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PROLOG

Varje år arrangeras i Lund en så kallad "Patristisk Dag". Vårens Patristiska Dag (5 maj) kommer att äga rum under Lunds Hållbarhetsvecka 2025. Dagen ska handla om klimatkrist och de ekologiska utmaningar som vi står ansikte mot ansikte med.

Men finns det överhuvudtaget något som senantik religion kan lära oss om detta? kan man fråga sig. Det kanske tycks tveksamt. Å andra sidan är krisen vi upplever så allvarlig att Collegium Patristicum Lundense menar det är värt att lyfta frågan – och även lyfta blicken. För fanns det inte ett frö till något djupt ekologiskt i sättet som asketerna levde sina kontemplativa liv? Eller lutade de sig bort och ut ur den skapade världen och glömde växterna och djuren och fåglarna? Vi får besök av stora namn för att hjälpa oss fundera över sådan frågor: Douglas E. Christie från LMU (Kalifornien), som bland annat har skrivit den hylade *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Note for a Contemplative Ecology*, samt Simone Kotva från Göteborgs Universitet och Peter Halldorf från Bjärka-Säby. Det blir en dag för stora frågor, en dag för viktiga frågor. Till syvende och sist blir det en dag att fråga sig: vad betyder det att vara människa? Alla är välkomna – passa på att anmäla dig!

Årets PNA har fått en delvis ny redaktion: Katarina Pålsson har ersatt Andreas Westergren. Pålsson är en prisbelönad och aktiv patristikforskare, som bland annat har tjänat som CPLs sekreterare de senaste åtta åren. Att redigera tidsskriften är i det stora och hela frivilligt och obetalat arbete, så redaktionen är mycket tacksam för Pålssons val att ingå i vår lilla arbetsgemenskap. Hon är synnerligen kvalificerad. Läsarna lär inte bli besvikna.

Samtidigt vill vi passa på att tacka Westergren. Han har arbetat troligt med att redigera PNAs artiklar i fjorton år, och det är ingen överdrift när jag påstår att hans bidrag har varit avgörande i förvandlingen av årsskriften från en lokal trycksak (*Meddelanden från CPL*) till den moderna referentgranskade tidskriften den är idag, med öppen tillgång på

nätet och en kompetent nordisk referensgrupp. Vi är djupt tacksamma för alla de tidiga morgoner och sena kvällen som Westergren har lagt ner på att läsa, korrespondera, påminna, korrigera, sätta text, förhandla med tryckeri, läsa återigen ... Tidsskrifter gör sig verkligen inte själva. Westergren – tillsammans med hela den hängivna redaktionen och alla som trofast skriver – har gjort ett ovärderligt kulturarbete. Det får vi inte glömma att komma ihåg!

Thomas Arentzen

MEDDELANDEN

Collegium Patristicum Lundense

Collegium Patristicum Lundense har under 2024 anordnat en patristisk dag med temat *Disciplin, individ och kollektiv. Klostret – den europeiska bildningens vagga* (mer om detta nedan under "Konferenser och seminarier"). En patristisk afton arrangerades den 23 april på CTR i Lund, i samarbete med Theofil. Hans Boersma höll en föreläsning på ämnet *Interpretation as Deification: Maximus the Confessor*. Föredraget följdes av en eftersits.

Svenskt patristiskt bibliotek VIII, *Teologi efter Nicaea*, med Daniel Wihlborg och Katarina Pålsson som redaktörer, publicerades under sommaren. Arbetet med SPB IX, som kommer att ha temat *Kyrka och samhället*, har inletts. Redaktörer för denna volym är Katarina Pålsson och Andreas Westergren. Översättningsseminarier arrangeras inom ramen för patristikseminariet vid CTR.

I samband med den patristiska dagen den 2 april ägde också Collegiets årsmöte rum. Vid detta valdes följande personer till styrelseledamöter: Thomas Arentzen (omval), Britt Dahlman (omval), Katarina Pålsson (omval), Andreas Westergren (omval), Simon Pedersen Schmidt (omval), Maria Stureson (omval), Christian Høgel (omval) och Wally Cirafesi (ny styrelseledamot). Thomas Arentzen valdes om som preses. Samuel Rubenson och Karin Zetterholm meddelades ha lämnat styrelsen. Lovisa Andersson och Love Hagmo har under året blivit medlemmar i symposieutskottet. Styrelsen har haft fyra protokollförda möten (31/1, 10/6, 5/9 och 26/11) och därutöver har redaktionsutskottet och symposieutskottet var för sig handlagt sina respektive ärenden.

Styrelsen håller Collegiets hemsida, patristik.se, uppdaterad med information om patristiska aktiviteter av intresse för medlemmarna.

Katarina Pålsson

The Newman Institute Research Seminar in Late Ancient and Byzantine Cultures

The Newman Research Seminar in Late Ancient and Byzantine Cultures in Uppsala had a lively programme in 2024. It continued running in hybrid format with invited speakers on zoom and in-person presentations. In the spring term we had papers by Kelly Holob (a graduate at the University of Chicago) on martyrs and ghosts in Roman Antiquity; by Vladimir Ivanovici (Vienna) on the archaeology and iconography of the Katisma shrine to the Virgin in Palestine; by Esen Ogus (Utah Valley University) developing ideas on the perceptions of statues as a cause for their diminishment and final demise in Byzantium; by Christophe Chaguinian (University of Texas) on the re-enactments of Christ burials in medieval Good Friday rituals. The May seminars were slightly different. We had an in-person visit from Mary Sweeney (University of Ireland at Galway) who gave us a philological paper on Jewish dramatist Ezekiel the Tragedian, discussing the scene of the dream of Moses preserved in Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica*. This event was organized in collaboration with the Greek Department who came "down the hill" and enjoyed some drinks after the lecture. As a last event we had a discussion with author M. David Litwa (Boston College) concerning his book, *Early Christianity in Alexandria* published by Cambridge University Press (2023). This book well describes the syncretic milieu of Alexandrian Judaism and Christianity in the second century, about which, Litwa argues, it is best to set aside criteria of "orthodoxy" in order not to miss what was happening on the ground.

The autumn programme started in September with a paper by Jason Borges (Asia Minor Research Centre, Antalya, Turkey) on the aspect of travel in the famous early Christian inscription of Bishop Abercius (or Aberkios). I learnt a lot from the paper on the practice of "Theoria" – a form of ancient sightseeing-cum-pilgrimage organized and funded by the polis and directed at going to watch shows in other places – a significant phenomenon casting new light on the word, which becomes the designation for abstract contemplative activities. The next speaker was Reyhan Durmaz (University of Pennsylvania) who presented the introductory outline to her new book on the army in the early medieval near East (especially Syria). Durmaz is revisiting the distinction between religious and army culture, and in so doing redrawing the boundaries that these social roles are often thought to have had. We just completed the

visit by Laura Lieber, who recently moved from Duke to Regensburg University in Germany, from which location it was a lot simpler to fly over to Sweden. Lieber held two lectures, one at our seminar in association with the Forum for Jewish Studies and the other on the next day at the Exegetical Seminar (OT/NT) at Uppsala University. She presented two papers based on late ancient Jewish poetry (*piyyut*) recited in the synagogue but with a more popular appeal than other formal liturgical music. The first paper concentrated on the elaboration of the figure of Abraham and the second on the poetry, including love poetry, associated with the story of Queen Esther and the Purim festival. Lieber's new book, *Staging the Sacred: Theatricality and Performance in Late Ancient Liturgical Poetry*, published by Oxford University Press (2023), is key to my own work of understanding the Dura Europos synagogue and its paintings as witnesses to performances that took place there. At the second seminar, I presented my views on the Esther/Purim panel at Dura Europos, and we had a joint Q&A session that demonstrated much convergence in our respective work.

Our last seminar for this year was a presentation by Carl-Johan Berglund of his translation of Origen's letter to Gregory the Wonderworker in preparation for the Svenskt Patristiskt Bibliotek. For more information, see <https://newman.se/late-ancient-and-byzantine-cultures>

Barbara Crostini

Forum for Patristik

Siden 1998 har Forum for Patristik arrangeret halvårlige møder – om foråret i København, om efteråret i Aarhus. Normalt plejer seminaret i København at finde sted på universitetet, men i 2024 blev det holdt i nye omgivelser på Diakonissestiftelsen på Frederiksberg.

Emnet for første seminar, som fandt sted 9. februar, var optakten til fejringen af Nikænum i 2025. Der var godt besøg fra patristikerne i Lund, da Andreas Westergren lagde ud og talte om kejser Konstantins rolle i forbindelse med koncilet i Nikæa. Efter Westergren fulgte hans danske kollega i Lund, Emil Hilton Saggau (nu generalsekretær ved Danske Kirkers Råd), der i sit foredrag pegede på den ofte oversete rolle spørgsmål om autoritet og ret spillede ved mødet – med særligt fokus på biskop Osius af Cordoba. Kasper Dalgaard, lektor ved Diakonissestiftelsen, overtog herefter stafetten og præsenterede et udvalg af kanoener – vedtagelser – fra Nikæakoncilet, som kaster lys over de problemer

og udfordringer, den tidlige kristne kirke stod over for. Endelig rundede Johannes Steenbuch af med at undersøge, hvad *homousien* mellem Gud Fader og Søn havde af implikationer for soteriologien, særligt som Athanasios af Alexandria udtrykte det i sine værker vendt mod arianerne.

Styregruppen bag Forum for Patristik var glade for at afholde arrangementet på Diakonissestiftelsen, der ikke kun lagde lokaler til, men også var været for frokost, kage og kaffe. Saggau og Dalgaard har ligesom Steenbuch bøger på vej i 2025 om Nikæa-koncilet.

Også ved efterårets seminar, som fandt sted på Aarhus Universitet 26. august var der fint besøg fra Lund. Ud over de lokale deltagere fra teologi i Aarhus, Elisa Uusimäki, Kasper Bro Larsen og Johan Brun Mendes Cederfeldt, var Katarina Pålsson kommet hele vejen fra Lund for at tale ved seminaret. Lektor i Gammel Testamente, Elisa Uusimäki, åbnede seminaret med at tale om rejsens betydning i den jødiske oldtid, især hvordan Filon af Alexandria både fejrede og var kritisk over for visse former for menneskelig mobilitet. Kasper Bro Larsen talte om "debutanten Jesus", nemlig hvordan Jesus debutterer med sin første offentlige optræden på forskellig vis i de fire evangelier. Foredraget gav desuden eksempler på, hvordan oldkirkelige teologer som Origenes og Augustin vurderede den mest passende debut. Katarina Pålsson præsenterede i sit foredrag Hieronymus af Stridons sammenligning mellem eksegeten og profeten. For Hieronymus er eksegeten (inkl. ham selv) en formidler mellem Gud og menneske, som deltager i en kosmisk kamp mellem godt og ondt, sandhed og løgn og på den måde kan virke for Gudsfolkets frelse. Seminaret rundede af med Johan Brun Mendes Cederfeldt, som introducerede sit forskningsprojekt om natursynet i senantik religion. I projektet forsøger Cederfeldt at sætte ændringer i natursyn i senantikkens religioner i en større kontekst, der ikke blot fokuserer på begrebshistorie, hvad de senantikke kilder siger om f.eks. dyr og planter, men hvordan menneskene så sig indfældede i en kosmologi, som også kom til udtryk i rituel praksis.

Dele af selskabet ved efterårets seminar fortsatte diskussionerne under indtagelse af blandt andet loukaniko, souvlaki og gode øl i madmekkaet Aarhus Street Food.

Forum for Patristiks første seminar i 2025 finder sted ved Det Teologiske Fakultet i København med temaet "Nikæa efter Nikæa", mandag d. 3. februar. Seminaret byder på foredrag ved Christian Thruw Durslev (AU), Jakob Juul Pedersen (AU), Carsten Pallesen (KU) og Anna Vind

(KU). Programmet kan findes på www.patristik.dk. Forum for Patristik kan kontaktes på forum@patristik.dk

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

Det Teologiske Fakultet, Københavns Universitet

I efteråret 2024 afholdt Christian Troelsgård og gæsteunderviser Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen et valgfag, kursus i "Arven fra Oldkirkens liturgier og musik", ved Det Teologiske Fakultet på Københavns Universitet. Valgfaget, der var åbent for alle studerende på både BA- og KA-niveau (bachelor og master), var tænkt som en kilde til inspiration. I forløbet blev de studerende introduceret til de ældst kendte liturgier, til senere udviklinger i vest- og østkirken og ikke mindst til den hymnografi, der var og er en vigtig del af de kristne kirkers gudstjenester. Der var smagsprøver på syriske hymner af Efraim Syrereren, anonyme græske hymner som stichera og troparia og ikke mindst Akathistos-hymnen, Romanos' kontakier og Johannes af Damaskus' påskekanon. Kurset bød også på latinske hymner, og de studerende snuste til koptisk og georgisk kirkesang. Endelig introducerede Troelsgård til de byzantinske neumer og afholdt en miniworkshop i at transskribere dem.

Valgfaget var ganske unikt og meget sjældent udbudt i de nordiske lande. Det var Christian Troelsgårds sidste undervisningsforløb, inden han ved nytår gik af som lektor efter mange års tro tjeneste ved først klassisk filologi og de seneste fem år ved teologi.

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

Societas Patristica Fennica (SPF)

Patristiska Sällskapet i Finland (*Societas Patristica Fennica*) ordnade tillsammans med Ukrainian Patristic Society den 18 februari 2023 ett symposium *Patristic legacy from the Ukrainian and Finnish perspectives* på Zoom. Under symposiet talade Anni Maria Laato, Serafim Seppälä, Oleh Kindiy, Siiri Toiviainen Rø, Maria Marty-nenko-Hupalö, Tomi Ferm och Oleksandr Kashchuk. Som moderatörer fungerade Cyril Hovorun och Harri Huovinen.

Sällskapet hade huvudansvar för organiseringen av Forskningsdagarna i teologi och religion 22–24.5.2024, *Traditioner och förändringar. Milstolpar och kontinuiteter*, i Åbo. Nicea-mötets 1700-årsjubileum firades i

förväg genom att en av keynotes var Giulio Maspero från Santa Croce. Hans tema var "From Semantics to Syntax: the Challenge of Tradition from the Perspective of the First Council of Nicea." Sällskapets egen session "Nicene Theology: Traditions and Continuities" fokuserade på temat från olika synvinklar: Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Pasadena) talade om "Ancient Councils and Contemporary Global Theology", Tomi Ferm (Helsingfors) om Athanasius' *De decretis*; Maijastina Kahlos (Lisbon) om "Gothic Christianity" och Jaro Karkinen (Helsinki) om "Papacy and Councils". Joonas Salminen var moderator och Giulio Maspero kommentator. En annan session fokuserade på Nicea-mötets betydelse för relationen mellan kristna och judar. Tomi Karttunen (UEF ja HY) talade om de dogmatiska besluten i Nicea och deras betydelse för förhållandet mellan kristna och judar; Raimo Hakola (Helsingfors universitet) om synagogor i Galilea; Antti Laato (Åbo Akademi) om tidig angelomorfisk kristologi och Arius; och Anni Maria Laato om Nicea-mötet (325) som en milstolpe i relationen mellan kristna och judar.

Sällskapet har efter senaste PNA gett ut två volymer. Antti Laato: *Jesajan taivaaseenastuminen ja hänen marttyyrikuolemansa* (SPF 22), är en översättning av *Ascensio Isaiae* från ge'ez till finska med en kommentar. Anni Maria Laato har redigerat en artikelsamling *Kohti vapautta: Varhaiskristillisiä tulkintoja vapaudesta, unista ja maailmankuvasta* (SPF 21) "Mot friheten: tidigkristna tolkningar av frihet, drömmar, och världsbild".

Mera information om *Societas Patristica Fennica* och dess verksamhet hittas på hemsidan: www.suomenpatristinenseura.fi/pa-svenska/, på Twitter: Suomen patristinen seura @patristiikka, och på www.facebook.com/SocietasPatristicaFennica

Anni Maria Laato

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

In January, Samuel Fernandes from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile visited the Centre for the Study of Antiquity and Christianity. His visit focused on research for two forthcoming books on the Council of Nicea: a monograph and a sourcebook, *Fontes Nicaenae*, which compiles all sources relevant to the council up to the death of Constantine. During his stay, he gave a paper at a seminar and chaired a PhD workshop,

where he analysed and discussed the main sources in collaboration with PhD students. Fernandes presented an ambitious reinterpretation of the events leading up to the council, as well as the nature of the council itself. Through a meticulous assessment of the various types of sources available, he countered a widespread narrative ultimately rooted in Athanasius' portrayal of Nicea. In Fernandes' original account, the theological controversies leading to the council arose from a tension between Alexandrian and Antiochian claims to Origen's legacy. Alexander of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea take centre stage in this conflict. Fernandes understands Nicea as functioning partly as a court of appeal for Eusebius of Caesarea, who had, less than a year earlier, been condemned at the Synod of Antioch. This reinterpretation of the causes and proceedings of Nicea cautions against overestimating the role of Arius and encourages treating the construct of "Arianism" with due scepticism.

In March, the Centre hosted a reading group led by Christian Thruw Djurslev to study Theophilus of Antioch's *Ad Autolycum*. This was the last in a series of collective readings connected to Djurslev's project, *How the Christians Stole the Past*. The focus of the reading was on the final chapters of Book 3. Topics of discussion included Theophilus' use of pagan sources – whether he accessed these through compendia or in their full form – and whether his engagement with them could be described as "borrowing," "appropriating," or even "stealing" pagan historical knowledge. The group also discussed Theophilus' intentions in constructing a chronology of universal history.

On April 10, Camilla Brokholm Pedersen presented the paper "Prostitution and Satisfaction: Pagan and Christian Perspectives on Prostitution and Rehabilitation." Drawing on a wide range of ancient pagan and Christian texts across multiple genres, Pedersen demonstrated that while pagan and Christian authors shared many sentiments regarding the role and status of prostitution and sex workers in society, Christian texts introduced a unique concern for sex workers. This concern opened the possibility for their rehabilitation and elevation to positions of status, serving as examples for others.

On May 6, the Centre hosted a workshop organised by Lavinia Cerioni on the topic of *Women as Code: Cultural Paradigms of the Feminine in Antiquity*. Six presentations explored themes relating to women and gender in ancient religious texts. Presenters included Gillian Glass on

the polisification of Aseneth, Rosanne Liebermann on perfume as a symbol of promiscuity in the Hebrew Bible, Ulla Tervahauta on the association between Rachel and Bethlehem in the Gospel of Matthew, Lavinia Cerioni on Origen's use of pregnancy as a theological motif, Giovanni Hermanin de Reichenfeld on the use of family and femininity in Augustine's Trinitarian theology, and Margrethe Birkler on queer nuns and gender trouble in Shenoute's monastic community. A recurring theme was the interplay of gender and metaphor, such as Aseneth as a city of refuge, the Trinity as a family (and Augustine's rejection of this metaphor), and Origen's use of pregnancy metaphors.

In September, Sean Hannan (MacEwan University), Anthony Dupont (KU Leuven), and Andreas Serafim (University of Cyprus) visited the Centre for the Study of Antiquity and Christianity for several days. They delivered papers on topics such as Augustine's use of the term *peregrinatio* (Hannan), "Beyond the Book: Augustine's Iconic Illumination and Imaginative Intermediality" (Dupont), and ancient decorum and sexuality (Serafim). Additionally, Hannan and Dupont served as members of the assessment committee for Eva Elisabeth Houth Vrangbæk's PhD defence.

In November, Lavinia Cerioni and Anders-Christian Jacobsen hosted a seminar on *Early Christian Metaphors* as part of their AUFF project. The event featured Annette von Stockhausen (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences) on the *Patristic Text Archive* (PTA) and its potential for digital analysis of Early Christian literature, Miriam DeCock on the reception of Jesus' domestic parables in Greek Patristic literature, and Lavinia Cerioni on the metaphorical use of martyrdom in Early Christian texts.

On December 13, Christian Thue Djurslev presented the paper "Some Points of Authority in Eusebius' *Vita Constantini*: Herodotus, Sirach, and Lactantius" during a Christmas seminar co-hosted with the research programme Classical Antiquity. For more information, contact Jakob Engberg, je@cas.au.dk

Jakob Engberg och Johan Brun Mendes Cederfeldt

Johannesakademin

Den 6–8 september 2024 firades tidskriften *Pilgrims* 30-års jubileum på Nya Slottet Bjärka-Säby under temat "Bönens inre skatt". Gästföreläsare under jubileumshelgen var den internationellt kända teologen Sarah

Coakley (mer om hennes medverkan nedan under "Övrigt"). Medverkade gjorde även pastor Liselotte J. Andersson, prof. em. Samuel Rubenson och biskop Erik Varden.

Tillsammans med Linköpings stift och Linköpings domkyrkopastorat kommer Johannesakademien att anordna ett Martin Lönnebo-symposium den 6–8 februari 2025 på Vårdsnäs stiftsgård och i Linköpings domkyrka med temat "Hoppets arkitekt". Lönnebo har betytt oerhört mycket för svensk och nordisk kristenhet. Hans inflytande innefattar bl.a ett omfångsrikt författarskap och kyrkliga innovationer som ljusbäraren och frälsarkransen. Symposiet kommer även att beröra Lönnebos intresse för den tidiga kyrkan och särskilt traditionen från öknens vishet, om vilket Samuel Rubenson kommer att föreläsa.

Under 2024 har de två grupper som översättningsseminariet numera består av fortsatt sitt arbete med varsitt kapitel av den systematiska samlingen av *Ökenfädernas tänkespråk*. En grupp träffas i Johannesakademins lokaler i Linköping under ledning av Britt Dahlman. I denna grupp har arbetet med den svenska översättningen och ny grekisk utgåva av de korta kapitlen 20–21 avslutats och arbetet med kapitel 12 påbörjats. Den andra gruppen har endast digitala träffar. Den arbetar med kapitel 11 och leds av Per Rönnegård. Under våren 2025 kommer två digitala lördagstillfällen att äga rum den 1/2 och 10/5. De fysiska lördagsträffarna kommer att äga rum den 22/2 och 5/4. Tidigare volymer av Paradiset finns utgivna i serien *Silentium Apophthegmata*, www.silentiumskrifter.se. Den som vill anmäla sitt deltagande och få del av förberedelsematerial kan skriva till Britt Dahlman: britt.dahlman@ctr.lu.se

För aktuellt program och ytterligare information, se Johannesakademins hemsida: www.johannesakademien.se

Britt Dahlman

Masterprogrammet Religious Roots of Europe i Lund

Det är roligt att se att en av artiklarna i årets nummer av *Patristica Nordica Annuario*, nämligen den som är skriven av Alexandra Lembke-Ross, är en omarbetad version av en tidigare masteruppsats inom Religious Roots of Europe. Programmet, som är ett samarbete mellan Lund, Köpenhamn och Oslo, fortsätter att skörda duktiga studenter.

Under året har inte lika många masteruppsatser i Lund skrivits som tidigare år. En anledning är säkert de höga ambitioner som många studenter har. En annan att Lunds krav på ett avslutat arbete inte är lika stränga som partneruniversitetens. Detta till trots har två spännande arbeten publicerats under året. Det första är Santal Timstedts historiska studium, "Dressing up Aseneth: An inquiry into the relational scope of garments in Joseph and Aseneth", det andra Aisha Mellahs synnerligen aktuella "Political Discourse in an Ongoing Conflict: A Comparative Discourse Analysis of Benyamin Netanyahu's and Ismail Haniyeh's Framing of National and Religious Identity and the Other, Post-October 7".

Programmet inleds varje höst med gemensamma översiktskurser (*The Study of Ancient Religion* och *The Emergence of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*), medan den första vårterminen erbjuder olika val. Exempelvis har man möjlighet att börja lära sig hebreiska eller arabiska tillsammans med Martin Ehrensvärd i Köpenhamn, en introduktion man sedan kan fördjupa genom att läsa rabbiniska texter med Karin Zetterholm och Wally Cirafesi, eller Koranen, tillsammans med Joshua Sabih.

En av de valbara kurser som erbjuds i Lund och Oslo varannat år är *Space, Art, and Identity in Synagogue, Church and Mosque*. En viktig del av kursen är en resa till Israel och Palestina, som på grund av den pågående krisen inte var möjlig i våras. I stället blev det ett kompaktseminarium i Lund med exkursioner till Uppåkra och Malmö. Vad som kan tyckas vara en dålig ersättning, blev ändå ett fint seminarium.

Under kompaktseminariet i Lund under hösten deltog studenterna i Wally Cirafesis docentföreläsning "Ancient Synagogues and the Early History of Jewish-Christian Relations". Cirafesi är en av flera nya lärare som undervisar i programmet.

Andreas Westergren

Forskningsprojekt

Ancient Synagogues and the History of Early Jewish-Christian Relations

Wally Cirafesi is currently working with the project *Ancient Synagogues and the History of Early Jewish-Christian Relations* as part of his Pro Futura Scientia fellowship, which will run until 2027. Here is a summary of the project:

By the time of the Byzantine–Islamic transition in Palestine in the seventh century, after hundreds of years of religious rhetoric from the mouths and pens of Christian literary elite, the concept of “the synagogue” had been firmly constructed as an irreconcilable rival to Christianity and “the church”. Although forged in antiquity, this totalizing portrait of “the synagogue” has had remarkable staying power. It has penetrated centuries of modern scholarship, and it continues to this day to function as the basic point of departure in historical research on the New Testament and the so-called “parting of the ways” between Judaism and Christianity. Indeed, despite the recent growth in synagogue studies as an academic discipline, it remains the case that precious little attention has been paid to how the diverse social and material realities of synagogues impacted the formation of Jewish and Christian identities and their interaction in the first seven centuries of the Common Era. This research project aims to rethink this so-called “irreconcilable rivals” paradigm by considering the complex role ancient synagogues played as sites, rhetorical and real, of Christian hostility and participation. When we consider a broad range of source material – archaeology, literary texts, law codes, and others – the picture we get of ancient synagogues in this period is far from an ethnically and culturally bound institution with firm social borders placed around it. Rather, it is a picture of a diverse institution that remained deeply entangled in its cultural surroundings, underwent a variety of changes, and played an important role in the development of both Judaism and Christianity, from the time of the earliest Jesus movement through Late Antiquity.

Wally V. Cirafesi

Avslutade och pågående danska projekt

On September 17, Eva Elisabeth H. Vrangbæk successfully defended her dissertation, “What is Love Other than Will? An Investigation of Augustine’s Concept of Love and Will Assisted by Computational Methods,” in a public defence and was subsequently awarded the degree of PhD. The assessment committee consisted of Kirstine Helboe Johansen (Chair), Aarhus University; Anthony Dupont, KU Leuven; and Sean Hannan, MacEwan University. The project was supervised by Jakob Engberg and Kristoffer Nielbo.

Lavinia Cerioni has been working on the project *Origen on Gender: The Feminine as an Intellectual Category in the Works of Origen of Alexandria* (Marie Curie Fellowship) from February 2021 to March 2024.

Anders-Christian Jacobsen and Lavinia Cerioni are leading the project *Early Christian Metaphors (ECM): Uncovering Layers of Meaning through Computational Linguistics*. The project is supported by the Aarhus University Research Foundation (AUFF).

Christian Thrué Djurslev is directing the project *How the Christians Stole the Past: Contestation, Education, and Interaction in Imperial Literary Culture*. This initiative, funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark, runs from 2022 to 2025.

Giovanni Hermanin is spearheading the project *Scriptural Networks: Digital Exploration of Quotation Culture in Origen of Alexandria's Exegesis*. This project aims to revolutionise our understanding of early Christian quotation culture through digital network analysis (NA) of Origen's extensive writings. By applying NA graphs and social network analysis to Origen's entire preserved corpus, the research seeks to uncover underlying relationships and patterns in his use of biblical quotations. Recognised for his focus on biblical interpretation and lasting influence, Origen provides an exceptional case study. The project is funded as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowship, and the research will be conducted from early 2025 to 2027.

Jakob Engberg & Johan Brun Mendes Cederfeldt

Konferenser och seminarier

Jesuit School of Theology, Santa Clara University, Berkeley, Kalifornien, 5–6 mars 2024

Reimagining Gospel Literature

Sju forskare från Europa och USA var inbjudna till Berkeley för att diskutera evangeliereception under de tidiga århundradena, med särskild hänsyn till hur evangeliegenren uppfattats i olika sammanhang. Från Norden deltog Carl Johan Berglund med ett paper om hur en serie evangelieberättelser under trehundralet återberättats med lärjungen Filippos som huvudperson i stället för Jesus. Bidragen planeras publiceras i ett temanummer av *Early Christianity*.

Carl Johan Berglund

Lunds universitet, 2 april 2024

Den patristiska dagen: Disciplin, individ och kollektiv. Klostret – den europeiska bildningens vagga

Patristiska dagen 2024 arrangerades den 2 april vid Centrum för teologi och religionsvetenskap i Lund av Collegium Patristicum Lundense, i samarbete med forskningsprojektet *Auktoritet, samhälle och individuell frihet – det latinska klosterväsendet och rötterna till Europas utbildningsideal* (ELAM). Temat för dagen var *Disciplin, individ och kollektiv. Klostret – den europeiska bildningens vagga*. Föredrag hölls av Samuel Rubenson, Elisabeth Göransson, Katarina Pålsson, Britt Dahlman och Henrik Rydell Johnsén. Föredragen följdes av ett panelsamtal med talarna, Lovisa Bergdahl, Moder Christa Claesson, Peter Halldorf, Christian Høgel, Sinnikka Neuhaus och Broder Ingmar Svanteson. Dagen avslutades med en middag.

Katarina Pålsson

Lund, 22–23 april 2024

Theofilsk teologikonferens: Sakramental exegetik och andra perspektiv – bibelsyn och bibeltolkning i den tidiga kyrkan

Studentföreningen Theofil anordnade i april en konferens på temat sakramental exegetik. Huvudtalare var Hans Boersma som höll fyra olika föreläsningar på temat och tog upp olika aspekter av texttolkning i den tidiga kyrkan. Den avslutande föreläsningen arrangerades tillsammans med Centrum för teologi och religionsvetenskap och Collegium Patristicum Lundense och hölls i universitetets lokaler. Talare på konferensen var också Anders Ek, David Nyström, Maria Sturesson och Karin Zetterholm som höll föredrag om tidig kristen och judisk bibeltolkning och bibelbruk. Konferensen samlade nästan 50 deltagare där föreläsningarna varvades med samtal under lättsammare former.

Maria Sturesson

Åbo Akademi, 28–31 maj 2024

The Challenge of Poverty: Theological Responses in Early Christian Literature and Global Christian History

På Själö i Åbolands skärgård samlades i maj sjutton forskare från Norden, USA, Storbritannien och Sydafrika till en konferens om hur Nya

testamentets utmanande vision om att fattigdomen ska utrotas bland kristna har förvaltats i patristisk litteratur och senare tiders kyrko-historia. Med utgångspunkt i Paulusbreven och den tidiga Jesusrörelsen behandlade vi apostoliska fäder, apokryfa apostlagärningar, antika författare som Theodoretos av Kyrros, Gregorius av Nyssa, Ambrosius av Milano och Efraim Syriern, medeltida folkspråkspredikningar, en reseberättelse till mongolriket från 1200-talet och moderna förhållanden i Afrika och Latinamerika. Konferensen blev mycket lyckad, och arrangörerna hoppas på att kunna ge ut en konferensvolym med de bästa bidragen.

Carl Johan Berglund

Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, 14 juni 2024

In Search of Ancient Travel Writers: Sources, Identities, and Social Locations

On June 14, Elisa Uusimäki and Christian Thrué Djurslev hosted a workshop at the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) titled *In Search of Ancient Travel Writers: Sources, Identities, and Social Locations*. The workshop was organized by the ERC-funded research project *An Intersectional Analysis of Ancient Jewish Travel Narratives* (ANINAN: projects.au.dk/aninan). Presentations included Thomas Biggs (University of St Andrews) on "Travel Writing and the Construction of 'Home' in Latin Literature," Catherine Hezser (SOAS, University of London) on the perception of space in ancient Jewish travel narratives, Eelco Glas (Aarhus University) on the impact of migration on Jewish literary culture in the Early Roman Empire, Casper de Jonge (Leiden University) on "First Century BC Greek Epigrams on Maritime Travel," René Bloch (University of Bern) on Philo's theory of travelling, and Christian Thrué Djurslev and Miriam DeCock (Dublin City University) on "Origin of Alexandria 'on the Move': Between History, Autobiography, and Eusebius of Caesarea."

Jakob Engberg och Johan Brun Mendes Cederfeldt

Oxford, 5–9 augusti 2024

The 19th International Conference on Patristic Studies

Den 19. patristikk-konferansen i Oxford ble avholdt 5.–9. august 2024. Nordiske forskere markerte seg sterkt, bl.a. med workshopene "Christian Pasts Beyond the Histories" (Christian Djurslev), "Remembering the Desert" (Samuel Rubenson & Adrian C. Pirtea), "St. Maximus the Con-

fessor's Christian Philosophy" med en hyllest til Torstein Tollefsen i forbindelse med at han pensjonerer seg (Vladimir Cvetkovic & Panagiotis Pavlos) og plenumsforedraget "Early Christian Tree Behaviour" (Thomas Arentzen).

Tradisjonen tro ble der avholdt et nordisk møte (8. august), ledet av Anders-Christian Jacobsen, kontaktperson for AIEP. Møtet la planer for neste Nordiske patristikermøtet. Den finske delegasjonen sa seg villig til å arrangere møtet i 2026, i Helsingfors eller Åbo. En nordisk samarbeidskomité bestående av Katarina Pålsson (Lund) og Florian Wöller (København) skal også delta i planleggingen. Angående tema for patristikermøtet i Finland diskuterte det nordiske møtet performativitet og teatralitet i tidlig kristendom. Norden har ikke lenger noen deltagelse i AIEPs eksekutiv-komité etter at Jacobsens periode er over. Kritiske røster betoner at college-losjiet har blitt vel dyrt i Oxford, og at årets konferanse led under visse praktiske problem, men forøvrig var det som vanlig en samling preget av verdensledende patristisk forskning.

Thomas Arentzen

Lunds universitet, 16–18 september 2024

The Gospel of John and the Formation of Jewish–Christian Relation. A symposium

On September 16–18, 2024, Wally Cirafesi organized and hosted a symposium in Lund on the topic of "The Gospel of John and the Formation of Jewish–Christian Relations." The participants were Miriam De Cock, Dublin City University, Daniel Weiss, University of Cambridge, Jonathan Bourgel, Laval University, Kelsie Rodenbiker, University of Glasgow, Michal Bar Ashar Siegal, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Michele Murray, Bishops University, Sarah Parkhouse, University of Manchester, Catrin Williams, University of Wales, Michael Azar, University of Scranton, and from Lund University: Karin Zetterholm, Wally Cirafesi, and Hannah Strømmen. The participants aimed to examine the role of John's Gospel in the mutual and entangled development of Judaism and Christianity in the first seven centuries CE, from the time of John himself to the production of the Babylonian Talmud.

Wally V. Cirafesi

Lunds universitet, 29–30 oktober 2024

Between Athos and Antioch. Urban and Monastic Translator Teams & Shared Translation Practices in the Eastern Mediterranean (10th–11th centuries)

I dagarna 29–30 oktober 2024 organiserade Christian Høgel och Adrian Pirtea (Wien) en workshop på SOL under rubriken "Between Athos and Antioch. Urban and Monastic Translator Teams & Shared Translation Practices in the Eastern Mediterranean (10th–11th centuries)", med följande upplägghållare och titler:

Marijana Vukovic: *Double Translations among South Slavs: Examination of Athonite and other South Slavic Monastic Translation Methods*

Alice Croq: *The reception of Antiochene translations in Copto-Arabic milieus (12th–14th C.)*

Joe Glynias: *The Cultivation of Masculine Intellectual Cultures on Byzantine Holy Mountain*

Habib Ibrahim: *Translations by Antonios abbot of Saint Symeon related to the Church councils*

Josh Mugler: *The Arabic Translators of Byzantine Antioch: New Manuscript Evidence*

Adrian Pirtea: *The Arabic Translations of the Corpus Macarianum and Other Homily Collections in Byzantine Antioch*

Lewis Read: *The Metaphrastic Translation Programme of Grigor II Vkasēr*

Daria Resh: *The Two Slavic Lives of St Theodore of Edessa*

Miriam Hjälml: *Translation Strategies and Audience Expectations in the Arabic Life of Theodore of Edessa*

Christian Høgel: *The Translated and the Incorporated in the Greek Barlaam and Ioasaph*

Sandro Nikolaishvili: *The Gelati Monastic School: a Successor of Iviron and the Black Mountain?*

Christian Høgel

MF vitenskapelig høyskole, Oslo, 5 juni 2025

Fagdag om kirkemøtet i Nikea i 325 – Nikea 1700 år

I 2025 markeres det i mange ulike sammenhenger at det er 1700 år siden kirkemøtet i Nikea. På MF Vitenskapelig høyskole for teologi, religion

og samfunn (Oslo) vil det bli arrangert en fagdag 5. juni, i samarbeid mellom MF, Den norske kirke og Norges kristne råd. Fagdagen vil bestå av to historieforelesninger om ulike aspekter ved kirkemøtet og bekjennelsen som til slutt ble laget, samt to økumeniske panelsamtaler om bekjennelsens plass i våre ulike kirkers spiritualitet og gudstjeneste-liv. Dagen vil være åpen for alle interesserte. Komiteen som planlegger fagdagen ledes av John Kaufman og Inge Westly, begge ved MF.

John Kaufman

Övrigt

Professor Sarah Coakley gästade Sverige 4–10 september 2024

Den 5 september 2024 gästades CTR av professor Sarah Coakley, hedersdoktor vid teologiska fakulteten vid Lunds Universitet. Hon medverkade med kommentarer till två pågående avhandlingsarbeten och höll därefter en gästföreläsning med rubriken "Re-Thinking Jewish-Christian Divergences on God-as-Trinity: Intra-Divine Complexity and the Phenomenon of Prayer". Hennes tes var att ett alltför stort fokus på kristologi – och inte minst betydelsen av Jesu död – i onödan försvårat dialogen mellan judar och kristna och att ett tydligare fokus på Anden i treenighetsläran innebär oprövade öppningar. Dagen efter reste Sarah Coakley till Bjärka-Säby för tidskriften *Pilgrims* 30-års jubiléum. Här medverkade hon med två föredrag, ett om spänningar i synen på bön mellan evangelierna och Paulusbreven och ett om utvecklingen av bönepraxis i den tidiga kyrkan. Hon deltog också i två offentliga samtal, ett med biskop Erik Varden om kyskhet och ett med professor Samuel Rubenson om traditionen från öknens lärare. Efter jubiléumshelgen fortsatte hon till Uppsala där hon föreläste över ämnet "Contested Meanings: Evolutionary Cooperation and the Continuing Possibility of a Natural Theology". Hennes tes här är att det är samverkan mellan delarna som karakteriserar evolutionen och att detta stödjer tanken på målinriktning snarare än slump, men att genom att fokusera på enskilda fenomen, snarare än helheten och sambanden bortser mycket forskning från detta.

Samuel Rubenson

Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae flytter til Sicilien

Selvom studiet af den byzantinske kirkes musik ret beset hører højmiddelalderen til, så er det på sin plads at nævne, at det store, internationalt anerkendte projekt *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* (MMB; www.iglu.ku.dk/MMB/) har holdt flyttedag. Primo 2025 blev materialesamlingen (MMB) overført fra København til universitetet i Messina, hvor den vil være under opsyn af den græske palæograf-professor Donatella Bucca. Støttet af *Comitato Italiano per lo studio e l'edizione delle fonti Musicali Bizantine*, nedsat under de italienske videnskabsakademier, kan det internationale udgivelsesprojekt således fortsætte i samarbejde med den danske nationalkomité for MMB og det øvrige videnskabelige samfund.

Dermed slutter en 93 år lang og glørværdig periode, som begyndte i København i 1931, hvor danske Carsten Høeg, britiske H.W.J. Tillyard og østrigske Egon Wellesz stiftede det, der skulle blive et nybrud inden for studiet af den middelalderlige byzantinske kirkesang. Siden stiftelsen har projektet stået bag udgivelser af vigtige og centrale håndskrifter med byzantinske notation i faksimile, transskriptioner, teoretiske værker, håndbøger og afhandlinger.

MMBs tilgang til transskription af de byzantinske neumer har været standard siden 1935, hvor Tillyard udgav den første håndbog i fortolkning af neumerne. Metoden, som kan kaldes analytisk, hvor de middelalderlige neumer gengives i et femlinjet nodebillede, har aldrig været tænkt som et bud på, hvordan melodierne lød i middelalderen, og nodebilledet ej heller som egnet til fremførelse, men blot som et videnskabeligt redskab. Alligevel vakte metoden modstand hos især græske sangere og musikforskere, der anså MMBs tilgang for alt for løsrevet fra den levende tradition især i Athen, på Athos og i patriarkatet i Istanbul. I dag kan man med nogen ret hævde, at der er fundet en form for konsensus, hvor forskere og sangere benytter sig af MMBs tilgang og samtidig fortolker det middelalderlige materiale med indsigter fra den levende sangtradition. Denne konsensus kommer især til udtryk i Alexander Lingas' arbejde med koret Cappella Romana og hos den græske sanger og musikforsker Ioannis Arvanitis.

Siden 1931 har MMB haft arkiv og en direktør tilknyttet Københavns Universitet. Siden 2007 har direktøren været lektor Christian Troelsgård. Han gik på pension ved årsskiftet og med ham slutter en æra i dansk og international forskning. Troelsgård har siden sin studietid i de

tidlige 80'ere været tilknyttet MMB og de seneste tre årtier været projektets primus motor med en udtømmelig viden og et unikt overblik over arkivet. I 2011 udgav han en længe ventet afløser for Tillyards håndbog fra 1935. I dag er Troelsgårds håndbog med både historisk indføring, grundige beskrivelser af de enkelte neumer og talrige musikalske eksempler indgangen for enhver, der vil stifte bekendtskab med byzantinsk musik.

I 2019 stod Troelsgård pludselig til at blive fyret pga. nedskæringer på Humanistisk Fakultet. MMBs overlevelse var truet. I løbet af kort tid blev der sendt protestbreve fra universiteter over hele verden og over 2700 akademikere skrev under på en online støtteerklæring til bevarelsen af MMB. Ledelsen på Humaniora lavede en kovending og ansatte Troelsgård i en deltidstilling, hvor han primært skulle sikre MMBs overlevelse og videreførelse. Han – og arkivet – blev flyttet til Det Teologiske Fakultet, hvor man mente, at MMB passede bedre ind. Eftersom der ikke var nogen til at tage over efter Troelsgård og universitetet ikke viste interesse for at huse MMB, har han de seneste år arbejdet på at finde udenlandske arvtagere.

Universitetet i Messina har nu overtaget samlingen af mikrofilm, transskriptioner, noter og arkivalier, og bogserien fortsætter, bl.a. med den første udgivelse af den middelalderlige lærebog, *Papadike*, som ventes udkommet i 2025 i en videnskabelig og kommenteret udgave af Christian Troelsgård og Maria Alexandrou.

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

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Sammanställning av Britt Dahlman

ARTIKLAR

CREATIO EX SAPIENTIA – THEOPHILOS AF ANTIOKIA MELLEM VISDOMSLITTERATUR OG LOGOSTEOLOGI

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Abstract:

This study of the second-century apologetic work *Ad Autolucym* attributed to Theophilus of Antioch aims to elucidate the role of the concepts Logos and Sophia as they appear in the work. To this end, we provide both a comprehensive overview of the uses of the concepts by Theophilus and a contextualization of the work within second-century Christian thought. This contextualization draws on the proposal by Daniel Boyarin that Logos-theology functioned as a central factor in Christian orthodoxy-construction and as a means of distinguishing a Christian from a Jewish tradition. We conclude that some aspects of Theophilus' use of the Logos- and Sophia-concepts harmonise with the thesis of a second-century emphasis on the divinity of God's Word and Wisdom, while others indicate a more monistic conception of God.

Key Words:

Logos, Sophia, pneuma, Theophilus, patristics, antiquity

Introduktion

De tre bøger, der tilsammen har fået titlen *Ad Autolyicum* (*Autol.*), "til Autolykos" eller "bøger til Autolykos",¹ blev affattet i den anden halvdel af andet århundrede e.v.t. og stammer fra den græsktalende del af Romerriget. Siden oldkirken er bogrullerne blevet tillagt Theophilos, den sjette biskop af den syriske hovedby, Antiokia. Trods de spørgsmålstegn, der både i oldtiden og nutiden er blevet stillet til bøgernes kompositionelle og stilistiske kvaliteter,² er der tale om et væsentligt dokument i en religionshistorisk sammenhæng, fordi det indeholder en af de tidligste bestræbelser på at forsvare en kristen identitet imod den græske hedenske tradition (mere herom nedenfor). Blandt de relativt få overleverede værker fra det andet århundrede, er det også et af de mest omfattende og spraglede, hvorfor det som historisk kilde har betydeligt potentiale på tværs af forskningsfelter.³

Autol. er i forskningsregi ofte blevet inddraget i diskussioner af spørgsmålet om den religiøse adskillelse af jøder og kristne, hvad der typisk betegnes "the parting of the ways".⁴ Dette skyldes for det første værkets datering: det tilbyder et sjældent indblik i en formativ fase af den kristne tradition, perioden mellem de nytestamentlige teksters tilblivelse og den efterfølgende politiske magtforøgelse og stigende doktrinære fiksering, der fulgte med kejser Konstantins accept af den

¹ For bibliografisk information om værket, se *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* nr. 1107.

² For et overblik, se Robert Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autolyicum* (Oxford Early Christian Texts), Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press 1970, xix–xxiii. Jf. Miroslav Marcovich, *Theophili Antiocheni Ad Autolyicum* (Patristische Texte und Studien 44), Berlin og New York: De Gruyter 1995, 1–14; José Pablo Martín, *Teófilo de Antioquía, A Autólico* (Fuentes Patristicas 16), Madrid: Ciudad Nueva 2004, 40–46.

³ Se f.eks. en kort diskussion af Theophilos klassicerende historieskrivning hos Aaron Johnson, "Early Christianity and the classical tradition", i: Daniel Richter og William Johnson (red.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017, 625–38 (634–36).

⁴ Om begrebet, se James Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways*, London: SCM Press, 2006; Adam Becker & Annette Reed (red.), *The Ways that Never Parted*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2020; Lori Baron, Jill Hicks-Keeton, Matthew Thiessen (red.), *The Ways that Often Parted*, Atlanta: SBL Press 2018. For Theophilos inddragelse i debatten, se f.eks. Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek: Constructing Christian Identity*, London: T&T Clark 2002, 66.

kristne gud og det første Nikæa-koncil i året 325.⁵ For det andet har det bemærkelsesværdige fravær af både Jesus og Kristus gennem alle tre bøger ægget til spekulation om forfatterens religiøse position. At være kristen (χριστιανός) indholdsbestemmes 1.12 ud fra den bogstavelige betydning af salvelse, og forbindes desuden til det at være nyttig (εὐχρηστος) – et ordspil, som Theophilos er tilstrækkeligt stolt over til at fremføre i både 1.1.2–3 og 1.12.1–2.⁶ Et af de mest omdiskuterede emner har således rettet sig mod spørgsmålet om, hvorvidt *Autol.* repræsenterer en unik form for tidlig kristendom, hvor Kristus-skikkelsen spiller en nedtonet rolle, eller, alternativt, om værket i lige så høj grad skal henregnes til en jødisk tradition som en kristen.⁷

I denne artikel vil vi berøre parting-of-the-ways-spørgsmålet i et forsøg på at situere Theophilos i en religionshistorisk brydningstid. M.a.o. indstiller vi os ikke på et forsvar for den rette betegnelse for den religiøse identitet hos forfatteren til *Autol.* men ønsker i stedet at undersøge, hvordan en særligt gådefuld del af værkets teologi, nemlig brugen af begreberne logos og sophia, skal forstås inden for en religionshistorisk kontekst. Den Hebraiske Bibel og de efterfølgende jødiske skrifttraditioner udviklede idéer om Guds Visdom og Guds Ord/Tale, som skulle blive modtaget og transformeret igennem den kristne patristik i den senantikke periode,⁸ indtil logosteologien blev etableret som et fast element i den kristne ortodoksi. Denne ortodoksi var endnu ikke givet en

⁵ Et analytisk overblik over de kristne forfattere, der kronologisk er nærmest Theophilos, findes hos Robert Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press 1988. Se også Frances Young, "Greek apologists of the second century", i Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, Simon Price, og Chris Rowland (red.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press 1999, 81–104.

⁶ Vi har anvendt tekstudgaven: José Pablo Martín, Teófilo de Antioquía, *A Autólico* (*Fuentes Patristicas* 16), Madrid: Ciudad Nueva 2004.

⁷ For alt dette, se især gennemgangen hos Jakob Engberg, "Theophilus", i: Jakob Engberg, Anders-Christian Jacobsen og Jörg Ulrich (red.), *In Defence of Christianity: Early Christian Apologists* (Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 15), Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH 2014, 101–124. Engberg opdaterer og udfordrer hovedsageligt Edgar J. Goodspeed og Robert Grant, *A History of Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: Chicago University Press 1966, 117–18; Michael Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum*, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh 2000, 54–55.

⁸ Her lader vi definitionen på periodiseringen være åben, ligesom Averil Cameron, "The 'Long' Late Antiquity: A Late Twentieth-Century Model", i: Timothy Wiseman (red.): *Classics in Progress*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, 165–191.

sikker form i det andet århundrede, hvorfor *Autol.* kan betragtes som et tidligt led i udformningen af et religiøst begrebsunivers.

I undersøgelsen af det semantiske felt, der aftegner sig omkring logos og sophia, inddrager vi Daniel Boyarins bog *Border Lines* til kontekstualisering,⁹ eftersom bogen fremsætter en tese, der udpeger et væsentligt distinktionskriterium mellem den kristne og den jødiske tradition i en adskillelse af teologiske synspunkter vedrørende Guds "ord" og "visdom" i det andet århundrede. Boyarin fremfører således en unik parting-of-the-ways-tese, hvis brændpunkt falder netop i Theophilos' samtid og hvis tematiske fokus er repræsenteret som et hovedtema i særligt anden bog af *Autol.* Ikke desto mindre nævnes Theophilos ikke igennem Boyarins værk – i stedet analyseres Justinus Martyr, der også generelt i forskningen har overskygget Theophilos.¹⁰

Et ærinde i vores artikel vil være at vurdere styrken af Boyarins tese som forståelsesværktøj, når *Autol.* inddrages som kildemateriale – og samtidig at spørge til, hvordan denne tese kan bidrage til vores viden om Theophilos' tænkning og intellektuelle kontekst. Vores overordnede formål vil være igennem teksten at kaste lys over en religionshistorisk brydningstid, som vi mener *Autol.* spiller en betydelig men relativt underbelyst rolle inden for – og igennem denne kontekst at uddybe vores viden om Theophilos' værk. Hermed sigter vi også efter at integrere værket i en bredere forskningskontekst end alene studiet af kristen apologetik,¹¹ hvor langt hovedparten af interessen hidtil har været placeret.

Første afsnit af denne artikel indeholder en generel introduktion til Theophilos og *Autol.* I det følgende afsnit bliver Boyarins tese opridset, hvorefter vi præsenterer et kursorisk overblik af den visdoms- og logos-teologi, der danner baggrund for *Autol.* Herpå følger en gennemgang af de forskellige anvendelseskontekster i værket, hvor logos og sophia op-

⁹ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2006.

¹⁰ Undtagelsen der bekræfter reglen forekommer i Grant, *Greek Apologists*: han dedikerede faktisk hele fire kapitler til Theophilos, flere end alle apologeter, Justinus Martyr inklusive. Se Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 140–47; 148–56; 157–64; 165–74. Afvigelsen er måske ikke så overraskende, fordi Theophilos var en af de mest centrale kilder i Grants kirkehistoriske forskning.

¹¹ Det skal dog siges at selv i dette felt springes Theophilos ofte over; udeladt hos f.eks. Stamenka E. Antonova, *Barbarian or Greek? The Charge of Barbarism and Early Christian Apologetics*, Leiden: Brill 2018.

træder (og undertiden, i samme semantiske felt, *pneuma*). Endelig diskuterer vi i forlængelse heraf forfatterens position ifht. Boyarin-tesen og spørgsmålet om jødisk og kristen visdomstænkning generelt. Vi vil konkludere, at visdoms- og logosbegreberne i værket grundlæggende kan inddeles efter fem funktioner: 1) som aspektuelle tilnærmelser til beskrivelser af Gud, 2) som værktøjer i skabelsen, 3) som midler til moralsk kultivering, 4) som vidnesbyrd om autorisering af bestemte historiske kilder og 5) som medierende led mellem skaber og skabning. Disse funktioner implicerer ikke en gennemgående antagelse vedr. logos og sophias guddommelige status, men udfolder en pluralitet af betydninger, hvor nogle i højere grad indikerer en strengt monistisk gudsforståelse mens andre kan regnes til den fremvoksende logosteologi, der ifølge Boyarin træder frem gennem 2. århundrede som *differentia specifica* for kristne i kontrast til jøder.

Om Theophilos af Antiokia og teksten

Den antagede forfatter kan næppe siges at have opnået en status som et "household name" i dag. Som sagt, står han heller ikke som den mest markante figur i forskningshistorien,¹² på nær udgivelserne af Robert Grant (1917–2014).¹³ Det afspejler sig desværre også i de begrænsede redskaber, som er til rådighed,¹⁴ eller som er svært tilgængelige, som José Pablo Martíns tekstkritiske standardudgave.¹⁵ Theophilos af Anti-

¹² Der angives kun fire publikationer om Theophilos, to efter 1900 og begge af samme forfatter, i Nordisk Patristisk Bibliografi (<https://www.patristik.dk/A2/Theophilos.htm>).

¹³ Om Robert Grants forfatterskab, se Robin Darling Young, "Introduction", i: David Aune og Robin Darling Young (red.), *Reading Religions in the Ancient World: Essays presented to Robert McQueen Grant on his 90th Birthday* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 125), Leiden: Brill 2007, 1–11.

¹⁴ Martín, *Teófilo*, 46 kender til ni tidligere tekstudgaver eller oversættelser, men ingen omfattende kommentarer. Dette bliver der forhåbentligt rådet bod på af Ferdinand Prostmeiers kommentar og oversættelsesprojekt i serien, *Kommentar zu frühchristlichen Apologeten*.

¹⁵ Som et typisk eksempel på tendensen, er Martíns udgave ikke anvendt i en monografi baseret på en afhandling fra Cambridge. Se Jeremy Hudson, *Worshipping a Crucified Man: Christians, Graeco-Romans and Scripture in the Second Century*, Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. 2021, 147–189.

okia er til gengæld forholdsvis velattesteret i den oldkirkelige tradition.¹⁶ Euseb af Caesarea (ca. 260–340 e.v.t.; biskop fra 313) nævnte Theophilos to gange i *Kirkens historie* (ca. 324/25), og i begge tilfælde var han beskrevet som en tidligere kollega fra et andet østligt episkopat:

I menigheden i Antiokia var Theophilos kendt som den sjette efter apostlene.¹⁷

...

Af Theophilos, som jeg har omtalt som biskop i menigheden i Antiokia, findes der tre grundlæggende skrifter, der er rettet til Autolykos.¹⁸

Senere i den anden passage introducerede kirkehistorikeren det faktum, at gejstligheden i Theophilos' levetid var begyndt at måtte kæmpe hårdt for ortodoksien, hvilket også fremgår klart fra Eusebs notits om resten af Theophilos' forfatterskab. Det bestod angiveligt af skrifter mod en række udvalgte "kættere", som Hermogenes og Marcion af Sinope (ca. 85–160). I den senere latinske samling af *Berømte Mænds Liv* (ca. 393), placerede Hieronymus Theophilos som nummer 25 (af 135, i kronologisk rækkefølge). Han afgav samme bibliografiske informationer som Euseb, men tilføjede også nye detaljer: Theophilos levede under kejser Marcus Aurelius (ca. 120–180) og skrev lærde skrifter i flot stil, som bidrog til kirkens kundskabstilegnelse. Derfor mente Hieronymus her, at det var usandsynligt, at to knap så gode bibelkommentarer kunne være skrevet af Theophilos. Derimod bidrog resten af Theophilos' værker "til kirkens uddannelse".

Autol. er det eneste blandt de værker, som Euseb og Hieronymus tilføjede Theophilos, som er overleveret til vores tid. Der lægges vægt på ordet "tillægge", for der er intet indhold i selve teksten, der endegyldigt bekræfter Theophilos' identitet. For eksempel skal de mange personlige

¹⁶ Rick Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch*, Oxford: Lexington Books 2000, 3–14.

¹⁷ Euseb, *Kirkens Historie* 4.20.1, i: Eusèbe de Césarée, *Histoire ecclésiastique*. Livres I–IV. Texte critique de E. Schwartz (GCS) — Traduction et annotation par Gustave Bardy, vol. 1 (*Sources chrétiennes*, 31), Paris: Cerf 1952. (Overs. Jørgen Ledet-Christiansen og Helge Kjær Nielsen, let modificeret).

¹⁸ Euseb, *Kirkens Historie* 4.24.1 (Overs. Jørgen Ledet-Christiansen og Helge Kjær Nielsen, let modificeret).

detaljer, som mesopotamisk ophav og trosskifte, ses i lyset af en ret generisk selviscenesættelse, ikke kun blandt de såkaldte kristne apologeter, men også andre samtidige grupper af intellektuelle.¹⁹ Der skal også medregnes det forhold, at selve navnevalget fremstår suspækt; "Den elskede af Gud", der viser sin tro "til den, som selv er ulv", kan vel nærmest kun tolkes som et aggressivt partsindlæg. Om ikke andet forstærker det i hvert fald fokus på afsenderens retfærdige væsen og modtagerens uret. Med det in mente, er der dog umiddelbart hverken meget vundet eller tabt ved at gøre som Euseb eller Hieronymus og identificere Theophilos som forfatteren på *Autol.*, hvorfor vi også har valgt at holde fast i forfatternavnet, reelt eller opdigtet.

Traditionelt set har Theophilos' værk været tolket som det sidste af de mange apologetiske skrifter, som blev skrevet i slutningen af det andet århundrede.²⁰ Paradoksalt nok ligner det nærmest ikke de andres, som eksempelvis talerne af Melito af Sardes eller Athenagoras af Athen. Værket er hverken en konstrueret dialog eller en offentlig appel til kejsermagten. Theophilos valgte at udforme teksten som en trio af breve til en ligeværdig person, hvorfor både format og adressat dermed var nybrud i det apologetiske korpus. Tekstens diskursive opgave bestod i at "Theophilos" skulle forsøge at overbevise "Autolykos" om sin filosofiske skoles sandhed, imod en uspecificeret men udenforstående "hedensk" skole, som Autolykos åbenbart stadig sværgede til, selv efter at have modtaget de to første bøger (*Autol.* 3.1.1). Opponenten blev fremstillet noget karikeret: Autolykos var den interesserende intellektuelle type blandt hedningene, der tilsyneladende var så interesseret i lærdom, at han "ikke ville tøve med at tilbringe natten på biblioteker" (3.4.3). Dette anlagte sigte på høj social status, som sofister eller filosoffer jo havde, er interessant og bidrager til forfatterens selviscenesættelse som en slags akademisk mentor, men udi det religiøse. Derfor passer forfatterens fremstilling umiddelbart godt for et medlem af gejstligheden, såfremt den navnkundige Theophilos faktisk *var* forfatteren; under alle omstændigheder ville *Autol.* være det første apologetiske skrift udgivet

¹⁹ Se især Kendra Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012.

²⁰ Se den bibliografiske liste hos Martín, *Teófilo*, 11 (n. 12). Til den bør også tilføjes, Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs 1893, 496–502.

af en biskop med sigte på en hedensk læserskare.²¹ Det fremstår altså som noget af et litterært eksperiment, selvom det selvfølgelig deltager i en bredere apologetisk debat og tradition.

Ud fra form, funktion og indhold lader *Autol.* til at være et forsøg på at indgå i en debat med et bredere publikum af tidens intellektuelle elite i de urbane filosofiske skoler (hvormed Theophilos retorisk fik placeret den kristne tænketank på et endnu højere plan).²² Men det ville naturligvis ikke have afholdt andre fra at tilgå teksten, og den kunne i lige så høj grad være tiltænkt et internt publikum eller folk interesserede i konvertering. Vi taler om et protreptisk trebindsværk, der fortæller én samlet historie om Gud og hans rolle i menneskets historie, et vidnesbyrd til religiøs og etisk instruktion. Theophilos fremhævede særligt didaktiske aspekter i sin korte epiløg, hvor han kaldte værket for en "rådgiver og løfte om sandheden" (3.30.4). Sådan læste både Euseb og Hieronymus teksten.

Selvom værkets fortælling kan ses som en enhed, tjente de tre bøger hvert deres formål.²³ 1. bog blev beskrevet som en *ὁμιλία* eller diskurs (2.1.1) og fylder cirka 3100 græske ord. Bogen skulle kort og præcist besvare spørgsmålet om, hvem Theophilos' gud var, dvs. Guds natur, til en klart udenforstående person, som var meget skeptisk og konfrontatorisk. 2. bog blev kaldt for en *σύγγραμμα* eller historisk lære (2.1.2), og den er den længste (over 11600 ord). Bogen genfortalte Guds rolle i mennesket og jordens historie med udgangspunkt i 1. Mosebog og andre hellige skrifter, som modsvar til tidligere hedenske udlægninger af verdens skabelse. Den flytter dermed fokus fra Gud til frelseshistorie og logos' rolle i historien. Den var henvendt til et mere medgørligt publikum, som fattede interesse for den særegne bibelske litteratur og teksternes etiske lære. 3. bog var en *ὑπόμνημα* eller minde eller huskeskrift (3.1.1) på cirka 7200 ord, som genoptog 2. bogs kritikpunkter af hedensk etik og bragte historiefortællingen fra Syndfloden (3.16.1) frem til Theophilos' egen tid (3.28.1). Den opklarede de sidste detaljer og måske mere perifere emner for den ellers interesserede læser, hvorfor den

²¹ Daniel H. Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith: An Introduction to Early Christian Apologetic Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020, 201–202.

²² Ferdinand Prostmeier, "'Zeig mir deinen Gott': Einführung in das Christentum für Eliten", i: Ferdinand Prostmeier (red.), *Frühchristentum und Kultur*, Wien: Herder 2007, 155–185.

²³ Rogers, *Theophilus*, 25.

har et større fokus på nomos end logos. Af den grund vil vi primært beskæftige os med 2. bog.

En religionshistorisk skillevej?

Ifølge Boyarin udfoldes i den periode, der i en jødisk kontekst kaldes Tannaitisk tid og i en kristen periodisering typisk betegnes den før-nikenske periode, nye hærésiologiske diskurser, der bidrager til at konstruere distinkte kristne og jødiske teologiske positioner og religiøse identiteter. Inden for denne polemiske kontekst omfavner kristne en guddommeliggjort logos og modsat afvises som kættersk enhver teologisk position, der nægter en guddommelig status til Guds Ord (en position, der i samtiden repræsenteres af monarkianere/sabellianere), mens jøder afviser som kættersk enhver teologi, der vil udfordre YHWHs eneherredømme:

I propose that Logos theology is not an essential and aboriginal distinguishing mark of Christianity as opposed to Judaism but rather a common theological inheritance that was construed and constructed as such a distinguishing mark via a virtual conspiracy of orthodox theologians on both sides of the new border line – Justin and followers on one side, the Rabbis on the other. The logos became a virtual shibboleth for the production, then, of both orthodoxies.²⁴

Fra Andet Tempel og frem er der ellers i jødisk tænkning en udtalt tradition for en teologi, der har fået betegnelsen *two-powers-in-heaven* i engelsksproget litteratur. Et eksempel herpå findes i det aramæiske begreb *memra* (ord/tale), der i en tradition, Boyarin betragter som en jødisk logosteologi, havde status som en autonom guddommelig entitet på linje med YHWH. En rabbinsk bestræbelse på at konstruere en ortodoksi baseret på et strengere monoteistisk grundlag reducerede, i Boyarins udlægning, denne tradition til kætteri. Således blev idéen om Guds ord/tale som en guddommelig enhed udpeget som "the most significant of indicia for Christian and Jewish separate religious identity. Jews who continued to believe in the logos and Christians who denied it were no

²⁴ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 29.

longer Jews or Christians but heretics by decision of the 'legislative' bodies, the metaphorical parliaments of religious power."²⁵

Denne tolkning er ikke ukontroversiel. Bla. har Shaye Cohen kritiseret Boyarins fokus på idéer frem for handling. I *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* skriver han: "If [...] one speaks of Judaism and Christianity as a collection of theological abstractions, one might conclude that they were, and perhaps still are, one and the same, an approach and a conclusion that I reject. This is (one of) my objections to Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*".²⁶ Det er først og fremmest adfærd, der afgør religiøst tilhørsforhold, ikke tænkning, lyder Cohens indvending. Særligt understreger han det forhold, at ingen jøder tilbad logos: "The logos was simply a philosophical abstraction, a way of understanding the world. For Christians, however, Christ the Logos was the primary focus of worship."²⁷ Endvidere nævnes det, at "even those Jews who, like Philo, used their belief in God's Logos to explain how a transcendent and unknowable God could create the world and interact with it did not worship the Logos or pray to it."²⁸ Senere skal vi vende tilbage til Filon, hvis forståelse af Logos rummer flere kompleksiteter end som så (hvilket Cohen, *contra* sit eget udsagn om logos som blot en filosofisk abstraktion, indrømmer med en hentydning til, at det angående Filon er uklart, "whether the Logos is merely an 'aspect' (or attribute) of God, or whether Logos is a 'being' in its own right").²⁹ For indeværende er det væsentlige at betragte Cohen og Boyarin som repræsenterende kontrasterende poler i parting-of-the-ways diskussionen.

Cohens praksisnære perspektiv er et nødvendigt korrektiv til et *Gipfelwanderung*-perspektiv, der måler religionernes overlap på intelligentsiaens idéproduktion. Dog skal det ikke forglemmes, at hæresiologi

²⁵ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 21. Boyarin understreger dog også, hvordan det hæresiologiske foretagende i jødedommen snart svandt igen efter 2. årh. I 3. og 4. århundrede finder vi desuden i rabbinisk jødedom idéen om Torah som en guddommelig entitet, som YHWH konsulterede i under skabelsen – en idé med klare affiniteter til logosteologien. Man må derfor forstå hans tese sådan, at andet århundrede indeholder en særligt intens impuls mod differentiering, hvor midlerne for denne differentiering imidlertid i højere grad skulle forblive i den kristne tradition end i den jødiske.

²⁶ Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 2014, 232.

²⁷ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 166.

²⁸ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 166.

²⁹ Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 81.

også er en praksis, og at de idéer, der genereres i en hæresiologisk diskurs, er praksisformende. En grundlæggende indsigt fra den sproglige vendings indflydelse på ortodoksi- og hæresispørgsmålet er, at diskursiv virkelighed sjældent fungerer som en refleksion af den ikke-diskursive virkelighed, men derimod tilstræber at forme denne. Når kristne forfattere allerede i det første århundrede og den tidlige del af det andet (hvor Cohen mener at finde et håndfast skel mellem jøder og kristne) kan formulere kategoriske distinktioner mellem kristne og jøder,³⁰ da skal dette ses som en diskursiv virkelighed og en præskriptiv manøvre snarere end en deskriptiv gengivelse af en reel historisk virkelighed.

I det følgende skal det i høj grad handle om abstraktioner. Spekulationerne om logos og sophia kan ligefrem regnes til den mest abstrakte del af *Autol.* Boyarins perspektiv lader os netop forme en kontekst for sådan en tekst. Det interessante i denne sammenhæng er ikke at uddrage, hvilken personlig religiøs identitet disse reflekterer, men snarere at læse dem i forhold til de generelle religionshistoriske dynamikker, som værket var præget af og bidrog til. Når det, som Cohen rigtigt nævner, er et særkende for kristne, at en egentlig tilbedelse af logos (identificeret som treenighedens anden person) vandt frem i løbet af senantikken, er det værd at undersøge hvilke diskurser, der motiverede denne særprægede handlingsform.

Om ord og visdom

En række begreber og idéer, der senere skal spille centrale roller i den kristne ortodoksi, optræder i relativt usystematiseret form i *Autol.* – eller er af den senere kristne tradition blevet udpeget heri som rudimenter eller kimformer til senere mere fasttømrede doktriner. Man har f.eks. ville finde en treenighedslære hos Theophilos.³¹ Således skriver D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, at "[w]e are given a glimpse of trinitarian doctrine in the early formative stage in the works of Theophilus".³² Hvad Wallace-

³⁰ Et primæreksempel i denne henseende er Ignatios af Antiokia, der i strenge vendinger mindede sin menighed om, at de ikke var jøder – se f.eks. Ignatios *Brev til Magneserne* 8–10; *Brev til Philadelpherne* 6.1–2, 8.2–9.

³¹ Robert Grant ærgrer sig over, at Theophilos ikke valgte begreberne "Father, Son, and Spirit", da han i dette fravalg "allowed a considerable measure of confusion to remain." (Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 169).

³² D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009, 67.

Hadrill peger på, er en passage i *Autol.* 2.15, hvor Theophilos omtaler Guds trefoldighed (τριάς).³³ Det er imidlertid ikke faderen, sønnen og Helligånden,³⁴ der er på spil, men derimod "God and his Logos and his Sophia" med den tentative tilføjelse af en fjerde part: "In the fourth place is man, who is in need of light – so that there might be God, Logos, Sophia, Man. For this reason the luminaries came into existence on the fourth day."³⁵

Derudover finder vi, som det generelt er tilfældet i *Autol.*, teologi udfoldet inden for rammerne af et partikulært problem, og ikke *in abstracto*.³⁶ Theophilos vil finde et svar på, hvordan de tre dage i Genesisfortællingen skal forstås, der går forud for skabelsen af himmelhvælvingens lyskilder. Svaret bliver, at disse tre dage er typer for Guds tre dele – en tredeling, som Robert Grant velvalgt oversætter med "triad" snarere end "trinity".³⁷ Denne treleddede teologi introduceres som et forklaringsværktøj til Genesis-teksten, og ikke som noget, der selv kræver forklaring. Om det har været udbredt i de kristne miljøer, Theophilos

³³ Dette må regnes blandt de mest almindeligt kendte aspekter af Theophilos tænkning. På Wikipedia kan man således læse: "Theophilus's apology is most notable for being the earliest extant Christian work to use the word "Trinity". (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophilus_of_Antioch#Trinity, tilgået 10/06/24).

³⁴ D.H. Williams hævder, at det er "unimaginable that Theophilus does not know of the Antiochene confession that would have professed the τριάς [sic] God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Men for denne artikels forfattere er det ikke klart, at forfatteren til *Autol.* skulle kende til en sådan bekendelse, særligt da vi ikke med sikkerhed kan tilskrive værket et antiokensk ophav. Jf. Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith*, 207.

³⁵ Blandt de tidligste formuleringer af tredelingen fader, søn og helligånd må regnes Athenagoras: Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 10, i: Athenagoras, *Legatio and De resurrectione*. Redigeret af W. R. Schoedel, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1972.

³⁶ En kontekstbestemt form for formidling af teologisk tankegods synes at være gennemgående for værket, som også Jakob Engberg antyder i sin pragmatiske løsning af spørgsmålet om fraværet af eksplicit kristologi i værket: Rammen for værket er bestemte problemer og spørgsmål rejst i diskussion med den virkelige eller fiktive dialogpartner Autolykos, og værkets indhold bestemmes ud fra disse snarere end ud fra et ønske om at give et generelt billede af den kristne tros indhold. Se Engberg, "Theophilus", 107–109.

³⁷ Grant påpeger selv en lighed på dette punkt mellem "the fantasies of Valentinian Gnostics" og Theophilos. (Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 160) Den påståede lighed beror imidlertid mest af alt på en passage af Ptolemaeus, en discipel af Valentinus, der skulle have hævdet, at Gen. 1.1–2 og Johannes 1.3–4 viser "tetrads" af metafysiske enheder ("Father, Grace, Onlybegotten, Truth", "Logos, Life, Man, Church"). Foruden logosbegrebets optræden i begge kontekster hviler sammenligningen på et lille sted.

havde sin gang i, at tale om Guds "trias" som bestående af Gud, logos og sophia, lader sig desværre dårligt besvare, da *Autol.* forbliver den eneste kilde, der indeholder denne karakteristik. Den selvfølgelighed, med hvilken den fremføres, kan lige så vel skyldes den rollefordeling mellem Gud, logos og sophia, som er blevet udfoldet inden for værket selv, hvilket vi vender tilbage til i næste afsnit.

Idéen om skabelse ud af intet – ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων i Theophilos' græske, *ex nihilo* i den senere og i dag mere velkendte latinske formulering – kommer også til udtryk i *Autol.* Formuleringen findes flere gange gennem værket (Cf. 1.4: ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων εἰς τὸ εἶναι og 2.4: Θεοῦ δὲ ἡ δύναμις ἐν τούτῳ φανεροῦται ἵνα ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ποιῇ ὅσα βούλεται) og retter sig polemisk mod den platoniske idé om en oprindelig materie, som universet skabtes ud af. Intet stof fandtes før skabelsen, da dette synspunkt vil ophøje det blotte stof til guddommelig status ved at tilkende det evig eksistens. Hvad der derimod findes før skabelsesakten, er logos og sophia, der beskrives som indeholdt uskabt i Gud – en pointe, der formidles af Theophilos med et meget kropsligt billedsprog, som når Gud i 2.10 indeholder Logos i sine σπλάγχνοις, bogstaveligt "indvolde", for så at "gylpe ham op", på græsk formuleret participialt som ἐξεγευσάμενος.³⁸

Som bibelsk baggrund for denne forståelse,³⁹ og som standardreferencen for Theophilos angående visdomsbegrebet generelt, er Ordsprogenes bog 8. Her forklarer den personificerede Visdom sit ophav som det første i Guds skabelse: "Som begyndelsen på sine handlinger skabte Herren mig, som det første af sine værker dengang. Fra evighed er jeg dannet, fra begyndelsen, før jorden blev til." (Ordsprogenes bog, 8.22–8.23) Det andet århundredes kristne tænkning var generelt optaget af

³⁸ Disse kropslige metaforer vedrørende Guds frembringelse af lavere guddommelige enheder har foranlediget paralleller til hedenske tekster som Hesiods *Theogoni* (et værk diskuteret af Theophilos gennem *Autol.*), hvor Zeus rummer Metis i sin bug og føder Athena ud af sin pande. Dette er en af mange dele af Theophilos tænkning, som falder uden for Robert Grants personlige teologiske smag, og som derfor af ham dømmes som "regrettable" (Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 170).

³⁹ Foruden de bibelske tekster af visdomslitteraturen formodentlig kommet til Theophilos gennem Salomos Visdom (også simpelthen kaldet Visdommens Bog). Denne er en græsk visdomstekst, højst sandsynligt af alexandrinsk oprindelse, der fandt vej ind i LXX. Theophilos citerer ikke Salomos Visdom, men bestemte elementer af hans teologi synes at bære tydeligt præg heraf: F.eks. følger han, som Grant har påpeget, "its doctrine on the envy of the devil". (Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 166).

denne passage, som bla. Justinus Martyr og Athenagoras lig Theophilus læser som en reference til den logosfigur, der optræder i Johannesevangeliet.⁴⁰ Foruden denne passage fra Ordsprogenes Bog kvalificeres logos- og pneumabegreberne med henvisning til Salmernes Bog 33.6, hvor Logos (i LXX) fremhæves i skabelsen af himlene.⁴¹ (*Autol.*1.7) En anden og omtrent samtidig kristen forfatter, Irenæus, benytter også denne passage som bibelsk ballast for sin logos- og pneumaforståelse.⁴² Men i kontrast til Irenæus, hvor logos og pneuma utvetydigt underordnes en enhedslig Gud, adskiller Theophilus betoning af bibeltekstens implikationer, som Josef Lössl har pointeret: "in Theophilus' version of the biblical text, it had been easier to read 'Logos' and 'Pneuma' as distinctive divine beings or powers, and Theophilus had responded to this in his account by highlighting the distinctive roles and even metaphysical states of Logos and Pneuma."⁴³ Generelt indeholder Theophilus teologi formuleringer, der i forhold til prominente samtidige kristne forfattere som Irenæus og Tatian synes at tilskrive begreberne logos, sophia og pneuma en højere grad af uafhængighed og guddommelig status i egen ret: Hos Tatian er Gud først en simpel enhed (ἀπλότης), der efterfølgende frembringer logos som det første i skabelsen;⁴⁴ hos Irenæus forbindes en selvstændiggørelse af logos med Valentinus' teologi og en sådan tolkning fordømmes følgelig.⁴⁵ I nogle passager ligner Theophilus Justinus Martyr, hovedskikkelsen blandt de kristne apologeter i Boyarins fortælling, der insisterede på "the Logos of God as a second divine person"⁴⁶ – i andre synes han at fremføre en monistisk Gud, som det fejlbarlige menneskesprog er nødsaget til at opdele med begreber som logos, sophia og pneuma.

⁴⁰ Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 108.

⁴¹ På dansk: Ved Herrens ord blev himlen skabt, hele dens mangfoldighed ved et pust fra hans mund.

⁴² Irenæus, *Haer.* 1.22, i: *Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libri quinque adversus haereses*. Redigeret af W. W. Harvey, vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1857.

⁴³ Josef Lössl, "Tatian, Theophilus and Irenaeus" i *The Routledge Handbook of Early Christian Philosophy*, New York: Routledge 2021, 349.

⁴⁴ Tatian, *Oratio* 5.2, i: "Die ältesten Apologeten". Redigeret af E. J. Goodspeed, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915. Se også: Lössl, "Tatian, Theophilus and Irenaeus", 345: "whereas in John 1:1 the Logos was in the beginning, in Tatian's account the Logos does not yet exist distinctly at this point".

⁴⁵ Irenæus, *Haer.* 2.28.

⁴⁶ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 38.

Theophilos er heller ikke konsekvent i sin identifikation af logos og sophia.⁴⁷ Begreberne synes, som indikeret foroven, at finde deres betydning ud fra den argumentatoriske kontekst, de optræder i gennem *Autol.*, mere end ud fra et forudfattet teologisk begrebsapparat. Som vi vil se i det kommende, er visdoms- og logosbegreberne hos Theophilos tilstrækkeligt ubestemte i deres betydning til at kunne ombyttes eller gøres til synonymer efter behov. Heri ligner han nogle andre kristne forfattere fra andet århundrede, f.eks. ovennævnte forsøg på at forbinde sophia i Ordsprogene med logos i Johannesevangeliet, men adskiller sig igen fra andre. Hos Clemens af Alexandria (ca. 150–215) findes f.eks. en klar opfattelse af sophia og logos som tilhørende hhv. immanens og transcendens. Således anklager han i 5. bog kap. 14 af sin *Stromateis* den stoiske pneuma-idé for at bero på en forveksling mellem Guds visdom, der ”gennemtrænger alt”, med Guds logos, der er hævet over kosmos.⁴⁸ Dog skal det også påpeges, hvordan en platonisk arv, der skelner mellem ontologisk væsen og immanent funktion, ville tillade et syn på logos- og visdomsbegreberne, der identificerer dem i deres væren men adskiller dem i deres virke. Mest udtalt findes denne tolkning hos Filon af Alexandria.⁴⁹ Peter Schäfer skriver herom: ”Thus Logos and Wisdom are indeed ontologically identical but describe different aspects of God, as also of his creative activity. God, his Logos, and his Wisdom are one, while they simultaneously reflect distinct qualities within God and in relation to the created world.”⁵⁰

Dette er en væsentlig kvalifikation af både Filon og den patristiske tradition, der trækker på ham i udviklingen af en logosteologi. Schäfers nuancering af Filons position er ikke uden relevans ifht. Boyarin-tesen, eftersom Filon ifølge Boyarin ”identifies Sophia and the Logos as a single entity”, hvilket for ham er forbundet med ophøjelsen af denne

⁴⁷ Med henblik på den efterfølgende patristiske historie kan det påpeges, at identifikationen af visdom og logos bliver gjort til genstand for særligt ophedet polemik under arianismestriden: For hvis Logos = Visdom = Sønnen i treenigheden, da giver det ikke mening (således argumenterer den arianske fløj) at tale om Logos som frembragt af Gud – for i så fald må der have været et tidspunkt, hvor Gud var uden Visdom.

⁴⁸ Andrew Litter, *Esoteric Teaching in the Stromateis of Clement of Alexandria*, Leiden: Brill 2009, 143.

⁴⁹ At *Autol.* indeholder indflydelse fra Filon er generelt accepteret. For et overblik over denne indflydelse, se David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*. Minneapolis: Van Gorcum, 1993, 110–116; Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 167.

⁵⁰ Peter Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 2004, 45.

sophia-logos enhed til status som *deuteros theos*.⁵¹ Vi vil se igennem næste afsnit, hvordan *Autol.* synes på den ene side at indeholde tilfælde af en aspekt-forståelse af logos og sophia, der ligner Schäfers karakteristik af Filon, og på den anden en tolkning af disse som uafhængige guddommelige instanser.

Begrebernes funktioner i *Ad Autolycum*

Logos, Sophia, Pneuma

Logos- og sophiabegreberne introduceres i tredje afsnit af værkets første bog, hvori en karakteristik af Gud forsøges. Først markeres Guds principielle ubegribelighed igennem en række apofatiske bestemmelser (ἀχώρητος, ἀκατάληπτος, ἀπερινόητος, ἀσύγκριτος, ἀσυμβίβαστος, ἀμίμητος, ἀνεκδιήγητος). Derefter opbløder han den kategoriske afvisning af sprogets duelighed over for Gud ved – i tråd med Filons ovenfor nævnte forståelse af logos og visdom – at påpege, hvordan bestemte begreber kan udpege aspekter af det guddommelige. Blandt en længere opremsning af disse findes følgende: "If I call him Logos, I speak of his beginning (ἀρχήν); if I call him Sophia (Wisdom), I speak of his offspring (γέννημα)".⁵² Også begrebet pneuma, der af Theophilos undertiden forbindes til eller analogiseres med sophia og logos, introduceres her. I en meget bogstavelig forståelse af Pneuma hedder det således: πνεῦμα ἐὰν εἴπω, ἀναπνοήν αὐτοῦ λέγω.

I 1.7 indikerer Theophilos, at sophia og pneuma udfyldte lignende funktioner i skabelsen: "God made everything through Logos and Sophia" skriver han, hvorefter han som bibelgrundlag for dette udsagn citerer Ps. 32:6: "by his Logos the heavens were made firm and by his Spirit (Pneuma) all their power". Hvad der i hans egen formulering er Sophia er Pneuma i bibelteksten, uden at der for Theophilos er noget semantisk mellemrum.

Allerede i afsnit 1.5 udfoldes pneumabegrebet i forbindelse med en ny antropomorfisering af Gud: skabelsen er omsluttet af Guds ånd (πνεῦμα), som igen er omfattet af Guds hånd. Theophilos er konsekvent nok i bestemmelsen af Pneuma som Guds åndedræt, til at han i afsnit

⁵¹ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 96. Her finder Boyarin opbakning fra bla. Darrell Hannah, der foreslår, at Filon befinder sig inden for en jødisk alexandrinsk tradition, der tilkendte "a certain independence to God's word." Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 113.

⁵² *Autol.* 1.3.

1.7 kan sige: "You speak of him, O man; you breathe his breath". Denne type fremstilling af *pneuma* har ledt Nicole Zeegers-Vander Vorst til at skrive at "le *Pneuma*, dans les Livres a Autolycus, loin d'être la troisième personne de la Trinité, est de coloration beaucoup plus stoïcienne que biblique."⁵³ Vorsts diagnose fortjener et par kommentarer, før vi fortsætter gennemgangen af Theophilos værk. Påpegningen af en potentiel stoisk arv viser, hvordan spørgsmålet om Theophilos intellektuelle og religiøse position ikke alene udstrækker sig til hans forhold til jødisk og kristen religion, men ligeledes til hans forhold til de hellenistiske skoler; i senantikken brogede intellektuelle landskab findes lignende idéer ofte inden for forskellige traditioner af jødisk, hellenistisk og tidlig-kristen tænkning. Vorst finder altså en hedensk hellenistisk baggrund til *pneumabegrebet*. Dette er ikke usandsynligt, men kan dog dårligt bestemmes med nogen sikkerhed – ikke mindst eftersom Vorst ikke uddyber den hævdede stoiske karakter, som for hende mest af alt fremhæves for at differentiere *pneumabegrebet* fra *logos* og *sophia*. *Logosbegrebet* vil hun spore til en jødisk midrashim-tradition: "un *Logos*, qui, meme s'il présente quelques affinités avec le Verbe johannique, accuse, lui aussi, de nombreuses attaches avec le judaïsme."⁵⁴ Man kan undre sig over dette udsagn, al den stund Theophilos eksplicit citerer Johannesprologens første sætning i 2.22 og desuden formodentlig tilsigter en underforstået reference til Johannesprologen 1.3 i 2.10: τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔσχεν ὑπουργὸν τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένων, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ τὰ πάντα πεποίηκεν. En johannæisk baggrund synes at udgøre mere end bare "quelques affinités" i værkets anden bog, hvor *logosbegrebet* udfoldes mest detaljeret. Vorsts pointe er, at en midrash-tradition, der omtaler Guds Torah som iboende i Gud, før denne bliver eksternaliseret og tilgængeliggjort for mennesker, synes at betinge Theophilos' brug af *logosbegrebet*, der hos ham træder i stedet for Torah. Der er rigtignok en analogi mellem idéen om Guds iboende Torah og Guds iboende *logos* – men i lige så høj grad er der en analogi mellem *logos* og den jødiske *memra*-teologi, som Boyarin betragter som en jødisk logosteologi, og som Vorst ikke nævner.

At hævde, at det ikke er et johannæisk men et jødisk *logosbegreb*, der er på spil, forudsætter imidlertid også en adskillelse mellem de to,

⁵³ Nicole Zeegers-Vander Vorst, "La création de l'homme (Gn 1,26) chez Théophile D'Antioche", *Vigiliae Christianae* 30:4 (1976), 258–267 (259).

⁵⁴ Zeegers-Vander Vorst, "La création de l'homme", 262.

som ifølge Boyarin er misforstået. Omkring Johannesevangeliet skriver Boyarin ligefrem, at "until verse 14, what we have before us is a piece of perfectly unexceptional non-Christian Jewish thought that has been seamlessly woven into the christological narrative of the Johannine community."⁵⁵ Der er for Boyarin tale om en form for midrash, der eksegetisk kombinerer to skriftsteder, i dette tilfælde Genesis 1 og Ordsprogene 8. Hvis denne tolkning stemmer, ville Vorst placere skellet mellem en jødisk og en kristen Logos-tradition allerede i første århundredes johannæiske litteratur, mens det først er i løbet af andet århundredes apologetiske litteratur, at en sådan distinktion indfinder sig.

Vorst insisterer desuden på, at et gennemgående træk ved Theophilos er at beholde logos og sophia som adskilte størrelser. Ved en nærmere granskning af værket kan denne tolkning kan dog ikke opretholdes som en konsekvent karakteristik, som man f.eks. ser, når Theophilos ved hjælp af en Paulus-reference skriver om Guds "Logos, through whom he made all things, who is his power and Sophia".⁵⁶ At han her sætter lighedstegn mellem logos og sophia sløres imidlertid i Robert Grants oversættelse, der (måske for at udglatte værkets begrebsmæssige inkonsistens) i dette tilfælde vælger at oversætte sophia med "wisdom" snarere end den direkte gengivelse af den græske term, som det ellers overvejende er tilfældet i hans oversættelse. Grant kan da også hævde, diametralt modsat Vorst, at Theophilos "refuses to differentiate mental activities within God [hvoraf Grant nævner Logos, Mind, Spirit, Wisdom og Forethought], since Gnostics could then slip in their theories about sequential emanation."⁵⁷ Her finder Grant udgangspunktet for sin tolkning i et formodet strategisk ønske hos Theophilos om at forme sin teologi således, at den ikke kan bruges af "gnostikerne". Et bemærkelsesværdigt omvendt udgangspunkt findes i hans forklaring af Theophilos' udlægning af den guddommelige *trias* ud fra ligheder til valentiniansk gnosis (se note 37).

Hvem Visdommen taler igennem

En gennemgående ambition i *Autol.* er at undergrave de hedenske digteres og historieskrivers autoritet og i stedet fremhæve den bibelske

⁵⁵ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 111.

⁵⁶ *Autol.* 2.22.1.

⁵⁷ Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 167.

udlægning af verdenshistorien. Med dette formål overlapper to roller, som logos og sophia udfylder i værket: deres funktion i skabelsen og deres evne til at indgive mennesker profetiske evner og sand viden om kosmos. Eftersom Sophia eksternaliseres (eller "gylpes op") ved skabelsesøjeblikket, bevidner hun hele skabelsesprocessen, og kan efterfølgende genfortælle denne gennem udvalgte mennesker. Herved etableres for Theophilos et håndgribeligt adskillelseskriterium for ethvert udsagn omhandlende kosmogoni eller den fjerne historie.

I en passage, der måske bærer præg af det jødiske påbud om forsigtighed i omgangen med *Ma'asse Bereshit*,⁵⁸ dvs. undersøgelser af Guds skabelse af verden, skriver Theophilos i 2.12: "No man can adequately set forth the whole exegesis and plan of the Hexaëmeros (six days work), even if he were to have ten thousand mouths and ten thousand tongues. Not even if he were to live ten thousand years, continuing in this life, would he be competent to say anything adequately in regard to these matters, because of the *surpassing greatness and richness of the Wisdom of God* to be found in this Hexaëmeros quoted above." Her skal det påpeges, at Theophilos introducerer endnu et begreb, der vil få et omfattende efterliv i patristisk teologi, nemlig begrebet *oikonomia*, som Grant her oversætter som "plan".⁵⁹ Oikonomia-begrebet i patristisk tænkning, som har modtaget sin nok mest bemærkelsesværdige analyse i Giorgio Agambens *The Kingdom and the Glory*, bliver et nøglebegreb i redegørelsen for forholdet mellem Guds enhed og flerhed, monoteismen og treenigheden: I sin væren er Gud én, men i sin *oikonomia* (hans administration af verden og frelsen) er han tre.⁶⁰ I denne passage drejer det sig efter alt at dømme om den indre sammenhæng i skabelsesprocessen.

Hvem der får adgang til sophia specificeres i 2.9 som "Guds mennesker" (Οἱ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι), beåndet af en hellig ånd (πνεύματο-

⁵⁸ Jf. Guy Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*, Leiden: Brill 2005.

⁵⁹ Begrebet Hexaëmeros som betegnelse for skabelsen får også et omfattende efterliv hos særligt Origenes, de Kappadokiske fædre, Johannes Chrysostomos, Ambrosius, Augustin og Pseudo-Eusthathius. Se: Johan Brun Mendes Cederfeldt, "Naturen i menneskets billede? Et ontologisk perspektiv på naturforståelse i senantik religion", *Slagmark* #88, 2024, 43–61.

⁶⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Stanford University Press 2011, 1–15. Nogle kristne tænkere i Theophilos' samtid og eftertid mente, at logos alene hørte til Guds oikonomia, således at den på den sidste dag vil vende tilbage til Gud, der kollapse sin treenighed for igen at blive monadisk.

φόροι πνεύματος ἁγίου – vel at mærke uden bestemt artikel, hvilket finder udtryk i Grants oversættelse som "a holy Spirit"), som gennem instruktion fra Gud blev hellige og retfærdige og derfor værdige til at blive redskaber (ὄργανα) og bærere af Sophia.

Sibyllen er den eneste ikke-bibelske skikkelse, der tildeles inspiration fra Sophia. Baggrunden for denne opskrivning af en hedensk kilde til profeti skal findes i den sibyllinske orakel-litteratur, som trods sin anvendelse af sibyllefiguren blev skrevet af jødiske og senere kristne forfattere.⁶¹ Når der ellers hos hedenske forfattere (af hvilke der nævnes kanoniske digtere som Simonides, Euripides, Aischylos og Pindar) kan findes betragtninger, der synes at harmonisere med Sibyllen eller den bibelske profetiske litteratur, da regnes disse for at være af nyere herkomst og resultatet af hedensk idétyveri. (2.37)

Sophia tjener som en garant for sandhedsværdien af udsagn fra bestemte ophøjede figurer i fortiden, men også antydningssvis som en kilde til muligt "selvsyn" for det, Theophilos fremfører gennem værket: 2.38 hentyder Theophilos til, at Guds sophia er almindeligt tilgængelig for alle, der stræber efter den og som lever et retfærdigt liv: "All these matters will be understood by everyone who seeks for the Wisdom of God and is pleasing to him through faith and righteousness and good deeds." Kendskab til Sophia udpeges desuden som vejen til at "se Gud": "Deliver yourself to the physician, and he will couch the eyes of your soul and heart. Who is the physician? He is God, who heals and gives life through Logos and Sophia. God made everything through Logos and Sophia (...). His Sophia is most powerful (...). If you know these things, O man, and live in purity, holiness, and righteousness, you can see God." Carl Curry har foreslået, at Theophilos her har "pagan theogonies in mind", og at han låner et motiv fra Hesiod, nemlig påkaldelsen af muserne som garant for et ikke-blot-menneskeligt indhold i det skrevne.⁶² *Autol.* bærer utvivlsomt vidnesbyrd om, hvor optaget Theophilos var af Hesiod – ikke desto mindre skal man holde sig den

⁶¹ Det længste citat af de mange både eksplicitte og indvævede citationer, der optræder i *Autol.*, er hentet fra 3. Sibyllebog. (2.36).

⁶² Carl Curry, "The Theogony of Theophilus", *Vigiliae Christianae* 42:4 (1988), 318–326 (319). Forslaget om en indflydelse fra Hesiod styrkes af de øvrige paralleller mellem Theophilos og Hesiod, Curry dokumenterer. F.eks. viser han, hvordan et fragment af Hesiod indeholder en række beskrivelser af Athena, der genfindes i Theophilos beskrivelser af Logos.

væsentlige forskel in mente, at muserne bringer både sandheder og løgne forklædt som sandheder.⁶³ Hos Theophilos er Visdommen den eneste virkelige kilde til sandhed.

Abstrakta eller guddommelige enheder

I hvilket omfang tilskrives logos og sophia en selvstændig guddommelig status hos Theophilos, jf. Boyarin-tesen? Beskrivelsen fra første bog, hvor logos og sophia beskrives som ord, der udpeger aspekter ved en Gud, der ikke lader sig omtale direkte, synes at indikere, at der ikke er tale om personlige, uafhængige guddommelige enheder sammen med Gud. Hvis man antager en stabilitet af begreberne på tværs af første bogs aspekt-passage og de mange abstrakte diskussioner af logos og sophia i anden bog, ville det forekomme som den oplagte tolkning, at disse begreber i skabelsesakten transformeres fra at være aspekter ved Gud til at være personliggjorte og eksternaliserede entiteter (der dog aldrig fuldkomment løsriver sig fra Gud). Spørgsmålet er da, om overgangen fra *logos endiathetos* til *logos prophorikos* (hhv. den i Gud iboende logos og den frembragte logos) også implicerer overgangen fra en rendyrket monistisk gud til en trefoldig gud.⁶⁴ *Trias*-begrebet er ikke nødvendigvis en evig attribut ved Gud, men måske alene fremkommende ved skabelsesakten – og selv i sin trefoldige udfoldelse er der ikke en treenhedsforståelse præget af lighed mellem de tre guddommelige personer, sådan som det bliver tilfældet i post-nikænsk kristologi.⁶⁵

Interessante tvetydigheder byder sig imidlertid til gennem værket, der ikke synes konsekvent at overholde aspekt-tolkningen fra første bogs apofatiske udsagn (ifølge hvilke logos og sophia simpelthen er midler for det menneskelige sprog til at begribe dele af den ubegribelige Gud, nærmere bestemt hans ἀρχή og hans γέννημα). I 2.22 skriver Theophilos, at logos er Guds søn (dette uden nogen benævnelse af Jesus eller Kristus) og beskriver ligeledes sophia som Guds afkom (γέννημα).

⁶³ Hesiod, Th. 27–28: ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, / ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι, "Mangen en løgn, som er sandheden lig, formår vi at ytre, / også vi kan, når vi vil, lade sandheden komme til orde" (overs. Lene Andersen).

⁶⁴ For mere om denne distinktion, der har sin tidligste dokumentation hos Filon, se: Adam Kamesar, "The logos endiathetos and the logos prophorikos in allegorical interpretation: Philo and the D-Scholia to the Iliad", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 44.2 (2004): 163–181.

⁶⁵ Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, 68.

I samme afsnit hører vi, efter en eksplicit fremhævnning af Johannesprologen, følgende udsagn: Θεὸς οὖν ὢν ὁ λόγος καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ πεφυκώς, ὁπότεν βούληται ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων πέμπει αὐτὸν εἰς τινὰ τόπον, ὃς παραγινόμενος καὶ ἀκούεται καὶ ὁρᾶται, πεμπόμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τόπῳ εὐρίσκεται. På den ene side markeres det, at logos er afledt af Gud (ἐκ θεοῦ πεφυκώς). På den anden side beskrives logos som θεός, gud – og vel at mærke ikke blot θεῖος, guddommelig.⁶⁶ Her ledes tankerne mod en passage hos Justinus Martyr, der eksplicit sidestiller begreberne θεός og λόγος: "God has begotten as a Beginning before all his creatures a kind of Reasonable Power from Himself, which is also called by the Holy Spirit the Glory of the Lord, and sometimes Son, and sometimes Wisdom, and sometimes Angel, and sometimes God, and sometimes Lord and Word."⁶⁷ Boyarin lægger i sin tese om logosbegrebets *shibboleth*-karakter stor vægt på Justinus' logosforståelse: "Throughout the *Dialogue* [dvs. Justinus' *Dialog med Tryphon*], Justin is very concerned to define the Jews as those who do not believe in the Logos."⁶⁸ Interessant er det da at finde en lignende logosforståelse hos Theophilos, hvis værk ikke er vendt polemisk mod jøderne, men derimod frembyder en markant nærhed til jødisk tænkning. Theophilos kan rimeligvis betragtes som et eksempel på opskrivningen af den guddommelige status hos logos- og sophiabegreberne uden at denne opskrivning indrammes af en bestræbelse mod religiøs differentiering og udgrænsning – en bestræbelse, der af Boyarin skrives frem som en dominerende motivation for de teologiske innovationer hos jøder og kristne, hvilket ikke mindst ses i hans tale om "a virtual conspiracy of orthodox theologians on both sides".⁶⁹

D.S. Wallace-Hadrill ser Sophia som ordensskabende og immanent, mens logos er frembringende. "The function of the wisdom of God is to 'found the earth', which may mean to set in order the unformed matter,

⁶⁶ Dette prædikat findes anvendt på logos i tredje bog (hvor både logos og sophia ellers er stort set fraværende): "ho theios logos" befaler, at man underkaster sig verdslig magt. Den anden iøjnefaldende forekomst af logos og sophia i tredje bog er den lange retoriske homoioteleuton-opremsning i 3.16, der bla. indeholder "logos hagios hodegei, sophia didaskei".

⁶⁷ Justinus Martyr, *Dialogus* 61.1, i: "Die ältesten Apologeten". Redigeret af E. J. Goodspeed, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915.

⁶⁸ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 38.

⁶⁹ Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 29.

the chaos, created by the Word"⁷⁰, skriver Wallace-Hadrill. Samtidig insisterer han på en skarp adskillelse mellem *endiathekos* og *prophorikos*: logos og sophia har alene deres hhv. frembringende og ordensskabende egenskaber, når de er ytret. Før dette er de alene, jf. første bogs aspekt-forståelse, endnu-ikke-differentierede egenskaber i en enhedslig Gud. Det rejser nødvendigvis spørgsmålet om, hvad der i så fald karakteriserer disse egenskaber qua *endiathekos*; hvis de fungerer, der bestemmer logos og sophia indholdsmæssigt, først træder i kraft i deres eksternaliserede form, hvad indholdsbestemmer dem så, mens de er iboende i Gud? Derudover synes denne tolkning dårligt forenelig med Theophilos' tolkning af den så omdiskuterede pluralisform af det hortative verbum, når Gud i Gen. 1.26 siger: "Let us make man after our image and likeness" (Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν τὴν ἡμετέραν), som en reference til logos og sophia. (2.18) De er ikke blot det første i skabelsen, jf. den af Theophilos meget afholdte passage fra Ordsprogene 8.22, men tillige eksisterende forud for skabelsen på en måde, hvor Gud meningsfuldt kan påkalde dem til skabelsesakten. På dette punkt synes det at lede til en mere sandsynlig tekstforståelse *ikke* at antage kontinuitet mellem første bogs aspekt-forståelse og denne udlægning af Gen. 1.26. I første tilfælde er logos og sophia aspekter ved Gud, som må tages i anvendelse i det menneskelige sprog, der ikke kan fatte Gud i sin helhed. I det andet udpeger begreberne entiteter, som Gud kan adressere. Hvis ikke man vil hævde, at Theophilos skulle mene, at Gud for at få gang i skabelsen betjener sig af menneskesprogets midler i en bemærkning rettet mod sig selv, må man antage, at denne sidste passage indeholder en forståelse af begreberne, der afviger fra første bog, og som tilskriver dem en større grad af personlighed.

Vedrørende spørgsmålet om aspekt-tolkningen skal det også påpeges, i forbindelse med ovennævnte pointer om Filons aspekt-teologi, at logos og sophia hos Theophilos ikke fordeler sig entydigt på den måde, at førstnævnte relaterer sig til et intelligibelt kosmos og sidstnævnte til det sanselige. Logos beskrives 2.10 som ὑποούργος, dvs. nyttig/tjenlig, og det nævnes, hvordan Gud anvendte denne bla. til at fordele vandene under skabelsen, og hvordan han skabte lyset gennem logos. (2.13) Endvidere argumenterer Theophilos for, at "Guds stemme", som Adam hører i Edens have, er logos, der optræder ἐν προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, i Guds sted. Begge optræder derfor som agenter i skabelsen, som aktører, der

⁷⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, 68.

interagerer med den materielle verden, men som ligeledes eksisterer forud for denne.

Konklusion

Det er et velkendt forhold i religionshistorien, at mediatorfigurer er nødvendige komplementar til transcendent gudeforestillinger. En gud, der er fjernet fra den materielle verden, behøver guddommelige eller semi-guddommelige entiteter, der kan bevæge sig i rummet mellem det transcendent og det materielle. De første århundreder af vores tidsregning bevidner et væld af religiøse innovationer, der udfylder dette rum. Det samme kosmologiske behov adresseres af Plotins emanationer, Valentinus' æoner og kirkefædrenes logos, sophia og pneuma. Den uvægerlige risiko ved sådanne mediatorfigurer er imidlertid, at de kan tilnærme sig den transcendent gud i sådan en grad, at de kompromitterer dennes eneret og overhøjhed (i eksplicit monoteistiske systemer: at gudsforholdet bevæger sig faretruende nær polylati). Skal man tro Boyarin, finder vi i andet århundrede to modsatrettede reaktioner på denne risiko: en principiel omfavelse af de medierende enheders guddommelige skikkelse i den kristne tradition og en afvisning i den jødiske. I denne artikel har vi undersøgt Theophilos' status i denne brydningstid.

Theophilos kan dårligt indskrives i nogen "conspiracy of orthodox theologians" (en formulering fra Boyarin, der nok under alle omstændigheder stiller sagen overordentligt meget på spidsen). Som ovenfor nævnt er det, i kontrast til Justinus Martyr, ikke en eksplicit ambition hos Theophilos at ville udfolde en teologi i en polemisk kontrast til jødisk teologi. *Autol.* er kendt for at fremvise mange "jødiske" træk (til en sådan grad, at Robert Grant kunne skrive, at "in almost every aspect his apology is defence of Hellenistic Judaism as well as of Jewish Christianity")⁷¹ og tilsvarende minimale "kristne" træk. Det har været en ledetråd for denne artikel at situere værket i den religionshistoriske dynamik, hvor modsatrettede hæresiologiske diskurser ifølge Boyarin bidrog til en gensidig distancering af det teologiske fundament for en kristen tro baseret på logosteologi og en jødisk baseret på konsekvent monoteisme.

⁷¹ Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 167.

Vi har i denne artikel præsenteret et overblik over brugen af logos- og sophiabegreberne i *Autol.* med henblik på at afveje, i hvilket omfang og i hvilken form der gives en logosteologi hos Theophilos. Vi har set, hvordan begreberne optræder i en række betydninger, der ikke tilsammen taler for en bestemt teologisk position vedr. spørgsmålet om deres status som selvstændige guddommelige entiteter. Der kan udstikkes fem generelle sammenhænge, hvor begreberne optræder med særskilte funktioner og betydninger:

1. Aspekter ved Gud, der er tilgængelige for beskrivelse gennem menneskets sprog.
2. Værktøjer i skabelsesakten. Her eksternaliseres de egenskaber, der før var iboende i Gud.
3. Midler til at retlede mennesker. Kendskab til logos og sophia ifbm skabelsesakten fremhæves som særligt vigtigt.
4. Legitimation af bestemte udsagn, særligt vedrørende skabelsen.
5. Mediation og kommunikation mellem skaber og skabning.

Værkets første bog, hvor aspekttolkningen udlægges i forholdet mellem Gud og det grundlæggende utilstrækkelige menneskelige sprog, implicerer en monistisk Gud og et logosbegreb uden nogen selvstændighed foruden i det menneskelige sprog. Derimod udviser de øvrige domæner en højere grad af differentiering, når logos eller sophia agerer inden for skabelsen og medierer mellem Gud og skabelsen. Mediation forudsætter selvsagt to parter, der ikke lader sig identificere. Også beskrivelserne af logos og sophia som Guds søn/afkom angiver en tilskrivning af autonomi, uagtet om Theophilos har haft kristusfiguren i tankerne eller ej (givet Johannesprologens status i *Autol.* er dette med overvejende sandsynlighed tilfældet).

Som afsluttende pointe skal det påpeges, at Theophilos' refleksioner over logos, sophia og pneuma ikke entydigt kan indskrives i en udviklingslogik i den kristne teologi, der bevæger sig fra et udpræget polysemisk teologisk vokabular til fikserede betydninger. Logos og sophia skulle i tiden efter Theophilos blive centrale begreber i diskussioner vedr. særligt kristologi og treenighedslære, og ikke mindst det første koncil i Konstantinopel år 381 fastsatte som ortodoksi, at logos er distinkt fra Faderen men af samme substans. Som indledningsvis nævnt bidrager Theophilos til udformningen af et kristent begrebsunivers,

men trods eftertidens stigende systematisering af begreberne logos og sophia ud fra de hævdvundne distinktioner, der fordeler dem på treenighedens personer (således at Sønnen=Logos og Helligånden=Sophia), beholder disse en ombyttelighed og identificerbarhed og fortsætter med at generere teologiske positioner, der udpeges som kætterske. Dette sidste bærer biskoppen Photinos vidnesbyrd for i 4. årh.: Photinos nægtede præ-eksistensen af Logos og så denne alene som frembragt med Kristus, en position, der koster ham hans kirkelige embede.⁷² Også i moderne tid fortsætter sophia- og logosbegrebene at generere kontroversielle teologiske positioner, et af de mest tydelige eksempler værende den russiske sophiologi, hvor sophia (ifølge nogle udlægninger af traditionen) føjes til treenighedens personer som en fjerde, feminin person – et yderliggående udtryk, kunne man sige, for den opskrivning af visdommen, Boyarin udpeger i den antikke teologi.⁷³ Når der hos Theophilos ikke gives identitet mellem treenighedens personer og de abstrakte kategorier logos og sophia, er der ikke blot tale om et forstadie til en efterfølgende etableret rollefordeling. Logosteologien er rigtignok, som Boyarin udpeger, blevet et særkende for den kristne tradition. Den strenge monoteisme repræsenteret i monarkianisme, sabellianisme, adoptionisme etc. fandt ikke vej fra den antikke verden ind i de senere hovedstrømme af kristen teologi (til trods for at skikkelser som Miguel Serveto og Emanuel Swedenborg undertiden er blevet taget til indtægt for en art modificeret sabellianisme). Men ikke desto mindre skal begreberne logos og sophia ikke regnes som blotte redskaber for ortodoksikonstruktion, hverken hos Theophilos eller eftertiden.

⁷² Sozomon, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.6

⁷³ Wilhelm Goerdts, "Sophiology" i *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 5 (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 122.

SEVERIAN OF GABALA AS A SOURCE FOR THE CATHEDRAL RITE OF CONSTANTINOPLE AROUND THE YEAR 400

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Abstract:

The early Greek Church Fathers may be used, with caution, to reconstruct early liturgy. An example of this are the homilies of Severian of Gabala, which very explicitly refer to biblical lections in the service and show that parts of the Old Testament lectionary, also called prophetologion, go back to AD 400, if not earlier.

Key Words:

Byzantine liturgy, Old Testament lectionary

The Old Testament was used quite extensively in the Byzantine church, although not as much as some scholars would want. The Septuagint is a very large book which not even the Jews recite in its entirety, and the early Christians had a very practical view on the book: they took what they could use, just as the authors of the New Testament had done, and they saw the entire Old Testament as a potential prophecy of Christ. Thus Moses, David and Solomon were all considered prophets, and any quote in the church from the book was a prophecy of the New Covenant;

there is one exception, the course readings,¹ or quasi-lectio continua on weekdays of Lent in Constantinople, when Genesis, Proverbs and Isaiah were recited from beginning to end, albeit with large text omissions.

Some scholars maintain that the Old Testament “originally”, that is, in the first few hundred years of Christianity, was recited at the “full liturgy”, as the Greek manuscripts call it, i.e. the Eucharist; however, other scholars consider this a myth for which there is no evidence.² In Constantinople, the Old Testament was recited from very early on, but not at the Eucharist. As a prophecy, it had its proper place before the New Testament, but not in the same service: it belonged in the evening service of Lent and on the eve of a great feast. Some of the scholars who believe that the Byzantine Eucharist contained a triple-lection series (Old Testament reading, Epistle, and Gospel) also believe that at some point in the 7th or 8th century the Old Testament lections were transferred from the Eucharist to the evening service,³ a rather clumsy and, to my mind, unnecessary theory, because it can be shown that Old Testament readings belonged in the evening service of Lent in Constantinople from quite early on. The reading program was slowly enlarged, first from one lection to two, and later to three readings every weekday of Lent, and gradually also readings for the eves of great feasts were added.⁴

This theory is supported by evidence from homilies by Severian of Gabala, who preached in Constantinople around the year 400 while he was *locum tenens* for the archbishop, John Chrysostom. I shall touch on three areas: the readings from Genesis during Lent, the readings from Job during Holy Week, and the singing of the Old Testament Psalms.

¹ I use the terms reading, lection, pericope, lesson synonymously, in the sense of a biblical passage read out in church.

² For the discussion, see: Sysse G. Engberg, “The *Prophetologion* and the Triple-Lecture Theory – the *Genesis* of a Liturgical Book”, *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 3 (2006), 67–91; online: <https://www.academia.edu/11905564/>, Robert F. Taft, “Were there once Old Testament readings in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy? Apropos of an article by Sysse Gudrun Engberg”, *BBGG* 8 (2011), 271–311, and Sysse G. Engberg, “The Needle and the Haystack – Searching for Evidence of the Eucharistic Old Testament Lection in the Constantinopolitan rite”, *BBGG* 13 (2016), 47–60; online: <https://www.academia.edu/36017045/>

³ Günther Zuntz, *Lukian von Antiochien und der Text der Evangelien*, hrsg. B. Aland und K. Wachtel, Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter 1995, 49.

⁴ See Sysse G. Engberg, *Profetie – Anagnosmata – Prophetologion* (forthcoming).

The church of Constantinople did not, as that of Jerusalem and other churches, collect all biblical lections into one book, but had three separate books, for the Gospel, the Epistle, and the Old Testament readings; the latter is now most often referred to as prophetologion.⁵ The oldest complete Greek manuscripts are from the 10th century, but two palimpsest prophetologia attest to an earlier version of the lectionary, before AD 630.⁶ The readings for Lent and Holy Week are found in almost all prophetologion manuscripts, and this part of the lectionary is extremely stable, both in the choice of readings and in their text form, and also in the sung material associated with the Old Testament readings; this is clearly a very old layer, the nucleus around which the rest of the book has developed.

Scholars have tried to establish the early lectionary of Constantinople from biblical quotes in contemporary homilies, the most ambitious being the dissertation from 2015 of Gary Philippe Raczka,⁷ who used the homilies of John Chrysostom, Severian of Gabala, Proclus, and Leontius presbyter, as well as the kontakia of Romanos the Melodist as sources for the early lectionary of Constantinople. However, this enterprise requires strict criteria: only when the author himself makes explicit mention of a reading as having taken place in the service ἀγτίως, meaning “a little while ago”, or “just now”, can we be sure that the quote is evidence of such a reading; a mere quotation from the Bible does not suffice as evidence of a biblical reading in the service. Nor is a match between an Old Testament quote and a reading in the 10th-century prophetologion sufficient evidence; rather than the homilist referring to a lection, it might be the other way around with the lection referring to the homily, or both texts may, independently of each other, have used the same *typos* from the common pool of Old Testament prophecies.

⁵ In the Slavic world it is called parimejnik. The Greek prophetologion exists in a scholarly edition, to which I shall refer in the following: *Prophetologium I-II* (Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae, Lectionaria I), ed. Carsten Høeg, Günther Zuntz, (Sysse) Gudrun Engberg, Hauniae: Munksgaard 1939–1981; online: <https://www.igl.ku.dk/MMB/series-transcripta-2.html>

⁶ Sysse G. Engberg, “An Early Greek Lectionary Recovered: The Palimpsest MS Cambridge Westminster College WGL 9/2”, *BBGG* 15 (2018), 2020, 61–96.

⁷ Gary Philippe Raczka, *The Lectionary at the Time of Saint John Chrysostom*, unpublished dissertation, University of Notre Dame 2015; online: <https://www.academia.edu/111779164/>

It is obvious from John Chrysostom's homilies on Genesis that consecutive lections from that book were recited in church on the evening of lenten weekdays, similar to what is found in the prophetologion. The problem is the question of where his homilies were delivered: in Constantinople where he was patriarch AD 398–404, or in Antioch where he spent many years before that. The continuous reading of Genesis might have been a custom of Antioch only, as Alfred Rahlfs assumed more than a hundred years ago.⁸ But since Severian of Gabala was *locum tenens* for Chrysostom in Constantinople, he must have delivered his homilies there, either in St. Sophia itself or in one of her sister churches. Here, however, the problem is the disagreement as to which homilies are actually by Severian, but his Genesis homilies are considered authentic.

The Danish scholar Holger Villadsen has analysed the use of the Bible in Severian's homilies in his dissertation from 1974, unfortunately unpublished and unfortunately in Danish.⁹ In this study he follows the principle of the explicit reference to a reading (the "ἀρτίως criterion") and establishes, among other things, that they attest to a consecutive reading from Genesis, recited in the evening of the weekdays of Lent in Constantinople at the time, beginning on Monday of the first week of Lent; he even finds evidence that there was an already established series of pericopes from Genesis that the preacher might interpret in his homily, but which he did not necessarily follow. The beginning of the homily *Of Noah and his sons, and of the Cherubim, and of the prophet Hosea who married a prostitute* (CPG 4232) shows that Severian was in the middle of a series about Noah, but preferred to digress in a different direction in this particular homily: "The previous sequence [of homilies] about Noah, and the whole story of him, invites to be talked about and wants [us] to follow the usual procedure in good order (...), but let me reserve this

⁸ Alfred Rahlfs, *Die alttestamentlichen Lektionen der griechischen Kirche*, (Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse), Berlin 1915, 114–122.

⁹ Holger Villadsen, *Bibelanvendelsen i de på græsk overleverede homilier af Severian af Gabala* ("The Use of the Bible in the Greek Homilies of Severian of Gabala"), unpublished dissertation, University of Aarhus 1974.

story for a different sermon”,¹⁰ whereupon Severian continues preaching about Adam’s Fall from grace, the cherubim, Hosea, and a number of other themes. This opening clause shows that there was a series of Old Testament readings about Noah, which the homilist was supposed to follow, but also that he was free to choose a different subject.¹¹ The story of Noah is very prominent in the prophetologion, told over nine pericopes recited from Friday of the second week to Tuesday of the fourth week of Lent (L 14b–22b). When Severian, in his homily *De Noe et de arca* (CPG 4271) treating Noah after the Flood, mentions that it is now Mid-Lent, this corresponds quite well to the Old Testament reading Gen. 8.21–9.7, recited on Monday of the fourth, or middle week of Lent.¹² Villadsen concludes that there is reason to suppose a general agreement between the Genesis homilies of Severian and the Byzantine lectionary, as we know it from later sources.¹³

Villadsen made yet another, unexpected discovery: the “ἀρτίως criterion” shows that either Old Testament, or New Testament readings are referred to in each of Severian’s homilies, not both in the same sermon. This means that no service reflected in Severian’s homilies contained readings from both Old and New Testament and, consequently, there was no Old Testament reading at the Eucharist, a conclusion Villadsen did not publish in English till quite recently. From his material, Villadsen reached the same conclusion that I did, many years later and from a completely different perspective.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ἡ μὲν τῶν προηγουμένων ἀκολουθία ἐπὶ τὸν Νῶε καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν κατ’αὐτοῦ ὑπόθεσιν προσκαλεῖται τὸν λόγον καὶ βούλεται τῇ τάξει τὸν οἰκεῖον λόγον ἀποδοῦναι δρόμον (...) εἰς ἑτέραν διάλεξιν ταμιευσάμενος ταύτην τὴν ὑπόθεσιν (...), *Homiliae pseudo-Chrysostomicae: Instrumentum studiorum* I, ed. K.-H. Uthemann, R. F. Regtuit, J. M. Tevel, Turnhout: Brepols 1994, 89.

¹¹ Holger Villadsen, “The Lectionary System in Constantinople according to Severian of Gabala” (Preliminary paper, April 1987), 3; published online in 2024: <https://www.academia.edu/117220539/>

¹² *Prophetologium* II 237–238, L 20b, and Juan Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, (OCA 165–166), 1962–1963, II.40.

¹³ Villadsen, “The Lectionary System”, 4.

¹⁴ Holger Villadsen, “Three or Two Readings in Early Byzantine Liturgy?”, *Patristica Nordica Annuari* 35 (2020), 99–107; see also his “The Lectionary System”, 5; Engberg, “The Prophetologion and the Triple-Lection Theory”.

Three of Severian's homilies on Job, which have recently been edited and discussed by Juditha Oosterhuis-den Otter,¹⁵ are accepted as genuine by scholars such as Sever Voicu, Holger Villadsen (although with some hesitation), and Harald Buchinger.¹⁶ Internal evidence shows that they were preached at evening services during Lent, shortly before Easter, that is, during Holy Week, exactly when the book of Job is recited in a much shortened course reading, according to the prophetologion. This cannot be a coincidence, but must signify that the recitation of Job in Holy Week goes back to around AD 400.

Severian also testifies to some of the sung parts of the service, and he refers to responsorial singing, as already observed by Sergey Kim.¹⁷ Severian stresses the importance of singing in church, as in *De legislatore* (CPG 4192): "If you sing of God with truth (...), then you shall also find God while singing and be filled with the Holy Spirit. For he who sings genuinely, renewing his soul, becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit";¹⁸ this may indeed reflect the practice in St. Sophia of the sung office, the ακολουθία ἀσματική. He even refers to the special singing of the Old Testament Psalms which in the prophetologion manuscripts are labelled "prokeimena", songs consisting of a few verses of a biblical Psalm, sung reponsorially before the recitation of an Old Testament lection. These prokeimena have a characteristic structure: first a verse taken, not from

¹⁵ Juditha J. Oosterhuis-den Otter, *Four Pseudo-Chrysostomian Homilies on Job* (CPG 4564, BHG 939d-g) – Transmission, Critical Edition, and Translation, Amsterdam: VU University Press 2015; see also: Juditha J. Oosterhuis-den Otter, "The Authorship of Four Pseudo-Chrysostomian Homilies on Job (CPG 4564; BHG 939d-g)", *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala – Homilists, Exegetes and Theologians*, eds. J. Leemans, G. Roskam, J. Segers, (Bibliothèque de Byzantion 20; Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta 282), Leuven: Peeters 2019, 167–178.

¹⁶ Oosterhuis-den Otter, "The Authorship", 173; accepted by Sever J. Voicu, "A Century of Progress on the Homilies of Severian of Gabala", *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala*, 259–283 (273); Harald Buchinger, "Festal Homilies and Festal Liturgies in Antioch and Constantinople – Innovation and Convention: John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala, with Particular Attention to their Epiphany Sermons," *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala*, 65–86 (76); by Villadsen in private communication.

¹⁷ Sergey Kim, "Liturgical practices mentioned in the homilies of Severian of Gabala" (in Russian), *Bulletin of the Ekaterinenburg Theological Seminary* 4.12 (2015), 131–143 (141).

¹⁸ Migne, PG 56, 401–402: Ἐάν γὰρ ᾄδῃς τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ ἀληθείας (...), εὐρίσκη καὶ ἄδων τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ πληρούμενος Πνεύματος ἁγίου. Ὁ γὰρ γνησίως ψάλλων, ἀνακαινίζομενος τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀποτελεῖται ναὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος.

the beginning, but from the later part of the Psalm; then the first verse is sung as *stichos*, and if there are more than one, then verses two and three become *stichos* two and three, as in the first prokeimenon for Monday of the first week of Lent: Ps. 1.8 with the *stichoi* ps. 1.1, 2, and 3.¹⁹ Presumably the prokeimenon itself was sung by the reader (ἀναγνώστης) and the *stichoi* by the choir, with the prokeimenon sung in response after each *stichos*, but the manuscripts give us no information as to this.

In his homily for Epiphany, Severian refers to Ps. 79 “which we have just sung reponsorially”, which complies with the “ἀρτίως criterion”; he then proceeds to quote the verses of this Psalm in the exact same order as found in a prokeimenon for Epiphany in the prophetologion: Ps. 79.8, 2, 3, where verse 8 probably functions as a refrain sung after the *stichos* Ps. 79.2, alternatively after each of the two *stichoi* Ps. 79.2 and 79.3bc.²⁰ Thus the prokeimenon singing known from the prophetologion was in existence in the early fifth century. Moreover, this very prokeimenon is found in a restricted number of prophetologion manuscripts, mostly older, from the 10th century onwards;²¹ later it disappears from use, which could indeed indicate that it was an old prokeimenon that eventually was removed or forgotten.²² When one compares the prokeimenon with Severian’s quote, it becomes clear that the two texts are identical. They even share three variants in relation to the traditional

¹⁹ *Prophetologium* I. 120. In most cases there is only one *stichos*, but some manuscripts have two, while others have three *stichoi*.

²⁰ *In Dei apparitionem* (CPG 4212), Migne PG 65, 17 & 20, compared to *Prophetologium* I. 72. Buchinger (“Festal Homilies”, 84) comments Ps. 79.8 (20) and refers to the prokeimenon, something I was not aware of when writing the present text; I do not see the necessity of assuming, as Buchinger does, that the whole Psalm was sung, and not just the *stichoi* quoted by Severian.

²¹ The Epiphany prokeimenon is found in seven prophetologion mss from the tenth century, eight mss from the eleventh century, six mss from the twelfth century, and three from the thirteenth century, in one of them as a marginal note; furthermore, in the Slavic Grigorovichev prophetologion, see *Grigorovichev parimejnik*, eds. Zdenka Ribarova, Zoe Hauptova, Skopje: MANU 1998; also in Mateos, I.178, lin. 9–11. For a full discussion and collation of the text, see Engberg, “The sung Psalter: Prokeimena”, *Liturgical Traditions: Their Use and Value for Critical Editions of the Bible*, ed. Felix Albrecht (forthcoming).

²² In the Latin rite, this is sung as graduale for Saturday of the third week of Advent, see *Graduale Romanum*, Venetiis 1745, 9: Ps. 79.8, with 79.3 as *stichos*; this is perhaps another indication that the Byzantine prokeimenon is indeed old.

Septuagint text: verse 79.8 (80.7 in the Western style) omits the first word and has only ὁ θεός τῶν δυνάμεων ("O God of hosts"), where the *textus receptus* has κύριε ὁ θεός τῶν δυνάμεων ("O Lord God of hosts"); in the first *stichos* (79.2 = 80.1) the two texts have the singular πρόβατον ("a sheep"), against the normal plural πρόβατα ("a flock"); and finally, both texts omit the whole phrase of 79.3a = 80.2a, ἐναντίον εφραϊμ καὶ βενιαμιν καὶ μανασση ("before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh"). Clearly, it is the same text version in both lectionary and homily, even if the division into *stichoi* is not quite identical.

Conclusion

If these three elements (Genesis readings during Lent, Job readings during Holy Week, prokeimenon singing) go back to AD 400, or before, it leads to further conclusions.

It is not known whether, at the time, there was just one Old Testament reading, taken from Genesis during the six weeks of Lent, and from Job in Holy Week, or whether there were already two readings each day. In either case, the Genesis reading would have been completed before Palm Sunday, when there was a shift in the reading program: it is only natural for Holy Week to have a different program from Lent, one which points to Easter Saturday with lections from Job, who is a prefiguration of the sufferings of Jesus and his resurrection. This structure, with the shift at Palm Sunday from Genesis and Proverbs in Lent, to Exodus and Job in Holy Week, is what we find in the Florence palimpsest from the 7th century, and it remains unchanged to the present day; since it is attested already in Severian, the shift must go back to AD 400. Whether or not the Proverbs reading belonged in the program in Severian's time is not known at present, but it is possible that it was there in the 5th century.

The Epiphany prokeimenon "hidden" in Severian's homily indicates that this form of singing the Old Testament Psalms existed in his time. Whether the systematic prokeimenon singing was already in place, involving Ps. 1 to Ps. 139 (in the fully developed prophetologion) over the seven weeks of Lent and Holy Week, is uncertain, but given the stability of the Lenten reading program, it is at least possible.

Another conclusion is that the text form of the Old Testament readings should be studied separately, according to when the readings were established. Obviously, the text from Genesis in Lent must represent an

older version, whereas the text of a lection chosen for a feast established in the tenth century would have been taken from a different, much younger *Vorlage*. The Old Testament text of the prophetologion should not be treated as a homogeneous block, but each separate feast should be placed in its historical context.²³

²³ A shorter version of this paper was first read at the nineteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford 2024. I am grateful to Laura Höger, Holger Villadsen, Katherin Papadopoulos, and Harald Buchinger for fruitful discussion and input on the subject.

Prophetologion Prokeimenon singing

Rubrics for Epiphany Eve (*Prophetologium* i. 72).

The prokeimenon sung consists of: Ps. 79:8 (20), 2, 3bc = Ps. 80:7(19), 1, 2b

καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο προκείμενον ἦχος βαρύς·

ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς· καὶ ἐπίφανον
τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα:

Ps.79.8 (20)

στίχος ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν ἰσραὴλ πρόσχε· ὁ ὁδηγῶν ὥσει πρόβατον
τὸν ἰωσηφ· ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν χερουβιμ ἐμφάνηθι·

Ps.79.2

[στίχος β' ἐξεγείρον τὴν δυναστείαν σου, καὶ ἐλθέ εἰς τὸ σῶσαι ἡμᾶς:]

Ps.79.3bc [this line only in two mss.]

καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέροχεται

ἀνάγνωσμα ἰ' κριτῶν: (L 2k: Jud. 6.36-40)

English translation:

And after this, prokeimenon in the third plagal mode:

*Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine
that we may be saved!*

Ps.80.7(19)

stichos *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a sheep
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.*

Ps.80.1

[stichos 2 *Stir up your might and come to save us!*]

Ps.80.2b

and immediately after this,

the tenth reading, from Judges (L 2k: Jud. 6.36–40)

Severian of Gabala
Prokeimenon singing

Severian of Gabala, *In Dei apparitionem*, CPG 4212, PG 65.17 & 20

17B ὁ μακάριος Δαβιδ..ὕμνον ἔλεγεν, ὡς ἀρτίως ὑπεψάλλομεν·
(...)

ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐπίστρεψον ἡμᾶς· καὶ ἐπίφανον
τὸ πρόσωπόν σου καὶ σωθησόμεθα:

Ps.79.8 (20)

(...)

17C ὁ ποιμαίνων τὸν ἰσραηλ πρόσχες· ὁ ὁδηγῶν ὥσει πρόβατον
τὸν ἰωσηφ·

Ps.79.2ab

ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῶν χερουβιμ ἐμφάνηθι, ἐξέγειρον
τὴν δυναστείαν σου, καὶ ἐλθέ εἰς τὸ σῶσαι ἡμᾶς.

Ps.79.2c, 3bc

Severian of Gabala, *Homily for Epiphany*.

English translation:

17B The blessed David...sang a hymn, as we have just sung responsorially
(...)

*Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine
that we may be saved!*

Ps.80.7(19)

(...)

17C Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph
like a sheep

Ps.80.1a

*You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Stir up your might and come to save us!*

Ps.80.1b,2b

WAS CERINTHUS A JOHANNINE THEOLOGIAN?

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Abstract:

This paper critically engages the reconstructions of Cerinthus as an early interpreter of the Fourth Gospel put forward by Simone Pétrement, April D. De-Conick and M. David Litwa. I challenge the arguments that Cerinthus's demiurgical theology and separationist Christology was influenced by the content of the Fourth Gospel and that the Johannine Epistles and the *Epistula Apostolorum* were written to counter Cerinthus's interpretations of the Fourth Gospel. Instead of construing the tradition about the confrontation between John, "the Lord's disciple," and Cerinthus in a public bathhouse in Ephesus that Irenaeus of Lyon inherited from Polycarp of Smyrna in reference to a battle over the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, I argue that Irenaeus misidentified the John in Polycarp's story as an apostle and the author of the Fourth Gospel. Finally, the accusation that Cerinthus forged the Fourth Gospel that appears in Epiphanius of Salamis's *Panarion* and Dionysius bar Salibi's *Commentary on the Apocalypse* probably reflects a misinterpretation of an earlier argument put forward by Gaius of Rome. The data thus does not support the thesis that the theology of the Fourth Gospel was developed under the influence of or in opposition to Cerinthus's teachings.

Key Words:

Fourth gospel, Cerinthus, separationist Christology, demiurgical theology

Introduction

A late first-century Christian teacher in Ephesus named Cerinthus was reimagined as one of the first heretics by his ancient Christian detractors. They set him in opposition to the apostles in general (*Ep. Apos.* 1.2; 7.1; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.2.3–6.8) or the Apostle John in particular (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.4; 11.1). They judged his theological beliefs to be false (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.26.1; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.1.2–2.2), his eschatological hopes to be carnal (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.28.2, 5; 7.25.3), and his ethical stances to be nonsensical (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.2.1–2). It may come as a surprise, then, that some Christians allegedly ascribed the book of Revelation and the Fourth Gospel to him (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.28.2, 4; 7.25.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 51.3.6; Dionysius bar Salibi, *Comm. Apoc.* 1–2).¹ The allegations that Cerinthus forged these biblical writings seem like transparent attempts to bring them into disrepute. Simone Pétrement, April D. DeConick, and M. David Litwa, however, contend that Cerinthus was at least an early exegete of the Fourth Gospel, even if he may not have had a hand in its composition.² On the contrary, I will argue that Cerinthus was neither the author nor an interpreter of the Fourth Gospel and that he was only linked to this text in select Patristic and Medieval sources due to the misinterpretation of the earlier traditions about him.

¹ I will designate the “Gospel According to John” as the Fourth Gospel.

² Simone Pétrement, *A Separate God: The Origins and Teachings of Gnosticism*, trans. Carol Harrison, London: Darton Longman, and Todd 1991, 301–302; April D. DeConick, “Why are the Heavens Closed? The Johannine Revelation of the Father in the Catholic-Gnostic Debate,” in: C. H. Williams and C. Rowland (eds.), *John’s Gospel and Intimations of Apocalyptic*, London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark 2013, 177; April D. DeConick, “Who is Hiding in the Gospel of John: Reconceptualizing Johannine Origins and the Roots of Gnosticism,” in: A.D. DeConick and G. Adamson (eds.), *Histories of the Hidden God: Concealment and Revelation in Western Gnostic, Esoteric, and Mystical Traditions*, Durham: Acumen 2013, 19; April D. DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age: How a Countercultural Spirituality Revolutionized Religion from Antiquity to Today*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, 159; M. David Litwa, *Found Christianities: Remaking the World of the Second Century CE*, London: Bloomsbury, 2022, 41.

The Case for Identifying Cerinthus as a Johannine Theologian

DeConick re-discovered a possible reading of John 8:44 that certain Patristic commentators strenuously opposed.³ The verse could be rendered as asserting that Israel's deity is the father "of the devil" (τοῦ διαβόλου) and that the devil is a murderer and a liar along with "his father" (ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ).⁴ Litwa builds on her grammatical observations.⁵ He identifies the wicked "ruler of this world" in John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11 as the god of Israel,⁶ whereas DeConick still interprets these verses as referring to the devil.⁷ The Johannine prologue contrasts the Mosaic Law with the "grace and truth" that Jesus proclaimed to the world (1:17) and the Johannine Jesus speaks about "your" or "their" Law (8:17; 10:34; 15:25). The Johannine Jesus may have perceived the commandments to have originated with Israel's creator god rather than with his transcendent heavenly father.⁸

If DeConick's reading of John 8:44 is adopted, πάντα ("all things") in 1:3 probably excludes the material cosmos that was fashioned by an inferior creator. The things that "came into being" (ἐγένετο) through the agency of the λόγος ("word") may have been spiritual emanations.⁹ This is close to how the later Valentinian commentator Ptolemy grounded his emanation theories in the Johannine prologue (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.8.5). Moreover, the affirmation that "the word became flesh" in John 1:14 need not be taken in a fully incarnational sense, for the word may have become enfleshed when the spirit descended on Jesus at his

³ For the controversial reception of this verse, see DeConick, "Why," 151–77; DeConick, "Who," 14–19; DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 142–43; M. David Litwa, "The Father of the Devil (John 8:44): A Christian Exegetical Inspiration for the Evil Creator," *Vigiliae Christianae* 74.5 (2020), 540–65 (547–63).

⁴ DeConick, "Why," 149–151; DeConick, "Who," 13; DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 142.

⁵ Litwa, "The Father," 543–45; Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 37.

⁶ Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 38.

⁷ DeConick, "Who," 23.

⁸ DeConick, "Who," 22; Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 35.

⁹ DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 157.

baptism in 1:32.¹⁰ “The spirit” (ὁ πνεῦμα) then left Jesus after he uttered his last words from the cross in John 19:30.

DeConick and Litwa suggest that the Fourth Gospel was quite amenable to Cerinthus’s worldview,¹¹ which the late second-century bishop Irenaeus of Lyon describes in his work *Against Heresies* as follows:

A certain Cerinthus ... said that the world was created not by the primal God but by a power separate from the authority above the universe and ignorant of the God who is over all. He taught that Jesus was not born from a virgin but was the son of Joseph and Mary, born just like all other people – although he was more righteous and wise. After his baptism, Christ descended upon Jesus from the Supreme Authority over the universe in the form of a dove. Afterward, he preached the unknown Father and performed miracles. In the end, Christ deserted Jesus, and Jesus both suffered and was raised. Christ, however, remained without suffering, since he was spiritual.¹²

¹⁰ For a survey of scholars who reach this exegetical conclusion, see Pamela Kinlaw, *The Christ is Jesus: Metamorphosis, Possession, and Johannine Christology*, Leiden: Brill 2005, 126–35.

¹¹ Although Pétremont (“A Separate God,” 301–302) too conjectures that Cerinthus reflected on the Fourth Gospel and oversimplified its Christology, she also thinks that the fourth evangelist opposed Cerinthus and championed positions about creation and the incarnation that challenged Cerinthus’s opinions (cf. John 1:3, 14).

¹² This translation of the *Refutation of All Heresies* 7.33.1–2, which has preserved the Greek text of Irenaeus’s *Against Heresies* 1.26.1, is taken from M. David Litwa, *Refutation of All Heresies: Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, Atlanta: SBL 2016, 566–69. The Refutor omits “in Asia,” though these words appear in the Latin translation of *Against Heresies* 1.26.1, and adds a line to Irenaeus’s text about Cerinthus’s Egyptian education (i.e. αὐτὸς Αἰγυπτίων παιδείᾳ ἀσκηθείς), so I have skipped over these amendments with ellipses. For the critical edition of the Refutor’s Greek text, see Paul Wendland, ed., *Hippolytus Werke. Dritter Band. Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, GCS 26, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1916, 220–21.

In other words, Cerinthus accepted a demiurgical theology and a separationist Christology.¹³ Of course, Irenaeus had a very different reading of the Fourth Gospel. He reckoned that the Evangelist John foresaw the erroneous notion that the Lord consisted of two separable substances (*Haer.* 3.16.5) and penned his Gospel to refute Cerinthus's error in negating the unity between Jesus's human and divine natures (3.11.1). Daniel R. Streett points out the inconsistency over whether John was writing before or after teachers such as Cerinthus began promulgating this Christological system of thought.¹⁴ He detects additional inconsistencies in Irenaeus's reporting of Cerinthus's teachings. At another point, Irenaeus summed up how "there are those who say" that Jesus was a "receptacle" of the Christ aeon and that Jesus was the son, the Christ was his father, and Jesus's father was the supreme deity (3.16.1).¹⁵ However, Irenaeus did not have Cerinthus alone in his purview in this passage, for he was conflating the Christological viewpoints of a variety of thinkers.

Irenaeus passed on a humorous anecdote from "the ones who had heard" (οἱ ἀκηκοότες) Polycarp, the deceased bishop of Smyrna and his former mentor, about how John "the Lord's disciple" reacted when he saw Cerinthus. This is what Irenaeus recounted:

And there are those who heard from him [i.e. Polycarp] that John, the Lord's disciple, went out to bathe while in Ephesus, and when he saw Cerinthus inside he ran out of the bathhouse without having bathed, saying, "Let's get out of here,

¹³ For the case for replacing the flawed category "Gnosticism" with "biblical demiurgical tradition," see Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996, 29–52. This isolates the belief in an inferior demiurge or "craftsman" as the defining feature. I have defined a "separationist Christology" as positing that only the human Jesus, and not the divine entity that temporarily possessed him, died on the cross. See Michael J. Kok, "Classifying Cerinthus's Christology," *Journal of Early Christian History* 9.1 (2019), 30–48 (36, 39, 45).

¹⁴ Daniel R. Streett, *They Went Out from Us: The Identity of the Opponents in First John*, Berlin: De Gruyter 2011, 70.

¹⁵ Streett, *They Went Out*, 69–70.

in case the bathhouse collapses, for Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is inside!”¹⁶

This story is typically classified, in the words of Raymond E. Brown, as an “etiological tale personifying in the figures of Cerinthus and John a dispute between Cerinthians and a branch of the Johannine community.”¹⁷ Likewise, Lorne Zelyck takes it as an application of the admonition in 2 John 10–11 to not greet schismatic teachers.¹⁸ Irenaeus urged his readers to imitate John’s example by breaking off fellowship with Christians who renounced fundamental theological doctrines (1.16.3; 3.3.4; cf. Tit 3:10; 2 John 11).¹⁹

According to DeConick and Litwa, Polycarp devised this tale to ward off older Cerinthian interpretations of the Fourth Gospel.²⁰ DeConick writes that Polycarp “identified Cerinthus’s interpretation of the Gospel as so evil that it will bring God’s judgment down upon all those who associate with him.”²¹ She finds further evidence of Cerinthus’s exegesis of the Fourth Gospel by mirror-reading the *Epistula Apostolorum*, which aligns Cerinthus with the demiurgical theologian Simon (1.1; 7.1) and insists against them that the word of the maker and ruler of the world became flesh in Mary’s womb (3.2, 13).²²

¹⁶ This translation of Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History* 4.14.6, which has preserved the Greek text of Irenaeus’s *Against Heresies* 3.3.4, is taken from Jeremy Schott, *The History of the Church: A New Translation*, Oakland: University of California Press 2019, 191. For the critical edition of Eusebius’s Greek text, see Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, eds., *Eusebius Werke. Zweiter Band, Erster Teil. Die Kirchengeschichte*. GSC 9.1, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1903, 332, 234.

¹⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, Anchor Bible 30, Garden City: Doubleday 1982, 767.

¹⁸ Lorne Zelyck, “The Story of John Meeting Cerinthus,” in: T. Burke (ed.) *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2023, 47.

¹⁹ Zelyck, “The Story”, 42.

²⁰ DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 158; Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 39.

²¹ DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 158.

²² DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 157–58. Joan E. Taylor (“Cerinthus and the Gospel of Mark: The Priority of the Longer Ending,” *COMSt Bulletin* 8.2 [2022]: 683–86) similarly mirror-reads the emphasis on the corporeality of Jesus’s resurrection in the *Epistula Apostolorum* (cf. 11.6–8; 12.1; 19.18; 21.1–3) as hinting that Cerinthus only believed that Jesus was spiritually raised.

The earliest evidence for a debate over the meaning of the Fourth Gospel may be in the Johannine Epistles. Brown and Streett list several commentators who identify the secessionists in the so-called “Johannine community” as Cerinthus’s followers,²³ though Brown held that the Johannine secessionists only devalued Jesus’s humanity and atoning death but did not go as far as Cerinthus in sharply distinguishing the human Jesus from the divine Christ.²⁴ Their alleged declarations that “Jesus is not the Christ” (Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός) or that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα) could be taken as severing the union between the fleshly Jesus and the spiritual Christ (1 John 2:22; 4:2; cf. 2 John 1:7). If Jesus Christ came “through water and blood,” not water “only,” then he was the Christ when he was baptized in water and when his blood was shed on the cross (1 John 5:6). Another interpretation of the imagery is that Jesus was the Christ at his conception (i.e. blood); he did not become the Christ when he was baptized.²⁵

In DeConick’s view, the epistolary author read John 8:44 appositionally, meaning that the “father” of Jesus’s interlocutors in the chapter was the “devil,” and depicted the Johannine secessionists as the devil’s children too.²⁶ They hated their metaphorical siblings, just like the murderer Cain hated his brother, and disobeyed the divine commandments (cf. 1 John 2:3–5; 3:4–24; 5:1–4). Pamela Kinlaw considers the message in 1 John that Jesus and the spirit were eternally united to be especially relevant to the recipients of the letter who were instructed to remain in permanent fellowship with each other.²⁷

If the traditions rehearsed so far aimed to re-claim the Fourth Gospel after it fell into Cerinthus’s hands, the critics of the Johannine corpus who are documented in the fourth-century bishop Epiphanius of Salamis’s heresiological treatise *Panarion* suspected that the Fourth Gospel and Revelation were Cerinthus’s own forgeries (*Pan.* 51.3.6). Epiphanius called them the “Alogi” because, in his mind, they were “irrational” to

²³ Brown, *The Epistles*, 65n.149; Streett, *They Went Out*, 133n.3, 176n.11, 276n.87.

²⁴ Brown, *The Epistles*, 73–79.

²⁵ DeConick, “Why”, 176; DeConick, “Who” (see n. 104), 18.

²⁶ DeConick, “Why”, 170–75; DeConick, “Who”, 14–18; DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 152–53.

²⁷ Kinlaw, *The Christ*, 95–7, 105–7.

ascribe a Gospel that depicted Jesus as the incarnate divine word to Cerinthus when this contradicted Cerinthus's Christology (e.g., 51.3.1–2, 6; 4.1–2). Epiphanius dated them after the launch of a controversial prophetic movement in Phrygia and after the dispute between the Christians in Asia Minor and Rome over the dating of Easter (51.1.1).²⁸ Irenaeus was involved in the ensuing conflicts over both issues (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.3.4–4.2; 24.11–17). Epiphanius's chapter on the Alogi concludes by quoting Irenaeus's rebuke of unnamed persons who rejected the "Paraclete" that the Johannine Jesus promised his heavenly father would send (51.35.1–3; cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.11.9; John 14:16).

Dionysius bar Salibi, a bishop in the city of Amid in Mesopotamia in the twelfth century, is more specific about the person who attributed the Johannine writings to Cerinthus in the preface of his Syriac *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. He asserts that "Hippolytus of Rome states that a man named Gaius had appeared, who said that neither the Gospel nor yet the Revelation was John's; but that they were the work of Cerinthus the heretic" (*Comm. Apoc.* 1–2).²⁹ Another Syriac bishop named 'Abdishko' bar Berika put together a catalogue around 1300 CE and credited the title (or titles) "Points against Gaius, and a Defense on behalf of the Revelation and Gospel of John the Apostle and Evangelist" to the bishop Hippolytus.³⁰ There is scholarly debate over whether he was referring to the same work whose Greek title has been inscribed on the plinth of a statue that was re-dedicated to Hippolytus. The first word of the inscription is unclear and the rest of it can be translated "concerning" or

²⁸ Dean Furlong, *The Identity of John the Evangelist: Revision and Reinterpretation in Early Christian Sources*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2020, 79.

²⁹ This translation is taken from Theodore H. Robinson, "The Authorship of the Muratorian Canon," *Exp* 7 (1906): 487. For the critical text and a Latin translation, see Jaroslav Sedlaček, *Dionysius Bar Salibi, In Apocalypsim, Actus et Epistulas Catholicas*, CSCO 53, 60, Paris: Poussielgue, 1909–1910, 1–2.

³⁰ This translation is taken from J.D. Smith Jr., "Gaius and the Controversy over the Johannine Literature", Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, 1979, 224. Smith Jr. ("Gaius," 225) argues that this was the title of a single work, while other scholars argue that the conjunction "and" was placed between two separate titles. For the latter view, see August Bludau, *Die ersten Gegner der Johannesschriften*, Freiburg: Heider 1925, 164–65; Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, VCSupp 31, Leiden: Brill 1995, 170; T. Scott Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi and the Johannine Controversy*, SVC 135, Leiden: Brill 2016, 97.

“on behalf of the Gospel According to John and Apocalypse” (ὕπερ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγελίου καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως).³¹

The fourth-century Christian historian Eusebius dated Hippolytus and Gaius around the same time and commended Gaius as a learned scholar who composed his *Dialogue with Proclus* when Zephyrinus was the bishop of Rome between 199 and 217 CE (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.20.2–3).³² Eusebius provides the following quotation from Gaius’s now-lost work:

Bur Cerinthus, who wrote revelations as though they were by a great apostle, introduces us to mind-blowing wonders, lying that they had been shown to him by angels, and saying that after the resurrection the kingdom of Christ will be upon the earth and once again the flesh will live in Jerusalem governed by the flesh, to serve lusts and pleasures. He is the enemy of the scriptures of God, and wishing to lead people astray, he says that the “marriage feast” will last for a period of a thousand years.³³

Moreover, Eusebius repeats the early third-century bishop Dionysius of Alexandria’s testimony that there are “some” who “say” that Revelation was written by Cerinthus, who “wanted to ascribe the name of someone trustworthy to his own creation,” and that Cerinthus anticipated that “the kingdom of Christ would be terrestrial, and comprised of things Cerinthus himself enjoyed.”³⁴ Cerinthus enjoyed feasting, marriages, festivals, and sacrificial offerings (3.28.4; 7.25.3). It is difficult to deter-

³¹ For this debate, see Brent, *Hippolytus*, 172; Francis Watson, *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2013, 481–82, 482n.128; Manor, *Epiphanius’ Alogi*, 139; Furlong, *The Identity*, 79.

³² Eusebius also referred to Beryllus, who was the bishop of the Arabians in Bostra. Since Dionysius bar Salibi designated Hippolytus as “Hippolytus of Bostra,” Brent (*Hippolytus*, 149) and Manor (*Epiphanius’ Alogi*, 105–106) regard this as evidence that he was directly dependent on Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*.

³³ This translation of Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History* 3.28.2 is taken from Schott, *The History*, 151.

³⁴ This translation of select portions of Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History* 7.25.2 and 3 (cf. 3.28.4) is taken from Schott, *The History*, 369.

mine from Eusebius's limited excerpt whether there is a direct, intertextual relationship between the writings of Gaius and Dionysius.³⁵ It is clear from Eusebius's citations of these two non-extant texts that Revelation's authorship was contested, but he did not cite Gaius's opinion about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

Eduard Schwartz conjectures that Gaius had access to a source in which both the Fourth Gospel and Revelation had been attributed to Cerinthus, but decided to only repeat the charge about Revelation's supposedly pseudonymous authorship.³⁶ Pétrement and DeConick disagree with Schwartz insofar as they judge the accusation that Cerinthus forged the Fourth Gospel to be the older tradition and that Gaius was the one to add that he forged Revelation as well.³⁷ They infer that Gaius re-imagined Cerinthus as a millenarian, which influenced Dionysius, solely because he attributed Revelation to him.³⁸ Litwa grants that Gaius misattributed Revelation to Cerinthus, but does not find it inconceivable that Cerinthus shared the chiliastic expectations held by some of his fellow Christians in Asia Minor or that he found a way to reconcile his

³⁵ For this debate, see Bludau, *Die ersten Gegner*, 50; Gustave Bardy, "Cérinthe," *Revue biblique* 30 (1921): 344–73 (361); A.F.J. Klijn and G.J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*, Novum Testamentum Supplements 36, Leiden: Brill 1973, 8; Smith Jr., "Gaius," 188; Brown, *The Epistles*, 768n.10; Brent, *Hippolytus*, 136; Matti Myllykowski, "Cerinthus," in: A. Maijanen and P. Luomanen (eds.), *Companion to Second-Century "Hereses"*, Leiden: Brill 2005, 242; Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 81; Michael J. Kok, *The Beloved Apostle? The Transformation of the Apostle John into the Fourth Evangelist*, Eugene: Cascade 2017, 119; Furlong, *The Identity*, 75–76.

³⁶ Eduard Schwartz (ed.), "Johannes und Kerinthos," in: *Gesammelte Schriften: Zum Neuen Testament und zum Frühen Christentum*, Berlin: De Gruyter 1963, 5.173–74. Schwartz revised his previous conclusion that Gaius was the originator of the charge that Cerinthus forged both the Fourth Gospel and Revelation and that Eusebius had read a copy of Gaius's *Dialogue with Proclus* that had the disparaging comments about the Fourth Gospel edited out of it. See Schwartz, "Über den Tod der Söhne Zebedaei: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Johannesevangeliums" in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, 5.107.

³⁷ Pétrement, *A Separate God*, 305; DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 159.

³⁸ Pétrement, *A Separate God*, 306; DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 159. This view is also supported by Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, 5; Brown, *The Epistles*, 770.

chiliastic eschatology to his demiurgical theology as he was tinkering “in the laboratory of Christian ideas.”³⁹

The Case Against Identifying Cerinthus as a Johannine Theologian

It is debatable whether Cerinthus derived his theological ideas from the Fourth Gospel. Stephen R. Llewelyn, Alexandra Robinson, and Blake E. Wassell have demonstrated that there are sufficient grammatical reasons for taking the devil in apposition to the father in John 8:44a (i.e. “you are of your father the devil”) and the “lie” (ψεῦδος) as the antecedent of the αὐτοῦ in 8:44b (i.e. the father “of it”).⁴⁰ The devil set the passion narrative into motion when he possessed Judas (13:27), so he is the most plausible candidate for the world ruler who Jesus defeated by dying, and the sense that the world came under his control is paralleled in the Synoptic tradition (e.g., Matt. 4:8–9//Luke 4:5–6). The material universe was likely part of the “all things” in John 1:3, but the “world” did not recognize its incarnate creator in 1:10. The λόγος was the “word” that the god of the Hebrew Scriptures spoke when forming creation (1:1; cf. Gen 1:3).

The assertion that no one had seen Jesus’s heavenly father (cf. 1:18; 6:46) is hard to square with the biblical narratives about Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah, but the rationale may be that they saw Jesus in his pre-existent divine state (5:46; 8:56; 12:41). John 1:17 could be expressing the continuity between the revelations bequeathed to Moses and Jesus, as Moses testified about Jesus (cf. 5:46), and the Johannine Jesus reasons

³⁹ Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 42. For attempts to reconcile the tension between the belief that the material world was created by an inferior demiurge and the hope that it would nevertheless be re-created into a millennial paradise, see Charles E. Hill, “Cerinthus, Gnostic or Chiliast? A New Solution to an Old Problem,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8.2 (2000): 135–72 (160–62, 164–67); Christoph Marksches, “Kerinth: Wer war er und was lehrte er?” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 41 (1998): 48–76 (57, 72–73); Gunnar af Hällström and Oskar Skarsaune, “Cerinthus, Elxai, and Other Alleged Jewish Christian Teachers and Groups,” in: O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik (eds.), *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, Peabody: Hendrickson 2007, 494; Kok, “Classifying”, 43–44.

⁴⁰ Stephen R. Llewelyn, Alexandra Robinson, and Blake E. Wassell, “Does John 8:48 Imply That the Devil Has a Father? Contesting the Pro-Gnostic Reading,” *Novum Testamentum* 60.1 (2018): 14–23.

that the very Scriptures that his opponents assumed were on their side support him (8:17; 10:34; 15:25).⁴¹ Jesus's father was worshipped by the Jewish people at his house in Jerusalem (2:16; 4:20, 22).

It is not evident that "the word became flesh" when the spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism. John 1:14 may mean that the word was embodied for the entirety of Jesus's earthly life, while 1:32 may just be an echo of the Synoptic tradition that Jesus was anointed by the spirit for his messianic task at his baptism. Kinlaw interprets the unique detail that the spirit "remained" (ἔμεινεν) on Jesus in John 1:32 as indicating that the union between them was permanent, in contrast to Cerinthus's position that the union between the human Jesus and the divine aeon within him was temporary,⁴² but this verse and the usage of the key verb μένω throughout the Fourth Gospel need not be read in reference to Cerinthus at all. Given the emphasis in 1:32 that the divine spirit "remained" on Jesus from this point forward, the only "spirit" that Jesus relinquished on the cross was his own.

Even if Cerinthus could have made the interpretive decisions outlined by DeConick and Litwa, it is unlikely that he did so as there is no evidence before the fourth century that he conceptualized the creator of the world as demonic. According to Irenaeus, Cerinthus's demiurgical "power" (δύναμις//*virtus*) was ignorant but not evil. Cerinthus's belief that an intermediary agent was the cause of creation was just a way to protect the transcendence of an immutable, impassible, supreme deity.⁴³ Later Christian writers claimed that Cerinthus believed that the world was created by angels and they were arguably dependent on a common source (cf. Ps-Tert, *Haer.* 3.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 28.1.2; Filaster, *Haer.*

⁴¹ For the polar-opposite perspective on the fourth evangelist's attitude towards the law-giver Moses, see Wally V. Cirafesi, *John within Judaism: Religion, Ethnicity, and the Shaping of Jesus-Oriented Jewishness in the Fourth Gospel*, AJEC 112, Leiden: Brill 2022, 132–144.

⁴² Kinlaw, *The Christ*, 110, 134–35, 174.

⁴³ Martin Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage: Ein Lösungsversuch mit einem Beitrag zur Apokalypse von Jörg Frey*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1993, 178n.77; Marksches, "Kerinth," 56–57, 72–73; Kok, "Classifying", 37, 40; Taylor, "Cerinthus", 679.

36.1),⁴⁴ but Epiphanius was the first one to characterize the angel who created the world and mediated the commandments to Moses in Cerinthus's theology as an evil being (*Pan.* 28.2.1–2).

Martin Hengel comments on how the absence of any polemic against a demiurgical theology in the Johannine Gospel or Epistles makes it doubtful that they were criticizing Cerinthus's misappropriation of the Johannine tradition.⁴⁵ Pétrement suspects that Irenaeus misrepresented Cerinthus as a demiurgical theologian, but she still maintains that Cerinthus's separationist Christology was drawn from the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁶ Yet the polemical remarks in 1 John 2:22, 4:2, and 2 John 1:7 may not have been directed at Cerinthus's Christology. They are ambiguous enough that they have been deciphered in countless ways, from attacking the docetic disavowal of Jesus's corporeal existence to the renunciation of his messianic status.⁴⁷ 1 John 5:6 may not be a polemical remark. Instead, it simply states that the theophany at Jesus's baptism, Jesus's sacrificial blood, and the spirit are the three witnesses verifying Jesus's Christological identity.⁴⁸

Irenaeus did guess that the Apostle John wrote his Gospel to debunk Cerinthus's Christology, but his deduction was based on his identification of the John in Polycarp's bathhouse story as the Apostle John. The tradition that the Apostle John was the fourth evangelist was well established in Irenaeus's time (*Haer.* 3.1.1). According to Bernhard Mutschler's calculations,⁴⁹ Irenaeus named the Evangelist John approximately

⁴⁴ This source is usually identified with Hippolytus's lost *Syntagma against Thirty-Two Heretics*. See Brown, *The Epistles*, 768; Pétrement, *A Separate God*, 306–7; Myllykowski, "Cerinthus," 216. Yet it is not necessary to posit this hypothetical source if Pseudo-Tertullian influenced Epiphanius and Epiphanius influenced Filaster. See Manor, *Epiphanius's Alogi*, 137.

⁴⁵ Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage*, 179–80.

⁴⁶ Pétrement, *A Separate God*, 302–3.

⁴⁷ See the survey of scholarly interpretations in Streett, *They Went Out*, 6–111.

⁴⁸ Streett, *They Went Out*, 300–36.

⁴⁹ Bernhard Mutschler, "John and His Gospel in the Mirror of Irenaeus of Lyons: Perspectives of Recent Research," in: T. Rasimus (ed.), *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel*, Leiden: Brill 2010, 320. Since Richard Bauckham (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, Second Edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2017, 469) differentiates John "the Lord's disciple" from the Apostle John, he calculates that the former figure appears fifty-nine times and the latter five times in Irenaeus's writings.

sixty times and introduced citations from the Johannine corpus eleven times with a formula about what “the Lord’s disciple” says.⁵⁰ Whenever he referred to some other John, Irenaeus clarified this person’s identity.⁵¹ Although he never clarifies that John “the Lord’s disciple” was the son of Zebedee,⁵² he elsewhere calls him an “apostle” (1.9.2, 3; cf. 3.5.1; 11.9),⁵³ groups him with “other apostles” (2.22.5), and compares him and Polycarp to the apostles and their disciples (3.3.4).⁵⁴ Irenaeus limited the number of apostles to the Twelve and Paul. The election of the twelfth apostle after Judas’s defection brought the number of apostles to completion (3.12.1), but Paul was an exception due to his self-designation as an apostle.⁵⁵ To challenge the Valentinians’ interpretation of Jesus’s selection of twelve apostles as a symbol for the Duodecad, Irenaeus responded that Jesus did not pick eight apostles to signify their Ogdoad or ten to signify their Decad (2.21.1).

Richard Bauckham and Dean Furlong object that Irenaeus expanded the number of apostles in select instances. Irenaeus noticed that the Valentinians accorded no significance to the Seventy in Luke 10:1–20

⁵⁰ Mutschler, “John”, 320.

⁵¹ Lorne Zelyck, “Irenaeus and the Authorship of the Fourth Gospel,” in: S.E. Porter and H.T. Ong (eds.), *The Origins of John’s Gospel*, Leiden: Brill 2016, 240–41. For instance, Irenaeus refers to the John “who was called Mark” when recounting Acts 15–16 (e.g., *Haer.* 3.14.1) or rehearses where John the “Baptizer” or “forerunner” of Jesus appears in the Gospels (e.g., 1.3.5; 3.9.1; 10.1; 3.10.2; 4.4.2, 3; 7.2; 5.17.4; 32.2).

⁵² Bauckham (*Jesus*, 458) observes that, while Irenaeus clearly refers to episodes in the Gospels or the book of Acts when referring to John the son of Zebedee (cf. *Haer.* 2.24.4; 3.12.3–5; 15), he does not identify him as “the Lord’s disciple.” However, Zelyck (“Irenaeus,” 241) rightly notes that the John in these passages is not explicitly identified as Zebedee’s son. Irenaeus only used the phrase “sons of Zebedee” once when paraphrasing Matthew 20:20 (cf. *Haer.* 1.21.2), but he presumed that his readers were familiar enough with the Synoptic Gospels and Acts to know that the John he was discussing in the previous references was the Apostle John. Zelyck (“Irenaeus,” 247) notes other instances when Irenaeus undoubtedly refers to “the Lord’s disciple” John without using this title (e.g., 3.8.3; 4.2.1; 10.1; 17.6; 21.3).

⁵³ Bauckham (*Jesus*, 461–2) downplays the import of *Against Heresies* 1.9.2, 3, because Irenaeus was repeating Ptolemy’s identification of the fourth evangelist as an “apostle.”

⁵⁴ Zelyck, “Irenaeus”, 242–24; cf. Culpepper, *John*, 124.

⁵⁵ Zelyck, “Irenaeus”, 248, 251; Michael J. Kok, *The Beloved Apostle? The Transformation of the Apostle John into the Fourth Evangelist*, Eugene: Cascade 2017, 94.

(2.21.1–2). Since the apostles stand for aeons in their reasoning, his rebuttal would be more persuasive if the Seventy were apostles.⁵⁶ Irenaeus may not have realized the implications of his argument as he fell short of labelling them apostles; his aim was not to enlarge the group of apostles, but to ridicule the Valentinians' numerological speculations.⁵⁷ He reasoned that, since John the Baptizer was greater than a prophet (cf. Matt. 11:9//Luke 7:26) and apostles outrank prophets (cf. 1 Cor 12:28), the Baptizer was like an apostle in bearing witness to Jesus (*Haer.* 3.11.4).⁵⁸ He may have deemed the Baptizer's role to be functionally equivalent to the apostles without counting him as an apostle.⁵⁹ He maintained that Polycarp was ordained to his episcopal office by plural apostles (*Haer.* 3.3.4),⁶⁰ but he may have exaggerated the number of apostles that Polycarp had come into contact with as he only knew about Polycarp's relationship with John "the Lord's disciple."

Bauckham's and Furlong's counterexamples do not substantiate their thesis that when Irenaeus called John "the Lord's disciple" an apostle, he was not identifying him as one of the twelve apostles. Irenaeus identified Peter and Paul as "disciples" of Jesus too (e.g., 1.25.2), but the Apostle John was for him *the* disciple par excellence.⁶¹ Μαθητής ("disciple") appears seventy-eight times in the Fourth Gospel and Irenaeus may be indebted to its terminology when lauding the disciple who reclined on Jesus's bosom (3.1.1; cf. John 13:23).⁶²

⁵⁶ Bauckham, *Jesus*, 462; Dean Furlong, *The Identity of John the Evangelist: Revision and Reinterpretation in Early Christian Sources*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2020, 41–42.

⁵⁷ Zelyck, "Irenaeus", 249. Furlong (*The Identity*, 42) counters that Irenaeus did not use the term apostles because it was not in his Lukan source, but he may have agreed with Luke that the Seventy were not apostles. Apart from Acts 14:14, Luke restricts the apostles to the Twelve (e.g., Acts 1:21–6).

⁵⁸ Bauckham, *Jesus*, 462; Furlong, *The Identity*, 41–2.

⁵⁹ Zelyck, "Irenaeus", 250–1.

⁶⁰ Furlong, *The Identity*, 42–3.

⁶¹ Zelyck, "Irenaeus", 252.

⁶² R. Alan Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2000, 124; Mutschler, "John," 321–2; Zelyck, "Irenaeus," 253; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 459; Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 93; Michael J. Kok, *Tax Collector to Gospel Writer: Patristic Traditions about the Evangelist Matthew*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2023, 42. Some scholars argue that

Irenaeus believed that it was the Apostle John who went to the public bathhouse in Ephesus. Although the bathhouse story has been dismissed as “fourth-hand folklore”⁶³ and as a “floating legend,”⁶⁴ Irenaeus may have been part of Polycarp’s audience when he told it and may have only meant that it was well-known among Polycarp’s hearers.⁶⁵ Gustave Bardy and Christoph Marksches do not deem the story to be historically implausible and find the chain of transmission from Polycarp to Irenaeus to be too short to so easily dismiss it as a late etiological legend about the Fourth Gospel.⁶⁶ Even if it was a fictionalized account of a meeting between John and Cerinthus that Polycarp told to amuse his students, it may reflect the real animosity between these two individuals. The question is whether Irenaeus rightly identified the John in this story as the Apostle John rather than some other figure.

Considering the shorter average age spans of people in antiquity, the likelihood that the Apostle John was alive after the commencement of the Roman Emperor Trajan’s reign in 98 CE as reported by Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.3.4) seems low but not impossible. Additionally, Irenaeus’s tradition about the longevity of the Apostle John’s life clashes with the Markan Jesus’s prediction that he would drink his cup and receive his baptism (Mark 10:39). Jesus metaphorically drank the cup on the cross (14:36) and the metaphors were taken in reference to martyrdom by John Chrysostom (*Hom. Matt.* 20.23), Cyril (*Cat.* 3.10), Cyprian (*Rebapt.*

Papias of Hierapolis set a precedent for distinctively calling John “the disciple of the Lord” (cf. John Chapman, *John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1911, 24, 43, 59, 62; Furlong, *The Identity*, 43), but Papias only refers to “the Lord’s disciples” (οἱ τοῦ κυρίου μαθηταί) in the plural.

⁶³ Streett, *They Went Out*, 70–1.

⁶⁴ Benjamin Bacon, “The Elder John in Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 26 (1927), 187–202 (192). Note that Bacon insists that the legend could have originally been set in Judea because one of his aims was to deconstruct the tradition of the residence of John “the Lord’s disciple” in Ephesus.

⁶⁵ Bauckham, *Jesus*, 456.

⁶⁶ Bardy, “Cérinthe,” 348 – 49; Marksches, “Kerinth,” 54.

13), and Aphrahat (*Dem.* 21.23) as well as in the Latin *Incomplete Commentary on Matthew* (*Hom.* 35 on *Matt* 20).⁶⁷ Granted, Acts 12:2 only narrates the execution of John's brother and Origen saw Jesus's prophecy as fulfilled by John's exile on the island of Patmos (*Comm. in. Mt.* 16.6),⁶⁸ but the author of Mark 10:39 would be surprised to learn that one of the sons of Zebedee died of natural causes.

Although Irenaeus linked Polycarp to an aged Apostle John (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.20.4), sources such as Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, and Pionius's *Life of Polycarp* are silent about their connection.⁶⁹ The silence is less remarkable if Polycarp interacted with a less reputable old man named John. Despite forgetting the individual whom Polycarp was talking about, Irenaeus benefited from misidentifying this figure as the Apostle John by claiming to be in the line of apostolic succession.⁷⁰

Polycarp may have been referring to another John who was known to Papias, an early second-century bishop of Hierapolis. Papias nicknamed this John "the elder." Irenaeus misidentified Papias's informant as the Apostle John by misreading the prologue to Papias's *Exposition of*

⁶⁷ Furlong, *The Identity*, 20–21. Furlong also considers the De Boor fragments, which attribute to Papias of Hierapolis the claim that John and his brother James were killed by the Jews, in his analysis. For debate about the value of these fragments, see W.R. Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary: Volume 5: Polycarp, Martyrdom of Polycarp, Fragments of Papias*, rev. ed.; Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock 2020, 5.118–21; Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage*, 88–91, 317, 319; Culpepper, *John*, 171–4; Enrico Norelli, *Papia di Hierapolis: Exposizione Degli Oracoli Del Signore I frammenti*, Milan: Paoline, 2005, 364–83, 434–41; Shanks, *Papias*, 219–25, 239–40; Furlong, *The Identity*, 23–8; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 458–62; Stephen C. Carlson, *Papias of Hierapolis Expositions of Dominical Oracles: The Fragments, Testimonia, and Reception of a Second-Century Commentator*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2021, 65–75; Kok, *Tax Collector*, 36–39.

⁶⁸ Furlong (*The Identity*, 66–67) notes that this could be conceived as a deferred death sentence. He adds that the Latin *Vetus Interpretatio* version of Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* describes how the sons of Zebedee attained "perfection" (*perfectio*). Origen presupposes that the John who had visions on the island of Patmos was the Apostle John, but the author of Revelation admired the twelve apostles as past figureheads (cf. Rev 21:14).

⁶⁹ Culpepper, *John*, 126–7; Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 94–95.

⁷⁰ Bacon, "The Elder John", 190; Zelyck, "Irenaeus", 254–57; Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 95–96; Kok, *Tax Collector*, 43.

the Oracles of the Lord (5.33.4; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.3).⁷¹ After listing a John among seven “disciples of the Lord” and expressing an interest in what they “said” (εἶπεν) as related by the followers of the elders, Papias disclosed that he wanted to know what “the Lord’s disciples” Aristion and “the elder” John were “saying” (λέγουσιν). Since Aristion was one of “the Lord’s disciples,” the phrase cannot be restricted to the apostles.⁷² The article before “elder” (πρεσβύτερος) may be anaphoric (i.e. “the aforementioned elder”),⁷³ meaning that Papias was mentioning the same John twice.⁷⁴ Conversely, regardless of whether Papias equated the “elders” and “the disciples of the Lord” or distinguished them,⁷⁵ he should not have discussed plural elders if he intended for the article to be taken anaphorically.⁷⁶ The shift in verb tense likely signals

⁷¹ A.C. Perumalil (“Are Not Papias and Irenaeus Competent to Report on the Gospels?” *Expository Times* 91 [1980], 332–37 [333–34]) protests that John is not called “the Lord’s disciple” in *Against Heresies* 5.34.4, but Irenaeus attached this epithet to him in 5.33.3. See Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 63; Carlson, *Papias*, 33n.163.

⁷² For the text-critical case for retaining the second occurrence of “the Lord’s disciples” and the possible meanings of the phrase, see J. Munck, “Presbyters and Disciples of the Lord in Papias,” *Harvard Theological Review* 52 (1959), 223–40 (230).

⁷³ Monte A. Shanks, *Papias and the New Testament*, Eugene: Pickwick 2013, 19–21, 155–6.

⁷⁴ Chapman, *John*, 35–6; Robert H. Gundry, “The Apostolically Johannine Pre-Papian Tradition Concerning the Gospels of Mark and Matthew,” in: R. H. Gundry (ed.), *The Old is Better: New Testament Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations*, WUNT 178; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2005, 55; Shanks, *Papias*, 133.

⁷⁵ Munck, “Presbyters”, 236–37, 239; David G. Deeks, “Papias Revisited,” *Expository Times* 88.11 (1977), 296–301 (296–7); Gundry, “The Apostolically Johannine Pre-Papian Tradition”, 53–4; Shanks, *Papias*, 140–3. Other commentators distinguish the elders from the Lord’s disciples including Chapman, *John*, 10–2; Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5.90, 98; U. H. J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des frühen Christentums*, FRLANT 133; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1983, 114–22; Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage*, 79; Culpepper, *John*, 110; Norelli, *Papia di Hierapolis*, 42; Furlong, *The Identity*, 8–14; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 16–8. I now lean towards the latter reading (contra Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 67–69).

⁷⁶ Furlong, *The Identity*, 10. For the view that the Elder John was given this title due to his old age, see Chapman, *John*, 38–39; Deeks, “Papias Revisited”, 297; Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 69.

that the first seven disciples had died and the article marks “the elder” out as a title distinguishing the second John from the first.⁷⁷

It is plausible that the Elder John was known to Polycarp and Papias because he resided in Ephesus during the early years of Trajan’s reign. Eusebius restated Dionysius of Alexandria’s inference that both the Apostle John and the Elder John were buried in Ephesus because there were two tombs for two separate Johns there (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.6; 7.25.16), but Jerome acknowledged that many regarded both sites as commemorating the same person (*Vir. il.* 9). Perhaps the same person’s remains were relocated from one site to another or two competing memorials were set up.⁷⁸ In either scenario, the Elder John may have been the one who was buried in Ephesus. It was Irenaeus’s misidentification of him that led to the legends about the Apostle John’s adventures in Ephesus.⁷⁹ Benjamin Bacon counters that Polycarp could have met various apostles and elders in Jerusalem as a child before he arrived in Asia Minor (e.g., Acts 15:2) and proposes that the Elder John was the seventh bishop of Jerusalem (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.5.3; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66.20.1).⁸⁰ However, it is more likely that Papias visited the Elder John in person, which is why Irenaeus referred to him as a “hearer of John” (*Haer.* 5.33.3), and it would be a much shorter trip from Hierapolis to Ephesus.⁸¹

The Elder John handed down the tradition that “Mark was Peter’s translator, and he wrote down accurately, though not in order, what he

⁷⁷ Munck, “Presbyters”, 238; Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 5.99–100; Körtner, *Papias*, 124–27; Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage*, 79; Norelli, *Papia*, 44, 263; Bauckham, *Jesus*, 17; Furlong, *The Identity*, 8–14; Kok, *Tax Collector*, 35.

⁷⁸ Gundry, “The Apostolically Johannine Pre-Papian Tradition”, 57; Furlong, *The Identity*, 76.

⁷⁹ Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 97–101.

⁸⁰ Bacon, “The Elder John”, 187, 191–94, 198–200, 201–202.

⁸¹ Kok, *Tax Collector*, 45n.93.

remembered [hearing] about what the Lord had said and done" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.15).⁸² Eusebius does not supply any explicit commentary from the Elder John on the Fourth Gospel.⁸³ The Elder John and Cerinthus likely got a hold of the Second Gospel in Ephesus.⁸⁴ Cerinthus's Christology was shaped by its narrative outline, which opens with the announcement of Jesus's divine sonship coinciding with the spirit descending "into" (εἰς) him at his baptism in Mark 1:10–11.⁸⁵ Jesus lamented that he had been divinely forsaken before he died in Mark 15:34. Perhaps Cerinthus construed Mark 8:27–29 as intimating that Jesus was inhabited by the Christ aeon rather than the ghost of the Baptizer or a past prophet.⁸⁶ Irenaeus conceded that the Second Gospel was preferred by the theologians who divided Jesus from the Christ (*Haer.* 3.11.7).⁸⁷

⁸² This translation of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15 is taken from Schott, *The History*, 166.

⁸³ Hengel (*Die Johanneische Frage*, 88) and Bauckham (*Jesus*, 424) posit that Eusebius suppressed Papias's statement that the Elder John was the fourth evangelist, because it went against the ascription of the Fourth Gospel to the Apostle John, but this argument cannot be demonstrated from the surviving Papian fragments. For my argument that neither the Elder John nor Papias commented on the Fourth Gospel and that Papias contrasted Mark's "order" with Matthew's rather than John's, see Kok, *Tax Collector*, 105–7.

⁸⁴ I will designate the "Gospel According to Mark" as the Second Gospel based on the canonical order, but not based on the historical order in which the Gospels were written since I hold to Markan priority.

⁸⁵ Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, 3, 20; Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage*, 181; Myllykowski, "Cerinthus", 235; Michael J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century*, Minneapolis: Fortress 2015, 243; Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 41; Taylor, "Cerinthus", 687–89.

⁸⁶ Taylor, "Cerinthus", 688.

⁸⁷ I scoured Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* for clues that the Basilideans, Carpocratians, and Valentinians exegeted the Second Gospel in Kok, *The Gospel*, 243–47. Joel Kuhlin and Paul Linjamaa ("The 'Heretical' Reception of the Gospel of Mark," *Patristica Nordica Annua* 36 (2021): 69–88 [77–80, 82–85]) object that the passages that I cited as evidence (e.g., 1.24.4//Mark 15:21//Matt. 27:32; cf. Luke 23:26; 1.25.5//Mark 4:11; cf. Matt 13:11//Luke 8:10; 1.8.2//Mark 15:34; cf. Matt 27:46) draw on shared Synoptic material and that Irenaeus's interlocutors may not have paid much attention to each evangelist's distinct wording.

Whether the dispute between the Elder John and Cerinthus was over conflicting interpretations of the Second Gospel, or some other issue, is impossible to ascertain because Irenaeus has obscured the cause of the conflict. Yet if Irenaeus had not misidentified the John in Polycarp's story as the Apostle John, he would not have then extrapolated that the Apostle John wrote his Gospel against Cerinthus. Irenaeus may have been the first Christian writer to misidentify the Elder John, but he was not the last. Cerinthus may only be named in the *Epistula Apostolorum* because he was wrongly remembered as a contemporary of the Apostle John, just as Simon the magician was remembered as Peter's contemporary in Acts 8:9–24.⁸⁸ It is therefore problematic to try to glean Simon's and Cerinthus's theologies through a mirror-reading of this text. Their names may be present in it for no other reason than to supply it with historical verisimilitude since it is purportedly a letter sent by the apostles. Francis Watson argues that this text was written in Ephesus around 170 CE.⁸⁹

It is also methodologically questionable to interpret Polycarp's bathhouse story in the light of the much later sources about Cerinthus's purported authorship of one or more of the Johannine writings. Such accusations only begin to surface in sources that post-date Irenaeus. As mentioned above, Irenaeus was familiar with certain Christians who rejected the Fourth Gospel because of its promises about the Paraclete

Moreover, the Second Gospel hardly surfaces in the primary literature attributed to Basilides or the Valentinians. These are fair objections. Yet they overlook the summary statement in *Against Heresies* 3.11.7 that was probably targeting Cerinthus and Carpocrates, since Irenaeus specified that the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John were preferred by the Ebionites, Marcionites, and Valentinians respectively (3.11.7) and described Cerinthus's and Carpocrates's Christologies similarly (cf. 1.25.1). If Polycarp was Irenaeus's source for Cerinthus's Markan Christology, this might answer Jonathan Bernier's objection that my evidence for conflicting interpretations of the Second Gospel comes from late sources (cf. Jonathan Bernier, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus After the Demise of Authenticity: Toward a Critical Realist Philosophy of History in Jesus Studies*, LNTS 540, London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark 2016, 132–33). Bernier ignores my analysis of the redactional and scribal changes to the Second Gospel as part of the evidence for its controversial reception.

⁸⁸ Francis Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel: The "Epistula Apostolorum" in Literary Context*, SNTSMS 179, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020, 7.

⁸⁹ Watson, *An Apostolic Gospel*, 7–11.

(*Haer.* 3.11.9), but he is silent about whether they rejected Revelation or attributed any of the Johannine writings to Cerinthus.⁹⁰

It is possible that Gaius originated the accusation that Cerinthus forged the Fourth Gospel and Revelation and Hippolytus published an apologetic response defending their apostolic authorship.⁹¹ The problem is that it is unlikely that Eusebius would neglect to mention that Gaius dismissed the Fourth Gospel as a forgery, and express his admiration for him, if he was aware of this fact.⁹² Joseph Daniel Smith Jr.'s hypothesis is that Gaius did not actually ascribe any of the Johannine literature to Cerinthus. Gaius's criticisms of the "revelations" (ἀποκαλύψεις) that Cerinthus put forward "as having been written by a great apostle" (ὡς ὑπὸ ἀποστόλου μεγάλου γεγραμμένων) may only call Revelation's apostolic authorship into question.⁹³ Hippolytus may have misunderstood Gaius as insinuating that Cerinthus was the real author of not only Revelation, but the Fourth Gospel as well.⁹⁴ For Hippolytus, both writings equally belonged in the Johannine corpus. Epiphanius and Dionysius bar Salibi were misled by Hippolytus's mistaken deduction.

⁹⁰ Bludau, *Die ersten Gegner*, 39–40. Because Schwartz ("Über den Tod," 5.90, 106) and Smith Jr. ("Gaius, 164, 167–68) argue that Irenaeus was using the plural "others" (*alii*) to conceal the fact that he was actually targeting Gaius, Schwartz dates Gaius's *Dialogue with Proclus* earlier than Eusebius did to around 160 CE while Smith Jr. proposes that Irenaeus knew Gaius's oral teachings before he had written them down in the early third century CE. However, Irenaeus's use of the plural can be taken straightforwardly as indicating plural opponents and Irenaeus could have easily named Gaius if he was the target of his polemics.

⁹¹ Bludau, *Die ersten Gegner*, 165, 229; Bardy, "Cérinthe," 356–358, 361n.1; Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, 8; Brown, *The Epistles*, 768; Marksches, "Kerinth," 59; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 486; Furlong, *The Identity*, 76–77.

⁹² Brent, *Hippolytus*, 148; Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 67; Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 119. This is why Schwartz ("Über den Tod," 5.107) originally supposed that Eusebius's copy of Gaius's work was incomplete.

⁹³ Smith Jr., "Gaius," 330–31. Since Smith Jr. believes that Dionysius of Alexandria was directly dependent on Gaius (226), Dionysius may have misread his source. However, Smith Jr. does not think that even Dionysius's wording clearly states that some Christians rejected Revelation because it was authored by Cerinthus (328–29).

⁹⁴ Smith Jr., "Gaius," 333.

Alternatively, Allen Brent and T. Scott Manor deny that Gaius was referring to Revelation as the apocalyptic book that Cerinthus expounded upon,⁹⁵ since Revelation 20:1–6 does not locate Christ's millennial reign in Jerusalem nor likens the millennium to a wedding feast. Rather, Dionysius of Alexandria heard a distorted rumour about Cerinthus's authorship of Revelation that was circulating in Alexandria.⁹⁶ On the contrary, Gaius was probably twisting Revelation's imagery, including its metaphor of the "wedding supper of the Lamb," and critiquing the identification of its author as the Apostle John.⁹⁷ Brent and Manor make a stronger case that Epiphanius, rather than Hippolytus, was the first one to misunderstand Gaius as having ascribed both the Fourth Gospel and Revelation to Cerinthus. Dionysius bar Salibi could have depended on Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* and Epiphanius's *Panarion* for everything that he divulged about Cerinthus and Gaius. He may have placed Gaius and Hippolytus as interlocutors in a fictional dialogue because Eusebius named them both in the same context (*Hist. Eccl.* 6.20.2–3) and recapped Eusebius's summaries of Cerinthus's chiliastic ideas (3.28.2, 4–5; 7.25.3).⁹⁸ He portrayed Gaius like Epiphanius's Alogi and was informed by Epiphanius's account of Cerinthus's opinions about angels and circumcision (*Pan.* 28.1.2–3; 2.3–5.3).⁹⁹ The Hippolytus statue attests

⁹⁵ Brent, *Hippolytus*, 134; Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 76–79.

⁹⁶ Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 81.

⁹⁷ Bludau, *Die ersten Gegner*, 45–48; Bardy, "Cérinthe," 355; Schwartz, "Johannes," 5.174; Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, 5; Brown, *The Epistles*, 768; Pétrement, *A Separate God*, 306; Marksches, "Kerinth," 59; Myllykowski, "Cerinthus," 237; Hällström and Skarsaune, "Cerinthus," 492; Watson, *Gospel Writing*, 479–80; DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age*, 159; Kok, *The Beloved Apostle*, 118; Furlong, *The Identity*, 75–76; Litwa, *Found Christianities*, 42; Taylor, "Cerinthus," 677.

⁹⁸ Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 103–107.

⁹⁹ Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 111–12, 118. Epiphanius manufactured the portrait of Cerinthus as the tireless advocate of proselyte circumcision (*Pan.* 28.2.3–5.3). He likely did so because he misread Irenaeus's comparison of Cerinthus to the Ebionites (cf. *Haer.* 1.26.2). See Bardy, "Cérinthe," 369–70; Brown, *The Epistles*, 768; Pétrement, *A Separate God*, 307; Hill, "Cerinthus," 147–48; Myllykowski, "Cerinthus," 219; Kok, "Classifying," 44. Alternatively, Taylor ("Cerinthus," 678) proposes that Epiphanius stumbled upon a short

that Hippolytus had written something on the Fourth Gospel and Revelation, but it might not have been identical to the work against Gaius attested in the Syriac catalogue. The cataloguer may have imagined that Hippolytus wrote a work against Gaius after reading Dionysius bar Salibi's commentary.¹⁰⁰

The Invention of Cerinthus as a Johannine Theologian

The accusation that Cerinthus forged the Fourth Gospel and Revelation cannot be dated before the third century if it goes back to Gaius. There is no evidence that Gaius was relying on a prior source for this allegation. Yet Gaius may have only denied the apostolic authorship of Revelation. The question is whether Hippolytus or Epiphanius was responsible for misreading Gaius and consequently inventing the accusation that Cerinthus forged the Fourth Gospel. It is difficult to come to a firm conclusion on the matter because Gaius's *Dialogue with Proclus*, and the relevant works attested on the Hippolytus statue or in the Syriac catalogue, have not survived. If they were rediscovered, they might clear up exactly what Gaius thought about the authorship of the Johannine writings.

There are no second century sources that suggest that Cerinthus forged the Fourth Gospel. Irenaeus was concerned about the Christians in the late second century who did not believe Jesus's promises about the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel, but he never claimed that they misattributed this Gospel to Cerinthus. He pictured how the Evangelist John could have been motivated to publish his Gospel to refute Cerinthus's Christology, but he may have arrived at this conclusion because he did not accurately recall the identity of the John who confronted Cerinthus at the bathhouse in Ephesus. It may be problematic to mirror read the Johannine Epistles and the *Epistula Apostolorum* to uncover Cerinthus's supposed exegetical interpretations of the Fourth Gospel.

notice about the Merinthians in Galatia and, confusing them with the Cerinthians, identified them with the non-Jewish Judaizers who Paul confronted in Galatia (cf. 28.6.4; 8.1–2). Even some scholars who are persuaded that Dionysius bar Salibi had a source from Hippolytus allow that he may have been dependent on the *Panarion* for the portrayal of Cerinthus (cf. Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence*, 6, 18; Myllykowski, "Cerinthus," 218).

¹⁰⁰ Brent, *Hippolytus*, 171–73; Manor, *Epiphanius' Alogi*, 97, 139.

Cerinthus probably did not ground his demiurgical theology or his separationist Christology in the text of the Fourth Gospel. He might have been a reader of Revelation if it was the source for his millenarian eschatology, but his millenarianism might have also been shaped by other Christian influences in Asia Minor. Cerinthus's Christology seems more Markan than Johannine. It is more likely that Cerinthus was an interpreter of the Second Gospel rather than the Fourth Gospel.

MATERNITY AND MORTALITY: A MATRICENTRIC READING OF THE PRISON DIARY OF PERPETUA

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Abstract:

Perpetua's prison diary records one of the very few female voices that can still speak to us from Antiquity. This article undertakes a matricentric literary reading of Perpetua's text in order to examine the interwoven strands of maternity and mortality that are threaded throughout her narrative. Drawing on contemporary motherhood studies and matricentric theory, the reading explores how Perpetua's writing reflects the maternal body as a liminal space between life and death. Against the backdrop of high infant and maternal mortality rates, it becomes clear that Perpetua's martyrdom is rooted in her maternal suffering. Ultimately, in finding that Perpetua became a martyr through, rather than despite, her maternal body, the paper explores how the text subverts the dichotomy between the virgin martyr and the married mother. To conclude, the paper advocates for the use of matricentric theory and method in historical analysis, and emphasizes the important role that patristic studies might play in the ongoing scholarly conversation about motherhood, the body, and sacrifice.

Key Words:

Motherhood, matricentric, feminism, Passion of Perpetua and Felicity

Assume the moment of childbirth is at hand; it is not the birth of the child, but the presence of death that is thought of, and the death of the mother anticipated. Often, the sad prophecy is fulfilled and before the birth is celebrated, before any of the anticipated goods are tasted, joy is exchanged for lamentation.

–Gregory of Nyssa

Introduction

In the opening account of her prison diary, Perpetua stands before the Roman prosecutors, awaiting her sentence of death in the gladiatorial arena. As a mother in Late Antiquity, this was not the first time Perpetua faced death. In a time of high maternal and infant mortality rates, the pregnant body occupied a liminal space between life and death. Perpetua's prison diary is the story of her preparation for death. The narrative opens with her trial and ends with her acceptance of death; in the interim, her story is reminiscent of Gregory of Nyssa's fourth-century description of impending childbirth. Throughout Perpetua's story, the presence of death is thought of and the death of the mother is anticipated.

Though the Virgin Martyr was portrayed as the highest ideal, most ordinary Christians in Late Antiquity did not experience their faith through an ascetic, monastic practice. As both miscarriage and infant mortality rates were high, however, many Christians would have recognized the pregnant body as a space where the battle between life and death was waged in secrecy. A matricentric reading of Perpetua's diary foregrounds the fact that she became a martyr through, rather than despite, her maternal body. Perpetua's sacrifice is not antithetical to her role as a mother but birth-giving in late antiquity might actually have been an embodiment of that sacrifice. If we foreground these themes – of maternal mortality, liminality, and suffering – through a matricentric reading of Perpetua's story, we can better imagine how ordinary women in early Christianity might have conceived of martyrdom as a natural extension of the maternal body.

Matricentric literary theory and method were born of Motherhood studies as a discipline. The field is new. In 2006, Andrea O'Reilly coined the term 'motherhood studies' to acknowledge and demarcate a new scholarship on motherhood as an autonomous discipline – one grounded in a tradition of maternal theory.¹ Within this theory, Motherhood is understood as socially and culturally constructed, rather than being defined as a biological function. In her seminal work on the topic, Adrienne Rich framed motherhood as a cultural institution that is continually redesigned in response to changing societal factors.²

Though matricentric feminism is centered on the idea that motherhood is historically constructed, as the field is so new, there has been very little study of ancient texts. A matricentric literary reading thus presents a new methodology through which to approach texts such as *Perpetua's Diary*. According to Andrea O'Reilly a matrifocal (or matricentric) reading, 'attends to and accentuates the maternal thematic in any given text'³. Matricentric literary scholars pay particularly close attention to embodied experience and maternal embodiment to understand maternal bodies as both lived and culturally encoded⁴ Thus, this reading attends to the maternal thematic and the maternal body in *Perpetua's Diary* in order to foreground themes of maternity and mortality and demonstrate the usefulness of matricentric theory and method as a tool for patristic studies.⁵ As matricentric feminism emerged from the field of academic feminism, this reading will also expand on feminist theory including French literary theorist Helene Cixous.

Perpetua's Diary records one of the very few female voices that still speaks to us from Antiquity and is thus one of the very few matrifocal

¹ Andrea O'Reilly, 'Maternal Theory: Patriarchal Motherhood and Empowered Mothering', in: L. O'Brien Hallstein, A. O'Reilly & M. V. Giles (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Motherhood*, London: Routledge 2021, 20.

² Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company 2021.

³ Andrea O'Reilly, 'Matricentric Feminism: A Feminism for Mothers', in: L. O'Brien Hallstein, A. O'Reilly & M. V. Giles (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Motherhood*, London: Routledge 2021, 54.

⁴ Margaretha Fahlgren, Helena Wahlström Henriksson and Anna Williams, 'Ambivalent Narratives of Motherhood and Mothering', in: M. Fahlgren, H. W. Henriksson and A. Williams (eds.), *Narratives of Motherhood and Mothering in Fiction and Life Writing*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2023, 1–15 (4).

⁵ Fahlgren, Henriksson and Williams, 'Ambivalent Narratives', 4.

narratives that have survived millennia.⁶ The narrative itself is written in the first person in the form of the prison diary of Perpetua, a young mother, and catechumen who was martyred in March of the year 202 or 203 AD in Carthage. The diary is an account of her imprisonment and visions. The text, as it comes down to us in medieval manuscripts in both Latin and Greek, is known as *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (*The Passio*). In its entirety, the diary is accompanied by the visions of her brother Saturnus, and a framing narrative. This framing narrative, written by one or multiple editors, begins with a prologue that attributes the following diary to the martyr Vibia Perpetua. The framing narrative ends in an epilogue that details in the third person the story of Felicity giving birth in prison and the martyrs's deaths in the arena. Issues of authorship and authenticity, and their relationship to these distinct voices, have been well studied with respect to the passion of Perpetua and Felicity. Though fascinating, these questions are not the focus of this study. Here I take my cue from Kate Cooper, in focusing on Perpetua as a narrator⁷. Perpetua's narrative voice, as translated by Thomas J. Heffernan from Latin⁸, will be the object of our reading. It is important to note the general lack of both female narrators and authors in the genre of hagiography and thus the historical and literary significance of Perpetua's narrative voice.

I am likewise persuaded by the argument put forward by Cooper that there are distinct tensions between the framing narrative and the prison diary and that, from a narratological point of view, you can see these as different voices that have different commitments.⁹ As the textual tradition of Perpetua's story, in both Greek and Latin manuscripts, is complex and the question of authorship is ultimately unresolved, it is possible that Perpetua's Diary and the framing narrative were written at different times.

⁶ Stavroula Constantinou and Aspasia Skouroumouni-Stavrinou, *Breastfeeding and Mothering in Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge 2024, 37.

⁷ Kate Cooper, 'A Father, a Daughter and a Procurator: Authority and Resistance in the Prison Memoir of Perpetua of Carthage', *Gender & History*, 23:3 (2011), 685–702.

⁸ Thomas J. Heffernan, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*, New York: Oxford University Press 2012.

⁹ Cooper, 'A Father, a Daughter and a Procurator'.

The Maternal Body as Liminal Space

In the early Christian church, particularly in North African theology and iconography, the womb had a significant status.¹⁰ Imagery of the mother church and her fertile womb pervades writing and art from that context. In a matricentric reading, pregnancy more generally and the womb specifically can be seen as a physical embodiment of the liminal space between life and death. A womb is a place where life and death hang in a balance. Just as the womb can contain new life it can also contain death. Miscarriage is equally a function of the maternal body and is intrinsic to the embodied experience of motherhood. As one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage, many women experience the death of the body many times over within their own lifetime.

The experience of pregnancy as a liminal space is echoed in the structure of the narrative. The narrative opens in medias res, as Perpetua is being held in custody awaiting her trial. The narrative ends in a kind of authorial passing of the baton, as Perpetua accepts her imminent death and leaves her story to another author to finish. The plot exists in the liminal space between Perpetua's life pre-custody and her death in the amphitheater. This liminal space is represented in the physical space of the prison. In Perpetua's description, the setting is reflective of the womb. She describes it as dark, cramped, and warm¹¹. This setting has the narrative function of pregnancy – it operates as a locus of transformation. Within this warm, dark, cramped space, Perpetua undergoes her transformation from Catechumen to Martyr and traverses the threshold between life and death.

As well as the space between life and death, pregnancy embodies a liminal sense of time – like advent, pregnancy is a season of waiting. 'Some say that Christian life is understood as a series of deaths and resurrections,' writes Theologian Carrie Fredrick Frost in her mono-graph *Maternal Body*, 'It can also be understood as a series of births and returns,

¹⁰ Robin M. Jensen 'Mater Ecclesia and Fons Aeterna: The Church and Her Womb in Ancient Christian Tradition', in: A.-J. Levine (ed.) *A Feminist Companion to Patristic Literature*, Cleveland: Pilgrim Press 2008, 137–155 (140).

¹¹ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.5–6; trans. Heffernan, *The Passion*.

and the maternal body reveals this sense of ever renewal.’¹² Frost highlights the ways in which the maternal body challenges the myth of linear time. She explains that the cyclical nature of the maternal body reflects a different sense of time, one reflected in the cycles of the liturgical calendar. ‘Yes, chronological time keeps marching on,’ explains Frost, ‘but there is a deeper sense of time lived out in the maternal body.’¹³ The maternal body is intrinsically cyclical, from the menstrual cycle to the female sexual response cycle. A matricentric reading of Perpetua’s diary likewise poses a challenge to linear time.

Though written chronologically, Perpetua’s diary exists outside of time. The readers do not know how long she was held in custody. In this sense, Perpetua’s writing departs from the conventions of a typical diary, which usually foregrounds important dates and time markers. Instead, the pacing of Perpetua’s narrative takes on a disjointed, almost hallucinatory quality. Perpetua’s diary opens with this cryptic sentence: “‘While”, she said, “we were still with the prosecutors, my father, because of his love for me, wanted to change my mind and shake my resolve.”’¹⁴ The word ‘still’ gives the impression that Perpetua had been with the prosecutors for some time already. When was she arrested and for how long has she been held? The circumstances remain a mystery and such mystery pervades the narrative. When any time markers are given, they are given very loosely. For instance, ‘For a few days’¹⁵ Perpetua is freed from the protestations of her father. Then, Perpetua writes, ‘In the space of a few days we were baptized.’¹⁶ The prisoners are given ‘a few hours’¹⁷ to revive themselves in a better part of the prison. Perpetua then worries for her child and ‘endures such worry for many days.’¹⁸ Perpetua writes of her vision and ‘a few days later’¹⁹ receives a visit from her father. The prisoners finally receive a hearing ‘on

¹² Carrie Fredrick Frost, *Maternal Body: A Theology of Incarnation from the Christian East*, Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press 2019, 108.

¹³ Frost, *Maternal Body*, 108.

¹⁴ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, III.1.

¹⁵ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, III.4.

¹⁶ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, III.5.

¹⁷ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, III.7.

¹⁸ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, V.9.

¹⁹ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, V.1.

another day'.²⁰ This strange sense of time continues throughout the narrative. It is further complicated by the pacing of the story. Some key scenes are recounted in a single sentence, such as when Perpetua laconically mentions their baptism, surely a significant event in the lives of those choosing to die for their Christian identity. Likewise, Perpetua recalls the moment that the prisoners were sentenced to death, writing simply, 'Then Hilarianus pronounced sentence on us all and condemned us to the beasts. And we descended the platform and returned cheerfully to prison.'²¹ In contrast to this, Perpetua's visions are written with vivid details and rich, figurative language. Her dreams are the longest passages of the text. This can have the disorientating effect of making Perpetua's dreams feel more real than her reality. The sense of chronological time is warped by the pacing of the narrative.

When embedded within the framing narrative, *The Passio* follows a traditional narrative arc, with an exposition, climax, resolution, and denouement. It is only when it is studied on its own that Perpetua's diary breaks with narrative convention; Perpetua's story begins in the middle – the Latin term 'in medias res' translates to 'into the middle of things.' The first line drops the reader straight into Perpetua's conflict with her father: 'While we were still with the prosecutors, my father, because of his love for me, wanted to change my mind and shake my resolve.'²² The last line offers up her ending for another author: 'This is the story of what I did the day before the final conflict. But concerning the outcome of that contest, let whoever wishes to write about it, do so.'²³ Kate Cooper points to this final line as Perpetua's greatest act of bravery. Cooper explains that 'her willingness to die for her faith shows physical and moral courage, her last words are brave in a different way... Her voice will endure in a future beyond her death, but in a form chosen by others, to serve the needs of later communities unknown to her and beyond her imagining.'²⁴ In leaving her story in the hands of other writers, Perpetua cedes narrative control and defies narrative convention.

²⁰ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, VI.1.

²¹ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, VI. 6.

²² *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, III.1.

²³ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, X.15.

²⁴ Cooper, 'A Father, a Daughter and a Procurator', 700.

This contrast between the narrative structure of the *Passio* as a whole and Perpetua's diary is interesting to examine through the prism of *écriture féminine*. *Écriture féminine*, literally 'women's writing', is a concept developed by the French literary theorist Helene Cixous in the 1970s. In this theory, Cixous posed that female writing could reflect the female body.²⁵ Cixous posited that non-linear, cyclical writing mirrored the embodied female experience.²⁶ In Cixous's eyes, the linear narrative arc was a convention of patriarchy, and by choosing to write outside its confines women posed a challenge to patriarchal grand narratives. Whilst Perpetua, of course, wrote almost two millennia before Cixous posited her theory, it is an interesting lens through which to view the narrative structure. From this point of view, the redactor's prologue and epilogue can be seen as patriarchal attempts to wrangle Perpetua's story into a conventional narrative structure. When Perpetua's story is allowed to speak for itself, the structure, like the maternal body, expresses a more cyclical sense of time.

Perpetua replaces the traditional narrative structure with, to appropriate Frost's phrasing, a sense of ever renewal. Her dreams are layered with imagery of new life, baptism, the Eucharist, and the paradise awaiting her in martyrdom – a series of births and returns. Her account of prison life is woven through with details of her maternal grief and anxiety, and the relief she finds when she can care for her baby – small deaths and resurrections.²⁷ Her character development from catechumen to martyr is punctuated by multiple baptisms and sacrifices. Her performance of martyrdom is non-linear. When viewed through a matricentric lens, Perpetua's narrative reflects the thin veil between life and death that women experience whilst pregnant. Perpetua's diary considers the maternal body an embodiment of the liminal space between life and death and a conduit for martyrdom.

²⁵ Hélène Cixous, Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', *Signs* 1:4 (1976), 875–893.

²⁶ Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', 881.

²⁷ Maria Doerfler, *Jephthah's Daughter, Sarah's Son: The Death of Children in Late Antiquity*, Oakland: University of California Press 2019, 29.

Maternal Suffering as a Worthy Martyrdom

Perpetua's maternal suffering is illustrated most clearly in her description of the prison conditions. Perpetua laments the day that she and the other catechumens are sent to the prison, exclaiming 'Oh cruel day!'²⁸ She describes the conditions of their material suffering, including the darkness – 'I was terrified because I had never before known such darkness – and the heat – "the crowding of the mob made the heat stifling'.²⁹ Moreover, they are harassed by their captors, as she writes 'and there was the extortion of the soldiers.'³⁰ To sum it all up, she explains that 'last of all, I was consumed with worry for my infant in that dungeon.'³¹ Perpetua, at this point in the narrative, is separated from her baby. At the earliest opportunity, she tries to arrange for his care with her mother, writing, 'In my worry for him, I spoke to my mother concerning the baby.'³² Finally, she writes 'I endured such worry for many days, and I arranged for my baby to stay in prison with me.'³³ Here follows one of the most intriguing passages of the entire diary: 'Immediately I grew stronger, and I was relieved of the anxiety and worry I had for my baby. Suddenly the prison became my palace, so I wanted to be there rather than anywhere else.'³⁴ This rumination on Perpetua's worry for her baby, and the resolution of her anxiety as expressed in the prison/palace metaphor, gives readers an extraordinary insight into her mental state at that moment. What becomes clear is the fact that, in her suffering, Perpetua does not reject motherhood. Instead, her maternal grief is the center of her suffering. Perpetua's worry for her infant magnifies her material suffering, in this case, the heat, darkness and harassment of the prison.

The theme of maternal suffering is echoed later in the text, in Perpetua's second vision. She recounts that, whilst praying, she sees her brother Dinocrates who died of cancer in childhood. She writes 'I cried out the name of Dinocrates. I was shocked because never before then

²⁸ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.6.

²⁹ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.6.

³⁰ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.6.

³¹ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.6.

³² *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.8.

³³ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.9.

³⁴ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.9.

had his name entered my mind, and I grieved as I remembered his fate.’³⁵ Later, whilst asleep, she sees Dinocrates in her dream. He appears to be thirsty and though he stands by a pool Perpetua writes ‘I was saddened because, although the pool had water in it, he was not able to drink because of the height of the rim. And I awakened, and I knew that my brother was suffering.’³⁶ On another day, as she is put in the stocks, she has a third vision. In this vision, Dinocrates appears and the pool has been lowered. He drinks from the pool and Perpetua recounts that ‘when his thirst was quenched, he began to play in the water, rejoicing in the manner of children. And I woke up. I knew then that he was freed from his suffering.’³⁷ Throughout this entire sequence, Perpetua’s grief is woven through both her reality, as it is recorded in her prison diary and her dream journal. The two modes of writing, which until this point were kept somewhat separate, begin to merge, as the pace of the narrative quickens, the paragraphs become shorter and the story begins to more quickly oscillate between dreams and reality. Perpetua’s worry for her brother, who she sees in her dreams, becomes a reflection of her worry for her baby, who she holds in her arms. Both modes – her prison diary and her dream journals – allow space for Perpetua to negotiate, then re-negotiate – her maternal grief. Throughout her time in prison, Perpetua is preoccupied with worry for her infant child and then her maternal-like empathy for her deceased young brother. This worry is at the heart of her suffering. The nature of her suffering, and its relationship to her motherhood, subverts the idea that Perpetua rejected her motherhood in order to sacrifice herself as a martyr. Instead, her maternal grief is at the heart of her sacrifice.

This specific relationship – between the suffering of motherhood and the sacrifices of martyrdom – was a dynamic that the early Christian community grappled with. When one in three infants didn’t live to their first birthday, and as many as half died before age the age of ten, infant mortality and parental bereavement posed a challenge, to Christian theology. Maria Doerfler’s book *Jephthah’s Daughter Sarah’s Son: The Death of Children in Late Antiquity* explores how early Christian writers confronted this challenge. Her work offers a new window through which

³⁵ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* VII.1.

³⁶ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* VII.9.

³⁷ *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* VIII.4.

to look upon the relationship between maternal suffering and martyrdom and thus might offer up new answers to the questions put forward by Perpetua's story.

Throughout the rise of the ascetic movement, the archetypes of the virgin martyr and the married mother were positioned as diametrically opposed. However, at the same time, we can see in Christian exegesis on the story of the Maccabean Mother, the emergence of an alternative point-of-view. Doerfler explores how the Maccabean Mother was held up as an exemplar 'exhorting even married women to the kind of spiritual aspirations that might otherwise be reserved for virgins and widows.'³⁸ In 2 Maccabees, the story tells of the arrest of seven sons, who, when they refuse to eat pork and therefore show their deference to the emperor, are killed one by one in front of their unflinching mother, who is then, in turn, martyred herself. In Doerfler's account, the story became an opportunity for Christian writers in Late Antiquity to meditate on the sacrifices required of ordinary Roman women.³⁹ Doerfler explains that 'the story spoke to more private matters ... the shape of virtue amongst that overwhelming majority of Christians who embraced family life rather than asceticism and how the mundane trials of life and death in the late Roman family could become worthy martyrdoms in their own life.'⁴⁰ The mundanity of this sacrifice, the weight of maternal suffering in a period of history with high rates of both maternal and infant mortality, is thus recognized by these patristic writers as a form of martyrdom in their own right.

This prism casts new light on Perpetua's suffering. When Doerfler writes 'ancient discourses ascribe to women both a peculiar capacity for grief and the task of its performance. Yet the display of maternal suffering in the patristic expositions of the Maccabean Mother also served to enhance her holiness'⁴¹, her words are reflective of Perpetua's account of life inside the prison. Once she is no longer experiencing maternal grief, the material conditions of her suffering no longer press on her,

³⁸ Doerfler, *Jephthah's Daughter, Sarah's Son*, 142.

³⁹ Doerfler, *Jephthah's Daughter, Sarah's Son*, 98.

⁴⁰ Doerfler, *Jephthah's Daughter, Sarah's Son*, 126.

⁴¹ Doerfler, *Jephthah's Daughter, Sarah's Son*, 132.

instead her 'prison becomes a palace.'⁴² Conversely, Perpetua's suffering is heightened because it is experienced through her maternal body - which, in turn, enhances her holiness. Her maternal suffering is therefore central to her performance of martyrdom.

Conclusion

In Late Antiquity, the relationship between motherhood and martyrdom was complex. Against the backdrop of the ascetic movement, the archetypes of the virgin martyr and the married mother were positioned in opposition to one another. Perpetua's writing paints a different picture: an intimate portrait of the maternal body that blurs the lines between the mother and the martyr. Thus, Perpetua's transformation into a martyr did not happen solely in the arena. Just as pregnancy pulls a woman into her skin, Perpetua's diary pulls us towards an understanding of the maternal body as a site of martyrdom.

A matricentric reading allows us to reflect on how Perpetua might have developed a new awareness of her body through the physicality of pregnancy, birth, and motherhood and how this awareness might be reflected in the text. By attending to and accentuating the maternal thematic within the text, we can understand Perpetua's diary as an expression of the liminal space between life and death. By placing our reading within the context of high maternal and infant mortality rates, it becomes clear that the suffering of motherhood and the suffering of martyrdom are in relationship.

Perpetua concluded her diary by offering up her story to another writer. This paper will likewise conclude by inviting other voices into the conversation. There is more research to be done on the topic of motherhood and martyrdom. Matricentric literary theory and motherhood studies offer patristics scholars new insight into ancient texts. As the subject of motherhood becomes a topic of serious consideration in both academia and the wider cultural sphere, there is a place for patristic studies to be an important voice in that conversation.

⁴² *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* III.9.

RECENSIONER OCH BOKANMÄLNINGAR

Harri Huovinen, *Images of Divine Participation: A Reappraisal of Fourth Century Views on Church Membership*. Doctoral Dissertation. Studia Patristica Fennica 18. Helsinki: Societas Patristica Fennica, 2022. ISBN: 9789526956787

Harri Huovinen's book explores the fields at the cross-section of patristics, ecclesiology, and sacramentology. It substantially contributes to the promising field of baptismal ecclesiology, which supplements eucharistic ecclesiology.

Huovinen focuses his research on three authors of the fourth century: Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil of Caesarea, and John Chrysostom. They belonged to different generations and milieux. Other patristic authors from the same period might have also contributed to Huovinen's argument, but he chose to be restrained by only these three. Therefore, the thesis is more a case study than a systematic exposé of the topic. This is both an advantage and disadvantage of the book. Among its disadvantages is that the book does not provide a full picture of theological developments regarding the topic that Huovinen researches. At the same time, the in-depth analysis of the mentioned patristic authors provides the researcher with enough material to draw convincing conclusions. It should also be mentioned that Huovinen sufficiently explores both similarities and differences between the three authors studied in his book.

The book is replete with merits that significantly enhance our current research and understanding of the theological and ecclesial processes during the fourth century.

First, it demonstrates that the initiation to the church and the following membership in ecclesial communities is not a quantum leap but a journey. This journey is related to the process of spiritual healing, which the researcher calls psychotherapy. He, thus, draws a link between psychotherapy and ecclesiality. He also argues that this journey is intended not for individuals but for groups, i.e., ecclesial communities. He, thus, affirms the reciprocity between a person and a community in their mutual influence. From this perspective, one could say that his ecclesiology is community-centred.

The book's important conclusion is that the church's membership should be perceived not as static but dynamic. In other words, Christian initiation does not cross a demarcation line, but a gradient that leads from less-ecclesiality to more-ecclesiality. The researcher convincingly demonstrates that baptismal candidacy constitutes an ecclesiological category of its own between the initial-stage catechumenate and full membership – based on the ecclesiological insights from Cyril, Basil, and John. He also applies his conclusions to the modern discussions about the borders of the church. He argues that the church and non-church are separated not by a clear-cut borderline, but by an undefinable frontier. This gives an important clue to interpret ecumenically the ecclesiality of the churches, which are seen as heterodox ecumenical partners. Such conclusions have far-reaching implications, which Huovinen tries to apply to some areas of the ongoing ecumenical dialogue by drawing parallels between the views on church membership by the fourth-century authors and Martin Luther and his followers. For example, he juxtaposes Basil's terminology of initiatory illumination and Luther's *Kleiner Katechismus*. These parallels can boost the Orthodox–Lutheran discussions, which are especially important in the context of Finland.

Speaking about the research methods that Harri Huovinen has chosen, he has clearly described and adequately implemented them. Notably, he combines the methods widely applied in patristics and systematic theology with the specific scientific approaches favoured in the Finnish academia. He sufficiently and critically explores the parallels and borrowings between the patristic and classical philosophies. Importantly, Huovinen relies on the imagery produced by the early church authors. He sorts the images out into three categories: therapeutic, illuminatory, and martial. This is a correct method because the images of

the church were the main way of speaking about the ecclesial phenomenon in the fourth century.

The researcher provides detailed and illuminating summaries of modern ecclesiological studies relevant to his topic. He even refers to the Japanese scholarship, which is a unique added value of this study. Among the Orthodox theologians, the author relies on Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos. However, the latter is known not so much for his systematic approach but for anti-Western prejudices. In this spirit, Hierotheos perceives even ecclesiology as such, i.e., the attempts to define the church, as a Western phenomenon. As for another modern Orthodox theologian, to whom Huovinen refers, Jean-Claude Larchet, his theological views are also questionable, as he appears to be biased by the agenda of radical conservatism and even fundamentalism. This agenda does not help him to perceive the phenomenon of the church adequately. Finally, Vladimir Shmaliy, to whom Huovinen refers as well, is an insightful Russian theologian, but he has not written much or systematically, including on the topic that constitutes the subject of the book.

In sum, the book offers a comprehensive overview of both patristic and modern Orthodox ecclesiologies. It expands the latter by incorporating the baptismal dimension and enriches the scholarship on the church's sacraments.

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