenes regularly regards Longinus' explanations as turning Plato into a hedonist by having him aim at the reader's pleasure, and at one point Longinus even made reference to Epicurus. The paper uses recent work on the presence in Porphyry and Lucian of alternative names, whether inside philosophic schools or as a *nom de plume*, to argue that Origen could not be sure of his opponent's identity, but that as he wrote he came to suspect that 'Celsus' was in fact his younger contemporary Longinus, the initial teacher of Porphyry himself. Hence the allusions to his 'philological' tendencies. If this is correct, then there is additional reason to identify Origen with Origenes.

Keywords: Origen; Celsus; Epicureanism; Plato; Longinus; Homer; philologists

1. Introduction

The amount of interaction between the Christian exegete and apologist Origen and pagan philosophers has become a matter of serious dispute. I broadly side with Ramelli (2009) in postulating a considerable amount of interaction, especially in Alexandria in the first half of the third century. Hence, I agree too in resisting the theory that there was a separate pagan philosopher with the name of Origenes as often claimed. One problem arising from this position is that Porphyry and his early mentor Longinus, traditional philosophers of a broadly Platonist persuasion, seem not to have been aware of Origen's exoteric work *contra Celsum* (*Against Celsus*) even though it directly engages with their sort of philosophy. This is hard to explain if our Origen is also the philosopher of that name whose lectures Longinus had once attended. How is it that such a work could have remained invisible to them? Did even the relevance of Celsus escape them, or had Origen chosen to engage in answering a polemical philosophic writer of no great relevance? One does not expect anybody engaged in contemporary interaction to be knowingly answering some long dead 'Celsus' in great detail. This is especially so if 'Celsus' was indeed an Epicurean, and yet the answers being offered in Origen's well-known apology would better serve as a response to a devotee of Plato.

This paper explores a similarity between Origen's attitude to this unknown 'Celsus' and Origenes' answers to Porphyry's teacher Longinus in Proclus, asking whether the one-Origen thesis can actually assist us in explaining how *contra Celsum* can be understood as contemporary engagement: contemporary engagement that did not escape those it engages with.

2. Materials and Methods

This article considers two questions of identity that may be related. It does so in the light of research that demonstrates the regular use of an alter ego or *nom de plume* in the

relevant period, and the notorious fluidity of ancient titles. This demands that one proceeds with a scepticism with regard to second and third century names and with regard to the titles of books.

2.1. 'Celsus' and His Alleged Epicureanism

One should ask first who was the 'Celsus' against whom Origen's *Contra Celsum* (henceforth *Cels*) was written? And second, who was the Origen who took exception to many of the things said about the early pages of Plato's *Timaeus* by Porphyry's teacher Cassius Longinus? The material is found in Book I of Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (henceforth *In Tim.*, using edn. by Diehl and van Riel, and trans. by Tarrant (2007)). The problem in *Cels* is a longstanding one. 'Celsus' is tackled throughout as if he were some kind of Platonist philosopher with a lively interest in theology, whereas Origen says in his introduction that elsewhere in his writings his opponent had adopted the stance of an Epicurean:

> Celsus should be exposed as one who contradicts himself, saying the opposite. For from other writings he is revealed to be an Epicurean, yet here, because it seems more reasonable to attack the account without acknowledging the doctrines of Epicurus he pretends [to believe] that 'there is something better in human nature than the earthly, and akin to the divine', and he says that 'those for whom this', i.e., the soul, 'is in good condition have an overriding desire for what is akin to them', meaning god, 'and ever yearn both to hear and to remember something about him'. (*Cels* 1.8.9–16, my translation)[1]

> For he knew that by acknowledging that he was an Epicurean he would fail to have credibility in his accusation against those who in whatever way introduce providence and place god at the head of reality. For we gather that there were two Epicureans called Celsus, the previous one under Nero, and this other one under Hadrian and/or more recent. (*Cels* 1.8.21–26)[2]

What did Origen actually *know* about the author of the work to which he replies? The verb παρειλήφαμεν ('we gather') implies that this is information handed down to Origen and others, not something that he is intimately familiar with. And while 'this other one' (on which see our footnote) might suggest to some that Origen knew that the writer was to be identified as the second of the Epicureans, there are significant doubts about both the text and whether it was intended to make this identification even if it were correct. Why should one even mention the first if one knew that the author was the second of these Epicureans? Perhaps Origen was excluding the first of them as he seemed rather early to be devoting such effort to attacking Christianity in its infancy. But again, κατὰ Ἀδριανὸν καὶ κατωτέρω ('under Hadrian and/or more recent') seems rather vague if Origen had been able to make a positive identification.

In fact, Origen could make no positive identification, for consider a passage at 4.36:

> But Plato obviously did not consider men who bequeathed such poems as 'divinely inspired', whereas he who is better able to judge than Plato, the Epicurean Celsus, if at least [*ei ge*][3] he is the one who also composed the other two books against Christians,[4] when quarrelling with us, presumably called 'divinely inspired' those whom he did not think divinely inspired'.[5]

Why introduce a conditional clause concerning Celsus' identity, if it had been a simple matter of agreement? It is tempting to deduce (a) from Origen's words and (b) from the general agreement that this 'Celsus' had Platonist affiliations that he either does not know much at all about this 'Celsus', or that he was himself beginning to have understandable suspicions that he wasn't who he first thought he was.

2.2. 'Celsus' and the Authority of Plato

Whatever Origen knew about the author of the attack on Christians, his reply seems firmly based on the assumption that he would accept the authority of Plato above all other

philosophers. Consequently Plato, Platonists or Platonic doctrine are mentioned far more often in *Cels* than language associated with other schools (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of school-terms in *Cels*.

c. Celsum	Epicur–	Platon–	Aristotel–	Stoic–	Pythagor–
Book 1	13	15	4	7	9
Book 2	3	8	4	0	5
Book 3	8	5	1	1	4
Book 4	8	25	1	4	5
Book 5	5	5	1	1	7
Book 6	3	56	0	3	1
Book 7	6	22	1	1	1
Book 8	1	0	1	0	2
Total	47	136	13	17	34

Authoritative texts include the doctrinal passages in three of the *Epistles*, the second, sixth and seventh;[6] purple passages from the *Phaedo*,[7] *Symposium* (Penia and Poros at 4.39), *Theaetetus* (4.62), and *Phaedrus* (4.40, 6.17, 6.19); material directed against Homer and poetic myths in the *Republic* (4.36, 4.50); and material from both the Atlantis episode (4.20–21, 4.62) and the exposition of the creation (4.54, 4.56, 4.62, 6.10, 7.42) in the *Timaeus*. Other late dialogues used are the *Philebus* (1.25 and 4.48 on *Tim.* 12C) and *Laws* (6.15 on 715E–716A). Many of these passages appear to be used at his opponent's instigation, and, with the exception of the *Epistles*,[8] the list could easily have come from a work of Plutarch. So, while Origen feels able to attack 'Celsus' as an inconsistent Epicurean, he nevertheless gives the impression that 'Celsus' regarded Plato as a key authority, and defends the Christians with reference principally to the authority of Plato too. What is going on here?

2.3. Names and Shadow-Boxing: Polemics against Whom?

There is another important question that is related to this: why would Origen choose to answer an attack on the Christians that he believes to have been written two or more generations before this? Have the issues not changed? Has something suddenly happened to bring a previously obscure text, for which Origen has no great respect, into the limelight? In general, polemics between belief systems involve fairly rapid reactions between critics and defenders, but Origen seems to suggest that he is writing an eight-book work to rebut criticism that (a) was generations old, and (b) had never accorded with the author's own beliefs anyway. It is one thing to mention such an obscure text at appropriate points in the course of a general defence of Christianity against its critics, and quite another to engage in an almost personal prolonged exchange with a figure whom he believed to be long dead. An explanation is required.

The name 'Celsus' has been placed in inverted commas because I now doubt whether it was ever the real name of the author, and suspect that Origen himself had legitimate doubts about it too. It serves his polemical purpose well to accept the attribution to 'Celsus', to note that this has hitherto been the name for Epicurean authors, and to deduce that the author has been utterly inconsistent in what he writes. While Origen would have been conscious that false attributions can occur, as for example was known to Diogenes Laertius (*Vitae philosophorum* 2.124, 3.62), he would also have known that certain proponents of some kind of Platonism had been known by different names at different times or in different situations. One of the most important sources for the way such alternative names had arisen is Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, which details his own transition from Malc[h]us to Basileus (*Vita Plotini* 17) before "Porphyrius" finally sticks.[9] Porphyry also mentions other names that had been used for individuals within the schools of Numenius (*Vita* 17) and Plotinus (*Vita* 7). Another significant source for alternative names is Lucian, whose *Death of Peregrinus* suggests that besides the real name mentioned in the title, the butt of Lucian's humour had also been known as 'Proteus', 'Second Socrates', and finally 'Phoenix' (Tarrant

2009, pp. 18–20). This author also detailed several other cases where a name by which we know a philosopher or philosophic author may well have been an adopted name (Tarrant 2009). Lucian, of course, is himself able to adopt a kind of *nom de plume* or *alter ego* (such as 'Lycinus' or 'Menippus') on occasions. He may even have been responsible for turning 'Albinus' into 'Nigrinus' in the *Nigrinus*, though he does address Cronius, the friend of Numenius, by his actual name in the death of Peregrinus. So, when we meet with the Celsus who was the addressee of Lucian's *The Lover of Lies*, which could easily be a real name, it is not surprising that this should seem to offer a possible identification for the author of the *True Logos*.[10] But what confidence should one have that Lucian's 'Celsus' was a real person?

Later, one meets one of the most celebrated cases of a false authorial name, when the author we know as pseudo-Dionysius pretends to be Dionysius the Areopagite, a figure mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (17:34). A well-known case of a *nom de plume* closer to Origen's time involves Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*, which is actually presented as a reply by the Egyptian teacher and priest 'Abamon' to Porphyry regarding matters raised by Porphyry in his *Letter to Anebo*, and it is noted in this regard that "pseudonymous and anonymous authorship was reasonably common in antiquity" (Clarke et al. 2003, p. xxxi). While it is not known whether 'Anebo' too was a fictitious name (Clarke et al. 2003, p. xxix and n. 54), Iamblichus treats the *Letter* as a disguised challenge to himself (*De Mysteriis* I.1.2.5–7). Nor is there any reason why it could not have been.

2.4. Origenes and His Criticism of Longinus' Hedonism

At this point I should like to introduce the other principal materials, shifting my focus to an author whose fragments are collected by Karl-Otto Weber (1962), one who will be here called 'Origenes', in order to preserve a certain distance from the theologian and biblical interpreter. Whereas the latter is mentioned by Porphyry in a fragment (Frg. 39) of *Against the Christians* that is preserved by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.19),[11] Origenes is known to us more widely from Porphyry and from other sources probably dependent on him. While difficulties in chronology are often held to count against identifying the two, this is counterbalanced by the fact that Porphyry does not distinguish them for us, even though both were said to be devoted pupils of Ammonius—or of *an* Ammonius, at least. It is often held that Origenes was a pagan, but this is not stated anywhere, and not at all proven from the evidence. Porphyry (*Vit. Plot.* 3) implies that his major work was the treatise (*syngramma*) *On Daimones*, but this may mean no more than 'the treatise about daimones'—i.e., it could be a description of content rather than a real title, as also at *Vita* 20 in a citation of Longinus. Certainly, most non-Christian Platonists postulated the existence of such beings, but if a Christian had written a systematic work on this topic then it could simply have been referring to all supernatural beings postulated by non-Jewish peoples in conformity with LXX *Psalm* 95:5 (οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν δαιμόνια), often quoted in *Cels* (3.2, 4.29, 7.69, 8.3). It is not hard to imagine *Cels* having gone by such a title, for the vocabulary of *daimones*[12] (all cases of the noun and the adjective *daimonios*, plus the adverb *daimoniôs*), constitute more than 0.3% of the vocabulary of *Cels*,[13] but less than 0.04% of that of other works of Origen in Greek.

Porphyry (*Vita* 3) mentions another title from the same author, *That the King is the only Demiurge*,[14] without calling it a *syngramma*, so possibly implying that it was an occasional work, yet presumably a second work heavily indebted to Ammonius.[15] It is probable that we have an indication of its contents in the second Book of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* (*Theologia Platonica* II 4.31.4–22 [=Origenes Frg. 7 [ed. Weber]]; cf. Tarrant 2017). Origenes seems to be taking the reference to the 'King', otherwise known as the 'first', in the *Second Epistle* once credited to Plato (312D-E: cf. Ramelli 2009, p. 236), as a reference to a creator-god. This in turn implies that that creator was not seen as a secondary god, inferior to the Good (like Numenius' creator for instance, especially Frgs. 11–13) and to the 'One' in the first account of the *Parmenides* (137C4–142A8). His doctrine would thus be diametrically opposed to that of Plotinus in *Ennead* 5.1.8, and to virtually the entire Neoplatonic tradition

down to Damascius, where the Platonic Demiurge was usually associated somehow with intellect and hence with a level lower than the supreme principle. Hence, Proclus is surprised that another pupil of Ammonius could have held such a belief as he thought he had found in Origenes. Even so, it is predictable that any Christian who was not a Gnostic should hold that there can be no god higher than the Creator-god of the Jews. Origen, in fact, assumes the equivalence of the 'King' found in the *Second Epistle* to that Creator-god in *Cels* 6.18–19.[16] So this title is one that could be plausibly credited to a Platonist who is also a Christian as well as to any conservative Platonists who still thought the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* to be the supreme Platonic principle—a dying breed in the third century.

The reason for involving Origenes here is that he comes close to calling Cassius Longinus,[17] Porphyry's early teacher who had himself attended Origenes' lectures, an Epicurean. There are three passages where this tactic is employed, and they result from the fact that Longinus highlighted the charms of Platonic diction, at least when tackling Plato's prefatory material (*prooimia*) if not in the exposition of the arguments. The first passage comments on *Timaeus* 19B4-C1, where Socrates explains his feelings about the theoretical city that he has just outlined.

> Origenes agreed that Plato is taking care over the grace of his writing, not however because he is aiming at pleasure, but in the course of using this comparison for the presentation of what he [Socrates] felt. (Proclus *In Tim.* 60.1–4 [=Origenes Frg. 9])

This should make it clear that Origenes objected to Longinus' implication that Plato was aiming at generating pleasure in the mind of the reader, rather than at capturing most precisely the nuances of Socrates' thoughts. Longinus had in fact claimed that Plato used the beautification of speech as a means to win the listener over (within Proclus, *In Tim.* I.59.28–29D = I.90.20–91.1vR = Porphyry, *In Platonis Timaeum* (ed. Sodano [hereafter *Plat. Tim.*]), Frg. 28), a claim that would have been in danger of classing this type of Platonic writing as a knack 'of achieving grace and pleasure' rather than as an art according to the theory of the *Gorgias*.[18] It would class Plato's diction as rhetoric rather than philosophy. Longinus' explanation of his own view was directed against other Platonic interpreters who regarded the subtleties of Platonic language here as coming spontaneously from his authorial gifts rather than from the application of technical rules.[19] The language strongly suggests that these Platonic interpreters had included Origenes himself.[20] In the course of resisting such a view, Longinus had made the provocative claim that it is easier to believe Epicurus' atoms could come together to create a universe than that a random collection of words could make a Platonic speech. The reference to Epicurus is highly unusual,[21] and may already have been designed to provoke Origenes, who accordingly presents Longinus as taking a hedonistic view of Plato.

Origenes next chastises Longinus' 'hedonism' at I.83.19–28 (*In Tim.* I.127.5–14vR = Porphyry, *Plat. Tim.* Frg. 13), after Longinus (Frg. 32 on *Timaeus* 20E–21A) had explained that the introduction of the Atlantis-story had answered the need to delight and seduce the listeners prior to the rather dry presentation of natural philosophy which would follow.

> Longinus points out here too that Plato worries about the freshness and variety of his diction (ὀνομάτων), pronouncing the same things in a variety of ways. The deed he called "ancient", the tale he called "old", and the gentleman "not young", yet he is making the same point throughout even when able to call everything by the same term. But he (Longinus) was 'a lover of diction' (φιλόλογος), as Plotinus says of him, and 'not a lover of wisdom' (φιλόσοφος [Porphyry, *Vita* 21]).[22] Origenes did not agree that he [Plato] was aiming at artificial pleasure (ἡδονῆς . . . μεμηχανημένης) and various cosmetic embellishments, but [said] that he was concerned for a spontaneous and unembellished plausibility and accuracy in his character-portrayal, and moreover that this kind of communication comes spontaneously,[23] as becomes an educated man. He thinks Aristoxenus the musical

> writer was right in saying that the dispositions of the philosophers extended to their voices, exhibiting an orderly quality in everything they say.

With the other passages, this builds up a picture of a sustained debate between Longinus and Origenes over various matters raised in the earlier parts of the *Timaeus*, and above all about the diction employed by the author there. As Longinus did not regard Origenes as somebody who wrote more than the very occasional work, it is clear that these debates occurred in person, and, assuming that Porphyry was not himself present, then we must suppose that he heard about them from his early teacher Longinus. At any rate, Porphyry informs us, through Proclus,[24] of one encounter involving Longinus and Origenes, when the latter "spent three whole days shouting and going red in the face, and getting into quite a sweat". Such personal observations confirm the part played by oral communication here, but in this case there are no such amusing details about Longinus' part in this inquiry, which cannot be safely reconstructed. My suspicion is that Longinus had been attending Origenes' lectures on the early part of the *Timaeus*, and had been raising issues that the lecturer was finding difficult to answer.

3. Results

Straight comparison between Origen's *Cels* and the fragments of Origenes in Proclus' *In Tim.* show the same tendency to try to expose what might be called the Epicurean features of an opponent who otherwise appears to be of a broadly Platonist persuasion. In the latter case, the opponent is actually addressing an important text of Plato, and in the former he repeatedly calls on Plato's authority. While such a tendency may be more common than one thinks, it constitutes a warning against insisting that Origenes was a figure altogether separate from Origen in the absence of any compelling reasons. The fragments in Proclus tend to show an attitude towards Plato that accords broadly with what we know of Origen. However, the attitude towards Homer and the relative merits of these two authorities requires further discussion.

Furthermore, I would not expect any sensitive author to adopt the same approach to answering *any* opponent of Platonist persuasion. The tactic would only be credible for the right Platonist adversary, not for Plotinus, for example. If, as we have argued, Origen knew little about 'Celsus', while having suspicions about his identity, there might also be an argument for identifying 'Celsus' with a rather youthful Longinus, about eighteen years Origen's junior. It was not from Plotinus that Porphyry inherited his polemical attitude to Christianity, and it is tempting to think that it may be due to his studies with Longinus, for whom he always retained considerable respect.

However, there are obvious objections to the idea that 'Celsus' was a *nom de plume* or nickname for Longinus. All such names among philosophers of Greek heritage would have had a meaning, and significance for the person concerned—agreeing either with their self-image or with others' image of them. 'Celsus' was not a random name taken by Longinus, and would need explanation. Furthermore, if Origen knew Longinus as well as Proclan material suggests, and he therefore suspected that he might be behind this work ascribed to 'Celsus', then would there not be clues that he did so in his response? Finally, if Origen had been replying to Longinus in his eight-book work, there seems little chance that Longinus would have remained ignorant of it, yet Longinus admits no knowledge of *Cels*. How might he have referred to such a work?

4. Discussion

4.1. Plato and Homer

The lemma of the *Timaeus* in the last case we examined was 19D2–E2, where Socrates has acknowledged his own inability to laud the inhabitants of his ideal community adequately, and goes on to say that he had come to the same conclusion about both ancient and modern poets, not out of disrespect for that "race", but because the whole mimetic "tribe" can best imitate those among whom they are raised, whereas it is hard to imitate in deeds what lies beyond their formative experiences and even harder to do so in words. This claim

was problematic (ἀπορεῖται) for Longinus and Origenes, if Homer was being included when Socrates claimed not only that modern poets were inadequate for the task, but also the ancient ones. It is rather obvious, I think, that Origenes was deeply embarrassed by this issue. In his view, Socrates' claim and the resulting difficulty were very considerable, and Origenes was "very keen to demonstrate that the imitation in [the works of] Homer adequately depicts actions of excellence". This suggests that his admiration for Homer at least matched and possibly exceeded his admiration for Plato (or for Plato's 'Socrates'). If the writings of both Plato and Homer were to be salvaged, as not only Longinus and he but also most imperial Platonists thought they should be, then Origenes had to seek some way in which either Homer could be exempt from the Platonic criticism, or the Platonic text could be taken to imply less than its literal meaning implied.[25]

There would be little difficulty in seeing anybody brought up in the Greek tradition, even a Christian with an appetite for Greek culture, as sufficiently keen on Homer to want to regard him as having the ability to capture with accuracy the deeds and words of persons who lived in an ideal society that functioned according to the proposals of 'Socrates'. There are in fact some 27 references to Homer or things Homeric in *Cels*, though 'Celsus' himself was responsible for some of these. *Iliad* 308–321 and 12.200–209 are cited at 4.91, 5.340 at 1.66 (cf. 2.36), *Odyssey* 4.563–5 at 7.28, an amalgam of 4.685 at 4.94, 10.281[26] and 11.93 at 2.76, 12.45 and 12.184 also at 2.76, and 18.117 or 20.120 at 4.94. At 6.42 Origen argues with 'Celsus' over the interpretation of *Iliad* 1.591–2 and 15.18–23. At 7.46 he calls Homer the very best of poets (ὁ τῶν ποιητῶν ἄριστος),[27] but the antiquity of an author is so important for him, and Moses is of course regarded as much earlier than Homer, so that a high regard for Homer is compatible with his greater devotion to Jewish scriptures. Yet Homer remains the best that Greek culture had to offer, and the challenge for 'Celsus' is to explain how his candidates for inspired poets, particularly Orpheus and Homer (who had better represented the traditional gods, 7.54), could promote a better life (7.41).

Origen of course knew that Plato had excluded the poets from his theoretical best city (4.36, 4.50, 7.54), and that Homer was among these. Nor did he think this irrational given Homer's ability to lead the youth astray with his depictions of the traditional gods (4.36), and he was reluctant to assume that any such poets were divinely inspired (*entheos*).[28] But the passage in Proclus (*in Tim.* I.64.2–3D [=I.97.8–10vR]) does not make Origenes insist that Homer was inspired or a source of theological truth, but that Homeric mimesis was adequate for presenting the deeds of virtuous men. In the immediate aftermath of this statement comes a passage that may still seem to originate from Origenes, but its language surely owes much to an intermediate source, presumably Longinus or Porphyry, or both. It is rather important to examine it in the present context.

> Who, after all, is more grandiloquent than Homer? Even when he brings gods into strife and battle, he does not fall short of capturing their likeness, but matches the nature of their deeds 'in his lofty language' (*hypsêlologoumenos*). This is the argument that confronts us. (*In Tim.* I.64.4–7 [=I.97.9–12vR])

I suspect that if Origenes were a Christian he would have been less likely to have spoken of Homer 'capturing the likeness of *the gods*'. For instance, Origen was willing to talk about the gods of [Greek] convention with phrases such as οἱ νομιζόμενοι θεοί, but he would not recognize the divine status of such 'gods'. One may note that Plato himself had doubts about strife that involved the gods, most obviously at *Euthyphro* 6B–C, and that a wide range of Plato-interpreters would have been expected to share them. If one did not accept that gods ever fought each other, then how could one capture an accurate likeness of gods involved in warfare? However, it should be obvious that the point of contention here is style rather than instruction. Homer is assumed to be able to capture in words the excellence and grandeur of the gods. Certainly, the lofty language, expressed in terms of *hypsêlologia*, is suggestive of a particular kind of discourse credited to the Muses in the eighth book of Plato's *Republic* (545E3: *hypsêlologoumenas*). The terminology then disappears until Pollux in the second century CE; it does not occur in Origen, but it is found elsewhere in Porphyry (*Zetemata* 314.27–28; *Questiones Homericae* I.89.17). Its occurrence

here is unlikely to be due to Proclus, for of only four other cases in Proclus, three refer or allude to the address of the Muses in the *Republic*. It is fairly obvious, therefore, that this word came either from Porphyry or from his teacher Longinus. Porphyry himself uses both *megethos* and *hypsos* in his contribution immediately below (I.64.8D [=I.97.14vR]), and he also used the language of grandiloquence (*megalophônia*) in a Homeric context, effectively praising Homer,[29] though other authors also did so by this time.[30] But *hypsos* is a concern of Longinus from the very first lemma of the *Timaeus*, mentioned twice in a very few lines, and one would suppose that some known concern with this quality has resulted in the treatise *On the Sublime* (*peri Hypsous*) being attributed to Longinus.[31] It should be no surprise if the stylistic terminology here should be found to be characteristic of both Longinus and Porphyry, given that Longinus has clearly shaped Porphyry's thoughts on stylistic and linguistic matters.

4.2. Origen on Platonic Style

When it comes to the assessment of the desirability of Homer, it may appear that the views expressed by Origenes in Proclus are in fact compatible with those expressed by Origen in *Cels.* There was an understandable admiration for Homer's poetic abilities, allowing him to be called 'the best of poets', but his poetic ability did not make him above criticism in other respects. This evaluation came close to Porphyry's solution of the difficulties posed by *Timaeus* 19D-e in Proclus' *In Tim.* I.64.9–11D [=I.97.13–17vR], where he suggested that Homer, though capable of capturing the intensity of the emotion and of building up an impression of towering deeds, was nevertheless incapable of presenting intellective freedom from passion and the philosophic life in action. Both could agree that Homer's virtues were poetic rather than philosophic. But how far does Origen's view of Plato conform with what Proclus attributes to Origenes? One assumes that Origenes has been giving lectures on the *Timaeus*, but not written lectures that ever circulated. Though the lectures included some prefatory material, Proclus fails to include him along with Longinus, Severus, Porphyry and Iamblichus when giving examples of different approaches that commentators had adopted to the preface (*In Tim.* I.204.16–27D [=I.302.17–303.3vR]), so that he probably did not adopt a systematic approach. It is clear that exegesis of the physiology of the *Timaeus* was expected of almost anybody who taught philosophy through Plato, but Origenes is not remembered for his natural philosophy because Longinus too made no lasting impression in this regard.[32] As for Origen, we have shown above how widely he employs and interprets Platonic material in *Cels*.

We are fortunate to have in *Cels* an indication of how Origen saw Plato's stylistic abilities, which should be of assistance in helping one to decide whether to distinguish him from Origenes:

> And if one should dare to say it, the beautiful and practised diction of Plato and those who spoke similarly has only been of benefit to a few, if at all, whereas that of the majority who have taught and written more economically in a practical and inexact manner [have benefitted] more. Indeed, one can only see Plato in the hands of those thought to be language-lovers (*philologoi*),[33] whereas Epictetus is admired also by ordinary people and those inclined to receive benefit, since they are conscious of the self-improvement that comes from his words. And we are not saying this out of criticism of Plato . . . (*Cels* 6.2).[34]

'The beautiful and practised diction' suggests that Origen too regards Plato's style as exemplary, but achieved by virtue of long-practised habits (such as would give it that spontaneous plausibility that contributed to accurate character-portrayal) rather than by inspiration or technical expertise. The surprise is that Origen talks of Plato being read by philologists (or 'language-lovers') rather than by philosophers (or 'wisdom-lovers'). It seems that he feels that it is principally the connoisseurs of style that have been especially captivated by Plato, while those with ordinary philosophical motivation are just as happy to be seeking it in the works of Epictetus, the unpretentious Stoic author.

4.3. Celsus as Longinus

When Origen claims that "one can only see Plato in the hands of those thought to be language-lovers (or 'literature-fanatics': *philologoi*)" there is little doubt that some possible readers, including but not confined to Plotinus and Porphyry, would immediately have thought of Longinus. Plotinus never uses the term 'language-lover' in the *Enneads*, making it all the more memorable when, according to Porphyry (*Vit.* 14), he was prompted to dismiss Longinus as such—rather than counting him as a 'wisdom-lover', or 'philosopher'. He did so in response to the reading of two of Longinus' works within the school. The title of one of these, *Philarkhaios* ('antiquity-lover', 'antiquity-fanatic'), actually suggests that Longinus was already responding to questions about what his own professional passion really amounted to. Indeed, there is little doubt that his principal legacy had been in the areas of ancient learning and stylistics, not philosophy. Origen too, I suggest, is here (*Cels* 6.2) challenging the philosophical commitment of a prominent reader of Plato. Could this be a clue that he suspects this 'Celsus' to be Longinus?

Besides being reminiscent of Plotinus' famous evaluation of Longinus, the adjective *philologos*, along with its adverb and its associated degrees of comparison, are found four times in *Cels* (2.34, 3.12 × 2, 6.2), and elsewhere in Origen only in the *Homilies on Psalms* (3.1, 5.6); in Porphyry, a second case in the *Vita Plotini* is actually from the quotation of Longinus' own letter (20); it is also used by Porphyry in *De Abstinentia* 1.3 of the less philosophical opponents of vegetarianism, while at *Plat. Tim.* Frg. 2 [=Proclus, *In Tim.* I.18.31–19.9D = I.28.3–12vR] it is used of the preferred life of the missing fourth person. Porphyry is also known from Eusebius (*Praeparatio evangelica* 10.3.1) to have written a work entitled *Philologos Akroasis* in which he described his time studying *with Longinus*. Even Proclus associates the term *philologos* primarily with Longinus.[35] But might there also be clues concerning 'language-lovers' in other passages in *Cels*? A passage on the crucifixion (2.33) may be revealing. Here 'Celsus' has presented a Jewish speaker[36] jokingly suggesting that Jesus knew a line from Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae* (498): "The god himself will release me whenever I want". Origen retorts that the Jews were not obsessed with Greek literature (*ta Hellênôn philologein*), and then grants that someone of the Jews may have become a language-lover (*philologos*) of that kind, going on to question different aspects of Celsus' attack. Clearly, there had been the implication that one had to be a *philologos* in the Greek tradition to be finding Euripidean quotes for such unlikely occasions. And ultimately it had been 'Celsus' himself who had done so, confirming his status as a *philologos*.[37] This was not a professional term, for nowhere in ancient Greek do I find references to teachers of *philologia*, or to the teaching of *philologia*, as one would expect in such a case. Referring to *philologoi* was more like referring to 'literati' in modern English.

So, Origen's implication is that 'Celsus' was a *philologos*. Furthermore, the implication throughout this work is that he was not worthy of the name *philosophos*. Of the twenty occasions in *Cels* where that term is used in the singular, it qualifies 'Celsus' only once, in the mocking expression "that noblest of philosophers Celsus (6.29: ὁ γενναιότατος φιλόσοφος Κέλσος)".[38] The Jew whom he introduces says "nothing worthy of a grey-haired philosopher" (1.28). 'Celsus' was a *philologos*, not a *philosophos*. That in turn would suggest that Origen's real opponent, the 'Epicurean' adopting the guise of Platonist, was in fact Longinus, whom Origenes had accused of attributing Epicurean motives to Plato's selection of language in the *Timaeus.* If Longinus had referred to himself as an 'antiquity-lover' in response to the criticisms by another, then he could also adopt the transparent disguise of an earlier Epicurean in response to the criticism that he made Plato too 'Epicurean'.

Yet Celsus was not merely an Epicurean name. It was also a name with a meaning, 'lofty', very much like the Greek *hypsêlos*, and perhaps even comparable with the Latin *longus* when that term was applied to tall people. Longinus would have known well that Homer referred to lofty towers, palaces or mountains,[39] while Virgil used *celsus* for buildings, cities, mountains, and also ships. But it was, as we have seen, lofty language that Longinus had been most interested in, not simply because of its relevance to the debates he entered into concerning the early pages of the *Timaeus*, but also because somehow

somebody had seen fit to attribute the extant treatise on lofty language (*Peri Hypsous*) to him.

5. Conclusions

A summary of the thesis that I here tentatively propose would run as follows:

- Origen's identification of 'Celsus' as an Epicurean cannot have been based on secure knowledge;
- 'Celsus' was in fact a *nom de plume* of a kind quite familiar in those times;
- There is a significant parallel between Origen's treatment of 'Celsus' as an Epicurean and Origenes' complaints that Longinus' explanation of the early pages of the *Timaeus* made Plato a hedonist;
- The distinction between Origen and Origenes should therefore be abandoned if chronology permits;
- Origen treats 'Celsus' as a poor philosopher and a *philologus*;
- Origen therefore suspected, at least as his detailed reading continued, that the real author of the *True Logos* was his former auditor Longinus, whose works Origen had indeed closely read,[40] associated as he was with 'loftiness' both in literary theory and by name.

However, if Origen had been replying to Longinus in *Cels*, how could Longinus not have known this work? It had to be a public work if it were to achieve its purpose, but Porphyry, Longinus' own pupil, seems to know only two such works by 'Origenes'.[41] In my view, Longinus did know *Cels*, but knew it as a treatise *On Daimones*: i.e., by a moderately accurate description of its subject matter rather than by the name of its 'opponent'. So many ancient works were known by alternative titles, including several by Plato,[42] fifteen by Antisthenes, nine by Democritus, etc.,[43] that inconsistencies should cause no surprise. Most importantly, the treatises of Plotinus received no titles from their author, and some appear under significantly different titles in Porphyry's own two lists (*Vit*. 4–5 and 24–26).[44] Porphyry (*Vit.* 4) also gives the opening words of each in an attempt to overcome this problem, which thus persists throughout the third century. But, above all, how was Longinus to refer to this treatise, if he knew that Celsus had never existed and especially if he knew that he was himself the real target? To refer to the work by its dominant subject matter was clearly the most acceptable alternative. The *daimones* concerned did not have to conform with his own definition of a *daimôn*, but with a Christian definition: the work had to have a major concern with the gods of the so-called 'gentiles'.

While confusion of titles and uncertainty over authors' names makes intellectual prosopography a difficult task, we should face up to those difficulties. Names that are unsubstantiated cannot be taken for granted; titles that are not clearly and unequivocally titles cannot be taken for granted either. It may not have been proven that 'Celsus' was Longinus and that the *Contra Celsum* was the treatise of Origenes '*On Daimones*'. That, however, is a thesis I recommend for serious consideration.

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Notes

1 Ἐλεγκτέον δὴ ὡς τὰ ἐναντία ἑαυτῷ λέγοντα τὸν Κέλσον. Εὑρίσκεται μὲν γὰρ ἐξ ἄλλων συγγραμμάτων ἐπικούρειος ὤν· ἐνταῦθα δὲ διὰ τὸ δοκεῖν εὐλογώτερον κατηγορεῖν τοῦ λόγου μὴ ὁμολογῶν τὰ Ἐπικούρου προσποιεῖται κρεῖττόν τι τοῦ γηΐνου εἶναι ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ συγγενὲς θεοῦ, καί φησιν ὅτι οἷς τοῦτο εὖ ἔχει, τουτέστιν ἡ ψυχή, πάντῃ ἐφίενται τοῦ συγγενοῦς, λέγει δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἀκούειν ἀεί τι καὶ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι περὶ ἐκείνου ποθοῦσιν.

2 Ἤδει γὰρ ὅτι ὁμολογῶν ἐπικούρειος εἶναι οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι τὸ ἀξιόπιστον ἐν τῷ κατηγορεῖν τῶν ὅπως ποτὲ πρόνοιαν εἰσαγόντων καὶ θεὸν ἐφιστάντων τοῖς οὖσι. Δύο δὲ παρειλήφαμεν Κέλσους γεγονέναι ἐπικουρείους, τὸν μὲν πρότερον κατὰ Νέρωνα

τοῦτον δὲ κατὰ Ἀδριανὸν καὶ κατωτέρω. I read τὸν δὲ rather than τοῦτον δὲ, as there is no other instance in the eight books of *Cels* of a μὲν . . . δὲ construction where μὲν is preceded by the article and δὲ by a form of the demonstrative οὗτος, or any demonstrative. If obliged to read τοῦτον δὲ I would interpret it as 'the more recent one'.

3 *Ei ge* occurs eleven times in *Cels*, of which four belong to what Celsus says (2.17, 2.31, 3.12, 3.62), and four more occur within fifteen words of Celsus' name (4.36, 7.55, 8.15, and 8.67). We infer that it is closely associated with polemics, challenging the opponent to accept or reject the condition. It will generally cast real doubt on the assumption being introduced, dependent on context. Celsus uses it in this way, Origen less consistently (at 6.2, 6.64, 7.26). Comparable use of *eiper* features as a way of conditionally (and temporarily) accepting the assumptions of opponents in the words of Celsus himself (*Cels* 2.18, 2.63, 6.78), and Origen often uses it similarly at 1.10, 4.35, 4.67, 4.91, 4.94, 6.57, 7.32, 7.63; it introduces other conditions not believed by Origen, e.g., at 7.18 and 8.12.

4 This might be a title by which the work was known, i.e., a two-book work *Against the Christians*. But, in that case, how can one understand 'other', for that is supposedly not the title of the present work?

5 Ἀλλὰ Πλάτων μὲν δῆλός ἐστι μὴ φρονήσας ἐνθέους γεγονέναι ἄνδρας τοὺς τοιαῦτα ποιήματα καταλελοιπότας· ὁ δὲ κρίνειν μᾶλλον Πλάτωνος δυνάμενος, ὁ ἐπικούρειος Κέλσος, εἴ γε οὗτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ κατὰ Χριστιανῶν ἄλλα δύο βιβλία συντάξας, τάχα ἡμῖν φιλονεικῶν οὓς μὴ ἐφρόνει ἐνθέους ἐνθέους ὠνόμασεν.

6 *Epistle 2* at 6.17–19 (312E–313A); *Epistle 6* at 6.8 (323D) and 6.12 (322D–E); and *Epistle 7* at 6.3 and 6.6–8 (341C5–342A1); cf. generally 6.17.

7 See 2.60 and 7.5 on 81C–D; 7.28 and 7.21 on the true earth and the myth; 6.4 on the cock to Asclepius (118A).

8 These were not a source of Platonic doctrine in extant Plutarch, though by the mid-second century they are much used by Platonizing thinkers, including Apuleius, Numenius and Clement Alexandrinus.

9 On Longinus having used this name, see Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum* 4.1.4 = Longinus Frg. 5 = Porphyry T1 (Porphyrii philosophi fragmenta, ed. Smith).

10 Note the attention given to Lucian's 'Celsus' in Keim (1873, pp. 143–51, 275–93).

11 Particularly the direct quotation from book 3 at *Historia ecclesiatica* 6.19.5–8; after Eusebius has readily identified this person with the theologian he followed: Τῆς δὴ μοχθηρίας τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν γραφῶν οὐκ ἀπόστασιν, λύσιν δέ τινες εὑρεῖν προθυμηθέντες, ἐπ' ἐξηγήσεις ἐτράποντο ἀσυγκλώστους καὶ ἀναρμόστους τοῖς γεγραμμένοις, οὐκ ἀπολογίαν μᾶλλον ὑπὲρ τῶν ὀθνείων, παραδοχὴν δὲ καὶ ἔπαινον τοῖς οἰκείοις φερούσας. αἰνίγματα γὰρ τὰ φανερῶς παρὰ Μωυσεῖ λεγόμενα εἶναι κομπάσαντες καὶ ἐπιθειάσαντες ὡς θεσπίσματα πλήρη κρυφίων μυστηρίων διά τε τοῦ τύφου τὸ κριτικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς καταγοητεύσαντες, ἐπάγουσιν ἐξηγήσεις. Ὁ δὲ τρόπος τῆς ἀτοπίας ἐξ ἀνδρός, ᾧ κἀγὼ κομιδῇ νέος ὢν ἔτι ἐντετύχηκα, σφόδρα εὐδοκιμήσαντος καὶ ἔτι δι' ὧν καταλέλοιπεν συγγραμμάτων εὐδοκιμοῦντος παρειλήφθω, Ὠριγένους, οὗ κλέος παρὰ τοῖς διδασκάλοις τούτων τῶν λόγων μέγα διαδέδοται. [6] ἀκροατὴς γὰρ οὗτος Ἀμμωνίου τοῦ πλείστην ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνοις ἐπίδοσιν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἐσχηκότος γεγονώς, εἰς μὲν τὴν τῶν λόγων ἐμπειρίαν πολλὴν παρὰ τοῦ διδασκάλου τὴν ὠφέλειαν ἐκτήσατο, εἰς δὲ τὴν ὀρθὴν τοῦ βίου προαίρεσιν τὴν ἐναντίαν ἐκείνῳ πορείαν ἐποιήσατο. [7] Ἀμμώνιος μὲν γὰρ Χριστιανὸς ἐν Χριστιανοῖς ἀνατραφεὶς τοῖς γονεῦσιν, ὅτε τοῦ φρονεῖν καὶ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἥψατο, εὐθὺς πρὸς τὴν κατὰ νόμους πολιτείαν μετεβάλετο, Ὠριγένης δὲ Ἕλλην ἐν Ἕλλησιν παιδευθεὶς λόγοις, πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα· ᾧ δὴ φέρων αὐτόν τε καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἕξιν ἐκαπήλευσεν, κατὰ μὲν τὸν βίον Χριστιανῶς ζῶν καὶ παρανόμως, κατὰ δὲ τὰς περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τοῦ θείου δόξας Ἑλληνίζων τε καὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων τοῖς ὀθνείοις ὑποβαλλόμενος μύθοις. [8] συνῆν τε γὰρ ἀεὶ τῷ Πλάτωνι, τοῖς τε Νουμηνίου καὶ Κρονίου Ἀπολλοφάνους τε καὶ Λογγίνου καὶ Μοδεράτου Νικομάχου τε καὶ τῶν ἐν Πυθαγορείοις ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρῶν ὡμίλει συγγράμμασιν, ἐχρῆτο δὲ καὶ Χαιρήμονος τοῦ Στωϊκοῦ Κορνούτου τε ταῖς βίβλοις, παρ' ὧν τὸν μεταληπτικὸν τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησιν μυστηρίων γνοὺς τρόπον ταῖς Ἰουδαϊκαῖς προσῆψεν γραφαῖς.

12 Including singular and plural of the noun, the adjective *daimonios* and the adverb *daimoniôs*.

13 The distribution across the 8 books is not even, for the plural of *daimôn* (all cases) occurs 20 times in book 1, 11, in 2, 21 in 3, 28 in 4, 16 in 5, 8 in 6, 48 in 7, and an incredible 135 times in book 8.

14 It is important for chronology that this work is said to have been written 'under Galienus' in *Vit. Plot.* 3, for only thus might we need to postulate two thinkers called Origenes. It is stated that Origenes 'wrote nothing except the *syngramma On Daimones*, and, under Galienus, *That the King is the only Creator*'. But was this really a date at which Origen (d. 254) was writing? This is almost a parenthetic addition, at some distance from the verb 'wrote', and in these pages Porphyry routinely dates events relevant *to his own life* by the years of Galienus' reign (cf. *Vit.* 4 [x4], and 6), and it is likely that this is the date when the work became known to him. Perhaps it was actually published posthumously, having been found in his papers. It is entirely possible that Porphyry did not know precisely when it was *written*, but that, unlike Longinus, he thought it was worth mentioning, since Porphyry too had a lively interest in the King of the *Second Epistle.* It should be noticed that Longinus (*Vita* 20), while regarding *On Daimones* as the obvious exception to Origenes' having written nothing, never affirms that it was the only exception.

15 The mention of these two works occurred in the context of explaining how the pact protecting Ammonius' doctrines from publication was broken; see (Ramelli 2009, p. 237).

16 Compare also Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evanglica* 13.13.28–29, for whom the 'King' is identical with the Timaean Demiurge and consequently with God the Father in Trinitarian thought.

17 Fragments edited by Patillon and Brisson used here, given its wider distribution (cf. also the different numbering in Männlein-Robert edn.). Many basic facts about Longinus are included in Ramelli (2009, pp. 234–35). Longinus' methods in fragments relating to the *Timaeus* are discussed in (Männlein-Robert 2006), who discusses Origenes only briefly (p. 87).

18 E.g., 462C7: χάριτός τινος καὶ ἡδονῆς ἀπεργασίας.

19 This is how Plato himself had seen the abilities of inspired poets at *Phaedrus* 245A5–8, but to see Plato in the same light would be to see him as a crazed plaything of a divine source of inspiration, rather than as somebody who thought out what he composed in a systematically rationalist manner.

20 Note I.59.12–14D = I.90.6–7vR, where Longinus writes "against certain Platonists who claim that the style of this passage is spontaneous (αὐτοφυῆ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν ταύτην) and not something provided to the philosopher from a craft". At I.86.27–30D = I.132.1–6vR we find Origenes (Frg. 14) claiming that Plato aimed at a spontaneous persuasion (πιθανότητος … αὐτοφυοῦς), and that this kind of language occurred spontaneously (τὸ εἶδος τοῦτο τῆς ἑρμηνείας αὐτοφυῶς ἔχειν). On the vexed question of identifying Cassius Longinus with 'Longinus', author of On the Sublime, see Section 4.1.

21 There is no other reference to Epicurus or to Epicureans in Book I of *In Tim.*, and only four later, all in Book II.

22 As Porphyry had noted at *Vit.* 14.19-20.

23 As at I.59.12–14D = I.91.4–7vR (Frg. 9) Origenes' emphasis on spontaneity will remind one of Plato's affirmations about poetic ability coming by a crazy gift of inspiration rather than by any formulaic craft at *Phdr.* 245A5–8.

24 *In Tim.* I.63.24–64.7D = I.96.15–97.12vR = Porph. *Plat. Tim.* Frg. 8 = Longinus Frg. 29 = Origenes Frg. 10.

25 We know from Proclus *In Tim.* I.76.30–77.3D (=116.14–17vR = Frg. 12) that Origenes did not take the Atlantis-story at face value, seeing it not as depicting a war between human Athenians under an ancient regime and human Atlantines, but as a war between two armies of *daimones*, the one presumably loyal to Athena and the other to Poseidon; yet it would require a master allegorist to take what Plato said about the mimetic tribe in general at anything other than face value.

26 It is this passage that is intended, but the principal line is misremembered in the light of the other.

27 See Ramelli (2009, p. 243), for the view that Origen held Homer in high regard; Heine, however, in a dedicated study, observes at the outset that 'Origen's attitude to Homer is rather mysterious', but goes on to claim that 'One must conclude that Origen did not, overall at least, have a negative view of Homer' (Heine 2022, pp. 336–37). Heine does not consider 'Origenes' as evidence for Origen.

28 "But Plato obviously did not consider that the gentlemen who bequeathed us such poems had been divinely inspired; yet the one who was better able to judge than Plato, our 'Epicurean' Celsus, … perhaps called those he didn't think to be inspired "inspired" (οὓς μὴ ἐφρόνει ἐνθέους ἐνθέους ὠνόμασεν) to pick a quarrel with us".

29 See Porphyry, *Quaestionem Homericarum ad Odysseam* 9.491; *megalophonônia* had earlier been used in a disparaging sense, as well as a neutral one indicating simply the strength of a voice or a sound.

30 See Galen, *De Methodo Medendi* 10.12.13K; and esp. Lucian, *Muscae Encomium* 5: τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀνδρίαν καὶ τὴν ἀλκὴν αὐτῆς οὐχ ἡμᾶς χρὴ λέγειν, ἀλλ' ὃς μεγαλοφωνότατος τῶν ποιητῶν Ὅμηρος.

31 See *In Tim.* 14.12 (=21.9: ὕψος) and 20 (=21.17: ὕψωσε). I defer to the view of (Halliwell 2022, pp. x–xix), that the author of *On the Sublime* is unknown.

32 Porphyry does, however, report relevant views of Longinus alongside those of Plotinus in the newly found *On Principles and on Matter* (94), on which see (Arzhanov 2021).

33 I discuss this term below, but see also (Männlein-Robert 2001, pp. 142–46).

34 Καὶ εἰ χρή γε τολμήσαντα εἰπεῖν, ὀλίγους μὲν ὤνησεν, εἴ γε ὤνησεν, ἡ περικαλλὴς καὶ ἐπιτετηδευμένη Πλάτωνος καὶ τῶν παραπλησίως φρασάντων λέξις· πλείονας δὲ ἡ τῶν εὐτελέστερον ἅμα καὶ πραγματικῶς καὶ ἐστοχασμένως τῶν πολλῶν διδαξάντων καὶ γραψάντων. Ἔστι γοῦν ἰδεῖν τὸν μὲν Πλάτωνα ἐν χερσὶ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι φιλολόγων μόνον, τὸν δὲ Ἐπίκτητον καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν τυχόντων καὶ ῥοπὴν πρὸς τὸ ὠφελεῖσθαι ἐχόντων θαυμαζόμενον, αἰσθομένων τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ βελτιώσεως. Καὶ ταῦτά γε οὐκ ἐγκαλοῦντες Πλάτωνί φαμεν ….

35 Proclus also employs the term at *In Tim.* I.14.7 and I.86.24D (=I.21.4 and I.131.18vR) of Longinus, and in his *In Platonis Cratylum* 32 of Plato's 'Hermogenes', prompted by Plato's *Cratylus* 384E1. Unlike 'philosopher', 'grammarian' or 'sophist', the term seems not to be used for the practitioner of a particular profession.

36 On the Jewish speeches within Celsus' work, see now (Arnold 2016, pp. 341–71).

37 Observations at 3.12 also make it clear that many Greek *philologoi* admire Christianity and seek to discover more about it; this also suggests that the 'Celsus' himself may be a *philologos.*

38 Cf. ὁ σεμνὸς φιλόσοφος at 4.30, following Arnold 2016.

39 Towers five times in the *Iliad* according to my count, once in the *Odyssey*; palaces three and one respectively; mountains or peaks twice in either poem.

40 This emerges in the Eusebian fragment of Porphyry (*Hist. eccles.* 6.19.8) quoted above, n. 23; though many years Origen's junior, Longinus had once belonged to the same intellectual circle, and was certainly old enough to have influenced what was "certainly the last of" Origen's extant works (Heine 2022, p. 335).

[41] Longinus mentions *On Daimones* (Porphyry, *Vit.* 20), but not in an exhaustive list; and he here only concerns himself with public works, not in letters or commentary-style works for classroom use.

[42] See especially *Diogenes Laertius*, *Vitae philosophorum* 3.58–60. *Phaedo*, *Menexenus* and *Critias* were often known as *On Soul*, *Epitaphios* and *Atlantikos* respectively.

[43] Diogenes, *Vit. phil*. 6.15–18; also in Diogenes' catalogues 3 in Crito (2.121), 1 each in Simon (2.123), Speusippus (4.4) and Xenocrates (4.13), 3 in Aristotle (5.22–23), two in Theophrastus (5.44, 5.50), 1 each in Zeno of Citium. Chrysippus, and Epicurus.

[44] *Enn.* 3.3 [29] has two *alternative* titles at *Plot.* 5 and slightly different ones at 25; 2.9 [33] *Against the Gnostics* is a well-known example.

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Essay

The Tritheist Controversy of the Sixth Century with English Translations of Neglected Syriac Quotations from Works of Earlier Church Fathers, Used by Peter of Callinicus in His Polemic Against Damian of Alexandria (*Contra Damianum*)

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Abstract: An arrangement of Patristic quoted sources translated from Greek into Syriac were used by Peter of Callinicus in his works against Damian of Alexandria within the sixth-century Tritheist Controversy. Exemplifying one useful role for a translator, the quotations have been extracted and saved from inaccessibility in Peter's very hefty volumes and presented side-by-side, author-by-author in checked and (where necessary) revised English. This not only better clarifies the argumentative thrust of Peter's diatribes and how he himself translates Greek into a Semitic tongue, but it will serve Patristic scholarship in showing how the thoughts of well-known Greek Fathers are conveyed in Syriac in the contexts of earlier theological debates. A key theme of this presentation is the Tritheist Controversy which broke out more than a hundred years after the acrimonious controversy over the Council of Chalcedon had cooled down. The focus is mainly on the dispute over the doctrine of the Trinity between the so-named miaphysites, the Syrian Patriarch Peter of Callinicus/um (d. 591) and Coptic Pope Damian of Alexandria (d. 605), which, in turn, led to the schism between Alexandria and Antioch lasting about 30 years. It comprises two parts: (i) A brief outline of the origins, narrative, and postlude of the Tritheist controversy of Peter with Damian and its doctrinal issues; (ii) identifying, enlisting and reproducing numerous seminal quotations in English from the works of earlier Church Fathers contained in Peter's *magnum opus* in support and in refutation of (or 'against') Damian of Alexandria; and (iii) reflection on issues of translating Patristic texts.

Keywords: Patristics; translation; Syriac; quotations; Tritheism

1. The Treatise Against Damian

Those of us who have become interested in the controversy between Peter of Callinicus the 'miaphysite' Patriarch of Antioch (581–591)[1] and Damian (578–605), his counterpart and spiritual superior of Alexandria, will know that they fell out and that they fell out over the doctrine of the Trinity. When the dust had settled on their graves and when churchmen turned their minds to assuaging the bitterness of the rift between fellow-believers, men pronounced the whole quarrel a mere logomachy, a battle of words in which the contestants had been at cross-purposes (see Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* [ed. Chabot (repr. 1963)], 10,26 [vol. 2, p. 391 col. 1]). No doubt these churchmen were in part, at least, right—even if in matters of this kind, ecclesiastical diplomacy, as so often happens, puts *akribeia* to flight and remoulds the past to its own liking. No doubt, too, as Gregory the Theologian observes (*Oratorio* 31,2) (and this is for both our contestants, Peter and Damian, almost

the equal of a divine utterance) "men must have something to blaspheme or life would be unliveable"—or, to paraphrase more charitably, a living theology demands adventurous debate, and the adventure runs the perpetual risk of turning into temerarious blasphemy. No doubt, moreover, a calm student of church affairs would have good cause to point to this quarrel as one further symptom of the rickety structure of a miaphysite church which lacked secular authority to moderate its internal doctrinal disagreements. All that would be true, or at least, partly true. Yet it would all, also, be beside the point. Peter and Damian were in dispute about the substance of the faith. That is what they believed and, if we are to understand them, what we must try to believe too. When Peter called Damian a 'Sabellian' and Damian retorted by calling Peter a 'Tritheist' each meant what he said.

About 586 Peter of Callinicus became involved in a stormy controversy with his patron Damian, Patriarch of Alexandria, over a problem which arose during the course of anti-Tritheist polemics. Damian was accused by Peter of Sabellianism on the grounds that in the course of refuting Tritheism he had taught that the divine hypostases were themselves the characteristic properties of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Thereupon Damian accused his critic of Tritheist sympathies. What follows is a brief word about Peter's writings.[2] But I will confine myself here to those which contain the seminal quotations from the works of St. Severus of Antioch, viz. in Peter's *Anti-Tritheist Dossier* and *Adversus Damianum*.

1.1. The Anti-Tritheist Dossier

Peter wrote at least three treatises one of which is his *Anti-Tritheist Dossier* which also concerns us here and which has survived in only one manuscript, viz. British Library Add. 12155, containing an extensive florilegium (hereafter using edn. by Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham [Orient. Lovan. Analec. 10] as ATD). It bears the title: "Rebuttal of those who are charged with Sabellianism and who therefore maliciously spread the libellous report about us of holding the heathen dogmas of the Tritheists". The writing, then, is not directed against that Tritheists (as (Baumstark 1922, p. 177) has wrongly suggested) but against people accused of Sabellianism, the heresy diametrically opposed to Tritheism. The author's aim is not to refute either Trithiesm or Sabellianism but simply to prove that the accusation of Tritheism advanced by his Sabellian, or Sabellianizing, opponents is utterly baseless and that, quite the contrary, he has from the start of his Patriarchate (581) up to the moment of composing his dossier of documents (586/7) always fought against that heresy (ATD, pp. 15–19). The Anti-Tritheist Dossier of Peter of Callinicus forms part of the controversy between the two Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria. It was connected with the struggle against Tritheism and started as a result of Damian's refutation of Tritheism. The work, which is evidently incomplete and may even be a portion of the lost Book I *Adversus Damianum*, is the dossier of documents (prefaced by a short Introduction) assembled by Peter to show how he and Damian were once friends, how they had fallen out and how shamefully he (Peter) has been maltreated and slandered. Peter will prove that so far from being a tritheist himself, as Damian alleges, he has been a highly successful combatant of tritheists with one outstanding convert to show for it; besides which Damian in earlier days wrote him extremely flattering letters, congratulating him on his prowess in the battle. Moreover, when Peter had arranged to meet Damian to sort the issues out in Egypt, the whole thing turned out to be a fiasco, for which Damian was to blame. That in outline is the subject matter.

1.2. Peter's Magnum Opus: Contra Damianum

As mentioned above, Damian accused his critic (Peter) of Tritheist sympathies. Peter, in turn, put together his *magnum opus*: *Against Damian* (hereafter using edn. by Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham, *Contra Damianum* [Corp. Christianum Ser. Graec. vols. 29, 32, 35, 54],

Bks. I–IV as CD) in which he rebuts the thesis defended by Damian in his refutation of the tritheists, that the characteristic properties of the divine persons, i.e., Fatherhood, Sonship and Procession are the Hypostases themselves. What this article reveals is that the Patristic doctrine of the Trinity inherited by Peter and Damian alike was, if not actually inconsistent, at least expressed in various and quite puzzling ways.

Let it be clear that we lack all but fragments of CD, which was originally written in Greek, which is why it stands edited and translated (along with other works by Peter) in the Greek Series of *Corpus Christianorum* series as just indicated. The only extant versions of it are in *Syriac*, in fact translated into Syriac by Peter, and so what follows are crucial extracts from a translation of the Greek into the most important Semitic language used for Christian theology in the Eastern churches of the Patristic period. The express purpose of the presentation of the extracts, then, has to be carefully stated. Below are sequences of translated quotations of Greek-writing Fathers (from St Athanasius of Alexandria to St Theodosius of Alexandria) (listed as i–viii above) out of Peter's Greek translated into Syriac. The material has already been Englished from the Syriac by the present writer, Rifaat Ebied, with Albert Van Roey and Lionel Wickham, yet the quotations lie rather locked away within five huge volumes of both the *Orientalia Lovaniensis Analecta* and *Corpus Christianorum Series*, *Series Graeca* that translate all of Peter of Callinicus's extant writings on this stormy controversy. The object here is lift these quotations out of these dense volumes, where they are likely to fall neglected, and, by first checking over them again, put them into an organized arrangement (in the order of their appearance in Peter's works) so that modern Patristic scholars can see them side-by-side or in clusters for comparative study. By doing so, researchers can then gauge their significance in the transferences from Greek into Syriac thought and clarify the role and effects of quoting authoritative texts of famed Fathers in the development of theological arguments. Instead of leaving these important quotations in textual obscurity, the case of Peter of Callinicus confirms that a key task of translators is not only to present whole texts, or single texts as wholes, but, where pertinent, to extract passages that can throw further light on the thought of quoted Fathers as expressed in their earlier contexts, to test the accuracy of the extant texts we have for them, let alone help us to assess the difficulties of conveying Greek theology into a Semitic tongue. It should be remembered that most of Peter's quotations derive from works written about earlier and different debates than the one Peter was involved in, and various scholars have already stated their hopes for an easier way to perceive more readily what the Callinicus' quotations can tell us about earlier doctrinal debates, not just those around alleged Tritheism in the sixth century. What follows, then, is meant to be of wider service to Patristic study, and not merely of relevance to researching one, albeit crucial, episode, but in opening up new perspectives on the central doctrinal debates of the fourth and fifth centuries.

2. Quotations in English from the Works of Earlier Church Fathers Contained in Peter's *magnum opus* in Support and in Refutation of (or 'Against') Damian of Alexandria

2.1. Quotations from the Works of St. Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 296–373)[3]

In presenting these quotations in his surviving *magnum opus*, Peter introduces St. Athanasius the Great with such wonder-inducing appellations as "mighty and apostolic"; "luminary of the Church"; "exact and vigilant" and "guide to truth".

The translation of these quotations is already published and may be found in (Ebied 2014, pp. 3–23).

2.2. Quotations from the Works of St. Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330–379)[4]

2.2.1. From *Adversus Eunomium* Bk. 1 (for the Greek, see Patr. Graec. vol. 29, cols. 497–572; using Sesboue ed., [Sourc. Chrét. 299], pp. 140–268)

Basil the Great explains this, writing as follows in the first discourse *Against Eunomius*: I, for my part, think the title 'ingenerate' harmonizes especially well with our notions. But inasmuch as it has no place in Bible and is the starting point for their blasphemy, I declare that it could rightly be suppressed, the word 'Father' being equivalent in meaning to 'ingenerate' besides bringing in the idea of the Son by the connected relationship. And again: Let us not, therefore, call him 'ingenerate' but 'Father' unless we are going to be wiser than the teachings of the Saviour, who said: "Go baptize in the name of the Father" [Matt 28:19]—not 'in the name of the ingenerate' (CD vol. 29, p. 68).

It has been demonstrated irrefragably that this divinely inspired father [**Basil**] takes 'ingenerate' (ܐ̈ܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ) like the other titles, too, as outside the substance. He shall teach us again, too, how ingeneracy, though following it, is said to be outside God the Father's hypostasis. He speaks as follows, then, when demolishing and deriding the feeble onslaughts of impious Eunomius by rebuttals in the first of the books addressed to him: Having declared that "if he is not prior to himself nor is there another to be prior to him, ingeneracy must follow him", he subsequently becomes aware that, as a consequence of the premisses, the argument has come out to the opposite conclusion. For if ingeneracy follows God, it evidently follows him externally; now what is outside God is not his substance and therefore the argument collapses. To avoid this fate what does he do? Paying scant attention to the derision he was likely to incur by uttering non-sequiturs, he corrected the argument and brought it to the desired end, by saying: "Rather ingeneracy is the substance itself". But this is quite out of key with the preceding words. For how can God have the ingeneracy, which both follows him and does not follow him but instead is based in the very concept of the substance? But yet he does not allow the sophism to be demolished entirely. For if, having said that ingeneracy follows Him, he had let the argument rest here, he would have been unable to call "ingeneracy" the substance of the God of all, or to prove that the Only-begotten Son is alien in respect of the substance to him, since no external accompaniment can separate the affinity of substance between Father and Son. But now by adding "but rather ingeneracy is the substance itself", he has proved that whatever God is, is ingeneracy. That he is preparing all this as a course for the onslaught of his blasphemy he will show when he has progressed somewhat in the argument. His initial statement, indeed, has been seen to be a consequence of the truth of the realities, by following from the points conceded. But the final addition has been tossed in from heretical thought, our author having no compunction at all towards making a *volte face* to set the argument straight. For how can the same thing follow God and be God, when it is well-known to everybody that what follows is different from what it follows (Ibid., pp. 124, 126)?

Basil the Great is a trustworthy witness on this point when in the first book *Against Eunomius* he says the following: Our Lord Jesus Christ in his statements about himself, revealing the Godhead's generosity and providential grace towards men, indicated this by some marks viewed as belonging with him, calling himself "door", "way", "bread", "vine", "shepherd" and "light" (John 10:9; 14:6; 6:35; 15:5; 10:14; 8:12), though He is not polyonymous, for the names do not all have the same bearing as one another. "Light" has one meaning, "vine" another and "shepherd" another; but being single in respect of the substrate, one substance simple and incomposite, he names himself differently at different times, suiting the different titles to the conceptions. For he attributes the various names to himself in accordance with the difference in the activities and by relation to the recipients of his benefits (Ibid., p. 230).

For **Basil the Great** said: Thus, evil seems not only to oppose good but also itself (Ibid., p. 286).

Now it is especially worth noting in addition to this what wise **Basil** says in a passage not quoted by us hitherto. He writes as follows in the first book *Against Eunomius* and shakes down his [Eunomius's] whole mischief: Amongst the names used of God, then, some are indicative of what belongs with God, but some, on the contrary, of what does not belong with him. From both these an impression, so to say, of God is created for us: from the denial of things inappropriate to him and from the acknowledgement of things belonging to him. For instance, when we name him 'incorruptible', we are potentially saying to ourselves or our listeners: 'Do not imagine God as subject to corruption'. When too we name him 'invisible' we are saying: 'Do not imagine that he can be apprehended by the eye's sense'. Now in this way too when we name him 'ingenerate' (Syr. ܠܐ ܕܝܠܕ) we are saying: 'You should think of God's being as dependent on no cause or higher principle'. And, in general, from each of these we learn not to lapse into unseemly notions in our ideas about God. Therefore, to recognize the special property of God, we forbid one another in talking about God to debase our notions to what is unfitting, so that men may never imagine God to be one of the corruptible beings or one of the visible or one of the created beings. And so through all these negative terms there is a sort of denial of what is alien, our understanding being illuminated and rejecting ideas of what does not belong to him. Again, we call God 'good', 'just', 'creator' and 'judge' and everything else of this kind. As, then, in the former case, the expressions indicated a denial and negation of what is alien to God, so here they indicate the positing and the existence of what is God's own and viewed as fittingly belonging with him. From each of the two kinds of appellation we learn either about the existence of what belongs to him or about the non-existence of what does not belong to him. Now 'ingenerate' is one of the non-existent things, for it indicates the fact that God has no generation. We shall not argue over whether one is to denominate this 'negation', 'prohibition' or 'denial' or whatever you like. But that 'ingenerate' does not indicate any of the things God has, has, I think, been sufficiently ascertained in what has been said. The substance, on the other hand, is not something God does not have, but is the very being of God, which it would be the height of folly to count amongst the non-existents (Syr. ܟ ܡܗܘܬܐ). For if the substance were among the non-existents, how could any other of the things mentioned exist? But 'ingenerate' has been proved to be reckoned along with the non-existents. Therefore, he who states that this term is indicative of the substance is a fraud (Ibid., pp. 320, 322).

Therefore, let us investigate this matter before those others. Let us clarify our understanding on this point with the help of the fathers' words and thoughts. **Basil**, then wise in things divine, wrote in the *Refutation*, instructing us as follows: 'Ingenerate', if it is a name, is not a substance, for names are indicative of substances, and are not themselves substance. Again, in the first book *Against Eunomius* he also says the following: Among the names used of God, then, some are indicative of what belongs with God but some, on the contrary, of what does not belong with him. From both these an impression, so to say, of God is created for us: from the denial of things inappropriate to him and from the acknowledgment of things belonging with him. And later on, again: We call God 'good', 'just', 'creator' and 'judge' and everything else of this kind. As, then, in the former case the expressions indicated a denial and negation of what is alien to God, so here they indicate the positing and the existence of what is God's own and viewed as fittingly belonging with him (CD vol. 32, pp. 196, 198).

Wise **Basil**, then, spoke in his first book *Against Eunomius* as follows: It would be pleasant for me, then, to ask him whether he preserves this goodwill alike towards all the things said about God or only with regard to this word? For if he regards nothing at all

by mental invention lest he be thought to adorn God with human appellations, he will acknowledge what are spoken of God to be, all alike, substance. How, then, can it fail to be ludicrous to declare that creativity is substance, or providence, again, and fore-knowledge likewise, and in a word, to posit every activity as substance? And if all these tend towards one meaning, all the terms must have the same potential as one another, as in the case of those with many names: for example, when we call the same person 'Simon', 'Cephas', and 'Peter' [cf. Mark 3:16; John 1:42]. So someone who has heard of the immutability of God would be led towards ingeneracy: one who has heard of his being without parts will be brought to his creativity. What could be more absurd than this confusion, when someone legislates against common usage and the teaching of the Spirit by removing the meaning of each term? Despite the fact that when we hear about God that "He made all things in Wisdom" [Psalm 104:24] we learn his creative skill; when that "He opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing" [145:16] the providence which is throughout; when the "He made darkness his hiding-place" [18:11] we are instructed in the invisibility of his nature; when, again, it is said in the *persona* of God, "I am and have not changed" [Mal 3:6] we learn the eternal sameness and immutability of the substance. How, then, can it not be plain insanity to say that its proper meaning does not underline each term, but to decree, against actuality, that all the terms have the same potential (Ibid., pp. 226, 228)?

Basil wrote, then, in the first book *Against Eunomius* as follows: Having declared that 'If he is not prior to himself nor is there another to be prior to him, ingeneracy (ܐܝܠܝܢܘܬܐ) must follow him', he subsequently becomes aware that, as a consequence of the premisses, the argument has come out to the opposite conclusion. For if ingeneracy follows God, it evidently follows him externally; now what is outside God is not his substance and therefore the argument collapses. To avoid this fate what does he do? Paying scant attention to the derision he was likely to incur by uttering non-sequiturs, he corrected the argument and brought it to the desired end, by saying: 'Rather ingeneracy is the substance itself'. But this is quite out of key with the preceding words. For how can God have the ingeneracy, which both follows him and does not follow him but instead is based in the very concept of the substance? But yet, he does not allow the sophism to be demolished entirely. For if, having said that ingeneracy "follows him," he had let the argument rest here, he would have been unable to call 'ingeneracy' the substance of God of all, or to prove that the Only-begotten Son is alien in respect of the substance to him, since no external accompaniment can separate the affinity of substance between Father and Son. But now by adding 'but rather ingeneracy is the substance itself', he has proved that whatever God is, is ingeneracy. That he is preparing all this as a course for the onslaught of his blasphemy he will show when he has progressed somewhat in the argument. His initial statement, indeed, has been seen to be a consequence of the truth of the realities, by following from the points conceded. But the final addition has been tossed in from heretical thought, our author having no compunction at all towards making a *volte face* to set the argument straight. For how can the same thing follow God and be God, when it is well-known to everybody that what follows is different from what it follows (Ibid., pp. 452, 454)?

Besides this, let us examine in due order other statements, too, of the divinely inspired father **[Basil]**, which are set down in the first book *Against Eunomius* the impious, but will instruct us in the truth of sound doctrines. Why, then, he says is it absurd for certain things even about the God of all to be accepted in this way in accordance with inventive thought, and primarily this very thing which is the whole subject of our argument? For we find that 'ingeneracy' is used in no different way. We say, indeed, that the God of all is incorruptible and ingenerate, calling him by these names in accordance with various ideas. For when we survey the first world-eras and discover that God's life falls beyond all beginning, we call him ingenerate. When, on the other hand, we stretch our mind to future world-eras, we

call him infinite and unlimited, not comprehended by any end whatsoever, incorruptible. So, just as endlessness of life is called 'incorruptibility' so also its unbeginningness has been called 'ingeneracy' as we view the two things in him in accordance with inventive thought. What reasoning, then, will gainsay that each one of these terms, too, will be the result of inventive thought and an acknowledgement of whatever truly belongs to God. And later: Since, then, God's substance has been seen to be incomprehensible and ineffable to man's understanding, it remains to disclose, with regard to ingeneracy itself, what it is and how it is perceived in the God of all. We discover, then, in reasoning, that the idea of ingeneracy does not fall for us within the consideration of what he is but rather (I speak the expression under compulsion) of how he is. For our mind investigates whether "the God over all" [cf. Ephes 4:6] has some cause prior to him and then, unable to think of one, names his unbeginningness of life 'ingeneracy' (Ibid., pp. 468, 470).

Listen to the wise doctor [**Basil**] himself, who says of Eunomius in the first book *Against Eunomius*: He [Basil] denies that ingeneracy is viewed in God by way of inventive thought supposing that thereby it will be easy for him to attempt to prove that ingeneracy is the substance and thereby demonstrate indubitably that the Only-begotten is dissimilar in substance from the Father. For this reason, he entangles himself with the expression 'inventive thought', on the ground that it indicates nothing at all but only has subsistence in utterance, and he pretends that it is unsuitable to honour God by thoughts (Ibid., p. 474).

The master of mysteries [**Basil**], having said this and duly discussed in thought, went on to say: Why, then, is it absurd for certain things even about the God of all to be accepted in this way in accordance with inventive thought, and primarily this very thing which is the whole subject of our argument (Ibid., p. 474)?

With this thus proved, let us go on to investigate the notion introduced to us by 'ingeneracy'. The very statement by **Basil** the Great set down for examination will show it us, then. For he says: We discover, then, in reasoning, that the idea of ingeneracy does not fall for us within the consideration of what he is but rather (I speak the expression under compulsion) of how he is (Ibid., p. 490).

And a little later he [**Basil**] said similarly: Then just as in the case of men, 'being from something' is not their substance, so neither is it possible in the case of the God of all, to call ingeneracy (which is equivalent to 'not being from anything' his substance. A person calling unbeginningness a substance does something similar to somebody who, being asked what Adam's substance and nature were, should reply 'not being from the intercourse of man and woman but being formed by the hand of God'. 'But I am looking', the other will say, 'not for the mode of the hypostasis but for the material substrate itself of the man, which I am very far off learning from your answer'. This happens to us too with the word 'ingeneracy' (Syr. ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ) whereby we learn how God is rather, and not the nature itself (Ibid., pp. 490, 492).

Therefore, the great herald of truth, **Basil**, shall again proclaim to you what he also proclaimed to Eunomius, who was striving to prove the Father ingenerate as if this was something outlandish over which some of those with a desire to be devout might have doubts. For he says: Why have I set down all this talk of his? So that the fellow's nonsense, which he uses throughout his entire discourse, may be known. For having said that it is clear to everybody's common notions that God is ingenerate, he attempts to produce proofs of it to us, acting somewhat like a man who wants by words to teach people with healthy vision at bright noontide that the Sun is the most luminous star in the sky. But if someone who gives a verbal proof of things known to the senses is ludicrous, how can someone who teaches things professed in common by everybody not be guilty of equal witlessness? For these matters are far clearer to men of sound mind than those which are visible to the eyes. For if there were anybody who blasphemed against this truth and argued that the

ingenerate was begotten either by himself or by another perhaps the inanity might have an excuse. But if no one up to today either of those who are outside our theology or even of those from the Church itself who have withstood the truth, has attained to such a pitch of witlessness as to doubt the ingeneracy of the ingenerate, I fail to understand the profit derived from these words. Do we really need Aristotle's and Chrysippus' syllogisms to learn that the ingenerate has not been begotten either by himself or by another, and is not older or younger than himself? (CD vol. 35, p. 74).

As **Basil the Great** also testifies, writing, as he does, as follows in the first book against the wicked man: But that fellow, taking a path from the argument he had forcibly seized, went on from these to the main claim that ingeneracy is the substance of the God of all, so that when this is acknowledged he will have the dissimilarity in substance between the Only-begotten and the Father as an undisputed point (Ibid., pp. 208, 210).

And again: He denies that ingeneracy is viewed in God by way of thought, supposing that thereby it will be easy for him to attempt to prove that ingeneracy is the substance and thereby demonstrate indubitably that the Only-begotten is dissimilar in substance from the Father (Ibid., p. 210).

To these utterly impudent and profane blasphemies shall be proclaimed very seasonably and justly the words in which **Basil**, truth's athlete, answered Eunomius, this redoubtable writer's master: Oh, the wicked and shameless blasphemy! Oh, the hidden guile and the manifold knavery! He speaks precisely with the devil's own cunning, intending to prove the Only-begotten Son and God unlike God the Father (CD vol. 54, p. 40).

Basil the Great wrote, then, in the first book *Against Eunomius* the miscreant, as follows: But let us first remind ourselves of this, that this is the man, who, in the previous words, very arrogantly promised us that he would clearly state the naked truth to us. Where then, is it written here: 'we believe that ingeneracy (Syr. ܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܕܐ) is the substance of the God of all' or 'we believe that the Only-begotten is unlike the father in substance'? And again: But that fellow, But that fellow, taking a path from the argument he had forcibly seized, proceeded from there to the main claim that ingeneracy is the substance of the God of all, so that when this is proved he will have the dissimilarity in substance between the Only-begotten and the Father as an undisputed point (Ibid., p. 118).

2.2.2. From *Adversus Eunomium* Bk. 2 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 29, cols. 573–652; using Sesboue ed., vol. 2 [Sourc. Chrét. 305], pp. 10–142)

Nevertheless, at this point too, to convince readers, it will not, I think, be wrong to set down one text, from **Basil the Great** only, who says this, and clearly (indeed, rather expressly) explains in his second book *Against Eunomius*: But with regard to God's appearing to be composite unless ingeneracy and light are taken to be the same thing, we can say that if we took ingeneracy as part of the substance his argument (being that what is compounded of different things is composite) would have some ground. But if we assert God's substance to be light, life or goodness, if all of him, whatever he is, is life, all of him is light and all of him is goodness, and the ingeneracy follows the life, how can the simple in substance not be incomposite? For the modes indicative of his property will not damage the condition of simplicity; or, in that case, all statements about God prove God composite. And, so it looks, if we are going to save the idea of simplicity and being without parts, we shall either say nothing about God except ingeneracy and shall refuse to call him 'invisible', 'incorruptible', 'immutable', creator', 'judge', and all the names we use now for His glory; or, if we accept these names, what are we going to make of them? Are we to take them and apply them all to the substance? In that case, we shall prove him not only composite but also compounded from dissimilar parts by virtue of the diversity of meanings of each of the names. But shall we take them as outside the substance? Whatever principle they hit on over each of these, they must apply to the title 'ingenerate' (CD vol. 29, pp. 58, 60).

Basil, then, the standard of orthodox doctrine, wrote as follows in the second book *Against Eunomius*: Though what man in his right mind would go along with the argument that things whose names are different must also have different substances? Peter's, Paul's and in a word, all men's names are different, but there is one substance of all of them. For which reason, in the majority of respects we are identical with one another, but only in the properties appearing with each individual are we different from one another. So, titles are not indicative of substances, but of the properties which characterize each one. When, therefore, we hear 'Peter' we do not understand by the name his substance (I mean now by 'substance' the material substance which the name does not indicate at all) but we receive mental impressions of the properties appearing with him. For from this word we immediately understand the son of Jonas, the one from Bethsaida, Andrew's brother, the one who was summoned from fishermen to the apostolic ministry, the one who, because of the pre-eminence of his faith, received the promise that the Church should be built upon him [e.g., Mark 1:16; Matt 16:18; John 1: 44; 21:15–17; cf. Plato, *Respublica* V–VII]. None of these is the substance, understood as the hypostasis. So that the name separates for us the characteristic mark of Peter, but in no way displays the substance itself to us (Ibid., pp. 94, 96).

But in superabundant proof that God-clad **Basil** expressed his own view when he said that ingeneracy followed God the Father, we will cite him as a witness. He said as follows, in the second book *Against Eunomius* the execrable: But with regard to God's appearing to be composite unless light and ingeneracy are taken to be the same thing, we can say that, if we took ingeneracy as part of the substance, his argument (being that what is compounded of different things is composite) would have some ground. But if we assert God's substance to be light, life or goodness, if all of him, whatever He is, is life, all of him is light and all of him is goodnesss, and ingeneracy follows the life, how can the simple in substance not be incomposite?. . . For in this passage the doctor [Basil] did not proceed to confirm the truth from the declaration of Eunomius when he says that ingeneracy follows God, but on the contrary, he refutes his stupidity for arguing and saying that unless one says ingeneracy is identical with substance, God will appear composite. That is why, a little before this passage, he had said: But he [Eunomius] here transfers the antithesis between the properties to the substance and thus deduces the ground for his blasphemy, scaring us, as if we were children, with his sophisms that if the light is something else beside the ingeneracy, God will necessarily be proved composite. What do I say? That unless the light is something else beside the ingeneracy, it cannot be used to refer to the Son any more than ingeneracy can (Ibid., p. 132).

. . . Pre-eminence of his faith, received the promise that the Church should be built him. None of these is the substance. So that the name separates for us the characteristic mark of Peter, but in no way displays the substance itself to us. Again when we hear Paul, we understand a collection of other properties: the man from Tarsus, the Hebrew, legally a Pharisee, Gamaliel's pupil, the zealous persecutor of God's churches brought by an awe-inspiring vision to recognize the truth, the Apostle of the Gentiles (see 2 Cor 11:22; 12:11–12; Acts 9:5–7, 11; 22:3; 23:6). All these are defined by the single word "Paul" (Acts 13:9). And a little later: It is obvious, then, from what has been said that in the case of the Father and Son also (Acts 9:20), the names do not display the substance but are indicative of the properties (Ibid., p. 186).

This shall the Church's great doctor, **Basil**, teach us, speaking as he does, as follows in the second of the books *Against Eunomius* the impious: There is a certain antithesis between unbegotten and begotten through the function of the terms (though not in the nature of the realities), a fact which they exploit. But no opposition between the lights can be found, either in the use of the term or in the idea (Ibid., p. 160).

Listen, then, to what **Basil** the Great teaches us on this point. In his second book *Against Eunomius* (as we have repeatedly quoted it) he said: Though what man in his right mind would go along with the argument that things whose names are different must also have different substances? Peter's, Paul's and in a word, all men's names are different, but there is one substance of all of them. For which reason, in the majority of respects we are identical with one another. But only in the properties appearing with each individual are we different from one another. So, titles are not indicative of substances, but of the properties which characterize each one. Again: It is obvious, then, from what has been said, that in the case of Father and Son also, the names do not display the substance, but are indicative of the properties. So, there is no room for the argument to introduce a contrariety of substances on the ground of a difference in names. Indeed, that way Eunomius would demolish himself first. For if 'creature' and 'offspring' differ, there will be different substances belonging to the Only-begotten Son of God following the difference of the names (Ibid., pp. 262, 264).

He [**Basil**] wrote, too, in the second book: For we will not here allow him to reshape and remodel the expression 'he begot' (said of the Father) so as to call the Son of God an 'offspring'. It is wrong, indeed, for one trained in true religion to make a facile leap to something which a connexion of words requires; no, he should cherish the names laid down in the Bible and abide by them, so that with their help he may fulfil a doxology fit for God. For if those who originally translated the Hebrew language into Greek did not venture on an interpretation of certain names but carried over the same Hebrew expression (as for example, 'Sabaoth', 'Adonai', 'El' and whatever is of that kind) displaying this respect not only towards the divine names but also many others, how much reverence ought we not to have regarding the Lord's names? Yet when would they have tolerated fabricating any of these names, they who lacked the confidence to translate certain words lest they destroy accuracy of ideas through failure to correspond with the meanings? (Ibid., pp. 322, 324).

He [**Basil**] wrote in the same way in the second book, as follows: And, so it looks, if we are going to save the idea of simplicity and being without parts, we shall either say nothing about God except ingeneracy and shall refuse to call Him 'invisible', incorruptible', 'immutable', 'creator', 'judge', and all the names we use now for His glory; or, if we accept these names, what are we going to make of them? Are we to take them and apply them all to the substance? In that case, we shall prove Him not only composite but also compounded from dissimilar parts by virtue of the diversity of meanings of each of the names (CD vol. 32, pp. 228, 230).

He [**Basil**] also proves this in the second book *Against* the same evil *Eunomius*, by saying: But he here transfers the antithesis between the properties to the substance and thus deduces the ground for his blasphemy, scaring us, as if we were children, with his sophisms that if the light is something else beside the ingeneracy, God will necessarily be proved composite. What do I say? That unless the light is something else beside the ingeneracy, it cannot be used to refer to the Son any more than ingeneracy can. But one will, from the above, learn also the difference between the meanings. It is said that "God dwells in light" (1 Tim 6:16) and that "He decks himself in light" (Psalm 104:2), but nowhere does the Scripture say that he dwells in his own ingeneracy or that he has it for his covering. And again: but with regard to God's appearing to be composite unless ingeneracy and light are taken to be the same thing, we can say that if we took ingeneracy as part of the substance his argument (being that what is compounded of different things is composite) would have some ground. But if we assert God's substance to be light, life or goodness, if all of him, whatever he is, is life, all of him is light and all of Him is goodness, and the ingeneracy follows the life, how can the simple in substance not be incomposite (Ibid., p. 458)?

These texts, then, having been examined, let us pass on to other divinely inspired words of wise Basil, whereby he demolishes, as if by these other words, the novel and deceitful insanity and despoils it utterly of its knavish trickery. He [**Basil**] wrote, then, as follows, in the second book *Against Eunomius* the impure: But afterwards, in adherence to his blasphemies, he will say: 'The Father also was not Father to begin with, but became so later'; and so, if it was good and fitting to God's goodness to be Father, why was what benefits Him not present to Him in the beginning? For they must necessarily impute the defect itself either to ignorance of something better or to impotence: ignorance, if He discovered the good later; and impotence, if aware of and understanding it, He fell short of excellence. But if (which it is impermissible to say) it was not a noble thing for Him to be Father, why did He change to choose the inferior? However, let the blasphemy recoil upon those who were its cause! The God of all, indeed, is Father eternally, never beginning to be Father. For he was not prevented from the accomplishment of His will by lack of power nor did He delay for the revolutions of eras so that, as with men and the rest of living beings, he should effect his aim after the completion of the age when capacity for begetting reaches him (for it belongs to madmen to think and utter these things), but He has His fatherhood (so to name it) co-extensive with His eternity. Therefore, the Son, being before time, and ever existing, never began to exist, but from when there has existed the Father there has also existed the Son, and with the idea of the Father there immediately enters that of the Son (Ibid., p. 498).

And how, again, with your fabricating these things arbitrarily and witlessly, will there not justly fit you what **Basil**, athlete in truth, exclaimed to Eunomius, your master also, when he wrote as follows: Those doctrines of yours are truly worthy of the judges you have fabricated. For you lay down the law with as much facility as if you were in a bazaar of dreams or an assembly of drunkards with nobody hearing or understanding what is said, because you think your *ipse dixit* suffices in place of all proof (CD vol. 35, p. 60)?

The God-clad **Basil**, then, wrote in the second of the books *Against Eunomius* as follows: So, when we hear of a man as father we then also apprehend the idea of passion; but when that God is Father, we are elevated in thought to the impossible cause. But one who is used to this appellation in relation to passional nature will deny what transcends his thoughts' comprehension as an impossibility. For on observing the passion of things corruptible one ought not to disbelieve the impassibility of God (Ibid., p. 500).

Look at what **Basil the Great** says in his second book *Against Eunomius*: But he here transfers the antithesis between the properties to the substance and thus deduces the ground for his blasphemy, scaring us, as if we were children, with his sophisms that if the light is something else beside the ingeneracy, God will necessarily be proved composite. What do I say? That unless the light is something else beside the ingeneracy, it cannot be used to refer to the Son any more than ingeneracy can (CD vol. 54, p. 20).

And later: And so it looks, if we are going to save the idea of simplicity and being without parts, we shall either say nothing about God except ingeneracy and shall refuse to call him 'invisible', incorruptible', 'immutable', 'creator', 'judge', and all the names we use now for His glory; or, if we accept these names, what are we going to make of them? Are we to take them and apply them all to the substance? In that case, we shall prove him not only composite but also compounded from dissimilar parts by virtue of the diversity of meanings of each of the names (Ibid., pp. 20, 22).

How, indeed, can you forget what the doctor [**Basil**] also taught on this point in the second book *Against Eunomius*, when he wrote: So that when we hear 'unbegotten light' we understand the Father, but on hearing 'begotten light' we apprehend the thought of the Son, *qua* 'light' and 'light' no contrariety obtaining between them but *qua* 'unbegotten'

and 'begotten' an antithesis being seen in them. For it is the nature of properties to disclose otherness in an identity of substance (Ibid., pp. 22, 24)?

. . . For, according to **Basil**, in the case of 'Father' and 'Son' the names do not indicate substances but are indicative of properties (Ibid., p. 38).

2.2.3. From *Adversus Eunomium* Bk. 4 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 29, cols. 672–709)

Likewise, he [Basil] also said in the *Rejoinder*: if powerlessness is the opposite of power and unwisdom of wisdom, and all mutual contraries are mutually opposed, ingeneracy is the opposite of generacy. Therefore, Father and Son are mutually contrary in substance if ingeneracy be substance and not a mode of existing (CD vol. 29, p. 148).

But in the book entitled *Refutation* he [**Basil**] also speaks in the following fashion: 'Ingenerate', if it is a name, is not a substance. For names are indicative of substances and are not themselves substance. But if 'ingenerate' is substance itself, let them state the substance's name. For we do not get understanding from the substances but from the names and the operations, especially of things incorporeal. If 'ingenerate' is the name of the substance of God, either God, knowing his own substance, did not know the name of the substance or, knowing the name, he misled the hearers. For the Lord says: "'Omnipotent' is my name" and, when asked by Moses what his name was, he said: "I am 'He who is'" [Exod 3:14] and again: "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—this is my name for ever" [15]; and David said: "The Lord' is thy name" [cf. Psalm 8:1]. But the name 'ingenerate' he did not use of himself nor did any of the saints either. Now, if he did not mislead and was not ignorant (for it is blasphemy to speak this way) 'ingenerate' is not his name (CD vol. 29, p. 324).

Basil, then wise in things divine, wrote in the *Refutation*, instructing us as follows: 'Ingenerate', if it is a name, is not a substance, for names are indicative of substances and are not themselves substance (Ibid. vol. 32, p. 196).

2.2.4. From *Adversus Eunomium* Bk. 5 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 29, cols. 709–73)

Basil, the great luminary of the Church, then, discoursing of the Holy Ghost in the *Refutation*, wrote as follows: again we understand 'ingenerate' as unsubstantial: the utterly non-existent. Anyone who said 'unsubstantial' has eradicated hypostasis and substantial being. 'Unsubstantial', indeed, and 'non-subsistent' mean a non-existent nature, which does not exist at all. But if one says 'substantial' and 'subsistent', one has meant an existing hypostasis. And again, a little prior to this he wrote: Yet, indeed, the prophet himself will explain this by saying: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made firm and all their power by the breath of his mouth" [Psalm 33:6]. But just as there is not in God uttered word, but living, subsistent and active Word, so there is not in God outpoured Spirit; there is not dissoluble air but hallowing power, substantial, actual, subsistent (CD vol. 35, p. 478).

2.2.5. From *De Fide* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 31, cols. 464–72; cf. Clav. Patr. Graec. 2859)

Likewise, also, in the sermon *On the Faith* he [**Basil**] writes: "Son"—not an acquisition; "Maker"—not a work; "Creator"—not a creature. He is all those same things that the Father is. "Son", I said, and "Father". Save me only those properties (CD vol. 32, pp. 432, 440).

In the sermon *On Faith*, then, where he took even more care (if I may so put it) to raise the listeners' minds to true divine knowledge, wise divine **Basil** wrote as follows: Passing over everything in thought, gazing above the sky and transcending it, with the mind alone, survey the beauties there: the heavenly hosts, the choruses of angles, the principalities of the archangels, the glories of the dominions, the hierarchies of thrones, the powers, the rulerships, the authorities. Passing above all these things, elevated in your thoughts above all creation and uplifting your mind beyond them, think of the divine nature, stable,

unchangeable, immutable, impassible, simple, incomposite, indivisible, light inaccessible, power unspeakable, grandeur unlimited, glory bright-shining, goodness desirable, beauty incomprehensible, deeply affecting the soul smitten by it but incapable of being made known by speech as it deserves: there, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the uncreated nature, the dignity of lordship, the natural goodness (CD vol. 54, pp. 260, 262)!

For **Basil** the Great, herald of truth, said: There, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the uncreated nature (Ibid., p. 266).

2.2.6. From *De Spiritu Sancto* 17 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 68–217; using Prughe ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 17 bis]; cf. Clav. Patr. Graec. 2839)

Saint **Basil**, then, shall come forward and from his spiritual treasures philosophize for us on the point in hand, with plainly expressed correct theology. He writes to Amphilochius *On the Holy Ghost* as follows: The Lord, in teaching the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, did not teach a number with them, for he did not say 'into first, second and third' or 'into one, two and three' but he bestowed the knowledge of the faith which brings to salvation, through holy names. Therefore, what saves us is faith; but number has been invented as a mark to indicate the quantity of subjects (CD vol. 29, pp. 302, 304).

2.2.7. From *Epistula* 38 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 325–340; using Patrucco ed., [Soc. Edit. Internaz.] pp. 178–94)

However, listen to **Basil the Great**, one of many, who on the issues presently under discussion, discourses, as follows, in the letter written to his brother Gregory *On Substance and Hypostasis*: This is the reason why we say that, in the commonness of substance, the marks appearing in the Trinity and delivered by the faith, by means of which the property of the *prosōpon* is disclosed, are disparate and incommunicable, each *prosōpon* being apprehended separately by his own marks. So that through the marks mentioned the separation of the hypostases will be discovered but in the infinity, incomprehensibility, uncreated existence, freedom from local circumscription and in all similar things there will be no difference in the life-giving nature, i.e., between the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, but instead there is contemplated in them a close and unbreakable participation. By the same ideas, from which one may see the grandeur of the Holy Trinity we believe in, gazing fixedly at the glory one reaches the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Ibid., p. 102).

Basil, wise in divinity, wrote similar things in the *Letter to his Brother Gregory* [of Nyssa] as follows: If you carry over to divine doctrines, then, the concept of the difference between substance and hypostasis you have recognized among us men, you will not be at fault. Whatever your mind suggests to you as to the being of the Father (for it is impossible to have any absolute idea for the soul to rest on, because it is our conviction that he transcends every idea) apply this understanding also to the Son and likewise to the Holy Ghost. For the concept of uncreatedness and incomprehensibility is one and the same in the case of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. For one is not more, another less incomprehensible and uncreated. Now because we ought to have an unconfused separation in the Trinity by particular marks, we shall not use for the particularizing separation what is viewed as common: I mean, e.g., uncreatedness, transcendence of comprehension or anything like that. We shall seek only the means whereby the concept of each is clearly and unconfusedly separated from what is perceived to accompany him (Ibid., pp. 108, 110).

In the letter, too, written to his brother Gregory *On Substance and Hypostasis*, he [**Basil**] says: One who says 'man' has effected a vague understanding in the ear by the indefiniteness of the meaning, so that the nature is signified by the term whereas the reality itself, which subsists and is signified properly, is not indicated by the term. But one who says 'Paul' has shown that the nature subsists in the reality which is signified by the name. This then is the hypostasis: not the indefinite thought of the substance, which, as a result of

the generality of the object indicated, obtains no stability; but that thought which presents and delimits the common and unbounded in some reality by means of the properties appearing on it; such a thing as Scripture is wont to do, too, in the narrative about Job and in many other places. For because it was about to relate Job's circumstances, it first recalled what was common and said "man" and immediately defined him in his particularity by the addition "a certain" [LXX Job 1:1; cf. 1:13–2:13]. Yet with regard to the description of the substance, since that would bring no benefit to the proposed aim of the discourse, it was silent, whereas it characterizes '*a certain*' by its own features of his mode of life and all the externals which, being taken together, would distinguish him and set him apart from the general meaning (CD vol. 32, p. 198).

'How', someone may perhaps ask, 'will we not be rejecting **Basil**'s statement which says that hypostasis is the collection of the properties?' (Ibid., p. 256).

Take a look, indeed, at **Basil** the Great, who spoke as follows at the beginning of the letter written to his brother Gregory *On substance and Hypostasis*: Seeing that many people, by failing to distinguish, in the mystic doctrines, between the community of the substance and the concept of the hypostasis, lapse into the same ideas and suppose that it makes no difference whether we say 'substance' or 'hypostasis', and consequently certain people, who accept things like this without examination, have seen fit to speak of 'one hypostasis' just as they do of 'one substance'; and conversely, those who accept three hypostases suppose they ought, as a result of this profession, to teach a division of the substances corresponding with the same number; for this reason, so that you too do not suffer the same fate, I have composed for you a short essay on the subject as a reminder (Ibid., p. 288).

Wise **Basil**, the great pastor of the Church, proves this clearly by saying as follows, in the letter to his brother *On Substance and Hypostasis*: But in the same way also, one who has accepted the Son and the Spirit along with him. For it is impossible to invent cleavage or division in any way such that the Son should be conceived of apart from the Father or that the Spirit should be separated from the Son. No, a certain ineffable and unknowable communion and separation is apprehended in them, with the difference in the hypostases not sundering the connection of nature and the community of substance not merging the properness of the marks (Ibid., pp. 344, 346).

Truth's champion [**Basil**], then, speaks as follows, in the same letter just now mentioned: Seeing, then, that the Holy Ghost, from whom all bestowal of graces upon creation springs, depends upon the Son with whom He is apprehended indivisibly, whereas He has his being from the cause of the Father whence also he proceeds, He has this sign as indicative of the property of the hypostasis: the fact that He is known after the Son and along with Him and subsists from the Father. But the Son, who makes known the Spirit (who proceeds from the Father) through and with himself, alone shining forth in Only-begotten fashion from the ingenerate light, has no participation, by the properness of the marks, with the Father or with the Holy Ghost. No, He is known as unique by the stated indications. But the all-transcending God alone has, as a distinctive mark of his hypostasis, the fact that he is Father and alone subsists from no cause; and by means of this mark again he too is known properly. This is the reason why we say that, in the commonness of substance, the marks appearing in the Trinity and delivered by the faith, by means of which the property of the *prosōpon* is disclosed, are disparate and incommunicable, each *prosōpon* being apprehended separately by his own marks (Ibid., pp. 346, 348).

And again: Just as, then, in the example we recognize also clearly the difference between the colours and it is impossible to apprehend by sense the remoteness of one from another, so you are to consider that it is possible to think in the case of divine doctrines that the properties of the hypostases, like some colours appearing in the rainbow shine upon each of those believed in the Holy Trinity; whereas no difference in one from another

is to be discovered in the natural property, but in the community of the substance the indicative properties give light upon each. For there too, in the example, what beams forth the many-coloured light was one substance, reflected by the sunray, but the colour of what appears is multiform (Ibid., p. 348).

For he [**Basil**] wrote in the letter just mentioned, as follows: so one who has observed the beauty of the image is endowed with a mental picture of the exemplar. And one who has taken up into his understanding the form, as it were, of the Son, has imprinted it with the impress of the Father's hypostasis, seeing him by it, not because he sees the Father's ingeneracy in the impress derived from him (otherwise he would be totally identical and not different) but because he sees the ingenerate beauty in the generate. And again: So the Son's hypostasis becomes as it were the form and the *prosōpon* of the indication of the Father, and the Father's hypostasis is recognized in the Son's form, the property viewed in them abiding for the clear distinction of the hypostases (Ibid., pp. 354, 498, 500).

Basil the Great, wise in things divine wrote, then, in the *Letter to his Brother*, as follows: So we say this: that what is said properly is signified by the word 'hypostasis'. For one who says 'man' has effected a vague understanding in the ear by the indefiniteness of the meaning, so that the nature is signified by the term whereas the reality itself, which subsists and is signified properly, is not indicated by the term. But one who says 'Paul' has shown that the nature subsists in the reality which is signified by the name. This then is the hypostasis: not the indefinite thought of the substance, which, as a result of the generality of the object indicated, obtains no stability; but that thought which presents and delimits the common and unbounded in some reality, by means of the properties appearing on it (CD vol. 35, pp. 374, 376).

This we can clarify also from the words the doctor **Basil**, his brother, wrote to him *On Substance and Hypostasis*, as follows: For just as a body always exists in a shape, but the concept of a body is one thing but that of shape is another, and no one in giving the definition of either of them would arrive at that of the other; nevertheless, even though in concept one separates shape from body, nature does not admit of the separation, but either is thought of along with the other connectedly; so does the Apostle think [cf. 1 Cor 15:44], and we must teach as the word of faith the difference, unconfused and divided, of the hypostases (CD vol. 54, p. 328).

Listen to **Basil** the Great, captain of true religion, theologizing in the letter to his brother *On the Difference between Substance and Hypostasis* and saying as follows: But do not be surprised if we say the same thing is both united and divided, and if we discover some new and paradoxical, as it were enigmatical, united separation and separated conjunction. For if anyone listens to the words without captiousness or cavil, he can discover something similar among objects of sense, too. And I beg you, regard my words as an illustration and shadow of truth, not as the very truth of the realities. For it is impossible to harmonize completely what is viewed in the illustrations with what gave rise to the need for illustrations. How, then, do we say, we can understand, by means of the sensibly perceived, what is at once separated and united (Ibid., p. 398)?

For **Basil**, standard and teacher of all respect and honour towards God, says this too in the same previously mentioned letter: For above in the example, too, what illumines the many-coloured brilliance was one substance, reflected by the sunray, but the colour of what appears is multiform, reason teaching us, even through creation, that we do not experience anything new in doctrinal discussions whenever we fall into an intellectual difficulty and are seized with giddiness at the prospect of assenting to some statement. For just as with things viewed by the eyes the experience has shown itself too great for words, so also in the most sublime doctrines, the faith, which teaches separation in hypostasis and union id substance, is too great for the comprehension of reasoned thought (Ibid., pp. 410, 412).

2.2.8. From *Epistula* 52 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 392–96; using Courtonne ed., vol. 1 [Édit. Budé], pp. 133–37)

For as to the man who does not follow the intention of the holy Fathers at all points and does not reckon their word more powerful and more exact than his own notions, Saint **Basil** ruled that he deserves censure for his presumption, in the *Letter* he sent *to the Canoness on the Trinity*, where he wrote as follows: 'For not following the Fathers and not considering their word more accurate than our own understanding deserves censure, because it is full of presumption'. Therefore, we too will be right to import no addition and make no substraction in the Fathers' teaching (Ibid., p. 386).

2.2.9. From *Epistula* 210 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 768–77; using Courtonne ed., vol. 2 [Édit. Budé], pp. 189–97)

And so not we, but the divinely inspired word of Basil the Great, shall opportunely shout aloud to the deaf, "listen!", and to the blind, "attend and see!" [Isa 18:18] (to remind him rightly and frequently of his words). We must rest our mind upon some substrate, construct mental images of the marks with it and thus come to understand the full meaning of the hypostases. Basil wrote in the manner in his *Letter to the Town Councillors of Neocaesarea*: For we must recognize that just as the one who does not profess the commonness of the substance lapses into polytheism, so also the one who will not admit the properties of the hypostases slips away into Judaism. For our mind must rest upon some substrate and have the impress of its clear marks and thus have imagination of the one loved. For if we had not conceived of the fatherhood or considered the one for whom this property was set aside, how could we have taken in the idea of God the Father? For it is not enough to itemize the difference of the *prosōpa*; one must acknowledge each *prosōpon* as existing in true hypostasis, as well. Since even Sabellius did not abstain from fabricating *prosōpa* without hypostases by pronouncing the same God one in substrate, transformed as each need arose and speaking at different times as Father, Son and Holy Ghost (CD vol. 29, p. 206).

Saint **Basil**, then, shall come forward and from his spiritual treasures philosophize for us on the point in hand, with plainly expressed correct theology. He writes to Amphilochius *On the Holy Ghost* as follows: The Lord, in teaching the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, did not teach a number with them, for he did not say 'into first, second and third' or 'into one, two and three' but he bestowed the knowledge of the faith which brings to salvation, through holy names. Therefore, what saves us is faith; but number has been invented as a mark to indicate the quantity of subjects (Ibid., pp. 302, 304).

And he [**Basil**] wrote as follows in the *Letter to the People of Neocaesarea* (its beginning goes: On the other hand, I did not need to open my mind to you): But if it is said: "Go and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" [Matt 28:19], we should not think on that account that a single name has been entrusted to us. For just as one who says *Paul and Silvanus and Timothy* has mentioned three names but linked them together with the word 'and', so one who states the name of Father and Son and Holy Ghost, states three and connects them by the conjunction, teaching that under each name lies a proper meaning because the names are indicative of the realities. But nobody with even a slight share of intelligence doubts that the realities have full, proper being. Father and Son and Holy Ghost have the same nature and one Godhead but different names which display to us definite and complete ideas. For it is impossible for a mind which has not been made aware of the properties of each, to perform an unconfused doxology to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Ibid., p. 304).

Again in his *Letter to the Town Councillors of Neocaesarea*, he discourses more clearly on the point, as follows: For we must recognize that just as the one who does not profess the

commonness of the substance lapses into polytheism, so also the one who will not admit the properties of the hypostases slips away into Judaism. For our mind must rest upon some substrate and have the impress of its clear marks and thus have imagination of the one loved. For if we had not conceived of the fatherhood or considered the one for whom this property was set aside, how could we have taken in the idea of God the Father (CD vol. 35, p. 376)?

2.2.10. From *Epistula* 214 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 785–89; using Courtonne ed., vol. 2 [Édit. Budé], pp. 202–6)

Because of a fraternal dispute between the Easterns and the Romans, related to this, wise **Basil**, hating the wicked heresies of the accursed Sabellius and Arius equally and to the same degree, defeated them, He wrote in the *Letter to Count Terentius* (the beginning of which is: When we heard that your Reverence had again been forced) and said as follows: But along with this news a report has reached us that the brothers too, of Paulinus' side, are speaking to your Rectitude about their union with us, us, I mean, who are of the party of the man of God, Bishop Meletius. These, I hear, are presently circulating a letter from the Westerns which entrusts the bishopric of the Church of Antioch to them but rejects the admirable Meletius bishop of God's true Church (CD vol. 32, pp. 112, 114).

And a little later: For I for my part, if a certain man receives a letter of men and thinks grand things of it, shall not consent to stand in awe of him on that account; not even if he comes from heaven itself, but does not agree with the sound word of faith, shall I be able to count him a participant in holy things. For consider, my admirable friend, that the falsifiers of the truth, those who import the Arian schism into the sound faith of the fathers, proffer no other excuse for not accepting the religious doctrine of the fathers, except the idea of consubstantiality which they interpret wickedly and as a slander against the whole faith, saying that the Son is declared by us to be consubstantial in hypostasis. If we yield them that a pretext, as a result of our agreeing with those who out of simplicity rather than wickedness say this or similar things, nothing will prevent our giving an indisputable handle against ourselves and strengthening the heresy of those whose sole exercise in addresses to the Church is not to equip their own arguments but to slander ours. But what could be a worse slander, more capable of unsettling the majority of folk, than if some of us should be seen to speak of one hypostasis of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, some who despite frequent clear confession of the difference between the *prosōpa* nevertheless confess what was accepted by Sabellius formerly who says this very thing: "God is one in hypostasis but is presented by Scripture in the guise of *prosōpa* in various fashions to suit the particularity of the subject-matter, sometimes taking upon itself the Father's words whenever there is occasion for this *prosōpon*, sometimes those which are fitting for the Son whenever He condescends to a concern for us or to other actions of the scheme of salvation, and sometimes he wears the *prosōpon* of the Spirit whenever the occasion demands words of such a kind from such a *prosōpon*"? If, therefore, some of our people are seen to say that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one in the substrate but to profess three perfect *prosōpa*, how can they not be supposed to be giving a clear and irrefutable proof of the truth of what is said about us (Ibid., pp. 114, 116)?

Likewise Basil too, in the *Letter to Terentius*, said that the concept of the substance is Godhead, as follows: 'There too the concept of the substance is common, like goodness, Godhead or whatever else is conceived of (CD vol. 54, p. 52).

And again: For this is how Saint **Basil**, too, in the *Letter to Terentius*, explains the concept of the divine substance from our humanity, when he writes as follows: "If we too must say briefly what appears to us to be the case, we will say this: that substance possesses with regard to hypostasis the same conceptual relationship as the common to

the particular. For each of us participates in being and is such and such a person, by both the common concept of substance and by the properties belonging with him. In this way, furthermore, the concept of the substance is common (for example, the goodness, Godhead, or whatever else is conceived of), but the hypostasis is seen in the property of fatherhood, sonship or hallowing power" (Ibid., p. 256).

2.2.11. From *Epistula* 236 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 876–85; using Courtonne ed., vol. 3 [Édit. Budé]. pp. 47–255)

He **[Basil]** wrote, indeed, in the same manner on substance and hypostasis *To Amphilochius* as follows: Substance, indeed, and hypostasis possess the same distinction as holds between common and individual, between, say, animal and such a man. Which is why we profess one substance in the Godhead, so as not to differentiate the concept of the being, but particular hypostases in order that the conception of Father, Son and Holy Ghost may exist in us unconfused and clear (CD vol. 32, pp. 288, 290).

2.2.12. From *In illud: 'In Principio erat Verbum'* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 31, cols. 472–81; cf. Clav. Patr. Graec. 2860)

God-clad **Basil**, also makes this clear by writing as follows in the discourse he composed on *In the Beginning was the Word*: So he said 'Word' in order to disclose to you the Father's impassible generation, to give you a full theology of the Son's being, and to show you thereby the non-temporal connexion of Father and Son (Ibid., p. 412).

2.2.13. From Ps. Basilus Caesariensis. *Contra Sabellianos* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 31, cols. 600–17; cf. Clav. Patr. Graec. 3674)

He [**Basil**] strongly reinforced and clarified these words when he wrote in the sermon *Against Sabellians and Arians* as follows: And though you do not attack me, all those of you who have either imperfectly followed what was said or who stand around us to vilify us, unwilling, as you are, to receive anything worthwhile from us but watching to catch hold of something we speak, will say, 'he preaches two gods, he announces polytheism. Not two gods, because not two Fathers! One who introduces two Beginnings preaches two gods. Such is Marcion and anybody like him in impiety!' And again, anyone who calls the begotten different in substance from the begetter, he too says 'two Gods', introducing, as he does, polytheism because of the dissimilarity of substance. For if there is one ingenerate Godhead and one generate, it will be you who are preaching polytheism, calling ingeneracy opposite to generacy and, clearly, making the substances opposite, if the Father's substance is ingeneracy but the Son's substance generacy; in which case you will be speaking not only of two Gods, but of two mutually antagonistic Gods. And, what is worse, you are assigning the conflict not to the will but to a division of nature which can never reach a peaceful concord (CD vol. 54, pp. 120, 122, 136).

2.2.14. From Pseud. Basilus Caesariensis. *De Eis dicunt Filium esse dissimilem Patri* (using "Une Homile contre les Anoméens attributé à Saint Basel de Césarée", [ed. Van Roey], *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 28 [1997]: 188–91; cf. Clav. Patr. Graec. 2988)

For the same warrior for truth said also in the address *To Those who say the Son is unlike the Father*: 'But if', they say, 'he begat, he gave some of his ingeneracy' (Syr. ܟܬܝܠ ܟ) And how did he give any of his unbegottenness to the one whom he brought into being through his begetting of him, for ingeneracy is the negation of God's being begotten? But you are reckoning a negation as the substance. The Father is not begotten. This is the meaning of ingeneracy. So how can not having been begotten be a substance? How, indeed, could the one who was begotten receive any of it (CD vol. 32, p. 504; vol. 35, p. 210; vol. 54, p. 122)?

2.3. Quotations from the Works of St. Gregory of Nazianzus (pp. 330–390)[5]

2.3.1. From *Epistola* 101 (see Patr. Graec, vol. 37, cols. 176–93; using Gallay and Jourdan ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 208], pp. 36–68)

Let us, then, please, quote the words themselves, by the master of mysteries, against Apollinarius, and from them too, justly rebut the insanity directed against the Godhead. The doctor [**Gregory**] wrote, then, in the *Second Letter to Cledonius*, as follows: But because, proud of their discussion of the Trinity, they falsely accuse us of being unsound on the faith, and entice the majority, it must be known that Apollinarius, though giving the name of Godhead to the Holy Ghost did not keep the meaning of Godhead. For making the Trinity consist of a great Spirit, a greater Son and a greatest Father like radiance, beam, and Sun (as is clearly written in his treatise) is a ladder of Godhead not leading up to Heaven but taking one down from Heaven. Whereas we recognize Father, Son and Holy Ghost as God, and these not as mere appellations which determine an inequality of honours and powers, but as there is one and the same name, so also there is one and the same nature of Godhead, substance and power (CD vol. 54, pp. 196, 224).

2.3.2. From Oration I (*In sanctum Pascha et tarditatem*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 396–401; using Bernardi ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 247], pp. 72–82)

But until he does so, he should take the trouble to learn what the man, who owes his title and name to his excellent and exact theology, **Gregory** (pastor and teacher of **Nazianzus**, and indeed of the whole world taught us about the subject. He wrote, then, in the *First Oration on Easter* (its beginning is: The day of Resurrection) teaching that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one Godhead and power, as follows: But do you offer as fruit to god and to us your being tended well (and a few lines later) not listening to the strange voice which steals in, secretly, and will drive you away from truth over hills, wastes, pits and places the Lord does not visit, and remove you from wholesome faith in Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the one Godhead and power, have ever heard and ever will *hear* (Ibid., p. 354; cf. John 10:27).

2.3.3. From Oration 2 (*Apologetica*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 408–513; using Bernardi ed. [Sources Chrét. 247], pp. 84–240)

But I have been so far from saying or thinking the three hypostases—those of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I mean—or their characteristic properties mere appellations or [empty] names or relationships bereft [of the realities] (CD ATD, p. 65 and cf. Ibid., p. 69).

And we must also recognize that fatherhood, i.e., ingeneracy, or generacy or procession are not empty names and 'relationships bereft realities (as **Gregory the Theologian** says somewhere) (CD vol. 35, p. 390).

2.3.4. From Oration 4 (*Contra Iulianum I*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 532–664; using Bernardi ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 309], pp. 86–292)

Now listen again to what **Gregory the Theologian** said on this point in the first *Invective Against Julian*: "To us", he says, "belong concepts and speaking Greek, to us who worship the gods; but to you belong irrationality and rusticity, and your wisdom is nothing more than 'believe!'". I do not think that the Pythagorean philosophers amongst you will ridicule it: their first and greatest point of doctrine, more fitting for words in gold or lead, is "*ipse dixit*". For after the first philosophy of silence, much esteemed by the initiates in Pythagoreanism, in order that they might become habituated through silence to modest quantities of speech, it was the rule, so it is said, that, when asked about, or deciding any doctrine whatever and being required to give a reason, they should give no other answer but 'This was what Pythagoras approved', and that the reason for whatever doctrine he approved should be unquestioned and unexamined. "Ipse dixit" [Cicero, *De natura deorum*

1.10] comes to the same thing as our 'believe', in other words and syllables, even if you will not cease mocking and sneering at it: it means that we may not discredit the utterances of divinely inspired men; instead, their trustworthiness should be the proof of a statement, stronger than all the force of dialectics and counter-argument (CD vol. 54, pp. 386, 388).

2.3.5. From Oration 6 (*De Pace I*) Esp. 22 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 721–52; using Calvet-Sebasti ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 405], pp. 120–78)

And in the *First Oration on the Peace* he [**Gregory**] wrote as follows: Rejoice and exult, best of fathers and most affectionate towards his children, clothed and arrayed with all of them as you are, like a bride by her adornment. And a little later: Safeguarding the noble charge we have received from the fathers, you worship the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and you recognize the Father in the Son and the Son in the Holy Ghost, in whom we were baptized, in whom we have believed, whom we have confessed. Before uniting them we separate them, and before we separate them we unite them: not the three as one *unus* (for they are not unhypostatic names or applied to a single hypostasis, so that our wealth will reside in names and not in realities) but the three one *unum*. For they are one *unum* not by hypostasis but by Godhead; the Unity is worshipped in the Trinity and the Trinity gathered into the Unity, all of it to be worshipped, all of it royal, co-regent, equal in glory, supra-mundane, supra-temporal, uncreated, invisible, impalpable, unbounded, alone knowing itself so far as its internal ordering goes but venerated and worshipped alike by us, and it alone appearing in the Holy of Holies (CD vol. 29, p. 306).

Again, too, in the *First Oration on Peacemakers*, when he discourses on the peace of the holy angels, he [**Gregory**] proclaimed that the Holy Trinity is, and is believed to be, one God, as follows: But the rest abide in their own dignity, the beginning of which is peaceableness and lack of dissension, having obtained their being one from the holy and praiseworthy Trinity, from whom also comes illumination, because it both is, and is believed to be, one God (CD vol. 54, p. 354).

2.3.6. From Oration 11 (*Ad Gregorium Nyssenum*) 4 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 832–41; using Calvet-Sebasti ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 405], pp. 328–46)

Besides this, it is pertinent for us to look also at the opinion expressed by **Gregory the Theologian** on the subject. He wrote in the oration *On Gregory of Nyssa*, speaking as follows about the holy martyrs: Let us pay this tribute to their exploits: that we too become crowned and inheritors of the same glory; both the glory they have from us and that which is reserved for them in heaven, glory whose memorials and certain small marks are the things seen (CD vol. 32, p. 204).

2.3.7. From Oration 14 (*De Pauperum Amore*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 858–909)

Besides this, he [**Gregory**] also spoke as follows in the oration *On the Love of Poverty*, writing: But you are witnesses also of the suffering. The harsh and pitiable spectacle is set before your eyes, incredible save to those who know, men dead and yet alive, mutilated in most of the limbs of the body, almost unrecognizable for who they formerly were or where they come from. No, rather they are the wretched remnants of sometime men; who tell their fathers, mothers, brothers and places as indications of who they are: 'I am so and so's son, so and so is my mother, such and such is my name, and you were once my friend and acquaintance'. And why do they do this? Because they cannot be recognized by their former mark (Ibid., p. 206).

2.3.8. From Oration 20 (*De Dogmate et constitutione Episcoporum*) 5–6, 11 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 1065–80; using Mossay and Lafontaine eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 270], pp. 56–84)

Gregory the Theologian spoke as follows in his *First Oration on the Doctrine of God*: We worship, then, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, separating the properties but uniting the Godhead, and neither merge the three into one (lest we fall sick with Sabellius's ailment) nor divide into three of different stock and foreign (lest we rave with Arianism). For why should we force, as it were, a plant very bent in one direction over to the other side and correct distortion with distortion, instead of straightening it out half-way and taking our stand within the bounds of true religion (Ibid., p. 76)?

'Why', someone might say to him, 'because on hearing God-clad Basil say: We must acknowledge each *prosōpon* as existing in true hypostasis, we understand the hypostasis as the same as *prosōpon*, is it necessary also, when the **Theologian** said: Because we must preserve one God and profess three hypostases or *prosōpa* and each of them along with its property, to think the *prosōpa* the same as the characteristic properties of the *prosōpa*?' (Ibid., pp. 400, 402).

But for elucidation and confirmation of what is said it will be useful to listen in full to the **Theologian's** words, which are as follows: But if you do not investigate, whether we should speak of the Son's generation (Syr. ܝܠܕܘܬܐ) or hypostasis or whatever else which one may find fuller in sense than these (for what is to be thought and said overcomes my tongue), do not investigate the procession of the Spirit either. lest the same It will be enough for me that I hear 'the Son' and 'from the Father' and that whatever the Father is yet the Son is and nothing beyond this will I investigate, thing happen to me as to words which, on being shouted frequently, fall utterly away, or as to a gaze extended towards the Sun's ray; for the more accurately a man seeks to see, the more will he be damaged in his perception, and will be deprived of the faculty of seeing because what is seen overcomes the gaze by its abundance, if it desires to see all and not in so far as it is safe. You hear of generation; do not investigate how! You hear of the Spirit who proceeds from the Father; do not investigate how! But if you do investigate the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession, I too will investigate the coupling of your soul and your body (Ibid., p. 408).

Tell us, then, what you wrote in the subsequent passage: so he [**Gregory**] who in his theology destroyed the whole fortress of heresy, shall illuminate dwellers in the darkness of ignorance, teaching, as he does, that generation is hypostasis in his *First Oration on Theology*. For he says: 'But if you do not investigate, whether we should speak of the Son's generation or hypostasis or whatever else which one may find fuller in sense than these (for what is to be thought and said overcomes my tongue)' (CD vol. 35, p. 276).

2.3.9. From Oration 21 (*In Laudem Athanasii*) Esp. 35 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 1081–28; using Mossay and Lafontaine ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 270], pp. 110–92)

Gregory the Theologian spoke as follows in his *First Oration on the Doctrine of God:* We worship, then, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, separating the properties but uniting the Godhead, and neither merge the three into one (lest we fall sick with Sabellius' ailment) nor divide into three of different stock and foreign (lest we rave with Arianism). For why should we force, as it were, a plant very bent in one direction over to the other side and correct distortion with distortion, instead of straightening it out half-way and taking our stand within the bounds of true religion (CD vol. 32, p. 76)?

Again, **Gregory the Theologian** attests this, too, in the *Oration on the Burial of the famous Athanasius*, saying as follows: But what I find especially to marvel at in the man and what it would be damaging to keep silent on because the hour brings forth especially schisms in plenty, this I shall add to what has been said. His action will be instructive to our contemporaries too, if we look towards him. Just as not only what the hand has let go as it draws it off is cut off from the water but also what is shed as it drips between the fingers, so

also not only the impious is sundered from us but also the very religious, not over merely trifling and negligible doctrines (for that would be a slight evil) but heretofore also over words that convey the same meaning. For when we say 'one substance' (Syr. ܚܕܐ ܩܢܘܡ) and 'three hypostases' (Syr. ܬܠܬ ܩܢܘܡ) with true religion (Syr. ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ) (for the first indicates the nature of the Godhead, the second the properties of the three) the Italians understand them in the same way as we, but they were unable, owing to the constraints of their language and its poverty of terms, to distinguish 'substance' (Syr. ܩܢܘܡ) and 'hypostasis' and therefore '*prosōpa*' was introduced so that three substances might not be accepted. What happens? Something ridiculous and pitiable; the verbal triviality was thought a difference of faith. And consequently, Sabellianism was fabricated in 'three prosōpa' and Arianism in 'three hypostases'—contentious fabrications. But what after that? By the constant addition of small annoyances (the annoyance produced the quarrel) the ends of the earth were in danger of being rent asunder along with the words. So the saint, truly a man of God and great steward of souls, on seeing and hearing this, did not feel it appropriate to disregard so absurd and irrational a dissection of the word, but applies his own remedy to the ailment. How, then, does he do this? Inviting both sides to come to him, so gently and humanely, he carefully investigated the meaning of their statements and, because he found both sides of one mind and not removed from one another on any point of principle, indulgent to the terms, he bound them by the realities. This was more beneficial for them than the exercises and lengthy discourses which everybody is writing nowadays, and to which is coupled a certain ambitiousness, and, therefore, perhaps, some innovation is made with regard to doctrine—this, I say, is more valuable than the many vigils and prostrations on the ground, things profitable only to those who accomplish them. This was of worth equal to the man's exile and famous flights (Ibid., pp.104, 106).

Perhaps you will say that the **Theologian** ruled absolutely that the hypostases are ingeneracy (Syr. ܠܐ ܐܬܝܠܕܘܬܐ), generacy (Syr. ܐܬܝܠܕܘܬܐ) and procession (Syr. ܐܬܝܗܒܘܬܐ), when he said: For when we say 'one substance' and 'three hypostases' with true religion (for the first indicates the nature of the Godhead, the second the properties of the three) (Ibid., pp. 146, 148)!

However, it would be as well here too, by way of reminder, to set out statements dealing with the point. **Gregory the Theologian**, then, in his oration *On the illustrious Athanasius*, as we have already frequently quoted, says: For when we say 'one substance' and 'three hypostases' with true religion (for the first indicates the nature of the Godhead, the second the properties of the three) the Italians understand them in the same way as we, but they were unable, owing to the constraints of their language and its poverty of terms, to distinguish 'substance' and 'hypostasis' and therefore '*prosōpa*' was introduced so that three substances might not be accepted (Ibid., pp. 270, 272).

2.3.10. From Oration 22 (*De Pace II*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 1132–52; using Mossay and Lafontaine eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 270], pp. 218–58)

See again how **Gregory the Theologian**, too, forbids and restrains any enquiry beyond the limit of our reasonings, laying down the measure of enquiry and concession over divine doctrines, lest one of these things should be harmed by the other, and taking much care for the caution due. For he wrote in the third oration *On the Peacemakers*, giving the following admonition: What is this, you people? How long is it to go on? Shall we not become modest, even though tardily? Shall we not wake up? Shall we not be ashamed? Even if of nought else, shall we not beware of the enemies' tongues ready to disparage with lies? Shall we not desist from this great contention? Shall we not recognize which of the issues we can comprehend and to what extent, but which are beyond our powers; which belong to the present time and to the base mixture which obfuscates the mind, but which to the world to come and to the liberty it brings; so that we may love the former now but

be purified by the latter when we are finally perfected and cease from desire? Shall we not discriminate for ourselves between what we ought not to enquire into all, what, in their stead, we should enquire into with moderation, and what we ought to leave out of account and concede however they may be to the lovers of contention, as things which do no damage to our argument; what we must grant to faith alone and what to reasonings; what we must fight for with diligence, by words and without weaponry (CD vol. 54, pp. 412, 414)?

2.3.11. From Oration 23 (*De Pace III*) Esp. 8 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 1152–68; using Mossay and Lafontaine eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 270], pp. 280–310)

But if also, because, as first cause, the Father is called the Beginning of Godhead and is said to come to creatures through Godhead (for the same guide to exact theology said in his [Gregory's] Second *Oration on Peace*: Therefore, to the extent that God is more honourable than creatures, will it be more glorious for the first cause to be the Beginning of Godhead rather than of creatures, and through intervening Godhead come to creatures, rather than the opposite, that the Godhead should be made to subsist for their sake, which is what it pleases these very high-up investigators to suppose), this redoubtable fellow thinks he can find some sort of aid for his doctrine, by shamelessly positing another Beginning. . . (Ibid., pp. 198, 200).

He [**Gregory**] wrote similar things too in the *Second Oration on Peace*, as follows: But I, by introducing a Beginning (non-temporal, without division or bounds) of Godhead, honour equally both the Beginning and what are from the Beginning; the former, because Beginning of such, the latter because thus and such are they from such: divided neither by a 'when' nor by nature nor by venerableness, being one separably and unitedly separable (to speak paradoxically), not less praised for mutual relationship than when each of them is viewed and apprehended on its own (Ibid., pp. 398, 400).

2.3.12. From Oration 25 (*In Laudem Heronis Philosophi*) esp. 16 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 1179–1225; using Mossay and Lafontaine eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 284], pp. 156–204)

And again, in the *Oration on Heron the Philosopher*: Truly we call the Father 'Father', and much more truly than with our human fathers; because he is Father solely, in his own fashion, and unlike bodies; and sole, for without intercourse; and he is Father of the sole, for of the Only-begotten; and only: for not first, a son; and wholly Father of a whole—something unknown, indeed, with us; and from the beginning, for not latterly. Truly we call the Son 'Son', because he **is** Son solely, of the sole, and in a unique way, and only. For he will not later be Father, and the whole is Son and of the whole, and from the beginning and has never begun to be Son, for Godhead does not change its mind, nor is deification progressive so that the one should ever lack anything of being Father or the other of being Son (CD vol. 35, pp. 520, 522).

In the oration *On Heron the Philosopher* also, he [**Gregory**] gave a preliminary outline of the same teaching and the following counsel: But now you are to teach that we know only thus much: a unity adored in Trinity and Trinity in unity, having a paradoxical division and union (CD vol. 54, p. 400).

But the same **Gregory** testifies again too that in things incomprehensible when reason correspondingly fails, toil and trouble in our reasonings when we stand up for the true faith, is better than departure from it through following the conventional train of reasonings, when he taught lovers of true wisdom in the oration *To Heron the Philosopher*: Do not be afraid of 'procession', for God, who is rich in all, has no necessity either to proceed or not proceed. But fear estrangement and the warning laid down, not to those who profess as God, but to those who blaspheme against the Holy Ghost. Do not give wrong honour to the single sovereignty either by contracting or curtailing the Godhead. Do not be embarrassed

by the charge of tritheism so long as another runs the risk of ditheism. For either you have resolved both charges or are in doubt about both or he has destroyed the Godhead too along with his reasonings, whereas the Godhead has remained for you; even if reason has failed, toil and trouble in our reasonings with the guidance of the Holy Ghost is better than easy blasphemy in pursuing the facile. Despise for me objections and retorts, new-fangled religion, and pettifogging sophistry; despise them more than cobwebs which catch flies but are torn by hornets, not to mention by fingers or any other heavier body. Teach that we are to be afraid only of destroying faith by sophisms. It is not a grievous thing to be worsted in argument, for argument does not belong to everybody; but it is a grievous thing to damage Godhead, for it is everybody's hope (Ibid., pp. 416, 418).

2.3.13. From Oration 26 (*In Seipsum cum Rure rediisset*) esp. 19 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 35, cols. 1228–52; using Mossay and Lafontaine eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 284], pp. 224–72)

And again in the oration *On Himself after returning from the Desert*, he [**Gregory**] asked, as if in astonishment: How are you, the same you, understood to be a unity and found as a Trinity? How are the ingenerate, the begotten and he who proceeds, one nature, three properties, "one God who is over all, through all and in all"? [Ephes 4:6] (CD vol. 35, p. 88).

And he [**Gregory**] prays in the *Oration On himself after his return from the Wilderness* (its beginning is: I was longing for you, my children, and was longed for by you to an equal degree) with a boldness that befitted him, as follows: O holy and adorable and perfect Trinity, nobly to be summed and lauded by us. Yours, the making! Yours, the making right! Do you restore to concord with us those who just so far departed as to be disciplined into concord by the separation, and do you reward us for our labours here with things heavenly and immovable, the chief and grandest of which is to be enlightened in you more fully and more purely, as to how you, the same you, are perceived to be a unity and found as a Trinity, how the ingenerate, the begotten and the proceeder, are one nature, the three properties (Syr. ܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܘܒܟܠ ܘܒܟܠܢ), "one God who is over all, through all and in all" [Ephes 4:6] (CD vol. 54, pp. 360, 362).

2.3.14. From Oration 28 (*Theologica II*) esp. 2 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 25–72; using Gallay and Jourjon eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 250], pp. 100–74)

As **Gregory the Theologian**, speaking about such things with divine inspiration, teaches us very clearly when he wrote as follows in the *Second Oration on Theology*: If anyone is an evil and untameable beast, unreceptive in any way of words of insight and theology, let him not creep into thickets maliciously and craftily to catch some word or doctrine by suddenly leaping and rending sound words with abuse, but let him stand again far off and depart from the mountain, otherwise he will be stoned and broken in pieces and the evil one shall perish evilly. For true and solid words are stones for the brutal. And if he is a leopard he shall die with his spots; if a ravening and roaring lion desiring to make food of our souls or words; if a swine trampling on the beautiful, shining pearls of truth; if an Arabian wolf, foreign in breed, sharper than these in sophisms; if a fox, a deceitful and treacherous soul, now this now that, changing with times and deeds, whom dead and putrifying corpses nourish or little vineyards since they avoid the big; or if any other of the animals rejected by the Law, which eat live flesh and are unclean for eating and enjoyment (CD vol. 35, pp. 158, 160).

He [**Gregory**] also wrote in the *Second Oration on Theology* as follows: But if there is anyone of the multitude, unworthy of such height and contemplation, if, indeed, he is utterly impure, let him not draw nigh, for it will not be safe. But if he be purified awhile, let him remain below and only listen to the voice and the trumpet, the mere words of true religion (CD vol. 54, p. 224).

In the *Second Oration on Theology* too, he [**Gregory**] acknowledges the primal and immortal nature as Trinity, by saying as follows: But when I looked, I scarcely saw God's back, and this when I was hidden in a rock, in the Word which was, for our sake, incarnate; and gazing a little while, I saw, not the primal and immortal nature known to itself (I mean to the Trinity) all of which waits inside the first gateway and is hidden by the cherubim, but only all that is hindmost and reaches us (Ibid., pp. 356, 358).

2.3.15. From Oration 29 (*Theologica III*) esp. 10 (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 73–104; using Gallay and Jourjon eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 250], pp. 176–224)

But I have been so far from saying or thinking the three hypostases—those of the Father, son and holy ghost, I mean—or their characteristic properties mere appellations [or empty] names or relationships bereft [of the realities] (CD, ATD, p. 65).

The **Theologian** preaches in the *First Oration on the Son*: why do you declare that ingenerate and generate are not the same thing? If you mean the uncreated and the created, I should be in agreement, for the unbeginning and the created are not the same thing in nature; but if you mean the begetter and the begotten, the statement is invalid, for it is absolutely necessary that they should be the same thing; indeed it is the nature of begetter and offspring that the offspring should be the same thing by nature as its begetter (CD vol. 29, pp. 38, 40).

The **Theologian** expressly calls the begetter and the begotten the same thing by nature. Let us, then, look also at what he writes about ingeneracy and generacy (Syr. ܐܚܝܢܘܬܐ ܐܚܝܢܐ ܕܠ). He says: "Or thus again: what do you mean by 'the ingenerate' and 'the generate'? If you mean ingeneracy and generacy—no, these are not the same thing; but if you mean those who have these properties, why should they not be the same thing"? (Ibid., p. 40).

Let **Gregory** come forward for us, therefore, and explain the accuracy of what has been stated by his true theology. He instructs us, then, in the *First Oration on the Son*, as follows: why do you declare that ingenerate and generate are not the same thing? If you mean the uncreated and the created, I should be in agreement, for the unbeginning and the created are not the same thing in nature; but if you mean the begetter and the begotten, the statement is invalid, for it is absolutely necessary that they should be the same thing; indeed it is the nature of begetter and offspring that the offspring should be the same thing by nature as its begetter. Or thus again: what do you mean by 'the ingenerate' and 'the generate'? If you mean ingeneracy and generacy—no, these are not the same thing; but if you mean those who have these things, why should they not be the same thing (Ibid., p. 54)?

We must also then recognize that fatherhood (i.e., ingeneracy) or generacy or procession are not empty names and relationships bereft of realities (as **Gregory the Theologian** says somewhere)... (Ibid., p. 82).

But **Greogory**, too, rich in the grace of theology, said things in agreement with and akin to this in his *First Oration on the Son*, as follows: This is the way you may learn that 'ingeneracy' and 'God' are not identical. If they were identical, ingeneracy would also have to be the ingeneracy of somebody because God is somebody's God; or, since ingeneracy is not somebody's, God could not be somebody's either, for things totally identical have the same consequences. But the ingeneracy is not anybody's; whose could it be? But God is somebody's God; everybody's in fact. So how can God and ingeneracy be identical? And again, since ingeneracy and generacy are mutually opposed as condition and privation, we must bring in mutually opposed substances; which is not allowed of. Or again, since conditions are prior to privations and privations are the removal of conditions, not only must the Son's substance be prior to God the Father's but it must also be in process of removal by the Father's on your suppositions (Ibid., p. 148).

Gregory the Theologian with the same invincible weapons of the Spirit subdued blasphemy when he wrote, as follows, in his *First Oration on the Son*: How could we pass over this next point of theirs which is no less remarkable than these last statements? 'Father', they say, is a term either for the substance or the activity, meaning to tie us down by the alternatives. If we say 'for the substance', we shall be agreeing that the Son is of a different substance, seeing that there is one substance of God and this (according to them) the Father has prior possession of. But if we say 'for the activity' we shall be admitting that the Son is a creature and not an offspring. For where there is an active producer, there must be a product of activity. And they will say, 'we wonder how the product can be the same as the producer'. I should have felt very abashed myself at your dilemma, had it been necessary to accept one of the alternatives instead of stating a third, truer possibility avoiding both. My subtle friends, 'Father' is not a term either for the substance or for the activity but for the relationship, the manner of being, which obtains between Son and Father or Father and Son. For just as with us, these appellations indicate close kindred and affinity, so also there they signify the sameness of nature between begotten and begetter. But, to please you, suppose that the Father is some substance: he will certainly bring the inference of the Son and not alienate him, according to common-sense and the meaning of the appellations. Suppose, if you will, that it is a term for the activity, even so you will not catch us out that way either. For the very thing he will have been actively producing is the consubstantiality, even if the thought of this active production is otherwise absurd (Ibid., p. 264).

To this we also attach in due order words by **Gregory the Theologian** which will illuminate the minds of readers more clearly than the sun's beams and will totally disperse the darkness of heretical wrong thinking. He wrote as follows, then, in the *First Oration on the Son*: Our argument, then, is: just as horse, ox and man and each under the same species have one concept and whatever shares in the concept is called by that name in the full sense but whatever does not share in the concept is either not called by that name or not called by it in the full sense, so also God has one substance, nature and appellation, even though the names are also separated along with the particular separate notions. Whatever he is called in the full sense, that god is; and whatever he is by nature, by that he is truly called because our truth is not in names but in realities (Ibid., pp. 324, 326).

Gregory the Theologian, too, indeed, in the *First Oration on the Son* pokes fun at such witlessness and says: Or thus again: what do you mean by 'the ingenerate' and 'the generate'? If you mean ingeneracy and generacy—no, these are not the same thing: but if you mean those who have these things, why should they not be the same thing? Because also unwisdom and wisdom are not the same thing as each other, but are with the man himself. Neither do they divide the substance off, but are divided off with the substance. Or are immortality, freedom from evil and immutability God's substance? But, if so, there are many substances of God and not one (CD vol. 32, p. 230).

He [**Gregory**] says similar things in the *First Oration on the Son*: How, then, was he begotten? It would have been no great generation had it been comprehended by you, you who do not even know your own generation. And again: Let god's generation be honoured with silence. It is a great thing for you to learn that he was begotten, but how, not even the angels are able to conceive of, not to mention our granting that you might understand. You want me to show you how (Ibid., p. 410)?

My good fellow, you hear the divinely inspired father proclaim: The one who has a different fleshly generation has also a different spiritual generation (Ibid., p. 410).

For having taken up to start with the Son's generation he [**Gregory**] later passed on to discuss the Father and said: Or rather, the one whose existence is not the same has also a different generation. Is it not because not only the generation of him who was begotten but

also that of him who begat can be, and be spoken of, in certain different senses? For after alluding perhaps to this he said: But if you do not investigate, whether we should speak of the Son's generation or hypostasis or whatever else which one may find fuller in sense than these . . . Observe him explaining in the words set down that it is the Father's generation also which is being spoken of, for he says: But they are different things, I think: willing and will, generating and generation, speaking and speech—unless we are drunk. The former are the moving, the latter as it were the motion itself. So what is willed is not the will's (for that by no means follows!) nor is the generated the generation's, nor the heard the expression's; but they are the willer's, the begetter's and the speaker's (Ibid., pp. 410, 412).

For we clearly heard the doctor proclaim that he who begat and he who was begotten are the same as those who have ingeneracy and generacy, whereas ingeneracy and generacy are not the same thing (Ibid., p. 416).

Clever sirs, your battle is not against us here but, clearly, with the **Theologian**, who plainly said that he who begat and he who was begotten (i.e., those who have ingeneracy and generacy) are the same, whereas ingeneracy and generacy are not the same thing (Ibid., p. 416).

For, as the same Theologian said, 'all the predicates of something are not simply predicates of its substrate' (CD vol. 35, p. 24).

And in the *First Oration on the Son*, he [**Gregory**] says this: then, why do you declare that ingenerate and generate are not the same thing? If you mean the uncreated and the created, I should be in agreement, for the unbeginning and the created are not the same thing in nature; but if you mean the begetter and the begotten, the statement is invalid, for it is absolutely necessary that they should be the same thing; indeed it is the nature of begetter and offspring that the offspring should be the same thing by nature as its begetter. Or thus again: what do you mean by 'the ingenerate' and 'the generate'? If you mean ingeneracy and generacy—no, these are not the same thing; but if you mean those who have these things, why should they not be the same thing (Ibid., pp. 84, 86)?

And again: 'But if' they say, the Son is the same as the Father in substance, and the Father is ingenerate, the Son will be so too' Yes, if God's substance were ingeneracy and so there would be the novel mixture of generate and ingenerate. But if the difference belongs with the substance, why do you say this as if it were a powerful objection? Or are you also your father's father, because you are the same in substance as him? Is it not clear that it is with the property remaining immovable that we are to look for what God's substance is, if we are indeed looking for it? This is the way you may learn that 'ingeneracy' and 'God' are not identical (Ibid., p. 90).

But they are clearly convicted of being sick in mind to the last degree, and of gnawing off petty phrases like mice and dwelling on the letter like Jews, although the same doctor said in the *First Oration on the Son*, as follows: 'He was in the beginning without cause (for what is cause of God?) but later he "became" because of a cause: it was that you, his despiser, might be saved; you who on account of this spurn his Godhead which assumed your denseness' (Ibid., p. 312).

Listen to **Gregory the Theologian**, who aims at them in the *First Oration on the Son*. He said the following: But they, as if fearful of not stirring up everything against the Truth, profess that the Son is God (whenever they are compelled to do so by word and testimonies) but by homonymity and only by participation in an appellation. But when we retort to them 'What, then? Is the Son not God in the full sense, in the way that a picture is not the living thing? How then is he God, if he is not God in the full sense?' They say, 'Yes, what is to prevent these being homonyms as well as both of them being said in the full sense?' And they will offer us dog (dry-land and marine) which are homonyms and said in the full sense. And a few lines later: So that the man depicted and the living man come

closer to your 'Godhead' than the dogs of your illustration. Or allow to both an equality of the natures in honour just as you allow a participation in appellation, even if you are introducing the natures as different, and you have destroyed those 'dogs' of yours which you discovered in your encounter with inequality (CD vol. 54, pp. 54, 56).

He [Gregory] wrote similar things too in the *First Oration on the Son*, as follows: These are our answers to riddlers, unwilling answers (for vexatiousness, indeed, and retorts are unpleasing to the faithful, for one adversary is enough) but necessary on account of those who fall, since medicines too are necessary because of illnesses, in order that they may know that they are not completely wise and are not invincible in those superfluities which make void the Gospel. For when we put forward the power of reason, abandon believing, and destroy the credibility of the Spirit by investigation, and when subsequently reason is vanquished by the grandeur of the realities (for vanquished it must be, proceeding, as it does, from the frail organ of our mind) what will happen? The weakness of reason appears to belong to the mystery, and thus the grandeur of reason is found to be something that "makes void the Cross", as Paul, too, held [1 Cor 1;17]. For faith is the fullness of our reason (Ibid., p. 414).

2.3.16. From Oration 30 (*Theologica IV*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 104–33; using Gallay and Jourjon eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 250], pp. 226–74)

And he [**Gregory**] discloses to us extensive teaching on the divine names in the *Second Oration on the Son*, declaring as follows in similar fashion, after dissolving the 'inescapable' Arian objections: this whole discussion dealing with counter-arguments, then, will get as far as being a first-stage note for fuller work by closer investigators. But it is perhaps appropriate and relevant to the previous words that we should not pass the Son's titles by either, without inspection (titles which are numerous and applied to numerous aspects understood as belonging with him) but should establish the meaning each of them has and reveal the mystery of the names. We must start from here: God is nameless. Not only do reasonings indicate this but also the wisest and most ancient Hebrews (so far as they have allowed us to conjecture). For when would those who used special characters to honour God and did not consent to anything else inferior to God being written down with the same letters as God, on the ground that God ought not to share even to this extent in our condition, have agreed to indicate the individual and indissoluble nature by an evanescent expression? Nobody, indeed, has ever breathed in all the air: no mind has grasped, no expression comprehended God's substance fully; either. No, we sketch what applies to him on the basis of what belongs with him and put together from the various features various dim, feeble images. Our chief theologian is not one who has discovered all (for the shackle does not admit of all) but one who has imagined more than another and collects more in himself truth's image or mark or whatever else we call it. So far, then, as we can comprehend, 'He who is' and 'God' stand especially as names of the substance, and of these especially 'He who is'; not only because when He was prophesying to Moses on the mountain and was asked what his name was, he called himself this (bidding him tell the people, "He who is has sent me") but also because we find this name even fuller in sense [cf. Exod 3:1, 14–15]. For this name 'God', though it is interpreted, by those who fuss noisily over these things, as derived from 'running' or 'burning' (on account of constant movement and consuming of evil habits, for that is why he is also called a "consuming fire") [Deut 4:24; Heb 12:28–29], yet, none the less, it is relative and not absolute, just as the word 'Lord' also is the Lord's name and it is only said, "for I am the Lord, thy God, that is my name" [Isa 42: 8] and "the Lord is his name" [Exod 15:3]. Whereas we are seeking the nature, the being on its own not bound to another, but that which is truly to God, even in its entirety, neither limited nor cut short by what is prior or subsequent to it (for that neither was nor will be). But of the other titles, some clearly pertain to power, whereas some to

his providential ordering; and this in a two-fold way: supra-corporeally and corporeally. For example: 'omnipotent' and 'king' (whether 'of glory', 'the ages', 'the powers', 'the beloved', or, 'those who reign') or 'Lord', too, of 'Sabaoth' (that is to say, whether of soldiers or the mighty or sovereigns) [Ps 24:10]; these clearly pertain to power. Whereas "God', "of salvation"', "retributions", "peace", "justice", "of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and of all the spiritual and God-regarding Israel [e.g., Psalms 79:9; 94:1; Heb 13:20; Isa 30:18; Exod 3:6]; these pertain to providential ordering. For because we are providentially ordered by these three things, by fear of punishment, hope of salvation and, besides these, by hope of glory and by the practice of the virtues, based on these, the term 'retributions' providentially ordains fear, whereas 'salvation' ordains hope and 'virtues' their practice. So that, as bearing God in himself, one who accomplishes some of these things will hasten the more towards perfection and the kinship which comes from virtues. These, then, so far, are the Godhead's common names. The proper names, on the other hand, are: of the unbeginning, 'Father'; of the one who was begotten without beginning, 'Son', and of the one who has proceeded or proceeds ingenerately, 'Holy Ghost'. But let us proceed to the appellations of the Son, which is the starting point of the argument. For I think he is called 'Son' as being the same thing in substance as the Father, and not only that, but as being also therefrom. Whereas he is also called 'Only-begotten', not only because he alone is from the only one, but also because he is so in a unique mode, unlike bodies. He is called 'Word' because he has the same relationship to the Father as word to mind, not only in respect to the impassibility of his generation but also because of his close connection and revelatory power; indeed, perhaps one might say, as definition to what is defined, seeing that a definition is also called a 'word'. For "He who has" understood "the Son" (for this is what 'seeing' means) *has* understood "the Father too" and the Son is the short and plain demonstration of the Father's nature [cf. John 14:9b); for every offspring is a silent 'definition' of its begetter. Indeed, were one to say too that it is because he is in what exists, he would not be astray in so saying, for is there anything which does not exist by the Word? He is called 'Wisdom' as the knowledge of divine and human realities; for how could the maker be ignorant of the principles of what he has made? He is called 'power' as preserver of what have come into existence and giver of power that they should stand fast. He is called 'Truth', as being one, not many, in nature; for truth is one, whereas falsehood is much cloven; and as being the Father's pure 'seal' and most truthful impression. He is called 'Image' as being consubstantial and because he is from the Father but not the Father from him; for it is the nature of the image to be an imitation of an archetype and of the one whose image it is said to be [cf. Col 1:5, 11, 15 etc.]. But more so: for here unmoving of the moving, but there living of the alive. He has, too, more unvaryingness than Seth from Adam [cf. Gen 5:3], and beyond that of begotten from begetter. For such is the nature of things simple: not, to be like in this respect and unlike in that, but to be a total representation of a totality and to be the same rather than a likeness. He is called 'Light', as being the brightness of souls made pure in word and conduct. For if ignorance and sin are darkness, light will be knowledge and divine living [cf. Col 1:12–13]. He is called 'Life', because he is the stay and substantiation of all rational nature. For "in him we live and move and are" [Acts 17:28; cf. Col 3:4] according to the meaning of a twofold inspiration: the breath we all breathe; and the Holy Ghost all are pervaded by, so far as we open the mouth of our understanding. He is called 'Justice', because he is the one who justly apportions to those under the law and to those under grace, to soul and body: so that soul is ruler, body is in subjection; and the higher has rule over the inferior, lest the inferior rise up against the higher. He is called 'Sanctification', as being purification, so that the purifier may pervade in purity. He is called 'Redemption', because he frees us who are held by sin, and he gave himself for us as a ransom cleansing the world. He is called 'Resurrection', because he raises us up hence

and returns us, dead as we were from sin, to life. These, then, so far, are what we have in common with him who is above us and because of us [Isa 30:18; 1 Cor 1:30bβ;] (CD vol. 29, pp. 326, 328, 330, 332).

What are we to say of **Gregory the Theologian**, not to mention divine Scripture itself or the entire number of divinely inspired fathers who eradicate and overturn such madness from the foundations? For he wrote in the *Second Oration on the Son*, as follows: But let us proceed to the appellation of the Son, which is the starting point of the argument. For I think he is called 'Son' as being the same thing in substance as the Father, and not only that, but as being also therefrom. Whereas he is also called 'Only-begotten', not only because he alone is from the only one, but also because he is so in a unique mode, unlike bodies (CD vol. 35, p. 520).

Again, in the Second Oration on the Son, he [**Gregory**] is seen to say similar things: Is not, then, he created me spoken along with cause? For he created me as the beginning of his ways, for his works [Prov 8:22], but the works of his hands are truth and judgement [Ps 111:7] because of which he was anointed with Godhead for this is the unction of manhood. On the other hand, he begets me is without cause—or you are to show some statement with it. So what reasoning will dispute the fact that Wisdom is called a creature in respect to the earthly generation, but offspring in respect to the first and more incomprehensible (CD vol. 32, pp. 392, 394)?

2.3.17. From Oration 31 (*Theologica V*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 133–72; using Gallay and Jourjon eds. [Sourc. Chrét. 250], pp. 276–342)

It is pertinent that you should hear his teaching in the discourse *On the Holy Ghost*: 'The Holy Ghost', he [**Gregory**] says, 'must be presumed to be either an individually existing thing or something viewed in something else: what experts in such matter call respectively "substance" (Syr. ܟܝܢܐ) and "accident" (Syr. ܩܢܘܡ). If the Holy Ghost is an "accident", he must be an energy (Syr. ܐܝܟ ܕܚܕ̈ܐ) of God. What else, whose else, could he be (for it is better thus, and avoids composition)? If he is an energy, then clearly he is put into operation, does not operate himself and ceases as soon as he has been activated. This is the kind of thing an energy is. How, then, does he act, say such and such things, set apart, is grieved, is vexed (all things clearly, that belong to one who moves, not to a movement)? But if he is a substance, and not one of the things belonging with the substance, he will be thought of either as a creature or as God. For not even the inventors of goat-stags can think up what is half-way or anything sharing, or composed of, both. But if he is a creature, why do we believe in him or how are we perfected in him? For our believing in something and our believing about it are not the same. The former belongs to the Godhead, the second to everything' (CD vol. 29, pp. 42, 44).

It remains, after this, for us to show that the divinely inspired **Theologian** took not only 'unbeginning' and 'unbegotten', but also 'generate' and 'proceeding', not as mere empty names but as indicative of the hypostases. He spoke in the oration *On the Holy Spirit* as follows: Again, where did you get those citadels of yours, 'ingenerate' and 'unbeginning', or we 'immortal'? Show us the exact words or we shall reject them! And you will be killed by your own principles, because your terms will have been destroyed and the wall of the fortress you were relying on. Or is it not recognized that they are derived from things which imply them, though they are unmentioned? What are they? "I am the first and I am hereafter" [cf. Isa 44:6)] and: "Before me there was no other God and after me there shall be none" [cf. Isa 43:10]. For all 'is-ness' is mine; it did not begin and will not stop. You have taken these truths of there being nothing before him and of there being no cause more ancient than he is, and called him 'unbeginning' and 'ingenerate'. The fact that he will not cease to exist means he is 'immortal' and 'imperishable' (Ibid., pp. 64, 66).

This is proved again by the same text of **the Theologian**, which says in the oration *On the Holy Ghost*: In what particular, then, does the Spirit fall short of being Son? For were there no deficiency, he would be Son. There is no deficiency, we say, for God lacks nothing. It is their difference in what one might call 'manifestation', or 'mutual relationship' which has also caused the difference in their appellations. For the Son does not fall short in some particular of being Father, for sonship is no deficiency. But that does not make him Father. By the same token would the Father fall short in some particular of being Son, for the Father is not the Son? No, this gives no ground for any deficiency or subordination of substance, but the very fact of not being begotten, of being begotten and of proceeding has given them the names which are applied to them, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, respectively, so that the three hypostases' freedom from confusion may be preserved in the single nature and power of the Godhead (Ibid., p. 178).

We will, then, as concisely as possible learn the meaning of the other texts of **the Theologian** and proceed to the testimony from the father which is quoted after that. He wrote, then, about the Holy Ghost: If the fact that he is neither clearly nor very often named 'God' in the Bible (as the Father is earlier, and the Son is later) is made an occasion of your blasphemy and such excessive garrulity and impiety, we shall release you from this affliction, by philosophizing a little about realities and names mainly outside the Bible's practice. From this, too, the difference has been made plain to all who want to see it, between realities and names. If not, let the absurd advocates of folly say how they think we ought to interpret about realities and names! Or will they say that this is said periphrastically? But it is obvious that this is the way of nobody except people who make a habit of blathering old-wives' nonsense. But when, the Trumpet of Theology says, did you hear of God as a 'body'? This being non-existent, has been made up. For we have, so far as we can, named the things of God from our condition (Ibid., p. 342).

Take note of this, you sophist, and consider the extremely apt way **the Theologian** proclaims to you: There being, then, this whole difference between names and realities, why are you so excessively servile to the letter, why do you mix with Jewish wisdom and follow the syllables and let the realities go, confining the great mystery of godliness, like Sabellius, only to names (Ibid., pp. 342, 344)?

Before the close examination of this, readers must know that no orthodox thinker disagrees with people who simply term the hypostases of the Holy Trinity 'properties'. For we find some of our God-clad fathers using this expression in relation to the hypostases, and especially **Gregory the Theologian**. For example, at one point in the oration *On the Holy Ghost* he says: Thus, do I stand on these matters and will stand and would have it so for everyone who loves me, that we should confess the Father as God, the Son as God, the Holy Ghost as God, three properties, one Godhead undivided in glory, honour, substance and sovereignty as a fairly recent God-clad saint philosophized (CD vol. 32, pp. 46, 48).

For **Gregory the Theologian** said, in the *Oration on the Holy Ghost*, the following too: "One commingling of light, as it were in three mutually linking Suns" (CD vol. 35, p. 392).

Listen to **Gregory the Theologian** who says in the *Oration on the Holy Ghost*: He is called 'Spirit of God', 'Spirit of Christ', 'Mind of Christ', 'Spirit of the Lord', 'Lord Himself', 'Spirit of adoption, of truth, of liberty' (CD vol. 54, p. 62).

He [**Gregory**] gave teaching similar to that already quoted when he said in the *Oration on the Holy Ghost*, as follows: Finally, then, I decided it was certainly best to bid farewell to images and shadows as deceptive and very lacking in truth, but I myself, would hold to the more religious view, would take my stand on few words, would use the Spirit as my guide, would keep to the end as close associate and companion that source whence I have received illumination as in this world I walk, and would urge others, as best I can, to

worship Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one Godhead and power, to whom be all glory and honour and power for ever and ever. Amen (Ibid., p. 356).

We shall be right to couple with these words what **Gregory the Theologian** said in his oration *On the Holy Ghost*: For neither is the Son 'Father' (for one is Father), but is whatever the Father is; nor is the Spirit 'Son' because from God (for one is the Only-begotten) but is whatever the Son is. For three are 'one in Godhead', and one is 'three in properties', so that there can be neither Sabellius's 'one' nor the 'three' of present evil division (Ibid., p. 398).

Let us observe too the grateful mind of this true 'theologian' in the oration *On the Holy Ghost*, and let us imitate him as best we can. For he theologizes about the union and separation belonging to the mystery and, not finding anything below to compare with the reality, or any finite area in which he comprehended it, he said this: As I pondered in myself many things in curiosity of mind and directed my reason all ways, I sought to obtain some illustration for so great a reality and there is nothing in our world below with which to compare the divine nature. For even if a small resemblance be found, the great thing itself escaped me and left me below with the illustration. And later: And there is nothing at all to give standing to my mind in the illustration, when I consider what is imagined, except a man take one thing from the illustration with a grateful mind and discard the rest (Ibid., pp. 414, 416).

Similarly he [Gregory] wrote in the oration *On the Holy Ghost* as follows: You, therefore, have released yourself from the business by a single word and have gained a pyrrhic victory, having done something similar to those who hang themselves from fear of death. For you have denied the Godhead, so as not to labour in fighting for the single sovereignty, and have surrendered the point at issue to the enemy. But as for me, even if I am forced to toil somewhat I will not surrender what is to be adored (Ibid., p. 418).

2.3.18. From Oration 32 (*De Moderatione in Disputando*) (see Patr.Graec, vol. 36, cols. 173–212; using Moreschini ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 318], pp. 82–154)

Let us, in confirmation of what has been said, now recollect our previous detailed examination and show that the Theologian recognizes each of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity viewed individually, as nature, like the rest of the Church's doctors. Saint Theodosius shall testify again to this when he speaks as follows in the same discourse *On Theology*: **Gregory** who was bishop **of Nazianzus** but who enlightened everyone under the sun by his teachings, shall teach clearly that the Father too has been called 'nature'; he speaks as follows in the oration *On orderliness in Discussion*: 'Do not scrutinize the Father's nature, the Only-begotten's substance, the Spirit's glory and power: the single Godhead and radiance in the three, the nature undivided, the confession, glory and hope of believers' (CD vol. 29, pp. 44, 46).

2.3.19. From Oration 33 (*Contra Arianos et de Seipso*) (see Patr. Graec, vol. 36, cols. 213–37; using Moreschini ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 318], pp. 156–96)

In the discourse *Against the Arians* he [**Gregory**] says: 'We worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost: God the Father, God the Son and God (if you are not obdurate) the Holy Ghost' (Ibid., p. 42).

In the oration *Against the Arians* he [**Gregory**] says: We worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; God the Father, God the Son and God (if you are not obdurate), the Holy Ghost; one nature in three spiritual, perfect properties subsisting of themselves, divided in number and undivided in Godhead (CD vol. 32, p. 48).

'Not supposing that the characteristic properties (we mean fatherhood, sonship and procession and the like) are hypostases or conversely, again, thinking foolishly of the "spiritual, perfect and individually subsisting properties" as characteristic properties of the prosōpa'. Oh, the outlandish and irrational teachings (CD vol. 35, p. 48)!

If, therefore, they call them perfect, and between perfect things there is no difference *qua* perfection they must concede that the characteristic properties also are 'spiritual, perfect and individually subsisting properties' (Ibid., p. 76).

2.3.20. From Oration 37 (*In Dictum Evangelii: "Cum consummasset . . ."*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 281–308; using Moreschini ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 318], pp. 270–318)

For **Gregory** wrote as follows in the oration *On the Gospel* saying: However, he bears all things, accepts all things. And what is marvellous? He endured blows, he was subjected to spitting, He tasted gall because of my taste [cf. 1 Cor 13:7; Mark 15:19; Matt 27:34). He endures even now when he is stoned, not only by those who despoil him but also by ourselves who seem to be devout. For our using corporeal terms in speaking of the incorporeal is perhaps the part of despoilers, perhaps of stoners. But let him again grant pardon to frailty. For we stone unwillingly, but being unable to speak otherwise, we use what words we have (Ibid., p. 22).

2.3.21. From Oration 38 (*In Theophania*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 312–33; using Moreschini ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 358], pp. 104–48+92)

As for the names indicative of these things, we find some of them set down in holy scripture; since God, because of his love to mankind, reveals himself through them in the measure he knows beneficial to us, in order that he may draw us to him (as the **Theologian** puts it) by what is understood, for what is totally beyond understanding, is beyond hope and beyond endeavour. By being uncomprehended he is wonderful, and being wonderful he is loved the more (CD vol. 29, pp. 72, 74).

The master of exact theology **[Gregory]** speaks, then, as follows in the oration *On the Nativity*: When you hear of the generation of God, of the Virgin and the swathing bands and all that belongs to bodily advent, do not be ashamed! For nothing god approaches sullies him, even though it appears to you to do so; no more does he share our impurity than does the Sun, from the things over which it passes in its course, yet also giving them some of its impurity. But revere in the same way both the first incorporeal generation and the second spotless and pure, free from the pleasure wherein is shamefulness (CD vol. 32, p. 392).

For one can see those even who serve draughts from Eutyches' cup of error alleging saint **Gregory's** words *On the Epiphany*, 'The discarnate becomes flesh, the Word condenses (CD vol. 35, p. 312).

So it is obvious from here that Gregory said that the Word condensed with our denseness meaning that he hypostatically united our substance to himself truly without illusion. That is why he also said: "The Word condenses, the invisible becomes visible, the impalpable becomes palpable, the timeless begins" (Ibid., pp. 312, 314).

Similarly too he [**Gregory**] warns his listeners not to suppose that the Godhead overflows Father, Son and Holy Ghost or, again that it is restricted within them, but to recognize the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as one God, by speaking as follows, in the *Oration On the Nativity*: Let these things be now the subject of my philosophizing about God, for now is not the time to go beyond them, when not 'theology', but the 'economy' is our theme. Now when I say 'God', I mean the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Godhead being neither diffused beyond them lest we import an assembly of 'Gods', nor confined within them lest we be condemned for penury of Godhead: either judaizing on account of the single sovereignty or paganizing on account of the plurality; for a like evil exists in both things, even if it is found in opposites (CD vol. 54, pp. 354, 356).

2.3.22. From Oration 39 (*In Sancta Lumina*) (see Patr. Graec, vol. 36, cols. 336–60; using Moreschini ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 358], pp. 150–96)

In the oration *On the Lights*, he [**Gregory**] said at one point: But when I say 'God', be illumined by one light and by three; by three in properties or hypostases, if anyone loves to call them that, or in *prosōpa* (for we are not disputing at all over names, so long as the words come to the same thought); but by one in the concept of the substance or Godhead (CD vol. 32, p. 48).

He [**Gregory**] also said in the oration *On the Lights*: "We have one God: the Father from whom is all; one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom is all" [1 Cor 8:6]; and one Holy Ghost, in whom is all; 'from whom', 'through whom' and 'in whom' not dividing off natures (for neither the prepositions 'from', 'through' and 'in', nor the positions of the names could change) but characterizing the properties of a single unconfused nature. And this is evident from what are brought together again into one, if what is in the same apostle is not read carelessly by anyone: "From Him and through Him and in Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever and ever, Amen" [Rom 11:36] (Ibid., pp. 204, 206).

For when we hear him [**Gregory**] saying this, as was said in the oration *Against the Arians*: one nature in three spiritual, perfect and individually subsisting properties, divided in number and undivided in Godhead; and this in the oration *On the Lights*: But when I say 'God', be illumined by one light and by three; by three in properties or hypostases, if anyone loves to call them that, or in *prosōpa* (for we are not disputing at all over names, so long as the words come to the same thought) (CD vol. 35, p. 88).

For **Gregory the Theologian** said in his oration *On the Lights*: An isolated statement is not a law of the Church, since one swallow does not make a spring, nor one line a geometer nor one voyage a sailor (Ibid., p. 324).

For he [**Gregory**] casts a flash of intellectual light on our minds in the oration *On the Lights* and thunders, when he speaks these divine words: But when I say 'God', be illumined by one light and by three; by three in properties or hypostases, if anyone loves to call them that, or in *prosōpa* (for we are not disputing at all over names, so long as the words come to the same thought); but by one in the concept of the substance or Godhead. For it is indivisibly divided, so to put it, and joined separably. For one in three the Godhead; and one the three in whom the Godhead or, to speak more exactly, who the Godhead is. And again: So one God in three, and one the three, as we said. But these, or this, being so, it was right, indeed, that worship should not be confined only to those above but that there should be some worshippers below, so that all should be filled with God's praise since all are also God's; and because of this was man honoured with God's hand and image (CD vol. 54, p. 362).

2.3.23. From Oration 40 (*In Sanctum Baptisma*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 360–425; using Moreschini ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 358], pp. 198–310)

Indeed he who is styled **the Theologian** says in his *On Baptism*: 'Each of them viewed separately, is God; the three known together are God: the former because of the consubstantiality (Syr. ܟܝܢܐ ܕܚܕ), the latter because of the *monarchia* (CD vol. 29, pp. 40, 42).

He [**Gregory**] wrote in similar terms to these in the oration *On Baptism*, as follows: The word knows a three-fold generation. One from bodies, one from baptism, one from resurrection. Of these, the first is nocturnal, servile and involving passion. The second is of the day, is at liberty and is free from passions; it severs all the covering derived from generation and restores to heavenly life. The third is more fearful and briefer, gathering all creation in a flash to stand before its fashioner and to render an account of its service and behaviour here, as to whether it has only followed the flesh or journeyed with the Spirit and reverenced the grace of re-fashioning. All these generations my Christ appears as having honoured through himself: the first in the primal, vitalizing in-breathing; the second in

incarnation and the baptism with which he was baptized; the third in the resurrection which he initiated, deigning to become also "first-born from the dead" as he became "first-born amongst many brothers" [Col 1:18; Rom 8:29]. It does not belong to the present moment to philosophize about two of these generations, then, (the first and the last, I mean) but let us philosophize about the middle one, the one that now presses upon us, which gives its name to the day of Lights. And a few lines later: When I take the three together in speculation, I see one lamp, for I cannot sunder or measure the united light. Do you fear generation, lest the impassible God (Syr. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܦ ܕܚܫܐ) should suffer? I fear creation, lest I destroy God through insult and through iniquitous severance, when I either cut the Son off from the Father or the Spirit's substance from the Son (CD vol. 32, p. 394).

See, besides these passages, how he [**Gregory**] sets down again, in the *Oration on Baptism*, the same precise instruction, for the benefit of those to be perfected in divine baptism, as if he were anointing novice contestants in a match and entrusting them, as it were, with invincible weaponry. He says: This I give you as companion and patron of your whole life: one Godhead and power found singly in three and embracing three dividedly; not disparate in substances or in natures, neither increasing nor diminishing by degrees of great and small, everywhere equal, the same everywhere, like the one beauty and grandeur of the sky; endless continuity of three without end; each of them viewed separately is God; the three of them conceived of together are God: the former because of the consubstantiality, the latter because of the single sovereignty (CD vol. 54, pp. 358, 360).

2.3.24. From Oration 42 (*Supremum Vale*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 457–92; using Bernardi ed. [Sourc. Chrét. 384], pp. 48–114)

For he [**Gregory**] declared here that the Spirit is not one of the things belonging with the substance by saying the following: 'But if a substance, and not one of the things belonging with the substance, he will be thought of either as a creature or as God'. But in the discourse entitled *On the Arrival of the Bishops*, having said that the unbeginning, the beginning and the with the beginning are the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, he ruled that the unbeginning (that is, the Father) does not possess unbeginningness (Syr. ܕܫܝܬ ܠܐ) as his nature, neither do the beginning (the Son) nor the with the beginning (the Holy Ghost) possess their appellations as their nature; for belonging with the nature, these are not natures (CD vol. 29, pp. 26, 28).

Likewise in the oration *On the Arrival of the Bishops* he [**Gregory**] wrote as follows: But let me get back to the subject! Indeed let 'ingenerate', 'generate' and 'proceeding' be said and understood, if someone enjoys creating names. For we are not afraid of things incorporeal being thought of corporeally, as the despoilers of the Godhead have decided. A creature should be called 'God's creature' (for this is a great thing for us) but not 'God'. Or I shall admit that God is a creature, when I too become God in the full sense of the word. It stands thus: if God, not a creature—for a creature belongs along with us who are not gods. On the other hand: if a creature, not God—for it began, and of what began in time there was when it was not. That which has prior to itself the state of non-existence, does not exist in the full sense of the word. How can what does not, in the full sense, exist, be God (Ibid., p. 66)?

He [**Gregory**] taught the same sort of thing about the Holy Ghost, and following that arrived at the doctrine of names indicative of the hypostases, saying: The name of the unbeginning is 'Father', of the beginning 'Son' and of the with the beginning 'Holy Ghost' (Ibid., p. 76).

But **Gregory the Theologian**, too, in the oration *On the Arrival of the Bishops*, declared: But as for the names: to the unbeginning belongs 'Father', to the beginning 'Son' and to the with the beginning 'Holy Ghost', but to the three belongs as their nature one Godhead. The Father is the unity from whom come the others and towards whom they ascend, not to be

merged but to be joined together, neither time separating them nor will, nor power. For these have caused us to be a plurality, with each in conflict with itself and with its fellow; whereas those who have a simple nature and the same being also have oneness in the full sense (Ibid., p. 110).

Gregory, too, distinguished for his polished theology and thereby appropriately styled 'the Theologian', gives us a philosophical exposition of the matter in his *Farewell Oration*: To the contentious shifts of argument now this way now that, and the counter-balances, let us, then, bid adieu, neither Sabellianizing with the one over against the three (and dissolving the division by a mischievous confusion) nor Arianizing with the three over against the one (and overthrowing the one by a pernicious division). For it is not our aim to exchange one evil for another, but to avoid missing the good. These are the Evil one's games, who adds his wicked weight to our affairs. But we tread the middle and royal road, wherein stand the virtues, as folk clever in these matters hold. We believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Ghost, consubstantial and equal in glory, in whom baptism too has its fulfilment, in the names and the realities (you who are initiated are aware of this), denial of godlessness and confession of the Godhead; and thus are we perfected, recognizing the one in the substance and the indivisibility of the worship, but the three in the hypostases or, as some prefer, the *prosōpa*. For people who dispute this point shall not scheme to prate as if religion for us consists in names and not in realities (Ibid., pp. 304, 306).

Moreover, in the oration *On the Arrival of the Bishops* he [**Gregory**] uses the same theological expressions, and says: To the contentious shifts of argument now this way now that, and the counter-balances, let us, then, bid adieu, neither Sabellianizing with the one over against the three (and dissolving the division by a mischievous confusion) nor Arianizing with the three over against the one (and overthrowing the one by a pernicious division). For it is not our aim to exchange one evil for another, but to avoid missing the good (CD vol. 32, p. 76).

The same doctor [**Gregory**] gave teaching similar to this also in the *Farewell Address to the Bishops*, saying: 'What, then, do hypostases mean to you, or *prosōpa* to you, for I put the question (Ibid., p. 294)?

He wrote, then, in the fourth chapter of his deceitful book as follows: The Theologian, then, wrote in the oration *On the Arrival of the Bishops* throughout demonstrating his aim, that the properties are not natures but belong with the nature (CD vol. 54, p. 112).

What, then, do you say, you who introduce three hypostases? Do you say this, thinking three substances? I am fully persuaded that you would loudly protest against those who do so think (Ibid., p. 376).

2.3.25. From Oration 44 (*In Novam Dominicam*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 608–21)

And, contending for their error, they quote in confirmation what he [**Gregory**] said in the oration *On New Sunday* as follows: "Flesh hardening he becomes poor that by his poverty we might become rich" (CD vol. 35, p. 312).

2.3.26. From Oration 45 (*In Sanctum Pascha*) (see Patr. Graec. vol. 36, cols. 624–64)

Moreover, it is now time we showed how **the Theologian**, again by the expression 'unbeginning', indicates to us that non-temporality and infinity which is a natural property of the Godhead's substance. He writes in thundering tones as follows in the oration *On Easter*: God, then, is infinite and hard to contemplate. The only thing that can be grasped about him at all is his infinity—even if one thinks that by his being a simple nature he is either wholly incomprehensible or totally comprehensible; for let us further enquire what it means for him to be simple in nature. He does not have simplicity as his nature any more than compounds do the sole fact of their being composite. Now the infinite is contemplated in

both directions, beginning and end (the infinite is what transcends, and does not lie within, these) and whenever the intellect surveys the deep past, having nowhere to stand, no mental imagery about God to lean on, it names the infinite and endless here, 'unbeginning'. When it looks at what lies below and is subsequent, it names him 'immortal' and 'imperishable'; but when it brings all together, 'eternal'. For eternity is neither time nor a part of time, for it is also not susceptible to measurement. But what time measured by the sun's course is to us, eternity is to eternal things, eternity, which is measured along with existents like a temporal movement and interval (CD vol. 29, pp. 62, 64).

As for the names indicative of these things, we find some of them set down in Holy Scripture; since God, because of his love for mankind, reveals himself through them in the measure he knows beneficial to us, in order that he may draw us to him (as **the Theologian** puts it) by what is understood, for what is totally beyond understanding, is beyond hope and beyond endeavour. By being uncomprehended he is wonderful, and being wonderful he is loved the more (Ibid., pp. 72, 74).

In the other *Oration On Easter* (whose beginning is: "On my watch will I stand", says marvellous Habakkuk [2:1]) he [**Gregory**] repeats the words in which he also philosophized in the *Oration on the Nativity*, and, as one who devotes himself to exact theology and to the offering of his fruits to God, he brightens the feast and makes it more festive, gladdening the devout and making them share as much as possible in the knowledge of God, by teachings like those: Let these things be now the subject of my philosophizing about God, for now is not the time to go beyond them, when not 'theology', but the 'economy' is our theme. Now when I say 'God', I mean the 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Godhead being neither diffused beyond them lest we import an assembly of 'Gods', nor confined within them lest we be condemned for penury of Godhead: either paganizing on account of the abundance or Judaizing on account of the single sovereignty; for a like evil exists in both things, even if it is found in opposites (CD vol. 54, p. 358).

2.4. Quotations from the Works of St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330–395)[6]

2.4.1. From *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 32, cols. 683–96; using Gregory of Nyssa, *Opera* vol. 3.1 [ed. Mueller], pp. 3–16; and note Clav. Patr. Graec. 3137)

Let this cunning fellow and expositor of deep notions tell us! What, too, are all the names which are to be found, by means of which the divine nature abides as it is, without indications (CD vol. 29, p. 346)?

2.4.2. From *Contra Eunomium Libri* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 45, cols. 248–464; using Gregory of Nyssa, *Opera* I and II [ed. Jaeger] vol. 1, pp. 3–409; vol. 2. pp. 3–311; and note Clav. Patr. Graec. 3135)

But wise **Gregory**, his brother, speaks as follows in his *Refutation of Eunomius* (which begins: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): This, then, is what the imitator of Paul does, having seen that the error of those who teach 'dissimilarity' is strengthened through the word 'ingenerate' (Syr. ܠܐ ܡܘܠܕ) (in the evil, heretical usage of the term). He advised that we should safeguard in our souls the truly religious idea of 'ingenerate' but that the word should not be an object of special concern, because it becomes a resource of sin to those who are perishing. For the title of 'Father' in one sense is enough to produce for us the sense of 'ingenerate'. For having heard 'Father' we at once understand the one who is the cause of everything's existence, who, had he owned a cause transcending himself, would not be called 'Father' in the full sense of the word, because 'Father' (in the full sense) would have been attributed to the cause found to be prior. And similarly in the fifth of his books against impious Eunomius (the beginning goes: Because, he says, the word 'Lord' he writes as follows: for the things remain what they are by nature, but the mind, when it handles existing things, reveals its ideas by whatever words it discovers. Just as

Peter's substance was not altered along with the alteration of name, so no other visible object is altered by variations of name. This is the reason we say that the term 'ingenerate' was applied by us to the truly primal Father, the cause of all, no damage at all accruing to the meaning of the subject if we indicate it with a different, equivalent word. For it is permissible, instead of saying 'ingenerate', to call him 'First Cause' or 'Father of the Only-begotten' or 'Causeless Existent (Ibid., p. 70).

Now if he says that these, being what they are, are insufficient to confirm the truth of the statements, let one, who (as he [**Gregory**] claims) speaks nothing but what the Fathers spoke, bend his ears to this wise teacher, and hear again the kinds of thing he said to impious Eunomius (who had written cognate, blasphemous nonsense) in the fifth book (the beginning goes: Because, he says, the word 'Lord'): But Peter and Paul, he says, were named by men, and therefore there was a possibility of their names being changed. But what existent is not named by men? I summon you, Eunomius, as a witness to the argument. For if you make changes of name a proof that things have been named by men, you must thereby agree that every name has been imposed on existents by us, because the same names of objects have not prevailed amongst everybody. For just as Paul was once Saul and Peter was Simon [Acts 13:9; Matt 17:18], so land, sky, air, ocean and all the parts of creation are not named alike by everybody, but one way by the Hebrews, another way by us and with different names by each nation. If, then, Eunomius has a valid objection to establish, I mean that Peter and Paul got new names because their names were given them by men, our argument (constructed from similar premisses and stating that everything has been given its name by us) must be confirmed, because the names of everything vary with different nations. Now if everything is of this kind, 'generate' and 'ingenerate' can be no different. For these also get fresh names. We have an idea about some object and reformulate it as a name. We say what has been thought in different words at different times, not creating the realities but indicating them by the names we call them (Ibid., p.86).

Saint Gregory, his brother, spoke in his book *Against Eunomius* the impious and witless (its beginning runs: There is a limit to the labours of those who fight in contests) as follows: If, then, the meaning of 'substance' is one thing and the term 'generation' is established to mean something else, their sophistical tricks have collapsed all of a sudden, like earthenware pots, thrown together and shattering one another. For it will no longer be open to them to carry over the ingenerate-generate distinction to the substance of Father and Son and simultaneously transfer the mutual conflict of the names to the realities. Likewise in the fifth book of the same treatise *Against Eunomius* (its beginning goes: Because, he says, the word 'Lord' he spoke as follows: But if he asserts a difference of substance between generacy and ingeneracy like that between fire and water, and imagines the names as having the same mutual relation as his examples have, the awfulness of his blasphemy will be evident even if we stay silent. For fire and water have mutually destructive natures and when one happens to be in the other it is destroyed by the force of the more powerful. If, therefore, he teaches this sort of remoteness between the Ingenerate's nature and the Only-begotten's, he must consequently concede that this destructive contrariety too resides in the difference between the substances; so that their nature must thereby be incompatible and unshared, and one would be consumed by the other or both mutually if they should come together. How, then, can the Son be 'in the Father' without being destroyed? How can the Father, while 'in the Son', hold out perpetually and remain unconsumed, if (as Eunomius says) the property of the fire in respect to water is also preserved in the relationship of generate to ingenerate? But neither does the argument perceive any communion between earth and air; for earth is firm, stable, hard, with a downward tendency and heavy. Air, though, has a nature founded on the opposites. In the same way white or black are included in colour-contraries and I agree that a circle is not identical with a triangle for each is, by

the condition of its shape, what the other is not. I cannot, though, discover what he sees the opposition between God the Father and God the Only-begotten Son to reside in. A single goodness, wisdom, justice, intelligence, power, incorruptibility, and all other terms of sublime meaning are used of each alike. In a certain sense the power of each resides in the other; for the Father effects everything through the Son, and the Only-begotten, being the Father's power, effects everything in him (Ibid., pp. 160, 162).

Saint Gregory, Bishop **of Nyssa**, wrote in similar vein in his first book *Against Eunomius* (its beginning runs: There is a limit to the labours of contestants): But I say we ought to pay close attention to the question whether it is the natural relationship which introduces the employment of these names. For he must be saying this: that affinity of substance enters with affinity of names. For he will not be saying that the mere names on their own, separated from a comprehension of their meanings, have any mutual relationship and affinity; no, we distinguish affinity and alien-ness of appellations by the meanings signified by the words. Therefore, if he acknowledges a natural relationship between Father and Son, let us leave the appellations and scrutinize the force of the things indicated. And again: So if, as Eunomius says, the appellations prove affinity, and the affinity is perceptible in the realities conceived of as individual and not in the mere verbal expressions of the names (if it be not rash so to refer to the Son and the Father) who can deny that the champion of blasphemy too has been drawn over to the advocacy of true religion of his own accord seeing that he demolishes his arguments himself and preaches commonness of substance as divine doctrine? For the argument about this he involuntarily tossed out on the side of truth is no cheat: he would not have been called 'Son', if the natural meaning of the terms had not corroborated the appellation (Ibid., pp. 178, 180).

Gregory, Bishop **of Nyssa**, Basil's brother is seen to have written in the fifth book *Against Eunomius* (its beginning is: Because, he says, the word 'Lord') as follows': For when we say 'this one was begotten' or 'was not begotten', we are stamped with a two-fold conception by the statement: by the demonstrative part of the sentence we look at the substrate; by 'was begotten' or 'was not begotten' we learn what is viewed as pertaining to the substrate. So that we understand one thing concerning the being but another thing concerning what is viewed as pertaining to the being. Besides, along with each term used of the divine nature (e.g., 'just', 'incorruptible', 'immortal', 'ingenerate' and any other expression) 'is' has to be understood. Even if the word happens not to accompany the statement, all the same the speaker's and listener's minds must complete the term by 'is'; so that the title lands in a vacuum unless the 'is' be supplied. For instance (for it is better to present the argument using an example) when David says: "God the righteous judge, mighty and patient" [Ps 7:11], unless 'is' were understood along with each term used, the itemizing of titles unsupported by any substrate would be thought vacuous and baseless. But when 'is' is understood along with each term, the expressions altogether gain significance as they are viewed belonging with that which is (Ibid., pp. 206, 208).

Gregory too, the wise doctor's brother, shall confirm that this is so by consideration of God the Father. He wrote as follows in the thirty seventh chapter of the *Refutation of Eunomius* the impious (its beginning is: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): This, then, is what the imitator of Paul too does: having seen that the error of those who teach dissimilarity through the word 'ingenerate' is strengthened by its evil, heretical usage, he advised that we should safeguard in our soul the truly religious idea of 'ingenerate', but that the word should not be an object of special concern, because it becomes food for sin to those who are perishing. For the name "Father' is, by its meaning, enough to produce for us the sense of 'ingenerate'. For having heard "Father' we at once understand the one who is the cause of everything's existence who, had he owned another cause transcending himself, would not be called 'Father' in the full sense of the word, because the appellation

'Father' (in the full sense) would have been attributed to the cause found to be prior. But if he is the cause of all and "all is from" him, as the Apostle says [cf. Rom 11:36}, obviously nothing can be found to pre-exist his being. And this is ingenerate existence. And again: But we despise this puerile, superficial attack of theirs and will manfully acknowledge what is presented by them as an absurdity: that the name 'Father' is identical in meaning with 'ingenerate'; that 'ingenerate' reveals the Father as not being from anything; and that the Father introduces connectedly along with himself, through the relationship, the idea of the Only-begotten (Ibid., p. 216).

Gregory of Nyssa, very cleverly demolished the same mischievous attack by writing as follows in his fifth book *Against Eunomius* (its beginning goes: Because, he says, the word 'Lord'): If the Son's substance is called "Spirit" and God also is called Spirit (for this is also how the Gospel states it [John 4:24]) the Father's substance must be called Spirit too. But their argument that things with dissimilar names have dissimilar natures has as its logical consequence that things with similar names are not mutually alien in nature either. So because, according to their argument, the substance of Son and Father is termed 'Spirit', the fact of there being no difference in substance is hereby given clear proof. And a few lines later: For if God is called 'Spirit' in the Gospel and the substance of the Only-begotten is made out by Eunomius to be Spirit, there being no difference between the terms, what are indicated by the terms cannot differ in nature from one another either. And again after other matters: What, then, are the titles of the substances by which he has learned of a difference in nature between Father and Son? He mentions fire and water, air and earth, cold and hot, white and black, triangle and circle. He scores a victory with his examples; he has got much the better of me in the argument. For I will not gainsay the argument that names which have nothing in common disclose along with themselves a difference of natures. But this acute and quick mind of his fails to see just this: that here the Father is termed 'God', the Son is termed 'God' and 'just', 'incorruptible' and all the terms belonging to the doctrine of God' are applied equally to both Father and Son. In which case, if a divergence of titles indicates a difference of natures; commonness of names must disclose commonness of substance. If we must agree that the divine substance is known by means of names, it would be appropriate to apply the lofty, God-befitting words to the nature rather than the terms 'generate' and 'ingenerate' (Ibid., p. 266).

But let us pass to the wise teaching of his namesake; he [**Gregory of Nyssa**], too, indeed, impelled by the same grace says: Every name whatsoever you use belongs with the being and is not the being. And again: All the things existing within the creation are considered with the aid of the meaning of names. One who says 'sky' has brought the mind of his auditor to the created thing signified by this term, and one who mentions man or any other living thing by name immediately impresses his auditor with the appearance of the living thing. And again: Only the uncreated nature believed in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost transcends every nameable meaning. Therefore, when the Word referred to "the name" in handing over the Faith, he did not add what it was (for how could a name be found for a reality "above every name"?) [Phil 2:9] but gave power so that our mind, being stirred by piety, should be able to discover what the name, revelatory of the transcendent nature, is, which we should attach in like manner to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, whether it be 'the Good', or 'the Incorruptible', whatever name each man thinks fitting to be taken for the manifesting of the immortal nature (Ibid., p. 344).

For **Gregory** also who adorned the throne **of Nyssa**, says this in the second book *Against Eunomius* the abominable: I ask the readers not to be irritated by the exactitude of the examination which unwillingly extends the discourse to a large size. For it is not on unimportant matters that we are in jeopardy, so that, if we pass by things that need more studied contemplation, we should suffer little damage, but we are endangered on the

chief article of our hope. For it is set before us either we should be Christians, not deluded by heretical perdition, or that we should be utterly swept away into Jewish and pagan opinions. And at the beginning of the third book of the same treatise he says as follows: But it is now time to examine more studiously what was said by Eunomius himself and by our father in connexion with the Apostle Peter's words. But if a careful contemplation lengthens the discourse to a large extent, the right-thinking listener will completely pardon the fact, not blaming us but the one who caused it (Ibid., p. 362).

For we find our teachers did this too, and, out of many, we show wise **Gregory of Nyssa** who in the fourth chapter of his *Refutation of Eunomius* (which begins: It is not possible, it seems, to want to help everybody) says as follows: I omit all such as being an empty multitude of things which introduce nothing useful. But if any defence of heretical opinion is made by him, towards this I consider it would be as well for me to devote more effort. For this is how the leader of divine doctrines acted in his own discourse, he who, though there were many points capable of broadening the argument, runs through only the essentials and shortens most of the subject-matter, selecting from all the statements in that book of impiety, the main points of the blasphemies (CD vol. 32, p. 66).

Saint Gregory teaches us this again in the second chapter of the *Refutation* just mentioned, writing as follows: It has occurred to me to say these things on considering one who shared his good things unsparingly, with everybody, Basil, I mean, the man of God, the mouth of blessing, who often in the abundance of spiritual treasures pours out the grace of wisdom without investigation even on souls who devise evil, even on Eunomius ungrateful to those who have taken pains to benefit him. For he, because of his soul's immeasurable disease with which it sickened as regards the faith, was considered pitiable by all participants in the Church (for who is so lacking in compassion as not to pity the perishing?) but him alone did he move to undertake the cure, him alone who in the abundance of his philanthropy ventures upon an impossible cure; who, pained by the loss of the man, due to his natural sympathy towards those in misery, devised, as an antidote to the evil, lethal poisons, a refutation of heresy having as its aim to save and restore him thereby to the Church. But he, as if mentally distraught by madness, rages against the physician, fights and battles with, and counts an enemy him who battles to draw him from the gulf of evil. And he babbles in this way not simply casually before just anyone, but he has erected a written monument to his own madness, and having obtained in a long period, as much leisure as he desired, he travailed with the discourse longer than the large, big-bodied animals, in all the intervening time (Ibid., pp. 68, 70).

Wise **Gregory**, who occupied with sanctity the throne of Nyssa, is seen to have said as follows in the 29th chapter of the *Refutation of Eunomius* (whose beginning is: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): If, therefore, the concept of the energy indicates the substance, one nature of the two will be seen, energy and substance being found in the same equal marks and properties. If, however, the concepts of substance and energy are not the same but the meaning of each is different, how can proofs of the points in question be given by things alien ad foreign? It is just as if, when the substance of manhood is being inquired into and it is being discussed whether man is a laughing animal or an animal capable of grammar, someone should take, as proof of the former subject, the construction of a house or ship which a builder or shipwright has effected (Ibid., p. 146).

Led by the same Spirit, wise **Gregory of Nyssa**, too, wrote in the first book *Against Eunomius* (whose beginning runs: There is a limit to him who "strives lawfully" [1 Tim 2:5b]): But I say, we ought to pay close attention to the question whether it is the natural relationship which introduces the employment of these names. For he must be saying this: that affinity of substance enters along with affinity of names. For he is not saying that mere names on their own, separated from the meaning of the objects indicated have any mutual

relationship and affinity; no, we distinguish affinity and alien-ness of appellations by the meanings signified by the words. Therefore, if he acknowledges a natural relationship between Father and Son, let us leave the appellations and scrutinize the force of the things indicated. And in the second book *Against Eunomius*: In the same way here too (when offspring and creature are mentioned together) in passing from the expressions to the meanings we do not envisage each of the names as containing the same understanding. And again in the book *Against* the same wicked *Eunomius' Statements* (whose beginning runs: The faith of Christians): For one who says 'sky' has brought the minds of his auditor to the created thing signified by this term, and one who mentions man or any other living thing by name immediately impresses his auditor with the appearance of the living thing. All the other things, too, are likewise depicted, through the names imposed on them, in the heart of one who has received through the ear the appellation imposed on the reality (Ibid., pp. 208, 210).

For wise **Gregory of Nyssa** answered Eunomius, who made similar thoughtless pronouncements: Every argument, so long as it is asserted by authority without proof, is old wives' prattle, having no power to prove thereby the point at issue when no support for the statements made is introduced either from the divine words or from human reasonings (Ibid., pp. 234, 236).

Gregory, too, Basil's brother, taught these sacred doctrines and taking up the same contests against Eunomius the intoxicated, wrote in his fifth book (its beginning runs, Because, he says, the word 'Lord'), as follows: Anyone, then, undertaking to give a definition of the existence of the one who is good and is ingenerate, would be useless if he spoke of the things viewed in him and said nothing of the substance itself which he had undertaken to explain with a definition. For existing ingenerately is one of the things viewed in "Him who is" [Exod 3:11], whereas the concept of existing is one thing and that of how it exists, another (Ibid., p. 492).

Here we shall move the examination on to words akin to those divinely inspired words of Saint Basil. For the wise instructor, his brother **Gregory**, wrote in the first book *Against Eunomius* as follows: I will take up and repeat the sentence of his which I set down at the beginning. 'we do not refuse', he says, 'also to call the Son, since he is begotten, "offspring", the begotten substance itself and the title "Son" laying claim to such a relationship of terms'. So now let the critical hearer of these words remember this: by using 'begotten substance' of the Only- begotten he grants, by logical sequence, that we should use 'unbegotten substance' of the Father, so that, therefore, neither ingeneracy nor generacy will be understood as substance; but substance, on the one hand, and the fact that it was begotten or not begotten, on the other hand, are to be considered individually by means of the properties viewed in the substance. But let us consider the reasoning on this point more studiously. He says that a substance has been begotten, and that the name of the substance which has been begotten is 'Son'. However, here the argument from our side rebuts the opposing argument on two grounds: first, for the impudence of its knavery; secondly for the feebleness of its attack on us. For he is acting with malicious deceit in speaking of the generacy of the substance, in order to procure the mutual opposition of the substances sundered by generacy and ingeneracy into a difference of natures. The feebleness of the attempt is rebutted by the very means whereby the plot is set up. For one who says the substance has been begotten clearly defines generacy as being something other than substance, so as not to permit the meaning of generacy to be adapted to the concept of substance. For he has not done in this part the very thing he designed in many passages so that he could say that generacy is the substance itself; but here he acknowledges that the substance has been begotten, so that the hearers have a distinct idea of each word. For different ideas are created for the hearer of 'has been begotten' and by the term 'substance'. The argument will become

clearer to us by illustrations. The Lord said in the Gospel that when her labour is at hand a woman is in pain but afterwards rejoices in her happiness "that a man has been born into the world" (John 16:21). So, just as in this passage we have learned from the Gospel two distinct ideas: first, we have understood a generation by birth; secondly, the one who has come into existence by generation (for a man is not generation but by generation the man exists); so also here; since Eunomius has acknowledged that the substance was begotten, we have learned by the word 'begotten' the fact of being derived from something and by the word 'substance' we have understood a substrate possessing a derived hypostasis. If, then, the meaning of 'substance' is one thing and the term 'generation' is established to mean something else, their sophistical tricks have collapsed all of a sudden, like earthenware pots thrown together and shattering one another. For it will no longer be open to them to carry over the ingenerate-generate distinction to the substance of Father and Son and simultaneously transfer the mutual conflict of the names to the realities. For with Eunomius having agreed that the substance was begotten (as the Gospel illustration too explains this sort of notion, an illustration by which, on learning that a man has been begotten we do not understand man and generation as meaning the same thing but have received the notion proper to each term) the heresy which teaches the otherness of substances through such words absolutely has no longer any room (Ibid., pp. 508, 510, 512).

So they then acted corruptly in that document and produced a proof-text from **Gregory** (the one time sainted bishop **of Nyssa**, who illuminated the whole world under the Sun with the radiance of his words) when he caught Eunomius the impious in the toils of his arguments in the third book he wrote against that wicked man, as follows: 'So just as in this passage we have learned from the Gospel two distinct ideas: first, we have understood a generation by birth; secondly, the one who has come into existence by generation (for a man is not generation but by generation the man exists); so also here; since Eunomius has acknowledged that the substance was begotten, we have learned by the word 'begotten' the fact of being derived from something and by the word "substance" we have understood a substrate possessing a derived hypostasis. And again: 'For with Eunomius having agreed that the substance was begotten (as the Gospel illustration too explains this sort of notion, an illustration by which, on learning that a man has been begotten we do not understand man and generation as meaning the same thing but have received the notion proper to each term) the heresy which teaches the otherness of substances through such words absolutely has no longer any room' (Ibid., p. 518).

For on such things too we have the same wise **Gregory** who instructs us by his defence of his brother, Basil the great, against Eunomius, the master and teacher of this writer and says as follows in the eighth chapter of his *Refutation of Eunomius* the impious (its beginning runs: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): Therefore, the sequence of insulting and abusing is prevented from its further courses by patience. So that if anybody pays back insult with insult and abuse with abuse, he must increase the outrage by nourishing it with things similar. Therefore, leaving aside all the intervening argument, which consists of insults, mockery, abuse and cavils, I shall hurry the discussion on to the examination of doctrines. But if anyone says I am refraining from abuse owing to a lack of requital in kind, let him observe himself how much proneness there is towards evil, slipping without occasion into sin of its own accord. And a few lines later: But I recollect that divine utterance which spoke prophetically those prophetic things about him, where he compares him with abusive women who load the modest with their own obscenities (Ibid, pp. 520, 522).

And so, when he [**Gregory**] begins the second of that pair earlier pair, he says: The first things in the contests with Eunomius have indeed already been accomplished sufficiently with God's help in the previous labours; whereas near the beginning of the first of those

ten he wrote: So because Eunomius, though already twice overthrown in the previous discussion, does not yet permit truth to have its victory over falsehood but again struggles by literary production in the accustomed wrestling-booth of falsehood for a third time against true religion, strengthening himself for contests on behalf of error, the word of truth must now stand up through us for the overthrow of falsehood (Ibid., pp. 538, 540).

For the same **Saint Gregory of Nyssa**, whom we are presently discussing, said, in the seventh chapter of his *Refutation of Eunomius* (whose beginning goes: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): But I will reserve the discussion of doctrines to its due time. But now for the present let us observe what truth the man, who makes the accusation at the beginning that he is hated by unbelievers for speaking the truth, uses. For it will not perhaps be beside the point to learn through his extra-doctrinal discussions his attitude to truth and use this as an example in dealing with the doctrinal also. "For he who is faithful in little will also be faithful in much, and he who is unrighteous in little will also be unrighteous in much" (Luke 16:10) (Ibid., pp. 544, 546).

Gregory, wise in things divine, brother of Basil the Great and bishop of Nyssa, will confirm this in the second book *Against Eunomius*: 'Therefore he indicates by the word the fearful manifestations of the judge at the end of the ages, when He will be seen no longer in "the form of the slave" but seated in grandeur on the throne of empire, worshipped by all the angels round him (Phil 2:7, 10). For this reason, He who came once for all into the world and was made "first born of the dead" (Col 1:15) of his "brothers" and "of all Creation" (Col. 1:15, 18; Rom 8:29) when he comes again into the world, He who (as prophecy says) "will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31) does not reject the title "first-born" which he accepted once for all on our behalf' (Ibid, p. 534).

The point will become clearer if the father's proof-text itself comes forward in evidence. He says, then: Similarly, he [**Gregory**] says these things also, expressing them in almost the same words, in the third book *Against Eunomius* (whose beginning goes: 'But concerning the statement of the Apostle Peter, it is time to examine more studiously what was said'): 'So that these things seem not to exist in the two on their own with any division; but by juncture with the Godhead, the temporal nature, being re-formed in accordance with the stronger nature, receives the Godhead's power, as one might say that the mixture makes into sea a drop of vinegar mingled with the ocean, so that the natural operation of the latter mixture moisture no longer remains in the boundlessness of what contains it' (Ibid., p. 528).

Likewise Severus says, indeed, at the beginning of the tenth chapter of the same third book: But **Gregory of Nyssa**, wise in things divine, will confirm that he recognizes the immortal and uncreated nature, God the Father's eternal and Only-begotten Word, as unchangeable and immutable in the same divine substance, and that he voluntarily took on the change involved in the passibility of the flesh which he united to him hypostatically. For he [Gregory] wrote in the fourth book *Against Eunomius* the impious: 'So believing the immortal, impassible and uncreated nature to have been made in the passibility of the Creation and therein understanding change, how can we be condemned for saying that "he emptied himself" (Phil 2:8) by those who noise abroad their own argument in opposition to our doctrines?' (Ibid., pp. 528, 530).

Listen to the same wise **Gregory**, who speaks as follows in the first book *Against Eunomius* the impious and explains the point to us: But let us consider the reasoning on this point more studiously. He says that a substance has been begotten, and that the name of the substance which has been begotten is 'Son' (CD vol. 35, p. 12).

Did not the doctor very wisely and very opportunely use the example for the clear demonstration of the point at issue, and consider it? Because, in combating Eunomius, he [**Gregory**] says, as follows, in the first book: For he has not done in this part the very thing he designed in many passages so that he could say that generacy (Syr. ܐܝܬܘܬܐ) is the substance

itself; but here he acknowledges that the substance has been begotten, so that the hearers have a distinct idea of each word. For different ideas are created for the hearer of 'generation' and by the term 'substance'. The argument will become clearer to us by illustrations. The Lord said in the Gospel that when her labour is at hand a woman is in pain but afterwards rejoices "in her happiness that a man has been born into the world" [John 16:21]. So, just as in this passage we have learned from the Gospel two distinct ideas: first, we have understood a generation by birth; secondly, the one who has come into existence by generation (for a man is not generation but by generation the man exists); so also here; since Eunomius has acknowledged that the substance was begotten, we have learned by the word 'begotten' the fact of being derived from something and by the word 'substance' we have understood a substrate possessing a derived hypostasis (Ibid., pp. 18, 20).

For we recollect wise **Gregory of Nyssa** who, in the 30th chapter of the refutation *Against Eunomius* (whose beginning is: It seems that the wish to benefit all) explains this point for us and defines it as no small danger neglectfully to abandon truth slandered by the evil-minded. He says: So if some impiety we should shun has become immediately obvious to everybody from what is said, and besides the impiety the baselessness of its design, it might be thought superfluous to make a detailed stand against each point. But because many, having adhered without examination to what has been said, "ere they perceive the thorns of the word" (to speak like the Psalmist) "have been swallowed up by wrath" (Job 5:5; 6:3; cf. Matt 13:15, 22, with Psalm 21:9), meaning that they would not have been swept away so much, as by a flood, into this depth of impiety, unless they had thought something in these arguments invincible and irresistible), it is wholly necessary that we should not surrender the truth through any negligence even though we need to rebut the argument by many words. So let us take up each point again (Ibid., p. 44).

Look at what wise **Gregory, bishop of Nyssa**, says on this point in the *Refutation of Eunomius* (its beginning is: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): For though the Church teaches us not to divide out faith into a plurality of substances but to believe there is no difference in the three *prosōpa* or hypostases *qua* being (Syr. ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܒܝܢ ܬܠܬ̈ܐ ܦܪܨ̈ܘܦܐ), whereas our opponents posit difference and dissimilarity in the substances themselves, this fellow confidently decrees the unproved and unprovable by any argument, as if the ground for it had been prepared; perhaps, without so much as addressing attentive ears, otherwise he would have learned from intelligent listeners, that every argument which issues unproven by authority is old wives' prattle, because it has no power to prove thereby the point at issue when no support for the statements made is introduced from the divine words or from human reasonings (Ibid., p. 108).

Therefore, let him listen to what wise **Gregory**, head of the see **of Nyssa**, said to Eunomius, a similar slanderer, in the *Refutation* (whose beginning is: To want to help everybody was not, apparently) as follows: For who would be so crazy or so out of his mind as to say 'Father' and 'Son', and again to suppose two ingenerates, and then think that the one had been begotten by the other? But what is the necessity thrusting his teachings into these suppositions? From what words of his has this been constructed so that the absurdity should be forced to crop up? For if he were alleging anything professed by us and then was bringing forward, whether by sophistry or with some sort of force, a proof for such a cavill, he might perhaps have had occasion for alleging such a thing for the slandering of our doctrines. But if there are not and will not be in the Church any such words, and none is convicted of saying them, none is proved to have heard them, and no necessity constructing this absurdity by way of some consequence is to be found. I do not understand what purpose this shadow-battle of his has (Ibid., pp. 124, 126).

Listen to wise **Gregory of Nyssa**, saying in the 20th chapter of his refutation *Against Eunomius* (whose beginning is: To want to help everybody was not, apparently) that this is a complete absurdity, as follows: But if, escaping from these absurdities he should call the activity, whose completion defines the Son, a non-subsistent thing, let him tell us again how what does not exist can follow "Him who is" [Exod 3:11; Rev 1:8], how, indeed, what does not subsist can effect what subsists. For it will be found that what do not exist will thereby follow God, indeed that what do not exist will be the causes of those that exist and that what do not subsist by their own nature will bound the nature of what subsists and that the power completing and making all Creation will be bounded by what does not, according to its own principle, exist. Such are the doctrines of the new theologian! (Ibid., p. 138).

Listen to the master of mysteries himself, who clearly explains these things to us through his plain words. For he [**Gregory**] says about Eunomius in the first book *Against Eunomius* (whose beginning is: There is a limit to him who "strives lawfully" [cf. Tim 2:5]): I will take up and repeat the sentence of his which I set down at the beginning. 'We do not refuse', he says, 'also to call the Son, since he is begotten, "offspring", the begotten substance itself and the title "Son" laying claim to such a relationship of terms'. So now let the critical hearer of these words remember this: by using 'begotten substance' of the Only-begotten he grants, by logical sequence, that we should use 'unbegotten substance' of the Father, so that, therefore, neither ingeneracy nor generacy will be understood as substance; but substance, on the one hand, and the fact that it was begotten or not begotten, on the other hand, are to be considered individually by means of the properties viewed in the substance (Ibid., pp. 194, 196).

For the same master of mysteries says, a little after the words set down earlier, as follows: for he is acting with malicious deceit in speaking of the generacy of the substance, in order to procure the mutual opposition of the substances sundered by generacy and ingeneracy into a difference of natures. The feebleness of the attempt is rebutted by the very means whereby the plot is set up. For one who says the substance has been begotten clearly defines generacy as being something other than substance, so as not to permit the meaning of generacy to be adapted to the concept of substance. For he has not done in this part the very thing he designed in many passages so that he could say that generacy is the substance itself; but here he acknowledges that the substance has been begotten, so that the hearers have a distinct idea of each word. For different ideas are created for the hearer of 'has been begotten' and by the term 'substance'. The argument will become clearer to us by illustrations. The Lord said in the Gospel that when her labour is at hand a woman is in pain but afterwards rejoices in "her happiness that a man has been born into the world" [John 16:21]. So, just as in this passage we have learned from the Gospel two distinct ideas: first, we have understood a generation by birth; secondly, the one who has come into existence by generation (for a man is not generation but by generation the man exists); so also here, since Eunomius has acknowledged that the substance was begotten, we have learned by the word 'begotten' the fact of being derived from something and by the word 'substance' we have understood a substrate possessing a derived hypostasis (Ibid., pp. 204, 206).

But let us, please, look at the harshness of the noble and truth-loving writer's grand criticisms of us. He wrote, then, immediately after his words just examined, about wise **Gregory**, as follows: For he says, "in between those words quoted by these admirable accusers, some which the agents of sacrilege have disregarded with a pricking conscience: 'If, then, the meaning of "substance" is one thing and the term "generation" is established to mean something else, their sophistical tricks have collapsed all of a sudden, like earth-enware pots thrown together and shattering one another. For it will no longer be open to

them to carry over the ingenerate-generate distinction to the substance of Son and Father and simultaneously transfer the mutual conflict of the names to the realities". . . .. For as the same wise father says of Eunomius: "The caviller's trivial accusation becomes important advocacy of the defendant's superiority" (Ibid., pp. 226, 228).

He [Damian] said, then: These words, which rebut their insanity and free the doctor [**Gregory**] from their calumny, they have left out. The doctor to explain them to us in a different way, teaches again a little later: 'But because the substance of Adam and of Abel is characterized by the same properties, we must necessarily profess that there is one substance in the two but that those viewed in the same nature are different. For Adam and Abel, the two of them, are one in the concept of nature but have a mutual, unconfused distinction in the properties viewed in each of them' (Ibid., pp. 248, 250).

But please let us examine 'generation' and see the real opinion of the doctor on the divine generation. He [**Gregory**] says, then, a little after the words we set down previously, as follows: 'But because, amongst men, the term "father" has various conjoined meanings, to which the immortal nature is a stranger, we must leave aside all the material ideas entering in beside the corporeal meaning of "father" and have the impress of a God-befitting thought which signifies only genuine relationship with God the Father. So, because along with human fatherhood one always conceives not only of all that the flesh gives to be apprehended in the notion of a human father, but also a temporal idea, it would be as well to rid divine generation of the temporal idea as well as of the corporeal taint; so that with the material property being everywhere cleansed away, the transcendent generation may be pure not only of any idea of passion but also of any of temporality' (Ibid., p. 250).

Therefore he [**Gregory**] writes in the first book *Against Eunomius*, after the words just now examined, as follows: So what we have been guided to learn of human nature (the same thing which has been proved by a train of argument) this, I think, is what ought to be taken as our guide to the exalted conception of divine doctrines as well. For having shaken off every carnal and material conception from the divine and exalted doctrines we shall have, through the conception that remains, secure guidance to the exalted and unapproachable, when that conception is purified of such things (Ibid., p. 264).

Taking up these words and pouring scorn upon them, the doctor, after a few lines, says: He repudiates a commonness of substance by a twofold argument and says: either there are two parallel ingenerate first principles, one of which we name 'Father' and the other 'Son', saying that "He who" *is* has been begotten by "Him who is" [Exod 3:11; Rev 1:8]; or, one and the same substance is understood as belonging to both, a substance which receives the names in turn, and is Father and becomes Son, being produced from itself by generation. And again: He says we conceive of two ingenerate substances. How can someone who accuses us of merging and muddling everything by professing a single substance, say this (Ibid., pp. 360, 362)?

What will he who affirms that a hypostasis is a collection of properties and indicative marks, and not the substrate they are collected to belong with, devise against these words? For we have now heard the doctor [**Gregory**] saying: for one who says 'man' has effected a vague understanding in the ear by the indefiniteness of the meaning, so that the nature is signified by the term whereas the reality itself, which subsists and is signified properly, is not indicated by the term. But one who says 'Paul' has shown that the nature subsists in the reality which is signified by the name. This then is the hypostasis: not the indefinite thought of the substance, which as a result of the generality of the object indicated, obtains no stability; but that thought which presents and delimits the common and unbounded in some reality, by means of the properties appearing on it. And again: For our mind must rest upon some substrate and have the impress of its clear marks and thus have imagination

of the one loved. For if we had not conceived of the fatherhood or considered the one for whom this property was set aside, how could we have taken in the idea of God the Father (Ibid., pp. 376, 378)?

Gregory, his brother, wrote similar things to this in the fifth book of the treatise *Against Eunomius* (its beginning is: But because, he says, the word 'Lord') as follows: For when we say 'this one was begotten' or 'was not begotten', we are stamped with a twofold conception by the statement: by the demonstrative part of the sentence we look at the substrate; by 'was begotten' or 'was not begotten' we learn what is viewed as pertaining to the substrate. So that we understand one thing concerning the being, but another thing concerning what is viewed as pertaining to the being. Besides, along with each term used of the divine nature (e.g., 'just', 'incorruptible', 'immortal', 'ingenerate' and any other expression) 'is' has to be understood. Even if the word happens not to accompany the statement, all the same the speaker's and the listener's minds must complete the term by 'is'; so that the title lands in a vacuum unless the 'is' be supplied. For instance (for it is better to present the argument using an example) when David says: "God the righteous judge, mighty and patient" [Ps 7:11], unless 'is' were understood along with each term used, the itemizing of titles unsupported by any substrate would be thought vacuous and baseless. But when 'is' is understood along with each term, the expressions altogether gain significance as they are viewed belonging with that which is. So just as by saying 'he is judge' we have conceived of as belonging with him a certain activity by means of judgement, yet we have cast our mind on the substrate by 'is', clearly being taught hereby not to suppose the concept of being the same as the activity; so also, as a result of saying 'is generate' or 'is ingenerate' we divide our understanding into a twofold conception, by 'is' conceiving of the substrate, but by 'generate' or 'ingenerate' apprehending either what belongs or does not belong to the substrate (Ibid., pp. 378, 380).

Only Eunomius, it would seem, who wrote this sort of riddle and concealed his mischief in a morass of darkness, could understand the obscurity of these phrases, Eunomius of whom wise **Gregory of Nyssa** says the following in the 23rd chapter of the *Refutation* of him (which begins: To want to help everybody was not, apparently): I suppose, then, that not even the writer himself would be able to say in simple terms what he meant when he wrote this. The meaning of what is said is so befouled in the mire of the diction that no one can easily recognize the intention for the mud of the explanation. For one would suppose that 'come out to as great a difference as the works come out to' belongs to a pagan word-twister, who talks nonsense to deceive the audience (Ibid., pp. 398, 400).

For wise **Gregory of Nyssa** wrote in the second book *Against Eunomius* the profane (its beginning is: But it is time that the explanation of the offspring's nature): But let us leave this aside and, so far as possible, let care for the prior issues mollify our hearts which leap up with faith's zeal against these great blasphemers. For how can we not be moved to hot indignation, when our God, our Lord, our Life-giver and our Saviour, is insulted by these little men? For had he been abusing my fleshly father or been at enmity with a benefactor of mine, could I have calmly borne his rage against my loved-ones? But if the Lord of my soul who caused it to subsist when it did not exist, and redeemed it when it was in bondage, who caused it to taste the present, and prepared for it a future life; who invites us into the kingdom, and counsels how we may flee the condemnation of Hell (to speak thus far of small things and not of things befitting the glory of our common Lord); who is worshipped by all the Creation of heavenly, earthly and sub-terrestrial beings; before whom stand numberless myriads of ministers in Heaven, and before whom bows whatever is governed by understanding and has a yearning for good; if he is exposed to abuse by men for whom it is not enough to make the lot of the Rebel only their own but who account it loss not to cast others too into the same pit with themselves through their writing, so that

their descendants may not lack guides to destruction: will anyone censure anger at that (CD vol. 54, pp. 6, 8)?

See how **Gregory**, brother to the God-clad father Basil expounds this when he says the following in the 39th chapter of his *Refutation of Eunomius* (its beginning is: To want to help everybody was not apparently): But we ourselves shall in charity correct the error of his opinion by saying what we know of the matter. Names mean various things with us, Eunomius, and yield a different meaning in application to the transcendent power. For in all else, too, divine, is parted from human, nature by a large interval and experience discloses no such thing here as great as that which is thought on in similitudes and suppositions. Likewise also, even if there be a homonymity of things human with the eternal in what is signified by the names, nevertheless what are meant by the names are parted in proportion to the remoteness of the natures (Ibid., p. 30).

For by 'concept', as has been said, they are characterizing the nature, **as Gregory of Nyssa** has shown by saying 'for the concept of "man" characterizes a man and that of "horse" a horse (Ibid., p. 52).

Wise **Gregory** too, Basil's brother, taught us similar (indeed, to speak more truly, the very same) things in his book *Against Eunomius* (whose beginning is: There is a limit to the labours of those who "strive lawfully" in contests [see 1 Tim 2:5b]) writing as follows: So now let the critical hearer of those words remember this: by using 'begotten substance' of the Only-begotten he grants, by logical sequence, that we should use 'unbegotten substance' of the Father, so that, therefore, neither ingeneracy nor generacy will be understood as substance; but substance, on the one hand, and the fact it was begotten or not begotten, on the other hand, are to be considered individually by means of the properties viewed in the substance. And later: For one who says the substance has been begotten clearly defines generacy as being something other than substance, so as not to permit the meaning of generacy to be adapted to the concept of substance. For he has not done in this part the very thing he designed in many passages so that he could say that generacy is the substance itself; but here he acknowledges that the substance has been begotten so that the hearers have a distinct idea of each word. For different ideas are created for the hearer of 'has been begotten' and by the term 'substance'. And again: If, then, the meaning of 'substance' is one thing and the term 'generation' is established to mean something else, their sophistical tricks have collapsed all of a sudden, like earthenware pots thrown together and shattering one another. For it will no longer be open to them to carry over the ingenerate-generate distinction to the substance of Son and Father and simultaneously transfer the mutual conflict of the names to the realities (Ibid., pp. 122, 124).

Similarly also in the second book (whose beginning is: But it is time that the explanation of the offspring's nature) he [**Gregory**] rebuts the miscreant out of his own words, proving that generacy is not a substance and saying as follows: What does he mean when he says these things? For having distinguished the two terms from each other and made a corresponding verbal division in what they signify, he sets down each of them on its own and properly: one term 'generation'; the other term 'substance'. 'The substance', he says, 'clearly being something other than generation, admits of generation'. For if generation were a substance (which is what he always rules so that the two terms may be mutually equivalent in meaning), he would not have said, 'the substance admits of generation'; for that would have been the same as saying, 'the substance admits of substance' or 'the generation admits of generation', if substance were generation. Therefore, he understands generation as one thing and the substance admitting of generation as another; for what is received is not the same as the recipient (Ibid., pp. 124, 126).

Let us investigate again also his [**Gregory's**] very wise words on this point in the 35th chapter of his *Refutation of* the same *Eunomius* (whose beginning is: To want to help

everybody was not apparently), where he explains the issue more clearly and says as follows: For let us grant that it is allowable, according to the argument of our opponents, that ingeneracy is a substance and, again, likewise, admissible that generacy is a substance. In that case if anyone adheres to the meaning of the words, precisely the Manichean doctrine will be constructed by this path, because it pleased the Manichees to teach, by an opposition of natures, an opposition between evil and good, light and darkness, and all such things. And, I think, anyone who has not traversed the exposition in a superficial way will readily agree that what I am saying is true. But let us examine the point as follows. In each of the subjects are seen fitting indications whereby the property of the underlying nature is recognized, whether you are studying the differences between animals or anything else; for a tree and an animal are not characterized by the same things, nor are man's signifying marks common to animals as against irrational nature; nor again, indeed, do the same things indicate life and death, but, as has been said, in all, generally, there is a pure and simple separation of subjects, unconfused, as it is, by any sharing of the indication appearing on them. This is the arrangement, by reference to which the argument of our opponents will be examined. They call ingeneracy a substance and likewise make generacy a substance. Now just as the indications of man and stone are different and not the same (for you would not give the same definition when defining what each of them is), so they will necessarily concede that the ingenerate God is recognized by certain marks whereas the generate God by different ones. In which case let us observe all the properties of ingenerate God which we have learned from divine Scripture to say about him and understand devoutly. What, then, are they? No Christian man, I think, is unaware that God is good, kindly, holy, just, pure, invisible, immortal, incapable of corruption change and alteration, powerful, wise, benefactor, Lord and judge, and all such things. Why, indeed, should we prolong discussion by dwelling on these undisputed matters? If, then, we perceive these things in the ingenerate nature, but 'being generate' is opposite in conception to 'not being generate', those who define ingeneracy and generacy as being 'substance' must, of necessity, assert that, according to the contrariety obtaining between 'ingeneracy' and 'generacy', the indicative marks of the begotten substance will also be contrary to those seen in the ingenerate nature. For if they say they are the same owing to the sameness in what appear on them, the otherness of the nature of the subjects will no longer be preserved; for we must necessarily suppose that the indications of things which are different are also different, whereas things which are alike in concept of substance are, it is clear, characterized by the same marks (Ibid., pp. 126, 128, 130).

It is this that wise **Gregory of Nyssa** teaches us when he subtly exposed Eunomius' hidden, satanic and blasphemous abuse in the 15th chapter of his *Refutation* of the impious fellow (its beginning is: To want to help everybody was not apparently), as follows: But it will not perhaps be inopportune to investigate each of these by argument, to see what he means when he attributes to the Father's substance alone the 'highest and fullest sense', not permitting the substance of Son or Holy Ghost to be high or in the full sense. For I think this is a device for totally denying the Only-begotten's and the Spirit's substance, by covertly contriving this verbal trick to make them seem to exist only in name, and the true acknowledgement of their subsistence to be negated by such a contrivance. And one can without difficulty discern that this is so, if one spends a little more time on the argument. It is not the part of one who thinks that the Only-begotten and the Holy Ghost truly exist in their own hypostases, to be over-particular about the acknowledgement of the names whereby he thinks he should honour the God over all; otherwise, it would be most insane, having assented to the reality, to be over-particular about the words. But as it is, by having attributed to the Father's substance alone the 'highest and fullest sense', he has conceded, by silence over the others, that he thinks they do not subsist in the full sense.

For how could he say that anything to which 'being in the full sense', is not attributed, truly exists? For in the case of what do not have 'in the full sense' attributed to them, we must necessarily assent to their contraries; for what does not 'exist' in the full sense, is entirely non-existent, in which case the claim of 'not being in the full sense' is proof of total non-existence. And after other things: but there is no doubt of this argument's being advocacy of Jewish teaching professed by those who make only the Father's substance subsist. It alone they affirm exists in the full sense, whereas they reckon that of Son and Spirit among the non-existent. For anything which does not exist in the full sense is spoken of as 'existing' only by a linguistic custom, just as someone seen in a portrait is named 'a man' whereas the one called 'a man' in the full sense is not the likeness but the archetype of the likeness; and the picture is 'a man' only in name, and therefore cannot be called in the full sense what it is called, because it is not by nature that which is named. And hence, then, if only the father's substance is called 'substance' in the full sense, whereas that of Son and Spirit is not called that at all, what else is this but a clear denial of the saving message? Therefore, let them run from the Church to the Jewish synagogues, because they will not grant that the Son exists in the full sense and claim that he does not exist at all; for what is 'not in the full sense' is equivalent to 'what does not exist'. And again: But if he professes the Son as subsisting as a substantial force in some way or other (for we will not still dispute over this), why does he again tear up what he has conceded, by claiming that he who is acknowledged as existing does not exist in the full sense, which is equivalent (as we have said) to his not existing at all? For just as someone to whom the name does not fully apply cannot be a man, and in the absence of a man's properties the whole concept of his substance is negated as well, so too in the case of any reality, which does not have existence attributed to it completely and in the full sense, a partial admission of its being is no proof of its existence. However, this claim about its 'not existing in the full sense' is a device for the total abolition of its basis (Ibid., pp. 184, 186, 188, 190).

As wise **Gregory**, Basil the Great's brother, instructs us in the 37th chapter of his *Refutation of Eunomius* (its beginning is: To want to help everybody was not apparently) by saying: For having heard 'Father' we at once understand the one who is the cause of everything's existence, who, had he owned another cause transcending himself, would not be called 'Father' in the full sense of the word, because the appellation 'Father' (in the full sense) would have been attributed to the cause found to be prior. But if he is the cause of all and "all is from Him" [Rom 11:36]. as the Apostle says, obviously nothing can be found to pre-exist his being. And again, in the 38th chapter: And, here then, if there is another Father, conceived of in thought as prior to the Lord's Father, those who pride themselves upon their inexpressible wisdom must demonstrate the point and then we shall agree that the idea of the ingenerate cannot be understood from the title 'Father'. But if the primal Father has no prior cause underlying his subsistence, and the Only-begotten's hypostasis is always also understood immediately 'Father' is heard, why do they terrify us with these technical tangles of sophisms (Ibid., pp. 200, 202)?

Therefore, on his having made these so wretched and irrational charges, he may be very justly and opportunely answered in the words wise **Gregory** wrote in reply to Eunomius, our author's stay and mentor (and like him a misrepresenter and accuser of the fathers) in the 34th chapter of his *Refutation* (whose beginning is: To want to help everybody): But what is the necessity thrusting his teaching into such suppositions? From what words of his has this been constructed so that the absurdity should be forced to crop up? For if he were alleging anything professed by us and then there were forthcoming, whether by sophistry or with some sort of force, a proof for such a cavil, he might perhaps have had occasion for alleging such a thing for the slandering of our doctrines. But if there are not and will not be in the Church any such words, and none is convicted of saying them,

none is proved to have heard them, and no necessity constructing this absurdity by way of some consequence is to be found. I do not understand what purpose this shadow-battle of his has. It is as if a mentally sick lunatic without a combatant were to fancy that someone was wrestling with him, and then, having made the effort to fling himself down, thinks that he has beaten his opponent. The clever writer has suffered some such fate, fabricating fancies unknown to us, and fighting the shadows he has formed with the imprint of his own notions (Ibid., pp. 276, 278).

For **Gregory of Nyssa**, as has been said, clearly testified that the property, or *prosōpon*, is one thing in its own concept, and the substance another thing, in the *Discourses against Eunomius*, when he said: 'Clearly the teaching of true religion will be confirmed by the opponents' claim, because they do not think ingeneracy is the same as substance but that it is viewed on the substrate, whereas the substrate is, in its own concept, something other than they' (Ibid., p. 290).

What a torpor this is, says wise **Gregory of Nyssa** to Eunomius, what a stupor this is, that these tipsy topers suppose the ceiling is turning into the floor and that they have the ground over their heads! They cry out in protest that even the ground is unsteady, that the walls have run away, that the whole world is revolving and that nothing they can see is still! Perhaps, then, the author was writing with his soul in such turmoil that we ought to pity him for what he wrote rather than despise him (Ibid., pp. 292, 294).

For the doctor [**Gregory**], opposing thoroughly impious Eunomius, quoted a little phrase of Eunomius' in the eighth book (whose beginning is: But let us hold on to the previously established points) and wrote: 'Generation', he says, 'is separate from the ingenerate but joined to the Son's substance'. Does this not suffice to prove the ignorance of the author's mind? Who does not know that what can be separated from something and joined to something is first conceived of on its own, and in this way is joined to something else or separated from what it is joined to, for 'joining' is not predicated of a single item on its own. So because he called generation 'separate from' the Father 'but joined to the son's substance', it is wholly necessary that what can be separated and joined should be seen entirely properly and on its own, for what does not exist and does not subsist is neither separated from anything nor joined to anything. But because he says 'generation is joined to the Son's substance', he must view each of them on its own; for if he supposed the one was the same as the other, he would not have termed the identity 'joining', it being clear to everybody that the signification of 'joining' is not observable in the single item on its own but that the term indicates relationship with something else. In which case the substance seen on its own is one thing and the generation which is joined to this substance but separate, according to what he says, from the Father's, is something other than it. But if generation is seen on its own by our opponents, it will be acknowledged, even by our adversaries, that the Only-begotten's substance is something other than it. For what is joined to something is not the same as what it is joined to, and what is not the same must be other. So, if the concept of substance and that of generation are different, the heresy will be cancelled by the very things he says. For then the Only-begotten's substance will not vary from the Father's substance through the difference between ingeneracy and generacy, for it has been proved by our opponents themselves that generation is something other than substance, so that there will be no necessity for a relationship to exist between what are viewed in the substance and the one joined with it; but if generation exists on its own and again substance is understood on its own, an unique concept, with no participation with the other, will apply to each of them. For were someone to follow Eunomius in the examination of the thought now proposed by him, and return the attack, it would be possible for an equivalent argument to be applied to the Father too. For it will be legitimate to imitate his express words, as follows: by ingeneracy's being separate from the Son

but joined to the Father's substance, the Son does indeed exist by generation and owes his being to the ingenerate, for he is begotten; for ingeneracy is not prior to the Father's subsistence nor is the Father prior to his own ingeneracy, for he who does not have his existence by being begotten has existed without being begotten. Equally then, if, when someone says 'ingeneracy is joined to the Father's substance', the argument follows in terms like those he has inferred of the Son, clearly the teaching of true religion will be confirmed by the opponents' claim: because they do not think ingeneracy or generacy is the same as substance but that they are viewed on the substrate, whereas the substrate is, in its own concept, something other than they; since no difference is found there (because the difference between generacy and ingeneracy is separate from the substance), it will, of entire necessity, turn out that they can profess no variation of substance in the two. Let us, again, examine in addition to what has been said, this too: what it is that he means when he says that generation is separate from the Father. Does he understand it as being a substance or an activity? Now if he thinks it an 'activity', it must be connected equally with what is effected and what acts, just as in the case of every effect it is possible to see, both in regard to what is brought into existence and to the agent, the activity unseparated from the craftsman and viewed in the making of the products. But if he calls it a 'substance' separate from the Father's substance, by professing the Lord as owing his existence to it he obviously regards it as occupying the place of Father to the Only-begotten, so that two Fathers are to be thought of for the Son: one who only bears the name, whom he also calls 'ingenerate', but who does not participate in generation; and one who effects in the Only-begotten what it belongs to the Father to effect: what he calls 'generation'. And this will be rebutted more by Eunomius' very own words than by ours. For he says in the subsequent words: 'God by existing without generation is also prior to the begotten'; and a little later, 'for he who owes his existence to generation did not exist before he was begotten'. Therefore, if generation is separate from the Father, whereas the Son owes his existence to his having been begotten, the Father himself will be inactive with regard to the Only-begotten's hypostasis and separate from the generation to which the son owes his existence. So if the Father is alienated from the Son's generation, either they are fabricating another Father of the Son by the term 'generation', or the clever fellows are, by their words, declaring the Son a self-begotten Son (Ibid., pp. 300, 302, 304, 306).

For **Saint Gregory** too, when he said: ingeneracy or generacy is not the same as substance but they are viewed on the substrate, whereas the substrate is, in its own concept, something other than they, did not say this on the ground that he recognized ingeneracy or generacy as in any way substance or substrate (Syr. ܗܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܠܡܗܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ) (Ibid., p. 326).

His namesake, wise **Gregory** who occupied the throne of Nyssa, wrote similar things to this in his second book *Against Eunomius* (its beginning is: But it is time that the explanation of the offspring's nature) as follows: First let him rebut these words as false and then he will be believed when he speaks about those that follow, but, so long as the first point is unproven, it will be idle chatter to dwell upon secondary matters. And nobody is to retort to me that what we say should be confirmed by an argument, for the tradition coming to us from the fathers as a heritage by succession from the Apostles through the saints after them is sufficient proof of our case. But those who change doctrines by innovation need a good deal of help from their ratiocinations if they are going to persuade, not men blown about like dust but, people who are settled and constant in their minds (Ibid., pp. 388, 390).

Besides this, the wise words of the other **Gregory** (I mean **of Nyssa**) will teach us reverence and awe over divine doctrines, for when contending against detestable Eunomius and seeing him brazenly aspire to things not to be ventured upon, he said in the 30th chapter of his *Refutation of Eunomius* (its beginning is: To want to help everybody was

not, apparently) the following, after first setting down the blasphemer's words, 'The kind of similarity to be sought', he says: by whom does he say it is be sought? What command, what scriptural law has made the search necessary? Does not wisdom clearly forbid search into matters too profound and enquiry into matters too difficult and being wise in inessentials? Paul says and testifies in the Lord to everybody who is on our side that we should "not think things higher than we ought to think" [cf. Rom 3:12], not because he despised wisdom but because he rejects our over-much extending ourselves through contemplating an enquiry into things incomprehensible. Isaiah, more clearly than the rest, proclaims the impossibility of such an investigation, by calling his generation uncomprehending [6:9]. Indeed, all the words of the divinely inspired Scripture which figuratively teach us "the mystery of godliness" [1 Tim 3:16] lay down the law that we ought not to enquire about things incomprehensible. For what the divine teaching says is, as it were, a limit of our duties. So, by what necessity has he sought 'the kind of similarity', there being no saint who has counselled any concern for such things? For had it occurred to the prophets or patriarchs or the Lord's disciples to give any consideration to these matters, it would not have been absurd for us too to be zealous for the same things in a like search for a similitude; although even so it would have been superfluous to search again into what has been searched into already, and we should have been right to stick by what was known before. But if the object of their concern seemed beyond even their comprehension and thus the search itself vain (their incapacity for the object of their search indicating its incomprehensibility), solicitude, therefore, in these matters is superfluous and useless in both cases, whether the object desired was sought by saints or unsought. For if anything useful had come about from this search, the saints, who exhort us to "enquire even into the deep things of God through the Spirit" [cf. 1 Cor 2:10], would not have disregarded these essentials. To whom after them, then, will be revealed what is too high for prophetic revelation and knowledge by the apostles? But I do know the necessity which constrains them to ask after such things. For, in my judgement, there is no other cause for such an investigation except their desire to convert the contentious to them by the outlandishness of their teaching. For had they held to the wonted doctrines of the fathers, in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel and the Apostles, they would have had no occasion for being known more than other people (Ibid., pp. 418, 420, 422).

For the same doctor [**Gregory**] taught this too, when he wrote as follows, in the first book *Against Eunomius* (its beginning is: There is a limit to the labours of those who "strive lawfully" [2 Tim 2:5b]): But if anybody were to demand an explanation and description of the divine substance, we should not deny that we are ignoramuses in such wisdom, and profess only so much: that it is impossible for the infinite in nature to be comprehended by any design of words, for prophecy calls out that there is no limit to divine grandeur, clearly proclaiming: "There is no bound to the glory of his greatness" [cf. Ephes 3:19]. But if the things belonging with him are infinite, much more is what he himself is in substance uncomprehended by boundary in any part. So, if an explanation by names and words limits the subject in meaning and the infinite cannot be limited, nobody can rightly find fault with our ignorance in not attempting what cannot be ventured upon. For by what name shall I comprehend the incomprehensible? What word shall I use to express the ineffable? So since God is too exalted and too sublime for signification by names, we have learned to honour what is beyond speech and understanding by silence, even if someone, thinking beyond what he ought to think, waxes hot against this soberness of speech, ridiculing this ignorance of ours with regard to things incomprehensible (I mean the absence of configuration, the infinity, the absence of size and volume in Father, Son and Holy Ghost), and recognizes difference by way of dissimilarity and produces this in rebuttal of our ignorance. And again: And therefore, we fix in ourselves the doctrine

which has been made a laughing-stock, professing that we are too inferior in knowledge for things which transcend knowledge, and saying that we truly "worship what we know" [John 44:22]. Yet we do know the sublimity of the glory of him we worship, reckoning the incomparability of the grandeur by our incapacity to comprehend it by our reasonings (Ibid., pp. 424, 426).

2.4.3. From *De Vita Gregori Thaumaturgi* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 46, cols. 893–957; using Gregory of Nyssa, *Opera* vols. 10.1.4, pp. 3–57, with vol. 3.4 [using Heil ed.], and note Clav. Patr. Graec. 3184)

Gregory the Great, who took his name from miracles and wonders, also teaches in his book *On the Faith, by sections* (whose beginning is: Enemies and strangers to the apostolic profession), as follows: But we call the Trinity 'one Godhead', 'one lordship' and 'one holiness', because the Father is the Lord's *Beginning*, since he begat him eternally, and the Lord is the *Exemplar* of the Spirit; for thus is both the Father 'Lord' and the Son 'God' and of God it is said "God is Spirit" [John 1:1–2; 4:24; cf. 13:15]. And again: for this is why the Holy Trinity is believed and worshipped: one God, in accordance with what is attested by divine Scripture, although we have everywhere in the divine Scriptures, numberless teachings which further testify to the apostolic and churchly faith (Ibid., pp. 338, 340).

2.4.4. From *Oratio Catechetica Magna* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 45, cols. 9–105; using Gregory of Nyssa, *Opera* vol. 3.4 [Using Muhlenberg ed.], and note Clav. Patr. Graec. 3150)

Observe closely what he [**Gregory**] said: Therefore, when there is a discussion with a pagan, it would be as well to produce this beginning to the argument: whether he supposes that God exists or is swept into the doctrine of atheists. So, if he says there is no god he will be led on from the skilful and wise arrangements in the world to the acknowledgement thereby of the existence of a certain power, therein viewed, set over all. But if he has no doubt that God exists but proceeds with his suppositions into a plurality of Godheads, let us use this sort of order of argument with him. Which of these does he think God is: perfect or defective? When he rightly testifies to the perfection of the divine nature, let us require him to concede the fact that through all the things viewed in the Godhead he is perfect, so that God is not to be seen as a mixture of opposites, of perfect and defective. You see that even those sick with the insanity of heathendom admit that God is perfect and thereby the master of mysteries attempts to direct them, even against their will, towards disavowing polytheism. But this becomes even clearer through the words you subsequently quoted: For if he concedes that perfection in all aspects is to be confessed as belonging with the subject, but says that the perfect things which are characterized by the same attributes are many, it will be entirely necessary for him either to point out the property in those things which are distinguished by no difference but viewed with the same attributes; or if the mind apprehends nothing by way of property, not to suppose a division in those things by way of distinction (CD vol. 35, p. 72).

2.4.5. From *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 45, cols. 465–572; using Gregory of Nyssa, *Opera* vol. 2 [using Jaeger ed.] and note Clav. Patr. Graec. 3136)

Wise **Gregory**, bishop **of Nyssa**, will bear witness that this is all measureless madness. He writes as follows in his discourse *Against Eunomius' Statement*, who uttered similar senseless nonsense (its beginning goes: The faith of Christians): 'He is not', he says, 'separated or divided into a plurality in the substance wherein he is one, nor does he become different at different times nor does he change from being what he is, nor is he transformed from one substance into three hypostases, for he is completely and entirely one, remaining likewise by the same respects unique'. The intelligent listener should first separate, from the passage quoted, the apparently sensible things and the empty verbiage

thoughtlessly tossed into the discourse. Afterwards he should take notice of the meaning of the residue of statement to see if it harmonizes with the Christian religion. The first words of the passage are completely devoid of any meaning, good or bad. For what meaning 'not divided into a plurality in the substance wherein he is one, nor does he become different at different times nor does he change from being what he is' has, not even he will say, and I think none of his supporters can find any shadow of meaning in these statements either. 'He is not divided in the substance wherein he is one'. Does he say of him that he is not divided from his own substance or of the substance that it is not divided from him? This meaningless sentence is an empty verbal noise, a random concoction. Why should we waste time in track of this senseless verbiage? For how can someone be separated from his own substance and remain in being? Or how can someone's substance be parted from him and looked at separately? Or how is it possible for someone having left his being to become someone else, while becoming outside himself? But, he says, 'he is not transformed from one substance into three hypostases, for he is completely and entirely one, remaining likewise by the same respects unique'. To my mind, then, the parts that are senseless in this statement will be obvious to everybody, even before our argument. Let the man who thinks there is some sense or meaning in this statement oppose it; for one who knows how to weigh the force of an argument will disdain involving himself with the baseless things. For what force does it have against our teaching to say 'he is not divided or separated into a plurality in the substance wherein he is one, nor does he become different at different times nor does he change from being what he is, nor is he transformed from one substance into three hypostases', things not said or believed by Christians nor logically deducible from our confessions? For whoever said, or heard anybody state in God's Church, that the Father is separated or divided from his substance, or has become different at different times by becoming outside himself or is transformed into three hypostases? Eunomius says these things to himself, without entering into controversy with us; instead he babbles his own nonsense, mixing a good deal of senselessness into the blasphemy of these statements. We, for our part, say that it is equally blasphemous and godless to call the Lord of the Creation a creature as to think the Father is separated or sundered in his being, or leaves himself or is transformed into three hypostases like clay or wax transformed into various patterns (CD vol. 29, pp. 112, 114, 116).

But let us pass on to the wise teaching of his namesake; he too, indeed, impelled by the same grace says: Every name whatsoever you use belongs with the being and is not the being. And again: All the things existing within the creation are considered with the aid of the meaning of names. One who says 'sky' has brought the mind of his auditor to the created thing signified by this term, and one who mentions man or any other living thing by name immediately impresses his auditor with the appearance of the living thing. And again: Only the uncreated nature believed in of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost transcends every nameable meaning. Therefore, when the Word referred to "the name" in handing over the Faith, He did not add what it was (for how could a name be found for a reality "above every name"?) [Phil 2:9] but gave power so that our mind, being stirred by piety, should be able to discover what the name, revelatory of the transcendent nature, is, which we should attach in like manner to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, whether it be 'the Good', or 'the Incorruptible', whatever name each man thinks fitting to be taken for the manifesting of the immortal nature (Ibid., p. 344).

But let us, also, examine the other statements of the doctor. For we know he [**Gregory**] says that from all names by means of which God is known; and again: And such things he shows to be notions which demonstrate the transcendent power by means of these names. And what does he think all the names by means of which God is known are? Or the things whereby the notions which demonstrate the transcendent power are known? Are they

substances or hypostases? Let this cunning fellow and expositor of deep notions tell us! What too are all the names which are to be found, by means of which the divine nature abides as it is, without indications (Ibid., p. 346)?

And again in the book *Against* the same wicked *Eunomius' Statement* (whose beginning runs: The faith of the Christians): For one who says 'sky' has brought the mind of his auditor to the created thing signified by this term, and one who mentions man or any other living thing by name immediately impresses his auditor with the appearance of the living thing. All the other things, too, are likewise depicted, through the names imposed on them, in the heart of one who has received through the ear the appellation imposed on the reality (CD vol. 32, pp. 208, 210).

Yet let us now bring in first wise **Gregory** himself, who has been misrepresented, and let us hear his teaching on the point. For in the book *Against Eunomius' Statement* (whose beginning is: The faith of Christians), he spoke as follows, after first setting down the miscreant's words: For he says, 'Being superior to all rule, all subjection, all authority, all empire'. This is ours, and the Catholic Church's declaration: that we believe that the divine nature is superior to all rule and has control over everything that is to be conceived of as included amongst things existing, but the divine nature is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now if he attests the power as belonging to the Father alone, if he says that he alone is free from change and alteration, if he says that he alone is immortal, it will be obvious that the claim is here being made that one to whom these do not belong must be mutable, corruptible, changeable and temporary. Therefore, it is these latter that Eunomius attributes to the Only-begotten and the Holy Ghost by his teaching (CD vol. 54, p. 334).

Gregory of Nyssa concurred in the same teaching when he said in the *Refutation* he wrote *of Eunomius' Statement* (its beginning is: The faith of Christians) as follows: For though there are many other names whereby God is signified, in history, prophecy and law, our Lord Christ, leaving all these aside, lays down these words as more capable of bringing us to faith about "Him who is", and decreed that it is enough for us to abide in the appellation of Father, Son and Holy Ghost for an understanding of "Him who" truly "is" (cf. Exod 3:14], who is both one and not one. For in the concept of substance he is one (which is why the Lord ordained that we should pay regard to one name) but by the properties indicative of hypostases he divides out faith in Father, Son and Holy Ghost, inseparably divided and unconfusedly united (Syr. ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫ ܒܡܗܝܬܐ ܘܒܡܬܩܢܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ). And again: Therefore, we say that *the mystery of godliness* is transmitted to the holy disciples as both united and separated: we are to believe in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. For the property of the hypostases makes clear and unconfused the separation of the *prosōpa*, whereas the one name laid down in the deposition of faith explains to us clearly the unity of substance of the *prosōpa*, the objects of faith: I mean the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Ibid., pp. 400, 402).

2.5. Quotations from the Works of St. John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407)[7]

2.5.1. From *In Johannen Homiliae* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 59, cols. 23–482, with Clav. Patr, Graec. 4425)

Therefore, adhering to the words of fathers proficient in the mysteries and considering John the great teacher of true religion, who states (speaking of the hypostasis of the Only begotten Son of God) that: 'the Word is a hypostatic substance' (CD vol. 29, p. 44).

2.5.2. From *In Epistulam ad Philippenses Homiliae* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 62, cols. 177–298, with Clav. Patr. Graec. 4432)

Therefore, let the Lybian Sabellius first be introduced. What, then, does he say? That 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Ghost' are mere names applied to a single *prosōpon* (Ibid., p. 348).

In chapter 22 of his Book II, Peter, following his usual practice, discusses the points he judges rebut Damian's thesis. To this end, in support of his arguments he quotes the following passage from St. John Chrysostom's Homily 6:

And again: Indeed, even Sabellius too, "considered it no robbery to be equal with God" [cf. Phil 2:6]. But equal is not said of one *prosōpon*, for the equal is equal to something. You see, the positing of two *prosopa*, not mere names which are spoken of apart from realities (Ibid., p. 350).

2.5.3. From *De Incomprehensibili Dei Natura* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 48, cols. 701–48; using Malingery ed., vol. 1 [Sourc. Chrét. 28 bis], pp. 278–80, with Clav. Patr. Graec. 4318)

The ecumenical doctor, **John**, too, who occupied the archiepiscopal throne of the Imperial City, indicates this more plainly, writing, as he did, in the fifth sermon *On the Incomprehensible*, as follows: For it is clear from the addition that the Son is God. For if the name 'God' belonged to the Father alone and could not signify any other hypostasis, but only the first and unbegotten, as if it were significant of him and him alone, the addition of "Father" would be superfluous; for it would suffice to say "one God" and we should understand who the one spoken of was. But because the name 'God' is common to Father and Son, by saying "one God" Paul would not have indicated whom he was speaking of. Which is why he needed the appellation "Father" to show that he was speaking about the primal and unbegotten hypostasis, because the appellation 'God' does not suffice to indicate him, since it is common to him and to the Son [cf. 1 Cor 8:6]. For some of the names are common, some proper: the common to show the invariableness of the substance, the proper to characterize the properties of the hypostases. 'Father' and 'Son', then, are proper to each hypostasis, whereas 'God' and 'Lord' are common. Since, then, he put the common name "one God", he needed also the proper name in order to indicate whom he was speaking of, lest we should fall into Sabellius's madness (CD vol. 54. pp. 162, 164).

2.5.4. From Ps. Iohannes Chrysostomus, *De Sancta Trinitate Seu de Fide* (see Patr. Graec. vol. 60, cols. 767–72, with Clav. Patr. Graec 4206)

In chapter 47 of his Book III, Peter returns to the theme that the fathers unite in teaching the truth affirmed at the end of his last chapter 46. Therefore, he adduces a series of quotations from a number of fathers including the following two short passages from St. John Chrysostom's *De Sancta Trinitate seu de Fide*:

Therefore, receive again Saint **John**, too, who was archbishop of the Imperial City but adorned all the churches everywhere with his divinely inspired teachings. He took aim and with a single shot brought down your false opinion. For he wrote in his exposition *On the Holy Trinity* (its beginning is: A teacher of the Church resembles a physician), as follows: First, then, is faith in God, who is a reality, impalpable, incomprehensible, invisible, not to be investigated, inquired into or subject to judgement, a reality honoured by silence and adored by the intellect. Faith begins with the Father, and arrives at the Son and is perfected in the Spirit (Ibid., p. 370).

For see how **John**, who pours forth streams of variegated and faultless teaching, forges the same unaltered chain as his precursors, by saying: Faith in God begins with the Father, and arrives at the Son and is perfected in the Spirit. First, then, he says, is faith in God, who is a reality, impalpable, incomprehensible, invisible, not to be investigated, inquired into or subject to judgement, a reality honoured by silence and adored by the intellect (Ibid., p. 378).

2.6. Quotations from the Works of St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444)[8]

In presenting these quotations in his surviving *magnum opus*, Peter introduces St. Cyril of Alexandria with such wonder-inducing appellations as 'Sacred Cyril, the scales of orthodox doctrines'; 'The very teacher who . . . indeed rather was a teacher of the whole

world, renowned Cyril'; 'Proven Cyril, guide to exactitude in divine doctrines'; 'sound Cyril, who throughout his life championed true religion'; 'Expert Cyril, the accurate teacher of divine doctrines'; 'The light of the Christ-loving Alexandrians' and 'Wise Cyril, rich fountain of exact doctrines'.

The translation of these quotations is already published and may be found in (Ebied 2016a, pp. 33–94).

2.7. Quotations from the Works of St. Severus of Antioch (d. 538)[9]

It is clear from these quotations from St. Severus of Antioch that Peter of Callinicus was well acquainted with the various seminal works of this great Father. Thus, in support of his argument against Damian of Alexandria, he made full use of these works by quoting extensively from them in the extant chapters of his Syriac work, *Contra Damianum*, although actually only less than half of this enormous polemic has survived. The value of these quotations lies in the fact that from them we could glean an insight into Severus's theology, doctrine and teaching, otherwise not well known, with regard to the issues raised by Peter in the Tritheist controversy.

- In presenting these quotations in his surviving *magnum opus*, Peter refers to St. Severus of Antioch, in more than one place, as 'Cyril's peer, proven Severus, who always followed Saint Cyril'. Furthermore, he (Peter) introduces St. Severus throughout these quotations with such wonderful appellations as he 'who illumined the world from the East; 'proven Severus, champion of the truth'; 'Severus, preserver and exact expositor of Patristic teaching (Syr. ܕܠ ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ)'; 'God-clad Severus, the expert destroyer of heretical practices'; and 'Severus, the proven teacher of truth'.
- The translation of these quotations is already published and may be found in (Ebied 2016b, pp. 65–123).

2.8. Quotations from the Works of St. Theodosius of Alexandria (d. 566)[10]

From *De Trinitate* (using Van Roey and Allen eds., Monophysie Texts of the Sixth Century [Orient. Lovan. Analect. 56], pp. 148–84 [trans. pp. 222–51], with Clav. Patr. Graec 7137)

And see how his peer, the accurate guardian of the fathers' doctrines, holy **Theodosius**, in his often quoted *On the Trinity* testified to this fact, writing as follows: These points being thus distinguished and explained, it is clear that the words 'substance' and 'nature' are applied sometimes by the holy Fathers to the generic and common meaning, sometimes to a single hypostasis perceived and considered on its own (CD vol. 29., p. 24).

So, lest anyone should think we do violence to the doctor's meaning, we shall produce a trustworthy witness, holy **Theodosius**, who wrote as follows in his discourse *On Theology* on the point: If they decline, then, to confess each of the hypostases, regarded on its own, as God (a refusal no one of sound mind will venture upon) let them hearken to the assembly of the 318 holy fathers, which taught us to confess 'God of God, light of light, very God of very God.' Indeed he who is styled the Theologian says in the discourse *On Baptism*: 'Each of them viewed separately, is God; the three known together are God: the former because of the consubstantiality, the latter because of the monarchia'. In the discourse *Against the Arians* he says: 'We worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost: God the Son and God (if you are not obdurate) the Holy Ghost' (Ibid., pp. 40, 42).

He [**Theodosius**] said: So much for these people! Gregory, styled the Theologian, on the other hand, is seen to have called the Holy Ghost 'a substance'; by this addition he introduced nothing into the meaning but simply was at pains to prove that the Spirit is substance so that no one should think him an unhypostatic energy (Syr. ܐܢܪܓܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܦܣܛܐ) or the accident of a substance, but should acknowledge him as something existing in his own right, as a vital force and hypostasis. It is pertinent that you should hear his teaching in

the discourse *On the Holy Ghost*: 'The Holy Ghost', he says, 'must be presumed to be either an individually existing thing or something viewed in something else: what experts in such matter call respectively "substance" and "accident". If the Holy Ghost is an "accident", he must be an energy of God. What else, who else, could he be (for it is better thus, and avoids composition)? If he is an energy, then clearly he is put into operation, does not operate himself and ceases as soon as he has been activated. This is the kind of thing an energy is. How, then, does he act, say such and such things, set apart, is grieved, is vexed (all things clearly, that belong to one who moves, not to a movement)? But if he is a substance, and not one of the things belonging with the substance, he will be thought of either as a creature or as God. For not even the inventors of goat-stags can think up what is half-way or anything sharing, or composed of, both. But if he is a creature, why do we believe in him or how are we perfected in him? For our believing in something and our believing about it are not the same. The former belongs to the Godhead, the second to everything'. Therefore, adhering to the words of fathers proficient in the mysteries and considering John the great teacher of true religion, who states (speaking of the hypostasis of the Only begotten Son of God) that: 'the Word is a hypostatic substance'; and considering, too, his predecessor Gregory, known for his discourses on God, who says of the Holy Ghost: 'But if he is a substance, and not one of the things alongside the substance', and showing that we are using the expressions of Fathers whose orthodoxy is pre-evident, we added in the address previously set forth: 'we acknowledge also to each of the hypostases (recognized for the being of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost) a substance, nature, life, light and truth, and whatever is predicated of the one Godhead by theologians' (Ibid., pp. 42, 44).

Let us in confirmation of what has been said, now recollect our previous detailed examination and show that the theologian recognizes each of the hypostases of the Holy Trinity viewed individually, as nature, like the rest of the Church's doctors. **Saint Theodosius** shall testify again to this when he speaks as follows in the same discourse *On Theology*: Gregory who was bishop of Nazianzus but who enlightened everyone under the sun by his teachings, shall teach clearly that the Father, too, has been called 'nature'; he speaks as follows in the oration *On Orderliness in Discussion*: 'Do not scrutinize the Father's nature, the Only-begotten's substance, the Spirit's glory and power: the single Godhead and radiance in the three, the nature undivided, the confession, glory and hope of believers' (Ibid., pp. 44, 46).

The distinguished **Theodosius**, too, who follows him on every point, wrote, in his discourse *On Theology*, giving us the following teaching: Though, then, there are in the divinely inspired Scripture many names by which the Godhead is signified, our Lord Jesus Christ passed them all by and declared, in the summary of our faith which he was handing on to his disciples: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" [Matt 28:19]. By these appellations he was not introducing to us any three, particular, Gods. Indeed, through Moses, speaker of things sacred, he said: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord" [Deut 6:4]. No, he teaches a clear and unconfused distinction of the *prosōpa*, so that we may recognize that the Father is not the Son or the Spirit, neither is the Son the Spirit or the Father, nor the Holy Ghost the Son or the Father. But recognizing each one by the distinct marks of the hypostasis, we will also repudiate that pernicious confusion which Sabellius the Libyan began, and reject that severing of the Godhead, which is not far off it in absurdity and which most impious Arius introduced (Ibid., p. 308).

It remains for us to point to famous **Theodosius's** view on this subject and in this way finally reach the plainly expressed teaching now under examination, by our God-clad father Severus. He, who truly rose up like an apostle, in our times, as head of the orthodox Church, wrote, then, in the discourse *On Theology* he composed against the polytheists,

as follows: Now the holy and consubstantial Trinity is in its hypostases, separate and unconfused, but of one substance, nature, indivisible Godhead, sovereignty, glory eternity, power, activity, knowledge, adoration and the other attributes which God has by nature. Now the property of the Father is fatherhood and existing ingenerately; the property of the Son is sonship and being begotten by the Father; and the property of the Holy Ghost is the fact that he was not begotten but proceeds, without beginning and eternally, from the Father. For by means of these properties the unconfusedness of the three *prosōpa* (i.e., *hypostases*) is characterized and signified. Whereas all the other things, as we have said before, which characterize the Godhead, are common to them, are co-equal in honour and indivisible, and prove that we have put our faith in one God, who exists and is known in one substance and three hypostases (CD vol. 32, pp. 220, 222).

Thus, in the second chapter I quoted careful readers the same Theologian, cited by the thoroughly distinguished **Theodosius**, saying in his oration *On Athanasius*, as follows: 'For when we say "one substance" and "three hypostases" with true religion (for the first indicates the nature of the Godhead, the second properties of the three)' (Ibid., p. 370).

In that case, why, similarly, should we not reckon the characteristic properties of the Godhead the same as the Godhead, because, with the famous **Theodosius** declaring: We worship and glorify one God in one substance and nature but in three hypostases, we acknowledge and believe the one substance and nature of the Godhead to be nothing other than God himself? For he wrote in his discourse *On Theology* as follows: So these things were said by us in proof of the fact that we worship and acknowledge one God, in one substance and nature but in three hypostases. And again: So, as has often been said, bidding farewell to deductions like this we have learned to believe one God in one substance and nature, but in three hypostases or *prosōpa*, not dividing the one Godhead or merging the three hypostases for the evil involved in both is equal even though it is to be found in opposites (Ibid., p. 402).

In addition to what has already been shown, famous **Theodosius**, he who in altogether priestly fashion headed all the orthodox churches everywhere, testified that the substance is nothing else but the three hypostases since it is seen in them, by saying in his careful discourse *On Theology*, the following: Whereas all the things, as we have said already, which characterize the Godhead are common to them and co-equal in honour and inseparable, and prove that we have put our faith in one God, who exists and is known in one substance and three hypostases. And again: So let all these things be said by us in proof that we worship and glorify one God, in one substance and nature but in three hypostases. And after other things: So, as has often been said, bidding farewell to deductions like this we have learned to believe in one God, in one substance and nature, but in three hypostases or prosōpa (CD vol. 54, pp. 282, 284).

What then! Does not **Theodosius**, the celebrated, in whose days the execrable heresy of the polytheists came to life again, as it were, from the underworld, and seethed up for the destruction of many, does not he, too, with all the Church's pillars before him, instruct in the same straight and undeviating path, and light up with the brilliant beams of exact theology the whole wide world as it were, and clearly say: that the one God worshipped with true religion by all Christians and the one Godhead and substance is Father, Son and Holy Ghost, i.e., three hypostases? See what he wrote in the discourse *On the Trinity* which he composed by divine inspiration against the heathen nonsense of the polyusiasts (Syr. ܗܠܝܢܝ ,ܡܬܐ). But I think, he says, it is very absurd for certain persons to attempt to leave out a definite number and to arrive at an indefinite. For if, by their indefinite usage, certain persons speak clearly merely of 'substances' or 'natures', but covertly on their own limit them to three, they are to know that this tacit attempt on their part has been denied them, and specially through Gregory the Theologian's statement, which we have clearly set down and which addresses his

fellow believers, as follows: 'What, then, do you say, you who introduce three hypostases? Do you say this, thinking three substances? I am fully persuaded that you would loudly protest against those who do so think' (Ibid., pp. 374, 376).

And later: 'Those divided not in natures but in properties are three'. But if they do not limit them to three, one of two things will be necessary: either they will introduce more hypostases into the profession of Father, Son and Holy Ghost whom alone the Lord prescribed we should worship as one God; or, by the deficiency of one hypostasis (or, they say, 'substance' or 'nature') they will be convicted of scheming to defraud the Holy Trinity. And later: So much for the words of holy Severus! Now, if they are minded to discern the words of Dionysius, too, with greater caution, they will have no stumbling-block there at all. For that blessed minister of Christ's mysteries by saying: 'But humaneness especially, because in one of its hypostases it truly participated in our whole condition by summoning to itself anew and raising up the lowliness of our humanity of which Jesus the simple was, in an ineffable way, composed, and by the eternal's also accepting temporal measure and by what supersubstantially (Syr. ܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܟܠ) transcends the rank of all nature's coming, along with the unchanging constancy and unconfusedness of its own condition, to be within our nature'—by saying this, Dionysius did not, as they are saying, subject the Godhead, or substance, recognized in the three holy hypostases (i.e., the three hypostases themselves), to incarnation, through the hypostasis of the Only-begotten (Ibid., pp. 376, 378).

For accurate **Theodosius** proved this by the divinely inspired words of Basil the Great, when he wrote in his *Discourse on Theology* in the following manner: Hence, bidding farewell to those who readily weave cobwebs of objections and speedily perfect thoughtless thoughts, and to the easy impious absurdities into which they slip especially from ignorance of the divine words, deceiving themselves rather than those they address, we ourselves will, so far as we can, collect and set down what we have received from our store-house (meaning from the divinely inspired learning of the God-clad fathers) thinking that what comes from them will suffice right-thinking people for secure knowledge of the issue. For as to the man who does not follow the intention of the holy fathers at all points and does not reckon their word more powerful and more exact than his own notions, Saint Basil ruled that he deserves censure for his presumption, in the *Letter* he sent *to the Canoness on the Trinity*, where he wrote as follows: 'For not following the fathers and not considering their word more accurate than our own understanding deserves censure, because it is full of presumption'. Therefore, we too will be right to import no addition and make no substraction in the Fathers' teaching (Ibid., pp. 384, 386).

3. Reflections

By far the great bulk of work in the discipline of Patristics has been to make available critical editions and solid translations of the Fathers and Mothers of the earlier Church. Scholars find it hard to proceed with research and debate if they do not have confident accessibility to primary sources, and as years go by better editions of Patristic authors are being made, with the textual apparatus to show variant readings. Up-to-date processes of text editing began in earnest in 1947 under the Flemish Benedictine scholar-Abbot Eligius Dekkers (1915–1998) with the *Clavis Patrum* series, which he helped further develop further into the fine critical texts of the vast new *Corpus Christianorum*, with its Latin, Greek and Oriental component series (published by Brepols in Turnhout, Belgium). Not only do these series surpass the old *Patrologiae*, but other mostly post-War translation series have also depended on knowledge of the best manuscripts, viz. *Texte und Untersuchungen* (Germany), *Sources Chrétiennes* (France), The Library of Christian Classics (Britain), Ancient Christian Writers (USA), Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity (The Netherlands), etc., and these have involved more and more inter-faith and international collaboration. In Australia, there

has developed a solid tradition of engagement in this work, both in the translating/editing of Christian works (Robert Hill, Graeme Clarke and Pauline Allen standing out) and of ancient historical and philosophical texts important for understanding early Christian life and thought (especially noting Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys, and Roger Scott on Byzantine annals, and Harold Tarrant on Proclus).

The work of fine translating is crucial, very painstaking, ideally subject to constant revision, and is a refined work of art in itself. In Patristics this is nowhere truer than in the most difficult linguistic arena of all, to do with the way developing doctrinal positions in the highly inflective Greek language were translated into the more concrete Semitic tongues, especially into the most widespread one developing out of Aramaic, called Syriac (whose speakers lie behind the ancient bearing of the Christian faith even as far as China). In its 'classical' form and its use in the expression of doctrinal positions, Syriac is a language only a small body of scholars have mastered, and it is surely worth displaying its significance in this special issue of Australian Patristics, let alone convey a key example of "translation dynamics in early Christian literature' (Berti et al. 2025). In the offerings above, however, it has not been our purpose to comment on the intricacies of Peter of Callicinus's mind as he gauges his choice of high-theological terms from one language to another. That would take a book. It is not to probe the issues of theological debate: that would take perhaps more than two books (!), because older Fathers are quoted who were involved in different debates in their times. The intent is a humbler, if hopefully very valuable one, to produce a kind of florilegium of revised, very basically annotated and specially organized passages from Syriac translations of the Church Fathers that above all (but certainly not exclusively) impinge on the largely Greek-expressed (highly neglected) Tritheist debate. The passages above have been extracted and collated in a way never done before out of obscure places (in huge works not accessible to those unfamiliar with the special issues of the sixth-century theological 'skirmishes'). The pressure to have access to this kind of work is strong, and it is very much in response to requests to make this material visible and usable that I have spent time and effort on it.

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Notes

1 Not 578 as is usually given for the date of his assumption of the See of Antioch (cf. Wright 1966, p. 113). See (Van Roey 1961, p. 183).
2 Herewith revising (Ebied 1977, 1982, 2010); and for a detailed discussion of Peter's writings, see (Ebied et al. 1994, pp. xiv–xxxvi).
3 On Athanasius, see (Brock et al. 2011, pp. 46–47).
4 On Basil, see (ibid., p. 64).
5 On Gregory of Nazianzus, see (ibid., pp. 181–88).
6 On Gregory of Nyssa, see (ibid., p. 182).
7 On St. John Chrysostom, see (ibid., pp. 229–30).
8 On St. Cyril of Alexandria, see (ibid., p. 109).
9 On St. Severus of Antioch, see (ibid., pp. 368–69).
10 On St. Theodosius of Alexandria, see (ibid., pp. 407–8).

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Under the Judgement of the Living God: The Early Christian Funerary Imprecations of Phrygian Eumeneia

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Abstract: Since the late nineteenth century, the Phrygian funerary imprecation, known as the Eumeneian formula, has been considered one of the clearest indicators of Christian religious identity on inscriptions from Roman Asia Minor. After a brief précis of the early scholarly history of interpretation of this formula and the historiographical assumptions which underpinned its identification as Christian, this article attempts to reframe how we understand the specific context out of which these inscriptions emerge—that of the wider socio-religious context of Roman Asia Minor—and to examine the degree of continuity which these inscriptions have in terms of religious sentiment with similar pagan examples from wider Anatolia. The central contention of this article is that the Eumeneian formula inscriptions, quite apart from what they can tell us about the socio-political status of early Christians and their relationships with their wider civic environment, are also an important index for understanding early Christian popular religion in the pre-Constantinian period and how ordinary Christians expressed their religious identity in a potentially hostile environment.

Keywords: Eumeneia; Phrygia; Greek epigraphy; early Christianity; Patristics; popular religion

1. Introduction

The small city of Eumeneia, situated in south-central Phrygia, arguably made little contribution to the wider history of the Roman world. It was the scene of no great battle, no famous treaties were signed there, it was the site of no particularly memorable monuments or architectural wonders, and it certainly inspired no literary figures of any note. In fact, to many scholars of the ancient Mediterranean, Phrygian Eumeneia may even be so close to anonymity as to be confused with either the Delian city or the festival that bore the same name. However, in histories of early Christianity and its geographic spread, Eumeneia always warrants at least a footnote, sometimes even a whole sentence, for its one claim to fame. That is, by the mid-third century C.E., Eumeneia provides the most extensive, and publicly displayed epigraphic evidence for a thriving early Christian community, which, during this same period, seems to have achieved a marked degree of civic integration, if not predominance (see esp. McKechnie 2019, pp. 210–31; Mitchell 1993, pp. 40–41; Ramsay 1897, pp. 484–568).[1]

Since the late nineteenth century, scholars have been nearly unanimous on this point. With specific mention of Eumeneia, Adolf von Harnack (1905, p. 358) noted the "very wide extension of Christianity throughout Phrygia", whilst William Frend (1984, p. 445) was on firm ground when he asserted that "Phrygia must have been one of the most Christianized provinces of the empire by the end of the third century". Robin Lane Fox (1986, p. 295) wistfully mused, "If Christians in other cities had only put up as many inscriptions as these confident figures in Eumeneia, what curious diversity might we not discover?" Stephen Mitchell (1993, p. 40) expressed similar sentiments when he noted that "Christianity flourished in the cities of southern Phrygia during the third century", further suggesting that Eumeneia was its "main centre". Finally, more recently, Graeme Clarke (2005, p. 614) went as far as to suggest—plausibly, but hypothetically—that the Christian population of Phrygia stood between 20 and 30%, adding that "in some instances this went much higher, most notably in the upper Tembris valley and in Eumeneia and its surrounding district".

The primary data for these claims about Eumeneia are not composed, however, of unambiguously identified Christian inscriptions—like those of the Upper Tembris Valley, where both those memorialized and those setting up the dedications boldly confessed the *nomen Christianum*—nor by the literary and epigraphic evidence for the Montanist movement, which thrived in Phrygia from the late second century, but by a collection of close to one hundred inscriptions bearing variations on a funerary imprecation warning a potential tomb violator that "he will reckon with God" (ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν).[2] This formula, dubbed by the Scottish archaeologist Sir William Mitchell Ramsay (1851–1939) with the toponymic the "Eumeneian formula", occurred with a series of variants, a number of which are (arguably) more indicative of its Christian content and worth briefly surveying here (Ramsay 1897, vol. 2, p. 496).[3]

Drawing on the original collection of examples published by Ramsay in the 1890s, one can see that a significant number use the variation ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν ζῶντα θεόν. "he will reckon with the Living God", including one inscription belonging to a bishop (ed. Ramsay 1897, vol. 2, no. 362), which reads in full:

> Δαμᾶς Διοτείμου κ[α]τεσκεύασεν τὸ ἡρῷον τῷ μήτρωνι Μητροδώρῳ ἐπισκόπ ῳ καὶ τῷ πατρί μου Διοτείμῳ καὶ ἑαυτ[ῷ]· εἴ τις δὲ ἐπιχειρήσει θεῖνε ἕτερόν τινα, θήσει ἰς τὸ ταμεῖον προστείμου (δην.) φ′ εἰ καταφρονήσει τούτου, ἔστε αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν ζῶντα θεό[ν].
>
> Damas, son of Dioteimos erected the shrine for [my] mother, for the bishop Metrodoros and for my father Dioteimos and for himself. If someone would lay hands to bury some other, he will give 500 denarii into the treasury. If he would despise this [warning], he will reckon with the living God. [Trans. Doherty]

Another utilizes an early variant of the Chi-Rho Christogram to substitute the name "Jesus Christ" in place of the usual invocation of God (ibid., no. 371). Yet another concludes with the variant ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ μέγα ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ "he will reckon with the Great name of God", which is seen by some as a circumlocution for the Tetragrammaton (ibid., no. 369):

> [τὸ ἡρῷον καὶ] τὸν ἐπ′ αὐτοῦ βωμὸν κατεσκεύασεν Αὐρ. Ζωτικὸς β′ τοῦ Παπ[ί]ου Εὐμενεὺς ἑαυτῷ καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ Αὐρηλίᾳ Ἀπφίῳ καὶ τῷ ἀδελφ ῷ αὐτοῦ Ἀ[μ]μια[ν]ῷ κα[ὶ εἰ] τιν[ὶ] [ἀλλ]ῷ α[ὐτ]ὸς ζῶν [συγ][χω]ρησει· οὐδενὶ δ[ὲ] [ἀ]λλῷ ἐξὸν ἔσται θεῖναι τινὰ· εἰ δέ τις ἐπιχειρήσει, εἰσοίσει ἰς τὴν Εὐμε νέων βουλὴν προστείμου (δην.) ,αφ′ καὶ ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ μέγα ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ.
>
> Aur[elius] Zotikos son of Zotikos son of Papias, Citizen of Eumeneia, erected the shrine and the altar upon it for himself and for his wife Aurelia Apphia and for his brother Ammianos and if some other having agreed while still living (i.1897 arranging for themselves to be buried here too). And none other will it be lawful to bury. But if someone would lay hands upon [this tomb], he will pay 1500 denarii into the public treasury of the council of Eumeneia, and he will reckon with the Great Name of God. [Trans. Doherty]

A final, sadly fragmentary, inscription specifies that this "reckoning" will be both now and on the day of Judgement (nos. 353–54) (ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν ζῶντα θεὸν καὶ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ κρισίμῳ ἡμέρᾳ), an eschatological idea shared by Christians and Jews.[4]

> [—{[2]ό δεῖνα}[2]—][—ἑαυτῷ—] καὶ τῇ μητέρι Μελτίνῃ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ Γαΐῳ καὶ τῷ ἀδελφῷ μου [Ἀσ]κλᾷ ἑτέρῳ δὲ οὐδενὶ ἐξέσται τεθ{ν}ῆναι {τεθῆναι} χωρὶς τῶν προγ[εγρ]αμένων ὃς δὲ ἂν ἐπιτηδεύσει, ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν ζῶντα θεὸν καὶ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ κρισίμῳ ἡμέρᾳ.
>
> [A certain man for himself] and for [his] mother Meltine and for [his] son Gaius and for my brother [As]kla and it is unlawful to inter another, apart from those registered [above], whoever would do this, he will reckon with the living God both now and in the day of Judgment. [Trans. Doherty]

The cumulative weight of this evidence—surveyed at greater length by Calder (1939), and most recently McKechnie (2019)—has meant that since at least the 1890s this formula has generally been considered a strong indicator of the Christian religious identity of the deceased and, despite its seemingly pithy nature, reveals a great deal about the enculturation of Christianity in third century Phrygia (see McLean 2002, p. 273 for a helpful survey of the relevant literature).

Scholars, then, have long been happy to grant Eumeneia and the wider cultural region of Phrygia this passing distinction, and normally to footnote one of the standard discussions of the Eumeneian formula by Ramsay (1897), his pupil and fellow Scot William Moir Calder (1881–1960) (1939), or the French epigrapher Louis Robert (1904–1985), (Robert 1960), without much further elaboration on its wider religious significance. However, when we stop to consider the matter further, in concert with other factors that can be assembled about third-century Eumeneia and Phrygia more generally, it is worth pausing to give some thought to what the religious implications of these inscriptions are for the study of early Christian popular religion in Phrygia and the ways in which "ordinary Christians" (MacMullen 1990) publicly displayed their religious identity in a potentially hostile socio-religious environment. As most recently reiterated by McKechnie (2019, p. 218), most datable inscriptions utilizing the Eumeneian formula can be safely dated to "a narrow chronological window" of around a generation between the mid-third century through to the early fourth century. This securely places the inscriptions within a period both of significant Christian growth (see Stark 1996, pp. 3–27; Hopkins 1998; MacMullen 1990, p. 156 for different assessments) but also within a period when the most intense persecution of Christians was evident. (see Doherty 2017, focusing there on social and political factors).

In this article, I seek to achieve two modest aims. First, I will briefly recount the early scholarly history of identifying these inscriptions as Christian and some of the historiographical assumptions that underpinned scholars' claims regarding this issue, and then assess whether these claims still stand up to scrutiny. Second, and more hypothetically, I will attempt to reframe how we understand the specific context of these Christian inscriptions within the wider socio-religious context of Roman Asia Minor, refocusing attention on to the level of cultural continuity displayed in these Christian inscriptions when compared with those of their dedicators' pagan neighbours. My central contention will be that the Eumeneian formula inscriptions, quite apart from what they can tell us about the socio-political status of early Christians and their relationships with their wider civic environment, are an important index for understanding one aspect of early Christian popular religion, which Ramsay MacMullen (2009) recently dubbed "the second church" (cf. van den Broek 1979). The Eumeneian formula is an important expression of everyday "Christianness", as the coinage of Rebillard (2012) has it, or perhaps even, to use the problematic evaluative category of Williams (2023), "cultural Christianity".[5]

2. Background

Almost as interesting as the inscriptions themselves, the historiography of the Eumeneian formula is worthwhile in its own right and involves intriguing and involved debates between some of the most important historians of Antiquity over the last two hundred years (see Frend 1996, 2003). These debates, some of which I will only signpost to here, were indicative of various wider trends in the historiography of early Christianity and, as such, worth revisiting, if only as a salutary lesson in the importance of understanding past historiographical trends in their historical context.

While the Eumeneian formula had been remarked upon by European travellers and antiquarians for centuries, it was only really in the second half of the nineteenth century that scholars began to pay it the attention it deserved as part of the wider exploration of Asia Minor, which followed on from the imperial ambitions of European powers. Three scholars stand out in importance here: William Mitchell Ramsay, the French Abbé Louis Duchesne (1843–1922), and the Belgian historian of religions Franz Cumont (1868–1947).

Ramsay and Duchesne, independently of one another, arrived at the conclusion that these inscriptions were Christian in the 1880s.

The Francophone historian and priest Louis Duchesne (1883, p. 31) first wrote of the Eumeneian formula in an article dealing with the famous Abercius inscription in the relatively conservative *Revue des Questions Historiques*, noting it as a common example of other Christian inscriptions from the vicinity of the Abercius find, where "l'envahisseur de la sépulture est menacé de la vengeance de Dieu". Duchesne (1895) elaborated on this just over a decade later when he returned to the topic in the *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome*, by then with far more confidence regarding its Christian identification. While Duchesne was something of an amateur when it came to archaeology, his instincts here were sound, though neither the Eumeneian formula nor Phrygia found much of a place in his later monumental *Histoire ancienne de l'Église* (1906, using trans. Duchesne 1909, vol. 2). Here, his remarks on Phrygia (aside from his discussion of Montanism) comprise one curious, and rather stereotypical, passage in which he wrote:

> Behind Asia Proper, many Christian communities existed on the plains of Phrygia. Phrygia was essentially an agricultural country, and inhabited by a simple and gentle folk; their native rites were of fabulous antiquity and had not been very deeply influenced by Hellenism. They involved great religious assemblies, near celebrated sanctuaries, and noisy, exciting ceremonies, presided over by wild and fanatic priests, Galli and Corybantes (priests of Cybele), whose religious frenzies were world famous. (Duchesne 1909, pp. 190–91; cf. Doherty's commentary, Doherty 2017, pp. 77–78 on the problematic reconstructions of Phrygian religiosity)

For all his rightly celebrated scholarly erudition, Duchesne's contribution here was largely indirect, though his name and reputation lent considerable scholarly weight to the arguments of subsequent Francophone commentators, especially Cumont. Despite his service to the critical study of the early church, Duchesne was rewarded with the dubious honour of having his *Histoire ancienne de l'Église* (though its first volume had received the imprimatur) placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Holy Office in 1912, following a vicious and reactionary campaign by sectors of the European Catholic press taking Duchesne to be a sceptical crypto-Modernist (see Frend 2003, pp. 137–43). In reality, Duchesne was more of a historian than theologian and it is probably safe to conclude that, like other scholars at the time, he was largely found guilty by association (for nuanced details, see Hill 2002, pp. 23–31). It was left to the Scotsman Mitchell Ramsay and his colleagues to marshal together a lengthier series of arguments in favour of the Eumeneian formula's Christian identification.

In something of a historical irony, the Presbyterian Ramsay's scholarship received a much warmer reception in Rome than Duchesne's, and he was awarded a gold medal by Pope Leo XIII in 1893 in recognition of his historical work. In the same year as Duchesne published his initial comments, Ramsay and a group of companions were conducting one of what were to become their almost yearly expeditions in Asia Minor, finding themselves spending a considerable amount of time among the ruins of Eumeneia (Işıklı). It was as a result of these journeys and a series of new epigraphic finds that Ramsay (1883, p. 401), writing in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, finally committed to the identification of the Eumeneian formula as Christian. "These examples have decided my opinion", he noted, "on the point about which I long hesitated—many inscriptions in central Anatolia which end with the curse ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, must be reckoned as Christian." The decisive factor for Ramsay seemed to be what he called the "strange curse" (p. 400) he had uncovered which read ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν ☧, even if the restoration of the key chi-rho (☧) monogram has been disputed (see pp. 433–34; the inscription in question appearing in ibid. no. 371). In his later work, Ramsay was increasingly confident of the Christian identification of the Eumeneian formula, noting in the second volume of his magisterial *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Ramsay 1897, p. 497), that the Eumeneian formula was

"by far the most important" of semi-concealed Christian inscription formulae. Ramsay's more considered discussion here is particularly interesting, not least for the way in which it sets the tone for later developments.

Two historiographical considerations frame Ramsay's developed discussion: on the one hand, Ramsay is clear that Christians adopted some of the funerary customs of their pagan forebears, including popular religious sentiments, which he considered problematic,[6] and on the other hand, Christians needed to carefully conceal their Christianity in a way that was inoffensive to their pagan neighbours but which did not transgress the boundaries of monotheism. In Ramsay's phrases (Ramsay 1897, p. 498), the Eumeneian formula was calculated "to avoid at once offence against the common public feeling and outrage to private Christian feeling". Ramsay's reconstruction here, written at the end of the nineteenth century, gels with his wider understanding of the nature of persecution at the time. Ramsay, who had written extensively on the question of persecution and debated this with figures like Mommsen, believed in a minimalist interpretation of the extent of persecution and that until the Great Persecution under Diocletian, Christians in Phrygia, as long as they were circumspect, were largely left unmolested (the exception being the Montanists).[7] More interesting, for our purposes, were Ramsay's further comments about the Eumeneian formula (Ramsay 1897, p. 498):

> In no respect could it jar on the most susceptible of pagans; and yet it contains an idea, which was rarely expressed by them, while it has been at all times ready to the lips of every person, trained in a Christian society. The pagan so often appealed to their God, but rarely to him as a Judge: they often ask him to punish their enemy, but they rarely ask for a fair treatment according to a reckoning of deserts.

Ramsay's observation here is underscored by his comment about epigraphic Christians, who were:

> …the mass of undistinguished and obscure Christians…this unknown multitude of common persons (who, as a rule, had not the courage and heroism to stand forth prominently as martyrs, or the intellectual power to shine as leaders and teachers), that are revealed to us in the sepulchral inscriptions. They are not represented to us in the Christian literature, except when their errors and backslidings have to be castigated; but if we want to see what Christianity practically was as a working influence in the Roman Empire, these common men are well worthy of some share of the attention that is given usually only to the leaders. (ibid.)

In these comments, Ramsay touches on what has most often been elided in subsequent discussions, and what I will elaborate on below, the Eumeneian formula is an important example of the popular religion of ordinary Christians as they lived their everyday Christianness in pre-Constantinian Phrygia. Ramsay's concluding comment (1897, p. 498) bears repeating. "It is a characteristic feature that the pagan form is adopted with the smallest possible change, and the least perceptible modification of its spirit." While, as I will indicate below, subsequent discussion has focused on whether specific instances of the Eumeneian formula were either Jewish or Christian, it was Ramsay's comments about cultural continuity that are arguably far more important. Returning to this historiographical overview, by the mid-1890s, another scholar of note lent his scholarly weight to the theory that the Eumeneian formula was a key indicator of Christianity: Franz Cumont.

Writing just over a decade after Duchesne and Ramsay, the Belgian Franz Cumont (1895, p. 252), in a lengthy discussion and catalogue of the Christian inscriptions of Asia Minor, referred to the Eumeneian formula as "le plus remarquable" example of vague inscriptions ("Crypto-Christian"[8]) which were "suffisement claires pour les initiés, mais qui ne pussent donner l'éveil à leurs ennemis". (ibid., p. 253) concluded strongly that the formula was "particulière aux chrétiens". Cumont's extensive knowledge of mystery religions, and, in particular, their penchant for esoteric language and symbolism, was an important factor in his willingness to apply a maximalist approach to interpreting cryptic

evidence, though his reasoning was sound and followed on from that of Ramsay, explaining with reference to the Christian adoption of funerary imprecations, "les chrétiens conservèrent cette coutume, comme tant d'autres, en la modifiant" (p. 252). However, with an eye to his well-documented circumspection when it came to commenting too closely on the relationship of nascent Christianity to the oriental religions, it is unsurprising that Cumont made little further comment on Phrygia outside the cataloguing of texts, other than his highly exoticized portrait of Phrygian religion and its relationship with Montanism in his great *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (1906).[9] While there were occasional dissenters, notably Danish scholar Wilhelm Schepelern (1929), by the time William Calder wrote what became the definitive contribution to the Christian identification of the Eumeneian formula in 1939, Cumont and Ramsay's conclusions had already become the standard position—at least amongst Anglo- and Francophone scholars.

In his seminal 1939 contribution to William Buckler's *Festschrift*, William Calder gave the most complete account of the reasons for considering that "the great majority of gravestones bearing the formula were Christian" (p. 15). While Calder conceded that "isolated cases" of pagan or Jewish usages could be identified; he mustered a considerable amount of evidence in support of its primarily Christian usage; and his arguments are worth briefly reprising. First, Calder asserted, based on a sizeable epigraphic survey, that "Eumeneian pagans did not appeal to the gods to protect their graves" (p. 18). Secondly, Calder observed that the grammatical construction ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς was "extremely rare" in pagan inscriptions, citing the handful of inscriptions then known (the number has not appreciably increased since–see below). Thirdly, Calder invokes an argument based on geographical and chronological specificity, noting (Calder 1939, pp. 20–21):

> Much progress has been made with the classification of the pre-Nicene tombstones of Asia Minor into pagan and Christian; but always on condition that the monuments of each self-contained area were treated as an interrelated group, whose members reflected, inside the limits of local and often of parochial fashion, the opposing religious influences operating from decade to decade.

Fourthly, Calder extends the survey beyond Ramsay's initial set of inscriptions, which in many instances remained tantalizingly vague, to include a series of cases where traditional epigraphic indicators of Christianity[10] were present, including three instances where the term κοιμητήριον (ed. Ramsay 1897, vol. 2, nos. 375, 376, 379) and others where a fish symbol appears (e.g., *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* IV [eds. Buckler, Calder and Guthrie], no. 355). Calder's conclusions (1939, p. 23) were emphatic:

> Suddenly a new formula, based on a grammatical construction which is very rare in pagan use anywhere, and entirely unknown in earlier pagan use in Phrygia, makes its appearance in two neighbouring cities, known to contain Christian Churches, about the middle of the third century.

Calder (1939, p. 25f.) further notes (with reference to Cumont and other scholars' use of the "not very happy term" Crypto-Christian):

> The term "crypto-Christian", when understood to mean not that the Christians concealed themselves under pagan formulae of inoffensive or neutral type, but that they themselves devised formulae of a type which offended neither their own conscience nor the prejudices of their pagan neighbours. All the evidence available shows that ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεόν (as editors ought always to print it) was of this type.

Since this time, most scholars have accepted, along with Calder (1955, p. 26), that "this formula, having been in pagan use at an earlier period in Lycia and Pisidia, was adapted by the Christians of the upper Maeander and used by them (as dated tombstones show) at least from A.D. 249 to 273". Subsequent discussions of the formula, however, have concentrated on a handful of potentially Jewish examples from surrounding regions (especially Apamea and Acmonia) and on challenging one or more aspects of the criterion-based approach adopted by Ramsay and Calder (see, e.g., Bij de Vaate and van Henten 1996; van der

Horst 2009; Mitchell 1993; Sheppard 1979; Strubbe 1994; Trebilco 2002, 2004). While these have been by no means unfruitful debates, what all this scholarly discussion has largely overlooked is the Phrygian, and wider Anatolian pagan, religious context which informs these inscriptions.

While almost every scholar has remarked on the adapted nature of the curse formula, they have, in a strange way, avoided discussing what this might mean for the relationship between these texts and their wider context and what this might tell us about the popular religion of early Christians in Phrygia. Calder (1939, p. 23) is representative here when he writes, oddly considering Ramsay's comments quoted above, that the Eumeneian inscriptions lack "traces, however slight, of pagan religious feeling and practice". While several examples of a syntactically identical formula used by pagans elsewhere in Asia Minor are always noted, these inscriptions are often summarily dismissed with comments noting it is "extremely rare" (Calder 1939, p. 20) and by implication insignificant.[11] Here, an argument from geographic determinism is invoked: if it does not occur in Eumeneia itself, it is not relevant. Conceptually, however, the syntactical construction occurring among pagan inscriptions simply indicates that it is one possible grammatical construction in the epigraphic Greek familiar in wider Asia Minor, and the corollary of this is that the pagan neighbours of the Eumeneian Christians would easily be able to discern its meaning and significance. This observation brings me to the key purpose of this article, situating the Eumeneian formula within its Phrygian, and wider Anatolian, pagan religious context.

3. Discussion

While I am persuaded by the arguments of McKechnie (2009) and others in seeing the Eumeneian formula as primarily a strong indicator of Christian rather than Jewish identity, there is a problem in this identification and one that has been insufficiently discussed in the more recent literature. This might be classified as one of a continuity of religious sentiment or enculturation. Elsewhere I have suggested some possible sociological reasons for this (Doherty 2017), yet what I wish to explore here are the implications of this formula as an example of popular religion, which expresses both the way in which the Eumeneian Christians verbalized the divine/human relationship, and secondly, as reflecting general beliefs (here not confined only to the Eumeneian Christians) about divinity common in Asia Minor in the early Christian era. By popular religion, I draw on the distinction made by Roelof van den Broek (1979, pp. 1–2), when he defines this as the "kind of religiosity which found expression in certain practices which enjoyed a great popularity among the common people in the Church and which, in fact, were mainly nothing else but Christian continuations of ancient pagan usages". This is particularly important when one comes to funerary practices, for, in Broek's justifiable view (ibid, p. 16), "it is difficult to find anything that showed a more tenacious life than funeral practices; whoever changes them risks being accused of a lack of piety".[12] This was the type of religion that more recent writers such as Ramsay MacMullen and Nadya Williams, along with Broek, have indicated was practised by the vast majority of "ordinary Christians", but which was often frowned upon or ignored by the Christian intellectual elites. As MacMullen (2009, p. xii) has written regarding these elites:

> They liked to speak of religious practice as it should be. Theirs was a sometimes theoretical, often normative view; and it is well known to us today, indeed it overwhelms us, in thousands of surviving sermons, hundreds of canons published through church councils, and in an always active exchange of correspondence among bishops, filled with opinions about what the world ought to be like. What the bishops didn't see, however, we ourselves can and ought to see, with an effort. What they saw but were not interested in or chose to ignore, purposefully, we can recognize as actual practice, differing from exalted norms, differing in social strata, differing according to time and region as Christian habits changed—all, reality.

The Eumeneian formula is precisely this kind of popular religion, a point clearly noted by Ramsay but little explored in subsequent scholarship. That such a reading of these inscriptions has often eluded comment is abundantly clear from a survey of the relevant literature. While the different epithets given to the Christian God have received some attention from Paul Trebilco and others, the rest of the formula is virtually ignored. Similarly, while the nature of the formula as being related to the various formulae known under the collective name of grave imprecations has often received passing comment, this is normally only to say that this is common practice in Asia Minor, where the hallowed customs of antiquity safeguarded the inviolability of the tomb as the eternal home of the deceased (see Lattimore 1962). This problem was evident in the historiography as early as the writings of Ramsay (1897, p. 514), who wrote that this formula contained:

> …a sentiment which is as much out of keeping with ordinary pagan expression as it is characteristic of Christian feeling: one of the most marked effects that Christianity had on common sentiment is that, among Christian peoples, references to Divine Judgement, justice, fairness, are so frequent.

However, in Asia Minor, this was simply not the case, and Ramsay knew this. This begs the question as to why no more detailed comment of this kind has been forthcoming. The kinds of questions I wish to address, however, are what does this formula indicate about the Christian practices of the Eumeneian Christians? How did this formula function to assist Christian assimilation into the pagan *polis*? Should this formula be read as a sign of potential "syncretism"? Or should this formula instead be understood as representative of a separation between what might be deemed "popular" religion vis-à-vis the theologically reified religion exemplified by the apologists?[13]

The Eumeneian formula, in its call for revenge upon or the "reckoning" of a potential grave robber with the Christian God, mirrors a grassroots approach to theodicy (here understood not in the technical sense as it is used in Christian theology but rather simply as the relationship regarding the functions of divinities in the administration of justice), which is as much a by-product of Anatolian indigenous religion,[14] and perhaps also beliefs about magic, as it is of a Christian (or Jewish) milieu. That it is linked to the more common curses on those who desecrate graves found throughout Asia Minor (and conveniently collected by Johan Strubbe 1997) shows not only the commonality of these formulae but also how a previously held religious conviction could fairly easily be reinterpreted, assimilated, or "Christianized" with minimal fuss. All scholars agree on this, but few tend to take the religious aspect further than this, instead focusing their attention on the social implications (e.g., questions surrounding concealment of religious identity to avoid persecution). It would be tempting, in the first instance, to see the Eumeneian formula as a form of popular religion that underwent censure, like the type of practices mentioned by Augustine in the *Confessions*, which were frowned upon precisely because "they bore so close a resemblance to the superstitious rites which the pagans held in honour of their dead" (*Confess.* VI. 2.). However, that this shared understanding of theodicy is not just an example of a so-called degenerate folk or lay religion is probably best evinced by the fact that the Eumeneian formula was not just adopted by otherwise unexceptional Christians but also by at least one bishop and a number of civic councillors. In corollary to this, it should also be noted that the epigraphic phenomena studied below were used equally by rural farmers as by urban priests and official functionaries: the Eumeneian formula was used alike by butchers (see, e.g., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* [eds. Horsley and Llewelyn] vol. 1, p. 86) through bishops (Ramsay, vol. 2, n. 362). What I suggest this ostensibly demonstrates is that the religious sentiments underlying the Eumeneian formula pervaded the thinking of a strong cross-section of Christians dwelling in the Anatolian interior. On this point, it is worth moving on to another factor of these inscriptions—their position in their physical social environment.

The Eumeneian formula is, by its very formulaic relation to the long held sepulchral customs of Anatolia, a visible sign of Christian assimilation into the social world of the Greco-Asiatic city. Far from being displayed in an isolated extramural cemetery or con-

cealed catacombs, these monuments, bearing a subtly Christianized variation of the customary grave imprecation formulae, probably stood in a very public necropolis or perhaps even in intramural burial (a custom, while repugnant elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean, was popular in Roman Asia Minor, particularly in the case of esteemed citizens). Tombstones in Asia Minor were publicly displayed at the roadside and the various entrances to the city. The banality of these monuments within their Anatolian context is further exemplified not only in the use of the grave imprecation formula, the verbal forms, or the classic memorial formula, but also in the kind of monuments themselves. The monuments adorned or marked ἡρῷον, or hero shrines, customary sepulchral monuments throughout Asia Minor, dating back until, at the very latest, the Hellenistic period, and later adapted by Christians for martyr shrines as part of the cult of the saints. Other monuments, perhaps marking the graves of more humble occupants, were in the shape of βωμοί, literally altars, traditionally used for the sacrifices or feasting on behalf of or for the dead, again practices carried over into the cult of the saints. While we might be inclined to see this as a simple example of the Eumeneian Christians following the material sepulchral customs of their neighbours, passages from Tertullian and later from Augustine relating to North African Christians, and the celebration of feasts for the dead should make us pause to think further. Indeed, it is not impossible (or, for that matter, unlikely in the slightest) that elements that lie behind what was to develop into the cult of the saints had their origin in pagan funerary banquets.[15]

Moving on from these initial considerations, I suggest it is appropriate to look in more detail and in a tentative yet probing way at the possible relation between the Eumeneian formula and a series of other phenomena of popular religion. In the remainder of this article, I will discuss the possible relationship between the Eumeneian formula and four popular religious practices found elsewhere in Roman Asia Minor: (1) *defixiones*; (2) the "appeals for justice" tablets; (3) the *Beichtinschriften* ('Confessional Inscriptions"); and (4) the pagan "Cult of the Angels" inscriptions.

When we note that in Antiquity, the grave was often viewed as having domestic connotations in the afterlife, then the concern with its potential desecration becomes understandable. The economic outlay for a tomb (which probably fell outside the means of the vast majority of individuals) and the potential for grave goods would no doubt tempt an intrepid tomb desecrator in Antiquity as much as it has modern archaeologists. The most common reason for the disturbing of graves in Asia Minor, however, was that a grave was preserved for a family alone, and given the nature of burials, it was often possible for an unregistered corpse to be interred without anyone being the wiser. Given the likely cost of erecting a monument for one's family, Strubbe (1994), the foremost authority on these imprecations, has suggested that the poor were the most likely desecrators. For my exploratory purposes here, however, I would like to point to another, less wholesome reason (if the idea of grave desecration can ever be called wholesome) found in the fascinating, and often softly spoken of world of ancient magic, in particular the phenomena of *defixiones*.[16]

While the term *defixiones* is fairly modern coinage, it describes the widespread ancient phenomena (even in Phrygia[17]) of lead curse tablets of various kinds. These tablets often invoked the help of chthonic deities or the restless spirits of those who died by foul means (i.e., murder victims) to punish some kind of rival. The use of these was, of course, not limited to an anti-social group of would-be sorcerers (just as horoscopes are not limited to astrology enthusiasts today). Their popularity was vast and was adopted for all manner of things, from using the gods to woo a beautiful woman to cursing the genitals of a would-be rival in such pursuits, from making one's horse run faster in the hippodrome to breaking the legs of a rival's horse. As one example, deposited in a grave in Attica and usually dated to the fourth century BCE aptly demonstrates:

> [Side A] I bind Theodora in the presence of the one at Persephone's side and in the presence of those who are unmarried. May she be unmarried and whenever she is about to chat with Kallias and with Charias—whenever she is about to discuss deeds and words and business…words, whatever he indeed says. I

> bind Theodora to remain unmarried to Charias and (I bind) Charias to forget Theodora, and (I bind) Charias to forget…Theodora and sex with Theodora.
>
> [Side B] [And just as] this corpse lies useless, [so] may all the words and deeds of Theodora be useless with regard to Charias and to the other people. I bind Theodora before Hermes of the underworld and before the unmarried and before Tethys. (I bind) everything, both (her) words and deeds toward Charias and toward other people, and (her) sex with Charias. And may Charias forget sex. May Charias forget the girl, Theodora, the very one whom he loves.
>
> (*Defixionum Tabellae* [hereafter DT] [ed. Audollent] no. 68 (Trans. Gager 1992, p. 90))

While the *defixiones* are a fascinating study in themselves, their importance in the present context is how they were made effective. In order to "bind" a god or angry spirit, it was necessary both to engrave the text and to place the tablet in a particular place. The most appropriate place for this was in graves, particularly those that belonged to people whose deaths had been violent or untimely. The engraving of a text was seen as something of a sympathetic action, like the invocation of a formula or a name. The carving relied on the power invested in language by ancient cultures. The invocations of the Eumeneian formula and other grave imprecation formulas function in a sense very similar to the sympathetic magic found in the *defixiones* and the related phenomena of the magic papyri. That is, the formula invokes, through the medium of the inscribed word, the deity named, that is, the Christian God. The inscriptions both warn a potential offender but also invoke the deity to action. This intimate and functional relationship with the deity is found repeatedly throughout Asia Minor, for instance in the surviving magical amulets from Ephesus, but most particularly in the context of funerary inscriptions (see esp. Strubbe 1997). However, we need to be cautious about pushing the similarities between *defixiones* and the Eumeneian formula too far. While the *defixiones* and related magical phenomena (magic papyri and magical amulets) display to varying degrees a utilitarian posture towards the deities invoked, another related group of lead tablets, defined by Versnel (1991, p. 60) as "appeals for justice" portray a religious sentiment that is closer to that displayed in the Eumeneian formula.

The appeals for justice, or judicial prayers, which display many similar phenomenological elements to both the *defixiones* and the "Eumeneian formula", differ from the former in one vital aspect. Whilst the *defixiones* approach the deity in a manipulative posture, the appeals for justice maintain a deferential approach to the deities in question, appealing to their sense of justice and their role in its administration. They are entreaties to the justice of the gods, rather than ritual bindings. As one example from Asia Minor, usually dated to the second century BCE, reads:

> Artemis "dedicates" to Demeter and Kore and all the gods with Demeter, the person who would not return to me the articles of clothing, the cloak and the stole, that I left behind, although I have asked for them back. Let him bring them in person to Demeter even if it is someone else who has my possessions, let him burn, and let him publicly confess his guilt. But may I be free and innocent of any offense against religion…if I drink and eat with him and come under the same roof with him. For I have been wronged, Mistress Demeter. (DT, no. 2 [trans. Versnel (1991, p. 72)])

The Eumeneian formula, like these appeals for divine justice, does not take a utilitarian approach to the deity; it rather leaves the punishing of an offence under the vague auspices of the Christian God, and this is a key aspect of understanding the cultural continuity that these inscriptions indicate. If the Christians of Eumeneia were so unspecific in their threats, how could they expect that the sanctity of their tombs would be respected? The answer to this question, I believe, lies in the understandings of how the pagan gods (and clearly also the Christian God) were perceived to act in the administration of justice by the Anatolian people at this time.

The presence of an ever-present or watching divine judgement was a common idea in Greco-Asiatic religion (see, e.g., Mitchell 1993). In an area where secular authority was often powerless to prevent crime, it became increasingly common for the meting out of chastisements for sins to fall exclusively into the hands of the gods or lesser deities (see, e.g., Chaniotis 2004). Perhaps the most revealing, and certainly most interesting, example of these beliefs is found in the *Beichtinschriften* ("Confessional Inscriptions") of Phrygia and neighbouring Lydia (see esp. Belayche 2004; Chaniotis 2004; Gordon 2004; Rostad 2002; 2020; Vikman 2021 for the growing literature). These inscriptions narrate an expiatory rite undertaken under the guidance of a local priest in which the person responsible for the inscription confesses on stone a hidden sin that the priests have revealed is responsible for their current state of misfortune. The inscriptions generally take narrative form, recording the sins and the expiatory rites required for setting things right with the deity in question. While the collection of these inscriptions is quite large and continues to grow (see, e.g., Petzl 1994), probably the best example, if for no other reason than its comic value, is an inscription from Silandos in Lydia dated to 235/6 CE that relates to the confession of a certain Theodoros, a sacred slave who had a weakness for female flutists and his fellow slaves' wives. As a result of his misbehaviour Zeus evidently struck Theodoros blind, a condition that would have been much worse, no doubt, if Theodoros had not quickly dedicated the necessary menagerie of wildlife required by the god as propitiation.

> THEODOROS: Because I have been brought by the gods to my senses, by Zeus and the Great Men Artemidorou. (I have atoned and set up this inscription).
>
> ZEUS: I have punished Theodoros on his eyes for his offences.
>
> THEODOROS: I had sexual intercourse with Trophime, the slave of Haplokomas, the wife of Eutychis, in the 'praetorium.'
>
> ZEUS: He takes the first sin away with a sheep, a partridge and a mole.
>
> THEODOROS: While I was a slave of the gods of Nonnos, I had sexual intercourse with the flutist Ariagne.
>
> ZEUS: He takes away with a 'piglet', a tuna, (another) fish.
>
> THEODOROS: For my third sin I had sexual intercourse with the flutist Aretousa.
>
> ZEUS: He takes away with a chicken, a sparrow, a pigeon. A *kypros* of barley and wheat, a *prochus* of wine, a *kypros* of clean wheat for the priests, one *prochus*.
>
> THEODOROS: I asked Zeus' help.
>
> ZEUS: Look I have blinded him for his sins. But, since he has appeased the gods and has erected the stele, he has taken his sins away. Asked by the council, (I responded that) I am kindly disposed, if he sets up my stele, on the day I have ordered. You may open the prison. I set the convict free after one year and ten months. (*Beichtinschriften Westkleinasien* [hereafter BIWK] [ed. Petzl], no. 5, II. 2–26) (trans. Chaniotis 2004, p. 28))

What this inscription reveals, other than that Theodoros was a serial philanderer, is something of the notions about the theodicy of the Anatolian gods. Offences relating to moral or religious crimes, even a bit of secret adulterous hanky-panky in the *praetorium*, were not beyond the reach of the all-seeing gods. In this understanding of divine omniscience, it is easy to hypothesize how the Eumeneian formula would appear to an outsider, for by crossing this unnamed god, a potential desecrator risked blindness, impotence or worse. What this inscription, and a similar inscription examined below, also demonstrates is that the gods (probably in the above case through the priests) were understood to communicate their displeasure and outline to the offender erecting the *Beichtinschriften* the offences they had committed. How this divine/human communication took place is particularly interesting when we look at another 'Confession Inscription' that can also be placed

as epigraphic phenomena contemporary with the Eumeneian formula: the "cult of the Angels" inscriptions (BIWK, no. 3 (Trans. Sheppard 1980, pp. 92–93)):

> Great is Men Axiottenos, King in Tarsi! When the scepter had been set up in case anyone stole anything from the bath house, since a cloak was stolen, the god took vengeance on the thief and made him bring the cloak to the god after a time, and he made a proclamation through an angel that the cloak should be sold and his powers written up on a stele. In the year 249.

This inscription narrates how an angel, acting as an intermediary for the Great Man Axiottenos, delivered the instruction to the unnamed thief regarding the necessity that he set up an inscription recording his transgression and subsequent punishment. The inscription, which is dated 249 from the Sullan era (i.e., 164/5 CE), also follows the Anatolian practice of "raising a scepter" (Gordon 2004), a ritual in which the priests would set up a scepter to indicate *inter alia* the transfer of rights of property to the god, thus making the damaging or stealing of the said property a matter of sacrilege as well as general theft. What is important for my purposes here, however, is that the need for divine propitiation is communicated to the offender through the auspices of an angel.

Angelic messengers (often associated with pagan chthonic deities like Hekate) were a common feature in Anatolian religion, in particular in the areas around the city of Stratonicaea in Caria (see, e.g., Sheppard 1980). These angels functioned in an intermediary sense, acting as messengers for a higher deity or (more importantly for our purposes here) as protectors of the grave. This idea of invoking the protection of intermediary quasi-divine figures in the protection of a sacred space like a grave is, of course, from a phenomenological viewpoint quite common and is witnessed in a variety of cultural contexts across both the ancient and modern worlds. But is it used specifically in the Christian inscriptions, utilizing the Eumeneian formula?

The answer to this question lies in a problematic but very interesting pair of inscriptions concerning a character by the name of Roubes (a name seen by Louis Robert as a Graecized version of the Hebrew name Reuben). The first of these inscriptions reads (from *Hellenica* [ed. Robert], vols. 11, 12, pp. 429–35):

> Property of one who still lives. I, Lycidas, cite God as my witness, that I built the shrine by my own labors, as my brother Amianus was reluctant, and I authorize my sisters Phronime and Maxima to be placed (in it). If anyone inters another, he will have to reckon with God and the Angel of Roubes (ἔστε αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τὸν ἄνγελον τὸν Ῥουβῆδος). (Trans. Sheppard 1979, p. 176)

So who was the "Angel of Roubes"? The answer is, perhaps, found in an extended inscription nearby (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, vol. 2, ed. Ramsay 1897, no. 232), which contains several problematic elements worth mentioning,[18] but for our purposes here the final line reads:

> Γάϊος π[ρ]αγματικός, ἠδ' ἀλόχῳ φιλίῃ Τατίῃ τέκεσίν τε ποθητοῖς ὄφρα τὸν ἀΐδιον τοῦτον ἔχωσι δόμον σὺν Ῥούβῃ μεγάλοιο θ(εο)ῦ Χρ(ιστοῦ)[19] θεράποντι.
>
> A man—Gaius the lawyer, trained in the arts—built this tomb while he was alive for himself and his dear wife Tatia and their lamented children, that they might have this eternal home together with Roubes, the servant of the Great God Christ. (Trans. Sheppard 1979, p. 178)

Roubes here, probably to be identified with the same named in the Lycidas inscription, is normally seen as a respected member of the local (Jewish?) community. The options here are either that being dead, Roubes has attained the status of an angel in some kind of euhemeristic sense or that the angel of Roubes is an intermediary guardian angel associated with the deceased Jew Roubes. Such an association might be seen, for instance, in the story in the Book of Acts where Rhoda sees Peter arriving at the house of John Mark when he was believed to be languishing in prison, and when she leaves Peter out in the cold and runs to inform the others present, they tell her that it must be his angel (Acts 12:12–15). Moreover, within the massive corpus of Jewish pseudepigraphal literature, the idea of the dead

becoming guardian angels over the living is sometimes referenced (see, e.g., Test. Asher 6:5f.; Jub 35:17; I Enoch 100:5). More interestingly, with regard to the Roubes inscription, is that this inscription, like the confession inscription above, also reveals the involvement of angels in the administration of religious justice in a way that is very similar to how angels are frequently recorded as behaving in the Judaeo-Christian literature. While some of the inscriptions of nearby Stratonicea in Caria evince that worship was specifically given to the angels by pagans, it is important to note that such a belief is not inherent in what is written on the Roubes inscription above.[20] What I would suggest here is that the Roubes inscription be understood as invoking the "Angel of Roubes", much in the same way as pagans in Termessos in nearby Pisidia (*Tituali Asiae Minoris* [ed. Heberdey], no. 365) could invoke the chthonic deities (ἔσται αὐτῶ πρὸς τοὺς κατυχομένους) as intermediaries who performed a functional role in protecting the rest of the deceased. This inscription contains language by which, while not compromising his monotheism, the Christian Lycidas was able to invoke the supplementary defence against grave desecration provided by the "angel of Roubes", an angelic intermediary (however we understand this) whose role and efficacy would be readily recognizable to his pagan neighbours.

In the evidence from this and other contemporary inscriptions, we see a Christian inscription that adapts similar religious sentiments from the shared religious context of the Anatolian interior and phrases them in a sense that is both acceptable to Christian claims of monotheism and, at the same time, both innocuous in sentiment and functionally efficacious with regard to local pagans. Like elements of the 'Confession Inscriptions' and the judicial prayers, the Eumeneian formula places the transgression of desecrating the grave under the auspices of the deity (here the Christian God), making the matter not only a criminal offence but also a religious one. At the same time, however, it takes a deferential posture toward the deity. The formula does not seek (at least actively), like the *defixiones* or magic papyri, to use the gods as a labour-saving device.

4. Conclusions

By probing these related Anatolian pagan inscriptions and highlighting a series of conceptual parallels between them and the Eumeneian formula, one might suppose that I consider that the Christians of Eumeneia were in fact highly "syncretistic" and compromised to their pagan surroundings—along the lines alluded to, but cautiously avoided, by Ramsay and others. This is not the case. Instead, I would like to suggest that one of the key reasons for the success of Christianity in Eumeneia, and perhaps also the success of Judaism elsewhere in Asia Minor, in carving spaces for themselves in the civic context, relates precisely to the way in which they were able to appeal to and adapt the widely understood forms and socio-religious notions of its surrounding culture while at the same time maintaining their monotheistic confessions. For Christians, we are dealing with the popular religion of ordinary followers—how they expressed their Christianness in a specific everyday context. Through language and approaches to theodicy and divine/human relationship, which were similar to the *Beichtinschriften*, *defixiones*, judicial prayers, and the Anatolian pagan cult of the angels, the Eumeneian Christians advertised to the surrounding pagans that they shared religious sentiments similar to their neighbours. It is possible that their pagan neighbours saw little difference between themselves and the Christians among them. The latter's language was non-threatening in the sense that it was not aggressively anti-pagan. As Éric Rebillard (2009, p. 75) observed with reference to funerary maledictions more generally, "Christians were acting no differently than pagans or Jews, regardless of their respective religious beliefs". While the tracing and comparing of religious phenomena shared by early Christians and their pagan and Jewish contemporaries can often fall into "parallelomania" or pose a variety of other theoretical problems (see Smith 1990; cf. Rebillard 2009, pp. 73, 75), I would suggest that, as a methodological starting point, examining these shared features in the Anatolian epigraphic habit, even across blurry religious divides, may be a more fruitful means of drawing further out distinctive aspects of ordinary Christianity in this region. This work also relieves the all-too-predominating text-

based approaches to the past. Following this orientation, I believe the Eumeneian formula should be understood as an example of the popular religion of ordinary Phrygian Christians as they sought to adapt the traditional pagan and Jewish customs widely practised in the contemporary socio-cultural environment of third-century Asia Minor.

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Notes

1 A significantly less developed version of this paper was presented at the Department of Ancient History, Macquarie University, in August 2008 under the title "Towards Respectability: The Early Christian Community in Third Century Eumeneia (Phrygia)". My thanks to my colleagues for their comments, especially Prof. Paul McKechnie for initially sparking my interest in ancient Phrygia and sharing his expertise. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Lyn Kidson and Prof. Wayne Hudson who both read and commented on earlier versions of this paper and offered invaluable feedback and corrections.

2 For the Upper Tembris Valley inscriptions, see Gibson (1978); on Montanism, see Heine (1989); Tabbernee (1997, 2007); and for a collection of other epigraphic texts see Johnson (1995).

3 Note: the abbreviations of various epigraphic references in this article derive from Horsley and Lee (1994).

4 Other variants exist which include various minor verbal differences and some which positively identify the person commemorated as a Christian, see e.g., Gibson (1975).

5 Williams (2023, p. xiv) defines "cultural Christianity" as referring "to individuals who self-identify as Christians but whose outward behaviour and, to the extent we can tell, inward thoughts and motivations are largely influenced by the surrounding culture rather than by their Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus". To my mind, this draws to sharp a distinction between Christianity and culture—though I recognize Williams' more nuanced appraisal in her otherwise thought-provoking and important book.

6 Ramsay (1897, p. 485) makes this clear: "Christianity when establishing itself amid an alien society, did not immediately re-make the whole life and manners of its converts. They continued to live in many respects as before; they were characterized by most of the habits, and some, or many even, of the faults, of their old life and of the society in which they lived".

7 It is important to note here that Ramsay often changed his mind when challenged by new evidence and this seems to have been the case regarding persecution between his earlier work (Ramsay 1895) and his more developed position (Ramsay 1897).

8 Cumont is the first to use this problematic phrase. On the issues surrounding this, see Chiricat (2013).

9 On Cumont and his historical milieu see the introduction to the recent collection Lannoy and Praet (2023, pp. 1–19). For Cumont's portrait of Phrygian religion, see Cumont (Cumont 1956, pp. 46–72).

10 For these indicators see Ramsay (1897, pp. 488–99). On the problematic nature of these kinds of arguments see e.g., Kraemer (1991).

11 For the most recent survey of pagan examples of its usage see Strubbe (1991, p. 34).

12 Such a claim is by no means original and has been born out in studies ranging from Cumont (1922) through to Rebillard (2009).

13 On this later aspect, see the interesting exchange between Robert Wilken and Ramsay MacMullen in Wilken (2010).

14 Here, however, I agree with Rebillard (2009), p. 74 about the need to be "prudent about these genealogical theories".

15 Space does not permit detailed discussion here, but on various aspects of this question see van den Broek (1979); Brown (1981); Rebillard (2009).

16 The bibliography on *defixiones* is extensive. Here, I draw, *inter alia*, on the discussions of Faraone (1991); Gager (1992); Ogden (1999).

17 For an example of a *defixio* deposited in an ossuary from Phrygia see Legrand and Chamonard (1893, pp. 250, 251 no. 27). Thanks to Paul McKechnie who pointed me to this example.

18 Whether this inscription is Jewish or Christian has been the subject of some debate among scholars, see e.g., Sheppard (1979, pp. 175–80) and Trebilco (2004, pp. 76–77). Here, I follow Ramsay and Buckler's original reading (see n. 19 below).

19 Ramsay and Buckler originally read θ(εο)ῦ Χρ(ιστοῦ) following what they saw as an early Chi-Rho monogram. However, subsequent epigraphers (noting the increasingly worn nature of the stone) have taken the reading θ(εο)ῦ.

20 That Christians believed in the existence of angels and that these angels engaged in a similar functional relationship to that which is implied in the Roubes inscription is clear from literary evidence, see e.g., Stuckenbruck (1995). However, whether or not they worshipped angels is more problematic. Celsus, in the second century (Origen, *Contra Celsum* I.26) could accuse Christians (and

Jews) of engaging in such activities and certainly Colossians 2:23 and Canon 35 of the Council of Laodicea (*ca* 364 C.E.) suggest that this was an ongoing problem.

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Article

The First Apocalypse of James in a Socio-Linguistic Perspective: Three Greek and Coptic Versions from Ancient Monastic Egypt

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Abstract: The discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices (NHC) in 1945 rates as one of the two most profound occurrences for Biblical archaeology and interpretation during the last hundred years, along with the Dead Sea Scrolls (1946–1956). The codices allow us to document Christian monastic culture, gnostic Christianity and gnostic offshoots in the desert climate of Late Ancient Egypt. The recovery of the related Codex Tchacos (CT) brought further excitement for contemporary readers by 2006, it being sensational that narratives of "Judas the betrayer" and "doubting Thomas" were found in the whole collection of writings. The text named the [*First*] *Apocalypse of James*, significantly, was found to be in both NHC and CT in different Coptic versions (from near the sacred sites of Chenoboskion and El Minya), but yet another more fragmentary version in Greek had turned up much earlier among the huge cache of papyri found at Oxyrhynchus (also, like the other places, on the banks of the Nile). Given the opportunity for comparison, what distinguishes the three versions? Does comparative analysis better tell us what this ancient text is about? Does the strong presence of Gnostic Christian insights in the Coptic texts still imply a historical Jamesian community is being honoured? This paper concentrates on three comparable passages in the three versions that apparently contain historical memories of James and his followers. It works on the reasonable hypothesis that the Greek version of Oxyrhynchus Papyri (P.Oxy. 5533) (hereafter = PO) is prior and read with different purposes than the two Coptic translated versions of CT (CT 2.10–30) and NHC (NHC V,3. 24–44). When a critical approach, involving a socio-linguistic comparison, is applied, we will see that the three versions of the text were not directly related to each other, but that narratives about James the Just were available to desert monastics from the second century CE. The paper argues for a literal transmission of traditions from a Jewish Christian community around James into Egypt, that the textual figure of James in the Oxyrhynchus fragments points to a 'mutual familiarity' between PO and CT, while the NHC tradition of James has been further elaborated by processes of compilation and addition.

Keywords: P.Oxy. 5533; Codex Tchacos; Nag Hammadi Codex; Gnostics; monasticism; Egypt

1. Introduction

The hot and dry desert of Egypt was a common space for ancient ascetic communities seeking to maintain their belief or promulgate their teachings in the context of a remote life (Gabra and Takla 2015; Sheridan 2012; Goehring 1999). While Ein Feshkha, on the West Bank (now between Israel and Palestine), was a wilderness region where the sacred Jewish manuscript collections of the Dead Sea Scrolls were stored, mostly during the first century CE, along the banks of the Nile in the south of Egypt lay sites of various monastic movements from the second century onwards, with the best known monasteries being those of Sheneset (Chenoboskion), the White Monastery (Boud'hors et al. 2022), Tmoushons, and that of Pachomius (Lundhaug and Jenott 2018). These centres not only show the continuance of Greek (Ptolemaic) cultures in late Antique Egypt, but also the flourishing of

Coptic (especially Christian) literature, and, to a limited degree, Latin and Arabic learning, down to the sixth century (Magness 2002; Binning 2022, pp. 293–310; Choat and Giorda 2017). The burgeoning finds of Christian manuscripts of Late Antiquity brought a fresh wind of discovery for modern readers, and even from the end of the nineteenth century, important documents were showing up to prefigure the later, more spectacular finds of post-War times.

The archaeo-papyrological excavations of Bernard Grenfell (1869–1926) and Arthur Hunt (1871–1934), by two British classical scholars in cooperation with the Egypt Exploration Society, uncovered numerous religious manuscripts on papyri from Oxyrhynchus about 160 km south of Cairo near the Bahr Yussef branch of the Nile. Among the multitude of private and public (usually fragmentary) documents found there in 1898—edicts, petitions, codes, registers, wills, census returns, official correspondence, tax assessments, court records, sales, bills, accounts, leases, horoscopes, inventories, and private letters (Rathbone 2009, pp. 49–53)—were found parts of hitherto unknown Gospels and Gnostic Christian writings, including one (denoted 5533 and temporarily left neglected) that related to James. The whole papyrus corpus has ongoing consequences, because less than two percent of the half-million fragments that were uncovered have been professionally examined so far (Rathbone 2009, pp. 49–53; Smith and Landau 2021, pp. 3–13), with the latest series of finds (numbered LXXXVII) being published in 2023.

Throwing light on these fragments, although outstanding in their own right, came the discovery of those Nag Hammadi Codices (NHC), rocking Biblical scholarship in 1945. These thirteen leather-bound padded-cover papyrus codices included 52 early Christian and Gnostic (including Gnostic Christian) treatises. The historical existence of the *Gospel of Thomas*, which was then known only through the testimonies of the Fathers Hippolytus and Origen, was unveiled at that time through the Coptic version (NHC II,2: 32,10–51,28 in the so-called Jung Codex). This was followed by the recognition that three Oxyrhynchus fragments, P.Oxy. 1, 654, and 655, were Greek fragments of the same gospel (Bernhard 2006, pp. 16–48). However, the "doubting Thomas" in terms of textual reliability could not resist the criticism of their being a Christian Gnostic invention (Kohn 2004, pp. 105–17), generating the conclusion, which becomes a working assumption of the paper, that desert monasticism was taken up by Gnostic or gnosticizing Christians, and that we cannot presume these codices were only works discarded by orthodox monks as too heretical to keep in their libraries.

A third surprising discovery came with the Codex Tchacos (Askeland 2021, pp. 299–314; Bethge and Brankaer 2007), bound Egyptian papyri emerging from the Jabal Qarara region of El Minya, Middle Egypt, in the late 1970s, and only made available to scholars in 2006 after decades of struggle with local and international dealers. The book of 66 pages enclosed four Gnostic tractates, together responding to personages known from the New Testament from a "unique" perspective (De Conick 2009, pp. 243, 255), probably used as Scripture by a marginal Gnostic Christian group and not necessarily monastic. The texts of the *Letter of Peter to Philip* (CT 1.1–9) and the *First Apocalypse of James* (=1 Apoc. Jas.) (CT 2.10–32) did not surprise any serious reader because they were already known through NHC VIII,2 and NHC V,3. While the fragment of the *Book of Allogenes* that was enclosed was different from the Nag Hammadi work of the same name (NHC XI,3), the Coptic *Gospel of Judas* (CT 3.33–58), previously only referenced in the polemic against the Cainites by Irenaeus of Lyon (*ca*. 180) and Epiphanius of Cyprus (370s), was a hot topic in the 2000s (Jenott 2011). Trompf and Kim approached this document with the understanding that "Judas is thus this gospel's hero: in his betrayal he makes the necessary 'sacrifice' of a body connected to Jesus for redemption to occur, the only worthy sacrifice in a sea of other (Jewish and ordinary Christian) ones". It was the only work in CT without a parallel in NHC, and the former collection, carbon-dated to the 280s, over a hundred years before the latter, larger cache was "thought to be transcribed by Christian monks" in fourth- and fifth-century desert Egypt (Trompf and Kim 2018, pp. 180, 183).

Meanwhile, in the midst of an additional shock surrounding the so-called *Gospel of Jesus's Wife*, which turned out to contain a forgery at the crucial Coptic passage (*GJW* Recto 4) (Kim 2015), the Oxyrhynchus papyri tagged 5533, or what became the third version of the *First Apocalypse of James* (*1 Apoc. Jas.*), was 're-discovered' on three leaves in 2017 by Geoffrey Smith and Brent Landau after Papyrus specialist Dirk Obbink selected it for study in America from the massive Grenfell–Hunt collection preserved at the University of Oxford (Moss 2017; University Communications 2017). P.Oxy. 5533, which offered a Greek version of *1 Apoc. Jas.* recently published in *the Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXXXVI* volume of 2021, shed a curious light on quite contextually specific personal revelations of Jesus to James the Just (Smith and Landau 2021, pp. 3–13). Something of the character of the Jewish Christian community formed by the legacy of James, the 'brother' of Jesus, can be better traced back from these Greek leaves to a second-century Christian[-Gnostic?] monastic setting (Lundhaug and Jenott 2015, 2018).

This paper seeks to examine select passages from the three versions of *1 Apoc. Jas.* and to explore the socio-linguistic characteristics of the three versions as they pertain to apparent historical reminiscences of the ancient James community, or at least to create a space in which three distinct narrative episodes covered in the three versions can be examined comparatively to see how they might reflect earlier historical traditions held by the ancient James community, and how and whether each version has transformed the James traditions for newer theological or gnosticizing purposes. The critical analysis that follows is based on the Greek fragments as primary, comparing them to the two Coptic ones as secondary, and this paper proposes that the three sets of James narrations we compare are retained in three textual genres that are independent of each other. The relevant texts in P.Oxy. 5533 and the Tchacos versions, though, seem closer to each other, and they would have been assimilated into a Gnostic society or ethos in similar ways. The relevant James traditions of NHC V,3 were written later, with additions from a compilation of sources, and the narration was adapted to bolster Christian Gnostic theological perspectives. The Coptic TC and NHC versions, we argue, actually better reflect the origination of these narratives in Jewish Christian culture, for in comparison to P.Oxy. 5533, the traces of changes to earlier traditions are clearer.

2. James in Three Textual Traditions

Non-canonical narratives about James, we should recognize, appear in as many as seven apocryphal texts of early Christianity.[1] Among them, *1 Apoc. Jas.* contains various discourses between Jesus and James, the latter apparently being considered a step-brother of Jesus (Funk 2007, pp. 321–30). The work as a whole—although only CT and NHC are in a good enough state to provide us with a relatively complete picture—can be divided into two parts: one surrounding the pre-passion Jesus, and the other surrounding the risen Jesus (Gianotto 2008, pp. 531–41). While the text begins with James's testimony, providing a recollection of Jesus's instructional teachings on "Him-who-is", femaleness, and redemption, the rest of Jesus' sayings are responses to the questions by James on mystical subjects, such as archons, hebdomads, the 72 heavens, powers, hosts, redemption, faith, sufferings, multitude, the Pre-existent One, and the figure of Addai (Pedersen 2018), as well as burnt offerings and knowledge (Edwards 2013, pp. 65–79). The final narrative in the text is not a conversation between Jesus and James but more a depiction by Jesus for James' sake of imminent conflict and division between two different groups, for which reason, it seems, James abruptly leaves the place. While many gleams of Gnosticism shine through the whole tract (Lewis 2013), as if Jesus mostly has to warn James about aeonic or archontic powers to be faced when he dies (especially Sophia and her son Achamoth) and not mere earthly challenges, various allusions in the text evoke the literary(–historical) figure of James ('brother' of Jesus, in tradition known as 'the Just,') who appears in the New Testament [e.g., 1 Cor 15:7; Gal 2:9–12; Acts 15:13; Jas.]. In response to what Jesus declares, James shows his emotional condition (stress, sorrow, and anger) over Jesus' supposed death and his own forthcoming martyrdom: "When James heard. . .and was much distressed",

"he wiped away the tears in his eyes and [was] very bitter", and "James heard of his [sufferings] and was grieved" (CT [sect.] 17 [Kasser and Wurst edn. as most accessible, p. 117]). *1 Apoc. Jas.* is laced with 14 longer sayings of Jesus that are directed to James and virtually all of them seem saturated with special Gnostic purport (with four of the sayings being elucidated), and they stand in contrast in the presentation to the *Gospel of Thomas*, with its 114 unelucidated and less gnosticized Jesus *logia* (Kim 2021), but behind the Jesus/James conversations there lurk narrative details apparently reflecting much earlier traditions about James, inferably preserved by his community. These narrations, embedded in the later passages of CT and NHC, are all interestingly preserved in the earliest and Greek text of *1 Apoc. Jas.* of P.Oxy. 5533.

None of the three versions of *1 Apoc. Jas.* are preserved in completion. The Nag Hammadi text, even if in eleven fragmented parts, contains more of the whole apocalypse, although the ends of NHC V,3. 37 and 39–43 are in a state that makes it well-nigh impossible to recover their sentences satisfactorily (Funk 2007, pp. 321–32). The CT find is better preserved, but sections of CT 2.13, 14, 24 and the last part of CT 2. 29–30 are damaged, and the context of the text cannot be reconstructed (Kasser and Wurst 2007, pp. 121–61; Funk 2007). The Greek version (See Figure 1), though apparently only parts of a whole, is valuable for our purposes—the Oxyrhynchus Papyri 5533 comprises three papyrus fragments named A, C, and H (Smith and Landau 2021). This greyer ink manuscript is about 13 cm wide and 14–15 cm tall, written by a single hand in the fourth or fifth century, and the Greek fragments were once presumed to be the work of a junior scribe, given the uncorrected errors and omissions in "accents, breathings, diaereses, sense breaks, and elision" (Smith and Landau 2021, pp. 3–4). These failures of an inattentive copyist are interpreted to be part of an educational context in which young scribes were trained to produce exact reproductions of early Christian manuscripts in ancient Egypt (ibid., pp. 4–5). The inconsistencies in the linguistic structure of the Greek text were thought to represent "a teacher's mode to help students learn to read and write". The regular application of mid-dots in this Greek James text is actually unique among ancient manuscripts (Moss 2017). An important point is, of course, that the Greek text has clearly been copied from a Greek text that we can cautiously hypothesize, for working purposes, was older than the CT and NHC versions, which were, as most fairly deduce, Coptic translations of earlier Greek versions (or copies of earlier such translations) that are probably (but may not be) earlier than POxy. 5533's source. This paper focuses on the narratives in P.Oxy. 5533 (Leaves A, G, and H) and on those parallel parts in the Coptic versions of CT 2.16–17 and 24–26 and NHC V, 3.29–30 and 37–39, and it is thus a piece homing in on the question of the residual traditions of a very early Jamesian community.

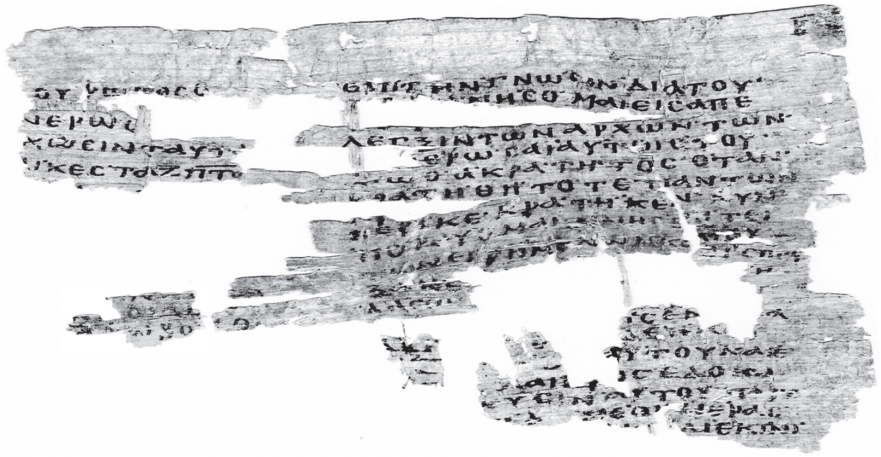

Figure 1. P.Oxy. 5533, Leaf A (a Greek fragment of the First Apocalypse of James).

Socio-linguistic analysis suggests the independent character of the three different versions, but in the Greek text leading up to the narrations, James has Biblical-sounding

revelations granted to him by Jesus in the less distinctly Gnostic terms of "knowledge", "hidden", "foresight", "these things concealed", and "seven spirits", which we suggest most reflect, in all three versions, the Jewish Christian community from which the narratives, in our view, originally derived. The Tchacos James writer was detectably familiar with the Oxyrhynchus James (or something like it) and attuned it for his group's purposes. This is why it has been useful to have the Greek text to help reconstruct small, damaged parts of the Coptic text (CT 2.16–17); indeed, modern editing has allowed two segments to be fairly added to the recently published CT text (Kasser and Wurst 2007, pp. 115–61). The kind of adaptation or culturo-linguistic transformation that was discerned for CT has already been previously spotted in other cases where we have both Greek and Coptic texts to compare. For three examples, note also how the Berlin Codex and Nag Hammadi *Sophia of Jesus Christ* can be re-evaluated in light of P.Oxy VIII 1081; the Berlin and NHC Codices of *The Gospel of Mary* can be re-evaluated in view of two Greek texts of P.Oxy L 3525 and Papyrus Rylands 463 (Smith and Landau 2021, p. 5); and the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*, in a limited way, can be re-evaluated considering the three Greek fragments of P.Oxy. 1, 654, and 655. If we can draw out special changes to James' narrations in CT, Candida Moss (2017) deduces the same for the NHC version. She proposes a culture of socio-linguistic transmission, such that "[early] Christian writings were not static, but living texts subject to change". Indeed, changes in the NHC *1 Apoc. Jas*. version indicate how the James tradition was dramatically developed in an Egyptian monastic society (Lundhaug and Jenott 2018; Wipszycka 2018). The following comparative study of three distinct narrative traditions of James show how they underwent textual development, signalled by new ideological additions, editing, and alterations.

Table 1 presents two illustrative moments in our first chosen text cluster, one of which concerns James' reaction to intimations of Jesus' passion, after the latter has reassured him of his power and knowledge over the "rulers" (or archons) and that James has no need to be distressed, after which Jesus leaves (1–1 and 1–2). These versions subtly prefigure James' own death (as was implied earlier, e.g., in NHC V,3,25), implying James's leadership in bringing others to faith and comforting him in his "initial distress" (Reaves 2019, p. 49; see Parkhouse 2021, pp. 61–65). This text cluster amounts to a relatively undeveloped narration, with the sayings of Jesus primarily elicited through the questions of James, without describing any spatial setting (Edwards 2013, pp. 65–79). Admitting that P.Oxy. 5533 is more damaged and fragmentary, and CT 2.16–17 and NHC V,3.29–30 are better preserved, we can spot verbal developments in the latter versions. Thus, we can see that the terms of "this" (PO.1–1) is altered to "this reason" (CT.1–1) to indicate the assurances of James' deliverance; and both CT.1–1 and NHC.1–1 developed the key phrase in PO.1–1 ("to show them this") into "and I shall reveal to them". The first-person pronoun of PO.1–1 is missing in the phrase "that have been said", but the CT.1–1 and NHC.1–1 change this, with a stronger tone, to "what I have said" and "I have told you". The CT.1–2 and NHC.1–2 accentuate James' resolution more firmly, following up with the narration of Jesus's departure. Both Coptic texts pinpoint and provide the name "James (ϊⲁⲕⲕⲱ ⲃⲟⲥ)", and the NHC narrator created an additional farewell scene, adding "the master said good-bye to him".

The second moment or episode that follows concerns a more specifically located Jesus/James encounter, with Jesus suddenly reappearing while James was walking yet involved in a scheduled prayer with his disciples and explains the real meaning of his passion (see above Table 1, 1–3 and 1–4) (Funk 2007, pp. 321–32; Mattison 2023). James has been distressed about Jesus' talk about his sufferings (expressed as τὰ πάθη αὐτοῦ in OP.1–3), and now he will learn his word's true meaning. Actually, in one unusual exposition of *1 Apoc. Jas.*, Mark Mattison (2023, p. 5) interprets OP's Greek phrase to refer to Jesus's physical sacrifice: "Jesus left James in order to be crucified so that his physical body would die". This looks to be a pre-Gnostic detail. As for differences between the versions and changes made, note how in the OP and CT texts Jesus returned in "two days", while the NHC tradition is less clear ("some days"). This could reflect that the Egyptian monastic communities

that were sources of the OP and CT texts were familiar with each other, given Smith and Landau's previous arguments for the bilingual similarity of the two texts (see Gruber 2003). On the other hand, there are peculiarities of the CT version that need to be reckoned with here. The narrator of CT.1–3 wants to stress that it was Jesus' suffering rather than his own that motivates James' anxieties, saying, "And it was this alone that he had [to] console himself (ⲙⲟⲛⲟⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲙⲁⲟⲩⲁⲁϥ ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲟⲩⲛⲧⲁϥⲁϫⲉ̄ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲥⲟⲗⲥⲁ̄ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ ⲉⲧⲉ)". The two American scholars Geoffrey Smith and Brent Landau have supposed that this phrase was dropped in the PO and NHC texts because of a *saut du même au même* case (literally, an unsatisfactory stylistic 'jump from the same to the same' in French) (Smith and Landau 2021, p. 11). If that is true, and the scribes of the PO and the NHC versions applied the same policy, the CT copyist may have had a different Greek text, or perhaps just accepted the decision of the community leader extolling the Tchacos 'scriptures' (see above). Following the same principle, we should ask why CT texts amplified Jesus' reappearing "all of a sudden (ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙⲏⲧⲉ ⲇⲉ ϩⲛ̄ ⲟⲩⲱⲥⲛⲉ)", a phrase not included either in the PO or NHC texts. Generally, the PO and CT texts are similar, but again that does not mean that they share the same Greek text; remember that the actual papyrus of the Greek we have (as PO) is dated later than Coptic Codex Tchacos, even though both PO and TC can be said to presuppose earlier Greek copies (or Greek originals from some unknown dates!).

Table 1. P.Oxy. 5533 (Leaf A) with two Coptic texts.

Texts		Context
P.Oxy. 5533 (Leaf A)	PO.1–1:	↓ 'to knowledge. Because of this I shall appear for the refutation of the rulers to show them this: the one who cannot be grasped, when he is grasped, then he has prevailed over all. Now I am going. Remember the things that have been said and let [them] grow in you".
	PO.1–2:	"I shall take pains. . . " . . . [and] he prepared what was necessary.
	PO.1–3:	[James] heard of [his sufferings] and was [troubled] and waited for his coming. He arrived after [*two*] *days* [and behold, James] was going to the mountain called *Golgoul* with [his own] pupils who gladly heard him [and] had him for comfort, saying "[This] is the second teacher". And behold, the crowd was scattered . . . was left [alone] . . . pray. . . to him the Lord . . . [Ceasing] the prayer, he went to take him,
	PO.1–4:	saying this: "[Rabbi,] I have you. I heard what [you suffered and] I was troubled".
CT 2.16.15–17.25	CT.1–1:	to knowledge. And for this reason I shall [appear] in order to rebuke the rulers, [and I] [shall] reveal to them that there is one who cannot be grasped. When he is grasped, then he becomes strong. So now I shall go. Remember *what I have said*, and let it growwithin you".
	CT.1–2:	*(James:)* "I shall make every effort, Rabbi, to do as you have said". And Jesus left and prepared what was destined for him.
	CT.1–3:	James heard about his sufferings, and he was deeply distressed and awaited his coming. *And it was this alone that he had [to] console himself*—waiting for this coming. And *two days* passed, and look, James was performing his duties upon the [mountain] called "*Galge[la]m*". [---] there [---] with his disciples [who] listened to him willingly. And they had him as a comforter, saying, "This is the second master". And look, they dispersed, and J[am]es remained behind by himself and prayed a great deal, as was his custom. *And all of a sudden* Jesus appeared to him, and he stopped praying and began to embrace him,
	CT.1–4:	saying this: "Rabbi, I withdrew from you. I heard what you endured, and I was greatly distressed".
NHC V, 3. 29.25–30.9	NHC.1–1:	[. . .]. And after this I shall appear to rebuke the rulers, and I shall reveal to them that there is one who is invincible. If that one is seized, he will seize all of them. But now I shall go. Remember the things *I have told you*, and let them enter your heart".
	NHC.1–2:	*James said,* "Master, I shall hurry to do as you have said". *The master said good-bye to him*, and he fulfilled what was fitting.
	NHC.1–3:	When James heard of the master's sufferings, he was deeply distressed. They were waiting for the sign of his coming, and it came after *some days*. James was walking on the mountain called *Gaugela*, along with his disciples, who still listened to him with desire. They had a comforter, and they said, "This is the second [teacher]". The crowd dispersed, but James remained [behind and] prayed ..., as was his custom. The master appeared to him. He stopped praying, embraced him, kissed him,
	NHC.1–4:	saying, "Rabbi, I've found you. I heard of the sufferings you endured, and I was greatly troubled".

For this re-appearance episode, the Nag Hammadi scribe added a few new aspects, including a "sign" and a "kiss", as if sprucing up what we have in the OP narration, which has "[Ceasing] the prayer, he (James) went to take him (Jesus)", NHC reads instead: "He (James) stopped praying, embraced him (Jesus), kissed him". Regarding such scribal interference, Julio Dias Chaves presumes that the "product of a Coptic compilation (NHC V) [is]. . .not directly linked to the Greek original context of composition", with the reproduction, which he believes "necessarily took place from the fourth century on", being far removed from the time of any James tradition's inception, let alone any possible corresponding event in New Testament times (Dias Chaves 2016, p. 240). Therefore, the kiss may simply be an embellishment, or the late supplying of additional detail. The humanizing image of Jesus embracing and kissing James, admittedly, was once thought to stem from "a remnant of Jewish Christian anti-Paulinism", but the Greek text does not support this view, as it is without emotional features (Schoedel 1991, pp. 158–61). A reference point in all three versions (PO.1–4; CT.1–4; NHC.1–4), though, that could take us back to a primitive Christian context, lies with James' expression of excitement at either simply finding Jesus or because Jesus *re*-appeared to him, apparently after his resurrection. Each of the three versions have James exclaiming the term "Rabbi", which may well derive from ancient communities following the historical James as a Jewish Christian community, which would explain its prominent use earlier in *1 Apoc. Jas*., as in NHC V,3,25–26 (Reaves 2019, pp. 48–53). For this episodic segment, the Greek and Coptic versions are all in good condition, and that is why they are chosen for comparison to probe any similarities between them, but the NHC is demonstrably the richest linguistically. Contemplate, for example, PO.1–4, with "[what you suffered and] I was troubled" beside the more refined NHC.1–4 on "the sufferings you endured, and I was greatly troubled".

With regard to the last sub-segments of these three versions, we note that they all concur in narrating that Jesus reappears to James on a mountain (rendered in three different ways), apparently in the Palestinian/Levantine region (see Shanks and Witherington 2014, p. 180, on NHC's "Gaugela" in Syria), and that James has followers there, who treat James as their "second teacher" after Jesus. We will need to return to this as a likely residuum of the tradition about James and his community from New Testament times.

Let us proceed to the second of the three sets of narrative tradition selected for sociolinguistic comparative analysis, the sets in CT and NHC, each presented further toward the ends of the two versions.

Table 2 covers a segment at the end of a Jesus/James dialogue in which Jesus tells James how he (James) can be delivered from suffering. The narrator of the text tells how, when James is arrested by a multitude of people, Jesus' instructions allow him to avoid their attacks. The relevant Leaf G of P.Oxy. 5533 is fragmentary, including the two parts isolated as PO.2–2 and 2–4. The relevant parts in CT.2–2, NHC.2–1, and NHC.2–4 are also partly missing, although the context is understandable. However, they all relate an episode in which Jesus prophesies for James by way of a future narration that involves "Levi" and his younger brother. The usage of 'holy spirit (ἅγιον πνεῦμα)' in the Greek text looks pre-Gnostic, and one might suspect a verbal leftover of the Jamesian community, a Jewish Christian one, when references to the role of "Levi" (as ⲗⲉⲩⲓ in CT.2–2) and the Land (of Israel) (even "Jerusalem [ⲛ̄ⲑⲓⲗ̄ⲏⲙ̄] in NHC.2–1)" are taken into consideration. But we must be careful. Already, such Greek phrases and terms in PO as "these aforesaid things", "hidden", "he is not (there)", and "[through] foresights]" ironically exhibit the textual potentiality from which Gnostic concepts could develop (as in CT and NHC) within the ascetic culture of the Egyptian desert (Choat and Giorda 2017; Goehring 1999). As it is, the Greek text we have is not that ancient and is already showing signs of being the work of an early gnosticizing writer, but in the deduced original 'less or un-tampered state' it can be fairly said to precede the two Coptic versions of *1 Apoc. Jas*. in the provenance of a military crisis in which the early James community needs protection (one suspects during the Bar Kochba revolt [132–6 CE], not the Jewish War [66–70]). As for the Coptic texts themselves, both the drive for edification and the confident manipulation or deformation

of earlier tradition in both of them confirm the intense labour and prosperity of Gnostic Christian communities, albeit under the threat of religious persecution, during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries (Parkhouse 2021, pp. 69–71; Binning 2022, pp. 293–310).

Table 2. P.Oxy. 5533 (Leave G) with two Coptic texts.

Texts	Context	
P.Oxy. 5533 (Leaf G)	PO.2–1:	"for a holy spirit [will come] from him and he will be considered worthy to inherit *these aforesaid things*.
	PO.2–2:	When his younger son inherits them . . . Levi, then this land will be warred upon, [but] Levi will hide them prudently . . .".
	PO.2–3:	"his mind, but *the younger* will grow in them and keep them *hidden* [until he becomes (?)] seventeen years old.
	PO. 2–4:	And then this land will be warred upon while *he is not (there?)*, but [*through foresight*] he will be protected. . ."
CT 2. 24.4–13 & 24.22–25.4	CT.2–1:	And there will come from him a seed, holy and worthy to inherit these [things] I have said.
	CT.2–2:	And when his little child *grows up [---] he [---] living*, he will receive the name 'Levi.' Then the land will be at war again. But Levi, as a little child, will hide there,
	CT.2–3:	his mind. The younger one, however, will grow up with them, and he will keep them hidden until he reaches his seventeenth birthday.
	CT.2–4:	And then the land will go to war. But since he is not there, he will be safeguarded in accordance with providence.
NHC V, 3. 37.2–38.10	NHC.2–1:	Then he is to bring forth. . .without words. On the basis [of what was] prophesied earlier, *I say, [he is to take] a wife [outside] Jerusalem in her. . ., and he <is to> produce [two] sons from her*.
	NHC.2–2:	*[They are] to inherit these things*, and the understanding of the one who will rise [even higher]. *They are to receive from him a portion of his mind.*
	NHC.2–3:	"*The smaller is the greater among them*. Let these things be shared with him and hidden within him until [he] is seventeen years old. . .from [them].
	NHC.2–4:	*He will be severely persecuted at the hands of his fellow... He will be proclaimed [through] them*, and he will proclaim this word. Then [it will become] a seed of [salvation]".

Table 2 displays the greater linguistic similarities of the PO and CT texts, while the features of the NHC text are more creatively Gnostic. Still, in CT.2–1, the "holy spirit" found in PO.2–1 is altered to read "a seed, holy (ⲟⲩⲥⲡⲉⲣⲙⲁ ⲉϥⲟⲩⲉⲉⲃ)", apparently a Gnostic adaptation and a novel development by the CT copyist (although, in NHC 2–4, the idea of a special seed is also present). As for the reference to the 'Holy Spirit' in the Greek fragments, rather than being a pre-Gnostic residue, it is possible that a later scribe wanted to bring the text into conformity with the emerging Trinitarian theology of the day. (Remember, scribes can have their own special impact: ponder how CT only has "James" as its title, and the NHC title is just "The Apocalypse of James", with no mention of it being 'the First' in either version (Dias Chaves 2016, pp. 235–53).) Neither "holy spirit" nor "holy seed" appears in the NHC.2–1. Additionally, while PO.2–1 and CT.2–1 are generally close, the narrator for NHC.2–1 not only apparently modified the Greek source with the phrase: "Then he is to bring forth...without words", but also included new additional references to "a wife" and "two sons".

Again, the sub-sections we isolated as PO.2–2 and CT.2–2, on the child Levi and his younger (unnamed) brother, share basically the same content, despite CT.2–2 being extended by the addition about how the boy "grows [up] [---] he [---] living". On the other hand, NHC.2–2 accentuates the children's joint inheritance of "the understanding of the One Who Is (ⲡⲉⲧⲱⲟⲟⲡ = the transcendent God)" before singling out the "younger son" or younger brother of "Levi" as playing a greater role when he turns seventeen. Two new phrases pertaining to the revelation of Gnostic truth are created—"[They are] to inherit these things" and "They are to receive from him a portion of his mind"—to replace the talk in PO.2–2 about an earthly situation of war (rather than what has been 'gnosticized' at NHC V,3, 36,5–37,25 into a cosmic conflict). Both PO.2–3 and CT.2–3 share a common

reference to mundane war, even though CT.2–3 laces the prophecy with different terms ("however", "reaches", and "birthday"). The NHC.2–3 includes the reason that the younger son was chosen, as "the smaller is the greater among them". A comforting tone is sounded in both PO.2–4 and CT.2–4, saying that, although the land will be at war, the younger brother would be protected. This scene was revised in the NHC.2–4 with the addition that the younger brother will be under persecution from his fellows yet will eventually become "a seed of [salvation]". Perhaps this literary development may have arisen because, to cite Ravinder Binning's generalization about ancient Egyptian documentation (Binning 2022, p. 293), "copying and translating inevitably introduced additions and changes". NHC's rewording provided a greater feeling of assurance to its recipients than to the readerships of P.Oxy. 5533 and CT, but we still have to acknowledge that the NHC revisor most definitely transmogrified earthly war into a cosmic conflict with inimical aeonic forces threatening (the Gnostic Christian) community. The historical residuum we are interested in tracing is well-nigh obscured in the Nag Hammadi version.

Let us now turn to the third of the three sets of narrative tradition selected for socio-linguistic comparative analysis, closer to the ends of the CT and NHC texts.

Table 3 continues from Jesus' prophesy and its inner narration, as previously discussed, and goes on to present Jesus and James, concluding their conversation before James's martyrdom. It concerns a crucial part of *1 Apoc. Jas.* as the work winds up, a special Jesus/James exchange about seven women, reckoned by James to be Jesus' female disciples in NHC V,3 38,17–18, and once more we have all three versions yielding passages that we can again set side-by-side, which were thus selected by us for comparative analysis. In this case, the CT text is well preserved, while the OP and NHC texts are fragmentary. PO.3–1 and 3–3, and their parallels NHC.3–1 and 3–3, are too unclear to allow for their full meaning to be understood, but the greater similarity between P.Oxy. 5533 (Leaf H) and CT 2.25.12–16 and 26.1–10 was confirmed when all the three versions were viewed synoptically (Smith and Landau 2021, pp. 12–13). The Greek term "this logos (ὁ λόγος)" of PO.3–1 can be fairly said to represent a pre-Gnostic authentic Jewish Christian tradition, traceable to an early James community. CT.3–1 delivers the extra sentence, "And these things will happen to restrain the rules", but without any obvious signs of gnosticizing. Together, CT.3–1 and NHC.3–1 decorate the opening sentence of the segment with an introduction of Jesus' interlocutor as James (esp. NHC, with "James said"), and the vocative "Rabbi" in both PO.3–2 and CT.3–2 confirms that the linguistic figure of the James applies to these versions. Again, an evocative reference to "light" is found in both these versions, and one may well ask whether this connects to the "the logos" in PO and also has a basis in early Jewish Christian tradition. Meanwhile, NHC.3–2, similar to the revelation discourse of *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (NHC III.4 = Berlin Codex (BG) 8502, 3), presents a distinctly different enquiring aspect of James, who asks Jesus about seven women that he perceives to be the latter's disciples and believes have "become strong through the perception within them" (Haxby 2013, pp. 81–82). This is a special elaboration of what is presented more simply in the other versions as Jesus' last revelation to James before his martyrdom.

Pausing to consider the special material of NHC 3.2–3, Antti Marjanen seriously conjectured (Marjanen 2010, p. 528) that "the seven women" held "a similar role to the prophets of the old times (in the Israelite prophetic tradition)" (cf. also Guy 1947). Maryanne pictures a well-developed Gnostic Christian philosophy in opposition to the mainstream Christianity, as seen in James' question about the strange and alternative role of females in Jesus' work (Ibid., pp. 535–46): "Yet I ask of you [something else]: who are the seven women who have [become] your disciples? Look, all the women bless you. But I wonder how it can be that [powerless] vessels have become strong through the perception within them?" This question, acknowledging how marginalized women can be empowered, may have truly encouraged those females in the socially vulnerable community of Gnostic Christianity, immersed in monastic Egyptian culture (Parkhouse 2021, pp. 69–71).

Table 3. P.Oxy. 5533 (Leave H) with two Coptic texts.

Texts		Context
P.Oxy. 5533 (Leaf H)	PO.3–1:	and [this *logos* will be] disdained [by them. . .] trickery (?) [. . .]". "Rabbi, . . . and. . ."
	PO.3–2:	of the *light* [so that they may be in the] manifest [even if they] have these things [concealed.
	PO.3–3:	The seven] women [are] the seven spirits. . .spirit. . .of thought . . . spirit of fear'
CT 2. 25.12–16 & 26.1–10	CT.3–1:	and they will despise this very word. And these things will happen to restrain the rules". (*James*:) "Rabbi, I have come to believe all these things, and they are well placed. . ."
	CT.3–2:	of *light*, so that they may possess the secrets when they are revealed.
	CT.3–3:	These seven women are seven spirits who are introduced in this (?) *scripture*: A spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirt of counsel [and] strength, [a] spirit [of] understanding and knowledge, a spirit of fear.
NHC V, 3. 38.11–39.8	NHC.3–1:	*James said*, "[I am] encouraged . . . and they are . . . [for] my soul.
	NHC.3–2:	*Yet I ask of you [something else]: who are the seven women who have [become] your disciples? Look, all the women bless you. But I wonder how it can be that [powerless] vessels have become strong through the perception within them?"*
	NHC.3–3:	The master [said], "You . . . well . . . a spirit of. . ., a spirit of thought, [a spirit] of counsel and. . ., a spirit of. . ., a spirit of knowledge, [a spirit] of fear.

We can affirm that Jesus's saying in PO.3–3 also supports the conception that the teaching of "the seven women" and "the seven spirits" downplays a dualistic aspect of sexuality, but we can fairly ask whether this derives from an early Jewish Christian tradition preserved in the Greek version. The section of NHC.3–3 covering Jesus' response to the long question is damaged, but PO.3–3 and CT.3–3 stand together in representing Jesus's positive affirmation of vulnerable figures. The seven spirits of the seven women are detailed in CT.3–3 as the spirits of wisdom, insight, counsel, strength, understanding, knowledge, and fear. The Greek tradition seems more related to the Hebrew revelation of Isaiah and is likely to be a pre-Gnostic allusion (Marjanen 2010, pp. 536–38; Haxby 2013, pp. 81–82): "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord" (Isa 11: 2–3). Seemingly picking up on this, the reference to "*This* (?) *scripture* (ⲧⲉⲓ ⲅⲣⲁⲫⲏ)" in CT.3–3 may mean the prophetic Hebrew book (Hames and Casanellas 2015). Note how the tradition of the seven spirits is progressively transformed by the author of Romans as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully" (Rom 12:6–8). This plausible connection led Sarah Parkhouse to assert the influence of Jewish and 'standard' Christian traditions on *1 Apoc. Jas.*, suggesting that readers of the text were familiar with Jewish scriptures. For her, even Johannine Christological themes of identity, death, and ascension are in the text, although reformulated (Parkhouse 2021, pp. 61–65). This presupposes, however, cultural connections and literary transmissions between the Johannine and the James communities that have not been established, and in any case, CT's reference to "this scripture" may pertain to the Tcachos James apocalypse or the Tchacos Codex *in toto* as being authoritative for an emergent gnostic group (Trompf and Kim 2018, p. 184). Meanwhile, our socio-linguistic analysis opens the possibility that the original Greek text for the *1 Apoc. Jas.* contains a prophetic perspective going back to Jesus and James. That may help to explain why, for theologico-political reasons, the Book of James was excluded from the Scriptural corpus of mainline Christianity when the canonical boundary was determined in the 39th *Festal* (*Easter*) *Letter* of 367, by Athanasius (*ca.* 296–373), as Bishop of Alexandria (Gwynn 2012): "If anyone adds anything to them, . . .And if anyone takes words away . . ., God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, . . ." (Rev. 22:18–19).

3. Traces of the James Community in the Greek P.Oxy. 5533

We proceed further, as it is a main goal of this paper to move beyond the three texts to detect early traditions by asking the key question: Is there any evidence to be gathered from this comparative textual study concerning the earliest or foundational Jamesian community? If the Greek and two Coptic versions of *1 Apoc. Jas.* depict various pictures of James, how do their images of James and Jesus reflect the transitional history of an earlier Christianity? James, the 'brother' of Jesus, is not placed traditionally among the twelve disciples. He is not the James who was an eyewitness of Jesus at the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2) or at the raising of Jairus's daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51), nor did he hear the Gethsemane prayer (Mark 14:33; Matt 26:37). One might suppose him to be a rather sceptical onlooker, as Jesus's half-brother. However, the tradition (works and belief) of James the Just are found in several Biblical texts of the first century. Along with the earliest witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, James remained in Jerusalem, becoming part of John Mark's upper room group (Acts 1:14). He met the converted Saul (Gal 1:19) and received a report on Peter's miraculous escape from prison (Acts 12:17). The chairman in the Jerusalem Council recognized James' eldership (=a 'pillar') in the early Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9; cf Acts 15:13). However, the Jewish Christian James, according to Josephus (36–100 CE), was martyred by stoning under the order of Ananus ben Ananus, a High Priest of the late Herodian era in 62 CE (just after the death of Porcius Festus, the Roman Procurator of Judea). As Josephus writes in one version: "So he (Ananus) assembled the Sanhedrim of judges, and brought . . . the brother of Jesus . . ., whose name was James: and some others [or, some of his companions.] . . . And as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned" (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaica* 20. 200).

The writings of Church Fathers carry on the Jamesian tradition by imaging James as bishop or head of the Jerusalem church and apostle (for testimonies by Papias, Hegesippus, and Clement of Alexandria through the second century, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome in the fourth, and Pseudo-Andrew of Crete in the seventh, see Rankin 2016). The James legacy was also popular in the early Christian apocrypha. The importance of Jesus' appearance to James, also recognized in Paul's 1 Corinthians (15:7), is represented in the *Gospel of Hebrews* (Evang. Heb.[ed. James [Frag.16]] (Hames and Casanellas 2015) and the *Gospel of Thomas* (Kim 2021). We find the appearance of the risen Jesus to James and Peter in the *Apocryphon of James* (NHC 1.2), a work written in Egypt (Lindenlaub 2020, pp. 3–27), and, as its name suggests, the apocryphal *Protevangelium of James* (or Infancy Gospel of James) has James providing a narrative of the birth of Jesus by Mary with Joseph present (Bremmer 2020).

The James legacy was transmitted by the early Jewish Christian community from Jerusalem to Egypt over the course of a geopolitical history of the religious persecution (Kasser and Wurst 2007, pp. 115–16). The canonization process and the localization of Jewish Christian culture in the Graeco–Roman world brought it into contact with the Gnostic ethos, and lineaments of tradition from the pre-Gnostic James followings somehow survived in the fourth-to-fifth century Gnostic Christian monasticism (Lundhaug and Jenott 2018; Gabra and Takla 2015, 2018). Matters for spiritual attention were altered and old narrative details were re-used for ascetic purposes. "The focus on divine identity and cosmic conflict,. . . may have held more influence in the fourth century on the Coptic codices when Christian bodies no longer faced Roman officials but Christian souls faced the powers of the devil" (Parkhouse 2021, p. 70). William Schoedel and Eirini Bergström detected a Valentinian formula in *1 Apoc. Jas.* and other "elements of Valentinianism", maintaining that these, along with other Gnostic teachings, were taken over or developed by a group which imagined itself to be "in continuity with the original Jewish Christian congregation in Jerusalem" (Schoedel 1970, p. 121; see Bergström 2019; Edwards 2013, pp. 68–72). All three versions leave signs of the issues that early James Jewish Christian community dealt with, yet made of these issues living spiritual dialogues, 'Gnostic-style', rather than *pericopai* of old narration, even though the scribes (and their supervisors) evidently felt that the old setting of the Jesus/James exchanges and the matters they discussed still had

pertinence. Various scholars presume that the Coptic readers of CT and NHC V,3 would have knowledge not only about the basic Christian story of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection, but also about "Valentinian theological speculation such as the identity of Achamoth" (see Parkhouse 2021, pp. 51–71).

The Greek text of P.Oxy 5533, of all three versions, provides the best indications of early Jewish Christian Jamesian narration. Leaf A posits the historical existence of James's disciples, and best conveys a historical sense of James' deep concern for and commitment to his master Jesus:

PO.1–3: [James] heard of [his sufferings] and was [troubled] and waited for his coming. He arrived after [two] days [and behold, James] was going to the mountain called Golgoul with [his own] pupils who gladly heard him [and] had him for comfort, saying "[This] is the second teacher". And behold, the crowd was scattered was left [alone] pray to him the Lord [ceasing] the prayer, he went to take him,

[Ἰάκ]ω[βος] δὲ ἤκου[ϛε]ν τ̣[ὰ] π[ά]θ̣[η] αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐ[λυπ]ή̣[θ]η καὶ προϛεδόκα
[τὴν ἔλ]ευϛιν αὐτοῦ. παρε[γένετ]ο̣ δ̣[ὲ] μεθ' ἡμέρας [β̄ καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰάκ]ω̣β̣ο̣ϛ διεκίνι
ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρως τὸ λεγόμενο[ν] Γολγουλ μετὰ τῶ̣[ν εἰ]δ̣ίων μαθητῶν οἴτειν[ες] ἡδέως
αὐτοῦ ἤκουο[ν κ]α[ὶ] εἶχον αὐτὸν εἰϛ παρα[μο]ιθείαν λέγοντες ['ο]ὗ̣[τός ἐϛ]τιν
ὁ δεύτερος [δ]ιδ̣άϛ̣κ̣α̣λως'. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐϛ̣κ̣ορπ[ίϛ]θ[η] ὁ λ⟨α⟩ός. [ ]..... [.] [ ] [ ] [ ]
φθη μ[όν]ο[ϛ̣.][ ] ευ[χ *c.* 17] ω[.]. θ[*c.* 12] αὐτο͂ ὁ κ[(ύριο)ϛ]α̣ [.....]ϛ τῆ̃[ϛ]
προϛευχῆ̃[ϛ] ἔρχε[το λ]αβε[ῖν] αὐτὸν λέγων

The scene of PO.1–3 is, in our assessment, about the period between the death of Jesus and his resurrection (cf. Evang. Heb. [16]), while James and [his own] pupils (μαθητῶν) carried on the regular custom of prayer at the usual mountain meeting-place. James's followers are depicted as glad to have James as "a comforter" even after the death of Jesus. James was then recognized as "the second teacher (διδ̣άϛ̣κ̣α̣λως')". The Greek text is not clear, but CT.1–3 and NHC.1–3 both underscore James' strong leadership by representing the disciples respectfully dispersing while he remained behind for another extra prayer. The text of PO.1–1 of "I shall appear for the refutation of the rulers", which was not much changed in the Coptic texts of CT.1–1 and NHC.1–1, could reflect the provision of encouragement that the members of the Jamesian community originally felt and/or received that they could be secured from the religio-political persecution in the colonized Jewish society in which James was eventually killed.

Now, all three versions have named the mountain where James and his disciples regularly prayed, but all differently, and we are left with a tantalizing choice between "Golgoul (Γολγουλ)" (PO.1–3), "Galge[la]m (ⲅⲁⲗⲅⲏⲗⲁⲙ̄)" (CT.1–3), and "Gaugela (ⲅⲁⲩⲅⲏⲗⲁⲛ)" (NHC.1–3). Sufficient concurrence between the versions sets the place of the two Jesus/James encounters in *1 Apoc. Jas*. as outside Jerusalem. None of them specify the place where the pre-passion meeting occurred, but the mountain-top site marks the second meeting, between James and the *risen* Jesus (see Kasser and Wurst 2007, pp. 115–16). While the names of the place may all, in some way, reflect Golgotha (meaning 'place of the skull'), where Jesus was crucified (Reaves 2019, p. 49), it has been suggested that the differing tones or accents derive from the James community of early Christianity in fending off smears from Jewish opponents about the 'bad place,' especially following the destruction in and around Jerusalem in 70 CE (Böhlig and Labib 1963, p. 40). This kind of anti-Jewish retort, Pamela Reaves also argues, indicates how the concept of God's rejection of the Jews was transmitted across the different Gnostic groups in ancient Egypt (Reaves 2019, pp. 52–53). At this point, we are not to forget the appearance of the figure of Addai in *1 Apoc. Jas*. esp. in NHC V,3 36, which was actually not singled out for our synopses of the different versions. From this inclusion, Nils Pedersen infers that the traditions of the Jewish Jerusalem Chris-

tians, which had "played a role in the formation of early Syrian Christianity" (cf. *Doctrine Addai* [*ca*. 400) lurk "in the Jewish Christian substratum of the Gnostic text" (Pedersen 2018, p. 178). The text(s) of *1 Apoc. Jas.* indicate an apostolic succession of the Jamesian tradition—James > Addai > Manael (Masphael) > Levi > Levi's unnamed younger brother (Mattison 2023, p. 8)—which implies that there are Jerusalem–Edessa connections in the very foundation of Eastern Christianity (cf. Trompf 2023, pp. 376–78).

The reconstructed phrase in NHC.2–1 of "[outside] Jerusalem" strongly supports this as the original location of the James community. The image of Jerusalem for *1 Apoc. Jas.* is generally depicted with a hostile attitude, as in CT.11.23–12,3: "But do not return to Jerusalem, for this (city) always gives the cup of bitterness to the children of light as a dwelling place of many rulers". Nevertheless, there is an overlap in the view of Jewish Christians and negative gnostic views of Jerusalem (Schoedel 1991, p. 175), as we can confirm through the Jesus/James exchange about the seven women recognized as disciples of Jesus, which implicitly occurred in Jerusalem, especially in NHC.3–2. The representation of female leadership marks an innovative challenge to the male-dominant society of first-to-second-century Jewish and Jewish Christian society, and, in NHC V,3 40,25, Jewish female names of disciples—Salome, Mariam, Martha and Arsinoe—are significantly listed. The image of "[powerless] vessels (ⲛⲁⲣⲅⲟⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲟⲱⲃ)" gains later relevance to the needs of Gnostic Christians in subsequent centuries who, like the female leaders, hope for a mystical "perception within them (ⲛϩⲛⲟⲟⲙ ⲙⲛ ϩⲛ̄ⲁⲓ ⲥⲑⲏⲥⲓⲥ)" and "to receive from him a portion of his mind" (NHC.2–4, and see Haxby 2013, p. 93). From this perspective, we can detect how the tradition of the early Jewish James community took on a cogent pertinence in the assimilated life of ancient Egyptian Christianity, even under the oppression from the mainstream churches, with the warning "He will be severely persecuted at the hands of his fellow . . ." in [NHC.2–4] being [re]interpreted for these later times.

4. Conclusions

The late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries produced textual evidence of the diversity and development of Jewish and Gnostic Christianities. The ongoing discovery of ancient Greek and Coptic papyri is unveiling the hidden secrets and narratives of various early Christian communities, many affected by a Gnostic ethos and apparently meeting religious persecution for their views and facing alienation in a changing Graeco–Roman world. As Christianity spread throughout the Mediterranean region, the Jesus tradition was transmitted across cultures and languages, becoming mixed with local ideologies and popular worldviews. Today, in three fairly clear-cut cases—in the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (P.Oxy VIII 1081, NHC III,4.90–119, and Berlin Codex); the *Gospel of Mary* (P.Oxy. L 3525, Papyrus Rylands 463, and Berlin Codex); and the *Gospel of Thomas* (P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655, and NHC II,2,32–51)—the socio-linguistic transmission of the original Christian teachings connected to 'more marginalized' or 'questionable' figures is illustrated in the polemical modification and transformations of newly discovered Coptic literature. This paper has attempted to introduce a fourth case, in which the traditional figure involved was not a disciple of Jesus but was nonetheless an elevated figure in early Christian times whose aura grew in significance within the ascetic culture of Gnostic Christianity in third-to-fourth-century ancient Egypt (Goehring 1999).

A continuing transmission of early Jamesian traditions and interest in James as an authoritative source both show up remarkably in *1 Apoc. Jas.*, found in different Greek texts in P.Oxy. 5533 and in Coptic texts in CT and NHC. We have to concede, in the end, that the texts are basically independent of each other, and we cannot definitively confirm that either CT or NHC V,7 depend on the extant PO Greek version, for, although the affinities between P.Oxy. 5533 and CT are strong enough to reflect relative 'familiarity,' we cannot say definitively that our Greek text is directly related to the two Coptic ones, or provides the text from which their authors made translations or redactions. However, through comparative detection, we can deduce prevenient processes of enhancing earlier Greek versions of the non-extant Greek *1 Apoc. Jas.* in a vital gnostic culture. The relative

inability to draw the three versions together in a tighter way, even though we found sufficient portions of the works to look at them synoptically, hardly points in the direction of a unifiable or reconstructable single prototypical text, and instead only suggests that the three different versions we possess originate from different Greek writings and the traditions they alluded to or recorded. This implies that there were plural ascetic groups (or monasteries) maintaining the Jamesian tradition, even during the development of Gnostic Christianity. We have only found what little we can from as much as has been left to us. Tables 1–3 illustrate this multiplicity, and display proclivities of style and concern in each written product. Apparent innovation in a text—as when (from Table 1) CT.1–3 reads: "And it was this alone that [about the crucifixion (death) of Jesus] he had [to] console himself," decisively diverging from PO.1–3 and NHC.1–3—ultimately lead us to ask whether the scribe has a special source (different to that accessed by the others) or has the choice (or is given a directive) to write new content.

Overall, in line with our object to find traces of a very early James community, the least we can say is that NHC embellishes the most as a gnosticizing document, although it nonetheless contains crucial fragmented information, especially personal names that seem to be surviving details from a distant past. We have worked on the assumption that the Greek text has priority when probing back as far as we can go, and our tabulations for comparison generally bear this out as a sensible heuristic procedure. We noted, as an important example, how Leaf G of P.Oxy. 5533 contains revelational terms, such as "these aforesaid things", "hidden", "he is not (there)", and "[through] foresights]", which look Biblical and pre-Gnostic—perhaps they even carry reminiscences of a New Testament context, even though they were susceptible to being patently re-worked by Gnostic minds. However, again, one has to be careful about how far we think we can reach back chronologically, and it is perhaps wise to be content with the portions of the versions of *1 Apoc. Jas*. we have examined here for comparison and transmission history, yielding small glimpses the Jewish Christian tradition of the Jamesian community, which emerged around the early to the middle of second-century CE (Lumpkin 2017). It is to be hoped that this article, which has a strong tradition–history side to it, throws useful light on this emergence, which could perhaps be further enlightened by the [re-]discovery of more fragments of the *First Apocalypse of James* (or other Gnostic texts) from the Oxyrhynchus treasure-store.

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Notes

1 *The Letter of James*, *the Secret Book of James*, *the Protoevangelium of James*, *the Ascents of James*, *the Contestatio of James*, *the Apocryphon of James*, *the First Apocalypse of James*, and *the Second Apocalypse of James*.

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Article

Probing the Relationships Between Mandaeans (the Followers of John the Baptist), Early Christians, and Manichaeans

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Abstract: Mandaeism is the only ancient Gnostic religion surviving to the present day from antiquity. 'Gnosticism' was a block of creative religious activity mostly responding to the early Christian teachings in unusual ways of cosmicizing Jesus, and presenting a challenge to the ancient church fathers in the first-to-third centuries CE. Mandaeism, by comparison, has roots from John the Baptist rather than Jesus, although it is also important to recognize that this baptizing movement emerged in part as a survival of a very old indigenous ethno-religious grouping from Mesopotamia, its followers eventually settling in Mesopotamia's middle and southern regions. Indeed, much of the Mandaeans' thought and practice, especially their rituals of water ablution, have deep origins going back to Sumer, Akkad and Babylonia, reflecting regionally wide influences from right across the Fertile Crescent. Mandaean culture and the Mandaic Aramaic language was of high report in the so-called Patristic period covered by this Special Issue, even in the Arabian Peninsula up until the rise of Islam (634 CE onward), and Mandaeans were honored as a third "People of the Book"—the Sabians (*Ṣābeʾun; or ṣobba* in modern Iraqi Arabic)—in the Qur'an (2:62; 5:69; 22:17); in the Muslim world, many Mandaic speakers switched language to colloquial Iraqi Arabic and (Arabicized) Persian. This article aims to raise some basic questions, relevant to Patristics, about aspects of relationships between Mandaeans and both early 'mainstream' Christians and the other large grouping, the Manichaeans. These questions *first* concern the common flight of the followers of John and Jesus just before the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem (66–70 CE) and the role of the woman Miriai; *second*, the extent to which John and his followers affected the direction of early Christianity, and the consequences this had for 'Baptist'/Christian relationships into the Patristic period, with attention paid to Mandaean views of Jesus; *third*, the process of the formation of early Mandaeism as it combined Hellenistic-Palestinian and Mesopotamian elements; and *fourth*, the signs that the Mandaeans not only influenced Mesopotamian Christian baptismal sects but were crucial in the emergence Manichaeism (from the 230s CE in Persian-dominated Iraq). This article will finish by concentrating on Mandaean–Manichaean relations in the light of a little known and previously secret Mandaic text (*Diwan Razia*), best known as *Mani* or *Sidra d-Mani* within a larger collection of unnamed occult texts. On the basis of the Mandaeans' texts, we maintain that both Jesus and Mani apparently left their fold in turn.

Keywords: Mandaeism; Gnosticism; Christianity; Patrology; Judaism; Manichaeism; Zarathustrianism; (Late) Antiquity; Mesopotamia; Elcesaites

1. Introductory Remarks

The performance of Mandaeans was exceptional in maintaining the only living Gnostic religion from antiquity. They are the last surviving representatives of Gnosticism today (Buckley 2010, p. 109). During the early centuries of Christian era, Mandaeism as both a

religion and group identity took a firm shape, and was a vital presence in the Mesopotamian region until the Arab-Muslim conquests and the collapse of the Sasanian Empire in the seventh century (633–638 CE).

According to rich archaeological, religious, and cultural discoveries from Mesopotamian cities during late antique times, Mandaeans were very active in many places there, especially in remnant settlements of the great Sumerian, Akkadian, and Babylonian centers, but also in areas stretching down and southwards to the top of the Persian Gulf. Mandaic texts inscribed upon curled-up lead rolls and especially Mandaean incantation bowls and lead amulets have been found in large numbers at many important sites such as Abu Shahrain (formerly Eridu), Warka (Uruk), Tell Uheimir and Ingharra (Kish), Afak (Nippur/Nuffar), Tell al-Hiba (Lagash), Telloh (Girsu), Tell Jokha (Umma), Tell al-Muqayyar (Hamazi and Ur), etc. These settlements are all on the Euphrates–Tigris alluvial plain, south of Baghdad in cities of which are still called the Bābil (Babylon), Wāsiṭ, Dhi Qar/Nasriah (including Ur), Maysan (including Ṭib), Al-Muthannā/Semawah, Al-Qādisiyyah, and Basrah (including Qurnah), all now governorates of Iraq, even areas extending to ancient Iranian Ctesiphon (home to the great Sasanian palace of Taq-i Kisra) (see Segal and Hunter 2000; Müller-Kessler 2010, esp. pp. 454–70; Häberl 2018, esp. pp. 75–79, with the information above also from community and private sources). The bowls and amulets used for incantations have become for researchers today particularly important cultural indicators (along with such objects from other traditions). Crossing religious boundaries and offering a tangible connection to their spiritual worldview, these magical items (and the texts and symbols on them) provide important insights into the mystical beliefs and spiritual practices of late antique Mesopotamian societies. The daily beliefs of the Mandaeans, Manichaeans, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and pagan populations, which were expressed side-by-side and competed peacefully in many of the above-named locations prior to the Muslim conquest, can be studied from these valuable, if often fragmented sources (Moriggi 2014). And at that time, Mandaeans carefully maintained their rich heritage of philosophy, literature, art, communal life, and festivals (Nasoraia 2022, e.g., pp. 1–12, 20–28).

Various ideas that we now associate with the Mandaeans were already present in diverse Aramaic-speaking groups in Mesopotamia, as has been highlighted in the recent study of the Mandaean religion by IonuȚ Băncilă (2018). His book shows Mandaeism to be a Gnostic religion that "reflected, recorded, evaluated and thus transformed various religious traditions of different identities", and he has asked, most significantly, "whether traces of 'Mandaic thoughts' can be found in Manichaeism, the second major Gnostic religion in the region", and whether the Manichaeism–Mandaeism relationships were subject to the cultural tendencies in different epochs and relative geographical proximities (Băncilă 2018, pp. 83–231).

As a complex phenomenon by the time of its eventual crystallization from the late first to third centuries CE, the Mandaean religion was producing (probably in some cases reproducing) a rich body of influential sacred writings (including magical texts and its wisdom literature) (Drower 1937, pp. 20–29; Macuch 1976; Segelberg et al. 1990; Rudolph 1996, pp. 339–41; Deutsch 2003; Nasoraia 2024, pp. 8–37). The texts preserved a significant amount of information as to its involvement with strands of Hellenistic and Jewish thought in the Levant and Alexandria (on the western side) and of Mesopotamian (and post-Seleucid part-Hellenized) cultures (to the east). Mandaeism, unique to the Mandaeans and a group designating as 'Naṣoraean' (see below), is based on an intricate understanding of the nature of God, and the origin of life, light, water, and the universe, and of the origin of evil, matter, and death. Woven together with other mystical insights, Mandaean deep knowledge (or Gnosis) of cosmic formation and struggle is documented in an exceptional metaphorical language, terminology, and symbolism, expressed in 'esoterizing'

spiritual wisdom, doctrines, artworks, and practices that have diverse roots in ancient Mesopotamian, Persian, and Gnostic worldviews.

The substantial corpus of Mandaean–Naṣoraean literature embraces a wide range of topics covering the religion's cosmology, life and death, ritual (mainly baptismal) practice, special beliefs, and forms of worship. Mandaeans see themselves as the divinely directed universal healers of the "Worlds and Generations" (*Almia u-Daria*), and unique practitioners of the religion of Mind (*Mana*), Light (*Nhura*), Truth (*Kušṭa*)), Love (*Rahma/Ruhma*), and Enlightenment or Knowledge (*Manda*) (Nasoraia 2012, p. 28). The majority of Mandaic writings are pre-Islamic and also, we would argue, pre-Manichaean, including almost all parts of the three major sacred books of Mandaeans, which are as follows:

(i) *Ginza Rba-Sidra d-Adam* (the Great Treasure, the Book of Adam) (hereafter GR);[1]
(ii) *Qulasta* (the Mandaean Canonical Prayer Book). (ed. and trans. Drower) (hereafter CP);
(iii) *Drašia d-Yahia* (the Teachings/Book of John the Baptist), also called *Drašia d-Malkia* (Teachings of Kings/Angels) (ed. and trans. by Lidzbarski [hereafter JB] and most recently by Häberl and McGrath). Cf. also (Nöldeke 1875; Macuch 1965a; Buckley 2010; with Säve-Söderbergh 1949, pp. 128, 137–54, 156–62)).

It is conceivable that the oldest sections in these works were composed at least several centuries before their actual final redaction, a fact inducing wild speculations concerning the first appearance of the Mandaeans, whether from as far back as some centuries BCE to as late as the sixth century CE (Müller-Kessler 2004, p. 53; Al-Zuhairy 1998; Al Majidi 2014). The dating issue has been connected to the question of *pre-Christian* Gnosticism, because although most extant Gnostic reflect early Christian influences, some do not. Pre-Christian Jewish mystical insights (*merkhabah*) are a case in point, because they look Gnostic (Macuch 1976; Drower 1960, e.g., pp. 14–17; Scholem 1965, pp. 4–5; Deutsch 1995, e.g., pp. 24–26, 43–46, 88–99, 119–27 [for some parallels]; 1999; 1999–2000). In this light, specialist Charles Häberl (2015, p. 297, with n. 1) has emphasized the need for persistent and open research:

> As the only surviving Gnostic religion from Late Antiquity, Mandaeism is unique among the religions of the world, and the sole surviving inheritor to one of the world's most widespread and influential religious traditions. Its sacred texts and liturgy are recorded in a dialect of Aramaic, and comprises one of that language's largest corpora. Its adherents have preserved both spoken and written forms of their language, as well as a complex body of rituals and a developed commentarial tradition. Despite all this, the history of scholarship on the Mandaeans is one of fits and starts, separated by long periods of virtual inactivity, and many important questions about their religion remain unanswered, including the precise nature of its relationship to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

As the leading Mandaean academic today, along with other researchers, including Jorunn Buckley (esp. 2010), whom Häberl acknowledges for providing "a useful synthesis of recent scholarly activity" on the subject, it has been long-term purpose of this author to provide combined in-house and critical scholarly expositions for a wider audience's better understanding of Mandaeism as a 'world religion', with intricate, discernable connections to traditions surrounding it (Nasoraia 2022).

Traditionally, the Mandaeans have always conceived their manner of life to necessitate dwelling on the banks of the rivers and wellsprings, especially the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers (flowing out of highland Turkey/Kurdistan through Iraq), the Karun (of Iran), and the Jordan (descending in the Levant from Lebanon and Syria, and flowing between Israel/Palestine and the state of Jordan). A well-known social fixture in the Fertile Crescent for the last two millennia, the Mandaeans have needed to live close to the fresh running

water where they can perform their daily baptismal sacraments, which have implications for every little feature of their lives (Drower 1937, e.g., pp. 1–73, 100–45; Drower 1938–1939, pp. 435–47; Segelberg 1958, pp. 154–58; Rudolph 1965, pp. 105–7, 364–70). This is why certain scholars such as Buckley (2005, pp. 94–109, esp. pp. 94–96) support the idea that the Mandaeans are descended from the first disciples of John the Baptist (given the historical narration of the significant Mandaean–Naṣoraean scroll *Har[r]an Gauaita/Gawait[h]a*) (hereafter HG) ed. Drower [Bibl. Apost. Vat.], pp. 11–12, 14; with ed. Burtea [*Mand. Forsch*. 17, and in Deegan 2020), and propose that studying Mandaean literature would aid in both (i) the study of the historical John the Baptist and Jesus and (ii) reconstructing the works of John's and Jesus's early disciples (cf. Buckley 2002, e.g., iv, 24–25; 2005, pp. 94–95, 108–9; McGrath 2024). Italian expert Edmondo Lupieri basically concurs, asserting that

> The possible historical connection with John the Baptist, as seen in the newly translated Mandaean texts, convinced many (notably R[udolf] Bultmann) that it was possible, through the Mandaean traditions, to shed some new light on the history of John and on the origins of Christianity. This brought around a revival of the otherwise almost fully abandoned idea of their Palestinian origins. As the archeological discovery of Mandaean incantation bowls and lead amulets proved a pre-Islamic Mandaean presence in the southern Mesopotamia, scholars were obliged to hypothesize otherwise unknown persecutions by Jews or by Christians to explain the reason for Mandaeans' departure from Palestine. (Lupieri 2008)

These connections made to John the Baptist's disciples are hardly unexpected. Remember that when they were 'discovered' by European Christian missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Mandaeans were well accepted, not considered heretics, and called the "Christians of St John". The missionaries thought that they were the unequivocal survivors of the Baptist's disciples, the "Followers of John" mentioned in the New Testament, as in Acts 18:24–27. And this welcoming was because they were frequently practicing unique forms of baptism, held a high regard for St John the Baptist, and were neither Protestants nor Catholics (Burkitt 1928, p. 225; Crehan 1968, pp. 623–26;[2] Lupieri [1993] 2002, esp. pp. 61–127).

Ongoing debates over the matter of the Mandaeans' history and their original homeland, admittedly, will always have to account for them as valuable surviving and living sources of information as preservers of various Mesopotamian cultural heritages (Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, and especially Babylonian (e.g., Häberl 2012; Al Majidi 2014; Nasoraia 2024). In their daily contact with autochthonous cultures surviving the aftermath of empires, the Mandaeans absorbed a good deal that was left over from persisting local lore, as revealed by the rich and large collections of Mandaean magical texts uncovered from the major cities once homes of old civilizations. Christa Müller-Kessler nicely summarizes the importance of Mandaeans transmitting ancient knowledge from around Babylon, the custodians of which, one tends to forget, were still trying to assert themselves during the Medo-Persian periods (e.g., Grayson 1980, p. 184):

> The Mandaeans took up and transmitted knowledge which was still around when the last temples in the Central Babylonian triangle Babylon, Borsippa and Kutha were still functioning. The Pir Nukraya archive of which I selected a few passages for the Mesopotamian magic volume contains two similar demon lists with an account of mostly former demonized deities of Babylonian or Iranian provenances. . .Even a small corpus of magic texts in Aramaic square script on bowls drew their texts from Mandaic *Vorlagen*, which means that the Mandaic texts must have been finalized at the end of the Parthian Period [ca. 200s CE]. . . .It seems that the Mandaean magic text corpus brings us nearer to the solving of the

> origin of the Mandaeans. Apart from the Mandaeans' awareness of Babylonian magic and astronomy, their Aramaic idiom can only have developed in Central Babylonia. . . .Finally, one can now state that the Mandaeans recruited from an Aramaic population in Babylonia and therefore, could transmit information for which we still have gaps in the Late Babylonian cuneiform sources. With the help of the editions of new text material from both language areas we shall be able to close these gaps in the near future and prove far more satisfactorily the question of the Mandaeans' *Heimat*. (Müller-Kessler 2004, p. 60)

Still, what of John the Baptist? Where does he fit into all this? For he definitely has to be taken into account as a figure looming large in Mandaean texts and thought, along with early Baptist/Christian relations drawing our attention in this paper. We should start in a recognizable context, New Testament times, when Jesus and John the Baptist had their earliest dealings with each other, with Christian and Mandaean accounts sometimes complementary and sometimes divergent (Nasoraia 2004a; Mead 1924, e.g., pp. 26, 48–51, 59, 81–85, 105–10, 120–27; Jonas 1958, e.g., pp. 39, 68–73). What is of first importance for this paper is that for both groups, kernels of their followings fled from Jerusalem and the central Palestinian area at the time of the Jewish War, when the Romans reinvaded Judaea and eventually laid siege to the fortifications of Jerusalem city and its Temple. Interestingly, the Followers of John were given succor by an influential woman called Mary.

2. Remarks on the Flight of Christians and Mandaeans from Roman Invasion, Jewish Persecution, and on the Role of Miriai

Traditionally, the Christians escaped to Pella (now in northern Jordan) (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiatica* 3.5.3), while the Mandaeans have their own story of receiving succor from much further afield. Interestingly, Lupieri had already addressed the comparative flight of the two groups by suggesting that

> Mandaeanism has aligned itself with those religions that allocate a flight to their beginnings, following upon a persecution. In backgrounds linked to Judaism, this flight or original migration is characterized by a flight from Jerusalem before its destruction, which is then explained as a divine punishment. The motif is well represented in Judaic traditions—for example, in the so-called "Second Book of Baruch"—but it is above all in Christian or post-Christian traditions where it has found the most ample scope for its development. Already in the Synoptic Gospels there is Jesus' exhortation to flee to the hills [e.g., Mark 13:14], leaving Jerusalem and Judaea to their destiny of death but most important of all was the legend of a flight of the entire Christian community in Jerusalem from the Judaic capital to Pella, a pagan city beyond the Jordan, shortly before the arrival of the Romans. (Lupieri [1993] 2002, p. 160, with ns. 52–55)

Lupieri tests the Patristic evidence for the Christians' flight to Pella of Peraea by tracing "the most ancient literary evidence" for it back to a certain Ariston, bishop and chronicler at Pella in the second century (though this can only be a rather unsafe inference from Eusebius's *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV, vi, 3). This location detail, according to Lupieri, was then "picked up by the ecclesiastical heresiologists and historians of the following centuries" (see Epiphanius [360s], *Panarion* 29.3.7–8; 30.2.7; *De mensuris et pondibus* 15; and Eusebius [310s], *Hist. eccles*. III, v, 3). Lupieri has come to nurture suspicions about whether the flight of the Jerusalem Christians actually happened:

> It was considered to be either true or realistic until only a few years ago, when strong doubts began to be raised in the criticism, whether because there was no corroborating evidence from other sources (Flavius Josephus says nothing

> about it) or perhaps primarily because Pella was laid waste by the Jewish rebels, because it was a pagan city, at the beginning of the rebellion. It is therefore not easy to determine to where the Christians could have fled. (Lupieri [1993] 2002, p. 161)

But of course, various villages surrounded Pella, and the area of Peraea (part of the ancient eastern side of the Jordan River valley) was in fairly isolated hill country as a potentially good haven (Van Houwelingen 2003). There is also more recent textual information to light that another group, the followers of James, 'brother' of Jesus, were able to escape northward, perhaps to move as far as Edessa, helped by "a son of Levi" ([*First*] *Apocalypse of James* (esp. the version in Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 5333 [Leaf G]; see Kim's chapter in this volume).

As for the Mandaeans, in their tradition, their flight and escape were through a (Mandaean or Jewish!) princess named Miriai (pron. Meryey, the name perhaps being a hypocoristic form of Mariam/Miriam [= the English (Christian) name 'Mary", which comes from the Greek Μαρία/Μαριάμ] (Drower and Macuch 1963 (hereafter MD), pp. 254a, 270a; JB ii. xx, 71 f., 123; yet cf. Deutsch 1999–2000, pp. 10–12). The name Miriam is a "diminutive form of the common Hebrew name Miryām (Häberl 2021, p. 66 and n. 6). It is with Miriai personal connections of influence, Mandaean–Naṣoraeans were led to "Inner Harran", apparently in and around the Jewish-saturated enclave called Adiabene,[3] even further north, close to the southeastern borders of Armenia (if we can infer this from the Mandaean sacred and historical text HG, p. 10; cf. Gündüz 1994, p. 124).

The Mandaean records attest that the Mandaean–Naṣoraeans were already living around Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley in the first century BCE (e.g., HG, pp. 1–9; JB; Buckley 2005, 2010). Miriai emerges as a significant figure for the Mandaeans during the time of John (the Baptist), even from as early as the last quarter of the first century BCE. She became even more important and an eminent symbol of the Mandaeans, especially after his death: we read in JB 80:13–14 that when John spoke about his departure (i.e., death), two women were listening to him, and when "When John said so, two women cried: Miriai and 'Nišbai (Elizabeth)…".

The prominent religious and social statues of Miriai, especially her apparent conversion from Judaism to Mandaeism or rather to Naṣoraeanism/Naṣoraeism, perhaps inflamed Jewish reactions that affected the existence of the Mandaean–Naṣoraeans in the West. Miriai is also a significant figure in the secret Mandaean–Naṣoraean tradition. She lived during the same period as Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, but she was younger. Her "conversion" remains controversial, especially among Mandaeans, with some asserting that she has a long Mandaean–Naṣoraean lineage and never really converted from Judaism at all. In any case, the texts about the elevation of her status in the Mandaean–Naṣoraean community suggest it provoked very adverse Jewish reactions,, threatening the very existence of the Mandaean–Naṣoraeans in the West. Severe persecution by the Jewish authorities is recorded in HG (p. 8), which goes so far as to allege that 60 years after the departure of John from his body, the children of Israel then "shed their blood so that not a man of the disciples and Naṣoraeans were left". This included the killing of 360 priests, yet the Mandaean tradition has it a little over the same number escaped of others in the hundreds. When "forgiveness of sins" (or humble recognition) is prayed for "those three hundred and sixty-five priests who went forth from the district of Jerusalem the city" (GY 332:5, 1. 6; CP No. 170; p. 152; cf. DC 34. 82 [mistakenly translated in MD, p. 131b as only 360], the implication is that over half were able to depart, with Drower (1953, p. 44. n. 1) asserting that the escape refers "to the traditional exodus of the Jewish Mandaean community from Palestine", and the notable flight of most Mandaean–Naṣoraeans from the Levant. These incidents took place probably shortly after the death of John, who died in

the age of 64 years, according to the Mandaean records (of GY; JB; HG), not by beheading under the Herodians (as most vividly in Mark 6:14–29) (cf. McGrath 2024). If these records are correct, then the migration and re-location of the Mandaean(–Naṣoraean)s from that region probably took place at some point before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple by the Romans 70 CE.

The record of HG provides important details about escaping and taking refuge in *Madai* (prob. Media), running away from all evil forces (referring to the Jews and their allies, who were strongly rejected from thereon). The text of HG, p. 5 [lines 21–22], refers to *madai d-ruha ušuba bna ʾIh lamṣun* ("Media which Ruha (the evil Spirit/Queen of Darkness) and her Seven sons could not reach"); cf. MD, p. 239a]. This Mandaean tradition holds that there was (i) the migration of (around 60,000) (Mandaean) Naṣoraeans, who moved far away to a safe area, where in their picturing of things large numbers of other Naṣoraeans subsisted beforehand, at so-called *Ṭura d-Madai or Midai* (the Mountain(s) of the Medes/Median Mountain(s) or the "Mountain of the Mandaeans" (!) (e.g., HG, pp. 3–7). This area was not under the control of the Romans or Jewish influence, but most probably under the rule of the Parthians;[4] (ii) then, they moved towards the (Inner) Harran (*Haran Gawaita*) and later to other Mesopotamian territories, where according to tradition, they eventually united with other Mandaeans who seem to have been be one of the indigenous people of the lower Tigris–Euphrates region from a long time before. These Mesopotamian Mandaeans seemed to enjoy some kind of safety and prosperity under Parthian rule (Nasoraia 2022, p. 55, cf. Deegan 2020, e.g., pp. 198–221 and ns. 784–895); (iii) protection was granted to this migration by the Parthian king Artabanus (probably the II (*ca* 12–38 or 40) or perhaps the III); (iv) punishment by Life (through the angel *Anuš ʾUtra*) was given to the Jews, which extended to destruction of Jerusalem and their Temple; (v) there was an indirect involvement of the Naṣoraeans, especially the seven leaders or *Riš-Ama*s (Heads of the [Mandaean] Nation at that time) in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; and (vi) and there was a settlement of Naṣoraean in seven episodes (HG, pp. 1–2).

Drower (1960, p. xi) speculated in this regard that

> . . .it might well follow that after the destruction of Jerusalem, when Jewish Christians for the most part settled in East Jordan, our Naṣoraeans, hating, and hated by, both Jew and Jewish-Christians, would naturally seek harbor in the friendlier atmosphere of Parthia and the Median Hills exactly as the *Haran Gawaita* relates, and, according to that manuscript, a number of them migrated later under Parthian protection into Babylonia and Khuzistan. Did they find in the well-watered marsh districts there a baptizing gnostic sect like-or affiliated to-their own? It might explain much, but here I can only refer the reader to Chapter 10 of this book. [Drower 1960, pp. 88–106]

Referring to that chapter, Lady Drower goes on (Drower 1960, p. xiii)

> the Naṣoraean fled from persecution in Jerusalem and sought refuge in the Median Hills (*Ṭura d-Madai*) and in *Haran Gawaita*, which I take to mean the city of Harran. Their persecutors were punished by the destruction of Jerusalem, which would place the flight before A.D. 70. In 'Haran' they found co-religionists and eventually migrated under a friendly Parthian king, Ardaban (Artabanus), to Lower Mesopotamia where they established headquarters at a place called Ṭib between Waṣiṭ and Khuzistan.

Whatever the case may be, Miriai seems to play an important role in saving and leading the Mandaean–Naṣoraean, first to a (temporary) secure and naturally protected place, and then to freedom far "northwards". According to the Mandaean sources, that place was in a mountainous area, varying in width and located (in we may call the Armenian Highlands

of southeastern Turkey) "at the mouth/headwaters of the Euphrates River", a place from which the Mandaean–Naṣoraean later continued their migration further eastward within the Adiabene-Parthian zone in down towards the Inner Haran (the place where HG was apparently written by the Naṣoraeans) to join other Mandaeans (or peoples readily take that identity) in northern Mesopotamia. To illustrate this, and in addition to HG, we may look for more details found in two others important Mandaean sacred books. We find Miriai attached to this unique process in some interesting Mandaic hymns recorded in CP No. 149 [pp. 129–30] and No. 162 [pp. 140–41)], and in JB, one in sect. 34 ("I am Miriai, the daughter of Babylon's Kings, daughter of mighty rulers of Jerusalem" [cf. JB [ch.] 34 [also, Häberl/McGrath, pp. 100–3]), and the other in the large section 35 ("I am Miriai, a Vine, a [Naṣoraean sacred] Tree standing at the Mouth of the Euphrates" [cf. JB [ch.] 35 [also, Häberl/McGrath, pp. 104–13]). In that latter section, we read that Miriai with Mandaeans had already gone far northwards and reached a sacred land among the mountains, with plentiful of pure waters. That land lay near the source(s) of Euphrates (Upper Mesopotamia) (lit. "standing [for them and teaching them] at the mouth/source of Euphrates River" [*d-qaiim lpum prat*]), and seemingly well after the escape from Judaea (cf. Drower 1937, pp. 282–88).

As already noted in parenthesis, Miriai's association with some important Christian figures has also been proposed. Perhaps it does not a surprise that some scholars have decided princess Miriai was none other than Mary, the Mother of Jesus, especially because Miriai or Mary was at one point referred to as the mother of *Mšiha* ('Messiah') (HG, p. 3) (cf. Luttikhuizen 2006, pp. 179–84), and at others her name was confused with hers (JB II: xx, 71–2, 123; Lidzbarski 1920, p. 282 (with *Ginza*, p. 341 n. 2); cf. Pallis 1926, p. 97).[5]

Polish philologist Mark Lidzbarski, working early in the twentieth century but without a copy of the narration in HG, concluded that Miriam was the mother of Jesus in the Mandaean texts he edited, and was for him the heroine in legends about "the transplantation of the Mandaean religion from Jerusalem to Babylonia" (*Ginza*, p. x). In this most sacred text, the GR (GY XV: [11], 166, 167, 171, and 173), the guardian angel Anuš 'Utra heals Miriai of the effects of her past inheritance, and she is represented as *Miriai Šalmanita* "Miriai, the righteous or perfect (Naṣoraean-Mandaean woman)" (JB 198, [lin.] 5, (Häberl/McGrath edn. 54:14, p. 245); cf. GY 332 [lin. 5]) and the Angel (i.e., 'Utra or Anuš 'Utra) supports, baptizes and heals her.

Some interpretations suggest that Miriai may reflect a reimagined version of Mary, due to the phonetic similarity of their names and the connection with the anglels. However, Mandaean texts avoid direct association with Jesus, often criticizing him, thereby complicating this hypothesis. Some scholars have compared Miriai to figures such as Mary (mother of Jesus) or Mary Magdalene, citing phonetic similarities and shared themes of enlightenment. However, Mandaeans emphasize her distinct identity, firmly rooting her in Mandaean cosmology. She was illustrated as a priestly figure who moved away far from Jerusalem and relocated "by the Euphrates, seated on a throne, with a white banner [*Drabša*] over her and a scroll on her lap, as she holds a [priestly] staff [*Margna*] and wears a girdle [*Himiana*]. She is thus at once a royal, a priest, and teacher, preaching to and commanding the attention of even the fishes and the birds" (JB [Häberl/McGrath edn., pp. 386–87]). In JB 35 Miriai recites and sings the hymn of life, unlike the adulterated words of the others. This explicitly contrasts Miriai's purity with perceived distortions in Christian teachings. About the story of Miriai in JB 34, Häberl and McGrath provide commentary that "while there is no reason to think that the precise details of this story necessarily reflect an historical event, it is not impossible that the conversion of a young women to Mandaeism, who at some point returned home late from one of their gatherings, could have led to tensions and persecutions at some point in Mandaean history" (p. 386).

As one of the Naṣoraean-Mandaean disciples of John the Baptist, Miriai in other places appears with two other disciples, Yaqip and Bnia-Amin (Jacob and Benjamin) (e.g., JB ch. 54, cf. *Ginza*, p. 341). She initiated them and the three played an important role in initiating the 365 *Tarmida*s (disciples/priests) who arose in Jerusalem and later "went forth from the district of Jerusalem the city" (e.g., CP No. 170; p. 152) (cf. Häberl 2021, e.g., pp. 76–85; Deegan 2020, p. 35 n. 1006; see also the Mandaean *Book of John* [JB], sects. 34–35 [Lidzbarski, pp. 126–38; Häberl/McGrath, pp. 384–87]). It is significant that references to Jacob and Benjamin, and also "the 365 disciples", are more decidedly associated with Miriai than John (cf. HG p. 4; with Häberl 2021, pp. 76–85, esp. pp. 76–77). How Mary becomes involved in Mandaean–Naṣoraean tradition, then, and also how this reflects on John/Jesus relationships, presents quite a puzzle, which needs solving.

The issues involved in untangling the Miriai traditions have been explored more recently by Jorunn Buckley (1993). According to her, Miriai is indeed the mother of Jesus, and the Mandaeans consider Miriai a convert from Judaism to Mandaeism, although her son is considered to be a false prophet (*Nbiha Kadaba*) (Buckley 2002, pp. 49–56). Buckley maintains the following:

> To my knowledge, Mandaeism has no tradition in which John the Baptist appears as a proto-convert, like Miriai does. John, simply, is the chief Mandaean prophet, belonging to a prophetic tradition extending back to Adam, according to the Mandaean view. Carrying on the eternal message of the Great Life, John springs up as a timely counter messenger to the Jewish religion. Nowhere does he baptize Miriai, though he reluctantly baptizes Jesus, who is on his way out of Mandaeism, in contrast to Miriai, who is entering it. If Miriai is baptized at all, it is by an 'utra, the object of her love, not by a human being. One might have expected a closer connection between John and Miriai, but the two seem to belong to independent traditions, even though they occasionally appear together, as in GR 15, 11. Perhaps the Mandaean adoption of Miriai while denigrating her son reflects a historical development out of Judaism. From the Mandaean viewpoint, Jesus was wrong, an apostate from the true religion, but his mother is a Mandaean heroine. Miriai stands on her own, and her connections are all laudable. (Buckley 2002, p. 55)

Although Buckley investigated the significance of Miriai within Mandaeism and the roles attributed to her, the identification of Miriai as "the mother of Mšiha" in HG remains ambiguous. This unexplained designation poses a challenging dilemma, leaving the issue unresolved and open to further interpretation (Buckley 2002, p. 49). Buckley has sought to provide an alternative perspective, pondering whether Miriai's presence might hint at brief early interactions between Mandaeans and Christians, although this remains speculative.

In Mandaean literature, Miriai is consistently depicted as a positive figure, embodying ideals of spiritual enlightenment and alignment with divine truth. "She was born in Light" and "upheld the truth of the Great Life", and "turning from no path to enter its gates". From Miriai's "lips came hymns of life", and "her feet tread the path of the 'Uthras". Unlike other figures who are sometimes associated with Jesus, Miriai's narrative remains distinct and free from such connections, reflecting her central role in Mandaean–Naṣoraean thought (Deegan 2020, p. 35, notes 1002–1005). By contrast, 'Mary (Miriam or Mary of Nazareth) as 'the mother of [the] *Mšiha*' (a figure ironically indicating Jesus in Mandaean–Naṣoraean tradition), holds a more ambiguous position. Early portrayals of her unusual maternity were initially neutral, but grew increasingly critical as Mandaean traditions developed. The suggestion in HG that Miriai, or "Meryey", might be identified as the mother of Mšiha is likely the result of "editorial confusion" (Deegan 2020, p. 35, note 1004). This interpretation aligns with observations in JB (Häberl/McGrath, p. 384, n. 124), where

distinctions between these figures are maintained to reinforce Miriai's unambiguously positive role. The shifting portrayal of Miriam versus the enduring reverence for Miriai highlights evolving theological and polemical currents within Mandaean tradition.

Mandaeans reject Miriam. She is identified in the New Testament and in the Quran as the "mother" of Jesus and as a "Virgin" mother through divine intervention. She holds significance holds a singularly exalted place in across multiple traditions. In the Hebrew Bible, she is the sister of Moses (Ar. Mūsā [ibn (son of) ʿImrān, ابن عِمْرَان موسى]) and Aaron (Ar. Hārūn [ibn ʿImrān, ابن عِمْرَان هارون]) (Exodus 15:20–21), and in Islamic tradition called Maryam bint ʿImrān (مَرْيَم بِنْت عِمْرَان, i.e., Mary the mother of Jesus) (cf. MD 224a, 270a), as referenced in the Qur'ān (e.g., in 3:42–47; 4:157, 5, 19, 21, 23, 66). However, in Mandaean–Naṣoraean literature, Miriai is a separate figure and is not acknowledged as the mother of the Messiah or Jesus. This association occurs in the form of Miriam with soul exception only one time in HG 3 (Buckley 1993, p. 194; Zinner 2019, p. 86). In Ginza Yamina (GY) 18: [lin.] 3 recorded that 400 years after the Mandaean exodus from Egypt, Jesus (*'Šu*) was born—specifically not in Jerusalem (Deegan 2020, p. 35 and ns.). In JB 34 [Häberl/McGrath]: pp. 164–81 [with n. 1 and; comm. pp. 384–87]) Miriai

> speaks in the first person, informing us of her ancestry as a daughter of the kings of Babylon and the rulers of Jerusalem. She is raised by unnamed priests in the Temple, which she characterizes in the most negative terms, calling it a "disturbed house", in which there is "no stability, no support for the poor, and no refreshment for tortured souls", and within which she sweeps and washes. Her parents leave her at home when they go to worship, warning her not to go out and to lock the doors behind them, lest the "sun[light] of my lord" fall upon her, possibly reflecting their identification of Adunāy, the God of the Jews, with Šāmeš, the sun. (Häberl 2021, p. 72 [and n. 23])

After encountering Mandaean–Naṣoraeanism, she renounces Judaism, cutting off her strong links to the "Kings of Babylon and the rulers of Jerusalem", enduring persecution and punishment from her father and her community. Her steadfast faith is rewarded when the Eagle (*Anuš 'Utra*) destroys Jerusalem's Jewish oppressors and elevates Miriai instead, allowing her to safeguard the Mandaeans. Similarly, in the CP Nos. 149, 162, Miriai is portrayed as a young woman who transforms to Mandaean–Naṣoraeanism despite strong familial and communal opposition (cf. JB, Chapters 34–35; Deegan 2020, pp. 35–36, ns. 1008–12; Häberl 2021; Buckley 1993).

These portrayals reflect an early Palestinian tradition, while her connection to the Kings of Babylon suggests the influence of historical migrations. The narrative may symbolize the experiences of Mandaean–Naṣoraeans fleeing Jerusalem and finding refuge in Mesopotamia, a theme analysed by scholars such as Rudolph (1996, pp. 401–5), Buckley (1993, pp. 181–96); Lupieri (Lupieri [1993] 2002, e.g., 151–53); McGrath (2010, 2021, 2024); and Häberl (2021).

Miriai's narrative underscores her theological significance as a figure of resilience and divine alignment, firmly rooted in Mandaean–Naṣoraean cosmology and polemics. Her portrayal is frequently interpreted as part of an anti-Jewish polemic, reflecting ongoing historical tensions between the Mandaeans and neighbouring Jewish communities. Through an allegorical critique of Judaism's perceived legalism and materialism, Miriai's story serves to affirm Mandaean spiritual ideals and esoteric cosmology. Scholars contend that her narrative encapsulates the Mandaean-Naṣoraeans' repudiation of external religious systems while emphasizing their unique theological identity and self-perception as a unique community aligned with the Lightworld.

3. Queries Concerning the Extent to Which John and His Followers Conditioned the Direction of Early Christianity, and How This Apparently Affected 'Baptist'/Christian Relationships into the So-Called Patristic Period

It is worth drawing attention at this point to Theodore Bar Konai (Syriac: ܬ ܒܪ ܩܘܢܝ), a well-known ancient Syriac defender and exegete of the Church of the East, who became very active at the end of the eighth century. In his *Book of the Scholion* (*Kṯāḇā d-eskoliyon*) (*ca* 792–810) (ed. Scher), ch. 11, Bar Konai provided information about the Mandaeans and their religion, including some quotations from their literature. He speaks also about a beggar called Ado from Adiabene as the founder of the Mandaean religion, and that his teaching was derived from the Marcionites and the Manichaeans (see Baum and Winkler 2003, p. 63). Crawford Burkitt (1928, p. 102), a well-known inter-war Patristic scholar of Syriac Christianity and Manichaeism, used Bar Konai's representation of the Mandaeans, which was really rather a polemical one, as sound evidence for the origins of their teachings and literature. "We have now", he maintained,

> an account of the Mandaeans by an ancient Mesopotamian writer, writing in the year A.D. 792. He tells us that their founder was a certain Ado, a mendicant, who came from Adiabene, i.e., from the district just north of Mosul. He further tells us that his teaching was derived from the Marcionites, from the Manichaeans . . . There is no reason to reject the evidence of Theodore. . .

It is important, however, to re-consider how much his evidence amounts to. First, he leaves out of consideration here the figure of John the Baptist. Second, he rushes in and accepts that the Mandaeans *derive* from heresies in classic Patristic times. Burkitt felt assured that

> The Mandaeans, then, rejected the Christ of the Catholic Church, born of a woman and crucified, but they accepted the Stranger who appeared in Jerusalem in the days of Pilate, who healed the sick and taught the true and life-giving doctrine, and who ascended in due course when his work was done to his own place in the world of Light. This Personage is called the Stranger, but he is no stranger to the modern student of Christian antiquity: it is clearly the Manichaean Jesus, a personage adopted by Mani from the Jesus of Marcion. (Burkitt 1928, p. 231)

Furthermore, in his *Church and Gnosis* (Burkitt 1932, pp. 92–122), Burkitt treated the Mandaeans as Christian 'heretics' (those of 'another opinion') who were acquainted with the Syriac Peshitta (the standard Syriac version of the Bible by the early fifth century) and that had affinities with two other heresies of Marcionism and Manichaeism. But these conclusions, or the way he arrived at them, by now look wrongheaded. Mandaean specialist Lady Ethel Drower, writing from the 1930s on, thought Bar Konai "repeats a foolish story" and that "the absurdities of the tale are self-evident", although she conceded that the Syrian Church Father apparently did look at some Mandaean literature (Drower 1953, p. x). In any case, Jesus was not called the Stranger in Manichaeism, but rather Mani was; and in Marcion's thinking (*flor*. 150s), the true God is the one who is the Stranger, even though Jesus is his Son (e.g., Franzmann 2003; Henrichs 1973, pp. 33, 38). The Mandaeans' literature does commonly refer to God (*Hiia*) or to (*Manda d-Hiia*) as the Stranger/Strange (Mandaic: *Nukraia* (pl. *Nukraiia*),[6] yet in a way integral to their own pattern of thought.[7] Mandaeism is *not* a Christian phenomenon, and its Gnostic aspects, though eclectic, basically belong outside Christian influences (cf. Macuch 1971, pp. 174–92; Buckley 2010, pp. 14–15). As for Judaism, many scholars like Drower, Rudolph, and Buckley had noticed some persuasive similarities and parallels between the two (esp. Drower 1960, e.g., pp. 14–17), including Jewish mysticism. Yet the Mandaeans' *Hiia* would indeed be a 'stranger' *vis-à-vis* the Hebrew divinity (referred as Adonai), in roughly the same way the classic Gnostic Hidden

God is to the demiurgic creator of the material world (cf. Nasoraia 2024, p. 119). Originally, however, Mandaean–Jewish connections would have had to be close to explain the drawing on traditions known from pre-Christian Hebrew Biblical materials and archaic Jewish lore (Deutsch 1995; Deutsch 1999–2000; with Yamauchi 1973, pp. 140–42). This is part of Mandaeism's 'western' foundations. But after the Mandaean–Jewish split, the relationship has later aspects in Babylonia, as Nathaniel Deutsch argued, after he was to identify and examine Jewish mystical sources, including the Hekhalot literature and medieval Kabbalah. Some of these traditions are similar enough to raise the possibility of extensive historical contact and cultural exchange between the two groups in Mesopotamia.
He concluded that

> The question of Mandaeism's relationship to Jewish mysticism may be divided along the following lines: origins, polemics, and parallel traditions. (Deutsch 1999–2000, p. 209)

By this later stage, Müller-Kessler (2004) wanted to add that Mandaeans and Jews also shared participation in the world of Mesopotamian magical practices.

But we cannot discount early 'mystical' connections as well, especially those to do with baptism. We have to remember that theories about pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism go back to the late nineteenth century, especially in the work of Moritz Friedländer (1898), and off-and-on these attracted the attention of scholars before Yamauchi formulated his position (see Wilson 1955, esp. p. 201). Even before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well, signs of baptizing movements in Palestine before John had been spotted (e.g., by Thomas 1935; Badia 1980), with Jewish baptismal "tubs" uncovered still more widely afield, probably showing that water cleansing was one means by which proselytes entered the Jewish fold in Hellenistic-Roman times (e.g., Dalbert 1954; Rudolph 1999, pp. 471–99). From this, note that it does not follow that in Judaism, or in Jewish baptismal movements such as John's, lie the major sources of 'early classic Gnosticism', as seen in Basilides, Valentinus, etc. (see Lahe 2017, pp. 391–95). But it is obvious we are still left gauging the effects, initially and even ongoing, of John's movement on early Christianity, which carried a baptismal aspect and apparently gave birth along its road(s) to some of those Gnostic groups that accentuated baptismal rites (Trompf 2018b, pp. 84–87).

In any case, treating Mandaeism as if it reflects Christian influences in Patristic times begs the question as whether it was the other way around, because there remains the matter of John the Baptist's role in preparing for Jesus's ministry, and thus of his influence and a possible constructive role of Mandaeism in shaping some major characters of thoughts and practices of earliest Christianity. In an attempt to study the social history of the early Christians, Buckley (2005, pp. 94–109) sees the Mandaean view "turning the tables on Jesus", and that we should look at the original disciples of Jesus as descendants of the followers of John. She accepts the possibility that the Mandaean people originated in Palestine at the period of John the Baptist and Jesus, and were the only ones surviving who knew Jesus in his initial time with John, whose followers formed a distinct religion, with its own special rites and with their own way of speaking Aramaic and writing it in their own (Characene) unique script (Häberl 2006, 2019), and referred to themselves as the Knowers or Gnostics in a pre-Christian, pre-classic Gnostic way.

Buckley holds that the *Haran Gawaita*, through the collection of myths, traditions, and history in it, supports the idea that Mandaeans were acquainted with the earliest forms of Christianity. Because of various customs, the Mandaeans (especially Naṣoraeans) consider themselves to have been former Judaeans from Jerusalem and surrounding arias including Jordan Valley. The oldest features of the Mandaic (Naṣoraean) language in their scripts are taken as the most significant corroboration of this, let alone their escape from Judaea (as Christians reported of their own flight). On their own understanding, because

Mandaeans held that their rituals were meant to subdue or defeat evil, they were spared annihilation, and their continued survival kept confirming this, which perhaps refers to that well-educated peaceful Naṣoraean–Mandaean group who originally hailed from Jerusalem, the historical and spiritual heart of the ancient Kingdom of Judah. These people have migrated or been displaced due to various historical events, such as conquests, exiles and long-suffering. Certain aspects of their identity as "former Judaeans" suggest they maintain many 'Western' ancient Naṣoraean–Mandaean cultural and ancestral connections to Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, even though they no longer reside there. The significant references to Jerusalem (as well as to other nearby cities, locations and mountains) and to John the Baptist, Miriai, the Jews and their leaders, ancient Jewish mystical insightts, Saviour and demiurge figures, Baptism (*Maṣbuta*) in the Jordan (*Yardna*), *Ruha d-Qudša* (Holy Spirit), *'Šu* (Jesus), *Mšiha* (Messiah), *Mamiduta* (Christian Baptism) and many other 'Western' elements in Mandaean literature, all confirm the enduring bond between these 'peaceful' people and their ancestral homeland. They all reflect the historical movements and diasporic experiences of the Naṣoraean–Mandaean Judaean people, who later migrated, and eventually even played a leading role, after they settled and harmoniously mixed with the 'Eastern' Mesopotamian Mandaeans, who were held to have antediluvian roots (Nasoraia 2024, e.g., p. 69 and n. 13). Interestingly, in one her conclusions, Buckley (2010, p. 311), explains why the Mandaeans "had no need for political power or statehood" or pilgrimages to any earthly sacred centres, and she states that:

> Among the Mandaeans, a social structure, with priests, and a tradition of 'rabbinic', mystery-laden style of elaborations on myths and rituals was in place quite early. The Mandaeans had no need for political power or statehood and did not aspire to "liberate" Jerusalem or any other centre, but broke decisively with all larger religious frameworks to be only themselves, set apart from Jews, Christians, and others. The Mandaeans insisted that they came from Adam, they held on to the original revelations (which were interpreted in a Gnostic manner), and they were soon loath to mix with outsiders in marriage or to set store by converts. All others may have diluted or otherwise misunderstood the original message from the Light-world, but the Mandaeans in their understanding held on. Their writings firmly testify to this conviction. The polemical parts of the literature, as religious-political evidence, are still in need of a thorough scholarly examination, a project that might emphasize the Mandaean politics of identity and the religion's labour of self-preservation.

Buckley's case is hardly without merit. After all, John looks to be a more influential social and religious figure than Jesus in their time. Even Jesus honors his stature: "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. . ." (Matt 11:11), and in Mandaean sources, John is shown to have a remarkable healing and teaching ministry (e.g., HG p. 7; *Ginza*, pp. 29–30, 341–43) that more clearly provides a precedent for Jesus' own than the Gospels tell, though they all suggest Jesus' ministry receives its initial impetus from John's. In traditional Christian discourse, of course, the Baptist is honored as the forerunner, but with the discovery of scrolls near the Dead Sea (at Qumran) and an apparent monastic settlement connected to them, various theories have arisen placing John and his movement in a Qumranite context, usually as part of the Essenes, a Jewish 'party' more ascetic than the Sadducees and Pharisees (see esp. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 2, 119–159), and various scholars consequently argue that Jesus began his work under John in these circles (e.g., Yamauchi 1973, pp. 123–26). Such theories were conditioned by earlier recognitions that John was leader of a considerable and the more prominent of the two figures in 'high public affairs' (esp. *Antiquitates Judaica*. 18, 116–19; cf. Matt 3: 5; Luke 2:18–20; and see, e.g., HG, pp. VI, IX, XI, 6–7; *Ginza* p. 213;

JB II 70: 1–10). Quite apart from different scholarly opinions on such matters (and for more consult (Trompf 2002, pp. 127, 131–32)), the fact of the matter is that the Mandaean tradition was the first to preserve the view that Jesus originally belonged among John's followers but broke off and went his own way (HG, pp. 3–4; JB (ch. 30) II, 104–9). Whatever we are to make of John's and Jesus's kin relationship and John's priestly heritage (Luke 1:5–18), which many scholars take to be legendary anyway, the implication in the Mandaean sources is that Jesus was John's pupil for enough time for John to instruct and initiate him, teach him the healing arts and the wisdom of the Heavenly King of Light, the Father, and baptize him before his ultimate departure, and there are suggestions of this in at least one of the Gospels themselves (John 1–3; cf. the detailed study on making the enlightened savior kings through Mandaean and Cristian Baptism by (Nasoraia 2004a, esp. pp. 332–40; Crangle and Nasoraia 2010, pp. 112–15; Nasoraia and Crangle 2010; McGrath 2024)).[8]

In any case, German-American Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas (1903–1993) fairly observed (1958, p. 68) that the language of the New Testament participates in a "series of metaphors referring to the human condition in the world", including a distrust for human desires and pleasures shared by whole range of Gnostic authors, including the Mandaeans (see 1 John 2:15–16; the "Hymn of the Pearl" in the *Acta Thomae*) and the Johannine writers as obvious cases in point. Already during the first few decades of the last century, for Christian scholars who were working on the Gospels and the historical Jesus, the figure of John the Baptist could propel them to direct special attention to the Gospel of John [the Evangelist], which is quite different from the other Gospels. Significantly, it is commonly believed that the Gospel of John is the last Gospel to be written, ca. 100 CE, apparently as a special corrective to the others (note *Acta Timothei* [ed. Usener] 9–10; cf. Stauffer 1964, p. 281), and, on Jesus in general and on John the Baptist particularly, John is distinctive in reflecting a Gnostic temper. Samuel Zinner adds that

> From even a cursory reading of their [i.e., the Mandaean] sacred literature, it becomes apparent that Jewish components of gnosis would have been circulating among Mandaeans from the beginning of their formation. Early Mandaean contacts with Syro-Palestinian groups of the Jewish Jesus sect [i.e., earliest Jewish Christianity] may arguably have left traces in various passages of the Gospel of John, the letters of Deutero-Ignatius. . .and the Odes of Solomon. (Zinner 2019, p. 10 and ns. 14–15 [regarding Schmithals 2009, pp. 181–203; Lattke and Ehrhardt 2009; with Rudolph 1969])

Zinner also discussed the Mandaean gnostic view about how all negative impacts of evil desire(s) or force(s) or spirit(s) are caused by *Ruha*. He explains the Mandaean view about John the Baptist *vis-à-vis* the metaphorical use of *Ruha d-Qudsha* (Holy Spirit), Jesus, and Christianity, commenting that Ruha literally means "spirit". The seeming perversion of this term to denote the highest personification of evil is an interesting episode in the history of religion [in the Mandaeans' case], all the more paradoxical in view of the fact that the full title of this anti-divine figure is, i.e., "the Holy Spirit". But this very paradox indicates the cause; for they have come associate Jesus very much with spirit.

Now, as a Mandaean scholar, I have already expressed my suspicion that this distinctiveness owes itself to do with something in the John–Jesus relationship before their split, these relations being made clearer in a rich Mandaean textual account of Jesus, John the Baptist, and important baptismal rituals connecting them (Nasoraia 2004a). On one hand, Mandaeans honored John the Baptist.[9] They consider him as their own prophet of 'Truth' and messenger of 'Light' (cf. Pulver 1960) and one of their ideal disciples, a wonderful priest, the Greatest Master of 'Healing', and the Teacher of 'Enlightenment' (esp. Rudolph 1960, pp. 66–80).

On the other hand, they (reluctantly) consider Jesus as one of the disciples of John the Baptist, who lost his way after his (initial!) initiation and baptism in the Jordan River. According to Mandaean (esoteric) tradition, Jesus was 'beguiled' (i.e., "possessed" and "deceived") and ultimately "betrayed" by the devil (*Ruha*, the evil spirit and her sons, especially *Nbu*). Jesus is linked directly and identified negatively with (i) the ancient (Mesopotamian) figure (Lord) of knowledge and wisdom (*Hukumta*) i.e., *Nbu*/*'Nbu* (=Babylonian *Nabū*) (the malevolent/evil spirit of the planet Mercury, one of the 'Seven Sons' of *Ruha*) [e.g., *Nbu Mšiha d-Kadba* GY 27:18 (cf. GY 51:3) "*Nbu* (i.e., Jesus) the false Messiah"; HG, e.g., pp. 3, 4 ns. 1–9, 19 ns. 6–7. see MD, p. 287b] and with (ii) Orpheus (=Mandaic: *Auruz*/*Aurus*, cf. MD, p. 11b; Ginza, p. 52 n. 6, JB, p. 20). *Ruha*'s influence over him is described as fleeting; she "abandoned" him after "leading him astray". Following this, Jesus was deceived and faced severe hardships and conquests, culminating in his isolation. His disciples abandoned him and scattered, leaving him to die alone, crucified and abandoned on the cross (*'l Ṣaliba niṣlib* GY 58:15 "He [i.e., Christ] shall be crucified on the Cross" [translated with an error in MD, p. 287b as "he [Chris]) shall be crucified"). This narrative sharply contrasts with Christian portrayals of Jesus, revealing a unique theological stance and critique of the tradition that honoured John as his forerunner.

According to Mandaeans, Jesus deceived John, misled the Jews and created his own group(s) (e.g., HG, e.g., pp. 4 ns., 5, 1–9, 19 ns. 6–7), establishing unholy practices against the Law and the teaching of Enlightenment (i.e., Mandaean–Naṣoraeanism) by his original Master, John. And so they called Jesus *Nbiha baṭla* (the false prophet) and *Mšiha kadaba* (the Deceiver or Lier or false Messiah),[10] whereas in direct contrast, the canonical Gospels portray John as lowering himself to be unworthy before Jesus (e.g., Mark 1:7 and ≠s) and declaring Jesus the "Lamb of God" (John 1:36). Do not be surprised, then, that in Mandaean texts, John is portrayed as teacher and Jesus as learner (also as "pupil" and annoying candidate) (e.g., JB ch. 30, see also Mead 1924, pp. 48–51). This is the impression also gained from the opening lines of a barely opened Mandaean lead roll (of as yet unknown provenance), where an (enlightened) 'Instructor' speaks authoritatively to Jesus (Lead rolls, private collection, Roll No. 1). Quite recently, in his book *What Jesus Learned from Women*, American New Testament scholar James McGrath (2021) challenges the assumption that Jesus only taught and did not learn, but the Mandaeans' view is that he should not have turned his back on what he was wisely taught. John, in their tradition, is a "man of soul (i.e., *mana*/*nišma*)", Jesus a "man of spirit (i.e., *ruha*)" (e.g., GY I-II, VI (also see *Ginza*, p. 414); CP Nos. 23 (pp. 19–20). 125 (esp. p. 119). JB ch. 30, HG, pp. III, 3–4, 12, 19 and n. 6), and even if some scholars might consider Zinner and also Jonas as going too far on Mandaeans identifying the evil Queen *Ruha* or *Ruha d-Qudša* as the dreadful "Holy Spirit", they rightly spot their

> violent hostility to Christian doctrine, whose Founder according to [their] tradition had stolen and falsified the message of his master, John the Baptist. . . and their "ambivalence in the figure of the 'Holy Spirit', understood as female, [being] noticeable also in Christian Gnosticism, as . . . seen . . . with the Sophia speculation, where Spirit/Wisdom can be depicted as a demiurge figure creating our very defective world. (Jonas 1958, esp. p. 72 and n. 26)

This does not mean that John the Baptist (or Mandaeism as a developing tradition parallel to early Christianity) did not influence the Christian way. In his message, John, as a bold and outstanding figure, offered baptism as the alternative to sacrifices in the Temple (e.g., JB chs. 18–33; cf. Matt 3: 7–9) and also to circumcision (JB 54:30). Instead of the *Shekinah* or God's Presence on earth being in the Temple, frequent baptism became that constantly circulating available connection to the Divine (e.g., JB chs., 21–22, 28, 30; cf. John 3: 23–24; Buckley 1989), the Living Water replacing the need to be continually beholden to the

Temple priesthood, and Sunday was to be the sacred day, not the Sabbath/Saturday (JB, e.g., 57: 40; cf. CP [Drower] No. 149, p. 130; No. 159 p. 136; No. 161, p. 138). All these more 'Jewish-connected' (yet anti-Judaic) teachings also look to be very important for early Christianity, as the eminent Bultmann, after he attended to Lidzbarski's German translations of GR, *Mandäische Liturgien* (1920) [cf. CP] and JB, was early to apprehend (Lupieri 2008). However, a greater Gnostic element in early Mandaeism when compared to primitive Christianity has to be accounted for, and we shall have to explore the contrast in the next section. We can fairly assert at this point that Gnostic threads were evident and affected the Palestinian world of the New Testament, from Jewry's own mystical aspects, from general Hellenistic culturo-intellectual impetuses in a colonial situation, and from the attractions of ideas in Alexandria (Philonic, 'Hermetic', Mysteries, etc.) (e.g., Quispel 1955, pp. 9–10; van Moorsel 1955, pp. 20–29).

The shadows of these different lineaments condition parts of the New Testament (especially the Johannine literature and the exegetical tendencies in the Epistle to the Hebrews), but whatever Hellenistic Gnosticizing influences were permeating in the region, they must have been soaked up in John's movement more, otherwise it is hard to explain how and why the Mandaean religion crystallized as it did after the flight from Jerusalem (cf. Rudolph 1996, e.g., pp. 363–67, 402–6, 428–36) into early Patristic times. But we cannot safely say that in its origins Mandaeism was a form of Jewish Gnosticism (see Lahe 2017, esp. pp. 391–95), because although much from the Hebrew Bible is incorporated into its lore, Mandaeans fairly quickly turned their backs on Judaism (including heavily Judaic expressions of Essenism), and only early parts of Genesis have really remained significant for them (a feature shared by other more decidedly Hellenistic Gnostic systems), especially the cosmic place of Adam, while they also paradoxically came to reject the Jewish deity (Adonai) as an evil spirit (e.g., HG, p. 4). It is really a moot point as to whether Gnosticism can be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (see Schoeps 1954), and yet the quest seems to persist that somewhere out of Jewish thought, in its compromises with Hellenism (including newer tendencies to cosmicize Adam) and in its quest for deeper meaning in such rituals such as baptism, Gnosticism was born (e.g., Quispel 1953–1954; 1955, p. 38). Mandaeism's case makes it important to decipher which circulating cosmological notions from the Palestinian melting pot stimulated it most, and why groups following Simon Magus and Dositheus, and perhaps Alexander of Abounoteichus, look to be promising candidates of Gnosticizers preceding John and Jesus. The first two of this trio were clearly ready to latch on to the Christian movement when it emerged (Wilson 1957; cf. Wilson 1955, p. 211), and in ways indicating that "elements in primitive Christian thought which were once considered to derive from the wider Hellenistic environment were already current in Palestine itself in the First Century of our era" (Wilson 1957, p. 21; cf. Braun 1935; Albright 1964).

The earliest leaders and coteries of believers laying the foundations of Mandaeism on its 'western' side may had something to do with the loss of hundreds of their priests, as their tradition has it, killed by Jews before the siege of Jerusalem (see Section 2), a trauma bringing in its wake a deliberate repelling of direct association with the Hebrew tradition, with the dissipation of any earlier Jewishness resulting from the loss of so many priestly custodians. Slowly, we are being forced to probe how the Mandaean religion took shape after the flight northwards from Judaea and how indelible events affected the subsequent shape of things, considering 'mainstream' early Christians are recognizable for continuing to honor the pre-Christian Hebrew Scriptures as the Word of God.

4. The Process of the Formation of Early Mandaeism as It Combined Hellenistic-Palestinian and Mesopotamian Elements

What happened to bring about the peculiar configuration of Mandaeism after the Palestinian remnants migrated to the north? We are left with a difficult puzzle, because pieces of the jigsaw are (for the moment) missing. In general terms, as Lupieri aptly puts it,

> we have information concerning the existence, in the Syrio-Palestinian area, in the second century, perhaps at the beginning, of a group of "Disciples of John" the Baptist who proclaimed that John, and not Jesus, was the Messiah, They were also supposed to have believed that John was not really dead [i.e., not really killed by Herod Antipas, as in Josephus, *Antiq.* 18.117–9; Mark 6:16–29] but was "hidden", which allows us to believe that they expected his return, coming back as Anush 'Uthra in GY XVI]. [They] behaved as if they really were the descendants of those disciples of John that did not convert to Christianity and that did not return simply to Judaism, (Lupieri [1993] 2002, p. 164 n. 61)

but whether we can just assume they were the Mandaeans remains an open question (cf. Yamauchi 1970; 1973, pp. 117–42, 229–33), even if their story of John's death (GY V, with Nasoraia 2004a; Nasoraia and Trompf 2010, esp. pp. 411–16) squares pretty well with these details.

To clarify, it is important to note that the lexical equivalents to the word *Mandaiia* (the plural Mandaic-Aramaic term for Mandaeans (MD, p. 247b), does not appear in the *Haran Gawaita*, the interesting document covering the flight from Jerusalem in the first century CE. Those fleeing are generally called *Naṣoraiia* (Naṣoraeans, a distinguished (secret) group within the Mandaean tradition, endowed with exceptional cosmic powers, profound spiritual wisdom (*Naṣiruta*), and extraordinary priestcraft (usually associated with religious and/or priestly practices). In the Mandaean view, they excel in the sacred arts of healing, astrology, astronomy, and esoteric divine knowledge. Their abilities include foresight and insight into future events, serving as vital conduits for divine connection and as pillars of spiritual and intellectual leadership within the Mandaean community. They are also the guiding mystics of the Mandaean religion, revered as the Guardians or Custodians of the secrets of *Naṣiruta*. As truth-seekers and recognized authentic elites, they are inspired with profound cosmic insight. Naṣoraean is epithet interestingly recalling a Nazarene or Galilean connection).[11] (Nasoraia 2004b, esp. pp. 306–7, 312–17, 334–56; 2023, p. 251 n.7. Cf. MD, p. 285b; Drower 1960; JB [Häberl/McGrath).[12]

On balance, though being very cautious, this Naṣoraean group would seem to be mainly mixed Jewish and pre-Christian Gnostics (honoring Adonai and steeped in Judaic tradition but familiar with Hellenistic ideas (HG, p. 3; cf. Gündüz 1994, pp. 86–94)), and was migrating into a much more culturally mixed region than were the Christians in Pella. Adiabene and its surroundings, the apparent first point of destination, was a small principality that had rulers of Jewish, Arab, and Persian extractions, and was also known for its residual Median cultural elements that had survived Persia's imperial pressures (Diakonoff 1985, pp. 139–42; Stone and Topchyan 2022, pp. 30–56). What is more, over time, life in Adiabene even allowed moments of Mandaean social control (see HG, pp. x (Drower), 10; cf. Thomas 2007, p. 6). The most important primary settlement of the new grouping—which possibly began to take a preliminary form even in the first half of the first century—was acclaimed to be Haran, possibly (i) Harran/Ḥarrān, a city in (southeastern) modern-day Turkey (neighbouring the border with Syria (e.g., Drower 1960, p. xiii; Segal 1956, p. 375),[13] or (ii) an area surrounding Jabal Ḥawrān/Ḥaurān (Mountain of Ḥawrān) located in Syria (very close to the borders of Israel/Palestine and Jordan. Lidzbarski (1925, p. vi) mentioned that this area was known to the Romans as Auranitis, or (iii) Hauran/Haran/Hiran, as a place with a protected passageway leading to Ṭura

d-Madai, which was identified by some scholars as Midia or the Median Hills in Persian territory (e.g., King 2003, p. 140; Buckley 2010),[14] or (iv) Wādi Ḥawrān/Ḥaurān, a seasonal waterway in Iraq. The last is the candidate preferred by Buckley (2010, p. 293) and later supported and favored by Häberl (2018, pp. 59, 82–84; 2012, pp. 262–65),[15] though both Haran and Hauran are also talked of sometimes in heavenly, Edenic terms and sometimes as a good earthly realm in the "north" (cf. Drower 1953, pp. vi–ix; Macuch 1973, p. 258; Häberl 2018; Buckley 2005; 2010, p. 293; Deegan 2020, p. 198 and n. 784).

There is a serious puzzle waiting to be solved here; the newcomers were so accepted by populations in the "Median Hills" in and around Adiabene that two seemingly divergent peoples coalesced extraordinarily to enable a new (or perhaps a renewed or a revived!) tradition to be born (though in the believers' eyes it was very ancient). The 'indigenous' so-called Eastern group, subjects under the Persian Empire, brought with them intense preoccupations with rituals and their mystical or symbolic significations, particularly Mesopotamian-originated water ablutions as 'mysteries' that complemented the teachings of John the Baptizer extolled by the more intellectually predisposed Western group. Scottish scholar Robert McLachlan Wilson actually conceived all Gnosticism to be the "result of an eruption of Oriental religious beliefs into the Graeco-Roman world", and a trajectory of thought and practice that consequently "sought to unite in itself two diverse strains, Western intellectualism and Eastern mysticism" (Wilson 1955, p. 194). In this light, the activities we have been considering might as well be his model case, and out of the interaction what we call 'Mandaeism' developed, a very unique baptismally focused 'Gnosticism'. (Rudolph 1960, pp. 58–79). In this new melding, John the Baptist (Yahya Yuhana) is taken to be the new movement's last prophet and master, who was translated out of the Median Hills to Palestine at birth and back to them to die (HG 6–8; GR VI). But in the development of a new religious group-identification, a propulsion arose (perhaps a compulsion because of persecution?) to move, and, as if signaled by Ha[u]ran as a topical gateway, to find a haven further into the Persian sphere (cf. Rudolph 1960, pp. 67–80; 1969, pp. 210–35).

The most important primary settlement in Haran has a Janus-faced aspect: it looks back towards the land of the Jordan where John baptized and forward to a journey to their eventual settling place—especially middle and southern Mesopotamia, in Babylonian territory and around the mouths of the Tigris–Euphrates and Karun rivers. In the Mandaean understanding, John the Baptist emerged as the significant figure from the holy baptizing sect called the Naṣoraeans [Nazorenes?] (the possessors of the esoteric and mystical Knowledge, also known as the (mystic) healers), with modern Mandaean researchers like myself interested to know whether they might have been Qumranites and/or Essenes. Yet, the main point here is that the 'Westerners' following John came to terms with the Easterners, who had (distinctive) traditional Mesopotamian ideas about ritual cleanliness and accentuated priestly ritualism. No one has fathomed it, and the Mandaeans themselves say it was miraculous, but somewhere between the late first and third centuries CE, the intricate cosmology and ritual lore of Mandaeism developed basically into the recognizable system we witness today; the Mandaeism we acknowledge today is the last surviving ancient gnostic religion from antiquity. In HG, p. 5, there is a mention of (the city of) "Tmar" (probably Thamara, a small town located in the South East of the Dead Sea) (see HG, p. 5 n. 1; Deegan 2020, p. 242 n. 1019), which starts the account of Yahya Yuhana (John the Baptizer); his conception was said to occur from a blessed "pure seed" in the great *Yardna* (*bazira dakia biardna rba*) (Yardna here referring not only to the holy river of fresh running water, but apparently to the River Jordan as well). Without HG clearly specifying as much, the Yardna, as the River Jordan, was first planted for John, so that he could be conceived in the waters of (that) Jordan and then seeded or implanted (mystically) into the womb of an

eighty-eight years old woman (i.e., Elizabeth or "*ʿEnišbai*"). (cf. ibid. with Drower 1937, pp. 100, 262–63). A precise dating is absent, and all we have to go on is the temporal linkage of the lives of Jesus and John the Baptist (who lived for sixty-four years, according to the Mandaean sources) and the external threat to Jerusalem, events which would have been generally known in the ancient world. At least we can say of HG's vague narrative is that, whether for literary or historical purposes, it is disclosed to a later, congealed Mandaean readership (in early Late Antiquity times when HG was written) that, yes, John, the last prophet, ministered in the land of Yardna, but there was a Mandaean presence in the East *before* his birth (and also before that reference "*mšiha*", who might have been referred to in that peculiar way here [as discussed above in sects. 1 and 3] because by then Christianity had grown very considerably) (cf. Deegan 2020, e.g., pp. 236–39).

Now, HG (esp. 7–14) provides an important historical narrative of a Naṣoraean–Mandaean journey 'from the West to the East', first moving eastward to the Mandaean mountains or hills, then to Media proper, and proceeded to (i) establish (new) settlements (e.g., the seven widespread regions throughout many parts of Mesopotamia mentioned in HG, pp. 9–11) and (ii) merge and integrate with what in the tradition's conceptualizing were other thriving and already well-established Mandaean settlements. The latter were especially in central and southern Mesopotamia (to "Khuzistan and Lower Mesopotamia", as Drower (1953, p. x) puts it), including the southwest regions of what is now Iran (especially Khurzistan/Ahwaz/Ahvas), in these cases reinforcing their communal bonds and ensuring the continuity of their cultural heritage. And HG has understandably been used to support the theory of the 'Western or Palestinian origin' of the Mandaeans, promoted in scholarship since the mid-twentieth century, but now in competition with proposals for origins in the east in a debate currently going on, which I hope this article goes some way to resolve (cf. Rudolph 1960, 1969; Macuch 1965b, e.g., pp. 116–18; 1973, e.g., pp. 257–59). Whatever this debate's outcome, Mandaeism, its leading adherents wearing distinctive white robes and turbans, grew unexpectedly famous in the Middle Eastern contexts of its transitions toward the great rivers region (of the Persian Gulf) by recapturing the main elements and central religious character of deep wisdom or enlightenment (*Manda* or *Gnosis*) from 'general' antiquity (not just Judaic or Hellenic or Mesopotamian). To be listed in the Qur'an by the seventh century as a "People of the Book" underscores this (see below), as does the archeological evidence that Mandaean (Sabian) objects (inscribed potsherds and other objects) are more widespread in Mesopotamia than similar items from other traditions or cultures (Segal and Hunter 2000). The Mandaeans had come to hold and teach, moreover, that their religion was the oldest on earth, going back to the cosmic Adam, and the divine "seed" was sown in the cosmic Jordan or Yardna long before John the Baptist (hence HG 7), conceived in both the macro-geography of the world's river systems (DN, Rudolph 1982; Nasoraia 2024, accompanied by a vision of living water circulating and sustaining the connection between heaven and our lower order (Franzmann 1989), and supported by the macro-history of past ages (Nasoraia and Trompf 2010).

Looking again at the problem about the Mandaeans and the question of their origin, lexicographic data show that the Mandaic language, if it ever had touches of the Hellenistic ethos, lost them in time. To follow Müller-Kessler (2004, p. 57), Mesopotamian features prevail

> Such lexical items dominate in the early Mandaic incantation corpus and show the influential heritage of Akkadian and of early Iranian stages on the Mandaic language. The lack of Greek loanwords noticed before is also striking, but when it came to evaluation it was judged differently. A vast lexical gap separates Syriac around Edessa and Harran, which is rich in Greek terms from the Central and Southeastern Babylonian Aramaic. A big difference is also noticeable in

> the linguistic features. All this makes it difficult to explain why a group which comes first from Palestine or Transjordan, and resides then in Harran, in the neighborhood of Edessa, does not show more Greek words or lexical items in their early compiled text corpus from their former places of residence. That the essential elements of the Mandaean doctrine developed parallel to the Qumran Aramaic text corpus does not help to solve the problem either.

As for continuing interactions with, and influences upon Christianity, in our view, when Mandaeism was both migrating and congealing into a discrete and complex Gnostic system, various ancient Christian sects in Mesopotamia were already receptive to adopting eclectic Hellenistic materials into their faith (including elements of Gnostic and Mandaean thought and baptismal rituals) in what may be considered a progressive shift in Late Antiquity. We have to remember here that after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, the Hellenistic period brought so many changes to the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, especially by way of city building and civic order, which were consolidated by the full emergence of the Roman Empire after the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE and the conquest of Ptolemaic Egypt the following year. Both 'East and West' were affected by these changes, even though civic developments occurring in the Fertile Crescent more slowly throughout Late Antiquity. Within these great transitions there were continual and intricate relationships between groups responding to cross-cultural encounters and, particularly in the East, there arose a rich variety of differences less restricted by the Roman aegis. The melting pot allowed for interactions and borrowings between Jewish, Christian, Gnostic, and water-purifying movements (consult first Gero 1986; Rudolph 1999).

The question as to how much of Mandaeism contributed in shaping both the Christian faith and transformations in the thoughts of early Eastern Christian Fathers in their times remains a tricky question, but is very important to consider. In the Eastern Churches especially, various ancient church treatises expectedly treated John the Baptist as a miraculously born prophet, Christian saint, and martyr,[16] and it is obviously not untoward to look toward baptizing Christian sects and their leaders, and ask whether they were affected by the attractive presence of the Mandaeans. Pertinently, we will conclude this article by paying particular attention to the Elkasites and the Manichaeans, and suggestions of their relationships in neglected Mandaean texts.

5. Mandaeans and Manichaeans

Queries about Mandaean impacts on early Christianity can be turned on the case of the founder of Manichaeism, Mani (216–274/277 CE), his disciples, and the writings and practices of Manichaeism, presenting to many as a version of Christianity. The Manichaean movement, which was the largest single institutional representative of the gnostic religious principle (Jonas 1958, pp. 207–8), was considered a 'heresy' by different Christian Fathers; indeed, the worst in a series of Gnostic-type corruptions (e.g., Serapion, *Contra Manichaeos* 1–2). But for the Mandaeans, this movement was initially a less rejectable deviation from their original path (or less unpleasant than Jesus turning his back on John). What we now want to stress in this article is that in the first three or so centuries after Jesus, the so-called 'Baptist' followers of John (the Baptist) strongly influenced Mani and his followers, there being much better documented evidence for this than for their influences upon early 'mainstream' Christianity. The Mandaean religion obviously had early antagonistic encounters with different Christian and Jewish groupings and also had variable interrelations with other religions, including Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, remnants of ancient (polytheistic) Babylonians, and, as a separate concern, Manichaeism. This is why such scholars as Jason BeDuhn (2000) and Iain Gardner (2021, esp. pp. 15–17) have suggested that Mani grew up in a religious community where various Gnostic texts might share or influence each

other for having similar cultural and spiritual backgrounds. This view takes in the thematic overlap between Mandaeistic and Manichaeistic views on light and darkness, concepts of salvation, divine messengers, and the dualistic view that portrays the spiritual realm as sacred while considering the material world flawed (Lang 2018). Beyond Mandaeism's particular influence or his borrowing of their ideas, Mani's distinctive integration of these concepts may also mirror broader Gnostic discussions.

Researchers have already delved into the textual comparisons between Mandaean and Manichaean bodies of literature, seeking to identify in common motifs and ideas. As we mentioned earlier, for a start, Băncilă (2018) has recently examined the relationship between the two religions from historical, philological, and geographical perspectives, highlighting the influence of cultural trends on the interpretation of their interaction over time. Moreover, comparative studies have been conducted to understand the historical origins of Mandaeism and its theological development, especially in relation to other contemporary religions like Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Manichaeism. These studies often focus on the authenticity of Mandaean traditions and the extent of their influence on or by other religions (Häberl 2012). In summary, the interface between Mandaeism and Manichaeism is complex and multifaceted, with ongoing research continuing to shed light on their historical, theological, and textual connections.

In general terms, the first scholar to probe cultural interactions between both Mandaeism and Manichaeism was the Swedish scholar Geo Widengren (1907–1996). He took seriously that most of Mesopotamia in Late Antiquity, especially before and during the time of Mani, was controlled by the Sasanian/Sassanids (224–651, successors to the Parthian/Arsacid Empire, 247 BCE-224 CE). In Sasanian times, apart from the continuing impact of Seleucid Hellenistic culture, both Mesopotamian and Iranian cultures were busily exchanging ideas and influences. In fact, for Widengren, the Mesopotamian background of Mani and early Manichaeism was very clear. In his book, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism* (1946), he focuses on the influences of archaic, surviving Mesopotamian religio-mythological elements in Manichaeism, Mandaeanism, and Syrian Gnostic traditions, and he particularly stresses the direct and indirect Mesopotamian effects on Mani. Here, of course, we may ask, why the inspirations of Mandaeism, which came to be saturated with traditional Mesopotamian elements, are not well accounted for in his studies, and if they were indeed there, what might have come out better about their impact? Surely, Mandaean and Syrian-Christian Gnosticisms would be expected to find their way into the Manichaean forum. But at this stage of scholarship, Widengren was more predominantly interested in deep cultural roots and their conditioning of newer religious developments (Widengren 1946; cf. Furlani 1950).

Widengren found this to be evident in as many as four interconnected religious issues spinning around the core of Manichaean teachings: (i) kingship, (ii) a savior figure, (iii) enlightenment, and (iv) salvation (cf. Widengren 1951). Indeed, the religions of ancient Mesopotamia have been well known for their salvation myths and the focus on savior figures, and it was of no surprise for him that these motifs would eventually find their way back among newly successful religions in the region (Widengren 1946). The works of important traditional 'saviour' deities, such as Tammuz (or Dumuzi) and indeed Marduk (the latter a savior of souls, the sick and dying, not just of Babylon) are reflected for Widengren in the salvific doctrines of Mandaeism, Christianity, and Manichaeism. Pregnostic Mesopotamian ideas of 'salvation' and the 'young (king) saviour', were already well developed in the religion of Tammuz, inspired kingly features being given to John, Miriai, Jesus, Mary, and Mani. In Persia, this is undeniably linked to the royal ideology that was constantly reappearing in the Fertile Crescent, with the king typically the earthly representative of the young god (Furlani 1950, pp. 169–71).

Turning from the general ethos to the particular, Mani and his fellow workers, Mani laid hands on a rich gnostic and technical religious language within the Mesopotamian complex. The principal focus of his discourse was the issue of salvation in this 'life' and the 'life after', a matter just as important for the Mandaeans and followers of John the Baptist. But in Widengren's view, Mani gives the various strands of belief at the time a special Iranian and Zoroastrian twist. If the king once represented the divine savior, now the savior with himself as the Apostle or the Messenger of Light (i.e., Jesus reappearing) replaces the king. The savior is no longer Tammuz, but the Great Soul, *Vohu Manah*, the divine, cosmic soul that encompasses all souls, in his way of appropriating Zoroastrianism. The same shift towards the accentuation of salvific roles was preveniently signaled by Mandaean and Christian Gnosticisms, in their own reactions to the broad Mesopotamian ethos; but Mani, growing up under Persian colonial sway (see Quispel 1998, pp. 53, 55), was the one who distinctly seized upon and adapted the frame of the religious establishment of the time, and who subsequently tried to influence Persia's royal court with his new vision of things (Widengren 1946; Furlani 1950, pp. 170–71).

Be this as it may, our task here is to see more of Mandaeism's place in Mani's story, considering newer work that puts the settling of its role in Mesopotamia by Băncilă and others. For the Mandaeans were expanding through numerous well-known Mesopotamian locations in the mid-third century at the time of Mani's emergence, proudly sitting alongside surrounding peoples with their unique language and cultural presentation, and their textual corpus showing striking familiarity and signs of interaction with a wide range of ancient Mesopotamian religious groupings, including Babylonians, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Manichaeans. Indeed, we have to account for the impact of Mandaean poetic literature in this context, and it is important to realize that some of it was re-presented clearly in Manichaean writings.

Thus, the relationship between Mandaeism and Manichaeism, particularly the influence of the former upon the latter, has become a crucial subject of scholarly interest. Recent studies have explored different aspects of this topic, including the possibility of shared ideas and theological concepts. In any case, Mandaeism and Manichaeism, as archeologically attested, spread rapidly side-by-side in the same region of middle and south of Mesopotamia, and continued to live together for many centuries, and so we would expect mutual influences and interactions, as well as theological, cosmological, and mystical similarities between the two over time. Scholars can fairly ask where the earlier tradition of Mandaeism might sit in the foundation story of Mani's movement. Both traditions are 'gnostic' in their characteristics, (emphasizing secret knowledge or *gnosis*) and share the belief in a higher Power or Being in an ultimately divine unity. They emphasize moral and ethical conduct, with concepts such as compassion, honesty, and kindness strongly parallel in both faiths (e.g., Băncilă 2018). They are both religious syncretisms, blending or merging different aspects of religiosity and of components in varied traditions, in ways that reflect two relatable formations able to converse and apparently assimilate each other's spiritual elements. We should explore the relativities of their commonality and examples of their interaction. Whereas Mandaeism has its unique aspects, particularly its reverence for John the Baptist (Zinner 2019, pp. 10–15; [JB] Häberl/McGrath pp. 30–35), it shares with other Gnostics (including Manichaeans) a dualistic worldview.

Manichaeism, however, is well known for its stronger dualism, often compared to other ethical dualist systems in Persian: Zoroastrianism, Zurvanism, and Mazdakism. Mandaeism should hardly be excluded from such comparisons, since it stresses the struggle between good and evil, right and left, above and below, light and darkness, male and female. It also contrasts material and spiritual realms, in an ontological dualism like Manichaeism and other 'gnosticisms'. This dualism notwithstanding, Mandaeism recognizes only one

God, who exemplifies the Worlds of Light; in contrast, Ptahil, the Fourth Life emanation at the bottom of the Worlds of Light, is the creator of our earthly world. He is similar to the Demiurge in many other (Platonic affected) gnostic groups. Ruha and Forces of Darkness (such as the spirits of the "seven" planets and "twelve" zodiacs), amounted to the polar opposite to Light, and Ptahil used them to create the earthly world, resulting in its imperfection and corrupted materiality. The Forces of Light intervened in a long process to correct the false duality by bringing Soul from the Lightworlds along with all cosmic elements (including radiating Light, Life, and Living Water) needed to restore our world and establish cosmic order and balance (Rudolph 1965; Nasoraia and Trompf 2010).

Similar to various other dualistic systems (within more of a tripartite system), Mandaeism emphasizes soul salvation, which is achieved through *gnosis*, or the esoteric Knowledge of its divine *origin*. The soul is not only called *Nišimta* but uniquely called *Mana*, the spiritual, enlightened, and intelligent *mind*. *Mana* represents *gnosis* or spiritual inner Knowledge and Wisdom. It is associated directly with the mind, thoughts, consciousness, and the head. *Mana* is connected with *Mana Rba* (the Great Cosmic Mind, the 'Source' of all *Origins*) (CP Nos. 78: 88; cf. Nasoraia 2023). The soul ascends in a journey that emphasizes purification, enlightenment, and spiritual growth. Souls (*not* spirits) arise to leave the material world and pass through the heavenly spheres to reconnect with the ultimate Divinity and (re-)join their ancestors, the divine Lightworld beings in their cosmological superstructure. Nonetheless, the rulers of the Darkworld try to disturb the soul and hinder its journey (ibid.; Nasoraia 2004a, pp. 314–17; 2004b). For the soul's purification, Mandaeans oppose sexual license and promote marriage and procreation within the context of marriage, in contrast to various other Gnostic systems (Drower 1960, p. xvi; Nasoraia 2004a, esp. pp. 316–17; 2004b).

The shared dualistic nature of Manichaeism and Mandaeism, along with their gnostic 'structure', syncretistic cosmology and comparable myth-historical frame (see Trompf 2018a, pp. 44–47), naturally entice one to ask about indications of Mandaeism's direct influence on Manichaeism. Let us introduce some crucial pieces of evidence.

First, there is the 'Baptist connection'. Since Mani was brought up in "marshlands community known for washing themselves" (Al-Nadim, *Fihrist* [eds. Gardiner and Lieu. pp. 46–47]), it can be anticipated that some scholars trace the beginnings of his religious framing to this Baptist sect, for the tenth-century Arabo-Persian encyclopedist Ibn Al-Nadim noted Mani's father's membership of these so-called "abluters" (Arab. *Mughtasilah*),

Second, there seems to be an overlapping of cosmic framing. In particular, Manichaean scholar Iain Gardner has conducted an important initial study probing how the many Mandaean *'Utra*s (lit. 'the powerful or plentiful or rich ones'), who are Lightworld or angelic divine beings in Mandaean cosmology [cf. MD, p. 347a-b), turn up in Coptic Manichaean texts.[17] He concluded from his research:

> There are unmistakeable traces of the 'utria in the Coptic Manichaica and the early textual tradition of that community. This distinctive category of divine being, the Coptic rmmao, is found; as also are the other specific forms such as Šitil/Sethel. What is now needed is an overarching theory to explain how this occurred in historical and social terms; and this short paper has been written as one building block in that enterprise. (Gardner 2010b, p. 96)

Shortly after, Gardner continued his research towards an "overarching theory", adding another building block to explain how this occurred in historical and social terms. He offers "a new look at Mani, the 'Baptists' and the Mandaeans" (Gardner 2010a, p. 321). His search tried to answer the puzzling "question of Mandaean–Manichaean origins", but focused more on 'Mani's *Book of Mysteries*', which is one of the 'Seven Scriptures of Manichaeism', and its links to Mandaic sources, including newly discovered secret Mandaean text. This

text, according to Gardner (ibid.), "suggests a new avenue of approach: To study Mani's own lost *Book of Mysteries* as a site for debate between the apostle and other religious communities of the time". In due course, we will work on this as yet untranslated text, and take these thoughts still further.

Third, there are close textual connections between Mandaean and Manichaean writings. The Greek Cologne Mani Codex (hereafter CMC) (eds. Cameron and Dewey), a tiny fifth-century book discovered in 1969 near Asyut in Upper Egypt, contains unique, relevant content. Dan Shapira's work has significantly detected Mandaean and quasi-Mandaean prototypes behind certain expressions in it (Shapira 2006), but by concluding from this that Mandaeans and Manichaeans have common roots, he would not say the case of CMC clinched direct Mandaean influence. He contends here for the intersection of Mandaean, Manichaean, and also other religious texts (cf. Abudraham 2020) that offers a fascinating glimpse into the rich tapestry of ancient religious thought. As Shapira (2006, pp. 695–96) indicates,

> Mani's account of his revelations has clear-cut Mandaic, or rather should we say quasi-Mandaic, linguistic equivalents, with a striking similarity to the language used by the Syriac [first- or second-century] Hymn of the Pearl, which can be detached from behind the extant Greek. . .The relation of the Manichaeism and Mandaeism was less direct and more complicated than is generally believed; nevertheless, in these stray notes of rather preliminary character we shall try to demonstrate some similarities and differences based on a common basis of both traditions.

Already, Kurt Rudolph had anticipated this kind of orientation by identifying significant links between Mandaean religious texts with the Coptic Gnostic body of documents found at Nag Hammadi, near the Nile, in 1945. He hypothesized (Rudolph 1975) that Gnostic-Christian groups lying behind the Coptic translations from Egypt were mainly pre-Manichaean, as were the Mandaeans themselves, and that they *jointly created the ethos* in which Mani was to emerge. This and Shapira's positioning are quite different from making the claim, made by Jae Hee Han (2019) about the CMC, for instance, that Mani first only wanted to reform a pre-existing Baptist-type movement, leaving the question more open as to whether this movement was a Mandaean group.

Fourth and moreover, other scholars' research has noticed many comparable features between Mandaean religious ceremonies and numerous Manichaean ceremonies, such as rituals for dying, for the dead, and for the departing and ascending souls, some involving in their presentation a poetic and distinct religious terminology (especially in relation to the salvation of the soul). Indeed, combining textual and ritual issues, numerous Manichaean hymns can be found in both the Mandaean ancient classic hymns for the souls from *Left Ginza* (GS) and numerous additional ritual hymns for the dead and souls from the CP (cf. the Coptic Manichaean *Kephalaia* [ed. Funk] 1.2, Lf. 13/14: 346–47 [=ch. 144]; with Rudolph 1961, pp. 415–18; Richter 1997, pp. 60–62). The resemblances and parallels in some cases are very special, in that one can see parts of the (Coptic-) Manichaean hymnic literature incorporating elements that are literally translated and borrowed from Mandaean–Naṣoraean poetry (Buckley 2002, p. 3; using Säve-Söderbergh 1949, pp. 128, 137–62; Colpe 1964).

Examining some influence of Mandaean texts, particularly the GS, CP, and JB, on the Manichaean Psalms of Thomas (hereafter PsTh), offers a fascinating glimpse into the theological dialog and intertextual relationships between these two Gnostic traditions. A pivotal study conducted by Torgny Säve-Söderbergh (1949) highlighted very strong similarities between these writings and concluded that PsTh drew significantly from Mandaean sources. For the most persuasive examples, Manichaean Psalm 13:1–8 clearly

parallels the prayers of CP Nos. 125 and 129, and Psalm 13:37–45 of CP No. 155; and the ending formulae in Psalms 1, 2, 6, 8, 12, and 14 closely resemble those in CP Nos. 78–103. Without providing all the details, note the highly comparable imagery of "the trembling demons" and the 'the mocking litany' in hymnic literature (Säve-Söderbergh 1949, esp. pp. 20–25 on PsTh 2 and 13 with GS III, 2, 15, 22, 41; CP 15, 24, 50, 55 [demons]; PsTh 12, 14, 17 with JB 12, 47 [mocking]); the sharing in the concept of "the Treasure of Life" (Säve-Söderbergh 1949, pp. 30–35 on PsTh 5 with GS II, 5 and CP pp. 60–65); the similar language of dualism and the light/dark divide (Säve-Söderbergh 1949, pp. 40–45 [cf. Buckley 2002, pp. 30–135] on PsTh 6 with GS III, 19); and why not add a common discourse on "heavenly messengers": (PsTh 8 with GS III, 3, 22), all indicative of a conceptual transfer (see Buckley 2002, pp. 140–45; Lieu 1992, pp. 50–55) and group interaction (Säve-Söderbergh 1949, pp. 60–65; Reeves 2011, pp. 80–85).

Lastly, if we can round off surveying this evidence by reflecting on Torgny Säve-Söderbergh's labors, a year after he published his dissertation *Studies in the Coptic Manichæan Psalm-Book: Prosody and Mandæan Parallels*, his leading reviewer Lady Drower, one of the great contributors in Mandaean studies, revealed the work's extreme importance. As she stressed,

> the author deals primarily with metrical forms used in the Coptic Manichaean psalm book recently edited by the late Professor C. R. C. Allberry [see his *Manichaean Psalm-Book: Part II*. pp. 218–20] and compares them with prosody used in similar Mandaic literature. The analysis is careful and scholarly. Dr. Säve-Söderbergh concentrates especially upon the group of poems called the "Psalms of Thomas", for in these he finds close parallels to Mandaean *drašia* and *'niania*, particularly the liturgical prayers and hymns intended to accompany sacramental meals for the dead. . . .The psalm book belongs to the oldest Coptic poetry, and the Psalms of Thomas appear to have been composed for use at a religious ceremony for the dead equivalent to the Mandaean *masiqta*.

Dr. Säve-Söderbergh quotes extensively from these psalms, setting beside them parallel passages from Mandaic literature. The resemblance between the two is not only close in idea and in distichal meter, but some passages are actually identical, line for line and word for word. He seems justified, therefore, in concluding that the Coptic author drew freely upon Mandaean originals, explaining convincingly why he is persuaded that the Mandaic versions were prior to the Coptic. In view of the early date of the Thomas psalms, in all probability the last quarter of the third century A.D., it becomes evident that the relationship of the two religions to one another deserves fresh consideration (Drower 1950, pp. 190–91).

Drower (1960, p. xiii, n. 1) later noted how "the author suggests tentatively that the Mandaean hymns may be placed in the second century A.D. or earlier", and, accentuating the acceptance of that finding by most scholars, stated that:

> A considerable part of the surviving [Mandaic] literature may be dated back to the earliest phases of Naṣoraeanism. Most scholars now accept Professor Säve-Söderbergh's discovery that the Coptic-Manichaean 'Psalms of Thomas' are adaptations, almost translations, of early Mandaic hymns', not, as was hitherto supposed, vice versa.

Then, she ventured to make a confident identification that

> Al-Nadim's story that Fatik, Mani's father, belonged to the Mughtasilah sect is thereby strengthened, for there can be no doubt that this baptizing sect were Sābians, that is to say, Mandaeans and Naṣoraean; (ibid., pp. 21 [with n. 1], 83)

This also rebuts the older (but weakening) theory that Mandaeanism was a much later post-Christian development in syncretism, ruling it out of debates about antiquity CE (Drower 1950, pp. 190–91).

So, to proceed on in with our assessment of these data, we have from Al-Nadim, a tenth-century compiler of the great *al-Fihrist* (*The Catalogue*), a crucial account of Mani, his background, his disciples and movement. He records "that Mani was born in Lower Babylonia among the *Mughtasila*", that is, among "those who practise ablutions", a description which, like the modern Arabic *Ṣābiya* (colloquially *Ṣabba*; 'those who dip under'), fits the Mandaeans, whose religion enjoins daily ablutions and submersion (for the Arabic, ed. Hammer, reprod. in Chwolson 1856, vol. 1, p. 126). Who were the *mughtasila*? In modern critical study, the Russian Orientalist and authority on the Sabians Daniel Chwolson seems to be the first to secure the answer: they were *Elchasaï* (p. 119). Since then, it is common to find that Mani's religion is believed to have originated from the Elkasaites/Elcesaites, a Judaeo-Christian sect believed to have flourished in Lower Mesopotamia between 100 and 400 CE, that period characterized by both cultural and religious syncretism. Perhaps it was at first a Transjordanic Jewish sect that was known for its gnostic orientation and frequent purification baptisms (Drower 1937, p. 123), with the sect's name Elkhasai (Koine Grk: Ἠλχασαϊ in Hippolytus), Elksai (Ἠλξαί in Epiphanius), or Elkesai (Ελκεσαϊ in Eusebius and Theodoret), originating from the Aramaic nomenclature of a Jewish prophetic text (*Elxai*) from Trajan's time (110s). At least, this what we can obtain from the Church Fathers and them alone in their commentaries on 'heresies.' However, it seems the best likely deduction to make is that Elkasaites and *mughtasila* refer to a Mandaean–Naṣoraean Baptist group in Ṭib of Maysan, a place where the Mandaeans historically flourished and continue even to the present day. Al-Nadim identified Elkasaites with the Sabians; it remained for Chwolson, the great compiler of Arabic texts on the Sabians (Chwolson 1856, vol. 2), to identify the Elkasaites with the Mandaeans (vol. 1, pp. 116, 118–19, 806). *We concur with his deduction*: but we need to look at Mandaean sources, especially the hitherto unavailable *Book of Mysteries*, to clinch the case.

Before doing that, however, there are a few matters needing clarification. First, one needs reminding that Mandaeans were a non-Christian and certainly not a Jewish-Christian sect, and we must presume that, when the Fathers treated the Elkasaites as a Christian heresy, they were awry, just as they were in reading certain Jewish groups, such as the Essenes (Hippolytus, *Refutationes* ix, 11, 14–22) as heretics *vis-à-vis* the Christian 'right belief'. But Mandaeans obviously belong among non-Christian baptizing (and gnostic) Mesopotamian groups that expressed dissatisfaction with Christianity (see last section). And their discontent sat alongside the Jews, who were the main challengers and enemies of the early Christian Church in the Middle East. During the second to fourth centuries, admittedly, most early and usually small Gnostic sects were Christian, but some were not, and the largest of these latter were the Mandaeans. The main characteristic of early Christianity was its Christology (generally speaking), that is, a centring on Jesus as Christ (not just as a Jewish teacher or prophet) and on entering into the Kingdom of Heaven he promised to those believing in him. That is not to say this focus could or did not have gnostic dimensions, for some developed them in ways acceptable to the 'mainstream' faith (e.g., Costache 2018, pp. 259–70), but others clearly deviated, as, we must concede, was the case with Mani and his followers, who could claim to be Christians and honored Jesus as "Lord" (even if one in a line of Messengers) and as foreshadower of the coming (feminized) Holy Spirit (even if Mani "seals" his followers with the Holy Spirit, and sometimes seems to embody her special agency) (Gardner 2010c, p. 149; cf. Franzmann 2003).

As we generally assess 'Mandaeans–Manichaeans' interconnections, we come to realize they are sensitive ones, for we will be wondering whether, yet again, the People of

John the Baptist, or the Naṣoraeans, have once again nurtured a famed religious leader who, as did Jesus before him, 'let the side down' and went his own way. In one sense, this might not be so strange, because the expectations of repetitive ritualism and ascetic discipline from Mandaean leadership are extraordinarily demanding, but disappointingly for the original 'host', both the early Christians and Manichaeisns might be said to have bounced off Mandaeism in the name of freedom from ritual shackles. In any case, whether we just acknowledge that the two faiths of Mandaeism and Manichaeism shared the same roots in Near/Middle Eastern culture(s) and the spread of Gnosticism, or maintain that Mani had not been a Mandaean and that the Elkasaites were actually Christian baptizers, Mani is still found to be the one refuting the traditional Elkasaite cleansing rituals in the inauguration of his new way. When arguing against the repeated baptism ritual, he stressed that the Elchasaites' bodies were constantly changing between a state of "disturbance" and stillness, rendering the rituals futile and ineffective for attaining salvation (Buckley 1983, pp. 400, 402; cf. Shapira 2006). It is our own contention, however, that Mani was indeed originally a Mandaean, and as Jesus left John the Baptist's movement, so Mani left the Mandaeans who had continued it.

Mani's departure left a rupture that became etched into Mandaic texts. There was much of Mani's teachings focused on the issues of enlightenment, spiritual ascension, and the progression of spiritual experience, wisdom, and healing, as against descent into ignorance, like the Mandaeans. Mani worked at multiple levels on cosmogony, cosmology, theogony, beliefs system, and practice, building institutional and encouraging a culturally eclectic outlook. But the substantial differences in the system he developed with his followers shocked the Mandaeans, arising as it did from his study of other religions, including Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Neoplatonism, various Gnostic schools, and some ancient Mesopotamian polytheisms. Most shockingly, Mani viewed himself as the final successor in a long line of prophets, including Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus, rather than to John the Baptist, and being Jesus present again as the Apostle of Light he rejected as he had before Jewish (or Jewish-associated) purificatory rites (Koenen 1980, pp. 735–76). His teachings emphasized the interconnectedness of religions and the need for a universal message to replace all of them. Despite its later decline and repression, Manichaeism left a lasting impact on religious thought and history. Moving away from the mainstream Mandaeism and traditional Mandaic Scriptures (though as we have seen incorporating some of them), Mani composed eight of his own independent works, seven of which, including the Gospel of Mani, were written in Syriac Aramaic, the eighth in Middle Persian and dedicated to the contemporary ruler of Persia, Shapur I.

In return for this eruptive deviation, Mandaeans were to reject Mani's universal approach and considered him and his followers to be heretics who strayed from the true path of Adam and the Worlds of Light. Unsurprisingly, negative references to Manichaeans appear in some Mandaean texts: in GR (esp. GY they are spoken of depreciatingly as *Marmanaiia*; see esp, e.g., GY IX (here ed. Shapira); cf. VII. In the CP, they are called *Yazuqaiia* (Yazuqaeans or Manichaeans) and *Zandiqia* (Zandiqaeans or Manichaeans), respectively, or those "who rest on supports of falsehood" and who "cut off their seed from the world" (CP No. 357, p. 251). They are deprecated along with other religions such as Jews, Zoroastrians, "Saturn-worshippers" (or Kiwanaiia), Idumaeans, and Arabs, with what borders on a dirge in a hymn integrally connected to the one before it (ibid.):

> Behold my oblation, behold my oblation, behold my oblation!
> Who ate it?
> The Jews, an evil nation, accursed and blasphemous ate it.
> The Kiwanaiia ate it, who cut it [?] in flames of fire.
> The demented Yazuqaeans ate it, who reverence fire

> Crazed creatures who reverence fire, serving a thing that is powerless.
> Idumaeans ate it, who destroyed their virility,
> Cast away, destroyed is their manhood,
> And they set up Death (or "a Corpse"), worshipping him.
> Zandiqs [probably Manichaeans], who rest on supports of falsehood, ate it,
> On pillars of falsehood do they rest
> And cut off their seed from the world.
> Arabs ate it, evil liars, a wicked race
> Who drink blood. Naṣoraean ate it,
> A people, a stock, a family group.
> The faithful of heart ate it,
> Righteous and believing people ate it,
> Those baptized in water ate it who at their baptism
> Arise and behold the Place of Light.
> And Life be praised! Life is victorious! I testify to Yawar-Ziwa who quickeneth us with his bounty.
> In the name of the Great Life be there healing and victory and forgiving of sins for me, Adam-Yuhana son of Sam! (Ibid., pp. 251–52)

The naming of Manichaeans as *Zandiq*s seems shared by Zoroastrians as a term deployed in the Sasanian period to mean "distorters of Zand" [or Zend, or the Zoroastrian sacred texts] (Shapira 2004).

Despite their close early relations, it is thus palpable that in their later stages Mandaeism and Manichaeism became two quite separate religions. Mandaeism is a pre-Gnostic religion that honors Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Sham son of Noah, and John the Baptist, whom is considered as the last and most significant Naṣoraean Healer, Teacher of *Kušṭa* (Truth/Enlightenment/Righteousness), and the last prophet and Messenger of Light (of the last era, in which the fourth world destruction will occur by air pollution)—(HG 18–20; p. 31; Nasoraia and Trompf 2010, p. 405 and n. 64 [cf. *Ginza*, p. 26]). Manichaeism was more syncretic in revering Moses, Zoroaster, Gautama Buddha, and Jesus as prophets or messengers, and it focused above all on Mani as the great teacher and as the foretold (last) prophet. We follow the view that Manichaeism incorporated aspects of belief and practice not only from Mandaeism but from other Gnosticisms, and Zoroastrianism and Christianity as well (Shapira 2006, p. 692), but that it was born from a Mandaean cradle only to reject its parent as too narrowly ritualistic.

We now come in conclusion, though, to a crucial unstudied and unpublished extended Mandaic tract so-called identified as [*Sidra d-*]*Mani*, a highly pertinent hidden text (touched upon by some few Mandaeans and non-Mandaeans and known to Gardner but not sighted by him (Gardner 2010a)). It was among the texts that first came into my attention from within a large unnamed (and sectionless) corpus of unknown esoteric writings. Some confusions about its origins and provenance are still to be clarified, and other issues sorted out concerning restrictions placed by those with the authority over the texts involved. Here, we can make a new initial contribution to both Mandaean and Manichaean studies by suggesting a re-orientation with a brief introduction to this text (before serious future editing takes place). The centerpiece of this work, as its title alludes, is Mani, with references to his parents, wife, children, and his life journey, but in particular his funeral and burial described as being carried out by Mandaean officiants. The text refers to Mani by different endearing epithets, such as the beloved or Enlightened Mani (and comparable to the fetching Aramaic references by Manichaeans to him as M'ny) (Gardner 2018, p. 226). Mani himself, born in Tib, was subsequently baptized probably by a group of Naṣoraeans, was taught the arts of healing, and underwent years of his early life studying

and training, to becoming a devoted Naṣoraean himself.[18] He was very motivated by a vision for universality, and through traveling and further learning, he came into contact with other religions, including Zoroastrian, Buddhism and Indic traditions, Judaism, and Christianity, and began his own school and unusual teachings under their impact. Not that this completely excluded Mandaeism as a result, for he subsequently deployed Mandaean cosmological elements. In the *Kephalaia* (1.2, Lf. 13/14: 337), for example, he sought the divine numbers of shepherds and guardians for his own church, by not only deciphering the mysteries of the twelve and the seventy-two chosen by Jesus, but apparently by the number of guides and angels established in the heavens in the Mandaean cosmic picturing. Mani's departure from the religion of his birth, however, was definitely radical.

Nevertheless, according to that text on *Mani*, written by those who were the leading participants in the care of Mani's body following his death, after imprisonment, he died very gruesomely, and the [Mandaean]–Naṣoraeans handled his death and burial ceremonies, so that he received the Naṣoraean–[Mandaean] funerary "ascent" rites. If these texts are old, authentic, and the insights they convey about beliefs, rituals, and historical contexts can be sorted out, they would be very significant indeed, and further study of the texts would seem to be crucial for a deeper understanding of both the Manichaean and Mandaean religions.

6. Conclusions

Mandaeans do not consider John the Baptist as the founder of their faith or religion, but for them, he is nonetheless a central figure in the Mandaean religious tradition, revered as a prophet of Truth and a key spiritual leader (Buckley 2002; [JB] Häberl/McGrath, e.g., pp. 1–2, 7–9). The Mandaean Book of John provides a detailed account of his teachings, emphasizing his role as a purifier and a guide to spiritual enlightenment (Häberl and McGrath, e.g., pp. 339–448; Buckley 2002). Stemming from John's work, theological concepts that developed in Mandaeism (particularly dualistic tendencies and emphases on purification), and baptismal practices along with ethical teachings (that cultivate purity, truth, enlightenment, righteousness, rebirth, and the washing away of defilements) apparently had some perceptible effect on early Christian communities and their baptismal theologies into Patristic times. The creativeness of the Mandaeans and their unique theology and practices (especially their baptismal rites) perhaps had an impact on Christian sacramental theology, underscoring the complex interplay of religious traditions in the ancient world. By probing the connections as we have, we may grasp better how early Christian practices could have been shaped by interactions with fraternal or related religious communities. Modern scholars continue to study the Mandaean texts to understand their unique perspective on Jesus and early Christianity (Yamauchi 1971; Buckley 2005).

We have insisted that Miriai, is a pivotal figure in Mandaean literature, representing the community's spiritual ideals of purity, enlightenment, and theological resistance to external influences. While some scholars compare her to Mary or Mary Magdalene, Mandaeans firmly root her in their cosmology as a symbol of alignment with the Lightworld (*Alma d-Nhura*) and *Manda* (esoteric knowledge). Her rejection of Judaic legalism and Christological frameworks underscores Mandaeism's distinct identity, pointing to broader polemical and theological narratives. Further studies on Miriai's role in primary sources, such as JB, CP, GR and HG and her intersections with Gnostic, Jewish, and early Christian traditions could deepen our understanding of Mandaean self-perception and historical development.

The relationships between John the Baptist and Jesus, and between the followers of John the Baptist and those of Jesus and Mani in Late Antiquity, seem to be deeper and more complicated than what have already been claimed by many scholars of these three wide fields of studies. Some researchers suggest that the close geographical and cultural proximity of Mandaeans, early Christians, and early Manichaeans in Mesopotamia and the

Levant facilitated mutual influences and exchanges of religious ideas and practices (e.g., McGrath 2021).

This is all the more the case when considering the recent availability of hidden texts which should be critically studied to better clarify cultural-religious connections between the followers of these three great traditions, especially during the Late Antiquity.

The core of Naṣoraean/Mandaean teachings is based on the five cosmic principles, loosely translated as Life, Light, Love, Peace, and Harmony. The followers are always aiming towards ideals of a greater universality, in purity, healing, redemption, integration, enlightenment, elevation, and wisdom that leads to cosmic Order and cosmic Truth (*Kušṭa*). By inclining this way, they hope to free themselves—during both this life journey in the material body and in the journey after death in the ethereal body—from all kinds of defilements and imprisoning elements of this world. During both journeys, there should be no *separation* from the Truth (*Kušṭa*), or from the Pure Light (*Nhura Dakia*) or the Great Life (*Hiia Rbia*). The Mandaeans have high expectations to have their Prayers (*Rahmia/Biriktas*), Baptisms (*Maṣbutas*), and Ascensions/Heavenly Connection (*Masiqtas*) fulfilled by *Hiia* (Life) and *Manda d-Hiia* (Gnosis/Knowledge of Life), believing that they are divinely appointed carers of humanity until the end of the world. This essay confirms the importance of their interactions with other traditions at their births, but it also addresses twin disappointments when the founders of Christianity and Manichaeism, two of the most influential and widespread emerging religions during the so-called Patristic period, went their own way.

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Notes

1 GR consists of two parts *Ginza Yamina* (hereafter GY) and *Ginza Smala* (hereafter GS). We will be using the edn. by Petermann [*Thesaurus sive Liber Magnus*, vols. 1–2 [hereafter GR], [but note most recently edn. by Al-Mubaraki, Saaed (=Nasoraia), and Mubaraki, as *Ginza Rabba: The Great Treasure*. It is translated by Lidzbarski, *Ginzā: Der Schatz, oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer* [hereafter *Ginza*].

2 Crehan tracked down the earliest reference to the Mandaeans, which goes back to "a Jesuit priest from the island of Ormuz (in the Persian Gulf)" sending a note to Lisbon", signed by three Jesuit missionaries at Goa (India) and dated 10 November 1555, about finding "the Christians of St. John". It is strange to find Mandaeans on a far island in the Gulf, but as Crehan writes:

> So successful were the Mandaeans in accentuating points of resemblance when talking to the Jesuits of Ormuz and Goa that a further report was sent to Europe at the end of 1555 in the form of a newsletter; it was translated into Italian, and this has survived, though the Portuguese original is lost. The letter says: In the past few days there has now come to Goa a Christian who belongs to those who are called Christians of St. John, wishing to see a boy related to him who is here in the school. Through an interpreter he told us that they are ready to obey the Holy Roman Church, and that they have all its sacraments and ritual. The Patriarch of Armenia sends them a bishop. They are subject to an Arab ruler and the place where they live is called Bassorà [=Basra]. The Arab ruler allows them to have churches and to say Mass, but the Turks often raid those parts and destroy their churches, so that they are forced to go into the mountains to say Mass in places where the Turk cannot come. He told us also that there are up to 40,000 married Christians there with their families.

That means the number of Mandaeans at that time may have exceeded 200,000, in contrast to later records (in 1935) counting only 4000 in Iraq. The depletion was due severe persecution, forced conversions and the brutal killing of Mandaeans by Muslims, actions continuing to the present day. Crehan puts the use of designation "Christians of St. John" to group "caution" against attacks:

The very name may have been adopted by the Mandaeans as a protection against the Turks, who would know of Christians and of the power of the Portuguese, but who would not pay much heed to a small band of sectaries. One might dismiss the whole conversation but for the one fact which has now emerged. There was an Armenian bishop amongst them. (Crehan 1968, pp. 624–25)

3 Adiabene was an ancient kingdom in northern Mesopotamia, located around the area between the two Zab Rivers (the Great and the Little), its capital being Arbela and its control ultimately extending Nineveh. This kingdom reached its peak under the Izates II (ruling 30–54 CE), who was allowed the territorial dominion of Nisibis by the Parthian king, Artabanus II (*ca*. 12–40). See (Marciak 2017, pp. 269–70 and esp. p. 447; Frye 1983, pp. i16–180; 1984, e.g., pp. 222, 279).

4 The term most commonly used is *madai*, also with a frequent variant *midai* as in HG, p. 6, etc.; see *Book of the Zodiac* (ed. Drower [p.] 182, ln. 8]; HG, p. 5 n. 4; cf. Drower 1960, p. xiii; MD, pp. 131b, 239a; Häberl 2012, 2018), but note also from HG. 7, "the Median Hills (*ṭura d-madai* [var. *midai*] *d-hdariun ʾlh* [or "the Mountain(s) of the Medes", or, in another reading, "Mountain(s) of the Mandaeans [or the Mandaean Mountain(s)]"!]) about which they travelled"; cf. MD, pp. 131b, 178b, 239a; Deegan 2020, p. 199 and n. 797). It is interesting to note that *Jabal Maddāʾī*, is recorded from the Mandaean oral tradition, especially by Drower (1937, p. 316). This was given more attention and discussed recently by Häberl (2018, pp. 58–59), who stated that "Drower . . . collected oral traditions situating this territory 'to the west' of the then current distribution of the Mandæans, in and around a legendary 'Mountain of the Mandæans', also known as *Jabal Maddāʾī*, 'for Arabs call the Jebel Mandai [*sic*] the Jebel Maddai [*sic*]'").

5 It seems that the Mandaic form of Miriai was developed and written in some later forms as Miriam/Mariam (cf. the Arabic مريمMariam), to refer to Mary (the mother of Jesus). For example, we read that in GY 382: 10, *ʾŠu br Miriam/Mariam* (Jesus son of Mary). This is similar to the old Aramaic form of the (Biblical) Aramaic name Miriam (the sister of Moses, and later as the mother of Jesus) (cf. Hebrew מִרְיָם, Aramaic מרים, Arabic مريم). Cf. MD, p. 254a.

6 For See MD, p. 293b.

7 Ibid. See, e.g., GY 110: 18, 134:1 (also *Ginza* p. 5 n. 2); JB ii p. 1 n. 1; (very frequently in) CP [e.g., Nos. 1 (p.1 and n. 1), 9 (p. 7), 17 (p. 12), 23 (p. 19 and n. 2), 35 (p. 34), 49 (p. 43), 51 (p. 47), 76 (p. 82 and n. 1), 105 (p. 106), 119 (p. 115), etc.]. We read the following passage in CP No. 163 (p. 141) [cf. No. 165 (pp. 143–46)]: In the name of the Great Life/Sublime Light be magnified!/On Sunday, on the chief of days,/Who saw that which I have seen?/Who saw Manda-dHiia who set out and came to the world?/He set out and came to the world and three 'uthras came with him./When he had put on a robe of radiance and light/Thrown over his shoulders, An ether-wreath he set on his head/And he set it on all his kin./On Sunday, on the chief of days/Who hath seen that which I have seen?/Who saw the Stranger who went/And stayed at the house of his friends?/I, who saw the Stranger/Mine eyes were filled with His light/Mine eyes with light were filled/And knowledge (*manda*) dwelt in my heart/In my heart knowledge dwelt/And my mouth filled with his praise;/His praise filled my mouth./And I arose, and I praise my Father./I arose and (gave?) praises to my Father/From dawn until the decline of day/I praised His great radiance/And I praised his lovely light . . .

8 Recent Mandaean texts have very recently come to light that trace John lineage back at least six generations, and throw light on the question of kin connections with Jesus; but these documents will have to be tested for their age and reliiabilty, and I am at liberty to discuss their contents as yet.

9 For relevant nomenclatures, iahia, in Aram. form as iahia *iuhana*, John the Baptist. See *Ginza*, p. 213. Also as iahia *br zakaria* (e.g., GY 213: 10, 218:23. See MD, p. 185a. For iuhana, John. John the Baptist, called also iahia *iuhana*. see JB ii 70 ff. Other references to him are as iuhana *maṣbana* (e.g., GY 189:1 ff.). iuhana *mitlid bʿurašlam iuhana laǧiṭ iardna*, etc. JB 70:8 ff.; iuhana *brh d-aba ṣaba zakria* GY 57:5; and *nbaṭ br iuhana* GY 362:8, cf. 364:9. See MD, p. 190a.

10 Relevant nomenclatures are as *mšiha* (pass. pt. pe. of MŠA, H. N°), Aram. Nw, Syr. Laxaro, Ar. esp.) 'anointed one', Messiah, Christ (in Mandaeism an evil being), identified with Mercury. *mšiha d- kadba* GY 27:18 = *mšiha kadaba* GY 247:14, 387:4 = *mšiha dagala* GY 51:3 Christ the liar; *rumaia mšiha* and *mšiha rumaia* GY 58:1 ff. probably meaning the same, and Christ the Roman (a pun); *nbu mšiha* GY 27:18, 28:2, 56:4 Mercury the Christ; *bšum alahuta umšiha* Q 60:3 in the name of the deity and Christ; *mšiha nbiha d-iahuṭaiia* GY27:14 Christ the prophet of the Jews; *mšiha mitiglia bdmuta hurintin* GY 28:15 Christ will appear in another form; *šiṭuata d-ruha umšiha* GY 254:10 abominations of R. and Christ; *šiṭia d-šaṭia mšiha kulh* GY 111:13 the whole abomination which Christ committeth; *mšiha baṭla*; GY 223:12 the good-for-nought Christ; *mšihaiia* (adj. from preced.) (MD, p. 280b). Also note the usage *nbu mšiha d-kadba* GY 27:18 (cf. 51:3) Nbu the false Messiah; another name for Jesus being associated with Nbu (the planet Mercury and Orpheus (Mandaic: *aurus*) in GR II.1 [Book 2, Part 1]. Through MD; GY; JB; HG; and CP, *nbu, ʾnbu* (Bab. *Nabi*) Nebo, or the planet Mercury, is identified with Christ; cf. MD, p. 126 on (Brandt [1889] 1912, p. 126); and p. 29 on (Bousset 1907); cf. also the MD Index on Nabu and Mercury. Jesus is also portrayed as one of the *maṭarta* guards, as he plays the role of a shepherd leading a congregation of souls resembling a flock of sheep, GR V.3.[3][4]. Other relevant verbiage has *mara* 3 (perhaps a reminiscence of *Ginza* p. 52 n. 2), the name of a hill (on which according to a Mandaean tradition Jesus was crucified); *ṭura d-mara* GY 58:15 (if 'the hill of the Lord', the name apparently being due to Christian influence) (MD, p. 251b).

11 Naṣoraeans and *Naṣiruta* hold a significant place in Mandaean literature. CP mentions *Naṣiruta* more than fifteen times (Nos, 58 n. 6, 83, 112, 130, 160, 181, 184, 194, 202, 241, 275, 285 n. 3, 287, 314, 316), and Naṣoraean(s) are mentioned more than eighteen times (CP, Nos. 31, 38–9, 52, 68, 71, 83 n. 8, 91, 139, 148, 154, 155, 179, 245, 248, 251, 269) (Nasoraia 2023, p. 251 n. 7).

12 There is a strict division between Mandaean laity and the priests. According to Ethyl Drower (1960, p. ix): "[T]hose amongst the community who possess secret knowledge are called Naṣuraiia—Naṣoraeans (or, if the emphatic ‹ṣ› is written as ‹z›, Nazorenes). At the same time the ignorant or semi-ignorant laity are called 'Mandaeans', Mandaiia—'gnostics'. When a man becomes a priest he leaves 'Mandaeanism' and enters tarmiduta, 'priesthoo'. Even then he has not attained to true enlightenment, for this, called 'Naṣiruta', is reserved for a very few. Those possessed of its secrets may call themselves Naṣoraeans, and 'Naṣoraean' today indicates not only one who observes strictly all rules of ritual purity, but one who understands the secret doctrine". See also (Segelberg 1970).

13 Cf. another Haran recorded in GY XVIII: 14 (related to the story of Noah and the Flood), but not the "Inner" Haran mentioned in HG, p. 3. It reads: *ugṭal arzia mn haran uašuhia mn libnan* "and cut down cedars from Haran and female cedars from Lebanon" (Deegan 2020, p. 198 n. 784).

14 For Haran or Hauran see HG, p. 3 n. 2. (Häberl 2018, pp. 59, 82–84). Hauran sometimes comes with another name 'Hauraran' (e.g., CP Nos. 14 (p. 10), 28 (p. 23), or Hauraran by itself CP Nos. 27 (23), 29 (p. 23), 49 (pp. 43 and 44). The Mandaic sources mentioned Hauraran, mostly related to a heavenly Being or Edenic (heavenly or earthly) place as in GY XV, GS III. CP No. 379 p. 298 reads: Moreover, thou wilt be blessed with the blessing/Pronounced in the Jordan and in the land of Hauraran,/The great land of light. And upon thee shall rest/Its glory and joy, that which abideth in the Innermost./On account of its magnificence they rejoice, embrace one another/And take one another's hands in troth./Thy fragrance will be sweet like the scent/Of trees of the world of light. Thy brightness/Will break forth and thy light shine out/In the earthly world like flashings of radiance,/And beams of light, going forth to bring into existence.

15 Häberl (2012, pp. 264–65) stated that it "is the principle affluent of the Euphrates in the Syrian desert. Anne Blunt (1881, pp. 235–40) and Gertrude Bell (1911, pp. 131–32) both relate local traditions according to which Wādi Ḥaurān is one of three valleys that communicate between the Jabal Ḥaurān and the Euphrates, despite the fact that its source is actually Jabal 'Anāzah (or 'Unayzah), located where the borders of Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia converge". The geographer Claudius Ptolemy (writing first half of the second-century CE), identifies the region of Babylonia watered by Wādi Ḥaurān as the Auranitis in Book 5, Chapter 17 of his Geography. Although the Wādi Ḥaurān does not actually begin in the Jabal Ḥaurān, the aforementioned traditions place its source there, effectively making the two Auranitides contiguous in the mental geography of the region, even if they are not contiguous in its physical geography. Although this Auranitis can hardly be identified with the "hill country of the Medians", (as most scholars have translated, Ṭura d-Madai), it is nonetheless located in close proximity to both the Arsacid capital and the present-day distribution of the Mandaeans, making it as plausible a candidate as any thus far advanced.

16 As Prof. Garry Trompf has thankfully reminded me, referring to scattered works in the *Patrologia Orientalis* (e.g., vol. 4, ch.6; vol. 8, fasc. 1, vol. 55, fasc. 3) and other collections.

17 These Coptic texts, either written by Mani himself or descended from the first Manichaean generations (dated the late 3rd century CE or before the mid-4th century CE), were found in the codices as part of the 'Medinet Madi library' in the 1920s. These texts are translations from the Syriac-Aramaic originals into Coptic (Gardner 2010b, pp. 87–88).

18 Now, during 1993–1994 I came across important untouched and unstudied new secret Mandaean documents and lead rolls. Part of them in a private Mandaean collection and the other part found in a special section belong to the Iraqi Museum. In 1994 I managed to show some of them to Dr Erica Hunter and Dr. Michael Müller-Karpe. We discussed the possibilities of treating, opening, and recovering them. We planned to study and publish them at Baghdad University in cooperation with Heidelberg University and the Iraqi Museum. However, due to radical intimidations, threats, and political challenges, I escaped and left Iraq in 1995 to Australia, leaving them behind along with many other valuable documents and Mandaic original material, including my private collections and library (one of the largest in Iraq, comprising of more than 20,000 books). Some of these documents related to John the Baptist, early Christianity and Manichaeism, thus, from the year 1999 on (to the present day), after extensive discussions with my dearest colleague Professor Garry Trompf regarding these new findings, we considered the possibilities of reaching these documents again and organizing a proper examination of them. In 2006 Dr Edward Crangle and I made a bid for research funds under a preparatory "Research Seed Funding Scheme". Soon after I negotiated with another colleague and Manichaean specialist Professor Iain Gardner to probe new findings on Mani and Manichaeism in newly available Mandaean secret sources. In conjunction with Gardner and Crangle some groundwork on the topic was laid, using some University and Australian Government research Grants, including the Research Infrastructure Blocks Grants Scheme (RIBG) of the Australian Government's Department of Education. In 2007 the process of raising funds to research early Mandaean/Manichaean relations eventually bore fruit in the re-acquisition (in 2006–2007) of neglected documents. The primarily work begun under an Australian Research Council (ARC) 'Seed Grant' for Large Research, and carried out with Gardner and myself, and later in conjunction with Semiticist Professor Rifaat Ebied). Due to some difficulties, political challenges and lack of funding we postponed the implementation of the work. These secret Mandaean writings give us unparalleled information, especially many details related to

Mani and his followers. Very recently (during 2023–2024), a newly initiated Mandaean living in Australia, made a controversial announcement about his receiving (from secretive or underhanded non-Mandaean sources) images of many hundreds of a large range of old secret Mandaean documents previously unknown to the Mandaeans. Some of them related to social and religious issues, ritual instructions, the history of Mandaeans, John the Baptist and Jesus. He claimed that most of them were engraved on different sizes of lead plates and rolls, some holding short sections on Mani's life and teachings. After an initial examination of this matter, they were faced with strong questioning and formal rejection of his assertions from the Mandaean headship. However, the matter remains subject to debate.

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Article

On the Foundation Period of the Maronite Tradition

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Abstract: The Maronite Church states that it is an Antiochene and Syriac Church. This article traces, in chronological and discursive fashion, the emergence of the Maronite tradition. It explores the life and significance of St Maroun (d. *ca* AD 418–23), giving consideration to thinkers who helped to understand his outlook and methods and assessing what we know of the St Maroun monastery (Dayr Mar Maroun) and its vicissitudes down to the sixth century. The piece then treats Maronites in the context of the seventh-century monothelite controversy, following their foundational developments up to the time of their first patriarch Yohanna Maroun (*flor*. 680s). The paper considers not only the ascetic and monastic currents in the early Maronite community but also touches on the influence of Syriac typology and its gradual displacement by analytic and dogmatic theology.

Keywords: Maronite Church; Syriac Catholic Churches; typology; Saint Maroun (deceased by 423); Dayr Mar Maroun (monastery); Saint Yuhanna Maroun; theological typology; Monothelitism

1. Introduction

The Maronite Church declares, in its official documents, that it is an Antiochene Syriac Maronite Church. For Maronites, their patriarch is officially the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. The Maronite Church is Catholic, being one of the 24 autocephalous or sui juris Churches that comprise the Universal Catholic Church (each of such churches, as the Latin indicates, "with its own law"). There is no recent, critical, and systematic overview of the early Maronite period, which is understandable because there is little material at hand. Most ecclesiological concentration has been placed on the church's institutional inheritance as it stands today because the legitimacy of claiming early Patristic foundations seems too tricky (e.g., Le Quien 1740, pp. 3–99) or scholars are resigned to dealing with existing "fabrics" that have slowly been woven up to our time (e.g., Mouhanna 1980). The scarcity of documentation probably has most to do with the persecution of the Maronites as alleged heretics in the seventh century. Unfortunately, it has long been a common scholarly opinion that the Maronites only made a definite appearance in church history at that time. However, Maronite collective memory has always seen itself as being (a central) part of and integral to the Antiochene Orthodox tradition, which is crucial to Syrian monastic beginnings, sharing in the hermeneutic and liturgical styles most prominent in Syriac Christianity, and as a pro-Chalcedonian community, which entangled it and pushed it somewhat into the shadows before a clearer (and prospectively unfortunate) exposure in the midst of the monothelite controversy (esp. 620s–30s). This article defends the usefulness of assembling as much ancient material pointing to Maronite foundations as we can and sets it out chronologically, with accompanying explanations along the way. It should be considered as "a new case made" by a published Maronite scholar who presented the "indigenous viewpoint" in a critical mode.

From its origin in Antioch, the "mother church of the mission to the Gentiles" (cf. Acts 11:26) accepted early self-recognition as part of the "Catholic Church", the epithet used by the third Antiochene bishop Ignatius of Antioch (*Epistulae* [to the Smyrmaeans] 7, 2) as he was taken as a captive to Rome to face martyrdom (Azize 2015). The writings of both Ignatius (d. 117) and Theophilus (Antioch's seventh bishop, *ca* 169–188) attest to an ancient

Syrian fashion of expressing the Christian faith we may call *typological*, a peculiarly Semitic way of conveying ideas and insights by evoking parabolic and mystical relationships. Already in the New Testament (cf. Goppelt [1939] 1982) Lampe and Woolcombe (1957), this theological manner survived in Syrian Christianity (e.g., Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* [ed. Grant], cf. Rogers 2000, pp. 158–83) until it was gradually displaced by the analytic theology required to participate in the Christological controversies of the fifth century and beyond. I dealt with some aspects of this hermeneutical issue in an earlier article on beauty in Syrian typology. There, I wrote the following:

> While the Greeks knew symbolical and even allegorical interpretations of mythology, this was not typology because "typology presupposes a divine history in past, present and future". Both typology and symbolism coexist within the Syrian tradition. Typology can use symbols, but a symbol is not a type, for a symbol is not a template, mold or pattern. In symbology, for example, a baby being baptized might represent innocence. But when the relationship is typological, we may say that the baby is both the Child Jesus and Jesus being baptized, not completely, but as an imperfect copy of the eternal original (Azize 2020, p. 162).

This fashion of thought penetrates into the ascetic, institutional, liturgical, homiletic, and literary life of the early Maronites, as well as a general mode the earliest followers of St Maroun imbibed along with other Antiochene Christians. It is natural to begin with Maroun (sometimes called Marun or Maron) as the saint from whom Maronites collectively take their name.

2. Maroun and His Legacy

"Monasticism" took different shapes in diverse times and places. Maronite monasticism has appeared in three different forms: the monastic "city in the desert" of Dayr Mar Maroun near Apamaea, Syria; then as houses of prayer founded in Mount Lebanon as independent concerns; and finally, as centrally-directed orders through the Middle East and then beyond, from the time of Patriarch Istifan Dwayhi in early modern times. Monks were not initially organized into "orders" (Caseau 1999, p. 585).

It is doubtful that Christian monasticism began with Anthony the Great (*ca* AD 251–356) and then spread from Egypt. Rather, elements in early Christianity, which tended towards monasticism, asceticism, and seclusion for the purposes of prayer, grew up, cross-fertilized, and developed in various other places, in Palestine, Syria and Cappadocia, not only in Egypt, and probably earlier than Antony Harmless (2008, pp. 493–94) sees "ascetic commitments" from the "very foundation" of Christianity, identifying four elements:

I. Praying in deserts
II. Fasting
III. Celibacy
IV. Renunciation of family and wealth.

It is significant, however, that by the early fourth century:

> Newly Christianized by more radical forms of Christianity, the countryside always threatened to slip from the orderly embrace of the Christian empire. . . . In northern Syria and in many areas in North Africa, populations had risen and new forms of village life throve. It was in the countryside that the most radical forms of Christianity took root.. . . In Syria . . . the roads had long been travelled by bands of charismatic preachers who owed nothing to the "world". Pointedly celibate, and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, their travelling bands were a sight to be seen. . . They were "unique ones", the "lonely ones". In Egypt, the Greek word *monachos*, "lonely one", from which our word "monk" derives, soon become attached to such eccentric persons. Unmarried, detached from society either by living in the desert or by their restless movement, the "wanderers" of Syria and the "men of the desert" of Egypt represented a new form of radical

> Christianity, henceforth associated with a new term, "monasticism"—the life of monks (Brown 2003, p. 81).

To anticipate: Maroun, the man acclaimed by the Maronites to be their monastic founder, represents, I suggest, the bridge between the city and the countryside, the uniting of the "orderly embrace" and "radical . . . Christianity". Brown uses the term "eccentric", i.e., "out from the centre". These men following Maroun left the centre, the city, to live their faith in the countryside. Maronite roots are arguably found in a radical interpretation of the teaching of Christ and turned into a settled way of life with minimal compromise. We now turn directly to Maroun's life story, which is the obvious beginning-point or account of early Maronite history.

2.1. Theodoret's Life of Maroun

Cyr, also known as Cyrrhus and Kurros, in northwest Syria, was a Seleucid city founded in about 300 BC, not far from Aleppo. The famed Theodoret was its bishop (*ca* AD 423–458), and we are almost totally reliant upon his *Historia monachorum Syriae* or *religiosa.* etc. (*History of the Monks of Syria*) for our knowledge of Maroun. It appears that Theodoret did not ever meet the extraordinary ascetic (Price 1986, p. 119, n. 1), but in this special *Historia* (composed *ca* 444), Theodoret recounts Maroun's doings glowingly (sometimes using typological language):

I. After Akepsimas, I will call to mind Maroun, for he adorned the godly troop of the holy ones. Maroun embraced life under the sky, taking for himself a certain hill-top which had long ago been honoured by the impious. And having dedicated to God the sacred precincts of the demons in that place, he passed all of his time there, pitching a small tent, but making little use of it. Maroun did not only employ the customary labours, but he conceived others also, gathering together the wealth of wisdom.
II. The judge measured out grace for these labours: so richly did the Munificent One grant to him the charism of healing, that Maroun's fame ran about everywhere, and everyone from everywhere was attracted, so that experience taught them the truth of the report. It was seen that fevers were quenched by the dew of his blessing, shudderings ceased, and demons fled—many and varied sufferings were cured by the one remedy. For the race of physicians applies to each illness the corresponding medicine, but the prayer of the holy ones is the common antidote to all pathologies.
III. But Maroun healed more than bodily weaknesses alone: he also applied the bountiful cure for souls. He heals the greed of this man, and the anger of that man. For one man, Maroun proffers the teaching which leads to self-control, while for another man he bestows lessons in justice; he tempers the man of intemperance, and arouses the sluggish. Farming in this wise, Maroun cultivated many crops through his wisdom: it was he who planted the paradise which now blooms in the land of Kurros. The great Yakobos (James) was a product of this cultivation: of him and of all the others whom I shall recall individually with God's help, one could rightly apply the famous prophetic saying: "The just man will flower like the palm tree, and will be multiplied like a cedar in the Lebanon" [Psalm 92:12].
IV. Caring in this way for the garden of God, doctoring to both souls and bodies alike, he patiently suffered but a short illness. Maroun, teaching us the frailty of our nature and strength in commitment, withdrew himself from this life.

> Quarrelling broke out between the neighbours over his body, a violent quarrel. A populous bordering village came out in a body, scattered all of the others, and seized this most-desired treasure. They built a great sacred enclosure, and even to this very day they reap the profit, honouring Maroun the victory-bearer with a public feast. And even we, who are at a distance, reap his blessing, for it is not Maroun's tomb which contents us, but his memory (*Hist. mon.* [sect.] 16 [Greek edn. Canivet/Leroy-Molinghen; author's trans.]).

Maroun was no controversialist but a missionary of unique and disciplined form. Whether he was the first hermit to live an open-air existence, as opposed to in a town or in a desert cell, is not, to my mind, as important as his example of holiness. He was not so extreme as some others, as he had a small hut to which he could retire in very bad weather. His way of life impressed contemporaries, and exposing himself to the elements assisted in that, although his ascetic life was expressed to be a physical means to a spiritual end.

Maroun must have been born sometime in the fourth century AD and almost certainly died between 410 and 423. One can hardly envisage him as being less than 40 years old at death, but he might even have attained a century. If Theodoret stresses that Maroun "planted the paradise which now blooms in the land of Kurros", signs of his local impact by 360 could allow an intelligent conjecture of his lifespan. When Julian passed through northern Syria in about 363, he found that the area was quite Christian until he came to Batnae, east of the Euphrates (Bowersock 1978, p. 109), where the scene altered. Batnae's "name is barbarous, but the place is Hellenic . . . [in] all the country round about the fumes of frankincense arose on all sides, and I saw everywhere victims ready for sacrifice" (*Epistulae* [ed. Wright, vol. 3]. [No] 58 400c).

Wolf Liebeschuetz observes the following: "By the 380s monks were settled in large numbers in the desert just beyond the inhabited areas of Syria. In the next hundred years or so, Syria was covered with monasteries", and on his reckoning, these monks were generally people from the country and probably spoke Syriac, not Greek (Liebeschuetz 1972, pp. 234–35). It is hard to think of the evangelization of an entire region being carried out by a man before he was 50 years of age, especially as he himself did not travel. Admitting his influence was exerted through his disciples, a very long life might well have played a role in the regional conversion process and a marvel in itself if he died, as some have alleged as late as 423. Part of the evangelizing by Maroun's followers, as when Abraham of Cyrrhus entered what is now North Lebanon), would surely have involved evolving his exemplary way.

2.2. An Analysis of Theodoret's Life of Maroun

Theodoret's short account highlights Maroun's magnetism. By the saint's "customary labours", he appears to have in mind prayer, fasting, penance, and depriving the body of sleep. Theodoret paid particular attention to any measures that might check the passions and bring the faculties under the control of a Christian will. His account is similar to the account of the life of Antony, famously penned by Athanasius (*ca* 360).

> Through him the Lord healed many of those present who suffered from bodily ailments; others he purged of demons, and to Antony he gave grace in speech. Thus he consoled many who mourned, and others hostile to each other he reconciled in friendship, urging everyone to prefer nothing in the world about the love of Christ. And when he spoke and urged them to keep in mind the future goods and the affection in which we are held by God . . . he persuaded many to take up the solitary life. And from then on, there were monasteries in the mountains and the desert was made a city by monks, who left their own people and registered themselves for the citizenship of the heavens. . . Before long, through the attraction of his speech, a great many monasteries came into being, and like a father he guided them all. (Vita Antonii [ed. Gregg] [sects.] 14–15).

Although similarities to the life of Maroun are evident, there are differences in the stories of their deaths, Antony's body was buried in a secret location (*Vit. Ant.* 92) while Maroun's deposition is very public, and a church was built ver his tomb, re-discovered as recently as 2002 in Barad, northwest Syria. If Theodoret knew well about Antony's deeds, he did not blindly copy this earlier life and, rather, stressed that Antony "acted in the same way in Alexandria" as had been done in Antioch (in *Historia ecclesiastica* 4. 24). It was probably because Theodoret believed Maroun to have been a great founder-figure of monasticism in Syria, however, that he filled gaps in his knowledge of him by touches from the doings of that "far-famed most excellent master in the school of mortification"

(4. 18). Additionally, Maroun accepted the guidance of an earlier monk Zebinas (*Hist. relig*., 24) even we know his own discipline was more radical and was imitated by his disciples (21–23).

2.3. John Chrysostom's Letter to Maroun

To help plug holes in our own current lack of documentation, we have another source on Maroun. John Chrysostom (347–407) wrote a letter to a hermit named Maroun and asked him for his prayers, and it is more probable than not that this was the fabled Maroun who initiated the tradition in his name. And when one reads and gauges the feeling, one might easily imagine that they studied together in Antioch.

> The bonds of affection and good will tie me to you and I can see you as if you were right here beside me. No distance can weaken the look of love. I would like to write to you more often, very pious Sir, but that is not easy due to all the obstacles in my way here [in exile in *ca* 403] (*Epist*. 36).

3. The Ancient Ethos behind Maronite Expressions of the Christian Faith: On Ephrem and Jacob Sarug

It must be stressed that we do not have much Maronite theological and liturgical material from before the fifteenth century, and even that is actually sparse in the extreme. But we are at liberty to reckon which Antiochene Christian thinkers most resonated with the first (very shadowy) Maronites detectable from the fourth and fifth centuries. Where the evidence is available, however, we would have to admit the enduring influences of Ephr[a]em and Jacob of Sarug.

3.1. Ephrem and Antiochene Religious Thought Most Resonating with the Early Maronite Way

Ephrem (ca 306–373) was born in Nisibis, living there until the last ten years of his life when, as a result of the Persian conquest, he had to move to Edessa (Brock 1985, p. 16; Colless 2008, p. 46). Known as "The Harp of the Spirit", Ephrem was a deacon and may have been one of those committed fourth-century ascetic leaders among Syriac Christians called the "Sons of the Covenant" (*Bnay Qyāmā*) (Murray 2004, p. 30). He had many talents, being a teacher of catechesis, hymn-writer, choir leader and commentator (Brock 1985, p. 16; Murray 2004, p. 30). He introduced a woman's choir, chosen from the "Daughters of the Covenant"—virgins, and possibly also widows, who lived ascetic lives (Colless 2008, p. 46). In his fine book on Ephrem, *The Luminous Eye,* Sebastian Brock assesses that

> To Ephrem, theological definitions are not only potentially dangerous, but they can also be blasphemous. They can be dangerous because, by providing 'boundaries', they are likely to have a deadening and fossilizing effect on people's conception of the subject of enquiry . . . the human experience of God. Dogmatic 'definitions' can moreover, in Ephrem's eyes, be actually blasphemous when these definitions touch upon some aspect of God's Being: for by trying to 'define' God, one is in effect attempting to contain the Uncontainable, to limit the Limitless (Brock 1985, pp. 23–24).

Ephrem was well aware of contemporary theological battles. For him, for a key example, the root error of the Arians was that they thought they could investigate and define the nature of the Son, because they saw him as having been created on this side of the chasm between eternity and time. As Brock puts it,

> The search for theological definitions, a heritage from Greek philosophy, is of course by no means the only way of conducting theological enquiry. Ephrem's radically different approach is by way of paradox and symbolism [and what we here call typology], and for this purpose poetry proves a far more suitable vehicle than prose, seeing that poetry is much better capable of sustaining the essential dynamism and fluidity that is characteristic of this sort of approach to theology (Brock 1985, pp. 24–25).

For example, a person working from definitions might enquire into the meaning of God's omnipotence. This can get complicated and involve conundrums such as the "omnipotence paradox" class of arguments (e.g., if God is all-powerful, then why. . . ?). To Ephrem, this would have been not only useless and absurd but also blasphemous: for God was the Great One who became small, the Rich One who became poor, the Hidden One who revealed Himself. The paradoxes give us something to ponder but nothing to grasp.

The hiddenness (*kasyuta*) and the revelation of God work together in each human life, although there is significant overlap, not least in the sacraments and the Bible. The hidden and the revealed go together: even if the Incarnated Lord could be seen by those then living, no mind could ever grasp his hidden divinity. Types and symbols are not instruments of God's revelation: they belong to this world, but what is hidden in them is from above (Brock 1985, pp. 25–29). Seeing the types behind the antetypes visible in the things of this world is a way of approaching the Beatific Vision, which will only later be vouchsafed in its fullness.

Kees den Biesen discerns that the use of polarity by Ephrem (above and below, hidden and revealed, eternal and mortal, holy and sinful, shadow and fulfilment, temporary and lasting, etc.) embody

> . . . the primordial polarity between Creator and creation . . . All in creation is therefore image or symbol of the Creator, in the sense that in it and through it the Invisible is seen, the Unknowable known, and the Omnipresent and Eternal experienced within the limits of space and time (Den Biesen 2006, p. 22).

It is not appropriate to try to fit Ephrem's doctrines into current theological models. He is not a contemporary theologian, defining terms and using them consistently. Some of Ephrem's key terms are interchangeable: *rāzā, tupsā, dmutā, almā,* and *urtā* (symbol, type, image, portrait and picture). A phrase like *lbeš pagrā* (he put on the body like a garment) cannot be rightly understood unless one understands *all* of Ephrem's thoughts (ibid., pp. 18–20). Typology expresses "interrelated aspects or layers of reality which the reader imaginatively and intelligently incorporates in his own vision of the faith". The mind is the "meditative eye of faith" which looks "out in all directions" and reaches "the meta-historical or cosmic dimension through the contemplation of the various stages in the history of salvation". This is what Ephrem called "the luminous eye", *'aynā šapitā* (p. 24), and it is his outlook and colour of thought that most reflect what was developing in early Maronite teaching, which is like Ephrem's approach also practical and disciplined.

In *Hymns on the Church* 24, Ephrem wrote *haymānutā gēr itēh 'aynā ḥāzit kasyātā* ("faith is the eye that sees the hidden"), which relates to the desire for what we now call the "Beatific Vision". Even now, in Maronite spirituality, it is said that we are made to seek truth, goodness, and beauty, but to seek them in God through faith, hope, and love. If we only seek beauty, like an aesthete, all we find is beauty. But if we seek it in God and with love, we may find God and his love. Contemplating goodness, truth, and beauty can raise our souls to God, but only if the impulse is for Him. Some of what Ephrem writes instantly makes sense to us, as when he describes nativity as the tree of life bringing hope to the dying (*Nativity Hymns* [ed. McVey] 1.8).

3.2. Jacob of Sarug and Antiochene Liturgics Most Resonating with the Early Maronite Way

As for Jacob of Sarug (*ca* 450–521), he was born at Kurtam, now Kutak on the Euphrates, and was raised near Edessa in the district of Serugh (Suruc in today's Turkey). He was, therefore, born about 30 years after the death of Maroun. He was a priest and, in about 519, was made bishop of Batnan in the district of Serugh, and his entire life was thus based in northern Mesopotamia. The church there had a number of religious celibates (*îHídōye*), and Jacob's account of them as single and living alone as hermits reveals that this way of life in the church was known across the length of Fertile Crescent, from Antioch to the East (*Festal Homilies* [ed. Kollamparampil, pp. 1–2, 5, 76]).

In controversies during his lifetime over the nature of Christ, Jacob is considered to have belonged to the grouping called "Monophysite" (today often "Miaphysite" or

"Henophysite"), teaching Christ had only one, the divine, nature enfleshed in a human body), although he himself disliked theological arguments and refused to commit to any side, opposing all division over Christ but also maintaining that the mystery of Him could never be defined (Kollamparampil 1997, pp. 1–2, 5, 11, 76). When Maronites brought Syriac manuscripts to the West and evinced their reverence for Jacob and his orthodoxy, he was generally assumed to have been an outright Chalcedonian (Forness 2018, pp. 259–69, 273–77). Jacob's material was used in Maronite liturgy: his anaphora (Eucharistic prayer) is included in Dwayhi's unpublished *Book of Syriac Anaphoras*, and his two series of Vespers, Nocturns, Matins and Compline were published in the Maronite Divine Office of 1656.

Apparently, Jacob also basically assumes Ephrem's approach to typology, but he adds to Ephrem's "luminous eye" the possibility of seeing what has happened in past history. In *On the Friday of the Passion*, he commences as follows:

> Every time that you celebrate one of the feasts of our Lord, reflect first upon the purpose of the feast, because from the purpose discernment will stir up in you so that you will provide honour to each feast as it deserves. For nothing is more useful to the soul than letting discernment stir it into (its) action . . . Let us consider the feast of today with the lucid eye of the soul for which it is easy to see the distant things from as if close at hand. (*Fest. Homil*. [p. 279]).

Through the eye of light, Jacob makes typological connections:

> And it happened thus, the veil (of the sanctuary) gives testimony to me for it was torn into two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). For if the tunic of the priest was torn by the hands of the priest, by whose hands was the veil of the sanctuary torn apart if not by (the hands of) the Holy Spirit who left them and went out: "Behold, your house is forsaken, rendered a desert by you" [Matt 23:38]. . . The Lord of the Sanctuary is carrying the vestments of His ministry, because the Hebrew nation has thrown them upon Him. When a betrothed woman desires to separate herself from her betrothed, she throws his clothes to him. Thus the Synagogue, too, because her mind fled away from the Holy One, all the worship and the priesthood which He had donated to her, she threw and wrapped it round upon Him in the veil of the altar (pp. 23–24).

This virtuoso display of disciplined imagination shows how typology can take events from daily life (such as the custom of breaking off a betrothal) and be related to sacred history.

4. The Monastery of St Maroun and Its Vicissitudes

What happened to the monks who followed in the teacher's footsteps? It is difficult to prove they evangelised far and wide and then came back to a base, that is, let us say to the proverbial "Cave of Monks" in North Lebanon or Southern Syria, carved out a mountain cliff-face and widely (but not unanimously) accepted as the oldest Maronite monastic house. There are five fairly detailed sources to come to grips with in this connection: Dionysius (Denys) of Tell Mahre; Euthyches (Sa'id ibn Batriq); Michael the Great; Thomas (Tuma) of Kfar Taba (Kfartab); and Bar Hebraeus (Bar 'Ebroyo). The leading analysis of the evidence has recently been made by Abbot Paul Naaman (2009), who is almost certainly correct in asserting that the monastery of St Maroun (Dayr Mar Maroun) was founded by Emperor Marcian in 452 to be a local centre for the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon (451). Its monks were among the foremost of the orthodox in the troubled period which followed that council (which defined Christ as truly God and truly Man, two Natures unconfused in the one integral Person and Hypostasis) (Sellers 1953, p. 211). The Christological controversies surrounding the Chalcedonian pronouncement plagued the development of the Maronite Church from thereon right up to 1736, and their effects have not yet entirely subsided (Moosa 1986, p. 1). Although there are various candidates for the precise place, it has long been thought that the monastery was in the vicinity of Homs (ancient Emesa), on the Orontes River, not far from the Lebanese border (Naaman 2009, p. 1).

The earliest direct evidence, though, is found in a brief architectural allusion by Procopius' (*De aedificiis* [*On Buildings*, Grk. *Peri Ktismatōn*)] [ed. Downing]), given around 560. The historian states that Justinian the Great (*ca* 482–565) restored many monasteries, among which he lists a number in Jerusalem, and then

> . . . in Phoenicia, the following:
>
> The house of the Virgin in Porphyreōn;
>
> The Monastery of St Phocas on the Mount;
>
> The house of St Sergius in Ptolemais;
>
> In Damascus, the House of St Leontius;
>
> Near Apamaea, he restored the Poor-house of St Romanus;
>
> The wall of the Blessed Marōn (*teikhos tou makariou Marōnos*);
>
> Near Theopolis, he restored the Church of Daphnē;
>
> In Laodicea, he restored St John's (*Aedif.* 5. 9).

The "wall of the Blessed Maroun" surely must refer to the monastery of Maroun. Procopius' list commences in Jerusalem, then proceeds northwards. The monastery of Our Lady in Porphyreōn is modern Jieh in Lebanon. I can find no reference to a monastery of Phocas other than in Constantinople and none to one "on the Mount". However, it must have been somewhere between Jieh and Damascus; for one to travel that road, one must pass over the mountains. The list follows north to Apamaea and then to the monastery of the blessed Maroun and proceeds further northwards inland to Antioch but then southwards to Laodicea (Latakia) on the Syrian coast. So Procopius almost certainly thought that the monastery of Maroun was north of the current Lebanese border perhaps in the vicinity of Apamaea. Scholars reckon his testimony reliable (e.g., Downey 1961, p. 521 n. 80; Suermann 2010, p. 68). Further, Eutychius also seems to have thought that the monastery of Maroun was near Emesa, and Thomas of Kfar Taba, who cited him as his source in the eleventh century, placed the monastery outside Hama north of Emesa along the Orontes and estimated it had 800 monks (Suermann 2010, pp. 71–72).

Still, the exact location of the monastery remains unknown. Referring inter alia to Al-Mas'oudi's description of it being an important building with 300 hermitages around it, Suermann conjectures that it must have been near Apamaea, on the Orontes, and near a mountain, which may have been the Jebel al-Alawiya (Suermann 2010, p. 86). Naaman also concluded that the monastery lay near Apamaea and that it was built on the orders of Emperor Marcian in 452 after the Council of Chalcedon, which he found plausible. On 28 July 452, the emperor issued a stringent law against the monks and the followers of Eutyches (who espoused Monophysitism or that Christ had only one Nature, the divine one). This monastery was to be the Chalcedonians' headquarters in the sixth and seventh centuries (Naaman 2009, p. 19; Suermann 2010, p. 85).

All that is known of the activities of the monks of Dayr Maroun is to be deduced from the few letters to ecclesiastical authorities about their persecution (during the sixth century, see below), and they tell us little about monastic lives, religion and thought. At some point, the monks began to ordain patriarchs and bishops from among their own number. The monastery must have been standing in 791 and possibly as late as 823 but had been destroyed by 956. The Nestorian Patriarch (Catholicos) Timotheus I (780–823) wrote a letter to the monastery in the year 791, referring to it as *bayt maroun,* which means that it was larger than a *dayr* or an *'oom.ro*, the two words together actually denoting "monastery", though *Bayt Maroun* can mean the monastery, the monks, or the people (Suermann 2010, p. 69, with n. 117). It appears that the monastery was probably still standing at or near 845, since the twelfth-century Syrian Patriarch Michael the Great states the following: "They ordain a patriarch and bishops from their monastery" (Dib 1971, p. 5). Was this patriarch for Syria, Lebanon, or both? Were these bishops *periodeuts* who would travel around to those villages and towns which lacked their own resident bishop? This is all unknown, as

is the precise date of the monastery's destruction. Arab historian 'Ali al-Mas'oudi wrote (930s) that "It was destroyed with all the cells which surrounded it, after continued raids by the Bedouins, and the violence of the Sultan" (Suermann 2010, pp. 51–52). However, all this is rather blurred, and we do not even know to which Sultan he referred. However, after Mas'oudi, the monastery is not mentioned, even when discussing others in Syria (Dib 1971, p. 7; El-Khouri 2017, pp. 395–96). So, the monastery must have been destroyed by Muslims sometime after 845 but before 956, when Mas'oudi died. If the apparent silence of Eutychius is significant, then we can narrow that range from roughly 940 to 956.

4.1. The Massacre of 517 and the Pro-Chalcedonian Stance of the Monks of Maroun in the Sixth Century

After the establishment of the monastery of Mar Maroun in 452, the monks remained out of our sight until 517, when Monophysites massacred many Chalcedonian monks, including some from the monastery of Maroun, probably totalling 350. The massacre was the subject of three reports by the surviving Chalcedonian monks of Syria Secunda to Pope Hormisdas, the bishops of Syria Secunda, and Patriarch John of Constantinople between 517 and 536. These reports contribute little of significance to our understanding of ancient Maronite mentality, although the fact of the massacre does. It emerged from the first letter, sent to the Roman Pope Hormisdas in 517 and delivered in person by two monks, John and Sergius, that the monks of Dayr Maroun held to the position of both Pope Leo (in his Tome of 449) and the Chalcedonian definition. However, Hormisdas' reply seems to consider the Maroun monks to have been on the side of Acacius of Constantinople, long excommunicated for apparent Monophysitism in 484 in the contemporary controversy (El-Khouri 2017, pp. 161, 173), and Hormisdas may have thought the massacre occurred from an internal dispute between Monophysites.

Harald Suermann (2010, p. 107) speculates that the monks of the monastery of Maroun probably attached themselves to Rome, leaving the imperial church of Constantinople in 516, not because of any change in their own doctrine of the Maronites but because of the former Patriarch Acacius and the (temporary) schism he triggered (482–519). On this reconstruction, the Maronite monks were initially under the Patriarch of Antioch (insofar as it is not anachronistic to speak of them being "under" any bishop), and since that patriarch was subordinate to the Patriarch of Constantinople, any issue they might have with Antioch would be referred to Constantinople. The Maronites were not so geographically close to Rome as the other two patriarchates, and not until they found themselves in opposition to the two Eastern great Sees did they turn to Rome. This respect for the Pope was not new or opportunistic: only after the brothers were refused at Constantinople and realised that Constantinople was supporting Severus, the newly appointed (albeit moderate) Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch (512–518, did they reconsider their communion allegiance, and so turned to Rome. Suermann (2010, pp. 107, 115–16) is even prepared to speak of it as some kind of *return*, which, considering how the old letters of Ignatius of Antioch were honoured (see above, Introd., cf. Vall 2013; Azize 2016), is not so tendentious as it sounds.

The monks' writing to the Pope perhaps shows that they held some notion of the seniority and global jurisdiction of Rome, yet it was still exceptional to call upon her. Three factors might have contributed to their decision: (1) The difficulties of communication in the ancient world; (2) Fear of offending Constantinople; (3) The welcome uncertainty that Rome would ever use her power to intervene, whereas Constantinople could enforce its will, either directly or through Antioch. It was an effort of last resort for a monastery, inland of Antioch and actually within a province ruled from Constantinople, to appeal to Rome. Admittedly, we do not know if the monks approached any other authorities in 517–518. That the surviving letter from the monks of Apamaea to their bishops looks lonely could, after all, be an accident of history. Might not John and Sergius have taken a letter to the Byzantine emperor? And, had there been letters sent to the civil authorities in Antioch?

It is noteworthy that in the letters written by various monks of Syria about this issue, the monks of the monastery of Maroun had leading roles. Altogether, some nineteen

priests seem to be from the monastery of Mar Maroun (or at least under its jurisdiction, as several of them are archimandrites and it is not clear that there could be more than one archimandrite in any monastery (Naaman 2009, p. 137)). The monk whose name appears at the very head of each list of the signees to the letters is Alexander, Archimandrite of Mar Maroun. Suermann observed that the monasteries were from Syria Secunda, that the authors must have been originally from the region of Apamaea, and that, as they travelled to the *mandra* (enclosure) of St Simeon, they were ambushed at a place called Kaprokerameon, today Kafr Karmīn, about twenty kilometres south of Qala'at Sim'an (Suermann 2010, p. 64). By their references to the synod of Chalcedon and Pope Leo, the monks identify themselves as Chalcedonian (El-Khouri 2017, pp. 173–74).

On 10 February 518, Pope Hormisdas replied. He did not promise any aid, only encouragement. Doubtless, there was nothing he could do. Perhaps the writers knew this, for they had made no specific request. Their letter to the bishops of Syria Secunda was expectedly more specific, both in detailing the violent sequel to the massacre and in asking that Peter of Apamaea be deposed. These surviving monks also wrote to the bishops of Syria Secunda in 518. Again, the same signatory came first, "Alexander, priest and archimandrite of the Monastery of the blessed Maroun, have made public this letter above, signing it with my own hand" (Naaman 2009, pp. 143–48). The letter to Patriarch John of Constantinople, "the Cappadocian" (518–520), was signed by, inter alia, the monks of the monastery of Maroun, who took precedence over the other clergy except for those from Antioch itself, thus showing that the monastery was subordinate to Antioch.

Dayr Mar Maroun heads each of the three lists. I suspect, then, that the monks of the monastery of Maroun organised a session at which a number of monks and clergy met, and all signed one document. They doubtless also had input into it: this would explain why the terms of the letters, like the names of the signatories, show much overlap though are not identical. It seems that up to 40 monasteries were under or somehow dependent upon the monastery of Maroun, so it is not surprising that they could not all meet at once (El-Khouri 2017, pp. 177–80), but neither should we be surprised the houses we can fairly call "Maronites" were acting in concert and showing an independent identity in the tussles of the Chalcedonian controversy.

What turned out to be a synod (or regional council) of Constantinople convened by Emperor Justinian in 536 saw the churches of Rome and Italy, Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, Palestine and Ephesus all collaborating. The eastern churches of Mesopotamia and Persia and the church in Alexandria under the fervent Monophysite Patriarch Theodosius I (536–567) did not (Suermann 2010, pp. 123–24), and the alleged episcopal abettors of Monophysitism were banished from the capital (Sellers 1953, pp. 312–13). At this synod, the Monastery of Maroun was represented by Paul, monk and apocrisary, who signed at the head of the monks of Syria Secunda. He signed using this formula: "Paul . . . apocrisary of the monastery of the Blessed Maroun, the monastery which governs the holy monasteries of Syria Secunda" (Dib 1971, p. 5).

At a subsequent conference at Antioch in 591, monks of the monastery of Maroun again defended the Chalcedonian doctrines. After the conference, Philip and Thomas, two monks of the monastery, wrote a letter to adherents of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (578–91)—Peter of Kallinike (Kallinikos). The reply, made by Theodore of Mar Abaz, attacks them for having the same faith as Chalcedon and Leo. The letters show how vicious the arguments were and that the so-named Jacobites (followers of the theology Jacob Baradaeus [d. 578]) considered that those holding to the two Natures of Christ were veering towards the deplored "Nestorians" and insisted that the Maronites should accept the Monophysite teaching of Cyril of Alexandria. In this correspondence, the Maronites called themselves sons of the Catholic and holy church, something the Jacobites did not do (Naaman 2009, pp. 152–53).

4.2. On the Maronite Chronicle and the Emerging Seventh-Century Monothelite Controversy

We now come to an interesting but rather overlooked document. Its original title has been lost, but it is known as "the Maronite Chronicle", which extends only to the year 664. It survives in one copy only, which lacks the opening sections before covering affairs from Alexander the Great to the year 658 (Penn 2015, pp. 54–55). On the basis that the author is a Maronite and supports the Byzantines, it is thought that he must have been writing prior to the Sixth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 680/681 (ibid., p. 55; text in Palmer 1993, p. 29). The Chronicle was written after the Muslim conquest, which the author detests, complaining of the *dhimmi* system (of tax and regulations disadvantageous to Christians) and the way the Jacobites benefitted from it (in Palmer 1993, pp. 29–35). The surviving portion commences with Alexander the Great, who, it says, fulfilled the "goat" prophecy of the Book of Daniel (8:8), then mentions his successors, especially Pompey and the high priest in Jerusalem. It numbers the years from the time of Adam and the first Olympiad to the destruction and the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon. It mentions the making of the translation of the Septuagint, names famous Jewish interpreters of Scripture, and the death of great philosophers such as Plato and Epicurus. It pays special attention to Jesus the son of Sirach (cf. Ecclus) and mentions some Phoenician history (Palmer 1993, p. 51). It says a good deal about the heretic Mani. It goes on to speak about Constantine and Arius and much church history, including details of Christianity in Antioch during this period. It refers to church calendars, both Western and Eastern, and mentions Apollinaris of Laodicea, and details his Trinitarian heresies (Palmer 1993, pp. 68–69). This most unusual document evinces a broad outlook. The interest in the feasts of the church and the difference between East and West demonstrates a connection with both sides.

The Chronicle includes this passage:

> In the same month (June 659) the bishops of the Jacobites, Theodore and Sabūkht came to Damascus and held an inquiry into the Faith with those of the House of Lord Maroun in the presence of Mu'awiya [the man rising in prestige to become the first Ummayad Caliph from 661]. When the Jacobites were defeated [in the debate], Mu'awiya ordered them to pay 20,000 denarii and commanded them to be silent. Thus there arose the custom that the Jacobite bishops should pay that sum of gold every year to Mu'awiya, so that he would not withdraw his protection and let them be persecuted by the members of the (Orthodox) Church (Palmer 1993, p. 30).

At this point, Penn (2015, p. 57) translates that the Jacobites were "punished by the [Maronite] clergy". The *Chronicle* mentions the arrangements by which the Jacobites were made to pay the money to the Muslim Caliph [to-be] and to keep their community peaceful. Penn interprets this to mean that the Jacobites were paying extra to Mu'awiya as "protection" against the Maronites and thus that the latter had earned the Caliph's favour (Penn 2015, pp. 54–55). Tannous (2014, pp. 51–52) notes that the debate may have had to do with who should have possession and control of the churches and that the Maronites appear to have been representing and speaking on behalf of all the Chalcedonians in Damascus, and, therefore, if this was true, the following applies: "the Maronites, that is, the Monotheletes, were the most important Chalcedonian group in Damascus in the earliest Umayyad period". But wait, who were the Monothelites?

5. The Monothelite Controversy in the Seventh Century

The pertinent doctrines of the competing parties of the major doctrinal dispute in the seventh-century Christian East are usually called "Monothelites" and "Dyothelites" (sometimes, and unfortunately, "Monotheletes" and "Dyotheletes"). For a long time in scholarship, it has been maintained that the Maronites only begin to be seen "in the clear light of day" or as a distinct historical entity in the context of this dispute. It has been one purpose of our tracings up to now, to demonstrate that this old contention is facile and that the tradition of the monks of Maroun, though the steps are hard to follow, go back to

the early monasticism of the Antiochene Church considered as (admittedly often fractious) whole,

5.1. The Progress and Decline of Monothelitism

"Monothelitism" is the doctrine that Jesus Christ had only one will, not two. It was part of a larger theological current, which Cyril Hovorun calls "Monenergism-Monothelitism", which stood over and against "Dyenergism-Dyothelitism". Although Hovorun says that these are "two integral doctrines", neither of them comprised one homogenous position but included many possible variants (Hovorun 2008, pp. 2–3). Both sides of the debate saw themselves as being in legitimate continuity with the Christian past (Tannous 2014, p. 30). I shall restrict myself to stating my opinion that these Christological issues are intrinsically difficult to resolve. One might doubt if any two people today who had not been instructed could possibly share the same opinion about Jesus' divinity and humanity. We may simply be faced with an "antinomy", or "a contradiction between conclusions which seem equally logical, reasonable, or necessary . . ." It occasions little surprise that one scholar believes that the differences between Monenergism and Dyenergism were mostly in vocabulary, "and not actually substantive" (Price cited in Tannous 2014, p. 61). The Council of Chalcedon taught that Christ had two Natures that were not in conflict with one another. Yet, the Natures could work differently: the difference between the two Natures is often said to explain how Jesus could say that even he did not know the hour and the day of the apocalyptic Coming of the Son of Man (in Matt 24:36 and Mark 13:32). This line of thought is attested as early as Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus. Others said that He did know that hour, but in the divine economy, it was better to deny this (i.e., he was "officially ignorant"). Others, such as Ambrose, said that some early Greek manuscripts omitted the reference to the Son not knowing. Perhaps even more significantly, his words in the Garden ("Not my will but yours be done") assume, on a natural reading, only one will in Jesus (see Mark 14:36, 38; Luke 22:42; and Matt 26:39–44) (see Pelikan 1974, pp. 56–75 for the relevant issues).

The issue became acute when, in 610, Heraclius became emperor and felt he was called to solve the problem of civil division between Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian populations of the Empire (Hovorun 2008, pp. 53–72; Tannous 2014, pp. 30–31). Together with the Syrian Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople, Heraclius sought to unite all Christians, whether for or against Chalcedon, with the formula "two Natures–one Activity (*energeia*)" (Hovorun 2008, p. 55). These differences of belief were, of course, not always insuperable in daily life. Tannous (2014, p. 57) relates that, in the late eighth/early ninth century, [St.] Timothy of Kakhushta learnt woodworking from Monothelite Maronites in a Syrian monastery. Timothy tried to prove from Scripture that Christ had two wills, but his Maronite friends were not persuaded. This indicates a continuing Maronite presence in Syria, although we know little about it now. In any case, it is striking that Monothelites and Duothelites were able to coexist.

After early success, the progress of Monothelitism faltered until it was condemned at the Third ecumenical Council of Constantinople of 680/681, summoned by Constantine IV (Hovorun 2008, pp. 7–86; Kelly 1986, p. 75). However, Monothelitism did not immediately die: the last Umayyad Caliph, Marwan II, was trying to suppress Monothelitism in Syria in 736–745, and Michael the Great recorded the following:

> At this time, Marwan [*d*. 750]. . .ordered the Chalcedonians to take as patriarch, Theophilactus Bar Qanbarra of Haran, who had been Marwan's goldsmith. He obtained from Marwan an edict and an army with which to persecute the Maronites. He went to the monastery of Maroun and wanted to constrain them to accept the heresy of Maximus [the Confessor (d. 662), champion of Dyothelitism]. . . The Maronites (then) remained as they are today. They ordain a patriarch and some bishops from their monastery. They are separated from Maximus in that they confess one will alone in the Messiah and say: "Who was crucified for us", but they accept the Council of Chalcedon. Bar Qanbarra returned to Mabboug

> and continued the struggle with the Maronites from there. But neither did they accept to say that there are two wills, nor to abolish the formula: "Who was crucified". That is why he accused them to Marwan, and he inflicted upon them a fine of a quarter of a million dinars. He (Theophilactus) behaved among them (the Maronites of Mabboug) as he had at Aleppo. Finally, Andrew, a Maronite, arrived, and with the permission of the king, built a church for the Maronites of Mabboug, and they separated from Maximus, and other disgraceful matters occurred amongst them (Michael the Great, *Chronicle* (ed. Chabot 2008, p. 511)).

Jack Tannous and Jean-Baptiste Chabot give different dates for Theophylactus Bar Qanbarra's accusation to Marwan. I suspect that not Theophylactus (my preferred spelling) but his father, Qanbarra, had been Marwan's goldsmith. To be "separated from Maximus" means to be Monothelites. It would excite little wonder if, after such crushing fines, the Maronites who had not yet gone to Lebanon might look at migrating, although there is no direct evidence of this (Suermann 2010, p. 313). This would also seem to be evidence that the monastery of Maroun was not under a patriarch or bishop of its own in 745. Rather, a manuscript about the deposit of a book in the monastery under the *hegemon* Giwargis suggests that it had a "hegemon" or leader. However, another note made around the same time states that there was a bishop residing there. Suermann conjectures that the bishop resided there only temporarily (Suermann 2010, p. 313). It could be that the leader was a bishop. I would conjecture that if the Maronites did have a patriarch at this time, he was in Lebanon, not at the monastery. These glimpses are too few, little, and far apart to allow us to say that the monks of Mar Maroun had ceased appointing patriarchs and bishops, a practice that Michael refers to.

5.2. The Maronites as Monothelites

It is often said that the Maronites were once "Monothelites". Spagnolo, for example, states that "The (Maronite) Church traces its distinctive character to its stand on the Divine and Human Wills reposing in Jesus Christ" (Spagnolo 1977, p. 7). At one time, the formula also worked in reverse so that any Monothelite was considered "Maronite", hence Eutyches (= Sa-id ibn Batriq, born in Cairo 877, Patriarch 933–940) was alleged to identify Cyrus of Alexandria, Macarius of Antioch and Honorius of Rome, who were "protagonists of imperial Monothelitism", as "Maronites" (Hovorun 2008, p. 97). The majority of Maronite scholars now accept that the Maronite theologians were at one time Monothelite and that this had significant effects on their liturgy and history (Moubarac 1984, p. 281). Indeed, the evidence that the Maronite theologians were Monothelite is overwhelming (Hovorun 2008, pp. 94–98; Tannous 2014, pp. 34–35; Moffett 1998, pp. 349–57; and Gribomont 1974, *passim*). The *Exposition of the Faith* of Yohanon Maroun, which is quite plausibly an ancient Maronite document from the very beginnings of the church, cites Severian of Gabala, a contemporary of Chrysostom, in "On the Nativity of Our Lord" (*Homilies* 2):

> For just as when we say: Father and Son and Spirit, we proclaim three Persons and we assert one Substance, in the same way when we say: Divinity and Humanity, we proclaim two natures and we confess One Person–One Son, one God, and one authority and one power and one energy, one worship (trans. in Tannous 2014, p. 52).

This is Monenergist rather than Monothelite, although the first doctrine implies the second. Furthermore, no available evidence ever shows the Maronites as duothelite. It is also said that the Maronites were intellectually dominant in their area and appeared to exercise some measure of control over other monasteries in the region.

In addition, there cannot be any doubt that the Maronites felt that they were different from other Chalcedonians. Even today, there is a relic of this: Maronites understand the Trisagion ("Holy are you, God; Holy are you (and) All-powerful, Holy are you (and) Immortal") as referring to Christ, adding phrases such as "Who was crucified for us" (Parry et al. 1999, p. 146). In Jerusalem, Constantinople, and the West, the Trisagion was

understood as referring to the Trinity, whereas in Syria, parts of Asia Minor, and Egypt, it was understood as referring to Christ alone. Peter the Fuller, Patriarch of Antioch (d. *ca* 488), added the following words: "Who was crucified for us" so as to "enforce a Christological interpretation". Brock's reconstruction is that since Constantinople was viewed as the centre of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, its usage of the Trisagion (that is, without the addition and as referring to the Trinity), therefore, became *identified* with Chalcedonian orthodoxy, but the particularly Christological understanding was earlier than the Trinitarian one (Brock 1985, pp. 28–29). Brock observes that "*both* understandings may be legitimate: in this case it is not a matter of contradiction, but of complementarity. . . .[and] the same approach needs to be applied to the doctrinal divisions brought about in Eastern Christendom by the Council of Chalcedon". (ibid., p. 31). One may opine that this may also be true of the Monothelite controversy. Most of the Christological Controversies may involve statements which are inconsistent or seem to be so, but which are complementary, for each is correct (similarly, Alexopoulos and Johnson 2022, pp. 356–57). I would also question how much the ordinary person, or even the ordinary priest, understood the controversy. The belligerents were almost certainly to be found mainly among the clergy.

However, some contemporary Maronites contend that the Monothelitism of the Maronite clergy was more a "moral" stance, as shown in the much later concurring opinion of Maronite and Antiochene Patriarch Dwayhi (d. 1704) and Maronite thinker Faustus Naironus (d. 1711). In Pierre Dib's view, their adoption of this view depends on the eleventh-century Maronite missal:

> The Merciful, who in Mary lived poor
>
> And, as a human, came from her womb humbly,
>
> Has entered the world by miracle and marvellously,
>
> In the union of two natures truly.
>
> Having one person, He had one will doubly
>
> With the properties of two natures indivisibly.
>
> The natures remain in one hypostasis divinely
>
> Recognized without separation or confusion.
>
> By his Divine nature, He performed wonders divinely.
>
> By his human nature, He endured suffering humanly.
>
> Paul has said: 'He has become like us entirely
>
> Except sin, iniquity, impiety, truly' (Dib cited in Hovorun 2008, pp. 98–99)

Yet, while he accepts that the foundations of this statement go back to late Patristic times, Hovorun holds the following point:

> This text quite clearly contains the standard Monothelite formula, there is one will in Christ which manifests itself in a twofold way, divine and human. Dib, in spite of the obvious, tried to interpret the passage in such a way that it would imply a human will subjected to the divine: 'Christ is at the same time both God and Man; He possesses a double will, but this will is one in the sense that the human faculty is irrevocably submitted to the divine. Also, according to Maronite thinking, the unity of wills extended only to the moral sense, for the author (of the hymn) did not doubt the existence of a human will insofar as physical power was concerned . . ."

In another late eleventh-century Maronite text, the Arabic text *Kitab al-Huda* or the *Book of Direction*, one finds similar, quite conventional Monothelite formulas:

> He (= Christ) has one person and two intellectual natures; He is God and man . . .
> We do not believe however that He is two, two Christs, two persons, two wills

> and two *energeiai*. Far from it!. . .The Melkites and Maronites are divided on the question of the will (in Christ). The Melkites (comparable pro-Chalcedonians who remained in communion with Constantinople rather than going over to Rome) profess two wills, the Maronites one; and each party brings forth arguments to support its thesis. . .The Maronites say (to the Melkites): These two wills that you profess in Christ ought to be either conformed or opposed to each other. If they are conformed to each other one ends up with one will; but if they are opposed to each other, it follows that the divine nature wills what the human nature does not will. If this is so, there would be a division and opposition, resulting in two (persons in Christ); and therefore the (hypostatic) union would not exist anymore, the Trinity would become a quaternary and one would find himself reduced to the point of view of Nestorius and his opinions on Christ (trans. in Hovorun 2008, p. 99).

Here, the doctrine of two wills and *energeiai* is openly condemned, and one of the most popular Monothelite objections to the two wills is included: "Christ cannot have two wills because they of necessity would oppose one another" (Hovorun 2008, p. 100), with the argument that if two wills were in conformity, this amounted to one will. Yet, it would be possible for one person to count two wills as comprising one as one, while another counted them as two!

Finally, Moosa (1986, *passim*) states that the Maronites were at one time Monophysites (Miaphysites) or, more eccentrically, Syrian (Jacobite) Orthodox. The direct evidence is quite the opposite, as we have seen—in the events of 517, the subsequent correspondence, the exchanges between Maronites and Monophysites, the Maronite presence and signing of the acts of the Council of Constantinople in 536, and the *Maronite Chronicle*. That side of the matter can be dismissed, and in addressing it, we have been able to plumb he foundations of the Maronites deeply back into the Patristic period, with their later liturgical and formulaic material, as well as their continuing preservation of Aramaean, thought forms and hermeneutics, all bearing out their long-standing Antiochene background.

We should finish our story by going back to the seventh century to consider the position of Yohanon Maroun (or John Maron, 628–707), who, despite debates over his life or shadowy existence, is now almost universally recognised to have become the first Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East in 685, ratified by both Constantinople and the Roman Papacy.

6. Yohanon Maroun as Antiochene Patriarch

Due to the Christological controversies and the supervening Arab conquest, the seat of Antioch was practically vacant from 610 to 742 (Gribomont 1974, p. 95). Maronites preserved their faith by emigration from Syria to Lebanon, and their establishment there, though heralded by preceding movement, traditionally congealed under Yohanon Maroun. William Harris (2012, p. 36) makes the plausible suggestion that Yohanon Maroun "may have moved independently to Mount Lebanon from the Orontes Valley during the Arab civil war between the Caliph 'Ali and Mu'awiya" (657–59) The surviving documents do not allow us to be certain as to whether Yohanon Maroun, his monks, and many of his people, undertook their "exodus" to Mount Lebanon because of friction caused by Muslim persecution, or their position in the Monothelite controversy. I suspect that both sources of friction would have been operating together. One leading scholar even posits, albeit on slender evidence, that the exodus was occasioned by Byzantine attacks directed against their stubborn Monothelitism (Abouzayd 2019, p. 733). Certainly, through unclear times, a Maronite people in Lebanon was developing to the point that it was clearly obvious by the time of the Crusades (from 1095) and the Great Schism between the eastern and western churches (from 1054) (El-Khouri 2017, p. 399). And the Maronites shared the same concern in the Catholic and Orthodox divide to keep their bishops in the apostolic line.

Suermann summarises the intermediate sources on Yohanon Maroun, written down by Ibn al-Qilā'ī (Maronite bishop in Cyprus from 1507) and used by later Maronite Patriarch

Dwayhi and scholar Giuseppe Assemani (in the eighteenth century), the account running as follows:

> Yohanon Maroun was born at Sarum, in the area of Antioch, and studied at the monastery of Maroun and at Constantinople. His intellectual work caused him to be nominated as bishop at Batroun [northern Lebanon] in 675, by the Pope's representative in Syria. Thanks to his missionary work, he not only converted nearly all the people of Lebanon to the Roman faith but also would also have found many supporters in Asia Minor and Palestine. The clergy elected him patriarch in 685/686. Accompanied by the pontifical legate in the Orient, he visited the Pope, who confirmed his election. After his return, he was first installed at Antioch, then, being pursued by the troops of the Emperor Justinian II, he fled to Lebanon. From that point on, he wrote and distributed theological works to sustain the people in the faith. Yohanon Maroun also combatted the Arabs with the aid of the Mardaites {Monothelites in the Nur Mountains, north Syria), and finally entered a pact with the Emperor Justinian II against the Arabs. He died on 9 February 707 (Suermann 2010, p. 319).

In the Maronite Syriac tradition, his name is given as Yohanon d'Maroun (Breydy 1988, p. 4), or "Yohanon of Maroun", which must mean from the monastery of that name. Peter El-Khouri (2017, pp. 268–69) notes that there is even a serious assertion by a Maronite "historian" that Yohanon Maroun had French ancestry. Suermann recounts that Chabot could not find any reference older than 1392 to Yohanon Maroun as patriarch, although the Maronite[?] ensemble of materials in Arabic *Kitāb al-Kamāl* (*ca* 1059, first pub. 1935), certainly older than 1058/1059, has a relevant tradition, different from that in Ibn al-Qilā'ī, naming him not as "Yohanon Maroun" but as "Maroun Yohanon". While it does not explicitly state that Yohanon Maroun was the first patriarch of the Maronites, it asserts that Maronites took their name from him, and so, as Suermann observes, this would lead one to infer his patriarchal status, nominally as Patriarch of Antioch, but never exercising jurisdiction in that venerable city. (Suermann 2010, pp. 320–21). Of course, the notion that the contemporary Bishop of Rome affirmed Yohanon Maroun as a patriarch of any description cannot be correct, as it would be recorded in Roman sources, and it was not.

A version of the *Kitāb al-Kamāl* goes back to the middle of the thirteenth century, from Qannoubine. It takes the name of the Maronites back to someone named "Maroun" *simpliciter*, and not to either Yohanon Maroun or Maroun Yohanon. It also states that the Maronites were Monothelites (Suermann 2010, p. 321). So, there are two ancient traditions suggesting that Yohanon Maroun was the patriarch of the Maronites. Even if these are slightly different in what they say, they demonstrate that the tradition must have been old. I see no reason to disbelieve the tradition that Yohanon Maroun founded his patriarchal see in Kfar Hayy, about ten miles to the east of the town of Batroun (Hitti 1965, p. 92).

Now, we come to an important document known as the "Exposition", which we deal with below, and the question has arisen as to whether Yohanon was its author. Whoever it was, he had access to Syriac sources that were not available after the seventh century, such as the text of Ephrem. Other sources include the profession of faith of Amphilocus, and the acts of the Synod of Antioch of 266–269, which disappeared after the sixth century, the *De principiis* (*Peri Arkhon*) of St Basil and the *De divinis nominibus* (*Divine Names*) of Dionysius [81] abridged from most ancient Syriac texts, and the *Mimro* of Sahdona, who died by 650. The author of the *Exposition*, whether Yohanon Maroun or not, seems to have had a fragment of John Chrysostom's homily on the baptism of Christ in an otherwise unique Syriac version. This must place the author in the seventh and eighth centuries. Further, Michel Breydy (1988, p. 6) dated the opuscules attached to the "Exposition" to the second half of the seventh century: the time of Yohanon Maroun.

Suermann (2010, p. 322) conjectures that since Assemani held Thomas (bishop) of Kfar Taba (*flor*. 1050s) to have written the *Exposition*, that it is not be given an early date, that it was written by a Monothelite, it therefore cannot have been by Yohanon Maroun. Assemani does not state his grounds for attributing the *Exposition* to Thomas, and in this

context, also wrongly ascribed the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* to Dionysius of Tel Mahre (Parry et al. 1999, p. 163). But we have established Yohanon (and his clergy) *were* Monothelite, and we can only assume that Assemani, the great Maronite scholar collating manuscripts the Eastern manuscripts of the Fathers for the Vatican, was concerned to deny that his people had ever been Monothelite, creating the narrative that the Maronites had always been faithful duothelites, and attributing all Monothelite texts to the deceitful Thomas, using yet adding to the work 300 years later.

In any case, the *Exposition*, if fairly re-ascribed to Yohanon, shows a clear Antiochene theological lineage going back as far as Ephrem. There is also a legend that Yohanon did a lot of work among the afflicted during a plague and that he wrote a "Mass", presumably an anaphora, which is used in times of plague (El-Khouri 2017, p. 269). Although no early evidence for this survives, a scholarly study of the anaphora apparently attributes it to Yohanon Maroun in the second half of the seventh century (Breydy 1988, p. 7). This is not to say that it was not subsequently developed over the years (the version in the contemporary Maronite *Book of Offering* has been brought into line with what was taken as the "standard" anaphora, that of "the Twelve Apostles)**.**

Exactly how Yohanon Maroun was made Patriarch of Antioch is unknown, except that the monks of Dayr Maroun decided to raise him to this dignity. I shall not consider the fanciful legends surrounding his election and subsequent attempt at a military defence of the Apamea Maroun monastery in 694 when 500 monks were unfortunately killed under the imperial generals Marcian and Maurice (El-Khouri 2017, pp. 269–71). However, we need not reject out of hand the tradition that when Yohanon re-located his seat to Kfar Hayy (northern Lebanon) and fixed the patriarchal seat there (until in the mid-fifteenth century, it was moved to Qannoubine), he brought with him the skull of Maroun. As El-Khouri points out, Italian sources do claim that a skull of Maroun brought from Kfar Hayy was given to the crusaders in 1130 (El-Khouri 2017, pp. 270–71). Furthermore, there is no reason to doubt that Yohanon Maroun died in 707 (El-Khouri 2017, pp. 271–72). Because there are two old chains of tradition for him, I would conclude that the tradition that he was the first patriarch of the Maronites is accurate: if not, how is it that there is no other tradition of someone else being the first patriarch? Further, if, as I have conjectured, the move to Lebanon and the election of a patriarch went together, then it would make sense for the new patriarch to bring a relic of Maroun with him. It served to indicate continuity and to lend authority (as well as serving as a focus for reverence in a cultic setting, as the relics of other saints were revered in other places). This was a new beginning. Yet it also raises the possibility that the relics had been kept at the monastery of Maroun, probably from its establishment, though other relics were lost when the monastery was destroyed.

6.1. The "Exposition" Attributed to Yohanon Maroun

The title of the "Exposition" is *krTysō d.hymnutō* ("Exposition of the Faith"). Written in Syriac, it comprises the scribe's introduction and then the following contents:

I. Our profession of faith (sections 2–25)
II. Supporting arguments from the letters of the Fathers (26–52)
III. Explication of the patristic teaching:
    (a) On the subject of the formula "one nature of God the Word Incarnate" (53–85)
    (b) On the subject of the essence and of the subsistence (86–104)
IV. Conciliar statements of faith (105–131)
V. Questions and answers against the Monophysites (132–146)
VI. Seven questions against the Nestorians (147–167)
VII. An annexure [which has nothing to do with John Maroun]

The fourth quarter of the document has been lost, but it refers to a copy of the *Exposition of the Faith* by Yohanon Maroun, which was known to ibn al-Qalā'ī (1450–1516). It said that the original by Yohanon Maroun was in Syriac and that Thomas of Kfar Taba added his ten chapters to Yohanon's work. Breydy (1988, pp. 42–45) accepts this commentary, saying that

it would explain Thomas' desire to circulate his own work under the aegis of the revered patriarch. The style of appended Ten Chapters by Thomas is very different from that of the *Exposition*, and expectedly it has significantly more polemics against Monothelitism (see *Treatise of the Ten Chapters* [=*Dix chapitres*, see Chartouni 1987]).

The reliance on Patristic tradition in the *Exposition* is obviously important in establishing the long lineage of the Maronites. Through paragraphs 26 to 52, we find an impressive list of authorities:

26. Pope St Sylvester's letter to the Jews (d. 335)
27. St Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, *On the Soul*
28. St Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, *Against Apollinaris*
29. St Flavian the Elder, Bishop of Antioch (d. 404), *Commentary on St John*
30. St Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius*
31. St Gregory of Nyssa, letter to Philip
32. St Gregory the Theologian (d. 390), 2nd letter to Cledonius
33. St Gregory the Theologian, *Discourse on the Son*
34. St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, *Against the Apollinarians*
35. St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, *Against the Emperor Gratian*
36. St Amphilochus, Bishop of Iconium (died c. 393), *Exposition of the Faith*
37–39. St John Chrysostom, to the monk Caesar
40–42. St John Chrysostom, On the Baptism of the Lord
43. St John Chrysostom, *On the Ascension*
44–45. St Severian Bishop of Gabala (d. 425), *On the Nativity*
46. Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople (d. *ca* 446), *On the Nativity*
47. Cyril of Alexandria, third document *Against Nestorius*
48. Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople, *Commentary on John*
49. Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople, Letter to Pope Xystus
50. Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople, Letter to Eulogius
51. Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople, Against those. Christ had only One Nature
52. Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople, letter to Secundus

Then follows a section on the two natures which further quotes earlier Fathers in addition to some of the above: Cyril of Alexandria, Ephrem, Jacob of Sarug, Isaac of Amida (*d*, ca 451), Isaac the Syrian (*ca* 613–700), Isidore of Pelusium (d. *ca* 450), Justin (probably the first emperor of that name), Dionysius (d. mid-sixth century). And the treatise evokes a more general reliance on the Patristic tradition as "a third order" after the Old and New Testaments:

> [2] We, sons of the holy and catholic Church, believe and confess as we have learnt from the prophets and the apostles, and from the third order, that of the holy teachers, who at all times have made the true faith of orthodoxy to prosper, and through four synods have fought the good fight against those we have just named

The words translated "catholic" and "synod" are *qatuliqy* and *sunidus*, respectively. The four synods must be the Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). There is nothing inherently improbable in the attribution of this text to Yohanon Maroun; further, there are indications that it was not, certainly not as a whole, the product of Thomas of Kfar Taba. The antiquity of the texts used by the author of the *Exposition* makes a seventh-century date more likely than not. In his *Ten Chapters*, Thomas quotes later writers such as Eutychius (Chartouni 1987, pp. 92, 94), and there is no such citation in the *Exposition*. The only other person who has ever been proposed as the author is Yohanon Maroun himself, and on balance, I think it is likely

to be by Yohanon Maroun, the first patriarch of the Maronites. Later, Maronites were to distance him from the *Exposition* because they perceived in it, quite correctly, Monenergist and Monothelite tendencies.

Time does not permit me to compare and contrast this with other kindred "expositions", most of which are, in any event, later and shed no light on Maronite history.

6.2. Reflections on Yohanon Maroun

The historicity of Yohanon Maroun has been doubted, but there is clear evidence that he lived. To illustrate, the Corinthian naval commander Machaon is mentioned only in one place—Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*, at 2.83—but does that give reason to deny his existence? Were Yohanon Maroun not central to Maronite history, the evidence for him would probably have been accepted without quibble. Two other questions arise: the manner of his *becoming* patriarch, and his vision for his people in Mount Lebanon. So far as we know, he was elected as patriarch not by any Pope, patriarch, or bishop, but by other monks and presumably priests. He was probably already the equivalent of the abbot of the monastery of Mar Maroun but may have been made *patriarch* by the same people who would have made him abbot. So attached were these monks to the hierarchy that they apparently considered the small exodus community needed a patriarch, given that there was none in Antioch, but the institution he filled had remained and continued after patriarchs had been more officially restored. This suggests that they may have desired a specifically Monothelite patriarch. But if this was so, it remains that they felt they needed a patriarch and that they could elect him. The procedure for the succession of the patriarchate was not at all fixed. Severus of Antioch had been appointed by a synod at Laodicea, succeeding Flavian (in 404), who had been both appointed and deposed by the emperor Anastasius. One might say that the patriarch could be appointed by whoever could appoint him, and if he was accepted, he reigned; if he was rejected, he was deposed. In fact, from one perspective, an election of a patriarch by monks makes more sense than one by an emperor. It is sufficient to indicate that the church's elders were, at the close of the first century, the choice of the local community. This can be traced back to the Jewish synagogue where the elders "...always, without known exception, provided themselves with an executive officer who presided over the community and over them" (Burtchaell 1992, pp. 295, 308). Later and modern applications of canon law should not be imported back into the seventh century.

When the Maronite monks and people were making their Exodus to Mount Lebanon, they seemed to have seen themselves as something like a *theocracy* (wielding "absolute ecclesiastical and political authority", the Greek *theokratia* was apparently first used to describe the Jewish polity guided under God). They had deliberately left Syria, where they were under the political jurisdiction of a civil government. They were deliberately going to where there was no government, except what they might take with them. That government was the patriarchate. The patriarch, being a creature of their church's need and insulated by distance and faith from any civil figure like the emperor, could be created at need by the church.

This would explain the looseness of the ancient system in Mount Lebanon, for the patriarchates they knew from Antioch and Constantinople did not organise civil affairs such as the army. There is no evidence of any civil government in Mount Lebanon, at least by Christians before the modern period. Neither did a secular Maronite ruling class arise until 1616, when the Druze Emir Fakhr al Din II at that time saw to it that Abu Nadir al-Khazin, a Maronite adviser in his court, was the first Maronite to achieve notability, or of that status called *muqati'ji* (Harik 1968, pp. 28–29). It seems that even long after the Druze ascendancy, there was little civil government among the Maronites of Mount Lebanon and that each village was governed from its own resources. I suspect that the village priest had a significant role, but this is an extrapolation from diverse materials we cannot examine here. However, after speaking of the destruction of the monastery of Beit Maroun in the tenth century, Charles Frazee asserted the following:

> At this time the Maronite situation forced the church to develop its own peculiar type of this and civil authority. At the head of all Maronites an abbatial patriarch enjoyed absolute ecclesiastical and political authority. His seven or eight synodal bishops, also abbots of monasteries, enjoyed no independent power. They were simply patriarchal assistants. Civil authority was delegated by the patriarch to the heads of the feudal landowners of the mountain, the *mouqaddamin* (religious officials) (Frazee 1983, pp. 50–51).

The very fact that Yohanon Maroun became a patriarch shows that what was effectively a theocracy was intentional from the start. We should not underestimate how little we know, and it is hardly unreasonable to conclude that the patriarch up in Mount Lebanon had "political authority". We can ask, what does that mean? Did he have jurisdiction in legal cases? If two people had an argument, e.g., a dispute over land boundaries, how did they resolve it, and did the clergy have any role in it? If a controversy arose between landholders, did the clergy have any role in this? General patriarchal management in the isolated area concerned was obviously crucial. The corollary of all this is that the apostolic succession must have been continued into the Maronite patriarchate through Yohanon Maroun himself if he had a position equivalent to a bishop. I am not aware of any direct evidence, but it is hard to imagine that anyone other than an abbot would have ordained some of his monks to the priesthood.

I would conjecture that the Maronites intended to establish a theocratic community under the religious authority of the patriarch, who owed his position as a bishop to the apostolic succession and his patriarchate to the consent of the monks and perhaps of the community. This led to the Maronite insistence that their patriarch shared in the apostolic line, which was centred upon Peter, who was recognised as the first bishop of Antioch and Rome.

7. In Retrospect

The foundation period of the Maronites extends from the time of Maroun (died by 423) to the establishment of a theocracy (with no civil government in Mount Lebanon) around or after the year 685. If Maroun served as a bridge between the Greek Christianity of Antioch and the Syriac of the inland, the monks of Dayr Mar Maroun and their successors cultivated both sides of their heritage while turning to Rome as they felt the need—until the Monothelite controversy and the migration to Mount Lebanon.

I suggest that the development of a unique Maronite identity passed through several stages. First, the monks of the monastery of Maroun were champions of *both* the Chalcedonian faith *and* the ascetic tradition of the historical Maroun, which was based in the region of Apamaea but influential throughout Syria and probably Lebanon. This championing of the Chalcedonian theology is also evident from the *Maronite Chronicle* (which also displays a keen interest in history, both secular and religious). The ascetic nature of their faith is shown by the great number of monks attached to them, as evinced in the various pieces of correspondence that we have referred to. We learn that their ascetic and monastic position was separate but not isolated from the world from those letters, as the *Maronite Chronicle* itself demonstrates, and as do their debates with the Jacobites, both before the Caliph Mu'awiya in Damascus in 659 and in the letters we have enumerated. They were watching, commenting, and participating in contemporary events. That monastery and its monks were the centre-point of stage one, and their very asceticism gave them the moral authority to intervene in the world as they did.

As far as we can see, in the development of the Maronites' identity, they become, in a second stage, champions of the Monothelite doctrine while retaining their Chalcedonian beliefs that Christ had two Natures and also their ascetic traditions. The correspondence demonstrates their eminent position among Syrian Christians, being second only to the representatives of the See of Antioch. The monastery of Maroun was still the axis of the incipient Maronite Church at this time, but they were now playing on a wider stage

and being more historically visible: they were the Chalcedonian champions of those who understood Chalcedon as consistent with and perhaps even implying Monothelitism.

Finally, with the seventh century and the Monothelite controversy, we enter a late-Patristic age when the most historically significant section of the Maronites were living in communities remote from the rest of the world. From the time of their relocation to Mount Lebanon, they lived in villages, with no cities and hence no urban culture, and with limited cultural and social exchange with the non-Maronites of that area. They comprised a Chalcedonian church with a clergy who, insofar as they could follow the issues, were Monothelite. They were aligned neither to Constantinople nor yet to Rome but considered themselves to be in continuity with the major ecumenical councils up to but not including that of 680/681 (using Alberigo 1972, vol. 1), which they rejected. Until the crusaders appeared four hundred years later, they had limited contact, if any, with the great Christian Sees of Antioch, Constantinople, and especially Rome, to which they were strangers. In this period, the Maronites developed a unique culture with a unique liturgy (Macomber 1973). They kept a rich typological heritage in their expositions of the Bible and faith, and although their theology was often re-directed by analytic and often polemical theology, many ancient Antiochene, Syriac, and Semitic traces survived with them, especially in their liturgy.

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Article

Revisiting the Institution of *Bnay* and *Bnoth Qyōmo* in the Syriac Tradition

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Abstract: A group of Syriac Christian believers existed during the fourth century called the *Bnay Qyōmo* (with their female counterparts known as the *Bnoth Qyōmo*): the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant. There has been considerable controversy about the nature of this archaic Syrian monastic movement or, as it is known to some scholars, the Syriac "Proto-Monastic Tradition". The controversy has not only been about the name, but also the origin, habits, and ascetic way of life of the *Bnay Qyōmo*. The intention of the present article is not to elaborate on the various terminology used to describe the *Bnay Qyōmo* or the nature of their vows and expected duties as introduced by Aphrahat and other Syrian Fathers, for these have been studied by many scholars. Rather, the intention of this article is to review some of the material discussing this group by key Syriac Fathers to present a fresh reading of the historical record to better apprize the order's regulations and its social and ecclesiastical roles within the Syriac-speaking Church during the fourth and fifth centuries AD. The main Syriac writers who dealt with this topic were Aphrahat, known as "the Persian Sage" (ca. 260–345), and Rabūla, Bishop of Edessa (flor. 420s). Whilst the order appears to have declined by about the eighth century, understanding the roles of the *Bnay Qyōmo* during the earlier period (the focus of this writing) is crucial for explaining the development of the Syriac Tradition.

Keywords: *Bnay Qyōmo*; Sons of the Covenant; Syrian monasticism; monastic vows

Introduction

The story of Syrian and Syriac-speaking monasticism is a very complex one. Our first important guide is Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus from AD 423 to 457, who was educated in one of the monastic schools of Antioch, and who produced a history of the monks of Syria (*Historia religiosa*) (ca. 444) that introduces a range of early ascetic lifestyles and monastery founder figures. At first, the paradigm for the monastic way was *hermitic* (solitary and in desert places), yet communities grew around spots associated with admired founder figures, leading to collective *cenobitic* or collective institutions. Later on, a third distinctive mixed form allowed hermits or solitaries to be connected to churches or communities (the *skete* model), providing protection in turbulent times (see esp. Vööbus 1958, 1960, 1988). This article is about an "Order" predominantly named *Bnay Qyōmo* (Sons of the Covenant) who presented as a special religious group in Syriac Christianity during the high Patristic period. I will be asking, since they were called the "Sons of the Covenant", to what kind of "covenant" were they bound? How did they live and what rules were they following during the time of their appearance through the fourth and fifth centuries AD?

Even though it is well known that the *Bnay* and *Bnoth Qyōmo*, both the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant, *vowed virginity and poverty* during those centuries, mainly in the northern part of Mesopotamia, data regarding *other and different aspects of their life and duties* within the wider Christian community and Late Antique society are scanty, even in the Syriac sources whence one would expect to find relevant information. For example, in a work by the earliest famed Syriac Father Aphrahat "the Persian Sage" (ca. AD 260–345 [Syr. also Pharhad; Grk. Aphraatis]), which was entitled *23 Demonstrations*, some parts were dedicated to the *Bnay Qyōmo* (esp. the sixth Demonstration); however, there is sadly insufficient

detail as to the lives of those belonging to this intriguing group. When information is offered, it is so vague that it has left scholars very puzzled (as I shall soon show). On the other hand, stories of many hierarchs and faithful martyrs suffering under prolonged persecution in 344 ignited by the Persian king Shapur II (309–379) against the Syrian Christians in Persia do exist in the literature. Recorded in the late-nineteenth century seven-volume collection of *Acta martyrium et sanctorum [Syriace]*, the stories include many names of the *Bnay Qyōmo* and *Bnoth Qyōmo (Acta Mart.* [ed. Bedjan] vol. 2, pp. 230, 241, 245, 254, 278, 325, etc.). But, again, few details are provided in the *Acta* about the Covenantal institution itself. While admitting that some institutional features have been tackled by scholars (mainly Burkitt 1939; Vööbus 1958, 1961; Nedungatt 1973; Griffith 1991, 1993, 1995; AbouZayd 1993; Amar 1995; Kathanar 1996; Murray 1999; Macina 1999; Koltun-Fromm 2001; Harvey 2005; Aydin 2017), in the following pages, as an indigenous Syrian voice, I will try to provide fresh insights as to the position, duties, lifestyle, and related issues of this distinguished group of people, drawing almost exclusively from Syriac primary sources from the fourth and fifth centuries. This article seeks to probe, with careful philological and semantic analytical support, the possibilities and probabilities of what the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant were about by both assessing, reassessing, and adding to what is known from studies of Eastern, in particular Antiochene, Christianity. The article is a detailed documentation and accompanying exposition of an Order or ancient Syriac monastic grouping that hitherto has not been given a full account.

1. The Sources

Let us first list the main sources of extant information concerning the *Bnay Qyōmo* in the fourth and fifth centuries. These are as follows:

1.1. Aphrahat and His Demonstrations

Aphrahat wrote 23 Demonstrations (hereafter Demon., using Parisot ed., Patrologia Syriaca [hereafter PS], vol. 1, cols. [=half page] 1–1050; vol. 2, cols. 1–150) called also "Chapters" (PS vol. 1, col. 1044 [line] 26; vol. 2, col. 1 [line] 2), "Homilies" (vol. 1, cols. 72 [line] 8, 457.23, 461.21, 952.22, 1044.23, 1048.18, 24), "Letters" (vol. 1, cols. 237 [ln.] 13, 272.25. 312.18, 573.2, 724.24; vol. 2, col. 149 [ln.]1, etc.) (hereafter for convenience virtually all referencing is to columns and lines, not Demonstration numbers or sections) and many other names. The work was written at the request of an unknown believer to describe the faith of Christians at the beginning of the fourth century AD in Persia. In composing the *Demonstrations*, Aphrahat started each one with a letter of the Syriac language in alphabetical order (*Ōlaf*, *Bēth*, *Gōma*l, etc.). The first ten Demonstrations are dated to 337 AD, the following twelve to 344, and the last to 345. It is probable that Aphrahat intended to write a new cycle of *Demonstrations* since the last one starts with the letter A, but something, maybe his death, caused this work to cease. The sixth Demonstration was dedicated to the "Bnay Qyōmo = Sons of Covenant". Aphrahat himself was a Bar Qyōmo, as he describes himself in many passages of his corpus (e.g., vol. 1, cols. 240.1–253.13, 276.23, 309.21, 256, 66–12, 1049.11; Nedungatt 1973, p. 211). The writings of Aphrahat are considered to be the main account of the life and institutions of the *Bnay Qyōmo* during the fourth century, and in this article, I refer to the critical Syriac text of *Demonstrations* much more extensively than other sources.

1.2. Liber Graduum (The Book of Steps or Degrees)

The Syriac text of *Liber Graduum* (using Kmosko (1926), ed. [PS vol. 3]; Eng. trans. Kitchen and Parmentier [Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 12a–c]) contains an introductory note that is apparently an addition made by an anonymous hand (see Vööbus 1958, p. 183). The note states that neither did the author of the *Liber Graduum* inscribe his name nor did any of the other scholars write about him, although the note-maker makes the unlikely claim that according to tradition the author was one of the last disciples of the twelve apostles (PS col. 1.1–8). Most probably, however, the book was composed around

the end of the fourth (or the beginning of the fifth) century, within the Persian Empire (Brock 1997, p. 28).

The *Liber Graduum* addresses two groups of believers: first, the "ܚܐܬܝ—*Kīne* (Just, Righteous, Upright)" who are fulfilling the commandments of God (called "the commandments of faith" (col. 860.1–4)) in a balanced way along with their worldly duties and day-to-day issues (labour, worry, marriage and so forth), and second, the "ܓܡܝܪܐ—*Gmīre* (Perfect)" who are aiming to attain a higher degree of spirituality by following the "commandments of love" (col. 860.1–865.24), and are, therefore, renouncing any attachment to this physical world (see cols. 324–32. on comparing both groups).

1.3. The Canons or Rules of Marūtha

The synod of Isaac and Marūtha of Maipherqat (AD 410) that was held in Seleucia issued a number of canons and regulations that organized the different categories of orders in the Syriac-speaking Church in the Sassanid territories (using *Synodicon Orientale*, ed. Chabot (1902) ed. for the Latin trans.; cf. Vööbus (1982), ed. [CSCO 439]).

1.4. The Rules of Rabūla

Rabūla became the Bishop of Edessa in 411. He was known for his philanthropic deeds, as well as for being a charismatic leader and administrator. Among his many achievements, history attributes to him that he substituted the ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܠܛܐ (*Evangelion da-mḥalṭe*, or "The Gospel of the Mixed" known as the *Diatessaron* of Tatian) by the canonical *Evangelion da-Mpharshe* (the "Separated Gospels" or the "Four Gospels") after the *Diatessaron* held pride of place and had been used in the Syriac-speaking Church for almost two hundred years.

Rabūla made it clear that during his time, at least to the people of Edessa where he was the Bishop, there were two categories of monasticism: the monks and *Bnay Qyōmo*. He set out rules for both groups (see *Opera Selecta* [for Rabūla, Ephrem, Balaei, etc.] [hereafter OS], ed. Overbeck, pp. 212–14 for monks, and pp. 215–21 for *Bnay Qyōmo;* or with *Syriac and Arabic Documents* [hereafter SAD] ed. Vööbus, pp. 27–33 for monks, pp. 36–50 for *Bnay Qyōmo*). Those issued for the *Bnay Qyōmo* shed quite clear light on different aspects of this order, revealing, first, that numerous rules relating to the *Bnay Qyōmo* were in common with those of the priests and deacons (*Rules* 2, 3, 4, 9, etc. [OS, pp. 215–16; SAD, pp. 36–39]; second, that some rules were issued specifically for the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo* (*Rules*, 18, 20, 29, etc. [OS, pp. 217–8; SAD, pp. 40–41, 44]); and, third, that some rules were set out for the priests and deacons to take care of the *Bnay Qyōmo* (*Rules* 10, 12, 18, etc. [OS, pp. 216–17; SAD, pp. 38–40).

1.5. Other Possible Sources

There are signs that equivalents for such Covenanters as discussed here are known in the Church of the East, but the best signs of this, coming from a Syriac liturgical handbook at Turfan (in an oasis in far Western China) (Hunter and Coakley 2017), are dated to the eighth century and belong outside the purview of this paper. This study acknowledges that possible equivalents to the phrase "Sons or Daughters of the Covenant" appear in other traditions, among the Manichaeans (in Egypt, e.g., Brand 2022, p. 293) and perhaps among the Mandarins, but it is very hard to establish if there is any mutual influence between these usages and/or phenomena and those in the Antiochene churches discussed here.

2. Nomenclature

The terms *Bnay Qyōmo* (masc. plur. of *Bar Qyōmo* [=Son of the Covenant or Male Covenanter]) and *Bnoth Qyōmo* (fem. plur. of *Ba[r]th Qyōmo* [=Daughter of the Covenant or Female Covenanter]) were used in the fourth- and fifth-century literature of Syriac-speaking Christianity in the Orient. In his *Demonstrations*, Aphrahat uses the terms *iḥidoye* (plur. of *iḥidoyo* (=single one)) and *Bnay Qyōmo* interchangeably (see AbouZayd 1993; Aydin 2017,

pp. 29–34). Due to their distinctive presence in the community, the catchphrase *Bnay Qyōmo* became more popular than *iḥidoye*.

Studying Syriac monasticism of this period, scholars have provided numerous meanings for the term *Qyōmo* to help us grasp what the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo* was about. Besides the term "covenant" used in the Old Testament sense, as a solemn agreement between God and His chosen people, some writers have suggested that the term *Qyōmo* in context meant "resurrection", others suggest "stance", "standing", or "vigil, watch" (see Griffith 1993, pp. 149–53 and ns. 37–38; Murray 2006, p. 14 and no. 65). Some interpreters even proposed that the *Bnay Qyōmo* were a group of ascetics who had their roots in the Qumran community (Griffith 1993, pp. 141–60). Sebastian Brock noted that none of these suggested meanings has firm or sufficient evidence (Brock 1989, p. 52; 1992, pp. 134–35). On the other hand, examining the 77 occurrences of the term *Qyōmo* in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*, Nedungatt (1973, pp. 191–200) remarked that approximately half of them (35 times) are used to indicate "any religious covenant in the history of salvation" (p. 195). The important meanings of the term "*Qyōmo*" are set out in the following paragraphs.

2.1. Covenant—Church

In many places in the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat, the word *Qyōmo* (covenant) means the "Church" of God. The expression "holy people—Christians" was chosen in the place of the "people—the Jews" (PS vol. 1, col. 232. 3–4; Eng. trans. Lehto 2010) because of their belief in Jesus Christ, who Himself became their "covenant" and liberated them (col. 232.3–11, 780.22–781.24; Acta Mart., vol. 3, p. 64), and they thus, became the "Church of God" (cols. 44.21, 464.24, 573.5, 1040.22, 1049.12, etc.). Faith is the first requirement that a person needs before being baptized in order to become a member of this newest "covenant—Church" (cols. 44.13–16, 72.10–11). Recounting the many symbols of covenants that God has made with humanity, Aphrahat shows that the symbol of the "new covenant" changed over time. He says:

> In each case the Law and the covenant were changed. First, God changed the covenant of Adam and gave another [one] to Noah... he gave another [one] in the final generation, a covenant that will not be changed. . . This is clear and known to the wise and to the one who understands that in the case of everyone who is from the covenant and (then) after circumcision, he is cast out because of his licentiousness and his lasciviousness, he has been circumcised but he does not understand what the Apostle had said, 'May those who are troubling you be themselves expelled (lit. castrated)' [Gal 5:12]. For our God is true and his covenants are very trustworthy. Every covenant was firm and trustworthy in its time. Those who are circumcised in their heart and those who will be circumcised a second time in the true Jordan, the baptism for the forgiveness of the sins, will live (*Demon*. 11, sect, 11 [PS vol. 1, cols. 497.17–501.10], using here Eng. trans. of *Demon*. by Lehto (2010) and Valavanolickal (2005, vol. 2, p. 15)).

With the expression "everyone who is from the covenant" (col. 501.1–2) who is "circumcised a second time in the true Jordan, the baptism for the forgiveness of sins" (501.9–10), Aphrahat apparently implies the baptized members of the "covenant—Church". If, however, the phrase "everyone. . . of the covenant" in Aphrahat's expression of this paragraph means the *Bnay Qyōmo* order, no action of "casting out" will be taken against the *other* baptized people of the Church because of their "licentiousness and lasciviousness". The theme of this whole paragraph is baptism, substituting the sign of baptism that underpinned the Old Law.

2.2. Covenant—Baptismal Promise

One of the senses that the term *Qyōmo* "covenant" that can be established in Syriac literature is that of "baptismal 'promise' made by each Christian at baptism, 'I commit myself to You, O Christ. . .'" (Brock 1989, p. 52). Following this same line, and in contrast with some who think that "originally the baptized community consisted *solely* (italics mine)

of those who had undertaken ascetic vows" (Burkitt 1904, pp. 125, 127; cf. Brock 1989, p. 52), the expression of baptismal promise is also attested in the story of Samuel bar Hanon, a married Jew who was converted by St. Eugen (early fourth century) in Nisibis and confessed his faith by saying, "I establish a covenant '*Qyōmo*' before the name of Christ that. . ." (*Acta Mar*t., vol. 3, pp. 414–15). Similar notions and testimonies are encountered in *Liber Graduum* (PS vol. 3, cols. 296.10–22; 720.2–25 [ܗܦܟܬ ܥܡܟ ܒܦܘܡܟ = you have taken up my covenant with your words (lit. "mouth")]) as well as in the Syriac translation of one of Theodore of Mopsuestia's catechetical homilies, "I establish a covenant 'Qyōmo', believe, and baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Theodore, Catechticae homeliae [eds. Tonneau and **Deyreesse**], Hom. 13, fol. 92v, 94r; cf. Brock 1989, p. 52).

2.3. Covenant—Baptismal Promise

As elaborated below, the promise of celibacy and poverty vowed by the *Bnay Qyōmo* could have been made at the time of their baptism, given that recipients were generally adults at that time. Aphrahat often expresses this vow by the phrase, "the one who take up the yoke of the holy ones" (PS vol. 1, cols. 248.26–249.2, 253.10–12, 272.21–24, 276.18–22. 613.17–18, 681.2).

3. Denotations of Taking up a Committed Way of Life

The expressions "Sons" and "Daughters of the Covenant" obviously denote a religious, spiritual, devotional, and ascetic movement or order, and it is worth investigating as to what it would require to be a member of it, and by this means apprehend better the movement's or order's characteristics.

3.1. Preparation

It could be suggested that the exemplary mode of life and behaviour of the already ordained *Bnay Qyōmo* was the instrument of preparation for being a member of the order. By seeing their good behaviour within society, together with their distinguished mode of dress and way of life (see below sects. 5–7), many people would be eager to imitate this new state (*kyōno*) of *Bnay Qyōmo (*Aphrahat, *Demon.* vol. 1, col. 356.11–12).

Not only were virgins accepted into the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, but also those who were married. The very fact that a *Bar Qyōmo* was allowed to live with his daughter (see *SAD,* p. 36; OS, p. 215) means that he was either a widower or left his married life and joined the institution (*Acta*, vol. 2, p. 513). Aphrahat also confirms this fact by his denotation of the "holy ones" (*Demon*. col. 345.10).

Not everyone, though, was accepted as part of this group: they had to be people without a blemish, whether married or virgins. According to the canons of Marūtha, when an archpriest (*chorepiscopus*) visits the district under his supervision, he will encouragingly announce to the local parishioners "to set some of their sons and daughters apart" to dedicate them as *Bnay Qyōmo* (SAD, p. 122). But any who were adulterers, as expected, were rejected from joining the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo*. Rabūla states that "They shall not admit for instruction (discipleship) any woman who has a man besides her husband, nor any man who has a woman instead of his consort, that the name of God may not be blasphemed" (SAD, p. 44).

There was no specified age limit for a candidate to join the order. Aphrahat categorizes people who were willing to join the institution as "young unmarried men and women, and holy ones" (col. 345; cf. *Acta*, vol. 2, p. 513). The *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* also speaks about a martyr in Persia who was a young boy named "Ohanom", without providing his age (*Acta*, vol. 2, p. 287).

The location for training was, in all probability, local church premises. Aphrahat implies without stating it clearly that local churches were centres where the *Bnay Qyōmo* were trained and prepared (SAD, p. 125), yet naturally when monasteries were established toward the first half of the fourth century in the northern Mesopotamian region, they also became places of preparation. As the Marūtha synodal canons state: "They (the

Bnay Qyōmo) shall be instructed, and given to the churches and monasteries, and he (the archpriest) shall order that they shall be educated in doctrine and instruction that they shall become inheritors, and the churches and monasteries will be established (or will have their existence) through them" (SAD, p. 122).

Candidates were enjoined to prepare themselves for the spiritual struggle. Since the contest was a continuous struggle against evil that did not cease once a person vowed to be a member of the institution, it was the individual's duty to be aware of the dangers to be faced (Aphrahat, *Demon*. vol. 1, col. 321.16–24). Aphrahat cited such dangers and advised candidates how to be trained and prepared in order to tackle them: "Let the one who is training for the contest keep himself from the world . . . run as a champion in the competition (1 Cor 9:24–25) . . . learn about his opponent . . . take armour for himself in order to fight, and let him keep it clean at all times" (*Demon*. col. 248.19–25). The Church Father also gave practical defense strategies for a list of temptations used by the adversary to attack the *Bnay Qyōmo* (col. 256.3–24). As depicted by a large part of Aphrahat's sixth Demonstration (cols. 256.22–277.18, 309.21–312.20), significantly, the prime dangers that the *Bnay Qyōmo* contended with were how to retain virginity and holiness, and how to detach themselves from the materialistic world, i.e., through voluntary poverty.

The subject matter of the training sessions that the candidates had to undergo consisted mainly of learning the Bible, the writings of the Church Fathers, and life manners (see SAD, p. 122). Aphrahat admonishes those already "vowed" *Bnay Qyōmo* to constantly meditate and study the Bible and the Fathers, including his own writings (*Demon*. cols. 245.6–8, 252.25–26, 304.22–25, 349.6–7, 464.21–24, etc.). He also cites many exemplars from the Bible to be imitated and encourages members to learn from related life experiences (e.g., col. 312.6–18). According to Rabūla, crucial things to learn and memorize were the Psalms and *Madrōshe* (or stanzas from poems or choral chants, most probably those of Ephraim) (SAD, p. 41, cf. OS, p. 217) and the Marūtha canons also urge ceaselessly reciting the Psalms along with studying the Bible (SAD, p. 125).

3.2. Initiation

The connection between commitment to the order and the *baptism* of *Bnay Qyōmo* members has been raised by the eminent Francis Burkitt as a point for debate during the last century. The matter deserves a separate article to tackle it, but at least an attempt can be made here to summarize the issue.

Problems started when Burkitt (1904, p. 125) hypothesized that "in Aphraates, Baptism is not the common seal of every Christian's faith, but a privilege reserved for celibates". He also claimed that for Aphrahat, "the Christian community, therefore, . . . consists of baptized celibates, together with a body of adherents who remain outside and are not really members of the body" (p. 127). Some scholars, such as Adolf von Harnack (1906, p. 122, n. 6), have supported this theory, while others, like Hugh Connolly (1906, pp. 522–38) and Edward Duncan (1945), have opposed it, and others still, for instance Paul Schwen (1907, pp. 96–99, 129–132), seriously modified it (for bibliography and discussions, Duncan 1945, pp. 82–83; Vööbus 1958, pp. 184–90; Vööbus 1961, pp. 19–27; Vööbus 1988, pp. 25–30). Burkitt held strong to his position (Burkitt 1906, p. 10), "adamantly affirming that Aphrahat has classified Christians as consisting first of baptized full members and then as penitents or general adherents" (Vööbus 1988, pp. 25–26). The main issue of confusion revolved around Aphrahat's statement in his seventh Demonstration regarding the Penitents, and it is worth quoting the sections that should determine the issue:

> "O you who have been invited to the struggle, listen to the sound of the trumpet and take heart. I speak also to you who hold the trumpets: priests, scribes, and sages. Call out and say to all the people, 'Let he who is afraid turn back from the struggle (cf. Jud 7:3), lest he cause his brother to become as disheartened as he is. And whoever has planted a vineyard, let him return to cultivate it, lest he think of it in the war and suffer defeat. And whoever is betrothed to a woman and wishes to marry her, let him return and rejoice with his woman. And let the one

> who is building a house return to it, lest he call it to mind and not fight [with] full [attention]' (cf. Deut 20:2–9). It is the single ones who are ready for the struggle, since they set their faces toward what is before them and do not call to mind what is behind them (Phil 3:13), for their treasures are before them, and whatever they plunder is for themselves; they will receive their reward abundantly. I say to you who sound the trumpets, that when you have finished issuing warnings keep watch over those who have returned, care for those who remain, and send down to the waters of testing those who have vowed [lit. chosen, singled out] themselves to war. The waters approve every strong person, but those who are lazy will be found out there (*Demon*. 7, sect. 18 [PS vol. 1, cols. 342.11–344.9], using Lehto trans. [GECS 27] p. 210).

In the next section (19), Aphrahat proclaims that this mystery of choosing the *Bnay Qyōmo* through the waters of baptism was shown beforehand by a *typological* act of Gideon when he chose the soldiers for the battle (see Jud 7:3–7). Aphrahat then returns for the warning and selection of the *Bnay Qyōmo* from among the people, when he states the following:

> On account of this, it is fitting that those who sound the trumpets, the preachers of the Church, should call and warn all those who have made a covenant with God in advance of [or before] baptism, those who have vowed [lit. chosen, singled out] themselves to virginity and holiness, young unmarried men and women, and holy ones. Let the preachers warn them and say: 'Whoever has set his heart on the state of marriage, let him be married before baptism, lest he fall in the struggle and be killed. And whoever is afraid of the conflict [lit. lot, portion of fighting], let him return, lest he cause his brothers to become as disheartened as he is. And whoever loves his property, let him turn away from the army, lest when the war overwhelms him he calls his property to mind and turns back to it. There is only shame for the one who turns away from the struggle. The one who turns away but who has not yet vowed [lit. chosen, singled out] himself nor put on armour is not blamed. But if any of those who have vowed [lit. chosen, singled out] themselves and have put on armour turn away from the struggle, they are ridiculed. The one who has emptied himself is ready for war, since he does not call to mind what is behind him nor turn back to it (*Demon*. 7 [sect.] 20 [cols. 345.4–26]).

and

> When they have preached, and announced, and warned all those who have made a covenant with God, let them bring those who have been chosen for the struggle to the waters of baptism so that they might be tested. After baptism they will see who is strong and who is weak. The strong ought to be encouraged, but the lazy and the weak will openly turn them from the struggle, lest when fighting overtakes them they conceal their weapons and take flight and suffer defeat. . . ([sect.] 21 [col. 348.1–10]).

Elaborating on the *typological* analogy of Gideon's selection of fighters for the battle (sect. 19) and the choosing of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, Connolly (1906) presented the representation of things in an organized and contextual sequence, a useful point needing no further comment here; yet a few extra notes are worth making about the passages quoted above to better clarify the matter at hand.

1. Aphrahat makes it clear that his seventh Demonstration is dedicated to Penance (col. 360.5–6, 1041.10–12). He tries to explain all the aspects of this topic to the reader.
2. In sections 18–21 of this same Demonstration, he only *incidentally* reminds the *Bnay Qyōmo* of their vows, to include them as one of the categories who needed to undergo penance.
3. These sections are *specifically* directed to those who were willing to join the institution of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, not to the whole people who came to baptism. Thus: "O you who

have been invited to the struggle" (cols. 341.11, 15, 245.9–10, 348.2; with Connolly 1906, p. 529).

4. Some phrases in sect. 18 are directed to the whole community, from whom the *Bnay Qyōmo* had *chosen/singled themselves out* (ܕܥܓܒܘ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ—*d-'agbiū nafšhūn*) for the vow (cols. 344.6–7, 345.9, 20, 348.3).
5. According to Aphrahat, there are two main phases for the selection of the *Bnay Qyōmo*: before baptism and after baptism.
    a. Before Baptism.
        i. Aphrahat says that the priests, scribes, and sages call out to all the people (ܠܟܠܗ ܥܡܐ—*l-kūleh 'āmo*). This call is for every one of the people, as it is implied by Aphrahat's later phrases: "*those who have vowed [chosen/singled out] themselves* (ܕܥܓܒܘ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ—*d-'agbiū nafšhūn*)" (cols. 344.6–7, 345.9–10, 348.3) and "keep watch over those who have returned, care for those who remain, and send down to the waters of testing those who have vowed themselves to war" (col. 344.4–7).
        ii. The phrases "*those who have vowed [chosen/singled out] themselves* (ܕܥܓܒܘ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ—*d-'agbiū nafšhūn*)" (cols. 344.6–7, 345.9, 20, 348.3) and the direction to "keep watch over those who have returned, care for those who remain, and send down to the waters of testing those who have vowed themselves to war" (col. 344.4–7) play a major role in the selection of the *Bnay Qyōmo*. The first phrase, "those who have vowed [chosen/singled out] themselves", denotes a group of people who singled themselves out to be part of something different. The latter phrases, as Aphrahat presented in Syriac, however, contain three categories of people (as Lehto 2010, p. 211, n. 68 put forward for consideration): 1. keep watch over *those who have returned* (from the contest), 2. care for *those who remain* (?), and 3. send down to the waters of testing *those who have vowed themselves to war* (the *Bnay Qyōmo*). Now, who are those (the second category) who *remained* in or from the community at baptism? They are not the people who returned from the struggle (the first category), and they are not the people who chose themselves and vowed to go to war (the third category)! Most probably, *those who remained* have nothing to do with the vow of contest (*Bnay Qyōmo*) but still have to do with baptism itself. It appears that they were the catechumens (married or unmarried) people who came to be baptized and had no concern whatsoever for those who *return* from the contest and those who *vow* to become *Bar Qyōmo* or *Bath Qyōmo*. Moreover, the three imperative verbs (keep watch over, care for, and send down) (cf. ibid.), and the use of Syriac plural common pronoun "ܐܠܝܢ—*'aylēn* (those who)" combined with the third person masculine "ܗܢܘܢ—*enūn* (they, them)" in the third phrase, strongly suggests that Aphrahat distinguishes between three groups of people. Otherwise, if the third phrase was intended to be addressed to the second category, its wording would have been arranged differently, and there would have been no need to either repeat the last "ܐܠܝܢ—*'aylēn* (those who)" or to cite it with "ܗܢܘܢ—*enūn* (they, them)" in the same phrase (col. 344.6).
        iii. While explaining the process of baptism, the related text *Testamentum Domini* (*ca*. 350) (ed. and Latin trans. Rahmani (1899, p. 126); Eng. trans, Cooper and Maclean (1902, p. 125)) sheds light on who "*those who remained*" are in Aphrahat's mind. As the *Testament* puts it: "But let them be baptized thus. When they come to the water, let the water be pure and flowing. First the babes, then the men, then the women. But if anyone wishes to make a promise of virginity (*Bnay Qyōmo*), let him be baptized *first* by the Bishop".
        iv. The term "ܐܓܘܢܐ—*'agūno* (contest, struggle, fight)" (e.g., cols. 244.4–5; 248.19–21, 316.8, 19–20, 317.15–16, 341. 11.23) in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*

plays an important role in defining the process of the *Bnay Qyōmo's* vow. Without a doubt, fighting against sin in this world is a contest common to all Christians. Hence, penitence is needed for all (cols. 313.1–316.5). Aphrahat, however, distinguished between the contest of the "common Christians" and that of the *Bnay Qyōmo*. He often called the contest of the *Bnay Qyōmo* "our contest" (316.8.20, 217.15–16, 341.11.23), which involves virginity, chastity, and poverty. This could be labeled as a "special contest" as distinct from the "common contest" of the Christian laypersons.

v. Let us keep in mind how the above term "ܥܓܘܢܐ—*'agūno* (contest, struggle, fight)", combined with the aforementioned phrase "ܕܥܓܒܝܘ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ—*d-'agbiū nafšhūn* (*those who have vowed [chosen/singled out] themselves*)" when compared to (the term *baptism*) is important for the *Bnay Qyōmo*. They voluntarily chose their future life *before baptism*, or, if incapable of continuing such a commitment, they are to be sent back to their normal life by the priests *immediately after baptism*. If baptism *is* the *'agūno* (contest) itself, then the conclusion of Burkitt (1904, p. 125) and those who agree with him that the baptized people of the Church consisted only of celibates would be correct. Thus, baptism would truly be a "privilege reserved for celibates", and the vow of baptism and that of "contest" was one and the same. Aphrahat, however, never claimed that baptism is the *'agūno* (or contest) per se, but rather it is the *testing water* for the *Bnay Qyōmo* to determine whether they were worthy of their contest or not. In fact, on a close examination of the *typology* of Gideon (see cols, 344.10–345.5, 348.10–18, 349.18–27), Aphrahat clearly indicated that "the waters of testing" are "a type of baptism" and "war" is "a mystery of the struggle" (344.22–25). The *Bnay Qyōmo* had to choose/single themselves out for the contest, not for baptism because the *contest* is for the "single ones (*iḥydōye*) who are ready for the struggle" (341.23). The contest of the *Bnay Qyōmo* comes after their vow at baptism. Baptism is for all people who believe in Jesus, the special *'agūno* or contest, on the other hand, is for those people who choose virginity, continence, and poverty. As Aphrahat states, "Those who are circumcised in the heart live, and they are circumcised a second time at the true Jordan, the baptism of the forgiveness of sins" (501.8–10), and "The servant who is bought (cf. Exod. 12:44) represents the sinful person who repents and is bought by the blood of Christ. When his heart has been circumcised of evil actions, he then comes to baptism, the consummation of true circumcision, and he is joined to the people of God, and participates in the body and blood of Christ" (*Demon*. col. 528.7–15). Duncan (1945, p. 89) has correctly put it: "Nothing is said here of any special form of asceticism to be undertaken by those who are baptised. Anyone who believes and 'has circumcised his heart of all evil works' is eligible for baptism. Marriage definitely does not belong to the category of 'evil works'", and "We seem thoroughly justified in concluding, from the words of Aphraates himself, that there was in that part of the Church which he represents no such thing as a general requirement of celibacy for all aspirants to baptism and membership in the Church" (ibid., p. 93).

vi. Aphrahat also makes a clear distinction between the faithful/sons and daughters of the faith and the *Bnay Qyōmo*. Both groups received baptism, and both are eligible to partake of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though this needs a separate paper, a clear example of this distinction from the writings of Aphrahat will suffice. He states that "The point of the sword is removed from before the Tree of Life (Gen 3:24) which is given as food to the faithful, and Paradise is promised to the blessed and the virgins and the holy ones. The fruit of the tree of life is given as food to the

faithful, to the virgins and to those who do the will of God" (Demon. col. 265.18–24, cf. cols, 237.7, 465.2–4, and see for the phrase "ܒܢܝ ܥܝܬܐ—Bnay ʿĪto ['sons of the Church']" cols. 533.21–22, 573.2–9, 841.6, 1040.21–22; and "ܥܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ—ʿāmo qadīsho ['the holy people']" cols. 232.3,6).

vii. Since a distinction is evident and established between the believers and the *Bnay Qyōmo* who are both coming to baptism, based on the purpose of each group, the first for a normal life and the latter to start their *ʿagūno* or contest, a point of dissimilarity is required between the vows or vow process taken by each group. In all probability, a demarcation was made immediately after baptism because before baptism all the baptized have to commit themselves firstly to Christ. This could also justify the "sending back" of the newly baptized *Bnay Qyōmo* before starting their contest. Or possibly there were two vows: one for the *beginners* (or novices, or "Fallen Sons of the Covenant" [see below]), who have the right to be "sent back from the contest" and afterward live a normal Christian life, without being excommunicated or expelled from the community; and another to become a *full member* of the *Bnay Qyōmo*. Aphrahat, however, does not clearly provide the pertinent information.

viii. In *Demon*. 7, sect. 20, Aphrahat becomes more specific and warns only the *Bnay Qyōmo* by direct instructions. The warnings to return or retreat from the contest are announced before the vow at baptism. It is the *Bnay Qyōmo's* own choice to accept or reject to proceed if they see themself as fit: "Let he who is afraid turn back from the struggle, lest he cause his brother to become as disheartened as he is" (cols. 341.15–16, 345.14–17), and "The one who turns away but who has not yet vowed (or chosen/singled out) himself nor put on armour is not blamed" (345.20–22).

ix. The warnings about fear (cols. 341.15–16, 345.14–16), sexuality (marriage [341.19–20, 345.11–14]), love of property (possessions [345.16–19] and vineyard [341.17–18]) and unfinished work (house [341.20–22]) are often the weak points that the *Bnay Qyōmo* struggle to uphold after the vow at baptism. Aphrahat advises the people who want to become *Bnay Qyōmo* that they ought to detach themselves from worldly matters and, if they cannot, to voluntarily retreat before being sent to "the waters of testing", i.e., baptism.

x. So the following is made clear: after knowing the dangers and being warned about the temptations that the *Bnay Qyōmo* will face, whoever is freely willing to enter into the struggle, let them mark their target *before* vowing at baptism, *viz*. becoming *Bnay Qyōmo*. Whoever, on the other hand, is willing to get married and live a normal life (marriage, vineyard, house, etc.), not that of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, let them do that before coming to vow at baptism, because *after* vowing at baptism and failing in the battle "There is only shame" (345.4–26).

xi. The stumbling block for the Burkitt theory centres around the phrase "Whoever has set his heart on the state of marriage, let him be married before baptism" (col. 345.11–14; cf. Burkitt 1904, pp. 125–27). Aphrahat, however, did not say that married people are disqualified from baptism (cf. Connolly 1906, pp. 534–35). He is basically saying that those people whose heart is set on marriage, possessions, etc., are disqualified and must retreat before becoming *Bnay Qyōmo*. Adam Lehto rightly deduces that "this (sentence) clearly implies that baptism was not reserved for an ascetic elite" (2019, p. 212) because after getting married, someone can come to baptism, but after taking the vow of asceticism at baptism, one cannot marry. Unless they renounce marriage, married people cannot become *Bnay Qyōmo*. Connolly (1906, p. 534) states correctly that "It is probable, however, that we

have here an incidental reference to a particular discipline connected with baptism, and that persons who had already decided upon matrimony may have been required to marry before baptism", and again, "an analogy may be found in the present practice of some portions of the Eastern Church, which, though it forbids priests to marry, does not deny them the use of marriage contracted before ordination" (ibid., p. 534, n. 1).

xii. It seems that, from around the middle of the fourth century to the beginning of the fifth, the vow that the candidates were taking up was not necessarily sworn at the baptismal ceremony. In the biography of St. Eugen, for example, a pagan priest of a certain village was converted to Christianity and was baptized by St. Eugen himself. On becoming Christian, the pagan priest asked to be St. Eugen's disciple. It is stated that St. Eugen "gave him the sign of *Bnay Qyōmo*, and he himself tonsured him" (*Acta*, vol. 3, pp. 444–45). Whilst the timing of the ceremony of becoming *Bnay Qyōmo* agrees with that of St. Eugen, i.e., after baptism, the canons of Marūtha have different steps (instead of giving the sign and tonsure) of dedicating the *Bnay Qyōmo*, "He [the *chorepiscopus*] shall mark them through prayer, and shall lay his hand on them and bless them, and these shall become the *benai qeiāmā*" (SAD, p. 122).

b. After Baptism.

i. The candidates who are ready to take the vow of virginity and poverty are sent to the waters of baptism.

ii. Once the candidates have taken the vow at baptism, two categories will be noticed by the priests: the strong and the weak (Aphrahat, *Demon*. PS, vol. 1, col. 348.5–6). There is no information about the formula uttered by the candidates to become a member of the order, but surely it was to a lifetime commitment to virginity and poverty.

iii. It is the duty of the priests to encourage the strong in order to continue in their contest, and the weak and lazy should be openly turned from the struggle (col. 348.6–10). Aphrahat, however, does not state with clarity how the priests would discern the weak from the strong, although a hint lies in his references to the qualities of love, loyalty, and readiness to sacrifice like the dog toward his master (cols. 348.20–349.17). Maybe there was some sort of testing required of the *Bnay Qyōmo* immediately after their vow at baptism to ascertain who were the strong, lazy, and weak of the group.

iv. The question of the time gap between "after baptism" (col. 348.4) of the *Bnay Qyōmo* and "turning [back] openly" the newly weak and lazy from the struggle is answered by a previous statement by Aphrahat: "but those who are lazy will be found out there" (344.8–9), i.e., immediately after baptism.

v. Aphrahat does not inform us whether those who were *openly turned [back] from the contest* after the baptism had the freedom to get the blessing of the Church for marriage since they had already vowed virginity.

vi. Aphrahat concludes his important portion about the *Bnay Qyōmo* in *Demon*. 7, sects. 18–21 by the incidental summary statement (at 22): "For this reason, my friend, it is right that those who fall in (or go down) (see Hallock 1967, p. 53; cf. Valavanolickal 2005, p. 178 [not 'who have entered' as in Lehto (2010, p. 213)]) the struggle should not resemble those lazy ones, lest they turn away from the fight and become a disgrace to all their friends" (*Demon*. col. 349.23–27).

6. Looking from the perspective of the main theme of the seventh Demonstration, *viz*. Penance, it may be argued that Aphrahat is questioning or depreciating the *Bnay Qyōmo* for being weak and falling in the contest *after baptism*. They have been warned and it was their choice *before baptism*, in which they vowed not to fall into sin, and they

had the prior choice to live an ordinary life (get married, have properties, vineyards, houses, etc.)!

Based on the previous notes and statements, I believe the following:

1. In the relevant sections of his seventh Demonstration (quoted *in extenso* earlier), Aphrahat "deviates" from the main context of the whole theme, i.e., penance, to direct his discourse to include the penitent *Bnay Qyōmo* and describes *incidentally and briefly* the process by which the candidates join the institution.
2. Some of the *Bnay Qyōmo* who vowed not to fall into sin have sinned and need penance, but they should not be *lazy* like those (novices) who were openly turned back after their baptism (*Demon*. PS, vol. 1, col. 344.8–9).
3. In examining the relevant paragraphs, it is essential to keep in mind the conclusion in sect. 22, which defines the three previous sections.
4. Examining the language of these paragraphs, phrases such as "*vow [choose/single out] themselves* (ܕܓܒܝܘ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ—*d-'agbiū nafšhūn*)", "keep watch over *those who have returned*, care for *those who remain*, and send down to the waters of testing *those who have vowed themselves to war*", and "ܐܠܝܠܝܢ—*'aylēn* (those who)" and "ܐܢܘܢ—*enūn* (they, them)" are all important to determine the different categories that Aphrahat is mentioning. These categories, most probably, are those who return from the contest, the catechumens (married or unmarried), and the *Bnay Qyōmo*.
5. Of other categories, at least one mentioned by Aphrahat, a group is to be baptized along with the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, but not to join them completely or by vow. And for the cluster of the *Bnay Qyōmo,* there was, in all probability, a special rite, formula, statement, or act that would be performed to "legalize" their initiation into the institution.

4. Denotations of a Settled Way of Pious Life

Since it has become increasingly obvious that the expressions "Sons" and "Daughters of the Covenant" denote an ascetic movement, order, or institution, it is now worth asking questions about where and how they lived, what regulations or stipulated duties they followed, and what were the characteristics and outward appearances of their spiritual life.

4.1. Form and Place of Dwelling

The rules covering both the form of living and place of dwelling of the *Bnay Qyōmo* are connected. They aimed to assist the *Bnay Qyōmo* in their spiritual contests and to protect them as much as possible against social and other surrounding risks. In order to minimize temptations from sexual tendencies, expectedly, the *Bnay Qyōmo* were to minimize to the utmost any contact with the opposite sex (Aphrahat, *Demon*, PS vol. 1, cols. 256.22–24. 264.25–265.2; SAD, p. 37; OS, p. 215; *Synod. Orient*. p. 24). The *Bar/Bath Qyōmo* (Son/Daughter of the Covenant) were either to live solitary lives (later called "hermits" in the strict sense), or to dwell together with others of the same sex (later: "coenobites or monastery life").

There are some indications in the fourth- and fifth-century Syriac literature that *Bar/Bath Qyōmo* lived a solitary life. The statement of Aphrahat that "You virgins who have betrothed yourselves to Christ: if a covenanter says to one of you, 'I will live with you and you will serve me', you should say to him. . . Rather, remain in honour on your own, and I [will remain] alone in my honour" (*Demon*. col. 272.1–13), for instance, implies that both Covenanters (the male and the female) were not only living a single unmarried life but a solitary one as well (ibid., col. 256.22–24, 261.5–8). Thus, although the term *iḥydōyo* used generally for *Bnay Qyōmo* denotes various meanings in Aphrahat, mainly just "'not to have taken a wife' or 'not to be in the married state'" (Nedungatt 1973, pp. 206–7), as in other Syriac sources (see Brock 1989, pp. 50–52), it does not exclude the possibility of denoting a solitary life, especially when the term is used along with the adverb "ܚܕܝܐ—alone, by himself" in the singular (e.g., Aphrahat, *Demon*. cols. 164.1–2,6–7,19–26, 256.22–24, 260.13–20, 261.2–11, 737.3–7).

But Aphrahat's exhortations also indicate that in his time some *Bnay Qyōmo* were living together in small community groups, two or more, though actually sometimes comprising both men and women (*syneisaktoi*). He was disapproving of this latter form of dwelling (Nedungatt 1973, pp. 421–22), and states that if a *Bar* or *Bath Qyōmo* wishes to live with the other counterpart Covenanter, let them marry openly and "not become wild with lust [see 1 Cor 7:9]" (col. 260.17) for "It is good for a woman to live with a woman, and a man ought to live with a man" (col. 260.20–22). Furthermore, Aphrahat warns the married man who vowed to be a *Bar Qyōmo* not to live with his wife anymore, so he "will not return to his former state and be considered an adulterer. . . even if a person encounters difficulty, it is proper and right and good that he [or she] should remain alone" (cols. 260.13–261.6; cf. 256.22–24; cf. Lehto 2010, p. 179).

The same notion is expressed by Ephraim the Syrian (Sermones [Beck 1973 ed., vol. 4] pp. 9 [stanza] 447–10 [st] 482) and by Rabūla of Edessa in his *Rules* (SAD, pp. 36, 38; OS, pp. 215–16), the latter stating that "if possible, they (the *Bnoth Qyōmo*) shall dwell with one another; and the same also with the *benai qeiāmā*" (SAD, p. 40; OS, p. 217). He also gives permission for the *Bnay Qyōmo* (male Covenanters) to dwell with their mothers, sisters, or daughters, but not with other laymen (SAD, pp. 36, 38; OS, pp. 215–16). He did not approve of the *Bnay Qyōmo* (males) to let women, albeit in a separate place, live next to their residence (SAD, p. 36; OS, p. 215).

These instructions of the Fathers for the symbiosis of the same sex were fairly observed by the *Bnay Qyōmo*. One *Bath Qyōmo* (Daughter of the Covenant) called Tarbo, though, a sister of Šem'ūn bar Ṣabo'e, is said to have a handmaiden, who was also a *Bath Qyōmo*, living with her, and other similar cases are found in the *Acta Martyrium et Sanctorum* (vol. 2, p. 254, cf. pp. 308, 337).

The place of dwelling was usually either the *Bnay Qyōmo's* own homes or a place dedicated to them within or close to the local church. The general impression of most of the stories of martyrs and saints and rules related to the *Bnay Qyōmo* expresses this fact. The *Bath Qyōmo* (Daughter of the Covenant) of Karkho d-Ledōn, for instance, was living in her own house with her maidservant, who was also the former's disciple (ibid., pp. 230–31; Vööbus 1958, pp. 205–6). It is said in the biography of one of the *Bnoth Qyōmo* named Thecla (ca. 347 AD) from Khaboz village in Persia that there were other *Bnoth Qyōmo* living in the same village (Vööbus 1958, p. 247; Acta, vol. 2, p. 308). The sources also mention that some other villages have settlements of Bnay Qyōmo within their boundaries (Acta, vol. 2, p. 337), and as Rabūla teaches, "The priests shall live in the church, also the deacons, and if possible, also the *benai qeiāmā*" (SAD, p. 46; OS, p. 220).

It appears that in certain places during the end of the fourth and early fifth centuries, the *Bnay Qyōmo* were using some places outside cities called "ܐܘܡܪܐ—*'ūmre* (dwelling places)". St. Ephraim the Syrian's biography relates how when the Huns invaded Edessa the city in 395, they ascended to the mountain beyond the city, where "many ܐܘܡܪܐ—'ūmre (community dwelling places) of *Bnay Qyōmo* lay, for both males and females" (Acta, vol. 3, p. 657; Beck 1973, pp. 6.267–76; SAD, pp. 121, 148).

These communities of *Bnay Qyōmo* were managed by the *Chorepiscopus* or archpriest (SAD, pp. 120, 125). Yet it seems that because of his many duties, local priests and deacons were assigned to oversee the welfare of the *Bnay Qyōmo* living within or around the boundaries of their churches. Whether consisting of small groups or larger communities, in villages or towns, all were meant to be rightly organized and managed (Nedungatt 1973, p. 443; SAD, pp. 125, 148). As Rabūla preferred, in directing the priests and deacons, "Do not permit the *benat qeiāmā* to come one by one to the church or go (back) at night; but, if possible, they shall dwell with one another; and the same also with the *benai qeiāmā*" (SAD, p. 40, OS, p. 217). Likewise, the *Bnoth Qyōmo* (female Covenanters) are the responsibility of the local deaconess. The biographer of the life and instructions of Rabūla himself confirms that "none of them (*Bnoth Qyōmo*) ought to go to the assembly [for worship] or to any official place (best translation for the Syriac ܐܬܪ ܕܟܢܫܐ) without the company of many [other women]. He (Rabūla) wanted that all the [spiritual] daughters of each deaconess live

with her in continence, holiness, and chastity, [saying] 'The unity of many can be [such] that it guards each of them'" (OS, p. 177; Rabbula Corpus (eds. Phenix and Horn 2017, pp. 37–39); cf. D-beth Yahkub 2016, p. 195).

4.2. Duties

The duties of the Covenanters' Orders are best divided into four strata: ecclesiastical and religious in particular; and their members' expected behaviour and work in society more generally.

– Ecclesiastical

Although the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo* is always listed with the priests and deacons (AbouZayd 1993, p. 59; cf. SAD, pp. 122–23, 138, 147; Vööbus 1975, p. 199), the members are not considered to be one of the priestly ranks (SAD, p. 49; OS. p. 221). The order of the *Bnay Qyōmo* is similar to the order of monks and nuns in the present day, and since they have their unique lifestyle, the order connects to the oath they vow, not to the priesthood. A clear distinction was made by the prayer of Martha the Martyr in affirming that the members of the *Qyōmo* are helpers to the pastors: "I confess You, Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes the sin of the world, for the sake of Your name the shepherd-bishops were sacrificed, and were sacrificed the chief-stewards (namely) pastors, and the stewards (namely) deacons, and the helpers to the stewards (namely) the holy *Qyōmo*. . ." (*Acta*, vol. 2, p. 238).

The canons of Marūtha state that the priests and deaconesses were actually elected from the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo/Bnoth Qyōmo*. Concerning the priests, *Rule* 25 states that "He (the *Chorepiscopus*) shall see whether there are villages that are lacking and need priests, and he shall make [priests] among them, and he shall not allow these villages to be led into the habit of unseemliness; and if there are villages where there are no *benai qeiāmā*, of whom he shall make priests, [in this case] he shall bring out brothers from the monasteries or churches which are under his authority, and shall make them" (SAD, p. 120). Furthermore, canon 41 rules that blameless sisters (*Bnoth Qyōmo*) aged sixty "shall be made deaconesses, in order to perform the service of the rite of baptism alone" (SAD, pp. 125–26).

– Religious

By composing special *Rules* for the *Bnay Qyōmo*, Rabūla denotes clearly that he is labeling and recognizing them as a *separate order* to that of the priests, deacons, monks (see SAD, pp. 27–33; OS, pp. 212–14), and the "sons of the church" (see SAD, p. 39; OS, p. 216). In many cases, admittedly, the *Rules* for the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo* are common with that of the priests and deacons, especially with regard to religious and social principles. One important and relevant rule shared by *Bnay* and *Bnōth Qyōmo* with the priests and deacons is that they "shall not demand interest or usury or any craftiness of profane profits" (SAD, p. 38; OS, p. 216).

The canons of Marūtha order the *chorepiscopus* to gather the entire *Bnay Qyōmo* of the villages under his supervision to visit their bishop, participate with him in the holy Liturgy, take his blessings, and go back to their respective places. This will be carried out twice a year: once at the beginning of winter and a second time after the feast of Resurrection (SAD, pp. 122–23), and probably something similar was expected of priests and deacons.

The *Bnay Qyōmo* have the duty to attend the services of the Church and assist the priests and deacons in performing them. Ephraim the Syrian had already established a choir consisting of *Bnoth Qyōmo* (females) and taught them hymns and *Madrōshe* about Christmas, Epiphany, fasts, and other feasts celebrated by the Church, to be sung in the churches (*Acta*, vol. 3, p. 653; Jacob of Serug, *Metrical Homily on Holy Mar* Ephrem (ed. Amar PO, vol. 47 [1995], pp. 48, 96–99; cf. Amar 2011, p. xiii)). Rabūla asserts that "The priests and deacons and the *benai qeiāmā* and *benat qeiāmā* shall be continually in the worship-service of the church and shall not neglect the times of prayer and psalmody night and day", and they should not travel to anywhere without the permission of the bishop "and leave his (*Bar Qyōmo*) church, not even if he has the business of the village or of his

church" (SAD, pp. 43, 45; OS, pp. 218–19). This would surely apply to the *Bnoth Qyōmo* also. It is worth noting that the participation of the *Bnay* and *Bnoth Qyōmo* in worship services was still detected at Turfan several centuries later (see Hunter and Coakley 2017).

The *Bnay Qyōmo* could also be elevated and ordained to all the priestly ranks. Aphrahat indicated that the ranks of the priesthood are from the *Bnay Qyōmo* (in *Demon.* PS, vol. 1, cols. 680.7–681.8). Canon 15 of the Synod of Laodicea (ca. 364 AD) according to the Syriac Synodicon, gives permission only for the *Bnay Qyōmo chanters* to ascend to the ambo and recite the sacred books (ed. Vööbus 1975, p. 118). The canons of Marūtha affirm that parish priests are ordained from the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, and deaconesses are selected from the *Bnoth Qyōmo* (SAD, pp. 120, 125–26).

– Social

It is evident by the place of their residence and their mode of life that although the *Bnay Qyōmo* were dwelling in separate places, they lived within the Syriac communities and constituted an integral part of them. Although some of the *Bnay Qyōmo* were living in seclusion, as is the case of one *Bath Qyōmo* (Daughter of the Covenant) of Karkho d-Ledōn (see Acta, vol. 2, pp. 230–31; Vööbus 1958, pp. 205–6), the impressions provided by the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat and the other writings of the Syriac Fathers prove that this group of *Bnay Qyōmo* lived and worked within the Syriac-speaking communities of different sizes, both in countryside and in urban towns, as noted earlier (cf. *supra* 5.1). Hence, in order for the *Bnay Qyōmo* to maintain their special course of life, their ways of direct social contact with the wider surrounding community have to be regulated to achieve the goal of being disciples of Christ and imitating Him (Aphrahat, Demon. col. 276.20–22; and see Macina 1999).

– Behaviour

In the practical admonitions given by Aphrahat in his sixth Demonstration, and in some *Rules* of Rabūla, impressive instructions of behaviour to follow within the society can be found, not only by the *Bnay Qyōmo* but also by every Christian believer. Their instructions to the *Bnay Qyōmo* related to many social issues, which include mode of speech, self-presentation at social gatherings, avoiding a deceptive tongue, etc. (the following classification below being adapted from Nedungatt 1973, pp. 425–28).

a. Speech

Aphrahat, who addresses the order in singular, guides as follows: "Let his [the man upon whom the yoke is laid = *Bar Qyōmo*] speech be peaceful and pleasant, and let his mind be clear toward everyone. Let him weigh his words (carefully) and set a fence against harmful words around his mouth, and may foolish laughter be far from him" (*Demon.* col 273.2–7). The Church Father actually made it clear in many other places of his *Demonstrations* that the preferred general rule, not only for the *Bnay Qyōmo* (cf. col. 681.2–3) but also for other Christian believers, is in fact silence (cols. 137.3–4, 424.23–24, 429.12–15, 432.16–21). Though if speaking is necessary, by the Syriac expression "ܬܟܠ ܡܠܝܗ ܕܥܒܕ ܠܗ ܒܡܠܝܗ—Let him weigh his words", he does not only mean selecting his words carefully but also counting them so as not to speak continuously.

b. Banquet and attire

On this matter, Aphrahat rules that "He should not recline at banquets, nor is it appropriate for him to wear fancy clothing. He should not boldly drink too much wine, and a proud mind should be far from him. It is not appropriate for him to look at fancy clothing, or to wear stylish cloaks" (ibid., col. 273.9–14).

Aphrahat is not really allowing the *Bnay Qyōmo* to attend banquets, or wear fancy clothes, most probably because it is contrary to the call of upholding the principle of poverty, and these acts are considered signs of "vanity and pride" (see Nedungatt 1973, p. 426).

It is true, as George Nedungatt noted, that, "By counselling temperance in the use of wine, Aphrahat holds his distance from Tatian, who forbade it altogether" (ibid.). Rabūla,

in his *Rules* 23 and 46 states that "The priests and deacons and the *benai qeiāmā* and *benat qeiāmā*, shall keep themselves far from wine and meat; but if there is any among them who is infirm in body, he may use a little, as it is written [in 1 Tim 5:23]; those, however, who become drunken or who enter taverns, shall be expelled from the church" (SAD, p. 42; OS, pp. 217–18) and "The *benai qeiāmā* or the *benat qeiāmā* shall not drink wine after the defunct (at the funeral-feast)" (SAD, p. 47; OS, p. 220).

They can, however, attend some other functions at which they might partly fulfill their duties. The *Rules* of Rabūla refer to two such occasions that they were obliged to take the permission of the local priest and, in some cases, of the bishop: "You (the priests) shall not allow the *benai qeiāmā* to go to gatherings, or other places without priests, and the *benat qeiāmā* without the deaconesses" and "No one among the priests or deacons or *benai qeiāmā* shall travel without our permission to the (imperial) court or to any far off place and leave his church, not even if he has the business of the village or of his church" (SAD, p. 45; OS, p. 219).

c. Truthfulness and calumny

The *Bnay Qyōmo*, Aphrahat exhorts, should "get rid of a deceitful tongue, put away envy and strife, and cast away lying lips. When words are spoken about a person who is not present, let [the Covenanter] not listen or receive [such words], so as to not sin, until he investigates [the matter]. Mockery is a repulsive blemish, and it is wrong for it to arise in the heart" (*Demon*., col. 273.14–21). This proves that the *Bnay Qyōmo* were considered part of general society and mingled with their social environment, who inter alia ought to be alert not to be involved in any defamation of other peoples' characters.

d. Possessions

On the matter of possessions, consider the words of Aphrahat: "He (*Bar Qyōmo*) should not lend and receive interest (using Valavanolickal (2005) trans. and ed. [Mōrān 'Eth'ō 23], p. 144; cf. Lehto 2010, p. 184), nor should he love greed. He should suffer wrong but not do wrong [to others]" (col. 273. 21–23); this verbiage implies that some of them were lending money and receiving interest. Some others, as shown later (see below, under g), were poor and needed to beg for a living. This suggests that not all of the *Bnay Qyōmo* renounced their total possessions to live in complete poverty.

e. Respect for others

Regarding respect for others, Aphrahat offers the following: "Let him (a *Bar Qyōmo*) stay away from commotion, and not speak frivolous words. He should not scoff at the person who repents of his sins, nor mock his brother who is fasting, nor shame the one who is not able to fast" (col. 273.23–27). Concerning fasts, some are organized by the Church for certain periods, there are also those taken up voluntarily by people for different reasons (e.g., repentance, vows, etc.). In addition, there are many kinds of fasting (cols. 97.1–100.24). Whatever the case might be, the *Bnay Qyōmo* should not blame or criticize others for their inability to fast or for any other actions.

Furthermore, Aphrahat firmly orders the *Bnay Qyōmo* to "Let insults not come out of our mouths, with which we pray to God (see James 3:9–10). Let us not curse [lit. not be cursers], so that we might be set free from the curse of the Law" (col. 244.11–13).

f. Fraternal Correction

Aphrahat directs the *Bnay Qyōmo* by saying that "Where he (*Bar Qyōmo*) is received, let him rebuke, but where they do not receive him, let him keep his honour. At an appropriate time let him speak his word, but [if there is no opportunity] let him be silent [lit. Let him speak wherever his word will be accepted, otherwise he should remain silent]" (cols. 273.27–276.3).

g. Begging

Aphrahat shows the correct way for begging for physical hunger: "He (*Bar Qyōmo*) should not despise himself on account of the demands of his stomach, but should reveal his secret to one who fears God, and keep himself from the Evil One" (ibid., col. 276.4–6).

h. Comportment with enemies

Aphrahat strikingly instructs that "He (*Bar Qyōmo*) should not respond to an evil man, nor to his enemy. Let him fight in such a way as to have no enemies at all. When they envy him because of what is good, let him add to his goodness and not be plagued by jealousy" (ibid., col. 276.6–10).

i. Almsgiving

As shown earlier (see *supra*, under d), some of the *Bnay Qyōmo* were somehow economically capable of sustaining themselves, others, however, were not. Aphrahat presents both cases and comforts them by saying that "When he (*Bar Qyōmo*) is able to give to the poor, let him rejoice, but when he is not able, he should not be sad" (col. 276.10–12).

j. Inappropriate Dialogue

Aphrahat classifies the people whom *Bar Qyōmo* should not deal with. He warns the *Bnay Qyōmo*: "Let him (*Bar Qyōmo*) not be acquainted with an evil person, nor let him speak with a disgraceful man, so that he will not give himself over to disgrace. He should not dispute with a blasphemous man, or his Lord will be reviled because of him. He should stay away from the slanderer and should not try to make one person pleasing to another with flattering words" (col. 276.12–28).

k. Legal Issues

The *Rules* of Rabūla single out two legal issues of which the *Bnay Qyōmo* should be well aware. The 26th *Rule* states that "The priests and deacons and the *benai qeiāmā* shall not become *'epiṭrāpē* (='representatives') or *šalīṭanē* ('rulers, taskmasters, leaders') to the lay-people, nor take on them [any] lawsuit of their relatives, or of those who bribe judges (lit. 'who buy judges for themselves'), and persevere at the door of a judge" (see SAD, p. 43; OS, p. 218); and the 41st *Rule* states that "The priests or deacons shall not give surety to anyone, nor the *benai qeiāmā*, neither in writing nor without writing" (SAD, p. 46; OS, pp. 219–20).

4.3. Work

The Syriac literature of the fourth and fifth centuries, in general, does not provide enough information concerning the type of employment that the *Bnay Qyōmo* were allowed to undertake for a living. Still, our sources convey some arresting impressions.

Aphrahat's general rule concerning employment for the *Bnay Qyōmo* is affiliated with poverty. He repeatedly encourages them to abandon the world and its materialistic properties (col. 249.2–6) by selling their possessions (col. 241.8–9) and distributing them to the poor (col. 256.19–20) in order to "buy the pearl, so that we might be rich [cf. Matt 13:46]" (col. 241.8–9; cf. 244.22, 248.9–10, 280.20). Their pattern is the Lord Himself, who in His humility "He made himself poor (Phil 2:6–8). . . though he was a fountain that quenched thirst, he grew thirsty and asked for water to drink [John 6:7], though he was fullness and satisfied our hunger, he hungered when he went out to the wilderness to be tempted [Matt 4:2; Luke 4:2]" (col. 276.24–277.8). Aphrahat is calling the *Bnay Qyōmo* to live in poverty when he refers indirectly to the poverty of Elisha the prophet by stating that his provisions were only a bed, table, chair, and candlestick (col. 264.20–22). Rabūla expresses the same thought about poverty when stating that "All those who have become disciples of the Messiah (priests, deacons, *Bnay* Qyōmo and Bnoth Qyōmo) shall not be covetous to possess more than their needs, but they shall distribute it to the poor" (SAD, p. 42; OS, p. 218; cf. Harvey 1994 on this as a principle of social welfare).

It seems, however, that not every member of the *Bnay Qyōmo* order was following this promoted rule of poverty. Vööbus (1958, p. 202) claims that Aphrahat "could not speak of absolute poverty as a common trait of these elite-groups" because some of them were giving to the poor and others were lending money and receiving interest. The goal of "absolute poverty" for the *Bnay Qyōmo* was probably not Aphrahat's aim anyway. He did not want the *Bnay Qyōmo* to go around begging from everyone to survive, even in extreme cases, for food (cf. col. 276.4–6). Surely his intention was that covenant members should live self-sustained lives ("give us our daily bread [Matt. 6:10]") and detach themselves from the materialistic world in order to grow spiritually (e.g., col. 249.2–3). If the phrase "when he is able . . . when he is not able" in the statement of Aphrahat: "When he (*Bar Qyōmo*) is able to give to the poor, let him rejoice, but when he is not able, he should not be sad" (col. 276.10–12) applies to the *one* and the *same person*, then the statement conveys the notion that the *Bnay Qyōmo* did not always have the opportunity to donate to the poor. If, however, Aphrahat points to different categories of *Bnay Qyōmo*, i.e., some being able to donate and others not, then the question may be posed: how much and in what form is the donation to the poor? Even a smaller amount than a penny (cf. Mark 12:42) given is considered a donation. In fact, a statement made by Aphrahat criticizing the contemporary leaders of the people, i.e., the bishops, for violating what seems to be the *acquiring possessions* and *lending–interest* rules of the *Bnay Qyōmo* because the bishops were elected and ordained from the order, and poverty, which proven herein were required of them, asserts the following: "There have arisen leaders among our people who have forsaken the Law and have adorned themselves with evil. They have acquired possessions, and greed has conquered them. They have lent at interest and demanded advance interest. . ." (*Demon*. col. 577.1–4; cf. SAD, p. 42; OS, p. 218). Not following the rule does not mean that it does not exist.

Such trade with worldly money and goods is prohibited work for the *Bnay Qyōmo,* and Aphrahat repeatedly warns against such acts since commerce involves possessions, lending money, and demanding interest. This sort of work, he asserts, would lead to greed and other sins because they have "adorned themselves with evil. . . The one who loves fields and merchandise will be deprived of the city of the holy ones" (col. 248:9–10); "Let the one who takes on the yoke of the holy ones remove himself from commerce" (cols. 248.2–249.2; cf. 249.10–12; see Smith (1903, p. 283) for the technical Syriac term for "commerce", as against Valavanolickal's (2005) "money affairs", p. 110, and Lehto's (2010) "getting and giving", p. 174); and "He (a *Bar Qyōmo*) should not lend and receive interest (using Valavanolickal's accurate trans. in this case), nor should he love greed" (col. 273.21–23). Rabūla is in obvious agreement and adds to the list of prohibited work "any craftiness of profane profits" (SAD, p. 38; OS, p. 216).

Some other specific, named professions are not allowed to Covenanters. They should not be "watchmen of granaries and vineyards or hirelings for the laymen", just, as noted above, they are not to represent or lead over laypeople and plead with judges (SAD, p. 43: OS, p. 218). It seems that employment as any sort of "watchman" was considered to be degrading and prohibited to the *Bnay Qyōmo* because during times of persecution in the Orient they were assigned to this same profession as their punishment (see *Acta Sanctorum Confessorum Guriae et Shamonae exarata Syriaca lingua Theophilo Edesseno Anno Christi 297* [ed. Rahmani], p. 27).

What kind of work, then, are the *Bnay Qyōmo* able to perform? Aphrahat is constantly expressing the idea that the *Bnay Qyōmo's* main duty is evangelizing and promoting the Christian faith. So, they have to proclaim the Gospel and be diligent in teaching (cols. 637.25–640.1) and spreading it (cols. 241.19–20; 244.6–8) because the Lord has hired them "for his vineyard" (col. 244.13–17). The Lord, moreover, has given them talents to trade and multiply for spiritual benefits (col. 248.9–15) instead of trading for worldly profits: "Let us do business with the silver that we have received, so that we might be called diligent servants (cf. Matt. 25: 12,23)" (col. 240: 13–14; cf. also 248.12–14, 252.1–3, 356.27–357.1, 401.2–5, 637.35–640.1, 716,.23–24, etc.). Thus, Aphrahat is calling the *Bnay Qyōmo* to spread the word of the Gospel "Let us be poor in the world (cf. James 2:5), but let

us enrich many with the teaching of our Lord" (col. 244.22–23) because the workers did not receive their reward yet for "their Lord has not yet come" (401.17–21).

The relative paucity in Syriac sources on possibilities for any definite employment among the Covenanters to sustain themselves is troubling, and the difficulty is compounded by Aphrahat's reticence. Some statements by Rabūla, however, do fill out the picture by acknowledging clearly that one of the *Bnay Qyōmo's* possible day jobs was to act as stewards or managers of Church affairs: "The laymen shall not become the *rabai bātē* (stewards, managers) in the church except where there are no *benai qeiāmā* who are suitable" (SAD, p. 47; OS, p. 220). Moreover, in addition to their pastoral care, the parish priests of the local community are obliged to care for the well-being and behaviour of the *Bnay Qyōmo* who live within the boundaries of their congregations (SAD, p. 38; OS, p. 216). They should take care of the poor of the order, and if they cannot, they should inform the local Bishop so he will attend to the *Bnay Qyōmo's* needs "so that because of their need they may not be compelled to do something that is not suitable" (SAD, pp. 39, 41; OS, pp. 216–17), or in other words, work not fitted for them.

5. The Spiritual Life of the Covenanters

To understand the spiritual life of the *Bnay Qyōmo*, one needs a short description of the main requirements (and related terminology) of Syriac monasticism of the fourth and fifth centuries AD.

5.1. Virginity

Virginity (ܒܬܘܠܘܬܐ—*bthulūtho*) and chastity were especially important characteristics that the *Bnay Qyōmo* had to preserve (see, e.g., Aphrahat, *Demon*. cols. 268.26–272.19). According to numerous Syrian writers (see Brock 1989, pp. 40–41, 56), every Christian soul is betrothed to the heavenly Bridegroom at baptism, but this is particularly so for any *Bnay Qyōmo* (cf. *Demon*. col. 272; *Acta*, vol. 2, pp. 236–37), male or female, because each made their special ascetic vows at the time of baptism to remain perpetually virgin. Not just in the exterior or physical way, but inwardly or spiritually, in the heart or soul; virginity and chastity are important features for Covenanters to watch and keep intact at all times. Even though a person of *Bnay Qyōmo* could remain a *virgin* outwardly, one could commit adultery secretively or in thought. Hence, they should not marry and remain in a state of complete sexual continence, physically or by thought, neither openly nor secretively. They ought to take prophet Elijah (Aphrahat, *Demon*. col. 253.9–10) and John the Baptist (col. 264.22–25) as examples of their virginity. They should live a spiritual life that is "angelic" in essence. According to the Gospel, angels live in a marriageless state (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35–36) and so should the *Bnay Qyōmo* (cols. 841.3–4.10–13, 23–26). Even though living among people, they should be in the likeness of the angels, *strange* in their spiritual way of life to the common people (see col. 248. 25–28).

To abstain from sexual inclinations amounts to one of the fiercest battles the *Bnay Qyōmo* struggle to uphold to keep their virginity intact. One of the best and most effective *weapons* to fight this kind of temptation is to minimize contact, as much possible as they can, with the opposite sex (cols. 264.25–265.2). Along with other Fathers of the Syrian Church in his time (as mentioned earlier in Section 4.1), the directives which were given by Aphrahat in this connection indicate that some of the *Bnay Qyōmo* adopted the *syneisaktoi* (mixed-gender communal) form of living. But Aphrahat encourages all Covenanters to either live a single (not married) or solitary life (later called "hermit") or with others of the same sex (later: "cenobites or monastery life") (cf. Nedungatt 1973, pp. 421–22), in order to maintain holiness and purity (cols. 260.13–261.14 [using Lehto 2010, p. 179]; cf. col. 256.22–24). The Church Father insists that under no circumstances should the *Bnay Qyōmo* cohabitate with the opposite sex, especially the females who are considered to be specifically betrothed to Christ (col. 272.1–19).

Ephraim the Syrian (Beck 1973, pp. 9.447–10.482) and Rabūla of Edessa expressed similar views. Rabūla's *Rules* require that "if possible, they (the *Bnoth Qyōmo*) shall dwell

with one another; and the same also with the *benai qeiāmā*". However, he permits the *Bnay Qyōmo* to live with the other sex with only one condition: that person has to be their mother, sister, or daughter. He also warns priests and deacons in his 4th *Rule* not to "be served by women and particularly not by the *benat qeiāmā.*" Rabūla goes further in his *Rules* by prohibiting the priests, deacons, and *Bnay Qyōmo* (males) to compel the *Bnoth Qyōmo* (females) "to weave garments for them by coercion" (SAD, pp. 36–38, 40; OS, pp. 215–17). All these rules and warnings have one intention: keep the least possible direct contact with the opposite sex whenever they are by themselves, not with the wider community, to lessen as much as possible the temptation of carnal desires.

Virginity is upheld, not because marriage is a sin, an evil, or something forbidden for the faithful to do, but because celibacy is superior to marriage. Aphrahat openly clarifies that marriage is holy and is in accordance with the teachings of the Bible "Far be it from us to find any fault with marriage, which God has given to the world! For it is written: '*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good*' (Gen 1:31)" (col. 836: 20–23). But when compared to celibacy, which is chosen by the *Bnay Qyōmo* by their own free will (col. 841.19–22), marriage becomes inferior. As he puts it, "But some things are more excellent than others. God created heaven and earth, and they are very good, but heaven is more excellent than earth . . . He created Adam and Eve, but Adam is much better and more excellent than Eve. And he created marriage, the procreation of the world, and it is very good, but virginity is more excellent still" (cols. 836.24–837.11).

5.2. Holiness

Virginity was not the only test involved in "covenanting" with Christ. Holiness (ܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ—*qadishūtho*), treated with length by Aphrahat, was another, if nonetheless related to virginity and required of both genders of the *Bnay Qy*ōmo (cf. ibid. col. 261.2–14; Koltun-Fromm 2001, p. 213).[1] The Syriac Fathers use *qadishūtho* (holiness) and its adjectives *qadisho*/*qadishto* (=holy man/holy woman) in its wider as well as narrower senses of the meaning. The wider or general sense is used to denote the *state of holiness* that God, a person, people, or a thing possesses. So, God is The Holy One (Demons., cols. 192.2,13, 425.22, 469.4. etc.), the Bible is holy (cols. 1.7, 45.8, 97.5, 1045.18, etc.), the *Law* is holy (cols. 105.13,22, 121.8, etc.), the *people of God in Old Testament* are holy (cols. 221.1,22, 224.25, etc.), the *people of God of the New Testament (Christians)* are holy (col. 232.3,6, etc.), the *inhabitants of heaven* are the holy ones (cols. 241.20, 248.10, etc.), etc. Christians generally are encouraged to attain this sort of holiness in this world as well as in the other (e.g., cols. 12.16–17, 296.3). The base of this sense lies in the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ: "*Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy"* (Matt 5:48). To acquire this kind of *qadishūtho*, for which every Christian including the *Bnay Qyōmo* is exhorted to strive, a person has to pray, fast, perform good deeds, and generally follow Christ's commandments (see e.g., col. 240.2–5).

A narrower sense of holiness finds its base in the command of the Lord to Moses to go to the people and "hallow [sanctify, consecrate] (=qadēsh, as imperative verb of *qadishūtho*) them today and tomorrow. . . and Moses came down from the mountain to the people and hallowed (qadesh) the people. . . he said to the people: Be ready the third day; you shall not touch a woman" (Exod. 19: 10, 14–15). In other words, being in *Qadishūtho* in the special sense is the *sexual continence* that the people practice after marriage. Aphrahat speaks elaborately concerning this kind of *qadishūtho* in his Demonstration 18: "A Demonstration against the Jews and on Virginity and Holiness (*Qadishūtho*)" (cols. 825.2–25, 832.2–4,7–10), showing the term was used for special occasions, temporarily or permanent, and for a specific person or group of people (cols. 261.15–18,26–264.1). The *Bnay Qyōmo*, in particular, are "ܩܕܝܫܐ—*qadīshe* (holy ones)" who have abstained from sexual relations and kept themselves spiritually and carnally "pure" (cols. 260.22–24, 261.12–14), although this does not then mean that married people cannot be "holy" unless they abstain from sexual relations. As Aphrahat teaches, "Let us be faithful in His service, so that He might serve us in the dwelling place of the holy ones" (col. 241.19–20), while "The one who loves fields and merchandise will be deprived of the city of the holy ones" (co. 248.9–10; cf. 265.18–24).

Surely, the "holy ones" of the Kingdom of Heaven are not only the Bnay Qyōmo (see col. 833.4, 1013.21, 1020.18–19), but also married people. Aphrahat also made it clear that not all *Bnay Qyōmo* are "ܩܕܝܫܬܐ—*qadīshe* (holy ones)" in either the narrower or broad sense of holiness (e.g., col. 356.4–7).

In such a case, then, it is obviously important to be careful in distinguishing between the general/wider and the special/narrow usages of the term *qadishūtho* as found in the writings of Aphrahat, being aware that context will be important in determining meaning. Note, for example of interest, how Aphrahat states that virginity (*bthulūtho*) and holiness (*qadishūtho*) vowed by the *Bnay Qyōmo* can be considered as kinds of fasting (col. 97.11–14).

5.3. Other Virtues

Besides other numerous virtues that the *Bnay Qyōmo* should follow (e.g., ibid. col. 240.6–10), it is necessary for them to pray constantly and fast, which Aphrahat calls "desirable fruits" (col. 245.20), read the Scriptures (349.6–7), be humble (277.19–23), and show mercy (through giving alms) to those who are needy (240.17–18, 272.26, etc.). Even though every Christian has to perform these virtues, *Bnay Qyōmo* aim to achieve a higher level of these as the spiritual ones. Aphrahat and other Fathers admonished the *Bnay Qyōmo* to be spiritually perfect and fulfill *all the commandments* of Jesus *in deeds* (e.g., 240.1–6, 272.20–24; OS, p. 177). To do so, for instance, the *Bnay Qyōmo* should be just and judge themselves truthfully to ascertain that they are following the instructions of the Gospel in order not to turn their "faces downward [before the members of] the tribunal, who sit on thrones and judge the tribes" (Aphrahat, *Demon*. 245.4–6). They are "sanctified, watchful, ready [for the spiritual battles] and standing [in prayer] before God all their days" (col. 829.11–13). Being vigilant and praying ceaselessly the vigils are essential acts required of the *Bnay Qyōmo* to observe (256.16–18). If, however, they are struck in their struggle against sin, there is a remedy for that: repentance (see cols. 316.8–10, 317.15–17, etc.) because "for all illnesses there are remedies; they are cured when a wise physician finds them" (316.6–10). The physicians are the bishops, the disciples of our Wise and Glorious Physician (316.10–11, 317.22–23; cf. 357.8–12, 457.9–10), who neither should withhold medicine from the one who needs to be healed nor should they reveal the sin that person has confessed to anyone (cols. 317.22–320.16).

Fulfilling the commandments written in the Gospel is considered the "weapon" of the *Bnay Qyōmo* to make them ready for the spiritual fight (cf., e.g., col. 245.6–8). In numerous declarations, Aphrahat demonstrates that the *Bnay Qyōmo* are athletes (col. 265.8), and they should not be defeated (col. 677.13–14) but always be victorious in struggle (col. 609.19–21) taking place in the world, which is the arena of their fight (248.18–20, 612.6–8). They have to equip themselves with the suitable and right armaments: be vigilant and hold fast to the oath vowed at baptism and the teachings of the New Testament, especially the Gospel, which are extremely important for their spiritual struggle (240.1–256.24; *Liber Graduum* [Kmosko] PS, vol. 3, col. 452.16–22). Otherwise, they will surely lose the contest (Aphrahat, *Demon*. PS vol. 1, col. 321.16–24) because "Our Adversary is skillful, my friend, and the One who fights against us is crafty. He prepares himself against the strong and the heroic, so that they might be weakened. For the weak belong to him, and he does not oppose those whom he has captured" (col. 253.14–19). Aphrahat is keen to present practical tactics for the *Bnay Qyōmo* to fight against various temptations of the devil (256.3–24). If the Adversary "tries to come to them in sleep", for example, "they are to be attentive and keep watch, singing songs and praying. If he entices them with possessions, they should give them to the poor" (256.16–20).

Aphrahat warns the *Bnay Qyōmo* that the life of virginity adhered to by them is not favoured by everyone. There will be mockers who mock them (*Demon*. cols. 312.6–9, 14–15, 613.17–18), and he notes that such scoffing is not a new strategy against Christians because one sees it already explicitly used by the opponents of Jesus (cf. Luke 16:14; *Demon*. col. 312.9–14), giving a case of the Jews at that time criticizing and sneering at the *Bnay Qyōmo* for keeping virginity and not marrying and having children (cols. 817.1–8, 841.3–10).

The *Bnay Qyōmo*, therefore, should be patient, on guard against mockers, and "Read and learn, and be zealous to read and to act. Let this Law of God be your meditation at all times" (312.6–18; using Lehto 2010 trans. p. 198).

But what of those who do not "make the grade", or "fall from grace"? There is more to tell.

5.4. Fallen Sons of the Covenant

In his seventh Demonstration, as already noted, Aphrahat states that after making their vows at baptism, the newly *Bnay Qyōmo* are classified into two categories: the *strong* and the *weak*. The priests should encourage the strong, and openly turn back from the struggle those who are lazy and weak "lest when fighting overtakes them they conceal their weapons and take flight and suffer defeat" (col. 348.1–10). He does not say whether those who immediately after baptism were *openly turned [back] from the contest* then had the freedom to obtain the blessing of the Church for marriage, since they had vowed virginity, but were now only going to live a normal life. By his statement, though, that "There is only shame for the one who turns away from the struggle. The one who turns away but who has not yet vowed (lit. 'chosen' or 'singled out') himself nor yet put on armour is not blamed. But if any of those who have vowed themselves and have put on armour and turn away from the struggle, they are ridiculed" (col. 245.19–24), a problem is encountered if one assumes the hypothesis of Burkitt and his supporters is right, because "surely the state and privileges of those who 'went back' at first, and those who after trial are 'sent back' are the same. The second class has been tried by the water of baptism and found wanting; they ought to have turned back at first. Neither one class nor the other is a scandal to the community; they are not blamed, but Church privileges are not for them, they are not to live the Church's life, they have retired from the 'contest.' In one word, they are out of communion" (Burkitt 1906, p. 12). But this is a curious deduction. The issue is not with those who simply "went back" before baptism because nothing happened in connection with them yet. But, if "baptism is not the common seal of every Christian's faith, but a privilege reserved for celibates," as Burkitt awkwardly contended (Burkitt 1904, p. 125), will those who are "turned back openly" by the priests from the contest *after baptism* and get married be sacked from baptism and considered sinners all the days of their life, "out of communion"? If the vow of celibacy is associated with that of baptism and both are one, is their baptism revocable? (Vööbus, for one (Vööbus 1958, p. 198) concludes it must be irrevocable). Although no time frame is set for the *Bnay Qyōmo* after the baptism to turn them back from the contest, Aphrahat's relevant assertion apparently implies that they are considered *novices*. This could suggest that they did not come into a *full vow* of their celibacy. The present writer believes that the vow taken by the people who are willing to join the *Bnay Qyōmo* order is either *separate* or *different* from that of baptism (see above on Initiation). Otherwise, if the vows of baptism and those of the *Bnay Qyōmo* are "the same", what theological difference does it make for the fallen ones, if they were sent back openly immediately after baptism *or* if they willingly left the institution after a while?

So, what would be their spiritual (excommunicated or not) and liturgical status (ability to participate in Holy Sacraments) within the Church community? The sources actually distinguish between the fallen *Bnay Qyōmo* who are expelled from the Church by the hierarchy for certain reasons and those who are repentant. The admonitions of Aphrahat before and after the vow are warnings for the *Bnay Qyōmo* not to be lazy and fall in battle. If they fall, however, they should not justify themselves (*Demon*. col. 356.12–16) or lose hope and ask for repentance. He says: "For this reason, my friend, it is right that those who fall in the struggle (following Hallock's trans. 1967, p. 53, as against Lehto's (2010) 'have entered', p. 213, and Valavanolickal's (2005) 'go down', p. 178) should not resemble those lazy ones, lest they turn away from the fight and become a disgrace to all their friends" (*Demon*., col. 349.23–27). He adds by stating that repentance is neither an excuse for sinning nor a cause to become a slack (352.1–5). The priests, on the other hand, should not withhold repentance for those who confess their sins (356.18–22) because, first, it is contrary to the

Lord's practice since He never rejected a repentant sinner, and secondly, the Judgement Day has not yet come (356.18–357.7; cf. Nedungatt 1973, p. 437).

The fallen *Bnay Qyōmo* are to be sent for spiritual rehabilitation. *Rule* 29 of Rabūla orders the following: "Send into the monasteries the *benai qeiāmā* or the *benat qeiāmā*, who have fallen from their rank, for repentance; but if they do not stay in the monastery they shall not be received in the Church, but be suspended with their parents, as long as it is right" (SAD, p. 44 [some trans. needs correction]; OS, p. 218). The conditional phrase "if they do not stay" implies that they should stay a certain period of time. This period, however, is not identified; yet a canon from the Synod of Catholicos Ezekiel in AD 576 rules the period to be six months (Chabot 1902, p. 116).

The *Bnay Qyōmo* could also be expelled by the hierarchy of the Church for several reasons. Drunkenness, going frequently to taverns to enjoy the pleasures of life (food, drink, etc.), and breaking the vow of virginity were major causes for expulsion. Thus, the *Rules* of Rabūla inform that those "who become drunken or who enter taverns, shall be expelled from the church" (SAD, p. 42; OS, pp. 217–18). Another *Rule* of Rabūla states that "They shall anathematize, bind and send to the town for judgement the layman who dares to take a *bart qeiāmā* (as a wife); [and] if she, too, became corrupted by her consent, they shall send her, too" (SAD, p. 43; OS, p. 218).

In short, the Fathers of the Syrian Church wanted to stress that every Christian, but especially the *Bnay Qyōmo*, should be *a real and active temple* for the dwelling of the Spirit of Christ they received on the day of their baptism (so, Aphrahat, *Demon*. cols. 292.15–293.11, 309.22–26). They should not make His Spirit angry with them and they ought to let Him take control of their lives by being diligent in following His commandments (cols. 292.15–305.21, 312.15–18). Nedungatt (1973, p. 444) has conveyed matters excellently by saying that "The life of a Covenanter is life according to the Spirit. The spirituality of the Covenanters thus leads the way in the spirituality of the Syriac Church, which emphasizes the Spirit (*rouḥā*) over against the characteristic Greek accent on the *Logos*".

6. Covenanters' Physical Appearance and Dress

Bringing matters toward a close, some remarks are surely worth making about what is known of the outward appearance of the Covenanters.

6.1. Form of Dress

Numerous sources confirm that the *Bnay Qyōmo* had a special uniform to distinguish them from the other orders of the Church during the fourth and fifth centuries. Among the martyrs of the severe persecution of the Persian king Shapur II was a eunuch named Ōzōd. Seeing that many Christians of Karkho d-Ledōn were martyred for the sake of the name of Jesus, Ōzōd, himself a Christian, was eager to attain the "crown of martyrdom". And since he was close and a respected eunuch of the king, the soldiers and government personnel were acquainted with him. So, he disguised himself by wearing the uniform of the *Bnay Qyōmo* and joined the persecuted, whereupon he was killed. When Ōzōd was summoned by the king to the court the next day, he was not found. Personnel of the king went out searching for him, only to find that he had been killed. The excuse of the killers was that, while they suspected him of being Ōzōd because "he was wearing the clothes of the *Bnay Qyōmo*" they dropped their suspicion (*Acta*, vol. 2, pp. 244–45). Another piece of evidence of the special uniform of the *Bnay Qyōmo* turns up in the (compositely written) *Doctrine of Addai* (ca. 400). The text praises the spiritual and social behaviour as well as the evangelization of the *Bnay Qyōmo* among even the non-believing communities: "For every one who saw them ran to meet them, that he might honourably salute them; because even the sight of them spread peace over the beholders" (*The Doctrine of Addai* (ed. Phillips 1876, pp. 48, 50–51)). The words "saw them" clearly indicate that they were distinguished by their appearance, i.e., a uniform. Testimonies for their appearance are also attested in various other sources (e.g., Gregory Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*

(eds. Abbeloos and Lamy 1877) vol. 3, col. 39; *Acta*, vol. 2, p. 296. n.2, OS, p. 177; Vööbus (1960, pp. 201–2)).

Moreover, although it could be argued that relevant statements in the work of Aphrahat and the *Liber Graduum* are just exhortations for the *Bnay Qyōmo* about what to wear, and not about any set uniform, it can still be maintained that these statements are about the spiritual meaning of clothes. They do not provide information about *what* the uniform was per se, but *how* it should be. Elaborating on the spiritual meaning of defilement, the *Liber Graduum* states that "Whoever dresses lavishly does not defile himself, but becomes really puffed up and extremely haughty and is brought down from the pursuit of Perfection" (Kmosko, col. 265.9–14). On Aphrahat's advice, "He (the *Bar Qyōmo*) should not love the adornment of clothing, nor let his hair grow long and decorate it, nor should he anoint himself with aromatic oils… nor is it appropriate for him to wear fancy clothing… It is not appropriate for him to look at fancy clothing, or to wear stylish cloaks" (*Demon*. col. 273.7–9, 10–11, 13–14 [here preferring Valavopolickal's trans. over Lehto's].

6.2. Colour of Clothing

A note among the *Rules* of Jōḥannan bar Qūrsos (beginning of the sixth cent.) implies that the clothes of the *Bnay Qyōmo* were black: "Those who have children dedicated to the *qeiāmā*, shall give them a decent garment since their childhood so that they do not become luxurious in white linen garments" (SAD, p. 59). Later still, in his *Ecclesiastical* Chronicon, Bar Hebraeus (1226–1286) states that when Bar Ba'oshmīn became the Metropolitan of the East in ca. 344 AD, he encouraged the clerics, Bnay Qyōmo, and bishops to change their uniform and wear white-coloured clothes, similar to those worn by many lay people. The intention of the Metropolitan was that the clergy would avoid being targeted by the authorities during the persecution of Shapur II since they could be easily identified by their special uniform. Bar Hebraeus continues by saying that after the persecution ended and when "Nestorianism entered the East, with the change of (the colour of) clothing followed the change of doctrine, for those who adhere to it. They (their clerics, *Bnay Qyōmo* and bishops) did not accept to go back to wear the previous holy uniform, in order to distinguish themselves from (the clergy) of all other Christian peoples, who their monks are humbled by the Antonian uniform" (*Chron. Eccles*. vol. 3, cols. 39–41; cf. *Acta*, vol. 2, p. 296, n. 2 [by Bedjan]). Bar Hebraeus does not state his source regarding this information, yet when the earlier statements of Aphrahat, the *Liber Graduum,* and the testimonies of *Acta Martyrium* are considered, one may fairly safely infer that the style of the Antiochene *Bnay Qyōmo's* uniform during the fourth and fifth centuries was simple and monochrome, most probably black.

6.3. Hood, Shoes, and Girdle

In the story of Ōzōd mentioned earlier (Section 6.1), it is said that he covered his head with a black hood (Acta, vol. 2, p. 245; Vööbus 1958, p. 206). It seems that the black hood was part of Covenantors' clothes, although one cannot ascertain whether it was decorated with crosses on top of it, like the black hoods of the Syrian Orthodox monks today, or was simply black. In any case, the impression gained is that it covered the whole top of the head, tied to it, and most probably covered the back of the neck and extended to the shoulders.

There is a long exhortation by Aphrahat, which runs as follows:

> Let us place the *helmet* (Ephes 6:17) of salvation on our heads, so that we will not be wounded and die in the battle. Let us *gird our loins* (Ephes. 6:14) with justice and truth, so as not to be weak in the contest… Let us take as a *shield* (Ephes 6:16) against the Evil One the readiness that comes from the Gospel of our Saviour (*Demon*., col. 244.2–8).

It could not be determined whether the Church Father refers in any way to Covenanters' clothes or simply reproduces a short version of Paul's text in his Epistle to the Ephesians. The armoury that Paul mentions in the Epistle consists of six parts: a girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword. Aphrahat enumerates only three: helmet,

girdle, and shield, and it is possible that he was alluding to the hood, girdle, and garments of the *Bnay Qyōmo's* order. Besides the garments and the cutting of the head's hair, though, it is discovered in the instructions of Rabūla that shoes are a definite part of the *Bnay Qyōmo*'s uniform (OS, p. 177).

6.4. Hair

The cutting off of the hair when becoming a member of *Bnay Qyōmo* is attested in the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat and in the biography of Rabūla. The former requests that a *Bar Qyōmo* should not "let his hair grow long and decorate it" (col. 273.8 [preferring Valavopolickal's trans. over Lehto's]; cf. Nedungatt 1973, p. 426), and the latter conveys the same idea (OS, p. 177). Both sources, however, do not say whether this also applies to the *Bnoth Qyōmo* (female Covenanters) or not; and they also do not make clear how short the *Bnay Qyōmo's* hair should be cut off. In any case, their main goal is to urge the *Bnay Qyōmo* to detach themselves from the adornments of the flesh and typical ways of living in the physical world, and so concentrate on their spiritual life.

6.5. Veil

Rabūla's clear instructions to the *Bnoth Qyōmo* were for them to use the veil while walking or going out into the streets. He says: "He was admonishing the whole *Qyōmo* of women (female Covenanters) at all times, that the face of a bride of Christ must never appear in the street in front of anyone without the covering of chastity. That they should not display at all any sign of licentiousness in any of their manners of dress" (OS, p. 177; Phenix and Horn 2017, pp. 36–37).

Conclusions

By examining the available evidence of the fourth- and fifth-century Fathers of the Syrian Church, generally and down to the finest detail, it was determined that the *Bnay Qyōmo* (males and females) existed as a discrete order within the Syriac-speaking communities in northern Mesopotamia at that time.

In terms of their rites and traditions, this paper has covered various matters that help characterize the *Bnay Qyōmo* community more thoroughly than before. Baptism, as established, was not only for celibates (as Burkitt and his supporters wrongly supposed), but for everyone who was married or unmarried (الاحب وحملاسنم). Those who willingly volunteered (choosing/or singling themselves out—ەەەە ەەەە وإ) to enter into the spiritual "contest (ەەل—*'agūno*)" were required to take a vow, which marked their covenant with the Lord and was connoted by the phrase "the one who takes up the yoke of the holy ones". Based on the data presented, mainly by Aphrahat, the logical suggestion for the vow taken by the *Bnay Qyōmo* as the vow of baptism was different from that for celibacy. The latter, for its part, was a vow consisting of two parts: the first at the ceremony of baptism, which could be revoked by the priests immediately after baptism, who sent select *novices* back to live a normal life, and the second after a period, when the priests gave approval for the novice to become a *full member* of the order. The order had firm rules and regulations and an ascetic way of life that was strictly adhered to, including the wearing of a special form of dress (black with a hood) that distinguished them from others. From the fully admitted and consistently holy Covenanters, also, members of the clergy could be selected.

The *Bnay Qyōmo* played a singularly important role in the spiritual, ecclesiastical, religious, and social life of Syriac Christians living in northern Mesopotamia for several hundred years. Their influence is still felt in the life of the Syriac-speaking Church. While the order of the *Bnay Qyōmo* was ultimately overtaken by the Antonian order of monasticism and fell into abeyance around the eighth century, the title *Ba[r]th Qyōmo* (Daughter of the Covenant) has continued until this day, for the wives of priests in the Syrian Orthodox Church are generally called *Bnoth Qyōmo* (*Phenqītho d-khirotūnīas* (ed. Iwaz 2009, p. 280); cf. *Rasamat Al-Qissisāt* (ed. Hayek 2001)). The lives and influence of this unique order of men

and women, who committed themselves to holy service to Christ and the Church so long ago, continue to speak to us about dedication to Christian living in our own century.

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Note

[1] It is worth noting that it is well-known general rule of grammar in Syriac, similar to other Semitic languages, that the plural masculine verbs and nouns generally represent both genders, males and females. So, when the Syriac writers attribute the action or the noun to include both genders, they denote it with a plural masculine verb or noun. Otherwise, they will specify it with a proper or gender verb or noun. This grammatical fact in Syriac could mislead some scholars to inaccurate conclusions. Cf. Parisot, *Aphraatis*, PS vol. 1, col. 261: 2–14; Koltun-Fromm 2001, p. 213.

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Article

Wulfila, the Gothic Bible, and the Mission to the Goths: Rethinking the 'Apostle to the Goths' in Terms of Homoian Theology, Conversion as a Strategy of Empire, and Fourth Century Social and Cultural Transformations

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Abstract: Wulfila (c. 311–c. 383) translated the Bible into Gothic, creating the first literary text in a Germanic language. His biography is contested; his parentage, place of birth, episcopal consecration, and theological position are all disputed. The fourth century saw heated debates about the Trinity, and the Goths were often termed 'Arians', despite the fact that the teachings of the African presbyter Arius (c. 256–336) were not directly transmitted to them. This article notes a rebirth of interest in Wulfila, his mission, and the Gothic Bible, employing the notion that 'Homoian' (a more neutral term than 'Arian') theology was a possible bridge between Catholic monotheism and Gothic polytheism as the starting point for a re-examination of Wulfila's evangelism as both an imperially mandated strategy and the creation of a route into civilization and modernity for the Goths. Christianity was modern and fashionable in the fourth century; Germanic tribes wishing to abandon their status as *pagani* (rustics) or heathens (heath-dwellers, not civilized city dwellers), viewed conversion as a move 'up'. The Gothic Bible played a role in developing Gothic literacy, but was also a magical object, the first of its kind, a book/roadmap for a people undergoing a great cultural transformation.

Keywords: Wulfila; conversion of Goths; Homoian theology; late Roman Empire; *Codex Argenteus*

Introduction

The mission of the fourth-century bishop Wulfila ('Little Wolf') to the Goths, and his translation of a majority of the Biblical text, creating the first literary work in a Germanic language, are acknowledged to be important events in the history of the Christianization of the late antique Germanic peoples (MacMahon 2006). Wulfila's birth is generally dated to 310–311, and Philostorgios identified his ancestors having been among those Greek prisoners of war "of Cappadocian stock, from a village called Sadagolthina near the city of Parnassus" (Philostorgios, *Historia Ecclesiastica* [ed. Amidon], p. 20). These Christians spread their faith among their Gothic captors in the former Roman province of Dacia, north of the Danube, from 250 CE (Brennecke 2014, pp. 120–21). Sources for Wulfila's biography are scant and fragmented (Munkhammer 2011); Auxentius, Bishop of Durosturum, who was a student and foster-son of Wulfila, wrote a biography of his spiritual father shortly after his death. However, this early testimony is not directly transmitted to modern scholars but was included in the fifth-century Latin "theological polemic", the *Dissertatio Maximini contra Ambrosium*, by the Arian bishop Maximinus against Ambrose of Milan. Timothy Barnes (1990, p. 543) argues it is likely that Maximinus may have edited or altered the text of Auxentius' letter. A second major source is the epitome of the *Church History* by Philostorgius (ca. 364–ca. 425) which was compiled by Photius, a ninth-century Patriarch of Constantinople (Cusack 1998, pp. 39–47). These sources identify Wulfila as a Homoian ('Arian') and underpin what Hagith Sivan terms the "modern consensus. . . Ulfila's birth

in 311, consecration as bishop of the Goths by a leading Arian cleric between 337 and 341, and a mission to Gothia in the 340s" (Sivan 1996, p. 377).

Yet this "modern consensus" is beset by questions and disagreements. The bishop's name has often been written as Ulfila, Ulfilas, or Urphila; this is due to variants in the sources by Late Antique and early medieval authors. Ernst Ebbinghaus (1991b, p. 236) explains that "Philostorgius used *ουρφίλας*, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret wrote *ουλφίλας*, Auxentius wrote *ulfila*, and Cassiodorus-Iordanes wrote *uulfila*". Ebbinghaus argues the Gothic form can confidently be identified as Wulfila, and this author accepts his conclusion (Ebbinghaus 1991b, p. 238). Wulfila's birth is generally dated to 310 or 311, and his death to 382 or 383 CE (MacMahon 2006).[1] However, there are disputes about the type of Christianity he espoused, which are linked to attempts to date his episcopal ordination accurately. In establishing the precise contours of his life and mission, the only agreed upon date is January 360, when Wulfila attended the Council of Constantinople, which confirms he was already a bishop at that time (Ebbinghaus 1991a, p. 311). This church synod, convened by Homoian Constantius II (reigned 337–361 CE), aimed to ordain a new Bishop of Constantinople (Eudoxius), and to promulgate a creed that could be used to judge whether bishops were "in accord or not with imperial theological policy" (Parvis 2020). Sara Parvis argues that after Constantius II died the next year, the following four Eastern emperors—Julian, Jovian, Valens, and Theodosius—perceived the 360 Council of Constantinople as mistaken in intent and tried in various ways to avoid or reverse its consequences (Parvis 2020). Further, she questions the usefulness of identifying Wulfila with Constantius II's 'Homoian' creed, arguing that "to call Ulfila a homoian is to interpret a long and interesting theological, political and pastoral career, spanning most of the Arian controversy, purely in terms of one action, the signing of the 360 creed" (S. Parvis 2014, p. 51).

The fourth century commenced with Diocletian's savage persecution of Christianity, which was then illegal. The reign of Constantine saw the toleration of Christianity after the promulgation of the Edict of Milan by Constantine and Licinius in February 313 CE (Anastos 1967). The Council of Nicaea in 325, summoned by Constantine to end the dispute between Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and the presbyter Arius, resulted in the Nicene Creed. This profession opposed the teaching of Arius that Jesus was subordinate to God the Father, not "of the same substance". Oskar Skarsaune (1987) argues convincingly that this creed was not a 'consensus' text, but rather upheld Alexander of Alexandria's position, as well as excluded that of Arius and his followers:

> We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance [*ek tēs ousias*] of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father [*homoousion tō patri*], through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and our salvation descended, was incarnate, and was made man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven and cometh to judge the living and the dead. (cited in Leclercq 1911)

Until the late fourth century, this statement of orthodox faith was in competition with various other creeds promulgated at other church councils, and the position of Arian and other non-Nicene Christians remained, more or less, stable until Recared, king of the Visigoths in Spain, abjured Homoian Christianity and embraced Catholicism in 589 CE (Koch 2014).

The twenty-month reign of Julian the Apostate, enemy of Christianity and convert to paganism in 361 CE (the year he became emperor), was a short-lived disruption of Christianity's rise to popularity and public status as the religion of the empire. Julian died at Ctesiphon in June 363, and Christianity was restored, to become the official religion of the Roman Empire when Theodosius I promulgated the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 CE (Erhardt 1964). Theodosius summoned a council to reconcile Nicenes and Homoians in 383 CE, which Wulfila attended. He died in Constantinople and was, Neil McLynn

avers (McLynn 2007, p. 134), given a public funeral hosted by the emperor, similar to that granted to Athanaric in 381. Wulfila's successor and former secretary, Selenus, was, according to church historian Socrates, "a Goth by his father's side, and by his mother's a Phrygian" (quoted in Mathisen 1997, p. 674). Sara Parvis identifies the issue at the heart of all biographies of Wulfila. He can be made to be unimportant, or his importance can be over-emphasized:

> If the dials are set low, as they often are, he can disappear completely from the narratives both of the rise of the Goths and of the triumph of homoousian Christology. But if we set the dials to the maximum, he can be argued to be the man ultimately responsible both for the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and for the establishment of Nicene Christianity as the normative form of Christianity up to the present day. (S. Parvis 2014, pp. 49–50)

Herwig Wolfram, addressing the individual fame Wulfila attained as creator of the Gothic script, translator of the Bible, and bishop of the *Gothi minores* (Roman Goths, those who entered imperial territory as Christians before 376 CE) notes that Wulfila's flock in Moesia (northern Bulgaria), settling near the Roman city of Nicopolis ad Istrum (likely on the site of the later medieval capital, Veliko Tarnovo), evidently had no king or judge and that the bishop was likely to have filled these important roles (Wolfram 2013, p. 26). He considers this the result of Wulfila being of "some socio-political standing", given that he "rose from lector to bishop without ever having been deacon or presbyter" (Wolfram 2013, p. 27). This present article charts a middle way between Parvis's two extremes, but accepts Wolfram's assertion of Wulfila's high socio-political status and likely exercise of governance over the *Gothi minores*. I will review the evidence for Wulfila's biography and theological formation and discuss the mission to the Goths in terms of fourth-century imperial policy (Cusack 1998). Wulfila's posthumous fame is also addressed, primarily through an examination of the Gothic Bible translation and the surviving prestige manuscript, the *Codex Argenteus* (Penzl 1977, p. 12).[2]

1. Wulfila in His Time: Life, Theology, and Mission

Given that Wulfila was born ca. 310–311 in Gothia (modern Romania) in the community of Greeks that were forcibly transplanted there in ca. 250 CE as prisoners of war, he was of mixed ethnic and religious background. As with all minority populations, the Christian Cappadocians intermarried with local Goths and spread their religion among those they formed relationships with. Wulfila has been identified as the son of a Cappadocian mother and Gothic father, but this is not certain (Schäferdiek 2014, p. 46). Sivan observes that "the participation of Theophilus, 'bishop of the Goths' . . . in the Council of Nicaea and his subscription to its creed indicate that the tenets of orthodox Christianity infiltrated Gothia as early as 325, when Ulfila was only fourteen years old" (Sivan 1996, p. 378). He argues that this means Wulfila's theological education was orthodox, and that he must have become a Homoian later. Herwig Wolfram concurs that Theophilus and Eutyches, both Catholic candidates for the "apostle of the Goths" title, were possible teachers and/or predecessors of Wulfila (Wolfram [1990] 1997, p. 76).[3] This is uncertain, given Philostorgios, a key source for Wulfila, who was also of Cappadocian parentage and adhered to Anomoean theology, argued that Wulfila's theological orientation was always Homoian, a position that is generally accepted in modern scholarship (Heather 1986; Dunn 2012). A reconstructed biography of Wulfila sees him as a lector at the age of thirty, and ordained bishop in the late 330s or early 340s: this matter of a few years is important, because Constantine the Great died in 337, and was baptized on his deathbed by the Homoian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia (d. c. 342), who may have met Arius as a fellow student of Lucian of Antioch (Lienhard 1987, pp. 415, 419). Eusebius of Nicomedia's career is closely tied to the issue of Wulfila's consecration, as Bishop of Nicomedia and later of Constantinople, and because he died shortly after the latest plausible date. Nevertheless, there are multiple problems in determining the date of this event.

Barnes notes that scholars have supported various dates from 336 CE to 341 CE, and advanced different criteria for preferring each date. Relying on Philostorgios, he argues for 336, when the Council of Constantinople "deposed Marcellus of Ancyra, attempted to force Alexander the bishop of Constantinople to accept Arius into communion, and then celebrated the *tricennalia* of Constantine" (Barnes 1990, p. 544). Barnes suggests that Constantine's program for the event recalled the acts of Augustus in the *Aeneid*, and that other Constantinian initiatives, such as the reconquest of Dacia, recalled Trajan's reign. As the Emperor intended to invade Persia to defend the Christians there, Wulfila's episcopal consecration would have been apposite. This date is also preferred by Knut Schäferdiek for different reasons; he believed there is an error in Auxentius' chronology, such that Wulfila was bishop for forty-seven years and not forty in total (Schäferdiek 1979, pp. 254–56). Richard Klein has argued the correct date was 338 CE, at the Council of Constantinople which deposed Paul and made Eusebius of Nicomedia bishop of Constantinople (Klein 1977, pp. 254–57). However, Eusebius of Nicomedia did not become Bishop of Constantinople until 339 CE. The traditional date of 341 for Wulfila's consecration (which tallies approximately with Auxentius' asserting he had been a bishop for forty years at the time of his death) has Constantius II as emperor, and Eusebius of Nicomedia, the consecrating bishop, occupying the see of Constantinople (Lifa 2020, p. 95).

Auxentius and Philostorgios are both emphatic that Wulfila's theological position was Homoian. Yet multiple scholars have objected to historians drawing the line between the so-called 'Arians' and 'Nicenes' too rigidly. Joseph Lienhard, SJ argues that giving Athanasius primacy as a source distorts the picture, as many he accused of Arianism rejected both the label and some typical doctrines of Arius (Lienhard 1987, pp. 416–18). Colm Luibheid has rehabilitated Eusebius of Nicomedia's theology, noting the three fifth-century church historians, Theodoret (who openly calls him an Arian), Socrates, and Sozomen, were all later hostile sources who focused on Eusebius' actions, like his opposition to Alexander of Alexandria and sympathy for Arius, and discounted his theology. Luibheid argues that in Eusebius of Nicomedia's own (admittedly scant) writings, the "letter to Paulinus of Tyre, a fragment of a letter to Arius and a description of the contents of another letter of which he was the joint author and which dates from the period after the council [of Nicaea] when he was in exile", a more nuanced position is evident (Luibheid 1976, p. 5). After all, Eusebius of Nicomedia signed the Nicene Creed, and his exile at Constantine's decree was because he did not support the exile of Arius; however, he was not one of two named bishops, Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, who were recorded as objecting to the excommunication of Arius at the Council of Nicaea (Luibheid 1976, p. 14).

This perspective is valuable because Hagith Sivan has argued that there are two ways to construe Wulfila: the 'Arian' Wulfila of Auxentius and Philostorgios, and the 'Nicene' Wulfila of Theodoret (ca. 393–ca. 466), Socrates (b. c. 380), and Sozomen (d. 443). In Theodoret, the Arians, Emperor Valens, and Bishop Eudoxius of Constantinople push for a mass conversion of Goths to bring them in line with imperial policy (Arian Christianity) (Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* [Bagster edn.] 4.12). The Goths resist because they are already Nicene Christians. Wulfila, introduced as the bishop of the Goths, "prevails upon his Gothic flock (and presumably their chieftains) to convert from orthodoxy to Arianism under the false impression that no real doctrinal difference between the two positions existed" (Sivan 1996, p. 374). Sivan notes that the chronology is uncertain (for example, the conversion is linked to the Gothic crossing of the Danube in 376 CE, by which date Eudoxius had been dead for six years). Socrates mentions Wulfila in the context of the 360 Council of Constantinople, saying "Ulfila, bishop of the Goths, then for the first time assented to this [Homoian] creed; for previously he embraced that of Nicaea, being a disciple of Theophilus, who as bishop of the Goths was present at the council of Nicaea and subscribed what was decided there" (Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* [Bell edn.] 4.33; McLynn 2007, p. 131). McLynn hypothesizes that Socrates saw Wulfila's name among those who signed Constantius II's Homoian creed; he then went back to the records of the Council of Nicaea and found Theophilus and concluded Wulfila had been raised in the

Catholic faith as a disciple of Theophilus, which is possible but far from certain, given the spread of Christianity among the Goths by the heretical Audius, mentioned above (n. 3). Socrates then says Wulfila created the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible, which was "a doctrinally neutral foundation for Gothic Christianity" (McLynn 2007, p. 132). Socrates then claims the martyred Goths of Athanaric's persecution were Catholic Christians and attributes Fritigern's conversion to Homoian Christianity to political expediency, that is, a wish to gain the favor of Valens.

Sozomen offers a broadly similar account, but focuses on the two Gothic leaders, the Pagan chieftain Athanaric and the *dux* Fritigern, who accepted Homoian Christianity "out of gratitude to the emperor [Valens]" (*Historia ecclesiastica* [Bohn edn.] 6.37; see Sivan 1996, p. 375). Sozomen thinks Wulfila was theologically orthodox but pragmatically chose to support the appointment of Eudoxius at the Council of Constantinople in 360 and was Homoian from then on. Therefore, he regards the martyrs of Athanaric's persecution as heretics (Sozomen, *Hist. eccles*. 6.37; Sivan 1996, p. 376). Sozomen's account makes Wulfila the leader of the embassy asking permission for the Goths to settle in Roman territory (Thrace); his chronology is impossible, however, as he dates the embassy when Wulfila interceded on behalf of the Goths under attack by the Huns, requesting they be allowed to cross into the empire, to 360 CE (McLynn 2007, p. 133). Sivan agrees that Theophilus, the 'orthodox' bishop of the Goths who attended the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, was a likely formative influence on Wulfila. He argues that Wulfila "experienced a personal conversion under the expert tutelage of Eusebius of Nicomedia" and then "embarked on a missionary campaign among his own people beyond the Danube" (Sivan 1996, p. 382). This is possible but again the evidence is not strong, given that Auxentius and Philostorgios (while preserved in later texts) are the earliest commentators on Wulfila's life and mission (Ebbinghaus 1992), and attest to his lifelong Homoianism. McLynn observes that Auxentius "assumes his readers' assent to Ulfila's theological soundness, his pastoral achievements, and his authority as teacher and preacher" (McLynn 2007, p. 126). He concludes that Auxentius' audience was other Homoians in the wake of Wulfila's death in Constantinople while at the 'Conference of Sects' of June 383 CE. McLynn's shrewd suggestion that a state funeral was granted to Wulfila would explain the Nicene historians' positive portrayal of him as the recipient of Theodosius's favor (McLynn 2007, p. 134).

The fact that no single chronology can be applied to the sources for the life of Wulfila, despite scholarly efforts to force contradictory narratives into a consistent biography, means that assessing his legacy is difficult (Szada 2020). After the Homoian creed was promulgated by Constantius II in 360, Valens authorized no new creeds. The accession of Theodosius I, a Nicene Christian, augured ill for Homoians of all stripes. However, as McLynn observes, the emperor saw fit to grant a state funeral to the former enemy of empire Athanaric in 381 CE and likely did the same for Wulfila in 383 CE (McLynn 2007). This probably says more about Theodosius's policy toward the Goths than theology; when he was appointed emperor by Valens' co-ruler Gratian in 378 CE he was given responsibility for the Gothic military campaign. After three years' fighting, he expelled the Greuthungi and they became subjects of the Huns (Cusack 1998, p. 45). Then, in 382, he settled the Tervingi in Moesia in return for military service (Schäferdiek 2014, p. 46). The crossing of the Danube in 376 by the Tervingi, if we follow Theodoret and Orosius, was led by Fritigern and possibly pastored by Wulfila, and represented a large recently converted population added to those Goths who were Christian during the war between Athanaric and Valens from 367 to 369 CE (Heather 1986, p. 292). There is no direct evidence that Fritigern allied with Wulfila; yet, to quote Socrates, "to express his sense of the obligation the emperor had conferred on him, [Fritigern] embraced the religion of his benefactor, and persuaded those who were under his authority to do the same" (Socrates, *Hist. eccles*. 4.33, p. 210). This created a group of newly baptized Goths who required instruction in the new faith and pastoral care, which seemingly only Wulfila was qualified to provide.

Although Valens mandated that the Tervingi be given food and land on which to live, he was occupied with the campaign in Persia, and they were reduced to starving indigence, and in some instances sold their children for food (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* [ed. Rolfe] 31.4 [vol. 3], p. 407). Heather argues that Valens aided the Tervingi to cross the Danube because he had no choice, and that sources that record his pleasure at acquiring so many new troops are "imperial propaganda, which was designed to put the best face on events" (Heather 1991). Guy Halsall contends that the Tervingi were supposed to have been disarmed after the crossing, which was effected by means of the Roman fleet, but that the scale of managing the migration exceeded planning and rapidly become uncontrollable (Halsall 2007, pp. 166–67). Fritigern's comitatus was murdered by Romans at a banquet, and he barely escaped alive. Driven to desperate measures, the Tervingi joined with the Greuthungi and revolted; they won a decisive victory over Valens at Hadrianople on 9 August 378 CE, in which the emperor was killed (see esp. Jordanes, *Getica* [ed. Mierow] XXVI). Theodosius I then was appointed emperor by Gratian and then expelled the Greuthungi and settled the Tervingi in Moesia. There was one distinctive fact about the Theodosian settlement of the Tervingi; as A. H. M. Jones observes, the Goths "were not *laeti*, subjects of the empire, but *foederati*, a foreign state bound by treaty to Rome" (Jones 1966, p. 68). This indicates the Goths kept their tribal structure and leaders, showing the Romans struggled to contain them and "how generous they had to be to obtain a treaty" (Cusack 1998, p. 45).

2. The Mission to the Goths and the Transformation of the Late Antique Empire

Auxentius records a creed crafted by Wulfila, which is clearly not theologically Nicene, but which would have been acceptable to most Homoians:

> the Father is for his part the creator of the creator while the Son is creator of all creation; and that the Father is God of the Lord, while the Son is God of the created universe . . . the Holy Spirit our advocate can be called neither God nor Lord, but received its being from God through the Lord . . . neither originator nor creator, but illuminator, sanctifier, teacher and leader, helper and petitioner and confirmer, minister of Christ and distributor of acts of grace . . . he [Ulfila] defended not comparable things [*comparatas res*] but different dispositions [*differentes adfectus*]. (Dunn 2012, p. 8)

It is, therefore, concluded that Wulfila's devising of the Gothic script and translation of the Bible into Gothic were interpreted as theologically neutral actions, and the likelihood of McLynn's suggestion that Theodosius I granted Wulfila a state funeral when he died in Constantinople in 383 CE strengthens the case for presenting him as holding Nicene-compatible beliefs in assessments by later historians who were not privy to texts circulated among Homoians and their sympathizers.

Whatever Wulfila's theological convictions, his mission in Gothia lasted only until 347/348 CE, when Aoric, father of Athanaric, launched a persecution against the Christians. Wulfila and his flock fled south of the Danube to Moesia (now located across parts of Serbia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria). The translation of the Bible that he undertook began around 350 CE and "despite its strong dependence on the original Greek source, embodied the idiom of the Danubian Goths" (Wolfram [1990] 1997, p. 690). Ebbinghaus affirms the Greek script as the sole model for the Gothic alphabet (Ebbinghaus 1996), and Artūrus Ratkus and Ireneusz Kida contend that original grammatical and syntactical forms are identifiable in the Gothic text of the Bible (Ratkus 2009; Kida 2009). Wolfram posits that the definition of 'Goth' in the fifth century had two vital criteria: "the shared Arian faith and a language which, thanks to Ulfila's Gothic translation of the Bible, had developed into a common tongue of the court and the religious cult" (Wolfram [1990] 1997, p. 9). In 376 CE, two Gothic polities experienced transformative change. In Ukraine, the Ostrogothic king Ermanaric (ca. 291–376), whose name translates as 'universal ruler', suicided due to fear of the Huns, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res* 31.3). Later, the *Getica* of Jordanes (incorporating Cassiodorus' *Gothic History*) blamed his death on a wound and celebrated

his key place in the ruling Amal dynasty of Theodoric (Jordanes, *Get.* XXIV [ed. Mierow]; Barnish 1984), though the Ostrogoths over whom Ermanaric ruled were a "multi-racial political unit", and Ermanaric did not seem to be particularly honored in Ostrogothic Italy (Heather 1989, p. 105).

Closer to the boundaries of the Roman Empire, the Goths in modern Romania were known as "'the Good', *Vesi* . . . whom their neighbors—the 'splendid' Ostrogoths or Greuthungian 'steppe and grass dwellers'—called *Tervingi*, 'forest people'" (Wolfram [1990] 1997, p. 69). There were three years of military unrest between the Tervingi and the Romans from 367 to 369 CE, at which point Valens met "the Gothic leader Athanaric on board a ship in the middle of the river [Danube]" (Heather and Matthews 1991, p. 19). The result was the Treaty of Noviodunum, which freed the Goths from imperial control and established peace between the participating polities. The Tervingi crossed the Danube and entered Roman territory in 376. As previously noted, this momentous movement was linked in the writings of Late Antique church historians to the mission and person of Wulfila. Mission was understood as a technique to integrate formerly hostile peoples into the Empire by means of conversion to Christianity, creating a "bridge between barbarism and civilization" (Momigliano 1963, p. 14). However, those Goths who accepted Christianity were often persecuted by fellow Goths who stayed Pagan. There were four wars between the Romans and the Goths in Wulfila's lifetime; this created a climate of political and religious uncertainty (Kulikowski 2007). Auxentius mentions the persecution ordered by Aoric, the father of Athanaric, in 347/348 CE, which coincides with Wulfila's move with his flock to Moesia (Cusack 1998, p. 42). Further information about religious persecution and the vexed issue of what type of Christianity the Goths were converted to is found in the *Passion of Saint Saba*, the hagiography of a Catholic Goth who was martyred during the third persecution of Christians on 12 April 372 at the age of 38 (Heather and Matthews 1991, p. 103).

The *Passion of Saint Saba* demonstrates that Gothic villages had councils that resisted attempts to quench their independence by centralized authorities (Heather 1991). Saba came to the attention of Gothic leaders after they devised a test of conformity to the Pagan religion:

> When the chief men in Gothia began to be moved against the Christians, compelling them to eat sacrificial meat, it occurred to some of the Pagans in the village in which Saba lived to make the Christians who belonged to them eat publicly before the persecutors meat that had not been sacrificed in place of that which had, hoping to preserve the innocence of their own people and at the same time to deceive the persecutors. (Heather and Matthews 1991, pp. 112–13)

Wolfram points out that Saba resisted this attempt to preserve his life and was exiled for a time by his fellow villagers. When he returned home, the villagers tried to protect him by "swearing there were no Christians in their *haims* [village]" (Wolfram [1990] 1997, p. 72). Saba broke ranks, and they then swore there was only one Christian, Saba, in the village (protecting their Christian family members). Saba was again banished by Gothic authorities, and when he returned from this second absence was finally condemned to death by Atharidus, who repeated the test of consuming sacrificial meat and executed Saba when he refused to eat it (Cusack 1998, p. 43).

The primary sources are confused; both Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen claim Wulfila was still a missionary during the reign of Athanaric and conflate the anti-Christian persecutions of 348 and 369–372 CE (Cusack 1998, p. 44). However, Zeev Rubin noted that the Goths released Saba's Sarmatian priest Sansala, who went south and crossed the Danube to avoid further trouble (Rubin 1981, p. 37; Heather 1986, p. 317). Further, Atharidus, in the *Passion*, appears not greatly interested in the persecution of Christians. Rubin further suggests that the *Passion of Saint Saba* can be harmonized with Socrates' chronology if the following is true: Saba's initial exile at the hands of the villagers was in 348 during the first persecution; the second exile at the hands of officials was in 369; and the outbreak when he was finally martyred in 372 CE is understood as "Athanaric's

reaction to missionary activities within his own domain, instigated by Fritigern and his allies" (Rubin 1981, p. 45). Saba was 38 at the time of his death, so Rubin's chronology makes his first exile at the age of fourteen, which is young, but not impossibly so.[4]

The entry of a party of Tervingi into the Empire in 376 was politically linked to the rivalry between the anti-Christian Athanaric, who ordered the persecution of 369 CE, the same year that he had concluded the peace with Valens contracted on the Danube (mentioned above) and Fritigern, the *dux* or war leader who led the opposing faction (Heather 1986). Wolfram cautions that while Wulfila was likely implacably opposed to Athanaric, whom Heather confirms was a hereditary judge of the third generation (Heather 1991) and thus very powerful, there is no evidence that he was allied with Fritigern before the Tervingi crossed the Danube (Wolfram 2013, p. 29). Heather observes that the Huns' destruction of the Greuthungian polity that pushed them westward was probably a decisive factor. Following the last great Roman historian, the Pagan Ammianus Marcellinus, Heather argues (Heather 1986, pp. 290–91) that in 376 CE two groups of Goths requested permission to cross the Danube into the Empire; Valens permitted the Tervingi under Fritigern and Alavivus, but refused the Pagan Greuthungi, who later crossed illegally and joined the Tervingi to defeat Valens at Hadrianople in 378 CE. Certain Late Antique historians, including Theodoret and Jordanes, believed conversion to Christianity was required by Valens in permitting the crossing; that may be, but as Heather's exhaustive review of the sources reveals, the impact of the Hunnic defeat of the Greuthungi, who were forced to migrate after their king died, was an event greater than is usually acknowledged, and a likely factor in the split between the Tervingi of Athanaric and those of Fritigern and Alavivus, at least as great as the spread of Christianity among the Goths prior to the Danube crossing (Heather 1986, p. 318). It is likely that the client relationship indicated by Valens' offer of asylum involved the Tervingi converting to Christianity (which really meant accepting the ritual of baptism), one and all.

3. After Wulfila: Germanic Homoianism, the Ostrogothic Kingdom, and the *Codex Argenteus*

This raises the question of why did the Visigoths and Ostrogoths retain Homoian theology after the ascendance of Theodosius I and his enforcement of Nicene orthodoxy? Maurice Wiles has shown that 'Arians' continued to live openly in Constantinople and throughout the empire, despite laws forbidding them to own churches or participate in religious processions, exiling their priests, and banning them from making wills (Wiles 1996). In the case of the Goths, Marta Szada demonstrates that Latin Homoian churches prospered into the later fifth century and played a strong part in the Christianization of the Goths as they moved westward through Roman territory after Hadrianople (Szada 2020, pp. 551–52). While Wulfila spread Christianity outside the boundaries of the empire and undoubtedly made converts, inside imperial boundaries and surrounded by Christian communities, existing as Pagans ceased to be an option for the Goths. As William Frend states (Frend 1976, p. 12), "the real agent of conversion was the social disintegration this vast transfer of life and custom brought about. Religious transformation followed social transformation". Some traditional customs were retained; when Alaric I died in 411 CE, the year after his Gothic army sacked Rome, Jordanes described his funeral as follows:

> His people mourned for him with the utmost affection. Then turning from its course the River Busentus [Busento] near the city of Consentia—for this stream flows with its wholesome waters from the foot of a mountain near that city—they led a band of captives into the midst of its bed to dig out a place for his grave. In the depths of this pit they buried Alaric, together with many treasures, and then turned the waters back into their channel. And that none might ever know the place, they put to death all the diggers. (Jordanes, *Get.* XXX [ed. Mierow], p. 95)

Alaric I was a baptized Christian, but his funeral—in a riverbed, not a consecrated church, with treasure and slaughtered slaves—resembles that of a Homeric hero rather than a Christian monarch. Yet his brother-in-law and successor, Athaulf (d. 415), married Theodosius

I's daughter Galla Placidia, and had he not been assassinated the following year, a different future for the Visigoths can be imagined (Humphries 2007, p. 260).

Jordanes identifies the Visigoths as spreading Homoian Christianity to other tribes, specifically the Ostrogoths, Gepids, and Vandals. Edward Thompson (1962) argued the adoption of 'Arianism' was an attempt to preserve a distinct Germanic identity inside Roman borders, and that aspects of Homoian theology—the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit, for example—were compatible with authority structures within the tribe. Further, Thompson (1966) believed the independent nature of Homoian churches, which were a loose confederation rather than a structured pyramid under the Papacy, was more attractive to Goths as it was a familiar political structure. Lucien Musset claimed that two chance circumstances resulted in Germanic Homoian identity, namely Wulfila's personal theological identity and the high prestige enjoyed by the Visigoths after Hadrianople. The vernacular Bible was an additional attraction that reinforced identity within the empire (Musset 1975). Marilyn Dunn extended this view to include possible compatibilities between Gothic Pagan religion and Homoianism. She argued that Jordanes shows the Goths worshipping 'Mars' (whom she thinks is Tiwaz, later Scandinavian Tyr, a god of war) and a group of lesser demigods, the Anses. She reasons that Homoian theology makes of the united trinity three gods, a superior (God the Father) and the subordinated Son and Holy Spirit, and that this would have been more familiar and comprehensible to the Goths (Dunn 2012, pp. 12–13). Ingemar Nordgren (2013), a specialist on Gothic Pagan religion, argues that the supreme god is Gaut, whom he sees as similar to Odin, a god of rulership, war, and death. However, he does not address the question of compatibility of religious systems, and in any case, it is difficult to find solid evidence for the conceptual compatibility facilitating the transfer of belief and practice posited by Dunn.

The Tervingi/Visigoths moved further west under Athaulf, settling briefly in and around Narbonne and after his death in 415 established the Visigothic kingdom of Toledo in 418, which was Homoian until the king, Recared, accepted Catholicism in 589 CE (Koch 2014). The Greuthungi/Ostrogoths moved westward in 488, a migration that resulted in the Ostrogothic kingdom of Theodoric the Great (ca. 454–526), who governed from Ravenna, the capital of the western empire from 402 CE onwards.[5] Unlike earlier Germanic rulers, Theodoric's life is well documented, from the eleven years he spent as a hostage in the court of Leo I in Constantinople during the 460s and 470s to his accession to the Ostrogothic kingship in 474 and his military career in the service of the empire. Svante Fischer summarizes Theodoric's rise to power: "he was given several Roman military commands, and performed well in the field. He held the consulate under Zeno in 484, and conquered Italy in 488–493 at Zeno's request. Theoderic was even recognized as a legitimate ruler of Italy by Anastasius after 507. . . Theoderic would rule post-imperial Italy through the reigns of three consecutive Roman emperors: Zeno, Anastasius and Justin I" (Fischer 2013, pp. 97–98).

The last emperor in the West, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed and exiled in 476 CE by the Scirian Odoacer, the first barbarian king of Italy. Theodoric killed Odoacer at a banquet in 493 and established a court at Ravenna that promoted Homoian Christianity while maintaining courteous relations with the Papacy (Cusack 1998, p. 49). During his reign, Ravenna was enhanced by the construction of beautiful religious buildings, including the Arian Baptistery, which survives in a partial state, the palatine chapel of Sant' Apollinaire Nuovo, and Theodoric's own mausoleum (Schäferdiek 2014, p. 48). The achievements of the Homoian Germanic kingdoms are "also attested in law codes issued by the. . . kings of the Visigoths, the Burgundians, and the Ostrogoths. . .three great codes, the Lex Romana Visigothorum, the Lex Burgundionum, and the Edict of Theodoric, all show the king as central to the nation. . ." (Cusack 1998, p. 50). Yet Fischer argues that there is ambiguity about Theodoric's relationship to texts, with hostile propaganda asserting his illiteracy, despite the fact that he was functionally literate in several languages:

> Theodoric probably had a 'functional literacy' of Latin with reading skills in Latin capitals, including numbers and acronyms. He was probably able to identify

> different monograms (although this may have been a matter of ideographic recognition of a totality rather than graphematic deconstruction). Theoderic understood the concept of separate writing systems, such as Greek and Latin. He also understood the difference between Catholicism, Arianism, and paganism. Although unable to read the late 4th century Gothic alphabet of Wulfila, he must have appreciated its Arian ideological value, excluding Greek and Latin Catholic literati of the early 6th century. (Fischer 2013, p. 99)

This is important because it is certain that the production of the *Codex Argenteus*, a luxury manuscript that Theodoric could *not* read, is associated with him (Fischer 2013, p. 109). It is probable that Theodoric and his Ostrogothic advisers and clergy recognized the significance of a written version of their language, which linked them both to their Pagan ancestral culture and to Christianity, in that Wulfila had rendered the Bible, the holiest text for all Christians, into Gothic. This is despite the fact that literacy in Gothic seems not to have gained much traction (Lee 1993, p. 28). Fischer ties the *Codex Argenteus* and Theodoric's mausoleum together, which may well be true, in that it could have been made to commemorate his death (in the fashion of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts like the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, produced to honor Saint Cuthbert, abbot of Lindisfarne) (Fischer 2013, p. 110).

The *Codex Argenteus* (Silver Bible), a manuscript written in silver ink on purple vellum pages, which is housed at the Uppsala University Library, Sweden, is the primary text that preserves the Gothic alphabet devised by Wulfila, and the translation of parts of the Bible which he undertook from ca. 350 CE (Lendinara 1992). The book probably had its origins in the kingdom of Theodoric (454–526 CE) and dates from the 520s, perhaps having been made for his funeral and interment (Munkhammer 2011, p. 47). The manuscript was acquired for Uppsala University by Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie (1622–1686) in 1668 or 1669. He commissioned a splendid new binding, "a casing of beaten silver" (McKeown 2005, p. 9), designed by David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl (1628–1698) and made by silversmith "Hans Bengtsson Selling († 1688)" (McKeown 2005, p. 10). Interestingly, Wulfila's translation of the Bible into Gothic was associated with Protestantism by these early modern Swedes. The freeing of scripture from the mandated Latin of the Catholic Church was clear to seventeenth century scholars; as Simon McKeown states, "Wulfila (c. 311–383 AD) and Jerome (c. 342–420 AD) were close contemporaries, with the crucial seniority lying with Wulfila. The Gothic Bible, therefore, could be confirmed as pre-dating the Vulgate of Jerome and having claim to greater authority and legitimacy" (McKeown 2005, p. 25). This link between Wulfila and Martin Luther (1483–1546) has been explored by Paul Greiner, who notes that both translators worked from a Greek text (in Wulfila's case likely the Antiochene-Byzantine recension of Lucian the Martyr [ca. 312]) and rendered scripture into a Germanic language (Greiner 1992). The purported geographical connection between the Goths and the Swedes made the *Codex Argenteus* particularly valuable, and Protestants in the nineteenth century recognized the genealogy of vernacular, non-Roman Christianity embodied in this magnificent text (Carter 1893).

Patrizia Lendinara has studied the fame of Wulfila as the deviser of the Gothic script and translator of the Bible in the early Middle Ages, in particular among a range of Christian scholars including Isidore of Seville, Julian of Toledo, Michael the Syrian, and Remigius of Auxerre and in anonymous texts, like the *Abecedarium Nord[mannicum]* of St Gallen and the *Ioca monachorum* from Sélestat. Eugene of Toledo's *De inuentoribus litterarum* praises Wulfila highly, in the company of other distinguished devisers of alphabets:

> First Moses created the Hebrew letters; the Phoenicians cleverly founded the Attic [=the Greek alphabet!]; Nicostrata produced the ones which we Latins write; Abraham discovered the Syriac, and the same man the Chaldaic; Isis with no less art brought forth the Egyptian; Gulfila brought forth the Goths' letters, which we see are the latest. (Lendinara 1992, p. 221)

While later medieval authors seem to know little about Wulfila (even the fact he was a bishop is neglected), his fame as creator of the Gothic script and translator of the Bible (save for the Books of Kings) was secure.

However, only the *Codex Argenteus* testifies to his activity in any substantial way, preserving much of "the New Testament Gospels and Epistles; the . . . surviving remnants of the Old Testament are chapters 5–7 of Nehemiah" (Krause and Slocum 2024). Todd Krause and Jonathan Slocum list other Gothic texts that contain parts of Wulfila's translation:

> The **Codex Gissensis** was found in Egypt in 1907. This consisted of four pages containing verses from Luke 23–24 in Latin and Gothic. It was subsequently ruined by water damage.
>
> The **Codex Carolinus** is a palimpsest consisting of four leaves and containing verses from the Epistle to the Romans in both Latin and Gothic. It was found in the abbey of Weissenburg, though it originally belonged to the monastery at Bobbio in Liguria. It now resides in the Wolfenbuettel library.
>
> The **Codices Ambrosiani** are likewise palimpsests. There are five of these codices, labelled A–E. Codex A contains 102 leaves, of which 6 are blank and another illegible. This contains various segments of the Epistles, as well as one page of a calendar. Codex B contains 78 leaves, which have the complete text of II Corinthians as well as parts of other Epistles. Codex C has two leaves, containing Matthew 25–27. Codex D contains three leaves, showing part of the book of Nehemiah . . . Codex E contains eight leaves. In these survive [sic] a document, given the title *Skeireins aíwaggēljons þaírh Iōhannēn* 'Explanation of the Gospel according to John' by the editor Massmann in 1834, generally referred to simply as the ***Skeireins***. The author of this commentary is not known; though possibly written by Wulfila, there is no evidence of this. (Krause and Slocum 2024)

Gothic, the only recorded East Germanic language, otherwise survives only in a handful of fragments, some of which have been lost. The most important of these is likely the Gothica Bononiensia (Bologna Fragment), a two-page palimpsest discovered in 2013 in the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna (Wolfe 2016). The survival of Gothic due to Wulfila's Bible is remarkable; the languages of other East Germanic peoples (Rugians, Burgundians, Gepids, Vandals, and others) were unwritten and thus are lost entirely, apart from a small number of personal names (Highlander 2014). This fact adds immeasurably to the linguistic and cultural importance of the *Codex Argenteus*.

Conclusions

This article has reviewed evidence for the "Apostle of the Goths" Wulfila, steering a path between those scholarly views that would make of him an agent of major social change: from the conversion of a number of Tervingi to their settlement in Moesia south of the Danube through the unintended influx of Greuthungi into imperial territory, resulting in the death of an eastern Roman emperor, Valens, at Hadrianople and culminating in the end of the Western empire due to the skills and ambition of Theodoric the Ostrogoth (S. Parvis 2014), and those views that would dismiss him as insignificant and merely a named individual who has been made too much of (Szada 2020). The fourth century was a tumultuous era in which Christianity progressed from being an illegal cult in the first decade (Anastos 1967) to the mandated religion of the empire by the last decade (Erhardt 1964). Wulfila lived through eight of the ten decades of this century of change, and as a Christian, a Goth (with some Greek ancestry), and a bishop, he was actively engaged in a geographical region (the former province of Dacia and the imperial territory of Moesia) where the Tervingi and later the Greuthungi (the future Visigoths and Ostrogoths) (Wolfram [1990] 1997, p. 69) were at war with Rome for substantial periods of time, yet were also engaged in trade, religious communication such as mission, and finally asylum seeking as the pressure of the Hunnic migration forced them south of the Danube (Heather 1986, p. 318). While his missionary and pastoral activities are worthy of attention, it is the time from 347/8 when he leads the Tervingi Christians into Moesia and devotes his time to the devising of the Gothic alphabet and the translation of the bulk of the Bible that cemented his fame for posterity (Musset 1975; McLynn 2007).

Wulfila's Homoian theology and his Bible translation are linked in a particular way. I follow those scholars who contend that firming the division between so-called 'Arians' and 'Nicenes' too early in the fourth century is anachronistic and misleading as to the actual development of Christianity as an institutional faith and Christological doctrine in particular (Lienhard 1987; Luibheid 1976). The various doctrinal parties have recently benefitted from careful, nuanced scholarship that emphasizes the prevalence of what used to be called 'semi-Arianism' but which is now generally referred to as 'Homoian' theology. This term includes a broader group of priests and bishops and their flocks and clarifies that 'Arian' is an incorrect designator for those who never encountered Arius, or his teachings, directly (Dunn 2012). As Wolfram persuasively argues, "Vulfila's position was pre-Nicene . . . he was against borrowing the concepts of *substantia* and οὐσία from Greek philosophy to confess the Holy Trinity, the essential identity of the three divine persons, as the fathers did in 325. Vulfila was, rather, an homoean from Greek ὁμοῖος, similar, and believed himself to be Catholic as did his fellow-believers down to the 6th century" (Wolfram 2013, p. 31). This is similar to the context of Wulfila's Bible translation, which preceded Jerome's Vulgate and used a Greek original, likely the Antiochene-Byzantine recension of Lucian the Martyr (ca. 312) that is now non-standard but was at the time available to those Christians literate in Greek.

These considerations render Wulfila's evangelistic and pastoral role among the Goths less problematic when it is considered as an imperial strategy, both of enculturating and pacifying aggressive barbarian neighbors (Momigliano 1963; Cusack 1998). Viewed with the benefit of hindsight, the conversion of the Tervingi and the Greuthungi created for these *pagani* (rustics) a path into modernity as it existed in the urbanized, multi-cultural late Roman Empire. Conversion brought advantages, most obviously seen in the offer of asylum Valens made to Fritigern and Alavivus in 376 CE; crossing the Danube preserved them from the Huns and the instability of unprotected, primarily rural life. Wulfila's rendition of Gothic into a written language was part of this process of bringing his people into a sophisticated, educated, 'modern' fourth-century society. There is no doubt that later Goths, such as Theodoric the Great, recognized the significance of having their traditional language preserved in the written form of the Bible (Fischer 2013). I have also examined the contention that Homoian theology made conversion easier for the Pagan Goths, and the related claim that the retention of Homoian theology after the triumph of Nicene Catholicism was enacted by Theodosius I in the Edict of Thessalonica preserved Gothic ethnic identity. It is possible that the three persons emphasis in Homoianism was closer to polytheism than the united trinitarian god of the Nicenes; however, I conclude that speculative new work like Dunn's cognitivist approach are as yet nascent and suggestive, rather than convincing.

The argument that the Visigoths and Ostrogoths retained Homoian views into the sixth century as a mark of ethic distinctiveness has greater credibility but is also not conclusively demonstrated (Thompson 1962, 1966). Yet the production of the marvelous *Codex Argenteus* in the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Italy, probably to commemorate Theodoric around or after his death in 526 CE, and the erection of his magnificent and wholly distinctive mausoleum to house his body, reflect awareness that *Romanitas*, Christianity, literacy, cities, and all the other material and cultural trappings of the empire which the Goths entered as refugees exercised great fascination for these recently semi-nomadic, pastoral peoples (Schäferdiek 2014). In the twenty-first century, the *Codex Argenteus* is a significant piece of world heritage, its value pronounced by UNESCO during the 1700th anniversary of Wulfila's birth, 2011, when there were important academic and heritage events held in Uppsala to celebrate the survival of the manuscript and the innovation of Wulfila in creating the script in which it is written and the vernacular Bible translation which is now linked to modern concerns such as the Protestant Reformation (Greiner 1992). Contemporary scholars recognize that certain heritage objects are powerful and 'magical' beyond their utilitarian usages, containing the hopes and dreams of people from distant epochs and faraway lands. The Gothic Bible was the first of its kind, a written text in a Germanic language (MacMahon 2006). Accidentally,

> Gothic became the only preserved East Germanic language because of Wulfila's script and translation: the Gothic Bible stands at the crossroads of Late Antiquity and the early medieval era, at the meeting place of Romans and Goths and at the flashpoint of orthodox and 'heretical' theology, and the *Codex Argenteus* survives as a testimony to the cultural sophistication of Ostrogothic Italy and the importance of the great transformation wrought in the fourth century for both Romans and Goths.[6]

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Notes

1 The notable exception to this consensus is Ebbinghaus, who believes that Wulfila was born in 307 CE and was ordained by Eusebius of Nicomedia "in 337, probably before 22 May, the day the emperor Constantine died" (Ebbinghaus 1991a, p. 313). He posits this ordination likely took place in Bithynia, either in Anchyrona (where Constantine was baptized) or in Nicomedia, where the imperial palace was located.

2 I first saw the *Codex Argenteus* in the Carolina Rediviva in Uppsala University Library in the company of Jonathan Wooding in 1986. It was already an object of fascination, featuring in the doctoral dissertation I was engaged in writing. That initial visit, for there have been others, lingers in my mind as possibly the first time I encountered a book that clearly functioned as a magical object, and one that still exuded power centuries after it was crafted.

3 The heretical bishop Audius, whom Constantine banished to Scythia, was also said to be concerned with mission to the Goths, as reported by Epiphanius. See Heather and Matthews (1991, 134, fn 1). Ralph Mathisen notes that Audius "refused to accept the date of Easter and proposed a form of anthropomorphism and . . . was exiled by Constantine to Scythia after the Council of Nicaea in 325. According to Epiphanius of Salamis, after irregularly becoming bishop he converted many Goths in the interior and established monasteries. He himself ordained bishops, including 'Uranius of Mesopotamia and several Goths', among whom was a certain Silvanus. Later developments demonstrate that here Scythia refers to the left side of the lower Danube. So, according to this account, by the mid-fourth century there would have been several Audian bishops of the Danubian Goths, however uncanonically consecrated" (Mathisen 1997, p. 672).

4 I accept the identification of Saba and Sansala as Catholic Christians, which is the dominant scholarly position. P. Parvis (2014), in a provocative short chapter, attempted to demonstrate that Saba was Arian and had become incorporated into Catholicism via the rescue of his martyred body and the relic cult that grew up around him. In a subject area rife with speculation, this thought experiment, while ingenious, has not found favour.

5 Guy Halsall's *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568* (Halsall 2007) provides a detailed analysis of the Hunnic impact on both Greuthungi and Tervingi. He argues that conflict between the Huns and the Greuthungi had longer roots than Ammianus admits, and involves the Alans too. Halsall argues the intra-Tervingi conflict between Athanaric and Fritigern likely impacted the Greuthungi and the Alans (noting that Saphrax, one of the pair of Greuthungi leaders—with Alatheus—after the death of Ermanaric's son Vidimer may have been Alan), and that there is evidence that some Alans went over to the "Hunnic side" (Halsall 2007, pp. 170, 172, 174).

6 This article is respectfully and affectionately dedicated to Emeritus Professor Garry W. Trompf (Professor in the History of Ideas), Studies in Religion, University of Sydney. For forty-four years he has been my teacher, friend, and guide, and this very late article has demonstrated the extent of his patience and tolerance of my tardiness. May it please him.

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Article

Patristics Confined in a Cocoon: Where Did We Go Wrong?

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Abstract: This article is a personal reflection on the current state of Patristics in Australia, focusing on its debatable effectiveness in both Church and society. It discusses the manner in which the subject of Patristics functions as a specialized subset of knowledge within theological colleges and in a very limited number of universities, meaning that its accessibility is almost exclusively via formal educational providers. The more specialized the mode of delivery becomes, however, the more the role and relevance of Patristics appears to be diminishing over time. While that is not an Australian characteristic alone, the author argues that the purely tertiary nature of Patristic learning today is a feature of the local landscape that ought to be surveyed. As it currently stands, the subject is disconnected from preceding levels of education and indeed from other possible means of popularizing the subject for a broader audience who, otherwise, are not likely to encounter the Church Fathers in any meaningful way. This implies a fundamental question about how such a situation arose in the first place and became part of the *status quo*. The discussion is broadened through a presentation of certain key features of Patristics in the Eastern tradition.

Keywords: Church Fathers; secondary schooling; tertiary theological education; Gregory the Theologian; Photios the Great; patristic translations; consensus patrology

1. Introductory Remarks

Having been asked to reflect on the field of Patristics in Australia today, the result is undeniably subjective, and it is hoped that the reasons for this will become apparent. These reflections are drawn from both sides of the classroom over the years, but also from personal perceptions about whether our broader society is imbued or engaged with the subject generally. The purpose of this article is not to add another Patristics article to many finer ones that can be found in journals and books of the English-speaking world. It is rather to make quite straightforward observations about the present state of the field for the sake of its future. In other words, this is not an exploration of a particular Patristics topic, but of Patristics itself. At least, it is one person's appraisal of the effectiveness and penetration of one subject in one country. The following observations may not apply in any other part of the globe.

The contention here is that Patristics has become an in-folded activity, enwrapped in the silk cloth of academic garb. It is a possession neither of the ranks of citizenry nor of the average person in the pew. This assertion is either an exaggeration (if evidence to the contrary can be produced) or a mere recognition of the state of affairs. The more sudden the recognition, the greater the wonderment that it was not more obvious beforehand, hence the choice of the word 'cocoon' to describe the situation in which Patristics finds itself. This is not necessarily a bad thing, and it is certainly not intended as a condescending description. Cocoons are places of metamorphosis. Beautiful, living creatures arise from them. They represent the struggle that must precede the ability to fly. The choice of the analogy for Patristics is not to imply that what occurs in the cocoon is somehow deprived; it is just that it seems to be such a small space in relation to the wider world.

The subtitle also begs the question about who "we" are or to whom the "we" refers. Any answer to that will seem presumptuous, especially as there was no consultation process in the preparation of this paper. Notwithstanding, the use of the first-person plural is

safer, from a moral point of view, when ascribing blame for anything that went 'wrong'. For those who are involved in any way with the teaching, communication and publication of Patristics, it is very difficult to speak of the origin of the problem in the third person, hence the use of 'we'. It implies everybody who is involved in these modes of delivery while also acknowledging that there is no personal blame for choices and priorities that have been carved out in past decades. Everyone who teaches does so with the best intentions, but finds themselves to be part of a much larger academic environment that lies mostly beyond their personal control. Finally, if the outcome did in fact go 'wrong', as the subtitle states, this is not to suggest that there was necessarily a time when everything was 'right'. The 'wrongness' is a matter of degree; it refers rather to a wrong direction, which, in this case, is the diminishing impact of Patristics over time.

The argument put forward here is that Patristics in Australia, to which this special volume is dedicated, (1) is restricted to tertiary education, (2) does not involve students of primary and secondary education due to certain practical factors, and (3) engages a very small proportion of the Christian faithful and an infinitesimally small percentage of the Australian population as a whole. Therefore, in this very depiction of the problem, the answer to our title's question is already met. In other words, the question 'Where did we go wrong?' receives its reply in the factual information that one can readily confirm concerning the small numbers of persons involved and, consequently, the small orbit of the Patristic enterprise. Of course, the quantitative parameters should not negate the qualitative aspects, which no one would seek to deny. Yet, the issue that is posed by the title is a quantitative one. It has to do with the narrow base of people who are able to become familiarized with, and then potentially enter, the field from the earlier stages of education (this is the vertical axis), but it also pertains to the almost impermeable interface between the specialists and non-specialists (on the horizontal axis). The method adopted to explore and tackle the topic will be, first, to outline the situation in Australia at present, together with the practical factors affecting it. Secondly, this paper will present several distinctive features of Patristics as practiced and understood in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Finally, examples of patristic material that have been introduced into school textbooks in Greece at both the primary and secondary levels are offered in order to inform the discussion (see Appendix A).

2. The Situation in Australia—Some Practical Limitations

Beyond those who are directly involved, or happen to have acquired an interest in it, the awareness of the subject of Patristics among the general Australian populace could probably best be described as opaque. By this, we do not mean that the content of the subject is unfamiliar, but that its very existence and parameters are so. This is despite the fact that Australia has in recent years produced outstanding scholars in the field (and I think here of John Chryssavgis, Doru Costache, Pauline Allen and the prolific translator Charles Hill). The anecdotal evidence for the lack of awareness derives from the reaction of otherwise well-meaning people who politely request alternative words or phrases in order to understand exactly what Patristics is. This normally morphs into a brief dialogue containing some variants of the phrase 'the study of the Church Fathers'.[1] First-year students of theology may encounter the term for the first time in their syllabus, unsure about whether Patristics is the same subject as Patrology, or about how either relate to the really 'essential' topics of a theological degree, such as Biblical Studies or Systematic Theology.

As a formal subject, one may first consider where it is offered. In Australia, the offering occurs at the tertiary level: at the Greek Orthodox and Coptic Orthodox Theological Colleges,[2] the Australian Catholic University, other Catholic institutions, the University of Divinity and the Sydney College of Theology. Not only is the sum of such providers of education in the Church Fathers quite limited in comparison with the entire spectrum of Australian tertiary institutions, but the combined numbers of enrolled students of Patristics within the mentioned institutions would have to be measured in the dozens—not in the hundreds and certainly not in the thousands—within any academic year. In addition,

variations in understanding about what exactly constitutes the Patristic era may further affect the field of study in tertiary settings. In Western countries such as Australia, that era is typically confined to the early Church or, at its longest estimation, it is sealed with the name of a most distinguished Church Father: John of Damascus (eighth century). Yet, for the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the so-called 'Patristic period' is unthinkable without the inclusion of the late Byzantine Fathers right up until Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century, to mention nothing of others who followed. There is, then, an obvious point of divergence between traditions. It is strange to think that:

(a) The very 'object' of Patristics, i.e., the line of demarcation between what (or who) is meant to be studied, is at variance depending on who is asked about it;
(b) These variations are played out in the lecture rooms of colleges across multi-faith Australia, where layers of East and West meet in distinctive and harmonious ways.

In short, then, this is the first observation that could be made about Patristic studies Downunder: it is an area of specialization that was 'born and raised' as a tertiary endeavor. This could be said of other countries as well, of course, but the important thing to note is that it need not be a tertiary subject exclusively. As it stands, however, in Western societies, of which Australia is a shining example, Patristics is an area of learning for the smallest minority, even when compared to the size of the respective faith communities that endorse Patristic studies in the first place. In terms of the numbers of students and their teachers, Patristics has become a kind of sheep-pen, well-fenced by course fees and expensive textbooks, which few gain the opportunity to gaze at, let alone graze in. As an area of specialty within academia and theology, it has become a subset within a subset; a body of knowledge that is open to all people but which, strangely, is not readily available to them. Occasionally it breaks out in a reverse direction towards the public through conferences, symposia,[3] videos and reading material, but even then, it normally does so in a technical language that is not geared for newcomers. Needless to say, however, introductory publications do exist and they are pleasant exceptions to the general rule (e.g., Chrestou 2005). Another notable exception, originating in the United States, is the initiative undertaken many years ago by St Vladimir's Seminary Press. Its Popular Patristics Series is to be commended since, in the words of the publisher, it aims to provide readable translations for a wide audience. Having that audience in mind, the series is embellished with brief introductory essays by scholars to provide both spiritual and intellectual benefit.

Specialists in any field are inclined to talk and write in a manner that caters to their colleagues, i.e., other specialists. This is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it is to be expected. Patristics scholars are no different in this regard. The problem is that, whereas other fields of learning may have a raft of educational options to introduce the layperson to their ideas—in addition to the specialist avenue—Patristics seems to depend on the latter. All of this begs the question about how the subject is taught or learnt. Its increasing specialization produces fine lectures and publications, yet the flipside of specializing is that the total pool of available knowledge can become scattered, so to speak, in multiple and minute details, often at the expense of more comprehensive overviews. The result is that, while greater interest is generated for those who already have an interest, there is less success in stimulating it among those who do not. In other words, it is difficult and rare to go from a position of 'zero knowledge' to becoming an enthusiast in the area of the Church Fathers. It seems that the students of today come to Patristics because it is a subsidiary of theology, the so-called queen of sciences. Other avenues, which are less significant but nonetheless legitimate, have apparently been bypassed. For example, apart from their strictly doctrinal contributions, the Fathers warrant attention on account of their fortitude, their contribution to the history of ideas, their upholding of education, their efforts towards social justice, their charity and wisdom—all of which belong to the non-religious sphere as well.

If one were to maintain that the Fathers are deserving of a broader readership or audience, beyond Church boundaries, then the corollary of that would be to ask: Why have these outstanding personalities of world history been confined to tertiary study alone? This is just another way of asking why they are not introduced to younger ages, within

a school setting. The answer to this eludes us collectively, probably because the question has not been squarely asked. If the opinion of the Fathers themselves could be sought, and if we could generalize, they would certainly agree to let the children come to them, which is to come to Christ; "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" (Matt 19:14). There may be a counter argument that many other areas of learning are excluded from primary and secondary education, only to be stored up for those who might choose them at a later date. Might not law and medicine be examples of such exclusions, and with good reason? Yet, even medicine builds upon the sciences of biology and chemistry that are introduced at earlier stages of learning. Law too, or at least several facets of it, has been introduced into high schools through so-called 'legal studies' (Kamvounias 1994, n. 21),[4] not to mention the host of extra-curricular activities that were always there to nurture the budding lawyer, such as debating and public speaking.

Pedagogically, then, there is an elephant in the room, and it has to do with when young minds should be introduced to the Church Fathers. However, before grappling with that, the underlying issue is about who decides, or is entitled to decide, on such fundamental matters. Is it the responsibility of a circle of Patristic scholars and lecturers? They would be genuinely occupied with their own core professional tasks, and far too modest to see themselves in the role of 'gatekeepers' of knowledge, or of policy-makers in institutions of learning other than their own. Alternatively, should this be yet another area in which government legislators intervene? Nobody, including the legislators themselves, would think so. Yet, as far as school curricula are concerned, this is a highly complex area for which departments of education are responsible and have the final word, and no one else. In Australia, the matter becomes more complex given that primary and secondary school education are the responsibility of the State governments,[5] whereas higher education is the realm of the Federal government. Added to this are the various categories within the school system itself, namely, (1) state or government schools, which are by far the most numerous; and (2) non-government schools (encompassing so-called 'private' schools, 'independent' schools and the extensive system of Catholic schools).[6] Of these, the likelihood of introducing course material relating to the Fathers would be least in the government schools, and greater in other schools. The confessionally based schools have religious classes that could make references to a Church Father or Mother, but this would be the result of a teacher's discretion rather than an objective prescribed in a syllabus. Then again, schools of most States that do not offer formal religious education classes (and which religion could they possibly choose to teach in a multi-faith society?) have a statutory obligation to allow representatives of religious groups to send their respective teachers—usually volunteers—to teach children of each faith in specially dedicated time slots, ranging from once a week to once a term.[7] As Peta Goldburg has stated,

> Public schools in Australia are secular and therefore religious education is not part of the formal school curriculum at either primary or secondary school level. Nevertheless, every State and Territory in Australia has the provision for confessional religious instruction…In most instances, ministers of religion or their accredited representatives are the only people approved to enter the school to provide confessional religious education classes. (Goldburg 2008, pp. 241–71)

In fact, the non-sectarian character of the government schools is perfectly in line with the origins of Australia's oldest and most esteemed universities. The University of Sydney (1850) and the University of Melbourne (1853) were established as secular institutions without faculties of theology, "a response to the sectarianism of the day and a reflection of post-enlightenment origins" (Goldburg 2008, p. 268). In our times, and in Wendy Mayer's opinion, there are only two Australian universities that actively support Patristics: Macquarie University, due to the legacy of Edwin Judge who headed Ancient History there; and the Australian Catholic University, which has "a historical confessional interest". The situation that can be observed nationally is mirrored internationally, given that the "study of the humanities, let alone church history or historical theology, is under threat, and

church attendance is in dramatic decline"; so, Patristics "barely registers on a university chancellor's, government's or society's radar" (Mayer 2021).[8] Robert McIver would add that theological education in Australia has proven to be "a miracle of survival" (McIver 2018, p. 43), taking place largely apart from government-funded universities, in small and under-resourced colleges that are typically denominational entities.

However, to return to the primary and secondary levels, it needs to be remembered that so many non-government schools were built on the foundation of various Christian denominations, having adopted a "catechetical or faith-forming approach for teaching religion in religious schools from the 1880s" (Goldburg 2008, p. 245). Yet, the greatest providers of education in these age groups are still the respective State governments. In government schools, the time restrictions and the informal character of limited religious education (between 30–60 min once per week at most) would enable the delivery of only the most fundamental tenets of the faith (biblical truths, in particular) rather than information about the personalities who embodied the faith throughout the centuries. Education in government schools must be non-sectarian due to the oddity of Australian society being very diverse religiously but at the same time not overtly religious![9] Moreover, not all the Christian schools (of the independent or private kind) will value the Patristic contribution equally in order to find a teaching space for it. We are not to forget, though, that *secondary school* options in Religion or Religious Studies, which are generally geared toward Comparative Religion, could be tailored by individual schools or teachers to introduce the Mothers and Fathers of the Church.

A further consideration regarding the themes and topics of Patristics is to know *how* they will be taught. First of all, a clear selection must be made according to certain criteria. Choices must be made about which Fathers are to be taught and, of those, which writings are to be studied. It has already been stressed that the teaching of Patristics is a tertiary affair. The criteria preferred in one Church-based tertiary college will be different to those of other denominations, and the resultant choices will naturally highlight those differences. To repeat a common example: a Western approach may concentrate exclusively on the early Fathers of the first few centuries after Christ, whereas an Eastern selection will additionally explore others who wrote hundreds of years later, up to—and even including—our own time. If the personalities studied in Patristics are not confined to the early or middle centuries of Christianity, but are rather part of a linkage that reaches the present (according to the Eastern understanding),[10] then there is an added incentive for Australians to be interested in them. The Fathers need not be so distant chronologically as first thought. From the Australian viewpoint, the Fathers may well seem exotic, and their social environment foreign, because there are not yet local 'representatives' of that illustrious group. However, a new method of beholding the proximity of the Fathers, at least in *time*, would arguably be a source of encouragement for intellectual and spiritual immersion in them.

The disparity with which the Fathers belong to one period, according to some, but to later periods, according to others, is reflected in the choices of their works that are studied, published and footnoted in critical editions. To illustrate this, a quick search at the Library of Congress will produce approximately 100 titles containing the name of Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), which can include works by, or about, that author. However, a figure such as Gregory of Sinai (d. 1347), the consolidator of hesychasm, has very close to nothing in one of the largest library collections of the world (however, see the *Philokalia* (coll. Nicodemos and Makarios [eds. Palmer and Ware, vol. 4]) The same applies to Nicholas Cabasilas (d. ca. 1390) and countless others. Admittedly, the last two named Fathers left behind a smaller volume of writings than the 'big' names, but no equitable comparison is possible, even when the proportions of authored works are taken into consideration. There are other areas in which a Father can be evaluated, apart from authorship per se, such as the perceived impact and legacy of his life. One may also consider the mismatch between the relatively small number of English-speaking scholars who are paying attention to John Chrysostom on the one hand, and the sheer extent of his works on the other, which fill no

less than eighteen volumes of Migne's famed *Patrologia Graeca* (PG) series (=vols. 47–64). A casual search for bibliographies relating to the 'Early Church Fathers' will furthermore reveal that they outweigh those of the 'Later Byzantine Fathers' by a considerable amount. The attention given to the former group of Fathers at the 'expense' of others can be understood on account of their pivotal role in shaping Trinitarian theology and Christology during an unrepeatable era of Church history. The disproportionate concentration on persons and themes that have been analyzed many times before cannot, however, be so easily justified. After all, how many times can the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria be presented in a 'new' analysis?

There are of course various categories of Patristic writings: epistolography, apologetic treatises, anti-heretical tractates, hermeneutical works (homilies and commentaries), catechetical discourses, poetical verses, mystical expositions and those called *neptic* (on the soul's ascent to God). Two of these categories have, in turn, given rise to the names we apply to entire groups of writers, hence the Apologists and Neptic Fathers. Academia has made tremendous contributions in all these categories. However, there are others which, for whatever reason, do not appear to receive the same degree of attention. These include hymnographical and liturgical works—not to mention the Divine Liturgy, in its several versions, the authorship of which has been attributed to specific Fathers.[11] The Canons of the Church are also largely overlooked as works of the Fathers collectively (having been produced in regional and ecumenical Synods) and, to a lesser degree, individually.

3. Distinctive Features of Patristics in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

Given the inseparability of Patristic studies and theology, the words of Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus) (329–90) concerning the latter may have significance for our treatment of the former. With a critical eye, one could substitute his critique of the manner in which theology was conducted in his day for an equivalent criticism of the way Patristics is conducted in ours. In his *First Theological Oration* (ed. Reynolds), Gregory states:

> The next thing is to look to ourselves, and polish our theological self to beauty like a statue. The first point to be considered is: What is this great rivalry of speech and endless talking? What is this new disease of insatiability? Why have we tied our hands and armed our tongues? We do not praise either hospitality, or brotherly love, or conjugal affection, or virginity; nor do we admire liberality to the poor, or the chanting of Psalms, or nightlong vigils, or tears. We do not subdue the body by fasting, or go forth to God by prayer; nor do we subject the worse to the better—I mean the dust to the spirit—as they would do who form a just judgement of our composite nature. We do not make our life a preparation for death, nor do we make ourselves masters of our passions.

In this quotation, one sees an affirmation of several major concerns of a single Church Father which, this paper would argue, are representative of the concerns of the Fathers as a whole. To become "masters of our passions" rather than to engage in "endless talking," and ultimately to make our entire life "a preparation for death (cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 67E)," [12] are all tied to a true realization of "our composite nature". The only tangible heirloom we possess, i.e., all that we can rely upon retrospectively, are the Patristic *texts*. Although this is an unavoidable reality, the texts should not be viewed in isolation, otherwise their authors will appear as theoreticians or dogmaticians and little more. Of course, doctrine is a key concern in those writings. It could not be otherwise, given that the defense of correct doctrine constitutes a big part of the very definition of a Church Father. Ignatius of Antioch (second century) would be one of the first to use the term 'heterodox' in contradistinction to 'orthodox' so as to underline the importance of correctness of faith. As he would put it, "Do not be led away by foreign [heterodox] doctrines and fables" (Μὴ πλανᾶσθε ταῖς ἑτεροδοξίαις μηδὲ μυθεύμασιν, in *Epistle to the Magnesians* [ed. Lake] 8). Yet, this exhortation, and doctrinal concerns in general, must be held in balance with the Fathers' permanent plea toward action, which goes far beyond an elementary exposition

of this or that terminology. Often, the form of action relates to asceticism on a personal level, but its communal dimensions should not be disregarded.

In the ninth century, Photios the Great (ca. 810–91) is the Patristic personality credited with shifting a good deal of emphasis away from the purely ascetic and dogmatic concerns that were characteristic of Fathers previously. With Photios, a spotlight is placed upon culture per se. In this light, the Christian seeker was to be enriched through knowledge of the classics and with a greater grasp of the tool of language. He therefore produced his own *Lexicon* for students who would meet in his home in the years prior to his elevation as Patriarch of Constantinople (first in 858). He compiled his most renowned opus, the *Myriobiblos* (or *Bibliotheca*), to review not only Christian writings, but also other great literary and historical works of the past, reaching as far back as Herodotus and as widely as *The Life of Pythagoras*. He underlined the value of action for the benefit of society at large. There had been earlier concerns in areas such as social justice, as illustrated in the life and writings of Basil the Great (*Homily to the Rich*: "I will tear down my barns") and John Chrysostom (Four Discourses: "On Lazarus and the Rich Man"). However, Photios upheld the value of direct involvement in civil affairs in particular, without which it is questionable whether a person can be virtuous at all, according to his words:

> By nature, people ascribe virtue to the life which rejects activity, but this is not so, in my opinion. Because virtue that is exercised in political life with political works and political words, is the very thing that also exercises the soul, such that it becomes stronger… However, the learned who remain on the sidelines, though they may philosophise with great severity concerning justice and temperance, take terribly inappropriate measures when they are forced to take action. (*Myriobiblos* 242 [this author's trans.])

Photios highlighted the importance of virtue enacted in the community by asking what Themistocles was meant to do in the face of real danger. Was he to "gather the Athenians in the Pnyka and speak to them about the ideas of Plato… to teach them about the being which always is, and has no genesis? In that case, the Athenians would have immediately lost genesis, being and everything else!" (*Myriobiblos* 248). Educational concerns are another important part of social consciousness. While they were not, of course, unique to Photios, he advocated that children's learning should in fact be *enjoyable*, and in so doing conceived forward-thinking directions for the educational process. His stated purpose of education was "to educate the children in such a way that it would be a source of pleasure to them while young and an enduring companion in their later years" (*Letter of Advice to Protospatharios Michael* [ed. Valettas 1864], Epistle 149).

In the ninth century also, John Scotus Eriugena appeared in northwest Europe (815–77). A contemporary of Photios who came from a diagonally opposite corner of the European continent, Eriugena has been described as "the first Western scholar who methodically studied Greek church fathers" (Laos 2015, p. 35). He translated the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory of Nyssa (*On the Making of Man*), and Maximus the Confessor (*Ambigua*) into Latin, effectively bringing knowledge of these works to the West. The division between the Fathers of the 'East' and readers in the 'West' would gradually erode; geographic, linguistic and even doctrinal borderlines were gradually crossed by what appeared to be a growing interest in the 'spirituality' (a term the Fathers did not employ, ironically) represented by these texts. The attraction may have been mutual during this period, but it did not operate equally in both directions; interest in Eastern writings was greater in the West than demand for Western writings was in the East. This we know by the volume of translations, and then publications, that were being made from the Greek originals—culminating, one might say, in the PG series of 162 volumes in 1866 under the supervision of an enterprising French priest named Jacques Paul Migne. In the reverse direction (from Latin into Greek), the Byzantine monk and scholar Maximus Planudes (1260–ca. 1310) translated the *De Trinitate* by Augustine of Hippo, and tracts written by the sixth century philosopher-statesman Boethius, together with translations of Ptolemy's *Geography*, the essays of Cicero and the poetry of Ovid. Based on its track record, then, Pa-

tristics would seem to have the capacity to connect Christians of various traditions more readily than other branches of theological studies—including even Biblical studies.[13] Traditionally, there have been more amicable gatherings around the dining table of Patristics than there have been around the breakfast bar of New Testament Studies. And although it may not figure highly in the average list of Protestant studies today, it is a curious fact that the term *Patrology* (a synonym for Patristics) was first coined by the Protestant theologian Joannes Gerhard (d. 1637),[14] by which he simply meant the lives and works of the Church Fathers (Van Geest 2014, p. 81).[15]

A further consideration relates to whether speaking about the Patristic texts is sufficient. In a conference held in Athens in 1936, the renowned theologian and clergyman Georges Florovsky proclaimed the necessity for Orthodox theology to "return to the Fathers" and to be released from the "Babylonian captivity" of a theological language and mindset foreign to its own (Kalaitzidis 2010, p. 5). Florovsky's exhortation sounded much more radical then than it does now. The 'return' has taken place to a large extent, and it behoves those who have a love for the field, decades later, to re-examine constantly what the return should and should not involve. Unless, that is, one really means an Odyssean return—a journey fraught with dangerous adventures, which culminates in the main hero being unrecognizable even to his closest kin. As one contemporary theologian has put it, "a theology of repetition that is satisfied simply with a return 'to the sources' or 'to the Fathers' cannot respond to the manifold challenges of the post-modern pluralistic world" (Kalaitzidis 2010, p. 29) and it might be best to heed the experience of Gregory the Theologian in "coining new names for the sake of clarity" (καινοτομῆσαι περὶ τὰ ὀνόματα σαφηνείας ἕνεκεν, *Oration*.12. 39). As a result of the above, the translation of Patristics texts in centuries past was good in principle, but it was not sufficient; it required the *vox patrum* as well, "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6). Today, not only in the Australian context but also internationally, the words of the Fathers rest rather impassively on pages. By this we mean either their subjective treatment by analysts, in the absence of the living voice of the Fathers, or else their weak impact due to there being little scope to present them in truly relevant ways. The task now is not to coin new terms necessarily, but to devise new avenues for understanding the Patristic ethos and intention.

We tend not to see the Fathers in terms of the purpose that they set for themselves. These purposes were soteriological. There is a temptation instead to impose our own career-minded harvesting machine over them in order to extract whatever matches our own purposes on an individual or denominational level.[16] This is doubtless a generalization of the matter, but the germ of truth within it appears to be growing in the Western world. The Fathers have spoken of salvation in Christ as a healing of human nature's wounds. By way of a response in freedom, the healing process is synonymous with purification in order to "see and hear in a spiritual manner" (πνευματικῶς βλέπειν καί ἀκούειν), to use a phrase of Symeon the New Theologian (*Hymns of Divine Eros* 4, [*Sources Chrétiennes* 156, 192]). Gregory Palamas comes in a long tradition that upholds a therapeutic view of the spiritual life. One may evaluate any resemblances between the following Palamite quotation and current Patristic emphases:

> Because the soul is known in three powers, the rational (λογιστικόν), the spirited (θυμικόν) and the desiring (ἐπιθυμητικόν), and it is ill in all three of these parts, Christ reasonably commenced the therapy from the last, which is the desirous aspect. The spirited or incisive aspect is fuelled by the desirous aspect when it is not fulfilled, and the imperfection of the rational aspect derives from the defects of the other two. And the incisive can never be healed unless the desirous is first healed, nor can the rational part be healed unless the former two are healed beforehand. (*Letter to the Nun Xeni* [PG vol. 150, col. 1061])[17]

Yet, before any discussion of soteriology can take place, there is the reality of the Resurrection.[18] Unbelievably, even the most central message of the sacred Scriptures, and of the Fathers who interpret them, can be lost amid the intellectual noise. It is not that the Resurrection should be 'analyzed' more by commentators; it cannot. The issue is rather

whether the Fathers are read in the light of the Resurrection that colors and illuminates all that they say and do. To lose the core of the Gospel via complicated mental gymnastics is a danger that "somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so [our] minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).[19] The new—and newest—'interpretations' of a finite number of Patristic writings produce, over time, enough layers to render the original texts illegible, metaphorically speaking. Instead of offering infinitely new interpretations of a finite number of texts, one wonders whether it might be preferable to offer a finite number of interpretations in edifyingly new ways.

Truth, being an experiential matter, invites a different methodology. This additional and essential, but largely ignored, dimension of experience shall not be elaborated upon, given the divergent approaches of the so-called 'East' and 'West' that can only be alluded to here. Suffice it to say that, although the very term 'experience' carries with it subjective connotations, the experience of the ecclesial community is *not* a subjective matter, precisely because it is an experience held in common. The experience of the Fathers is but a magnification of this reality, such that we should firstly understand the *consensus patrum* in terms of their common experience of God, and only secondarily in the more typical way as a collection of doctrinal truths held in common. The term *Logos*, so central to the Christian message, implies an experiential understanding of truth through participation (*methexis*), while the Latin term *ratio* "means the individual ability to syllogistically arrive at a comprehensive exhaustive understanding of truth" (Laos 2015, p. 35). It has therefore been said, and with good reason, that the sound patristic approach to truth is eucharistic. It is centered upon the Eucharist. It is participation, not speculation, and a shared experience. If it were not so, faith would be reduced to an ideology, and the Fathers to ideologists.

The late scholar Stylianos Papadopoulos (1933–2012),[20] who did much to popularize the subject of Patristics in his home country Greece, pointed out a further obstacle in its path. This was the blurring of the distinction between Fathers and ecclesiastical writers. This, he said, explained the increased use of terms such as 'Christian literature' rather than 'Patristic literature'. All this reveals a deeper uncertainty about who qualifies to be called a Father at all (see Parry 2015, pp. 3–10). Papadopoulos wondered if there could really be a 'definition' before offering his own as follows: the Church Father is the bearer of the tradition of the Church who, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, expresses the broader experience of the truth for the purpose of countering a certain crisis faced by the Church (Papadopoulos 1977, pp. 2–3). This last point (countering a crisis) recasts our attention to a point already made, which is that we are referring not to a group of theoreticians as much as to people of action, people who first experienced an inner action of the Holy Spirit before heeding the call to action. According to the above definition, dealing with a crisis in the life of the Church becomes a *criterion* of what it means to be a Father. Indeed, although there may be a few exceptions to that rule, it is true that the writings we possess are the result of their authors' defense of specific doctrinal matters amidst a specific crisis, with great anguish and often personal cost. One need think no further than the fate of Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580–662), who was tortured on imperial orders *inter alia* for not accepting Monothelitism, the heterodox belief that Christ had only one will.

All of this raises questions, once again, about the exact function of the Fathers. Do they perform an essential function, or an ornamental one? A perfectly logical response is that everything necessary for salvation is already contained in the Holy Bible. There are, in turn, two ways of looking at this, neither of which contradict the premise of the completeness of Scripture. In the first way, the Fathers are useful as *exegetes* of Scripture. This aligns well with Gregory Nazianzus, who spoke about those:

> who have handled the holy Scriptures, not with indifference or as a mere pastime but by opening up the letter of the text and looking into the inner meaning … to see the hidden beauty (τὸ ἀπόθετον κάλλος) there, and have been illumined. (*Fifth Theol. Orat.* [*Homily* 31.21])

The second way involves the realization of the pledge made by Jesus Christ:

> I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:12–13; cf. 14:25–26)

In other words, the revelation of divine truth is an ongoing process (cf. Nazianzus, *Orat.* 31.26 on the Holy Spirit). This is not a contradiction of the uniqueness of all that was revealed in the incarnate Logos, but lies, in fact, in complete accord with it. Thus, John of Damascus would write:

> Where can you find in the Old Testament or in the Gospel explicit use of such terms as 'Trinity' or '*homoousios*' or 'one nature of the Godhead' or 'three hypostases,' or that Christ is 'one hypostasis with two natures'? Yet, the meanings of these things are found in other phrases contained in the Scriptures, which the fathers have interpreted for us. (*Third Oration on the Holy Images*)

The Trinitarian nature of salvation and revelation, and its 'unfolding' in time, is beautifully expressed by Photios, as follows:

> You [Lord] uncovered part of the truth to us, but He [the Paraclete] will guide us unto all truth. Having been initiated by You, we have need yet of wisdom and power and truth. And when He attends, He grants each of us inexhaustible enjoyment of all things. If You, therefore, the enhypostatized wisdom and truth, teach these things, it would not be appropriate on our part to have uncertainty that the Spirit is deserving of both greater honour and glory. (*Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, para. 25 [my trans.])

This brings the reasoning about the role and identity of the Fathers round full circle. The end point is partly joyful and partly sorrowful, reflecting the complex reality of Patristics in our time. It has been summed up very well in the following couple of sentences:

> Today, despite the strong interest in the Fathers, these great figures are usually regarded as exceptional authors but rarely as instruments of the Holy Spirit towards a broader and fuller exposé of the divine truth. This situation demonstrates that, at present, Patrology is not on its true path and that, while we have much research on the Fathers, we do not have *Patrology* or, when we have it, it is atrophic. (Papadopoulos 1977, p. 83 [my trans.])

After deliberating on several theoretical qualities of Patristics, one wonders how it all translates into practice. Personal experience in the classroom has highlighted the various strands of interest and expectations that will inevitably exist among a diverse group of students. While some will approach the topic in the manner described immediately above, i.e., as the study of "great figures" and "exceptional authors," it is also quite plain that others are seeking "instruments of the Holy Spirit". This is particularly true when dealing with the so-called later Byzantine Fathers, such as Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022) and Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), whose names and works are synonymous with a description of the experience of the divine life. Students may try to read their works as a handbook, so to speak, of how they too might enter into that newness of life. This pursuit of course is not to be shunned, but rather encouraged, if conducted with the right presuppositions. The writings of Symeon, especially, being deeply personal and uniquely autobiographical, lend themselves to much reflection about how a Taboric experience can be possible so long after the Transfiguration of the Savior. If such an experience could occur 1000 years after Mt Tabor, as it did with the New Theologian, why can it not occur again another 1000 years after that? For we know what a thousand years is equivalent to in God's sight (cf. 2 Pet 3:8).

As a consequence, the field of Patristics can offer not only strictly doctrinal focal points but also an experience of the spiritual path. This is because the Fathers walked that path before us. It would be fair to say that a portion of students are now drawn by the appeal of this latter factor, which is receiving increasing emphasis. This is not an 'additional' aspect of the tradition but an essential part of it. When the Christian life is viewed in terms of a

process of purification, illumination and sanctification, it then has an allure that it would not otherwise have. That allure, of which our nominally Christian societies are so often deprived, feeds the discussion in many tutorials and essays, particularly when its rightful place is brought to the fore in the lectures. It is one 'competitive advantage' that Patristics has over other subjects in the course of a tertiary theological degree; students are provided with an opportunity and several conceptual tools in order to grapple with questions of their own spiritual growth. They may see a personal path within an ecclesial setting, if they had not seen one previously. They may also come to acknowledge a fresher connotation of spiritual discipline in relation to discipleship. A balance is therefore struck between an academic approach and, at the same time, the legitimate concern of students to find whatever is applicable to their own development as persons.

4. To Conclude

We have identified several reasons for which the field of Patristics in Australia exercises a narrow range of influence amid the faithful and among the broader population. These include the limited number of opportunities that are available for formal study in the Church Fathers, which unfortunately do not include the younger years of school education and are therefore necessarily restricted to tertiary education. Among the tertiary sector, a student would typically have to be enrolled in a Church-based theological college in order to have the opportunity to choose a relevant course. Only rarely would such an opportunity be available outside that circle of learning, unless it had been incorporated into a Studies of Religion course within a university (public or private). Apart from these provisions for formal learning in Patristics, there do not appear to be many others to attract people towards it, even as an informal area of interest. We do not see much evidence, for example, of the subject being popularized or presented in lay terms such that the non-specialists might begin to savor the wisdom that the Fathers can offer them as well. In the second section of the paper, an attempt was made to present several essential features of Patristics in the eastern Orthodox understanding. This was designed not as a digression, but as a point of reference for a possible reassessment or revitalization of the subject vis-a-vis current practices.

It has been stressed that Patristics has become a subset within a subset of learning. Those who do not find themselves under the banner of theology will rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to encounter the Fathers in any meaningful way. Their paths will not cross. In precisely this realization lies the ascertainment that the community of faithful have allowed for an outcome that no Christian would have hoped for, and few would have foreseen. We have collectively, even if unintentionally, gone wrong somewhere in the not-so-distant past. Circumstances of history and civil government have no doubt contributed to this. For the Church obviously does not function as an island in the world. Yet, without implying any kind of moral failure by use of the term 'wrong', there must at least be an objective acknowledgement, based on all the above, that we have taken the awareness, availability and overall appeal of Patristics into misguided directions.

At the same time, the Australian situation presents a further complexity in so far as the various tiers of its education system, both horizontally and vertically, simply *cannot* accommodate a syllabus in Patrology in the ways that other societies might, as this will either grate against its secular foundations or else be seen as favoring one Patristic perspective over another. In a multifaith society such as Australia's, there cannot be any solution that appears to be even remotely 'confessional', which is to say, denominational. The onus for education in this field therefore lies where it always belonged: on the shoulders of the faithful people of God, both clergy and lay, hence the endurance of formal Patristic studies as an almost exclusively Church-based effort. With the passage of time, it has become an increasingly tapered affair, relying in a very specialized way on the slender overlap of Church and higher education. For better or for worse, the cocoon that confines Patristics also produces the silk of the academic robes which the subject appears to be clothed in today.

The problems described above should not all be perceived as unique to Australia. The gradual de-Christianization of public life and policies in regions of the globe that were once strongly Christian, the allure of new technological means of human communication, the individualization of what used to be a communal and eucharistic approach to the truth, coupled with the erosion of support for studies in the classics right around the world, and the fading knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin as a consequence of that are all likely causes of the diminishing role and relevance of Patristics in the lives of everyday men, women and children.

Yet, so as not to end on a bleak note, all parties involved in the nurturing and teaching of Patristics might also look towards a future stage, in God's time, when the cocoon will have been discarded and the butterfly will have flown.

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Appendix A

The Church Fathers in Text Books for School-Age Children: An Overseas Example

The following examples are taken from textbooks that are available to students of primary and secondary education in Greece, and which are accessible through the website ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks (accessed on 6 December 2023).

The textbooks cited below commence from Year 3 of primary school until the end of high school (known as Year 12 in Australia), and are part of the students' studies in their own religious tradition through the subject called *Thriskeftika* (Θρησκευτικά). The excerpts have been translated into English especially for this paper.

No claim is made concerning the teaching methods employed or the effectiveness of the material upon the students' learning experience. Nor is it implied that these curricula can be used as a model for students of equivalent age groups in Australia. In the first section of this article, several characteristics of the Australian school system were presented which would not only make a uniform religious syllabus impossible, but which would also reject an overtly denominational content for it. One basic reason for which the curriculum of one country could not be copied by the other is the different religious complexion of each society. The Australian population is not only multicultural but also very diverse in terms of religious affiliation, and so the student population would reflect a very wide range of Christian denominations as well as world religions. This fact alone would make the introduction of a subject on the Church Fathers problematic for obvious practical reasons. On the other hand, the situation within the school system in Greece still reflects a population that is overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, of the Orthodox Christian faith. Exceptions have arisen due to the arrival of migrants and refugees in Greece in recent years, affecting some pockets of Athens in particular (where the Orthodox children in a small number of classrooms might be a minority among the new arrivals). Most schools in the country are state-run and there is an obligation upon them, according to the Greek Constitution (art. 16:2), to offer instruction in the Orthodox faith. Individual students can be exempted on certain grounds. Consequently, no attempt should be made to compare such dissimilar situations. This is why, as mentioned, the aim is not to offer a model.

The example of overseas education in a single educational and geographic area is offered in order to illustrate the principle that Patristic studies can be introduced in an elementary way at a very young age, and that there is no pedagogical reason to restrict this practice to students of higher (tertiary) education. It is easy to discern below how this principle has been laid out according to the various grades of both primary and high school. The Patristic quotations that have been translated below are quite effectively interspersed

with numerous Scriptural passages and color illustrations, such as sacred icons, in the relevant textbooks.

Finally, it is noteworthy that students who complete the mentioned grades will have encountered no less than 80 references to, or quotations from, the Eastern Church Fathers by the time they have completed their final year of schooling.

(A) 3rd Grade Primary School—The World of Religion and Faith (ed. by Eleni Maraki).

1. There is first a two-page introduction on the Three Hierarchs, and on each individually: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom (pp. 32–33).

2. An icon of the Three Hierarchs appears, together with a small section titled 'Wise sayings' (Σοφά λόγια), samples of which are translated here.

Basil the Great:

> "Just as bees gather nectar from the flowers, you can do the same with the things you read. Keep what is good and beneficial".

Gregory the Theologian:

> "Education is the greatest good. This has helped us to worship God. We should not neglect education, but rather consider ignorant and illiterate those who do".

John Chrysostom:

> "I will say that someone loves me, not only when he praises me, but also when he corrects me".

> "The rich person is not the one who has many things, but the one who has no need for them". (p. 34)

3. The *Apolytikion* hymn of the Three Hierarchs is presented in both the original form in which it was composed but also in an easier modern Greek rendition (p. 35).

4. Finally, there are listed several suggestions for activities, e.g., inviting students to express their thoughts when observing the relevant icon, but also to learn to chant the hymn with their teacher.

(B) 4th Grade Primary School—Discovering icons, people and stories (Ανακαλύπτουμε εικόνες, πρόσωπα και ιστορίες).

5. An analogy of St John Chrysostom is provided on the value of prayer: Just as rays of dawn's sunlight send wild animals into their hiding places, so does sincere prayer send rays of light to the mind, sending our wild habits to hide in their own den (p. 11).

(C) 5th Grade Primary School—The World of Religion (Ο κόσμος της θρησκείας).

6. A boxed paragraph titled 'The Three Hierarchs on education and the teacher' reads:

> "Education according to the Three Hierarchs should be characterised by the following: freedom, love and respect. The personal character of the teacher, and the relationship of the teacher with students, are the basic factors in the educational process. The teacher should not be an egotist. He or she must acknowledge mistakes, be humble, democratic and employ dialogue". (p. 23)

7. A title states 'Sayings on the value of education'. What follows do not appear to be direct quotations from the authors and they are not referenced.

> "Teaching in class should be pleasant, for this is the only way for knowledge to remain permanently" (St Basil the Great)

> "Education is a superior art and science" (Gregory the Theologian)

> "Education is very beneficial, but it requires constant effort in order for weaknesses and passions to be uprooted from the soul of the pedagogue". (John Chrysostom) (p. 24)

8. A letter of John Chrysostom to a rich person states that a Christian noble is not known by his attendants, but by the help he gives to those in need (p. 72).

9. Basil the Great comments on the words "I will tear down my barns" contained in the Gospel according to Luke, reminding the person who wishes to store goods that "the extra bread you have belongs to the hungry, and the [extra] clothes you have in your cupboard belong to the one who has nothing to wear. So, when you do not help those who are in need, it is as if you have done them the injustice" (p. 73).

10. John Chrysostom describes the Church as the ark of salvation. However, he says, unlike the first Ark, which merely saved the animals without transforming them, the ark of the Church can receive someone who is like a crow and return that same person as a dove. The children are then asked to comment on Chrysostom's comparison between the two arks (p. 79).

11. Arianism and Monophysitism are introduced as heresies, while mentioning the 1st Ecumenical Council in the year 325 and the prominent role of Athanasius the Great in all of this (p. 80).

12. An extract from Gregory Palamas' *Homily* 18 (*On the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers*) states: "Only when the sinner avoids associating with bad people, and begins to keep company with the righteous, will that person succeed in terms of justice and the salvation of his or her soul" (p. 81).

13. An extract of St Athanasius' *Against Arians*: "We have been given a great gift by the Logos (that is, Christ), so that we are not deceived by appearances. Yet more than this, even when something appears to be unclear, we are able to interpret it through the grace of the Holy Spirit" (p. 84).

14. An extract of Basil the Great's *Letter to Amphilochius*: "Heresies have to do with those who are completely cut off and estranged from the correct faith, while schisms have to do with internal disputes for ecclesiastical reasons and they concern issues that can be resolved" (p. 84).

15. In order to introduce the period of iconoclasm, John Chrysostom is described as a "great Father of our Church" and is quoted as follows: "Our Church may experience difficulties, and struggle against every kind of enemy, but it is not possible for it ever to be defeated or destroyed" (p. 87).

16. Basil the Great *On the Holy Spirit*: "The honour attributed to the icon is given to the prototype" (p. 88).

17. Mention is made of the first major rift between the Church in East and West, and the strong reaction of Photios the Great to the demands of Pope Nicholas I (p. 90).

(D) 6th Grade Primary School—Discovering texts, monuments, places and events (Ανακαλύπτουμε κείμενα, μνημεία, τόπους και γεγονότα).

18. John Chrysostom: "The Old Testament preceded the New, and the New Testament interpreted the Old. Many times I have said that the two Testaments are two daughters and sisters serving the same Master. Christ is foretold by the prophets and proclaimed in the New Testament. The news is not new, because the old preceded it". In this textbook, it is noteworthy that the reference is to the *Patrologia Graeca* series of Migne (PG vol. 50, col. 796) (p. 42).

19. John Chrysostom: "The purpose of the two Testaments is one. Our correction. That is why it presents not only those who were successful, but also those who were unsuccessful, so that we might imitate the former and avoid imitating the latter. In this way, we are led to virtue and diligence from both angles" (PG 56, 313–314) (p. 42).

20. John Chrysostom: "From the beginning, when God made people, he spoke directly with them in a manner that they were able to hear. In this way, he went to Adam, reproached Cain, spoke with Noah and was shown hospitality by Abraham… However, because humankind turned out to be unworthy to communicate with him, and as he wanted to renew his friendship with them, he sent them letters [the Holy Scriptures] just as one would to someone far away, and in this manner called all people to him" (PG 53, 27–28) (p. 43).

21. John of Damascus: "It is very beautiful and beneficial to study the Holy Scriptures. Because when the soul, like a tree planted near water, is watered with the Scriptures, it is nourished and produces ripe fruit, namely correct faith, and is decorated with evergreen leaves, namely actions that are pleasing to God… Let us do this with willingness and endurance. If we read something once or twice and cannot understand what we are reading, let us not be discouraged, but instead persevere and ask questions" (PG 94, 1176) (p. 56).

22. John Chrysostom: "He who once adorned that table is the one who adorns the Holy Altar table. It is not a human who makes the offered gifts the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ himself who was crucified for us" (PG 49, 380) (p. 80).

(E) 1st Year High School—A life journey: the encounter between God and human through biblical narratives (Ένα ταξίδι ζωής: η συνάντηση Θεού και ανθρώπου μέσα από τις βιβλικές διηγήσεις).

23. St Basil the Great on gender equality: "We are, said St Ioulitta, made of the same nature as men… From the Creator, woman has been fashioned in such a manner that she can, equally with man, be receptive to virtue… As result, stability, power and patience were given by the Master in equal measure to men" (*On the Martyr Ioulitta and on Thanksgiving*).

24. Two paragraphs of Gregory of Nyssa appear on the plight of "countless homeless" and refugees who must knock on doors and whose "table are their folded knees" (*On the Love of the Poor and Charity*) (p. 30).

25. Two petitions from the Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom are presented: "For seasonable weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth and fair weather;" and "For those who travel by sea and land, the sick, the suffering and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord" (p. 33).

26. Isaac the Syrian: "What is a merciful heart? It is a heart that is aflame for all of creation… Due to prolonged and intense compassion, the heart is squeezed and cannot bear any injury, even if it is small, occurring in Creation. This is why it prays constantly with tears for all irrational animals, the enemies of truth, and for those who damage it, asking God to protect and forgive them" (*Ascetic Works*) (p. 33).

27. Students are provided with a large extract of Chrysostom's famous *Catechetical Oration on Holy Pascha* (p. 109).

28. John Chrysostom on social justice: "Don't you blush from embarrassment when you describe as aggressive the person battling to earn bread? That person, although behaving so, is deserving of our compassion because the pressure of hunger forces him or her to wear the mask of aggressiveness […] And I must say furthermore that the aggressor is really *you* because, even though you come regularly to church and you listen to my sermons, you none the less prefer gold and desires and human friendships in the marketplace, in preference to my own promptings" (*Commentary on Romans*) (p. 120).

29. John of Damascus: "We should know that God does not punish anyone in the future, but all people make themselves receptive to participation in God. Participation in God is delight, whereas non-participation is hell… For, what is hell, other than the deprivation of something which one intensely desires? In accordance with the proportion of desire, then, those who desire God feel delight, whereas those who desire sin feel torment" (*Against Manichaeans*) (p. 146).

(F) 2nd Year High School—The Church: a journey of life through time (Η Εκκλησία: πορεία ζωής μέσα στην ιστορία).

30. Basil the Great on the cenobitic life: "I call the cenobium the most perfect form of social co-existence, in which there is no institution of private ownership, there are no disagreements, while turmoil, rivalry, factions and feuds are kept at a distance. In this kind of society everything is held in common: God is common, the offering and pursuit of virtue is common, salvation is common… Which other social structure is equal to it? Which is happier?… One who is physically ill has so many people to share his or her suffering. One who is spiritually ill and exhausted has many to be served by and assist in his or her restoration of health" (*Ascetic Regulations*) (p. 44).

31. Over one page is presented on Justin the Martyr and Apologist, including his *Second Apology* in which it is stated that Socrates "was accused of the same things of which we [Christians] are accused. For, they said that he, too, introduced new gods […] He encouraged people to accept the God who was unknown to them, saying 'It is not easy to find the Father and Creator of all, nor is it safe to do so, or to speak about him to all'" (pp. 54–55).

32. Clement of Alexandria: "We accept that philosophy prepares one for the serenity of Christ; it trains the spirit, awakens intelligence and enables it to continue its search towards true philosophy. Just as it is possible for one to be faithful even if illiterate, in the same way we maintain that it is impossible for one to comprehend the entire content of faith without learning" (*Stromateis* [1.6]) (p. 55).

33. Here appears a single page biography and icon of Basil the Great (p. 56).

34. A didactic incident from Basil's life is presented, based on a food shortage in Caesaria during which he saw that the rich were stocking their warehouses and the merchants were charging exorbitant prices: "Basil, with his fiery sermons, commenced a campaign against greed. He described those greedy and uncompassionate persons as being worse than wild beasts, as they did not respect their own kind, whereas the animals respect their own. Through his proclamations he was able to break down any resistance, and open the hearts and warehouses of his countrymen. As a result, many people were saved. Another great work was the *Basileias*; outside Caesaria, Basil the Great had built a small city with a hospital, orphanage, hostels, schools, workshops, special dwellings for the workers and workshops for the necessities of the city" (p. 57).

35. Here there is a page-long blurb and icon of Gregory the Theologian (pp. 57–58).

36. Gregory the Theologian's poetic output is mentioned (amounting to 407 poems), mostly written towards the end of his life. An example of this is provided; an epigram of ten lines in honor of his friend Basil is also quoted (p. 58).

37. A one-page biography of John Chrysostom is presented together with his icon and the title "Rhetoric in the service of the truth" (pp. 58–59).

38. Here there is an icon of the Three Hierarchs together with information that, in the modern era, their feast day was dedicated to education in 1842, through the University of Athens. Since that year, the Three Hierarchs have been considered to be patrons of students and of learning generally (p. 60).

39. The *Apolytikion* hymn of the Three Hierarchs is provided in its original Greek together with a Modern Greek rendering (p. 60).

40. A half-page excerpt is presented from Basil the Great's renowned *Address to Youth: On how they might Benefit from Classical Greek literature* (p. 61).

41. A half-page excerpt is presented from Gregory the Theologian's *Epitaph for Basil* on the value of Christian education but also of *pre*-Christian education (*paideia*) which, it is claimed, many Christians look down on due to their mistaken impression of it (p. 61) (see Jaeger 1961).

42. Under the heading 'Is it permitted for Christians to use violence?', there are two quotations from Chrysostom: one from his *Homily in Honour of the Blessed Babylas* ("It is not right for Christians to destroy by way of deceit, force and violence, but to work for the salvation of people through persuasion, speech and gentleness") and the other from *On not Publicizing the Sins of the Brothers* ("It is hubris towards God to ask him for things against our enemies") (p. 62).

43. A paragraph describing Photios the Great is quoted from the *Life of Patriarch Ignatius* (p. 68 given).

44. Gregory of Nyssa describes the interest of the faithful of Constantinople during the Second Ecumenical Synod of 381: "It fills the whole city, the squares, the marketplace, the crossroads—all are discussing it with a frenzy. If you ask one shopkeeper for your change, he philosophizes about what is Begotten and Unbegotten; if you ask the price of bread, the reply is that the Father is greater than the Son; if you ask 'Is my bath ready?' the steward answers that the Son was created out of nothing" (*On the Divinity of the Son and the Spirit*) (p. 86).

45. Heading: The Church Fathers defend the Christian faith and interpret the Word of God Sub-heading: Who do we mean when we speak of 'Church Fathers'?

> "The Fathers of the Church are those of its members who were recognized as authentic interpreters of Holy Scripture and guides of the faithful in Christian living. They contributed decisively to the definition, formulation and, chiefly, the defence of the faith. For this reason, the term 'Father of the Church' is often interchanged with 'Teacher' as a title of honour [names of several major Church Fathers are provided as an illustration]. The Orthodox and the Roman Catholics follow the principle of 'agreement' set out by Vincent of Lerins (fifth century), which is that the Church is to follow the teaching that was proclaimed by all Fathers or at least by a majority of them, with clarity, harmony and stability". (pp. 87–88)

46. A quotation from a modern writer appears above the icons of Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Palamas, stating "The Orthodox Church sees itself as the Church of the Fathers. The Church does not cease to produce Fathers, i.e., enlightened faithful persons who manage, with the help of the Holy Spirit and their own virtue and wisdom, to recapitulate and formulate once again the common and constant goal in the language of each historical period: the sanctification of the human person" (p. 88).

47. Here is a page on Athanasius the Great together with his icon (p. 89).

48. Augustine of Hippo appears on half a page together with his icon (p. 90).

49. One page is dedicated to the briefest quotes of Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius the Great, Chrysostom, Synesios of Cyrene, Isaac the Syrian, Maximos the Confessor and Augustine (p. 91).

50. Four excerpts from John of Damascus' *On Those who Oppose the Holy Icons* are provided (pp. 111–12).

(G) 3rd Year High School—The witness of the Orthodox Church in the modern world (Η μαρτυρία της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας στον σύγχρονο κόσμο).

51. Quotations of Basil the Great (*On Those who gather Riches*), Gregory the Theologian (*On love of the Poor*) and Isaac the Syrian are presented (p. 18).

52. John Chrysostom is quoted on the topic of social justice (the same quotation from PG 60, 535–538 that was given in an earlier grade) (p. 40).

(H) 4th Year High School (Lyceum)—Orthodox faith and worship (Ορθόδοξη πίστη και λατρεία).

53. Symeon the New Theologian *Hymn 6* is quoted in both the original and modern Greek (pp. 9–10).

54. One paragraph is quoted from Chrysostom's *On the Canaanite Woman* regarding prayer (p. 21).

55. An excerpt is presented from Cyprian of Carthage, together with a reference to *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate* in Latin (p. 45).

56. Justin the Philosopher's *First Apology* is cited to describe the way the eucharistic gathering occurred every Sunday (p. 46).

57. Here is an excerpt of Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechism 18* on the catholicity of the Church (p. 48).

58. John Chrysostom is again referred to, this time by way of his Homily 8 *On Repentance* which relates to the sanctifying power of the Church (p. 49).

59. Maximos the Confessor's *Mystagogy* is quoted regarding the meaning of the Divine Liturgy (p. 59).

60. Symeon the New Theologian provides a sentence on Baptism, taken from PG 155, 221 (p. 106).

61. Four excerpts are given from John Chrysostom on the topic of marriage as a mystery of love (pp. 112–13).

62. Students are made aware of Gregory of Nyssa's *On the name and profession of the Christians* (p. 133).

63. John of Damascus is quoted on the etymology of 'virtue' (ἀρετή) to underline that it is something freely chosen or elected (αἱρετή) (p. 137)

64. The passage that the textbook editors have chosen from Chrysostom's Homily 76:5 *On the Gospel of Matthew* is so beautiful that it deserves to be reproduced here in full:

> "I am Father, I am brother, I am bridegroom, I am dwelling place, I am food, I am raiment, I am root, I am foundation, all that you wish, I am. Be in need of nothing, I will be a servant, for I came to serve, not to be served; I am friend, and member of the body, and head, and brother, and sister, and mother; I am all; only adhere closely to me. I became poor for you, and a beggar for you, on the Cross for you, buried for you; above I intercede for you to the Father; on earth I was sent as an ambassador from my Father for you. You are all things to me, brother, and joint heir, and friend, and member of the same body. What more would you want?". (p. 138)

65. Passages relating to free will are presented from the writings of John of Damascus (*Precise exposition of the Orthodox faith,* PG 94, 920b and PG 94, 924b), Maximos the Confessor (*Dialogue with Pyrrhus*, PG 91, 304c) and Gregory the Theologian (*Homily* 14:25, PG 35, 829a). Students are to discuss and offer reasons for which this (free will) is a basic feature of human nature (pp. 141–42).

66. Maximos the Confessor on love: "When someone offends you or ridicules you, guard yourself against angry thoughts, lest they separate you from love through sorrow, and transfer you to the realm of hatred" (p. 147).

67. Chrysostom's *Commentaries* on 1 Corinthians (PG 61.251) and 2 Corinthians (PG 61, 527) are cited in order to show the distinctions and similarities between lay people and clergy within the Church (pp. 154–55).

68. A quotation of Gregory the Theologian on the equality of male and female has him asking rhetorically: "Why do you legislate unequally, given that you are one body? Let us see something worse: did the first woman commit sin? Adam did the same! They were both deceived by the snake" (*Homily* 37, PG 36, 289–292) (pp. 156–57).

69. A second paragraph from Gregory the Theologian follows, touching this time on the issue of slavery (p. 157).

70. From Basil the Great, two sentences are provided concerning the equality of women with men (*On the martyr Ioulitta*) (p. 157).

71. Basil the Great's claim is that we are to become like children (Matt 18:3) in the sense of the equality that exists among them (*Shorter Rules*, 216) (p. 157).

72. Clement of Alexandria's brief quotation (from *Stromateis* 7:12) underlines that no one is to be looked at condescendingly according to the law of God (p. 157).

(I) 5th Year High School (Lyceum)—Christianity and Religions (Χριστιανισμός και Θρησκεύματα).

73. John of Damascus is presented in an extensive quotation concerning the creation of the human person in both soul and body (*Exposition of the Orthodox faith*, 12) (p. 19).

74. A stimulating quotation of Basil the Great is provided: "Our admiration for the works of God is not diminished if we learn how one of these works came about" (*On the six days of Creation*, PG 29, 25) (p. 21).

(J) 6th Grade High School—Christianity and the modern world (Χριστιανισμός και σύγχρονος κόσμος).

75. Isaac the Syrian: "A merciful heart is one that is aflame for the entire Creation, for people, for birds, for animals *etc".* (*Ascetical Works*) (p. 20).

76. One page is shared by John Chrysostom and Basil the Great on the topic of wealth and greed (pp. 25–26).

77. John Chrysostom on the value of work: "Let us not be ashamed of manual labour […] Idleness is destructive; work, by contrast, makes everything more useful. Knowing how much damage comes through idleness and the benefit of work, let us avoid the former and pursue the latter" (p. 32).

78. Ephraim the Syrian: "Woe to those who deprive the workers of their fair pay, because they are like those who shed blood" (*Oration on the Second Coming*) (p. 34).

79. John Chrysostom: "Wherever the husband and the wife and the children are connected through bonds of concord, friendship and virtue, there Christ is among them" (p. 36).

80. Another (unreferenced) quotation of Chrysostom is provided, emphasizing the value of love between a husband and wife, beyond which "nothing is more precious" (p. 37).

Notes

1 It occurred once, when asked about what Patristics is, that this author stated "it is the study of the *fathers*". Whereupon the enquirer, who obviously misheard the reply, exclaimed with a mixture of surprise and affirmation "oh, it's the study of the *farmers*"!

2 These are as follows: St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, Sydney; St Cyril's Coptic Orthodox Theological College, Sydney (both are members of the Sydney College of Divinity) and St Athanasius College, Melbourne (a Coptic Orthodox member college of the University of Divinity).

3 One positive initiative, of which the author has personal experience, belongs to St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, Sydney. Patristic symposia have been organized there, not only for specialists but also for members of the public, since 2009. As the website of the College explains, these gatherings "originally took the form of a series of scholarly lectures delivered annually throughout the month of September, two every week. Since 2012, the annual symposia adopted the form of regular, two-day conferences. In the wake of the sixth session (2014), the conference has been biennial. From the outset, the symposia proved to be an open space for cross-disciplinary approaches to the Patristic phenomenon, and so they remain" (see online: www.sagotc.edu.au, accessed on 30 November 2023).

4 The rationale of the 2 Unit Legal Studies syllabus, however, was "*not* designed to prepare students for further study in law or to advise others about the law but rather to prepare them to participate effectively in everyday life" (doi:10.53300/001c.6019).

5 Since the Federation of Australia in 1901, there are six Australian States, each with its own parliament, government and laws (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia), and two Territories (the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory).

6 According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2022 "the majority of students were enrolled in government schools (64.5%), followed by Catholic schools (19.7%) and independent schools (15.9%)". *Source*: www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release (accessed on 4 January 2024).

7 These used to be known as Scripture classes, but are now called Special Religious Education (SRE) or Religious Instruction (RI) classes. It must be remembered that they are optional classes, and, in more recent times, the children in New South Wales can opt for non-religious ethics classes instead of SRE.

8 Mayer does provide optimism nonetheless for an increased interest even in secular universities worldwide based on "the legitimacy afforded by the now maturing field of late antiquity" within which "patristics can be viewed either as an allied field or a subdiscipline".

9 According to the 2021 Australian Census figures, only 43.9% of the population identify themselves as Christian, down from 52% in 2016 (and 74% in 1991), while those who identify as non-religious are 39%, an increase from 30% in 2016. For an insightful overview of the data concerning religious affiliation, involving a great diversity of religious beliefs due to migration trends over recent decades, see the Australian Bureau of Statistics at www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia (accessed on 4 January 2024).

10 Several notable luminaries who lived in the last hundred years or so would certainly qualify as Patristic personalities. It is simply that the designation of 'Church Father' is so hallowed that it is normally applied only with the passage of a very great period of time.

11 The Divine Liturgy ascribed to John Chrysostom is celebrated throughout the liturgical year in Greek Orthodox practice, while a second, ascribed to Basil the Great, is used ten times throughout the year. A third, bearing the name of Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzus), is more popular among other ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Regardless of embellishments that have occurred over time, or even questions of authorship, it is noteworthy that all Three Hierarchs have the distinction of being honoured as authors of 'prayed theology,' as represented in the most central act of the Church, which is the Eucharist.

12 An obvious echo of Plato's assertion that "true philosophers give thought to dying" (οἱ ὀρθῶς φιλοσοφοῦντες ἀποθνήσκειν μελετῶσι).

13 As the late Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Australia Stylianos Harkianakis of blessed memory relayed to his students: "The Holy Bible unites all Christians, but as soon as we open it, it divides us!"

[14] Otto Bardenhewer maintained, back in 1908 (Bardenhewer 1908, p. 2), that it is to Jerome (fourth century) that we owe the *idea* of a Patrology. That assertion may, however, reflect a conflation of the notions of 'ecclesiastical writers' on the one hand, and of 'Fathers' on the other.

[15] Although the terms are used interchangeably in everyday usage, Van Geest outlines what he perceives to be the differences between Patrology and Patristics. His article points out that it was only much later that patrologists employed the methods of literary and historical criticism to determine the historical and literary influences upon the works of the Church Fathers.

[16] With a touch of light-heartedness, we could add that the traditional *consensus patrum* is in danger of becoming *consensus partum*, where *partum* indicates profit or acquisition. According to dictionary definitions, moreover, *partum* is the accusative of *partus*, from *parere*, 'to give birth to, bring into being', hence the term *post partum*, 'after childbirth'. Therefore, the attentive stance of listening to the consensus of the Fathers on matters of salvation, could either conjure the appropriate image of the spiritual birth that this is meant to provide, or else degenerate into an expectation of other kinds of profit—all through the reversal of just two letters.

[17] Palamas's terminology for the three powers of the soul are part of an extremely long linguistic tradition, as the very same terms can be found in Plato's *Republic* (441E-442C).

[18] The centrality of the Resurrection is lived out liturgically and hymnographically within the Body of Christ, the Church. An extract of one Resurrectional *Kontakion* hymn, among countless others that could be cited, exclaims straightforwardly: "The Saviour has come to those in darkness. Come out now, believers, to the Resurrection!" See online: digitalchantstand.goarch.org/goa/dcs (accessed on 12 December 2023).

[19] In certain newly minted but unacceptable views (in so far as they claim to be Christian views), the Resurrection is not an event that truly occurred, but only the symbolic way in which the Evangelists and disciples portrayed the memory of Jesus Christ in their own nostalgic imagination!

[20] Papadopoulos became a monk of Mt Athos towards the end of his life, receiving the monastic name Gerasimos.

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Article

The Fathers of the Church, the Reformation, and the Failed Attempts at Union between the Tübingen Theologians and the Patriarchate of Constantinople: A Broad Perspective

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Abstract: The sixteenth century witnessed dramatic upheavals in Eastern and Western Europe in both the ecclesiastical and political domains. In the previous century, Constantinople had fallen to the Ottoman Turks, meaning that its Eastern Orthodox inhabitants were severed both politically and religiously from their Western Christian neighbors, who were ruled over by sovereigns that derived their spiritual authority from the Papacy. Meanwhile, the Reformation endangered the unity of the political and religious spheres of the Catholic West. As it soon became clear that the mainstream Reformers were neither united nor consistent in their ecclesiological views, one thing remained a constant: a recourse to the Fathers of the Church for the confirmation of Reformed tenets such as sola scriptura and sola fide. The use of Patristic proof texts played an important role in the attempt of the Lutherans to unite with the Orthodox, the former reading the writings of the Fathers in a very different way to the latter. This article analyzes why this attempt at union failed, with specific focus on the correspondence between the Tübingen theologians and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Jeremiah II Tranos, in their respective reading of the *Augsburg Confession* which represents the main Lutheran articles of faith.

Keywords: Fathers of the Church; Patristics; Roman Catholic Church; Orthodox Church; Luther; Reformation; Radical Reformation; Patriarchate of Constantinople; Patriarch; Tübingen

1. Introduction

Long before the Great Schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church in 1054 AD, the second Ecumenical Council in 381 elevated the see of New Rome, Constantinople—the capital of the Byzantine empire—second to the old Rome among the emergent ecclesiastical centers. Since the beginnings of the Church, the elder Rome had been "first among equals", the center of judicial administration with a growing consciousness of universal jurisdiction. While these two ecclesiastical centers would develop different customs based on their divergent cultural and historical trajectories—Rome was Latin-centerd, the East Greek-speaking, the former would come to use unleavened bread in the Eucharist, the latter leavened, etc.—a common source of unity among them was their recourse to the writings and lives of the Fathers of the Church. The Fathers were usually considered holy figures, often ordained bishops or clergymen, sometimes monastics, other times neither, who defended and articulated the Christian faith—especially in terms of dogma or doctrine—principally through their writings. In contemporary scholarship the study of the Fathers is known as "Patristics".

When the break between the two Romes took place around the turn of the first millennium, still these two churches—which would become known as Catholicism and Orthodoxy, respectively—could be said to have had more in common than not because of their joint Patristic antecedents. They mostly venerated the same Fathers as saints, some of whom participated in formulating the commonly held doctrinal definitions articulated at consecutive Ecumenical Councils, one of the highest instruments of spiritual and jurisdictional or

canonical authority in the Church. And while Rome would continue to hold Ecumenical Councils after the schism with the Greek East and would develop other categories to signify great teachers of the faith—such as the "Doctors of the Church"—nevertheless the Fathers would remain a common source of succor and verification of each Church's respective identities through times of crisis: for the former during the Reformation period, and for the latter during Ottoman occupation. This adherence to the Fathers is of course not to be confused, from a methodological point of view, with the discipline of Patristics per se: the latter developed in post-Enlightenment academia which emphasizes the analysis of texts in an objective or non-confessional manner in order to determine their meaning in context.

While Patristics is still undertaken in a confessional manner, especially by traditional Christian ecclesial communities like Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, nevertheless the use of the writings of the Fathers as proof texts to confirm Church doctrine—or as containing the elements of doctrine espoused by churches officially (decrees of Ecumenical Councils, the Roman Catholic magisterium, etc.)—has always been a feature of Christianity from an institutional point of view, and is thus relevant to the present study which addresses the use of the Fathers by the Lutherans and Orthodox, respectively, in relation to a reading of the former's *Augsburg Confession*, a foundational Reformation document. Indeed, this article contextualizes the lack of consistency in the approach of the Reformers toward the writings of the Fathers and their contributions to Church doctrine—resulting in the re-emergence of ancient Christian heresies with the Radical Reformation—in order to demonstrate that this lack of uniformity, which had sacramental and ecclesiological ramifications, in fact presaged the failure of the attempted union between the Lutherans and the Orthodox initiated by the Tübingen theologians in Germany in the middle of the sixteenth century.

The Reformation led to the splintering of Western Christendom among various denominations: Catholicism remaining the mainline Church with emergent Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist, Anabaptist, and later, Anglican confessions of faith, to name the major Reformation strands. In the middle of the sixteenth century, several serious attempts were made by the Lutherans to establish a correspondence and ultimately a union with the Orthodox Church, specifically with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, based partly on the incentive to confirm their own confessional position from support of the Apostolicity that they knew the Patriarch possessed as "first among equals" among the Eastern or Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, i.e., those churches that adhere to the doctrinal Definition of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 addressed below. ("First among equals" is a title that the Patriarchate had claimed since the schism with Rome in 1054). This is something that, given their split from Rome, the Reformers were not willing to do with Rome, despite Catholicism's inherent Petrine Apostolicity. This article will present some of the factors that led to the theological correspondence between the Lutheran theologians at the University of Tübingen and Jeremiah II Tranos, Patriarch of Constantinople. It will also assess the Patriarch's response to the *Augsburg Confession* that comprised the 28 articles of faith of the Lutherans, and the role that the Fathers of the Church played in his reading of the new doctrinal formulations in the 1550s. As made clear by Ammann and Kennerley (2020, p. 271):

> In this period, well-known Church Fathers were disseminated in new, groundbreaking editions, many hitherto lost Greek church authors were rediscovered and made available in the original language or in translation, and Patristic texts were closely read by the many, often feuding, confessional groups who sought answers to the questions that had been raised by contemporary debates about the past and present of the Church.

Thus, it will be shown that differing interpretations of Patristic texts, based on different ecclesiological understandings, played a pivotal role in undermining the possibility of union between the Lutherans and the Eastern Orthodox.

2. The Situation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Orthodox Church

On the eve of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II on the 29th of May 1453, the Patriarchate of the city was left to its own devices. The Russians, at war with the Mongols, were too far away to be of any assistance either before or after the siege. After the city fell, the rulers of Russia—the Tsars—had styled themselves as successors to the Byzantine emperors, who up until that time were considered by the Orthodox in Constantinople and elsewhere within the Byzantine commonwealth as divinely appointed sovereigns (Sloutsky 2019, p. 276). The Russians' claim to having inherited Byzantine imperial rule was specifically predicated on the marriage of Zoe Palaiologos, the niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium, Constantine XI—who died during the city's fall on 29th of May—to Ivan III, the Grand Prince of Moscow (Gregory 2005, p. 345). When the city fell, Zoe's father, Despot Thomas of the Morea in the Peloponnese, sought refuge in Rome. It was there that, under the protection of the Papacy, Zoe's name was change to Sophia, and the marriage between her and Ivan was proposed by Pope Paul II in 1469 as a way of strengthening ecumenical relations between Catholics and Orthodox Russians (Sloutsky 2019, pp. 277, 279). However, this move's failure became clear when Zoe returned to Byzantine Christianity after arriving in Moscow in 1472, with her grandson, Ivan IV (the Terrible), later becoming the first Tsar. Thus, Russia, the only Orthodox country not to have been conquered by the Ottomans, though still technically under the jurisdiction of Constantinople until the conferral of its own Patriarchate in 1587, nevertheless remained geographically and ideologically distinct from both Constantinople (i.e., Ottoman Konstantiniye) and Western Christendom (Gregory 2005, p. 346).

The Papacy had in any case been compelled to make these aforementioned overtures to Russia because of the suspicions harbored by Orthodox Christians that formerly belonged to the Byzantine Empire toward the Pope and Catholicism in general. This was especially the case among the inhabitants of Constantinople. The Byzantines had received help from the Catholic West in the form of the mercenary traveller Giovanni Giustiniani Longo, who arrived at Constantinople on the eve of its fall with 700 soldiers, most of whom, including Giovanni, sacrificed their lives protecting the city. The Pope had also sent 200 archers together with the Byzantine humanist Bessarion, who had become a Roman Catholic cardinal and was responsible for retrieving ancient and medieval manuscripts from Greece and other former Byzantine territories and preserving them in the maritime capital of Venice (Cameron 2010, pp. 197–98). Nevertheless, whatever help that was received from the Christian West was perceived as tainted. The Fourth Crusade in 1204 and the subsequent Latin occupation of the city were still a bitter memory, and anti-Catholic feeling ran high, especially against Bessarion and other members of the pro-unionist party who had tried to reconcile Orthodoxy to Catholicism at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1431–1439)—the seventeenth Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church—that attempted to mediate a union between the Byzantine Christians and Rome (Gill 1959; cf. Stormon 1981).

With Constantinople's fall in 1453, the Byzantine Empire and its collective belief that the secular affairs of the Christian oikoumene would forever remain solemnly guarded and guided by the Emperor were shattered. In the Emperor's place now ruled an Islamic Sultan who established a new pattern of administration for the Christians in his territories. First, Orthodox Christians were relegated to millet or nation/people status which meant that they were allowed to govern themselves according to their own laws (Runciman 1997, p. 167). The Sultan, however, also demanded that the Christian millet be centralized, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which was in close proximity to the Sublime Porte, i.e., the imperial court of the Sultans, was naturally chosen (ibid., p. 177). The Patriarch, a Greek-speaker yet still identifying as a Roman, henceforth became the Ethnarch of all the Orthodox under Ottoman occupation, regardless of their ethnicity: Greeks (still self-identifying as Roman, with a growing sense of Greek nationalism), Romanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, etc. This stifling situation for the non-Greek speakers, complicated by the rise of various nationalisms in later centuries, led to the establishment of independent or

autocephalous churches in these aforementioned regions that still recognize the Patriarchate of Constantinople as "first among equals": all of this in spite of the demise of the Roman millet and the gradual curtailing of the rights and privileges of what the Turks still designate as the Rūm or Roman Patriarchate (Patrikhanesi).

Before becoming the first Patriarch after the fall of the city, Gennadios Scholarios was intransigently opposed to Catholicism and was thus appointed deliberately as such by Sultan Mehmet II in order to drive a wedge between the Catholic kingdoms of Western Europe, with their fealty to the Pope, and Eastern Orthodox Christians. In 1439, fourteen years before the city's fall, Gennadios was present at the Council of Ferrara-Florence as a pro-unionist, but had returned to Constantinople as a staunch advocate of resistance to the union, having been influenced in no small part by bishop Mark of Ephesus who interpreted the Council as heretical. Gennadios followed Mark in taking the Council to compromise the 'faith of the Fathers,' which, since the ninth century 'triumph of Orthodoxy' over iconoclasm in Constantinople, had become an indelible feature of Byzantine/Orthodox Christianity in both its imperial and ecclesiastical spheres (Ware [1962] 1993, pp. 42–81).

Thus, the Patriarchate, without an Emperor and separated from Rome, was endowed (paradoxically) by the conquering Muslims with prestige and authority. But this also caused many problems. The Patriarchate of Constantinople was now for the first time responsible for the lay affairs of the people, and thus the administration of the Patriarchate had to be reorganized to cater for these new and enlarged obligations. Mehmet had established several precepts that would safeguard the integrity of the Orthodox against certain abuses, but the ambivalent dispositions of his successors meant that these precepts were regularly transgressed (Runciman 1997, pp. 189–90). The Patriarchate of Constantinople was not only captive to foreign rulers, but, by force of circumstances, was gradually becoming introverted. Compelled to deal with both internal and external problems—including corruption and betrayal (ibid., pp. 187, 193–94)—its more genuine incumbents had to struggle to maintain and promulgate the traditions that they had received from the past. In any case, because of half a millennium of Islamization in Asia Minor, the late Byzantines and their Eastern spirituality had become increasingly cut off, geographically and intellectually, from Roman Catholicism and Western Christendom in general. After the Council of Florence and the Fall of Constantinople, this applied all the more in the sixteenth century, when the West became preoccupied with the complex issues and problems caused by the Reformation (see Vryonis 1971).

3. The Reformation: Context, Theology, and the Use of the Fathers

In the early 1500s, the Papacy, headquartered in Rome, remained the undisputed spiritual center of Western Europe. But the expensive enterprises of the Renaissance—artistic, architectural, or otherwise—had thrust it into debt. The then Pope Leo X (1475–1521) ordered that indulgences (indulgentiae: the full or partial remissions of punishment due for sins that had not otherwise been forgiven via the sacrament of confession (Hamilton 1986, p. 47)) to be sold throughout Christendom in order to finance the rebuilding of St Peter's Basilica in Rome (Grimm 1958, p. 106). To this end, he sent the Dominican friar Johann Tetzel to Germany to preach indulgences and gather funds. In Germany, Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar, had completed his theological training several years previously and held a chair at the University of Wittenburg. Upon learning that Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz endorsed Tetzel's actions, Luther allegedly felt compelled to nail a copy of his infamous *Ninety-Five Theses* to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenburg on 31 October 1517 (yet cf. Iserloh 1968, pp. 76–97) within which disputation he argued against the sale of indulgences. These were supposed to draw on the treasury of merit acquired by Christ's sacrifice and the penances of the saints and very often made it congenial to pay off by money or gift penances imposed by the Church for sins committed (Hamilton 1986, p. 47). This formulation of indulgences emerged from atonement theology that had come out of scholasticism in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, and was a point of divergence for Roman Catholics and the Orthodox at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, since the Orthodox—while having engaged

with scholasticism through various representative figures of the Byzantine intellectual Renaissance that took place in the fourteenth century (Schulz 2010, pp. 23–32)—did not accept scholastic theological developments wholesale (Estep 1998, pp. 116–17).

Coming to interpret the Church's doctrine of penance in a different light, Luther argued in his *Theses* that avariciously based indulgences gave too much "plenary remission of all penalties" when sins called for "true contrition" and belonged to God alone to forgive (Grimm 1958, p. 107, and see *Theses* 1, 3, 6. 12, 20–21, 57, 86 [ed. Bettenson, pp. 260–62, 265, 267]). Luther studied certain portions of the Bible including the letters to the Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians, and came to believe that the undertaking of good deeds or works, which he identified with the Pauline concept of law, are inherently useless due to the fact that human beings are incapable of good deeds outside the grace of God which is conferred upon them if they have faith in Jesus Christ (Estep 1998, p. 116). In his *Preface to the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans* (ed. Dillenberger, p. 22) Luther wrote:

> We reach the conclusion that faith alone justifies us and fulfils the law; and this because faith brings us the spirit gained by the merits of Christ. The Spirit, in turn, gives us the happiness and freedom at which the law aims, and this shows that good works really proceed from faith.

Insofar as he disparaged the significance of works as a result of his emphasis on faith, Luther placed himself at odds with the Roman Catholic Church (later clarified formally in Tridentine Session 4 [ed. Schroeder pp. 32–45]), and, as circumstances would prove, his theology would be considered incompatible with Orthodoxy as well. As his popularity grew and his views spread, Luther and a small circle of confidants, including the scholar Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), began to fan the flames of an extremely disruptive Reform, especially after Luther called the Pope "Antichrist" in repost against the 1520 Bull against him for his *Ninety-Five Theses* (Dickens 1974, p. 96; cf. Greengrass 2014).

The Reformation spread rapidly throughout Europe, owing not only to Luther and his contemporaries but also to other prominent figures such as Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) who facilitated a simultaneous movement in Switzerland. Zwingli, who was not aware of Luther at the time he began his reforms, diverged from him on several doctrinal points. In Zwingli's approach to the Lord's Supper as symbolic and as merely memorial, Luther took him to be denying the faithful the Real Presence of Christ when partaking the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, resulting in a bitter correspondence that culminated in a colloquy at Marburg in 1529 where Luther, Melanchthon, and several others met with Zwingli and other Swiss theologians in order to come to an agreement (Estep 1998, p. 150). Luther had rejected the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (encoded in Lateran Council IV [1215], canon 1): the mystery of the conversion of the elements into Christ's body and blood with only the appearance of bread and wine remaining, and his position was consubstantialist instead. He accepted the reality of Christ's body and blood as "in and under" the taking of the elements, a view basically following an older Catholic position (going back to fifth-century Pope Leo I [Epistula 59]). In the Marburg discussions, the Fathers of the Church significantly played a role, with the writings of Sts Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, and Augustine—all of whom believed that the Eucharistic bread and the wine actually become the body and blood of Christ without further qualification—being evoked in the squabble (Backus 2019, p. 434), which remained an impasse to the unity of the two movements, thereby resulting in the first Great Schism within the Reformation.

From this point onward, a united reform movement was impossible. Luther, having departed from his original goal of attempting to reform aspects of the Catholic Church, endeavored now to remain as conservative as possible while the other reform movements, hastened by the emergence of figures belonging to what is known as the Radical Reformation, took a more controversial line. This situation was all the more complicated by the fact that the Protestant churches, instead of being subject to (or extensions of) a single governing body—as in the case of Roman Catholicism—were now aligned with the secular authority of various rulers with their conflicting dispositions, which was similar to the Orthodox pattern both before and after the fall of Constantinople. (The theocratic

Byzantine government in relation to the former; Reformed doctrines and 'new monarchies' or early modern 'nation-states' for the latter). Despite these problems, in 1530 at the Diet of Augsburg, which was convened by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in order to allay further divisions within the Church in his realm, Melanchthon presented a summary of the beliefs of the Reformers which he had drafted in consultation with Luther that later became known as the *Augsburg Confession*.

Foundational for the Lutheran churches, the *Augsburg Confession*—which set the precedent for the confessionalism that would become characteristic of the development of the many varying Protestant denominations—grounded them in authoritative principles that conditioned the development and reception of Lutheranism and distinguished it from the Roman Catholic Church on the one hand and Radical Reformers on the other, especially the Anabaptists (1520s on), who increasingly abandoned the traditional approach toward doctrine and faith heretofore upheld by Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Be that as it may, in its 28 articles delineating the Lutheran profession of faith including God, Original Sin, the Son of God, Justification by Faith, the Office of Preaching, to name a few, the *Augsburg Confession* refers to early Fathers venerated by Roman Catholics and Orthodox alike, such as Sts Cyprian, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Gratian, not to mention post-Schism champions of Catholicism like St Thomas Aquinas (Tappert 1959, pp. 43, 45, 50, 55, 60, 64). These were obviously interpreted in a selective manner aligning with Luther's characteristic emphasis on sola scriptura and sola fidei, yet in Melanchthon's reconciliatory stance, the *Confession* was framed in hope of drawing diverging energies back into a stable, unified reform position (Elert 1962, vol. 1, p. 278). After all, he first came to be seriously engaged in the study of the Church Fathers in vital correspondence with the non-Lutheran Reformer Johannes Oecolampadius and the relatively independent Martin Bucer (Sperl 1959, esp. pp. 172–75).

The Radical Reformers would not be so accepting of Patristic tradition, referring only to the Scriptures in a selective manner that re-introduced what would be considered various heretical beliefs that in earlier periods had been addressed by the Fathers of the Church. One such belief was modalism, popularized in the third century by Sabellius who believed that the three members of the Trinity are not distinct persons but modes of manifestation of the one God. This compromised the integrity of the three persons who paradoxically are one God on account of their shared divine essence and was refuted by the fourth-century Cappadocian Fathers Sts Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. These Fathers, in a manner that was a watershed for the Greek-speaking East in terms of theologizing, applied new terminology, namely that of hypostasis (ὑπόστασις), which they distinguished from its synonym ousia (οὐσία), meaning essence, and utilized it for personhood. In this way, they replaced the weaker terms deployed by the Sabellians to indicate how God sometimes appears as Father, Son, and Spirit, namely the Greek term πρόσωπον or Latin persona, and thus, one could speak of God as three eternal hypostases who share the same divine essence (Otis 1958). The other heresy that re-emerged in the Radical Reformation was monophysitism, which is the belief that Christ only had a single divine nature that overshadowed his human one, believed to have been propounded by Eutyches of Constantinople and Dioscorus of Alexandria and condemned at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. It is worth exploring these deviations further to determine the extent to which Luther, who had a hand in drafting the *Augsburg Confession*, adhered to Patristic doctrine in contrast to his radical counterparts (for first guidance, see Williams [1962] 1995).

4. Luther, Other Reformers, Protagonists for Radical Reformation, and the Fathers of the Church

The Reformation—and the major Western Renaissance—witnessed an upsurge in editions and translations of Patristic texts, works by "Origen, [John] Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Arnobius, Hilary, and others" (Rummel 2004, p. 35), like Jerome. Indeed, in 1517, the same year that Luther—whom we have already seen was familiar with the writings

of Cyril—acclaimedly published his *Theses* on Wittenburg's Castle Church doors, wrote about his aims to expose more students to the writings of St Augustine in an attempt to 'dethrone' Aristotle who had been so instrumental in forming the theology of the scholastics (Hendrix 2004, p. 41). But while Luther and his disciple, Melanchthon, could marshal the works of the Fathers in their delineation of Reformation tenets, their emphasis was always on the Scriptural text (Kusukawa 2004, p. 67), as was also the case with the major Swiss Reformers Zwingli and Calvin (Stephens 2004, pp. 83–84; Steinmetz 2004, p. 117). And the Fathers not only had a role in helping Luther articulate his Christological doctrine —even if he prioritized the Scriptures over Patristic texts—but as we have seen, referring to Cyril, John Chrysostom, and Augustine, they were employed in the Eucharistic debates of the Reformers at Marburg as well (see above). Along with Cyril and Augustine, John Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* utilized the writings of the Cappadocian Greek Fathers and others. Despite their criticism of Roman Catholic traditions and doctrinal formulations and their emphasis on Scripture and faith alone, the mainstream Reformers worked in familiarity with the writings of the Fathers and tried to remain consistent enough with established, especially pre-ninth-century Catholic doctrine, albeit with different emphases (cf., e.g., Headley 1963, pp. 204–7) and with the chief formulations of the first seven Ecumenical Councils (so Luther's 1539 Authority of Councils and Churches [ed. and trans, Smyth]).

In order to make sense of just how far the Radical Reformation deviated from accepted doctrinal formulations, we can turn to the use of Fathers who contributed to foundational Church tenets. In relation to the holy Trinity, most of the mainline Reformers—Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin—accepted the belief that God is three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—united in a single essence (Bainton 1964, p. 127), and that the Son became one of us as Christ Jesus for our salvation. In Patristic tradition, the Eastern or Greek-speaking Fathers, beginning, as we have seen, with the Cappadocians, affirmed that the distinct hypostases of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit incomprehensibly share the same essence which is common to them (Meyendorff 1983, pp. 181, 186). Western Fathers like Sts Augustine and later, Anselm, generally began with the simplicity or unity of the Godhead and gave precedence to the essence of God, within which the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct (ibid., 1983, p. 184). These two approaches are in fact complementary and, insofar as they were adhered to by the Latin and Greek-speaking churches before the Great Schism, not much more need be said on the matter, except that, on account of geographical and cultural factors, the latter (i.e., Western) position and its language was taken up by the main Reformers. In Luther's *De Servo arbitrio* (*On the Bondage of the Will* (ed. and trans. Packer and Johnston]) Pt. 1, sect. 4), Luther referred to the Trinity as "in the Godhead", declared that "the Trinity, the incarnation, and the unpardonable sin are facts", and Calvin entitled the thirteenth chapter of his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Bk. 1, ch. 13 as follows: "In Scripture, from the Creation Onward, We Are Taught One Essence of God, which Contains Three Persons". Thus, for the Reformers, that there was a Trinity of persons in the Godhead was clear from the testimony of the Scriptures and presupposed. What they seemed to be more interested in were Christological issues since their respective understandings of Christ had ramifications for their positions on sacramentology and ecclesiology. The writings of Fathers, such as Cyril of Alexandria, were important for Reformed Christologies, as with Luther, who, in his 1540 *Disputation on the Humanity and Divinity of Christ*, maintained that there was a complete unity of the two natures in the person of Jesus:

> From eternity he was not man, but now he is conceived from the Holy Spirit, born from the Virgin, made God and man in one person, which had predicated of it both man and God. Here was made the union of the person. Humanity and divinity enter into each other. The unity, that is what contains it. I confess two natures which cannot be separated. The unity makes it; a unity which is a greater and firmer joining than that of body and soul, because these are separated, the other never. The immortal divine nature and the mortal human nature, but unity

> in one person: That is Christ, son of the impassible God, God and man crucified under Pontius Pilate.

The above passage indicates that Luther was basically in line with the Christological reflections of Cyril, who in the early fifth century refuted Nestorius of Constantinople's belief that the Son and Logos of God could not be born of a human being, and thus had to assume a human body, in this case, Jesus. In opposition to this, Cyril emphasized the oneness or unity of Christ's person in a manner that was consistent with liturgical experience: we pray to the one Christ and we partake of the one Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, a oneness of personhood that would later be articulated as having united two natures, divine and human, which we will presently clarify.

Without getting into the details of the controversial exchange between Cyril and Nestorius that resulted in the anathematization of the latter and the eventual vindication of Cyril's theology at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553, the Alexandrian bishop had a powerful yet misinterpretable Christological slogan: that there is "μία φύσις τοῦ [Θεού] Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη" or "one nature of [God] the Logos incarnate" (Second Letter to Succensus 2 and 3). The term φύσις here does not necessarily mean 'nature' but can be taken to mean 'reality' or 'life' as reflected in the fact that Cyril elsewhere also used the term 'person' (ὑπόστασις) to denote the manner in which God the Logos 'hypostatically' (καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν) or 'personally' united a second nature, that is, the human one, to himself while remaining fully God (Second Letter to Nestorius 4). This means, of course, that when referring to Christ's oneness, Cyril was not referring to his nature, insofar as we have seen that he considered Christ to have both divine and human natures. Instead, Cyril referred to the oneness of Christ's person, of "the Logos incarnate".

Cyril's theology was enshrined in the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431), when Nestorius was excommunicated, but his influence is further detectable after his death (in 444) at the Fourth, 451 Council of Chalcedon, with its credal language of the one hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ. The Chalcedonian Definition was recognized by the Eastern Orthodox as well as Roman Catholics, not least because of the instrumental contribution of Pope St Leo I with his famed Tome, which articulated that two natures, divine and human, respectively, fully inhere within the person of Jesus. The trouble was, however, an exaggerated version of Cyril's "μία φύσις" formula. A literalizing, misinterpreting and compromising of it by Cyril's outspoken disciples Eutyches of Constantinople and Dioscorus of Alexandria resulted in perturbation over their monophysitism ('one-nature' Christology) and its spread. Chalcedon turned out to seemingly be an accommodation between mostly (Nestorius-affected) Antiochene stresses on Two Natures and mostly (Cyril-inspired) Alexandrian on One. The Alexandrian (Coptic) Patriarchate, realizing key Cyril-sponsored phrases were absent from the Chalcedonian formula (such as "the one incarnate nature of the divine Logos" and "after the union, one nature", suspected the Nestorian "beast" had returned and rejected it (along with other Oriental Churches) (see Sellers 1953, p. 256). But Cyril himself had been no Monophysite, certainly of the Eutychian type (condemned at Chalcedon) (cf. also Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003, p. 172). From a soteriological perspective, this would sever us from participating in the effects of Christ's resurrection which he accomplished in the flesh (via, for example, the Eucharist), and so the definition of Chalcedon was formulated to affirm both Christ's divinity and humanity for both doctrinal and salvific reasons:

> So, following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the Virgin God-bearer as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged in

> two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation. (*Definitio* [ed. Bettenson, p. 79]; and see Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003, p. 181)

This statement not only profoundly illustrates Christ's consubstantiality with both God the Father and humanity in his person, but it employs apophatic terminology, as reflected in the words "no confusion, no change, no division, no separation", in order to secure that ultimately this hypostatic union compromises neither nature and yet remains beyond comprehension. It has been argued that Zwingli and Calvin, in stark contrast to Luther, advocated a Christology which reflected that of Nestorius, but the evidence for this is not altogether convincing, especially when misrepresentations are discerned. They both upheld the unity of Christ's divine and human natures, albeit not as strongly as Luther (Reardon 1981, p. 80). Despite their differences in emphasis, the Reformers' Christologies were closer to (though not identical with) the standard of orthodoxy represented by Fathers like Cyril, Leo, and the Council of Chalcedon. This is in contrast to the Radical Reformers, such as the Spiritualists, various Anabaptists and Unitarians. The former lapsed into a sort of anti-ecclesiological monophysitism in the formulations of Sebastian Franck and Caspar Schwenckfeld (1490–1561) who affirmed that Christ's human nature was not consubstantial with our own (Reardon 1981, pp. 227–29), but uniquely akin to God. Indeed, in a letter to the Flemish Anabaptist leader Johannes Campanus (1500–1575) preserved in the *Amoenitates literariae* (1729) of Johann Schellhorn, we find Schwenckfeld went as far as to exclaim:

> I am fully convinced that after the death of the apostles, the external Church of Christ with its gifts and sacraments vanished from the earth and withdrew into heaven and is now hidden in spirit and in truth and for these past 1400 years there has existed no true Church and no efficacious sacraments.

This demonstrates that the relative eradication of traditional approaches to doctrine and the sacraments undertaken by the Reformers—for Luther, the sacraments eventually comprised only baptism and the Eucharist—opened up its radical fringe to bypass belief in the Church that administers these sacraments altogether. Though he believed that Christ was "God and man in one person indivisible" (McLaughlin 1986, p. 212), which is seemingly consistent with Chalcedon, Schwenckfeld affirmed that Christ's human nature was not consubstantial with our own, but uniquely like God's, an "uncreaturely" body brought from heaven implanted in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of "celestial flesh" that in a way reflected monophysitism (Steinmetz 2001).[1] And this mitigation of Christ's humanity had profound implications for ecclesiology: the human nature of Christ was here dismissed along with all that pertains to the Church on earth (Reardon 1981, pp. 227–29). Needless to say, the Spiritualists were ostracized for their views. Submitting an account of Schwenckfeld's beliefs to the theologians who backed the Schmalkaldic League, which was a military alliance of Lutheran princes upholding the *Augsburg Confession*, Lutheran Martin Frecht (1494–1556) forcefully opposed his Christology. The refutation significantly appealed to the Church's early credal formulations with their Patristic antecedents—including the Nicene, Athanasian, and Apostles' Creeds—with the denunciations of both Schwenckfeld and Sebastian Franck's views drafted by Melanchthon and signed by the other renowned Lutherans at Schmalkald. Franck was not officially condemned but removed himself from ecclesiastical politics and lived out the rest of his life as a printer.

In relation to anti-Trinitarian modalism, otherwise known as Unitarianism, we must observe the works of Michael Servetus (1511–1553) and Fausto Sozzini (1539–1604) who were two of its foremost representatives. In *The Restoration of Christianity*, Servetus asserted that Christian teaching had been "falsified successively by the early Fathers, by the Roman church and finally by the reformers" (Wendel 1965, p. 94). For Servetus, it was the role of faith to achieve the true intellectual recognition of the divinity of Christ based on Scripture (Reardon 1981, p. 232). This led him to a Platonic reading of the literal text of the Bible where God the Son and Logos became the ideal reason which subsumed the essences of all things. Created beings appeared to Servetus to consist of "the successive degradations of the divinity, from which they proceed by emanation" (Wendel 1965, p. 94). This is perhaps best reflected in his ideas concerning the eschaton or the 'last things' where Servetus

declared a 'Trinity of dispensation' in Section 41 of the very first book of his *De Trinitatis Erroribus Libri Septum* (*The Errors of the Trinity, Seven Books*). This was performed in a manner consistent with the Neo-Platonic theory of an ontological emanation and return—from the One through to the Nous and the World Soul and back again (Stumpf 1975, pp. 109–11). In *The Errors of the Trinity* (ed. Wilbur) Bk. 3, sect. 19, we read that at the end of time, the ministries of both the Logos and the Spirit in this dispensational Trinity, as powers emanating from the one God, will terminate, because we will no longer have the need for either an "advocate", i.e., the Holy Spirit, or a "reconciler", i.e., Christ, for God will be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

In addition to this, in Bk. 2, sect. 11, Servetus betrays certain theological affinities with Schwenckfeld in his opinion on Christ's humanity:

> See how gloriously God brought forth the Son whom He had decreed to beget as His only begotten. . .when I raise my eyes to Him who sits at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven I tremble when I hear you refer to Him as the human nature. Do you not see that it is He who governs all things?

Servetus' ideas were unacceptable to both Reformers and Roman Catholics. John Calvin refuted the errors he found in his works, but Servetus persisted, eventually having them published in Vienne which resulted in his arrest by the Inquisition in the city. Due to a lack of incriminating evidence, he was released and intended to flee to Naples by way of Geneva, but was found, rearrested, and imprisoned at Calvin's instigation (Wendel 1965, p. 95). He was tried for heresy and burnt at the stake in April 1553, with the Swiss Reformers and the Lutherans supporting both Calvin's refutation of him and the Genevan magistracy's decision to put him to death (Wendel 1965, p. 97).

Servetus' death, however, gave a martyric impetus to the Unitarian cause, which was gaining momentum and which influenced the thought of Fausto Sozzini. The Unitarians of Poland, known as the Polish Brethren, had a minor church in Raków that had broken off from the mainstream Reformed Church of Poland in 1563 over the nature of the Trinity (Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003, p. 709). Sozzini believed that the Bible's main purpose was to mediate a message which could be used for the rational and wilful ordering of one's life. The inferences derived from the text of Scripture for the articulation of doctrine were therefore redundant. For Sozzini, Christ could not directly participate in the Godhead, for God, who alone is divine, was the acting agent ad extra in Christ's virgin birth and his miracles, death, and resurrection from the dead (Reardon 1981, pp. 234–35). Sozzini founded his own unitarian movement called the Socinians, which is the Latinized form of his surname. *The Racovian Catechism*, comprising an outline of unitarian tenets, was subsequently drafted as a series of responses to rhetorical questions posed by an invisible interlocutor. Published in 1605, it manifests Sozzini's lasting influence on this group. In *On the Nature of Jesus Christ Son of God* (ed. Reed), ch. 1, we read:

> Prove to me that in the one essence of God there is but one person?
>
> This may indeed be seen from hence, that the essence of God is one, not in kind but in number. Wherefore it cannot, in any way, contain a plurality of persons, since a person is nothing else than an individual intelligent essence. Wherever, then, there exist three numerical persons, there must necessarily, in like manner, be reckoned to have three individual essences; for in the same sense in which it is affirmed that there is one numerical essence, it must be also held that there is one numerical person.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the cornerstone of Christian tradition and experience, is here being altogether rejected. Moreover, this anti-Trinitarianism had ramifications for Christology: Christ was relegated to a position below God the Father, and in this way Sozzini evoked ancient subordinationist heresies such as Arianism, which posited the creatureliness of the Son of God (and was rejected in AD 325 at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea). The marginalization of Christ, both in terms of elevating his divinity at the expense of his humanity—and thus rationalizing him into abstraction—as well as the

denial of his concrete Personhood as the second member of the Trinity, might have even opened the doors for the proliferation of deranged Messianism, as seen, for example, with the Radical Reformer Jan Bockelson (1509–1536), an ex-tailor from Leyden, who crowned himself presumptuously as a 'Davidic' king, substituting for Jesus in his Second Coming in the German town of Münster which he renamed the eschatological New Jerusalem, and which led to the siege of the city and the death of many of its inhabitants (Cohn 1970, pp. 252–80).

In light of these few examples from the Radical Reformation—for there are many more—it becomes clear that although the mainline Reformers had less deviating views on the Trinity and Christ, their relative disunity on the Eucharist, the meaning of the sacraments, and other ecclesiological matters—even if usually argued with reference to Patristic proof texts—opened the gates for the disbelief that the Son and Logos of God became human as Christ (i.e., monophysitism) and the rejection of the belief in God as Trinity (in a manner similar to the ancient Sabellians or modalists). Indeed, Servetus and Sozzini were simultaneously dismissive and selective in their use of the Fathers in their respective interpretations of the Scriptures and Christianity in general. In stark contrast to these Radical Reformation departures, it is striking just how Patristically oriented are the first and third articles of the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* on God the Trinity and Christ, respectively. On the former, the *Confession* states:

> We unanimously hold and teach, in accordance with the decree of the Council of Nicaea, that there is one divine essence, which is called and which is truly God, and that there are three persons in this one divine essence, equal in power and alike eternal: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. All three are one divine essence, eternal, without division, without end, of infinite power. (Tappert 1959, pp. 27–28)

And on the latter:

> It is also taught among us that God the Son became man, born of the virgin Mary, and that the two natures, divine and human, are so inseparably united in one person that there is one Christ, true God and true man, who was truly born, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried in order to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also all other sins and to propitiate God's wrath. The same Christ also descended into hell, truly rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God . . . The same Lord Christ will return openly to judge the living and the dead, as stated in the Apostles' Creed. (Tappert 1959, pp. 29–30)

It is clear that the use of the Fathers, Councils, and Creeds was considered acceptable by the authors of the *Augsburg Confession*. It is to this text we now turn, for with its use of the Fathers, the Lutherans presented the *Confession* to the Patriarchate of Constantinople as evidence of their orthodoxy in an attempted union with the latter.

5. The Tübingen Theologians and the Patriarchate of Constantinople

We have seen that at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, which was convened by Charles V in order to alleviate the growing divisions within the Western Church, Philip Melanchthon presented a confession containing the tenets for reforming the Church which he had drafted in consultation with Luther. The *Augsburg Confession* was to play an important role in the relations between the Lutherans and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in their crucial correspondence over a decade. This correspondence has been meticulously analyzed by Dorothea Wendebourg (1983) in her *Reformation und Orthodoxie: Der ökumenische Briefwechsel zwischen der Leitung der Württembergischen Kirche und Patriarch Jeremias IL von Konstantinopel in den Jahren 1573–1581*. The original texts are compiled in the *Acta et Scripta Theologorum Wirtembergensium, et Patriarchae Constantinopolitani* by Patriarch Jeremiah [Hieremia] and Jacob Andreae (by 1584), but I have especially consulted George Mastrantonis' (1982) seminal and more widely accessible work, *Augsburg and Constantinople*, which contains

translations of these texts into English. In any case, both Churches, Lutheran and Orthodox, would inevitably be forced to communicate with one another because of their common opposition to Catholicism (Travis 1984, pp. 311–12). Moreover, it was important to the Reformers that their desire to return to what they perceived to be the true doctrines of the early Church was in line with the beliefs of the Eastern Orthodox, who, on account of their antiquity, were believed by the Lutherans to have maintained and faithfully guarded the traditions of the apostles (Travis 1984, p. 310). Melanchthon's efforts throughout the 1540s and 1550s to contact Constantinople were made in collaboration with two Greeks of varying temperaments, a professor based in Venice and a wayward adventurer named James Basilicus (d. 1563), both of whom made for problems in such sensitive transactions.

In the case of the aforementioned former, who was known as Antony the Eparch, difficulties arose due to his reluctance to put the Lutherans, whom the devout Catholic Charles V opposed, in a position to undermine the Emperor, who was the only person, or so Antony believed, who could seriously oppose the Ottomans. In the case of James Basilicus, who claimed to have descended from royalty and to be a distant cousin of the then Patriarch Joasaph II (tenure, 1555–1565), things were a little more complicated. Basilicus promised to put the Lutherans in touch with the Patriarch. With Lutheran support, he was crowned Prince of Moldavia and, endeavoring to remodel the state based on Reformation ideals, was eventually murdered by an angry mob with his promise unfulfilled (Runciman 1997, pp. 240–45). In 1559, however, Patriarch Joasaph II sent his deacon Demetrios Mysos to Germany to gather information about the faith, worship, and customs of the Reformers (Travis 1984, p. 304). Now, the renowned Patristics scholar, Georges Florovsky (1893–1979), has tried to downplay this ostensible desire of the Orthodox to establish rapports with the Protestants by maintaining that

> . . .many of these ecumenical conversations were initiated, not so much because of any immediate theological concern, as from heavy diplomatic pressure arising from the general international situation. (Florovsky 1993, p. 187)

Certainly, whereas the Lutherans sought theological verification, the Orthodox mostly needed political support. In any case, this was just the opportunity that Melanchthon was looking for. He entrusted a letter outlining the beliefs of the Reformed Christians and a Greek translation of the *Augsburg Confession* to Demetrius who was to deliver it to the Patriarch in Constantinople. Melanchthon died before he could receive any news from the deacon. No news, however, would be forthcoming. Upon reading the *Confession*, Joasaph, seemingly unnerved by its content, decided simply to pretend to have never received it rather than spoil relations with a potential ally (ibid., p. 189).

An alternative hypothesis, though, maintained by George Mastrantonis, is that Demetrios, after receiving the translation from Melanchthon and having warmed to Lutheran beliefs, went to Moldavia to deal with its ruler, Prince James Basilicus, who was then imposing Reformation doctrines on the Orthodox there. He therefore did not go to Constantinople at all, and with his death, the translation of the *Augsburg Confession* was lost. This interpretation is significant due to the fact that it exonerates Patriarch Joasaph from the negative accusations made against him that he deliberately misplaced the *Confession*. The assessment of the veracity of this account, however, is outside the scope of this article. Suffice it to state that whatever happened to the document, Orthodox and Lutheran relations were pushed back over ten years until the historical correspondence between the Tübingen theologians and Patriarch Jeremiah II in the 1570s (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 9).

At the University of Tübingen in Germany, the famous Lutheran Professor of Theology, Martin Crusius (1526–1607) firmly held the belief that union with the Church of the Greeks was a real possibility (Chadwick 1964, p. 358). The opportunity for renewed discourse came in 1570 when the German emperor Maximilian II (1527–1576) sent a zealous Lutheran ambassador to Constantinople who in turn appointed one of the Tübingen theologians, Stephen Gerlach, as the chaplain there (Yannaras 2006, p. 72). Gerlach put the Greek scholar Theodore Zygomalas in touch with Crusius, and it was through Zygomalas that both Crusius and the chancellor of Tübingen University, Jacob Andreae (1528–1590), were

able to come into contact with the then Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremiah II Tranos (1530–1595) (Runciman 1997, p. 246). Crusius' role has been explored meticulously in a volume by Paul Neuendorf (2022) entitled *Daraus kündten auch die Graeci lärnen* (So by What Was Announced the Greeks also Learnt). The Tübingen theologians established a personal correspondence with Jeremiah, sending him several letters to which the Patriarch replied in a paternal spirit. This encouraged them to send a fresh copy of the *Augsburg Confession* in Greek to the Patriarch in the hope of securing the union between the two churches (Yannaras 2006, p. 72). Jeremiah, however, could not ignore the *Confession* as his predecessor had because Gerlach was close at hand, awaiting a response. Aided, therefore, by a team of scholars, including Theodore Zygomalas and the latter's father John, he composed a reply to the Tübingen theologians which systematically addressed the content of the *Augsburg Confession* (Littlewood 2000, p. 836).

After receiving a reply from Jeremiah in which he acknowledged receipt of the document, Andreae wrote to the Patriarch before the latter had responded to its contents. This document is now known as *The Letter from the Tübingen Theologians to Patriarch Jeremiah [II] Accompanying the Augsburg Confession*:

> Although we might, perhaps, differ in some customs because very great geographical distances separate us, we, on our part, had hoped that we were in no way innovating on the main articles concerning salvation, since (as far as we know) we held and had kept the faith which had been handed down to us by the Holy Apostles and Prophets, by the God-bearing Fathers and Patriarchs, and by the seven Ecumenical Synods that were founded upon the God-given scriptures.

Here, Andreae is proclaiming that Lutheran beliefs are anchored in Patristic tradition and the Ecumenical Councils informed by it, not to mention the Scriptures. Indeed, the adherence to the 'faith of the Fathers' remains a constant and deep conviction throughout the correspondence (Travis 1984, p. 313). Jeremiah's response to the *Confession*, submitted to the Lutherans in 1576, clearly demonstrates that he did not agree. In fact, the Patriarch's reply, consisting of 21 chapters corresponding to the 21 articles of faith contained in the first part of the *Augsburg Confession*, would have deeply disappointed the Lutherans. It even began with a quotation from Basil of Caesarea's *Against Eunomius* 2.8 implying that the Lutherans had departed from the spirit of the same synods referred to in Andreae's letter. Thus:

> One who has the judgment of Christ before his eyes, who has seen the great danger that threatens those who dare to subtract from or add to those things which have been handed down by the Spirit, must not be ambitious to innovate, but must content himself with those things which have been proclaimed by the saints.

The Patriarch's response also addressed the list of ostensible abuses that constituted the second part of the *Confession* which the Lutherans maintained were being perpetuated by the Catholic Church, but which were standard in both Catholic and Orthodox practice (Littlewood 2000, p. 836). These included confession, celibacy, monastic vows, and fasting, to name a few.

Of the 21 articles in the *Confession*, Pt. 1, many of which are not equally discussed, there are certain points of agreement, including the first article concerning the Nicene Creed as accurately reflecting the truth of the Church; the second concerning the doctrine of Original Sin; and the seventh pertaining to the nature of the Church as based on a proper teaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments (Mastrantonis 1982, pp. 32, 36, 46–47). The Patriarch, however, considered many of these as only partially true and subsequently corrected them by expounding Orthodoxy's perspective concerning each one. For example, in his response to the first article, he affirmed that the filioque should be omitted from the Nicene Creed because—in a manner reflecting the Orthodox Church's position in general—he considered it an erroneous interpolation made by the Catholic Church several centuries earlier (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 32). The Patriarch pointedly quotes

various diachronic Patristic sources that do not refer to the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, such as the Pope-saints Gregory the Great and Leo III. This was in spite of the evidence that earlier Fathers venerated by both Orthodox and Catholics alike, such as Origen and Augustine, articulated the procession of the Spirit via both the Father and the Son in a manner that is retrospectively consistent with the filioque clause (Siecienski 2010, pp. 34–35, 60).

For the second article on Original Sin, Patriarch Jeremiah emphasized that baptism for the remission of sins should only be done via triple immersion—no longer mandated in the West at this time by either Reformers or Roman Catholics—and immediately followed by chrismation. Concerning the seventh article, he stated that the sacraments were seven in number, including "baptism, chrismation with the holy unction, Holy Communion, ordination, marriage, penance, and holy oil" (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 47) before expounding upon the function and merit of each one consecutively. He was clearly aware of the Lutheran belief in only two sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist (*Confession* arts. 9–13). The fact that the articles with which the Patriarch was able to partially agree needed clarification and amendment underlines a significant point: the Lutherans and the Orthodox held different opinions concerning the nature of the Church or ecclesiology. And we can hardly leave aside the disputed articles of faith with which Jeremiah disagreed in order to illustrate the irreconcilability of some of the Lutheran and Orthodox positions. Concerning free will in art. 18, the Lutherans emphasized the impotence of the will without the grace of God, quoting a text erroneously attributed to St Augustine entitled the *Hypognosticon* or *Hypomnesticon contra Pelagianos et Coelestianos* (*An Instructive Letter Against the Pelagians and Coelestians*). In *Hypognosticon* Bk. 3, ch. 4 it states:

> We concede that all men have a free will, for all have a natural, innate understanding and reason. However, this does not enable them to act in matters pertaining to God (such as loving God with their whole heart or fearing him). . .

In response to this, Jeremiah quoted St John Chrysostom's *Commentary on Epistle to Hebrews*, *Homily 12*, namely his interpretation of a passage from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans which reads, "So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy" (Rom 9:16). Concerning this passage, John stated:

> For we must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His part. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our free will be destroyed. When we have made our choice, then He brings us to great assistance . . . For it is ours to choose and to wish, but God's to complete and to bring to an end.

Reflecting upon the Fathers and their approach toward Scripture, Jeremiah accepted that the grace of God is paramount, but he nonetheless affirmed that it is only those who actively will to be saved that are saved. Also, the 21st article, which discourages prayers to saints as intercessors before God, was swiftly rebuked by Jeremiah, who espoused the Orthodox (and Catholic) position by stating that "we make mediators of all the saints, especially the Mother of the Lord, and along with her the choirs of the angels and saints, whom we venerate in a relative manner, but not in the manner of divine worship" (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 90). Lastly, one of the more significant points of disagreement was the Lutheran belief concerning justification by faith alone, which constitutes the subject of the fourth article of the *Augsburg Confession* and which we saw was a main feature of the Reformation with Martin Luther's insistence on sola fide. The original text stated that "our churches teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works but are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith" (Pelikan and Hotchkiss 2003, p. 60). Jeremiah repudiated this by asserting that "the Church demands a living faith, which is made evident by good works" (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 37). He also quoted the *Shorter Rules* of Basil in order to once again demonstrate that his assertion had its basis in the mindset of the Church Fathers. As Basil wrote:

> The grace from above does not come to the one who is not striving. But both of them, the human endeavour and the assistance descending from above through faith, must be mixed together for the perfection of virtue. . .

This dynamic illustration of the intricate relationship between faith and works, resonating with the apostle James the Just's assertion that "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20), is in stark contrast to the Lutheran emphasis on sola fide.

Turning to the second part of the *Augsburg Confession*, Jeremiah addressed the so-called burdens or abuses of the Catholic Church which the Lutheran Reformers believed they were rectifying, since the Orthodox Church adhered to these as well. These included, as we saw above, monastic vows, compulsory clerical celibacy (which, for the Orthodox, was optional), confession, and fasting (Littlewood 2000, p. 836). Jeremiah was again compelled to give a fuller and more balanced position on these issues, affirming that monasticism is a praised and legitimate office of the Church; that both celibacy and marriage for priests are, from the Orthodox Church's perspective, equally valid, and that confession is an indispensable sacrament of the Church employed since early times for the therapy of the soul and the forgiveness of sins (Mastrantonis 1982, pp. 92–93). Jeremiah then ended his response by exhorting the Lutherans to follow and submit to the apostolic and synodal decrees of the Orthodox Church, for he believed that, only when doing so, by this could the "two churches . . . become one by the grace of God" (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 103).

Unfortunately, the Tübingen theologians' sincere hope for union would not be attained. They sent another letter to the Patriarch in 1577, clarifying the points to which he had objected. The Patriarch responded in the following year, reiterating his views in a manner which was clearly less conciliatory. The Lutherans, adamant in reaching an agreement, sent yet another letter in 1580, which argued that the matters of dispute were only matters of terminology, and that perhaps other differences could be treated as differences in ritual and usage. The Patriarch's final response concerning this matter is indicative of both the inability of the two churches to find common ground, and the role that divergent readings of the broader tradition shared by Orthodoxy and Catholicism—but especially the reinforcement of that tradition in the writings of the Fathers—had to play in the ultimate failure of the Reformer's intentions:

> We request that from henceforth you do not cause us more grief . . . Therefore, going about your own ways, write no longer concerning dogmas; but if you do, write only for friendship's sake. Farewell (Mastrantonis 1982, p. 306)

6. Conclusions

By the early fifteenth century, that which had constituted the 'undivided' Church almost half a millennium earlier was fragmented and in deep strife. The Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople, under Ottoman occupation, was administering to a subject people isolated from their Western counterparts, whom they viewed with bitterness. The Roman Catholic Church, adjusting to the new social, political, and ideological environment of the Renaissance, had come under attack by Reformers who believed that it had become corrupt. Theologians such as Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon attempted to reform aspects of Catholicism while their counterparts, Zwingli and Calvin, attempted to create independent churches anchored solely on the scriptures and faith. In reality, they—along with the Lutherans later on—substituted traditional Catholicism with their own administrative instruments that were dependent on the vicissitudes of local independent sovereigns. Thus, the Reformation quickly became disunited on both the level of faith and the level of ecclesial or denominational governance.

Deprived of established criteria of authority settled in the institution of the Papacy, in the canons of Ecumenical Councils, and in the broader tradition, the various protagonists for Reformation soon displayed their divergent understanding of the Bible both in relation to the Scriptural texts themselves and in relation to the Patristic interpretation of these texts. These fractured understandings influenced doctrine, so that while Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin could agree on fundamental Trinitarian and Christological beliefs,

they nevertheless disputed in relation to everything else, especially the Eucharist. Into this maelstrom entered the Radical Reformers: the Anabaptists, such as Spiritualists Franck and Schwenckfeld, and those Unitarian rationalists Servetus and Sozzini who denied even the humanity of Christ and the existence of God as Trinity altogether. Against this complicated background, it is no surprise therefore that by the 1550s, the conciliatory Melanchthon turned to a more or less stable apostolic Church, the Orthodox one, for union and confirmation of the Lutheran tenets of faith delineated in the *Augsburg Confession*. The irony is that Melanchthon did not consider that the Orthodox, in spite of their split from Catholicism centuries earlier, had much more in common with the Roman Catholic Church than with the Reformers themselves.

This is reflected in the correspondence between the Lutherans and the Orthodox, specifically by the overtures of the Tübingen theologians to Patriarch Jeremiah II. Faced with a fragmenting Reformation, armed with a confessional platform to better stabilize the increasingly problematic situation, and motivated both out of a sincere desire to establish their apostolicity by appealing to and even seeking union with the Orthodox Church, not to mention securing an ally against Rome, the correspondence failed miserably. And this failure had just as much to do with the content of the *Augsburg Confession* as it did with the Patristic proof texts that were used by the Tübingen scholars to justify their positions on important doctrinal matters—positions which the Orthodox, who, sharing with the Western Catholics as they did a deep appreciation of the Fathers, ultimately rejected the Lutheran recourse to the same Patristic tradition. As I have attempted to demonstrate by assessing some of the points of disagreement outlined by Patriarch Jeremiah with recourse to Patristic sources in his response to the *Augsburg Confession*, namely in relation to the filioque (which we have seen was a matter of contention between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches), the sacraments, and free will—as well as the Lutheran approach to the nature of the Church and the scriptures—all of these could not be reconciled with the views of the Lutherans. By reacting so severely against Catholicism, the Lutherans not only polarized themselves from their Western contemporaries, but from the Orthodox as well, and a mutual antagonism against Rome could not constitute enough common ground to secure a union.

We detected, at the beginning, the Patristic bases of Martin Luther's theology, indeed the apparent stamp of Cyril of Alexandria's special Christological formulations in his approach to the divinity of Christ. If this has been quite widely noted, however, there still remains the question of Luther's Protestant freedom to theologize "beyond Cyril" (Malysz 2023). In any case, no matter how nuanced Cyril's position was, by the sixteenth century, Cyril's Coptic associations still partly tainted him with pro-monophysitism and the anti-Chalcedonians (especially from the seventh century on and the monothelite controversy on) (see e.g., Gregorios and Chrysostomos 1996). The Patriarch of Constantinople in the 1550s was not ready for dissonances either from the West or the East. The paradox is that the Orthodox primate held so 'fast to the Faith' when his position was relatively vulnerable under the Sultan. The Turks had controlled the Balkans from the fourteenth century, so the former Byzantines (Romans or Greeks) largely lost; Russians were staking the ground of their own hallowed destiny in the north; The Ferrara-Florence Council had not been finalized and glory-enshrouded Rome, however damaged by Protestantism, was firming its own doctrinal ground at Trent during the time of the correspondence we have considered; Lutheranism was making grounds in Moldavia and Slovenia; and intransigence still applied between churches accepting the Chalcedonian Definition or not. The apparently embattled Patriarchate of Constantinople stood firm and the Faith, complicated by factors relating to ethnicity, became the key uniting factor for those under its charge. And this was at the time when one great moment was obviously coming to an end, when the great *Patrologiae Graeca et Latina* were eventually thought to be best brought to a close.

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Notes

[1] It is important to note that while this term was utilized in the ancient polemic between the Chalcedonians and what would become the Oriental or Orthodox churches—Coptic or otherwise, i.e., non-Chalcedonians—these days 'miaphysitism' is the preferred nomenclature in both scholarly and ecumenical circles.

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The Atemporal Plan for Union with God: Father Matta Al-Miskīn against the Backdrop of His Alexandrian Predecessors

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Abstract: The present paper explores contemporary desert father Matta Al-Miskīn's views on humankind's union with God within the Paradise–Fall–Salvation schema against the backdrop of his Alexandrian Patristic forebears. He understood humankind's paradisal perfection as an orientation towards God and access to the divine life. Through the Incarnation, Christ reclaimed humanity's access to the divine life. Based on Matta's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, this paper shows that the Paradise–Fall–Salvation continuum confirms his assertion that humankind's union with God is the goal of Creation. The paper also demonstrates that Matta's vocabulary points to the fundamental difference between being God by nature and being God by adoption, with the latter state to be fully attained in eternity.

Keywords: deification; divine life; divine participation; Matta al-Miskīn; union with God; atemporal plan; Alexandrian predecessors

1. Introduction

Matta al-Miskīn (1919–2006), also known as Matta el-Meskin and Matthew the Poor (English translation), is a contemporary Coptic (Egyptian) Orthodox desert father. He left a considerable mark on his Church and those who knew of him around the world. He is credited with the theological revival of modern Coptic Egypt (Rubenson 1997, p. 43) and is referred to as "probably one of the greatest Coptic Orthodox spiritual leaders of the Middle East in modern times" (Watson 2006, p. 1). As with his Alexandrian forebears, the topic of union with God is paramount to his theology (Gross 2002; Russell 2004).[1] This paper aims to reconstruct his understanding of the relationship between God and humankind since before the foundation of the world, within the context of his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (*Commentary*)[2] and his other writings. I show that the mutual orientation of God and humanity permeates his *Commentary* within the Paradise-Fall-Salvation plan. For him, God began to work for humankind's salvation by "writing" an atemporal plan (existing outside time and not subject to the constraints of time) for the entire economy. The continuity of God's plan to unite humankind to Godself in the Incarnation is evident in God's timeless orientation towards humankind and humankind's orientation towards the Creator. This reciprocal orientation—although unfolding from before the beginning of time—reaches full realization in the Word of God incarnate.

In exploring Matta's creational and incarnational narratives within the context of humankind's union with God, I aim to show—along the lines of arguments by Stephen Davis—that Matta "places himself in continuity with his late antique Alexandrian Greek Fathers in his emphasis on the dual themes of Incarnation and deification" (Davis 2008, p. 276). The significance of this conclusion is not negligible. Whether he quotes the early Fathers

directly or not (Anonymous Monk(s) 2003a, 2003b),[3] the comparison brings to the fore the Patristic antecedents of his thinking. What is evident, though, is that despite Matta being an adherent to the Alexandrian tradition, he is also an original thinker, offering novel interpretations to suit his theological argument. In exploring the aspect of continuity, as Davis aptly stated, "At stake is nothing less than the cultural legacy of biblical and patristic interpretation, the shape of intra- and interreligious apologetic encounter, and the ritualised ways that Coptic Christians continue to put their Christology into practice" (Davis 2008, p. 278).

This paper's outline, couched in the context of the Creation/Re-creation continuum, is as follows. First, I discuss the relevance of the Creation/Paradise and the Fall narratives for the topic. Second, I tackle the role of the Incarnation in humankind's attainment of union with God. Finally, I provide concluding remarks on Matta's grasp of the relevance of the Incarnation and what it means to be human while attaining union with the divine. Throughout, I show that for Matta, like his Alexandrian predecessors, despite the realistic and transformative aspects of that union, there is a difference between the participant (humankind) and the participated in (God). Be that as it may, it will become obvious that, for him as for his Patristic sources, the soteriological dimension of the Creation/Fall/Re-creation continuum culminates in humankind's real participation in the divine life.

2. The Creation/Paradise Narratives

The contemplation of the Creation and Paradise narratives is integral to Matta's grasp of the Incarnation. For him, the Alexandrian interpretation of humankind's creation in God's image (Burghardt 1957, 1961) and of the breath of life God breathed into Adam's nostrils (Boulnois 1989) are crucial to understanding humankind's relationship with God since the beginning of time. In short, the Scriptural narratives supply the very purpose of the Incarnation, highlighting the continuity of God's atemporal plan.

The birth from above, of water and the Spirit, conjures the Creation Re-creation framework in Matta's mind. It is against this backdrop that he speaks of humankind's orientation towards God:

> It is a natural orientation (نزوع طبيعي) in humankind—according to the movement of the Spirit (حركة الروح) in it, which God breathed into its nostrils—so that humankind may aspire to immortality and continuance in life, to what is always greater and superior. Humankind's nostalgia for God, the heavens, and holiness is never extinguished, irrespective of the measure of sin it accumulates. As humankind was initially created according to God's image, the image desires to draw closer to its origin (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:217–18).

Even though John 3:6 refers to the Re-creation of humankind after the Incarnation, Matta relates it to the first Creation. The above passage implies three interrelated principles: (1) humankind's orientation towards God is natural, inherent, and instinctive; (2) this orientation is due to a movement of the Spirit of God breathed on humankind at Creation; and (3) people's Godward orientation never disappears in the fallen condition, as God created humankind in God's image.

2.1. Natural Orientation Towards God

Matta establishes that humankind's orientation towards God is "natural." It is an instinct that exists in humankind to turn to God. He expands on this idea by proposing that God implanted in human nature the urge for perfection to reach what is divine (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 27). Proof of this orientation towards the good in humankind's nature is its elation when adhering to righteousness and its sense of regret and sadness upon doing what is evil and contrary to its natural orientation (al-Miskīn 1988, pp. 28, 44). However, when

evil prevails, it does so in the absence of good (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 32). He confirms that evil results from humankind's choice and is not by nature (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:34; al-Miskīn 1989, Introduction 120, 122). It was in Adam's abilities to be "like God," given that he was created in God's image (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 41).

Matta's view of humankind's natural orientation towards God mirrors the Alexandrine tradition. For Cyril, in *Contra Anthromorphitas* (*Against the Anthropomorphites*), God, having moulded the human being and animated it with a living and intelligent soul, "naturally" oriented it toward every good deed and knowledge, and since the human being is created in God's image and likeness, it "is therefore born with a natural penchant toward the good" (Costache 2015, pp. 343–44). Similarly, for Athanasius, being in the form of God's image, Adam had "his mind oriented towards God in the beginning" (Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* [ed. Thomson; using *Against the Gentiles*, trans. Newman (Nic. Post-Nic. Fthers vol. 4)] 2.12–13).

Moreover, Matta's rejection of evil as inherent in human nature echoes the Patristic tradition. Athanasius asserts that wickedness did not exist in the beginning and, even now, holy people do not have evil as part of their nature (*Contr. Gent.* 2.1–2). However, whereas Athanasius states that wickedness does not exist in holy people, Matta argues that evil does not exist by nature. His position here coincides with the argument of Cappadocian theodicy (as in Basil the Great's *Homily Explaining that God Is Not the Cause of Evil* [using trans. Harrison, pp. 67, 73, 74]). However, this position is not entirely different from Athanasius', who, within the aforementioned passage, states that by preserving its nature intact, the human being possesses the capacity to never depart from God (*Contr. Gent.* 2.11–12). Matta's argument is also consistent with Origen's, who adduces that no one is essentially evil, with humankind having the ability to be evil or holy (Origen, *De Principiis* [*On First Principles*, ed. Behr], 1.5.5). That is, like Origen, Matta emphasizes that doing good or evil is not by nature and that humankind can fall away from holiness only through the misuse of free will. Furthermore, Origen argues that wicked acts do not proceed according to the truth but have darkness as their basis (*Commentarium in Johannem* [using trans. Blanc (Sourc. Chrét. 120), vol.1] 2.25.158). Finally, Cyril taught that humankind is neither good nor evil by nature; instead, whatever it is, it is by free choice (Boulnois 2000, p. 67). By advocating that good is not a characteristic that is implanted in humankind's nature, Matta agrees with Cyril of Alexandria, with the former pointing to the orientation towards the good as being natural in humankind, while being good invariably is not.

2.2. Movement of the Spirit

Matta attributes this "natural" orientation to the "movement of the Spirit in humankind that God breathed into its nostrils." To grasp the "movement" of the Spirit before the Incarnation, we need to understand how Matta construed the role of the Spirit after it.

In exegeting John 3:16, Matta predicates that humankind can only accept the love of the only-begotten Son after being born again (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:231–38). This second birth differs from the first (creation) in that it is not just through a breath but through union with the Spirit of God (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:236). That is, Matta differentiates between Adam receiving the breath of life at Creation and attaining union with the Spirit of God through the new birth from above. Accordingly, he distinguishes "movement" and "union". The first began at Creation, while the second is an outcome of the Incarnation of the Word of God—the sending of the Spirit. This is an original contribution compared to Cyril's pneumatological discussion (Boulnois 1989). That said, while "movement" and "union" are distinct, they are aspects of one process.

Matta's paradisal narrative proposes that humankind inherits flesh from Adam; yet together with eternal life and holiness through the Spirit God breathed into his nostrils; and that the divine breath is renewed in humankind through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

(al-Miskīn 2002, p. 40). Although sin and death are active in the flesh of humankind, life and holiness dwell in its spirit (al-Miskīn 2002, p. 41). While the flesh is "of dust" and will return to dust, humankind's spirit draws upon God's Spirit breathed upon human nature to make it a living soul (al-Miskīn 2001, pp. 3–4). He adds that the human being, through its own volition, can lean towards either the body or the spirit, thus rendering it either a physical or a spiritual being, respectively. However, consistent with his commentary on John 3:16, he connects the Spirit to a movement that points humankind towards becoming spiritual. Still, within the same passage, Matta injects a new concept: the reception of the Holy Spirit at the baptismal rebirth. Here, he contrasts the movement of the Spirit in humankind at Creation and the union with the Holy Spirit effected at baptism.

Matta ultimately asserts that the divine image is fully displayed in the person of Christ (al-Miskīn 1985, p. 6). The divine image was first actualized at God's breath, resulting in the human being becoming "a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). He extends the meaning of the breath to Christ's breathing the Holy Spirit upon his disciples to renew their lives. The full realization of the image of God is ultimately fulfilled through the stability the person of Christ brings.

Again, one can recognize a parallel between Matta's and Athanasius' views regarding the struggle between the flesh/body (physical life) and the spirit/mind (spiritual life) and that humankind can orient its mind away from the body and cling to the divine (Athanasius, *Contr. Gent.* 2–3). This parallels Matta's view of the human spirit as the cradle of all that is spiritual, leading to a deep relationship with God. Similarly, Matta's view of the self's leaning towards the flesh (carnal life) as leading to death echoes Athanasius' view that by cleaving to what is carnal, human beings become imprisoned in a life of pleasure, leading the soul to the fear of death and separation from the body. Moreover, Matta agrees with Cyril that the human being has the inclination and capacity to choose between the carnal and the spiritual, given that it is created in God's image (Boulnois 2000, pp. 64, 71).

2.3. Loss of Holiness, but Not of Orientation Towards God

As with movement and union, Matta differentiates between holiness and divine support. The loss of holiness does not include the loss of divine support. He considers this support a prerequisite for humankind to realize a condition "above nature" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:848). He sees the breath at Creation as the infusion of a "supernatural" capability into the "natural being" that led to its orientation towards God through the "movement of the Spirit" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:848). He, therefore, proposes an interplay between the natural and the supernatural since the beginning of Creation by emphasizing the supernatural role God's breath played then. Against the backdrop of connecting Creation and the Incarnation, he emphasizes the progress of the supernatural capability by explaining that, at Christ's resurrection, the breathing of the Spirit on the disciples denotes union with the Spirit. In other words, created as a "natural being," humankind was to progress (through the orientation, not the "good" implanted in it) into a "spiritual being," with the ability to ultimately become divine. Supremely, however, it is in Christ, as discussed below, that humankind attains union with God.

In other words, as Hani Hanna discerned, humankind finds stability through the supernatural component (Hanna 2010, pp. 258–62, 266). The supernatural component enables the possibility of deification since humankind was created in God's image, a state that Adam lost and which Christ restored through the Incarnation. Immortality (or deification) is God's image in humanity and was not totally lost after the Fall. In pointing this out, Hanna grasped the Creation/Re-creation continuum correctly while affirming Matta's insistence that the ultimate aim of Creation is the deification of humankind.

The idea of progress is anchored in the Alexandrine tradition. Norman Russell asserted that, for Clement Alexandrinus, Adam was called to progress in virtue when he was created (Russell 2004, p. 124). Likewise, as Doru Costache has shown, for Athanasius, Adam's acquisition of divine knowledge was to occur gradually (Costache 2015, p. 328). This gradual progress requires humankind's continuous yearning for God. For Origen, when humankind yearns "to possess life in truth," it is made a "partaker of life," which leads to higher knowledge (*Comm. In Johan.* 2.156). Origen's view that progress depends on the Logos (Russell 2004, p. 143) also finds its echo in the writings of Matta. The dynamic interaction and interplay of the natural and the supernatural lead to humankind's divine participation.

The Fall changed humankind's paradisal orientation towards God. Matta elaborates on the fallen condition, showing that Adam separated from God (which amounts to death) when he sought independence from God by disobeying the commandment (al-Miskīn 1988, pp. 36, 37, 39). In the beginning, Adam lived with God in a state of "knowledge of the truth" and "righteousness" derived "not experientially but from God himself" (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 36). Matta adds that before the Fall, Adam possessed freedom that allowed him to think willingly of virtue and truth. Adam's recompense was his constant presence and growth in virtue (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 36). In other words, Adam was created "complete (perfect)", but "his completeness (perfection) was through God and with God only" (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 37). Matta adds that he does not deny the vulnerability of Adam to falling if he separates himself from the Creator of his own volition.

Matta proposes that Adam did not seek to be "like God" from within his nature; the thought was implanted in him by external forces—the serpent (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 38). Indeed, God did not create Adam with a disobedient or contrary nature. Accordingly, "Adam desired the tree as if it were good" (al-Miskīn 1988, p. 39). This is not an attempt by Matta to minimize Adam's sin; rather, it is a way of saying that he had a good intention by virtue of being created with a nature-oriented towards the Creator. Thus, wrongdoing is exogenous to Adam's nature. However, Adam was misled to seek the good outside God and fell into the sin of self-reliance.

Matta argues that God desired Adam to progress in holiness by bestowing on him a capacity to eat from the tree of life at the designated time. Instead, before reaching the full stature of a perfected person, he disobeyed God by eating "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17) before having the capacity to discern, thus siding with evil (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:895–96).

Despite Adam falling into disobedience, he still heard the voice of God (Genesis 3:9,10), but fear accompanied his hearing (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:626). For Matta, the separation from God that led to death did not amount to total deprivation of God's presence. As humanity refused to live in the light of the Creator, within the realm of the Creator's "truth, love, and holiness", the effectiveness of that light in humankind ceased (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:48). The fear of death reigned in people instead of the vivifying breath of God (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:440). Nevertheless, the orientation towards God was never wholly extinguished, irrespective of the depth of sin (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:217–18; Georgi 2003, pp. 62, 63). This indicates that God's image was not entirely erased from humankind after the Fall; the longing to be united to God through faith in Christ remained (al-Miskīn 1985, p. 9).

In summary, the coherence and interrelation of the three principles—the natural orientation towards God, the movement of the Spirit within humankind, and the loss of holiness without the loss of divine support—point to the inner connection between humankind and God since the beginning of time. This also paves the way for what might appear as an interplay of opposites: the dialectic of sin against God and union with God.

Given that in Adam, humankind was rendered unable to experience union with God; it needed to be born from above (John 3:3) to re-enter God's full presence. Therefore, spiritual rebirth is necessary if humankind is to attain what is above nature (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:208–9).

3. The Incarnation Narrative

The Creation-Fall-Re-creation trajectory culminates in the Incarnation of the Word, or what Cyril consistently called a hypostatic union. For Matta, the Incarnation manifests eternity embracing time and God's turning towards humankind (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:78) before the foundation of the world, resulting in the "mystery of (our) seeing God" (Matthew the Poor 2003, p. 85). Through the Incarnation, humankind participates in Christ's divinity. Divine participation elevates the natural human being to supernatural status, exalting humankind's filiation, or adoption, to the "real" level of Christ's own sonship to the Father (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:81). Matta contends that the Word has flooded humankind's spirit with his Spirit to raise it, through love, above its nature to abide with him (Christ) in God, "spirit in Spirit (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:17)" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:82).

Having referenced a battery of verses from John's Gospel (15:9–10; 16:15, 27; 17:8, 10–11, 20–23), Matta then highlights the outcomes of humankind's union with God:

> May the reader now be convinced [through these verses] that the union with God, or the sharing in the union of the Father and the Son, is pivotal for John's Gospel. [Therefore, union with God] is the premise of salvation and eternal life that Christ came to declare in the name of the Father. And the last verse that we have adduced as a witness: "I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one," is the epitome of the significant mystery John's Gospel declares to the world, that is, the divine essence (الجوهر الإلهي) that unites the Father to the Son is the very same power/force that gathers us in them through grace. [. . .] thus, the divine union and the power of the divine love stored in the Father and the Son became effective in us through Christ (al-Miskīn 1989, *Commentary* Introd. 175).

This passage shows that Matta sees a direct relation between the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son and the Son's consubstantiality with humankind. The power of the former is communicated to humankind through the Incarnation. Through the divine flesh of Christ, humankind participates in and is united with God (Anonymous Monk(s) 2003a, p. 35; 2003b, pp. 25, 39). The mystery John declares is that the hypostatic union (الإتحاد الإقنومي) between the divinity and the humanity of the Word establishes the union between humankind and God. Nevertheless, Matta asserts that the latter union is through grace, though no less real and enriching for us. In short, while exceeding our limitations, humankind's adoption by the Father is not by nature but by grace.

For Matta, the hypostatic union forms the foundation of humankind's union with God. Having established that the Word is God (John 1:1), Matta ponders the incarnational phrase *par excellence*, "And the Word became flesh" (John 1:14), to draw out the realities of the hypostatic union (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:77–107). Above all, the union took place between a complete, real, and lasting humanity and a complete divinity such that the resultant union is a single subject without alteration to either the divinity or the humanity (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:88–91, 445–46, 448; II:802). Echoing Cyril, Matta insists that in Christ, no divine work took place separately from the flesh, nor did any human work take place without the divinity (McGuckin 2004, pp. 153–55, 166, 190–93). The Word lifted the curse of death the very moment he united himself with the flesh (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:91). Therefore, the hypostatic union led to humankind's union with the Father and the Son (John 17:21), attaining eternal life (John 11:25 and 5:24) and partaking of the

divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). As highlighted by Matta's disciples, the hypostatic union is, for him, the foundation of humankind's union with God (Anonymous Monk(s) 2003a, p. 33; 2003b, pp. 24, 36). These disciples emphasized that Matta's writings show that "the ultimate aim of Christian life is the return to God through his Son and the power of the Holy Spirit and [. . .] the life of fellowship in the church" (Anonymous Monk(s) 2003b, p. 23).

Matta's understanding of the role of the hypostatic union in humankind's union with God echoes themes in Patristic theology. For Clement, the intimacy between God and humankind can only be achieved given that God first united himself to human nature in the person of Christ (Russell 2004, p. 121). Likewise, Athanasius speaks of the Word from heaven being born to transfer human nature into himself (becoming flesh) to attain what is beyond being human through sharing eternal life with the Word (Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* [ed. Newman; (Nic. Post-Nic. Fthers vol. 4)] 3.33). Finally, Cyril asserts that because Christ is both God and human, he becomes the bond between humankind and God (*Commentarius in evangelium Johannis* [using trans. Maxwell (Anc. Christ. Texts)] 11.1 [II:304]).[4] For Cyril, without the hypostatic union, humankind could not participate in God.

In what follows, I explore three principles Matta deploys to argue the importance of the hypostatic union to humankind's participation in the divine life: (1) the fullness of the incarnate Word, (2) Christ as light and life, and (3) Christ as the true vine.

3.1. The Fullness of the Incarnate Word

Matta calls attention to the teaching of John 1:16 that the incarnate Word bestows his "fullness" on humankind. He explicates the dynamics of this bestowal by linking three Johannine verses (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:109): "the Word was God" (John 1:1c), "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14), and "out of his fullness [. . .] all received" (John 1:16). For humankind to receive the Word's fullness (v.16), the incarnate Word had to be one with God (v.1) and one with humankind (v.14).

Correlating the fullness in John 1:16 with five occurrences of the word in the Pauline epistles (Col 1:19, 20; 2:9, 10; Ephes 1:22, 23; 3:19; and 4:13), Matta asserts that Christ's fullness is the fullness of God and that humankind, through faith in Christ, can attain this fullness (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:110, 111). For Matta, the passage "(in Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead" found in Colossians (2:9) refers to the fullness of the Son in the bosom of the Father (John 17:21). Although his fullness is unapproachable by humankind (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:1079), he adds a very pertinent point, saying that "the fullness of the Godhead [that dwells] *bodily*" (my emphasis) entails a "divine fullness that became flesh for our sake" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:1080). Thus, the relationship between the Son of Man and the Father is "the supreme model" of the union between believers and God (al-Miskīn 1989, *Commentary* Introd. 199), enabling human beings to share in Christ's fullness. Again, Matta compares two unions: between the Father and the Son in the triune God and between believers and God effected through the incarnate Word. However, the first union is by nature, while the second is by grace. The first union is eternal and absolute, while the second is affected through relationships in history. Accordingly, while the divine fullness is absolute, humankind's sharing in it is an ongoing process that begins in the here and now and reaches into eternity (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:112–13). Still, believers are indeed rendered partakers of the divine nature. Christ's prayer (that all may be one in the Father and the Son, John 17:21) asserts humankind's right and calling to seek union with God, then and now, since this is the scope and aim of the Incarnation (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:112–13).

In summary, Matta's writings highlight the difference between the hypostatic and trinitarian unions and the union between humankind and God. The latter does not negate humankind's earthly nature but elevates it to the heavens. It is a union by adoption and

grace, whereas the Son is of the very essence of the Father (Anonymous Monk(s) 2003b, pp. 22, 46–49, 53–57). Humankind's equality with the Son concerns his humanity, whereas the Son is equal to the Father regarding his divinity. In other words, Matta does not believe that union with God, or participation in the divine life, leads to human nature's absorption into the divine one (Boctor 1995, pp. 62–66).

Matta's perspective on humankind's union with God echoes the Alexandrine tradition. Most notably, Cyril argues that humankind's union with each other and with God resembles the union between the Father and the Son, elevating humankind to an ineffable union with God:

> Therefore, since the natural (physical) unity (φυσικῆς ἑνότητος) between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is acknowledged [. . .] let us consider how we too are found to be one with one another and with God both corporeally and spiritually (σωματικῶς τε και πνευματικῶς). The only-begotten shone forth for us from the very essence of God the Father, [. . .] became flesh [. . .], mixed (ἀναμιγνύς) himself, as it were, with our nature through the unimaginable coming together and union with this body from the earth. Thus, He who is God by nature is called and truly becomes the heavenly man. [. . .] He is God and a human being in the same person so that by uniting in himself, as it were, things that are different by nature and essentially distinct from each other he may make humanity share and participate in the divine nature. [. . .] The mystery of Christ, then, has become a beginning and a way for us to attain participation in the Holy Spirit and union with God (Cyril, *Comm. in Johan.* 11.11 [II:303,304]).

In the above passage, Cyril suggests that the unity within the triune God helps explain how human beings are united with each other and with God. Given that the only begotten became flesh while possessing the Father's very essence, humankind is able to partake of the divine nature. In addition, Cyril affirms that "the Son supplies of his natural fullness" to each soul worthy of receiving it (*Comm.* 1.9 [I:67]), thus emphasizing the interplay between divine activity and human response. Finally, Cyril asserts—which has been shown to be echoed by Matta—that the Son grants the Spirit (filling humankind) by participation, while he has it "essentially himself" (Cyril, *Comm. in Johan.* 2.3 [I:113]).

3.2. Christ as Light

Commenting on "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), Matta proposes that human nature is but darkness in the absence of the divine nature. However, when Christ revealed within himself the divine nature and rendered people partakers of it, "light broke through our depths [allowing us] to discern God's nature and his mysteries, and his thought enlightened our minds, hearts, will, and words" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:521). Thus, a renewal took place, allowing humankind to behold the Word's glory (John 1:14b). Here, Matta understands "the true light" as a characteristic of the Word's divine nature. The incarnate Word revealed in himself the divine nature, allowing people to partake of his light. The divine light, therefore, shone in humankind's being, rendering it a new creation. This idea becomes more evident in Matta's commentary on the utterance of the man born blind: "I am he" (John 9:9). He interprets it as the reflection of Christ's characteristics in the blind man. In gaining sight and saying ἐγώ εἰμι, "I am he," an utterance always associated with Christ in John's Gospel, signifying his divine identity, Matta proposes that the blind man is able to claim that "he is in Christ a new creation" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:593). The blind man, therefore, in receiving outward sight, received inwardly the true light that rendered him a new creation in Christ.

One only has to recall the striking connection that Matta (and Cyril) make between breathing of Christ upon his disciples (John 20:21–22) and the breath of life in Genesis 2:7.

He highlights that just as God created humankind according to his image, Christ, after his resurrection, recreated it towards righteousness and holiness by breathing his Spirit in the image of the creator (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* I:1288–91; al-Miskīn 1985, p. 10). Thus, humankind regained the divine image with the disciples as the first fruits (al-Miskīn 1985, p. 6). Although humankind's actions can tarnish the image, it can now attain a better state (al-Miskīn 1985, p. 13).

Although Matta is clear that what Christ is by nature is unapproachable, he contends that the Incarnation has allowed humankind to share in Christ's characteristics. Sharing is not merely by moral imitation; it is existential, organic, and real (see Section 3.3 below). It enables believers to become a new creation in Christ, as did the man born blind who received his sight. Through his Incarnation, Christ has recreated humanity within himself. Being in him means that humanity shares in his characteristics.

Humankind's participation in Christ, who is light by nature, reverberates throughout the Patristic tradition. Cyril states that only Christ is light by nature while humankind when it renounces the light of the only-begotten Son, walks in darkness (*Comm. in Johan.* 5.2 [I:317]). Origen shows the same understanding when he says that humankind seeking "life in truth" comes to share in it the "foundation of the light of knowledge" (*Comm. in Johan.* 2.156).

3.3. Christ as the True Vine and Believers as the Branches

Matta contends, in agreement with Cyril, that John 15 points to the believers' "organic union" with Christ (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:892). But first, I must establish the significance of the vine regarding Christ's divinity. The following is Matta's explanation of "I am the vine":

> [When he says] I am (ἐγώ εἰμι), Christ is speaking of the divine essence: "I am the self-existent (أنا الكائن بذاتي)." The context does not support any comparison or analogy here. What follows in the form of attributes does not support the notion that this is a parable. Here, the "vine" denotes the essence of Christ and his divine attribute, "I am." However, within the human reality, [it denotes] the Church!! This is the mystical equivalent to "And the Word became flesh." For the extension of the meaning is: And the Word became flesh that he might become Church! For the Church is the aim of the Incarnation—Ephesians 1:22 and Colossians 1:18 (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:894).

Matta insists that Christ's utterance "I am" signifies his divine attributes (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* Introd. 218–46). Adding the word "vine" to the title "I am," Christ points to an absolute reality that goes beyond any analogy or symbolism; the Incarnation made the symbol real, one would say. Matta then extends the meaning to highlight the effects of the hypostatic union (the Word became flesh) on the church as the body of Christ (alluding to Ephes 1:22; 5.30; Col 1:18; 2:9, 10; Rom 12:5; and 1 Cor 12:27). In doing so, Matta prepares the readers to understand the branches of the vine as members of Christ's body. He infers that the branches become the vine, saying, "Christ shows the extent of the diffusion of his divine nature as a true vine into the true branches, so that they and the vine may become one true vine" (Matthew the Poor 2008, p. 37).

When the Word became flesh, he enabled humankind to be mystically united to himself that it might become a living member in Christ as the branch is in the vine (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:895). Thus, Matta continues, "the vine here is heavenly, living, vivifying, and human-like, all at once. Through the branches, the vine exists in the world, while not being of the world, and has thus directly entered into God's care" (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:896). Although the vine (the Word) is divine (heavenly, living, and vivifying), in order to unite the branches to himself, he became flesh, thus rendering the vine "human-like." In

all this Matta echoes Cyril (*Comm. in Johan.* 10.2 [II:211–12]), adding that the Father as the vinedresser also points to believers' union with Christ as deriving from a divine source. The Son (the vine) carries in his flesh the believers (the branches) who abide in him, while the Father (the vinedresser) is the one who planted it from of old—an allusion to Psalm 80:8 (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:897). By abiding in the vine, believers gain the right to become children of God, becoming the offspring of the Beloved, not symbolically, but through the mingling with the blood and flesh of the incarnate Word of God (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:925).

Matta expands on the vine imagery to highlight the Creation–Re-creation continuum. When commenting on Christ being the true vine (John 15), Matta identifies a new paradisal image. To him, the incarnate Word institutes in humankind a New Paradise through planting "the true vine, the true tree of life" in its midst, which is himself (al-Miskīn 1990, *Commentary* II:896). While humankind was warned not to eat from the tree of knowledge lest it should die, Christ now warns that it surely will die if it does not partake of the true vine (John 6:53). Matta weaves together the Paradise narrative and the Incarnation of the Word in an extended and complex metaphor. Here are its components: (i) the tree of knowledge from which Adam and Eve ate despite the commandment and hence were separated from God; (ii) they were allowed to eat from the tree of life but ate from the tree of knowledge instead; and (iii) the vine, which is Christ, is the true tree of life. Since the Word is the tree of life, to partake of the Word and to be united to him was always possible from the beginning. Humankind, having failed to partake of him at Creation, Christ came down and became incarnate to unite those who believe in him to himself.

The above discussion has many parallels with Cyril's exposition on the vine and the branches. While Cyril's focus on John 15 is in the context of his eucharistic theology, it still finds parallels with what Matta denotes as an "organic" union with Christ. Cyril employs the vine analogy to highlight the recipients' corporeal participation in Christ through the communion of his holy flesh. In short, they receive "life out of and from him" (Cyril, *Comm. in Johan.* 10.2 [II:214]). Masterfully, Cyril connects John 15:1 with a battery of other verses to strengthen his interpretation. He uses Romans 12:5 to highlight participants' unity with Christ "in the one body" and 1 Corinthians 10:17 to show that "we all partake of the one bread." By participating in his holy flesh, communicants receive the mystery of the Eucharist in themselves and have Christ dwelling corporeally in them. He extends the blessings of the Eucharist to embrace the Gentiles (referring to Ephesians 3:6) as fellow members of the body of Christ by virtue of the embodiment that takes place due to their eucharistic participation. He refers to 1 Corinthians 6:15, 56 to point to the role of the Eucharist in making believers the members of Christ. This exposition's key point refers to the necessity of participation of like-nature, a requirement well expressed by the analogy of Christ as the vine and believers as the branches. In this case, Cyril points to the ineffable manner in which participation takes place through the indwelling of Christ in the communicants. In other words, like Cyril, Matta expresses Christ's vine image in the context of humankind's union with God. The union is "organic," just as the branch and the vine are organically one.

In summary, the Word removed the disconnection between divine and human by taking flesh and uniting it to himself. Through the hypostatic union or the Incarnation, all humanity is granted the ability to attain union with the Word incarnate. Although fullness belongs by nature only to the Son, he allowed humankind to share in it by uniting it with his humanity. The communicated fullness is the Son bestowing on humankind life and light to renew those who accept him and to enable them to behold his glory. As the true vine, Christ nourishes and maintains the branches that abide in him. The Word unites himself with believers by becoming flesh, granting them membership in his body,

the church. Ultimately, the branches and the vine become one true vine. Clearly, for Matta, the hypostatic union, or the Incarnation, is the cornerstone of humankind's participation in the divine life. In this light, humanity's soteriological Re-creation culminates in the divine union.

4. Concluding Remarks

This paper has aimed to show that the Incarnation is the *milieu* of humankind's union with God in Matta's writings and that Matta's teachings are consistent with those of his Alexandrian forebears without being imprisoned in their tradition. The crux of the matter is that the Word, who is consubstantial with the Father before all ages, became flesh and tabernacled in humankind, filling humankind out of his own fullness. For Matta, however, God's plan to unite humankind to himself is atemporal, ordained before the foundation of the world. In essence, humankind's relationship with God is a single divine story from before the beginning of time. This relationship shapes what it means to be human.

Matta uses two Scriptural themes to highlight the Creation-Fall-Re-creation continuum: God's image and God's breath. These themes point to God's orientation towards humankind and humankind's orientation towards God. He deploys the Scriptural term "image" as an exegetical link connecting Creation and the new Creation, with the Word as the common agent. He argues that given that humankind is created in the divine image, the Word bestows his attribute, "light," on us. This is due to Christ being "light" before the foundation of the world. Yet, despite being granted the capacity to apprehend "light" since the beginning, humankind failed to accept its rightful share in this, resulting in death and darkness.

The continuity of the Creation-Fall-Re-creation narrative is reflected in the Incarnation. The incarnate Word inaugurated the new Eden, God's spiritual paradise, and reunited humanity with the Father. Thus, in the person of the incarnate Word, the divine image reaches perfect clarity, and humankind is once again restored to its share of eternal life. In essence, for Matta, the Word is the locus of both the first Creation and the New Creation.

Matta's second Scriptural theme within the Creation-Fall-Re-creation continuum is God's "breath." He sees the breath of God at Creation as orienting humankind towards God. Inclination towards God originates in the Spirit God breathed on humankind at creation, which gave it the urge and capacity to attain holy life. In other words, since Creation, God has provided humankind with divine support, breathing the supernatural capability of the breath into the natural being of humankind through the movement of the Spirit. Despite the fall, this natural orientation is never entirely extinguished.

The "movement" of the Spirit at Creation becomes through the Incarnation "union" with God. The "first birth" (Creation) is augmented by the "second birth" from above, enabling the attainment of union with God. Still, the "movement" and the "union" are aspects of the one process. Matta further highlights the continuum between "movement" and "union" by showing a parallel between God's breath in Genesis 2:7 and Christ's breath in John 20:21–22. While, at creation, humanity inherited flesh from Adam and holiness through the Spirit breathed by God into Adam's nostrils, Christ's breath upon his disciples, as the first fruits of humanity, created humanity anew. Therefore, through Christ, the divine image reaches its full manifestation. All barriers to participation in the divine life have been removed in Christ, and humankind's union with God transpires as a continuous and gradual process across the Creation−Fall−Re-creation continuum.

Matta paints a new paradisal image through the incarnate Word, in whom humankind's union with God reaches its zenith. For Matta, the hypostatic union is the supreme model of the union between humankind and God. The Word, taking flesh from humankind, sanctifies it, granting it the vivifying power of God. In doing so, the incarnate

Word's fullness is communicated to humankind. While the Son's fullness is the absolute fullness of God and is unapproachable, by taking flesh, the incarnate Word allows humankind to participate in his fullness. Through the single subject of Christ as *Godman* (الله-إنسان) humankind is thus able to reclaim its right to seek union with God. Without this union, humankind loses what it means to be human.

Finally, Matta is clear on the measure of humankind's participation in the divine life. While emphasizing the real nature of the union of humankind and God as the goal of the divine plan and of the Creation-Fall-Re-creation trajectory, he makes it clear that the union between the Father and the Son is by nature, whereas humankind's union with God is by gracious participation in the divine life. God is always totally other than the human being—even when humanity fully participates in the divine life.

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Notes

1 For a review of the notion of union with God (deification) in early Christian theology, see the seminal works of Jules Gross, *The Divinization of the Christian According to the Greek Fathers* and Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*.

2 I refer to Matta's introduction and two volumes on the Gospel of John (in Arabic) as follows: *Commentary* Volume:pages. Introduction: pages denote the introduction volume followed by page numbers; and I: pages and II: pages denote Volume I and Volume II followed by page numbers, respectively. All translations from Arabic belong to me.

3 By way of an example, Matta quotes the early church fathers 262 times in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* alone. For a detailed discussion of Matta's adherence to the Alexandrian fathers, see the two volumes from Anonymous Monk(s), *The Orthodox Patristic Principles in the Writings of Father Matta al-Miskīn*.

4 I refer to Cyril of Alexandria's commentaries on the Gospel of John (edited by David Maxwell) as *On John* 11.11 means book 11, chapter 11 and (II:303–304) denotes (Volume II: pages 303–4).

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