INNEHÅLL

ARTIKLAR

RECENSIONER OCH BOKANMÄLNINGAR

PROLOG

Det var något historiskt över det gångna året. Det var inget vanligt år. En farsot rasade – och fortsätter rasa – över världen, och de vanliga förväntningarna på livet har satts ifråga. Inget tycks längre självklart. Även i vår del av världen fruktade både vanligt folk och statsministrar rent konkret för sina liv på ett sätt som det var länge sedan man gjorde sist. Pesten var något man lärde sig om i skolan. Vi har blivit del av historien igen. Samtidigt försökte demagoger på olika håll att lugna massorna med magiska tricks. När detta skrivs är det bara några dagar sedan en mobb rusade uppför trapporna till Kapitolium på Trettondedagen, och stormade in i byggnaden, över människors kroppar. Vi går på glödande kol.

Om omständigheterna var unika, var inte massornas reaktioner det: kalabaliken, oron, våldet, ett tvärsäkert patos om det rätta, människorna kom att likna bestar ... Tumult med arga folkhopar verkar ha inträffat så ofta förr i tiden att det närmast blev ett topos i den antika litteraturen. Daniel Caner har skildrat hur konciliet i Chalcedon omgavs av folkliga oroligheter, där inte minst grupper av nitiska munkar skapade kaos. Gängvåldet präglade även det senantika Alexandria, och Serapistemplet lär ha förstörts av en kristen mobb på 400-talet. Under den s.k. origenistiska striden startade andra arga munkar ett upplopp och några källor pekar ut en särskild biskop som i bakgrunden ska ha drivit på händelserna. Vad som är sant är förstås svårt att säga så långt senare, men dynamiken är inte svår att känna igen för den som nyligen hade tv-bilderna från Washington D.C. på näthinnan. Det är som om vår moderna tid har skrivit in sig i historien igen även på detta sätt. Medan människor har dött och vården inte har hunnit vårda, har vi på något sätt förlorat känslan av att allting var annorlunda före vi blev moderna. Den moderna självsäkerheten domnar mot insikten om att vi alla är dödliga historiska varelser.

Hur ska vi leva med de döda, med historien, som både finns inom oss och mitt ibland oss? En av dem som hejade på Kapitolium-upploppet, var enligt *New York Times* en senator som vid flera tillfällen har använt pelagianismen för att karakterisera vad han ser som dagens politiska förfall. Men även Joe Biden använde sig av samma persongalleri när han citerade Augustinus i sitt installationstal. Liksom Kapitolium är historien ingen neutral, helgad zon, skyddad från angrepp. Ibland verkar det för enkelt, även för patristiker, att skapa sig en bild av det förgångnas gestalter som alltför väl passar in i den egna profilen, istället för att låta dem få vara människor av kött och blod, liksom oss: mångtydiga, grälsjuka, tankspridda och komplexa. I årets första artikel diskuterar Jayne Svenungsson just hur teologer och historiker kan leva med de döda på ett ansvarsfullt sätt. De finns i alla fall med oss hela tiden – i vårt språk, våra rum, våra gener – och när vi har erkänt hur mycket vi faktiskt liknar dem, kan vi kanske bättre uppskatta mångfalden i deras närvaro.

Artiklarna rör sig annars kring frågor om historiska texters auktoritet. Samuel Byrskog argumenterar för att det inte räcker att läsa de gamla texterna, inte ens de heliga texterna, vi måste också, rent konkret, *lyssna* till dem, eftersom intonationen påverkar argumentet. Ulla Tervahauta resonerar kring den kvinnliga närvaron i den en gång nästan kanoniska Hermas Herden, och Holger Villadsen, en nestor i nordisk patristik, diskuterar vilka bibliska texter man faktiskt läste i den senantika gudstjänsten. Slutligen får vi höra berättelsen om St Nikolaos på nytt, men denna gång inte som julsång utan i en hymn som lånar sin auktoritet från den stora senantika diktaren Romanos. Sången är översatt till engelska – för första gången någonsin – av Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen och Thomas Arentzen.

Vilken auktoritet låter vi dessa gamla röster få? Augustinus var varken demokrat eller republikan. Virus är äldre än människan. Det är när vi inser detta som det hettar till och historien brinner. Årets *PNA* rör sig på glödande kol.

Thomas Arentzen
& Andreas Westergren

MEDDELANDEN

Collegium Patristicum Lundense

På grund av rådande omständigheter med coronapandemin har kollegiet under 2020 inte arrangerat något symposium. Ett årsmöte ägde rum den 11 juni och vid detta valdes följande personer till styrelseledamöter: Samuel Rubenson (omval), Katarina Pålsson (omval), Andreas Westergren (omval), Britt Dahlman (omval), Thomas Arentzen (omval), Simon Pedersen Schmidt (omval), Karin Zetterholm (ny) och Maria Sturesson (ny). Annamaria Laviola-Svensäter har lämnat styrelsen. Styrelsen har under året haft fyra protokollförda möten (8 januari, 11 juni, 17 september och 26 november) och därutöver har redaktionsutskottet och symposieutskottet var för sig handlagt sina respektive ärenden. Styrelsen har, under Simon Pedersen Schmidts ledning, skapat en webbsida för nyheter om kollegiet och patristiken: www.patristik.se

Katarina Pålsson

Forum for Patristik

Normalt afholder Forum for Patristik to møder om året. Denne tradition, der har over 20 år på bagen, måtte brydes i 2020 pga. COVID-19-restriktionerne. Derfor blev kun mødet i København (møde nr. 45) afholdt, mens Initiativgruppen bag Forum for Patristik regner med at kunne gennemføre det aflyste møde i august 2021 i Aarhus.

Ved mødet i København 27. januar 2020 var der følgende foredrag:

Thomas Hoffmann (KU): "Islam og patristikken – forsøg på et overblik".

Jon Gissel: "Johannes Chrysostomos – den store byzantinske prædikant og Den hellige Skrift".

Holger Villadsen: ”Evangelieperikoper og kirkeår i Rom i 600-tallet – endnu en brik til historien om første tekstrække”.

Holger Villadsens foredrag er i lettere bearbejdet form udgivet på www.patristik.dk i Forum for Patristiksonlinetidsskrift ”Patristik” og kan tilgås her http://www.patristik.dk/Patristik21.pdf

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

Societas Patristica Fennica (SPF)

Societas Patristica Fennica kan rapportera om följande symposier som har ägt rum under året som gått och som väntar under året som kommer:

Symposium Patristicum Fennicum 20.11.2020 Helsingfors med temat ”Vanhantestamentin pyhät patristisessa tulkinnassa” (Gamla Testamentets heliga i patristisk tolkning).

Symposium Patristicum Fennicum 27–28.5.2021 Joensuu med temat ”Jerusalem”.

För mer information, se: https://www.suomenpatristinenseura.fi/

Anni Maria Laato

Nordic Network for Jewish Studies

The Nordic Postgraduate forum in ancient and early Medieval Jewish History and Literature (22–23 September 2020) is the first event organised by Karin Zetterholm and Katharina Keim for the Nordic Network for Jewish Studies (https://nordicnetworkforjewishstudies. com). This event was designed to fulfil the following purposes: (i) to give doctoral students feedback on their work from experienced researchers; (ii) to support doctoral candidates in developing professional networks throughout the Nordic region; (iii) to develop closer cooperation and stronger networks between Jewish Studies scholars in the Nordic region (particularly through the newly-established Nordic Network for Jewish Studies); (iv) to raise the profile of Jewish Studies as a discipline in Nordic countries. As such, the title of the event was intentionally broad in order to allow students from a broader range of sub-disciplines to participate.

The programme consisted of six presentations and a text-reading masterclass that took place over two half days. The presentations were given by doctoral students affiliated with universities in the Nordic region. The presenters were all at different stages of their doctoral work, from those who were just beginning their projects to those who were nearing their programme's conclusion. A short text from each presenter (project plan or excerpt from thesis work-in-progress) was pre-circulated two weeks prior to the event to those listed on the programme. These were then discussed in 45-minute slots, allowing 10–15 minutes for each presenter to summarise their paper before receiving comments from respondents and questions from the audience. At the conclusion of the first afternoon's programme Philip Alexander (FBA, Emeritus Manchester) gave a text-reading masterclass entitled, "'If they are not prophets they are sons of prophets': Tosefta Pesahim 4:13–14 and its reception in the Yerushalmi and the Bavli."

40 participants joined the event from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and the UK, contributing to a collegial and supportive discussion environment. The organisers are grateful to the European Association for Jewish Studies for their support of the programme.

Katharina Keim

FOWIS – Formative Wisdom, Lunds universitet

Forskningsprojektet *Vishet och bildning. Receptionen av monastiska tänkespråk i europeisk kultur: Vetenskaplig samverkan på en digital plattform* avslutades formellt under 2020, men arbetet fortsätter på åtminstone tre plan. Förutom forskningsresultat som redan publicerats eller är under utgivning samverkar tre av de i projektet ingående forskarna (Britt Dahlman, Elisabet Göransson och Karine Åkerman Sarkisian) i en större banbrytande jämförande studie av hur grekiska, latinska och slaviska versioner av öknens tänkespråk utvecklades. Forskarna i projektet ingår dessutom i ett i Uppsala baserat och av Michael Dunn lett övergripande forskningsprojekt om textevolution, *Kulturell evolution av texter*, d.v.s. hur gemensamma texter förändras när de recipieras i olika kontexter, ett projekt som använder sig av genetiska modeller för evolution och avancerade statistiska beräkningar av likheter. Vid sidan av detta fortsätter utvecklandet av *Monastica*, det digitala nätbaserade verktyget

för studiet av den flytande förmedlingen av tidiga monastiska texter. Verktyget används nu på prov i undervisningen vid en av kurserna i det nordiska masterprogrammet Religious Roots of Europe.

Samuel Rubenson

Center for Studiet af Antikken og Kristendommen (C-SAC), Aarhus Universitet

During 2020 the following seminars were held:

March 3, Aarhus University, Thesis seminar: Mads Østerlund Christensen, *Editing Legendary Origins: Comparative Criticism of the Early North African Martyr Accounts*.

May 6, Aarhus University (organized by the Research Programme for Theology), Thesis seminar: Valeria Dessy, *Why this Origen? An analysis of Adolf von Harnack´s interpretation of Origen of Alexandria*.

November 11, Aarhus University, seminar: Helen van Noorden, AIAS-Fellow, *Narrative authority in the Sibbyline Oracles*.

December 4, Aarhus University (co-organized with the research programme *Classical Antiquity and its Heritage*), seminar: Anna Sitz, Heidelberg, *Making and Erasing the Gods: The Fates of Ancient Statues and Inscriptions in Late Antiquity (4th–7th Century)*.

During 2021 the following seminars and conferences will be held:

March 3–5, Aarhus University, Sandbjerg, Joint annual Göttingen-Aarhus–seminar on Patristics, *Transfer and Reception*.

May 6–7, Aarhus University (co-organized with the research programme for *Theology*, for *Classical Antiquity and its Heritage* and for *History*), conference: *Popular Receptions of Classical Antiquity*.

For more information, contact Jakob Engberg, je@cas.au.dk

Jakob Engberg

Den Kristne Orient, Aarhus Universitet

Forskningsenheden Den Kristne Orient ved Aarhus Universitet udmærker sig ved at fokusere på kristendom uden for det vestlige og byzantinske rige i det første årtusind og har en stærk filologisk interesse i sprog som koptisk, armensk, ge'ez, syrisk og arabisk.

Også aktiviteterne i Den Kristne Orient har været ramt af aflysninger og udsættelser i forbindelse med pandemien. Der var i år derfor kun to foredrag:

23. september, Miriam Jane de Cock (AU): "Reading the Gospel of John with Origen of Alexandria: Problems, Solutions, and the Breast of Jesus" (arrangeret i samarbejde med forskningsenheden Det Nye Testamente).

9. december, Heisenberg Fellow (DFG) Blossom Stefaniw: "Curating Knowledge in the Lessons from the Tura Papyri".

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

Johannesakademin

Johannesakademin är en ekumenisk studie- och samtalsmiljö med fokus på den monastiska traditionen i den tidiga kyrkan. Verksamheten är förlagd till Nya Slottet i Bjärka-Säby och Linköping.

En viktig del av verksamheten utgörs av de översättningsseminarier som anordnas i samarbete med studieförbundet Bilda och Linköpings domkyrkoförsamling en lördag varje månad under terminstid. Vid dessa seminarier översätts den grekiska systematiska samlingen av Ökenfädernas tänkespråk successivt till svenska. Översättningen publiceras med grekisk parallelltext under titeln *Paradiset* i skriftserien *Silentium Apophthegmata* (se https://www.silentiumskrifter.se). Hittills har tolv kapitel publicerats (vol. I–IX, XV samt dubbelvolymen XVI/ XVII).

Med undantag för en träff i Linköping i februari har seminariet till följd av pandemin under år 2020 haft digitala möten via Zoom. För närvarande pågår arbetet med kapitel 18. Den grekiska texten ges ut av Britt Dahlman utifrån dels en Athos-handskrift, *Protaton 86*, och dels en Paris-handskrift, *Parisinus graecus 2474*. Översättningen görs gemensamt av seminariets deltagare med utgångspunkt från ett förberedande utkast. Såväl nybörjare som vana översättare är välkomna. Seminarierna leds av Britt Dahlman, FD i grekiska, och Per Rönnegård, TD i Nya testamentets exegetik.

Under våren 2021 kommer översättningsseminarier att hållas kl. 10.00–16.00 följande lördagar: 27 februari, 27 mars och 8 maj. Utöver dessa ordinarie träffar blir det ett extratillfälle den 23 januari, då Per Rönnegårds översättning av början på kapitel 10 kommer att diskuteras.

Den som vill få del av förberedelsematerial och mer information kan skriva till Per Rönnegård: johannesakademin.per@gmail.com

För aktuellt program och ytterligare information, se Johannesakademins hemsida: http://www.johannesakademin.ekumeniskakommunite ten.se

Britt Dahlman

Masterprogrammet Religious Roots of Europe i Lund

Den som vill studera patristik i Lund bör vända sig till de kurser som ges inom masterprogrammet Religious Roots of Europe.

Om man inte har tid för ett helt program går nämligen en del av kurserna i programmet också att söka externt (via antagning.se). Under hösten 2020 gavs så exempelvis kursen Sayings and Stories as Educational Tools in Early and Medieval Christianity för första gången, under ledning av Samuel Rubenson. Förutom att arbeta med tänkespråk på latin och grekiska får studenterna också stifta bekantskap med den kartläggning av tänkespråk som finns i den digitala plattformen *Monastica*, och så förenas nytt och gammalt under samma tak. De flesta kurser inom RRE ges delvis på distans, med ett gemensamt kompaktseminarium i Lund eller annorstädes, även om coronasituationen har försvårat utbytet mellan studenterna det senaste året. Det betydde exempelvis att exkursionen till Israel inom ramen för kursen Space, Art, and Identity in Synagogue, Church, and Mosque fick ställas in. Under kursen skulle man, tillsammans med studenter från Harvard, bl a ha deltagit i en arkeologisk utgrävning i Magdala.

Programmet är numera in på sin tolfte årskull. Ett samarbete med Paideia – the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden har också lett till att studenter som studerar där deltar i vissa av kurserna. Under det senaste året har flera spännande masterarbeten skrivits, som i år har undersökt gränsområdena mellan judiskt, kristet och pagant, exempelvis Johanna Bokedals arbete ”Ambigous Unity? A Late Antique Rhetoric of Legal Exclusion: Heretics, Pagans and Jews in the Eastern Laws of the Theodisian Code”, Theresa Abell Haynes uppsats “Voices of Fire: Sinai Imagery in Acts 2 and Rabbinic Midrash” och Stefan Larssons

”Outsiders Becoming Insiders: A Study of Jewish Constructions of Identity for ’Gentiles Amongst Israel’ in the First Generation of Jesus-followers (ca 50 CE) through an analysis of Acts 15:20”.

Andreas Westergren

Konferenser och seminarier

The Norwegian institute in Athens, February 25–26, 2020
Religions in Late Antiquity workshop

In late February 2020, only days before Europe closed down, the research group Religions in Late Antiquity under the direction of Einar Thomassen, held a two day highly interesting workshop in Athens. Invited were a rather small number of scholars that have for many years been closely related to the Bergen network. The workshop was held at the Norwegian institute led by Jorunn Økland, and excellently organised by Moa Airijoki. Papers were presented by Ingvild Gilhus, Jan Bremmer, Christian Bull, Aleksandros Tsakos, Einar Thomassen, Laura Feldt, David Brakke, Anders Klostergaard Pedersen, Moa Airijoki, Dimitris Kyrtatas and myself. Fruitful discussions moved from overarching questions about long-term shifts in the character of religion, religious practices and beliefs, to more mundane issues of monastic dressing, reading and walking.

Samuel Rubenson

Annat

Helen van Noorden, Senior Lecturer in Classics, Cambridge University, er i perioden 1. oktober 2020 til 30. september 2022 AIAS-Fellow ved Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Aarhus Universitet. Hendes projekt har titlen ”Reframing the *Sibylline Oracles*”.

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

NYA PUBLIKATIONER

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Sammanställning av Britt Dahlman

ARTIKLAR

THE ART OF LISTENING TO THE PAST: REFLECTIONS ON THEOLOGICAL HISTORY WRITING

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Abstract:
This essay ponders the ethos and premises of history writing with particular regard to the discipline of Systematic Theology. Taking inspiration from Hans Ruin's recent phenomenological study *Being with the Dead*, the first part reflects on the otherness of historical subjects. More specifically, it raises the question of how we, as modern scholars, relate to and represent historical thinkers and their ideas in a truthful way, that is, without either mystifying them or appropriating them for specific theological aims. The second part of the essay is concerned with our own subjectivity and how it is affected by our "being with the dead", including our dead intellectual peers. Focus is here placed on the moral responsibility that is attached to history writing, especially in a time when efforts are continuously being made to exploit memories of a common Christian past for various ideological purposes.

Key Words:
Systematic Theology, history writing, Hans Ruin, Rowan Williams, otherness of historical subjects, moral responsibility.

Last summer a neighbour and long-time villager came by and gave us an old photograph of our house. The picture must have been about a century old and the veranda looked different, but the old brickhouse displayed in the photo was unmistakably our beloved country home. In front of the house, the then residents had lined up: a mother and a father, two little children, two maids and what seemed to be a farmhand.

I was reminded of the photograph again while reading Hans Ruin's recent study *Being with the Dead: Burial, Ancestral Politics, and the Roots of Historical Consciousness* (2018). The book is a thoughtful philosophical reflection on the ontological as well as ethical dimensions of the fact that we live, as humans, not only with the living but also with the dead. We live in places that bear the traces of those who once lived there. We entertain gardens laid out by people now long gone, knowing that some of the trees and plants will remain in place also when we are no longer there. I often reflect on that when I look at the beautiful old ash tree in the midst of our garden, or when every spring I cut our timeworn rose bushes.

We also, of course, live with the dead in more distinct ways. We live with the memories of our loved ones who are no longer with us, we tell stories of who they were, and we keep pictures of their faces. And yet we tend to restrict the extent to which we allow the dead to be part of our lives. Already the expression "no longer with us" betrays this inclination in a paradoxical way, because the very fact that we speak of our loved ones as "no longer with us" reveals that in a significant sense they still are with us. And to be sure, we do want our loved ones to remain with us; no longer being able to recall the face or the voice of a lost friend or family member can be an extremely painful experience. But it seems that we somehow want the dead to be there on *our* terms. We don't like disturbing memories, just as we don't like our lives to be unsettled by unexpected episodes from the past. However, it is precisely this desire on the part of the living to reduce the dead to what *we* want them to be (or not) that Ruin wishes to challenge:

> There is a need to resist the temptation of objectifying the lives of the dead as the political, cultural, or spiritual property of the living, just as there is a need to move beyond an unreflective awe before their shadowlike being and demand. Seen from the perspective of the present, the dead are pitiable, always weaker

> than the living whose blood their shadows need in order to be heard. But from the perspective of the dead and the dying, the living are just short, flickering lights waiting to take their place among them in the temporality of *having-been*.[1]

There are two aspects that I would like to emphasize in this dense paragraph. The first concerns the nature of our relationship to the dead, and more specifically, the question of how to respect the otherness of historical subjects. As Ruin indicates, there are two temptations in this regard: either to undermine the alterity of the dead by making them too familiar, or to undermine their alterity by mystifying them. The second aspect concerns our own subjectivity and how it is affected by our "being with the dead". Living with the dead, among other things, reminds us of the transient nature of our lives. Although this can be a source of existential distress, it may also be a source of an enhanced sense of life, as the twentieth-century existentialist philosophers were keen to emphasize. However, as other thinkers in this tradition were equally keen to stress, recognizing our own mortality is not primarily about obtaining a heightened sense of life as a good in itself. It is also about my ethical relation to future generations of human as well as non-human life. Knowing that we are just transient guests on this earth invites us to reflect on how our agency here and now may affect the yet unborn, those who will one day look back at us as those who are no longer there.

In this essay, I shall approach the topic of "listening to the past" from these two perspectives. While Ruin has a broader philosophical approach, ranging – as his subtitle indicates – from reflection on burial practices to the question of historical consciousness, my own approach will be narrower, focusing on the writing of history within theology. In particular, I wish to reflect on the capacity and sometimes lacking capacity to listen to the past within my own discipline, which is that of systematic theology.

[1] Hans Ruin, *Being with the Dead: Burial, Ancestral Politics, and the Roots of Historical Consciousness*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2018, 14.

Respecting the Otherness of the Past

"Christianity is not one of the great things of history: it is history which is one of the great things of Christianity."[2] Henri de Lubac's famous remark wittingly captures the fact that Christian theology, from the moment of its birth, was intricately interlaced with history writing. From the author of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles up to Eusebius, early Christian theologians relied significantly on theological readings of history in order to constitute what eventually became the Christian tradition. The other side of this coin – which de Lubac is also hinting at – is that early Christian history writing, in its turn, would leave a decisive imprint upon Western conceptions of history in general. While the latter aspect is a topic far too vast to be approached in this essay,[3] I want to linger for a moment on theology's significant reliance on history writing. This certainly did not end with the early Christian theologians. On the contrary, theologians in all times have elaborated their arguments by means of historical claims. Fredrich Schleiermacher, arguably the greatest of the early modern theologians, even went so far as to claim that it is through the contemplation of history that we come to know the inner essence of religion:

> History, in the most proper sense, is the highest object of religion. Religion begins and ends with history – for in religion's eyes prophecy is also history, and the two are not to be distinguished from each other – and at all times all true history has first had a religious purpose and proceeded from religious ideas.[4]

To be sure, all academic disciplines – especially within the humanities – to some extent rely on history. When philosophers introduce new students into their discipline they usually tell a story that begins with the pre-Socratic thinkers and then runs through Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas,

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[2] Henri de Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, trans. P. Simon and S. Kreilkamp, San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1987, 145.

[3] I address this topic in my study *Divining History: Prophetism, Messianism and the Development of the Spirit*, trans. S. Donovan, London and New York: Berghahn Books 2016.

[4] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, 2nd edn, ed. and trans. R. Crouter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996, 42 (my modification of the translation).

Descartes, Kant and Hegel all the way up to contemporary philosophers who, in no small degree, continue to elaborate their own thinking in close dialogue with the canonical figures just mentioned. If you choose instead to study anthropology, you are likely to be introduced to a story about the horrendous acts of the early anthropologists, how they were blinded by the colonial ideals of the time, and how today we know better. History, in this case, not only serves the purpose of defining who we are and where we come from as scholars, but also who we don't want to be and in what direction our discipline should be heading.

However, while it is true that all academic disciplines to a greater or lesser extent rely on history, I want to maintain that theology has a very specific relation to the construction of the past. Hence Schleiermacher and de Lubac were both right in pointing to the symbiotic relationship between history and Christianity. Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity is founded on the idea of a God who reveals himself in history and who continues to act in history, and the traditional role of the theologian has been to interpret the pattern of these actions. Some theologians have gone quite far in this endeavour. One may here think of the twelfth-century Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore, famous for his daring charting of the various phases of God's revelation throughout history. Although Joachim was careful not to present himself as someone who had come to impart a new revelation – an interpretation that would be ascribed to his texts by later commentators – he elaborated a complex hermeneutical theory that served to expound the inner connectedness between God's acting as depicted in the Bible, on the one hand, and events in the later history of the church, on the other.[5]

In modern times, beginning with Schleiermacher, theologians have taken a more modest approach to their task. Few theologians today would claim to have "God's revelation" as the object of their study and would rather define their task as studying what innumerable humans throughout history have experienced and interpreted as God's revelation. But that still leaves theology and theologians intimately tied to history, since the main access to such experiences and interpretations are the imprints left by devout persons throughout history in the form of hymns, prayers, diaries, letters and theological meditations or treatises.

[5] I offer an extensive reading of Joachim's theology of history in Svenungsson, *Divining History*, 35–63.

Returning now to Hans Ruin's concept of "being with the dead", this intense relation between theology and history means that theologians live with the dead in their own very specific way. Just as we as humans live with our near and dear ones who are no longer with us, so we live as scholars with our dead peers. We learn from them, we are inspired by them, sometimes we disagree with them, and sometimes we are deeply disappointed, as for instance when some new biographical details emerge that reveal less flattering aspects of our intellectual heroes.

So, what does it mean to live with our dead thinkers, or rather, what *should* it mean? For one thing, it means that there is a moral dimension to the writing of history, that is, to the way in which we relate to our dead peers. Rowan Williams captures this aptly in his 2005 essay *Why Study the Past?*, a work from which I have taken a great deal of inspiration, not only for this essay but also for my academic work in general, both as a scholar and a teacher: "the figures the historian deals with are not modern people in fancy dress; they have to be listened to as they are, and not judged or dismissed – or claimed and enrolled as supporters – too rapidly."[6] Dealing with people in the past, Williams suggests, is a matter of striking a sound balance between difference and sameness. On the one hand, we need to recognize the irreducible otherness of historical subjects – they are not just earlier versions of ourselves in fancy dress. On the other hand, we need to assume that human feelings and motivations do not change so fundamentally over history that we cannot imagine at least in part what people experienced, believed or hoped for in earlier ages. The point to bear in mind, as Williams remarks later in the same paragraph, is therefore that "the risk of not acknowledging the strangeness of the past is as great as that of treating it as purely and simply a foreign country".[7]

What about systematic theologians' capacity to listen to the past in relation to these two risks or temptations? As a hypothesis, one may assume that "liberal" or "progressive" theologies would be more prone to

[6] Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd 2005, 10–11.

[7] Williams, *Why Study the Past*, 11.

the first temptation, whereas "conservative" or "traditionalist" theologies would be more prone to the second.[8] My own suggestion, however, would be that few systematic theologians today suffer from the temptation to make the past too foreign a country. The general temptation among progressive as well as traditionalist theologians – and I include myself in this critical reflection – is rather to appropriate selected parts of history for their own theological purposes. I am thereby not insinuating that systematic theologians intentionally abuse or manipulate history. What I am suggesting, recalling Williams' words, is merely that theologians are sometimes a bit too eager to "judge and dismiss" or to "claim and enrol" historical key figures for the sake their own intellectual objectives. To be generous to my own guild, I think this eagerness has to do with the fact that systematic theology is a discipline that is driven by strong visions and ideals. As a colleague from a neighbouring discipline once remarked at a conference: "Systematic theologians always want to sell something, don't they?".

Indeed, they do. From Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theological denunciation of Nazism via the many factions of liberation theology during the second half of the twentieth century and up to contemporary eco-theologians' radical criticism of our consumerist society, theologians usually have greater ambitions than merely describing Christian dogma. This ambition is certainly not unique to systematic theology but something it has in common with most disciplines engaged in analysing ongoing social, political and cultural processes. In fact, most scholars within most disciplines do more than merely offer descriptions of their material. Political scientists use texts of Plato, Hobbes or Hegel to argue for one approach to state governance rather than another, and moral philosophers draw on Aristotle, Kant or Nietzsche in their theorizing about what constitutes a good human life.

The problem with some of these disciplines is that while they necessarily draw on historical sources, their scholars are not always equipped with the critical skills of the historian (in-depth knowledge of the specific historical context of a source, access to original languages, training in archive research, etc.). Hence the risk of ending up in what both Ruin and Williams in similar ways describe as the temptation to appropriate

[8] I insist on placing these attributes within scare quotes, since they generally tend to simplify rather than clarify the complexity of the contemporary theological landscape.

the past – historical key figures or episodes – for the sake of specific cultural or intellectual motives. To indicate the kind of endeavours I have in mind as regards contemporary theology, let me very briefly point to three influential examples from recent decades.

The first is the role assigned to Duns Scotus among theologians who during the past twenty-five years have been aligned with the Radical Orthodoxy movement. When John Milbank set out to elaborate a comprehensive theological critique of modern secularity in his landmark study *Theology and Social Theory* (1992), he identified Duns Scotus and late medieval nominalism as the point in history where theology went fatally wrong. In contrast, his own theological enterprise was an attempt to recover an Augustinian-Thomist vision for a postsecular era, thereby indicating that there was a finer and more pristine era before theology successively became tarnished by secular reason.[9] As the years have passed, Milbank's account of the origins of modernity has become something of a foundational myth within significant factions of theology, with few commentators ever challenging its idiosyncratic portrait of Duns Scotus as the progenitor of secular reason.[10]

A second example is the equally forceful trope of the Constantinian shift as the moment in history when the deformation of true Christianity

[9] See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwell 2006 (1992); see also John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward (eds), *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, London: Routledge 1999, and Philip Blond, "Introduction: Theology before Philosophy", in idem, *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*, London: Routledge 1998, 1–66.

[10] A significant exception is Daniel P. Horan, *Postmodernity and Univocity: A Critical Account of Radical Orthodoxy and John Duns Scotus*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2014. Horan's book was the subject of a symposium at *Syndicate* in December 2017, featuring both Horan and Milbank: https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/postmodernity-and-univocity/ (accessed 14 July 2020). Worthy of mention in this context is also Wolfgang Hübener, "Die Nominalismus Legende: Über das Mißverhältnis zwischen Dichtung und Wahrheit in der Deutung der Wirkungsgeschichte des Ockhamismus", in Bolz, N.-W. and Hübener, W. (eds), *Spiegel und Gleichnis: Festschrift für Jacob Taubes*, Würzburg: Königshausen-Neumann 1983, 87–111. Hübener's essay was written in response to Hans Blumenberg's classical study *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1966), which – albeit with opposite aims – presented a genealogy of the modern era with clear parallels to that of Milbank.

set in. This trope has been particularly popular among theologians hailing from low-church backgrounds, but also more generally among theologians who rightly wish to challenge the politicization of Christianity in the context of modern national churches. For instance, the late Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder did a fascinating work in showing the links between an early "free church" vision of Christianity and diaspora Judaism before the "constantinization" of the church set in.[11] And yet there are questions to be raised about the monumental significance ascribed to the Constantinian shift in some contemporary theologies, including the extent to which a particular set of post-reformation quandaries are being projected back upon late antiquity.[12]

My third example is one used by Williams himself: the tendency by some feminist theologians to buttress visions of a non-sexist church with historical claims about the original egalitarianism of the early Jesus movement. These claims are usually inspired by the significant work that has been carried out by both historians and biblical scholars to explore the status of women in the early church. Worthy of mention in this context is especially Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who in her long scholarly career has combined exegetical skills with a strong feminist theological pathos.[13] However, while the significance of her pioneering research to subsequent feminist theology cannot be overestimated, there is nonetheless a tendency in her systematic theological work to picture

[11] Among the many works in which Yoder deals with this topic, see notably *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 1984; *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*, London: SCM 2003; *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press 2009.

[12] The most comprehensive critique to date of this perspective is offered by the historian Peter J. Leithart in *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*, Downers Grove: IVP Academic 2010. Leithart was in his turn challenged by an array of scholars loyal to the theology of Yoder in John D. Roth (ed.), *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian Debate*, Eugene: Pickwick Publications 2013.

[13] See especially her classic study *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York: Crossroad 1983, but also *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklēsia-logy of Liberation*, London: SCM Press 1993.

a golden age of inclusiveness and egalitarianism which was subsequently overthrown by the emerging patriarchal church.[14]

At this point, I want to make clear that I am not arguing *against* any of these theological endeavours. On the contrary, I chose these three examples because they all offer valuable theological perspectives. Hence, there are good reasons to scrutinize monolithic constructions of secular rationality, especially in light of the effects such constructions tend to have in multicultural contexts.[15] Similarly, we need to keep an eye on unhealthy forms of nationalist politicization of religion, a point to which I shall come back in the second part of this essay. Last but not least, the process of coming to terms with patriarchal structures in both theology and the church is far from being completed. However, these theological tasks could all be pursued without succumbing to what Williams aptly describes as "the temptation to look for a period of Christian history in which the ordinary ambiguities or corruptions of human history have not obscured the truth of the gospel"[16] – be it in the form of a harmonious medieval synthesis (Milbank), a pre-Constantinian "free" church (Yoder), or an original community of equals (Schüssler Fiorenza). To respect the otherness of the past, in this perspective, is also to be prepared to hear voices that we do not want to hear, voices that challenge our preconceptions about the past and thereby threaten to unsettle our historical identities.

History Writing and Moral Responsibility

This brings me back to the second part of the paragraph by Hans Ruin quoted in the introduction, and more specifically to the question of how our own subjectivity is affected by our "being with the dead". Ruin's

[14] Critique of this argument has been launched by e.g. Kathleen E. Corley, *Women and the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins*, Santa Rosa: Polebridge 2002, and John H. Elliott, "Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian: A Critique of an Anachronistic and Idealist Theory", *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 23:2 (2002), 75–91. The critique has been countered by e.g. Mary Ann Beavis, "Christian Origins, Egalitarianism, and Utopia", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 23:2 (2007), 27–49.

[15] I address this topic more extensively in "The Return of Religion or the End of Religion? On the Need to Rethink Religion as a Category of Social and Political Life", *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 46:7 (2020), 785–809. DOI: 10.1177/0191453719896384.

[16] Williams, *Why Study the Past*, 102.

philosophical meditation on this question is situated within a phenomenological-hermeneutical tradition, and those who are versed in this tradition will already have recognized Martin Heidegger's *Mitsein mit dem Toten* in the English words "being with the dead". This expression was first coined by Heidegger in *Being and Time* in a section where he deals with how *Dasein* – human existence – responds to the death of the other.[17] Throughout his study, Ruin elaborates this theme in close dialogue with later thinkers within the same philosophical tradition, notably Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida. Unfortunately, the limited scope of this essay does not allow me to do justice to Ruin's compound argument, and I shall have to content myself with briefly touching upon one particular aspect: the shift in focus between Heidegger and Levinas with regard to the death of the other.

Although Heidegger dedicates some space in *Being and Time* to how the death of the other affects our being, his main interest lies in how the individual existence is affected by its own mortality. In this respect, Heidegger's reflections echo the long Western tradition of *memento mori* – the art of enhancing the quality our finite existence by acquiring a philosophically mature relation to our own mortality. However, as already indicated, this notion of authentic finitude as approachable primarily from the perspective of individual mortality has been challenged, especially by Levinas, who contrary to Heidegger argued that it is the death of the other – our near and dear ones – that truly reveals our finitude. When we lose a friend or family member, our entire existence is shaken in a way that profoundly affects who we ultimately are. But the experience of loss does not merely throw us into despair. Living with the memory of our lost loved ones moves us out of ordinary time into the time of the past and thereby invites us to participate in a shared finitude which also implies a shared responsibility between the dead, the living and the yet unborn.[18]

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[17] See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Staumbaugh, Albany: SUNY Press 2010, 238.

[18] Ruin, *Being with the Dead*, 20–21. Part of the originality of Ruin's contribution to this debate lies in his argument that there is – Levinas's critique notwithstanding – still a potential for a more compound reading of Heidegger's approach to mortality, which takes into account his reflections on historicity as constituted by an existential confrontation with the present pastness of the dead ancestors.

Taking my inspiration from these phenomenological reflections, I wish to apply them, once more, to the specific question of history writing in theology. If "being with the dead" is constitutive of our very identity in a way that implies a moral responsibility for the dead as well as the yet unborn, what does this line of thought entail when transferred to our scholarly identities? More specifically, what does it mean that we, as scholars, are constituted by our past, by our relation to thinkers who are long gone but who nevertheless continue to live in us, in our thoughts, in our writing, and in our teaching? Recalling an earlier point, it means among other things that we recognize the extent to which history writing serves to construe and uphold our scholarly identities. In Williams's words: "We don't have a 'grid' for history; we construct it when we want to resolve certain problems about who we are now. We use narratives to define a subject – a person, a country, a process or practice – as something that exists and persists through time."[19]

The fact that we relate and listen to the past in order to better understand who we are explains our uneasiness with episodes or facts that challenge our representation of a particular past. This is what I referred to a moment ago as the voices we don't want to hear, because they risk unsettling our identity in relation to, for instance, a particular theological or confessional tradition. Confronted with such disturbing voices, one common impulse is to recognize their presence but simultaneously dismiss them as deviations of the true core or essence of the tradition with which we identify. An opposite impulse is to end up in a wholesale rejection of the tradition in question because of its awkward or problematic aspects. As an example, both these tendencies were clearly present in the struggle to handle the ambivalence of the Lutheran legacy – including Luther's writings about the Jews and the Peasants' War – during the Reformation Jubilee in 2016 and 2017. Despite many excellent initiatives of dealing with this complex past, much of the public debate was polarized between those who hailed Luther as a forerunner of liberal and democratic ideals, and those who instead depicted him primarily as a betrayer of any truly liberating ideals. In both cases, there was a tendency to foreground and accentuate certain aspects of the past, whereas other aspects were toned down or ignored. By contrast, I want

[19] Williams, *Why Study the Past*, 5.

to argue that the art of listening to the past is precisely about owning up to our chequered past, which means to assume this past in all its complexity as part of our own identity. Applied to the example of Lutheranism or Lutheran theology, this means that Luther's hatred of the Jews remains part and parcel of the Lutheran tradition to which I belong. As such, it cannot simply be rejected as an unfortunate deviation of this tradition, nor does it afford me to reject the Lutheran tradition wholesale. Rather, it gives me a special responsibility for this particular past.[20]

This brings me back to the moral aspect of history writing in general and theological history writing in particular. While representation of the past is always and inevitably selective, we currently live in a time when efforts to deliberately adjust or manipulate collective memory in order to promote particular ideological agendas are on the rise.[21] Such efforts will certainly not diminish as the technological means for mobilizing selective memory continue to evolve. Of particular concern for theologians in this context are the nationalist claims that are today being laid to a purportedly common Christian past of the European continent. While most bluntly articulated by nationalist parties in Eastern Europe, variations of such claims can be found in most right-wing populist parties across the continent, as well as in a growing number of conservative parties.[22]

The problem – and danger – with such memory politics is threefold. First, it is problematic in relation to the past itself. In placing emphasis on the harmonious aspects of Europe's Christian history while deliber-

[20] A good example of what such scholarly responsibility might look like is Elisabeth Gerle's recent endeavour to do justice to the complexity of the Lutheran legacy in *Passionate Embrace: Luther on Love, Body, and Sensual Presence*, trans. S. Donovan, Eugene: Wipf and Stock 2017.

[21] See Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Ingrid Rasch (eds), *Minne och manipulation: Om det kollektiva minnets praktiker*, Lund: CFE Conference Papers Series No. 6 2013.

[22] There is a rapidly growing literature on these tendencies; see e.g. Per-Erik Nilsson, "'Shame on the Church of Sweden': Radical Nationalism and the Appropriation of Christianity in Contemporary Sweden", *Critical Research on Religion* (forthcoming as DOI: 10.1177/2050303219900252); Jakob Schwörer and Xavier Romero-Vidal, "Radical Right Populism and Religion: Mapping Parties' Religious Communication in Western Europe", *Religion, State & Society*, 48:1 (2020), 4–21; Hannah Strømmen and Ulrich Schmiedel, *The Claim to Christianity: Responding to the Far Right*, London: SCM Press 2020.

ately directing focus away from its repressive episodes, it fails to do justice not only to the complexity of the past but also to Christianity's many victims in medieval as well as in modern Europe. Second, such memory politics is pernicious because it invokes a past that appeals to the imagination and memory of certain segments of the population at the expense of others (this is, of course, a deliberate strategy, the aim of which is to convey a message of who belongs and who does not belong in contemporary Europe). Third and finally, this deliberately selective account of Europe's past is problematic in relation to the future. As I have argued elsewhere, there is a close relation between memory politics and the ways in which we are able to conceive of the future.[23] More precisely, as populist policy makers are well aware, selective and simplifying constructions of the past tend to breed exclusive and excluding visions of our future societies.

This cultural situation has given new urgency to the question of theological history writing. As a consequence of declining religious literacy, there is a fading critical knowledge of the Christian inheritance among average Europeans. This also means that fewer and fewer people have the education to question the arbitrariness with which representations of the Christian past are brought into play by nationalist actors. In this context, theologians and church historians – as experts on the Christian tradition – have a special responsibility to point to the complexity of our collective past and to challenge interpretations that are deliberately brought forth with a view to excluding groups and individuals from a shared European cultural identity. Bearing in mind my earlier discussion on respecting the otherness of the past, this critical responsibility certainly does not allow scholars to cover up or obscure the more problematic aspects of Christian history. However, it does allow them to question and criticize particular uses of the past in light of the harmful effects certain ideas and doctrines have had and may have in the church as well as in the broader culture. Carrying a tradition forward in a responsible and generous way is thus a matter of doing justice both to the subjects of the past and those of the future.

[23] Jayne Svenungsson, "Whose Justice? Which Future?", in J.-I. Lindén (ed.), *To Understand What is Happening* (forthcoming).

To summarize my argument, I have suggested that history writing in theology – as all history writing – is ultimately about what Ruin describes as a "shared responsibility over generations", words that echo not only Levinas but also the famous saying, commonly traced to Edmund Burke, that "history is a pact between the dead, the living, and the yet unborn". Or, to offer my own metaphor inspired by the photograph mentioned at the outset: good history writing is like cultivating an old garden, which means respecting and entertaining the work laid down by generations that have gone before us in a way that gently and carefully prepares it for those who will come after us.

The Art of Listening in the Gospel of Matthew and Paul's Letter to the Romans

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Abstract:
This revised lecture highlights two aspects of listening in the Bible, that of listening as an obedient act of confession according to the Gospel of Matthew and that of listening to and interpreting the oral performance of Paul's letter to the Romans. The former aspect is specific to the socio-religious commitment in ancient Israel and Judaism, including the Jewish Christ-believers, and identifies this particular act of listening regardless of the oral mode communication and with a focus on the Jewish Shemaʿ. It is argued this confession serves as the interpretative key to several Matthean texts, being an important means of incorporating the Jewish notion of obedience into the early Christian understanding of Jesus' obedience to his Father and the disciples' obedience to Jesus and to God. This, in turn, indicates the importance of the confession elsewhere in the New Testament, especially in Paul's insistence that Jews and Gentiles together owe their love and obedience to the one and only God. The latter aspect reflects the broad Greek and Roman sensitivity to the oral character of the written text and focuses on the interpretive clues of orality encoded into the writing and decoded at the moment of its public reading and hearing. The two examples from Paul's letter to the Romans are on the awareness of how ancient experts on performance dealt with sound and the combination of cola into periods, illustrating that attention to the aural impact of texts helps the interpreter to enter into the sounding-setting of the first audience and fosters sensitivity to both the cumulative aural effects of sounding syllables and words as well as to the aural

syntax of structuring the linkage between individual clauses. As is evident especially in the complex problem of Rom 9:5 if Christ is seen as God or not, the sound analysis has potential to solve crucial theological issues and, in addition, to provide historically based hermeneutics and theology.

Key Words:
Gospel of Matthew, letter to the Romans, Shemaʿ, listening/hearing, confession, performance, orality, aurality, sound analysis, Matthew 4:1–11, Romans 9:3–5, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Pseudo-Demetrius, Quintilian, reception-history, hermeneutics

Introduction

The art of listening was a multifaceted phenomenon in ancient Greek and Roman antiquity. The well-known historian Thucydides, for instance, active in the fifth century BCE, was aware that historical material consists of words that were spoken (τὰ λεχθέντα) and deeds that occurred (τὰ ἔργα) and divided the sources into that which could be registered through the ear and that which could be registered through sight (1.11.1–2). The rhetoricians, somewhat later, favored oral performance for the sake of persuasion, despite their use of written notes. Cicero (106–43 BCE) insisted that history needs the voice of the orator in order to argue a case and make history immortal (*De Orat*. 2.9.36) and that the end of rhetoric eloquence is to persuade by speech (*De Inv.* 1.5.6). The advice of Quintilian (5–96 CE) was that the orator should avoid using note-books at the oral performance and commit everything to memory in order to be utterly convincing to those listening (*Inst*. 10.7.32). Many other ancient texts could be mentioned that testify to the predominance of the oral and aural form of communication. Ordinary people were mostly unable to read and had to appropriate texts by listening to them being read aloud in different settings, such as the theater, the public square or at home.[1]

* This is a revised version of a lecture held at the 40th anniversary of the Collegium Patristicum Lundense 5 October 2019 at Lund University. The theme of the anniversary was "The Art of Listening."

It is evident that the people in ancient Israel and in the early Christian communities shared this broad appreciation of the oral form of communication and of listening. I will elucidate two selected aspects of this essentially cultural phenomenon, that of listening as an obedient act of confession according to the Gospel of Matthew and that of listening to and interpreting the oral performance of Paul's letter to the Romans. The former aspect is specific to the socio-religious commitment in ancient Israel and Judaism, including the Jewish Christ-believers, and identifies this particular act of listening regardless of the oral mode communication; the latter reflects the broad Greek and Roman sensitivity to the oral character of the written text indicated above and highlights the interpretive clues of orality encoded into the writing.

Listening as Obedience: The Shemaʿ and the Gospel of Matthew

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 and the Shemaʿ

The classic text of listening in the Bible is the well-known confession in Deut 6:4:

> שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד
> ἄκουε Ισραηλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν
> Hear, Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

The Shemaʿ Yisrael, or simply the Shemaʿ, has been the most crucial Jewish confession through-out the centuries. It appears in a collection of speeches attributed to Moses before the next generation of people entered into the promised land, constituting the decisive call to unreserved love for God. In traditional Jewish prayer these lines from Deut 6:4 were prayed together with the following verses morning and evening and became one of the most influential identity markers in Jewish history. In later liturgy the Shemaʿ included in addition to Deut 6:4–9 also Deut

[1] Usually the literacy rate in ancient Greece and Rome is estimated to circa 10%. See William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1989, who allows for local variations. For Palestine during the Roman period specifically, cf. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2001, arguing against earlier studies that the Jewish society in Palestine was characterized by a low level of literacy.

11:13–21 and Num 15:37–41 (m. Ber. 2:2) and its recitation was seen as a means of receiving or taking upon oneself the Kingdom of Heaven.

The characteristic opening line "hear, Israel" does not simply mean to let the sound waves enter the ears. The word שְׁמַע/ἄκουε here implies the process of allowing the words of the confession to impose understanding and generate an obligatory response to the one true God. The command that follows in Deut 9:5 is threefold, to love with your whole heart, with your whole soul and with all your strength, and formed in ancient Israel the fundamental covenantal bound of love and obedience to God.

In the reception history of this confession, the initial command to listen disappears and the focus is directed to the threefold command. We find references to it in different places in the Hebrew Bible as well as in early Jewish texts and the focus is consistently on the oneness of God.[2] It came to encapsulate the monotheistic essence of Jewish belief. In early rabbinic times, when the Shemaʿ was the crucial declaration of obedience to the Kingdom of Heaven, the confession surfaces in a way indicating a significant attention to the deepest meaning of what it means to truly follow its command. The Mishnah, while not paying much attention to the initial reference to listening, interprets its threefold command in Ber. 9:5 saying that you should love God,

בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ, בִּשְׁנֵי יְצָרֶיךָ, בְּיֵצֶר טוֹב וּבְיֵצֶר רָע
וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ, אֲפִלּוּ הוּא נוֹטֵל אֶת נַפְשֶׁךָ
וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ, בְּכָל מָמוֹנֶךָ
דָּבָר אַחֵר בְּכָל מְאֹדֶךָ, בְּכָל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה שֶׁהוּא מוֹדֵד לְךָ הֱוֵי מוֹדֶה לוֹ בְּמִאֹד מְאֹד׃

'with all your heart', with both your inclinations, with the good inclination and with the evil inclination;
'with all your soul', even though he takes your soul;
'with all your might', with all your property.
Another saying: 'with all your might', with whatever measure he measures out for you, bring to him an overflowing thanksgiving.

[2] E.g. 2 Kgs 19:19; Zech 14:9; Mal 2:9; 2 Macc 7:37–38; 1QH 14:26; 15:10; Let. Aris. 132; Philo, *Spec.* 1.30; Josephus *A.J.* 4.199; *C. Ap.* 2.193.

This interpretation is found in a more developed form in Sifre to Deuteronomy Pisqa' 32, and it is implied in both Targum Onkelos and Targum Yerushalmi (Ps.-Jonathan). Taken together, these texts suggest that your heart must not be divided in the love of God, that you must be prepared to give up your soul/life in martyrdom, and that you must place all your possessions at God's disposal. To listen truly to what God commands is an act of deepest religious commitment and radical obedience in the most crucial matters of life and death.

Although the questions concerning the redaction and dating of Sifre and the Targumim are difficult to determine with certainty, the Targum Yerushalmi surely being considerably later than the other two, the detailed explanations of the Shemaʿ in the Mishnah as well as the reports that the priests in the temple recited it (m. Tamid 4:3; 5:1) and that the early tannaitic houses of Shammai and Hillel fervently discussed it (m. Ber. 1:3), indicate that this radicalization of the confession existed early, probably in the first century CE.[3] Although the listening motif is not very prominent as such in the reception history of Deut 6:4–5, it lurks in the background as an urgent call to total obedience to the one true God.

Listening and Obedience to the Shemaʿ in the Gospel of Matthew

It should come as no surprise that Jesus himself and many of his followers, who were all deeply grounded in Jewish piety, show signs of their commitment to what the Shemaʿ demands.[4] In all likelihood, Jesus and most of his disciples recited it in their morning and evening prayer, just as Paul and many of his Jewish associates might have done before and perhaps also after they came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Al-

[3] Cf. also Josephus, *A.J.* 4:212–213, implicitly referring to the Shemaʿ.

[4] For some more extensive studies pointing to the Shemaʿ in certain New Testament passages, cf. Birger Gerhardsson, *The Shema in the New Testament: Deut 6:4–5 in Significant Passages*, Lund: Novapress 1996, where he collects his previous articles on the subject, and more recently Erik Waaler, *The Shema and The First Commandment in First Corinthians: An Intertextual Approach to Paul's Re-Reading of Deuteronomy*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2008; Brury Eko Saputra, *The* Shema *and John 10: The Importance of the* Shema *In Understanding the Oneness Language In John 10*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock 2019; John J. R. Lee, *Christological Rereading of the Shema (Deut 6:4) in Mark's Gospel*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2020.

though the New Testament does not dwell explicitly on this, the fundamental and enduring Jewishness of Jesus and his followers makes it highly probable.

The Shemaʿ plays a particularly important role in the Gospel of Matthew, albeit beneath the surface of the text, in fact functioning as a subtle interpretive key for unlocking the motif of true obedience and elaborating the motif of listening. This Gospel, probably composed during the 80s when the Jewish religious movements were struggling to find their identity after the destruction of their temple and its cult, includes a characteristic emphasis on listening and a sophisticated use of the Shemaʿ. The Jewish author and the Jewish audience(s) of this Gospel, whoever they were,[5] had most likely internalized the Shemaʿ as a confession recited every morning and evening in Hebrew or Greek, perhaps even in other languages.[6] It was the cognitive religious lens through which they understood their entire existence and according to which they had to interpret the new messianic situation.

The author is fond of the Greek verb for listening (ἀκούειν) and uses it approximately 63 times, in various ways, not always in explicit conjunction with the Shemaʿ.[7] Of interest is that Jesus speaks in 7:24, 26 of hearing and doing his words presented in the Sermon on the Mount. These two references hark back to 7:15–23, where it is evident that hearing and doing must go hand in hand, just as in the Shemaʿ. Much later in the story, the scribes and the pharisees are harshly criticized precisely for not acting in accordance with their own teaching (23:3), to the extent that they are rejected as Jewish teachers and replaced by Jesus only

[5] Although I am convinced that the author understood himself an ethnic Jew, I find it difficult to argue that he belonged to the same community as the intended addressees of the Gospel and remain open to the possibility of several intended audiences. Cf. the rehearsal of this influential debate in Edward W. Klink III (ed.), *The Audience of the Gospels: Further Conversation about the Origin and Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity*, London: Clark 2010. The debate has unfortunately become polarized in the recent studies of the Gospel of Matthew.

[6] Y. Sota 21b mentions that the Shemaʿ was recited in Greek at Caesarea. M. Sota 7:1; t. Sota 7:7 refer to "any other language."

[7] For statistics and further analysis, see my *Jesus the Only Teacher: Didactic Authority and Transmission in Ancient Israel, Ancient Judaism and the Gospel of Matthew*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994, 300–302, 321–324, 361–364.

(23:8–10). Hearing, and also doing, relate more substantially to the beginning of the Shemaʿ elsewhere in Matthew. In 22:37 the author has Jesus quoting Deut 6:5 as a response to the pharisees' attempt to test (πειράζειν) him. Jesus acknowledges it more strongly than in the other Synoptics as the most important command in the Torah.

The author also seems to use the Shemaʿ to interpret Jesus' obedience to God and the disciples' obedience to Jesus. Most evident is that Jesus' obedience to God is in fact evidence of his obedience to the Shemaʿ. The pharisees' desire to tempt Jesus is foreshadowed already at the initial portrayal of Jesus in the narrative, in the pericope of his so-called temptation in 4:1–11. The author here describes how Jesus' obedience was decisively tested (πειράζειν) before the beginning of his active ministry and employs his deeply felt obligation towards the Shemaʿ as the interpretive key to the testing of Jesus, presenting Jesus' conformity to God's will as the radical and unreserved obedience to the Shemaʿ as it was understood at the author's own time. This has been convincingly shown in one of Birger Gerhardsson's early and most prolific but much neglected studies.[8] Gerhardsson here observes that all the quotations in Matt 4:1–11 are from Deut 6–8 and argues the intriguing thesis that the portrayal of the testing of Jesus as the Son of God is in fact a midrashic exposition of the Shemaʿ.

The first temptation is hunger for forty days, just as God allowed his people to go hungry for forty years and then fed them with heavenly food. Unlike the people in the desert, Jesus overcomes the temptation and shows that the evil inclination has no power over him and that he loves God with his whole heart. The second temptation concerns safety, that Jesus should remain uninjured no matter what happens. The people of Israel had doubts about God's protection. Jesus, by contrast, shows that he is prepared to give up his life if God demands it. The third temptation has to do with worldly possessions. Israel had fallen for this temptation. Jesus rejects it and proves that he loves God also with his whole might. When tested if he is truly the Son of God, Jesus thus proves that he loves God by allowing God's word and not the evil inclination to reign his heart, by acknowledging God to decide over his life, and by

[8] *The Testing of God's Son (Matt 4:1–11 & Par): An Analysis of an Early Christian Midrash*, Lund: Gleerup 1966.

renouncing all the properties of this world for the service of God.[9] He is, according to Matthew, true to his daily confession of obedient listening to the only true God and his demands.

The question of the disciples' obedience to Jesus is more complex and touches on the ambivalent and much debated Christology of the Gospel. This debate rarely if ever takes into account the possibility of allusions to the Shemaʿ,[10] perhaps due to the reluctance to consider the implications of the fact that this thoroughly Jewish Gospel put a strong messianic focus on one particular teacher among the plurality of teachers in contemporary Judaism and end narratively by resolving the limited range of Jesus' mission in 10:5–6, 23 with a more inclusive one in 28:19.[11] The recent but not novel idea of understanding the Gospel of Matthew from a Jewish sectarian perspective similar to the specific adherence to the Righteous Teacher according to some of the Dead Sea Scrolls opens up possibilities of appreciating the strong emphasis on Jesus' extraordinary status in this Gospel without necessarily diminishing the Jewishness of the writing.[12]

The yoke of Jesus in 11:29 is significant. The author's use of this image is influenced by the terminology and motif concerning the yoke of Wisdom in Sir 6:23–31; 51:26, as most scholars recognize.[13] What is rarely noticed, however, is that Sir 6:24–26, when referring to the fetters (πέδαι) or collar (κλοιός) or bonds (δεσμοί) of Wisdom, makes a close

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[9] Gerhardsson, *The Testing*, 76–79. Gerhardsson refers also to Heb 4:15 as an example of how an early Christian author thought of the temptation of Jesus. The similarities to Matthew are striking.

[10] Cf. my *Jesus the Only Teacher*, 301–302

[11] For a detailed argument, see Matthias Konradt, *Israel, Kirche und die Völker im Matthäusevangelium*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2007, 285–348.

[12] I made this comparison in *Jesus the Only Teacher*, 114–132, 148–155, 188–193. For a recent, sectarian understanding of the Matthean group based on a comparison with the Dead Sea Scrolls, cf. John Kampen, *Matthew within Sectarian Judaism*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2019. The Christology as well as the biographical genre of the Gospel require, in my view, further thought in order to be integrated into a view of an entirely Jewish identity of the group from which the Gospel emerged and to which it was presumably addressed, granted that Jewish identity remains a flexible category.

[13] See Celia Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11.25–30*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1987.

connection to the Shemaʿ, exhorting the student to draw near to Wisdom "with all your soul" (ἐν πάσῃ ψυχῇ σου) and to keep her ways "with all your power" (ἐν ὅλῃ δυνάμει σου), a quite clear way of linking the adherence to Wisdom and her yoke to obedience to the Shemaʿ. In rabbinic literature the connection between the yoke and the Shemaʿ is explicit and well-known: when a person recited the Shemaʿ, s/he in fact accepted the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven – Matthew's favorite expression for the Kingdom of God – and the yoke of the commandments.[14] In Matthew, the yoke is not that of Wisdom or that of the Kingdom of Heaven, but that of Jesus' teaching. The conclusion that follows suggests a prolific Christology: in 11:29 Jesus invites the disciples to learn his teaching, and in doing this they obey in fact the Shemaʿ and its commandments, implying a strong focus on who he is and what he teaches. Adding to this is the possibility argued long ago by both Felix Christ and, most convincingly, M. Jack Suggs that the author of Matthew in fact understood Jesus to be Wisdom, not only her messenger.[15] A cautious way of expressing the impression we gain from this discussion is that when Jesus invites people to himself and his own yoke he in fact assumes the functions of Wisdom herself and calls people to adhere to the Shemaʿ.

In addition to these passages, we have a significant use of the phrase εἷς ἐστιν in Matthew, perhaps alluding to "the Lord is one" in the Shemaʿ. "There is only one who is good," is Jesus' response in 19:17 to the question of what to do to inherit eternal life. Although the text is not entirely clear, it is probable that Jesus is referring to God rather than to himself, not in this case drawing attention to his own person. More prominent and thought-provoking is the threefold εἷς ἐστιν in 23:8–10: "one is your teacher", "one is your father," "one is your guide." The

[14] Cf. e.g. m. Ber 2:2, 5; b. Ber. 61b. For discussion, see Hans-Jürgen Becker, *Auf der Kathedra des Mose: Rabbinisch-theologisches Denken und anti-rabbinische Polemik in Matthäus 23, 1–12*, Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum 1990, 145–146, 161–164.

[15] Felix Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern*, Zürich: Zwingli Verlag 1970; M. Jack Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and the Law in Matthew's Gospel*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1970. This view has been reinforced by Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*; eadem, "Wisdom in Matthew: Transformation of a Symbol," *Novum Testamentum* 32 (1990), 13–47. Deutsch goes as far as to claiming that in Matthew Jesus is Wisdom personified.

expression here oscillates between Jesus and God as the only one. Regardless of how exactly to define Jesus' status in Matthew, it is evident that the same theologically loaded phrase can be used both for God and for Jesus in the same pericope. The three-fold repetition of it, culminating with a reference to the Messiah as the only guide, has a strong rhetorical impact and cannot but remind the pious Greek-speaking Jewish author and listener of the confessional introduction to the three-fold Shemaʿ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν.

The implication of all this is that the classical confessional act of listening was important as a means of incorporating the Jewish notion of obedience into the early Christian understanding of Jesus' obedience to his Father and the disciples' obedience to Jesus and to God. Although we cannot here discuss the importance of the confession elsewhere in the New Testament, it is immediately evident that it influenced from early on the understanding of Jesus relationship to God and pointed out the basic directives for good behavior (Mark 12:29; James 2:19). It is significant that Paul uses the commandment of love several times (Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14). The notion that God is one also serves as an axiomatic and non-negotiable statement in his otherwise complex lines of argumentation. His messianic conviction that the Jewish covenant includes the Gentiles is based on his Jewish belief that God is one. God is not only the God of the Jews but also of the Gentiles, because God is one, he says in Rom 3:30, after a complicated argument about the righteousness of God for all.[16] Other passages confirm the importance the Shemaʿ had for Paul (1 Cor 8:6; Gal 3:20). The earliest Jewish theological thinker in Christianity from whom we have texts probably continued to confess it every day, reciting the command to listen morning and evening and integrating it into his messianic and apocalyptic theology.

Listening as Interpreting Oral Performance: Paul's Letter to the Romans

Performance Criticism and Beyond

The other aspect of listening in the Bible is less religious but equally intriguing: the interpretive act of listening to a text being read aloud. It is

[16] See more extensively my *Romarbrevet 1–8*, Stockholm: EFS-förlaget 2006, 106.

common knowledge today that the New Testament writings have a strong rhetorical dimension, both technically and effectively, and that they were composed for persuasive oral performance, regardless of the specific literary genre that they exhibit.

The analysis of oral performance has been labeled yet another "criticism" of New Testament studies.[17] During the last decade it has been widely employed as a means of understanding the dynamic dimension of textual composition and oral performance as well as the audible reception of text and performance, and as such it has already been criticized on account of its neglect to incorporate the ancient recommendations of oral performance from memory or from a manuscript with its small notes of how the writing should be communicated.[18] Dan Nässelqvist has studied this extensively in his dissertation from Lund University, criticizing the previous trend of performance criticism and elaborating the idea of sound analysis in order to grasp the impact that the reading had on small groups of people listening to the performance of written manuscripts.[19] His study proposes an analysis of the "soundscape" of John 1–4, indicating the broader implications of this new scholarly attention to sound in narrative performance.

Listening to Paul's Letter to the Romans

The Biblical study of letters has paid much attention to the rhetorical and epistolary conventions in antiquity. Despite this interest, scholars have not to the same extent studied the profound significance of the well-known fact that letters of the kind we have in the New Testament were composed through detailed or more flexible oral dictation and read aloud in settings where the author was absent. To be sure, we have realized that the secretary played an important role – in Rom 16:22 he is

[17] The pioneering appeal to performance criticism was David Rhoads, "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies – Part I," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36 (2006), 118–133; idem, "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies – Part II," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36 (2006), 164–184.
[18] Larry W. Hurtardo, "Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? 'Orality', 'Performance' and Reading Texts in Early Christianity," *New Testament Studies* 60 (2014), 321–340.
[19] *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscript, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4*, Leiden: Brill 2015.

prominent enough to give a personal greeting by name;[20] we have indeed realized that the letter was considered to be a friendly conversation on a distance between two persons, especially if the letter was a personal one, or that is was like a persuasive speech, in full awareness that the author needed to express himself with clarity not being himself present;[21] and we have integrated into our conception of the letters that they seemed to replace the presence of the author when performed to the audience.[22] Letters were composed orally and meant to be read aloud to an audience at some distance from and yet in a way close to the author.

More rarely do we integrate this media perspective into the actual interpretation of the letters, neglecting to see how much the message depends on the form of communication. The two book-length studies of the Pauline letters from the perspective of orality by John D. Harvey and Casey W. Davis, published rather long ago, reflect the present state of research on the letters and deal with the oral patterns to be identified, but they remain within the paradigm of ancient rhetoric and neglect the importance of sound almost entirely.[23] The long-standing expert on orality Pieter J. J. Botha deals in his more recent study with Paul and his

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[20] E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1991. Cf. also idem, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity 2004.

[21] We find this in the theoretical writings on letter-writing collected by Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, Atlanta: Scholars Press 1988. Cf. e.g. Cicero's statement in his letter to Atticus that he writes the letter "because I feel as though I were talking to you" (*Ep. Att*. 12.53), while also realizing that the letter was not a *tête-à-tête* talk (*Ep. Fam*. 12.30.1), or Seneca stating that "my letters should be just what my conversation would be if you and I were sitting in one another's company or taking walks together – spontaneous and easy" (*Ep Mor*. 75.1–2). The special clarity required by a letter-writer is mentioned several times by the theorists.

[22] The classic study is Robert Funk, "The Apostolic *Parousia*: Form and Significance," in W. M. Farmer, C. F. D Moule and R. R. Niebuhr (eds), *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1967, 249–269. On occasion, Paul might have preferred the letter to the personal visit. Cf. Margaret Mitchell, "New Testament Envoys in the Context of Greco-Roman Diplomatic and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992), 641–662.

[23] John D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters*, Grand Rapids: Baker 1998; Casey W. Davis, *Oral Biblical Criticism: The Influence of the Principles of Orality*

letters mostly from the general perspective that an oral culture gives to the epistolary genre.[24] Generally speaking, it seems that our study of orality has developed further in studies of the gospels and the gospel tradition than in the study of the letters. It remains, for instance, to interpret Paul's letter to the Romans from a perspective informed by the complexity of the oral and aural media in the mid 50s, considering that Paul was aware that he addressed people gathered in house-communities that he had never visited and that he depended entirely on the epistolary medium to make up for his absence. In this letter in particular, he is at pains for not having had the possibility to visit them previously and eager to make contact in order to find a basis for his continued mission (Rom 1:10–13; 15:22–29).

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Paul uses all his literary and theological training and experience to communicate effectively and persuasively in Romans. Scholars have shown the strong rhetorical character of the letter at large;[25] and the rather independent combination of rhetorical and epistolary conventions is evident also in some detail.[26] The audible impact of the performance needs however more scrutiny. Two examples of how the text might have been intended to be heard, and in fact perhaps was heard at the first moment of oral reading, suffice here.

The first one concerns the rather simple way of identifying and constructing sound as an interpretive sign by looking for the similar audible effects between vowels or consonants in words or syllables, often in combination, the so-called assonance and consonance. This audible impact could vary, indeed, depending on what sounds that were used, but

on the Literary Structure of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1999. Davis pays some attention to the importance of sound, but not in terms of the ancient recommendations for how to use sound.

[24] *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books 2012.

[25] Cf. e.g. Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2007; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2007.

[26] Cf. e.g. my "Epistolography, Rhetoric and Letter Prescript: Romans 1.1–7 as a Test Case," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 65 (1997), 27–46.

as a general rule for interpreting such passages it might be more adequate to listen to the text and its audible effects than to philologically separate lexicographical word-meaning.

A straight-forward example is Rom 1:29–31. As elsewhere in his writings, Paul here uses and modifies a traditional catalogue of vices and describes how God delivered men and women to deplorable ways of thinking and acting. He includes into the passage some specific sound-effects:

> 29 πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικί**ᾳ** πονηρί**ᾳ** πλεονεξί**ᾳ** κακί**ᾳ**,
> μεστοὺς **φθόνου φόνου** ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας,
> ψιθυριστάς,
> 30 καταλάλους, θεοστυγεῖς, ὑβριστάς, ὑπερηφάνους,
> ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,
> 31 **ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀσ**τόργους, **ἀ**νελεήμονα**ς**.
>
> 29 They were filled with every kind of **wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice**. Full of **envy, murder**, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips,
> 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents,
> 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (NRSV)

The Greek sound-effects are lost in translation, and only rarely do translations include considerations of these effects.[27] As seen above, the translation of the New Revised Standard Version remains within the lexicographical paradigm of determining the meaning of words, overlooking the strong aural impact of the Greek terms. Similarly, the latest Swedish translation, though with a certain aural sensitivity indicated with the repeated "-het" in 1:29 and "-lösa" in 1:31:

> 29 uppfyllda av allt slags **orättfärdighet**, **elakhet**, **själviskhet** och **ondska**, fulla av **avund**, **blodtörst**, stridslystnad, svek och illvilja. De skvallrar

[27] But cf. James A. Maxey and Ernst R. Wendland, *Translating Scripture for Sound and Performance: New Directions in Biblical Studies*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books 2012.

> [30] och baktalar. De föraktar Gud. De är fräcka, övermodiga och skrytsamma, uppfinningsrika i det onda, uppstudsiga mot sina föräldrar,
> [31] tanklösa, trolösa, kärlekslösa, hjärtlösa.

When listening to the text, however, there appears to be no significant difference in meaning between ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ, translated "wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice"; there is no substantial difference to be heard between φθόνου φόνου translated "envy, murder"; and there appears to be no significant difference between ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους, ἀνελεήμονας, translated "foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless." Such catalogues of vices were common in Greek moral writings – already from Plato's time in the fourth century BCE and onward – and had its place also in Jewish writings.[28] Their sole generic purpose was that of describing the evil character of men and women. Just as we have become accustomed to seek for the meaning of terms according to their domain of semantically related terms found in similar genres of texts,[29] we might also take seriously the audible impression of words and syllables when identifying the actual meaning-effects, as difficult as it might seem. In this case, Paul encoded into the text strong signals of its oral performance. The performer in the small Roman house-community had come to a climax, perhaps raising his voice, stating emphatically that God has decided that they all deserve death.[30] The attentive listeners received thus a decisive impression of what a truly deprived human being is.

To be noted is the quality of sound in the passage. Nässelqvist develops previous attempts to describe sound-quality and points out that θ, φ and χ were considered harsh letters and that a too frequent use of σ,

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[28] The classic study is Anton Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament*, Münster: Aschendorff, 1938, arguing that the ethical lists in the New Testament are indebted to stoicism. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls added new examples of such catalogues from a Jewish – and indirectly perhaps Iranian – perspective. Cf. Siegfried Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament und ihre Traditionsgeschichte unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung der Qumran-Texte*, Berlin: Töpelmann, 1959.

[29] Johannes Louw and Eugene A. Nida (eds), *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, New York: United Bible Societies 1988.

[30] It is debated who "they" are, Gentiles only or both Jews and Gentiles. I have argued for the latter option in *Romarbrevet 1–8*, 45.

ξ and ψ were considered dissonant due to the hissing sound they evoke.[31] We notice that the similarity of sound in φθόνου φόνου is created by the deplorable use of both φ and θ. The hissing sounds are prominent through-out our passage, with a dissonant climax in 9:31: ἀ**σ**υνέτου**ς**, ἀ**σ**υνθέτου**ς**, ἀ**σ**τόργου**ς**, ἀνελεήμονα**ς**. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BCE–7 CE), historian and literary expert, pointed out that such hissing sounds created dissonance and were offensive when used excessively "A hiss seems a sound more suited to a brute beast than to a rational being" (*Comp*. 14). There were, he continues, writers who composed entire odes without using such sounds. As it seems, Paul played with the sounds in Rom 1:29–31 not only by creating assonance and consonance but also by using sounds that created feelings of offence and disgust in order to enforce his point concerning the deprived human being.

Let us turn to the more theologically challenging text in Rom 9:4–5. Scholars have long debated the reference of θεός in 9:5 and the possibility that Paul here actually refers explicitly to Christ as God. No one has to date given attention to the oral and aural features of the text. Serious consideration of these features gives however new clues for interpretation. The text is well structured and certainly aimed for oral performance:

> 4 οἵτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται, ὧν ἡ υἱοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθῆκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι,
> 5 ὧν οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν.
>
> 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;
> 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (NRSV)

[31] Nässelqvist, *Public Reading*, 154. Nässelqvist builds on and partly corrects Margaret Ellen Lee and Bernard Brandon Scott, *Sound Mapping in the New Testament*, Salem: Polebridge 2009.

Many if not the majority of scholars argue today that we here find a text – the only one – where Paul calls Christ God,[32] adopting the edition of the Greek text that puts a comma after κατὰ σάρκα. The standard commentary by Robert Jewett in the influential Hermeneia series provides an illustration of the common trend: "If salvation results from calling on the 'name of the Lord' (10:13), then the salvation of 'all Israel' in 11:26 would entail their recognition that Jesus is 'really God over all things'."[33] The argument is circular, indicated with the initial "if." Translations reflect a similar position. The New Revised Standard Version translates accordingly (see above). Similarly, though not with the capital for θεός, the latest Swedish translation: "och från dem kommer Kristus som människa, han som är över allting, gud, välsignad i evighet, amen."

There are several options available concerning the punctuation of this passage. The editors of the latest edition of the Greek New Testament has a comma after κατὰ σάρκα, producing the translation suggested by the New Revised Standard Version. If we instead insert a full stop after ἐπὶ πάντων, we translate "Messiah according to the flesh, who is over everything. God be blessed forever." Or if we instead insert a full stop after κατὰ σάρκα, we translate "Messiah according to the flesh. God, who is over everything, be blessed forever." Paul would in none of these two cases claim that the Messiah is God.

There are many philological and theological arguments in either direction, most of them well-known and repeated in commentaries. The most decisive consideration is perhaps that blessings are usually directed to God, also in Paul's letters. It is true that blessings are mostly not stated as independent clauses but related to a previous clause, such as in Rom 1:25; 11:36 and elsewhere. But independent blessings are common in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish literature, also in Greek, and Paul himself and his followers use such blessings (2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3).[34] It is also true that the term "blessing" is often placed before rather than after the reference to God. But the significance of word-order is difficult

[32] So e.g. George Carraway, *Christ is God over all: Romans 9:5 in the context of Romans 9:1–11*, London: Bloomsbury 2013. Carraway calls his method simply "exegetical" (19) and fails to add insights from new interpretative strategies.

[33] *Romans*, 564. Jewett holds this to be the majority position among scholars.

[34] Cf. LXX Gen 9:26; 1 Sam (LXX 1 Kgs) 25:32; Pss 28:6 (LXX 27:6); 31:21 (LXX 30:22); 41:13 (LXX 40:14); 68:20 (LXX 67:20). For the New Testament, cf. also Luke 1:68; 1 Pet 1:3.

to estimate in Greek and we do find in LXX Ps 67:19 a blessing of God with a different word-order, κύριος ὁ θεὸς εὐλογητός. We should remember that elsewhere in the New Testament this type of blessing is directed to God, not the Messiah.

The blessing here ends the section starting in 9:1 with an emphatic statement that Paul is not lying, "I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying." In 2 Cor 11:31 Paul similarly blesses God who knows he is not lying: "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, blessed be he forever, knows that I do not lie." Moreover, Paul never elsewhere calls Christ God. Phil 2:6 and 2:9 come close, speaking of him as being "in the form of God" (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ) and perhaps using κύριος with divine connotations, but in that passage Paul seems to ascribe divine categories to Christ rather than labelling him God.[35] The text-critical variant in Gal 20:20 indicating that Paul directs his faith to both God and Christ, implying their equality, has strong support in P^{46} but is probably secondary. Paul, we should remember, had since his childhood daily confessed that God is one and, as we saw above, earlier in Romans used this conviction as an axiomatic point for arguing that God's righteousness is always through faith (3:30). It would be difficult to reconcile this observation with assuming that he now, in the same letter, intends to say that the person whom he just referred to as human (κατὰ σάρκα) is in fact God;[36] and it would be surprising if he now, in a section moving towards defending God's choice to elect both Jews and Gentiles and concluding with an emphatic defense of righteousness through faith for Jews as well as Gentiles (9:30–33), would blur the strong argumentative force of his monotheistic belief.

The sound analysis of this passage adds a new and significant dimension to this debate and gives support to the interpretation advocated above. What is rarely if ever noticed is the word-play going on with the repeated ὤν. Another look at the Greek text, including also 9:3, indicates the aural impact of the passage:

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[35] The proposed interpretations of this so-called hymn are many. For a history of research, see Gregory P. Fewster, "The Philippians 'Christ Hymn': Trends in Critical Scholarship," *Currents in Biblical Research* 13 (2015), 191–206.

[36] Rom 1:3–4 indicates not that the Messiah κατὰ σάρκα became God at his resurrection but rather that he entered into the sphere of God as his Son. Cf. my "Epistolography."

[3] ηὐχόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ
ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα
[4a] οἵτινές εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται
[4b] **ὧν** ἡ υἱοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθῆκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία
καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι
[5a] **ὧν** οἱ πατέρες καὶ **ἐξ ὧν** ὁ χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα **ὁ ὢν** ἐπὶ
πάντων
[5b] θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν.

The proposed translation would be as follows:

[3] For I wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for the sake
of my people according to the flesh,
[4a] which are Israelites,
[4b] **to whom** belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises,
[5a] **to whom** belong the patriarchs, **from whom** comes the Christ
according to the flesh, **he being** over all.
[5b] God be blessed forever. Amen.

To be noticed is that the text sounds as if the performer repeated the relative pronoun ὧν several times from the beginning of 9:4b in order to emphasize the things that have come from the Israelites. Then comes however ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων, where ὁ ὤν cannot be a relative pronoun although sounding like one. Reading the text aloud, the relative pronoun sounds very similar to the participle of "to be," ὤν, especially when this participle is preceded by the definite article ὁ and its spiritus asper. Instead of using the simpler expression "who is," ὅς ἐστιν, Paul employs the similarities of sound between the relative pronoun ὧν and the participle form of the verb preceded by the definite article, ὁ ὤν. In this way Paul formulates a rhetorically effectful way of pointing to what has come from the Israelites, the Christ according to the flesh. It is most natural to think that the participle refers back to Christ than forward to God.

Adding to this is Näsellqvist's important observations concerning Paul's use of the Greek period (περίοδος) at the oral performance of a

Greek text.[37] Two thing are of importance: the connection between the end and the beginning of a period and the nervous moment just after the speaker had finished the period and before the audience reacted. Both these items are of importance in ancient recommendations for how to perform a period; and both items are found in Rom 9:3–5.

The first has to do with what a period actually is: artistically arranged cola that end with a rounding connecting the end to the beginning. This is the very definition of a period. Pseudo-Demetrius (date uncertain) says that the sophisticated arrangement of the parts of a period "has a certain bend (καμπήν) and focus (συστροφήν) at the end" (*Eloc.* 10). He continues to explain that the name "period" comes from the image of paths traversed "in a circle" (περιωδευμέναις; *Eloc*. 11), implying that the bend and focus at the end of the period is a concentrated reference back to the beginning of the very same period. The clause, so to say, bends back at the end, connects to the beginning and forms a circuit, a περίοδος in the strict sense of this term.

Secondly, there was room for pause, reflection and praise from the audience when the period was finished. Quintilian, when discussing the difficulties of performing good prose, realizes that the ear finds its best opportunity of forming an appropriate judgment when the rush of words comes to a halt and indicates what usually happens after the last sound of the period: "Here the speech sits (*sedes*), here the listener awaits (*expectat*), here all praise breaks out (*declamat*)" (*Inst.* 9.4.62). Quintilian indicates the tense moment of silence after the period is finished and before the audience gives its acclamation.

Romans 9:3–5 gives evidence of both these things. In connection to commenting on the moment of silence, Quintilian has some interesting comments also on the middle of a period, which is somewhat inferior to the end and the beginning, indicating that the performer should avoid placing short syllables together and pay attention to breathing. The repeated sound pattern in Rom 9:4–5 requires structured breathing –

[37] For his application of this on Rom 9:5, see his forthcoming article in *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*. The proposal goes back on his paper presentation at the Society of Biblical Literature conference in San Antonio, USA, 2016 and at Svenska Exegetiska Dagen 2020, using insights from my forthcoming commentary on Romans 9–16. The following section depends on his paper from 2016 entitled "Sound as an Interpretive Clue in New Testament Exegesis."

ὧν…ὧν…ἐξ ὧν…ὁ ὤν – where each use of the sounding asper indicates a new colon. The first of these cola is long but manageable, especially as the clauses are linked to each other with the repeated καί and like-sounding syllables dividing the colon into two clauses, so that ἡ υἱοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθῆκαι aurally parallels ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι. When the performer finally comes to the all-important final colon ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων, he refers in accordance with the ancient rules back to Christ in the first colon in 9:3 – notice also the resemblance between κατὰ σάρκα in 9:3 and 9:5 – and establishes the required circular structure of the entire period.

If this is correct, the blessing in 9:5b was never intended to belong to the period but reflects what happened after the period was finished. We need to imagine that the performer made a brief pause after uttering the last word of the period and made room for the listeners to reflect and react. Paul thus composed Rom 9:3–5 in such a way that he provided the performer with specific textual signs that allowed the listeners to give their appropriate response in the form of a blessing, *after* that the period was finished. Rather than being a description of the Christ, the blessing is a joint response to it. The attentive audience was given the clues of interpretation by well-thought aural features and the listeners were invited to react to the performance after the reading of the period.

Conclusion

Listening in the Bible is a rich topic and we have only touched on two significant occurrences, on that of listening as confessional act of obedience in the Gospel of Matthew as well as on that of interpreting sections in Paul's letter to the Romans being read aloud. The first part of this article illustrated how the Jewish confession of the Shemaʿ served to establish the early Christian understanding of Jesus' obedience to his Father as well as the disciples' obedience to Jesus and God. This is evident in the Gospel of Matthew, as we saw, but its emphasis on the one true God seems to have axiomatic status also elsewhere in early Christianity.

At the heart of the emerging Christian movement, we thus find the confessional act of listening, and on this basis the monotheistic Jewish-Christian faith became manifest. It is perhaps no exaggeration to claim that long before Christian dogmas were decisively formulated in order to regulate the theology and life of the Churches, and probably with

roots in the life of Jesus himself, the Jewish idea of listening fostered obedience and laid the foundation of Christian ethics. The difficult and controversial factor is perhaps not the deep roots and the religious sensibility of listening but the way the Shemaʿ already in the first century seems to be transformed, so that Jesus' Jewish obedience to his Father became intertwined with the disciples' Christ-centered obedience to God. Matthew illustrates this Christological tension by relating the act of listening both to God and to Jesus, oscillating narratively between moments where the obedient listening directs itself to God and to Jesus and thus indicating the process of making sense of who Jesus was.

The second part of this article focused on the importance of studying the oral performance and aural reception of Paul's letter to the Romans in order to fully interpret Paul's message. The two examples, based on the awareness of how ancient experts on performance dealt with sound and with the combination of cola into periods, illustrate that attention to the aural impact of texts liberates the interpreter to enter into the sounding-setting of the first audience and fosters sensitivity to both the cumulative aural effects of sounding syllables and words as well as to the aural syntax of structuring the linkage between individual clauses.

No doubt, an increased sensitivity to the aurality of texts has profound interpretive and hermeneutical implications. It indicates that although the clues encoded into the text set limits for the interpretation of these text, they were also flexible enough to allow a certain amount of interpretative variation when the texts were heard again and again. Such sensitivity suggests a perspective on interpretation that imagines the aural impacts of the very same text on different people depending on their social status (e.g. education, reading habits, manuscript availability) and on the performer's skills and material setting (e.g. size and location of the room, performance out-side, light).

We might wish to work more ambitiously towards establishing chronologically successive readings in the interpretation of texts, so that the second and third readings and listening among the first addressees and the continuous readings and listening in reception history are on equal hermeneutical status, without creating the hierarchy where the first authorial encoding or the first decoding of the authorial audience is the decisive one in creating meaning. The hermeneutical awareness among New Testament scholars and others have opened the door to the

scholarly appreciation of the complexity of interpretation and the reception history. We might learn from the small samples of texts in Paul' letter to the Romans that such questions need not lead us back to the endless discussion of authorial intentionality *versus* reader-response and to indefinite fusions of various hermeneutical horizons but rather alert us to specifically structured historical acts of performance and listening as decisive backbones of modern literary theory and theology.

A Just Man or Just a Man: The Ideal Man in the Visions of Hermas

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Abstract:
This article examines the Visions, the first part of the Shepherd of Hermas. The starting point is that the Visions is an early text that should be read against a first century background. Once an early date is accepted, this affects the interpretation of the text. It is tempting to read the Visions in a Christian framework, but that clashes with the notion of an early context. I resist such a reading and prefer to keep open the nature of the situation in which the Visions were composed. This is particularly significant in the case of the main revelatory figure, the Elder, identified as Ἐκκλησία. The usual interpretation is that she is the personification of the church, but I argue that the early context does not justify this reading. Instead, she is the personification of the Community in which the Christian way of life is still in its formative phases. My reading highlights the female characters and investigates what they reveal about the narrator Hermas. The Visions portray Hermas as struggling with several interconnecting issues within himself and among others, authority and control of emotions emerging as central concerns. The encounter with Rhoda brings to the fore intersecting questions of desire and slavery, introspection and repentance, but also the struggle for power and authority. The Elder, despite her femaleness, cannot be taken as evidence for women's leadership positions, but rather, must be read against Greco-Roman visual culture that personified abstract concepts as females; both the Elder and Rhoda emerge as primarily fictional women of authority, tools to think with as they hold long discourses with Hermas. The two real women in

Hermas' life, his wife and Grapte, are only briefly mentioned. Hermas' wife and Grapte remain silent and are not given independent roles in the narrative. As the figure of Grapte reveals, Hermas and/or the author preferred to limit women's authority in the community to gender-specific areas.

Key Words:
The Shepherd of Hermas, early Christianity, gender, intersectionality, Apostolic Fathers

The Shepherd of Hermas was one of the most popular works that the earliest Christians read: we know this from the surviving early papyrus fragments that were preserved and from the quotations made by early Christian authors who showed their appreciation of the work. In the fourth century, part of the Shepherd was copied into the Codex Sinaiticus, one of the most important Bible manuscripts there is. In the end, the Shepherd did not attain canonical status, and in the following centuries its popularity appears to have waned. Today the Shepherd is included in the collection(s) of early Christian writings known as the Apostolic Fathers. It remains an intriguing text that takes its readers to first-century Rome. One of the most fascinating aspects of this work is that its first part, the Visions, is written in the first person. The narrator, a certain Hermas, reveals to his readers the cares and concerns of his own life as a family man and someone aspiring to standing in his community.

In this article I examine the protagonist Hermas in the Visions section of the Shepherd.[1] I explore his portrayal in relation to ideals connected

[1] I thank the anonymous reader for his or her thorough feedback and suggestions that improved this work. This article is based on a paper I presented on the Patristic Day at Lund University, 4 April 2019. I thank the organizers for the opportunity to participate and the audience for their valuable comments and questions. As I was working on this topic, Vilja Alanko and Outi Lehtipuu read earlier versions and made many insightful suggestions and comments. In 2017–2020 I led the Apostolic Fathers project with Niko Huttunen and Joona Salminen. Two books resulted from the project. The first is a new translation of the Apostolic Fathers' writings into Finnish, translated by a team of New Testament and early Christianity scholars from the University of Helsinki and published

with manhood/masculinity, revealed in and through his character, but also through portrayals of women in the text: Rhoda, the Elder, Grapte, and Hermas' wife. The first-mentioned two are women of authority who hold discourse with Hermas, whereas the latter two, actual women in Hermas' life, are only briefly mentioned and do not appear as independent characters.

My reading builds on previous discussions of the Visions, in particular those that bring gender and social history to the fore, but there are several points of departure that I take. To begin with, I find arguments for an early dating so convincing that in my reading I distance myself from any straightforward interpretation of the Visions as a "Christian" text. As I approach the figures of Rhoda and the Elder, I find it important to emphasize, in Rhoda's case, the intersection of gender and status (slave/free) and the struggle to control desire, but also how these connect with issues of authority. As Hermas discourses with the Elder, his struggle shifts from the issue of desire to authority. The Elder, I suggest, does not provide direct indications of how Hermas views women and their authority, but as a personification of the community and its leadership she is an image to think with. In contrast with the largely imaginary figures of Rhoda and the Elder, the real women, Hermas' wife and Grapte, are mentioned in passing. How women and gender are portrayed in the Visions connects with ideals about manhood. After discussing the women in the Visions, I consider the aspects that connect with ideals for a just man: what is the manliness that Hermas should exercise and what are its inward and outward forms.

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as Niko Huttunen, Joona Salminen & Ulla Tervahauta (ed.), *Apostoliset isät: Kokoelma varhaiskristillisiä kirjoituksia*, Helsinki: Suomalainen Teologinen Kirjallisuusseura 2020, and a second edition in 2021. At the time of writing this, a second volume, a collection of introductory and research articles on the Apostolic Fathers is being prepared for press: Niko Huttunen & Ulla Tervahauta (ed.), *Johdatus Apostolisten isien kirjoituksiin*, Helsinki: Suomen Eksegeettinen Seura 2021. I wish to thank Susanna Asikainen, Raimo Hakola, Niko Huttunen, Outi Kaltio and Outi Lehtipuu for many lively discussions on the Shepherd.

The Work, its Dating and Original Context

The Shepherd is a long work that consists of three distinct parts, Visions, Commandments, and Parables.[2] It is an apocalyptic work that combines its visions with ethical instruction, and rather untypically does not focus on end-time expectations.[3] The Shepherd was a popular work in the early centuries as the number of papyrus fragments evidences – it is well known that its early manuscript evidence exceeds that of the gospels of Mark and Luke –, but there is not one manuscript that contains the complete text, and the manuscript evidence on the whole is meagre.[4] Although the majority of scholars treat the Shepherd as the work of a single author who may have revised his work over time, it has also been argued that the long and repetitive text is the result of several authors'

[2] The tripartite structure is visible when I cite parts of the Shepherd. I follow the SBL recommendation and use composite references, e.g., Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.1 (2.1). The first numbering follows the traditional division of the work into Visions, Commandments (Mandates), and Parables (Similitudes). The second numbering, in brackets, treats the three parts as one work that is divided into 114 chapters.

[3] Carolyn Osiek, "The Genre and Function of the Shepherd of Hermas", *Semeia* 36 (1986), 113–121; Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Early Christian Apocalypses", *Semeia* 14 (1979), 74–75; Carolyn Osiek, *The Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* (Hermeneia), Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1999, 10–12; B. Diane Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion: Hermas, Thecla, Aseneth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011, 23–24.

[4] The most complete early Greek witnesses are Codex Sinaiticus (S) that contains the Visions and some of the Commandments, Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.1–Herm. *Mand*. 4.3.6 (1.1–31.6). The first three visions are included in Papyrus Bodmer 38 (B), Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.1–3.13.4 (1.1–21.4). Papyrus Michigan 129 (M) contains the text from the second parable to the ninth, but not the complete second or the ninth parable, Herm. *Sim*. 2.8–9.5.1 (51.8–82.1). The most extensive Greek text is the 14th–15th century Codex Athous (A), Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.1–Herm. *Sim*. 9.30.2 (1.1–107.2). Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 1–4; Bart D. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers: Epistle of Barnabas, Papias and Quadratus, Epistle to Diognetus, The Shepherd of Hermas*, Vol. 2 (Loeb Classical Library, 25), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2003, 162–172; and Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (third edition), Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2007, 447–449; on early manuscripts, see also Thomas Wayment, *The Text of the New Testament Apocrypha (100–400 CE)*, London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark 2013, 81–169 and Brent Nongbri, *God's Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2018, 231–232, 279.

work.[5] It is not the aim of this article to discuss these questions. The Visions 1–4 form a clearly defined section, and I limit my discission to that part.

The Shepherd is usually dated to the end of the first and/or the early second century.[6] The stance taken in this article is that the work, the Visions in particular, must be early: a first rather than a second century work. Jörg Rüpke has given several factors in favour of the early dating of the Shepherd. First, many second and third century Christian authors in different geographical locations quote it, which suggests wide circulation. On the other hand, there are no quotations from the Pauline letters or the early gospels in the Shepherd, which suggests that the author possibly did not know or have access to them.[7] When a passage in the Shepherd recalls the gospels, these passages more likely point to oral traditions than literary dependence on written gospels.[8] I find one example in the shepherd figure, identified as the angel of repentance (ó

[5] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas,* 8–10. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers* 2, 165–166; Jörg Rüpke, *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2006, 142–143. The most recent discussions are Walsh, "Lost in Revision: Gender Symbolism in Vision 3 and Similitude 9 of the Shepherd of Hermas", *Harvard Theological Review* 112:4 (2019), 467–490 (471, 490) and Walsh, "The Lady as Elder in the Shepherd of Hermas", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 27:4 (2019), 517–547 (519–520, 523–524).

[6] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 18–20; Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 446–447. Ehrman suggests that the Shepherd was written, "possibly over a stretch of time", in the first part of the second century (perhaps 110–140), Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers* 2, 169.

[7] Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 141–142. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas,* 26; Joseph Verheyden goes through previous discussions of possible knowledge in the *Shepherd* of those writings that came to be included in the New Testament canon: he admits that the evidence is meagre and difficult to interpret, and ends up suggesting that Hermas may have known Matthew and one of Paul's letters to the Corinthians: Joseph Verheyden, "The *Shepherd of Hermas* and the Writings that later formed the New Testament" in: Christopher Tuckett & Andrew Gregory (ed.), *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* 293–329; 293–295, 322, 329. The earliest quotation from the Shepherd is found in Irenaeus *Haer.* 4.10.2; for a fuller list, see Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 4–7; for a recent discussion on Origen's take on the *Shepherd,* see Edmon L. Gallagher, "Origen on the Shepherd of Hermas", *Early Christianity* 10 (2019) 201–215.

[8] The vineyard and the slave parable in Herm. *Sim*. 5.2.1–11 (55.1–11) is more elaborate than the gospel version. The elaboration need not be based on an extension of a shorter written version, but may stem from oral transmission and Hermas' different perspectives and aims in comparison with gospel writers.

ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας), in Vision 5. This figure, dressed in clothing suitable for a revelatory figure as well as an exceptional prophet, brings to mind John the Baptist, characterized in the Gospel of Mark as baptizer, messenger (angel) of repentance, and Elijah figure. John is portrayed as such not only in Mark but also in other traditions stemming from first-century Palestine, including the Q-source.[9]

In contrast to apocalyptic texts, and unlike Christian writers in the second century, the author does not seek pseudepigraphical authority for his work. This seems to be another hint that there were not yet famous Christian works in wide circulation. This lack of pseudepigraphical strategy is important, as it not only gives a hint regarding the possible date of composition but, I think, was possibly one of the factors that contributed to Hermas' waning popularity from the fourth century onwards.[10]

The original context of Hermas and his work is found in first century Rome and in a community where emerging Christian identity is closely connected to Jewish traditions.[11] The author was someone who did not

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[9] Mark 1:2–6 par., Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia), Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2007, 135–146. If the gospels were not yet written or in wide circulation, but important events and figures were part of the proclamation of Jesus-believers, it does not seem impossible that traditions about John inspired the ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας. Traditions about John need not be considered primarily from the gospel perspective or that of Jesus-belief. Clare Rothschild has argued that Q contained John traditions; see the discussion in Clare Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (WUNT 190) Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2005, 6–10. Acts 19:1–7 seems to suggest that some believers had been disciples of John (discussed in Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions,* 33–34), an issue that is relevant for the Visions (or the Shepherd), its possible early context, and the overlap of identities.

[10] For the benefit of those who read Finnish, see my forthcoming article "Melkein pyhiä tekstejä toiselta vuosisadalta: Hermaan Paimen ja Marian syntymä (Jaakobin protoevankeliumi)" in Jutta Jokiranta & Nina Nikki (ed.), *Kirjakääröistä digiraamattuun: Pyhän tekstin idea, muoto ja käyttö*. Helsinki: Suomen Eksegeettinen Seura.

[11] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 18–21; Lampe suggests that the separation from the synagogue may have taken place around the time when Paul wrote Romans, after which Gentile Christianity predominated. This conclusion is primarily based on Paul's letter to the Romans, which is skimpy as a historical source. Lampe's discussion indicates that Gentile and Jewish traditions were closely connected. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, London: T&T Clark International 2003, 69–76. See also Markus Vinzent, *Christ's Resurrection in Early Christianity*, London: Routledge 2012, 62–65.

have easy access to books: the only explicit reference to a book is not to the Law or the Prophets, but to a now lost *Book of Eldad and Medat*. This reference suggests that prophetic and apocalyptic/visionary traditions were held in esteem, at least by the writer himself. Women held some positions in the community, at least in the gender-specific sphere of women and children (see discussion below). Martyrs, overseers and servants are mentioned.[12] The work's rather vague manner of referring to God (or Jesus) as the Name closely resembles the Jewish custom of referring to God and appears to point to a situation where a distinctive "Christian" identity had not yet developed. The names Christ and Jesus are so absent in the text that one asks whether it would do justice to the author and his community to characterize this community as Christian, Christ-believing, or Jesus-believing. Members are baptized in the name of the Lord, and while it is possible that this is a baptism of Jesus-followers, the identity of this Lord is not elaborated on in the text. Immersions are known in Jewish contexts, John practised immersion/baptism of repentance, and some of his followers were among the early "disciples", all of which should make us cautious about how we read references to baptism.[13]

In short, we should be cautious about any straightforward assumption of approaching the Visions as a "Christian" text as regards its original context and purpose. I see it as being a product of an early context where a Christian way of life was still in its formative phases. This context was different from later contexts where the writing was read and transmitted.[14] The text itself gives no indication of having any strong impulse towards identity formation or making a distinction between

[12] Overseers/bishops and servants/deacons are mentioned already in Phil 1:1.

[13] What the baptism was and how it related to the new teaching and faith seems to have been hazy. Acts tells about Apollos, who preached and taught about Jesus but knew only John's baptism/immersion (18:24–25), and about some disciples in Ephesus who knew only John's baptism/immersion (19:1–3); cf. Acts 13:24. My point is to highlight the multiple meanings that baptism may take, the Jewish context of early believers, and the ambiguity of identities.

[14] What we know of later, but still early, contexts and readerships are more clearly Christian: this applies to authors who quote from the Shepherd, and manuscripts copied in Christian contexts, such as Codex Sinaiticus, and the papyri with *nomina sacra*, a very strong indication of Christian transmission. For the latter, see, e.g., Wayment, *The Text of the New Testament Apocrypha*, 82, 85, 109.

Jewish and Christian identities – an impulse that is so very visible in some other writings, such as the Letter to the Hebrews and the Epistle of Barnabas. Most of all, one should avoid seeing the Shepherd as a representative of the "Apostolic Fathers", as such a title or collection did not exist prior to the 17th century.[15] The Shepherd was a popular writing, but it seems that it was not part of any one collection. How it was grouped in the early centuries varied, as far as we can judge from the manuscript evidence. The early papyri are, for the most part, too fragmentary to yield information on their manuscript contexts, but when such a context is known, it shows variation and some attention to the genre: the Visions and part of the Commandments follow the Revelation and the Epistle of Barnabas in Codex Sinaiticus, and in the Bodmer Codex of the Visions, the Visions were copied together with the Vision of Dorotheus and Christian poetry.[16]

These notions have a direct impact to how I approach Hermas and his work in this article. The most important revelatory figure in the Visions, the Elder, is identified as Ἐκκλησία in the Greek text. She is usually taken to be the personification of the church in a straightforward manner.[17] However, if we accept the early dating and its implications, as I argue we should, it would be misleading to translate ἐκκλησία in

[15] Only since J. B. Cotelier completed two volumes of early Christian texts in 1672, has the Shepherd been part of collections commonly labelled the Apostolic Fathers. No such title or collection was known in ancient times. For a brief summary of the history of the collection, see Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5–6, and David Lincicum, "The Paratextual Invention of the Term 'Apostolic Fathers'", *Journal of Theological Studies*, 66:1 (2015): 139–148. It is worth mentioning here the Codex Hierosolymitanus (Panagios Taphos 54), which contains, between biblical paraphrases and a hagiographic text, some of the works that today are included in the Apostolic Fathers collections, namely, the Epistle of Barnabas, First and Second Clement, Didache, and Letters of Ignatius. The Shepherd is not included.

[16] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 1–2; Nongbri, *God's Library*, 174. For Hermas in Sinaiticus, see Dan Batovici, "The Less-expected Books in *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Alexandrinus*. Codicological and Palaeographical Considerations", in: Chiara Ruzzier & Xavier Hermand (ed.), *Comment le Livre s'est fait livre. La fabrication des manuscrits bibliques (IVe–XVe siècle): Bilan, résultats, perspectives de recherche.* Turnhout: Brepols 2015, 39–50.

[17] This is, for example, how Osiek, Ehrman, and Holmes translate ἐκκλησία.

this context as "church". The term is so suggestive of a developed Christian identity that I suggest instead that we approach her as the personification of the Community.[18]

Discarding an emphatically Christian concept and reading the Visions without presupposing a distinct Christian identity has the benefit of keeping us attentive to the situation in which this work was written, in which the content of faith and the identity of its practitioners were evolving rather than fixed. It also reminds us of the complicated processes that were often involved in the formation of early Christian identities. The Visions (and the entire work) came to be read, transmitted and widely appreciated by Christians, but I see it wise to differentiate that situation from the one in which it was initially written. When considering that situation, it seems that to approach the Visions as a Christian work would oversimplify the complex situation in which it was composed and read such ideas into the text that were not there.

Hermas of the Visions

We now turn to the Visions and its protagonist who presents himself as the former slave Hermas who has risen in the world. It is possible that the information we get about him and his past is autobiographical, and in that way yields valuable information on this first-century person. However, caution is needed. Fictional is mixed with what seems like autobiographical information, perhaps partly because of the conventions of apocalyptic literature.[19] When I discuss Hermas, I recognize that ultimately it is not possible to differentiate between fictional and autobiographical elements in his work. Conventions of the apocalyptic genre and literary purpose may well be behind what we "learn" about Hermas. This, needless to say, in no way diminishes the value of the writing.

Hermas has his own household and some real or, perhaps more likely, aspired standing in his community. Most of the Visions describes and explains his visions and revelatory encounters, particularly with an old woman, or woman Elder. The four women mentioned in the Visions

[18] Cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Reading Real Women Through Undisputed Letters of Paul", in: Ross Shepard Kraemer & Mary Rose D'Angelo (ed.), *Women and Christian Origins*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999, 205.

[19] See the discussion of the opening scene below.

– Rhoda, the Elder, Hermas' wife, and Grapte – relate to and highlight different aspects of Hermas' life and personality: his past slave status, his anxieties, his present role as the head of a household, and his aspirations in the community. This implies that the women do not stand independently in the narrative but reflect Hermas, his life and its questions, and also his striving to be a man. Yet simultaneously this connectedness is mutual, and I argue that not only do the women in the Visions reflect different sides of Hermas, but Hermas the man is revealed through the different female figures he has discussions with. They guide, shape and transform Hermas the man and emerge as important for a reading that seeks to understand how gender and masculinity are discussed in this writing.

It is necessary to consider how other issues intersect with gender.[20] It emerges that the standing of the woman in society and her relation to Hermas, and the issues that she represents, are decisive for how Hermas responds to her. Rhoda was the owner of Hermas when he was a young slave, and above him; the Elder appears to Hermas several times as a spiritual guide and figure of authority; Hermas' wife connects with his role as the head of household that he is accused of performing in an unsatisfactory manner. The wife and Grapte do not appear as independent characters but are only mentioned in the dialogue between the Elder and Hermas. Rhoda and the Elder on the other hand have discussions with Hermas and exert authority over him. It is notable that while the Elder and Rhoda are imaginary women who appear in visions, the wife and Grapte are "real" women in Hermas' life. What does it mean, then,

[20] My reading is influenced by discussions of gender in the context of the New Testament and early Christianity, such as: Virginia Burrus, "Mapping as Metamorphosis: Initial Reflections on Gender and Ancient Religious Discourses", in: Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele (ed.), *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, Leiden: Brill 2007, 1–9; Elizabeth A. Clark, "The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn'," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 67 (1998), 1–31; Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man, Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008; Anna-Rebecca Solevåg, *Birthing Salvation: Gender and Class in Early Christian Childbearing Discourse* (Biblical Interpretation 121), Leiden: Brill 2013, 12–40; Vilja Alanko & Anna-Riina Hakala, "Näkökulmia sukupuolen, uskonnon ja historian risteyksestä," in: Susanna Asikanen & Elisa Uusimäki (ed.), *Sukupuoli Raamatun maailmassa* (Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran julkaisuja 117), Helsinki: Suomen Eksegeettinen Seura (Finnish Exegetical Society) 2019, 19–31.

that the unattainable and unreal women are so much at the focus, while the "real" women are given considerably less space in the narrative and no chance to speak?

Women of Authority: Rhoda

Rhoda's impact on Hermas is evident from the start: the powerful, and to Hermas (emotionally) agitating, encounter opens the Visions. Hermas the narrator opens his work by referring to how he was raised as a slave and sold to a certain Rhoda in Rome, and many years later met her again and began to love her as a sister. Some time later, he sees Rhoda bathing in the river Tiber and he – her former slave boy – stretches out his hand and helps her out of the water and, seeing her beauty, wishes in his heart that he had such a wife, yet denies wanting anything else. The encounter raises questions about Hermas narration: are his brotherly feelings as genuine as he claims? Doubts are cast on his words, and soon he is accused of having lustful thoughts, first by Rhoda,[21] then by the Elder.[22]

The opening scene is one of the sections in the text that give an impression of being autobiographical, although this cannot be verified. The information given is historically plausible: Hermas may have been a foundling, sold to and raised by Rhoda who at some point sold him further. At some yet further point he was manumitted.[23] Despite the plausibility, the river scene is also reminiscent of fictional scenes in an-

[21] Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.8 (1.8).

[22] Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.4 (2.4).

[23] Osiek suggests that Hermas may have been sold at least twice, first to Rhoda, then by Rhoda to someone else who appears to have manumitted him. After all, Hermas does not appear to have a patron–client relationship with Rhoda because the encounter seems unplanned. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas,* 42. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus,* 218–220; Marianne Bjelland Kartzow provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of Hermas' slave background on the text (while admitting that the information may not necessarily be historical). Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor and Gendered Enslavement in Early Christian Discourse: Double Trouble Embodied,* London: Routledge 2018, 105–106. It has been suggested that Hermas may have been a foundling; for discussion on exposed children, see also Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity,* Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2006, 74–77.

cient literature, such as the stories of Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:2) and Susanna (Susanna 17).[24] Like the stories of Bathsheba and Susanna, the river scene in the Visions also has erotic tones and directs its attention to the wrongness of the male desire involved. As a result, this combination of plausible yet possibly fictional elements immediately captures interest in a manner that appears planned and purposeful. From the start, gender dynamics are brought to the centre of attention.[25] Providing presumed autobiographical or historical information is of course typical of apocalyptic and pseudepigraphical literature.[26] The autobiographical cast makes a strong claim of reliability and may be part of the strategy for claiming readership and authority for one's message.[27] This is not necessarily contradictory to the notion that the Visions appears to reflect genuine experience. It may well be intertwined with fictional elements, all of which were skilfully written into a narrative.

The river scene and Hermas' longing invite the question of not only how gender, but also intersecting factors affect the encounter between Hermas and Rhoda.[28] Although sexual attraction is implied in the scene, that alone does not define what is between Hermas and Rhoda. Since Hermas has revealed himself to be Rhoda's former slave, their encounter cannot be one of a man and a woman of equal standing. The attraction and ensuing discord are complicated by their difference in status. Hermas is a former slave, Rhoda presumably a free woman and therefore of higher social standing.[29] Intersectional reading seeks to highlight different factors that are influential for the identity and standing of a person, and such a reading can be made here as well. Hermas the narrator began his account by referring to the past, thus defining himself and Rhoda by their past and the difference in status that continues to the present. Rhoda, a free and probably wealthy woman, emerges as an

[24] For other examples, see Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 29.

[25] Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 34.

[26] See, e.g., Rev 1:9; 1 Tim 4:13 and 2 Tim 4:13; Prot. Jas. 25.

[27] Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 147.

[28] For an excellent recent discussion on the perspective of slavery and intersectional analysis in Vision 1, see Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor*, 105–121.

[29] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 42–43; Mark Grundeken, *Community Building in the Shepherd of Hermas: A Critical Study of Some Key Aspects*, Leiden: Brill 2015, 98–100. See especially Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor*, 106–109.

important figure in Hermas' life; she bought, owned, possibly also sold him in the past, and this is the background of their encounter. Hermas does not give many details about Rhoda: she is beautiful, and probably older than he is – age emerges as a topic later in the narrative and we return to it below. Hermas the freedman, a man with his own household and status, is agitated by this encounter. His standing in the world has changed, he is no longer a slave but a freedman, but the past is not completely erased, as the encounter with Rhoda seems to demonstrate. As Marianne Kartzow notes, Hermas' past slavery highlights the fact that he is now a slave to passion.[30]

Rhoda's response is not elaborated, but the visionary encounter that follows indicates that she has taken offence at him. Hermas, walking in the countryside[31] after some time, is taken by the spirit to a deserted place where he prays and has a vision of a woman who appears from heaven. She is identified as that woman he had desired. The Rhoda from heaven claims that she was "taken up in order that I may accuse you of your sins before the Lord".[32] God is angry with Hermas because he has sinned against her. Hermas takes offence and vehemently denies this, pointing to his impeccable speech when addressing her, but Rhoda laughs at this denial. The prime sin is Hermas' evil desire towards her. She does not accept his point of view, yet she does not focus on Hermas' sexual desire alone but warns him against worldliness and taking pride in one's wealth.[33]

Rhoda's accusation raises questions about how she views Hermas. When she accuses him, is it only because she has perceived his desire? It is certainly possible that his inferior status could be part of the offence. It has been suggested that Hermas' claim to relate to Rhoda as to a sister could indicate that they are a Christian sister and brother.[34] This is not

[30] Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor*, 108.

[31] I follow the manuscript readings (εἰς κώμας, into the countryside), and do not emend, as, e.g., Holmes does, into Cumae (εἰς Κούμας). See Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 43.

[32] Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.5 (1.5), trans. Holmes.

[33] Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.6–8 (1.6–8).

[34] Some have suggested that Rhoda may be a fellow Christian on the grounds that Hermas first characterizes his feelings towards her as loving her as a sister. Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.1 (1.1). Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 42.

obvious; rather, when Hermas relates himself to her as brother to a sister, this diminishes their status difference, even puts Hermas in a superior position.[35] Such struggles are in evidence in other early Christian literature: while Paul preached the end of difference between slave and free (Gal. 3:28), another Pauline writer reminded slaves not to imagine themselves on the same level as their believing masters, let alone above them (1 Tim 6:1–2). A claim to have brotherly feelings is therefore not as innocent and void of claims as it may first seem. As Marianne Kartzow notes, loving Rhoda as a sister intensifies and develops into sexual desire – and Hermas lapses back to his previous slave self.[36] There could, however, be a further side to the accusations directed at Hermas: is he, a former slave, perceived as unreliable and suspect even if his intentions were not improper?[37] Be that as it may, Rhoda's accusation points to Hermas' desire and his need to be truthful. She also refers to the evilness of desire in a righteous or just man (ὁ δίκαιος ἀνήρ) because it conflicts with the intentions such a man ought to have.[38] I will return to the concept of the just man at the end of this discussion, but before that I turn to the Elder, Grapte, and Hermas' wife, and what they contribute to the image of Hermas the man.

Women of Authority: The Elder, Community Personified

After Rhoda from above finishes speaking, the heavens close and she disappears from the narrative. The most prominent female in the Visions now enters the scene.[39] Details given about her point to authoritativeness: her robe, her age (or that she is an elder), the white

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[35] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 42; Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 30; Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor*, 107–108.

[36] Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor*, 109.

[37] Ancient literature reveals slave owners' anxieties concerning their slaves and their perceived potential disloyalty and misconduct. Glancy, *Slavery*, 138; J. Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2006, 145–146.

[38] Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.8 (1.8).

[39] Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.1–2 (2.1–2). The text is ambiguous, and although the woman is not identified as Rhoda, she could be Rhoda in a different form. Or perhaps Rhoda serves to introduce the woman Elder of the Visions. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 46–47.

chair,[40] and the scroll that she holds in her hand. The interpretation of the words γυνὴ πρεσβῦτις has been discussed from several angles in the recent scholarship. Many have read the words as simply indicating that she is old, or elderly,[41] but the words can be interpreted as "woman Elder".[42] There certainly is ambiguity, and both aspects are part of this figure. In Kartzow's reading, her old age emphasizes that, contrary to Rhoda, no sexual attraction is involved. Rather than being cast under the power of disturbing emotions, Hermas can now feel safe in the woman's presence. In this reading there is a shift from sexual desire to Hermas' male role in his community and family.[43] What I consider emphatic in the Elder is her authority, her actions and qualities, age included, that depict her as a leader and an elder.

Advanced age and a position as elder indicate authority, status, and wisdom that are part and parcel of the symbols, the book in the woman's hands and the chair on which she sits. The woman represents a leadership position that is connected with Hermas' community of the faithful. Not just her attire, but her actions – she instructs and guides Hermas – cohere with those of someone with high status in the community.[44] The Elder enters precisely at the moment when Hermas is experiencing self-doubts and sets about redirecting his thoughts away from Rhoda to his family. The Elder reminds Hermas of his good qualities and instructs him to focus on his family, a topic that will be discussed presently. She promises Hermas and his household new strength and consoles him by her reading.[45]

The book as an object receives special attention: the woman carries a scroll in her hands as she first appears, and in the second vision she appears walking and reading from a little scroll.[46] Scrolls and reading play

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[40] In the gospels, Jesus is often portrayed seated or sitting down in situations that emphasize his role as a teacher, even a judge. See, for example, Mark 13:3; Matt 5:1, 13:1. Collins, *Mark*, 602.

[41] This is the translation given by Ehrman and Holmes.

[42] Osiek translates "elder lady," Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 52.

[43] Kartzow, *The Slave Metaphor*, 109.

[44] Walsh, "The Lady as Elder", 518–521, 533–541; See also Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 62.

[45] Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.2–1.3.4 (2.2–3.4).

[46] According to Richard Bauckham, the words βιβλίον, βιβλαρίδιον (5.3; 8.3) and βιβλίδιον (5.3–4, 8.1) are used synonymously in Hermas. Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophesy: Studies in the Book of Revelation*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1993, 243–245.

a significant role in exchanges between Hermas and the Elder. In the first vision she reads to Hermas, and the words are first terrifying, but then bring consolation.[47] In the second vision she appears reading from a little scroll and Hermas asks to have it to copy its words, which he manages to do but he cannot understand the text at first. It takes fifteen days, fasting and prayer, before he is able to understand the message that he copied.[48] The woman appears again later in a night-time vision and amends the initial text and gives instructions as to how it is to be copied and distributed.[49] The book, thus, is a container of wisdom but also of authority that is not easy to reach. In Jörg Rüpke's reading, this prominence of books, writing, and reading indicates how they are seen as part of religious practice.[50]

The book(s) the woman possesses and reads from, and that Hermas copies and amends according to the woman's instructions, illustrate the interplay between written text, knowledge, and revelation in a predominantly oral culture. They point to issues of education and possession of and claims for authority and comprehension.[51] When Hermas receives the book for copying, this can be read as a claim for authority that is not easily obtained. The woman's connection to wisdom and knowledge is strengthened when, towards the end of the second vision, she is identified. Hermas initially draws the conclusion that the revelatory figure is Sibyl. This is not the case, but his suggestion is revealing. It indicates that Hermas sees the woman as a prophetic figure with access to divine knowledge. It also indicates that he held the sibylline traditions in some esteem.[52]

Rather than being the Sibyl, the woman is revealed to be the personification of the Community (ἐκκλησία). Her designation as γυνὴ

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[47] Herm. *Vis*. 1.3.3 (3.3).

[48] Herm. *Vis*. 2.1.3–2.2.2 (5.3–6.2).

[49] Herm. *Vis*. 2.4.2–3 (8.2–3).

[50] Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 156–157. For later Christian cultures, see Derek Krueger, "Hagiography as an Ascetic Practice in the Early Christian East", *Journal of Religion* 79:2 (1999): 216.

[51] On books and their secret knowledge, see, e.g., Rev 1:11; 5:1–10; 10:8; 22:8–10.

[52] Herm. *Vis*. 2.4.1 (8.1). Osiek takes up the possibility that Sibyl may have been Hermas' model when writing about the ἐκκλησία. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 58.

πρεσβῦτις, woman Elder, connects well with this identification: she personifies the community and the elders who direct it.[53] The question is what this personification implies. It has been suggested that the woman is a further transformation of Rhoda.[54] Perhaps Hermas is used to seeing women as elders in his community: this is the argument Lora Walsh makes.[55] I find it helpful to take my cues from Hermas' surroundings: the visual imagery of the Greco-Roman era. Not only in literature, but in the visual/material culture of the Greco-Roman world, abstract concepts or geographical locations that were feminine by their grammatical gender were personified as female figures.[56] Hermas' imagery draws from visual arts and material culture that would have been visible and accessible, even to someone the author presumably was: a non-elite person in first-century Rome. Personifications were commonly visible in buildings, statues and coinage. Examples include Judaea Capta coins that show a personification of Judea or the Judean people as a seated woman brought to submission, and the statues of Wisdom (σοφία), Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), Intelligence (ἐννοία), and Virtue (ἀρετή) in the Library of Celsus at Ephesus.[57] Objects and other details depicted in connection with such a figure would have helped the ancient viewer identify her.[58] This is why Hermas notes the chair, the book, the woman's

[53] In Herm. *Vis*. 3.1.8 (9.8), the woman asks Hermas to sit, but he demurs and replies: "Let the elders sit first" – a remark that points to the woman and, simultaneously, to the elders in his community.

[54] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 46–47, esp. note 4.

[55] Walsh, "The Lady as Elder", 519, 522.

[56] Amy C. Smith, "Personification: Not Just a Symbolic Mode", in: *A Companion to Greek Art,* Dimitris Plantzos & Tyler Jo Smith (ed.), Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell 2012, 440–455; 443.

[57] R. R. R. Smith, "Cultural Choice and Political Identity in Honorific Portrait Statues in the Greek East in the Second Century A.D." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 88 (2012): 56–93, 74–75; The statues were brought from other locations and placed in the Celsus Library façade in late antiquity. Diana Eidson, "The Celsus Library at Ephesus: Spatial Rhetoric, Literacy, and Hegemony in the Eastern Roman Empire", *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 16:2 (2013), 189–217, 206–207.

[58] Jessica Hughes, "Personifications and the Ancient Viewer: The Case of Hadrianeum Nations", *Art History* 32:1 (2009): 1–20.

age and connects them with who she is. A seated woman would be read as a portrayal of respectability, domestic virtue, and moral authority.[59]

Hermas inquires about the woman's age (διατί οὖν πρεσβυτέρα). Walsh reads Hermas' question as indicating his surprise that the figure personifying the community should be old.[60] I do not think that the question indicates surprise that stems from the assumption that the church should be young (as an institution). If we approach – as I do – the Visions as a writing that stems from a context where distinction from Judaism is not emphatic and Christian identity is not clearly developed, it is not necessary (although not impossible) to expect the members of the community, such as Hermas, to see themselves as part of something new. On the contrary, new religious movements have a tendency to emphasize how ancient they are. This was the case with many cults in the Roman era, including the early Jesus/Christ-believers and early Christians.[61] It is more fitting to read Hermas' question as a device to tease out further explanations about the woman, her identity and meaning,[62] and an explanation is what Hermas gets. The woman is not only the personification of the Community, but she is given qualities that in the Jewish scriptures are associated with God's creative Wisdom: "She was created before all things; therefore, she is old, and for her sake the world was formed."[63] This reference to a feminine being at the origin of creation is significant: its outlook coheres with Jewish scriptures' wisdom traditions.[64] Contrariwise, Pauline letters and the early gospels tend to reverse the feminine qualities of the pre-existent wisdom through association with Jesus as the pre-existent Logos.[65] This is not the case in the

[59] Eve D'Ambra, "Mourning and the Making of Ancestors in the Testamentum Relief," *American Journal of Archaeology* 99:4 (1995): 667–681; 679.

[60] Walsh, "The Lady as Elder", 517–518.

[61] Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity,* New York: Columbia University Press 2005, 63–64.

[62] Hughes, "Personifications and the Ancient Viewer", 8–9.

[63] Herm. *Vis*. 2.4.1 (8.1), trans. Holmes, with one modification.

[64] Cf. Prov 8:22–31; Sir 15:2–10, 24, 51:19–20; 4 Ezra 8:52 and 2 Bar 4.1–7.

[65] Matt 11:25–30; John 1; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–20. For Matthew's portrayal of Jesus as wisdom and a discussion of the gender reversal, see Celia Deutsch, "Jesus as Wisdom: A Feminist Reading of Matthew's Wisdom Christology," in: Amy-Jill Levine (ed.), *The Feminist Companion to Matthew,* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 2001, 88–113; Conway, *Behold the Man*, 115–118.

Visions: the feminine Community is the first of creation, which makes her similar to if not identical with the Wisdom in the Jewish scriptures.[66]

The question of the significance of portraying the Elder (the Community) as the first of the creation and as female still remains. I find Elizabeth A. Clark's classic article helpful for discussing this issue. Clark inquires into presentations of (certain) learned women as wise teachers in the later ascetic literature. In her reading, the personification of wisdom as a woman is not a straightforward sign that reveals recognition of women's intellectual capacities. Female personifications of wisdom rather serve as "inversed alter egos" of the protagonist, a concept that Clark found in David Halperin's essay "Why Is Diotima a Woman?". In other words, these personifications are not true females. This applies to the Wisdom in the Jewish scriptures, a figure that can be read against the background of marital and sexual imagery employed to illustrate the relationship between God and Israel. Wisdom, personified as a woman, enables a safe distance between the male human and male God in a culture that prohibited sexual relationships between men.[67] There are good grounds to read the female figures in the Visions as tools to think with rather than straightforward signs of appreciation of women's qualities. This is also the reading of Steve Young who has proposed that the Elder is female because she signifies Hermas' transformation into full manhood.[68] His masculinity is tied to his freedman status: as a slave,

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[66] Valentinian myth and its aeons serve as another example of the same phenomenon, personification of concepts according to their grammatical gender. The earliest account of the Valentinian myth is from Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.1–3, but there are differing versions. The myth stems from the Jewish wisdom traditions; Dunderberg emphasizes the connections with Greco-Roman moral philosophy: Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus.* New York: Columbia University Press 2008, 97–111.

[67] Clark, "The Lady Vanishes", 22–30; David Halperin, "Why Is Diotima a Woman?" in: David Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love*, London: Routledge 1990, 113–151. See also Outi Lehtipuu & Ismo Dunderberg, "Women and Knowledge in Early Christianity: An Introduction", in: Ulla Tervahauta, Ivan Miroshnikov, Outi Lehtipuu & Ismo Dunderberg (ed.), *Women and Knowledge in Early Christianity,* VigChrSupp 144, Leiden: Brill 2017, 1–18 (2–3).

[68] Steve Young, "Being a Man: The Pursuit of Manliness in *The Shepherd of Hermas*", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2:3 (1994), 237–255 (238–240).

he was not able to be a man, as a freedman he has to fulfil new expectations. The female Elder reveals his struggle to fulfil these expectations and supports him in in his transformation to full manliness – once Hermas is transformed, she is replaced by the male angel of μετάνοια: repentance, but also conversion and change.[69]

I find that the shifting and ambiguous attitudes towards age in the Visions find their explanation in the Elder's role as a tool to think with and to reflect issues from different angles. At first, she is very old and seated on a chair.[70] The second time she has a young face but the body and hair of an old woman, and, while speaking to Hermas, she is stands and appears happier than before.[71] The third time she is completely young and remarkably beautiful, with only an old woman's hair. In this vision, she is happy and seated on a couch.[72] In the fourth vision Hermas encounters her as a beautiful bride: a veiled (controlled) woman at the height of her beauty.[73] The age of the Elder is given different valuations in the first and the third visions because it is employed to illustrate different issues.[74] In the first vision her advanced age holds positive connotations and calls attention to wisdom and the Elder's authority.[75] In the third vision where a male revelatory figure explains her age, it is a symbol of spiritual decay and weariness.[76] The age is transformed from being a sign of authority and one of the characteristics that enables Hermas to recognize the woman, into a sign of weariness that should deepen introspection and make him (and the reader) vigilant of his spiritual state and that of the community.

To sum up, I read the Elder as a personification of the Community and the guidance it provides. She is an image to think with, not a symbol of actual women in the community or a clue to the writer's inclusive views on women's leadership. Different kinds of female figures were

[69] This happens in the fifth and final vision, which also serves as an introduction to the Commandments. Young, "Being a Man", 245–246; Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 34–36.

[70] Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.2 (2.2); 3.10.3 (18.3).

[71] Herm. *Vis*. 3.10.4 (18:4).

[72] Herm. *Vis*. 3.10.5 (18:5).

[73] Herm. *Vis*. 4.2.1–2 (23.1–2).

[74] So, too, Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 86.

[75] Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.2 (2.2).

[76] Herm. *Vis*. 3.11.1–4 (19.1–4).

visible in the visual culture of the first and the second centuries CE, including personifications of abstract concepts such as wisdom, knowledge, or geographical locations. While it is impossible to determine the extent to which the writer had access to statues and artwork in his surroundings, and how he experienced what he saw, there is no reason to doubt that some such imagery was accessible to him. The Elder, too, is an image that the writer drew before his audience. As we now move on to inquire what he has to say about real women, we notice that it is on a different scale from what is said about Rhoda and the Elder.

Real Women: Grapte and Hermas' Wife

Contrary to the attention that the unattainable Rhoda and the Elder receive, the real women in the protagonist's life, his wife and Grapte, are mentioned only briefly. Neither is given an independent role in the text, and neither speaks.[77] They remain in the shadow of the imaginary women, Rhoda, the symbol of Hermas' evil desire and his bait for attracting readership, and the Elder who personifies the Community and guides Hermas to introspection and proper conduct. Some scholars have been optimistic about finding information on women in the brief glimpses provided in ancient texts, including the Shepherd.[78] My reading is less optimistic: the information these women yield is on the author's views, not so much about themselves.

Hermas' wife is mentioned among the members of his household and in repeated exhortations to Hermas to show concern for them. After the vision of Rhoda, the Elder directs Hermas to turn away from his thoughts concerning Rhoda to the concern he should show towards his household. He is to guide his children, to remain positive and keep strengthening his household.[79] Once he is able to decipher the message of the scroll he copied, it contains reprimands to his children and criticism directed at his wife (συμβίος) for her evil speech.[80] Hermas' inadequate concern for his household is harmful because it implies that he

[77] Grundeken, "Community Building", 104.

[78] MacDonald, "Reading Real Women", 199–220, esp. 210, 217.

[79] Herm. *Vis*. 1.3.1–2 (3.1–2).

[80] Herm. *Vis*. 2.2.2–4 (6.2–4).

bears a grudge against them.[81] It is emphatic that it is his responsibility to control its members.[82] These passages contain a certain amount of ambiguity: discussion on the household (οἶκος) overlaps with discussion on the community, but I do not think it is necessary to conclude that the household should be interpreted as the community of the faithful, God's household.[83] In a manner similar to discussions in the Pastoral letters, the two households are parallel. Behaviour and performance in one should cohere with behaviour and performance in the other.[84] Instead of brooding over his sorrows, Hermas is to be attentive to his household and the wider community.

Control of his wife and family connects with a change that will take place in the nature of the relationship Hermas has towards his wife: she will be his sister (τῇ συμβίῳ σου τῇ μελλούσῃ σου ἀδελφῇ). If, in the case of Rhoda, perceiving her as a sister implies that Hermas considers himself to be on the same level with Rhoda (or perhaps above), should, by the same logic, the change towards wife indicate that she becomes a companion to him in a different, fuller sense than before?[85] It is questionable whether such a reading can be made. The most likely interpretation is that this refers to their future sexual abstinence.[86] The reference is brief, the wife is not given an independent role in the text, and Hermas is ambivalent about women and sexuality. The reference does not provide any explanation of why celibacy would be necessary or desirable. Mark Grundeken highlights Hermas' preference for sexual abstinence and points out contradictory expectations between religious celibacy and socio-cultural expectations for people to marry.[87] Prophetic call and eschatological motivation have been mentioned, but since celibacy is connected with the wife's lack of control over her tongue, it is probably

[81] Herm. *Vis*. 2.3.1 (7.1).

[82] See also Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.9 (1.9); 3.1.6 (9.6).

[83] On this point, I disagree with Steve Young, who reads references to children and household as references to the community as a household (Young, "Being a Man", 241).

[84] First Timothy distinguishes between one's own household (1 Tim 3:4–5) and God's household (1 Tim 3:15). The ideal that the head of household has control over wife and children is also expressed, e.g., in 1 Tim 3:4 (directed at ἐπίσκοποι), 12 (at διακόνοι); and in 1 Tim 5:8.

[85] Cf. MacDonald, "Reading Real Women", 202–203.

[86] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 54; Grundeken, *Community Building*, 100–102.

[87] Grundeken, *Community Building*, 100–102.

the importance of self-control that is highlighted.[88] Hermas' commonplace claim about women's speech as their vice aligns with the views and expectations typical of many ancient authors.[89] As Grundeken points out, Hermas intends real women to be silent.[90]

That women have a certain limited role not only in the household, but in the community, also applies to Grapte, about whom very little is said.[91] Hermas is to write two little books and send them to Clement and Grapte who then disseminate the message further.[92] Clement's and Grapte's identities are not explained further. Both are literate in the sense that they are able to read in public; both have a role in the community, albeit different.[93] Grapte's role, while acknowledged, is limited by gender and status: she is in charge of widows and orphans. By contrast, Clement and Hermas deal with communities at large, but it will be Hermas that has the more important task. The purpose of the remark on how the book's copying and reading task is to be divided serves to argue that Hermas should be given the prominent position of reading "to this city", along with the elders, while Clement is (merely) to disseminate the book to the outside cities, and Grapte, as pointed out, admonishes the widows and orphans.[94]

This brief discussion on the real women in Hermas' Visions demonstrates that they do not receive the same attention as the imaginary women, and also shows that Hermas' views about women, their place and their speech, appear to be typical of his time.

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[88] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 54–55.

[89] Sir 26:14; 1 Tim 2:11–12; 3:11; 4:7; 5:13; Tit 2:3. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 54–55. Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Gossip and Gender: Othering of Speech in the Pastoral Epistles* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 164), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2009, 133–137.

[90] Grundeken, *Community Building*, 104.

[91] See Grundeken, *Community Building*, 108–110.

[92] Herm. *Vis*. 2.4.3 (8.3).

[93] It is impossible to reliably identify Clement with Clement of Rome. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 59; Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 447.

[94] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 59. Women's care of widows is a topic in 1 Tim 5:16. For discussion, see Kaisa-Maria Pihlava, *Forgotten Women Leaders: The Authority of Women Hosts of Early Christian Gatherings in the First and Second Centuries C.E.*, Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society 2017, 167–169.

How to Be a Man

Discussions with the visionary figures, Rhoda and the Elder, and the brief references made to Hermas' wife and household, and Grapte and the community, make visible something of Hermas' relations with others and reveal his claims to authority. Yet Hermas' ideas and ideals about manliness do not become visible just through the portrayal of women characters. In this section I briefly consider two aspects that are connected to views on manliness.

The first was briefly mentioned above. As the Elder is leaving the scene after the first vision, she is joyful and exhorts Hermas with the words ἀνδρίζου Ἑρμᾶ.[95] Two aspects are intertwined in her words: Hermas is to be courageous,[96] and he is to be a man.[97] The two meanings of the verb cannot be separated from one another: courageous conduct and behaving like a man are one and the same thing.[98] While the woman's command may emphasize how Hermas is to act, in the third vision he is shown how manliness is connected with self-control. Hermas sees seven women who support the tower, symbol of the community. The women are personified virtues, and the second of them, self-control (ἐγράτεια) is characterized as manly (ἀνδριζομένη).[99] Manliness is also mentioned in the explanation of the Elder's changing ages.

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[95] Herm. *Vis*. 1.4.3 (4.3).

[96] This is how Holmes and Osiek translate: "Be courageous, Hermas" (Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 463); "Be of good courage, Hermas!" (Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 48).

[97] Ehrman: "Be a man [*Or: Be courageous*], Hermas." Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 2, 186. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 51.

[98] In the Septuagint the command to be courageous/manly often refers to acting in a courageous and manly way as a leader or a fighter, often as part of a double command, ἴσχυε καὶ ἀνδρίζου, e.g., in Deut 31:6–7, 23; Josh 1:6–7, 9, 18; 2 Kgs 10:12; 1 Chr 19:13, 22:13, 28:20; Ps 26:14. Hermas is not the only visionary who receives the command to be manly and courageous. It is also given to Daniel (10:19) whose famous vision contains several elements also present in the first two visions of Hermas: riverbank, linen clothes, luminosity of the person appearing, supernatural fear, consolation. Theodotion's version contains a similar connection to the seer's process from desires to manliness (καὶ εἶπέν μοι Μη φοβοῦ, ἀνὴρ ἐπιθυμιῶν, εἰρήνη σοι· ἀνδρίζου καὶ ἴσχυε, Dan 10:19). See also 4 Ezra 10:33. Polycarp is commanded to be courageous/act the man prior to his martyrdom (Mart. Pol. 9.1); this work is later than the Shepherd, and therefore not of direct relevance.

[99] Herm. *Vis*. 3.8.4 (16.4).

In this passage, the effect of the vision on Hermas' community[100] is likened to an old person's resumed will to life at unexpected good news: the person raises himself, becomes very joyful, clothes himself with strength, does not lie down but stands up, his spirit renewed, and he does not sit but is manly (καὶ οὐκέτι κάθηται ἀλλὰ ἀνδρίζεται).[101] Being courageous and manly is connected with joy, appetite for life, strength and upright posture. Each time that manliness is mentioned, it is combined with actions and attitude, virtue and inner strength.[102] Diane Lipsett has argued that introspection and examination of the self and community are key themes in the Shepherd.[103]

Andrew Crislip observes that recommendations concerning emotions and exhortations to joy, happiness, and calls to abandon sadness in the Shepherd are "wrapped up in codes of masculinity".[104] The Elder leaves joyfully, the invigorated person is filled with strength and joy. Visions give ample attention to Hermas' emotions and their intensity from the start: the vision of Rhoda agitates Hermas and her – in his view false – accusations offend him.[105] After the encounter, he is shaken and filled with sorrow, and debates Rhoda's words in his mind. When the Elder first appears, he is sad and weeps to the extent that she remarks on his uncharacteristically gloomy appearance. The Elder points out that usually Hermas is patient, not easily angered, and always laughing (μακρόθυμος, ἀστομάχητος, ὁ πάντοτε γελῶν) and thus reminds him of his good qualities; she further characterizes him as self-controlled, able to abstain from evil desires, full of sincerity and great innocence.[106] Only after attention has dwelt on Hermas' emotions and his characteristics, does it shift to his family and Hermas' performance as head of

[100] A second person plural is used in the text.

[101] Herm. *Vis*. 3.12.2 (20.2).

[102] Manliness is not gender-specific, a woman can be courageous/manly, for instance amidst birth pains; cf. Mic 4:10. For virtues in the Shepherd, see Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 19–53, esp. 34–36.

[103] Lipsett, *Desiring Conversion*, 19–23.

[104] Andrew Crislip, "The Shepherd of Hermas and Early Christian Emotional Formation", in: Yannis Papadogiannakis (ed.), *Studia Patristica LXXXIII*: *Papers Presented at the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2015,* vol. 9, Leuven: Peeters 2017, 231–250, 245.

[105] Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.5–8 (1.5–8).

[106] Herm. *Vis*. 1.2.1–3 (2.1–3).

household.[107] In Crislip's analysis, the attention given to sadness reveals that it is perceived as a negative emotion that should be abandoned to give room for the more desirable cheerfulness and joy.[108]

The second aspect to note is the concept of a just/righteous man (ὁ δίκαιος ἀνήρ). After Rhoda has accused Hermas of evil desire, she responds to Hermas' denial by demanding that he admit that evil desire in the heart of a just man is evil, a sin. If Rhoda's accusation is true, then Hermas fails as a just man. If he succeeds in being a just man, one who aims at just things, his reputation (δόξα) will be established in heaven, otherwise he brings death and captivity upon himself.[109] In this context two aspects of evil and sin are brought up: desire, and pride and reliance on one's wealth.[110] The opening scene thus expands the initial issue, evil desire for Rhoda, towards issues of wealth and worldliness, and the ideal of a just man. Later on, in the Commandments, the topic is resumed with emphasis on desire that leads to adultery.[111] To lead the life of a just man is the ideal often expressed in wisdom literature.[112] Just men are ideal leaders,[113] but sometimes they become victims of unjust enemies.[114] Joseph, Mary's husband, John the Baptizer, and Joseph of Arimathea are characterized as just men in the gospels, as is Cornelius

[107] Herm. *Vis*. 1.3.1–2 (3.1–2).

[108] Crislip, "The Shepherd of Hermas and Early Christian Emotional Formation," 231–250. See also Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 151–155.

[109] Herm. *Vis*. 1.1.8 (1.8).

[110] Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 44–45. There is also a communal aspect: later "the just" are reminded that the days of their repentance have come to an end, Herm. *Vis*. 2.2.5 (6.5). "The just", in the plural and without the qualifying "men", refers to the faithful, the members of the community. It also does so in the discussion of true and false prophets in Commandment 11 where a reference is made to the assembly (or synagogue) of righteous men (συναγωγὴ ἀνδρῶν δικαίων), Herm. *Mand*. 11.9, 13, 14 (43.9, 13, 14), and in the explanation of the tower in Herm. *Sim*. 9.15.4 (92.4), where the second group of stones represents the second generation of just men (δευτέρα γενεὰ ἀνδρῶν δικαίων).

[111] Herm. *Mand*. 4.1.2–3 (29.2–3).

[112] E.g., Prov 10:32; 11:7; 12:25; 29:27.

[113] Exod 18:21.

[114] E.g., 2 Sam 4:11; Isa 57:1.

the centurion in Acts.[115] In Matthew, the just may expect rewards in the future when the evil receive their punishments.[116]

Just as Hermas is commanded to act like a man, the concept of a just, or righteous, man is given to him – and the reader – as an ideal to follow, a mirror against which to reflect himself. First and foremost, the just man resists evil desire. He turns the desire that enters his heart into care of family, ensuring that his household functions as it should. The just man acts in a just way in his community and as regards wealth and business affairs that do not dominate his thoughts, and he is charitable towards the poor.

Conclusions

In this article, I have read the Visions of the Shepherd of Hermas to investigate the portrayal of Hermas through female characters, and to consider ideal manliness in the writing. My focus was on the first four Visions, independent of the Commandments and Parables. Hermas in the Visions can be observed through what he writes about Rhoda, the Elder, his wife and Grapte. Each relates to Hermas and can only be reached as far as the narrator Hermas sheds light on them, but the same applies to Hermas: he is known through the four women who reveal aspects of him and shape what may be known about him. Since the women are of different standing in the narrative, they reveal different sides of Hermas.

The Visions portray Hermas as struggling with several interconnecting issues within himself and among others, with authority and control of emotions emerging as central concerns. The encounter with Rhoda – autobiographical and fictional at the same time – brings to the fore questions of desire and slavery, introspection and repentance, but also struggles for power and conflict. Hermas is under the past authority of Rhoda and in danger of being subjected to desire and sin. When the Elder enters the scene, authority and signs of status become visible. What Hermas sees highlights the Elder's authority. Her robe, the scroll, the chair,

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[115] Joseph: Matt 1:19; John: Mark 6:20; Joseph of Arimathea: Luke 23:50.

[116] Matt 13:17, 43, 49. In 13:17, δίκαιος is the term preferred by Matthew. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2001, 247. The language in these verses is drawn from Jewish concepts and the scriptures (Luz, *Matthew,* 267, 270, 281–284).

and her age-cum-position belong to revelatory imagery that, as external signs of authority, emphasize her power, the power of the community and its leaders. Although the figure of the Elder has been read as an indication that Hermas could imagine women in positions of authority in his community, my reading is less optimistic. Against Greco-Roman visual culture that personified abstract concepts as females, it is unlikely that such a figure reveals much of the realities behind the text. Like personifications of other abstract concepts, the Elder is a personification of the male-dominated community, a tool to think with.

The primarily fictional Rhoda and the Elder hold long discourses with Hermas, whereas the women that are connected to Hermas' everyday life, his wife and Grapte, remain silent. What little is mentioned about them connects with Hermas' claim to authority. The message of the Elder is that Hermas has not succeeded in being the authoritative head of the household that he should. In other words, Hermas uses the revelation to claim control over his wife and children. His nearly invisible wife should control her tongue (but not others) and be a companion in abstinence. Complaints about children, and about Hermas' kindness and softness towards them, are part of the discussion of household and family in the Visions. In a similar manner, little is said about Grapte, but her task – to read to widows and orphans – at the same time reveals her abilities, yet restricts her sphere of activity and authority. The division of the reading task reveals that Hermas himself aims at a prominent position within his community. The visions and the claim that the scroll he produces is of heavenly origin provide means to claim a more visible role. When the message of the scroll is to be disseminated, Clement and Grapte should play supporting roles.

After discussing the women of the Visions, I briefly considered the call to be a man given to Hermas, and the ideal of a just man. The command to be manly and courageous is connected to virtues and strength, as is the concept of a just man. As in Jewish literature, a just man is someone able to choose the right course for his life. This takes us to where I started my discussion. In the majority of studies, the Shepherd is approached as the work of an early Christian author. I have taken a different course. There are grounds, as discussed at the beginning of my article, to consider the Visions an early rather than late work. Once an early date is accepted, it becomes necessary to consider how to interpret

the Greek text. It is tempting to do so in a Christian framework, but then that clashes with the notion of an early context, and the observation of how little that is decidedly "Christian" there is in the work. In discussing Hermas and the women of the Visions, I have sought to resist such a reading, and to keep open the nature of the initial situation where the text was composed.

Three or Two Readings in Early Byzantine Liturgy?

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Abstract:
The following article will draw attention to some remarks in the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala about the number of biblical readings in the early Byzantine Liturgy. Severian held several homilies in Constantinople AD 401–402 and was substitute for John Chrysostom. In the Eucharist there were most likely only two readings, and they were both from the New Testament: Apostle and Gospel.

Key Words:
Severian of Gabala, Constantinople, lectionary system, Old Testament readings, Byzantine liturgy, Eucharist, homily

Introduction

It has often been argued that in the first Byzantine centuries there were three readings in the liturgy: first the Prophet, then the Apostle and last the Gospel. For example, we can find a reconstruction of the Byzantine liturgy before the seventh century in an appendix to F. E. Brightman's

book *Liturgies, Eastern and Western*.[1] Here there are three readings: Prophet, Apostle and Gospel. The reconstruction is based mostly on evidence from John Chrysostom.

According to this common theory the first reading from the Old Testament disappeared in the seventh century.[2] A reform of the Byzantine liturgy was made, and the result can be seen for example in a Typicon from Constantinople in the tenth century with only two readings: Apostle and Gospel.[3] The same order and number of readings have been used since in the Orthodox Church.[4]

I am sceptical concerning the traditional theory, that in the early Byzantine centuries there were three readings in the liturgy beginning with a reading from the Old Testament. My scepticism comes from remarks in the homilies by Severian of Gabala.[5]

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[1] See Appendix O in F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies, Eastern and Western, vol. I: Eastern Liturgies,* Oxford: Clarendon Press 1896, 527–534 (527).

[2] See e.g. Juan Mateos, *La célébration de la parole dans la liturgie byzantine* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 191), Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium 1971. According to Mateos, the Byzantine church had originally three readings, beginning with the Prophet, but the first reading from the Old Testament disappeared in the seventh century (p. 130–133).

[3] Edited and translated by Juan Mateos, *Le Typicon la Grande Église: Ms. Sainte-Croix N° 40, X^e siècle,* vol. I–II (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 165–166), Roma: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum 1962–63.

[4] See e.g. A. Kniazeff, "La lecture de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament dans le rite byzantin", *Lex Orandi* 35 (1963), 201–251. Se also Job Getcha, *The Typicon Decoded: An Explanation of Byzantine Liturgical Practice*, translated by Paul Meyendorff, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 2012.

[5] In 1982–88 I was preparing an edition of all the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala. See the revised plan for an edition in C. Datema, "Towards a Critical Edition of the Greek Homilies of Severian of Gabala", *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 19 (1988), 107–115. According to this plan I should publish the homilies on Genesis. The plan was not realised, but several dissertations about homilies by Severian of Gabala was published at Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, e.g. R. F. Regtiut, *Severianus van Gabala: Contra iudaeos et graecos et haereticos, tekst, inleiding en vertaling*, Doctoralscriptie, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1987, and Remco F. Regtuit, *Severian of Gabala: Homily on the Incarnation of Christ (CPG 4204)*, Amsterdam: VU University Press 1992. Another result was the preliminary edition of some Pseudo-Chrystostomic homilies, among them some unedited homilies by Severian of Gabala: *Homiliae Pseudo-Chrysostomicae*, ed. Karl-Heinz Uthemann, Remco F. Regtuit & Johannes M. Tevel, Turnhout: Brepols 1994.

Severian was staying in Constantinople for some years when John Chrysostom was patriarch, and he held several homilies in Constantinople in AD 401 and 402, especially in the months when John Chrysostom was on a journey to Asia Minor.[6] His homilies can be used as a source to the lectionary system in Constantinople in the beginning of the fifth century.

I did not start by being sceptical. When I, in 1973, first studied the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala,[7] I expected to find a lectionary system with three readings (Prophet, Apostle and Gospel) according the common opinion for Constantinople at that time. But I did not succeed in finding traces of three readings in the same homily.[8]

Many years later, in 1991, I studied the evidence in the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala once more and tried to find out how the early lectionary system in Constantinople was according to Severian. In this study my conclusion was that evidence in the homilies points in the direction of a lectionary system in the Eucharistic services on Saturdays and Sundays with only two readings, both from the New Testament:

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[6] The homilies by Severian of Gabala are in the Greek manuscripts mostly found under the name of John Chrysostom and mostly edited as Pseudo-Chrysostomica. An older but still useful dissertation about Severian is Hans-Dietrich Altendorf, *Untersuchungen zu Severian von Gabala*, Tübingen 1957. Altendorfs dissertation is basis for the list in Mauritius Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum: Vol. II ab Athanasio ad Chrysostomum* (Corpus Christianorum), Turnhout: Brepols 1974 (abbreviated CPG). About Severian of Gabala see CPG 4185–4295 (p. 468–488). Since then, more homilies have been identified and edited, see Sever J. Voicu, s.v. "Sévérien de Gabala", in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 14 (1989), 752–763, and several other articles by Sever J. Voicu, latest: Sever J. Voicu, "A Century of Progress on the Homilies of Severian of Gabala", in J. Leemans, G. Roskam & J. Segers (eds.), *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala: Homilists, Exegetes and Theologians* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 282), Leuven: Peeters 2019, 259–283.

[7] In 1974 I was rewarded a gold medal for a prize thesis at the University of Aarhus about the use of the Bible in the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala. The prize thesis has not been published. One of the aspects which I analysed was the liturgical use of the Bible.

[8] The corpus of homilies which I was studying in 1973 was based on the German dissertation from 1957 on Severian of Gabala by Hans-Dietrich Altendorf, *Untersuchungen zu Severian von Gabala*, and included 37 Greek homilies. It is nearly the same as the list in CPG 4185–4215.

Apostle and Gospel. In homilies held on such occasions there are no traces of liturgical readings from the Old Testament.[9]

This does not mean that texts from the Old Testament were not used as liturgical readings in Constantinople around AD 400, but rather that they were used at different kinds of services, most probably at Vespers. Severian of Gabala held a series of homilies on Genesis in the late afternoon on weekdays, and here there was certainly a liturgical reading from the Old Testament, but there are no traces of readings from the New Testament in this context.[10]

Aimé Georges Martimort

I am not the only one who is sceptical concerning a supposed old structure with three readings in the liturgy of Constantinople, nor the first to utter such scepticism. Among the sceptics I will primarily mention Aimé Georges Martimort, who, in 1984, wrote an article about the number of readings in the liturgy.[11] In his article, he not only discusses the situation in Constantinople, but also in Rome, Jerusalem, North Africa (Augustine) and Cappadocia.

Concerning Constantinople, he examines the evidence from John Chrysostom, which has been collected and analysed by Frans van de

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[9] Holger Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem i Konstantinopel ifølge Severian af Gabala" [The Early Lectionary System in Constantinople according to Severian of Gabala], in *Florilegium patristicum*, ed. Gösta Hallonsten, Sten Hidal & Samuel Rubenson, Åsak 1991, 101–127.

[10] *De creatione mundi* 1–6 (CPG 4194), ed. PG 56.429–550, and *Quomodo animam acceperit Adamus* (CPG 4195), ed. Savile 5.648–653. See Johannes Zellinger, *Die Genesishomilien des Bishofs Severian von Gabala* (Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen, VII. Band, 1. Heft), Münster in Westf.: Aschendorff 1916. The series of homilies on Genesis by Severian of Gabala is probably longer than the seven homilies. See Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem", 236–238; and Voicu, "A Century of Progress", 281 (no. 39, 41, 42 & 46).

[11] Aimé Georges Martimort, "A propos du nombre des lecture à la messe", *Revue des sciences religieuses* 58 (1984), 42–51. A later critical article about readings from the Old Testament in the Constantinopolitan Eucharist is Sysse Gudrun Engberg, "The Prophetologion and the Triple-lection Theory: The Genesis of a Liturgical Book", *Bolletino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata*, Terza Series, vol. 3 (2006), 67–92.

Paverd in his book about the liturgy in Antioch and Constantinople according to John Chrysostom.[12] Martimort analyses the texts used by Paverd, and, according to him, they do not demonstrate a system in Constantinople with three readings in every Eucharistic service.[13]

I will leave the evaluation of the evidence from John Chrysostom to others and concentrate on Severian of Gabala.[14] In his homilies from Constantinople a thorough analysis will reveal interesting and relevant information about the number of readings in Constantinople.

In Centurionem (CPG 4230)

I will first concentrate on one interesting remark in the homily *In Centurionem* by Severian of Gabala. The editio princeps of this homily was made in 1983 by Michel Aubineau.[15]

In Centurionem is a homily preached in Constantinople, probably on a Saturday when there was a horse race in town. In a homily on the following day, Severian complains that people the previous day left the church and instead attended a horse race, and refers to the homily *In Centurionem* as being held on that occasion.[16]

The Gospel of the day was the text from Luke about the centurion (Luke 7.1–10). In the introduction to the homily Severian mentions that

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[12] Frans van de Paverd, *Zur Geschichte der Messliturgie in Antiocheia und Konstantinopel gegen Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts: Analyse der Quellen bei Johannes Chrysostomos* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 187), Rome 1970.

[13] Martimort, "A propos du nombre", 50.

[14] See the dissertation from 2015 by Gary Philippe Raczka, *The Lectionary of the Time of Saint John Chrysostom* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame 2015). He uses among other patristic sources also homilies by Severian of Gabala (pp. 281–297) and upholds the traditional view that there was an Old Testament reading from the Prophets in the early Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy (p. 319), but he has not found evidence for this conclusion in the homilies by Severian (p. 296), so the basis for his conclusion is other patristic sources.

[15] Michel Aubineau (ed.), *Un traité inédit de christologie de Sévérien de Gabala: In Centurionem et contra Manichæos et Apollinaristas* (Cahiers d'Orientalisme 5, Genève: Patrick Cramer 1983).

[16] *In dictum apostoli: Non quod volo facio* (CPG 4203), ed. PG 59.663–674. See Aubineau, *Un traité inédit*, 46–49. The reference to the horse race the day before is found in the beginning of the homily *In dictum apostoli: Non quod volo facio*, PG 59.663.

Luke 7.9 has been read.[17] In the next section he compares the faith of the centurion with the heretics. And now comes the remark, which I find very interesting. Severian says:

> On the contrary the heretics, who read both the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels and the Apostles, did not recognize the dignity and did insult the authority of the Only-begotten by saying, that he is submitted under the power of the Father, and not knowing, that the authority is common for the divine essence, and that the power is indivisible. For "I and the Father are one". But let us now return to the matter.[18]

In this small digression Severian says, as I understand it, that someone at that time had four readings, and that they were heretics. If this understanding of the remark is true, it is a remarkable statement.

Severian of Gabala understood himself as an orthodox bishop and would certainly not want to have something in common with heretics.[19] So, according to this statement, the orthodox in Constantinople did not have four readings.

If there were heretics who, according to Severian, had four readings at this time around AD 400, then who were they? Severian is not explicitly stating who the heretics were, but he gives a short description of their theology, and according to this description the heretics seem to be Arians. Elsewhere in the homily he is arguing against Manichaeism and Apollinarianism. But they do not fit with the description of the

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[17] Προηγεῖται δὲ τῶν πάντων ἡ πίστις, ἣν καὶ ὁ σωτὴρ ἐν τοῖς σήμερον ὑπαναγνωσθεῖσιν ἐπεθαύμασεν λέγων· «Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὗρον.» Aubineau, *Un traité inédit*, 108. See also Aubineau, *Un traité inédit*, 53–54.

[18] Οἱ δὲ αἱρετικοί, καὶ νόμον καὶ προφήτας καὶ εὐαγγέλια καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἀναγινώσκοντες, ἠγνόησαν τὴν ἀξίαν καὶ ὕβρισαν τὴν τοῦ μονογενοῦς ἐξουσίαν, ὑποκεῖσθαι αὐτὸν λέγοντες τῇ τοῦ Πατρὸς αὐθεντίᾳ, οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι τῆς θείας οὐσίας κοινὴ ἡ ἐξουσία καὶ ἀμέριστος ἡ αὐθεντία· «Ἐγὼ» γὰρ «καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν.» Ἀλλ᾽ εἰς τὸ προκείμενον ἐπανέλθωμεν. Aubineau, *Un traité inédit*, 108.

[19] In his homilies Severian is very often arguing against heretics, especially Arians. See e.g. Johannes Zellinger, *Studien zu Severian von Gabala* (Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie 8, Münster in Westf.: Aschendorff, 1926), 146–173.

heretics in this section of the homily. So it seems to me most probable that Severian here is talking about some Arians.

Three or Two Readings?

If there were some heretics, most probably Arians, who used four readings in the liturgy, both from the Old Testament and from the New Testament, what was then the practice among the orthodox in Constantinople?

The traditional answer is that they had three readings, the first of them taken from the Old Testament. This answer is primarily based on the evidence from texts by John Chrysostom. If we instead look at the homilies preached in Constantinople by Severian of Gabala, it seems to me more probable that there were only two readings in the liturgy, and that those readings were both taken from the New Testament.

Among the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala I have found two where he more or less explicitly mentions the number of readings. The first homily is *De Christo pastore et ove*.[20] Here Severian says that the two readings of the day run together.[21] The Gospel of the day is the text about the Good Shepherd from John 10.11–30.[22] It is, however, not quite clear where the first reading is from. It could be from Isaiah 53.7, but more likely it is from the Acts 8.32, where there is a quotation from Isaiah.[23]

The second homily is *De paenitentia et compunctione*.[24] The Apostle is 1 Corinthians 12.21 and the Gospel is Mark 2.5.[25] Here Severian again says that the apostolic reading and the gospel reading of the day run together.[26] The number of the readings is not mentioned, but Severian

[20] CPG 4189, ed. PG 52.827–836.

[21] τὰ γὰρ δύο ταῦτα συνέδραμον σήμερον ἀναγνώσματα, PG 52.827.34–35. [The line numbers used here and in the following are not found in Migne, but are added by me].

[22] See PG 52.827.10–14 and PG 52.831.45–48.

[23] See PG 52.827.34–37.

[24] CPG 4186, ed. PG 49.323–336.

[25] PG 49.323.8–12 and 22–27.

[26] Συνέδραμε δὲ σήμερον τῇ ἀποστολικῇ ἀναγνώσει καὶ ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ τοῦ Σωτῆρος αὐθεντία, ἁμαρτιῶν ἄφεσιν ἀφθόνως χαριζομένη. Τὸν γὰρ παραλυτικὸν ὁ Σωτὴρ

seems to presuppose that there are only those two readings: Apostle and Gospel.

There are, in homilies by Severian, a large number of references to liturgical readings, but in no case have I found homilies with more than two readings. And I did not find homilies with readings both from the Old and the New Testament.

The homilies can be divided in four groups with readings from: (1) Genesis, (2) other parts of the Old Testament, (3) the Apostle and (4) the Gospels.[27] Homilies can belong to more than one group.

Homilies from the first group with readings or texts from Genesis seem to be held on weekdays in Lent at some sort of Vesper, similar to what is known from the Byzantine liturgy in the tenth century.[28] And there are no traces of readings from the New Testament. They belong to a special sort of service without Eucharist and without readings from the New Testament.[29]

The second group with readings from other parts of the Old Testament is important in this context, especially if, among the homilies, there were examples with readings both from the Old Testament and a Gospel. But I did not find such homilies, only three possible references, and they are so questionable that it seems justified to exclude them.[30] In this

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ἰώμενος ἔλεγεν, ὡς ἀρτίως ἀκηκόατε· Τέκνον, ἀφέωνταί σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου αἱ πολλαί· PG 49.323.22–27.

[27] A list of the forty Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala used in the analysis can be found in Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem", 245–249. A handwritten index (from 1974) of biblical quotations and allusions in the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala can be seen in my private home page: www.sejrupvilladsen.dk/SG-01.pdf.

[28] See Mateos, *Le Typicon*, vol. II, 12–65.

[29] Homilies with text or reading from Genesis are: CPG 4194 (six homilies), 4195, 4208, 4232 and 4271. See Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem", 236–239.

[30] See Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem", 239–242. In a homily for Whitsun, *In sanctam pentecosten* (CPG 4211), Severian interprets Exod. 19, Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 12. None of the texts are mentioned as liturgical readings, but it could perhaps be a Eucharist with four readings. In the beginning of *In pretiosam et uiuivicam crucem* (CPG 4213) he mentions "a prophetic word to day" (Combefis 1556, 224). If he is referring to a reading from the Old Testament, the reading could perhaps be Num. 20.11 which is mentioned in the beginning of the homily (Combefis 1656, 227). In a homily for Epiphany, *In theophaniam* (CPG 4212), Severian interprets Is. 35.2 at the end. It could reflect a liturgical reading, but

group there are also homilies with liturgical use from the Psalms, but the Psalms belong to another category and are not relevant here.[31]

In the third group there are eight homilies with readings from the Apostle.[32] In all homilies, except one, Severian also mentions the Gospel of the day, but he does not mention a reading from the Old Testament.[33]

There are, in the fourth group, a considerable number of references to readings from the Gospels, and most of them are explicitly mentioned as liturgical readings.[34] In several cases they are combined with a reading from the Apostle, but in no cases are they combined with a reading from the Old Testament.

Conclusion

Evaluated as a whole it seems justified to conclude that, according to the Greek homilies by Severian of Gabala, readings from the Gospels in the Eucharistic services in Constantinople around AD 400 were only combined with another reading from the Apostle and not with a reading from the Old Testament. The same structure is found in the later Byzantine Lectionary.[35]

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if it is so, it most probably belongs to the vigil before Epiphany, cf. Mateos, *Le Typicon*, vol. I,182–183.

[31] Homilies with liturgical use of the Psalms are: CPG 4190 (Ps. 96.1), 4191 (Ps. 95.1), 4192 (Ps. 96.1), 4194 (Ps. 118.105 and 140.2), 4196 (Ps. 65.4) and 4212 (Ps. 79.2–4).

[32] The 8 homilies are: CPG 4186, 4187, 4189, 4191, 4196, 4200, 4203 and 4215. See Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem", 242–243.

[33] The homily which only mentions the Apostle is *In Non quod volo* (CPG 4203). In two homilies the Gospel is not from the same day as the Apostle: CPG 4187 and 4200.

[34] A list of the homilies and references to readings from the Gospels can be found in Villadsen, "Det tidlige perikopesystem", 243–245. The homilies are: CPG 4186, 4187, 4189, 4191, 4192, 4193, 4196, 4200, 4201, 4202, 4205, 4207, 4209, 4210, 4213, 4214, 4215 and 4230.

[35] This article was first held as a short communication at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford August 2003. The text has been revised and notes added for this publication.

"The great initiate of God's grace": A Kontakion on St Nicholas by Pseudo-Romanos

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Abstract:
During the ninth and tenth centuries, St Nicholas of Myra became increasingly popular as a saint, eventually rising to rank of the apostles in veneration. This article presents an investigation into the monastic piety which brought St Nicholas onto the stage of the Byzantine liturgical storyworld as one of the most important saints. Through a closer examination of how he was presented from the ninth century onwards in hagiography in general, the main focus of the article is a kontakion on the saint attributed to the great poet Romanos the Melodist (ca. 485–560) in particular. The question of authorship, time and place of origin of the kontakion is discussed. The article finally brings a new translation of the kontakion into English.

Key words:
Keywords: pseudo-Romanos, Romanos the Melodist, kontakion, kanon, Byzantine hymnography, St Nicholas of Myra, St Nicholas of Sion, hagiography

Hagiographical Hymns in General

Scholarly work on Byzantine hymns devoted to saints is still a desideratum. This goes not only for a large amount of unedited hagiographical kanons,[1] but also for the kontakia[2] on saints' lives. Most of these hagiographical kontakia, several hundred,[3] remain unedited, but because of the high esteem and popularity of Romanos the Melodist among Byzantinists we have 20 kontakia devoted to apostles or saints attributed to him in a critical edition. The edition was originally prepared by Paul Maas but it was his collaborator, Constantine Trypanis, who finished the volume after Maas' death based on his notes and personal communication.[4] Maas and Trypanis regarded all the kontakia in this edition spurious, and Trypanis' verdict on the quality of the hymns could easily scare away interested scholars (see below). Furthermore, only a few translations of these hymns into modern languages exist,[5] not least the excellent translation by Charles Kuper in the previous volume of *Patristica Nordica Annuaria*.[6] This article and translation follows in the footsteps of his work and begins remedying the lack of translations.

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[1] Antonia Giannouli, "Byzantine Hagiography and Hymnography: an Interrelationship" in: S. Efthymiadis, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol 2. (Genres and Contexts), Farnham: Ashgate 2014, 285–312 (285 and 291). On Byzantine hymnography, see John A. McGuckin, "Poetry and Hymnography (2): The Greek World" in: S. A. Harvey & D. G. Hunter (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008, 641–656.

[2] On the kontakion in general, see Sarah Gador-Whyte, *Theology and Poetry in Early Byzantium: The* Kontakia *of Romanos the Melodist*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017, 9–17.

[3] See the list in José Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origins de la poésie religieuse à Byzance*, Paris: Beauchesne 1977, 74–93. This list includes of course also the genuine kontakia of Romanos.

[4] Paul Maas & C. A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Dubia*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1970, preface and p. ix n. 5.

[5] There only exists an Italian translation of the two kontakia on St Nicholas of Myra attributed to Romanos, see P. Rosario Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano il Melode* (Studi e testi 1), Bari: Levante 1985.

[6] Charles Kuper, "The Pseudo-Romanos *Kontakion on Symeon Stylites the Elder*", *PNA* 34 (2019), 79–98.

The Question of Authorship

In scholarship, a general agreement has not been reached about the hagiographical kontakia, although the modern editors agree on most of them. Already J. B. Pitra, the first editor of a large amount of Byzantine hymns, among them kontakia ascribed to Romanos,[7] deemed many of the hagiographical kontakia dubious for various reasons, some historical, some given by comparison with the poet's other works considered genuine.[8]

Trypanis was quite harsh in his verdict on dubious hagiographical hymns, which he found had an "inferior poetic quality" and furthermore had lost the "true nature of a metrical sermon which characterizes the genuine kontakia of Romanos".[9] In his and Maas' edition, he distinguishes between two main types of hagiographical kontakia, the "encomiastic hymns" and the "biographical hymns". Whereas the encomiastic hymns reflect the rhetorical encomia on saints and focus on praise, the biographical hymns adhere more to the life of a particular saint. The kontakion on St. Nicholas presented in this article belongs to the encomiastic type, which Trypanis characterizes as "indulged in exuberant praise of the saint" where "[s]terility of inspiration competes with bombastic verbosity." His characteristic of the biographical type does not do this type much favour either: "they narrate in a dry, flat style the miracles performed, many of which are imaginary stories suitable only for highly unsophisticated audiences."[10]

As further evidence against the authenticity of the hagiographical kontakia, Trypanis sees an "Atticizing tendency" and lexicographical

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[7] J. B. Pitra (ed.), *Analecta sacra Spicilegio Solesmense parata*, vol.1, Paris: Jouby et Roger 1876.

[8] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, ix.

[9] Ibid., x and 204. Recently, the generic definition of a kontakion as a "metrical sermon" has been debated, see Thomas Arentzen, *The Virgin in Song: Mary and the Poetry of Romanos the Melodist* (Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion), Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press 2017, 11.

[10] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, x. This unflattering description echoes that of Karl Krumbacher who characterised the hymns following the vita meticulously as "geschmacklos versifizierte Heiligenbiographien", Krumbacher, "Studien zu den Legendens des Heiligen Theodosius" in: *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Classe*, Munich 1892, 220–379 (322). See also Giannouli, "Hagiography and Hymnography", 291–293.

evidence such as the use of words which are only attested later than sixth century. Another difference between the genuine and the dubious kontakia is also the uses of the epithets τάλας[11] (wretched) and ἐλάχιστος (smallest) in the acrostics. Whereas these epithets occur in hagiographical kontakia written by other poets, they are never found in the genuine kontakia of Romanos.[12]

Finally, Trypanis also mentions that whereas many of the genuine kontakia are written to their own melody (idiomela), most hagiographical kontakia are contrafacta (prosomia) written to existing melodies. This is particularly the case concerning the introductory preludes (prooemia) of the dubious kontakia.[13]

Trypanis therefore concludes that Romanos cannot be the author of these hymns. The evidence points towards the iconoclastic period perhaps even later.[14]

The Maas and Trypanis edition of the dubious kontakia was published in 1970. Seven years later, José Grosdidier de Matons published his monograph on Romanos in which he also discussed the question of authenticity. Grosdidier de Matons based his criteria on stylistic analyses, for instance the use of participles and percentage of discourse and dialogue.[15] Whereas Maas had originally considered the two kontakia on the forty martyrs of Sebasteia (SC[63–64]/MT57–58)[16] genuine, Trypanis came to the opposite conclusion in the foreword to the edition of

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[11] Somewhat confusingly, ΤΑΛΑΣ is also the name of an otherwise unknown poet, who might be a Stoudite monk active in the first part of the ninth century and who is superseded only by Romanos in number of kontakia in the kontakaria, see Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode*, 63–64. Whereas τάλας used as an epithet is found elsewhere in the kontakaria, ἐλάχιστος is only attested in the hymns of Ps.-Romanos, see ibid., 228–229.

[12] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, xi.

[13] Ibid., xii.

[14] Ibid., xiii.

[15] Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode*, 231–241.

[16] I refer to the kontakia by the numbering they have been assigned in the editions by Maas & Trypanis and the French edition by Grosdidier de Matons in the Sources Chrétiennes-series. MT = Paul Maas & C. A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica Genuina*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 1963 and Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*. SC = *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes*. Vol. I–V, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par José Grosdidier de Matons, (SC 99, 110, 114, 128, 283), Paris: Cerf 1964–1981.

the cantica dubia.[17] However, Grosdidier de Matons, with his criteria, found them to be authentic along with the kontakia on St Panteleimon (SC[65]/MT69), St Demetrios (SC[61]/MT71) and Sts Cosmas and Damian (SC[62]/MT73).[18] Unfortunately, he died before he could finish the last volume(s) of his edition of the kontakia of Romanos, which would have included the hagiographical kontakia.

Why then were the hagiographical kontakia attributed to Romanos? Trypanis suggests that "it was not to be endured that Romanos, the writer of kontakia par excellence, had omitted to celebrate this or that saint, when cantica of rival saints were circulating under his name". This also goes for our hymn on St Nicholas. It is one of two hymns on the popular saint attributed to Romanos. The other one is much shorter consisting of only one prelude and ten stanzas.[19]

Dating of the Kontakion on St Nicholas

If we cannot establish firmly who is the real author hiding behind the name of Romanos,[20] we can try to place it more precisely in time and place of composition. Trypanis places it in the ninth century at the earliest, since he assumes that the vita known as *Thaumata Tria* from the

[17] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, ix n. 3.

[18] Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode*, 242, and the table of concordance of hymns p. 332.

[19] With the acrostic ΩΔΗ ΡΩΜΑΝΟΥ (MT78), Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 130–134. The hymn has been translated into Italian with a short introduction, see Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano*, 49–65. In addition to these two hymns attributed to Romanos, there are two more kontakia in the manuscripts (Kontakaria) on the feast day of Nicholas the 6th of December: one is by "The Stoudite" while the other has an alphabetic acrostic, see Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode*, 79. Nicholas was popular, also in terms of kontakia written in his honour.

[20] It could even be a different poet with the same name, who is however unknown. A similar case exists with kanons carrying the name Joseph in the acrostic which are attributed to either Joseph the Stoudite (Joseph of Thessaloniki) or Joseph the Hymnographer, see Nancy Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar: The Role of a Ninth-century Hymnographer in Shaping the Celebration of the Saints" in: L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1996* (Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies 5), Birmingham: Routledge 2016, 101–114 (105 n. 8).

ninth century is the source of all later versions of the saint's life, including the one or ones that were the source of the author of our hymn.[21] It is clear that the author presupposes knowledge of the life and miracles of St Nicholas. Some stanzas mention "innocent men" (st 3.3), "the young man" (st 15.3) and "men about to be killed" (st 21.8–9) without further explanation of who they are. This lack of explanation suggests that the audience were supposed to know what the author was referring to.[22] It is more difficult to determine which vita he used as source. It seems rather that he followed either different sources or some source which is now lost.

The hymn is, as mentioned, of the "encomiastic" type and does not retell the life of Nicholas, but rather weaves in and out different episodes between praise and comparisons between the saint and heroes from the Old and the New Testament. Especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, which deals with the role of the high priest, is alluded to often. Concerning sources of the life of St Nicholas of Myra, we encounter the major obstacle pertaining to all research into the saint: at some point, probably during the end of the ninth century, his story was merged with that of a later namesake, St Nicholas of Sion, who lived in the sixth century (see further below). The earliest source to the life of St Nicholas of Myra is the so-called anonymous *Praxis de stratelatis*, which is written no later than 580.[23] It tells the story about three generals who were unjustly

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[21] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 204–205. The *Thaumata Tria* is edited in Gustav Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heiligen Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, Band I: Die Texte, Berlin: Teubner 1913, 183–197. Anrich dates it to 850–900, see Gustav Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heiligen Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, Band II: Prolegomena, Untersuchungen, Indices, Berlin: Teubner 1917, 382. Both volumes have been digitized by the Niedersachsische Staats- und Universitätsbiblithek Göttingen and are available at https://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/id/PPN632244593 (accessed 14 December 2020).

[22] See also Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 204 n. 118, and Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 363. The relevant passages are explained in the footnotes to the present translation.

[23] Based on the fact that a section of the *Praxis de stratelatis* (18–21) is quoted by the presbyter Eustratios in his treatise "On the State of Souls after Death" from 580, see Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 370, and on Eustratios the Presbyter in Angelo di Berardino, *Patrology: The Easter Fathers from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to John of Damascus (+750)*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co 2006, 106–107. Edition of the *Praxis de stratelatis* in Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 66–91, German translation in Lothar Heiser, *Nikolaus von Myra: Heiliger der ungeteilten Christenheit*, Trier: Paulinus Verlag 1978, 47–55.

put to prison on a false accusation that they wanted to usurp the imperial throne from Constantine the Great (*Praxis de stratelatis* 11–13). In prison they remember how the bishop Nicholas saved three falsely accused men from beheading in Myra (5–7) and prays to the saint to intercede on their behalf and set them free (19). A true wonder happens when Nicholas, who is at that moment in Myra, appears in the emperor's dream and demands that the three generals be set free, which they are on the following day, later returning to Myra with precious gifts to Nicholas (20–26). This story builds the core narrative of the life of Nicholas of Myra.

Some centuries later, most likely in the first half of the ninth century, another important source appears, the *Vita per Michaëlem*.[24] Perhaps it was written by Michael the Stoudite.[25] This vita, the author claims, is an attempt to collect scattered stories about Nicholas. In this vita many of the later core elements in the life of Nicholas are found, among others the probably most well-known story that he helped three young daughters from life in a brothel by throwing a bag with money through their window a night (*Vita per Michaëlem* 10–18). However, this story is not mentioned in our hymn, whereas other episodes from the vita are alluded to:[26] Nicholas' orthodox faith and firm stance against heretics such as the followers of Sabellius and Arius[27] (25–26); how he helped Lycia through a famine by asking for a little amount of grain from a ship going to Constantinople – the wonder was that the amount was not missing when the ship harboured in the capital (37–39); and his friendly behaviour towards people who stray from orthodoxy (40).

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[24] Edition in Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 111–139. German translation in Heiser, *Nikolaus von Myra*, 58–79.

[25] Heiser, *Nikolaus von Myra*, 56.

[26] The references are mentioned in the footnotes to the present translation at the appropriate stanzas.

[27] Later, Nicholas was said to be present at the council of Nicaea as a champion of orthodox faith. This is mentioned for the first time in the Synaxarion-vitae from the tenth century, see Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 301. Nicholas was from the thirteenth century mentioned in the lists of participants at the council. However, the legend that he punched Arius at the council of Nicaea is much later and attested only in the sixteenth century, see Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 459–460. For a translation of the sources mentioned in Anrich's volume, see https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2015/02/28/did-st-nicholas-of-myra-santa-claus-punch-arius-at-the-council-of-nicaea/ (accessed 14 December 2020).

The kontakion seems also to be dependent on an encomium to St Nicholas of Myra attributed to Andrew of Crete. Anrich dated this encomium to the second half of the ninth century, but no consensus has been reached.[28] A heretic who is not named in the kontakion[29] is identified in the encomium as a certain Theognes who was a bishop of "the Marcianites"[30]. He was brought back to orthodoxy by St Nicholas. If indeed the *Praxis de Stratelatis*, the *Vita per Michaëlem* and the *Encomium* attributed to Andrew of Crete are the main sources of the kontakion, we might have a *terminus post quem* around 850.

As regarding a *terminus ante quem*, the earliest witness of the kontakion on St Nicholas is highly likely the Patmos-kontakarion. This important manuscript for the tradition of the kontakia have recently been dated to around 950 at the earliest.[31] This means that we have narrowed down the time span to a hundred years.

In general, the period from the end of iconoclasm in 843 and until the first half of the tenth century is the period in which the liturgical use of hagiography is systematized.[32] Important figures in this process were the monks at the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople.[33] For our purposes the most important Stoudite is Joseph the Hymnographer, who is said to have written one or more kanons for each saint in the liturgical year, although the exact number that can be regarded as authentic still

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[28] Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 109 n. 27.

[29] See st. 18.5 "the one who joined alien dogma to faith" (τὸν γὰρ ἑτέρως δόγμα ἀλλόφυλον τῇ πίστει συνάπτοντα).

[30] *Encomium Andreae Cretensis* 7, edition in Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 419–427 (425).

[31] See Thomas Arentzen & Derek Krueger, "Romanos in Manuscript: Some Observations on the Patmos Kontakarion" in B. Krsmanović & L. Milanović, *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 22–27 August 2016. Round Table*, Belgrade 2016, 648–654 (648).

[32] This is also the period where the important collections of prose versions of saints' lives for liturgical use are composed: the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* (around 900) and the *Menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes (last decades of the tenth century), see Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Hagiography from the 'Dark Age' to the Age of Symeon Metaphrastes (Eighth–Tenth Centuries), in: idem, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 1 (Periods and Places), New York: Routledge 2016, 95–142 (129–130).

[33] For the liturgical renewal created by the Stoudites, see Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (American Essays in Liturgy), Minnesota: The Liturgical Press 1992, 52–66.

is uncertain.[34] Joseph also seems to have been responsible for the formation of the *Menaion*, a liturgical book containing prayers and hymns for the fixed cycle of the liturgical year, one for each month,[35] as well as a new version of the *Octoechos* or *Parakletike*, which contains prayers and hymns for each day of the week in a cycle of eight weeks that is repeated during the year from the end of Pentecost until the beginning of Lent (then the *Triodion* and the *Pentekostarion* are used).[36] In the *Menaion* for December we find two kanons to St Nicholas of Myra as well as the prelude and first stanza of our kontakion for the morning office (orthros) on 6 December. The truncation of the kontakion from a lengthy hymn to only prelude and first stanza was perhaps a result of the Stoudite reform, probably because the addition of the kanon to the morning offices called for an abbreviation. This reform was also mainly concerning the monastic rite which was yet to fuse with the cathedral rite of Constantinople where the kontakion remained in use at night vigils until the beginning of the thirteenth century.[37]

However, most important for the new additions by Joseph the Hymnographer is his role in promoting St Nicholas of Myra as a saint with the rank of the apostles.[38] In his *New Octoechos*, each day was dedicated to different holy people: Mondays to the archangels, Tuesdays to John the Bapist, Wednesdays and Fridays to the Cross and the Theotokos, Saturdays to the martyrs and Sundays to Christ. Thursdays were dedi-

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[34] 466 kanons are attributed to Joseph the Hymnographer according to E. Tomadakis, see Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 104–105 and n. 8. About 385 of these are considered genuine, see Giannouli, "Hagiography and Hymnography", 291.

[35] Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 105.

[36] Ibid., 110.

[37] On the use of kontakia in the cathedral rite, see Alexander Lingas, "The Liturgical Place of the Kontakion in Constantinople" in: C. C. Akentiev (ed.), *Liturgy, Architecture and Art of the Byzantine World: Papers of the XVIII International Byzantine Congress (Moscow, 8–15 August 1991) and Other Essays Dedicated to the Memory of Fr. John Meyendorff*, Byzantino-Rossica 1, St. Petersburg: Publications of the St. Petersburg Society for Byzantine and Slavic Studies 1995, 50–57. The fusion or "synthesis" of the rites of Jerusalem and Constantinople is complicated, but see Stig Simeon Frøyshov, "Rite of Jerusalem" and "Rite of Constantinople" in: *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, https://hymnology.hymnsam.co.uk/.

[38] Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 110–111.

cated to the apostles and together with them, St Nicholas of Myra. Different prayers and hymns were assigned to each week of the eight-week cycle, which means that the Octoechos contains eight canons to St Nicholas of Myra, seven of which are attributed to Joseph the Hymnographer.[39] There might be a reference to this elevation of St Nicholas to the rank of the apostles in our kontakion:

> You became the apostles' truthful companion, most esteemed one,
> and dedicated yourself to their way of life,
> father Nicholas, wise hierarch. (st. 17.1–3)
>
> Ὀπαδὸς ἀψευδὴς τῶν ἀποστόλων, πάντιμε,
> γεγονὼς τὴν αὐτῶν πολιτείαν ἐζήλωσας,
> Νικόλαε πάτερ, σοφὲ ἱεράρχα

If this is a reference to his role as an apostle-like saint, an elevation Joseph the Hymnographer seems to have been crucial in establishing, one might wonder if the kontakion could have been penned by Joseph himself (he wrote kontakia as well)[40] or one of his collaborators.

However, one more source needs to be addressed. This is the aforementioned *Vita of St Nicholas of Sion* which merged with the life of his older namesake in Myra. The merging of the to vitae is first attested in the *Vita Compilata*, which dates to around 900.[41] The *Vita of St Nicholas of Sion* was written shortly after the abbot of the monastery Holy Sion in Lycia and later bishop of Pinara had died in 564.[42] In two stanzas, our kontakion refers to wonders known from the vita of Nicholas of Sion

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[39] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 364 and Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 111 n. 33. The promotion of St Nicholas might even be due to the fact that Joseph according to some vita was saved by St Nicholas when he was imprisoned by the Arabs on Crete, see Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 102, and for one of the sources Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 455–457.

[40] See Patterson-Ševčenko, "Canon and Calendar", 107; Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode*, 64.

[41] Anrich (*Hagios Nikolaos* II, 311) dates the *Vita Compilata* to somewhere between 860–975, whereas Patterson-Ševčenko, ("Canon and Calendar", 109 n. 27) suggests ca. 900.

[42] Edition and English translation of *Vita Nicolai Sionitae* in I. Ševčenko & N. P. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion*, Massachusetts: Hellenic College Press 1984. Concerning the dating of the vita, see p. 11.

and which are found in the *Vita Compilata* and in the *Vita per metaphrastem* respectively, first is the wonder in the washbasin, where Nicholas (of Sion) stood straight on his feet for two hours,[43] which is shortly referred to in stanza 10.2 "you stood up straight on the feet directly"[44], and the second wonder is just as briefly mentioned and almost allusive:

> So the young man, whom he was about to kill,
> you raised up to life with prayers, Nicholas,
> and gave him back to his own country.
> When the people had seen him,
> they approached you with faith
> and a desire for your blessing, beseeching you fervently (st. 15.3–8)

> διὸ καὶ τὸν παῖδα, ὃν ἔμελλεν[45] ἄφνω
> ἀπονεκρῶσαι, ζῶντα παρέστησας εὐχαῖς σου, Νικόλαε,
> καὶ τῇ ἰδίᾳ χώρᾳ ἀπέδωκας·
> ὅνπερ οἱ λαοὶ κατανοήσαντες
> πίστει καὶ πόθῳ προσήρχοντό σοι
> εὐλογηθῆναι παρὰ σοῦ, καθικετεύοντες θερμῶς

As Trypanis rightly notes,[46] this episode about the young man is incomprehensible without some presupposed vita that the poet is referring to. In the *Vita of St Nicholas of Sion*, the young man is Ammonios, a young Egyptian who is on board a ship sailing to Jerusalem (ch. 27). During the journey on the sea, the devil attacks the ship with heavy winds, but Nicholas calms down the winds with prayers (ch. 30). However, the spar of the mast is broken because of the wind, and so Ammonios climbs the mast to fix it. The devil then throws Ammonios from the mast, killing him. He is raised back to life by the prayers of Nicholas (ch. 31) and brought back to Egypt where the people receive Nicholas with great honour and where he performs more miracles. This wondrous healing account is not found in the *Vita Compilata*, but instead in the *Vita per metaphrastem,* which was written/rewritten by Symeon Metaphrastes in the

[43] *Vita Nic. Sion*. 2; *Vita Comp*. 13.

[44] Gr. ἐπὶ πόδας εὐθὺς ἔστης ὀρθός.

[45] Here we follow a variant reading, see the translation.

[46] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 204 n. 118.

last decades of the tenth century.[47] As the *Vita Compilata* is the earliest account of the amalgamation of the two Lycian saints, it is reasonable to suggest the *Vita Compilata* as a source for the kontakion, which gives us a terminus post quem of 900. Thus highly likely, the kontakion was written in the first half of the tenth century. Trypanis dated this hymn to the second half of the ninth century, but suspected it might be a little later.[48] His suspicion seems justified.[49]

Where Was the Kontakion Composed?

Having established an approximate date for the composition of the kontakion, the question remains where it was penned. Already Cardinal Pitra suggested that it might have been written to be performed at a feast celebrating the saint and possibly in a church dedicated to St Nicholas in Myra, because the city of Myra, "your people" and "your church" are mentioned several times.[50] Anrich is a bit more cautious concerning the exact location.[51] No doubt the hymn was meant to be performed on the feast day of the saint[52] (cf. the prelude and st. 2) which must have been established on the 6th of December at least in the ninth century[53] when

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[47] See Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 363 n. 3, and idem, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 234–267, for the edition of the text and p. 244 for the relevant passage (*Vita per metaphrastem* 9). On the *Menologion* of Symeon Metaphrastes in which this vita is found, see Christian Høgel, "Symeon Metaphrastes and the Metaphrastic Movement" in: Efthymiadis, *Ashgate Research Companion*, vol. 2, 181–196.

[48] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 204.

[49] Scognamiglio also favours a date close to 900, "tenendo conto che la *Vita Compilata* e l'*Encomio* attributo ad Andrea da Creta sono stati composti nella seconda metà del IX sec., bisogna pensare come data di composizione, alla *fine* di questo secolo", Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano*, 19.

[50] References to the city of Myra and "your people" (λαός σου) in pr. 1–3, st. 2.1; 3.4; and 6.9. The strongest support for the assumption that the hymn was written to be performed in a church dedicated to St Nicholas is st. 12.9 "…rescue now also your servants / who cry out in your church: 'Do not forget us…'" (ῥῦσαι τοὺς δούλους σου / τοὺς ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῷ σῷ κραυγάζοντας). If indeed the kontakion was written in and to be performed in Myra, it would bear "touches of local patriotism" which Trypanis mentions as one of the characteristic elements in the hagiographical kontakia, Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, xi.

[51] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 362 n. 3 and 4.

[52] See the prelude, st 2.1; 10.8.

[53] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 464. Perhaps even by the eighth century, ibid. 460.

Joseph the Hymnographer was instrumental in promoting the saint. As at least one other kontakion to St Nicholas was written by an earlier Stoudite and Joseph himself wrote seven or more kanons to the saint, the kontakion may also have originated in a Stoudite environment. Moreover, from around 950 the kontakion had entered the Patmos Kontakarion, which was probably written at the monastery of the Stylite at Mt Latros in Bythinia, not far from Constantinople.[54] A century or more later, the hymn became part of the *Menaion* in an abbreviated from for the orthros service on the of St Nicholas 6th December, a place it still holds today in modern *Menaia*.[55]

The Kontakion on St Nicholas – Structure and Content

That the kontakion originated in a monastic context, possibly the Stoudite monastery, can be deduced from its overall aesthetic character, which is closer to that of the kanons. As mentioned earlier, this kontakion belongs to the encomiastic type, which does not follow the vita of a saint closely. It is rather episodic and thematic and occasionally refers to episodes of the saint's vita accompanied by praise, prayers and exhortations. Compared with the genuine kontakia of Romanos the Melodist, this kontakion is not dramatic, but it shares a common trait which is the connection between the story of the saint's life and the feast that is celebrated.[56] Not only in the prelude, which follows the meter and melody of Romanos' most famous kontakion "Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον"[57], but also in stanza 2 and 3 the word "today" (σήμερον) is used to connect the life and deeds of St Nicholas with the celebrating congregation.[58]

On a structural level, it also resembles the kontakia of Romanos the Melodist in that it has a prelude announcing the theme and the refrain,

[54] Arentzen & Krueger, "Some Observations", 648.

[55] For instance in *Μηναία*, Τόμος Β, Rome 1889, 401. A newer version of the Menaia was not ready accessible to me at the moment of writing.

[56] See Giannouli, "Hagiography and Hymnography", 291–293 and especially 304–307. There are examples of hagiographical kanons with stronger emphasis on narrative and dialogue, ibid., 293 n. 49.

[57] For this hymn, see *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes* II, 50–77 (SC 10).

[58] Regarding the use of "today", see also my article, "Imaginære rejser ind i de hellige fortællinger – med Romanos Melodos som rejsefører", *PNA* 33 (2018), 61–82 (68–70).

then follows a first stanza where the poet exhorts his audience to praise St Nicholas, then several stanzas dedicated to the story or theme, and then, as is often the case in the genuine Romanos kontakia, the hymn ends with a final stanza in which the poet turns to prayer and exhibits penitence and humility. However, in the kontakion on St Nicholas, the introductory praise and the concluding prayer cover several stanzas, so the structure can be described as follows:

Prelude: Announcing theme and refrain
St 1–6: Exhortation, praise
St 7–20: The encomium to St Nicholas with several episodes from his life
St 21–25: Concluding prayer with a penitential tone

Concerning the content, it is more or less an expansion of the prelude where St Nicholas is called a priest who cared for his people and saved innocent people from death. In the refrain he is called "the great initiate of God's grace" (ὁ μέγας μύστης θεοῦ τῆς χάριτος).[59] This is an important invocation as it deals with his role as a priest initiated in the mysteries (st. 2, 5, 7, 8 and 19) and having the rank of the apostles (st 17) – he even seems to be compared with the Theotokos when St Nicholas is said to be a vessel of the Holy Spirit and a wonder-bearer (st. 14.8–9).

The poet also several times refers to the priestly role of St Nicholas as one who anoints (μυρίζειν) people with perfume oil (μύρον). This is an obvious wordplay on the city of Myra (Μύρα), but has also to do with chrismation and the grace distributed in that ritual (st. 6, 9 and 25).[60] Especially in stanzas 9 and 25, the poet elicits strong affective and olfactory imagery when he asks for the perfume oil to cover with fragrance "the stinch of grave sins" (δυσῳδίᾳ ἁμαρτημάτων χαλεπῶν, st.

[59] On the function of the refrain in drawing in the congregation in the performance of the kontakion, see Thomas Arentzen, "Voices Interwoven: Refrains and Vocal Participation in the Kontakia", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 66 (2016), 1–10, and my contribution on the narratological concept of metalepsis by the use of the refrain in Eriksen, "Imaginære rejser", 81–82.

[60] This kind of wordplay is very typical of the hagiographical hymns in general, mostly on the saint's name though, see Giannouli, "Hagiography and Hymnography", 304.

9.8) and "my whole stinking heart" (τὸ τῆς καρδίας μου δυσῶδες ἅπαν, st. 25.6).

In the same stanzas we find what Antonia Giannoulli calls "the modesty topos",[61] which is very common in the hagiographical hymns. In stanza 6.2 the poet uses the almost formulaic "no one can sufficiently express your fame" (οὐδεὶς ἱκανὸς πρὸς εὐφημίαν λέξαι σοι) and in stanza 9 he[62] implores God to give him strength to recount the life of St Nicholas. Finally, in the last stanza, the poet reflects on his lowly status and prays for the saint to receive the very kontakion which he has "woven from helpless lips" (ἐξ ἀπόρων χειλέων ἔπλεξα, st 25.5).

Another stylistic element is the frequent use of apostrophes to the saint, addressing him with his name or other adjectives that pertain to his priestly role. Although Romanos the Melodist will occasionally also use apostrophes to address biblical characters, he normally reserves this heightened mode of expression to addressing God or the Theotokos.[63] The "endless direct addresses to the saints" are a feature of the hagiographical kontakia, that Trypanis found "contrast most unfavourably with the genuine cantica".[64] However, this feature is also found in the hagiographical kanons in the Octoechos or Parakletike which are sometimes called "intercessory" hymns, and therefore the hagiographical kontakia should not be judged by the aesthetic standards of the early kontakia, but by that of the kanons from the ninth century onwards.[65]

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[61] This topos is according to Maas and Trypanis never found in the genuine kontakia of Romanos; Trypanis (from Maas' notes) frowns upon the kontakion on St John of Chrysostom in which the poet uses the modesty topos, which is "completely alien to Romanos, who wrote about the passion of the Lord without any rhetorical mock humility" (p. 191 n. 21). See also Giannouli, "Hagiography and Hymnography", 305 n. 78, but humility was no unknown sentiment for Romanos the Melodist, see Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness. The Practice of Authorship in Early Christian East*, (Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2004, 169–174.

[62] Or she – as the poet still remains unknown.

[63] See especially Gador-Whyte, *Theology and Poetry*, 188–193.

[64] Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, xii n. 22.

[65] See Giannouli, "Hagiography and Hymnography", 293, who also counterargues Trypanis: "the negative opinions on it [the hagiographical kontakia] should be put in context, particularly as the trends developed in later hymnography correspond to new needs and priorities in the Byzantine Church".

Another characteristic of the hagiographical hymns in general is that the saints are compared with characters from the Old and the New Testament.[66] As we have already seen, St Nicholas is compared with the apostles and indirectly with the Theotokos, and among the apostles he is directly compared with Paul (st. 3.5). Several scriptural citations or allusions are from the letters of Paul, but there are also citations from the gospels.[67] However, most comparisons are with important figures from the Old Testament. The patriarch Joseph (st. 16), Moses (st. 5, 7, 15), Aaron (st. 5, 7, 19), Samuel (st. 5, 7), Levi (st. 5), David (8, 19) against Goliath (st 4), Habakkuk bringing food to Daniel (st. 11), Elijah and Elisha (st. 14). Most of these comparisons are made to show St Nicholas comparable to or even surpassing the Old Testament figures – for instance, St Nicholas brings more than just grain to his people compared with Joseph, st. 16.3–9 – and sometimes the comparisons pertain to this priestly role (such as Aaron, Samuel and Levi), sometimes to his fight against heretics and the devil (Moses, st. 15, David, st. 4). The comparison with Habakkuk and Daniel is a bit stretched, as St Nicholas rescues from a death sentence three innocent men in prison, whereas Habakkuk brought food to Daniel in the den.[68] The tertium comparationis here is that Nicholas "completed a similar course" (ἰσόμοιρον δρόμον διατελέσας, st. 11.3–4).[69] Finally, Moses, Elijah and Elisha are used to describe both his initiation in the mysteries (st. 5.3–5) and his death and ascent to heaven (st. 14). Many of these Old Testament types are found also in the encomium of Andrew of Crete, however expanded and adapted to show certain aspects of the life and deeds of St Nicholas.

[66] Ibid., 306–307.

[67] See the notes in the translation where we have mentioned the ones that have caught our and others' attention. There might be more to find for a trained exegetical eye.

[68] A similar idea is, however, found in Romanos, *On the Nativity* I (SC10/MT1) 20.7–8.

[69] See also Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano*, 32–34 n. 30, for a more elaborate interpretation of the comparison with Habakkuk.

On the Translation

The translation was done by the present author and Thomas Arentzen from the basis of a draft translation that we made with a group of colleagues.[70] We have not attempted to imitate the metre, nor the stylistic elements such as alliteration, wordplay or the acrostic of the Greek text. The translation is fairly literal, although we occasionally change the wording as to make it more readable in English.

[70] The draft was made by a reading group connected to the project "Retracing Connections: Byzantine Storyworlds in Greek, Arabic, Georgian, and Old Slavonic (c. 950–c. 1100)". I would like to thank Christian Høgel, Sandro Nikolaishvili, Dimitris Skrekas, Milan Vukašinović, and Marijana Vuković, who provided the rough draft together with us. Also a special thanks to Maria Dell'Isola and Christian Høgel from the Centre of Medieval Literature at the University of Southern Denmark for help with texts in Italian. Furthermore, Arentzen and I would like to thank Christian Høgel for generous help with both translation and accommodation when working on the translation, and Derek Krueger for helpful suggestions. I would finally like to thank Thomas Arentzen for many hours of stimulating translation work and discussion on this piece of a neglected but fascinating world of hagiographical hymnography. Arentzen and I are solely responsible for any typos or errors in the translation.

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen & Thomas Arentzen:

A translation of Pseudo-Romanos, *On Saint Nicholas* (MT77)[1]

Acrostic: PRAISE AND PSALM BY ROMANOS[2]

Prelude
You became a renowned priest in Myra, holy one;
embodying today the gospel of Christ
you gave up your soul for the sake of your people;
you saved from death the innocent ones.
For that reason you are hallowed,
the great initiate of God's grace.

1
People, let us praise this hierarch[3] in song,
the shepherd and teacher in Myra,
so we may be embraced by his intercessions.

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[1] *Kontakion* 77 according to Maas' and Trypanis' numbering. Greek text: P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis (eds.), *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Dubia*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1970, 71–78. The metrical patterns (model stanzas) for the hymn are Τὰ ἄνω ζητῶν for the prelude and Τῥάνωσον for the stanzas. The melody is sung in the second mode or ἦχος β'. For more on the rhythmic and musical structures of the *kontakia*, see Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 210–211.

[2] ΑΙΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΨΑΛΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΡΩΜΑΝΟΥ.

[3] Term for describing high ranking clergy, such as a bishop or "one who directs in the sphere of the holy" see G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969, s.v. ἱερᾰρχης.

Behold, he appeared completely purified,[4] undefiled in spirit,
bringing Christ an unblemished sacrifice,
a pure one acceptable to God.[5]
For as priest he is cleansed
both in soul and flesh, and thus is truly
a protector and defender of the church,
the great initiate of God's grace.

2
So behold, people, today is the feast of the hierarch;
let us make ourselves shine[6] by celebrating brightly
and sing a hymn to Christ the savior!
Christ glorified him with glory and left among mortals
a great luminary shining for all.
As a priest of his mysteries,
as a worker full of devotion
you showed yourself, both a marvelous guardian of the orphans
and a protector of widows. And you intercede for all,
the great initiate of God's grace.

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[4] We translate the word καθάρσιος as synonymous with καθαρός, i.e. that in a passive sense St Nicholas is purified, rather than the more active sense of the word as "cleansing" or "purifying". Scognamiglio does the same in his translation, suggesting that this purified state refers to asceticism and thus probably an influence from the *Vita of Nicholas of Sion*; see P. Rosario Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano Melode* (Studi e testi 1), Bari: Levante 1985, 22 n. 9. Regarding the *Vita of Nicholas of Sion*, see note 24. Furthermore, the word καθάρσιος is not found in the genuine kontakia of Romanos.

[5] Heb 9:14.

[6] In Greek λαμπρυνθῶμεν, λαοί, perhaps an allusion to the irmos of the first ode of the *Paschal Canon* of John of Damascus, "Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα, λαμπρυνθῶμεν, λαοί". We have moved λαοί to the previous line. On the *Paschal Canon* by John of Damascus, see Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1961, 206–216. See also Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene. Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, 258–268. The first lines of this irmos (first model-stanza of an ode in a kanon) are probably borrowed from *Oratio* 1.1 (*In sanctum pascha et in tarditatemi*) by Gregory of Nazianz: "Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα, καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ δεξιὰ, καὶ λαμπρυνθῶμεν τῇ πανηγύρει" in Gregoire de Nazianze, *Discours 1–3,* Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Jean Bernardi (SC 247), Paris: Cerf 1978, 72.

3
Today the hierarch took up a weapon of victory,[7]
the cross of Christ; he struck down the lawless
and saved innocent men from punishment.[8]
He shared its glory with Myra as divine rewards,
as Paul also shared[9] the commands
with everybody.[10] Completely purified,
he joined the heavenly choir
performing the divine song. He dazzles those on earth
with rays of blood, even though he died in body,
the great initiate of God's grace.

4
The good shepherd called upon the lambs;
he gathered them alive and enclosed them in the sheepfold.[11]
And having snatched them away from the enemy
he wounded with a solid slingshot everyone's adversary.

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[7] Perhaps also a very subtle allusion to the name of the saint, which etymologically is a composition of the words νίκη (victory) and λαός (people), one who is the "victory of the people", see Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano*, 46 n. 52. The wordplay is taken up in other hymns for St Nicholas on his feast-day in the *Menaia*, for instance in one of the stichera prosomia for Great Vespers on 5 December, see *Μηναία*, Τόμος Β, Rome 1889, 401 ("Νίκη, φερωνύμως ἀληθῶς, τοῦ πιστοῦ λαοῦ ἀνεδείχθης", "Truly bearing the name, you showed yourself as victory of the faithful people"). Unfortunately, a newer edition of the *Menaia* was not readily accessible at the moment of writing.

[8] The "innocent men" can refer to St Nicholas' saving actions in general, and in particular to *Praxis de Stratelatis* 5–9, where St Nicholas saves three innocent men from being executed just as the executioner is about to chop their heads off with a sword, cf. the edition by Gustav Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heiligen Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche,* Band I: Die Texte, Berlin: Teubner 1913, 68–71, as well as the three generals (stratelates) who are put unjustly in prison because of a false accusation of high treason, *Praxis de Stratelatis*, 14–25, ibid., 72–77.

[9] Perhaps a reference to Rom 1:11, where Paul longs to "share some spiritual gifts" (NSRV) ("ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν", NA28) with the Romans.

[10] We follow the reading suggested by Trypanis who deletes θεῖα ("divine") and ἔπειτα δὲ νῦν ("but now then") in that line because it does not fit the metre, see Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica dubia,* 122 apparatus.

[11] John 10:1–18.

He himself gained victory, then,
just as David against Goliath
killing with a stone, and he struck down
all deceitful heresies – those of Sabellius the terrible,
Nestorius, Arius, and the other founders of heresy[12] –
the great initiate of God's grace.

[12] The "heresiarchs". Term used for "leaders" or "founders" of heresies, Lampe s.v. αἱρεσιάρχης. Trypanis sees in this verse a further proof that the hymn cannot be by Romanos: the sixth century Melodist would never include Nestorius among the heretics that St Nicholas fought against, he argues: "No matter how inadequate Romanos' theological training may have been (…) he would hardly have made such a mistake", Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica dubia*, 204. n. 199. Scognamiglio likewise claims that the inclusion of Nestorius reveals a much later poet than Romanos, one with a poor training in dogmatics and history ("dalla formazione dogmatica e storica piuttosto superficiale"), who included the name for metrical causes, Scognamiglio, *Inni di Romano*, 26 n. 17. In the *Vita per Michaëlem*, only Sabellius and Arius are mentioned (*Vita per Michaëlem*, 27–29, Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 125–127) and the same goes for the encomium of Andrew of Crete (*Encomium Andreae Cretensis*, 5, ibid., 423–424). However, in both cases the authors also condemn the heresies going against the dogma of the two natures in one hypostasis. The author of *Vita per Michaëlem* adds an explanation that clearly reflects the decisions of the sixth ecumenical council (680–681) which says that Christ has two separate wills and energies (*Vita per Michaëlem*, 27, see also Lothar Heiser, *Nikolaos von Myra: Heiliger der ungeteilten Christenheit*, Trier: Paulinus Verlag 1978, 138 n. 24); likewise, Andrew of Crete echoes clearly the language of the fourth ecumenical council in Chalcedon, when he lauds St Nicholas for wounding the Arians with the same speer as the heretics who do not understand that the two natures in Christ are neither mixed nor separated (ἀσύγχυτον καὶ παντελῶς ἀδιάσπαστον, *Encomium Andreas Cretensis*, 5 end, see also Heiser, *Nikolaos von Myra*, 138 n. 33. Heiser furthermore hears an echo of the fifth ecumenical council in Constantinople in 553 in the condemnation of the heretics. For an Italian translation, see Scogniamiglio, *Inni di Romano*, 71–78). Against the harsh opinions of Trypanis and Scognamiglio, one could argue that the poet is faithfully following the tradition and the possible sources for the hymn, in which the heresies condemned at Chalcedon 451, Constantinople 553 and Constantinople 680–681 were merely variations on the positions of Sabellius and Arius. Moreover, the poet is already mixing the life of St Nicholas of Myra with his younger namesake from the Sion Monastery. The poet was writing encomiastic poetry, not history, and for the monastic circles in the ninth to tenth centuries from which this hymn most likely emerged it seems reasonable to assume that spiritual truth prevailed over historical accuracy in a liturgical celebration.

5
Visibly putting on the vestment of virtue
as another Moses,[13] great in grace,
you entered the darkness,[14] father Nicholas,
into the innermost parts. Entirely airy, you passed through,
most glorious one, illuminated by divine glory.
And with Aaron and Samuel and Levi,
according to their order,[15] you serve as priest
of Christ the redeemer of all, acclaimed initiate of the sacred.
Thus being in light you congregate with angels,
the great initiate of God's grace.

6
Now is the time to proclaim your divine works of greatness,
but no one can sufficiently express your fame,
because you have emerged as Christ's perfume-vase,[16]
anointing all who run to you with the ointment of grace
of the most Holy Spirit, sacred one,
the ointment of the mind, the ointment that enlightens
those who anoint themselves with this faith
and truly rub themselves with the divine ointment of Christ.
For that reason, hierarch, you are known as the protector of Myra,
the great initiate of God's grace.

7
You appeared as another Moses, most holy one,
when you entered the darkness of wonders, divinely inspired one.

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[13] Ex 28:2.

[14] Ex 20:21.

[15] Heb 5:5–6.

[16] This is among other things an allusion to the sacrament of chrismation, where the faithful are anointed with consecrated perfumed oil, and to the sinful woman who anointed Christ with fragrant oil (Luke 7:36–50). The Greek text iterates words connected to perfume oil (μύρον, "myr-") seven times, connecting it indirectly to the name of the city Myra (Μύρα). Anrich assumes that this wordplay has been borrowed from another kontakion by Theodor the Stoudite, Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* II, 363 n. 5, but there are no direct borrowings.

He received the divine law,[17]
whereas you, father, who received the whole Lord of the law,
divided him with innocent hands,
and shared divine rewards with the faithful,[18]
as you were a priest of Christ,
and stood before God, just like Aaron and Samuel.
Thus you shine forth and illuminate those in faith,
the great initiate of God's grace.

8
Holy to us is the precise teacher
who grants exact insight into his miracles,
the grace of imperceptible wisdom.
To all he apportioned, distributed, gave wealth,[19]
and those who implored he helped fully,
just as the divine father David cries out:
"His horn shall appear in glory
and be exalted with light,"[20] so *he* may be made to shine
with divine radiance and intercede with the Lord,
the great initiate of God's grace.

9
You, good one, who fixed the earth on the waters,[21]
make my mind firm, Lord, in fear of you,
so I may say and do what is beneficial to me
and recount the virtuous life of him who lived in Myra

[17] Ex 24:12–17.

[18] We have chosen the reading of manuscript T (Tauriniensis 11). Trypanis favors the reading in P (Patmiacus 212–213) which has μελέω, whereas T has μελίζω. As the stanza seems to refer to St Nicholas' priestly work, it makes sense to read μελίσαντα as referring to the dividing of bread during the Eucharist. Cf. Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica dubia*, 124 apparatus. For some reason, Trypanis forgot to mention T in his *sigla* (ibid., xix–xx), but the manuscript is described in the introduction to the edition of the genuine hymns of Romanos, see Paul Maas & C. A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica Genuina*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1963, xxvii.

[19] Psalm 112:9 (111:9 LXX).

[20] Ibid.

[21] Psalm 89.24 (88:25 LXX). Cf. also Psalm 136:6 (135:6 LXX)

and who made divine and fragrant ointment[22]
spring forth from his soul like a river
anointing all those who in their souls
have fallen ill with the stench of grave sins
and sweetening the voices and the ways of those who cry:
"The great initiate of God's grace!"

10
Born according to a predictive decree,[23] most saintly one,
you stood up straight, Nicholas, directly on your feet[24]
showing by this that you would trample under foot
the dragon's puffed up pride[25] and hold back
its immeasurable evil, so it cannot advance now
against those who faithfully seek refuge with you
and praise your sanctity
and light-bringing feast,[26] which Christ magnified,
he who called you, father, as priest and shepherd,
the great initiate of God's grace.

11
Habakkuk was formerly sent to the prophet [Daniel]
to bring food in the den, as is written,[27]

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[22] Again, the poet plays with the Greek words for Myra (Μύροις) and perfumed ointment (μύρον).

[23] Possibly a reference to the *Vita per Michaëlem* which relates that Nicholas was born "according to God's plan" (κατὰ θεοῦ βοὐλησιν …τίκτεται Νικόλαος, *Vita per Michaëlem*, 4, Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 115). In the short vita in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, a decree of God (ψήφῳ θεοῦ) is also mentioned. But this decree has to do with Constantine the Great becoming emperor and ending the persecutions, see Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 205, and bears no direct relation with our hymn.

[24] That Nicholas stood straight up on his feet is an influence from the life of Nicholas of Sion, see *Vita Nicholai Sionitae*, 2, in: I. Ševčenko & N. P. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion*, Massachusetts: Hellenic College Press 1984, 22.

[25] The word ὀφρῦς can also mean eyebrow, and lifting one's eyebrow signals pride or scorn. Cf. also Gen 3:15.

[26] The feast of St Nicholas is traditionally celebrated 6th of December, just before Christmas, Christ's Nativity, traditionally the feast of light.

[27] Dan 14:31–39 (LXX).

whereas *you*, godly minded, completed a similar course
when you reached the city in which those condemned
by an unrighteous decision, just like in the den,[28]
were now held horribly in prison,
and as you unchained them from death
you offered them life in place of abundant food;
thus unexpectedly saved they praise you,
the great initiate of God's grace.

12
When they had been delivered from the most unjust slaughter,
those who called upon your tremendous protection, honored one,
taught everyone to call your name when in danger,
and thus to be released from disasters and afflictions.
So rescue now also your servants
who cry out in your church:
"Do not forget about us, father, for to you
we have faithfully entrusted all our spiritual
and bodily care, and to you we sing hymns unceasingly,
the great initiate of God's grace."

13
You became an imitator of Christ in all respects, wise man,
and gave up your soul for your flock, father,
always putting yourself in danger for their sake.
And so all those herded by the staff of your tongue,
hearing your sweet voice,
recognized it and followed you,
turning away from the hostile one,
and they faithfully sought shelter together in your dwellings.
Watch over us all, now, by your intercessions,
the great initiate of God's grace.

[28] This is a reference to the *Praxis de Stratelatis* where the three generals are thrown into prison because of a false accusation of high treason against the emperor Constantine the Great, *Praxis de Stratelatis*, 13–25, Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 71–77. Cf. Dan 6:6–9 (LXX) which also tells about an unrighteous decision plotted against Daniel by satraps and presidents.

14

The Tishbite[29] was once carried in a chariot
but you, father, by your virtues as in a carriage
mounted and ascended into the inaccessible places,
and as another mantle you left your immaculate body,
which has made the sea of sins part[30]
and doubled the rewards
to your servants, just as the power
of the Most Holy Spirit came doubly to Elisha.[31]
You emerged as its vessel, wonder-bearer,[32]
and a great initiate of God's grace.

15

With a figure of the cross,[33] Moses struck Amalek down
as you too with the cross knocked down the devil:
So the young man, whom he was about to kill,
you raised up to life with prayers, Nicholas,
and gave him back to his own country.[34]
When the people had seen him,
they approached you with faith
and a desire for your blessing, beseeching you fervently.
And as you granted them grace, give it also to us,
the great initiate of God's grace.

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[29] I.e. the prophet Elijah; for the chariot, see 2 Kings 2:11.

[30] Elijah strikes and divides the water with his mantle: 2 Kings 2:8.

[31] 2 Kings 2:9.

[32] Here we do not follow Trypanis but the Patmos Kontakarion, which has the word in vocative. This is the first instance in Greek where the word θαυματοφόρος is attested. It serves to accentuate the underlying comparison with the Theotokos and her annunciation. See also Karophilis Mitsakis, "The Vocabulary of Romanos the Melodist," *Grotta* 43 (1965), 171–197 (186).

[33] Ex 17:8–16. The sign of the cross is Moses' staff (ῥάβδος τοῦ θεοῦ, LXX).

[34] The episode is from the *Vita of Nicholas of Sion*, ch. 27–34. We follow the reading of manuscript T which has ἔμελλεν in stead of ἤμελλον in the Patmos Kontakarion (P), see the apparatus to the stanza in Maas & Trypanis, *Cantica Dubia*, 126.

16
You resembled the wise Joseph, honored one,
when you nourished and fed the people,[35]
but greater than the former ones are the current deeds,
for he richly distributed grain to the needy,[36]
while you, father Nicholas of godly mind,
wisely provided the word of Christ's assurance
in the hearts of the poor
by exclaiming "Mortals shall not live
on bread alone!"[37] Thus they faithfully praised you
as great initiate of God's grace.

17
You became the apostles' truthful companion, most esteemed one,
and dedicated yourself to their way of life,
father Nicholas, wise hierarch.
So having become all things to all people, you won all,[38]
always in a strict way pushing
the rich to avoid evil deeds,
while also instructing the poor to endure
the trials with joy and to wait for the reward,[39]
granted by the only merciful one, who glorified you,
the great initiate of God's grace.

18
Bound in the soul by lofty humility,
you never showed yourself, holy one,
angry with your neighbor.
Instead you refused and rejected mildly
the one who joined alien dogma to the faith
when you said to him next:
"Come, companion, let us be reconciled,

[35] *Vita per Michaëlem* 37–39.
[36] Gen 41:46–57; 47:13–26 (LXX).
[37] Matt 4:4, cf. Deut 8:3 (LXX).
[38] 1 Cor 9:22.
[39] Luke 6:20.23; Matt 5:3.12, cf. Luke 6:24.

so that the sun does not go down on our anger!"[40]
Thus you were also revealed as a friend of the Lord,
a great initiate of God's grace.

19
You escaped the filth of life, dressed in chastity,
and – as David the great sings in the spirit –
you washed your hands in innocence, godly minded one,
wanting to go around the altar,[41] which is venerable to everyone,
where you, father, were shown blamelessly
sacrificing the Lamb of God for the whole earth,
as another Aaron not washing his vestment,
but rather wiping off the offences of your most faithful people.[42]
So, hurry and hasten, save us by your intercessions,
the great initiate of God's grace.

20
As the most diligent guardian of right dogmas
you drove those who tried to think differently
out of the Lord's courtyard, hierarch,
and you put them to death by the sling of your prayers;
thus you have also received renown from above;
while alive you appeared before the kings of the earth,[43]
and after your end, as if alive, you arrive
and deliver from trials those who in danger
call your name with faith, for, Nicholas, you are
the great initiate of God's grace.

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[40] Eph 4:26. This is the heretic known as Theognes in the encomium of Andrew of Crete who uses the same citation from Ephesians to show the mildness of St Nicholas, *Encomium Andreae Cretensis* 7, Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 425.

[41] Ps 26:6 (LXX).

[42] Cf. Lev 16 (LXX).

[43] St Nicholas appeared to the emperor Constantine the Great in a dream, *Praxis de Stratelatis* 20–21, Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos* I, 75. The verse may also be a subtle Christological allusion; like Christ he was greeted by the kingly Magi.

21
Do not hesitate to grant your protection, most esteemed one,
to those who with fervent faith are in need of it.
We all habitually put you forward
as protector and rescuer in every trial and crisis,
having experienced your swiftness
and your compassionate affection, holy one,
how, against hope, through dreams,
you rescued from prison men about to be killed
who kept in their memory only your name,[44]
the great initiate of God's grace.

22
Great despondency has now overtaken us
from immeasurable evils, and there is no release.[45]
But to us who are afflicted by despair and approaching Hades,
hasten to give strength, father Nicholas,
and prescribe the medicine of the grace you have in you,
God's blessed one, the sweet potion of repentance,
and relieve us instantly by the safe prospects
of hope, so that recovered we may praise you
as great initiate of God's grace.

23
We have bowed down to earth with both soul and body
and call upon your swift help,
for the sword of death constrains us,
and the bodiless enemies oppress us, holy Nicholas.
Having outrun these, expose as powerless
their treacherous and haughty intention

[44] Again a reference to the *Praxis de Stratelatis*, 18–21. In the prison, one of the generals, by the name of Nepotiaons, remembers that the generals witnessed how St Nicholas saved the three men from execution in Myra (cf. st. 3 n. 8) and subsequently these three call upon his help. Then St Nicholas appears in Constantine's dream and reveals that the accusation is false and that he should release the prisoners immediately.
[45] Ps 72:4 (73:4 LXX).

by raising up the horn of the lowly[46]
among all who are faithfully praising your most holy feast
from the love of their hearts and are calling your name,
the great initiate of God's grace.

24
Nobody ever invoked you in their trials
without immediately receiving release, holy one.
Neither those at sea nor those on land
you cease saving at any time, you who are empowered
by the One who alone created all,
the God who now has given strength
to his servants, as the prophet
cries out loudly: "He will fulfill the will
of those who fear God."[47] And you are yourself one of them,
the great initiate of God's grace.

25
You do not accept a material crown, honored one,
for you were given the victory[48] prize
from God's hand, father Nicholas.
But as you are always full of love, receive this hymn,
which I have woven from helpless lips;
fill my whole fetid heart
with the fragrance of your prayers,[49]
and water my mind with showers of the divine spirit,
so that you are glorified always, in ages and for ages,
the great initiate of God's grace.

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[46] Ps 148:14 (LXX). Here we disregard the comma inserted by the editor. Scognamiglio (*Inni di Romano*, 45) translates κέρας (horn) as "power" ("along with many modern versions" he states, p. 30 n. 25), keeps the comma and reads "ταπεινῶν κέρας" as an apostrophe meaning "(you), power of the lowly".

[47] 144:19 (145:19 LXX).

[48] Again perhaps a subtle allusion to the name of the saint, see stanza 3 n. 7.

[49] Here again a subtle wordplay on Myra and myron (μύρῳ… καταμυρίζων).

RECENSIONER OCH BOKANMÄLNINGAR

Gunnar af Hällström (red.), *Apologists and Athens: Early Christianity Meets Ancient Greek Thinking*. Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens, vol. XXV. Helsinki: Stiftelsen för Finlands Atheninstitut, 2020. 166 s. ISBN 9789526850054.

Denne antologi med indledning og elleve artikler udspringer af et seminar i Athen i 2016. I indledningen præsenterer Hällström antologiens anliggende og artikler (iii–v). Antologien diskuterer tidlige kristne græske apologeter med fokus på deres forhold til Athen konkret (havde flere apologeter hjemme i Athen) og kulturelt (var de præget af den lærdom, som associeredes med Athen). Dette fokus er frugtbart og begrunder i sig selv bogens bidrag til forskningen. Det er derfor overflødigt og dertil misvisende, når Hällström hævder, at flere apologeter sjældent diskuteres i samme værk (fx R. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* 1988; W. Kinzig, "Der 'Sitz im Leben' der Apologie in der Alten Kirche," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 100 (1989), 291–317; B. Pouderon, J. Doré (red.), *Les apologistes chrétiens et la culture grecque* 1998; M. Edwards, M. Goodman, S. Price (red.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* 1999; M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum* 2000; J. Ulrich, A.-C. Jacobsen, M. Kahlos (red.), *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics* 2009; A.-C. Jacobsen, J. Ulrich, D. Brakke, (red.), *Critique and Apologetics* 2009; J. Engberg, A.-C. Jacobsen, J. Ulrich (red.), *In Defence of Christianity* 2014).

Karin Blomqvists artikel, "Reading, Learning and Discussing. Being a Student at Athens in the Early Roman Empire" (1–14), viser, at kejsertidens Athen både reelt (1–6) og i forhold til ry (6–11) opretholdt sin position som læringscentrum. Med udgangspunkt i Gellius og Libanius

skildres byens studenterliv, og Athen sammenlignes med andre læringscentre. Blomqvist fokuserer på retorisk og filosofisk uddannelse. Hun nævner ikke den højere juridisk uddannelse, der trivedes i andre læringscentre. Artiklen giver et fundament for de følgende artiklers diskussion af apologeternes forhold til Athen og dannelse.

I "On the Areopagus Speech and its Reception in Second-Century Apologetics" analyserer Sven-Olav Back talen og dens forhold til tre tidlige kristne tekster (15–27). Sand Gudserkendelse og Gudsdyrkelse er talens fokus (16–19). Back finder ligheder mellem talen, *Kerygma Petrou* og Aristides' *Apologi* men konkluderer, at lighederne skyldes fælles anliggende snarere end direkte afhængighed (20–23). Ifølge Back var Justin den første, der påviseligt brugte talen (23–27). Flere ligheder mellem Justins forsvarsskrifter og talen kan forklares uden henvisning til direkte afhængighed. Men i dialog med tidligere forskning (hvor Justins kendskab til Acta af og til bestrides) viser Back, at *Anden Apologi* 10 trækker direkte på Areopagostalen.

Jerker Blomqvist har tre anliggender i "Apologetics and Rhetoric in the Ad Diognetum" (31–47). Retorik og litterære virkemidler i dette apologetiske skrift analyseres, og Blomqvist konkluderer, at forfatteren var formelt uddannet, også retorisk (33–39). Blomqvist sammenligner dernæst skriftet med Klemens fra Alexandria og Melito (39–41) og konkluderer, at de tre forfattere mestrede tidens litterære og retoriske konventioner (41). Endelig diskuterer artiklen, hvordan kristne apologeter, fx Tatian, kunne kritisere samtidens retorik samtidig med, at de benyttede dens virkemidler (42–44); samme dobbelte forhold til retorik genfindes hos samtidige filosoffer (44).

Dimitrios Karadimas' "Justin's Dialogue with Trypho Revisited: Philosophy, Rhetoric and the Defence of the Christian Faith" (49–67) viser, at Justins dialog var præget af retoriske konventioner og i sær Hermogenes' stasisteori (49–51). Stasisteorien var særligt indflydelsesrig i forensisk retorik. Denne juridisk-retoriske tilgang var frugtbar for Justin, fordi han ville overtale og gendrive anklager (51 og 65). Karadimas' kompetente analyse giver anledning til diskussion af værkets disponering og progression, af dets intenderede læsere og grader af overtalelse (65–66).

I "The Trophy and the Unicorn – Two Images of the Cross of Christ in Justin Martyr's Texts, with Special Regard to Reception History" analyserer Anni Laato Justins forsvar for korset (69–80). Justin henviste til symboler og symbolik i jødiske skrifter, i natur og i hverdagsobjekter (70–73). Hans forsvar rettedes mod jøder og hedninger og kunne ifølge Laato udruste kristne læsere til at gentage lignende forsvar (69–71). Justins forsvar af korset blev ivrigt reciperet (73–77). Endeligt viser Laato, at der er nøje overensstemmelse mellem fortolkning og symbolisering af korset hos tidlige kristne teologer og i samtidig kristen kunst (77–79). Således bidrager Laato til dekonstruktion af den teori, at kristen kunst repræsenterede en mindre normativ kristendom, der afveg fra teologernes.

Nicu Dumitrașcu diskuterer Justins antropologi i "Reconsidering Anthropology: A Note on Soul and Body in the Thinking of Justin Martyr" (81–92). Ifølge Dumitrașcu er Justins antropologi defineret af Paulus men influeret af Platon. Justins antropologi er overvejende todelt. Han lægger afstand til platonske idéer om sjælens præeksistens, at den ved fornuft kan erkende Gud, og at kroppen er sjælens fængsel. For Justin er der positiv samhørighed mellem sjæl og krop; og sjælen har brug for Helligåndens gaver for at se Gud (82, 85–86 og 91). Justin betoner den frie vilje og forkynder opstandelsen med henvisning til Kristus og martyrer (83–84 og 90). Dumitrașcu bedømmer til tider Justins antropologi ud fra en udefineret (ortodoks) norm som "correct", "acceptable" men som udvisende "uncertain grasp" (81–82).

Anders-Christian Jacobsens "What has Athenagoras to do with Athens? A Geography of Athenagoras' Life and Thought" (93–101) fokuserer stringent på antologiens anliggende og diskuterer, Athenagoras' forhold til Athen på to plan. Først diskutere Jacobsen, om Athenagoras, sådan som kristen tradition har hævdet, konkret var fra Athen (93–96). Dernæst diskuterer Jacobsen, om Athenagoras var præget af den dannelse, som forbandtes med Athen (97–100). Jacobsen konkluderer, at Athenagoras "was familiar with, well trained in and firmly grounded in Athenian tradition" (100), men at det fortsat er usikkert, om han i konkret forstand kan knyttes til byen.

Pablo Argárate følger op med "The Doctrine of God in Athenagoras' Legatio" (103–125). De kristne blev anklaget for at være ugudelige. Som forsvar præsenterede Athenagoras de kristnes Gudsopfattelse (104–

106). Athenagoras' Gudsopfattelse var trinitarisk, men hans præsentation fokuserede mere på Gud, end på Helligånden, og Logos' metafysiske dimension fremhævedes snarere end inkarnationen (106–115, 121). Athenagoras' Gudspræsentation var, ifølge Argárate, pædagogisk selektiv og målrettet kejserne og den dannede hedenske offentlighed (119–121). Athenagoras argumenterede derfor med henvisning til den (filosofiske) dannelse, som han delte med sine intenderede læsere, mens han kun implicit brugte jødisk-kristne skrifter (105). Ifølge Athenagoras kan Gud kun erkendes gennem Helligånden og åbenbaring; digtere og filosoffer havde ufuldstændig del heri (108, 116–117).

Serafim Seppäläs "Aristides and Athenagoras of Athens on Angels: From Christian-Jewish Polemics towards Universalism" (127–141) diskuterer Aristides (127–129) og Athenagoras' (136–138) korte udsagn om engle. Seppäläs placerer disse i forhold til udsagn om engle i andre antikke jødiske og kristne tekster (129–136, 138–139). Seppäläs konkluderer, at Aristides' bemærkninger om engle indgik i identitetskonstruktion, mens de for Athenagoras forhandlede forholdet mellem partikularisme og universalisme (139–140). Artiklen formidler et godt overblik over engle i antikke tekster, men der savnes dialog med tidligere forskning (fx E. Muehlberger, *Angels in Late Ancient Christianity* 2013). Litteraturlisten er på ni værker.

Hällströms "Providence (Pronoia) in the Early Apologists and Creeds" (143–154) indledes med en fin iagttagelse: Tidlige bekendelser og De Apostolske Fædre fokuserer mest på Kristus, mens apologeternes fokus er Gud som far og skaber (143–144). Apologeternes fokus er ifølge Hällström pædagogisk målrettet hedenske læsere (144, 153). Hällström finder dette antydet i *Diognetbrevet* og bekræftet gennem en analyse af apologeternes diskussion af forsynet (144–153). Tanken om forsynet var udbredt i antik filosofi. Hällström argumenterer koncist med henvisning til flere apologeter og bidrager til forståelse af deres sigte og målgruppe. Beklageligvis debatterer Hällström ikke med andre forskere, der diskuterer apologeternes ofte korte og selektive omtaler af Kristus; hverken forskere, der ser et pædagogisk missionerende sigte (fx Engberg, Jacobsen og Ulrich 2014), eller forskere, der finder andre forklaringer (fx J. Bentivegna, "A Christianity Without Christ by Theophilus of Antioch", *SP* 13 (1975)). Litteraturlisten er på syv værker.

I "The Characteristics of Greek Religion According to Origen's Contra Celsum" diskuterer Aspasia Kaloudi hvordan Origenes' værk kan give indblik i Celsus' syn på græsk religion og filosofi (155–166). Ifølge Kaloudis analyse præsenterede Celsus den filosofiske dannede religiøsitet som rationel, lys, lovlydig, bevarende og grundet i tradition. Gud er for Celsus det højeste gode, en ubevægelig ånd, der indeholder alt og er uinteresseret i udannede mennesker, idet kun filosofi giver gudserkendelse (158–161). Origenes' respons diskuteres kort med fokus på, hvordan inkarnationen og Helligånden gør det muligt for alle, også de uuddannede, at få del i Guds natur (162–163).

Den samlede udgivelse klæder artiklerne, og midt under Coronarestriktioner minder antologien os om værdien af seminarer. Antologiens titels verbum, Meets, antyder et tvivlsomt, men næppe intenderet, perspektiv på apologeternes forhold til "Athen". Antologien viser, at apologeterne gjorde mere end at møde og til lejligheden (41) gøre sig bekendt med (12) "Athens" lærdom. Nej, apologeterne verden var gennemsyret af den græske dannelse, som de selv var opvokset og oplært i. For de fleste apologeter var det først sekunderet og gennem omvendelse, at de omfavnede den kristendom, som de satte sig for at forsvare. Mattæusevangeliet 13:52 sammenligner en skriftklog, som er blevet Himmerigets discipel, med en husbond, der tager nyt og gammelt frem fra sit forråd. Tilsvarende præsenterede apologeternes det nye, kristendommen, idet de benyttede sig af den gamle og velkendte græske dannelse. På lignende og glimrende vis bidrager denne antologi med nyt og gammelt til forståelse af de tidlige græske apologeter i forhold til "Athens" lærdom.

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Olof Heilo (red.), *Vägar till Bysans*. Skrifter utgivna av vänföreningarna till de svenska instituten i Athen, Istanbul och Rom. Skellefteå: Norma, 2019. 141 s. ISBN 9789172171237.

Det östromerska kejsardömet existerade i mer än ett millennium, det behärskade, under sin största blomstring, stora delar av Öst- och Sydeuropa, Nordafrika och Mellanöstern. Konkreta rester av dess storhet är

kyrkobyggnader, fresker, mosaiker och ikoner, och i biblioteken gömmer sig handskrifter med omfångsrika litterära texter från denna period. Likväl har detta rika källmaterial bara i ringa utsträckning inspirerat till forskning i Sverige. Bysantinologi blev här en självständig akademisk disciplin först 1980, när en professur i ämnet inrättades för Lennart Rydén vid Uppsala universitet. En forskningstradition med huvudsaklig inriktning på hagiografi etablerades där, och den fortsattes under Rydéns efterträdare från 1996, Jan Olof Rosenqvist. Efter hans pensionering tillsattes Ingela Nilsson 2010 som professor i ”grekiska, särskilt bysantinsk grekiska”, dvs. med ett vidare ansvarsområde än företrädaren. Sedan 2019 är hon föreståndare för det svenska forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul som inrättades 1962. Det är i första hand inriktat på forskning kring Turkiet och Mellanöstern men stöder också bysantinologin (se institutets hemsida: https://srii.org). Nilsson är den första bysantinologen som varit dess föreståndare.

Boken som presenteras här kan ses som ett försök att öppna vägar för en vidare svensk publik till den forskning som numera pågår i Sverige kring det imperium där Konstantinopel var huvudstad. Bokens redaktör Olof Heilo är biträdande föreståndare vid Istanbulinstitutet, och övriga bidragsgivare är svenska forskare med olika specialiteter. Heilos inledning är en översikt över de bilder av Bysans som förmedlats i svensk litteratur – både skön- och fack-litteratur – under 1900-talet. Vid sidan av poeter som Gunnar Ekelöf och Hjalmar Gullberg är det främst Sture Linnér som lyfts fram. Han gav ut flera populärvetenskapliga framställningar av den bysantinska världen, och det är helt i sin ordning att *Vägar till Bysans* dediceras till hans minne och att bidragsgivarna upprepade gånger nämner hans namn, samtidigt som det påpekas att nyare forskning inte alltid bekräftar Linnérs uppfattningar.

De nio essäer som utgör bokens huvuddel tar upp vitt skilda aspekter av den bysantinska kulturen, i ungefärlig kronologisk ordning. I den första behandlar Ragnar Hedlund förvandlingen av det ursprungligen grekiska Byzantion till den kristna kejsarstaden Konstantinopel. Att det i bokens titel står Bysans – en försvenskning av det grekiska namnet – och inte Konstantinopel eller Istanbul är en påminnelse om att staden från början var grekisk. Men redan under Septimius Severus regering (193–211) hade stadsbilden fått romerska inslag i form av badhus, stadsvillor och hippodrom, och Konstantin och hans efterträdare verkar ha

strävat efter att dölja stadens grekiska historia – liksom den nuvarande turkiska regimen gärna vill bortse från Istanbuls förislamiska anor. När Rom spelat ut sin roll som imperiets huvudstad tog Kontantinopel över, och på Justinianus tid (527–565) var det Medelhavsvärldens största stad. Invånarna, grekiskspråkiga och andra, kallade sig dock fortfarande romare (*Rhōmaioi*).

Slutet för detta östromerska rike blev den turkiska erövringen 1453. Om tiden närmast efter denna epokgräns handlar de två avslutande essäerna i boken. Johan Mårtelius skriver om ”bysantinskt arkitekturarv i ottomanska moskéer” och betonar att maktövertagandet inte innebar ett häftigt brott i den bysantinska traditionen. Den turkiske erövrarens avsikt var inte att förinta kejsardömet utan att bli herre över det, och kalifen fortsatte den siste kejsarens maktutövning från dennes huvudstad. Liksom tidigare i Damaskus bemäktigade sig erövrarna kyrkorna som kultplatser för den nya religionen, och när nya moskéer byggdes, tog arkitekterna i stor utsträckning över design, konstruktion och teknik från sina kristna föregångare.

Anders Cullhed tar upp konsekvenserna av att en stor mängd emigranter sökte sig västerut i Europa under imperiets beträngda läge och slutliga fall på 1400-talet. I ungrenässansens Italien fanns samtidigt ett nyvaknat intresse för det grekiska, och lärda greker kunde finna elever och gynnare. Ett exempel är filosofen Georgios Gemistos Plethon från Mystra på Peloponnesos. Han var en av de grekiska delegaterna vid unionskonciliet i Ferrara och Florens 1438–1445 och fann en lärjungekrets i Florens som han undervisade i platonsk filosofi. Hans grekiske elev Johannes Bessarion blev kvar efter konciliets avslutning och slutade som romersk-katolsk kardinal. Andra emigranter lyckades sämre, och under några årtionden efter 1453 reste ett betydande antal greker runt i Västeuropa, utblottade och på jakt efter egen bärgning eller medel att friköpa familjemedlemmar som hölls i turkisk fångenskap. Likväl, menar Cullhed, hade de sammantaget ett inflytande som gör det möjligt att konstatera ”att de bysantinska emigranterna kom att spela en roll för renässansens och den tidiga modernitetens Europa som är svår att överskatta.”

Gemensamt för de övriga bidragen är att de betonar den kontinuitet som präglar övergången från antik till medeltid och visar på förbindelselinjer mellan öst och väst. Samuel Rubenson redogör för resultaten

från ett större forskningsprogram som han ledde vid Lunds universitet. Han visar att de enkla munkarna i den bysantinska världen inte var så obildade som eftervärlden ofta föreställt sig. Med exempel särskilt från egyptiska kloster kan Rubenson visa hur den antika lärdomstraditionen vårdades och levde kvar även i denna miljö.

I sin egen essä betonar Olof Heilo den gemenskap på den andliga odlingens område som trots allt hela tiden fanns mellan Bysans och Islam. Att ange en bestämd tidpunkt för ”antikens slut” är omöjligt. Förändringar sker naturligtvis, men de sker gradvis, och mycket bevaras. Snarare har man anledning att tala om ”renässanser”, t.ex. på 800-talet eller 1200-talet, då bysantinarna särskilt lyfter fram och omhuldar det förflutnas betydelse för nutiden.

David Westbergs bidrag har ett liknande tema och tar upp bevarandet av ”lärdom och minne” i det kristna Konstantinopel. Hans utgångspunkt är den märkliga *Ceremoniboken* som sammanställdes av kejsar Konstantin VII vid mitten av 900-talet i syfte att för all framtid bevara de former för kejsarmaktens utövande som hade fått traditionens helgd.

Helena Bodins essä visar hur den antika litteraturens locus amoenus – idealbilden av en behaglig plats i naturen med skuggande träd, mjukt gräs, blomdoft, svalkande vind, cikadors sång och porlande vatten – lever vidare både konkret i bysantinsk trädgårdskonst och i idén om det förlorade paradiset och i hymndiktningens bildspråk kring Gudsmoderns gestalt.

Theodoros Metochites skrifter från 1300-talets början, som behandlas av Karin Hult, blir till klagosånger över det elände som drabbat ”Romarriket”, som det fortfarande kallas. Även för honom är minnet av den forna storheten levande men blir i den rådande situationen inte en källa till stolthet och tröst utan närmast en plåga.

Spår av influenser från Bysans i medeltidens västeuropeiska litteratur har traditionellt antagits vara närmast obefintliga. Ellen Söderblom Saarela vill nyansera bilden och framför försiktigt hypotesen att vissa myndiga kvinnogestalter i franska riddarromaner har en förebild i kejsardottern Anna Komnena.

Boken saknar index, vilket kan beklagas. Den är illustrerad med ett femtiotal välvalda foton och andra bilder samt med en serie kartor som visar de bysantinska och ottomanska imperiernas utbredning under olika perioder. Boken vänder sig till en publik av icke-specialister, och

läsaren behöver inte mycket förkunskaper om bysantinsk historia för att kunna ta del av innehållet.

I äldre svenska framställningar – t.ex. i flertalet av dem som Olof Heilo nämner i bokens inledning – var författarens utgångspunkt att Bysans är något främmande och annorlunda, och särdragen som skilde det från Västeuropa betonades. *Vägar till Bysans* betonar istället kontinuiteten från antiken till medeltiden och pekar på de öst–västliga förbindelser som hela tiden förekom samt på den betydelse som den bysantinska lärdomstraditionen haft för Europa även efter Konstantinopels fall.

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Christian Thrue Djurslev, *Alexander the Great in the Early Christian Tradition*. Classical Reception and Patristic Literature. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 240 s. ISBN 9781788311649.

Antiken släpper inte sitt grepp om eftervärlden. Många gestalter från den antika världen återutnyttjas i olika historiska sammanhang, och att studera receptionen av gestalter, begrepp och händelser har blivit ett stort forskningsfält. Den här föreliggande volymen ingår i en serie, Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception, som en av till dags dato 20 volymer. Det lär inte vara slutet av serien, med tanke på det rikhaltiga material som ställer sig till förfogande.

Få antika gestalter har haft sådan genomslagskraft i eftervärlden som Alexander den store, och i motsats till mycket annat i antikens värld har han inte bara varit en angelägenhet för västvärlden. Redan under hans korta livstid blev hans liv och gärningar föremål för skriftliga beskrivningar, böcker som inte längre finns bevarade men som i sin tur gett upphov till litteratur som levt vidare. Mest känd av denna litteratur är förmodligen Curtius Rufus' *Historiae Alexandri Magni* från första århundradet e. Kr., ett verk som har varit oerhört läst och spritt genom seklerna. Något senare har vi författare som Plutarchos, Arrianos och Justinus. I dessa skrifter kan man spåra delar av det förlorade författarskapet från Alexanders samtida som också var ögonvittnen till händelserna. Man kan urskilja två olika linjer i framställningarna: en mer

realistisk-saklig, och en där händelseförloppet interfolieras av anekdoter, exkurser och fantasterier. Det är denna senare typ som har gett upphov till den s k Alexanderromanen, det verk med en salig blandning av historisk verklighet och rena anekdoter som tillkom på 300-talet e. Kr. och gick under Kallisthenes namn. Romanen uppnådde en otrolig popularitet och stoffet fördes över till otaliga andra språk och kulturkretsar, med olika former av kulturella adaptationer, tillägg och inkorporeringar av annat material. Ännu på 1800-talet gjordes t ex översättningar till bulgariska. Alexander, både den historiske och den mytiske, kunde användas för att ge uttryck för olika ideologiska förhållningssätt. Vi har exempel från vår egen historia, när drottning Kristina skriver utförligt om Alexanders härskargestalt i Les sentiments heroïques (och tar sig tillnamnet Alexandra efter sin abdikation, en reverens till påven men kanske också ett sätt att associera sig med förebilden Alexander), eller i Karl XII:s identifikation med Alexander. Det är också välbekant att Alexander figurerar i bibliska sammanhang, framför allt i Daniels bok.

Därmed närmar vi oss temat för den föreliggande boken, receptionen av Alexander i tidigkristen tradition. Boken är en reviderad version av författarens doktorsavhandling från 2016. Den kronologiska ramen är mitten av andra århundradet e. Kr. fram till Konstantins regeringstid, i huvudsak alltså författare från den antenicenska epoken. Det empiriska materialet är den kristna litteraturen, inklusive heretiska rörelser, i dess olika former. Författarens syfte är att ge en holistisk bild av Alexanderreceptionen, baserat på analys av förekommande *topoi*. I introduktionen presenteras fyra övergripande frågeställningar med underavdelningar: hur inpassar de kristna Alexander i en ny kulturell kontext; vilka metoder använder de för att utsmycka sin framställning; hur samverkar Alexander i den kristna traditionen med samtida ickekristna framställningar; finns det något unikt ”kristet” i den litterära traditionen kring Alexander i tidigkristen tid? Frågeställningarna genomarbetas i fyra kapitel. Det första är ett bakgrundskapitel som presenterar de behandlade författarna. Kapitel två behandlar tre teman kring Alexander: hans utbildning, hans brev och hans önskan om apoteos. Kapitel tre undersöker den kristna användningen av alexandermotiv från den hellenistiska judendomen. Tyngdpunkten ligger här på historier om judar i Alexandria, referenser i Gamla och Nya testamentet,

samt Josefus. I kapitel fyra studeras alexanderrelaterade motiv i historiografi och retorik, med en avslutande studie av jämförelser mellan Alexander och nyckelpersoner som Paulus och Konstantin den store. Kapitlet Conclusion sammanfattar resultaten i de föregående kapitlen, men sätter också in dem i ett större perspektiv på förhållandet mellan kristenheten och Alexandertraditionen.

Detta är en bok som präglas av stor lärdom. Författaren rör sig obesvärat med ett stort antal källor från den aktuella perioden och hanterar dem med säkerhet. Han är också väl inläst på tidigare forskning. Avståndet mellan vad han kritiserar i tidigare forskning och säger sig själv vilja göra är inte alltid så uppseendeväckande stort, så t ex på s. 37 där han säger att han vill visa hur de kristna ”generally used the stories to counter greater points made by intellectual opposition”, men här finns en god ambition att vidga förståelsen av den tidigkristna Alexanderanvändningen.

Naturligtvis finns det en del frågetecken till texten. Det är inte glasklart varför avsnittet om den kristne filosofens klädedräkt inordnas under tematiken ”Alexander’s education” (kap. 2). Användningen av begreppet identitet i detta sammanhang kunde ha problematiserats: ”identitet” är något som började användas som analysbegrepp först i mitten av 1900-talet, och för antikens människor handlade frågeställningarna snarare om tillhörighet – till en släkt, en religion, en stad eller stat. Jag undrar något över uppgiften sid 84 att Octavianus skulle ha brutit näsan av Alexanders kropp vid sitt besök vid graven – något sådant står inte att läsa i den Suetoniuspassage som utgör referensen i texten. På sid 121 dateras den s k betarecensionen av Alexanderromanen till slutet av 400-talet utan närmare motivering, medan forskare som arbetat med texten, t ex utgivaren Leif Bergson, inte menar att texten kan dateras med större säkerhet än mellan 300 och 550 e. Kr. Origenescitatet på sid 131 säger inget om Alexanders vrede. Det holistiska förhållningssättet som författaren deklarerar att denna studie representerar uppfylls väl inte helt och fullt, något som också är närmast en omöjlighet med en så spridd och mångfaldigt rekonstruerad gestalt som Alexander är. Skillnaden i återanvändningen av den historiske och den mytiske Alexander är inte alltid tydliggjord. Som helhet är det dock ett imponerande antal aspekter av ”den tidigkristne Alexander” som behandlas, och genomgående på ett mycket kompetent sätt.

Boken har flera tilltalande drag. Ett viktigt sådant är att den är omsorgsfullt korrekturläst, och läsningen störs aldrig av tryckfel. Noggrannheten gäller även de latinska och grekiska citaten. Ett trevligt drag är också att författaren emellanåt drar fram receptionsperspektiven ända till modern tid, utan att göra något större nummer av detta. De fungerar helt enkelt som en liten krydda i helhetsanrättningen. Sammanfattningsvis är denna bok ett gott tillskott inte bara till förståelsen av alexandertraditionen generellt och dess kristna kontext speciellt, utan också till förståelsen av samspelet mellan kristet, judiskt och pagant i fråga om litteratur, retorik och kulturyttringar under den dynamiska period som den tidigkristna antiken utgör.

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Mattias Brand, *The Manichaeans of Kellis: Religion, Community and Everyday Life*. Doktorsavhandling, Universiteit Leiden, 2019.

Boken är Mattias Brands doktorsavhandling som försvarades 10 april 2019 vid universitetet i Leiden, Nederländerna. Den förväntas publiceras i serien Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies vid Brill. I avhandlingen behandlar Brand material från ett mycket betydelsefullt textfynd i Kellis, dagens Ismant el-Kharab, i oasen Dakhleh som ligger cirka 350 kilometer från Nilen i den västra egyptiska öknen. Kellis grävdes ut under perioden 1977–1987, men materialet har tagit tid att publicera och det var först 2014 som den andra volymen med dokumentära koptiska texter publicerades. I gengäld är utgåvorna vid Oxbow Books oerhört välgjorda och en veritabel guldgruva för den som är intresserad av manikéism i 300-talets Egypten. I Kellis möter vi manikéer i olika sorters material. Vi har litterära texter såsom psalmer, bokföring i ett manikéiskt kloster samt dokumentärt material. Det sistnämnda består av brev där vi får inblickar i det manikéiska vardagslivet. Genom detta material har manikéismen klättrat ned från ismernas abstrakta sfär till den konkreta verkligheten. Det är första gången vi har tillgång till gnostikers vardag och kan se hur religiös hängivenhet samsas med vardaglig

pragmatism. Manikéerna lever i en miljö där det även finns pre-ortodoxt kristna och anhängare av den traditionella egyptiska religionen, och genom det vardagliga materialet ser vi hur den gränsöverskridande verkligheten påverkar manikéisk praxis (se exempelvis Jörgen Magnussons ”Mat och Manikéism” i *Religion och Bibel* Vol. 71–72, Uppsala: Nathan Söderblom-sällskapet, 2018, 73–98 som Brand även bygger på i kapitel sex). Brands arbete är ett viktigt bidrag till att förstå religiös identitet utifrån vardagen och är på så vis besläktat med Isabella Sandwells utmärkta bok *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Studies of Religious Interaction in the Fourth Century AD*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Vi möter således manikéismen lokalt, men samtidigt som en del av den universella religiositet som manikéismen är ett tidigt exempel på och som även tar sig uttryck i missionerande judendom, kristendom och islam, så kallade utopistiska religioner.

Efter att i kapitel 1 ha givit en översikt av synen på manikéism i modern forskning tar sig Brand i kapitel två an frågan hur antik vardagsreligion kan förstås. Den religiösa antika identiteten förstås som ett kluster av religiösa aspekter varav några i taget aktiveras beroende på den situation som personen befinner sig i. Detta religiöst färgade spektra samsas med andra identiteter och tillsammans bildar de en persons identitet. Det gör att den som studerar vardagsreligion ibland kan dra slutsatsen att skillnaden mellan den levda religionen och det system som personen relaterar till kan vara så stor att man kan underskatta betydelsen av den religiösa läran ifråga. Men enligt Brand som jag håller med kan vi snarare förstå den praxis som återspeglas i Kellismaterialet som exempel på hur den institutionaliserade manikéismen brukas. Även om manikéerna i Kellis använder sig av kristen terminologi, finns det enligt Brand en klart manikéisk grund. I fallet med manikéismen har vi inte bara problemet med hur vardagsreligion kan skilja sig från de förväntningar som dogmer kan ge upphov till; då manikéismen anpassar terminologin utifrån de majoritetsreligioner den möter får vi ett än intressantare problem att begrunda då vi relaterar lokal och utopisk identitet till varandra. Härvidlag bidrar Brand inte bara till konkreta religionshistoriska utredningar av en viss grupp vid en viss tid, utan även till att fördjupa den växande diskussionen kring hur vi ska förstå religiös senantik identitet.

I kapitel tre ger oss Brand en översikt av socioekonomiska data för Kellis. Han drar slutsatsen att kellisborna tillhörde en relativt välbärgad befolkning i en välmående del av det romerska imperiet. Brand går vidare och hävdar att såväl det arkeologiska som det papyrologiska materialet ger vid handen att de brev som återfunnits härstammar från invånarna i husen ifråga. Man kunde ju annars tänkt sig att de kom från andra grupper som korresponderat med kellisborna.

I kapitel fyra möter vi för första gången manikéer från Kellis genom deras personliga korrespondens. Breven i kapitel fyra är från 330-talet och utgör tidiga brev. Makarios och Pamours familjer har goda band såväl till det manikéiska översta ledarskapet i Egypten som till de högsta tjänstemännen i den romerska administrationen i Kellis. Brand lyfter fram att manikéer vid den tiden kunde vända sig till de romerska myndigheterna i händelse av konflikt. På ett intressant och för mig tentativt övertygande sätt kritiserar Brand de läsningar som alltför hastigt tolkat vaga fraser om svårigheter i ljuset av religiös förföljelse.

I kapitel fem tar sig Brand an den svåra uppgiften att tolka uttryck för grupptillhörighet. Ofta har man tolkat manikéiska uttryck för gruppidentitet som sekteristiska, så även med kellismaterialet. Brand sätter dessa tolkningar i tvivelsmål, vilket är klokt. Det är endast utifrån den bredare kontexten som vi kan ta ställning till läsningen av specifika passager. Å andra sidan kan enskilda passager vara sekteristiskt färgade, även om majoriteten av dem inte är det.

I kapitel sex går Brand igenom texter som har med gåvor att göra. Det som särskilt fångat Brands intresse är en så kallad agapehögtid. Tidigare har forskningen knutit denna måltid till den rituella måltid som de utvalda skulle förtära. Men då de utvalda mestadels verkar ha varit stadda på olika resor är det ingen tillfredställande förklaring. Istället utvecklar Brand mitt förslag att agape syftar på en kombinerad bema- och påskhögtid. Agapemåltiden förekommer endast i dokument från årets första fyra månader. Om bema och påsk kunnat kombineras och eventuellt firats med kristna är det ett intressant exempel på hur lokal praxis kan skilja sig från doktrinära påbud.

I kapitel sju bygger Brand vidare på temat religiösa sammankomster. Kellismaterialet ger inga tydliga indikationer på regelbundna religiösa sammankomster, men vi har anledning att anta att bön och sång var viktiga inslag i den manikéiska vardagen.

I kapitel åtta behandlas frågan om vad vi kan säga om begravningsritualer bland manikéerna i Kellis. Det arkeologiska materialet tyder enligt Brand inte på att manikéerna begravde de sina på annat sätt än övriga. Men rikedomen av psalmer och annat material som nämner allmosor i samband med dödsfall talar ändå för att det fanns väl utvecklade ceremonier med distinkt manikéiskt innehåll.

I kapitel nio diskuterar Brand den rika bokproduktion som kellismaterialet uppvisar. Mycket tyder på att det förekom ritualiserade högläsningar på syriska. Även om vardagens praktik kan te sig avvikande från det vi hade förväntat oss utifrån dogmatiska verk är den syriska recitationen en klar indikation på hur den lokala manikéiska gruppen knöt an till sin religions ursprung i 200-talets Mesopotamien. Klart verkar också att lekmän kunde producera böcker som man tidigare antagit varit förbehållna de utvalda.

Mattias Brands bok är en värdefull genomgång av ett brokigt och fortfarande sparsamt beforskat material som är av stort teoretiskt och historiskt värde, även för forskare utanför specialiseringen ifråga.

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Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Thomas Arentzen, Henrik Rydell Johnsén & Andreas Westergren, *Wisdom on the Move: Late Antique Traditions in Multicultural Conversation. Essays in Honor of Samuel Rubenson*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 161. Leiden: Brill, 2020. 263 s. ISBN 9789004430693.

The title of this collection of essays in honour of Professor Samuel Rubenson is aptly chosen. It not only reflects the contents of this carefully curated volume, but also propels us through the different perspectives with which to encounter wisdom in each essay. Wisdom is "on the move", according to the introduction, because of the Heraclitean principle of the ever-flowing stream, the constantly changing reality that – whether through historical times or personal rhythms – requires the reshaping of our certainties every step of the way. With characteristic sagacity, this Presocratic maxim encapsulates what its content decon-

structs, demonstrating the tension between wisdom-uttering, with its aura of authority and immutability, and wisdom-acting, with its demands for flexibility, adaptation, and re-interpretation according to changing parameters and circumstances. There is no question that one of the interpretations that this title beckons to is Samuel Rubenson himself, a personification of "Wisdom on the move" both through the travels and displacements that have marked his life, and through the dynamic engagement with scholarship concerning expressions of wisdom in Eastern Christian monastic thought. The introduction and a conclusive biographical note, with a list of Rubenson's extensive bibliography, map out the honorand's journeys in body and mind, while several authors express their sincere tribute to Samuel as friend, colleague, teacher, and inspiration. Wisdom is, indeed, "on the move", but far from directionless.

In reviewing the contributions that cohere into this precious offering, and from which I have learnt a lot, I have chosen not to respect the volume's tripartite structure, the alliterative trio Transmission / Translation / Transition. While these categories have served the editors' ordering of the material well, what interests me more is to see how wisdom emerges from these pages like a glue along Christian history, sealing the cracks between the various components of societies where religion never offered an uncontested or univocal identity. In fact, one could say that today's renewed interest in the wisdom tradition is generated by the same need of finding a common point of convergence across a broad spectrum of metaphysical and philosophical positions, from positivism to mysticism, that appeal to different groups. Wisdom can ignite the "multicultural conversation" to which modern society aspires. And while politically we may not find exact parallels to today's democratic model, sociologically and psychologically the struggle to form suitable cultural tools by which to shape, construct, and manage functional societies is closely reflected in these historical meanderings. The scholarly instruments by which to expose these processes are texts, and the collection of monastic sayings known as the *Apophthegmata patrum* (= AP) is in this context the privileged body around which the story of Samuel Rubenson's dynamic wisdom revolves.

The wisdom-journey readers are invited to undertake really starts with and from the Bible, even though, as Lorenzo Perrone discusses, the

balance between Scriptures and Sayings veers towards the latter in what could sometimes be perceived as a tension (p. 69). Miriam Hjälm's contribution most clearly presents these biblical roots, while already complicating their reception between Jewish, Christian and Islamic scholarship. She quotes these words of Saadia Gaon (882–942): "Any person […] who follows this course of giving his cognitive faculty dominion over his appetites and impulses, is disciplined 'by the discipline of the wise', as Scripture says, *The fear of the Lord is the discipline of wisdom* (Prov 15:33)" (p. 235). Although this Jewish scholar's intent was to refute the Christian interpretation of Scriptures as deficient with respect to both logic and linguistic skill (i.e. knowledge of Hebrew), his appeal to "the discipline of the wise" as rooted in "the fear of God" echoes the starting-point of the monk Cassian in the passage of the *Institutes* analysed by Britt Dahlman (Inst.IV.39, p. 101). For Cassian, straddling bilingual universes and drawing a sure line of continuity between East and West, "fear of God" began the monastic journey of self-introspection and conversion, of separation from the world and acquisition of virtue. The path is marked by practical as well as by spiritual exercises. Cassian's *Institutes* resurface in a florilegium as instructions shaped according to a pattern of school exercises or *progymnasmata*, an elaboration that Dahlman exploits philologically in order to understand the linguistic paths of transmission of Cassian's work. Like Proverbs, these exercises are constituted by memorable, pithy maxims or *chreiai*, which at once fix for the students the verbal rhetorical form and the juice of moral content. It is this broader concept of wisdom, rather than the narrower equation of it with the second person of the Trinity (cited by Hjälm through Abu Qurra's interpretation, p. 230), that most concerns us in this volume.

In like manner, biblical study, form and content constitute the keys with which Susan Ashbrook Harvey penetrates the secrets of the "women's choir" of Syria. Harvey claims that the instruction of these women, as depicted in the *Life of Ephrem*, for example, was not limited to an aesthetic performance to embellish liturgy, but demonstrated these women's contribution as teachers in the church. Harvey compares the fascinating information about such female choirs with the School of Nisibis, whose structured pedagogical activities included embracing a

specific, strict ethos by the student body and following a musical curriculum throughout the course of studies. In this connection, Harvey cites Adam Becker's book about the school, entitled *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom*, wrapping up recourse to this biblical citation that runs like a red thread throughout the volume.

Against this background, it is less surprising that the people who skirt the religious movement in search for God and a meaning to their existence are termed "God-fearers". This marginal and marginalized category plays a role in the study by Karin Hedner Zetterholm on the early fourth-century Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*. While the world of the *Homilies* belongs to the fictional genre of Hellenistic novels, the community it describes may well have had a true historical counterpart where Wisdom played a determinant role in articulating belief and structuring social interaction. According to Zetterholm, the *Homilies* accept two parallel paths to salvation, one through Moses and one through Jesus. Both figures are "prophets of truth", and it is the prophetic content of such truth-seeking endeavour that matters more than the actual beliefs of each group. The Pseudo-Clementines's community is united precisely by this search for Wisdom, and the role of Jesus is primarily that of a teacher who can guide to a deeper understanding of Scripture beyond its literal or historical sense. In searching for a place where the Pseudo-Clementine dual-community might have existed, Zetterholm points to recent archaeological finds in Asia Minor, but the region of Syria and Mesopotamia might well prove a more fruitful hunting ground for such evidence.

The Hellenization of Mesopotamia reminds us that Aristotle, whose definition of "maxim" is expounded in the essay by Denis Searby (pp. 79–80), was tutor to Alexander the Great, whose empire brought Greek civilization – in a version declined and mixed with both Jewish and Oriental elements – to those regions. Interestingly, the area south of the confluence between the Tigris and Euphrates reveals a mixture of influences that make more sense when seen as deriving from an original community that might have been not unlike the one described in the Pseudo-Clementines. As Ute Pietruschka tells us, the region of Basra exhibited the phenomenon of *qussas*, who performed instruction in the faith as bard-like monks. Their stories were sourced from Christian apophthegmatic traditions, adapted for an Islamic setting. Through the

stories of *The Garden of the Monks*, Basra became the cradle of Muslim asceticism in the ninth century. Borderlines were tenuous between these Muslim believers and the Christian lore that they harkened to and used, reaching back to the underlying biblical stratum.

The volume's introduction raises the problem of changes in attribution, noting that these mark the semantic history of a saying and contribute to its shift in interpretation and scope (pp. 2–4). Searby acknowledges this issue through an example where ethnic belonging replaces individual identity as a standard for attribution (p. 79). Pietruschka also devotes some space to this question. As she notes, "Transfer of authorship is a common phenomenon that can be observed in Greek pagan collections of sayings (gnomologia)" which "mingle sayings of Greek philosophers and Christian authorities" (p. 175). In the Arabic tradition, names of the early "renunciants" were added to enhance the credibility of a story (p. 174: an obsession called *onomatomania*) and enable some details about their lives to be reconstructed from sayings, sermons and anecdotes, with some later collections offering short biographies (p. 172). Christian elements could be easily eliminated to produce versions epurated for a Muslim audience, since the contents tallied well with the ideals of Muslim ascetics who also advocated "a humble life agreeable to God, abstinence and silence, and … emphasise the significance of education and wisdom for pious people" (p. 173). Dahlman notes how a *chreia* is characterized by such named attributions, giving it a particular role in the school exercises (p. 103), while Perrone contends with the attribution of sayings within a new body of literature, trying to identify the numerous quotations of *AP* in the writings of Barsanouphios and John of Gaza. While some attributions that grant authority to the sayings are preserved, others experience more radical shifts in focus. Karine Åkerman Sarkissian's essay explores not only problems of attribution within the Slavonic collections of the *AP*, but also more generally the question of whether the origins of the translation rest with Methodius at the very source of Slavic Christianity (125 ff.). Together with Anahit Avagyan's essay on the manuscript tradition of Armenian *AP* and Britt Dahlman's use of the digitized texts of Cassian, Sarkissian's essay showcases the potential results of the Lund database of *AP*, 'Monastica'. For example, Sarkissian can publish some

impressive graphs that establish the connections between these translated fragments across the complex panorama of Slavonic collections (a transliteration of the Cyrillic would have been welcome).

The pair of opening essays homes in on Pachomian monasticism. Peter Toth presents new evidence of an early fragment of the rare *Vita prima* of Pachomios retrieved from a miscellany now in the British Library. This information introduces the reader to the problems of the Pachomian texts that James Goehring expertly analyses in the following essay. Goehring maintains that the later recensions of the Pachomian life become increasingly polemical against Origenist monasticism. At the same time, he identifies a connection between upstream Pachomian foundations along the Nile and the cultural capital of Egypt, Alexandria, and its bishops from the very beginning. Countering the emphasis on the desert in Chitty's pioneering book, Goehring describes the Pachomian federation as interacting with the village communities and trading with "the city" in goods, men, and ideas.

The volume is edited to a high standard, with only a handful of minor typos, and one *erratum* (at p. 109, *Collatio* IV.39 should read *Institutio* IV.39). Besides the index, a more generous apparatus of cross-references may have helped the reader draw some exciting links between the various contributions. I have attempted to highlight some of these connections in this review, though many more are possible. I hope I have not sacrificed too much of the content in doing so, and I am pleased if in some way I have managed in this way to contribute to the appropriate celebration of the Festschrift's honorand. In the current pandemic, the title, so well chosen in a different context, has acquired a peculiarly ironical ring. Wisdom on the move has become wisdom at a standstill. But precisely in this circumstance do we need to adapt the wisdom received, and thus transform it again, making it move, and letting it move us. Monastic *hesychia* has a lot to offer our society even now, and we owe its availability to the uninterrupted line of practitioners and scholars who have laboured to ensure its survival across centuries. Together with them, Samuel Rubenson takes a well-deserved place that this book fittingly celebrates and enshrines.

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Gösta Hallonsten (red.), *Teologi före Nicea*. Svenskt patristiskt bibliotek, Band VI. Skellefteå: Artos, 2020. 212 s. ISBN: 9789177771241.

For den som arbeider med kristendommens tidlige historie, dukker stadig spørsmålet opp om det finnes gode oversettelser av tidlig-kristne tekster på skandinaviske språk. Utvalget er dessverre begrenset. Artos & Norma Bokförlag har imidlertid over flere tiår presentert oss for godbiter fra patristisk litteratur, oversatt av dyktige fagfolk på feltet. Flaggskipet blant disse utgivelsene har etter hvert blitt serien Svenskt Patristiskt Bibliotek, som rommer både fullstendige skrifter og utdrag fra tekster av sentrale patristiske forfattere. Flere av nestorene i det kirkehistoriske og patristiske miljøet i Sverige, med et naturlig nav i Lund og CTR, står sentralt i utgivelsene, både som oversettere og redaktører for de enkelte utgavene. Selv om serien utvilsomt har et populært sikte, er den faglige forankringen med andre ord solid, og med Samuel Rubenson som hovedredaktør borger dette for kvalitet. Utgivelsene har kommet med ujevne mellomrom siden første bind om Gudstjänst og kyrkoliv fra 1999. Ikke minst derfor er det en begivenhet å få et nytt bind i postkassen.

Foruten det nevnte bind I er de tidligere bøkene i serien viet henholdsvis Martyrer og Helgon, Ur kyrkofädernas brev, Bibel och predikan og Munker och asketer. Her dreier det seg altså primært om ulike tverrsnitt fra den oldkirkelige epoken, forbundet ved en tematisk tilnærming.

Serien har nå kommet til bind 6, Teologi före Nicea. Her er altså ikke lenger det tematiske, men kronologiske perspektivet styrende for utvalget. Vi presenteres for et knippe tekster fra tiden før Konstantins maktovertakelse, den arianske striden, og kirkemøtet i Nikea i 325. Utvalget er begrenset, men de mest sentrale teologene fra denne epoken er representert: Justin og Ireneus, Klemens og Origenes, Tertullian og Cyprian. Til slutt får vi et utdrag fra Pamfilus' første bok i *Apologien for Origenes*. Dermed knyttes også forbindelsen frem mot Eusebius og tiden etter Nikea, og Origenes-debattene som skulle komme til å stå så sentralt i de teologiske avklaringene i århundrene som fulgte.

Når det gjøres plass til et utdrag fra dette historiske forsvaret for Origenes mot urettmessige anklager, misforståelser og feillesninger, i tillegg til oversettelsen av Origenes' *Dialog med Herakleides*, bidrar det

kanskje også samtidig til en liten, men viktig balansering i skandinavisk – og ikke minst – i en Lund-kontekst. Det er svært mye vi kan være takknemlig til det fremragende Lund-miljøet for gjennom generasjoner. En adekvat lesning av oldkirkens kanskje mest innflytelsesrike teolog har nok dessverre historisk sett ikke alltid kunnet regnes til denne takknemlighetslisten. Mye har skjedd i det faglige miljøet de siste tiårene. Likevel har generasjoner av skandinaviske teologer blitt preget av Nygrens lesning, og ikke minst av Hägglunds presentasjon i *Teologins Historia*, en systematisk og velordnet fremstilling som stadig er aktuell som pensumbok ved teologiske utdanningssteder. Om Nygren leser Origenes med en viss sympati, er forståelsen av hans platonisme neppe fyllestgjørende. Hos Hägglund blir Origenes' knefall for platonismen nærmest for et Salomo-fall å regne; en fremragende kristen intellektuell som går seg vill i fremmed lære.

Det er mulig å lese Gösta Hallonstens (redaktøren for det aktuelle bindet) omtale i innledningen som en taktfull visitt til Hägglund her. Den korte introduksjonen til Borgehammars oversettelse av *Dialogen med Herakleides* lyder også som et ekko av den gamle oppfordringen fra Henri de Lubac om å «see Origen at work».

Selv om denne dialogen ikke kan regnes som en sentral Origenestekst, (strengt tatt er det heller ikke en Origenes tekst, men en – angivelig – stenografi fra en reell offentlig disputas) gir det mening å presentere den i dette perspektivet. Her får vi et glimt av Origenes som den brilliante tenkeren han var, og hans dype lojalitet mot den kirken han tjente. Teksten fører oss også inn i en teologisk diskusjon i streng forstand, om hvordan vi må forstå forholdet mellom Faderen og Sønnen. På denne måten illustreres Hallonstens poeng innledningsvis, om Origenes som en overgangsfigur fra de tidlige fedrenes hovedsakelig «økonomiske» tilnærming (hvordan Gud handler med verden) til de nikenske fedrenes dreining mot teologi i mer presis mening (om Gud i seg selv, og de indre forhold i treenigheten).

Dette er en tradisjonell skjelning, som enhver leser som befatter seg med tekster fra disse epokene vil kunne gjenkjenne. Det er ingen tvil om at de senere fedrene utviklet et langt mer omfattende teknisk språk og vokabular, og stadig mer utførlig og intrikat diskuterer det teologiske «mysteriet» i seg selv. Likevel kan denne skjelningen etter min mening fremstå kunstig. De senere fedrene hadde ikke tilgang til noe nytt

«åpenbaringsmateriale» som gjorde at de nå kunne legge bak seg «økonomiske» refleksjoner, og konsentrere seg om den indre-trinitariske teologi. Det siste vil alltid være basert på videre refleksjoner omkring det første. Spørsmålet er altså om kristen teologi i streng forstand noensinne er i stand til å bevege seg bortenfor «økonomien». Teologien vil alltid være kontemplasjon og refleksjon over den Gud som handler i denne verden.

Denne diskusjonen omkring teologibegrepet skal ikke videreføres her. Det skal kun konstateres at disse tidlige kirkefedrene med rette presenteres som teologer, på tross av sparsommeligheten i distinksjoner og et presist språk for de indre-trinitariske relasjonene. De opererer på den samme arenaen som deres etterfølgere, om enn med mindre spissede redskaper. Rasjonalet i debattene i det fjerde og femte århundret hviler på de før-nikenske teologenes diskusjoner rundt historie, åpenbaring og inkarnasjon, deres Skrifttolkning og avklaringer i møte med filosofiske utfordringer. De nikenske teologenes utvekslinger om gudsbegrepet baserer seg kort sagt i all hovedsak på de før-nikenske teologenes valuta.

Når det gjelder det konkrete tekstutvalget understrekes det innledningsvis at det er tatt hensyn til hvilke tekster av disse forfatterne som allerede finnes oversatt til svensk. Med unntak av den nevnte Origenes-dialogen er vekten likevel i det store og hele lagt på tekster som kan forsvares som sentrale i forfatterskapene, enten det gjelder Justins *Dialog med Tryfon*, Ireneus' *Mot Heresiene*, Klemens' *Stromata* eller Cyprians *Om den katolske kirkens enhet*. Av Tertullian finner vi utdrag fra hans *Apologi*, *Om Kristi kjøtt*, og *Mot Praxeas*. Ikke minst det siste peker frem mot, og understreker forbindelsen med de senere terminologiske diskusjonene om treenighetslæren.

Stort sett handler det riktignok om smakebiter, i form av utdrag fra de respektive tekstene. Dette er naturlig, gitt det begrensede formatet. Likevel er nok det jeg savner mest med denne utgivelsen en tydeligere kontekstualisering av tekstene vi får servert. Korte og informative presentasjoner av forfatterne innleder tekstutvalgene, men som regel blir det for knapt. Det burde ha fulgt en liten presentasjon av tekstene som helhet, og noe mer utfyllende om tid, sted, og hvordan de relaterer seg til forfatterskapet. Her overlates man i stor grad til å søke andre kilder for utfyllende informasjon. Litteraturlisten bakerst i boken henviser til

noen gode introduksjoner, men denne kunne også med fordel vært noe utvidet.

Når dette er sagt, bidrar som sagt redaktør Gösta Hallonsten til kontekstualisering og verdifulle perspektiver innledningsvis. Oversikten over bredden av teologiske tema og historiske epoker, og den umettelige faglige appetitten hos den mannen er intet annet enn imponerende. Teologi före Nicea er et fint og viktig tilskudd til dette sakte, men sikkert voksende patristiske biblioteket. Det enkle, tidløse og smakfulle designet bidrar til å understreke anbefalingen for enhver med interesse for antikken, oldkirken og teologien om å inkludere serien i sitt bibliotek. Det er vel verd investeringen.

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Matthew D. C. Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 227 s. ISBN 9780190848583.

Recensentens uppfattning om hur skrifter uppstod och cirkulerade under antiken är att det i stora drag skedde som nu, åtminstone före datorernas intåg. Det fanns då som nu en mängd anteckningar och utkast, ofta kallade *hypomnemata* på grekiska och *commentarii* på latin. De var ibland mer eller mindre utarbetade föregångare till verk avsedda att publiceras efter förbättringar av författaren, ibland endast personliga notiser. De fanns i de antika motsvarigheterna till skrivbordslådor och anteckningsböcker. Då som nu utarbetade någon en skrift avsedd att publiceras, satte sitt namn på den och såg till att den kom i cirkulation, d.v.s. var tillgänglig för alla som ville och kunde skaffa sig en kopia. Den stora skillnaden är att tryckpressen uppfunnits, vilket gör att en publicerad skrift förblir oförändrad, eventuellt utkommer i en annan upplaga, som också förblir oförändrad; en handskriven antik text kunde däremot ändras oavsiktligt genom felskrivningar eller förses med ändringar och kommentarer, som ibland avsiktligt, ibland oavsiktligt kom in i texten; detta skedde dock i allmänhet i mindre skala, så att skriften i stort sett förblev den ursprungliga. Larsen lägger däremot vikt vid att det fanns vad som han i sitt andra och tredje kapitel kallar ”Unfinished

and Less Authored Texts" och texter som uppkommit genom "Accidental Publication and Postpublication Revision"; sådana texter kunde bli utsatta för betydande förändringar. Vi kan, med Larsen, tala om "flytande" texter.

Larsen lägger stor vikt vid benämningarna *hypomnemata* och *commentarii*, som vi kan betrakta som ungefär likabetydande. Han menar att dessa benämningar tyder på att de cirkulerade utan författarnamn. Men det finns andra benämningar. Justinus Martyren, 1 *Apol*. 66, 3, talar om "*apomnemoneumata*, som kallas *euangelia*" och som skapats (γενομένοις, ett verb som ofta är passivum till ποιεῖν) av apostlarna. Här har vi skrifter som uppenbarligen cirkulerade med angivande av upphovsmän. (Jag använder av praktiska skäl de traditionella namnen.) Lukianos talar om en skrift som publicerats av en viss Kallimorphos och som egentligen är *hypomnemata*; den kritiseras häftigt just för detta och borde förblivit opublicerad. Problemen diskuteras närmare i det andra och tredje kapitlet, se ovan. Viktiga exempel diskuteras nedan.

Cicero skrev *hypomnemata* om sitt konsulskap och önskade att någon annan skulle skriva ett utarbetat arbete om detta. Han kunde nämligen inte stå med eget namn. Ingen nappade på detta. Larsens uppgift (s. 14) att dessa arbeten cirkulerade är felaktigt: de skickades till enstaka personliga vänner och ingenting visar att de kom längre.

Caesar skrev *commentarii*, men det var ingen "flytande" text som någon kunde fullborda, och ingen försökte. Däremot skrev Aulus Hirtius tillägg till det som fattades. Detta är en helt annan sak än att omarbeta en publicerad skrift. Det är också en annan sak att lägga till ett slut till Markus evangelium; här tyckte man att något saknades.

Den intressantaste författaren i kap. 2 är Galenos. Vi vet att han delat ut anteckningar till elever och att dessa senare kommit i visst omlopp. Därvid har man gjort förkortningar, tillägg, ändringar, och ibland har någon uppgivit sig vara författaren till arbetet. Vi kan här säga att *hypomnemata* blivit "flytande" texter. Galenos säger inget om att dessa skrifter kommit i vidare omlopp, men det kan givetvis vara fallet. Det är också självklart att sådant kan ha förekommit i andra fall, men Larsen kan inte presentera några goda paralleller.

Med "Accidental Publication" menas att skrifter kommit i omlopp utan att författaren avsett det. De intressanta fallen av sådan publicering är stora arbeten som författaren hållit på med under lång tid. Larsen tar

upp Diodorus Siculus och Josefus omfångsrika arbeten. Det är inte konstigt att intresserade personer undrade vad som skulle komma ut av dessa stora företag och försökte skaffa sig en uppfattning. Författarna var inte medellösa: de hade tjänare och skrivare till sitt förfogande. Det var möjligt att med hjälp av dessa få tag på en kopia. Förvånande är att Larsen inte tar upp Augustinus stora verk *De trinitate*, ett av hans huvudverk. Detta fullbordades långt om länge i 15 böcker, men flera av dem hade smugglats ut (*praereptos sive subreptos*) innan de var fullt utarbetade. Augustinus talar om detta i prologen och önskar att de som har de tidigare böckerna skall rätta dem efter den nya upplagan, om de får tillgång till denna.

Arrianos uppger att han tagit *hypomnemata* från Epikuros föreläsningar och sedan publicerat dem. Detta är ett undantagsfall som torde sakna paralleller, och som klart visar den vanliga skillnaden mellan *hypomnemata*, i allmänhet helt privata men här för en gångs skull utgivna. Inget tyder på att texten skulle varit ”flytande”.

Allmänt sett har kapitlen 2 och 3 ingen bäring på evangelierna, bland dem Markus evangelium, som står i centrum för Larsen. I allmänhet bevisar Larsens exempel den exakta motsatsen till det han vill visa. De visar i stället den klara skillnaden mellan förarbeten och publicerade arbeten.

I det fjärde kapitlet, ”Multiple Authorized Versions of the Same Work” vill jag protestera mot att många (”many”; se även s. 100: ”First, textual revision was prevalent in antiquity”) texter existerar i mera än en version (”in multiple versions”). Larsen har i själva verket bara ett fåtal exempel att redovisa när det gäller publicerade verk, främst Diodorus, Josefus och Galenos. För den överväldigande massan av texter kända från antiken finns inga tecken på olika versioner. Larsen redogör för två sådana. Det ena är den s.k. församlingsförordningen (”community rule”) för Qumran. Den finns i flera versioner, men inget tyder på att den var ute bland en bredare allmänhet, vilket ju inte heller är troligt. Det andra exemplet visar att Philodemos, vars arbeten blivit kända från papyrer i Herculaneum, funnits i olika versioner, med vissa förändringar. Att arbetena skulle cirkulerat i olika versioner finns det inga bevis för.

Huvudtanken i det femte kapitlet, ”The Earliest Readers of the Gospel according to Mark”, är att Markus cirkulerade som en ”flytande”

text, och först mot slutet av det första århundradet omnämndes det av Ireneus som en fastställd och publicerad skrift.

Larsen tar först upp Lukas företal, som inte säger något annat än att andra före Lukas ställt samman redogörelser. Vi vet inte vad han syftar på. Ingenting talar vare sig för eller emot ”flytande” texter. Givetvis är Papias viktig. Han beskriver, i början på 100-talet, Markus som en skribent som noggrant skrev ned vad han hört av aposteln Petrus. Detta omtalas som Markus minnen (ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν), nedtecknade utan ordning. De skulle snarast kallas *hypomnemata*, men det betyder inte att de saknade författarnamn eller var ”flytande” texter. Se ovan om Lukianos, som förmodligen skulle klandrat Markus evangelium som *hypomnemata*. Ingenting tyder på en ”flytande” Markus.

Ireneus vittnar som en av de tidigaste författarna om evangelierna som fastlagda skrifter, men han är inte den tidigaste, vilket Larsen hävdar. Justinus Martyren (mitten av 100-talet) är tidigare (som det påpekas av Timothy N. Mitchell i hans starkt kritiska recension i *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62:3 (2019), 644). I 1 *Apol*. 66, 3 säger han: οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ’ αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια, οὕτως παρέδωκαν ἃ ἐντέταλται αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λαβόντα ἄρτον, εὐχαριστήσαντα εἰπεῖν (”i de anteckningar som gjorts av apostlarna och som kallas evangelier, för de vidare det som Jesus ålagt dem, att han tog brödet…”). Detta visar att skrifterna var bekanta och att benämningarna (här *apomnemoneumata*, jämför ovan Papias) var skiftande. Om det saknas tidiga vittnen och man lägger stor vikt vid detta, hämtar man argument *e silentio*, vilket alltid är farligt. Dessa skrifter har gått under den litterära radarn, om uttrycket tillåtes.

Det viktigaste i det sjätte kapitlet, “The Earliest Users of the Gospel according to Mark”, har titeln “The Gospel according to Matthew as Continuing the Gospel according to Mark”. Tanken att Matteus är en fortsättning på Markus bygger på två obevisade antaganden, det första att Markus är en ”flytande” text, det andra att flertalet av de episoder som förekommer hos Matteus är hämtade från Markus. Som bekant är synoptikernas inbördes förhållande till varandra omdiskuterat i oändlighet. Varför skulle inte de flesta episoderna vara gemensamma? Ingen förnekar ett samband mellan dessa två evangelier, men hur det skall förstås är oklart.

Kapitel 7, ”Reading Mark as Unfinished”, är förvirrande. Larsen vill läsa Markus som en ”unfinished collection of notes” (s. 122). Han visar detta genom att konstatera att Markus samlar dessa noter till enheter. Man frågar sig då, om inte just detta är ett tecken på att en upphovsman bearbetat sina noter för publicering. Somliga som tecknar ner noter har dålig ordning på dem, medan andra har god. Vidare visar somliga publicerade verk en logisk struktur och en genomtänkt uppbyggnad, medan andra är röriga. Man kan tycka att Markus ibland visar en viss ordning, ibland inte. Man kan också tycka att han skrev en dålig bok. Somliga har tyckt så, andra har en annan uppfattning. Att en bok kan tyckas ha mindre god ordning är inte ett tecken på ”flytande” text.

Larsen stöder sin uppfattning på skribenter tillhörande en välbekant litterär kanon. Ett stort och intressant område som inte tas upp är kyrkofäderna och predikningarna. Vem som helst kunde stenografera ned en predikan och sedan ge den eller sälja den till någon som behövde en. Augustinus (*De doctrina christiana* IV, 29) säger att man kan använda en annans predikan, om man själv inte har den rätta gåvan. En mängd predikningar anses vara oriktigt traderade under stora namn. När det gäller ökenfäderna finns det olika redaktioner, en alfabetisk uppställd efter abborna, en systematisk efter olika ämnen som behandlas. Kanske finns där avvikelser av intresse. Detta kan också gälla veterinärmedicinska skrifter, som forskare i Lund fått anslag till att studera. När det gäller texter som man har nytta av handgripligen, som predikningar och skrifter om medicin (även djurmedicin?) torde sannolikheten för ”flytande” texter i omlopp vara större än för andra.

Har då Markus gått oförändrad genom tiderna? Givetvis inte. Han har utsatts för påverkan, antingen genom det vanliga slaget av felläsningar och missuppfattningar, eller genom att det som ”fattades” lagts till (avslutningarna), eller genom att han rättats enligt en teologiskt ”riktig” uppfattning, vilket i Markus fall gäller Kristus sanna natur. Klassiska arbeten som belyser det senare fenomenet är Eldon Jay Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts*, Cambridge 1966, och Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: the Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, Oxford 1993, 2011. Inget av dessa verk finns med i den omfångsrika bibliografin.

Men är då inte texten till Markus ”flytande”? I viss mån. Evangelierna har genom sin natur blivit föremål för jämförelser sinsemellan, kanske också med andra för oss kända eller okända skrifter; det teologiska innehållet kan ha ogillats av olika trosriktningar i en senare tid. Ingenting tyder på något annat än ett begränsat antal mer eller mindre framgångsrika försök till ändringar i en fastlagd text. Då skall man beänka att ingen genre har varit i samma grad utsatt för jämförelser och dissekerande.

Larsens bok är alltså enligt min mening missledande. Hans huvudtes om en betydande förekomst av ”flytande” texter, däribland texten till Markus, är obevisad. Materialsamlingen är mycket ofullständig. Argument *e silentio* spelar stor roll men är av högst tvivelaktigt värde. Arbetet kan förefalla ”modernt” och ”up to date”, med hänvisningar till Wittgenstein (vem annars?), Bakhtin, Barthes, och andra storheter, men för innehållet varnas bestämt.

Bengt Alexanderson

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