



ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE  
PHILOLOGICA 2/2016  
GRAECOLATINA PRAGENSIA



A C T A   U N I V E R S I T AT I S   C A R O L I N A E

# PHILOLOGICA 2/2016

---

GRAECOLATINA PRAGENSIA

Editors

DAGMAR MUCHNOVÁ, MARTIN BAŽIL,  
JÁN BAKYTA

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE  
KAROLINUM PRESS  
2016

Editors: Dagmar Muchnová (Charles University in Prague)  
Martin Bažil (Charles University in Prague)  
Ján Bakyta (Charles University in Prague)

<http://www.karolinum.cz/journals/philologica>

© Charles University in Prague, 2016  
ISSN 0567-8269 (Print)  
ISSN 2464-6830 (Online)



**In memoriam professor Růžena Dostálová**  
**(22. 4. 1924 – 18. 8. 2014)**



## CONTENTS

---

Konstantinos Tsivos: Růžena Dostálová (22 avril 1924 – 18 août 2014) .....	9
--	---

### Graeca antiqua Byzantina novaque

Edita Wolf: Others as matter of indifference in Marcus Aurelius' <i>Meditations</i> .....	13
Walter Puchner: Die Chorführung im mittelalterlichen <i>Christus patiens</i> .....	25
Ivan Prchlík: Photius and μεταγράφειν: Some notes on the linguistic aspect of Photius' testimony to the nature of Zosimus' drawing upon the <i>Histories</i> by Eunapius of Sardis .....	33
Eugenia Marinakou: Talion social et plaidoyer littéraire dans <i>La Mère du chien</i> de Pavlos Mateissi .....	43

### Latina antiqua mediaevalia recentioraque

Lucie Pultrová: The Latin <i>bonus – melior – optimus</i> .....	59
Benjamin Hübbe: „Hymnisches“ in den <i>Laudes Dei</i> des Dracontius .....	69
Francesco Lubian: Un caso di riscrittura metrica ‘ultrabreve’ dei Vangeli: i distici <i>Miracula Christi</i> (Ps. Claud. <i>carm. min. app.</i> 21 = <i>Anth. Lat.</i> 879 R. <sup>2</sup> ) .....	87
Hana Šedinová: Aristotle’s carp as Claretus’ bird <i>comor?</i> Tracing the origin of one medieval term .....	111
Magdaléna Jacková: The end of school year on the stage of Jesuit schools in the Bohemian Province .....	125

### Existimationes librorum

Renato Oniga: <i>Latin. A Linguistic Introduction</i> (Lucie Pultrová) .....	139
Jorgos Seferis: <i>Básně</i> (Nicole Votavová Sumelidu) .....	142



## RŮŽENA DOSTÁLOVÁ (22 AVRIL 1924 – 18 AOÛT 2014)

---

Professeur titulaire, madame Růžena Dostálová, l'une des plus éminentes personnalités des études byzantines et néo-helléniques en République tchèque, est décédée le 18 août 2014. Elle avait considérablement contribué à la création des études byzantines et à la réintroduction du grec moderne parmi les unités de formation de la Faculté des lettres de l'université Charles de Prague.

Née le 21 avril 1924 à Bratislava d'un père officier de l'armée tchécoslovaque, Růžena Dostálová déménage en 1935 avec toute sa famille à Prague où elle entreprend des études secondaires dans un lycée général. Dans les années 1945–1950, elle fait des études de lettres classiques à la Faculté des lettres de l'université Charles. Après avoir terminé ses études, elle se voit offrir un poste à la Commission épigraphique de l'Académie des sciences. Elle se lance en même temps dans des études de grec moderne. À la suite de la dissolution de la Commission épigraphique, elle travaille en tant que documentaliste à l'Institut géologique central, puis, en 1953, elle passe au Cabinet d'études grecques, romaines et latines de l'Académie des sciences. La même année, elle soutient une thèse de doctorat intitulée *Le Roman grec de Ninos écrit sur des fragments de papyrus* grâce à laquelle elle obtient le titre de « Docteur en philosophie ». Elle reçoit ensuite, en 1959, le titre de *Candidatus scientiarum*.

L'intérêt scientifique de Růžena Dostálová porte alors notamment sur les études byzantines et néo-helléniques. Quelques années plus tard, elle est nommée responsable du Département d'études byzantines de l'Académie des sciences. En 1987, elle est élue présidente de la Commission d'études byzantines ; en 1993, elle devient professeur associée des études byzantines et néo-helléniques à l'université Charles. Trois ans plus tard, elle est nommée professeur titulaire en lettres classiques.

Au fil du temps, Mme Dostálová approfondit ses compétences dans divers domaines scientifiques. Elle collabore avec les plus grands spécialistes de la philologie classique et des études byzantines et néo-helléniques. Parmi ces spécialistes, il y a des Tchèques, mais aussi des chercheurs d'autres pays. À partir des années 1950 et quasiment jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, elle enseigne la littérature grecque et le grec moderne à l'Institut d'études grecques et latines de la Faculté des lettres de l'université Charles. Le département d'études grecques modernes de Prague étant temporairement fermé, elle transfère son bureau, en 1994, à l'université Masaryk de Brno. Grâce à son initiative, en 2009, les études néo-helléniques peuvent être de nouveau reconnues à la Faculté des lettres de l'Université Charles.

Parallèlement à son activité pédagogique, son travail de recherche et de traduction est remarquable. Son intérêt porte surtout sur des thèmes issus de la littérature et de l'histoire culturelle : le roman hellénique et byzantin, l'historiographie byzantine, les problèmes du passage de l'Antiquité au Moyen-Âge, la théorie antique de la traduction, l'esthétique de la littérature, etc. Elle se focalise surtout sur l'étude des relations entre Byzance et les Slaves. Elle traduit également en tchèque des œuvres de la littérature antique et byzantine (Julien l'Apostat, Michel Psellos, Anne Comnène, Laonicos Chalcondyle) et aussi le meilleur de la littérature grecque moderne (Odysseas Elytis, Constantin Cavafy), ainsi que des poèmes du lauréat du prix Nobel Georges Seferis. Elle participe enfin à la rédaction de la première méthode de grec moderne en République tchèque (2004).

Son engagement scientifique a valu à Mme Dostálová une position irremplaçable non seulement dans les études byzantines et néo-helléniques tchèques mais aussi dans de nombreux autres domaines scientifiques. Pour son travail dans le domaine de traduction, la Médaille d'or de la Société grecque des traducteurs lui a été décernée en 2004. La même année, à l'occasion du 85<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Faculté de théologie évangélique, elle a reçu la Médaille de l'université Charles. En 2010, le président de la République grecque Károlos Papoulias lui a remis la médaille du Commandeur de l'Ordre du Phénix pour l'ensemble de son œuvre. En 2011, elle a reçu la Médaille de la Société savante de la République tchèque pour sa contribution au développement de la science.

*Konstantinos Tsivos  
Université Charles, Prague  
Konstantinos.Tsivos@ff.cuni.cz*

GRAECA ANTIQUA  
BYZANTINA NOVAQUE

---



## OTHERS AS MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE IN MARCUS AURELIUS' *MEDITATIONS*\*

EDITA WOLF

### ABSTRACT

In *Meditations*, others are treated in a double way, as being closest to us and as matter of indifference. The present article offers an interpretation, based on chapter V, 20, where the two ways are seen in different perspectives, the perspective of the whole and the perspective of a part. The perspective of the whole allows one to see the interconnectedness of individuals by reason; it is also linked to the imagery of the view from above which enables one to understand oneself as equal to any other, whereas the perspective of a part helps one to assume the attitude of indifference towards the other and thus to act properly.

**Keywords:** Marcus Aurelius; stoicism; others; indifference

---

A significant part of *Meditations* is centered on interpersonal relationships and the social nature of the human being. *Meditations* are strongly marked by prevalence of ethics compared to the other two branches of the Stoic division of philosophy, logic and physics. Thus the question how to deal with others is primarily posed as an ethical one, with respect to the Stoic axiology distinguishing good, bad and indifferent. In this context, we have to deal with the paradoxical claim that we are naturally inclined to benefit others, but neither our happiness, nor our virtue, which is the only condition of a happy life, depends on them. Others do not seem to be good, but they are not bad either. Therefore, one's attitude towards them should be one of indifference, nevertheless involving the actions and affections according to nature. Moreover, according to some fragments (e.g. LS 60 G and M), there are special cases of others – sages and friends, who can be considered “not other than benefit”, therefore good.

In *Meditations*, the treatment of others is double: on the one hand, a human being is regarded as a member of the human community, which is based on shared reason. People are kin one to another and this kinship is provided by their rationality, for each and every human being has a small part of the divine reason. On the other hand, there

---

\* This article was written in the framework of the project *Marcus Aurelius and imperial Stoicism in the contemporary Classical studies* realized by Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague financed by the Specific higher education research for 2014.

are several chapters that seem to disturb this concept of humanity. In those chapters, other people are described as matters of indifference, as an obstacle to proper action, and sometimes even as a nuisance – a possible cause of anger or other passions.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of others in *Meditations* reflects the complexity of the problem of others in Stoic ethics, especially the difficulties in combining the theoretical notions of living in accordance with nature and that of indifference and their application in praxis. In the following, we shall look into how the problem appears in particular discursive conditions and examine the delicate balance<sup>2</sup> in the attitude towards others. Since chapter V, 20 contains the concept of the other in its doubleness, it will serve as a point of reference throughout the present text.

According to another account, the human being is that which is closest to us, in relation to which one should do good to humans and put up with them. However, to the extent that some of them stand in the way of our proper actions, the human being becomes one of the things that are matters of indifference to me, no less than sun or wind or wild beast. They may obstruct one or other of my actions but they do not act as obstacles to my motivation or disposition because I have the power of reservation and adaptation. The mind adapts and converts everything that prevents its activity into something that serves its objective; an impediment to its action becomes a means of help to this action and a blockage along the way becomes a means to help it on its way.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter presents a disconcerting image of others compared to wild beasts surrounded by precise stoic terminology. To unfold the layers of the text, special attention will be paid first to the characteristic of a human being as closest to us (*oikeiotaton*) and to the closeness or properness in general alluding to the Stoic concept of appropriation (*oikeios, oikeiosis*).<sup>4</sup> The concept of appropriation helps to develop the sense of reasonableness of a human being and gives access to the perspective of the whole. The second part of the chapter illustrates a rarer way of perceiving others, where they are compared to beasts in connection to the notion of reservation (*hupexairesis*) and the vocabulary of standing in the way (*enistantai, enstatikon*), hindrance or blockage (*empodia, koluma*). The two ways will be shown as two complementary perspectives, the perspective of the whole and the perspective of a part. As the link between the two is the one who is perceiving, who is assuming the point of view either of the whole or of a part, the position of the perceiving *I* will be examined.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. VI, 54; IX, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Expression used by Christopher Gill (2013: 158) in his commentary to chapter V, 20.

<sup>3</sup> V, 20: Καθ' ἔτερον μὲν λόγον ἡμῖν ἔστιν οἰκειότατον ἄνθρωπος, καθ' ὅσον εὐ ποιητέον αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀνεκτέον· καθ' ὅσον δὲ ἐνίστανται τίνες εἰς τὰ οἰκεία ἔργα, ἐν τι τῶν ἀδιαφόρων μοι γίνεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὐχ ἡσσον ἡ ἥπιος ἡ ἀνεμος ἡ θηριόν. ὑπὸ τούτων δὲ ἐνέργεια μέν τις ἐμποδισθεῖ ἄν, ὀρμῆς δὲ καὶ διαθέσεως οὐ γίνεται ἐμπόδια διὰ τὴν ὑπεξαίρεσιν καὶ τὴν περιτροπήν. περιτρέπει γάρ καὶ μεθιστησι πᾶν τὸ τῆς ἐνέργειας κώλυμα ἡ διάνοια εἰς τὸ προηγούμενον καὶ πρὸ ἔργου γίνεται τὸ τοῦ ἔργου τούτου ἐφεκτικὸν καὶ πρὸ ὁδοῦ τὸ τῆς ὁδού ταύτης ἐντατικόν. Quoted from Farquharson's edition (1968), translation by Gill (2013) with slight changes in the first and the second phrase. As Gill's translation of the books 7–12 hasn't been published yet, Haines' (1930) translation of these will be used in the following text.

<sup>4</sup> The main sources for *oikeiosis* are Diogenes Laertius, Cicero's *De finibus*, Seneca's letter 121 and fragments of Stoic philosopher Hierocles who lived in the 2nd century CE. Cf. D. L. VII, 84–89; Cic. *Fin.* III, 16–31; for Hierocles' *Elements of Ethics* and other works see Ramelli (2009).

## **Others from the point of view of the whole**

In the beginning of chapter V, 20, human beings are described as “closest” (*oikeiotaton*). The adjective, as Gill points out,<sup>5</sup> evokes the Stoic concept of appropriation (*oikeiosis*). In Stoicism, the appropriation takes place during the development of an individual and is generally understood as consisting of two major phases.<sup>6</sup> In the first phase an individual becomes familiar to themselves, their physical functions and limits and the primary motive for any action is self-preservation; in the second phase, they realize that they form part of a bigger whole of reasonable creatures and they become capable of reasonable actions for the good of society. In chapter V, 20, we can clearly link the expression *oikeios* with the second phase, the so-called social *oikeiosis*.

To understand what is meant by *oikeiotaton* in this context, it is important to stress that the social *oikeiosis* begins only with the development of reason. The existence of human society is dependent on reason, because reason is the basis of human society, the physical link that ties the whole together. Reason makes one human, for a divine share of reason is what makes the difference between an animal and a rational animal that is a human being. But it is exactly a share, a part of the whole whose individuality arises from the whole. Not only does each human being have a share of divine reason, but it is that very reason that creates the connection between all reasonable beings.

Being human thus does not consist of a discrete substantial quality of an individual, but from the appurtenance to the reasonable whole. Reasonableness is not a quality dissociable from sociability. On the contrary, reason is the permanent link between individuals that makes humanity possible.<sup>7</sup> Marcus Aurelius concentrates this argument in a short gnome in chapter X, 2:

Now the rational is indisputably also the civic.<sup>8</sup>

Detached parts of the unique reason proper to individuals form a whole in the same way as the things in the world form the whole of the world (LS 67 R).

For there is both one Universe, made up of all things, and one Substance, and one Law, one Reason common to all intelligent creatures, and one Truth: if indeed there is also one perfecting of living creatures that have the same origin and share the same reason.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Gill (2013: 158).

<sup>6</sup> The division of appropriation is to be found in Gill (2013: xxxviii) who uses terms individual-social in the commentary to Marcus Aurelius. Ramelli (2009: lix) who interprets Hierocles' account of appropriation in terms of preservative-deontological, Engberg-Pedersen (1990: 122) whose analysis is centred on Cicero (Cic. *Fin.* III, 16–21) and who uses the terms objective-subjective, and Pembroke (1971: 114–149). Annas (1993: 270–4) and Reydams-Schils (2012: 438) examine the division into personal and social appropriation and show that they go hand in hand.

<sup>7</sup> As Reydams-Schils (2012: 443) notes, the rational soul is always sociable, but not all sociability derives from reason, because certain animals are also sociable. The degrees of sociability follow the stoic *scala naturae* as we find it in chapter IX, 9 where there is a direct proportion between reasonableness and sociability. The more reasonable a creature is, the more sociable, and the bond thus created is proportionately stronger.

<sup>8</sup> X, 2: ἔστι δέ τὸ λογικὸν εὐθὺς καὶ πολιτικόν. Transl. Haines. Similarly in XI, 26.

<sup>9</sup> VII, 9: κόσμος τε γάρ εἰς εξ ἀπάντων καὶ θεός εἰς δι' ἀπάντων καὶ οὐσίᾳ μίᾳ καὶ νόμος εἰς, λόγος κοινὸς πάντων τῶν νοερῶν ζώων, καὶ ἀλήθεια μίᾳ, εἴγε καὶ τελειότης μίᾳ τῶν ὁμογενῶν καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ λόγου μετεχόντων ζώων. Transl. Haines.

The closeness of other human beings is fully revealed only when we perceive all that it comprises, therefore only when we can see the world from the point of view of reason and take a glimpse of the workings of providence. The point of view of reason is at the same time the point of view of the whole, because reason only can pervade the whole universe and comprehend it, including the comprehension of the reason itself.<sup>10</sup> The point of view of the whole enables us to see the other as a human being, as another. It is the reason that creates the permanent link forming the whole and thus the framework for cooperation of its parts, individuals who interact with each other and create temporary links.

The interaction of individuals is expressed in the chapter V, 20 as “doing good and putting up with” (*eu poein kai anechein*). Therefore any particular action or passion according to nature can be understood as either putting up with others or doing good to them. This shows that the temporary link of interactivity is always an expression of the reasonableness and sociability, an expression of the permanent link of reason.

In “doing good and putting up with” another human being becomes a direct object of action in the grammatical sense, as it is expressed by the accusative, while an agent or patient becomes a subject. In this way, the temporary link of a particular interaction creates a subject-object relationship between two individuals. However, as Bénatouïl argues, this subject-object relationship is not marked by reciprocity.<sup>11</sup> An agent is a subject of doing good as well as a patient is subject of putting up with, the object of both being another. Meanwhile, another individual is also subject of doing good and putting up with and these also have a human object. The first subject and the second object may or may not be the same.

The first part of the chapter V, 20 is to be read as understanding the human condition from the point of view of reason, which is the point of view of the whole, because it is this point of view that enables us to see the interconnectedness of individuals and to understand what is human society. It is also the point of view that we encounter most frequently in *Meditations*. This point of view was analysed especially by Pierre Hadot, who considered looking at things from the perspective of the whole as crucial to Marcus Aurelius’ philosophical exercises.

Only seeing reason means that we are able to see the human society, which is the whole that we are a part of, therefore understand what are others to us, that is that they are closest to us. The fact that it is reason that enables a human being to see another as closest does not lead to insensibility. On the contrary, the reasonableness and sociability create the framework for feeling the right emotion – not excessive passion, but natural affection. We should like others and, according to *Meditations*, this liking has a double basis.<sup>12</sup> Firstly, one likes another as a reasonable being, because they are from the same stock.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See XI, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Bénatouïl (2009: 78).

<sup>12</sup> Marcus Aurelius does not really mention the possible third basis for love, being part of a family, which plays a significant role in the first phase of appropriation according to Hierocles (*Elem. eth.* IX, XI Ramelli; selected parts LS 57 D).

<sup>13</sup> See chapters IX, 27 (φύσει γάρ φίλοι); XI, 9. Natural affection for others is expressed in *Meditations* also by the expressions *eumeneia* (III, 4; III, 12; IV, 25; V, 5; VI, 30; VII, 47; VII, 3; VII, 26; VII, 52; VII, 63; VIII, 5; IX, 11; IX, 42; X, 4; X, 12; XI, 9; XI, 13; XI, 18), *praoes* (VII, 63; IX, 42; XI, 9; XI, 8), *philostorgia* (II, 5; VI, 30; XI, 18), *hemerotes* (III, 11; XI, 8). For a similar treatment of affection in Epictetus see Epictet. *Diss.* I, 11 interpreted by Salles (2012: 95–121) with respect to appropriation.

Secondly, one likes another in the same way as one should like anything that happens in this world as a working of providence.<sup>14</sup>

It is interesting to note that the liking is expressed in terms of *philia*, which can be translated as friendship, affection or fondness. A special treatment of affection towards one's own family and personal friends is absent from the books II–XII of *Meditations*.<sup>15</sup> This leads Rutherford (1989: 123) to the conclusion that in the lexical group of *philia*, *philos*, *philein* as it appears in *Meditations*, any reference to friendship is missing, and there is only an imposition of “moral obligation” which replaces “personal contact and private warmth”.

However, the first book of *Meditations* may allow another explanation because it can be interpreted as a form of catalogue<sup>16</sup> presenting a certain group of *philoī* of Marcus Aurelius, his family, friends and, last but not least, gods. The first book of *Meditations* can support the argument that in some cases friends, children and spouses are not only preferred indifferents, but may be considered as good because they prove to be a help to virtue. This is the point of view of Reydams-Schils (2005: 2–7) who analyses *Meditations* “from the vantage point of [...] social embeddedness”. According to her, it is from this point of view that others may become more than matters of indifference.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, the possible special value of family and friends is not directly commented upon and doesn't become a subject of *Meditations*. In chapter V, 31 friends appear along gods, family, servants and others on the list of people towards whom it is important to act correctly. The philosophical exercise is directed rather towards understanding of all human beings as *philoī*, than towards special appreciation of particular friends or family. It seems that appreciation and love for friends and family could have posed rather a different problem, such as that of excessive love for close ones and of succumbing to passions. Indeed, chapters IX, 40, X 34 and X, 35 show that the death of one's own child should be borne with moderation, because from the point of view of the whole, death is natural and therefore a matter of indifference.

### **I as a matter of indifference**

The point of view of the whole can be illustrated by repeated image of the view from above which has a long philosophical tradition in Antiquity. Rutherford, who reads *Meditations* primarily as a piece of literature, draws attention especially to the similarities with a passage in Plato's *Theaetetus*<sup>18</sup> and compares and contrasts *Meditations* with Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> III, 16: φιλεῖν μὲν καὶ ἀστάζεσθαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα καὶ συγκλωθόμενα αὐτῷ. Compare with X, 21.

<sup>15</sup> The word *philos* is also used in a chapter describing life at the imperial court referring to a group of people called *philoī* (VIII, 39).

<sup>16</sup> The first book of *Meditations* can be read also as a stoic catalogue of virtues, *imagines maiorum* where there are combined the Roman tradition and Stoic philosophy. Compare VI, 48, and LS 66 D, where Cicero speaks about *simulacra virtutis*. Reydams-Schils (2005: 77) interprets the first book in similar vein as “a curious reversal of a testament”. For the special combination of Roman and Stoic element in piousness in *Meditations* see Pià-Comella (2011).

<sup>17</sup> Ramelli (2009: lxxxiii) argues in a similar manner for Hierocles.

<sup>18</sup> Pl. *Tht.* 173e–174a.

<sup>19</sup> Rutherford (2002: 155–161).

In his influential interpretation, Hadot identifies the view from above with looking at things from the perspective of the whole and considers it as crucial to human freedom<sup>20</sup> because the spiritual exercises consist of the work of liberation from that which does not depend on us in Epictetan sense.<sup>21</sup> To achieve the universal perspective of reason, to see and comprehend the world from the point of view of the whole means, for Hadot, to achieve human freedom.

The view from above is not a view of a static picture from a fixed point, but quite the opposite. As Hadot notes,<sup>22</sup> it is rather an imaginative overflight (“survol imaginatif”). In this overflight, neither the viewer, nor the viewed are motionless. The viewed world is, first, the world of human affairs, names and fame, ephemeral and endlessly repeated.<sup>23</sup> The viewer then, as a human being, is essentially part of this world. As pointed out in *Meditations*, the courts of Augustus,<sup>24</sup> of Vespasianus<sup>25</sup> vanished in the abyss of *aion*, and every emperor, every general disappears and is lost in time, even the one looking.

Specific topos of *Meditations* is the reflection on endless metamorphosis. This theme appears very frequently and illustrates interconnectedness of the three parts of philosophy. As Giavatto (2008: 133–140) shows, theoretical knowledge of cosmology becomes a regulative principle through rhetorical praxis of the philosophical exercises. The imagery of metamorphosis in *Meditations* is very rich and vivid. The Stoic world is shown as being essentially non-static, as a world in motion. The world and the viewer are both in motion; they are subject to constant change. Not only the human world, but everything changes, dies and is reborn, including the cosmos itself. After having gone through the human world, the flight of thought continues to embrace the whole world, to the imperceptible, to the incessant becoming, coming into existence and perishing of parts of the whole of nature, to the blending of mixtures and stellar movements that happen in the heights of the skies and the depths of the earth on the level of elements.

Watch the stars in their course as one that runneth about with them therein; and think constantly upon the reciprocal changes of the elements, for thoughts on these cleanse away the mire of our earthly life.<sup>26</sup>

The limit of becoming human is to grasp with reason the whole of nature. It is not a question of time and space, but of speed, of the velocity of thought. The flight of thought passes from a human being through the whole of the human world to the border of the cosmos to see that every individual, every element, is a part of the cosmic whole which is the unique being with unique impulse, the unique cause.<sup>27</sup> The reason reaches to the utmost confines of the cosmos, even to the endless void and gaping *aion*,<sup>28</sup> and returns

<sup>20</sup> Hadot (1997: 192–196).

<sup>21</sup> Hadot (2002: 329).

<sup>22</sup> Hadot (2002: 54). See IX, 30; XII, 24.

<sup>23</sup> Expressed in many chapters and in many ways. See e.g. II, 14; VI, 37; IX, 35; XI, 1; XI, 2.

<sup>24</sup> See IV, 33; VIII, 5; VIII, 31.

<sup>25</sup> See IV, 32.

<sup>26</sup> VII, 47: Περισκοπεῖν ἀστρων δρόμους ὥσπερ συμπεριθέοντα καὶ τὰς τῶν στοιχείων εἰς ἄλληλα μεταβολάς συνεχῶς ἐννοεῖν· ἀποκαθαίρουσι γάρ αἱ τούτων φαντασίαι τὸν ρύπον τοῦ χαμαί βίου.

Transl. Haines.

<sup>27</sup> See IV, 40; VII, 9; XII, 30.

<sup>28</sup> See XI, 1.

back to see everything intertwined and continuously rearranged in the tonic movement, bodies interwoven by their nature and actions in the same manner as human limbs,<sup>29</sup> inseparable in the unity of matter.

Seeing the unceasing course of metamorphoses leads to grasping of human mortality and transience.<sup>30</sup> Human life is seen from the perspective of the whole of nature as insignificant, almost imperceptible as natural elements that are indiscernible, and yet they form everything people use. As one can think of imperceptible elements from the perspective of a human being that is constituted by those elements, so one can think of human life from the perspective of the whole of the reasonable soul of the world that pervades matter. As a part of the whole, a human being is born and dies, with respect to the whole, human life is but a fleeting moment. Understanding the reasonableness, becoming human thus necessarily includes awareness of one's mortality, for a human being is only one of the things, which in many ways come into existence in the course of becoming.

Not only the view from above enables one to come to terms with mortality, but it also provides an ethical framework for living in accordance with nature, to do good and put up with others, but also with oneself. For, in *Meditations*, an individual that happens to be *me* isn't treated as special with respect to others: all serve the purpose. On the contrary, paying too much attention to one's personal identity, social position, and even to one's name is something emphatically warned against.<sup>31</sup> As Gill points out: "the focus [...] lies on what should matter most to us as ethical agents, rather than psychological entities".<sup>32</sup> When doing something or putting up with it, when thinking, one should always act like a reasonable being, like a man, nothing more and nothing less.<sup>33</sup>

From the point of view of the whole, an individual is seen, on the one hand, as a part of the always-recreated link of actions and passions, a unit entering into various relationships, a subject of actions and passions, a subject of a verb. On the other hand, this point of view reveals that an individual is a mixture composed and decomposed, undergoing transformation, same as any other.

### **Others from the point of view of a part**

The comparison from chapter V, 20<sup>34</sup> deserves attention, because it seems to create an important gap between human beings. As shown by Bénatouïl<sup>35</sup> and Ackeren<sup>36</sup>, others are seen simply as matters of indifference without any further reference to value. By contrast to their position as viewed from the point of view of the whole, in this context they are seen from the point of view of a part, which is necessarily the point of view present in taking a particular action. The point of view of a part is thus the point of view from which one has to assume the attitude of indifference and directly deal with an indifferent thing.

---

<sup>29</sup> See VII, 19.

<sup>30</sup> See III, 10.

<sup>31</sup> See VI, 30; IX, 29.

<sup>32</sup> Gill (2013: 185).

<sup>33</sup> See III, 3; III, 7; IV, 12; V, 16; VI, 14; VI, 44; VII, 9; VII, 68; VII, 72; IX, 12; IX, 16; X, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Similar treatment in VIII, 56.

<sup>35</sup> Bénatouïl (2009: 65–66).

<sup>36</sup> Ackeren (2011: 532–33).

In the rest of chapter V, 20 others are not perceived as objects of actions or passions, because it is the proper actions (*oikeia erga*) that become direct objects, in the sense of obiectum effectum – the result of acting is an action. On the contrary, others are described as “standing in the way” (*enistantai*) in the same manner as natural forces. They are not treated as logical animals, but as beasts.<sup>37</sup>

Compared to beasts, others are not introduced as bad or good, but as matters of indifference and they are perceived in the same manner as sun and wind. Therefore the difference between an acting individual and a beast encountered is not to be understood as one of quantity: it is not so that somebody, a less reasonable human being becomes a beast, while another, more reasonable remains a reasonable animal. Between reasonable and unreasonable, the difference is one of quality.<sup>38</sup>

But of what should the attitude of indifference consist? The verb *enistantai* can show us the way. This verb does not only mean to stand in the way as an obstacle but we can read it with an allusion to a standard Stoic term for “present” (*enestos*).<sup>39</sup> Beasts are not something bad that prevent our actions, but something that presents itself, happens on our way in the same manner as, for example, bad weather. In this context, “beast” doesn’t refer to a higher or lower level of reasonableness, but to the fact that others are material entities, bodies that happen to be in the world. Compared to a beast, another human being is perceived on the level where body encounters body, from the point of view of a part.

While the relation of a part to the whole is qualified as non-other, the relation of the parts of the chain of actions and passions is that of other (*heteron*).<sup>40</sup> From the point of view of a part, there is a division between them. A hand when it meets the other one to clap is other (*heteron*) to it, even though they belong to the same body to which they are non-other (*ouch heteron*).<sup>41</sup>

By contrast to the perspective of the whole, at the level of parts, the human being doesn’t look at the reasonably governed whole of the universe but becomes an entity that accepts what is coming by the virtue of reservation and adaptation. Reservation (*hupexairesis*) is a standard Stoic term for the conditioning of action,<sup>42</sup> which permits us to act according to the limits of what is in our power, and therefore to reinstate our freedom and assume our responsibility. Mostly, the results of our actions are something that does not depend on us, thus it would be wrong to let oneself be upset by the frustration of such action. The power of adaptation (*peritrope*) works as a supplement to the reservation: not only an unexpected result happened and I am not upset, but it may actually bring me some profit. Under such circumstances, it would be more Stoic to speak of unexpected results of our actions, rather than of expected results that did not happen. The power of

<sup>37</sup> The comparison of a human being to a wild beast appears in other chapters where it allows a more expectable interpretation, see III, 16; IV, 16; V, 11; VI, 16. In these chapters, the notion of beastliness denotes either a complete lack of reason or its utter distortion, therefore, for a beast, the way to virtue is closed. See Seneca’s exclusion of unreasonable beings from the possibility of attaining good in LS 60 H. For vice as a distortion of the reasonable part see LS 61 B and O.

<sup>38</sup> Compare LS 60 D on the difference in quantity and in quality.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. LS 51 G.

<sup>40</sup> See V, 13 for the juxtaposition of every part of me (*πᾶν μέρος ἐμὸν*) and another part of the cosmos (*ἐτερόν μέρος τι τοῦ κόσμου*).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. LS 28 D, LS 60 G and Barnes (1988).

<sup>42</sup> The term belongs to the area of psychology of the action, cf. LS 65 W, as to details and exact working of reservation opinions differ, see Inwood (1985: 119–126) and Brennan (2000: 149–177).

adaptation helps us to avoid frustration of the expected and to profit instead from the gain of the unexpected.<sup>43</sup>

In this context, the notion of impediment appears frequently in *Meditations*. An impediment doesn't seem to be an object of action, since it presents itself as something other than action or its result. It becomes material (*hule*)<sup>44</sup> to the fabrication of an instrument that can be used.

That as this Nature moulds to its purpose whatever interference or opposition it meets, and gives it a peace in the destined order of things, and makes it a part of itself, so also can the rational creature convert every hindrance into material for itself and utilize it for its own purposes.<sup>45</sup>

As Bénatouïl notices,<sup>46</sup> the capacity to use to our profit whatever happens is specific of human beings. Actions of others that may appear as impediments are events to us just as any other event and others thus become material that we use. In this perspective, they are not direct objects of actions and passions, but instruments, not another (human being), but (something) other.

### Others in theory and in praxis

As the text of *Meditations* is not a systematic treatise, the Stoic concepts are not exposed in a systematic way to withstand the attacks of possible adversaries, but they are presented with all their problematic points. With regards to the Stoic axiology, others are not explicitly categorized but treated in particular circumstances as matters of indifference. A finer division of preferred and absolute indifferents is lacking altogether. According to the level of systematicity assigned to the text, it is possible to interpret it in such different ways as Ramelli and Ackeren<sup>47</sup> do.

In general assertions or exhortations, Marcus Aurelius assumes the point of view of the whole where the question of value is not posed, because from this point of view even the bad is necessary, *philoī*, *phauloi*, *spoudaioi* and *kakoi* are all equally and necessarily parts of the world. Among more concrete cases, it is the situation where others act as a hindrance or an obstacle or the situation where we are moved by what happens to

<sup>43</sup> The notion of gain (*kerdos*) or crop (*karpοs*) appears in *Meditations* also with accepting the events (IV, 26), which may be turned into profit, and also with the faculties of reason which is only capable of harvesting its fruits itself, whereas other beings, plants and animals, are used to be turned into profit by reasonable beings (XI, 1).

<sup>44</sup> The Stoic term *hule* standardly refers to the passive principle of the universe that is formed by Reason, cf. LS 44 B.

<sup>45</sup> VIII, 35: ὃν τρόπον γάρ ἔκεινη πᾶν τὸ ἐνιστάμενον καὶ ἀντιβαῖνον ἐπιπεριτρέπει καὶ κατατάσσει εἰς τὴν εἵμαρμένην καὶ μέρος ἔαυτῆς ποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον δύναται πᾶν κώλυμα ὅλην ἔαυτοῦ ποιεῖν καὶ χρήσθαι αὐτῷ ἐφ' οἷον ἄν καὶ ὥρμησεν. Transl. Haines.

<sup>46</sup> Bénatouïl (2009: 66–67).

<sup>47</sup> Ramelli stands in all her works as a proponent of the thesis that later Stoics, including Marcus Aurelius, could understand others as something more than indifferent, while Ackeren (2011: 532) sees in *Meditations* the influence of Aristo of Chius whose opinion differed from that of Zeno in that he assumed that there isn't anything of value except for virtue. As an Aristonian, Marcus Aurelius couldn't recognize the value of preferables.

others that is treated by Marcus Aurelius. Both *philoī* and *phauloi* thus come into consideration because our relationship to them can lead us to the formation of a wrong opinion and thus to passions (being angry with stupid people, feeling fear for children). What becomes the subject of philosophical exercise is not a reflection upon an inherent value of others, whether they are certain goods or indifferents (preferred or not), but rather the way how to achieve the attitude of indifference in a situation that threatens one's life according to nature.

I is not excluded from the group of others, it is, on the one hand, an object of natural liking, but on the other hand, when the time comes to do a proper action, it becomes a matter of indifference. To become so, it is necessary to see one's self from the perspective of the whole, as a part. In a particular situation, e.g. when it is reasonable to make a sacrifice for the country, it is necessary to adopt the attitude of indifference even towards one's self, so that *they* and *I* become equally matters of indifference.

In chapter V, 20, Marcus Aurelius develops two ways of looking at others and shows that there are two sides to the human being, the one we are looking at from the point of view of the whole and the one we are looking at from the point of view of a part. Another human being who is from the point of view of the whole my closest kin, is at the same time to be seen from the point of view of a part as other, pure presence of matter in its becoming a body.

The two sides are inseparable for they belong to one thing. In theory, it is possible and even necessary to differentiate, as does Marcus Aurelius, because the differentiation allows for seeing the reason of things and distinguishing the whole and its parts. However, in praxis we just happen to act. We are already situated in the world as a part to a whole and the two points of view are always mixed together. Chapter V, 20 is thus the place for theory where elements of the mixture can be and are in effect separated in the two perspectives. This is also how we can understand the introduction of the argument as "another argument" (*heteros logos*) – the argument that plays out in theory where there are two perspectives, while in praxis there is just one attitude of an ethical agent.

---

## REFERENCES

- Ackeren, M. van, 2011. *Die Philosophie Marc-Aurels*, I-II. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Annas, J., 1993. *The Morality of Happiness*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barnes, J., 1988. 'Bits and Pieces'. In: J. Barnes, M. Mignucci (eds.), *Matter and Metaphysics*. Naples: Bibliopolis, 225–294.
- Bénatouïl, T., 2009. *Les Stoïciens III: Musonius, Epictète, Marc-Aurèle*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Bénatouïl, T., 2006. *Faire usage: la pratique du stoïcisme*. Paris: Vrin.
- Brennan, T., 2000. 'Reservation in Stoic Ethics'. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 83, 149–177.
- Engberg-Pedersen, T., 1990. *The Stoic theory of oikeiosis: Moral development and interaction in early Stoic philosophy*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Farquharson, A. S. L. (ed.), 1968. *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Giavatto, A., 2008. *Interlocutore di se stesso: la dialettica di Marco Aurelio*. Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Olms.

- Gill, Ch., 2013. *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, Books 1–6*. Transl. with an introd. and commentary by Ch. Gill. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hadot, P., 1997. *La citadelle intérieure: introduction aux Pensées de Marc Aurèle*. Paris: Fayard.
- Hadot, P., 2002. *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée. Paris: Michel.
- Haines, C. R. (transl.), 1930. *Marcus Aurelius, Meditations*. London/Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Inwood, B., 1985. *Ethics and action in early Stoicism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lewis, E., 1995. ‘The Stoics on Identity and Individuation’. *Phronesis* 40, 89–108.
- LS = Long, A., Sedley, D. (eds.), 1997–2000. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, I–II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pembroke, S. G., 1971. ‘Oikeiosis’. In: A. A. Long (ed.), *Problems in Stoicism*. London: Athlone Press, 114–149.
- Pià-Comella, J., 2011. *Philosophie et religion dans le stoïcisme impérial romain*. Dissertation. Université Paris-IV Sorbonne.
- Ramelli, I. (ed.), 2009. *Hierocles the Stoic, Elements of ethics, fragments, and excerpts*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Reydam-Schils, G., 2012. ‘Social Ethics and Politics’. In: M. van Ackeren (ed.), *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 437–452.
- Reydam-Schils, G., 2005. *The Roman Stoics: Self, responsibility and affection*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Rutherford, R. B., 1989. *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius: A Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (reprint 2002).
- Salles, R., 2012. ‘Oikeiosis in Epictetus’. In: A. Vigo (ed.), *Oikeiosis and the Natural Basis of Morality*. Hildesheim/Zürich/New York: Olms, 95–121.
- Sedley, D., 1982. ‘The Stoic Criterion of Identity’. *Phronesis* 27, 255–275.

### **DRUZÍ JAKO PŘEDMĚT INDIFERENCE V HOVORECH K SOBĚ MARKA AURELIA**

Shrnutí

V *Hovorech k sobě* jsou druzí pojímáni dvěma způsoby, jednak jako blízké bytosti, jednak jako předmět indiference. Článek interpretuje tyto dva způsoby na příkladu kapitoly V, 20 jako pohledy ze dvou různých perspektiv, perspektiv celku a perspektiv části. Perspektiva celku umožňuje uvidět propojenosť jednotlivců na základě rozumu. Zároveň je spjata s obrazem pohledu zvýšky, který vede k chápání sebe samého jako kohokoli jiného. Perspektiva části naopak napomáhá zaujmout postoj indiference, který umožňuje vhodné jednání.

*Edita Wolf*

*Charles University in Prague, CEFRES (USR3138CNRS-MAEDI)*

*wolf.edita@gmail.com*



## DIE CHORFÜHRUNG IM MITTELALTERLICHEN *CHRISTUS PATIENS*

WALTER PUCHNER

### ABSTRACT

#### **Directing the chorus in medieval *Christus patiens***

The Byzantine poem on the passion of Christ is neither a tragedy nor a drama but a *cento* – compilation of quotations from the Bible and the texts of ancient tragedies. There are three main arguments for dating the poem in the middle ages and not in the first centuries: the misunderstandings of ancient dramatic techniques as *angelike rhesis* and *teichoskopia*, not understanding the scenic consequences of the dramatic techniques implemented, the dependence of the central passion scenes from iconographic programmes elaborated just after the iconoclastic struggles, and the curses of Mary against Judas which correspond better with the anthropocentric mariology of the middle ages than the highly spiritual estimation of the traitor in patristic times as a mysterious instrument of salvation. In structural terms the poem is a *planctus Mariae*, the Holy Mother is accompanied by a chorus of women which functions as a sort of *alter ego*, but not as a real partner of communication. In other cases, the chorus is used mainly for technical purposes of stage business as announcing entrances and exits, defining presence and absence of stage characters, etc. This does not really correspond to the essentially reflective and poetical function of chorus in ancient tragedy. In this way the casual use of chorus in *Christus patiens* points to a late dating, too, when theatre cannot be traced any more in the Byzantine Empire, but ancient tragedies were studied, commented, and copied.

**Keywords:** *Christus patiens*; chorus of women; *planctus Mariae*; *cento*; stage business

---

Das byzantinische Passionspoem *Xριστὸς πάσχων* ist mit über 2600 Versen der umfangreichste erhaltene dialogische *cento*, der in einem Drittel seines Umfangs Stellen von antiken Tragödien (Euripides, Aischylos) aneinanderreihrt, zusammen mit Passionsszenen aus der Bibel und apokryphen Quellen, und mit diesem Sprachmaterial die Passionserzählung vom Judasverrat bis zur Erscheinung Christi vor den Aposteln (Ungläubiger Thomas) bewerkstelligt.<sup>1</sup> Einzigartig ist hingegen die Stellenkompilation

---

<sup>1</sup> Kritische Textausgabe bei Tuilier (1969). Es ist dies keineswegs der einzige byzantinische Dialogtext eines Passions-Cento: zum Zypriotischen Passionszyklus vgl. nun die kritische Ausgabe Puchner

aus altgriechischen Tragödien, die in die versifizierte Passionserzählung (*dodekasyllabos*) eingeflochten sind, die dazu geführt hat, daß man lange Zeit von der ersten „christlichen Tragödie“, entstanden in der Kirchenväterzeit, gesprochen hat, obwohl die Byzantinisten ihre Vorbehalte bezüglich der Dramenkonstitution und Aufführungsintention des Textes eigentlich nie aufgegeben haben.<sup>2</sup> Eine theaterwissenschaftliche Analyse des dialogischen *cento*-Textes kann jedoch nachweisen, daß es sich im Falle des *Christus patiens* weder um eine spielbare Tragödie noch um ein für eine Aufführung konzipiertes Passionsspiel handelt;<sup>3</sup> damit sind schwerwiegende Argumente für eine mittelalterliche Datierung – 11./12. Jahrhundert in Gelehrtenkreisen Konstantinopels statt 4./5. Jahrhundert, eventuell dem Gregor von Nazianz zugeschrieben – gewonnen.<sup>4</sup>

Die Argumentationslinie konzentriert sich dabei auf folgende Punkte: 1) das fehlende szenische Verständnis für die angewendeten dramatischen Techniken, 2) der Nahbezug zu den Passionsdarstellungen in den nachikonoklastischen Bildprogrammen der Sakkralmalerei und 3) die umfangreichen Judasverfluchungen aus dem Mund der Gottesmutter. Ad 1): unter strukturalen Gesichtspunkten geht es nicht um ein Drama, sondern um einen dialogischen *planctus Mariae* (von den 2.531 Versen [ohne Prolog, Epilog und Kolophon], werden 1.210 von Maria gesprochen, das sind 47,8 %, und zusammen mit dem Frauenchor, ihrem *alter ego*, sind es 1462 Verse, 57,76 % des gesamten *Cento-Poems*) in Form einer Stellenkompilation aus antiken und christlichen Quellen.<sup>5</sup> Der Theaterbezug beschränkt sich wesentlich auf den antiken Quellensektor und die Tragödienzitate, denn dramatische Dramenkonventionen wie *angelike rhesis* und *teichoskopia* werden verwechselt und falsch angewendet, Bühnenraum und Bühnenzeit bleiben unterdefiniert, die Bühnenan- oder -abwesenheit von Sprechpersonen ist vielfach unsicher, da Abgänge und Auftritte nicht markiert sind (auch nicht als indirekte Bühnenanmerkungen im Dialogtext), ein Botenbericht geht in eine dargestellte Szene über usw. Der Autor ist sich der szenischen Konsequenzen der angewendeten dramatischen Konventionen und Techniken nicht bewußt. Das Gedicht bietet auch keine logisch konsistente und nachvollziehbare Aktion: nach Christi Auferstehung verwickelt sich die zitierte Vollständigkeit der Bibelvarianten und apokryphen Versionen in logische Widersprüche in der Informationsvergabe, zu welchem Zeitpunkt der Herr wem erscheint, wer zu seinem Grab geht, wieviele Auferstehungsengel dort anzutreffen sind und in welcher Form die Resurrektionsbotschaft verkündet wird etc. Widersprüche tun sich auch in der Informationsvergabe der sichtbaren *on-stage* Aktion und der erzählten *off-stage* Handlung auf, die der Autor auch in wiederholten Nacherzählungen des Geschehenen (und vom Zuschauer Gesehenen) nicht bereinigen kann. Die Vollständigkeit in der Aufzählung der zu zitierenden Erscheinungsvarianten Christi, die seine körperliche Anastasis dokument-

(2006a), zu einem zweifelhaften spät- oder nachbyzantinischen Dialogfragment vgl. Tsionti-Fatsi (2000).

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. indizierend Krumbacher (1897: 746–749); Hunger (1992: 501–504 [gegenüber der älteren deutschen Version etwas erweitert]). Zur langen Kontroverse Puchner (2002). Eine ältere Überblicksdarstellung bei Trisoglio (1974). Die neuere Monographie von Vakonakis (2011) bringt zwar wiederum eine solche Übersicht, jedoch keine wesentlich neuen Argumente.

<sup>3</sup> Puchner (1992; 1995; 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Dostálová (1982) hat den Autor im Gelehrtenkreis um den Erzbischof Eustathios von Thessaloniki angesiedelt, Hörandner (1988) denkt an den höheren Schulbetrieb im Konstantinopel der Komnenenzeit (dagegen Garzya 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Für eine solche Zuordnung hat auch Alexiou (1974: 64f.; 1975) plädiert.

tieren, war eben wichtiger als einen spielbaren Passionsspieltext zu liefern, wo nur einer einzige Version der Vorzug gegeben werden kann. Eine solche Diagnose aber weist deutlich auf die mittelalterliche Epoche, wo der Begriff von Drama und Theater in Ost und West für einige Jahrhunderte verlorengegangen ist. Im 4.–5. Jahrhundert war der Theatertypus als erlebbare Realität, wie aus den feurigen Verdammungen der Schauspiele in der Schriften der Patrologie abzulesen ist, jedoch noch im gesamten Imperium gegeben.

Ad 2): die zentralen Passionsszenen wie Kreuzigung, *depositio* und Lamentation sind deutlich nach den mittelbyzantinischen Bildprogrammen der Sakralmalerei strukturiert. *Staurosis*, *Apokathelosis* und *Threnos* werden in den ikonographischen Festzyklen des *dodekaheortions* als Passionstriptychon zusammen abgebildet.<sup>6</sup> Besonders deutlich ist dieser Zusammenhang bei der Kreuzabnahme, wo Ausrufe und Anweisungen für Nikodemus und Joseph, wie der Körper des Heilands vom Kreuze abzulösen und Maria zur *pietà*-Figuration zu übergeben sei, bis ins Detail den ikonographischen Abbildungen entsprechen. Diese Bildtypen der Ikonen- und Wandmalerei sind jedoch erst nach der ikonoklastischen Epoche entstanden. Ad 3): die umfangreichen Judasverfluchungen aus dem Mund der Gottesmutter selbst umfassen 242 Verse, das ist fast ein Zehntel des gesamten Gedichts. Dies läßt sich nicht einfach dadurch erklären, daß der Kompilator der Versuchung nicht widerstehen konnte, Rache-Passagen aus *Medea*, *Hippolytus* und *Bacchae* (Judas als Pentheus) aneinanderzureihen. Dieser heute seltsam anmutende Zug mariologischer *image*-Formung bildet jedoch ein relatives Argument für eine späte Datierung: die Verfluchungsrhetorik des *proditor*, der immerhin Heilswerkzeug gewesen ist, paßt schlecht in die tiefe Spiritualität der frühchristlichen Periode, wo in theologischen Traktaten der Heilandsverrat als Mysterium hingestellt und Judas als Apostel respektiert wird.<sup>7</sup> Die Rache-Tiraden der Theotokos, wo der *threnos* in Hass und *anathema* umschlägt, passen zweifellos besser in das anthropozentrische Verständnis des Heilsgeschehens in der mittelalterlichen Theologie, wo in der Ikonographie der nachikonoklastischen Periode die menschlichen Züge der Heilspersonen dominieren.<sup>8</sup>

Demnach ist *Xριστὸς πάσχων* weder eine Tragödie noch ein Passionsspiel, vielmehr überhaupt kein Drama im herkömmlichen Sinn, sondern eine dialogische Stellenkomilation in Form eines *kέντρων*, dessen Ästhetik nicht von der Intention szenischer Verwirklichung oder angestrebter Spielbarkeit geleitet ist, sondern vom Genuss des Erkennens der zitierten Stellen, die aus gänzlich konträren Quellenbereichen stammen und in ihrer Kontrapunktik für den klassisch Gebildeten einen eigenartigen Reiz ausüben, der heute wohl kaum nachzuvollziehen ist. Die Argumentationslage verweist die Datierung eher in mittelbyzantinische Zeit als in die Hoch-Zeit frühchristlicher Patrologie.

<sup>6</sup> Cottas (1931) hat einen Einfluß des „Dramas“ auf die byzantinische Sakralmalerei postuliert, doch durfte ich seinerzeit schon den Nachweis führen, daß ein solcher Einfluß aus theologischen Gründen, die nach der Bildertheologie des Johannes von Damaskus die Ikonenmalerei an die Dogmatik bindet, eigentlich nur in die Gegenrichtung möglich ist: Puchner (1979) und gekürzt in Puchner (2006b). Zum streng geregelten Zusammenspiel der Expressionsmedien der orthodoxen Meßliturgie vgl. Puchner (1991).

<sup>7</sup> Die Abbildungen aus dieser Zeit stellen den Verräter als edlen jungen Mann dar, ganz im Gegensatz zu den Hypercharakterisierungen der hochmittelalterlichen Bilddarstellungen; zur Entwicklung der Bildtypen um Judas Puchner (1991: I, 61–82 und II, 211–247).

<sup>8</sup> Ausführlich analysiert in Puchner (1995: 103–112).

Diese Feststellung ist auch in der inkonsistenten Chorführung nachzuweisen. Wie angeführt spricht der Chor der Maria begleitenden Frauen insgesamt 252 Verse, also etwa 10 % des ganzen Poems; zusammen mit den 1210 Versen der Mutter Gottes (47,8 % des Gesamtumfangs) kommen die lamentierenden Frauen auf 57,76 % der gesamten Cento-Kompilation. In diesem Sinne weist das Dialog-Poem eine starke Tendenz zur Monologhaftigkeit (der Begriff nach J. Mukařovský) auf, so daß man versucht sein könnte, von einem pseudo-dialogischen bzw. quasi-monologischen *planctus Mariae* zu sprechen. Der begleitende Frauenchor ist überdies unzertrennlich mit Maria verbunden; beide treten fast ausschließlich konkomitant auf.<sup>9</sup> Dies ist von Anfang an evident: während Marias erster Lamentation (Vers 1–90) ist der Frauenchor anwesend und unterbricht ihre Klage mit dem Hinweis, sie solle ihre Kleidung ordnen, denn Männer ließen an ihnen vorbei in die Stadt; offenbar trauert sie nach antiker Art. Gleichzeitig kündigen die Frauen den Auftritt des ersten Boten (91–129) an. Der Botenbericht wird nicht nur von Maria, sondern auch dem Frauenchor mit ängstlichen Kommentaren unterbrochen (136–137, 140–141, 147).<sup>10</sup> Nach der *angelike rhesis* des Verratsberichts und der ersten Judasverwünschung Marias beklagt der Frauenchor zusammen mit der Mutter Gottes das üble Schicksal ihres Sohnes und führt gleichzeitig den zweiten Boten ein (358–359, 361–362, 367–368). In einer geschlossenen Gruppe folgen die Frauen in einem gewissen Sicherheitsabstand dem Kreuzesgang Christi zum Golgatha-Hügel (437–438, 440–442, 451–452). In der Folge drückt der Chor in einem etwas längeren Kommentar die Meinung aus, daß es für die Frauen besser wäre, sich zu verstecken (478–497, 500), um in Sicherheit beobachten zu können, was weiter vor sich gehe. Maria stimmt dem sofort zu, bricht jedoch in eine neuerliche Lamentation aus, die vom Frauenchor nun ausführlicher kommentiert wird (560–567, 598–604, 610, 617–620). An dieser Stelle überschreitet der Chor die Funktion eines bloßen Multiplikators des individuellen Mutterschmerzes, der in poetischer Form die persönliche Verzweiflungsattitüde der Gottesmutter variiert, und fragt Maria, was sie nun zu tun gedenke. Es kommt sogar zu Meinungsverschiedenheiten, wenn die Theotokos deklariert, ihre Hoffnungen seien nun endgültig zu einem Ende gekommen; dem widersprechend konstatiert der eine Halbchor, daß die Hoffnung niemals zu Ende komme, selbst für den Seemann inmitten eines vernichtenden Seesturms – so sähe das Unglück Marias im Moment aus (622–638); gleichzeitig wird das Auftreten des nächsten Boten angekündigt, der den Kreuzigungsbericht vortragen wird.

Nach Maßgabe der zitierten Chorpassagen aus den antiken Tragödien bilden die Frauengesangsstimmen des Begleitchors ein lyrisches Echo der Stimmungen und Worte Marias, ihrer Agonie und Furcht, von Schmerz und Verzweiflung; nur an wenigen Stellen kommt es zu einem richtigen Dialog, indem sie Fragen an sie stellen oder ihr gar widersprechen; doch selbst in diesen Fällen hat es den Anschein, als ob sie eher eine innere Stimme der Protagonistin bilden, die nach außen projiziert wird und im Chor leibliche Gestalt annimmt, als daß es um Reflexionen aus der Sicht des Zuschauers/Zuhörers ginge, die ein Dilemma aus einer eher neutralen Außensicht überdenken, indem sie die Konsequenzen

---

<sup>9</sup> In der umfangreichen Bibliographie zum *Christus patiens* gibt es jedoch nur wenig Studien, die sich speziell mit dem Frauenchor beschäftigen, z. B. Trisoglio (1979).

<sup>10</sup> Zum Kommentar der Einzelstellen und der einschlägigen Bibliographie vgl. Puchner (1992; 1995).

von Ereignissen einzuschätzen versuchen und die Lösungsmöglichkeiten gegeneinander abwägen. Darüberhinaus ist die „Bühnen“-Anwesenheit des Chores und seine exakte Raumplacierung in verschiedenen Phasen der Handlungsentwicklung durchaus unklar: z. B. in der umfangreichen Szene mit Maria unter dem Kreuz dürften die Frauen etwas abseits stehen (809–811), um die Privatheit des Gespräches zwischen Mutter und Sohn am Kruzifix nicht zu stören, denn in Vers 843–847 hören sie bloß die Todesrufe des sterbenden Heilands, nähern sich jedoch in der Folge für die lange Lamentation von Maria, welche sie in Vers 848 direkt anspricht. Die Frauen hüllen sich in respektvolles Schweigen, intervenieren jedoch in der Folge auf resolute Art in das Gespräch zwischen Maria und Johannes: die beiden Halbchöre (1019–1033, 1042–1045) drücken ihr sympathisches Mitleiden mit dem Schmerz der Gottesmutter aus, vergessen allerdings nicht, die signifikante Unterschiedlichkeit ihres Seinsstatus explizit zu formulieren: die Frauen seien Mütter von sterblichen Kindern und hätten sie auf natürliche Weise empfangen und nicht durch ein Wunder. Dieser Unterschied wird in den Versen 1063–1070 noch einmal ausdrücklich unterstrichen. An solchen Stellen ist der Begleitchor Marias nicht mehr nur ihr undifferenziertes *alter ego*, eine gleichsam kollektive Fortsetzung ihrer inneren Gestimmtheit nach außen, sondern der Chor sterblicher Mütter von sterblichen Söhnen mit einem akzentuiert verschiedenen Schicksal als dem der Gottesmutter, die ja immerhin der prophezeiten Auferstehung ihres Sohnes mit Gewißheit entgegensehen kann.

Diese Szene muß sich jedoch bereits in einem Abstand zum Kreuz abspielt haben, denn nun beobachten Maria und der Chor, wie der römische Soldat mit seinem Speer eine Wunde in der Seite des Gekreuzigten öffnet; die Beschreibung der Szene mit dem *centurio* ist Maria und dem Chor zu gleichen Teilen in den Mund gelegt (Maria 1079–1094, Chor 1095–1109). In dem nachfolgenden ausgedehnten Mittelteil des Poems, der die Kreuzabnahme (*apokathelosis*) und den Threnos der Grablegung detailreich wiedergibt (1134–1817), ist die Anwesenheit des Chors nur durch einen einzigen Vers dokumentiert (1433), in dem er seiner moralischen Genugtuung über das schreckliche aber gerechte Judasende Ausdruck verleiht. In der Folge wird die Rolle des Frauenchors wieder aktiver, vor allem auf dem Gang zum Grabmal, wo ihnen der Engel die Auferstehung verkündet; dies wird nach den verschiedenen Bibelversionen zitiert. An manchen Stellen werden hier auch die beiden Halbchöre alternativ eingesetzt (1832–1846, 1851–1854). Zu den üblichen Chorfunktionen gehört es, das Auftreten eines Boten anzukündigen (z. B. im Falle des *angelos*, der die Resurrektion berichtet 1860–1862, 1866), Informationen über Zeit und Raum zu geben (1903–1905) bzw. über die Bühnenhandlung (Auftritt, Abgänge etc. 1930–1932, 1957–1964), kollektive Gefühle auszudrücken (2002–2003) oder Entscheidungen zu fällen und zu begründen (2136–2142), *off-stage* Handlungen zu rekapitulieren (2415–2420), oder aber auch verbal festzuhalten und zu beschreiben, was Akteure oder die Frauen des Chors selbst *on-stage* tun, wie dies in der Szene der Erscheinung Christi vor den Aposteln am Gedichtende der Fall ist (2479–2503). Dies ist insofern interessant, als auch der Chor in antiken Tragödien eine derartige deskriptive Funktion der (eigenen) Bühnenaktion übernehmen kann.

Nach Maßgabe der Instabilität und Unterdefinierung der szenischen Zeit, des Bühnenraums und der intendierten Handlungen in Struktur und Funktion, indem manche dramatische Konventionen der Antike oberflächlich angewendet werden, ohne ein tie-

feres Verständnis für die szenischen Konsequenzen dieser Techniken, ist auch der Chor der die Mutter Gottes begleitenden Frauen in ähnlicher Weise inkonsistent, da er für eine Vielzahl von Funktionen eingesetzt wird. Doch ist dies nicht Ergebnis einer multifunktionellen Anwendung dieser zwischen Handlung und Zuschauer vermittelnden Institution poetischer Reflexion und emotioneller Distanzierung, indem die Direktimpulse des tragischen Identifikationsangebots an die Zuschauer durch ein mitdenkendes und mitführendes Kollektiv gefiltert und gemildert werden, sondern bloß eine Kumulation unreflektierter und zufälliger Anwendung, diktiert von den jeweiligen Möglichkeiten der zitierten Chorpassagen aus ausgewählten antiken Tragödien. Nach quantitativen Kriterien gemessen besteht die Hauptfunktion des Frauenchores darin, eine Art *alter ego* der leidenden Mutter Gottes darzustellen, indem ihre Lamentationsattitüde im Kollektiv multipliziert und poetisch variiert wird; an manchen Stellen geschieht dies auch in semidialogischer Form. Doch bildet der Chor keinen realen Partner eines existierenden Dialogs, mit einer konsistenten Meinungsbildung und einer verständlichen Argumentationsführung, die sich von den Ansichten der Protagonistin abheben würden; es geht um eine eher schwankende Entität von instabiler Identität als Handlungsfaktor und agierende „Person“, die zu unterschiedlichen Zwecken und Zielen des *stage business* in inkonsequenter Weise eingesetzt wird: Ankündigung von auftretenden Boten, Erläuterung von Raum und Zeit, Angaben zu Bühnenab- und -anwesenheit von Charakteren usw. Die Kommentare des Frauenchores bilden selten eine autonome Meinung oder einen strukturierten Gedankengang, deutlich unterscheidbar von der Protagonistin; gewöhnlich agiert der Chor als eine Prolongierung und getreue Spiegelung des dominanten Bewußtseins der Hauptperson in diesem *planctus Mariae*. Die temporäre Aufteilung auf zwei Halbchöre ist nicht in einer dramatisch konzipierten Antithese begründet, sondern bloß eine unreflektierte Übernahme einer Formkonvention der Chorhandhabung in der antiken Tragödie ohne innere dramatische Notwendigkeit.

Auf diese Weise spiegelt der eher zufällige Gebrauch des Frauenchores im *Christus patiens* deutlich die ästhetische Gattungsentität des gesamten Cento-Gedichts, das nicht als Drama konzipiert und für eine Aufführung geschrieben ist, obwohl es dramatische Konventionen der antiken Tragödie nachahmt und Passagen aus bestimmten Werken zitiert. Auch diese Diagnose, Form, Funktion und Struktur des Frauenchores betreffend, weist auf die späte Datierung in mittelalterlicher Zeit hin, als die Idee und die Institution Theater in Ost und West für einige Jahrhunderte unbekannt zu sein schien.

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- Alexiou, M., 1974. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexiou, M., 1975. „The Lament of the Virgin in Byzantine Literature and Modern Greek Folk-Song“. *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1, 111–140.
- Cottas, V., 1931. *L'influence de drame Christos Paschon sur l'art chrétien d'Orient*. Paris: Geuthner.
- Dostálová, R., 1982. „Die byzantinische Theorie des Dramas und die Tragödie Christos paschon“. *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3, 73–82.
- Garzya, A., 1989. „Ancora per la cronologia del *Christus patiens*“. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 82, 110–113.

- Hörandner, W., 1988. „Lexikalische Beobachtungen zum *Christos paschon*“. In: E. Trapp, J. Diethart, G. Fatouros, A. Steiner, W. Hörandner, *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 183–202.
- Hunger, H., 1992. *Byzantine logotechnia. E logia kosmike grammateia ton Byzantinon*, II. 2. ekd. Athen: Morfotiko idryma ethnikes trapezes.
- Krumbacher, K., 1897. *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des Oströmischen Reiches (527–1453)*. Zweite Aufl. München: C. H. Beck (reprint New York: Burt Franklin, 1970).
- Puchner, W., 1979. „Zur liturgischen Frühstufe der Höllenfahrtsszene Christi. Byzantinische Katabasis-Ikonographie und rezenter Osterbrauch“. *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 16, 1979, 98–118.
- Puchner, W., 1991. *Studien zum Kulturkontext der liturgischen Szene. Lazarus und Judas als religiöse Volksfiguren in Bild und Brauch, Lied und Legende Südosteuropas*, I–II. [= Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften 216]. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Puchner, W., 1992. „Theaterwissenschaftliche und andere Anmerkungen zum *Christus patiens*“. *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 129, 93–143.
- Puchner, W., 1995. „*Christos paschon kai archaia tragodia*“. In: W. Puchner, *Anichneontas te theatrike paradose*. Athen: Odysseas, 51–113.
- Puchner, W., 2002. „Acting in Byzantine theatre: evidence and problems“. In: P. Easterling, E. Hall (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors. Aspects of an Ancient Profession*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 304–324.
- Puchner, W., 2006a. *The Crusader Kingdom of Cyprus – A Theatre Province of Medieval Europe? Including a critical edition of the Cyprus Passion Cycle and the „Repraesentatio figurata“ of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* [= Texts and Documents of Early Modern Greek Theatre. Vol. 2]. Athen: Academy of Athens.
- Puchner, W., 2006b. „Abgestiegen zur Hölle. Der *descensus ad inferos* als Keimzeile eines inexistenten orthodoxen Auferstehungsspiels“. In: W. Puchner, *Beiträge zur Theaterwissenschaft Südosteuropas und des mediterranen Raums*. Bd. 1. Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 191–226.
- Puchner, W., 2012. „*Christus patiens* und antike Tragödie. Vom Verlust des szenischen Verständnisses im byzantinischen Mittelalter“. In: W. Puchner, *Von Herodas zu Elytis. Studien zur griechischen Literaturre tradition seit der Spätantike*. Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 41–86.
- Trisoglio, F., 1974. „Il *Christus patiens*. Rassegna delle attribuzioni“. *Rivista di studi classici* 27, 351–423.
- Trisoglio, F., 1979. „La Vergine ed il coro nel *Christus patiens*“. *Rivista di studi classici* 2, 338–373.
- Tsiouni-Fatsi, V., 2000. *Ena threskeutiko drama gia to Theio Pathos. To zetema tou threskeutikou theatrou sto Byzantio*. Athen: Nea synora.
- Tuilier, A. (ed.), 1969. Grégoire de Nazianze, *La Passion du Christ. Introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes et index* [= Sources chrétiennes 149]. Paris: Cerf.
- Vakonakis, N., 2011. *Das griechische Drama auf dem Weg nach Byzanz. Der euripideische Cento Christos Paschon* [= Classica Monacensia 42]. Tübingen: Narr.

---

#### VEDENÍ CHÓRU VE STŘEDOVĚKÉM CENTONU CHRISTUS PATIENS

Shrnutí

Byzantská báseň o Kristově ukřižování není ani tragédie, ani drama, ale *cento* – komplikace citací z Bible a z textu antických tragédií. Jsou tři hlavní důvody, proč báseň datovat do středověku a ne do prvních staletí n. l.: neporozumění antickým dramatickým technikám jako je *angeliké rhésis* a *teichoskopía*; nepochopení scénických důsledků použitých dramatických technik; odvozenost ústředních scén ukřižování od ikonografických programů, které vznikly až po obrazoboreckých sporech; Mariino proklínání Jidáše, které lépe odpovídá středověké antropocentrické mariologii než patristické spirituální úctě ke zrádci coby tajemnému nástroji spásy. Z hlediska struktury je báseň mariánským planktem, Marii doprovází sbor žen, který funguje jako její *alter ego*, nikoli jako skutečný komunikační partner. Jinde má

sbor pouze technickou funkci vzhledem ke scénickému dění, ohlašuje příchody a odchody, oznamuje přítomnost a nepřítomnost postav na scéně atd. To se odlišuje od zásadně reflexivní a poetické funkce sboru v antické tragédii. Tak se nahodilé užívání chóru v básni *Christus patiens* stává dalším argumentem pro dataci do pozdější doby, kdy už nenacházíme v byzantské říši žádné stopy po divadle, zato antické tragédie se stále čtou, komentují a opisují.

*Walter Puchner  
University of Athens  
wpochn@theatre.uoa.gr*

**PHOTIUS AND ΜΕΤΑΓΡΑΦΕΙΝ:**  
**Some notes on the linguistic aspect**  
**of Photius' testimony to the nature**  
**of Zosimus' drawing upon the *Histories***  
**by Eunapius of Sardis\***

IVAN PRCHLÍK

**ABSTRACT**

Photius' statement, if understood literally, seems to indicate Zosimus' *New History* to have been a virtual transcription of the *Histories* by Eunapius of Sardis. Some of the modern scholars mistrust his authority, yet one of them, J. A. Ochoa, tried to analyse Photius' statement in order to achieve a more nuanced interpretation that would even allow for a non-literal reading. In this paper, Photius' usage of the verb μεταγράφειν is re-examined, as well as other reviews of his *Bibliotheca* are pointed to, in which there are compared the authors who are known to have drawn upon one another, yet not exclusively. Both clearly testify that what Photius had in mind was that Zosimus had drawn solely upon Eunapius in the relevant section of the *New History*. One minor observation corroborates the hypothesis that also the opening chapters of the first book are in fact part of this section.

**Keywords:** Photius; *Bibliotheca*; Zosimus; Eunapius of Sardis; *metagraphein/metagraphē*

---

When writing his *New History*, Zosimus drew upon the *Histories* written by Eunapius of Sardis; such a statement can be made without the risk of being challenged. Yet it was not Zosimus himself who had acknowledged his debt to Eunapius, nor had his dependence been recognized by modern scholars by way of comparing the texts of these two authors, nearly completely preserved in the case of Zosimus, fragmentary in that of Eunapius. This comparison had already been made by Photius who had read both authors in full, and had communicated his opinion in his *Bibliotheca*.<sup>1</sup> His authority has universally been accepted since the 18th century,<sup>2</sup> and corroborated in various ways by modern

\* The present paper was written within the framework of the “Centre for Ancient and Mediaeval Thought” (UNCE), Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, and as part of the post-doctoral project “Vybrané problémy historie a historiografie pozdní antiky” (Selected Problems of the History and Historiography of Late Antiquity), no. FF VS2015/054, supported by the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague.

<sup>1</sup> For the quotation, see below, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> First by Reitemeier (1780: 226–230). An excellent overview of the discussion on Zosimus' sources is given by Paschoud (2000: xxxvi–lxxi) in which none is mentioned who would entirely deny Zosimus'

scholars,<sup>3</sup> even if with a slight nuance: since Zosimus covered a larger time span than Eunapius, it is clear that he could not have managed solely with Eunapius.<sup>4</sup> Even thus, however, Eunapius still remains recognized as a source for the major portion of the *New History*.<sup>5</sup> Later, however, the question emerged whether Zosimus had drawn upon any other sources also in his Eunapian section, at least in order to supplement what he had taken over from Eunapius, or whether Eunapius had been his unique source there.<sup>6</sup> The question remains controversial as yet, but Photius' place in this particular debate is rather circumstantial. More often than not, his authority on this detail is being mistrusted,<sup>7</sup> and rather a comparison between the text of the *New History* and the Eunapian fragments<sup>8</sup> or internal evidence within the *New History* itself<sup>9</sup> is sought to resolve it. But although it certainly is true that no decisive argument can be drawn from what Photius says, the benefit of the most accurate possible comprehension thereof can still hardly be doubted.

It is therefore no surprise that an attempt at carefully analysing Photius' statement has already been made. In the debate, however, it is rather being ignored, although its author claims to be going to throw new light on the problem.<sup>10</sup> In fact, his analysis sheds considerably less new light than claimed, as rightfully pointed out by its reviewer,<sup>11</sup> which is perhaps one of the reasons behind the lack of interest on the part of the scholarly world. There is, however, another, more serious flaw in this analysis: if conducted properly, it could never support the view as claimed.<sup>12</sup> Instead, the effort – certainly praiseworthy as such – to understand what precisely Photius had meant, ends in an excessive subtlety, overlooking that the meaning under question (specified below), though often not the only possible one, still is, without exemption, by far the simplest and also the most proper one. This, combined with misunderstanding the view under examination – taking it for Zosimus having fairly copied out Eunapius instead of merely having drawn exclusively upon him – leads to that, contrary to what it was intended for, the analysis supports the view that in the relevant section of the *New History*, Zosimus drew solely upon Eunapius. The argument, as admitted above, is not that decisive to conclude the debate, yet

---

debt to Eunapius. Speck's (1991: 2) conviction that it is possible "nur auf eine Identität des Inhalts [...] schließen, nicht aber, daß Photios nun sagt, Zosimos habe Eunapios als Quelle benutzt und nur umgeschrieben", results from his wholly unconvincing attempt (1991: 1–3) to reconsider Photius' testimony, not from its rejection.

<sup>3</sup> The very compatibility of what is preserved of both authors is being invariably affirmed in the scholarly literature ever since. A more detailed comparison with the same result was carried out by Ridley (1969–70: 582–592), Fitton (1976: 7–88) and Baldini (1984: 41–74).

<sup>4</sup> As also noticed already by Reitemeier (1780: 230–232), or in fact even by Valesius, whom he referred to.

<sup>5</sup> For further specification, see below, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Reitemeier (1780: 233–235) counted with the former, Martinus (1866: 20–31) tried to vindicate the latter.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Blockley (1980: 394–395); Ochoa (1990: 23–26); Cameron (2011: 653). According to Liebeschuetz (2003: 178) "Photius' observation must be generally speaking correct"; yet even so, he was convinced of Zosimus' having drawn upon an additional source (see below, p. 38 with note 34).

<sup>8</sup> As e.g. by the above (note 3) cited Ridley, Fitton, or Baldini, none of whom found evidence of any drawing upon a source other than Eunapius in the Eunapian section of the *New History*.

<sup>9</sup> See esp. Paschoud (2000: lxv–lxvii and lxi–lxxi), whose argument I consider superior to that of Liebeschuetz (2003: 206–215) or Cameron (2011: 644–654).

<sup>10</sup> See Ochoa (1990: 13–14, esp. 14).

<sup>11</sup> Paschoud (1992: 169 = 2006: 242).

<sup>12</sup> For this claim, see Ochoa (1990: 17–18 and also 27).

still it is important to recognize to which side indeed it eventually tips the scales. And in addition, some other important, as yet overlooked, details shall emerge, as the following re-examination is going to show.

Photius' words read as follows: εἴποι δ' ἂν τις οὐ γράψαι αὐτὸν ἱστορίαν, ἀλλὰ μεταγράψαι τὴν Εὐναπίου, τῷ συντόμῳ μόνον διαφέρουσαν, καὶ ὅτι οὐχ, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος, οὕτω καὶ οὗτος Στελίχωνα διασύρει· τὰ δ' ἄλλα κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν σχεδόν τι ὁ αὐτός, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν ταῖς τῶν εὐσεβῶν βασιλέων διαβολαῖς.<sup>13</sup> In his analysis, J. A. Ochoa attempted to discern the exact meaning of *ἱστορία* on the one hand and *μεταγράφειν / μεταγραφή* on the other.<sup>14</sup> The former need not be addressed here, since in my view it has no impact on the issue, whatever the exact meaning thereof is.

The latter pair of expressions are of greater significance. According to those denying the use of any other source than Eunapius in the relevant section of the *New History*, this means simply to “copy out”. Ochoa tried to nuance this meaning. In the *Bibliotheca*, nine other occurrences are offered for comparison, six of them in three pairs, each time following immediately one another. For Ochoa, the only one among them to perhaps support the meaning in question concerns a treatise by a physician living in the times of Claudius and Nero, one Pedanius Dioscorides. Photius described his later influence: καὶ ὅσοι δὲ μετ’ αὐτὸν περὶ ἀπλῶν φαρμάκων ἔδοξαν γράφειν, οἱ μὲν μετέγραψαν μόνον τὸ βιβλίον, οἱ δὲ οὐδὲ κάν τῇ μεταγραφῇ τὸ ἀκριβὲς διασῶσαι πεφροντίκασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατέτεμον τὸ ὀλόκληρον τῆς περὶ ἑκάστου διδασκαλίας, χωρὶς μὲν εἶδος καὶ φύσιν καὶ γένεσιν τῶν ἀπλῶν συναγείροντες, χωρὶς δὲ καὶ μεμερισμένως τὴν χρείαν καὶ ώφέλειαν διαγράφοντες.<sup>15</sup> In my opinion, here the meaning of “copy out”, strengthened by the adverb *μόνον*, is the obvious one. But there is more to it, since in the very same breath Photius makes clear, what else *μεταγράφειν / μεταγραφή* can be: even those who had rearranged the material of the original, still produced a *μεταγραφή* in the end.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, as far as any effect of using other sources, there is not a word here.

Similarly illustrative to me seems also another testimony, although Ochoa disputes the case. Photius had resumed the first three of the fifty διηγήματα of the Augustan mythographer Conon in greater detail than the majority of others, especially the ones immediately following after those three. When passing from the third to the fourth one, Photius admonished himself to brevity: τί μοι δεῖ μικροῦ μεταγράφειν ταῦτας, δέον πολλῷ κεφαλαιώδεστερον ἐπελθεῖν;<sup>17</sup> Here Ochoa points out the disbelief, if indeed only slightly implied, of the Belles Lettres editor of Photius, that the first three resumes corresponded to the original length of the texts,<sup>18</sup> and on that sole ground himself suggests as a likely meaning “trasladar”, yet specified on one hand with “con cierto detalle”, and on the other with the object dependent thereon, since it is only “la trama de las primeras narraciones”.

<sup>13</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* XCVIII 84b 27–32.

<sup>14</sup> Ochoa (1990: 14–17).

<sup>15</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CLXXXVIII 123b 24–31.

<sup>16</sup> I agree with Ochoa that here Photius is to be understood this way. The translation of Henry (1960: 183) “les uns n’ont fait que recopier son ouvrage, d’autres n’ont même pas eu le souci de le transcrire exactement”, however, seems to me not to exclude the possibility of a *μεταγραφή* indeed not being what the others produced, precisely because of not having been copied exactly. For the present purpose, however, this need not be decided.

<sup>17</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CLXXXVI 131b 19–20.

<sup>18</sup> Henry (1962: 229–230).

For my part, I see no sufficient reason for so a loose translation. And apparently, not even Alan Cameron, thus one of those who credit Zosimus with supplying some information from additional sources, would see any, since he quotes Brown's translation and adds a comment: "Photius's remark [...] 'why should I be virtually transcribing these tales? I ought to be much briefer,' implies that his summaries [...] are not much shorter than the original."<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, even so Ochoa's translation, while reduced to "trasladar con cierto detalle", still matches what must be thought of as the kind of work with Zosimus drawing exclusively upon Eunapius; but this is due to one important detail that remained overlooked by Ochoa. In what Photius says there is a certain qualification: μικροῦ μεταγράφειν. Yet indeed, when commenting upon Zosimus, Photius too uses even a double qualification: εἴποι δ' ἂν τις and σχεδόν τι, which is usually appealed to by those crediting Zosimus with something more sophisticated than merely copying out Eunapius.<sup>20</sup> But now it comes clear that these qualifications apply to quantity rather than quality: Zosimus according to Photius, as well as Photius himself, when resuming the first three διηγήματα of Conon, had drawn only upon their models, abbreviating them somehow, but not supplementing them from elsewhere.

In further testimony, Photius assesses mutual similarity of two lexica to the ten Attic orators, those of Diodorus and Julianus:<sup>21</sup> δοκεῖ γὰρ ὥσπερ μεταγραφὴ θατέρω τὸ σπουδασμα, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ ἴδιᾳ ἐκατέρῳ αὐτῶν συνειλέχθαι, yet he adds that he is not able to establish τις ἔξ ἄλλου μετέγραψε. At various points, Ochoa gives somewhat misguided explanation thereto. He states beforehand that the testimonies to follow will concern literary works, and so inserting information from a source into the new context naturally will be the case, and then refers for Diodorus to Volume II of the *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, where only the fragments of his Περὶ μνημάτων and Περὶ δήμων are gathered, while his lexicon is not mentioned.<sup>22</sup> Yet, since in fact two lexica are concerned in this case, the context for insertion of information from a source could thus not have been so new.

Furthermore, Ochoa insinuates the possibility of both works under comparison being independent compilations, as if perhaps allowed for by Photius: "Focio se decide por entenderlas como dos obras dependientes una de otra, aunque fuera posible considerarlas dos colecciones independientes." But Photius' words are understood differently by Henry: "deux ouvrages dont l'un dépend de l'autre et non deux collections indépen-

<sup>19</sup> Cameron (2004: 72) and see above (note 9) for reference to his view on Zosimus' sources. Neither Henry's (1962: 10) translation "qu'ai-je besoin de les recopier, ou peu s'en faut, quand je devrais en faire une revue beaucoup plus sommaire?", nor Treadgold's (1980: 23) "why should I almost transcribe these things, when I should proceed much more summarily?", supports that of Ochoa at all.

<sup>20</sup> Blockley (1980: 395); Cameron (2011: 653). Ochoa (1990: 25f.) and Speck (1991: 2, note 9) emphasized only the former one.

<sup>21</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CL 99b 9–15.

<sup>22</sup> FHG II, pp. 353–356, where Henry (1960: 112, note 3) refers to as well, while Freese (1920: 222, note 4) identified, if without giving any reason, this Diodorus with a son of Pollio, whose unspecified lexicon is reviewed by Phot. *Bibl.* CXLIX 99a 35–38. Diodorus' identity, however, does not play such a role here, unlike the literary works he authored. And it is true that Photius' actual wording εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν διεπραγματεύσατο does not exclude a possibility of the same subject elaborated in a work of a different kind. Yet, by virtue of the internal cohesion of the whole codex in question, in which even three authors are compared, such a possibility is excluded effectively.

dantes”,<sup>23</sup> and especially by Freese: “it is evident that they are not independent compilations”.<sup>24</sup> It is obvious that each two literary works always can be considered independent of one another, and that is why Photius mentioned this possibility; these two, however, did not seem to him the case anyhow.

Finally, Ochoa cautiously remarks that it cannot be specified to what degree one work was copied from the other, since Julianus we only know thanks to Photius. Nevertheless, Photius himself specifies the degree: οὐδὲν δὲ ἡττον Ιουλιανοῦ καὶ Διόδωρος εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν διεπραγματεύσατο· πλὴν Ιουλιανῷ ἡ τῶν μαρτυριῶν χρῆσις ἐπὶ πλέον παρατίθεται. Although the comparison through ἡττον seems to point rather to the standards of both lexica, its liaison with μεταγράφειν / μεταγραφή I consider a sufficient reason to understand Photius in the manner suggested for Zosimus with regard to Eunapius, save that in this case the epitomist had not abbreviated his model all that much.

Looking at another testimony, the problem Ochoa sees escapes me completely. Photius reports<sup>25</sup> that he came across two manuscripts of Oribasius’ writing dedicated to Eunapius, yet one of them, the latter, had borne a different title, and had been dedicated to one Eugenius; then he states: τὰ δ’ ἄλλα μάλα περιφανῶς μεταγραφὴ μόνη ἔστι τῆς πρὸς Εὐνάπιον πραγματείας. In my opinion, this once more clearly points to the meaning suggested for Zosimus with regard to Eunapius, with the same nuance as in the previous case.<sup>26</sup>

One of the testimonies is entirely omitted by Ochoa. Photius once more tries to establish a relationship between two opuscles, in the present case those by Lucius of Patrae and Lucian,<sup>27</sup> and says, among other: οἱ δέ γε πρῶτοι αὐτοῦ δύο λόγοι μόνον οὐ μετεγράφησαν Λουκίῳ ἐκ τοῦ Λουκιανοῦ λόγου ὃς ἐπιγέγραπται «Λοῦκις ἡ Ὀνος» ἢ ἐκ τῶν Λουκίου λόγων Λουκιανῷ. Ξοικε δὲ μᾶλλον ὁ Λουκιανὸς μεταγράφοντι, ὃσον εἰκάζειν, to which he adds that Lucian is briefer. Here again, the qualification μόνον οὐ brings their relation, as it seemed to Photius, nearer to what must be taken for his opinion on the relation between Zosimus and Eunapius as well. And again, no additional material from elsewhere is signalled in any way, indeed rather the opposite: καὶ γὰρ ὥσπερ ἀπὸ πλάτους τῶν Λουκίου λόγων ὁ Λουκιανὸς ἀπολεπτύνας καὶ περιελών ὅσα μὴ ἔδοκει αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν οἰκεῖον χρήσιμα σκοπόν, αὐταῖς τε λέξεσι καὶ συντάξεσιν εἰς ἔνα τὰ λοιπὰ συναρμόσας λόγον, «Λοῦκις ἡ Ὀνος» ἐπέγραψε τὸ ἐκεῖθεν ὑποσυληθέν.

The last testimony is irrelevant, according to Ochoa, and rightly so, since the phrase is used within the resume of the plot of the romance by Antonius Diogenes Τὰ ὑπέρ Θούλην ἄπιστα.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, Ochoa points to two meanings that are absent from the *Bibliotheca*: “traducción”,<sup>29</sup> and especially “corrección”, in the sense of “reescribir, alterar o corregir lo

<sup>23</sup> Henry (1960: 112).

<sup>24</sup> Freese (1920: 222).

<sup>25</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CCXIX 176b 5–23.

<sup>26</sup> Ochoa’s recourse to Schröder’s (1940: 804) persuasion that the writing dedicated to Eugenius had in fact a different author and was only mistakenly attributed to Oribasius, is once more somewhat misleading. Schröder himself cast no doubt at all on Photius’ statement concerning the uniformity of both texts.

<sup>27</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CXXIX 96b 17–26.

<sup>28</sup> See Phot. *Bibl.* CLXVI 111b 25–27: ταῦτα Βάλαγρον εἰσάγει τῇ γυναικὶ γράφοντα, καὶ ὅτι τὰς κυπαριττίνους δέλτους μεταγραψάμενος διαπέμψει τῇ γυναικὶ.

<sup>29</sup> For the verb used by Photius in this sense, see below, p. 39. The same occurs in Phot. *Bibl.* CXCVI 160a 38–160b 5.

que otro ha escrito”, which seems to me the one needed by those who credit Zosimus with supplying some information from additional sources, or even harmonizing the accounts of a number of sources. In the end, Ochoa’s – according to his own view thereof – nuanced conclusion sees Photius’ above quoted statement to mean as follows: “se podría decir que Zósimo no escribió una investigación histórica propia (thus not ‘obra histórica’, yet this nuance I consider irrelevant for the present case), sino que traslada la de Eunapio, siendo mucho más conciso”. Nevertheless, according to François Paschoud, one of those convinced of Zosimus having drawn solely upon Eunapius, this is in accordance with his own view,<sup>30</sup> and I agree with him. The contrary view of those advocating the use of supplementary sources on the part of Zosimus is hence not supported at all thereby, even if not outright disproved.

Photius’ usage, however, offers another possibility to learn a little more about the meaning of his above quoted statement concerning Zosimus. Occasionally, there appear pairs of writers in the *Bibliotheca* who are compared somehow one with the other. In some cases we know or can suppose that one of them had drawn upon the other, yet this time not exclusively, which is the procedure some ascribe also to Zosimus when working with Eunapius. Despite the unreliability of an argument *e silentio* eventually arrived at thereby, a closer look may be of interest.

Certainly the most notorious of these pairs is that of the ecclesiastical historians Socrates and Sozomenus, since the latter is known to have taken over considerable amount of material from the former.<sup>31</sup> Photius’ review of Sozomenus is very brief, yet a comparison with Socrates is still included: ἔστι δὲ Σωκράτους ἐν τῇ φράσει βελτίων, διαφωνεῖ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ κατά τινας ιστορίας.<sup>32</sup> One is thus tempted to infer that the relation of Zosimus to Eunapius was (or at least seemed to Photius) somehow closer than that of these two.

Less telling may seem the review of the *Panarion* by Epiphanius of Salamis, since he used a number of sources of various kind. Yet the two most important were the Σύνταγμα κατὰ αἰρέσεων by Hippolytus of Rome and the *Adversus haereses* by Ireneaeus of Lyons, the former often followed as for the layout of the work, with passages from the latter often inserted and quoted at length,<sup>33</sup> which fairly resembles what some suppose to have been the pattern pursued by Zosimus as well.<sup>34</sup> Now, precisely these two works Photius reviewed immediately before that of Epiphanius;<sup>35</sup> yet even so, when reporting the debt of Epiphanius to his predecessors, he remarks: πάντων δὲ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ κατὰ αἰρέσεων καταβεβληκότων πόνους πλατύτερος τε καὶ χρησιμώτερος, ὅτι ἄπερ τε ἐκείνοις ἐρρήθη τὸ χρήσιμον ἔχοντα, οὗτος οὐ καταλέλοιπε, καὶ εἴ τι προσεξευρεῖν ἡδυνήθη, προσέθηκε.<sup>36</sup> Here then, unlike in the case of Zosimus, the additions are even fairly pointed to.

<sup>30</sup> Paschoud (1992: 169 = 2006: 242).

<sup>31</sup> For the sources used by Sozomenus, see Bidez, Hansen (1960: xliv–lxiv), for his use of Socrates, see further Rohrbacher (2002: 122–125), according to whom “there is no precedent in ancient literature for two works written at nearly the same time which share so much detail”.

<sup>32</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* XXX 6a 41–42.

<sup>33</sup> See Williams (2009: xxv–xxvii).

<sup>34</sup> Liebeschuetz (2003: 206–215) whose view is favoured by Hartmann (2014: 60–62). Yet see Paschoud (2005: 370–371 = 2006: 444–447) for its effective refutation.

<sup>35</sup> Ireneaeus: Phot. *Bibl.* CXX 93b 32–94a 22; Hippolytus: Phot. *Bibl.* CXXI 94a 24–43; Epiphanius: Phot. *Bibl.* CXII 94b 2–14.

<sup>36</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CXXII 94b 5–9.

Yet another review, however, may raise some suspicion as to the reliability of Photius' judgement. When it comes to the work of the Eusebian continuator, Gelasius of Caesarea, Photius conveys it to be a translation of the Latin continuation by Rufinus of Aquileia. The actual relation between these two was a matter of dispute that lasted for nearly whole of the 20th century, the result being as follows:<sup>37</sup> thanks to Jerome we know that Gelasius had died prior to 400,<sup>38</sup> thus also prior to the emergence of the *Ecclesiastical History* by Rufinus in 402.<sup>39</sup> Both works must have seemed somehow similar, which, however, may point rather to the contrary: that it was Rufinus who had translated Gelasius' original. Earlier scholarship was inclined thereto, yet the recently established *communis opinio* holds Rufinus' work to have been his original endeavour. Among the reasons for this, one is of importance in this discussion as well:<sup>40</sup> according to Schamp, fragments considered by him to be those of Gelasius' work, suggest the death of Arius as its *terminus ad quem*.<sup>41</sup> If true – and some dispute Schamps' view on the authorship of the fragments<sup>42</sup> – both works could eventually have little in common, yet it would not indeed be Photius' own judgement to be eventually disqualified, but the judgement of an unknown source of his information: ήμεῖς δὲ εὑρομεν, ἀνεγνωκότες ἐν ἄλλοις, ὅτι αὐτός τε Κύριλλος καὶ Γελάσιος οὗτος τὴν Ἐρυθραίου τοῦ Ρωμαίου μετέφρασαν ιστορίαν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν, οὐ μέντοι ιδίαν συνετάξαντο ιστορίαν.<sup>43</sup>

Of importance is also a piece of our knowledge of Photius' occasional manner of dealing with works closely resembling one another. From time to time, he probably did not read the latter to the end, as in the case of Arrian's *Tὰ μετὰ Ἀλέξανδρον*, resumed completely,<sup>44</sup> and the work with the same title by Dexippus, whose review ends abruptly with the remark: καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διέξεισν ἐν πολλοῖς, ως κἀν τούτοις, Ἀρριανῷ κατὰ τὸ πλεῖστον σύμφωνα γράφων.<sup>45</sup> At first glance it may seem that Photius stopped reading here because of such close a resemblance of both works, and thus the work of Zosimus must have contained some added value compared to its source, Eunapius. Nevertheless, a closer scrutiny reveals that the problem is more complex. First of all, Photius certainly did stop resuming Dexippus, but probably at least checked the rest of the text to make sure that it really had come from Arrian.<sup>46</sup> Further, it simply cannot be excluded that Photius, for whatever unknown reason, had read Zosimus to the end despite the absence

<sup>37</sup> As conveniently summarized by Rohrbacher (2002: 100–101).

<sup>38</sup> In Hier. *Epist.* 92 init. from 400 his successor on the Caesarean see Eulogius occurs among the addressees. For reference to more detailed discussion, see Henry (1960: 15, note 1).

<sup>39</sup> For this date, see Rohrbacher (2002: 98).

<sup>40</sup> For the others that, in my opinion, unlike this one, are decisive, see Rohrbacher (2002: 100).

<sup>41</sup> Schamp (1987).

<sup>42</sup> Winkelmann (2000: 410).

<sup>43</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* LXXXIX 67a 35–38. According to Treadgold (1980: 63–64) this is one of only two occurrences of reference to a source of information directly read by Photius that eventually need not have been reviewed in the *Bibliotheca*. The fact that Photius himself professes no reading of Rufinus escapes some scholars, e.g. Rohrbacher (2002: 100). Henry (1960: 15, note 1) is aware of it, yet even so he allows for “une erreur au passif de Photius ou plutôt de ses sources”.

<sup>44</sup> See Phot. *Bibl.* XCII 69a 2–73a 30.

<sup>45</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* LXXXII 64b 31–32.

<sup>46</sup> Whom he must have read first, although in the *Bibliotheca* the review comes later, as rightly emphasized by Henry (1959: 202, note to p. 190, l. 13). Eight other similar cases with yet unspecified others are referred to by Treadgold (1980: 25 with note 23). Cameron's (2011: 653 with note 132) inference that Eunapius and Zosimus were not read by Photius one after the other, since the reviews do not follow so in the *Bibliotheca*, is thus simply invalid.

of any added value. And last but not least, there is no certainty that Photius had read Zosimus to the end.

Within the review of Zosimus, his text is not resumed, except for the opening and closing events being enumerated,<sup>47</sup> which could have been learnt by simply checking the first and the last pages of the manuscript. Yet some indicia even exist that Photius may not have read the Olympiodoran section of the *New History*.<sup>48</sup> Olympiodorus may not have been mentioned by Photius as Zosimus' source for precisely this reason and if so, Eunapius, as the only one mentioned, becomes all the more likely a source also for the initial section of Zosimus' first book, as for various reasons persuasively suggested by Baldini, and further corroborated by others.<sup>49</sup> Against such a notion it could be objected indeed that this is ruled out by Photius' observation on Zosimus' treatment of Stilico, being not as harsh as with Eunapius. Usually this is considered an effect of the Olympiodoran section of the *New History*, in which Stilico is even praised. But Photius does not seem to have been aware of directly praising Stilico. His assessment can be due only to the eventual elimination on the part of Zosimus himself, of the harshest attacks within the Eunapian section of the *New History*.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, two other reviews may contribute a little more to this discussion. That of Ἐκλογαὶ διάφοροι by Sopater of Apamea,<sup>51</sup> the Neoplatonic philosopher put to death by Constantine, consists primarily of an enumeration of sources used in each of the individual books, which is certainly due to the compilatory nature of the work itself. Although comparison with Zosimus may thus be a bit misleading, one aspect still seems to me worth mentioning. For some of these books, namely I, VI, and VIII, Photius, if only implicitly, distinguishes between the main source and the eventual additional ones.

The review of the polemic by John Philoponus concerning the Holy Trinity<sup>52</sup> is to be mentioned as well. As a heretic, John is sharply criticised by Photius, among other for cribbing from the orthodox, although it is only in these passages that John's text reaches certain level of quality, even if deviations do occur as well. Some of the orthodox authorities are enumerated then, along with the opinion being emphasized that they in no manner contribute to the heretical approach of John. Here again the comparison with Zosimus must be taken as merely showing what may have occurred also in the review of the *New History*, but by no means as what must have occurred. Obviously, the Trinity can be supposed to have attracted greater interest on the part of Photius than the attacks on Christianity by pagan writers, similarly to orthodox authorities as used by John being preferred to any additional sources eventually used by Zosimus. Nevertheless, once more it is to be pointed out that a procedure similar to that used by John is sometimes suggest-

<sup>47</sup> For those closing, see Phot. *Bibl.* XCVIII 84b 14–26, where in fact Zos. VI 6–13 is summarized.

<sup>48</sup> Zos. V 26–VI 13; for pinpointing the starting point of the section, see Paschoud (2000: lxv–lxvi).

<sup>49</sup> Zos. I 1–46; Baldini (1984: 208–230); Paschoud (1985: 244–247 = 2006: 157–158); Bleckmann (1992: 404–406; 420); Festy (1997: 469–470).

<sup>50</sup> For Photius' statement, see above, p. 35, Stilico is praised by Zos. V 34, 5–7. Obviously, this would imply that Photius had in fact read a great portion of the *New History* and had left not so much more unread than just the Olympiodoran section. This may seem and indeed is little likely, yet certainly it is possible; thus unless proven not to have been the case, it cannot be excluded.

<sup>51</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* CLXI 103a 18–105a 14.

<sup>52</sup> Phot. *Bibl.* LXXV 52a 25–52b 16.

ed for Zosimus as well, and that in the case of Zosimus, unlike in that of John, pursuing of such a procedure is not signalled in any way by Photius.

So, the modest aim of this paper I consider fulfilled. All herein examined internal evidence in his *Bibliotheca* clearly testifies that what Photius had in mind was that Zosimus had drawn exclusively upon Eunapius in the relevant section of the *New History*. The double qualification Photius used was not meant to concede Zosimus' having drawn upon any other sources, but his not having copied out Eunapius at length the way others had with their models, but rather having abbreviated Eunapius' text somehow. One minor argument can be added to those indicating that this relevant section had included also the opening chapters of Zosimus' first book. What must be emphasized, however, is that thus only Photius' opinion is made clear. Nevertheless, that his opinion also matches reality is plain from the internal evidence in the *New History* itself, as referred to above.

---

## REFERENCES

- Baldini, A., 1984. *Ricerche sulla storia di Eunapio di Sardi. Problemi di storiografia tardopagana*. Bologna: CLUEB.
- Bidez, J., Hansen, G. Ch., 1960. *Sozomenus, Kirchengeschichte*. Ed. Joseph Bidez, Günter Christian Hansen. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Bleckmann, B., 1992. *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung. Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras*. Munich: tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Blockley, R. C., 1980. "Was the First Book of Zosimus" New History Based on More Than Two Sources?". *Byzantium* 50, 393–402.
- Cameron, A., 2004. *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*. Oxford: University Press.
- Cameron, A., 2011. *The Last Pagans of Rome*. Oxford: University Press.
- Festy, M., 1997. 'Le début et la fin des Annales de Nicomaque Flavien'. *Historia* 46, 465–478.
- FHG II = *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*. Collegit, disposuit, notis et prolegomenis illustravit, indicibus instruxit Carolus Müller. *Volumen secundum*. Paris: Didot, 1848.
- Fitton, J. D., 1976. *Eunapius and the Idea of the Decline of the Roman Empire in Zosimus*. A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy. McMaster University <<https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/15911>>.
- Freese, J. H., 1920. *The Library of Photius. Volume I*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge / New York: Macmillan.
- Hartmann, U., 2014. "... und die Pronoia hat die Menschheit noch nicht verlassen". Die Konstruktion der Geistesgeschichte als pagane Gegenwelt in Eunaps Philosophenviten'. In: B. Bleckmann, T. Stickler (eds.), *Griechische Profanhistoriker des fünften nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts [= Historia. Einzelschriften 228]*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 51–84.
- Henry, R., 1959. *Photius, Bibliothèque. Tome I (Codices 1–84)*. Ed. and trans. René Henry. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Henry, R., 1960. *Photius, Bibliothèque. Tome II (Codices 84–185)*. Ed. and trans. René Henry. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Henry, R., 1962. *Photius, Bibliothèque. Tome III (Codices 186–222)*. Ed. and trans. René Henry. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Liebeschuetz, W., 2003. 'Pagan Historiography and the Decline of the Empire'. In: G. Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity. Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* Leiden/Boston: Brill, 177–218.
- Martinus, R. C., 1866. *De fontibus Zosimi. Dissertatio inauguralis*. Berlin: Schade.
- Ochoa, J. A., 1990. *La transmisión de la Historia de Eunapio*. Madrid: ACHH.

- Paschoud, F., 1985. 'Eunapiana'. In: J. Straub (ed.), *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium 1982/83*. Bonn: Habelt, 239–303.
- Paschoud, F., 1992. Rev. 'J. A. Ochoa, La transmisión de la Historia de Eunapio'. *Orpheus* 13, 168–172.
- Paschoud, F., 2000. Zosime, *Histoire nouvelle. Tome I. Livres I-II*. Ed. and trans. François Paschoud. New ed. Paris: Belles Lettres.
- Paschoud, F., 2005. 'Questions d' historiographie tardive: à propos de deux ouvrages récents'. *Antiquité tardive* 13, 363–376.
- Paschoud, F., 2006. *Eunape, Olympiodore, Zosime. Scripta minora. Recueil d'articles, avec addenda, corrigenda, mise à jour et indices*. Bari: Edipuglia.
- Reitemeier, I. F., 1780. 'De Zosimi fide'. In: I. C. Volborth (ed.), *Bibliotheca philologica II*. Leipzig: Weygand, 225–235.
- Ridley, R. T., 1969–70. 'Eunapius and Zosimus'. *Helikon* 9–10, 574–592.
- Rohrbacher, D., 2002. *The Historians of Late Antiquity*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Schamp, J., 1987. 'Gélase ou Rufin: Un fait nouveau. Sur des fragments oubliés de Gélase de Césarée (CPG, N° 3521)'. *Byzantion* 57, 360–390.
- Schröder, H. O., 1940. 'Oreibasios'. In: G. Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Supplementband VII*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 797–812.
- Speck, P., 1991. 'Wie dumm darf Zosimos sein? Vorschläge zu seiner Neubewertung'. *Byzantinoslavica* 52, 1–14.
- Treadgold, W. T., 1980. *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies.
- Williams, F., 2009. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book I (Sects 1–46)*. Second edition, revised and expanded. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Winkelmann, F., 2000. 'Zur nacheusebianischen christlichen Historiographie des 4. Jahrhunderts'. In: C. Scholz, G. Makris (eds.), *POLYPLEUROS NOUS. Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. Geburtstag [= Byzantinisches Archiv. Band 19]*. Munich/Leipzig: Saur, 404–414.

---

**FÓTIOS A ΜΕΤΑΓΡΑΦΕΙΝ  
NĚKOLIK POZNÁMEK K LINGVISTICKÉMU ASPEKTU  
FÓTIOVA SVĚDECTVÍ O POVAZE ZÓSIMOVA ČERPÁNÍ  
Z DĚJEPISNÉHO DÍLA EUNAPIA ZE SARD**

Shrnutí

Podle Fótia, je-li chápán doslovňě, bylo dějepisné dílo Zósimovo témař opsáno z Eunapiova. Některí moderní badatelé Fótiovi nevěří, jeden z nich, J. A. Ochoa, se však pokusil Fótiovu formulaci rozebrat a dospět k takové interpretaci, která by dokonce umožňovala chápát ji volněji. V tomto článku je znova rozebráno Fótiovo užití slovesa μεταγράφειν a dále poukázáno na ty části *Bibliothéky*, v nichž jsou srovnávány dva autoři známí tím, že jeden čerpal z druhého, ale nikoli výhradně. Obojí jasně dokazuje, že Fótiovým názorem skutečně bylo, že v příslušné pasáži svého díla čerpal Zósimos výhradně z Eunapia. Jedním postřehem menšího významu lze podpořit i domněnkou, že součástí této pasáže byla také první část první knihy.

Ivan Prchlík  
Charles University in Prague  
*Ivan.Prchlík@ff.cuni.cz*

**TALION SOCIAL ET PLAIDOYER LITTÉRAIRE  
DANS LA MÈRE DU CHIEN\* DE PAVLOS MATESSIS**

EUGENIA MARINAKOU

**ABSTRACT****Social revenge and literary defence in Pavlos Matesis'  
*Mother of the Dog***

The public castigation of women upon the end of the Axis Occupation of Greece on account of their sexual relationships with soldiers of the occupying army has been a phenomenon that occurred in most of the European countries. This paper, based on Pavlos Matesis' novel Η μητέρα του σκύλου, examines the literary representation of this practice of chastisement through two interrelated approaches: the symbolism of this form of punishment and the discourses of the women subjected to it, thus allowing for the main issue of the study to be established, according to which literature, by focusing on female experience, questions the violence of History which is dictated by the national values and the moral ideals of that period.

**Keywords:** Pavlos Matesis; public punishment of women; sexual collaboration; occupation of Greece

---

L'action des femmes dans la Résistance contre les occupants au cours de la seconde guerre mondiale, leur combat aux côtés des hommes pour la libération de la patrie et l'indépendance nationale marque la dynamique différente qu'acquiert leur sexe, grâce à leur implication dans l'espace public et à leur participation aux affaires communes (Vervénioti, 1994 ; Varon-Vassar 2009). Trouvant la consécration dans le discours historique officiel, ces femmes sont parallèlement glorifiées par la littérature, la poésie et la prose qui exalte leur ardeur combattive et leur patriotisme (Axioti 1945 ; Axioti 1946 ; Boumi-Pappa 1946 : 16, 19 ; Votsi 1946 ; Terzakis 1947 ; Kazantzaki 1952). À l'opposé, les femmes qui ont collaboré avec l'ennemi, particulièrement celles qui ont eu des relations sexuelles avec les conquérants au cours de l'Occupation italo-allemande, sont frappées d'opprobre (EAM KE 29/08/1943 : 14–30), car elles ont terni le modèle de l'héroïne « qui ne baisse pas la tête mais résiste avec honneur et dignité aux conquérants au prix de sa

---

\* Le titre de la traduction française de ce roman, effectuée par Jacques Bouchard (Gallimard 1993), est *L'Enfant de chienne*. Les passages cités sont empruntés à cette traduction, sauf mention contraire.

vie même » (Vénézis 1943 : 339–344 ; Granissioti 1945 : 401). Mais plus tard aussi, au moment de l’après-guerre, la prose se meut dans le même climat idéologique et qualifie, nonobstant quelques oppositions (Théotokas 1964 : 389–397), l’acte de la collaboration sexuelle d’infâme et son châtiment de nécessaire et exemplaire (Avérouf 1984 ; Mihaïlidis 1999). De son côté, la recherche historique va l’ignorer en tant qu’objet d’étude jusqu’à la fin des années quatre-vingts, période idéologiquement et politiquement encore lourde des événements du passé.

La collaboration sexuelle (Vervenioti 1994 : 148–152 ; Virgili 2000 ; Brossat 1992 ; Capdevila, Virgili 1999 ; Leclerc, Weindling 1995 : 255–267) constitue un des aspects du *dosi-logismos* (« parole donnée à l’ennemi », donc collaboration, trahison), phénomène aux facettes variées – économique, politique, militaire – observé dans la plus grande partie de l’Europe. Dès l’Occupation, mais particulièrement à la Libération, en Grèce, en France, en Belgique, en Hollande, au Danemark, l’attitude de la société face aux femmes qui « sont allées avec l’ennemi » a été majoritairement celle du rejet, et elle s’est exprimée par une forme précise de punition, le châtiment public. Ce dernier constitue une pratique punitive collective remontant à la nuit des temps, que l’on rencontre dans le monde gréco-romain, médiéval et post-médiéval, et qui recouvre une large palette de délits de droit commun, d’outrage aux moeurs, de crimes politiques, de conflits religieux, de rivalités et d’hérésies. Elle est institutionnalisée en tant que rite très ancien en 1306, dans les *Novelles* 26 d’Andronic Paléologue (Arménopoulos 1971 ; Koukoulès 1949 ; Simopoulos 2010), et tient de la justice arbitraire : « En tant que système exceptionnel de protection légale des valeurs de la société, il est le produit d’un écart, d’un processus qui se différencie du système de justice courant, afin de stigmatiser sur les individus fautes, erreurs, violations de la loi » (Laiou 1993). Inaltéré dans ses moyens et sa forme, mais différent quant à la place qu’il occupe dans chaque système de répression, dans la mesure où il est parfois appliqué avant le châtiment final et parfois seul, il sera compris dans les événements de la Libération et ses techniques seront remises à l’honneur afin de « clore » la question « ouverte » des « coupables ».

Ce châtiment, qui comprend deux actions – d’abord la tonte obligée puis l’exhibition en cortège – et vise à l’humiliation publique, est rapporté par les rares documents de l’époque<sup>1</sup>, surtout étayé de l’argument de la nature « évidente » de la transgression des valeurs nationales et morales. Cet argument place d’emblée le châtiment dans le champ des représentations, particulièrement quand on constate que, le plus souvent, les relations avec les ennemis n’ont pas influé sur les développements historiques, et que « leur importance symbolique est inversement proportionnelle à leur influence sur les événements » (Virgili 2000 : 20). Cette importante remarque de Fabrice Virgili exclut quasiment les retombées de la collaboration sexuelle au niveau politique. Déchargeant l’événement des signifiants idéologiques de la « trahison nationale », elle souligne surtout les grincements survenus à l’intérieur de la société, la différenciation des actions des individus des discours de l’époque qui les dictent. La compréhension de ce phénomène n’a d’ailleurs pas lieu dans le vide total. Le chemin de l’étude a été ouvert aux historiens (Asdrachas 2007 : 72–76) par la photographie, le cinéma et la littérature lorsque, usant

<sup>1</sup> Journals *Flamouro*, 20/04/1943, n° 1, Athènes ; *Hiérolochitis*, 30/04/1943, n° 3, Athènes ; *Élefthéri Hellada*, 30/06/1943, n° 22, Athènes ; *Gynaikia Drassi*, 05/07/1943, n° 19, Athènes.

de leurs moyens d'énonciation propres pour illustrer le châtiment, ils forment d'autres critères de son interprétation. Et il n'existe pas peut-être de description plus vigoureuse et efficace du châtiment que celle qui souligne son caractère « inconcevable ». C'est d'abord la parole poétique qui va le saisir sur le vif. Dans son recueil de poèmes *Au rendez-vous allemand*, 1944, où il glorifie les morts de la Résistance et exprime sa haine envers ceux qui ont collaboré avec l'ennemi, Paul Eluard, poète engagé de la Gauche, insère la pièce intitulée *Comprenez qui voudra* qui tranche par son thème, celui de la femme tondue traînée dans les rues en cortège.

Le commentaire acide placé en exergue du poème

En ce temps-là, pour ne pas châtier les coupables, on maltraitait des filles. On allait même jusqu'à les tondre,

sera suivi du regard chargé d'émotion du poète face à

la victime raisonnable/à la robe déchirée/au regard d'enfant perdue/découronnée défigurée/  
celle qui ressemble aux morts.

En Grèce, environ cinquante années plus tard, en 1990, Pavlos Matessis parlera, dans son roman *La Mère du chien*, de cette forme de collaboration et, à l'inverse de l'approche du passé, réductrice, unilatérale et dénonciatrice, il va proposer une autre attitude à son égard. En effet, dans la plus grande partie du roman, le monologue dramatique de Raraou, ancienne actrice de seconds rôles s'adressant à un psychiatre, tourne autour des relations sexuelles de sa mère avec deux Italiens pendant l'Occupation, son châtiment public par la foule au début de la Libération et leur vie ultérieure. Les techniques narratives modernistes dont use l'auteur restituent la complexité des causes et des effets de la collaboration sexuelle. L'auteur présente au départ cette dernière comme un choix imposé par la nécessité de survie. Par la suite, cependant, il laisse entendre qu'elle est l'occasion de l'éveil sexuel et social de l'héroïne. Parallèlement, il la montre associée à toute l'étendue de ses conséquences, qui sont le châtiment public et le mutisme volontaire dans lequel l'héroïne s'enferme juste après, adoptant cette forme de protestation dans une exclusion sociale qui va s'élargissant (Marinakou 2011).

L'extrême cohérence de ces trois thématiques dans leur restitution fictionnelle, le caractère sans fard de leur narration et le revirement de point de vue que présente l'intrigue font de ce roman une œuvre particulièrement significative. En effet, sa thématique montre la relation indissociable de la prose de P. Matessis avec sa production théâtrale en dépit des différences liées au genre (Puchner : 23–24). Ses motifs principaux, à savoir l'amour maternel, la sexualité, l'infirmité physique et psychique, la mendicité, le meurtre, l'humiliation, sont présents à la fois dans ses précédents récits (*Aphrodite*, 1986 ; *Matière de forêt*, 1992)<sup>2</sup> et ses œuvres dramatiques, par exemple la longue pièce *La Cérémonie*<sup>3</sup> (1966) couronnée par le Prix National du Théâtre et *La Dégradation*<sup>4</sup> (1969). Dans *La Mère du chien* cependant, le rôle de ces motifs n'est pas de mettre en

<sup>2</sup> Nous traduisons.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>4</sup> *Idem.*

relief des pathologies individuelles ou des troubles familiaux, mais de montrer un monde anthropocentrique d'une part, et de l'autre la rencontre tragique d'un microcosme avec l'Histoire et la seconde guerre mondiale. Il contribue aussi par conséquent à donner une image plus complète de l'Occupation et de la Libération en mettant en lumière un événement que l'histoire officielle avait passé sous silence ; de surcroît, rehaussant la véracité du fait, il l'expose sous un aspect jusqu'alors ignoré. Il nous fait ainsi pénétrer dans un questionnement complexe sur les discours dominants de l'époque face à cette forme de collaboration qui met à l'épreuve les idéaux nationaux et sociaux soumis à l'épreuve d'une conjoncture historique cruciale, mais aussi sur les discours des sujets qui les remettent en question lorsqu'ils tentent d'affronter d'insurmontables difficultés.

Dans cet article, nous allons étudier le châtiment public que subit l'héroïne pour avoir collaboré sexuellement avec les ennemis. Les modes d'application de la punition tels qu'ils sont présentés dans le roman sont d'excellents outils pour étudier les raisons qui lui confèrent un sens. De surcroît ces modes, dans leur fonction performative, ont essentiellement un double office : ils décrivent l'acte de la collaboration en même temps qu'ils le punissent, et ils sont « formulés » par les vecteurs du châtiment au moyen d'un code constitué de symboles visuels et sonores idéologiquement chargés. Pour les récepteurs, la langue dans laquelle ils se réfugient est principalement exprimée au moyen de messages lexicaux dont le ton est cependant celui du délire. Les deux discours ont comme point de référence le corps – récepteur et émetteur de messages – corps-intermédiaire, point de rencontre de la violence du pouvoir et de la réaction à son égard. Leur intrication fait apparaître les significations du châtiment public qui concernent les positions et oppositions de tous les participants.

La restitution de cet événement peut être considérée comme une prise de position politique face au discours historique officiel, car elle se meut sur une trajectoire parallèle à un événement historique dont des traces seules sont conservées, et elle se différencie sensiblement de ce discours dans la mesure où l'auteur présente le châtiment dans toute son ampleur : en tant que mécanisme enclenché pour rétablir les valeurs nationales et morales mises à mal, il présuppose la déconstruction totale de l'individu en tant que sujet social. En d'autres termes, il aborde le châtiment public de façon à rendre la dimension anthropologique de l'expérience historique, en se concentrant sur ce que vivent les sujets qui y prennent part.

Par conséquent, nous allons suivre le châtiment public dans les deux phases de son déroulement. Lors de la première, la narration s'attache aux organisateurs. Dans la seconde, elle expose les femmes punies, particulièrement l'héroïne et sa fille lorsqu'elles interviennent dans le processus, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'elles abandonnent un instant le rôle de sujet passif et réagissent. Le passage de la première à la seconde phase est représenté au moyen d'un revirement narratif et d'un changement de point de vue. Ce dernier permet alors à la relation du châtiment d'atteindre son terme, après avoir cependant conduit l'intrigue à travers des scènes chargées d'ironie dramatique, lorsque les deux personnages principaux, dans leur effort d'annihiler l'humiliation qu'ils subissent, ne font que l'accroître et s'effondrent sur la scène du drame : la mère et la fille sur la scène de l'événement, puis la fille des années plus tard, sur la scène de la narration. De son côté, l'auteur va ébranler la véracité intratextuelle et péritextuelle des deux personnages lorsque, usant d'une narration intercalée confiée à d'autres personnages (Tsatsoulis 1997 : 183–202),

il complète mais aussi corrige la narration de Raraou, et que, dans le titre du roman, il rétablit la vérité historique sur l'anéantissement des sujets sociaux que parachève ce type de châtiment.

C'est la narratrice principale du roman, Raraou, qui nous introduit dans les péripéties du châtiment public. Après la brève information « Ils les avaient toutes tondues », elle entame sa relation, commentant la participation de la population entière à l'événement « La plupart portaient des cornes de bouc, des tripes pleines mais ouvertes, le tout une gracieuseté des abattoirs publics... où est-ce qu'ils avaient bien pu les trouver ! », sur un ton d'amère ironie « elles étaient éclaboussées d'immondices vertes, étaient aussi éclaboussés d'honnêtes gens tout autour ». Cependant les scènes dévastatrices qu'elle transmet ensuite ne permettent pas davantage de projections de son expérience de sujet. L'élément dramatique qui régit la narration impose par définition que son plan suive ses traits génériques, qui ne sont autres que la présentation de l'action et la description des caractères – de leurs paroles et de leurs actes : cette méthode montre que le roman est défini par l'histoire autant qu'il la définit, puisqu'il présente en détail l'événement du châtiment public et met l'accent sur ses multiples sens. D'autant plus qu'il est composé d'un rituel dont la représentation, par le seul fait qu'elle monopolise la narration en occupant totalement le champ visuel de son vecteur et en ne laissant nulle place à son psychisme, peut augmenter le sentiment de réalité (Athanasopoulos 2003 : 335–352). Mais justement, puisque la méthode dramatique représente le châtiment public en demeurant attachée à l'action extérieure de ses vecteurs et aux moyens qu'ils utilisent à sa réalisation, nous pourrions à juste titre nous demander ce que représente le châtiment lui-même. Car, en observant ses fonctions de représentation, nous constatons que c'est par elles que la *mimésis* tente d'atteindre son objectif, qui est de diminuer la différence entre le propre et le figuré, d'atténuer les limites qui distinguent signifiant et signifié, de remplacer de la façon la plus convaincante possible ce à quoi elle se réfère et qui est absent depuis le début, afin d'assurer la perception des messages.

La description minutieuse de l'action est divisée en deux parties inégales: d'une part la foule qui compose le cortège punitif et qui présente largeur et densité, tandis que la tension qu'elle manifeste vient de ce qu'elle est absorbée par son objet ; au contraire, les personnages qui subissent le châtiment occupent une place élevée, car ils sont debout sur le camion, offerts au regard dévorant de la foule qui inonde l'espace. Plus précisément, Raraou va voir sa mère

dans l'avenue centrale, là où se faisait la promenade de la bonne société, dans un camion découvert. ... le camion avançait très lentement, en marquant le pas, pour que tout le monde puisse jouir de l'humiliation publique. ... Le camion avançait très lentement, le conducteur avait reçu des ordres, mais il y avait aussi beaucoup de monde, devant le véhicule, derrière, sur les côtés, et comme ça le conducteur avançait lentement avec précaution, de peur de heurter un citoyen. Et tout en riant de bon cœur. Tout le monde était très jovial, les fenêtres pleines de monde, les messieurs sont sortis des cafés et s'amusaient à regarder le camion. ... il y en avait beaucoup qui tenaient des boîtes en fer-blanc vides et qui tapaient dessus avec une pierre. Les cloches aussi sonnaient.

L'activité fiévreuse de ceux qui prennent part au châtiment public est décrite comme paroxysme, à savoir mouvement imprévisible de l'affectif, d'une façon qui n'est pas

dépourvue de cohérence car elle est soutenue par des moyens visuels et sonores dont les symbolismes relient dans les deux sens les émetteurs et les récepteurs. Les premiers moyens, « des tripes pleines mais ouvertes... boyaux... œufs pourris... cendre... guenille mouillée trempée dans de la cendre » ne sont pas des éléments « anthropisés », mais primaires. C'est en tant que matériaux organiques provenant d'animaux, que rebuts à l'aspect et à l'odeur repoussants, qu'ils sont choisis par la foule pour souiller et déformer le visage et le corps des femmes :

La plupart portaient des cornes de bouc, des tripes pleines mais ouvertes, le tout une gracieuseté des abattoirs publics, d'autres tenaient aussi des cloches ou des grelots à boucs, où est-ce qu'ils avaient bien pu les trouver ! Certains tenaient des drapeaux et les agitaient avec une ferveur patriotique. Ils tenaient les cornes à bout de bras et dansaient sur place, d'autres les pendaient comme un ex-voto sur les côtés du camion, et d'autres frappaient le camion avec des tripes ouvertes. C'est-à-dire que c'est les tondues qu'ils voulaient frapper, mais ils n'y arrivaient pas, seulement elles étaient éclaboussées d'immondices vertes, étaient aussi éclaboussés d'honnêtes gens tout autour, mais eux ne s'en offusquaient pas au milieu de l'allégresse générale de la Libération, ils ne faisaient que danser.

Leur usage est narrativement retransmis par le biais de suggestions visuelles et olfactives qui font naître la répulsion et présupposent des comportements spontanés et arbitraires, ainsi qu'un code corporel abondamment et librement exprimé :

Ma mère à présent était tout au bord, on aurait dit qu'elle voulait descendre, barbouillée de tripes, quelqu'un a grimpé et lui a passé autour du cou deux cornes attachées d'entrailles, et un grelot, alors tous applaudissaient autour.

Outre la matière première qu'ils se sont déjà procurée avant le début du châtiment, les participants utilisent des objets produisant des sons assourdissants :

cloches... grelots... applaudissements... boîtes de fer-blanc vides... qui tapaient dessus avec une pierre... Les cloches aussi sonnaient.

L'étude anthropologique des immondices et des objets sonores, dans la longue histoire de leur usage (Douglas 2006 ; Gauvard, Gokalp 1974 : 693–704 ; Bonnain-Moerdyk, Moerdyk 1977 : 381–397 ; Thompson 1972 : 285–312), les examine en relation avec la place qu'ils occupent dans le système d'organisation du monde, à savoir comment chaque société les conçoit. En tant qu'élément de mort, de putréfaction, de saleté et de violence dans leur version première, ils sont répugnantes et ne sont pas intégrés dans ce système, à savoir qu'ils ne coïncident à aucune catégorie, mais se trouvent hors des limites qui assurent sa cohésion. C'est le corps naturel qui est le lieu dans lequel sont symbolisés les principes classificateurs des éléments de souillure, et il est sévèrement déterminé dans ses usages par le corps social, soumis à ses évaluations et convié à les observer de façon exemplaire. Dans le cas contraire, lorsque par exemple il transgresse les limites imposées par des comportements divergents et des actes marginaux, il est considéré comme sale, impur et de ce fait menaçant pour le bon ordre social. Ici, la limite que l'héroïne et les autres femmes ont remise en question est la façon dont elles ont choisi d'utiliser leur corps au cours de l'Occupation, provoquant cette réaction de la société à la Libération,

qui va abuser du corps afin d'en faire pour tous – bourreaux et victimes – une métaphore didactique.

Quels sont donc les sens que comporte une telle procédure, dirigée sur le corps avec une violence et une crudité déclarées afin de le stigmatiser et de le couper de l'ensemble, comme quelque chose d'étranger et d'étrange ? Que signifient la souillure et la déformation du visage et du corps des femmes, les coups portés sur elles au moyen des produits « déplacés » de la matière (Douglas 2006 : 13) ? À quoi renvoie l'image carnavalesque que dessine le châtiment public contre la volonté de l'individu ?

La narration de Raraou porte sur les scènes de souillure et de raillerie enrichies de sauvagerie sonore, car c'est justement l'action extérieure qui la conduit, tandis que le caractère spectaculaire de cette dernière est dû aux façons dont la foule s'électrise. Les visions des femmes tondues et recouvertes de viscères et de cendres jointes à des sons incompatibles avec tout ordre rationnel du monde, dans un unisson scellé par la violence sonore, établissent une communication non-verbale dont la passion est l'élément et la force motrice (Politi 2006 : 11–45). La passion collective, en tant que situation psychique pulsionnelle et comportement dont les déterminations historiques et sociales sont aisément discernables, provient de sentiments de masse et non individualisés. Ces derniers sont dramatisés par des gestes dirigés contre les sujets passifs, à l'aide de moyens visuels et sonores qui prolongent l'acte arbitraire de ceux qui en font usage, lorsqu'ils interviennent sur le corps avec une satisfaction sadique. Les rythmes rapides du déroulement du châtiment, le ton haut perché des voix, l'excitation des sens créent tout au long du cortège un climat d'asphyxie dans lequel les corps des victimes sont déstabilisés et cèdent, paralysés, à la barbarie de la foule, dont l'action de défaoulement va croissant. La punition imposée suivant ce rituel, mise en scène comme une expérience de libération de ceux qui l'effectuent, retire aux corps châtiés toute caractéristique culturellement déterminée, ce qui, outre qu'il génère un sentiment d'horreur, accentue celui de la force triomphante. Les moyens d'expression et de punition de l'humiliation publique exigent une approche métalinguistique, à savoir explicative, afin de révéler leur code d'interprétation. En effet, ils n'appartiennent pas à la sphère de la fonction de communication de la langue selon laquelle la « faute » est déterminée et contrôlée par le discours maîtrisé qui attend le contre-discours. Au contraire, ces moyens stimulent la fonction émotionnelle de la langue sur laquelle se fonde exclusivement le châtiment public, afin d'extérioriser son attitude envers « ce » dont elle « parle » et sur lequel elle « agit ». Dans la logique qui régit le mécanisme de cette fonction, ce qu'elle châtie est lié au comment elle le châtie. Et puisque ce qu'elle châtie est le corps, en le traînant sur la place publique, en le dégradant et le torturant, ce châtiment ne peut qu'avoir lieu grâce à des moyens naturels. Par conséquent, la correspondance à laquelle on parvient entre les moyens de représentation et son objet, et qui démontrent l'aspect auto-référentiel de la *mimésis*, nous renvoient de surcroît aux discours qui lui confèrent un sens. Le châtiment public donne une forme à ces discours grâce à la matière et leur fournit une représentation par des moyens archaïques de sens propre, non métaphorique. C'est au nom de ces discours qu'il agit, c'est à eux qu'il « rend compte », à ces discours qui, lors du contexte historique de l'Occupation, contrôlent le corps. Par conséquent, les symboles du châtiment véhiculent des valeurs, quand ils sont utilisés à la structure idéologique du châtiment comme vecteurs de souillure en

même temps que de purification. L'effet recherché est l'expression, jointe à l'exorcisme, de la peur du dérèglement des relations sociales provoqué par cet usage donné du corps féminin (Pomata 1997 : 217). D'autant plus que dans ce cadre de l'Occupation italo-allemande, le genre sexuel constitue dans l'imaginaire national un des critères de la nation, le corps de la femme étant assimilé au corps de la patrie, comme si le corps intact des attouchements de l'ennemi de l'une garantissait la souveraineté de l'autre. C'est pourquoi le corps doit correspondre et répondre aux représentations nécessaires à la cohésion sociale.

Ainsi, dans les corps salis et couverts d'opprobre, nous pouvons saisir les symbolismes implicites et explicites. Les premiers font du corps de la femme, par une conception exclusive, un vecteur d'expression des idées et des valeurs que la société se fait de lui. Les seconds replacent le corps de la femme dans le champ social, lui ôtent par le châtiment quelque doute qu'il pourrait nourrir sur les limites sociales, et rétablissement le contrôle sur lui. La femme qui, donc, « va avec l'ennemi », qui ne garde pas son corps mais « le laisse enfreindre » (Psara 1997 : 41), se défait de la domination masculine et de tout contrôle, tout en profanant la patrie. En stigmatisant le corps des femmes, en tondant leur chevelure, instrument de leur charme corrupteur, en les souillant, le châtiment public symbolise leur écart moral dont il trace sur elles une image humiliante. En souillant au sens propre le métaphoriquement souillé, la foule, sous l'emprise d'une ivresse qu'intensifient les rythmes effrénés du cortège, crée un corps-caricature.

C'est alors qu'un honorable citoyen, qui tenait même un drapeau, est monté à califourchon sur le camion et s'est mis à écraser des œufs pourris sur la tête de chacune des femmes qu'on humiliait publiquement, et les gens tout autour l'applaudissaient... L'honorable citoyen faisait la révérence, comme un conférencier à son public, ou comme un maire, chaque fois qu'il écrasait un œuf pourri sur la tête d'une tondue.

L'héroïne, à présent coupée des autres, n'a plus de place dans la représentation du groupe, si ce n'est en tant que quelque chose d'extérieur, montré du doigt, mis à l'écart. Son corps, surpris et déformé par le châtiment, confirme la suppression de tout lien avec les membres de la société car, en tant que « structure symbolique et non réalité en soi » (Le Breton 1990 : 13), il cesse d'être défini par la combinaison solidaire des paramètres personnels et collectifs. En tant que corps monoxydant, dans lequel coïncident le sens propre de la saleté et sa métaphore morale, il devient une image étrangère et dépaysante, un objet de carnavalisation et non son promoteur.

Par conséquent, si les valeurs de l'honneur national et familial sont énoncées par des symboles tels que le corps de la femme, le châtiment public en tant que pratique punitive fondée sur des symboles est lui-même un symbole. Cette domination du symbolique manifeste de façon catégorique combien évidentes sont pour tous les valeurs bafouées à présent rétablies. Ainsi, l'écart créé entre la présence physique et l'image de la « putain traître à la patrie » que dessine le châtiment public confirme le détachement de l'héroïne des prédicts de base de son identité – le sexe, le corps, la sexualité – ainsi d'ailleurs que sa relégation au niveau le plus bas de la vie animale, avant même qu'elle parvienne à établir son droit à l'auto-détermination qui lui assurerait la possibilité de s'élever en tant qu'individu face à cette dégradation. Pour reprendre les mots de Paul Eluard, elle n'est désormais plus que

la plus aimable bête/souillée et qui n'a pas compris/qu'elle est souillée/une bête prise au piège/des amateurs de beauté.

Si pourtant le châtiment, en tant que représentation par l'image de la faute et de sa punition, concentre les discours que ses auteurs s'approprient afin de l'infliger, la narration littéraire, ainsi que nous allons le voir à présent, en tant que représentation verbale d'une représentation visuelle et sonore, développe les discours des sujets qui le subissent afin d'en montrer plus étroitement tous les aspects. Seulement, pour que se développent ces discours, il faudra mobiliser deux des agents fondamentaux du monde romanesque, les narrateurs et l'auteur. C'est eux qui vont faire apparaître sur le devant de la scène tous les héros : à la fois ceux qui, personnages anonymes de l'Histoire, ont disparu, et ceux qui abandonnent leur rôle de narrateur. L'implication des uns et des autres va conserver intact l'élément dramatique puisque le mode scénique de présentation de l'action fait des événements des causes et des situations psychiques des produits de ces causes. C'est dans ce cadre que nous allons étudier la réaction de Raraou, qui continue sa relation par ces mots « Alors moi j'ai pris la carafe d'eau du garçon, j'ai couru, j'ai rattrapé le camion, j'ai grimpé dessus et j'ai arrosé ma mère, toute la journée sous un soleil de plomb et tondue, qu'elle n'attrape pas de mal, que je disais », qu'elle interrompt néanmoins brusquement en prétextant « Et alors le soleil est devenu trop fort, même si c'était déjà l'après-midi, il est devenu trop fort le soleil et je ne me rappelle plus rien de l'humiliation publique ». Ce revirement narratif que provoque son attitude constitue, selon nous, le tremplin d'où prennent leur essor les discours des héros, dont l'auteur va retranscrire le caractère « de lisibilité ardue » en une langue métaphorique mais directe dans la périphrase du titre *La Mère du chien*.

En tant que témoin *de visu* du châtiment public, mais aussi en tant que personnage qui y est impliqué, Raraou constitue une voix structurellement supérieure (Lanser 1992) et l'oubli qu'elle invoque justifie son éviction de la scène de la narration ainsi que la perte de sa qualité de sujet narratif. Cette absence structurelle peut être interprétée comme le résultat du conflit entre rôles de héros et de narrateur, conflit révélé par un autre personnage narratif s'adressant comme Raraou au même narrataire. Le discours de ce dernier est transmis par un narrateur impersonnel extradiégétique. Il s'agit d'une prostituée qui a également subi le châtiment public, et qui va intervenir énergiquement pour démentir Raraou (« Elle s'en souvient mais n'en dit rien ») et terminer la présentation de l'événement en décrivant en détail aussi bien l'action de ceux qui le « produisent » que la réaction de ceux qui l'« enrichissent ». Le faisceau de son récit va jeter une abondante lumière sur les pôles du châtiment, de cette organisation massive au caractère de liesse populaire et, plus précisément, sur la façon dont le spectacle est successivement alimenté, à travers trois péripeties auxquelles participent la mère et la fille, cette dernière se révélant alors non seulement témoin *de visu*, mais aussi personnage principal. Au cours de ces péripeties s'effectuent deux déconstructions successives qui ont trait à leur tour à deux signifiants du social, au discours et à la qualité d'être humain. Ces déconstructions, pourtant, n'ont pas lieu uniquement à cause de la violente répression des sujets qui subissent l'opprobre public, mais principalement à cause de leur propre révolte, ce qui souligne l'ironie tragique de leur situation.

C'est ainsi que nous pouvons saisir la signification prise par l'interruption de la narration : alors qu'au départ elle peut être envisagée comme un problème, elle constitue au fond la clé de l'interprétation du retrait du personnage de la scène narrative. Raraou narre le châtiment public, mais elle ne va pas jusqu'à la fin. Elle s'arrête quand sa structure persécutrice se tourne aussi contre elle, et que sa mère elle-même en est le vecteur, lorsqu'elle prononce à son égard les mots « Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ici ce chien, je ne suis pas sa mère »<sup>5</sup>. L'intrication des rôles de héros et de narrateur s'avère un détriment de la narration lorsque, à l'intérieur des faits relatés, le personnage-narrateur qui détient le privilège de témoin oculaire s'en trouve démunie à cause d'une expérience traumatique. Par conséquent, si en tant qu'héroïne elle s'effondre, humiliée par la foule et rejetée par sa mère, en tant que narratrice de l'expérience vécue, elle se trouve dans l'impossibilité de le narrer jusqu'à la fin.

La voix, en tant que terme de la narration, sert les formes précises de la pratique narrative. En tant que terme politique, elle place les événements littéraires au cœur de l'Histoire humaine et intègre les conditions qui président à sa production (Lanser 1992 : 5). Donc, les conditions qui déterminent cette voix imposent son interruption, ce qui confirme de nouveau la domination de l'élément dramatique au niveau de la narration, dilate dans le temps les retombées du châtiment et donne une interprétation complète du fait.

La rétrogradation de Raraou de sujet narratif en objet de la narration fait que l'expérience traumatique des deux personnages, le premier perdant sa détermination sexuelle et le second sa détermination ontologique (d'être humain devenu chien), est mise en pleine lumière et reçoit une double confirmation. Historiquement par le témoignage du discours, et narrativement par son interruption. La distorsion de la réalité à laquelle le mécanisme du châtiment public a poussé les sujets par la double pathologie qu'elle leur a infligée apporte des preuves au double trauma historique (La Capra 2001 : 181–220 ; Liakos 2007 : 223–227) de l'anéantissement social de l'un et de la déchéance ontologique de l'autre.

Mais le trauma est confirmé d'une autre façon encore, qui concerne aussi une autre des composantes du texte, le titre. Car ce que narre le titre *La Mère du chien* n'est pas exactement le discours de l'héroïne (« Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ici ce chien, je ne suis pas sa mère ») sur la base duquel cette dernière s'auto-détermine. Cette constatation suscite des interrogations sur le rôle joué par le titre dans le processus de perception et d'interprétation du texte, tout comme sur le rôle de l'auteur tant au plan intradiégétique du roman qu'à celui de sa construction. De mêmes questions se posent par surcroît sur la place du personnage romanesque démentie par le titre. En effet, le titre « relate » une expérience vécue, il « relate aussi sa représentation par l'héroïne. À sa fonction métonymique s'ajoute aussi une autre représentation. Celle qui découle du rôle de l'auteur, réel et implicite, particulièrement lorsque ce dernier se transforme en narrateur à la fonction interprétative » (Lintvelt 1991 : 97–124).

Si l'auteur emprunte le statut linguistique de l'héroïne pour le titre de son roman, cela signifie son intention « politique » de se tenir en-dessous de son personnage romanesque, cela signifie aussi l'intention morale qui dicte le respect envers le héros en tant que condition de la libre expression de ce dernier (Bachtine 2000). Si, cependant, l'auteur retourne

<sup>5</sup> Nous traduisons.

le discours du héros et de « je ne suis pas sa mère » fait « La Mère du chien », il crée alors avec le texte une relation métalinguistique extrêmement révélatrice. Par la différence qu'il introduit dans le titre qui à la fois contient et annihile le sens des paroles de l'héroïne, il prédispose le lecteur. Car, avant même que celui-ci ne forme sa propre perception, il se trouve face à un auteur qui se révèle être le premier récepteur productif de sens des narrations présentées. Particulièrement, lorsqu'il exerce un contrôle sur ce qui a été déjà dit et rétablit le sens « authentique » du texte, qui est que l'héroïne « a bien été » *La Mère du chien*, interprétant ainsi les retombées du châtiment public comme abominables. Car grâce à ce rôle de récepteur intradiégétique de la narration, laquelle d'ailleurs comprend une foule de personnages, l'auteur confère le titre par lequel il reconstruit l'auto-représentation de l'héroïne. L'écart sémantique complet entre le titre et le discours de la mère fait d'elle un objet, un personnage d'emblée tragique qui s'interprète elle-même faussement ainsi que sa fille lorsqu'elle « fait le chien ». La même intention préside aux deux parties du titre, car elle exploite l'ambiguïté de la langue afin de montrer la disparition des personnages auxquels il se réfère. Enfin héros, narrateurs et auteur « collaborent » à la relation du châtiment public et dépassent les obstacles rencontrés au cours du parcours narratif.

Ainsi, en faisant revivre le passé et en l'interprétant, ce roman polyphonique transmet une part de l'histoire des femmes, celle de la collaboration sexuelle et de son châtiment, qui est totalement opposée à leur participation à la Résistance. Dans la relation de toute façon délicate qu'entretiennent leur sexe avec le champ social, relation chargée des circonstances historiques de « la nation en danger », la collaboration sexuelle constitue un phénomène réprouvé du point de vue des représentations dominantes de la sexualité féminine, étranger à la ferveur nationale et aux orientations idéologiques de l'époque. C'est pour cela que dès le début la collaboration sexuelle est évincée par le discours historique officiel, tandis que sa punition n'est perçue que par rapport aux causes qui la rendent légitime. Au contraire, longtemps après, ce sujet occupera la littérature et son discours va l'intégrer à ses quêtes. Se mouvant dans le climat de l'horizon littéraire qui va de l'après-guerre jusqu'à nos jours, déjà formé par des prosateurs qui « participent à la représentation publique de l'Histoire » (Apostolidou 1995 : 117), Pavlos Matessis va replacer dans le champ de l'histoire cet épisode oublié et va en redéfinir la perception. Il va principalement se concentrer sur ses retombées, dont il donne une vision détaillée. La façon dont les représentations s'emboîtent l'une dans l'autre, ainsi que leur opposition à l'intérieur du roman, interprète exhaustivement le fait lorsque, en dramatisant la dynamique de ceux qui, afin de défendre les discours dominants, détruisent les autres qui les ont rejetés, mais en dramatisant aussi l'anéantissement de ces derniers quand ils tentent de résister, il met en lumière l'incurable trauma, car ils sont dans l'incapacité de « se rappeler » l'expérience qui l'a créé. Résolvant avec habileté les problèmes narratifs posés par la représentation bloquée par la mémoire traumatique, l'auteur combine la relation subjective de l'expérience vécue avec le point de vue distancié. Élargissant les limites de la représentation des femmes qui « sont allées avec l'ennemi », Pavlos Matessis crée une image complexe des aspects sexués de la violence, tels que les construisent les moyens morbides du châtiment public et l'asphyxiant enchaînement causal de ses techniques. Il fait donc du châtiment public, sujet presque inexistant dans l'histoire officielle, un objet narratif qu'il va présenter de façon différente. Néanmoins, même s'il le met en scène

en insistant sur son élément carnavalesque si bien que les transports « des sens » de ses auteurs bouleversent l'imagination, il ne détourne pas l'attention du lecteur de l'historicité de ses moyens, de la réalité sociale de l'époque sur laquelle l'histoire a le premier mot, en tant que facteur de régulation de l'action humaine.

Fidèle au principe de son projet, qui est de présenter les discours sur l'histoire des individus obscurs qu'elle a ignorés, Pavlos Matessis leur offre la tribune de *La Mère du chien*, lieu d'expression par personnages interposés des expériences qu'ils ont vécues. Cette proximité presuppose aussi de sa part un bond dans l'imaginaire, lorsqu'il s'intègre en tant que personnage narratif à la fiction qu'il a lui-même créée, lorsqu'en d'autres termes il s'y enchâsse. Dans le champ de cette fiction, il présente deux personnalités, Raraou et sa mère, qui répondent à la catégorie historique des femmes châtiées à la Libération, mais qui s'autonomisent en tant que formes romanesques lorsqu'elles sont impliquées d'une manière particulière dans une pratique punitive qui graduellement parvient au paroxysme d'un déchaînement. Dans cette tourmente, Pavlos Matessis repère ses héroïnes et, avant de les en sortir, afin d'en faire des symboles de protestation dans le refuge lustral mais idéologiquement chargé de la littérature, il rétablit l'historicité de leur expérience. Par conséquent, son roman peut constituer un point de référence pour la recherche sur la violence historique sous l'aspect du sexe et de la relation indissociable qu'entretiennent Histoire et Littérature. Son point de vue, en tant qu'observateur du passé et en tant qu'écrivain, croise lors d'un décalage chronologique celui de Paul Eluard, dans le poème intitulé *Comprene qui voudra*. Ce vers, adresse à celui qui pour comprendre doit le vouloir, est la paraphrase de la locution française « Comprene qui pourra », laquelle exprime l'inconcevable. En tant que figure de substitution, ce vers à l'ironie subtile mais claire ne permet pas à son récepteur d'avancer à sa guise un quelconque alibi afin de justifier son attitude, et le rend responsable de son refus de comprendre. Cet apophategme, dans son énonciation accusatrice, accentue le relief d'un titre qui pourrait très bien d'ailleurs être la « pointe » éternellement ouverte du poème. Et nous pourrions affirmer qu'à ce titre béant Pavlos Matessis répond par *La Mère du chien*. Cette mère qui converse avec la femme décrite par Paul Eluard :

Et ma mère la femme/voudrait bien dorloter/cette image idéale/de son malheur sur terre.

Et c'est, à son sens, sur le résultat aliénant de ces actions contraires au sens moral de l'homme, bien qu'elles se présentent comme ses officiants, qu'il convie à son tour le lecteur à répondre. Une petite torsade de réponses, c'est bien d'ailleurs ce que tresse la littérature, lorsqu'elle répond aux demandes de la vie sociale d'en former de nouvelles.

*Traduction Danielle Morichon*

---

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- Apostolidou, V., 1995. « Laïke mneme kai dome tes aistheses ». [Mémoire populaire et structure du sentiment]. In : *Epistemoniko symposio Istorike pragmatikoteta kai neoellenike pezographia 1945-1995*. [Colloque scientifique. Réalité historique et prose néo-hellénique (1945-1995)]. Athènes : École Moraïtis, 113-127.

- Arménopoulos, K., 1971. *Proheiron nomon e Exabiblos*. [Recueil de lois ou Hexabible]. Éd. K. G. Pitsakis. Athènes : Dodoni.
- Asdrachas, S., 2007. « Istorikotrope Logoteknia ». [Littérature tournée vers l’Histoire]. In : K. Voulgaris (éd.), *Meta to '89. Stous dromous tes istorias kai tes logoteknias*. [Après 89. Sur les chemins de l’histoire et de la littérature]. Athènes : Gavriilidis, 72–76.
- Athanassopoulos, V., 2003. « Dramatiko enanti lyrikou sto synhrono elleniko mythostorema », [Le dramatique face au lyrique dans le roman grec contemporain]. In : V. Athanassopoulos, *Oi maskes tou realismou. Ekdothes tou neoellenikou aphegematikou logou*, III. [Les masques du réalisme. Versions du discours narratif néo-hellénique III]. Athènes : Kastaniotis, 335–352.
- Avérouf, G., 1984. *Ge tes Odynes*. [Terre de douleur]. Athènes : Hestia.
- Axioti, M., 1945. *Oi Ellenides phrouroi tes Elladas*. [Les femmes grecques gardiennes de la Nation]. Athènes : O Rigas.
- Axioti, M., 1946. *Eikostos Aionas*. [Vingtième siècle]. Athènes : Ikaros.
- Bachtine, M., 2000. *Zetemata tes poietikes tou Dostoievski*. [Problèmes de la poétique de Dostoïevski]. Trad. grecque A. Ioannidou, éd. V. Hatzivassiliou, avant-propos D. Tzivolas. Athènes : Polis.
- Bonnaïn-Moerdyk, R., Moerdyk, D., 1977. « À propos du Charivari : discours bourgeois et coutumes populaires ». *Annales E. S. C.* 32, 381–397.
- Boumi-Pappa, R., 1946. *E Athena*. [Athènes]. Athènes : s. é.
- Brossat, A., 1992. *Les tondues. Un carnaval moche*. Paris : Manya.
- Capdevila, L., Virgili, F., 1999. « “Épuration” et tonte des collaboratrices : un antiféminisme ? ». In : Ch. Bard (éd.), *Un siècle d’antiféminisme*. Paris : Fayard, 255–267.
- Douglas, M., 2006. *Katharoteta kai kindynos. Mia analyse ton ennoion tes miarotetas kai tou tabou* [Purity and Danger]. Trad. grecque A. Hatzouli, éd. T. Paradellis. Athènes : Polytropon.
- EAM KE 29/08/1943. *Eisegetike Ekthese tes grammateias ste synedriase tes KE tou EAM*. [Rapport introductif du secrétariat à la réunion du comité central de l’EAM]. Athènes : Reproduction anastatische de la Résistance nationale, 1981.
- Gauvard, C., Gokalp, A., 1974. « Les conduites de bruit et leur signification à la fin du Moyen Âge : le Charivari ». *Annales E. S. C.* 29, 693–704.
- Granissioti, A., 1945. « *Mia diamartyria* ». [Une protestation]. In : *Philologika Chronika*, n° 33, 401.
- Kazantzaki, G., 1952. « *Ortans* ». [Hortense]. In : G. Kazantzaki, *Krisimes stigmes*. [Instants critiques]. Athènes : Kastaniotis, 55–69.
- Koukoulès, Ph., 1949. *Byzantinon bios kai politismos*. [Vie et civilisation des Byzantins] 3. Athènes : Collection de l’Institut Français d’Athènes.
- Leclerc, F., Weindling M., 1995. « La répression des femmes coupables d’avoir collaboré pendant l’Occupation ». In : *CLIO. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 1, 129–150.
- Laïou, A., 1993. « Ethniko Lintsarisma – E gynaika mou paei me ton ehthro ». [Le lynchage national – Ma femme va avec l’ennemi]. In : supplément *Ios* du journal *Éléftherotypia* du 17/1/93, 38.
- Le Breton, D., 1990. *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*. Paris : Quadrigé/Puf.
- Lanser, S. S., 1992. *Fictions of authority. Women writers and narrative voice*. New York/Ithaca/London : Cornell University Press.
- La Capra, D., 2001. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore : John Hopkins University Press.
- Liakos, A., 2007. *Pos to parelthon ginetai istoria*. [Comment le passé devient-il histoire?]. Athènes : Polis.
- Lintvelt, J., 1991. « *Oi bathmides tou logoteknikou aphegematikou keimenou* ». [Les degrés d’un texte narratif]. In : C. Bremond, S. Chatman, A. J. Greimas, J. Lintvelt, W. Martin, G. Prince, F. K. Stanzel, *Theoria tes aphegeses*. [Théorie de la narration]. Trad. grecque A. Kastrinaki. Athènes : Kastaniotis, 97–124.
- Marinakou, E., 2011. *L’Occupation italo-allemande et le parcours de l’identité féminine dans E metera tou skyiou de Pavlos Matessis*. Thèse de doctorat non publiée. Montpellier.
- Matessis, P., 1990. *E metera tou skyiou*. [La Mère du chien]. Athènes : Kastaniotis. Traduction française de J. Bouchard, 1993. *L’Enfant de chienne*. Paris : nallimard.
- Mavroïdi-Papadaki, S., 1946. « *Antartopoules* ». [Les petites Résistantes]. In : S. Mavroïdi-Papadaki, *Tes niotes kai tes leuterias*. [Sur la jeunesse et la liberté]. Athènes : Ta nea biblia, 24.
- Mihaïlidis, G., 1999. *Tes epanastases, tes monaxias kai tes lagneias II. O Labyrinthos*. [De la révolution, de la solitude et de la luxure. Le labyrinth]. Athènes : Kastaniotis.

- Papadakis, N., 1945. « Mia nyhta tou 42 ». [Une nuit de l'an 42]. In : *Philologika Chronika*, n° 32, 339–344.
- Politi, G., 2006. « To grapto kai to aphrasto e Peri pathous ». [L'écrit et l'inexprimable ou De la passion]. In : G. Politi, *Peri amartias, pathous, blemmatos kai allon tinon*. [Du péché, de la passion, du regard et autres]. Athènes : Agra, 11–45.
- Pomata, G., 1997. « E Istorya ton Gynaikon : ena zetema orion ». [L'histoire des femmes : une question de limites]. In : E. Avdela, A. Psara (éd.), *Sioperes Istories. Gynaikeis kai Phylo sten istorike aphegesē*. [Histoires silencieuses. Femme et sexe dans la narration historique]. Athènes : Alexandria, 149–229.
- Puchner, W., 2003. *O Magikos Kosmos tou Yperlogikou sta Theatrica Erga tou P. Matesi*. Athènes : Hellénika Grammata.
- Psara, A., 1993. « Ethniko Lintsarisma – E gynaika mou paei me ton ehthro ». [Le lynchage national-Ma femme va avec l'ennemi]. In : supplément *Ios* du journal *Élefthériotypia* du 17/1/1993, 41.
- Simopoulos, K., 2010. *Basanisteria kai exousia. Apo ten Ellenoromaike Arhaioteta, to Byzantio kai ten Tourkokratia os ten epohe mas*. [Tortures et pouvoir. De l'antiquité gréco-romaine, Byzance et la domination ottomane à nos jours]. Athènes : Piroga.
- Terzakis, A., 1947. *To lykophos ton anthropon*. [Le crépuscule des hommes]. Athènes (publié en feuilleton dans *I Kathimérini*).
- Théotokas, G., 1964. *Astheneis kai Odoiporoi*. [22 juillet 1943]. Athènes : Hestia.
- Thompson, E. P., 1972. « Rough music : le charivari anglais ». *Annales E. S. C.* 27, 285–312.
- Tsatsoulis, D., 1997. « Oi ekdohes tes aletheias », [Les versions de la vérité]. In : D. Tsatsoulis, *E Peripeteia tes Aphegesē*. [La péripetie de la narration]. Athènes : Hellénika Grammata, 183–202.
- Varon-Vassard, O., 2009. *E enelikiōse mias genias. Neoi kai nees sten Katohe kai ten Antistase*. [Le passage à l'âge adulte d'une génération. Jeunes gens et jeunes filles lors de l'Occupation et dans la Résistance]. Athènes : Hestia.
- Vénézis, I., oct. 1943. « 22 Ioulou 1943 ». [22 juillet 1943]. In : *Protoporoi* [Pionniers], n° 3, sous le pseudonyme de M. Alkaios.
- Vervenioti, T., 1994. *E gynaika tes Antistases*. [La femme de la Résistance]. Athènes : Odysséas.
- Virgili, F., 1995. « Les "tordues" à la Libération : le corps des femmes, enjeu d'une réappropriation ». In : *CLIO. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 1, 11–127.
- Virgili, F., 2000. *La France « virile »*. *Des femmes tondues à la libération*. Paris : Payot.
- Votsi, O., 1946. « Elehtra ». [Électre]. In : O. Votsi, *Ymnosi*. [Hymnes]. Athènes : Mavridis, 5–8.

## SPOLEČENSKÁ ODPLATA A LITERÁRNÍ OBHAJOBA V PSÍ MATCE PAVLOSE MATESISE

Shrnutí

Veřejné trestání, které podstupovaly ženy po konci okupace Řecka ze strany fašistické Osy za své sexuální vztahy s vojáky okupující armády, bylo fenoménem, k němuž došlo ve většině evropských zemí. Tento článek založený na románu Pavlose Matessise *H μητέρα των σκύλων* zkoumá literární zobrazení tohoto způsobu trestání prostřednictvím dvou propojených přístupů: symbolika této podoby trestu a diskurzy žen, které mu byly podrobeny. To umožňuje ustanovení hlavního problému studie, podle kterého literatura zaměřením na ženské zkušenosti zpochybňuje násilnost dějin, které jsou diktované národními hodnotami a morálními idejemi této doby.

*Eugenia Marinakou*  
*Docteur en Littérature de l'Université de Montpellier*  
*mariamats@otenet.gr*

LATINA ANTIQUA  
MEDIAEVALIA RECENTIORAQUE

---



**THE LATIN BONUS – MELIOR – OPTIMUS\***

LUCIE PULTROVÁ

**ABSTRACT**

The etymology of the adj. *melior* given in etymological dictionaries is unsatisfactory not only from the formal point of view and for the lack of unambiguous equivalents, but mainly because it does not address the non-standard fact of suppletion at the level comparative vs. superlative (*optimus*). The superlative is regularly derived from the comparative. The article therefore considers the existence of types of qualities that can be expressed as being of higher degree on the scale (comparative), but not of the maximum (superlative); based on this assumption and the formal analysis alternative etymologies of the adj. *melior* are given.

**Keywords:** Latin; comparison; suppletion

---

**Theoretical background**

In most Indo-European languages there exists certain group of basic adjectives that – according to handbooks – “are compared irregularly”. There are essentially two types of irregularity. The first is an irregularity in principle of the same type as *sum – es – est ...*, i.e. the retention of the original inherited forms with analogical leveling not having taken place within the paradigm (in the case of comparison, within the paradigm of positive – comparative – superlative). An example of such irregularity in the category of comparison in Latin is *magnus – maior – maximus*: all the forms are derived from the root \**meg’h₂-*, that is, neither the comparative nor the superlative are derived from the positive (i.e. \*\**magnior*, \*\**magnissimus*),<sup>1</sup> in contrast with e.g. *doctus – doctior – doctissimus*. The other type of irregularity is the suppletive comparison<sup>2</sup> (i.e. in principle of the same type

---

\* The article was written with the financial support of *Univerzitní centrum pro studium antické a středověké myšlenkové tradice* and the grant provided by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, no. 14-10673S “Diachronic Typology of Suppletion”.

<sup>1</sup> By using two asterisks \*\* here and below I denote the forms that should have developed according to the formulated and generally accepted sound laws, but that actually do not exist.

<sup>2</sup> Suppletion is usually characterized as “maximum irregularity”, cf. for example the definition by Melčuk (2000: 511): “suppletion is a relation between signs X and Y such that the semantic difference [...] between X and Y is maximally regular [...], while the formal (i.e. phonological) difference [...] between them is maximally irregular”. After all, even ancient grammarians describe suppletive forms

as *sum – fui*), for instance the English *good – better*, Czech *dobrý – lepší*, Latin *bonus – melior – optimus*.<sup>3</sup>

The derivation by the comparative and the superlative suffix is already Proto-Indo-European, even though in the earliest period we cannot speak about the grammatical category of comparison, but about a primary derivation by the suffixes denoting higher degree of intensity of a quality, or gradation.<sup>4</sup> The existence of suppletion in this case thus testifies to the fact that the root that the original adjective was derived from in the positive, expresses a quality that for some reason “defied” intensification or gradation and, consequently, comparison. During the further development there occurred a semantic shift in the adjective, which brought about the need to compare it; this, however, was in the time when the derivation by the inherited comparative and superlative suffix was no longer productive. This is why the semantically missing form was substituted by the forms of an (inherently “intensifiable”, comparable) synonym.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the condition for retention of suppletion is that the adjectives in question must be extremely frequented ones, to that extent that the analogical leveling would not occur again in the successive period, yielding the analogical forms of the type *\*\*bonior, \*\*bonissimus*.

Latin grammar books regard comparison as a general category of adjectives, or at least they do not refer to it as a category exclusive for only a certain type of adjectives.<sup>6</sup> In reality, only a minority of adjectives are compared.<sup>7</sup> The possibility, or impossibility of comparison depends on whether the adjective is scalar, i.e. an adjective that denotes a quality that can exist on a scale, can vary in grade (e.g. *small, broad*, etc., in contrast

---

simply as *inaequalia* or *anomala*, which are the terms used for any formal irregularity; cf. for example Prisc. gramm. II 95, 9–11: *exceptis anomalis, id est inaequalibus, quae sunt “bonus optimus”, “malus pessimus”, “magnus maximus”, “parvus minimus”, “multus plurimus”*.

<sup>3</sup> However, modern theories on suppletion regard both mentioned types as examples of suppletion. Cf. Corbett (2007: 13), who distinguishes two types of suppletion from the diachronic point of view: 1) combinatory suppletion, formed by “incursion”, i.e. “invading” the paradigm from the outside (= *bonus – melior – optimus*), and 2) dissimilatory suppletion, caused by sound change, i.e. the originally uniform paradigm breaks down due to inner changes (= *magnus – maior – maximus*). (Corbett takes the terms “combinatory” and “dissimilatory suppletion” from F. Plank.)

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Sihler (1995: 356): the suffix *\*-yos-* was “an intensive marker signifying ‘very, rather; to a marked degree’”, the suffix *\*-(t)ero-* then ‘particularizing and by implication antonymic: ‘the hot one (and not the cold one)’; ‘our (own)’”.

<sup>5</sup> The author of this article claims that the same explanation holds true for the adjectives with periphrastic comparison: I believe that the reason for the fact that regular forms of comparatives and superlatives did not develop cannot consist in a certain “phonetic unsuitability”, but in the original non-scalar character of given adjectives and their obtaining scalar character only when derivation ceased to be productive. I have noted this briefly earlier (Pultrová 2011: 31, 35, 45). The issue is, however, contentious, and I intend to elaborate it further elsewhere; therefore, I leave only this footnote in the present article.

<sup>6</sup> For example Menge, Burkhard, Schauer (2000: 44): “Außerdem sind die Adjektive i.d.R. komparativfähig” and further on the same page: “Einige Partizipien des Perfekts (PPP), seltener des Präsens (PPA), sind weitgehend zu Adjektiven geworden, können u. U. regelmäßig gesteigert werden [...] und ein Adverb bilden” – the comparison is understood here as a characteristic feature of adjectives. Cf. also Hofmann, Szantyr (1965: 151): “Vom Subst. ist das Adj. durch die streng durchgeführte Motions- [...] und Steigerungsfähigkeit sowie durch die Möglichkeit der Bildung eines Adverbs deutlich geschieden.” Typically, however, grammar books go straight *in medias res*, i.e. to the way of formation; thus e.g. Oniga (2014: 88): “Adjectives decline in three possible degrees.” Touratier (2013: 75) formulates more adequately, employing potential modality: “Die Adjektive können mit besonderen Morphemen verbunden werden, die den Grad einer durch das Adjektiv ausgedrückten Eigenschaft anzeigen.”

<sup>7</sup> For example Cvrček (2010: 205) claims, on the basis of corpus data, that only 6% (!) of Czech adjectives are compared.

to non-scalar adjectives, e.g. *red* or *Latin*). At the same time it is true that an originally non-scalar adjective can take, and often does, also scalar meanings, e.g. *zlatý* (“gold”) in Czech frequently means “extremely kind”, “sweet”, and having this meaning, it can exist in the comparative *zlatější* (“golder”) and superlative *nejzlatější* (“goldest”). The text could be *latinštější* (“Latiner”), denoting the quality of being “close to native/standard, classical Latin”; “greener” will be perceived nowadays as “more focused on ecological issues”; the sound of an instrument can be “more metallic”; etc.

The quality of “good” (expressed by the adj. *bonus*) can undoubtedly exist on a scale. Nevertheless, Indo-European languages very often do not regularly compare adjectives with this meaning. Nor they have a uniform expression for this quality,<sup>8</sup> which suggests that the given meaning of the relevant adjectives stabilized only in the post-Indo-European period, having developed from other (semantically related) adjectives.

### **Etymology of *bonus*, *melior* and *optimus***

The etymology of the Latin adj. ***bonus*** is not quite unambiguous. It is usually associated in particular with the Greek δύναμαι, “to be able to”, and the Gothic *taujan*, “to make”, both being derived from the root to which Pokorny (1959: 218: \**deu-*, *du-*) ascribes the meaning of “(religiös) verehren, gewähren”, LIV (123: \**dewh₂-*) then “to combine”. However, the attested inscribed form *duenos* can be formally derived from this root only with difficulty.<sup>9</sup> Besides this etymology de Vaan (2008: s. v. *bonus*) suggests also the possibility of the relation to the root \**deh₃w-*, “to give” (cf. Latin *duim*).<sup>10</sup> In any case, the prevailing – and probably semantically most acceptable – opinion (= LIV), namely that it is an original verbal adjective from the root with the meaning “to combine”, is in accord with the theoretical hypothesis that it was originally non-comparable.

Of the remaining two forms, *melior* and *optimus*, it is the superlative that is less etymologically problematic, even though there is by no means any certainty either. De Vaan (2008: s. v. *ob*) summarises the up-to-now debate on the etymology of the adj. ***optimus***<sup>11</sup> and presents two leading – rivalling – interpretations. The first<sup>12</sup> derives the form *optimus* from the adverb/preposition *ob* (< \**h₁opi*) “towards” (according to de Vaan, with the presumed meaning “foremost”). The other interpretation<sup>13</sup> assumes the derivation from the subst. *ops* in the sense “wealth”, “power”, i.e. *optimus* as “the one endowed with the supreme power”. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Jupiter’s epithet *Optimus Maximus* is a translation of the Greek stock epithet used to address the supreme god

<sup>8</sup> Cf. for example Greek ἀγαθός, Sanskrit *bhadrá-*, Latin *bonus*, Gothic *gobs*, Old Church Slavonic *добръ*, etc.

<sup>9</sup> \**duh₂-nós* > \*\**dūnos*, or \*\**dwanos*; \**du-nós* (according to Pokorny) > \*\**dunos*.

<sup>10</sup> The etymology is again formally problematic; there would have had to take place a non-standard elimination of the laryngeal followed by anaptyxis: \**dh₃w-nós* > \**dw-nós* > *duenos*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also Dieu (2011: 374–379).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Leumann (1977: 316–318); Sihler (1995: 440); this etymology is favoured also by de Vaan (2008: s. v. *ob*).

<sup>13</sup> For example Walde, Hofmann (1938–1956, s. v. *optimus*); Ernout, Meillet (1932: s. v. *ops*); with uncertainty Pokorny (1959: 780).

Zeus: κύδιστε μέγιστε.<sup>14</sup> Both etymologies are formally acceptable and in accord with the reconstructed function of the superlative suffix  $*-t\bar{m}h_2o-$ , which makes a pair with the comparative suffix  $*-tero-$  and which used to derive the superlative adjectives from adverbs<sup>15</sup> or substantives.

The most problematic appears to be the etymology of the middle form, *melior*. De Vaan (2008: s. v. *melior*) gives a construction  $*mel-ios-$  and the Greek μάλα, μᾶλλον and μάλιστα as equivalents,<sup>16</sup> but at the same time he admits that the etymology is weak (formally and semantically), and provides a possible connection with the Greek μέλω, “be anxious, care for”, and the Hit. *māl-*, “mind” <  $*mol-$ . Neither the latter etymology, however, resolves the formal complications: the PIE comparatives with the suffix  $*-iés-$  have proterodynamic paradigm (i.e. the stress is on the root in the strong cases, on the suffix in weak ones).<sup>17</sup> As follows from the analysis carried out in the monograph Pultrová (2011) on a number of Latin word-formative types, the results of which cannot be discussed again in detail within the scope of this article, during the process of analogical leveling in Latin it is the forms of strong cases that level to the weak ones, not vice versa. This is to say that the words with an originally proterodynamic paradigm finally have the root in Latin paradigm that corresponds to the zero grade (e.g. nom. *\*mér-tis*, gen. *\*mr-téis* > *\*mers*, *mortis* > *mors*, *mortis*). Other Latin inherited (i.e. non-analogical) comparatives fully correspond to that: *minor* (albeit with a problematic etymology; in any event, its initial syllable *mi-* cannot be but in the zero grade), *maior* <  $*m_{(e)\bar{g}}'$ ; another comp. *peior* is itself ambiguous, the first syllable can formally issue from both the full and the zero grade. In the case of the adj. *melior*, however, we encounter a problem, because the zero grade of its root, the way it is commonly reconstructed ( $*ml-$ ), should yield  $**mol-$  in Latin; this form is actually attested in the adj. *multus* (< *multos* <  $*ml-tós$ ), classed with the same base in etymological dictionaries. Even if we were – theoretically – considering the presence of a laryngeal in the root, we would not, according to the generally acknowledged Latin sound laws, arrive at the form *mel-*: the zero grade of the root *\*meHl-*, i.e. *\*mHl-*, should yield  $**mal-$  in Latin; the root in the form *\*melH-*, i.e. *\*mlH-* in the zero grade, would before the given suffix, that is one beginning in *-j-*, probably yield *\*mol-* again (*\*mlā-* before an occlusive). In brief, the vowel *e* can develop in Latin in the given sound environment in zero-grade syllable only with difficulty; nor can we presume an analogical leveling (what to, considering that the form is a suppletive one both to the form of the positive and the superlative?). At the same time, it is not possible *ad hoc* to presume that the ablaut relations in the adj. *melior* would have been different than in other representatives of the same word-formative type, even though such an interpretation in this concrete case would be, in the first plan, phonetically befitting. It is therefore necessary to search for other possible explanations.

<sup>14</sup> From κῦδος in the original meaning of “miraculous power” (cf. Chantraine 1968: s. v. κῦδος; Beekes 2010: s. v. κῦδος), not that of “glory”; see Latte (1960: 151), cf. also Dieu (2011: 375).

<sup>15</sup> There are numerous parallels in Latin, e.g. *inter(ior)* – *intimus*, *ulter(ior)* – *ultimus*, *poster(ior)* – *postumus* etc.

<sup>16</sup> Thus also Pokorny (1959: 720; he ascribes the meaning of “strong, big” to the root), Walde, Hofmann (1938–1956: s. v. *melior*), and Ernout, Meillet (1932: s. v. *melior* [with the reference to the adj. *multus*]).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Rix (1992: 167); Pultrová (2011: 147 [on *ō* in place of PIE *\*é* in Latin suffixes]).

## Possible alternative solutions of the etymology of *melior*

When searching for the etymology, it is also, or rather mainly, the semantics that should be considered. The mere fact that we deal with an adjective that supplanted the paradigm of another adjective with the meaning of “good” will not provide us with any clear lead, since, as can be seen in other Indo-European languages, semantic shifts could be diverse in this case (the comparative could have originally meant “stronger”, “more honest”, “prettier”, etc.). The key question here is not the (quite trivial) fact of suppletion on the level positive vs. comparative, but – not at all trivial – suppletion also at the level of comparative vs. superlative (in contrast, e.g. to English *better* – *best* or Czech *lepší* – *nejlepší*). The semantics of the root of the adj. *melior* should thus be of such nature to prevent the formation of regular superlative derived from the form of the comparative (i.e. *\*\*mellimus* or *\*\*melissimus*). The key question now therefore is: **What types of qualities can be expressed as being of the higher degree on the scale (comparative), but not of the maximum one (superlative)?**

An example of this type can be the Greek ἀμείνων (vs. the superlative ἄριστος) in the etymological interpretation offered in Pokorny (1959: 711): he claims it is an adjective derived by a privative suffix from \*μείνων, i.e. “non-smaller”. The superlative *\*\*“the most non-small/non-smaller”* would then be semantically meaningless. This example, however, is rather extreme (disregarding the fact that this etymology is not universally accepted – for the summary of the individual views see Dieu 2011: 47–54). Another feature is more common: One characteristic of gradable adjectives – according to Hock (1999: 209–210) it is actually the main characteristic, of more consequence than the fact itself of being able to be expressed on the scale – is that the “quantity” of the quality expressed by the positive is not absolute, but that the positive of an adjective denotes certain comparison of the quality to the norm of the given class (Hock cites the famous Sapir’s example “A small elephant is a large animal”). In my opinion, however, this cannot be considered to be the feature of all gradable adjectives. There are also such adjectives that, on the contrary, denote the absolute measure of a quality, independent of the meaning of the substantive they modify, e.g. *empty* or *honest*. Such adjectives denote already in the positive directly the full degree of a quality. To emphasise the maximum degree we can use the expressions like *completely empty* or *absolutely honest*. The superlatives *the emptiest* or *the most honest*, on the other hand, refer not to the reality of the maximum measure of “emptiness” or “honesty”, but to the one of the “not completely empty” or “not absolutely honest” most closely approaching it. The regularly formed superlatives thus have only a limited use. The comparatives *emptier* or *more honest* denote a lesser degree of a quality than the positives *empty* and *honest*. The logical (not the grammatical) scale is in fact more likely thought of as follows: “little honest – (slightly) more honest – absolutely honest”, within which the grammatical superlative *the most honest* has no place. The quality denoted by the root from which the comparative *melior* is derived must have most probably been of this type. The root \**mel-* understood as denoting the meaning “strong, big” does not support such an interpretation; nor does the existence of the Greek superlative μάλιστα.

Let us return to the issue of the form now. Let us proceed from the presumption that the Latin root should correspond to the zero grade. The vowel *-e-* obviously can, and

commonly does, occur in Latin even in the zero grade syllables, including in the morphemes ending in a stop (e.g. *decet* < \**d<sub>(e)</sub>k'-h<sub>1</sub>jé-*, *sedeō* < \**s<sub>(e)</sub>d-h<sub>1</sub>jé-*, *sessus* < \**s<sub>(e)</sub>d-tós* etc.).<sup>18</sup> This, however, never happens in the position before *l*, as was described earlier. Therefore, let us consider the possibility that the *-l-* in *meliōr* was not etymological, but resulted from the Latin sound changes.

The consonant *l* alternates in Latin with two other consonants, namely with *r* in the instances of the so called liquid dissimilation (mainly in suffixes) and – under not completely clear conditions – with *d*, e.g. Archaic Latin *dacrūma* > *lacrima*, *dingua* > *lingua* and others.<sup>19</sup> So, let us look at the possibility of the development *meliōr-* < \**m<sub>(e)</sub>r-iés-* or \**m<sub>(e)</sub>d-iés-*.

### Etymology with /r/

The dissimilation of *l-r* usually goes vice versa, i.e. if the suffix containing the consonant *l* is attached to the base that also contains *l*, the *l* in the suffix changes in *r*, e.g. *consul-aris*, *exempl-aris*, etc. × *nav-alis* and others. The etymological *l* thus changes into *r*. Nevertheless, there exist also sporadic examples of a reverse change: *caerulus* < \**caelulus* < *caelum* or the Late Latin \**pelerinus* (hence the English *pilgrim*) < *peregrinus*, etc. In our case we are considering the possibility that *meliōr-* developed from \**meriōr-*.

First, immediately apparent problem is the fact that the *r* in the suffix *-iōr-* is not etymological, either, but is a result of rhotacism. That means that if we were to consider the possible dissimilation *mer...r... > mel...r...*, it would have had to be chronologically younger than rhotacism.<sup>20</sup> A very serious counter-argument here could be the form *meliōsem*, i.e. “already” with an *l*, but still with an *s*, attested by Varro (*ling.* 7, 3, 27): --- *f<o>edesum foederum, plusima plurima, meliōsem meliōrem, asenam arenam, ianitos ianitor*.<sup>21</sup> However, the relevance of Varro’s evidence could be contested from two aspects. First, the *-r* in the subst. *ianitor* is etymological (suffix \*-tér-/ -tor-), i.e. the form *ianitos* never really existed and is only a Varro’s construction. This obviously casts slight doubt also at the attestation of the other given forms (albeit in the other instances<sup>22</sup> rhotacism is undoubtedly a reality; the form *meliōsem* however could be only a construction,

<sup>18</sup> These cases are sometimes referred to as “new full grade”, but it is actually nothing but the vocalization of the syllable in the zero grade so that the root syllable is maintained.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. for example Mar. Victorin. *gramm.* VI 26, 1–5: *communionem enim habuit <l> littera <cum d> apud antiquos, ut dīnguām et linguaṁ et dacrīniſ <et> lacrīniſ et Kapitōdium et Kapitōlium et sella a sede <et> olere ab odore: <est> et communio cum Graeciā, nos lacrīmae, illi δάκρυα, olere ὁδωδέναι, meditari μελετᾶν*. Cf. e.g. Meiser (1998: 100), Leumann (1977: 155–156).

<sup>20</sup> It is generally held that rhotacism took place in the fifth century BC, with reference to the records of yet unrhōtacised forms in older Latin inscriptions. It must be said, however, that such records are rare. Safarewicz (1932: 15ff.) aptly pointed out that there are not many definite proofs: NVMASIOI on *Fibula Praenestina* need not necessarily correspond to the classical *Numerio*; ESED on the Forum Romanum Cippus need not be the classical *erit* and IOVESAT of the so called Duenos Inscription need not necessarily correspond to the classical *iūrat* (particularly with regard to the vertical line between IOVE and SAT, and – let us add – the syntactically rather problematic attachment of the ensuing DEIVOS), as is generally assumed. In Safarewicz’s time, there were no other records of unrhōtacized forms. Later, however, quite unequivocal *Lapis Satricanus* with VALESIOSIO was found.

<sup>21</sup> Cited according to ed. G. Goetz – Fr. Schoell, Leipzig: Teubner, 1910.

<sup>22</sup> Possibly with the exception of *asena* – *arena*: the subst. *arena* has quite unclear etymology.

which in this form, that is with the sequence *-l-s-*, may not have ever really existed). Second, Varro's interpretation refers to the citation from *Carmen Saliorum* given in the previous paragraph (*ling.* 7, 3, 26), which is attested as follows: *dunus Ianusue uet pom melios eum recum*. The text is wholly unintelligible and the adjective in question is in the form *melios* – which says nothing about whether rhotacism had or had not taken place.

The second counter-argument is again a formal one: for the root ending in *r* practically the same holds true as for the root ending in *l* – the zero grade of the root should standardly vocalize in Latin into *or*, i.e. *mr-* > *mor-*, even if in the case of *r* this vocalization is not so unambiguous as in the case of *l* (there are also the instances of *r* > *ur*, *r* > *ar*<sup>23</sup> and then secondary derivations *r* > *er* of the type *ager*).

Overall it can be said that even though there is no unequivocal counter-argument, the formal doubts are apparently too numerous for this interpretation to prevail over the absolutely straightforward derivation of Latin *meliōr* < PIE \**m(e)l-*. Nevertheless, if we approach the whole issue primarily from a semantic viewpoint, a candidate for the base of the comparative *meliōr* could be found: the adj. *merus*, “pure, core”, derived from the root \**merH-* (hence also the Hit. *marri* “just so, gratuitously”, cf. de Vaan [2008: s. v. *merus*]). There is no comparative \*\**meriōr-* nor superlative \*\**merissimus* attested to the adj. *merus*. In addition, the vocalization of the zero-grade of the root ending in *-rH-* > *-er-* is attested.<sup>24</sup>

An objection can surely be raised against the hypothesis that the *l* in *meliōr-* developed through dissimilation, namely that there exist comparative forms in *-riōr-* (e.g. *pūrior*). But what plays role here is the strength of analogy: the other forms of the paradigm positive – comparative – superlative prevent dissimilation. In the case of *meliōr-* there is no paradigm to have such an effect.

### Etymology with /d/

The other consonant that has in Latin a close relation (*communio*, as writes Marius Victorinus – cf. above note 19) to *l*, is *d*. The derivation of *meliōr-* from \**m(e)diōr-* would have one advantage, namely absolutely uncomplicated explanation of the *e*-vocalism in the root, but at the same time one indisputable disadvantage, namely that it is generally held that the group *dj* in Latin assimilates to *jj* and consequently reduces to *j*.

A usual example of the change *dj* > *(j)j* in Latin grammar books is the comparative of the antonym of the discussed adjective, *peiōr-* < \**pei-iōr-* < \**ped-iōr-*, and then *Jovis* < *Diovīs*.<sup>25</sup> It must be added, however, that these examples are the only (possibly with the exception of the extremely poorly documented *caia, caiare*), and ambiguous, ones. Firstly, there are also counter-examples, in the case of the name *Jov-* directly from its own family: *dies* and its derivations (including the extraparadigmatic *hodie*), *diu*. In addition, there is also one more instance of an inherited formation with the group *-diV-* in the original, that is non-assimilated form: *ordior*; moreover, the question is whether the cases should

<sup>23</sup> Cf. for example Meiser (1998: 63–64).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. *verbum* (< \**wṛh₂-*, see de Vaan [2008: s. v. *verbum*]; however, the reconstruction \**wérdʰ-om* is also well possible here) and probably also others, e.g. *terō*, and, after all, *merus* itself.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for example Sihler (1995: 189), Meiser (1998: 120), Baldi (2002: 271), Weiss (2009: 159).

not be added as well of *medius*, *fidius*, *gradior* or *radius*, where the reconstruction of \**d<sup>h</sup>* is either accepted or deemed possible: the loss of aspiration should in all probability have preceded the assimilation. To put it briefly, in contrast to the groups -*giV-* and -*siV-*, which are usually treated together with the group -*diV-* in historical grammars, the assimilation of the last-named is not completely provable.

What is definitely worth mentioning is the fact that the preverb *ad-i-* does not assimilate, which points to the relative phonetic distance of the two sounds.

In addition, in the case of *peior* the etymology is not by far that clear. The derivation of an adjective with a similar meaning from the root \**ped-*, “feet”, has no equivalents and is by no means semantically straightforward. What could be semantically more acceptable is the root \**peth<sub>1</sub>-*, “fall” (LIV 477). Beside this, Sihler (1995: 189, note 1) writes that an “alternative reconstruction \**pes-yōs* is sometimes suggested”. He himself (*ibid.* and p. 368) rejects both the variants (< \**pes-* and \**pet-*), but does so based on the consideration I do not deem to be entirely correct: Sihler says that with regard to the form *optimus* the same superlative suffix, i.e. in his rendition \*-*tñmo-*, is to be presumed also in the adj. *pessimus*; neither the sequence \**pes-t-* nor \**pet-t-* would then in Latin yield the resulting *pess-* (in contrast to this, the development -*d-t->-s-s-* is standard, cf. e.g. *sessum* < \**s<sub>(e)</sub>d-tó-* etc.). In my opinion, however, the argumentation cannot be based on the fact that antonyms need to be derived by the same suffix. What is important is that the superlative suffix \*-*tñh<sub>2</sub>o-* is connected with the comparative suffix *-tero-* (cf. already earlier note 15), which would not hold true in the given case (*peior*), and next that by this suffix are also derived the superlatives from substantives and adverbs (the latter condition seems – regarded superficially – to hold, if we take the root with the meaning of “feet” as a base; then, however, the resulting superlative would apparently have to have the meaning “the most feet-like” or “the most feety” – cf. Sanskrit *víratama-*, “the most manly”). It is therefore much more probable that the suffix in the adj. *pessimus* is \*-*(i)sHmo-*, and that all the three options, i.e. \**ped-s-*, \**pes-s-* and \**pet-s-*, are formally absolutely equal: they would all yield *pess-* in Latin.

So, we do not find a clear argument for claiming that the sound law -*dj->-(j)j-* works in Latin. Therefore, from the formal point of view, the possibility that *meliōr-* derives from \**m<sub>(e)</sub>diōr-* cannot be completely excluded. Let us then take a look again at whether there is a root \**med-*, from which the meaning of “better” could be derived and which would comply with our stipulation that the base adjective from the given root should express the absolute degree of a quality. From the root *med-*, “to measure” (Pokorný 1959: 705; LIV 423) no primary adjective in the positive is formed in Latin; however, the semantics of this root very well corresponds with what we are looking for: a positive denoting the absolute degree “appropriate, right” (cf. also Umb. *meřs*, “right, what is right”),<sup>26</sup> a comparative (expressing a lesser degree of the quality than positive) “more appropriate, righter”. The semantic shift towards “better” would then be only very subtle.

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Untermann (2000: 461).

## Conclusion

To draw any unanimous conclusions about the etymology of the given adjectival form is practically impossible, as is usually the case with the words with no clear equivalents at least in one other Indo-European language. The current etymology of the adj. *melior* is problematic both from the formal and the semantic view. The newly suggested options, i.e. the derivation from the root \**merH-* or \**med-*, are at first sight formally less straightforward, but, on the other hand, they solve the conflict the formerly suggested etymology has with the rule which in Latin is really close to be called “a law”, i.e. \**l* > *ol* (× -*e*- in *melior*). From the point of view of semantics, I believe that both forwarded options are better than the existing etymology, explaining the suppletion in the paradigm at the level comparative – superlative.

---

## REFERENCES

- Baldi, Ph., 2002. *The Foundations of Latin*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Beekes, R., 2010. *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Charnraine, P., 1968. *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Corbett, G. G., 2007. ‘Canonical typology, suppletion, and possible words’. *Language* 83, 8–42.
- Cvrček, V. (ed.), 2010. *Mluvnice současné češtiny 1. Jak se píše a jak se mluví* [= A Grammar of Contemporary Czech 1. How we write and how we talk]. Prague: Karolinum, 2013 (2nd reprint).
- de Vaan, M., 2008. *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Dieu, É., 2011. *Le supplétisme dans les formes de gradation en grec ancien et dans les langues indo-européennes*. Geneva: Librairie Droz.
- Ernout, A., Meillet, A., 1932. *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Hock, W., 1999. ‘Zur Suppletion beim Adjektiv im Altgriechischen und Germanischen’. In: W. Schindler, J. Untermaier (eds.), *Grippe, Kamm und Eulenspiegel. Festschrift für Elmar Seibold zum 65. Geburtstag*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 207–223.
- Hofmann, J. B., Szantyr, A., 1965. *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* [= M. Leumann, J. B. Hofmann, A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik. Zweiter Band*]. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Latte, K., 1960. *Römische Religionsgeschichte*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Leumann, M., 1977. *Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre* [= M. Leumann, J. B. Hofmann, A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik. Erster Band*]. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- LIV = Rix, H. (ed.), 2001. *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert.
- Meiser, G., 1998. *Historische Laut- und Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Melčuk, I. A., 2000. ‘Suppletion’. In: G. E. Booij, Ch. Lehmann, J. Mugdan (eds.), *Morphologie / Morphology. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Flexion und Wortbildung / An International Handbook on Inflection and Word-Formation. 1. Halbband / Volume 1*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 510–522.
- Menge, H., Burkhard, T., Schauer, M., 2000. *Lehrbuch der lateinischen Syntax und Semantik*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Oniga, R., 2014. *Latin: a linguistic introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pokorny, J., 1959. *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch. I. Band*. Bern/Munich: A. Francke.
- Pultrová, L., 2011. *The Latin Deverbal Nouns and Adjectives*. Prague: Karolinum.
- Rix, H., 1992. *Historische Grammatik des Griechischen. Laut- und Formenlehre*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Safarewicz, J., 1932. *Le rhotacisme latin*. Vilnius: Towarzystwo przyjaciół nauk.

- Sihler, A. L., 1995. *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Touratier, Ch., 2013. *Lateinische Grammatik. Linguistische Einführung in die lateinische Sprache*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Untermann, J., 2000. *Wörterbuch des Oskisch-Umbrischen*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
- Walde, A., Hofmann, J. B., 1938–1956. *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Weiss, M., 2009. *Outline of the Historical and Comparative Grammar of Latin*. Ann Arbor: Beech Stave Press.

---

#### **LATINSKÉ BONUS – MELIOR – OPTIMUS**

##### Shrnutí

V etymologických slovnících tradovaná etymologie komparativu *melior* je neuspokojivá nejen z formálního hlediska a kvůli nedostatku jasných ekvivalentů, ale zejména proto, že se nevyrovnává s nestandardním faktorem supletivismu na úrovni komparativ vs. superlativ (*optimus*). Superlativ je běžně odvozen od komparativu. Článek se proto zabývá otázkou, zda existují nějaké druhy kvalit, které lze vyjadřovat ve vyšší míře na škále (komparativ), avšak již nikoli v míře maximální (superlativ), a na základě této úvahy i formálního rozboru jsou pak navrženy alternativní etymologie adj. *melior*.

*Lucie Pultrová  
Charles University in Prague  
Lucie.Pultrova@ff.cuni.cz*

**,HYMNISCHES‘ IN DEN LAUDES DEI DES DRACONTIUS**  
**Bemerkungen zu einem Lichthymnus**  
**(*laud. dei 1, 118–137*) und einem Gotteshymnus**  
**(*laud. dei 2, 15–31*)**

BENJAMIN HÜBBE

**ABSTRACT**

‘Hymnic elements’ in the *Laudes Dei* of Dracontius  
Notes on a lux-hymn (*laud. dei 1, 118–137*) and on a praise of God  
(*laud. dei 2, 15–31*)

In his paper the author tries to shed light on two hymnic and/or panegyrical passages of book 1 and 2 of the *Laudes Dei*, written by the North African poet Dracontius by the end of the 5th century A. D.: the so called hymn on *lux* (Drac. *laud. dei 1, 118–137*) and a hymn on God (Drac. *laud. dei 2, 15–31*).

Under the term of ‘hymnic elements’ (*Hymnisches*), to be understood as a collective for hymnic and panegyrical forms as well as their ‘pagan’ and ‘christian’ motifs and themes in the Late Antiquity, the author tries to detect specific performative modes of Dracontius’ poetical practices in the *Laudes Dei*. He argues, in order to value the *Laudes Dei* as a christian work of poetry, that it seems not so much of interest for the poet Dracontius to provide a strict exegetical or dogmatic programme via his poetry, but rather to perform the praise of God via a setting of various poetical elements, namely hymnic and panegyrical ones.

As the author’s analysis of the two hymns tries to show, the poets approach to the Bible and the deeds of God as a christian layman is a literary one. In order to praise the christian God, Dracontius uses several hymnic and panegyrical elements and transforms them so that categorizations and dichotomizations like ‘pagan’ and ‘christian’ become suspect for the description of his poetry.

**Keywords:** Dracontius; *Laudes Dei*; *De laudibus Dei*; hymn; panegyric; pagan; christian; *lux*; *sol*

---

Von ‚Hymnischem‘ in den *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius<sup>1</sup> zu sprechen, muss zunächst völlig selbstevident und nahezu tautologisch wirken, bedenkt man den (nicht eindeutig

---

<sup>1</sup> Dracontius lebte wohl von der Mitte des 5. Jhdts. bis zum Anfang des 6. Jhdts. n. Chr. in Nordafrika. Einschlägige Biographien liefern u. a.: Langlois (1959); Schetter (1989); Weber (1995); Simons (2005) sowie Thanner (2009).

überlieferten)<sup>2</sup> Titel dieses drei Bücher von epischer Länge umfassenden hexametrischen Gedichts, das der Dichter selbst *carmen* nennt und der seine eigene dichterische Tätigkeit als *memorare tuas [scil. Dei] hoc carmine laudes* und als *cantare tuas [scil. Dei] per carmina laudes* beschreibt.<sup>3</sup> Die Frage ist dabei weniger, ob sich ‚Hymnisches‘ in den *Laudes Dei* findet – diese Frage lässt sich entschieden bejahen –, sondern vielmehr, *wie*, das heißt mittels welcher Strategien und poetischer Mittel, Lobpreisungen Gottes in Form von hymnischen und/oder panegyrischen Passagen im Text umgesetzt und den Lesern präsentiert werden.<sup>4</sup>

Anhand zweier Fallbeispiele, dem Lichthymnus im ersten Buch (*laud. dei* 1, 118–137) und einem Gotteslobpreis aus dem zweiten Buch (*laud. dei* 2, 15–31), sollen daher die besonderen Merkmale der im Gedicht zur Anwendung kommenden poetischen Techniken und Strategien der *Laudes Dei* beschrieben werden. Dabei soll gezeigt werden,

---

<sup>2</sup> Die beiden in der modernen Forschung gebräuchlichen Titel sind *De laudibus Dei*, der auf die Edition von Vollmer (1905) zurückgeht, oder schlicht *Laudes Dei*. Vgl. Stella (1985; 1988), Arweiler (2004; 2007). Zur Überlieferung der diversen Werktitel in Handschriften und Editionen siehe Vollmer (1905: X–XIV), Camus, Moussy (1985: 42–45 sowie 130–136). Im Mittelalter bekannt bleibt zu weiten Teilen nur die Bearbeitung des Dracontius durch Eugenius von Toledo aus dem 7. Jahrhundert, der die *Laudes Dei* auf ein *Hexaemeron* reduziert und redigiert. Eine erste Edition aller drei Bücher der *Laudes Dei* und der *Satisfactio* des Dracontius legt erst Faustino Arevalo 1791 vor unter dem Titel *Carmen de Deo* (Camus, Moussy [1985: 133–134]).

<sup>3</sup> Drac. *laud. dei* 1, 1–2; 1, 749; 3, 736. Textgrundlage bildet die Edition von Camus, Moussy (1985) bzw. Moussy (1988). Einen Forschungsüberblick bis 1996 über das Gesamtwerk des Dracontius liefert Catagna (1997). In jüngster Zeit haben sich besonders Simons (2005) und Selent (2011) in ihren Monographien dem Werk des Dracontius gewidmet und versucht zu erweisen, dass sich durch isolierende Kategorisierungen wie ‚profan‘ oder ‚christlich‘ seine Dichtungen nur bedingt einteilen und beschreiben lassen, wie es bereits durch Langlois (1959: 254) betont worden ist. Zur Problematik von Begriffsdiotomien wie ‚pagan‘/‚christlich‘ oder ‚polytheistisch‘/‚monotheistisch‘ siehe Fontaine (1982); Cameron (2011: passim); mit Bezug schon auf Ausonius: Hämke (2013). Auch das literarische Genre der *Laudes Dei* wurde viel diskutiert, da sich in ihnen eine Vielzahl von Traditionen und Textformen (von Hymnik und Panegyrik, bis hin zu Lehrdichtung bzw. didaktischer Poesie) vereinen, siehe z. B. Herzog (1975: LVII), Stella (1985; 1988), Evenepol (1995), Arweiler (2004; 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Anhand seiner Kommentierung des Psalm 148 entwickelte bereits Augustinus eine Konzeption des (Gottes-)Hymnus (Aug. *in psalm. 148, 17: Hymnus scitis quid est? Cantus est cum laude Dei. Si laudas Deum, et non cantas, non dicis hymnum: si cantas, et non laudas Deum, non dicis hymnum: si laudas aliud quod non pertinet ad laudem Dei, etsi cantando laudes, non dicis hymnum. Hymnus ergo tria ista habet, et cantum, et laudem, et Dei. Laus ergo Dei in cantico, hymnus dicitur.*). Inwieweit Dracontius sie kannte und mit seinem *Laudes Dei* direkt auf sie rekurriert oder von ihr abweicht, kann nicht mit letzter Sicherheit gesagt werden. Frappant jedenfalls ist Augustinus‘ Formel *Laus Dei in cantico hymnus dicitur*, die konzeptionelle Entsprechungen im *carmen* des Dracontius zu finden scheint; sei es an den meta poetischen Stellen der *Laudes Dei* oder bei der Umsetzung von Gotteslob und Glaubenskenntnis des Sprecher-Ichs und den vielen daran gekoppelten Gebets-Passagen.

Der Begriff des ‚Hymnischen‘, der im Titel dieses Aufsatzes erscheint, wurde gewählt, weil er in seiner Allgemeinheit zum einen diesen konzeptionellen christlichen Hintergrund der Gotteshymnik (nach Augustinus) aufgreift, zum anderen aber auch die lange klassische Tradition des Götterhymnus und Herrscherpanegyryus miteinbezieht. ‚Hymnisches‘ scheint ferner geeignet, da es sich nicht um lose aneinander geheftete hymnische oder panegyrische Passagen handelt, sondern um einen ca. 2400 Verse umfassenden durchgängigen, nicht prosimetrischen Text. Der Begriff des ‚Hymnischen‘ soll zudem auch auf das Ineinandergehen von ‚christlicher Weltansicht‘ und ‚paganer Kultur‘ (Simons [2005: passim]) aufmerksam machen, das in den Werken des Dracontius präsent ist und sich auch anhand der Stilistik und Darstellungsweise in den *Laudes Dei* analysieren lässt.

wie Gotteslobpreis (*confessio laudis*) und Gottesbekenntnis (*confessio fidei*)<sup>5</sup> des Sprecher-Ichs formal und inhaltlich gestaltet sind.

Eingehender zu thematisieren beginnt der Dichter sein dichterisches Tun nicht, wie man hätte erwarten können, im Prolog, sondern erst am Ende des ersten Buches, wenn er *cantare per carmina laudes [scil. Dei]* abgrenzt von *narrare facientis [scil. Dei] opus*.<sup>6</sup> Es scheint hierbei wichtig, darauf aufmerksam zu machen, dass das Sich-Einordnen des Textes in eine spezifische Gattung nicht mit den ersten Zeilen gegeben ist, sondern sich im Leseprozess bis hin zum Ende des ersten Buches entwickelt: ausgehend vom didaktischen Anspruch, für die Leserschaft Gotteserkenntnis bereitzustellen und zu seinem Lobpreis zu führen (*Drac. laud. dei* 1, 1–4), konkretisiert sich am Ende von Buch 1 der Begriff des *carmen* noch einmal insofern, als dass es sich von jeglicher Form narrativer (Helden- oder Christus-)Epic abgrenzt.<sup>7</sup>

Dracontius geht es stattdessen um ein weitaus schwierigeres Unterfangen: nämlich die *laudes [scil. Dei]*, das Lob der Taten Gottes selbst als einer omnipräsenten und außerzeitlichen Entität zu besingen. Dies ist selbstredend wesentlich schwieriger narrativ umsetzbar und erfordert für Dracontius eine andere Form der literarischen Verarbeitung. Die Entscheidung am Ende von Buch 1 für *memorare* und *cantare*, vor allem für Letzteres, scheint also nicht nur textsortenspezifisch noch einmal auf hexametrische Dichtung verweisen zu wollen, sondern bringt vor allem auch zum Ausdruck, dass der Dichter mit seinen *Laudes Dei* der Heiligen Schrift (etwa der Genesis oder den Büchern der Propheten), die von den *facta Dei* erzählt, in ihrer textlichen Konstitution und Dignität keine Konkurrenz machen will und sich stattdessen für eine poetische Verarbeitung (ein drei Bücher umfassendes hexametrisches Gedicht mit vielen hymnischen und panegyrischen Elementen) entscheidet.

Der dichterische Anspruch des Dracontius erkennt hiermit die Unmöglichkeit, die Erhabenheit Gottes und seines Wirkens angemessen darstellen zu können, wie Iuvencus und Sedulius es ebenfalls zuvor in den Proömien ihrer Bibelgedichte und Evangelienparaphrasen zum Ausdruck gebracht hatten.<sup>8</sup> Auch Dracontius ist sich der Problematik einer dem Ruhme Gottes angemessenen narrativen und/oder poetischen Verarbeitung

<sup>5</sup> Entsprechend der dreifachen Bedeutung von *confessio* als *confessio laudis* (Gottesbekenntnis), *confessio fidei* (Glaubensbekenntnis) und *confessio peccatorum* (Sündenbekenntnis), wie sie bereits vielfach für Augustinus und seine *Confessiones* konstatiert worden ist: Fuhrer (2004: 106); Arweiler (2004). Auch in den *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius nimmt bereits in den ersten Zeilen die *confessio* als Gotteslob und Glaubensbekenntnis einen wichtigen und finalen Stellenwert ein: *Drac. laud. dei* 1, 1–4: *Qui cupid iratum placidumve scire Tonantem / hoc carmen, sed mente legat, dum voce recenset. / Agnoscat quem tempa poli, quem moenia caeli / auctorem confessa suum veneranter adorent.*

<sup>6</sup> *Drac. laud. dei* 1, 747–752 (in Anrede an Gott): *aspice despectum, deiectum attolle parumper / confusumque iuva, quia paenitet esse nocentem, / ut valeam memorare tuas hoc carmine laudes, / quas potero (nam nemo valet narrare creatus / vel modicum facientis opus), quod mens rea clamat / pectore contuso lacrimans et voce fidelis. Ähnlich: *laud. dei* 3, 735–742: *servatum reparare iube pietate sueta, / ut merear cantare tuas per carmina laudes. / Quamvis nemo tua praeconia congrua dixit / aut umquam dicturus erit, nam formula laudis / temporibus tribus ire solet, tu temporis expers. [...] / Si laudator abest, narrator plenus adeset, / sed quis opus narrare tuum sermone valebit?**

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. dazu etwa Herzog (1974: LVII). Die lateinische ‚Bibeldichtung‘, deren Geschichte weit über Antike und Spätantike hinausreichte, war seit ihren Anfängen stets ein diffuses und vielseitiges Genre, sodass die *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius mit ihrer spezifischen Form eher eine Regel bestätigen, statt diese auf innovative Weise zu brechen. Zur abendländischen Geschichte der lateinischen ‚Bibeldichtung‘ siehe u. a. Roling (2006: 327–382).

<sup>8</sup> *Iuvenc. 1–35 (praef.); Sedul. carm. Pasch. 1–59.*

der Heiligen Schrift bewusst. In den Ausdrücken *laudes memorare*, *laudes cantare* und *praeconia dicere*, die er in Bezug auf sein Gedicht wählt, schwingt dabei auch ein spezifisch panegyrisches Element mit, das, anstatt durch das Erzählen von Taten den Ruhm Gottes erst noch zu erweisen, diesen vielmehr grundlegend voraussetzt und diesen selbst zum Gegenstand des Lobs macht.<sup>9</sup> Daher scheint es gerechtfertigt, auf ausgewählte hymnische und panegyrische Passagen des Gedichts, die bisweilen durch einen starken Gebetscharakter gekennzeichnet sind, genauer den Blick zu richten und ihre jeweiligen stilistischen und strategischen Besonderheiten freizulegen.

## I

Das erste Beispiel soll die häufig konkret als ‚Lichthymnus‘ benannte Passage im ersten Buch der *Laudes Dei* (1, 118–137) sein, die die Darstellung des Sechstagewerks einläutet und zugleich – unter engeren formalen Gesichtspunkten – den ersten Hymnus im gesamten Gedicht überhaupt markiert.<sup>10</sup> Doch zunächst kurz zum Kontext der Stelle innerhalb des Werks.

Dem Lichthymnus voraus gehen noch der Prolog (1–42), in dem die Allmacht Gottes gepriesen wird, und eine Digression nach Art eines Prodigienkatalogs über die Wunderzeichen Gottes, mit denen dieser sich den Menschen mittels der Natur auf der Erde offenbare (43–117).<sup>11</sup> Die ersten Zeilen des Prologs nennen das Thema, den *iratus placidusve Tonans*, dessen Doppelfunktion als zürnender, vor allem aber als liebender Gott über die gesamten drei Bücher das leitende Thema bleibt, mit dem Dracontius das Gedicht strukturiert. Verbunden damit liefert der Prolog eine Leseanweisung: Wer etwas über Gott, den zürnenden und sanften Donnerer, wissen möchte, der lese dieses Gedicht (*carmen*) und zwar *mente*, während er es dabei mit der Stimme mustere.<sup>12</sup> Das Innere des Lesers, die *mens*, und das äußerlich Hörbare, seine Stimme (*vox*), wie es der Dichter Dracontius kunstvoll in einem Parallelismus (*mente legere – voce recensere*) auszudrücken weiß, sollen gegenseitig den Leseprozess vollführen. Intensiviert wird diese Anweisung durch den Vertausch der semantischen Bezüge: mit dem Geist soll gelesen werden und mit der Stimme gemustert oder geprüft. Einem (lauten) Lesen wird der geistig-innere, kognitive sowie affektive Mitvollzug des Gelesenen – mehr also als die bloße Bitte um Aufmerksamkeit – zur Seite gestellt. Auf diese Weise, so fährt die Anrede fort, werde der Leser

<sup>9</sup> Camus, Moussy (1985: 45 sowie 52–54) übersetzen den Titel *De laudibus Dei* mit „Louanges de Dieu“. Mit *laudes* wird vor allem der *de facto* bestehende Ruhm Gottes (die „gloire de Dieu“) bezeichnet. *Laudes* ist also nicht nur rein performativ als dichterische Tätigkeit zu verstehen, sondern auch als Gegenstand des Lobs, nämlich den Ruhm Gottes, der besungen werden soll. Vgl. auch Moussy (1988: 137) zu *laud. dei* 3, 736.

<sup>10</sup> Formal erkennbar am Bauelement der nominalen Epiklese sowie an der Auflistung der Wirkungsbereiche und Taten des Lichts (*laud. dei* 1, 119–128); so bereits Smolak (1972: 382). Den traditionell dritten Teil des Hymnus bildet dabei ein Gotteslob in Form eines Sprecherkommentars (*laud. dei* 1, 129–137).

<sup>11</sup> In Form eines Scharniers zwischen Prolog und Prodigienkatalog belehrt das Sprecher-Ich seine Leser in *laud. dei* 1, 39–42 über Gott: [...] *dare signa reis natura iubetur. / ne lateant mortale genus quaecumque propinquent, / praemonet ante pius quam mittat tanta pericla, / prodigiis signisque docens elementa fatigat.*

<sup>12</sup> *laud. dei* 1, 1–2: *Qui cupid iratum placidumve scire Tonantem, / hoc carmen, sed mente legat, dum voce recenset;*; Vgl. auch Arweiler (2004: 231–232).

erkennen (*agnoscet*), wen der Himmel als seinen Schöpfer (*auctorem suum*) bekennt (*confessa*) und mit Verehrung anbetet (*veneranter adorent*).<sup>13</sup> Damit wird zugleich ein Anspruch formuliert, den das Gedicht erfüllen soll: das Erlangen von Gotteserkenntnis beim Leser durch den inneren, affektiven Mitvollzug beim Lesen.<sup>14</sup>

Als Überleitung zwischen Prodigienkatalog und ‚Lichthymnus‘ wird ein Sprecher-Kommentar gesetzt: Wer wüsste nicht, dass Gott die Menschen bewahren wolle, der ja die Schöpfung an sie übergeben hatte, als er am sechsten Tag Adam, den ersten Menschen, erschuf?<sup>15</sup> Mit der Erwähnung des sechsten Schöpfungstages ist das Stichwort gegeben für die Darstellung des Genesisgeschehens. Hier setzt, passend zum ersten Schöpfungstag, der Lichthymnus ein (1, 118–137):

*Prima dies nam lucis erat, mors una tenebris:  
lux datur ante polos, lux clari causa diei,  
120 lux iubar aethereum, lux noctis limes et umbris,  
lux facies rerum, dux lux cunctis elementis,  
lux genitis per cuncta color, lux gratia solis,  
lux decus astrorum, lux aurea cornua lunae,  
lux fulgor caeli, lux et primordia mundi,  
125 lux splendor flammae, lux magni temporis index,  
lux opus Auctoris primum, lux cardo pudoris,  
lux honor agricolis, requies lux omnibus aegris,  
lux aevi media est, lux quae dat tempora metis.  
Et bene constituit mundi primordia lucem  
130 clarus ubique Deus nunquam maculabilis auctor,  
quem non obscurant quacumque ex parte tenebrae  
nec celantur ei quaecumque obscura geruntur.  
Initium factis lucem dat lucis origo.  
Quanta spes mundi promissa est principe luce!  
135 Quae totum praecessit opus quod continet orbis,  
quae solis praevenit iter lumenque coruscum,  
cuius iussit ope clarescere cuncta creata.*

Der erste Tag nun war der des Lichts und zugleich der Tod für die Finsternis: Licht erscheint vor den Himmelspolen, Licht, die Ursache dieses klaren Tages, (120) Licht, der himmlische Glanz, Licht, die Begrenzung der Nacht und der Schatten, Licht, das Antlitz der Dinge, Licht, Führer über alle Elemente, Licht, den Geschöpfen durch alles hindurch Farbe, Licht, der gefällige Dienst der Sonne, Licht, die Zierde der Sterne, Licht, das goldene Horn des Mondes, Licht, der Schein des Himmels, und Licht, der Ursprung der Welt, (125) Licht, der Glanz der Flamme, Licht, das Zeichen einer großen Zeit, Licht, das erste Werk des Schöp-

<sup>13</sup> laud. dei 1, 3–4: *Agnoscet quem templa poli, quem moenia caeli / auctorem confessa suum veneranter adorent.*

<sup>14</sup> Ein topischer Bestandteil christlich-biblischer Hermeneutik: Arweiler (2004: 233), Körtner (1994: 120), Reinmuth (2002: 16–17).

<sup>15</sup> laud. dei 1, 115–117: *Quis genus humanum nescit servare volentem / auctorem dominumque Deum?  
Cui contulit index / per tot facta dies, quem sexta luce creavit.* Dazu Vollmer (1905: 81): *generi humano deus contulit, in potestatem dedit ea quae per tot dies fecit, indicando consilium suum, cum hominem post omnia sexta luce crearet.* Gott ist der Anzeiger, der zeigt, was zu verfolgen oder was zu meiden sei (vgl. Irwin [1942: 71] ad loc.).

fers, Licht, der Ursprung der Scham, Licht, eine Pracht für die Feldbesteller, Licht, eine Ruhe für alle Kranken, Licht, das in der Mitte der Zeit ist, Licht, das den Wendepunkten einen Zeitverlauf gibt. Und gut hat Gott, (130) der nach allen Seiten klar und ein stets makelloser Schöpfer ist, das Licht, den Ursprung der Welt, gestaltet, Gott, den keine Finsternis – von welcher Seite auch immer – verdunkelt, noch bleibt ihm verborgen, was auch immer an Dunklem getan wird. Der Ursprung des Lichts [i.e. Gott] gab als Beginn seiner Schöpfung das Licht. Welch eine Hoffnung auf die Welt ist durch das erste Licht versprochen worden! (135) Das Licht ging dem gesamten Werk, das die Erde enthält, voran. Das Licht ging dem Weg der Sonne und dem blitzenden Licht voran, durch dessen Hilfe [i.e. des Wegs der Sonne] es [i.e. das Licht] befahl, dass alles Geschaffene sich erhelle.<sup>16</sup>

Der Hymnus gliedert sich in zwei nahezu gleich große Teile: einen Lobpreis auf das Licht (118–128) und einen Lobpreis auf Gott, der das Licht erschaffen hat (129–137). Was dieser Passage jedoch zu Recht die Bezeichnung ‚Lichthymnus‘ eingetragen hat, ist nicht nur die besondere Stellung innerhalb des ‚dracontianischen Hexaemeron‘<sup>17</sup> und die Persistenz mit der das Wort *lux* selbst darin vorkommt (anaphorisch nach Art einer Litanei und am Beginn eines jeden Hemistichons von Vers 119 bis 128),<sup>18</sup> sondern auch die mit ihm verbundenen Synonyme und semantischen Felder, wie *clarus*, *dies*, *iubar*, *aureus*, *decus astrorum*, *caelum*, *sol*, *lumen*, *color*, *splendor*, *flamma*, Tages- und Jahreszeitenwechsel sowie der allgemein damit verbundene (messbare) zeitliche Verlauf in der Welt, die sich über die gesamten zwei Teile des Hymnus finden lassen.

Ebenso wie das Licht sich nach allen Seiten ausbreitet und gleichzeitig die Finsternis zur Gänze vertreibt (*mors una tenebris*),<sup>19</sup> so breitet sich auch das Wort *lux* (selbst und in seinen Spielarten) über die gesamten zwanzig Verse des Hymnus aus. Diese vollkommene Ausbreitung des Lichts und gänzliche Vertreibung der Finsternis wird in den Versen 119 und 120 zunächst durch zwei parallel zueinander stehende Hyperbata illustriert: In *lux clari causa diei* werden die zusammengehörenden Glieder *clarus* und *dies* voneinander durch *causa* getrennt. Das Licht, das sich ausbreitet, sorgt dafür, dass der klare und helle Tag nach allen Seiten hin (ausgehend vom Wort *causa*) ausstrahlt, sodass *lux* nicht nur auf inhaltlicher Ebene de facto die Ursache für die Ausbreitung der Helligkeit ist, sondern auch auf der formalen Ebene des Hymnus.

Ähnliches ist im darauffolgenden Vers 120 zu beobachten: *lux noctis limes et umbris*. Stellvertretend für die Finsternis (*tenebrae*) stehen hier – fast analog zum Genesisbericht – *nox* und *umbrae*, die durch das Licht nach allen Seiten hin vertrieben werden, sodass das Licht nicht nur auf inhaltlicher Ebene Nacht und Schatten auseinandertreibt (*noctis – limes – et umbris*), sondern ebenso wie im vorangegangen Beispiel auch auf formaler

<sup>16</sup> Eine Übersetzung des Dracontius ins Deutsche ist ein Forschungsdesiderat. Für jede hier präsentierte deutsche Übersetzung der *Laudes Dei* bürgt, wo nicht anders vermerkt, der Verfasser dieser Arbeit.

<sup>17</sup> Zu den Besonderheiten und Abweichungen in Dracontius' gesamter Darstellung des Sechstagewerks siehe Smolak (1972: 382–397). Die Bezeichnung ‚Hexaemeron‘ ist problematisch, da erst mit der Redaktion des Eugenius von Toledo das erste Buch der *Laudes Dei* auf das Sechstagewerk verkürzt wurde und – inklusive von Eingriffen in den Text – unter dem Titel *Hexaemeron* in Umlauf kam. Vgl. dazu Camus, Moussy (1985: 105–107). In seiner ersten Edition druckt Vollmer (1905) den von ihm erststellten Text des Dracontius und den Text des Eugenius gegeneinander ab.

<sup>18</sup> Smolak (2004: 346).

<sup>19</sup> Vollmer (1905: 28) ad loc.: *mors una: luce apparente funditus omnes victae sunt tenebrae*. Vgl. auch Camus, Moussy (1985: 259): „leur « seule et unique » mort“.

Ebene. Das *fiat lux* der Genesis, die Schaffung des Lichts aus dem Wort Gottes, die der Hymnus thematisiert, wird so performativ auf formaler, gestaltungstechnischer Ebene gespiegelt. Dem schaffenden Wort Gottes, dem *fiat lux*, wird eine Entsprechung im Medium der Sprache und der Dichtung gegeben, die ebenso wieder der Verbreitung dieses Gotteswortes dienen.

Zu den spezifischen Besonderheiten des Hymnus gehört ebenso die Art und Weise, in der der biblische Stoff des ersten Schöpfungstages durch Dracontius poetisch verarbeitet wird. Der Beginn mit *lux datur* lehnt sich eng an das *fiat lux* der Genesis an.<sup>20</sup> Umso bemerkenswerter ist, dass der Hymnus im Weiteren relativ eigenständig gegenüber den Hergang des ersten Schöpfungstages auftritt, wie er im Bericht der Genesis zu finden ist.<sup>21</sup> Die Scheidung von Licht und Dunkelheit (*Gen. 1, 4*) bildet gleichsam nur den Auftakt für den Lobpreis auf das Licht. Die Attribute des Lichts speisen sich dabei nicht nur aus dem ersten Schöpfungstag, sondern die ganzheitliche Bedeutung des Lichts für das komplette Schöpfungswerk wird durch Dracontius im Licht-Hymnus bereits vorweg genommen. Elemente aus den gesamten sechs Schöpfungstagen werden zum Wirkungsbereich des Lichts gezählt, obwohl ihre Entstehung – auch in den *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius – erst in den noch folgenden Schöpfungstagen beschrieben ist. Zu diesen antizipierten Wirkungsbereichen des Lichts zählen unter anderen: *lux dux cunctis elementis, lux genitis per cuncta color, lux gratia solis, lux decus astrorum, lux honor agricolis, lux quae dat tempora metis* (120–128), um nur einige Beispiele zu nennen.<sup>22</sup> Hier realisiert sich klar der vom Dichter formulierte Anspruch, *laudes Dei*, also den Ruhm Gottes,<sup>23</sup> des Schöpfers der Dinge, zu besingen und sich nicht nur darauf zu beschränken, das *opus facientis* der Reihe nach zu erzählen (*narrare*).

Der Hymnus lässt zudem auch einen in der Bibel geschulten Autor erkennen, der mit Fragen der Schriftexegese und der Kommentierung der Genesis im Speziellen vertraut zu sein scheint.<sup>24</sup> So scheint der erste Vers (118) auf eine besondere Formulierung im Genesisbericht zu rekurrieren und diese unter Rücksicht ihrer exegetischen Auslegung poetisch im Hymnus zu verarbeiten: *Prima dies nam lucis erat, mors una tenebris*. Zu Recht wurde darauf hingewiesen, dass in der Genesis (*Gen. 1, 5*) ausdrücklich vom *dies unus*, also vom *einen Tag*, und nicht vom ersten Tag die Rede ist, wie es *prima dies* bei Dracontius nahelegt.<sup>25</sup> Namhafte spätantike Exegeten der Schrift, wie Origines oder

<sup>20</sup> *Gen. 1, 3: Dixitque Deus: Fiat lux. Et facta est lux.* Ebenso Smolak (2004: 346).

<sup>21</sup> Die Erwähnung der Erschaffung von Himmel und Erde (*Gen. 1, 1*) als erste Schöpfung Gottes fehlt. Stattdessen geht Dracontius gleich zur Schaffung des Lichts über: *Prima dies nam lucis erat, mors una tenebris (laud. dei 1, 118)*. Siehe dazu: Smolak (1972: 282–383). Zum exegetischen Stellenwert des Lichthymnus des Dracontius auch Nodes (1993: 110–111).

<sup>22</sup> Die Sterne (*astra, sidera*) sowie der tages- und jahreszeitliche Wechsel (*lux quae dat tempora metis*) gehören erst in den vierten Schöpfungstag, genauso wie das Sonnenlicht (*Gen. 1, 14; Drac. laud. dei 1, 206–233*). Die Erschaffung der Lebewesen (*genita*) startet erst ab dem fünften Tag (*Gen. 1, 20–36; Drac. laud. dei 1, 234–254*).

<sup>23</sup> So beschreiben Camus, Moussy (1985: 45, mit Anm. 4) das Thema der *Laudes Dei*.

<sup>24</sup> Welche Version oder Versionen des Bibeltextes (*Vetus Latina, Vulgata*, spezifisch nordafrikanische Textvarianten) Dracontius möglicherweise benutzt haben mag, ist nicht mit letzter Sicherheit feststellbar. Wie lange sich in Nordafrika alte bzw. regionale Traditionen mit welcher Persistenz hielten bis sich ein einheitlicher *Vulgata*-Text letztlich durchsetzte, ist umstritten. Vgl. dazu ferner etwa die Bemerkungen von Kelly (1993: 174–176) zu den nordafrikanischen Bekenntnissen.

<sup>25</sup> *Gen. 1, 5: [...] factumque est vespera et mane, dies unus.* Die folgenden Ausführungen zur *prima dies* fußen auf den Beobachtungen von Camus, Moussy (1985: 259–260).

Ambrosius, hatten sich in ihren Werken dieser Stelle der Genesis bereits angenommen. Für Origines konnte nur vom *einen* Tag die Rede sein, da es vor Erschaffung der Welt auch noch keine Zeit geben konnte. Nur die Abfolge mehrerer Tage konnte eine Reihung wie erster, zweiter oder dritter Tag implizieren.<sup>26</sup> Ambrosius stellt in seiner Bearbeitung des Hexaemeron des Basilius von Caesarea Ähnliches fest, argumentiert jedoch, dass der Tag der Erschaffung des Lichts *der erste eine*, das heißt ganze und vollständige, Tag von vierundzwanzig Stunden Dauer gewesen sei und deshalb *unus* sei.<sup>27</sup>

Von dieser exegetischen Problemlage scheint Dracontius in seinem Lichthymnus nicht unbeeinflusst gewesen zu sein und was macht er anders, wenn er von der *prima dies* des Lichts und von der *mors una* der Finsternis spricht? In seinem Hymnus ist das Licht gleich mehrmals *primordia mundi* (124 und 129), aber zugleich auch *magni temporis index* (125), *aevi media* (128) und *quae dat tempora metis* (128); also ein zugleich zeitloses wie zeitliches Phänomen, das zum einen die Ewigkeit Gottes illustriert, zum anderen aber auch die Erschaffung der Welt und mit ihr die vergängliche, irdische Zeit dokumentiert. Doch gerade wenn auch die Genesis selbst davon berichtet, dass Gott das geschaffene Licht ‚Tag‘ nannte und die Finsternis ‚Nacht‘,<sup>28</sup> so ist eine Bezeichnung des Lichts als *opus Auctoris primum* (126) und eine Bezeichnung des *ersten einen* Tags mit *prima dies lucis erat* exegetisch eher unproblematisch, da im Gedicht die Ausdrücke *prima dies* und *mors una tenebris* gleichzeitig verschiedene Aspekte der Genesis und ihrer spätantiken Auslegung kunstvoll miteinander verbinden: es wird sowohl der erste Moment der Schöpfung (die Erschaffung des Lichts durch Gott), als auch das gesamte kommende Schöpfungswerk und die Schlüsselrolle des Lichts als Ausdruck auch der Ewigkeit Gottes durch den ersten Teil des Hymnus antizipiert. Diese exegetischen Gesichtspunkte scheinen für Dracontius allerdings weniger ausschlaggebend. Wie bereits bei der formalen Analyse des ersten Teils gezeigt werden konnte, liegt seine Schwerpunktsetzung darin, die Bedeutung des Lichts performativ vorzuführen mit den Mitteln der Dichtung.

Der zweite Teil des Hymnus illustriert hingegen spezieller die Verflechtung von Gott und Licht (129–137). Beide scheinen sich besondere Attribute zu teilen. Dabei wird zu sehen sein, dass ihr Verhältnis zueinander nicht nur darin aufgeht, dass das Licht ein Instrument Gottes darstellt (wie etwa auch die *natura* bei Dracontius), sondern als sowohl zeitliches wie außer-zeitliches Phänomen ebenso auch einen Bestandteil der Ewigkeit Gottes ausmacht und als ein solcher mit Hilfe der Mittel der Poesie vom Dichter inszeniert wird.<sup>29</sup>

Rein formal löst sich der Lobpreis nun von der hymnisch-litaneiahaften Struktur und wird in Form eines Sprecher-Kommentars, der panegyrische Elemente aufweist, fortgesetzt (129). Dabei werden Gott und das von ihm geschöpfte Licht eng miteinander verbunden, indem Gott wiederholt als Schöpfer des Lichts geltend gemacht wird, zugleich aber auch entscheidende Attribute des Lichts mitübernimmt: *constituit [...] lucem / clarus ubique Deus*. Gott ist *clarus*, wie auch das Licht der Ursprung des klaren Tages war

<sup>26</sup> Orig. hom. in Gen. 1, 1 (Text nach: Habermehl 2011): *non dixit dies prima, sed dixit dies una, quia tempus nondum erat antequam esset mundus. Tempus autem esse incepit ex consequentibus diebus. Secunda namque dies et tertia dies et quarta et reliquiae omnes tempus incipiunt designare.*

<sup>27</sup> Ambr. hex. 1, 10, 37: *Praeclare etiam unum, non primum diem dixit.*

<sup>28</sup> Gen. 1, 5: *Appellavitque lucem diem, et tenebras noctem.*

<sup>29</sup> Zu diesen und ähnlichen Ausdrucksformen von Raum, Zeit und Ewigkeit bei Dracontius vgl. Stoehr-Monjou (2011).

(119: *clari causa diei*) und er ist *ubique*, ebenso wie das Licht, das überall die Dunkelheit vertreibt. Beide Attribute stehen zur Hervorhebung am Versbeginn, wie häufig bei Dracontius. Ferner werde Gott, so fährt der Sprecher fort, von keiner Seite her von Dunkelheit verdeckt (131: *quem non obscurant quacumque ex parte tenebrae*), noch entgehe ihm, was auch immer an Dunklem getrieben werde (132: *nec celantur ei quaecumque obscura geruntur*). Wiederum übernimmt Gott ein Attribut des Lichts. Bereits in Vers 126 wurde das Licht als *cardo pudoris* bezeichnet, als Ursprung der Scham,<sup>30</sup> weil es die Scham überhaupt erst sichtbar macht. Auch Gott in seiner Allmacht, wird jeder Scham gewahr und macht sie – wie das Licht – sichtbar.<sup>31</sup> Und sowohl Gott als auch das Licht werden im Licht-Hymnus als *index* bezeichnet, als Anzeiger und ‚Sichtbarmacher‘ (Gott in 116 und das Licht in 125). Parallel zur Allmacht Gottes, die ein Allsehens-Motiv miteinschließt, wird also auch dem Licht eine gewisse Allpräsenz attestiert.

Dennoch ist Vorsicht geboten: diese Annäherung von Gottes- und Lichtattributen vollzieht sich allein auf formaler und poetischer Ebene. Theologisch stehen auch sie bei Dracontius auf völlig verschiedenen Niveaus, wie der Text immer wieder deutlich werden lässt. Ein Teil der Erkenntnis scheint hier darin zu liegen, dass der Lichthymnus der *Laudes Dei* stärker unter dem Aspekt seiner formalen und poetischen (und damit literarischen) Umsetzung zu funktionieren scheint, anstatt dadurch, mal diese oder jene oder gar etwa eine ganz spezifische (christliche) Theologie zu forcieren.<sup>32</sup> Die *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius scheinen deutlich performativer, statt nur rein didaktischer Natur zu sein; es geht vor allem um das *laudare*, statt nur um das *docere*.<sup>33</sup>

Dies illustrieren auch die folgenden Verse, wenn das Sprecher-Ich des Gedichts – in Übereinstimmung mit der Genesis – berichtet, dass das Licht (*lux*) vor den irdischen Dingen und vor dem Lauf der Sonne (136: *solis iter*) und Phänomenen wie Blitzen oder Wetterleuchten (136: *lumen coruscum*) erschaffen worden sei, durch deren Hilfe wiede-

<sup>30</sup> Camus, Moussy (1985: 263) mit den Hinweis auf *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* III, 446: „origo, radix, stirps“.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. dazu etwas später die Passage in *laud. dei* 1, 491–501, in der Adam und Eva nach dem Sündenfall versuchen, ihre Scham zu verbergen: *Viderat Omnipotens homines didicisse pudorem, / perdiderant quem fraude truci dapibusque comesis, / errantes per prata reos folisque tegentes / fecundos artus: dant agnita membra reatum, / illicitum fas ante putant licitumque profecto / creditur esse nefas. Hos increpat ore tonanti, / sacrilegos quos iura Dei calcasse profanat, / dum quaerunt illas folis vel rupe latebras, / tunc magis abfunti, cum credunt posse latere / omnium quodcumque Deum, cui cuncta patescunt, et merito, quia cuncta facit fecitque iubendo*. Siehe auch Gen. 3, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Dass Dracontius allem Anschein nach von der göttlichen Trinität überzeugt war, wie u. a. Stellen der *Laudes Dei* nahelegen (Drac. *laud. dei* 2, 78–110), darf nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, dass er auf poetische Traditionen zurückgreift, die durchaus als theologisch fragwürdig erscheinen konnten.

<sup>33</sup> Solche und ähnliche poetische Lizzenzen haben die *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius bei der Nachwelt nicht selten fragwürdig werden lassen. Die Redaktionen des draconianischen ‚Hexaemeron‘ durch Eugenius von Toledo, die Vollmer (1905) in seiner Edition abdruckt, geben hierfür ein gutes Beispiel. Davon zeugen die Widmung der Redaktion an Chindaswinth, in der Eugenius seine Redaktionssprinzipien beschreibt (Vollmer [1905: 27]: *nec in eis aliquid reperitur quo lectoris animus aut mulceatur doctus aut doceatur indoctus*) sowie seine Eingriffe in den Text des Lichthymnus (Vollmer [1905: 29], dort besonders die Eingriffe in die Verse 133/134 des überlieferten Textes [= Vers 16/17 der Fassung des Eugenius von Toledo]: Aus der von Vollmer (1905: ebd.) präsentierten Textfassung *initium factis lucem dat lucis origo. / quanta spes mundi promissa est principe luce?*, wird bei Eugenius *initium factis lucem dat, lucis origo, / qua vita mundo praemissa est principe luce / [...]*). Hieran zeigt sich nicht zuletzt, dass auch die Textgeschichte der *Laudes Dei* und der mit ihr einhergehende Anspruch auf Begradiung der inhaltlichen Stringenz sowie bestimmter Ausdrucksweisen des Dracontius, die Interpretation nicht unwesentlich erschweren und problematisch werden lassen können.

rum das Licht befahl, dass sich die gesamte Schöpfung erhelle. Gott und Licht werden hier sehr eng miteinander verhandelt, sodass es fast scheint, als würde sich das Licht von den übrigen Instrumentarien Gottes emanzipieren, wenn es selbst (und nicht Gott) sogar befiehlt (137: *quae [...] iussit*), dass sich die Schöpfung erhellen solle. Doch diese poetische Ausdrucksweise wird durch den vorangegangenen Vers 133 dogmatisch abgesichert: denn Gott selbst sei ja der Ursprung des Lichts, der das Licht überhaupt erst ins Werk gesetzt hat und es als das erste der Instrumentarien seiner Schöpfung verwendet (133: *Initium factis lucem dat lucis origo*). Ferner variiert der Ausdruck *iussit clarescere* (137) wiederum das *fiat lux* der Genesis, auch wenn sich das eine auf die konkrete Erhellung der Schöpfung bezieht, das andere auf die Erschaffung des Lichts an sich – also auf verschiedene Tage des Schöpfungswerks.<sup>34</sup> Nichtsdestotrotz schafft es Dracontius auf diese Weise, einerseits zwischen Gott und Licht die gebotene Hierarchie aufrecht zu erhalten, andererseits aber beide so miteinander zu verbinden, dass sie ähnliche Attribute erhalten und das Licht in besonders emanzipierter Position unter den anderen Instrumentarien Gottes zu agieren scheint (137) – stets unter dem Grundsatz jedoch, dass Gott das Licht erschaffen hat und es nach seinem Willen lenkt. Gott und Licht nähern sich also nur auf der Ebene der Dichtung, genauer gesagt: auf der Ebene der stilistischen Darstellung an eine gemeinsame Entität an, die jedoch stets ausschließlich an Gott als höherer Instanz rückgekoppelt bleibt.<sup>35</sup>

## II

Eine andere Art der poetischen Darstellungsweise von Gott und Licht bzw. Sonne begegnet an einer weiteren Stelle der *Laudes Dei*. Nah am Beginn des zweiten Buches lässt Dracontius das Sprecher-Ich folgenden Gottes hymnus (2, 15–31) sprechen:

15 *Tu Deus inspiras, ut sol auriga vocetur,  
non quia vectus equis est quattuor axe rotato,  
sed quia praefectus sol quattuor est elementis,  
quattuor alternat sollers auriga colores;  
permutat iussus sol tempora quattuor anni,*  
20 *non ausus transire vices sub lege perenni  
praefixas dictione tua; non ille vapores  
auget sponte sua, medios nec temperat ignes  
aut gelidum dat forte iubar nisi praeduce iussu  
imperii per saecula tui sine fine manentis:*

<sup>34</sup> Eine Kenntnis dieser exegetischen Problemlage, die der Genesisbericht und seine Kommentierung aufgeworfen haben, hat auch Speyer (1999: 191) den *Laudes Dei* zu Recht attestiert. Fraglich muss allerdings bleiben, ob und inwiefern eine für Dracontius angenommene Trennung zwischen *lux* und *sol*, also göttlichem und irdischem Licht, „mehr neuplatonischen als biblischen Geist“ (ebd.) atme. Zur Differenz *lux* – *sol* bei Dracontius vgl. auch: Nodes (1993: 111).

<sup>35</sup> Ähnliche Verschränkungen von Gott und Licht finden sich etwa auch später in Drac. *laud. dei* 3, 1–12. Von einer für die Gesamtheit des Werks geltenden Gott-Licht-Konzeption kann hier jedoch keine Rede sein. Die Passagen der *Laudes Dei*, in denen *lux* und Gott vorkommen, erweisen sich als viel zu divers, als dass aus ihnen eine immer einheitliche Konzeption abgeleitet werden könnte.

25 *militia famulante sua servire fidelis  
oceano, mundo vel caelo teste probatur.  
Sic opus omne tuum visibile non latet orbem.*  
*Te, Deus, auctorem, te novimus omnia patrem,  
te pariter dominum, qui das exordia rebus*  
30 *et finem, sine fine parens exordia nescis,  
spes hominum, rerum princeps mundique superstes.*

(15) Du, Gott, inspirierst (uns) dazu, dass die Sonne Wagenlenker genannt wird, nicht weil sie mit vier Pferden und rotierender Achse fährt, sondern weil sie die vier Elemente dirigiert. So wechselt der geschickte<sup>36</sup> Wagenlenker die vier Farben [grün, rot, blau, weiß für die vier Jahreszeiten] und auf Anweisung [Gottes] verändert die Sonne die vier Jahreszeiten, (20) ohne es dabei zu wagen, sich über den (jahreszeitlichen) Wandel, der unter ewigem Gesetz durch deine Diktion festgeschrieben ist, hinwegzusetzen; noch vermehrt er [der *auriga* = die Sonne] nach seinem Willen die warmen Ausdünstungen [Frühling], noch mäßigt er die mittleren Feuer [Sommer/Herbst] oder liefert einen frostigen Glanz [Winter], außer durch den vorgegebenen Befehl deines Reiches, das ohne Ende in alle Ewigkeit besteht. (25) Dass er [der *auriga* = die Sonne] treu mit seiner dienenden Armee [= weitere Himmelskörper/Sterne<sup>37</sup>] dient, das wird durch das Zeugnis des Ozeans, der Erde und des Himmels bewiesen. Somit liegt dein ganzes sichtbares Werk, Gott, für die Welt nicht im Verborgenen. Dich, Gott, kennen wir als Urheber, als Vater aller Dinge und zugleich als Herren, der du den Dingen einen Anfang und ein Ende gibst, der du sie unablässig erschaffst und selbst keinen Anfang kennst. Du Hoffnung der Menschen, Herrscher über die Dinge und der du die Welt überdauerst.

In einer direkten Anrede an Gott (*tu deus*) stellt das Sprecher-Ich unmissverständlich fest, dass es Gott ist, der die Menschen dazu inspiriere, sich die Sonne (*sol*) als Wagenlenker (*auriga*) vorzustellen.<sup>38</sup> Nicht jedoch – wie in der üblichen Phoebus-Ikonographie –, weil die Sonne (Sol/Phoebus/Apoll/Helios) auf einem Wagen mit vier Pferden durch den Himmel fahre, sondern weil die Sonne die vier Elemente (Feuer, Wasser, Erde und Luft) lenke. In Analogie dazu wechsle auch der versierte Wagenlenker beim Wagenrennen die vier Farben (*alternat colores*), d. h. die vier Farben der vier sogenannten Faktionen (grün, rot, blau und weiß), die – neben den vier Elementen – auch für die vier Jahreszeiten standen.<sup>39</sup> Ebenso ändere auch *sol*, befohlen von Gott (*iussus*), die vier Jahreszeiten (*permutat [...] tempora quattuor anni*). Soweit zur Erklärung der *sol-auriga*-Analogie, die Dracontius den Lesern hier präsentiert.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Ein guter Wagenlenker konnte, wenn er umworben war, während seiner Karriere mehrmals die Faktionen wechseln, um an bessere Verträge zu kommen (Camus, Moussy [1985: 328]).

<sup>37</sup> Bresnahan (1949: 163–164), Camus, Moussy (1985: 329) ad loc.

<sup>38</sup> Ebenso Selent (2011: 252).

<sup>39</sup> Camus, Moussy (1985: 328).

<sup>40</sup> Die Frage drängt sich auf, auf welche Weise diese Analogie von den vier Farben und vier Jahreszeiten im kulturellen Wissen der Zeit verankert gewesen war und welche tiefer gehenden Konnotationen es für zeitgenössische Leser gehabt haben könnte. Camus, Moussy (1985: 328) und Bresnahan (1949: 162) informieren darüber, dass auch im Karthago des späten 5. und frühen 6. Jahrhunderts, dem Lebensumfeld des Dracontius, noch Wagenrennen abgehalten wurden und auch archäologisch Faktionen nachweisbar sind. Inwiefern aber passen versierter Wagenlenker, der die vier Farben wechselt, und die im Tausch der Jahreszeiten versierte Sonne zueinander? Cameron (1976: 50–53) konnte anhand verschiedenster Wagenlenker-Epigramme nachweisen, dass es bei Wagenrennen nicht unüblich war,

Formal bietet auch diese Passage einen dreigliedrigen Hymnus mit einer Anrede an Gott, einer Erklärung, dass ihm die Sonne untersteht und nach seinem Willen ihre Aufgaben verrichtet, und einem Schlussgebet, in dem das Sprecher-Ich Gott als den Allmächtigen und Allerschaffenden lobpreist. Durch die Verwendung der Analogie von Sonne und Wagenlenker eröffnet sich Dracontius die Möglichkeit, auf verschiedene poetische Traditionen, wie etwa die zuvor genannten Wagenlenker-Epigramme<sup>41</sup> oder klassische Phoebus-Mythologeme, zurückzugreifen, um Gott und die ihm dienende Sonne zu rühmen.<sup>42</sup>

Gegenstand des Lobs ist der besondere Gehorsam der Sonne als Instrument des göttlichen Willens bei ihren vorgeschriebenen Aufgaben. Dabei akkumulieren sich förmlich die Gehorsamsausdrücke: *non ausus transire vices sub lege perenni / praefixas dicione tua* (20–21). Die Sonne wird stark personifiziert, indem ihr die Möglichkeit eigenen Willens zwar eingeräumt wird, sie es zugleich aber nie „wagen“ würde, sich der Diktion ihres Herren zu widersetzen (*non ausus transire*). Die Abhängigkeit der Sonne von Gott wird sogar nahezu juridisch bestimmt, indem dafür Formulierungen wie *lex perennis*, *vices praefixa*e oder *dictio* verwendet werden.<sup>43</sup> Zugleich ist der Lobpreis der Sonne ein Lobpreis Gottes selbst, denn es ist seine Diktion, nach der sich die Sonne richtet, wie das Sprecher-Ich in beibehaltender Anrede an Gott zu erkennen gibt (21: *dicione tua*).

Darauf folgt als Trikolon eine Beispielreihe: die Sonne macht den Frühling nicht nach eigenem Willen wärmer als er sein soll (21b–22a: *non ille vapores / auget sponte sua*), sie macht den Sommer und den Herbst nicht kühler als vorgesehen (22b: *medios nec temperat ignes*) und sie sorgt auch nicht für einen plötzlichen Kälteschock (23: *aut gelidum dat forte iubar*). Diese Beispielreihe schließt in Vers 23b–24 wieder mit einer Akkumulation juridischer Ausdrücke: *nisi praeduce iussu / imperii per saecula tui sine fine manentis.*

---

dass sich zwei der Faktionen jeweils zu einem Team zusammenschlossen. Waren Wagenlenker siegreich, konnten sie ihr Team mit Mitgliedern aus feindlichen Faktionen auswechseln, ein Verfahren, das in den Texten auch als *diversium* begegnet (Cameron [1976: 51–52]). Das Verhältnis von siegreichem Wagenlenker, der strategisch sinnvoll die Farben der Faktionen wechselt und sie für seinen Sieg instrumentalisieren konnte, konnte wohl auch mit dem Wirken der Sonne verglichen werden, die (von Gott instruiert) die jeweiligen Farben der Jahreszeiten wechseln konnte. Zur Bedeutung des Wagenrennens in Text und Bild auch im spätantiken, christlichen Nordafrika, siehe jetzt Puk (2014: 161–226). Vgl. auch den Katalog von Zirkus-Ikonographien bei Puk (2014: 402–404).

Möglich wäre ferner auch eine (kosmologische) Deutung von sich wiederholenden Kreisbahnen, die Wagenlenker und Sonne jeweils vollführen. Siehe Arevalo (1791: 219) und dessen Hinweis auf den Mythographen Fulgentius (6. Jahrhundert): *Fulg. myth. 1, 12 (Fabula Apollinis): Huic quoque quadrigam scribunt illam ob causam, quod aut quadripartitis temporum varietatibus anni circulum peragat aut quod quadrifido limite diei metiatur spatium* (zitiert nach Helm [1970: 23]), wobei dies jedoch eine Erklärung der *quadriga* ist und nicht des *auriga*. Der Vergleich allerdings von Wagenrennbahn im Circus und astrologischen Kreisbahnen ist in der zeitgenössischen Kosmologie durchaus vertreten und auch archäologisch nachweisbar: Camus, Moussy (1985: 328) mit Quellenbelegen.

<sup>41</sup> Beispiele für diese Art Epigramme bespricht Cameron (1976: 45–56) bei der Abhandlung über die Farben der Circusfaktionen.

<sup>42</sup> Inwiefern Dracontius damit generell den mythischen Stoff von Phoebus als Wagenlenker entwertet, kann nicht isoliert auf dieses Beispiel beantwortet werden, da sein Umgang mit klassischem Mythos überhaupt vielseitigen und unterschiedlichen Funktionen unterliegen kann. Vgl. Simons (2005: 107) und Selent (2011: 254–255).

<sup>43</sup> Bresnahan (1949: 163), der auf diese Vorliebe des Anwalts Dracontius hinweist. Zum oft diskutierten Beruf des Dracontius vor seiner Einkerkerung durch Gunthamund siehe Schetter (1989), der für eine Anwaltstätigkeit plädiert. Ferner grundlegend für die Untersuchung des juridischen Vokabulars in den Werken des Dracontius ist die Arbeit von Santini (2006).

Auch hier wird durch die Unendlichkeit der göttlichen Herrschaft die Unendlichkeit des Gehorsams der Sonne illustriert und gewissermaßen zu einem Doppellobpreis ausgebaut. Ähnlich wie Gott und das Licht im Lichthymnus, werden auch Gott und Sonne in diesem Hymnus eng miteinander verknüpft. Auf diese Weise kann – zumindest auf poetischer Ebene – auch zwischen *lux* und *sol* nicht immer eine klare Trennlinie gesetzt werden.<sup>44</sup>

Wiederum endet der Hymnus mit einem lehrhaften Kommentar des Sprechers, in dem der Gehorsam der Sonne noch einmal um eine kosmologische bzw. militärische Analogie erweitert wird und der in Form eines Beweisgangs mit Schlussentenz inszeniert ist: *militia famulante sua servire fidelis / oceano, mundo vel caelo teste probatur* (25–26). Die Sonne ist also mit einmal auch der Anführer einer Heerschar (*militia sua*), mit der sie treu dem allmächtigen Gott dient (*servire fidelis*). Die *militia* der Sonne bilden dabei die weiteren Sterne oder Himmelskörper, die Dracontius auch an anderen Stellen seines Gedichts in dieser Form benennt.<sup>45</sup> Das Zeugnis dieses treuen Dienstes der Sonne an Gott seien des Sprechers zufolge die Eckpfeiler der Schöpfung selbst: nämlich Wasser, Erde und Himmel (*oceano, mundo vel caelo teste*). Damit ist auch in diesem Hymnus die Perspektive auf die Gesamtheit der Schöpfung gegeben: durch die Sonne, die für Licht sorgt, liegt das Werk Gottes für die Menschheit offen zu Tage und wird erkennbar (27: *Sic opus omne tuum visibile non latet orbem*). Im Lichthymnus bestand diese Sichtbarkeit der göttlichen Schöpfung rein im Aspekt ihres Erhellens durch das Licht. Hier im zweiten Fallbeispiel zeigt der Sprecher, dass sich Gott mit sichtbaren Zeichen (*signa*) den Menschen offenbare,<sup>46</sup> indem zwischen dessen Wirken und der irdischen Welt Analogien bestehen, wie es die Analogie zwischen Wagenlenker und Sonne im Hymnus zeigen sollte. Das Licht bzw. die Sonne wird nicht nur als Schöpfungsinstrument, sondern auch als Zeichen-Instrument Gottes präsentiert.

Auch das Gottes- und Glaubensbekenntnis, das sich hieran anschließt, rekurriert auf das Motiv der ewigen Allpräsenz Gottes, das bereits mit der *sol-auriga*-Analogie installiert wurde: Gott ist der Urheber aller Dinge, er gibt den Dingen einen Anfang und ein Ende und ist dabei selbst stets ewig, er steht über den irdischen Dingen und ist gerade deshalb die Hoffnung der Menschen, dieser Ewigkeit teilhaftig zu werden.<sup>47</sup> Seine Ewigkeit manifestiert sich anhand der Kreisbewegung des Wagenlenkers im Circus ebenso wie in der steten Wiederkehr der Sonne, die Tag auf Tag, Jahr für Jahr feste Aufgaben nach Gottes Willen verrichtet. Gott gibt der Welt durch das Licht also Zeichen seines Wirkens, wozu auch Allegorien und Analogien gehören können. Diese göttlichen Zeichen können, so könnte man hier das poetische Anliegen des Dracontius formulieren, auch durch das Medium der Dichtung illustriert und verdeutlicht werden.

<sup>44</sup> Selent (2011: 253–254).

<sup>45</sup> Drac. *laud. Dei* 2, 341 und 2, 484 sowie 1, 231; Bresnahan (1949: 163–164), Camus, Moussy (1985: 329).

<sup>46</sup> Vgl. mit dem, was der Sprecher kurz vor der Digression über die Prodigien sagt: Drac. *laud. dei* 1, 39–40: [...] dare signa reis natura iubetur. / Ne lateant mortale genus quaecumque propinguent.

<sup>47</sup> Vgl. auch Bresnahan (1949: 165–166) ad loc.

### III

Führt man die Ergebnisse der beiden gemachten Analysen zusammen, ergibt sich folgende Frage: Welche Erkenntnisse konnten sich daraus für die Bewertung der *Laudes Dei* als einen Gotteslobpreis ergeben?

Die Tatsache, dass Dracontius die Phoebus-Allegorie durch eine Wagenlenker-Analogie aus dem Circus ersetzt, darf nicht darüber hinweg täuschen, dass auch er sich in seiner Dichtung zahlreichen Versatzstücken und Elementen der klassischen Dichtungstradition verpflichtet sah.<sup>48</sup> Hier pauschale Dichotomisierungen wie etwa ‚pagan‘ oder ‚christlich‘ anzulegen, kann den Gegenstand, die Dichtung des Dracontius, nur eingeschränkt beschreiben. In seiner Rezension von Wallraff (2001) schrieb Klein (2003):

Sollte man sich jedoch nicht ebenso die außerordentliche Anpassungsfähigkeit der neuen Religion ins Gedächtnis rufen wie die Tatsache, daß gerade im Volksglauben weit mehr erhalten geblieben ist, als den stets um eigenen theologischen Gehalt ringenden Bischöfen lieb sein konnte.<sup>49</sup>

An dieser Stelle sei daran erinnert, dass auch Dracontius kein Bischof oder Theologe war, sondern ein christlicher Laie.

Die besprochenen Fallbeispiele zeugen zum einen vom versierten Umgang des Dracontius mit poetischen Traditionen, beweisen aber zum anderen auch den besonderen Stil, mit dem Dracontius Mythologeme, Theologeme, philosophische Konzepte sowie Allegorien und Analogien als diverse Bestandteile kulturellen Wissens in seinem Gedicht verarbeitete und es dabei vermochte, einen ganz eigenen ‚poetischen Kosmos‘ aufzubauen.<sup>50</sup> Dabei bilden seine beiden präsentierten Hymnen nur einen Bruchteil der dafür in Frage kommenden Passagen seines Werks. An anderen Stellen seines Werks kann beobachtet werden, wie er kommentarlos auf Phoebus und Luna als Allegorien für Sonne und Mond anspielt,<sup>51</sup> wie er selbstverständlich (nach Art der frühchristlichen Apologetik) den Phoenix als Symbol der christlichen Auferstehung inszeniert<sup>52</sup> und wie er verschiedenste kosmologische Philosopheme (stoische, platonische, lukrezsche) kunstvoll in seiner Dichtung transformiert,<sup>53</sup> um ein christliches Gedicht über seinen Gott zu schreiben. Klassisch-mythologisch-philosophische und christliche Elemente existieren hier nebeneinander und in Kombination und lassen die *Laudes Dei* des Dracontius so zu einem offenen und höchst integrativen Text werden. Um sich den poetischen Lobpreisungen Gottes in den *Laudes Dei* zu nähern, hatte sich hierfür der Begriff des ‚Hymnischen‘ als brauchbare Kategorie erwiesen, weil damit näherungsweise die verschiedenen

<sup>48</sup> Vgl. Simons (2005: 107) und Selent (2011: 254–255).

<sup>49</sup> Klein (2003: 49).

<sup>50</sup> Dieses Urteil von Bretzigheimer (2010: 398) über Dracontius' Kleinepos *De raptu Helena* (Drac. Romul. 8), trifft auch auf seine *Laudes Dei* zu.

<sup>51</sup> Unmittelbar zu Beginn des zweiten Buches, direkt vor der *sol-auriga*-Analogie: Drac. laud. dei 2, 8–11. Oder auch in seiner *Medea*, als diese Phoebus anruft: Drac. Romul. 10, 497–502: *O mundi facies pulcherrima, Titan, / naturam fervore tenens, elementa coartans, / ne dispersa fluant aut mundi machina mergat, / [...] / dum contra rapis axe rotas et colligis ignes.* Auch in diesem sich eher pagan geriebendem Werk, lassen sich christliche Elemente entdecken: vgl. Arweiler (2004: 259–260, mit Anm. 81).

<sup>52</sup> Drac. laud. dei 1, 653–655.

<sup>53</sup> Arweiler (2004), Simons (2005), Arweiler (2007), Selent (2011) passim.

Aneignungen gleichermaßen ‚klassisch-paganer‘ wie ‚christlicher‘ Formenelemente (wie etwa Götter-Hymnus oder Herrscher-Panegyrius) durch Dracontius beschrieben werden können.

Diese Aneignungen klassisch-paganer, kosmologischer Elemente durch Dracontius haben sich auch an anderen Stellen als stark variierend herausgestellt.<sup>54</sup> Seine Dichtung kann nie einseitig auf ein bestimmtes solares oder kosmologisches Konzept festgelegt werden, wenngleich er sich auf theologischer Seite stets zur ‚weströmischen Trinität‘ seines nordafrikanischen Umfelds bekennt.<sup>55</sup> Anhand der besprochenen Fallbeispiele konnte gezeigt werden, dass sprachliche Elemente oder zusammenhängende Textpassagen der *Laudes Dei* nicht durch einseitige Dichotomien wie ‚pagan‘/‚christlich‘ oder gar ‚trinitarisch‘/‚arianisch‘ allein beschrieben werden können, sondern vielmehr immer vor dem Hintergrund ihrer Funktion zu sehen sind, die sie im Text erfüllen: den Lobpreis des Schöpfers, des christlich-trinitarischen Gottes in hymnischen und panegyrischen Formen – und dafür ist Dracontius jedes Mittel recht, auch wenn ihm dabei längst nicht alle heilig sind.

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- Arevalo, F. (ed.), 1791. *Dracontii poetae christiani seculi V. carmina*. Roma: apud Antonium Fulgonium.
- Arweiler, A., 2004. „Die *Confessiones* des Augustinus, die römische Verssatire und die Grundlagen einer christlichen Poetologie in der Dichtung *De laudibus Dei* des Dracontius“. In: V. Panagi (ed.), *Dulce Melos. Akten des 3. Internationalen Symposiums: Lateinische und griechische christliche Dichtung in Spätantike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, Wien, 15.–18. November 2004. Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 229–265.
- Arweiler, A., 2007. „Interpreting Cultural Change: Semiotics and Exegesis in Dracontius’ *De laudibus Dei*“. In: W. Otten, K. Pollmann (eds.), *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity. The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 147–172.
- Bresnahan, J. E. (ed.), 1949. *Liber II Dracontii De Laudibus Dei*. Diss. Philadelphia.
- Bretzighemer, G., 2010. „Dracontius‘ Konzeption des Kleinepos *De raptu Helenae*“. *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 153, 361–400.
- Cameron, A., 1976. *Circus factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cameron, A., 2011. *The last Pagans of Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Camus, C., Moussy, C. (eds.), 1985. Dracontius, *Oeuvres. Tome 1. Louanges de Dieu. Livres I et II*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Catagna, L., 1997. *Studi Draconziani (1912–1996)*. Napoli: Loffredo.
- Evenepoel, W., 1995. „Dracontius, *De laudibus Dei*, 1, 329/458: Adam and Eve before the fall“. In: M. Wacht (ed.), *Panchaia. Festschrift für Klaus Thraede*. Münster: Aschendorff, 91–101.
- Fontaine, J., 1982. „Christentum ist auch Antike“. *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 25, 5–21.
- Führer, T., 2004. *Augustinus*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Habermehl, P., 2011. *Die Homilien zum Buch Genesis [= Origenes: Werke mit deutscher Übersetzung 1/2]*. Eingeleitet und übersetzt von P. Habermehl. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter/Herder.
- Helm, R. (ed.), 1970. *Fabii Planciadis Fulgentii v. c. opera. Accedunt Fabii Claudii Gordiani Fulgentii v. c. de aetatibus mundi et hominis et s. Fulgentii episcopi super Thebaiden*. Recensuit R. Helm, addenda

<sup>54</sup> Vgl. nur Simons (2005) passim und Selent (2011) passim.

<sup>55</sup> Das diffuse Feld von Bekenntnissen in der Spätantike bearbeitete bis heute grundlegend Kelly (1993). Wie genau Dracontius‘ Verhältnis als Trintarier zu den ‚vandalischen Arianern‘ angesehen haben mag, darüber kann aufgrund der einseitigen Quellenlage oftmals nur spekuliert werden.

- adiecit J. Préaux. *Editio stereotypa editionis anni MDCCCXCVIII*. Stutgardiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri.
- Herzog, R., 1975. *Die Bibelepik der lateinischen Spätantike. Formgeschichte einer erbaulichen Gattung*. München: Fink.
- Hömke, N., 2013. „Reden zu Gott, beten zu Göttern. Vorstellungen vom Göttlichen in den *Precationes Variae* und der *Gratiarum Actio* des Ausonius“. *Philologus* 157, 315–337.
- Irwin, J. F. (ed.), 1942. *Liber I Dracontii de laudibus Dei*. Diss. Philadelphia.
- Kelly, J. N. D., 1993. *Altchristliche Glaubensbekenntnisse. Geschichte und Theologie*. 3. Auflage. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Klein, R., 2003. [Besprechung von] „Martin Wallraff: Christus Verus Sol. Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike“. *Gnomon* 75, 46–49.
- Körtner, U. H. J., 1994. *Der inspirierte Leser. Zentrale Aspekte biblischer Hermeneutik*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Langlois, P., 1959. „Dracontius“. *Realenzyklopädie für Antike und Christentum* 4, 250–269.
- Moussy, C. (ed.), 1988. Dracontius, *Oeuvres. Tome II. Louanges de Dieu. Livre III. Réparation*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Neumann, B., 2006. „Kulturelles Wissen und Literatur“. In: M. Gymnich, B. Neumann, A. Nünning (eds.), *Kulturelles Wissen und Intertextualität. Theoriekonzeptionen und Fallstudien zur Kontextualisierung von Literatur*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 29–51.
- Nodes, D. J., 1993. *Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry*. Leeds: Cairns.
- Puk, A., 2014. *Das römische Spielwesen in der Spätantike*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Reinmuth, E., 2002. *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Roling, B., 2006. „Zwischen epischer Theologie und theologischer Epik. Die Versuchung Christi in der lateinischen Bibeldichtung von Iuvencus bis Robert Clarke“. *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 40, 327–382.
- Santini, G., 2006. *Inter iura poeta. Ricerche sul lessico giuridico in Draconzio [= Studi e testi tardoantichi 4]*. Roma: Herder.
- Schetter, W., 1989. „Dracontius Togatus“. *Hermes* 117, 342–350.
- Selent, D., 2011. *Allegorische Mythenerklärung in der Spätantike. Wege zum Werk des Dracontius*. Rahden: Leidorf.
- Simons, R., 2005. *Dracontius und der Mythos. Christliche Weltsicht und pagane Kultur in der ausgehenden Spätantike*. München: Saur.
- Smolak, K., 1972. „Die Stellung der Hexaemerondichtung des Dracontius (laus. dei 1, 118–426) innerhalb der lateinischen Genesispoesie“. In: R. Hanslik, A. Lesky, H. Schwabl (eds.), *Antidosis. Festschrift für Walther Kraus zum 70. Geburtstag*. Wien/Köln/Graz: Böhlau, 381–397.
- Smolak, K., 2004. „„Kryptochristianismen“ in spätantiker paganer Hymnik?“. *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 44, 341–355.
- Speyer, W., 1988. „Kosmische Mächte im Bibelepos des Dracontius“. *Philologus* 132, 275–285.
- Speyer, W., 1999. „Der Bibeldichter Dracontius als Exeget des Sechstagewerkes Gottes“. In: *Frühes Christentum im antiken Strahlungsfeld. Kleine Schriften*, II. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 181–206.
- Stella, F., 1985. „Per una teoria dell’imitazione poetica ,cristiana’: saggio di analisi sulle *Laudes Dei* di Draconzio“. *In vigilata Lucernis* 7, 193–224.
- Stella, F., 1988. „Fra Retorica e Innografia. Sul genere letterario delle *Laudes Dei* di Draconzio“. *Philologus* 132, 258–274.
- Stoehr-Monjou, A., 2011. „L’expression de l’espace et du temps chez Dracontius: de l’expérience personnelle à la profession de foi romaine“. In: C. Moussy (ed.), *Espace et temps en latin [= Lingua latina 13]*. Paris: Presses de l’université Paris-Sorbonne, 205–218.
- Thanner, T., 2009. „Dracontius, Blossius Aemilius“. In: *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* 30. Ergänzung 17. Herzberg: Bautz, 266–275.
- Vollmer, F. (ed.), 1905. *Fl. Merobaudis reliquiae. Blossi Aemillii Dracontii carmina. Eugenii Toletani epis copi carmina et epistula. Cum appendicula carminum spuriorum [= Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctorum antiquissimorum tomus XIV]*. Edidit F. Vollmer. Berolini: apud Weidmannos.
- Wallraff, W., 2001. *Christus Verus Sol. Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike*. Münster: Aschendorff.

---

**HYMNICKÉ PRVKY V DRACONTIOVÝCH LAUDES DEI  
POZNÁMKY K HYMNU NA SVĚTLO (LAUD. DEI 1, 118–137)  
A HYMNU NA BOHA (LAUD. DEI 2, 15–31)**

Shrnutí

Autor tohoto článku nabízí interpretaci dvou hymnických a/nebo panegyrických pasáží v první a druhé knize *Laudes Dei*, které napsal severoafrický básník Dracontius koncem 5. století po Kr.: takzvaného hymnu na světlo (Drac. *laud. dei* 1, 118–137) a hymnu na Boha (Drac. *laud. dei* 2, 15–31).

Prostřednictvím termínu „hymnické prvky“ (*Hymnisches*), který chápe jako souborné označení pro různé formy hymnu i panegyriku a zároveň pro jejich pozdněantické „pohanské“ i „křesťanské“ motivy a téma, se autor pokouší uchopit specifické podoby performativity v Dracontiových básnických postupech v tomto díle. Ve snaze docenit *Laudes Dei* coby křesťanské básnické dílo autor vyslovuje tezi, že se Dracontius ve své básni nesnažil formulovat exegetický nebo dogmatický program, nýbrž spíše uskutečnit (performovat) chválu Boha prostřednictvím celého souboru různorodých básnických prvků, zejména hymnických a panegyrických.

Jak ukazují rozbory v článku, básníkův pohled – coby laika – na Bibli a na Boží skutky je literární. K účelům chvály křesťanského Boha užívá rozmanité hymnické a panegyrické prvky a transformuje je takovým způsobem, který činí kategorie a dichotomie jako „pohanský“ versus „křesťanský“ pro popis jeho díla málo důvěryhodnými.

*Benjamin Hübbe  
Freie Universität Berlin – University of Jyväskylä  
benhueb@zedat.fu-berlin.de*



**UN CASO DI RISCRITTURA METRICA ‘ULTRABREVE’  
DEI VANGELI: i distici *Miracula Christi*  
(Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21 = *Anth. Lat.* 879 R.<sup>2</sup>)**

FRANCESCO LUBIAN

**ABSTRACT**

**A case of extremely condensed metrical rewriting  
of the Gospels: the distichs *Miracula Christi***

(Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21 = *Anth. Lat.* 879 R.<sup>2</sup>)

This paper provides a new study of the short poem entitled *Miracula Christi* (Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21 = *Anth. Lat.* 879 R.<sup>2</sup>). After having provided an Italian translation of the text, I reconstruct its editorial history and the scholarly debate on its paternity. The authenticity of Claudian’s attribution is highly disputable; some unnoticed reprises from Paulinus of Nola, together with the distichs’ orthodox theological content and stylistic peculiarities, may suggest a dating around the middle of the 5th c. The structure and intonation of the poem can reveal the author’s willing to celebrate Christ, highlighted by a peculiar interest for the most prodigious aspects of miracles. Similarly to other cycles of Late Antique *tituli historiarum*, with all probability the *Miracula Christi* did not describe a pre-existing iconographic cycle with baptismal theme, and have to be considered as a literary text which aims to involve the readers in the supplementation of visual elements.

**Keywords:** Ps. Claudian; *Miracula Christi*; *tituli historiarum*; Late Antique Christian poetry; intermediality

---

1. I cosiddetti *tituli historiarum*, cicli di epigrammi che si presentano come descrizioni e chiarificazioni di progetti iconografici di tema biblico, rappresentano un prodotto peculiare della tarda antichità latina, caratterizzato da uno statuto letterario irriducibilmente complesso. Pur nella consapevolezza dei limiti del concetto di *Kreuzung der Gattungen*, inadeguato soprattutto a cogliere l’effettiva struttura gerarchica in cui si organizzano gli elementi derivati da generi diversi<sup>1</sup> nonché la dinamica immanente alle forme letterarie, si può affermare che i *tituli*, eredi almeno ideali della prassi romana della scrittura esposta ed in specie della tradizione epigrafico-monumentale cristiana inaugurata da papa Damaso,<sup>2</sup> rivelino un aspetto peculiare dei rapporti fra epigrafia e letteratura «di formato

---

<sup>1</sup> Stella (2005–2006: 21).

<sup>2</sup> Fontaine (1981: 111–125); Mazzoleni (1989: 322–332); Charlet (1997: 539–543).

epigrafico» nella Tarda antichità;<sup>3</sup> essi sono inoltre tematicamente affini alla parafrasi biblica, di cui rappresentano una sorta di versione ‘ultrabreve’,<sup>4</sup> ma con specifiche peculiarità, dato il loro obiettivo di descrivere oggetti d’arte: sotto questo aspetto, essi risultano piuttosto assimilabili alla tradizione antica del *Bildepigramm*.<sup>5</sup>

In questa sede mi propongo di prendere in esame il componimento intitolato *Miracula Christi* (Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21 = *Anth. Lat.* 879 R.<sup>2</sup>), per il quale D. Kartschoke, nel suo influente saggio del 1975 sulla poesia biblica, ha adoperato la definizione di «Extremfall kürzender Bibelparaphrase»<sup>6</sup> che ha ispirato il titolo del presente lavoro.

2. I *Miracula Christi* sono costituiti da nove distici elegiaci, fra loro indipendenti<sup>7</sup> e dedicati ad altrettanti episodi della vita di Cristo; mentre i primi due distici si riferiscono a episodi dell’infanzia (Annunciazione e doni dei Magi), i sette *tituli* successivi sono dedicati a prodigi compiuti dal Signore. Se considerati all’interno della tradizione tardoirantica dei *tituli historiarum* a tema biblico, i *Miracula* costituiscono dunque l’unico ciclo pervenutoci dalla tematica esclusivamente neotestamentaria. Si riporta quindi il testo del breve componimento, che corrisponde – tranne che in un punto – a quello dall’edizione claudiana di J. B. Hall,<sup>8</sup> e di seguito una traduzione italiana:

*Angelus alloquitur Mariam, quo praescia uerbo  
Concipiat salua uirginitate deum.  
Dant tibi Chaldae praenuntia munera reges:  
Myrrham homo, rex aurum, suscipe tura deus.  
Permutat lymphas in uina liqueantia Christus,  
Quo primum factu se probat esse deum.  
Quinque explet panes, pisces duo milia quinque,  
Et deus ex paruo plus superesse iubet.*

5

<sup>3</sup> Velázquez (2006).

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. in particolare Charlet (1985: 636): «Cette série d’épigrammes narratives constitue une espèce d’anthologie poétique de la Bible (peut-être d’intention simplement didactique?). Elle crée en tout cas une forme nouvelle de paraphrase poétique du texte sacré»; Quacquarelli (1986: 166–171; i *tituli*, che vengono inquadrati dallo studioso all’interno di un cosiddetto ‘genere iconologico’, rappresentano «una particolare parafrasi biblica a carattere popolare», come anche per Mazzoleni 1989: 331–332); Belting-Ihm (1994: 843; i *tituli historiarum* sono prodotti della stessa ‘ambizione poetica’ che aveva portato nel quarto secolo alla nascita di una poesia latina cristiana di tema biblico); Dinkova-Bruun (2007: 321): «Even though they [scil.: i *tituli* di Prudenzio ed Elpidio Rustico] remain outside the main corpus of biblical epics, they are important, because they are examples of the biblical epigrammatic genre that founded its continuation in the medieval verse *tituli* and various *versus memoriales*, as well as in the influential biblical epigrams of Hildebert»; Kässer (2010: 162–165; è rimarcata la relazione fra il genere dei *tituli historiarum* e l’epica biblica: i *tituli* fanno uso di metri dattilici – per lo più l’esametro – e di alcune analoghe convenzioni narrative nel tradurre la materia biblica in forma non epica, ma epigrammatica).

<sup>5</sup> Si vedano su questo punto le osservazioni di Downey (1959: 929–930), cui si riferisce, limitandone la portata, anche Lausberg (1982: 557, n. 2). L’analisi più aggiornata è ad oggi quella di Arnulf (1997: 23–32); alcune riflessioni preliminari in Lubian (2013: 217–224).

<sup>6</sup> Kartschoke (1975: 112).

<sup>7</sup> I distici sono stati separati per la prima volta nell’edizione claudiana di Claverius (1602: 251; cfr. n. 47).

<sup>8</sup> Hall (1985: 426–427). Il carme figura inoltre nell’*Anthologia Latina* (Riese: 1894–1906: vol. II, 329), come componimento numero 879, naturalmente incluso fra i *Carmina quae libri tantum typis descripsi exhibent*.

*Editus ex utero caecus noua lumina sentit,  
Et stupet ignotum se meruisse diem.  
Lazarus e tumulo Christo inclamante resurgit,  
Et durae mortis lex resoluta perit.  
Nutantem quatit unda Petrum, cui Christus in alto  
Et dextra gressus firmat et ore fidem.  
Exanguis Christi contingit femina uestem:  
Stat crux in uenis, fit medicina fides.  
Iussus post multos graditur paralyticus annos,  
(Mirandum!) lectus<sup>9</sup> portitor ipse sui.*

10

L'angelo rivolge la parola a Maria, così che ella, ricevuto l'annuncio ad opera del Verbo Concepisca, intatta la sua verginità, Dio.  
I re Caldei ti omaggiano con doni profetici:  
Accogli la mirra in quanto uomo, in quanto re l'oro, l'incenso in quanto Dio.  
Cristo trasforma le acque in vino fluente; 5  
con questo miracolo per la prima volta dimostra di essere Dio.  
Cinque pani e due pesci sfamano cinquemila uomini  
E Dio ordina che da tale scarsa quantità avanzi più di quanto c'era all'inizio.  
Un uomo, cieco dalla nascita, si accorge dei suoi nuovi occhi  
E stupisce di essersi guadagnato la luce del giorno a lui sconosciuta. 10  
Lazzaro risorge dal sepolcro al richiamo della voce di Cristo  
E annullata vien meno la legge dell'inclimente morte.  
L'onda scuote il vacillante Pietro, a cui Cristo nell'alto mare  
Rinsalda i passi con la mano e con la parola la fede.  
Una donna malata di emorragia tocca la veste di Cristo: 15  
Il flusso di sangue si ferma nelle vene, la fede diventa medicina.  
Un uomo, paralitico da molti anni, ricevutone l'ordine, cammina  
(cosa straordinaria!), portatore lui stesso del proprio lettuccio.

5

10

15

3. Il carme ha fatto la sua prima apparizione nell'edizione viennese delle opere di Claudio, pubblicata nel 1510 per le cure di Giovanni Ricuzzi Vellini, noto come Camers dalla sua città d'origine nelle Marche, Camerino.<sup>10</sup> Il componimento (fol. CIII = 171) è presentato dall'editore con un'intestazione che fa esplicito riferimento alla paternità claudianea (CLAVDIANI MIRACVLA CHRISTI), come la *Laus Christi* che lo precede. I due carmi, a differenza dell'altro epigramma cristiano *De Saluatore* cui subito fanno seguito nell'edizione, e analogamente invece alla *Laus Herculis* e al carme *In Sirenas* che pure appaiono qui per la prima volta nel *corpus* claudianeo, non fanno parte della tradi-

<sup>9</sup> Ripristino in questo punto la lezione *lectus* dell'*editio princeps*, corretta in *lecti* a partire dall'edizione isengriniiana e poi in tutte le successive edizioni claudiane. La sostituzione della lezione attestata in Camers (che del nostro componimento, come si vedrà, è unico testimone) non risponde che a criteri di normalizzazione (*contra* Jeppe 1876–1879: vol. II, 203); aggiungerei che chiasmo ed iperbato, che incorniciano la menzione del protagonista della guarigione (*portitor ipse*), costituiscono un dispiegamento retorico sufficiente ad evidenziare la *iunctura*; *lecti* costituirebbe inoltre l'unico caso di corrispondenza 'rimica' fra cesura e clausola dei *Miracula Christi*, caratteristica tipicamente tarda e non particolarmente affine alle caratteristiche generali della tecnica versificatoria di cui dà prova l'autore del componimento.

<sup>10</sup> Sulla vita del filologo e teologo francescano (29 settembre 1447 – 2 settembre 1546), attivo presso le Università di Padova e, dal 1497, di Vienna, cfr. Dienbauer (1976).

zione manoscritta dei *Carmina minora*.<sup>11</sup> Essi provengono da una tradizione indipendente: lo afferma lo stesso Camers nella sua *Claudiani vita* pubblicata in coda al volume, dove li dice ricavati da un «codice antichissimo» (fol. FIIv = 191v: *quae ex uetustissimo codice addidimus*), ma lo testimonia anche il fatto che l'editore aggiunga il nome dell'autore nell'intitolatura, come fa sempre (lo notava già Th. Birt,<sup>12</sup> e in seguito K. Strieder<sup>13</sup>) quando integra l'*editio princeps* dei *Carmina minora* di Taddeo Ugoletto (Parma, 1493), edizione che altrimenti egli mostra di seguire fedelmente per quanto riguarda i *carmina minora*, anche per l'ordine in cui presenta i testi.

Il *codex unicus* su cui si era basato Camers, di cui nessuna fonte successiva all'edizione del 1510 ricorda l'esistenza, risulta oggi irrimediabilmente perduto: ciò significa che nessun testimone manoscritto noto trasmette i *Miracula Christi*,<sup>14</sup> e che dunque, nel caso del carme, l'*editio princeps* rappresenta l'unico testimone su cui fondare *codicis instar* l'edizione. Sebbene nel caso dei *Miracula* non emergano particolari problemi di carattere testuale, le condizioni materiali relative alla loro trasmissione (comuni ai *Disticha ambrosiani* ed ai *Tristicha historiarum testamenti ueteris et noui* di Elpidio Rustico) devono orientare ogni considerazione sui distici, così come sulla loro relazione con un supposto modello iconografico. Al contrario, la sola *Laus Christi*, a cui i *Miracula* come detto venivano associati nel codice di Camers con l'attribuzione a Claudio, ricompare – ma con il titolo *De Christo* – nella fortunata raccolta intitolata *Poetarum veterum ecclesiasticorum Opera christiana*, apparsa a Basilea nel 1564 per le cure di Georg Fabricius (pseudonimo di G. Goldschmidt).<sup>15</sup> Nel *Commentarius* pubblicato in coda al volume la paternità del componimento viene tuttavia attribuita non a Claudio, ma ad un cosiddetto 'Merobaude scolastico' (p. 87: *Merobaudis Hispani Scholastici Carmen de Christo transcripsimus e libro antiquo, quem ad nos Oporinus misit*). Per quanto tale componimento non sia stato rinvenuto nella *scriptio inferior* degli otto fogli del codice palinsesto Sangallensis 908 (V-VI sec.) indagato da B. G. Niebuhr nel 1823 e contenente i frammenti delle altre opere di Merobaude, la testimonianza di Fabricius appare oggi generalmente accettata come autentica<sup>16</sup> e, anche sulla base di uno studio delle caratteristiche stilistiche e intertestuali, la paternità del panegirista di Aezio per il carme *De Christo* risulta sostanzialmente accolta,<sup>17</sup> a meno di non considerare, in accordo con

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt (1992: 643–660).

<sup>12</sup> Birt (1892: CLXX–CLXXI).

<sup>13</sup> Strieder (1941: 17–18).

<sup>14</sup> Eccezion fatta per un interessante libro manoscritto, l'*Enchiridion orationum meditationum et psalmorum quorundam ex lectio S. Patrum selectorum* (Chantilly, Musée Condé 102, olim 1398), sorta di libro d'ore riccamente illuminato dedicato all'ambasciatore a Roma di Francesco I, il cardinale Georges d'Armagnac (1501–1585), da F. Vidonius (François Wydon). Il codice fu copiato a Roma nel 1543–1544, dunque dopo l'edizione di Camers e anche quella isenegriniana del 1534 (cfr. *infra*), e per i testi in questione (foll. 69v–72) segue fedelmente queste edizioni, anche nella collocazione dopo il carme *De Saluatore*; cfr. su questo codice Ploton-Nicollet (2013: 57–80).

<sup>15</sup> Fabricius (1564: col. 763).

<sup>16</sup> È stato notato che Fabricius, che conosceva l'edizione di Camers, in presenza esclusiva di testimonianze relative alla paternità claudiana avrebbe dovuto comportarsi come nel caso del *De Saluatore*, che egli attribuisce a Damaso non potendolo concepire come opera del *paganus peruicacissimus* Claudio, e che in generale egli assai difficilmente disponeva, nella seconda metà del XVI sec., di cognizioni adeguate ad elaborare autonomamente l'ipotesi dell'attribuzione a Merobaude (Ploton-Nicollet 2008: vol. I, 102–103).

<sup>17</sup> Niebuhr (1824: X–XI); Jeep (1873a: 299–301); Birt (1892: CLXXI–CLXXII); Vollmer (1905: 14); Lenz (1931: 1045–1046); Gennaro (1959: 23–37; 52–55); Clover (1971: 8–9); Bruzzone (1999:

F. Ploton-Nicollet, come possibile autore un omonimo, anch'egli in ogni caso di origine spagnola, cristiano e di formazione scolastica, come il *poeta lyricus* cieco il cui *floruit* nella cronaca dello Ps. Lucius Dexter è collocato a Barcellona in riferimento all'anno 423 d. C. (*Marabaudes poeta lyricus, caecus, Barcinone floret*).<sup>18</sup>

È chiaro dunque che esisteva almeno un altro testimone manoscritto contenente la *Laus Christi*, indipendente da quello adoperato da Camers: si trattava del codice miscellaneo fatto pervenire a G. Fabricius dal suo editore di Basilea, il celebre Johannes Oporinus; in tale testimone tuttavia l'opera risultava attribuita a Merobaude ed in esso non dovevano essere contenuti i *Miracula Christi*, che altrimenti Fabricius non avrebbe di certo escluso dal suo variegato *corpus* di poesia cristiana.

Non è altresì possibile affermare che Camers abbia attinto i due carmi cristiani da fogli poi perduti del Codex Veronensis Cap. CLXIII (Δ), codice antologico mutilo e acefalo in minuscola precarolina, risalente all'VIII-IX sec., come immaginava L. Jeep che lo scoprì nel 1872.<sup>19</sup> Se è vero infatti che *Laus Herculis*<sup>20</sup> e *In Sirenas*, gli altri due carmi dei quali Camers fornisce l'*editio princeps*, risultano oggi testimoniate da questo solo codice, è difficilmente ipotizzabile che l'umanista francescano da qui li abbia tratti per la sua edizione, dato che alcune lezioni testimoniate dall'edizione viennese non sono solo diverse, ma in alcuni casi obiettivamente migliori rispetto a quelle del codice veronese (cfr. spec. la lacuna dovuta ad omeoteleuto di *carm. min. app. 2*, 75b–76a).<sup>21</sup> A maggior ragione, assai difficilmente Camers avrebbe ricavato dalla stessa fonte i due carmi cristiani: questi ultimi non sono oggi contenuti nel codice Veronese e neppure, al contrario della *Laus Herculis* e del carme *In Sirenas*, compaiono nell'Aldina di Claudio (Venezia, 1523), per cui Giovanni Francesco d'Asola ha con tutta probabilità fatto uso, oltre che dell'edizione viennese, proprio del Codex Veronensis (fol. 2v: *ex fragmento quodam uetustissimo*).<sup>22</sup>

4. In conseguenza di quanto appena messo in luce, appare opportuno tenere distinta la storia del componimento intitolato *Miracula Christi*, e con questa ogni ipotesi sulla sua paternità, sia da quella del carme *De Saluatore* (come detto facente parte organica della tradizione manoscritta dei *carmina minora* e oggi – superate le difficoltà di accettare la paternità di un *paganus peruicacissimus* per un carme di contenuto cristiano, e al netto delle diverse opinioni sulla personale adesione al cristianesimo di Claudio – persuasivamente identificato con un componimento d'occasione composto dal poeta alessandrino

20–21); Bodelón (1998–1999: 353–354); Ucciero (2004: 87); una traduzione italiana, con l'attribuzione a Merobaude, è stata curata da Manzoni (1993). Rivelando maggiore prudenza, conclude che l'attribuzione non può essere né respinta né accolta Smolak (2000b: 7–8). Le analogie esisterebbero invece non con la lingua di Merobaude, dal cui stile la *Laus Christi* apparirebbe anzi «del tutto difforme», ma con il *De Saluatore* ed altri carmi claudianei per Romano (1958: 47–51), incline all'ipotesi di paternità claudiana per il carme, che è definito «senz'altro di Claudio» in Romano (1996: 267–272). Difende la paternità claudiana di tutti i carmi, latini e greci, di argomento cristiano attribuiti al poeta alessandrino Lo Cicero (1976–1977: 5–51; per la *Laus Christi* in particolare 35–45).

<sup>18</sup> Ploton-Nicollet (2008: vol. I, 98–105). Conviene tuttavia ricordare che il *Chronicon omnimodae historiae* è opera pseudoepigrafa, composta dal gesuita spagnolo Jerónimo Román de la Higuera (1538–1611).

<sup>19</sup> Jeep (1873a: 291–304).

<sup>20</sup> Jeep (1873b: 405–415).

<sup>21</sup> Hall (1986: 144); Guex (2000: 63–87).

<sup>22</sup> Guex (2000: 75–76). I quattro carmi di cui l'edizione di Camers rappresenta l'*editio princeps* non comparivano invece nella Giuntina pubblicata a cura di Antonio Francino Varchiese (Firenze, 1519).

no per la celebrazione della Pasqua alla corte di Onorio),<sup>23</sup> sia da quella della *Laus Christi*, che nella tradizione manoscritta testimoniata dall'edizione di Fabricius, in cui i *Miracula Christi* non comparivano, veniva attribuita a Merobaude.<sup>24</sup>

Come sottolineato già da Th. Birt nella sua monumentale edizione, labilissimo indizio di attribuzione dei *Miracula Christi* a Merobaude, a suo tempo ipotizzata da B. G. Niebuhr<sup>25</sup> e riproposta da I. Bekker,<sup>26</sup> sarebbe solo la loro trasmissione insieme alla *Laus Christi* nel *codex uetustissimus* di Camers, ma con l'attribuzione a Claudio;<sup>27</sup> a queste osservazioni aggiungerei che Merobaude è autore di due componimenti ecrastici relativi alla corte ravennate, secondo la teoria di J. B. Bury oggi unanimemente accettata sulla natura dei *Carmi* 1 e 2.<sup>28</sup> Sarebbe tuttavia azzardato trarre conclusioni a partire da questi semplici dati, ed è a ragione che F. Ploton-Nicollet sembra escludere da ultimo la paternità di Merobaude per i *Miracula Christi*.<sup>29</sup>

Per altro verso implausibile è la stessa paternità claudiana, che, dopo Camers (il quale, lo ricordiamo, esplicitamente intendeva i due carmi cristiani come prova dell'adesione alla religione cristiana da parte del poeta alessandrino, fol. IIIv = 191v: *Carmina quoque Claudiani quae [...] addimus [...] ostendunt quid Claudianus de Christo et eius fide sanctissima senserit*), era ancora accolta nell'edizione isengriniana curata da Michael Bentin († 1527) e Johannes Honter (Basileae, 1534, foll. 189v–190r) e nelle successive stampe dell'opera claudiana, ovvero l'edizione plantiniana di Theodor Poelmann (Antverpiae, 1571), quella di Étienne de Clavière (Parisiis, 1602), l'edizione leidense curata anonimamente dallo Scaligero<sup>30</sup> per i tipi di Frans van Ravelingen II (Leidae, 1603), nonché le due edizioni approntate da Caspar von Barth nel 1612 e nel 1650. In particolare, se nel suo commento alla prima edizione C. von Barth non prendeva in considerazione i carmi cristiani attribuiti a Claudio, nell'edizione del 1650 l'erudito si spingeva a difendere, in base a ragioni stilistiche, la paternità claudiana dei *Miracula Christi*, anche a dispetto dell'assenza dai manoscritti.<sup>31</sup>

È curioso che il primo esplicito, per quanto lapidario, intervento in difesa della paternità claudiana del carme, quello di C. von Barth, si manifesti nello stesso anno in cui

<sup>23</sup> Vollmer (1899: 2656); Alfonsi (1956: 173–178); Cameron (1970: 214–227); Sebesta (1980: 33–37); Charlet (1984: 273–287); Gualandri (1989: 26, n. 4); Ricci (1994: 365–374); Ricci (2001: 234–239); Hofmann (1997: 4); Moreschini (2004: 59–61).

<sup>24</sup> Questo senza considerare la possibilità che esistesse un altro testimone manoscritto per la *Laus Christi*, ovvero uno dei codici dell'erudito e giurista Jacques Cujas di cui avrebbe fatto uso Claverius per la sua edizione (Koch 1889: 7–8). Nella sua edizione del 1602, al v. 29 egli accoglie infatti la stessa lezione di Camers (*Quid nisi*), ma annota: «Haec est antiqua lectio. Excusi omnes eam secuti aliter habent, nempe: Qui nisi praestares, quod videtur aptius. Sed enim hic auctor, ut alii poetae, verba sua intricavit.» Che Claverius abbia potuto inventare artatamente la lezione erronea per giustificare una propria correzione è ipotesi già di J. Koch e Th. Birt.

<sup>25</sup> Niebuhr (1824: XI): «Disticha de miraculis Christi pariter Merobaudem nostrum auctorem habere, valde probabile est.»

<sup>26</sup> Bekker (1836: VIII).

<sup>27</sup> Birt (1892: CLXXII); già Riese (1869–1870: vol. II, XXXII), nella *Praefatio* al secondo fascicolo della prima edizione dell'*Anthologia Latina*, affermava che tali carmi «eiusdem omnia poetae esse possunt». Associava dubitativamente a Merobaude i *Miracula Christi* anche Fontaine (1981: 278).

<sup>28</sup> Bury (1919); Monti (1966); Clover (1971: 16–19); Mazza (1984: 402–414).

<sup>29</sup> Ploton-Nicollet (2008: vol. III, 801).

<sup>30</sup> Bernays (1860).

<sup>31</sup> Barthius (1650: 1071): «Claudiano non indignum, cuius aequabilitatem, facilitatem, amoenitatemque egregie exhibet.»

emergono esplicitamente i dubbi, ad oggi ancora attuali, sull'effettiva ascrivibilità dei *Miracula Christi* al poeta alessandrino: i *Miracula* figurano infatti in un gruppo di epigrammi *quae Claudiani non uidentur*, non solo per l'assenza dai codici ma anche per questioni stilistiche, per la prima volta nell'influente edizione claudiana di Nikolaes Heinsius, anch'essa apparsa alla metà del XVII sec. (Ludguni Batavorum, 1650; 1665<sup>2</sup>), così come in quella di Johann Matthias Gesner (Lipsiae, 1759). Se gli epigrammi di attribuzione claudiana venivano di nuovo pubblicati tutti insieme, senza distinzioni, nell'edizione *ad usum Delphini* a cura di Guillaume Pyrrho (Parisiis, 1667) ed in quella di Pieter Burman il Giovane (Amstelaedami, 1760), nelle moderne edizioni critiche di L. Jeep,<sup>32</sup> Th. Birt,<sup>33</sup> J. Koch,<sup>34</sup> e da ultimo nella teubneriana di J. B. Hall, i *Miracula Christi* sono definitivamente relegati nell'*Appendix spuriorum carminum*, che ha assunto definitivamente con l'edizione di Th. Birt la sua fattispecie attuale, sostanzialmente immutata anche nelle più recenti edizioni.<sup>35</sup>

A rendere insostenibile la paternità claudiana dei *Miracula*, nonostante il tentativo di difesa ancora da parte di C. Lo Cicero, la quale immaginava che la composizione dei *tituli* da parte di Claudio avesse avuto luogo dopo l'ascolto della predicione di Ambrogio durante la Settimana santa del 395,<sup>36</sup> sono per altro verso – al di là delle peculiarità della loro trasmissione e di ogni altra possibile considerazione<sup>37</sup> – alcune tracce di dipendenza del carme rispetto alla tradizione poetica latina cristiana della prima metà del V sec., con particolare riferimento a Paolino di Nola<sup>38</sup> e, nel caso dei distici V. e VI. (come già messo in luce da G. Cupaiuolo<sup>39</sup> e C. Springer<sup>40</sup>), probabilmente anche a Sedulio. Pur nell'esiguità dei 18 versi di cui il carme è costituito e con la consapevolezza che alcune ricorrenze possono essere dovute non ad una cosciente ripresa, quanto piuttosto all'identità del codice, ossia alle caratteristiche della *langue* poetica latina applicata ai medesimi episodi scritturistici, gli indubitabili legami con la poesia precedente di cui si è parlato per i *Miracula Christi*<sup>41</sup> trovano nei seguenti casi – per la gran parte finora non presi in

<sup>32</sup> Jeep (1876–1879: vol. II, 202–203).

<sup>33</sup> Birt (1892: 412–413).

<sup>34</sup> Koch (1893: 309–310).

<sup>35</sup> Sulla configurazione dei *Carmina minora* e dell'*Appendix claudiana* cfr. Luck (1979).

<sup>36</sup> Lo Cicero (1976–1977: 35–45).

<sup>37</sup> I rilievi più approfonditi in questo senso in Strieder (1941: 51–52 e 66); cfr. inoltre Alfonsi (1956: 178, n. 1); Romano (1958: 51, n. 50); Cameron (1970: 203–204); Lausberg (1982: 219).

<sup>38</sup> L'ipotesi inversa, che presupporrebbe l'imitazione da parte di Paolino di Nola dell'autore dei *Miracula Christi*, sembra assai meno plausibile: va ricordato che Paolino, legato da rapporti epistolari con le personalità più eminenti della sua epoca, fu rappresentante di punta dell'élite culturale e letteraria del tempo e si impose da subito come modello degno d'imitazione, come dimostrato in maniera inequivocabile almeno nel caso di Prudenzio (Charlet 1975). Se avesse scritto prima di Paolino, inoltre, l'autore dei *Miracula Christi* avrebbe dovuto precedere anche la composizione del *Dittochaeon*, e sarebbe quindi una figura potentermente originale, da cui l'operazione letteraria prudenziiana sarebbe stata in certo modo influenzata; invece il componimento dell'anonimo, per quanto di buona fattura, sembra tradire in più di un punto una natura in qualche modo 'derivativa', caratterizzata dalla combinazione di influenze provenienti da modelli letterari pagani (cfr. spec. Cupaiuolo [1989: 186, n. 21; 197]) e cristiani (per il ruolo di Giovenco cfr. specialmente Lo Cicero [1976–1977: 41–42]). Meno decisivo, ma comunque meritevole di menzione, è il fatto che il *De Christo*, a cui come detto i *Miracula* erano associati nel codice edito da Camers, è opera attribuita pressoché unanimemente al pieno V sec.

<sup>39</sup> Cupaiuolo (1989: 183).

<sup>40</sup> Springer (1988: 60).

<sup>41</sup> Ha affrontato tale aspetto dell'opera soprattutto Cupaiuolo (1989: 181–192), pur non comprendendo nell'analisi Paolino di Nola.

considerazione dagli studiosi – oggettive conferme, sia a livello testuale che della comune impostazione conferita alla presentazione dei prodigi, dei quali vengono spesso messi in luce i medesimi tratti salienti:

Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21, 2: *concipiāt salua uirginitate deum.*

Paul. Nol. *carm.* 25, 154: *Quae genuit salua uirginitate deum.*

Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21, 5–6: *Permutat lymphas in uina liquefiantia Christus / Quo primum facto se probat esse deum.*

Paul. Nol. *carm.* 27, 50–52: *Siue dies eadem magis illo sit sacra signo, / Quo primum deus egit opus, cum flumine uerso / Permutauit aquas praedulcis nectare uini.*

Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21, 9–10: *Editus ex utero caecus noua lumina sentit / Et stupet ignotum se meruisse diem.*

Paul. Nol. *carm.* 23, 293: *Ex utero et caecum noua lumina fecit habere.*

Sedul. *carm. pasch.* 4, 261–263: *Mox ergo gemellae / Vultibus effulgent acies tandemque merentur / Ignotum spectare diem.*

Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app.* 21, 11–12: *Lazarus e tumulo Christo inclamante resurgit / Et durae mortis lex resoluta perit.*

Sedul. *carm. pasch.* 4, 283–287: *Ergo ubi clamantis Domini sonuit tuba dicens / “Lazare, perge foras” ... / ... mortisque profundae / Lex perit.*

5. Se questi paralleli risultano almeno in parte convincenti, e nonostante la perdurante impossibilità di avanzare, allo stato attuale, alcuna plausibile ipotesi attributiva per il carme *Miracula Christi*, si è in grado comunque di escluderne, credo con maggior sicurezza, la paternità claudiana, e di ipotizzare una plausibile datazione intorno alla metà del V sec., sia per i debiti mostrati dal poeta verso la tradizione poetica cristiana precedente,<sup>42</sup> sia anche per le caratteristiche ortodosse della teologia dell'autore, in particolare in riferimento al concepimento verginale di Maria e alla natura divina del concepito, oggetto di una formulazione pregnante (v. 2: *concipiāt salua uirginitate deum*) conforme al Credo niceno-costantinopolitano e alle posizioni che, già in parte elaborate nel corso del IV sec., porteranno a sancire definitivamente il ruolo della Vergine ad Efeso nel 431 d. C.<sup>43</sup> Una datazione molto più tarda, diciamo posteriore al VI sec., dovrebbe viceversa essere esclusa per la *facies* linguistica complessiva del carme, piuttosto schematico<sup>44</sup> ma in cui vige un rigoroso rispetto delle quantità prosodiche (in particolare la quantità della seconda sillaba del nome *Maria*, al v. 1 ancora breve come in Giovenco, Paolino di Nola e Pru-

<sup>42</sup> Secondo la cronologia di Fabre (1948: 114; 35–39; 122–123), i carmi paoliniani che l'autore dei *Miracula Christi* sembrerebbe conoscere vanno datati al 401 (Paul. Nol. *carm.* 23), al 403 (Paul. Nol. *carm.* 27; si noti inoltre che è questo il *Natalicium* in cui Paolino descrive le raffigurazioni bibliche della *basilica noua* di Cimitile, accompagnate da *tituli*) e agli anni 401–404 (Paul. Nol. *carm.* 25; ma una datazione dell'epitalamio per le nozze di Giuliano e Tizia al 407 è teoricamente possibile, cfr. da ultimo Trout [1999: 215, n. 103]); Sedilio fu invece come noto attivo sotto gli imperatori Teodosio II e Valentiniano III, ossia fra il 425 e il 450 (cfr. da ultimo Springer [2013: XIV–XVI]).

<sup>43</sup> Riguardo al primo distico, un commento più approfondito in Lubian (2012–2013: 40–44).

<sup>44</sup> Tranne che ai distici I e VII, è praticata una rigorosa, quasi schematica separazione sintattica fra esametro (per lo più descrittivo) e pentametro (dedicato all'interpretazione dell'episodio); fra i tratti di ricorsività stilistica e lessicale dell'opera vanno citati, nei pentametri, l'*et incipitario* (v. 8; 10; 12; 14) e le clausole *deus/deum* (v. 2; 4; 6; *diem* al v. 10) e *fidem/fides* (v. 14; 16).

denzio, diventerà lunga in Aratore e Venanzio Fortunato) e delle regole metriche,<sup>45</sup> e da cui risultano assenti fenomeni tipici (anche se, va naturalmente precisato, non onnipresenti) della versificazione tardoantica, come la coincidenza piede-parola in corrispondenza del secondo o terzo piede d'esametro o – se all'ultimo verso si ritorna alla lezione *lectus* dell'*editio princeps*<sup>46</sup> – la corrispondenza ‘rimica’ fra parole in cesura e in clausola.

6. Dopo un primo pronunciamento in questo senso da parte di É. de Clavière,<sup>47</sup> la dipendenza dei *Miracula Christi* da un ciclo iconografico preesistente è stata ribadita con poche eccezioni dalla critica.<sup>48</sup> In particolare, il principio unificatore del ciclo è stato individuato da G. Turcio nella tematica della *regeneratio baptismalis*,<sup>49</sup> questa tesi, sviluppata ed approfondita in tempi più recenti da parte di D. Calcagnini,<sup>50</sup> ha condotto ad ipotizzare che i distici fossero destinati a comparire sulle pareti di un battistero.

La mancanza di ogni evidenza extratestuale e anche di testimonianze indirette relative all’effettivo impiego dei nostri distici come didascalie per un ciclo figurativo sembra tuttavia richiedere maggiore prudenza in relazione a quest’ipotesi. Sebbene un’analoga selezione di episodi evangelici non fosse in principio incompatibile con la cultura visuale attestata a partire dalla fine del IV sec. (i temi affrontati dai distici non sono privi di paralleli nell’arte paleocristiana, non solo per quanto riguarda le singole scene affrontate),<sup>51</sup> ma anche – come si vedrà meglio in seguito – per l’associazione di vicende miracolose in

<sup>45</sup> Tre i casi di sinalefe, di cui uno con eclipsi di *-m*. Pur nella scarsa base statistica costituita da 9 esametri, si può osservare una discreta varietà di *patterns* metrici (7 diversi, con doppia occorrenza solo di DSSD e del più raro SSDS), la prevalenza per il primo piede dattilico (5 casi) ed un’identica presenza di dattili e spondei nei primi quattro piedi (18 e 18), in sostanziale continuità con la prassi classica, mentre solo la predominanza di dattili al quarto piede (6 casi) segna una differenza rispetto alle norme versificatorie più sorvegliate. Gli esametri sono regolari anche per quel che riguarda le clausole, in 7 casi su 9 (77,7%) del tipo x + 2 (*condere gentem*), in un caso del tipo x + 3 (*conde sepulchro*) ed in un caso anche del tipo più raro, ma comunque regolare, 2 + 1 + 2 (*gente tot annos*), mentre le cesure, di cui almeno alcune usate in funzione espressiva (vv. 1; 7; 11; 13), mostrano un’apprezzabile varietà, evitando il meccanico ricorso alla semiquinaria tipico della versificazione tarda.

<sup>46</sup> Cfr. n. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Claverius (1602: 251): «Non dubito quin haec in totidem disticha separanda sint, mihique persuaserim libens ea singulis miraculis, a pictore expressis, subiecta fuisse, aut subiicienda, sunt vero facilia et pulcra.»

<sup>48</sup> Barthius (1650: 1071): «Non inepta vel Cuiacii vel Claverii opinio, singula hinc disticha singulis miraculorum picturis subiecta. Delectabatur enim iam tum Ecclesia representandis penicillo rebus et historiis utriusque Testamenti»; Gesnerus (1759: vol. II, 711); Birt (1892: CLXXII; lo studioso sottolinea anche il parallelismo con gli Επιγράμματα ἐν Κυζίκῳ del III libro dell’*Anthologia Palatina*); Turcio (1928: 339–344); Calcagnini (1993: 24–26); Arnulf (1997: 138). Diversa l’opinione di Cupaiuolo (1989: 184–192), che suggerisce l’ipotesi che l’opera sia stata piuttosto composta per una lettura orale, a fine mnemonico e pedagogico, forse ad uso degli iniziandi. Tali osservazioni risultano decisamente interessanti, specie alla luce delle recenti ricerche sulla versificazione biblica come *aide-mémoire* in epoca medievale (cfr. in particolare Dinkova-Bruun [2010]); tuttavia nel nostro caso le caratteristiche stilistiche dei distici (cfr. n. 52), anche secondo Cupaiuolo (1989: 195) affini a quelle degli altri *tituli*, sembrano implicare l’instaurazione di un legame – per quanto con tutta probabilità *in absentia* – con un referente extratestuale, creando le condizioni perché il lettore, facendo leva sulle proprie competenze culturali, attivi l’indispensabile cooperazione ermeneutica da cui trae origine la visualizzazione. È dunque a partire da questa impostazione *in nuce* intermediale, caratteristica precipua del (sotto-)genere dei *tituli*, che possono essere indagate le possibili funzioni di questa forma ‘ultrabreve’ di riscrittura evangelica.

<sup>49</sup> Turcio (1928).

<sup>50</sup> Calcagnini (1993: 31–45).

<sup>51</sup> Calcagnini (1993) ha il merito di sottolinearlo nel suo studio; così anche Arnulf (1997: 138).

progetti iconografici unitari), riterrei più prudente immaginare che l'autore dell'opera abbia tratto spunto dall'effettiva diffusione dei *tituli* in epoca tardoantica (cfr. soprattutto Paul. Nol. *carm.* 27, 580–584) per 'costruire' poeticamente il proprio referente extratestuale,<sup>52</sup> facendo leva su una serie di procedimenti stilistici comuni alle altre serie di *tituli*<sup>53</sup> per prestrutturare l'*Ergänzungsspiel* del lettore, il quale, fondandosi sulla *Appellstruktur* del testo, attiva l'indispensabile strategia di cooperazione ermeneutica da cui trae origine la visualizzazione.<sup>54</sup>

Anche la questione relativa alla predominante tematica battesimale dei *Miracula Christi* merita a mio avviso di essere ripensata. Se è infatti vero che alcuni dei distici, presi singolarmente, possono essere obiettivamente ricondotti a tale simbologia, pare forzato ricondurre tutte le scene ad un'unica tipologia sacramentale, tanto più che ad esempio nel miracolo della guarigione del cieco nato (V.) non viene esplicitamente tematizzata la funzione guaritrice dell'acqua, ossia precisamente il dato che, sulla base del legame fra elemento liquido e φωτισμός, consentiva l'attivazione dell'interpretazione tipologica nei Padri. Non è inoltre sicuro che nell'ultimo distico il poeta si riferisca alla guarigione del paralitico avvenuta presso la Piscina Probatica di Gerusalemme (*Ioh.* 5, 1–15), episodio dal preminente significato battesimale: la guarigione di un uomo paralitico è infatti raccontata anche dai Sinottici, che la ambientano a Cafarnao (*Matth.* 9, 2–7; *Marc.* 2, 3–12; *Luc.* 5, 18–24), e non vi è consenso fra gli studiosi in merito a quale dei due episodi fosse presente al poeta, che tace ogni particolare relativo all'ambientazione della scena ma afferma che il paralitico era malato «da molti anni».<sup>55</sup> Per parte mia, credo che il silenzio sulla Piscina sia un elemento troppo importante per essere sottovalutato, e possa suggerire che alla base del distico conclusivo stia la versione dei Sinottici: sia nell'esegesi che nell'iconografia, infatti, era proprio l'elemento acquatico quello più valorizzato della redazione giovannea. Nell'arte paleocristiana, nei casi in cui la scena viene resa senza alcuna concessione alla raffigurazione ambientale, la critica ritiene più probabile il riferimento all'episodio di Cafarnao, nel quale il miracolo viene innescato dall'ostinazione del paralitico, espressione emblematica della fede nella capacità salvifica di Cristo premiata con il risanamento fisico e la salvezza. Le versioni per cui è sicuro il riferimento al testo

<sup>52</sup> Roncoroni (1975: 219–220) considera i *Miracula Christi* come un'opera che testimonia «anche formalmente» una fase in cui il genere dei *tituli* epigrafici, dotati ormai di autonomo valore poetico, veniva forse coltivato come proposta o suggerimento per cicli da realizzare.

<sup>53</sup> Innanzitutto i distici rappresentano nove pannelli isolati, che descrivono scene separate; generalizzato (al v. 10, *sentit* è correzione di Th. Birt per il trāditō *sensit*) è inoltre l'impiego del presente, il tempo del «mondo commentato» o «besprochene Welt» (Weinrich [2004: 63]) tipico per didascalie e titoli di quadri; al v. 3, il modulo costituito dal v. *dare* unito ad una apostrofe diretta (da enunciatore ad enunciatario interno, secondo il modulo tipico della preghiera e della lode) è tipico della poesia iscrizionale (CLE 865, 7; 1110, 9; 1181, 7; 1229, 1; 1405, 13–14; 1988, 35; 2150, 1–2; AE 2005, 498, 7; Zarker 1958: 82, 4), così come l'allocuzione intradiegetica, ossia ad enunciatore ed enunciatario interno (funzionale alla drammatizzazione della descrizione) costituita dall'imperativo di *suscipio* (v. 4), che, in concorrenza con quello di *accipio*, rappresenta un modulo tipico della poesia iscrizionale, soprattutto – ma non solo – epitimbica, per l'invito a ricevere doni (CLE 627, 13; 755, 9; 1338, 1; 1339, 7; 1371, 2; 1405, 1; 1429, 9; 1477, 1; 2103, 1; ICVR II, 4140, 3).

<sup>54</sup> Per le riflessioni sulla fenomenologia della lettura come atto di integrazione si rimanda fra gli altri a Iser (1987: 207–238).

<sup>55</sup> Mentre Lo Cicero (1976–1977: 40) ritiene che l'ipotesto vada identificato nella versione dei Sinottici, e l'aggiunta *post multos annos* sia da attribuire al poeta, secondo Cupaiuolo (1989: 180, n. 11), Calcagnini (1993: 20, n. 27) e Dulaey (2007: 100) proprio tale particolare sarebbe spia dell'impiego del brano giovanneo, dato che solo nel quarto Vangelo è precisato che il paralitico era malato da 38 anni.

giovanneo, viceversa, fanno esplicito riferimento a *Ioh.* 5, 1–15 per l’ambientazione architettonica e soprattutto per la presenza dell’acqua:<sup>56</sup> così nell’affresco delle catacombe di sant’Ermene sulla via Salaria, in un ristretto numero di sarcofagi di epoca teodosiana detti appunto ‘di Bethesda’, probabilmente provenienti da un medesimo *atelier* romano, in cui l’episodio è raffigurato in due scene in registri sovrapposti e separati da linee ondulate, alludenti alle acque della piscina,<sup>57</sup> o ancora, a inizio VI sec., nei mosaici del terzo registro ‘cristologico’ della navata centrale di S. Apollinare Nuovo a Ravenna. D’altro canto, anche se le pericopi evangeliche dei Sinottici e di Giovanni avevano senz’altro una qualche tendenza a sovrapporsi nella memoria, dato che nell’omiletica si sente l’esigenza di precisare agli uditori che le due guarigioni andavano tenute distinte (*Ioh. Chrys. in Matth. hom.* 29 [PG 57, col. 357, l. 42–46]: Ὁ μέντοι παραλυτικὸς ἔτερος οὗτός ἐστι παρὰ τὸν ἐν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ κείμενον [...] ὁ μὲν τριακονταοκτὼ εἶχεν ἔτη, περὶ τούτου δὲ οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον εἴρηται;<sup>58</sup> cfr. anche *Aug. cons. euang.* 2, 25), la percezione della distinzione da operare fra i due episodi, oltre che nell’esegesi,<sup>59</sup> appare netta anche al livello dell’arte paleocristiana: i due miracoli sono giustapposti, e perciò evidentemente distinti, proprio nella basilica ravennate di S. Apollinare Nuovo. Ritengo pertanto improbabile che il poeta abbia proceduto ad una contaminazione dei due ipotesti, e l’ipotesi più verosimile mi sembra quella che il poeta si sia basato sulla versione dei Sinottici, aggiungendo il particolare enfatico (e non precisamente giovanneo) relativo alla lunga durata della malattia.<sup>60</sup> Come possibile conferma dell’identificazione dell’ipotesto con la versione tramandata da Matteo e Luca, si noti che *paralyticus*, il termine usato dal poeta, compare nella versione dei Sinottici (*Matth.* 9, 2; 9, 6; *Marc.* 2, 3–4; 2, 9–10; *Luc.* 5, 18; 5, 24), ma non nella redazione giovanea, dove il malato è definito soltanto: *quidam homo triginta et octo annos habens in infirmitate sua* (*Ioh.* 5, 5) e *infirmus* (5, 7), e che anche il termine *lectum* compare solo in *Matth.* 9, 6 e *Luc.* 5, 24, mentre in Marco e nel quarto Vangelo (5, 8–12) viene impiegato il sinonimo *grabattum*,<sup>61</sup> di per sé non incompatibile con la poesia datitica (*Comm. apol.* 650; *Prud. apoth.* 967; *Sedul. carm. pasch.* 3, 98).

Se quest’identificazione della scena appare convincente, occorre ripensare anche il significato assunto dall’episodio nella serie dei distici: l’interpretazione più diffusa nei Padri della guarigione di Cafarnao non prevedeva infatti alcuna tipologia battesimal. Mentre infatti la guarigione del paralitico presso la piscina Probatica, ottenuta grazie alla potenza dell’acqua, era regolarmente utilizzata nella catechesi per la sua connotazione figurale,<sup>62</sup> riguardo alla guarigione narrata dai Sinottici l’esegesi generalmente non

<sup>56</sup> Dulaey (2006: 321–327).

<sup>57</sup> Nicoletti (1981: 52–69); Noga-Banai (2007).

<sup>58</sup> Trad.: «Questo paralitico [scil.: quello di *Matth.* 9, 2–7] è diverso da quello presente in Giovanni [...] Quello fu malato per trentotto anni, riguardo a questo nulla del genere viene detto.»

<sup>59</sup> Dulaey (2006: 287).

<sup>60</sup> Un’analoga allusione alla lunga degenza del paralitico, con probabile riferimento alla versione dei Sinottici, compare in Cipriano (*Cypr. epist.* 69, 13, 2: *Ego enim qui clinicum de Euangelio noui scio paralyticu illi et debili per longa aetatis curricula in lecto iacenti nihil infirmitatem suam obfuisse quominus ad firmitatem caelestem plenissime perueniret*).

<sup>61</sup> Si fa qui riferimento sia al testo della *Vulgata* sia a quello delle precedenti versioni latine; per le isolate forme alternative registrate da alcuni testimoni dei *Vangeli* di Matteo, Luca e Giovanni (*grabattum* in *Matth.* 9, 6 nei codici *a h* ed in *Luc.* 5, 24 nei codici *c d r'*; *lectum* in *Ioh.* 5, 8; 12 nel solo *q*) si vedano rispettivamente Jülicher (1938: 49); Jülicher (1954: 54); Jülicher (1963: 43–44).

<sup>62</sup> Dulaey (2006: 302–305).

mette in luce una tipologia sacramentale, concentrandosi piuttosto – come sembra fare anche il nostro distico (si noti l'enfasi data da *mirandum!*) – sull'ordine impartito al paralitico di trasportare il proprio lettuccio. Nella lettura allegorica più diffusa, il malato di Cafarnao rappresenta l'uomo primordiale, la cui paralisi è figura della condizione postlapsaria (Iren. *adv. haer.* 5, 17, 2) e la cui guarigione sta a rappresentare una «figure globale du Salut».<sup>63</sup> Secondo questa linea esegetica, il lettuccio del paralitico rappresenta il corpo umano (Orig. *in Cant.* 2, 4) e il paralitico guarito raffigura la restaurazione piena dell'uomo nella Resurrezione (Chromat. *serm.* 44, 4; Aug. *serm.* 124, 1; 362, 14; Max. Taur. *serm.* 19, 3), mentre la guarigione stessa prefigura la salvezza eterna.<sup>64</sup> La tematica della resurrezione, testimoniata già dalla compilazione delle *Costituzioni apostoliche* (*Const. App.* 5, 7, 27: ὁ τὸν παραλυτικὸν σῶον ἀνεγέιρας [...] ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀνεγείρει),<sup>65</sup> è oltretutto propria dei commenti all'episodio sicuramente più noti in Occidente fra IV e V sec., quelli di Ilario di Poitiers (Hil. *in Matth.* 8, 7–8)<sup>66</sup> e Ambrogio (Ambr. *in Luc.* 5, 12–14),<sup>67</sup> che il poeta può forse aver conosciuto.

7. Si passi ora a prendere in esame la struttura del componimento, analizzata nel dettaglio da G. Cupaiuolo,<sup>68</sup> il quale ha visto nel carme un'organizzazione tripartita. L'opera risulterebbe dunque introdotta da una sezione dedicata all'annuncio (v. 1: *praescia*), al riconoscimento (v. 3: *praenuntia munera*) e alla dimostrazione (v. 6: *se probat esse deum*) della divinità di Cristo (I.: Annunciazione; II.: doni dei Magi; III.: miracolo di Cana), che funge in pratica da prologo delle effettive manifestazioni miracolose. Nella seconda sezione

<sup>63</sup> Dulaey (2006: 292).

<sup>64</sup> Dulaey (2007: 85–88).

<sup>65</sup> Trad.: «Colui che ha fatto levare in piedi il paralitico risanato [...], egli anche noi farà risorgere.»

<sup>66</sup> Porro autem ut ipse esse in corpore positus intelligi posset, qui et animis peccata dimitteret et resurrectionem corporibus praestaret, [...] ait paralytico: «Surge et tolle lectum tuum». [...] Primum remissionem tribuit peccatis, dehinc iuritatem resurrectionis ostendit, tum sublatione lectuli infirmitatem ac dolorem corporibus docuit a futurum, postremo redditu in domum propriam iter in paradisum credentibus esse redhibendum. Trad.: «Inoltre, affinché si potesse comprendere che lui stesso si era incarnato in un corpo umano per rimettere i peccati alle anime e procurare la resurrezione ai corpi [...], disse al paralitico: "Sollevati, e prendi il tuo letto." In primo luogo ha concesso la remissione dei peccati, quindi ha mostrato la potenza della resurrezione, poi con la sollevazione del lettuccio ha insegnato che infirmità e dolore non avrebbero più gravato sui corpi, infine con il ritorno alla propria casa ha insegnato ai credenti che bisogna riprendere il cammino verso il Paradiso.»

<sup>67</sup> Quo loco plenam speciem resurrectionis ostendit, qui mentis uulneribus corporisque sanatis, peccata donat animorum, debilitatem carnis excludit; hoc est enim totum hominem esse curatum. Quamuis igitur magnum sit hominibus peccata dimittere [...], tamen multo diuinius est resurrectionem donare corporibus; quandoquidem ipse Dominus resurrectio est. Hic lectus qui tolli iubetur, quid est aliud nisi quia humanum iubetur corpus ad tolli? [...] Nec solum leuare lectum, sed etiam domum suam repete, hoc est, ad paradisum redire censetur. Trad.: «E qui Egli ha mostrato un'immagine piena della resurrezione, poiché, avendo guarito le ferite dell'animo e del corpo, rimette i peccati alle anime, elimina la debolezza della carne: ciò è a dire, l'uomo è stato risanato nella sua totalità. Benché dunque sia una grande cosa perdonare i peccati agli uomini [...], tuttavia è molto più divino far resuscitare i corpi; perché il Signore è lui stesso resurrezione. Questo letto che viene ordinato di sollevare, cos'altro significa, se non che viene ordinato di sollevare il corpo umano? E non solo gli ordina di sollevare il letto, ma anche di rientrare a casa sua, ovvero di ritornare al Paradiso.»

<sup>68</sup> Evidentemente quest'ipotesi interpretativa presuppone che l'opera non proseguisse con altri distici non pervenuti, come per la prima volta ipotizzato da Gesnerus (1759: vol. II, 711: «Ceterum videtur hoc fragmentum modo esse longioris opusculi, quo alia quoque miracula Domini nostri poeta prosecutus est»); la medesima opinione è condivisa da Riese (1894–1906: vol. II, 329), il quale, richiamandosi anche all'opinione di J. Ziehen, in coda al componimento aggiunge: «Post 18 disticha nonnulla desunt.»

ne sono ricordati i principali miracoli di Cristo, che implicano uno stravolgimento delle leggi di natura (IV.: moltiplicazione di pani e pesci; V.: guarigione del cieco nato; VI.: resurrezione di Lazzaro), mentre i tre epigrammi conclusivi mettono in luce l'indispensabilità della fede (v. 14: *firmat et ore fidem*; v. 16: *fit medicina fides*) per la salvezza (VII.: salvataggio di Pietro; VIII.: guarigione dell'emorroissa; IX.: guarigione del paralitico).<sup>69</sup>

Tali osservazioni appaiono del tutto condivisibili, fatto salvo per due precisazioni: innanzitutto il distico III., facendo esplicitamente riferimento alla trasformazione del vino come al primo σημεῖον (v. 6), sembra appartenere di diritto alla parte miracolistica dell'opera<sup>70</sup> e, insieme al distico precedente (cfr. spec. v. 4), può piuttosto costituire una sotto-sezione a sé stante, da prevalente valore teofanico,<sup>71</sup> che rappresenterebbe una 'cerniera' fra la parte dedicata all'infanzia (II.: Magi) e quella relativa ai prodigi (III.: Cana). In secondo luogo, se si ritiene che il componimento riflette un'architettura voluta dal poeta (la successione dei primi tre distici sembrerebbe dimostrarlo), e si accetta l'ipotesi che l'ultimo distico si riferisca al paralitico di Cafarnao, va almeno valutata la possibilità che l'episodio collocato in ultima posizione rappresenti una conclusione studiata per il ciclo dei distici. Con l'immagine del paralitico che sorge sulle proprie gambe, l'autore richiamerebbe da un lato la resurrezione di Lazzaro dal sepolcro (collocata in sesta posizione, al centro dei sette distici effettivamente dedicati ad episodi miracolosi e al culmine della sezione centrale, dal carattere più spiccatamente prodigioso) e dall'altro concluderebbe l'opera con un'allusione alla resurrezione e alla restaurazione dell'uomo nel Paradiso, ossia con uno scarto – almeno sul piano allegorico – dalla prospettiva soteriologica prevalente nei *Miracula* alla dimensione anche escatologica della redenzione.

Queste osservazioni sull'articolazione interna dell'opera non impediscono di riconoscere che i *Miracula Christi* sono caratterizzati, a livello macrotestuale, anche da un forte principio unificatore. Tale elemento comune è rintracciabile, credo, non tanto in un'onnipervasiva simbologia battesimal, quanto piuttosto nella volontà di «celebrare ed esaltare la figura di Cristo»<sup>72</sup> ed il suo potere soteriologico tramite i miracoli. Anche in ragione dell'estrema sintesi imposta dalla misura del distico, dei prodigi è selezionato un singolo particolare,<sup>73</sup> che di regola coincide con l'aspetto più portentoso dell'evento,

<sup>69</sup> Cupaiuolo (1989: 192–195). Lo Cicero (1976–1977: 41) ha invece visto nel carme una differente tripartizione: vv. 1–4 (Annunciazione e doni dei Magi), vv. 5–12 (miracoli tratti dal *Vangelo* di Giovanni, e ricordati anche da Giovenco: Cana, moltiplicazione di pani e pesci – ma il miracolo è raccontato anche dai Sinottici –, guarigione del cieco nato – assente dalla parafrasi di Giovenco –, e resurrezione di Lazzaro), vv. 13–18 (miracoli non più tratti da Giovanni e che hanno l'ordine inverso rispetto a Giovenco e ai *Vangeli*, «come se l'autore, volendo aggiungere altri episodi alla lista presentata fino al v. 12, avesse sfogliato a ritroso le fonti»: Pietro sulle acque, guarigione dell'emorroissa e del paralitico).

<sup>70</sup> Di quest'avviso anche Lo Cicero (1976–1977: 41), secondo cui, come già accennato nella nota precedente, i quattro versi iniziali rappresentavano una prima sezione dedicata al 'Vangelo dell'infanzia'.

<sup>71</sup> Proprio in questo senso i due episodi erano associati – insieme al Battesimo di Cristo – nella liturgia dell'Epifania (*Theophania*, τὰ θεοφάνεια, τὰ Φῶτα, ἐπιφάνεια), come dimostrato, nel secondo quarto del V sec., da Pietro Crisologo (serm. 160, 7: *Tribus autem modis hodie Christi deitas est probata: magorum munere, Patris testimonio, aquae mutatione in unum*); cfr. Talley (1989: 148–149). Nell'impossibilità di affrontare qui nel dettaglio il complesso problema cronologico legato alla diffusione di tale festa liturgica, si accenna soltanto al fatto che la discussione sulle fonti è legata a doppio filo a quella relativa all'autenticità dell'*Inno VII (Inluminans altissimus)* attribuito ad Ambrogio, in cui è dato riscontrare la giustapposizione dei tre episodi.

<sup>72</sup> Cupaiuolo (1989: 180).

<sup>73</sup> Lausberg (1982: 220): «Die Kenntnis der ausführlicheren biblischen Erzählung kann beim Betrachter vorausgesetzt werden; wie das Bild greift das Epigramm nur ein Moment aus dem Geschehen heraus.»

di cui, tramite l’ἀδύνατον, viene rimarcata la miracolosa paradossalità<sup>74</sup> (IV.: gli avanzi della moltiplicazione sono più numerosi di quanto era a disposizione all’inizio;<sup>75</sup> VI.: è la stessa Legge della morte a perire con la resurrezione di Lazzaro).<sup>76</sup> Altro fulcro tematico

<sup>74</sup> È forse proprio questa una delle possibili ragioni per cui i *Miracula Christi* sono stati associati nella tradizione alla *Laus Christi* con la falsa attribuzione a Claudio. Si tratta infatti non solo di due poemi dalla cristologia rigorosamente ortodossa, ma anche di componimenti che esprimono il miracolo attraverso l’estetica del paradosso. Si può aggiungere che è possibile che i *Miracula*, che parlano della vita di Cristo, siano stati considerati complementari alla *Laus Christi*, che viceversa parla dell’Incarnazione, della morte e della resurrezione di Cristo, ma pochissimo della sua vita pubblica. Devo queste osservazioni a F. Ploton-Nicollet, che ringrazio sentitamente della benevola attenzione con cui ha letto la prima redazione di questo studio.

<sup>75</sup> Anche Giovanni Cassiano ricorda che, di quello che era stato predisposto per togliere la fame, molto avanzò per la sazietà (Cassian. c. *Nest.* 7, 3), ma l’espressione più simile a quella del nostro distico mi pare quella che compare nel sermone *De Salomone*, oggi attribuito a Gregorio di Elvira. In un elenco dei miracoli di Cristo, di quello della moltiplicazione si afferma che, dopo aver saziato la folla, restarono più pani di quelli che c’erano all’inizio (15, 34: *Quid ille solidus gressus in fluctibus, quid reliquiae, de paucis panibus plus superesse saturata multitudine quam fuisse?*). Tale particolare è interpretato in chiave eucaristica da Ambrogio, il quale lo associa al fluire del vino dalle idrie d’acqua di Cana che portò al colmo la fede dei discepoli (Ambr. in *Luc.* 6, 85–87). Per quanto riguarda la poesia, tale caratteristica è inoltre ricordata, in termini molto simili, anche nell’inno di attribuzione ambrosiana *Inluminans altissimus* (21–26: *Sic quinque milibus uirum / dum quinque panes diuidit, / edentium sub dentibus / in ore crescebat cibus, / multiplicabatur magis / dispendio panis suo*). Ancora, il particolare del cibo che cresce con lo spezzarlo è menzionato in Prud. *apoth.* 716 (*crescente cibo per fragmina*) e Paul. Nol. *epist.* 13, 11, forse dipendente da Ambr. in *Luc.* 6, 87 (*Ut inter manus uel in ore sumentium crescentibus cibis sentient potius escarum suarum copiam quam uiderent morsibus redeunte consumpto et dentibus subeunte sumentium*). Tale caratteristica costituisce anche per Sedulio l’elemento più straordinario del prodigo, quello che più deve suscitare l’ammirazione dei fedeli (Sedul. *carm. pasch.* 3, 216–218: *Quodque magis stupeas, cophinos ablata replerunt / Fragmina bis senos, populisque uorantibus aucta / Quae redit a cunctis non est data copia mensis e*, sulla seconda moltiplicazione, 3, 272: *adritae creuerunt morsibus escae*; cfr. anche Sedul. *op. pasch.* 3, 18: *Quodque magis amplius admireris quisquis ista perlegeris, si neccdum tibi nota didiceris, post expulsam saturatae plebis esuriem cophinos ablata duodecim fragmentorum mole impletuit. Nec tanta fuit copia, quem daret, quanta fuit in reliquis iam fastidita, quum tollitur*); così è anche nel caso della parafrasi di Nonno (Nonn. *par. Ioh.* Z, 55: ἀπτων αὐτομάτων παλιναύξεα δάίτα γεραιών).

<sup>76</sup> La vittoria di Cristo sulla legge della morte originatasi con il Peccato è immagine teologicamente fondamentale che fa naturalmente riferimento alla riflessione paolina di *I Cor.* 15, 20–22 e 54–55 e soprattutto a quella, tutta concentrata sui poli peccato-(Legge)-morte / Grazia-vita, dell’*Epistola ai Romani* (*Rom.* 5, 20–7, 25); cfr. fra i primi almeno Ign. *Eph.* 19, 1–3; Ps. Barn. 5, 6; Iust. *dial. Tryph.* 20, 49; Iren. *adv. haer.* 2, 32, 2; 3, 18, 7; Tert. *adv. Marc.* 5, 6, 7. Il motivo ha larghissima diffusione in tutta la poesia latina cristiana: cfr. ad es. le anonime *Laudes Domini* (v. 113: *Imperium <tu> morti adimis*), ma anche Prudenzio (Prud. *cath.* 1, 70: *Tunc lex subacta est Tartari*; 9, 75: *lege uersa*; 11, 45–48: *Mortale corpus induitur / Ut excitata corpore / Mortis catenam frangeret*), Paolino di Nola (Paul. Nol. *carm.* 22, 66: *rigidae disrupte uiacula mortis*) e Aratore (Arator, *act.* 2, 118–124: *Mors denique uicta est / ... / ... / ... / ... sors ultima coepit Auerni / Iam uita praesente mori, quaeque omnia subdens / Ante fuit, tunc ipsa perit*). In questo quadro, il distico si distingue per l’impiego ossimorico del v. *pereo* per riferirsi alla vittoria sul peccato e di conseguenza sulla morte (*per peccatum mors*): è la morte stessa, insomma, a perire per opera del Salvatore. L’immagine è paragonabile ad alcune formulazioni paronomastiche agostiniane relative alla Resurrezione (Aug. in *euang. Ioh.* 12, 11: *in morte Christi mors mortua est; in psalm.* 51, 1: *Nam mortuus ille mortis interfector fuit, et magis in illo mors mortua est, quam ipse in morte; serm.* 231, 5: *Tertio die resurgens, finito labore, mortua morte;* 308A, 6: *In morte Christi mors mortua est*), nonché, in poesia, soprattutto a Sedulio, come già illustrato *supra*. Va ricordato in ogni caso che anche altre riscritture poetiche si fanno portatrici della medesima interpretazione dell’episodio, con il sovertimento della legge fondamentale della vita umana: così Commodiano (Comm. *apol.* 641–642: *Si Hic lege<m> tartaream derupit uerbo praesenti / Et leuat de tumulis Lazarum die quarta fetentem*), Damaso (Damas. *epigr.* 12 Ferrua = 9 Ihm, 3–6: *Soluerre qui potuit letaliam uiacula mortis, / Post tenebras fratrem, post tertia lumina solis / Ad superos iterum Marthae donare sorori, / Post cineres Damasum faciet quia surgere credo*), Prudenzio (Prud. *apoth.* 767: *O mors auritis iam mitis legibus!*), ancora Sedulio nell’inno cristologico (Sedul. *hymn.* 2, 61–64: *Quarta die iam fetidus / Vitam recepit*

dei *Miracula Christi* è l'insistita celebrazione della divinità del Signore (v. 2: *Concipiat ... deum*; 6: *se probat esse deum*;<sup>77</sup> 8: *deus*), di cui peraltro è anche sottolineata, in maniera rigorosamente ortodossa, la natura insieme divina ed umana (v. 4: *homo, rex ... deus*; si ricordi che quella relativa a monofisismo e difisismo è questione particolarmente scottante nel V sec., in particolare intorno alla metà del secolo).

8. Per questo i distici dei *Miracula Christi*, forse indirettamente influenzati anche dalla celebrazione delle πράξεις tipica della codificazione retorica del λόγος βασιλικός tardocattolico, sembrano intrattenere i rapporti di affinità più stretti, per quanto riguarda le opere poetiche, con gli elenchi di *gesta Christi insignia*<sup>78</sup> che spesso selezionano i medesimi episodi miracolosi: per l'affinità con cui sono costruite le scene, si pensi in particolare ai tetrastici XXXII–XXXVIII del *Dittochaeon* prudenziiano e ai versi 28–69 di *Cathemerinon* IX,<sup>79</sup> ma anche ad altri casi di elenchi di episodi miracolosi, con fine precipuamente celebrativo e di dimostrazione della divinità di Cristo.<sup>80</sup> In campo iconografico invece, pur riconoscendo che gli episodi dei distici, presi singolarmente, avevano tutti conosciuto una traduzione figurativa in pitture catacombali e sarcofagi,<sup>81</sup> mi pare che i *Miracula Christi* rivelino le maggiori affinità, sia per la selezione degli episodi che per le probabili finalità (al di là degli specifici impieghi liturgici),<sup>82</sup> rispetto ad alcuni progetti iconografici specificamente dedicati all'infanzia ed ai prodigi del Signore, operanti una selezione almeno parzialmente analoga di scene neotestamentarie in funzione celebrativa della natura divina e della missione salvifica del Figlio. Nello specifico, sto pensando alla celebre lastra policroma con scene cristologiche del Museo Nazionale romano (fine III – inizio IV sec.),<sup>83</sup> o ancor meglio ai casi delle due valve laterali di un dittico eburneo (prima metà del V sec.) proveniente da un *atelier* romano o norditaliano oggi conservate a Berlino (SMB – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, Ident.Nr. 2719 [Fig. 1]) e Parigi (Musée du Louvre, Département des objets d'art, Inv.-Nr. OA 7876-7877-7878), in cui compaiono scene dell'infanzia e miracoli fra cui quelli di Cana, dell'emorroissa e del paralitico,<sup>84</sup> e delle valve eburnee della copertura di evangelionario del Tesoro del Duomo di Milano detto «dittico delle cinque parti» (seconda

Lazarus, / Mortisque liber uinculis / Factus superstes est sibi), ed Elpidio Rustico (Rust. Help. *hist. testam.* 71: *Et pariunt animas mutata lege sepulchra*). Anche nell'omiletica la resurrezione di Lazzaro è vista come segno della vittoria sulla morte; così ad es. in Giovanni Crisostomo (c. *Anom. hom.* 9, 3 [PG 48: col. 784, l. 5–7]: Ἦκουσε τοῦ δεσποτικοῦ προστάγματος ὁ νεκρὸς, καὶ εὐθέως τοῦ θαύματος νόμους παρέλυσεν) e Pietro Crisologo (Petr. Chrys. *serm.* 65, 6: *Ubi Christus coepit Inferi pulsare fores, portas Tartari submouere, ianuas aperire mortis, Gehennae soluere legem uetustam, deturbare antiquissimum ius poenarum, reponere Lazari animam, ab Inferis uiam reditus innouare, occurrit ei Tartari tota furens potestas*).

<sup>77</sup> Come sottolineato da Lausberg (1982: 220), la collocazione di *Christus* in clausola al v. 5 accentua l'identità Cristo-Dio.

<sup>78</sup> Prud. *cath.* 9, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Esemplare in questo senso lo studio di Smolak (2000a).

<sup>80</sup> Penso fra gli altri a Comm. *apol.* 639–660; Sedul. *hymn.* 2, 49–72; Drac. *laud. Dei* 2, 115–153. Lo Cicerone (1976–1977: 45) parla di «fine apologetico di dimostrare la divinità di Cristo» e sottolinea anche l'affinità con gli elenchi di fatti prodigiosi del tipo di quelli riportati nel *Liber prodigiorum* di Giulio Ossequente.

<sup>81</sup> Cfr. n. 51.

<sup>82</sup> Sugli impieghi liturgici dei dittici eburnei cfr. Navoni (2007: 305–312).

<sup>83</sup> Dinkler (1980: 7–38); Bisconti (2007).

<sup>84</sup> Volbach (1976: 80–81, tav. 60); Kötzsche (1979: 446–448).

metà del V sec. [Figg. 2–3]), dove i due pannelli centrali con le raffigurazioni simboliche della croce e dell’Agnello divino sono circondati da scene evangeliche fra cui l’Annunciazione, l’adorazione dei Magi, il miracolo di Cana, la guarigione del cieco e del paralitico e la resurrezione di Lazzaro,<sup>85</sup> tutti episodi affrontati anche nei *Miracula Christi*.

Al di là di tale aspetto, non va comunque ignorato che i distici appaiono lunghi dall’essere meramente descrittivi come talvolta sostenuto<sup>86</sup> e non mancano in alcuni casi di tradurre l’aspetto celebrativo dei prodigi di Cristo in messaggio soteriologico, enfatizzando il potere salvifico della fede (V: il cieco nato si è meritato la guarigione; VII: la fede di Pietro è rafforzata dal Signore, che non lo lascia affondare; VIII: la fede dell’emorroissa è per la stessa donna medicina). In questo senso, si può dire che i *Miracula* rivelino anche un elementare interesse teologico; anche per l’estrema *breuitas* che contraddistingue l’opera, esso non prende naturalmente le forme di una ‘ermeneutica in versi’, ossia di un autonomo approfondimento esegetico dell’ipotesto di riferimento,<sup>87</sup> ma da quest’ultimo sembra partire per mettere in luce, almeno in alcuni casi, i particolari più rilevanti a fini edificanti, come ben evidenziato da M. Lausberg per il distico VII, dedicato al salvataggio di Pietro.<sup>88</sup>

9. I *Miracula Christi* costituiscono dunque una semplice ma efficace riscrittura epigrammatica di natura ‘ultrabreve’ di episodi salienti dei Vangeli. Essi risultano caratterizzati da una tonalità entusiasticamente celebrativa e da una spiccata attenzione per i particolari più stupefacenti dei miracoli, senza tuttavia disinteressarsi al dato più propriamente spirituale ed edificante della materia scritturistica. L’adozione di alcuni stilemi caratteristici del (sotto-)genere dei *tituli historiarum*, senza escludere la possibilità di altre eventuali finalità per il carme, permette di affermare che il presupposto dell’operazione letteraria attivata dai distici passasse per l’evocazione dei modelli iconografici corrispondenti alle diverse scene, che dovevano essere ben note all’autore ed ai lettori tardoantichi anche in assenza di un rapporto deittico *in praesentia* con un ciclo figurativo. Se il problema viene posto in questi termini, l’effettiva preesistenza di un referente pittorico

<sup>85</sup> Delbrück (1951); Bovini (1969); Volbach (1976: 84–85, tav. 63).

<sup>86</sup> Arnulf (1997: 138): «Die Distichen sind überwiegend beschreibend.»

<sup>87</sup> Parziale eccezione è costituita dal v. 4, che costituisce un’auxesis prettamente esegetica (ma ampiamente tradizionale) del tema dei doni dei Magi, di cui è adottata l’interpretazione ‘cristologica’ o ‘ireneana’, per cui si veda Scorsa Barcellona (1985). In poesia, tale interpretazione era diffusa fin da Giovenco, che mostra di conoscerla in un passo famoso (Iuvenc. 1, 246–251), e ritorna nel *Dittochaeon* di Prudenzio (Prud. *tituli* 105–108), in Sedulio (Sedul. *carm. pasch.* 2, 93–96) ed Elpidio Rustico (Rust. *Help. benef.* 84–85). Per quanto riguarda il nostro componimento, si osservi che il v. 4 è giocato su una triplice scansione asindetica, con *uaratio* chiasistica, tramite la quale vengono presentati insieme l’elenco e la chiarificazione esegetica dei doni, ognuno legato ad un aspetto e ruolo della figura di Cristo. L’elenco, che non rispetta la sequenza che i doni hanno nel racconto di Matteo, sembra organizzato in forma di *climax*: l’aspetto umano è seguito da quello regale (*aurum* in evidenza al centro dello stico), per culminare infine con quello divino (*deus* è in clausola di pentametro, come nel distico precedente).

<sup>88</sup> Lausberg (1982: 220–221): «In seiner kurzen antithetischen Gestalt gibt das ED dem Gegensatz zwischen einem mit äußerer Bedrohung verbundenen schwankenden Glauben und der Stärkung durch Christus eine Form, die über die konkrete Szene hinausweisend etwas für die Situation des Christen allgemein Gültiges klar sichtbar macht. Es vermag so den theologischen Gehalt des zugehörigen Bildes dem Betrachter zu verdeutlichen, aber auch losgelöst vom Bild den Blick auf den wesentlichen Kern der Geschichte zu lenken.»

o musivo diventa meno rilevante ai fini dell'inquadramento dei *Miracula Christi* entro il perimetro letterario dei *tituli*.

---

## BIBLIOGRAFIA

- AE = *L'Année Épigraphique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1888–.
- Alfonsi, L., 1956. «Su una fonte del *Carmen de Christi Iesu beneficiis* di Elpidio Rustico». *Rivista Italiana di Filologia* 84, 173–178.
- Arnulf, A., 1997. *Versus ad picturas. Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunstgeschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter*. München: Deutscher Kunstverlag.
- Barthius, C. (ed.), 1612. *Claudi Claudiarii poetae praegloriosissimi quae extant*. Caspar Barthius recensuit, et animaduersionum librum adiecit. Hanoviae: in Bibliopolio Willieriano.
- Barthius, C. (ed.), 1650. *Cl. Claudiani, Principum Heroumque Poetae praegloriosissimi, quae extant*. Caspar Barthius ope septemdecim manuscriptorum exemplarium restitut: Commentario multo locupletiore, Grammatico, Critico, Philologico, Historico, Philosophico, Politicoque ita illustravit, ut auctor pretiosissimus omni aetati, Scholasticae, Academicae, Aulicae, Politicaeque esse debeat ex commendato commendatissimus. Francofurti: apud Ioannem Naumannum.
- Bekkerus, I. (ed.), 1836. *Merobaudes et Corippus*. Bonnae: impensis ed. Weberi.
- Belting-Ihm, C., 1994. «Zum Verhältnis von Bildprogrammen und *Tituli* in der Apsisdekoration früher westlicher Kirchenbauten». In: *Testo e immagine nell'Alto Medioevo*. Vol. II [= Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo 41]. Spoleto: presso la sede del centro, 839–884.
- Bentinus, M., Honterus, J. (eds.), 1534. *Cl. Claudiani poetae celeberrimi omnia quae quidem extant opera, ad veterum exemplariorum fidem quam fieri potuit emendatissime excusa: versibus etiam aliquot, eorundem beneficio, supra omnes hactenus aeditiones sparsim locupletata*. Basileae: Michael Isengri-nius, sub palma Io. Bebelii.
- Bernays, J., 1860. «Scaligers Ausgabe des Claudians». *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 15, 163–165.
- Birt, Th. (ed.), 1892. *Claudii Claudiarii Carmina. Accedit appendix vel spuria vel suspecta continens* [= Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctorum antiquissimorum tomus X]. Recensuit Theodorus Birt. Berolini: apud Weidmannos.
- Bisconti, F., 2007. «Le lastre policrome del Museo Nazionale Romano: immagini di salvezza e guarigione». In: Brandenburg, Heid, Marksches 2007: 93–106.
- Bodelón, S., 1998–1999. «Merobaudes. Un poeta de la Bética en la corte de Rávena». *Memorias de Historia Antigua* 19/20, 343–368.
- Bovini, G., 1969. «Il dittico eburneo “delle cinque parti” del Tesoro del Duomo di Milano». In: *XVI Corso di Cultura sull’Arte Ravennate e Bizantina (Ravenna, 16–29 marzo 1969)*. Ravenna: Longo, 65–70.
- Brandenburg, H., Heid, S., Marksches, Ch. (eds.), 2007. *Salute e guarigione nella tarda antichità: Atti della giornata tematica dei Seminari di Archeologia Cristiana (Roma, 20 maggio 2004)*. Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.
- Bruzzone, A. (ed.), 1999. Flavio Merobaude, *Panegirico in versi*. Roma: Herder.
- Burmannus, P. (ed.), 1760. *Claudii Claudiarii opera, quae extant, omnia: ad membranarum veterum fidem castigata*. Cum notis integris Martini Antonii Delrii, Stephani Claverii, et Thomae Dempsteri, auctoriibus Nicolai Heinsii, et ineditis Petri Burmanni. Amstelaedami: ex officina Schouteniana.
- Bury, J. B., 1919. «*Justa Grata Honoria*». *The Journal of Roman Studies* 9, 1–13.
- Calcagnini, D., 1993. «Tra letteratura e iconografia: l’epigramma *Miracula Christi*». *Vetera Christianorum* 30, 17–45.
- Cameron, A., 1970. *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Camers, I. (ed.), 1510. *Claudiani Opera novissime per D. Io. Camertem accuratissime recognita*. Viennae Austriae: Hieronymi Victoris Philovallis Calcographi et Ioannis Singrenii sociorum solertia, expensis vero Leonhardi Alantse Bibliopolae Viennensis.
- Charlet, J.-L., 1975. «Prudence lecteur de Paulin de Nole. A propos du 23<sup>e</sup> quatrain du *Dittochaeon*». *Revue des Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 21, 55–62.

- Charlet, J.-L., 1984. «Theologie, politique et rhétorique : La célébration poétique de Pâques à la cour de Valentinien et d'Honorius, d'après Ausone (*Versus Paschales*) et Claudien (*De Saluatore*)». In: *Poesia tardoantica* 1984: 259–287.
- Charlet, J.-L., 1985. «L'inspiration et la forme bibliques dans la poésie latine chrétienne du III<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle». In: J. Fontaine, Ch. Pietri (eds.), *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*. Paris: Beauchesne, 613–643.
- Charlet, J.-L., 1997. «Die Poesie». In: J. L. Engels, H. Hofmann (eds.), *Spätantike: mit einem Panorama der byzantinischen Literatur*. Wiesbaden: AULA-Verlag, 495–564.
- Claverius, S. (ed.), 1602. *Cl. Claudiani, poetae in suo genere principis opera, serio emendata, neque non aucta, ex fide vett. Codicum, qui olim in Bibliotheca Cujaciana. Cum annotationibus perpetuis St. Claverii in suprema Curia Advocati. Parisiis: apud Nicolaum Buon.*
- CLE = *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. Conl. F. Bücheler, suppl. ed. E. Lommatzsch. Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1895–1926.
- Clover, F. M., 1971. *Flavius Merobaudes. A Translation and Historical Commentary* [= Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. New Series. Volume 61, part 1]. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society.
- Cupaiuolo, G., 1989. «Note ai *Miracula Christi* (A. L. 879 R.)». In: Polyanthema. *Studi di Letteratura cristiana antica offerti a Salvatore Costanza. Vol. II*. Messina: Sicania, 177–198.
- Delbrück, R., 1951. «Das fünfteilige Diptychon in Mailand (Domschatz)». *Bonner Jahrbücher* 151, 96–107.
- Dienbauer, L., 1976. *Johannes Camers. Der Theologe und Humanist im Ordenskleid*. Wien: Wiener Katholische Akademie.
- Dinkler, E., 1980. *Christus und Asklepios. Zum Christustypus der polychromen Platten im Museo Nazionale Romano*. Heidelberg: C. Winter Verlag.
- Dinkova-Bruun, G., 2007. «Biblical versifications from Late Antiquity to the Middle of the Thirteenth Century: History or Allegory?». In: W. Otten, K. Pollmann (eds.), *Poetry and Exegesis in Premodern Latin Christianity. The Encounter between Classical and Christian Strategies of Interpretation*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 315–342.
- Dinkova-Bruun, G., 2010. «The Verse Bible as *Aide-mémoire*». In: L. Doležalová (ed.), *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 115–131.
- Downey, G., 1959. «Ekphrasis». In: *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. Band IV. Dogma II – Empore*. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 921–944.
- Dulaey, M., 2006. «Les paralytiques des Évangiles dans l'interprétation patristique». *Revue des Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 52, 287–328.
- Dulaey, M., 2007. *Symboles des Évangiles (I<sup>er</sup>–VI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. «Le Christ médecin et thaumaturge». Paris: Librairie Générale Française.
- Fabre, P., 1948. *Essai sur la chronologie de l'œuvre de Saint Paulin de Nole*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Fabricius, G. (ed.), 1564. *Poetarum veterum ecclesiasticorum Opera christiana, et operum reliquiae atque fragmenta: Thesaurus catholicae et orthodoxae Ecclesiae, et Antiquitates religiosae, ad utilitatem iuventutis Scholasticae. Collectus, emendatus, digestus, et Commentario quoque expositus, diligentia et studio Georgii Fabricii Chemnicensis*. Basileae: per Ioannem Oporinum.
- Fontaine, J., 1981. *Naissance de la poésie dans l'Occident chrétien. Esquisse d'une histoire de la poésie chrétienne du III<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes.
- Gennaro, S., 1959. *Da Claudiano a Merobaude*. Catania: Centro di Studi sull'Antico Cristianesimo.
- Gesnerus, J. M. (ed.), 1759. *Cl. Claudiani quae extant, varietate lectionis et perpetua adnotatione illustrata a Io. Matthia Gesnero accedit index uberrimus*, I-II. Lipsiae: in officina Fritschia.
- Gualandri, I., 1989. «Il classicismo claudiano: aspetti e problemi». In: A. Garzya (ed.), *Metodologie della ricerca sulla Tarda Antichità. Atti del primo convegno dell'Associazione di studi tardoantichi*. Napoli: D'Auria, 25–48.
- Guex, S. (ed.), 2000. *Ps.-Claudien, Laus Herculis. Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire*. Bern/Berlin/Bruxelles/Frankfurt a. M./New York/Wien: Peter Lang.
- Hall, J. B. (ed.), 1985. *Claudii Claudiani carmina*. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner.
- Hall, J. B., 1986. *Prolegomena to Claudian*. London: Institute of Classical Studies.
- Heinsius, N. (ed.), 1650. *Cl. Claudiani quae extant*. Nic. Heinsius, Dan. F. recensuit ac notas addidit. Lugduni Batavorum: ex officina Elzeviriana [Amstelodami] 21665.

- Hofmann, H., 1997. «Claudius C. [= Claudianus 2]». In: H. Cancik, H. Schneider (eds.), *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, III. Stuttgart: Metzler, 3–6.
- ICVR = *Inscriptiones Christianae Vrbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores*. Colligere coepit Ioannes Baptista De Rossi. Nova series. Compleverunt et ediderunt A. Silvagni, A. Ferrua, D. Mazzoleni, C. Carletti. Romae; In civitate Vaticana, 1922–1992.
- Iser, W., 1987. *L'atto della lettura. Una teoria della risposta estetica*. Bologna: il Mulino [ed. or. ingl. 1978].
- Jeep, L., 1873a. «Die älteste Textrecension des Claudian». *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 28, 291–304.
- Jeep, L., 1873b. «L'autore del poema *Laudes Herculis*». *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica* 1, 405–415.
- Jeep, L. (ed.), 1876–1879. *Claudii Claudiani Carmina. Accedunt nonnulla aliorum carmina quae in mss. Claudiani leguntur*, I–II. Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri.
- Jülicher, A. (ed.), 1938. *Itala. Das neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung nach den Handschriften herausgegeben. I. Matthäus-Evangelium*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Jülicher, A. (ed.), 1954. *Itala. Das neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung nach den Handschriften herausgegeben. III. Lucas-Evangelium*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Jülicher, A. (ed.), 1963. *Itala. Das neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung nach den Handschriften herausgegeben. IV. Johannes-Evangelium*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Kartschoke, D., 1975. *Bibeldichtung. Studien zur Geschichte der epischen Bibelparaphrase von Juvencus bis Otfried von Weissenburg*. München: Fink.
- Kässer, C., 2010. «Text, Text, and Image in Prudentius' *Tituli historiarum*». In: V. Zimmerl-Panagl, D. Weber (eds.), *Text und Bild. Tagungsbeiträge*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 151–165.
- Koch, J., 1889. *De codicibus Cuiacianis quibus in edendo Claudiano Claverius usus est*. Marpurgi Cat-torum: typis Friedericici Typographi Academicci.
- Koch, J. (ed.), 1893. *Claudii Claudiani carmina*. Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri.
- Kötzsche, L., 1979. «406., 407. Plaques with scenes of the infancy and miracles of Christ». In: K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century: Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977 through February 12, 1978*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Princeton University Press, 446–448.
- Lausberg, M., 1982. *Das Einzeldistichon. Studien zum antiken Epigramm*. München: Fink.
- Lenz, F., 1931. «Merobaudes 3». In: W. Kroll (ed.), *Paulys-Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. [Fünfzehnter Band.] Neunundzwanziger Halbband*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1039–1047.
- Lo Cicero, C., 1976–1977. «I carmi cristiani di Claudiano». *Atti della Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Palermo. Classe di Lettere* 36, 5–51.
- Lubian, F., 2012–2013. «L'episodio dell'Annunciazione (Lc. 1, 26–38) nei *tituli historiarum* tardoantichi: Ambrogio, Ps. Claudio, Prudenzio». *Incontri di Filologia Classica* 12, 29–56.
- Lubian, F., 2013. «Il genere iconologico e i suoi rapporti con i *Bildepigramme* dell'Antichità». In: M.-F. Gineste-Guipponi, C. Urlacher-Becht (eds.), *La renaissance de l'épigramme dans la latinité tardive. Actes du colloque international de Mulhouse, 6–7 octobre 2011*. Paris: De Boccard, 211–227.
- Luck, G., 1979. «*Disiecta membra*: On the Arrangement of Claudian's *Carmina minora*». *Illinois Classical Studies* 4, 200–213.
- Manzoni, F., 1993. *Canto a Cristo*. In: V. Guerracino (ed.), *Poeti latini tradotti da scrittori italiani contemporanei. Vol. II*. Milano: Gruppo editoriale Fabbri-Bompiani-Sonzogno-ETAS, 986–989.
- Mazza, M., 1984. «Merobaude. Poesia e politica nella tarda antichità». In: *Poesia tardoantica 1984*: 379–430.
- Mazzoleni, D., 1989. «Patristica ed epigrafia». In: A. Quacquarelli (ed.), *Complementi interdisciplinari di patrologia*. Roma: Città Nuova, 321–365.
- Monti, S., 1966. «Per l'esegesi dei carmi 1 e 2 di Merobaude». *Rendiconti della Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli* 41, 3–21.
- Moreschini, C., 2004. «*Paganus pervicacissimus*: Religione e “filosofia” in Claudiano». In: W.-W. Ehlers, F. Felgentreu, S. M. Wheeler (eds.), *Aetas Claudiana: eine Tagung an der Freien Universität Berlin vom 28. bis 30. Juni 2002*. München/Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 57–77.
- Navoni, M., 2007. «I dittici eburnei nella liturgia». In: M. David (ed.), *Eburnea Diptycha. I dittici d'avorio tra Antichità e Medioevo*. Bari: Edipuglia, 299–315.

- Nicoletti, A., 1981. *I sarcofagi di Bethesda*, Milano: Stendhal.
- Niebuhr, B. G. (ed.), 1824. *Fl. Merobaudis carminum panegyricique reliquiae ex membranis Sangallensis-bus*. Editio altera emendatior. Bonnae: impensis ed. Weberi.
- Noga-Banai, G., 2007. «*Loca sancta* and the Bethesda Sarcophagi». In: Brandenburg, Heid, Marksches 2007: 107–123.
- PG = Patrologiae cursus completus ... Series Graeca*, 1–161. Lutetiae Parisiorum: apud J.-P. Migne, 1857–1866.
- Ploton-Nicollet, F. (ed.), 2008. *Édition critique, traduction et commentaire de l'œuvre de Flavius Mérobaude*, I–III. Thèse doctorale. Université de Paris IV – Sorbonne.
- Ploton-Nicollet, F., 2013. «Les épigrammes de François Wydon et l'*Enchiridion* du cardinal Georges d'Armagnac (Chantilly, Musée Condé 102)». *Studi Umanistici Piceni* 33, 57–80.
- Poesia tardoantica, 1984 = *La poesia tardoantica: tra retorica, teologia e politica. Atti del 5. Corso della Scuola superiore di archeologia e civiltà medievali presso il Centro di cultura scientifica E. Majorana, Erice (Trapani), 6–12 dicembre 1981*. Messina: Centro di studi umanistici, Facoltà di lettere a filosofia, Università degli studi di Messina.
- Pulmannus, Th. (ed.), 1571. *Cl. Claudianus Theod. Pulmanni Craneburgii diligentia, et fide summa, e vetustis codicibus restitutus*. Antverpiae: ex officina Christophori Plantini.
- Pyrrho, G. (ed.), 1667. *Cl. Claudiani Opera quae extant, interpretatione et annotationibus illustravit Gulielmus Pyrrho, in Academia cadomensi doctor eloquentiae, consiliariusque et professor regius: Iussu Christianissimi Regis, in usum Serenissimi Delphini*. Parisiis: apud Fredericum Leonard.
- Quacquarelli, A., 1986. *Reazione pagana e trasformazione della cultura (fine IV sec. d. C.)*. Bari: Edipuglia.
- Ricci, M. L., 1994. «Note al carme *De Salvatore*». In: *Paideia cristiana: studi in onore di Mario Naldini*. Roma: Gruppo Editoriale Internazionale, 365–374.
- Ricci, M. L. (ed.), 2001. *Claudii Claudiani Carmina minora*. Bari: Edipuglia.
- Riese, A. (ed.), 1869–1870. *Anthologia Latina sive Poesis Latinae Supplementum. Pars prior: Carmina in codicibus scripta*, I–II. Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri.
- Riese, A. (ed.), 1894–1906. *Anthologia Latina sive Poesis Latinae Supplementum. Pars prior: Carmina in codicibus scripta*, I–II. Editio altera denuo recognita. Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri.
- Romano, D., 1958. Appendix Claudiana. *Questioni d'autenticità*. Palermo: G. B. Palumbo.
- Romano, D., 1996. «Dalla *Phoenix* alla *Laus Christi*». *Siculorum Gymnasium* 49, 267–272.
- Roncoroni, A., 1975. «Sul *De passione Domini* pseudolattanziano». *Vetera Christianorum* 29, 208–219.
- Scaliger, Io. Io. (ed.), 1603. *Cl. Claudiani quae exstant: Ex emendatione virorum doctorum*. Leidae: ex officina Plantiniana Raphelengii.
- Schmidt, P. L., 1992. «Zur niederen und höheren Kritik von Claudians *Carmina minora*». In: M.-H. Jullien (ed.), *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire, par ses élèves, amis et collègues*, I. Paris: Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 643–660.
- Scorza Barcellona, F., 1985. «“Oro, incenso e mirra” (*Mt. 2, 11*, I)». *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 2, 137–147.
- Sebesta, J. L., 1980. «Claudian's Credo: the *De Salvatore*». *Classical Bulletin* 56, 33–37.
- Smolak, K., 2000a. «Der Hymnus für jede Gebetsstunde (Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 9)». *Wiener Studien* 113, 216–236.
- Smolak, K., 2000b. «Flavius M. [= Merobaudes 2]». In: H. Cancik, H. Schneider (eds.), *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, VIII. Stuttgart: Metzler, 7–8.
- Springer, C. P. E., 1988. *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity: the Paschale Carmen of Sedulius*. Leiden: Brill.
- Springer, C. P. E. (ed.), 2013. *Sedulius, The Paschal Song and Hymns. Translated with an Introduction and Notes*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Stella, F., 2005–2006. «Imitazione interculturale e poetiche dell'alterità nell'epica biblica latina». *Incontri Triestini di Filologia Classica* 5, 9–24.
- Strieder, K., 1941. *Die Appendix-Gedichte Claudius Claudianus (Echtheitsfrage)*. Dissertation. Universität Wien.
- Talley, T. J., 1989. *Le origini dell'anno liturgico*. Brescia: Editrice Queriniana [ed. or. ingl. 1986].
- Trout, D. E., 1999. *Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters, and Poems*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Turcio, G., 1928. «Sull'epigramma “Miracula Christi” attribuito a Claudio Claudio». *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 5, 337–344.

- Ucciero, R., 2004. «Recenti studi su Flavio Merobaude». *Atti della Accademia Pontaniana* 53, 81–93.
- Velázquez, I., 2006. «*Carmina epigraphico more*. El códice de Azagra (Madrid BN ms. 10029) y la práctica del “género literario” epigráfico». In: C. Fernández Martínez, J. Gómez Pallarés (eds.), *Temptanda Viast. Nuevos estudios sobre la poesía epigráfica latina*. Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès): Servicio de Publicaciones de la UAB, 1–29.
- Volbach, W. F., 1976. *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*. 3., völlig neu bearbeitete Aufl. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.
- Vollmer, F., 1899. «Claudianus 9». In: G. Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys-Realexencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Dritter Band. Sechster Halbband*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlerscher Verlag, 2652–2660.
- Vollmer, F. (ed.), 1905. *Fl. Merobaudis reliquiae. Blossii Aemilius Dracontii Carmina. Eugenii Toletani epis copi Carmina et epistulae. Cum appendicula carminum spuriorum [= Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctorum antiquissimorum tomus XIV]*. Edidit F. Vollmer. Berolini: apud Weidmannos.
- Weinrich, H., 2004. Tempus. *Le funzioni del tempo nel testo*. Nuova ed. Bologna: il Mulino [ed. or. ted. 1964].
- Zarker, J. W., 1958. *Studies in the Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. Dissertation. Princeton University.

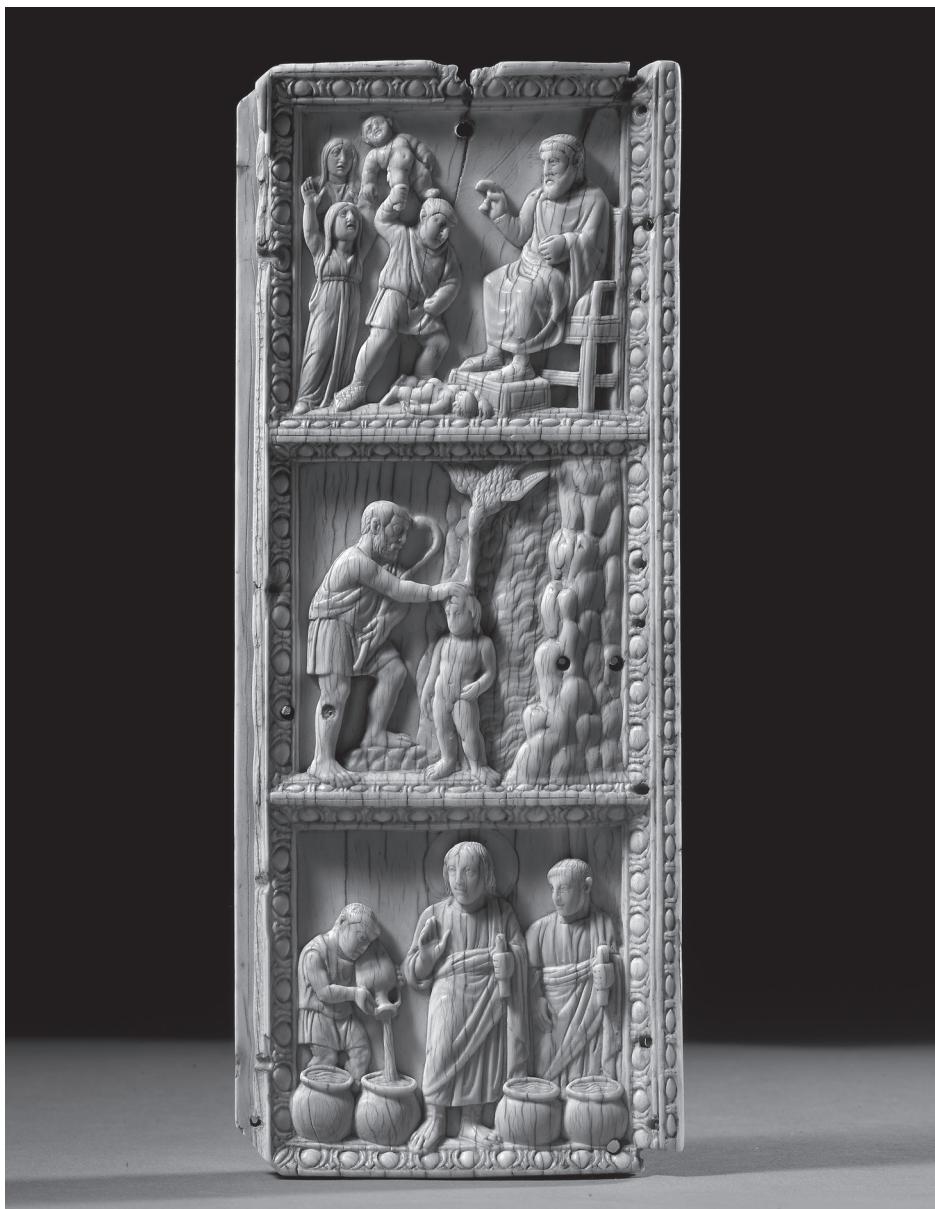
**PŘÍPAD „ULTRAKRÁTKÉ“ VERŠOVANÉ PARAFRÁZE EVANGELIÍ:  
DISTICHA MIRACULA CHRISTI  
(PS. CLAUD. CARM. MIN. APP. 21 = ANTH. LAT. 879 R.?)**

Shrnutí

Článek představuje nový rozbor krátké básně označované jako *Miracula Christi* (Ps. Claud. *carm. min. app. 21 = Anth. Lat. 879 R.?*). Obsahuje její italský překlad a přehled dějin jejího vydávání i diskuse mezi badateli o jejím autorství. Atribuce Claudianovi je velmi sporná; několik dosud neidentifikovaných výpůjček od Paulina z Noly, stejně jako teologicky ortodoxní obsah dvojverší a jejich stylistické zvláštnosti, naznačuje dataci kolem poloviny 5. století. Struktura i celkový tón básně odhalují autorův záměr oslavit Krista, jak vyplývá ze zvláštního zájmu o nejpodivuhodnější aspekty zázraků. Podobně jako jiné pozdněantické sbírky typu *tituli historiarum* tato báseň pravděpodobně nepopisovala existující ikonografický cyklus s tématem křtu, a je tedy třeba ji chápát jako literární text, jehož cílem je přivést čtenáře k tomu, aby si vizuální prvky doplnili sami.

*Francesco Lubian*  
Università degli Studi di Macerata – Universität Wien  
aosta14@libero.it

## APPENDIX



**Figura 1.** SMB – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst (Ident. Nr. 2719), valva laterale di dittico eburneo con scene dell'Infanzia e cristologiche (fra cui il miracolo di Cana), prima metà del V sec. d. C., © Antje Voigt-SMB-Museum für Byzantinische Kunst



**Figura 2.** Tesoro del Duomo di Milano, «Dittico delle cinque parti» con scene dell’Infanzia e cristologiche (fra cui l’Annunciazione), seconda metà del V sec. d. C., DiFaB (Digitales Forschungsarchiv Byzanz), o:284921



**Figura 3.** Tesoro del Duomo di Milano, «Dittico delle cinque parti» con scene dell’Infanzia e cristologiche (fra cui l’adorazione dei Magi, il miracolo di Cana, le guarigioni del cieco e del paralitico e la resurrezione di Lazzaro), seconda metà del V sec. d. C., DiFaB (Digitales Forschungsarchiv Byzanz), o:284684



**ARISTOTLE'S CARP AS CLARETUS' BIRD COMOR?  
Tracing the origin of one medieval term\***

HANA ŠEDINOVÁ

**ABSTRACT**

The research of medieval reception of Aristotle's knowledge of zoology confirmed that on the way through the Arabic and Latin translation to mediaeval encyclopaedias Aristotle's treatises underwent both large and small alterations in both names and descriptions of animals. The meaning of these new names often remained unchanged; in other instances, however, medieval authors interpreted their models so incorrectly that they endowed the original animal not only with a new name but also with new features of appearance and patterns of behaviour. In the Arabic and Latin translation of Aristotle's treatise, the original information about the fertility of the carp remained basically unchanged, but given the phonetic differences between Greek, Arabic and Latin, the original Greek name κυπρῖνος from the relevant passage of Aristotle was deformed to the form *kokonior* and others like it. While consulting Michael's translation, Thomas of Cantimpré did not comprehend that the animal that lays eggs several times a year was a fish, and he put it under an altered name *komor* to the book on birds and located it to Arabia. Thomas' term then appears in a slightly different form *comor* in Czech medieval sources.

**Keywords:** ancient and medieval zoology; medieval Latin lexicography; Aristotle; Aristoteles Latinus; Michael Scotus; Thomas of Cantimpré; Bartholomaeus de Solencia dictus Clareetus; carp; *komor*

Among the sources of Latin zoological terms recorded and explained by *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands*, glossaries by the 14th-century Czech lexicographer Bartholomaeus of Chlumec, also called Clareetus, are very important. The author collected the names of animals mainly from the encyclopaedia *De natura rerum* written by the 13th-century preacher Thomas of Cantimpré, but was inspired by other texts as well, including the

\* The study came to light thanks to the long-term conceptual development of the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences (RVO: 67985955) and a grant MŠMT LD 13043 (*Latinitatis medii aevi lexicon Bohemorum*) from the programme COST. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr Aafke van Oppenraay of the Huygens Institute of Netherlands History, who diligently read through this study and kindly put at my disposal her knowledge of manuscript variants of Michael Scotus' Latin translation of Aristotle's treatise *Historia animalium* (Aristotle, *De animalibus*, Books I–X), which are about to appear in her critical edition of the text.

work of Albert the Great, who used Thomas' text as the main source for books XXI–XXVI of his treatise *De animalibus*. Apart from more or less well-known names of birds, fishes, quadrupeds, reptiles and insects, many of which are attested already in the classical Latin and whose origins and meanings have been described in detail by modern scholars,<sup>1</sup> it is possible to find in Clareetus unusual animal names, that are partially or totally unexplained; nor have the Czech glosses, appended to these names by Clareetus, been of much help, because many of them are as enigmatic as their Latin counterparts.

To these yet undeciphered Latin terms belongs the name *comor*, used in Clareetus' *Glossary* in a chapter dealing with field birds (*De volatilibus campestribus*), where it appears in the pair *comor ozwecz*.<sup>2</sup> This term was included in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands* with a question mark and vaguely defined on the basis of Clareetus' chapter as "some bird".<sup>3</sup> We have some notion of the kind of bird on Clareetus' mind thanks to the Czech equivalent, the meaning of which is rather easy to understand compared with Clareetus' other translations. *The Dictionary of Old Czech* derives the name *ozwecz* from the verb *ozývati sě*, "to sound", and defines the animal as "a calling bird (calling a flock together by its sound)" and offers a hypothesis that the Latin *comor* could have perhaps been formed by a shortening of a noun *convocator*, "the one who calls together". The Bohemist Emanuel Michálek, in a passage dealing with word formation by shortening, notes the appearance of the same Old Czech equivalent of Latin *comor* in the *Liber viginti arcium* by Paurerinus, a Czech author of the 15th century, where both words introduce a chapter on some forest songbird.<sup>4</sup> But there is not a mention in Paurerinus' description about a "calling a flock together", and consequently it seems to me rather bold to deduce the formation of *comor* from *convocator* only on the basis of the characteristics *avis cantus sonorosi*, "a bird that sings loudly". I think that Clareetus did not create the word, but rather adopted it from some older text.

An almost identical Latin term is found in the encyclopaedia by Thomas of Cantimpré. In his fifth book, Thomas describes a certain Arabian bird named *komor* which is exceptionally prolific, for it breeds five or six times a year. According to the author, a frequent clutch is common among the pigeons, hens and other domestic birds, but not among wild birds. What is remarkable is not only the fact that the Arabian bird lays eggs so often, but also that it needs special circumstances for its breeding, namely an appearance of certain stars that positively influence its fecundity.

De komor. Komor avis est Arabie, ut dicit Aristotiles, et est avis optime pullificationis inter omnia genera avium silvestrium. Quinques enim in anno vel sexies ovat et pullos facit, et hoc nulla avium silvestrium facit preter istam. Aves vero, que in domibus manent, sicut columbe aut galline, sepius ovant. Igitur in komor ave hoc satis mirabile perpenditur, quod

<sup>1</sup> From the rich literature on ancient zoology see especially these basic handbooks on the study of Greek and Latin animal names: Keller (1909–1913); Thompson (1936 and 1947); Cotte (1944); de Saint-Denis (1947); André (1967); Leitner (1972); Capponi (1979); Beavis (1988); Kitchell (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Clareetus, *Gloss.* 296.

<sup>3</sup> LB (I, 793, s. v. \**comor*).

<sup>4</sup> StčS (II, 1073, s. v. *ozvec*); Michálek (1989: 28); Paurerinus, *Liber vig. arc.* 186: <C>*omor* (in mg. add.: *ozwecz*) est avis ad magnitudinem passeris, habens nasum, ac si esset truncatus, raro reperibilis. Et est avis silvana et cantus aliqualiter sonorosi, colligit suum pastum ex arboribus.

de facili non ovat, antequam appareant quedam stelle in firmamento, que medio tempore reconduntur. Et harum stellarum apparitio dicte avi virtutem tribuunt fecundandi.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas' description of an unknown prolific bird attracted the attention of Albert the Great and Jacob van Maerlant, with the result that they used it in their treatises, and it is possible that Claretus was also influenced by Thomas' text.<sup>6</sup> But whence did Thomas' description come and what bird is called *komor*?

A possible solution is offered by the editor of Albert's work *De animalibus* Hermann Stadler, who points out<sup>7</sup> that the presentation of the bird *komor* (*komer* in Albert the Great) is similar to the passage of Aristotle's treatise *Historia animalium* that under a name κυπρίνος describes a fish that lays eggs five or six times a year, especially when certain constellations appear in the sky:

Τίκτουσι δ' ἐν τῇ καθηκούσῃ ὥρᾳ κυπρίνος μὲν πεντάκις ἢ ἔξακις (ποιεῖται δὲ τὸν τόκον μάλιστα ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀστροῖς), χαλκὶς δὲ τίκτει τρίς...<sup>8</sup>

The passage probably concerns the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio* Linné) that actually does breed several times a year.<sup>9</sup> Apart from the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands*, the word *komor* (*komer*, *comor*) has not appeared in any Medieval Latin dictionary, but a certain clue can be obtained by the way this bird name was handled by the translators of Albert's treatise *De animalibus*. In a note to his 1987 translation, J. J. Scanlan calls attention to Aristotle's passage on the carp, voicing his opinion that the word *komer* originated from the Greek name κυπρίνος, grossly distorted. The authors of the 1999 translation K. F. Kitchell and I. M. Resnick note that Scanlan ponders a possible connection with the Aristotle passage and add a reference to the similar name and description at Thomas of Cantimpré.<sup>10</sup> I found no similar passage in Aristotle's treatise, so there is no other solution but to work on the assumption made by Hermann Stadler and accepted by other scholars who studied Albert's text. Is it possible to go further and to explain how the Greek name κυπρίνος was changed into the Medieval Latin *komor*, and the reason why Thomas of Cantimpré uses the word not in reference to a fish, but to a bird?

The lore of Greek zoologists reached the Middle Ages in two ways. The first means of transmission was via the Roman polyhistor Pliny the Elder, who devoted several books of his encyclopaedia *Naturalis historia* to the animals and who was the source of the twelfth book of the *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville. Pliny the Elder did not skip over the passage of Aristotle, but he was not overly interested by its wording, so he shortened it to a simple note stating that the carp breeds five or six times a year.<sup>11</sup> He put the Latin loan-word *cyprinus* in his ninth book, dealing with fishes and other sea creatures, so it is improbable that this

<sup>5</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* V, 72.

<sup>6</sup> Albert the Great, *De animal.* XXIII, 124: *komer* (for the text, see below, n. 22); Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen Bloeme*, vv. 7107–7120: *komor*.

<sup>7</sup> Stadler (1920: 1501).

<sup>8</sup> Arist., *Hist. animal.* VI, 14, 568a16–19.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson (1947: 135–136).

<sup>10</sup> Scanlan (1987: 301, n. 124.2); Kitchell, Resnick (1999: 1634, n. 403).

<sup>11</sup> Plin., *Nat.* IX, 162: *cyprini sexies* (i.e. *pariunt*). The name of *cyprinus* appears in the Middle Ages in a very short note by Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. nat.* XVII, 146, in the chapter *De temporibus ovandi et pullificandi*; Vincent claims that the fish breeds three times a year.

name and Pliny's short note would influence Thomas of Cantimpré's description of the bird *comor*. Furthermore, Pliny leaves out the detail about the stars' influence on the breeding of this animal – just the important feature of Thomas' description. It is thus necessary to explore the other way by which the passage of Aristotle could have reached Medieval Latin texts.

Aristotle's zoological treatises *Historia animalium*, *De partibus animalium* and *De generatione animalium* became known to medieval authors during the 13th century, when two independent Latin translations were made. In the 1260s, the treatises were translated from Greek into Latin by William of Moerbeke. But Thomas of Cantimpré, Albert the Great and other medieval encyclopaedists, who had all written their treatises several decades earlier, were using the translation from the Arabic, made c. 1220 by Michael Scotus.<sup>12</sup> Because of the different phonetics of Greek, Arabic and Latin, and further because of faulty readings of the Arabic script and errors during the copying of the Latin text, smaller and greater changes were occurring not only in Aristotelian descriptions, but also in animal names, especially in cases of names simply transcribed from Arabic to Latin.<sup>13</sup>

The passage concerning the frequent breeding of the carp, however, was not gravely affected by changes, and Michael's version mirrors Aristotle's description quite accurately.<sup>14</sup> The name of the fish was not so fortunate; it was first transcribed in Arabic and then into Latin, and substantial phonetic changes took place during the process. In the passage describing the carp's fertility we find in place of the Greek term κυπρῖνος the readings *kokonior*, *kokonioz* and *kemoi*,<sup>15</sup> there are many different Latin variants in other passages.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> A part of Michael Scotus' translation was published by Benedikt Konrad Vollmann (Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.*). The critical edition of books I–X (= *Historia animalium*) is being prepared by Aafke M. I. van Oppenraay in the Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus Series, who has as yet published the books XI–XIV (= *De partibus animalium*) and the books XV–XIX (= *De generatione animalium*).

<sup>13</sup> Some Medieval Latin names of animals found in Michael's translation in place of Aristotle's original terms suggest that he must have been mistaking the Arab letters *fā* and *qāf* (the shapes of which differ only slightly) or letters *bā*, *nūn*, *thā* and *tā* which differ only in the number of dots above or below the same sign. This is probably the origin of the sea monsters' names *barcora* (originally Greek πορφύρα, “the purple dye murex”) and *koki* (originally Greek φώκη, “the seal”), the bird names *fatocor* (originally Greek κότυφος, “the blackbird”) and *kini* (originally Greek φίνη, “the bearded vulture”), the fish names *akaleki* (originally Greek ἀκαλήφη, “the sea anemone”) and *abereni* (originally Greek ἀθερίνη, “the sand smelt”), the quadruped name *lamiekuz* (originally Greek λάταξ, “the beaver”), and others. For some of these Medieval Latin names see in more detail Šedinová (2008: 324–325 and 330–331; 2012: 410–411; 2013a: 223–235). About the preparation of the critical edition of Michael Scotus' translation see van Oppenraay (especially 1999; 2009a; 2009b; 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* VI, 568a15 (ed. Vollmann, p. 96): *Et animal, quod dicitur kokoneoz, ova<t> quinque aut septies in anno et pullificat in maiori parte apud aparitiones stellarum.* For the name of the animal see following note.

<sup>15</sup> For her edition of Scotus' translation of *De animalibus* Dr van Oppenraay collected seven manuscripts, one of which (Vaticanus Chigi E.VIII.251, siglum A) is known to be very close to Scotus' autograph. As Dr van Oppenraay wrote me, according to the forthcoming edition of *De animalibus* I–X (= *Historia animalium*) readings of the manuscripts in VI, 568a15, are as follows: *kokonior* (*ACD<sup>1</sup>HW*), *kokonioz* (*BD<sup>2</sup>*) and *kemoi* (*E*).

<sup>16</sup> Arist., *Hist. animal.* IV, 11, 538a15 (κυπρῖνος); VI, 14, 568b26 (κυπρῖνος); VIII, 10, 602b24 (κυπρῖνος); according to the forthcoming edition of *De animalibus* I–X (= *Historia animalium*) prepared by Dr van Oppenraay, readings of the manuscripts in IV, 538a14, are as follows: *kiroz* (*ABC̄D<sup>2</sup>*), *kiroc* (*D<sup>1</sup>*), *recoh* (*EW*), *leveh* (*H*), *lenoh* (*W*); in VI, 568b26: *kokoneoz* (*ABCD<sup>1</sup>W*), *kokonioz* (*D<sup>2</sup>*), *keconeoz* (*E*), *kokoneor* (*H*); in VIII, 602b24: *kokonioz* (*ABC*), *coconioz* (*D*), *kokenioz* (*E*), *coconiez* (*HW*).

Aristotle mentioned the carp also in his *De partibus animalium*.<sup>17</sup> The Latin translation of this treatise, also done by Michael Scotus, has already appeared in a critical edition supplied with Latin-Arabic-Greek indexes. In the Arabic version, the carp's name has the form *q-w-b-r-n-y*.<sup>18</sup> It is thus evident that the Greek word (pl. κυπρῖνοι) was simply transcribed to Arabic with the letter *ب* transcribed with the consonant *bā* (Arabic lacks the phone *p*), the vowel *υ* was replaced by the semivowel *wāw* (which can be read as *ū*) and the diphthong *οι* was transcribed whith the semivowel *yā* (which can be read as *i*). This Arabic word was in turn transcribed by Michael Scotus, who supplemented Latin vowels at his own discretion: apart from the variant *kobri* (which was adopted) the editor Aafke van Oppenraay notes variants *kebri* and *koki* in the apparatus.<sup>19</sup> The variant *kobri* indicates that the Latin translator transcribed the Arabic semivowel *wāw* with the Latin vowel *o* (as he did on other occasions as well), missed the letter *nūn* and transcribed the final semivowel *yā* with the Latin vowel *i* (this, too, is common for him).<sup>20</sup>

Further deformation of the animal's name to the form *komor* is attested in the work of Thomas of Cantimpré. Someone probably misread the form *kokonior* as *kokomor*, which was subsequently shortened to *komor*. Such a marked difference between Michael and Thomas is not unusual. Thomas of Cantimpré borrowed some of Michael's terms without change (e. g., *koki* > *koki*); on other occasions the form of the name we find in copies of Thomas' encyclopaedia differs slightly, but the similarity remains visible (e. g., *khilon* > *chilon*). Sometimes, however, a greater deformation took place, such, that it is difficult to connect Thomas' term with the name given by Michael Scotus without a textual analysis (e. g., *akaleki* > *kylok*).<sup>21</sup>

Thomas of Cantimpré was not the only one who worked with Michael's translation. We find the Aristotle passage in two places in the treatise *De animalibus* by Albert the Great. In his twenty-third book, which treats the topic of birds, and is modelled after the work of Thomas of Cantimpré, Albert mentions the fertile bird in the form of *komer* and reproduces Thomas' text, although he reduces it to a single sentence – the notice of the bird's fertility.<sup>22</sup> In his sixth book, which is not based on Thomas and comments directly on Michael's Latin translation of Aristotle, Albert gives the name of the animal in the form *kokomoz*, classifies the animal among aquatic creatures and elaborates on Aristotle's finding that the carp breeds especially at the time when certain stars shine in the sky.<sup>23</sup> It is obvious

<sup>17</sup> Arist., *Part. animal.* II, 17, 660b36: οἱ καλούμενοι κυπρῖνοι.

<sup>18</sup> Van Oppenraay (1998b: 444, s. v. *kobri*).

<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *De animal.* XII, 660b36 (ed. van Oppenraay, translation and apparatus on p. 89).

<sup>20</sup> The transcription of vowels in the name (i.e., *qwbrnj* > *kobri*) is in accordance, for instance, with the transcription of vowels in the name of the seal (Greek φώκη): Arabic *fwky* > Latin *koki*.

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of Thomas' name *kylok* (*kiloka* at Claretus) see Šedinová (2013a: 227–234). See further Michael's name *hahanie*, which has the form *ahune* in Boese's edition of Thomas' encyclopaedia (Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* VI, 3), while in the manuscript XIV A 15 in Prague National Library we find variants *hahune* and *achime*; see Šedinová (2008: 316 and 321–324).

<sup>22</sup> Albert the Great, *De animal.* XXIII, 124: *Komer avis est, quae in anno quinquies vel sexies pullificat et nutrit.*

<sup>23</sup> Albert the Great, *De animal.* VI, 77 (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* VI, 568a15 [ed. Vollmann, p. 96]): *Animal autem aquaticum, quod kokomoz dicitur, quinquies aut sexies in anno ovat et pullificat in maiori parte apud apparitiones stellarum diversarum, quae in mutatione sex signorum aquiloniarium desub radiis solis emergunt.* Albert also adapted Michael's translation of other Aristotelian passages dealing with the carp, see Albert the Great, *De animal.* IV, 105: *kyroz* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* IV, 538a14 [ed. Vollmann, p. 72]); VI, 78: *kokomoz* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal.* VI, 568b18

that Albert did not connect the fish name in this passage (and its variants elsewhere in Michael's translation) with the almost identical text he found in Thomas' book on birds under the name *komor*, given that he described with similar words first a fish (rightly), and then a bird (wrongly). This marks the end of the way of Michael's and Albert's Medieval Latin variants of the word κυπρίνος as a fish name. Thereafter the carp was denoted by the name *carpo* (alternatively *carpera*) and medieval authors give other information unrelated to its fertility.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, the name *komor* denoting the bird was destined to have a long life, for medieval encyclopaedists and lexicographers passed it on, one to another, until the end of the Middle Ages.

But how should we explain the erroneous ranking of the animal among creatures of a completely different class? The error is probably due to the fact that Michael Scotus did not call the described creature *piscis*, but used the word *animal*.<sup>25</sup> Although the whole chapter that includes the relevant passage of Aristotle concerns fishes and the name *piscis* appears often in preceding and following sentences, it probably did not occur to Thomas of Cantimpré that *animal* is meant generally as "an animal", including all quadrupeds, birds, fishes, snakes and insects, and he consequently classified *komor* as a bird. This is by no means a unique case. Another fish (Greek ἄψια) was ranked by Thomas of Cantimpré among quadrupeds under the name of *ana* and described as a ferocious carnivore.<sup>26</sup> Here, too, Thomas was probably misled by the formulation of Michael Scotus, who termed the fish *animal*.<sup>27</sup>

Medieval illuminators of Thomas' encyclopaedia and that of its follower Jacob van Maerlant complied with Thomas' classification, though their artistic interpretations varied. Some hinted at the bird's fertility by painting it in its nest (fig. 1), without picturing the eggs laid or sat on by the bird. Others preferred to depict several eggs with the bird seated upon them, rather than the nest (fig. 2). Still others were captivated by the detail about direct connection between stars and the fertility of *komor*, so that they painted a nest full of birds staring at the sky with a bright star (fig. 3). Authors of some other surviving illuminations, however, did not form any specific idea and simply pictured a bird without any hint at its behaviour (fig. 4).<sup>28</sup>

[ed. Vollmann, p. 96]); VI, 79: *kokoz, kokonez* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*. VI, 568b22.26 [ed. Vollmann, p. 97]); VII, 102: *kokomos* (cf. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*. VII, 602b23 [ed. Vollmann, p. 121]); XII, 207: *kohery* (cf. Aristotle, *De animal*. XII, 660b36 [ed. van Oppenraay, p. 89]).

<sup>24</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* VII, 23 (*carpo vel carpera*); Claretus, *Gloss.* 420: *carpo tyepal* (manuscript B: *czyepal*); Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.*, fol. oo 2vb: *carpo, -onis, m. t. kapr*. In his chapter on the carp, Thomas of Cantimpré refers to the treatise *Liber rerum* which did not survive to the present day and from which Thomas also borrowed names of the quadrupeds *crichtetus* and *hemtra* or the sea animals *rochen*, *helchus*, *zydrach* and *zytiron*. The name *carpo* (*carpera*) is related to Old High German *charpfo* and Middle High German *karpfe* which probably denoted the freshwater carp; Sanders (1978: 439).

<sup>25</sup> See note 14.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas committed more errors in taking over passages from Pliny the Elder's encyclopaedia and other sources. To name a few examples: under the name *locusta* he describes not only the locust (putting it in the book that deals with insects: IX, *De verribus*), but also a quadruped of a size of the rabbit, supposedly eaten by John the Baptist in a desert (Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 67); from the name of the sea nation of the Troglodytes he created a name of cattle *tragodite* (Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 102), and from the name of the nation *Gedrosi* a name of a sea monster *zedrosti*; see Aiken (1947: 205–225); Šedinová (2013b: 223–235; 2015: 231–268).

<sup>28</sup> In addition from the cited illumination from the copy of Thomas' encyclopaedia currently located in Cracow, see also Prague National Library, MS XIV A 15, fol. 76va.

Let us now return to the *Glossary* by Claretus. Thanks to the studies of Bohumil Ryba and new results of research on Claretus' zoological names we know that Claretus adopted a good number of animal names from Thomas of Cantimpré's encyclopaedia;<sup>29</sup> it is therefore not out of the question that he found the Latin name *comor*, agreeing with Thomas' term *komor* (the substitution of the initial *k* with *c* is not uncommon in medieval manuscripts),<sup>30</sup> in a copy of Thomas' encyclopaedia. Doubts about this being the case are raised by the Czech equivalent *ozwecz*. If Claretus indeed drew on Thomas, there should be some hint of the singing of the animal *komor* that would have inspired the form of the Czech term. Many Czech equivalents appearing in Claretus were created in this way: for instance, the Czech name in the pair *beznoha dariaca* is related to the note that the bird does not have legs (cf. the Czech preposition *bez*, "without", and the noun *noha*, "leg") and for this reason moves forward on the ground with the help of its chest, beak and wings;<sup>31</sup> the Czech name in the pair *wletnye Pegasus* mirrors the description of terrible Ethiopian horse with wings greater than the eagle (cf. the Czech verb *letět*, "to fly");<sup>32</sup> and the Czech name in the pair *aspis hlus<e>cz* corresponds to the description of the snake that defends itself from the charmers by covering one of its ears with its tail and pressing the other one to the ground, so that it do not hear the voice of the man uttering the incantation (cf. the Czech adjective *hluchý*, "deaf").<sup>33</sup> But there is not a single word in Thomas' entry *komor* about a song or a sound, nor do the medieval illuminators depict the bird singing, but rather fulfilling its parental role.

However, creating Czech animal names based on their looks and behaviour is not a rule for Claretus. There are other names borrowed from Thomas' encyclopaedia to which Claretus appended a Czech equivalent lacking any connection to Thomas' descriptions, but rather influenced by the form of the Latin term. For example, the Czech name *twrdopal* (cf. the Czech adjective *tvrdý*, "hard") is coupled with Latin *duranus*, although there is no connection with the word *durus*, "hard", in Thomas' description of the quadruped *duran*.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, with regard to the pair *dobranyk banochus* (cf. the Czech adjective *dobrý*, "bonus"), we do not find in Thomas' exposition of the appearance and behaviour of a quadruped called *bonachum* any mention of the word *bonus*, "good", disregarding the fact that Thomas in his allegory assimilates good priests to the bird.<sup>35</sup> This way of creating Czech equivalents is not uncommon in Claretus, so it cannot be ruled out that he proceeded in the same way in the

<sup>29</sup> See esp. Ryba (1940 and 1942) and Šedinová (2005).

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., *karkolaz* > *carbolasia*; *kalaoz* > *calazo*; *karabo* > *carabo*; Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* V, 71; VII, 42; VI, 31; Claretus, *Gloss.* 290; 421; 444.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* V, 42: *Dariata... Pedibus caret, pectore, rostro et alis in rependo utens*; Claretus, *Gloss.* 258. Similarly, Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.*, fol. oo 5ra, who created a Czech name *beznōžka* to match Latin *<d>ariaca*.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 89: *Pegasus... animal magnum et horrendum est in Ethiopia. Equi formam habet, alas ut aquila sed multo maiores...*; Claretus, *Gloss.* 456.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* VIII, 2: *Aspis... naturaliter cauta est contra incantatorem. Nam ubi benefici sapientis incantationes percepit, cauda sua unam aurem obturat, reliquam vero ad terram premit, ne incantantis vocem exaudiatur*; Claretus, *Gloss.* 562. Similarly Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.*, fol. oo 5ra, who created a Czech name *hluchy had* to match Latin *aspis*.

<sup>34</sup> See Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 31 (*duran*), according to whom this animal (the description of which corresponds with Aristotle's presentation of a bison) defends itself when hunted by hurling its stinking faeces at dogs; Claretus, *Gloss.* 536. The origin of the name *duran* is not known yet.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* IV, 11; Claretus, *Gloss.* 546. The name *bonachum* stems from Greek βόβασος, "the bison", without any relationship with Latin *bonus*.

case of the bird *comor*: in creating Czech *ozwecz*, he could have thought of the substantive *canor*, “a sound”, *sonor*, “a song”, or the adjectives *canorus* and *sonorus*, “sonorous”.

The research of medieval reception of Aristotle’s knowledge of zoology confirmed that on the way through the Arabic and Latin translation to mediaeval encyclopaedias Aristotle’s treatises underwent both large and small alterations in both names and descriptions of animals. Nevertheless, the meaning of these new names which were created by a translation or transcription of the Greek term into Arabic and then into Latin, often remained unchanged and the medieval variants consequently denote the same animal that was described by Aristotle. In other instances, however, medieval authors interpreted their models so incorrectly that they endowed the original animal not only with a new name but also with new features of appearance and patterns of behaviour. Errors in adopting Aristotle’s expositions were committed already by Roman authors, but the responsibility for most of them lies with Michael Scotus and Thomas of Cantimpré. The translator of Aristotle’s treatise created some new words with transcriptions that failed to match original Greek terms not because of different phonologies of Greek, Arabic and Latin, but because of an erroneous reading of the Arabic text. For his part, Thomas of Cantimpré often did not understand Michael’s version of Aristotle’s text, to the extent of combining descriptions of two different animals or even moving the described creature to a completely different class.

Important changes also took place in the reception of Aristotle’s description of the carp, which reached the Middle Ages by two ways. Pliny the Elder briefly reproduced Aristotle’s note of the fish with Latin loan-word *cyprinus* which, however, appears only rarely in medieval texts; in the majority of medieval texts the carp is described under a term stemming from some vernacular language and medieval authors give other details about its appearance and behaviour than those known from the passage of Aristotle. In the Arabic and Latin translation of Aristotle’s treatise, the original information about the fertility of the fish remained basically unchanged, but given the phonetic differences between Greek, Arabic and Latin, the original Greek name κυπρῖνος from the relevant passage of Aristotle was deformed to the form *kokonior*. While consulting Michael’s translation, Thomas of Cantimpré did not comprehend that the animal that lays eggs several times a year was a fish, and he put it under an altered name *komor* to the book on birds and located it to Arabia.

Thomas’ term then appears in a slightly different form *comor* in Czech medieval sources, where it probably denotes two different birds. Claretus borrowed it, as well as many other animal names, either directly from a copy of Thomas’ encyclopaedia, or from another medieval treatise closely related to Thomas. Despite the Czech equivalent *ozwecz*, created, I think, because of acoustic similarity of words *comor* and *canor*, Claretus had on his mind Thomas’ description of an unknown Arabian bird that breeds several times a year. Paulerinus, on the other hand, obviously used not just Thomas’ encyclopaedia (or a text dependent on it) and the *Glossary* by Claretus, but also another source unknown to us, and he preferred to ascribe the names of Claretus’ pair *comor ozwecz* to a completely different bird of passerine size that lives in the forest and “sings loudly” rather than to connect them with the description of Thomas’ bird breeding five or six times a year.



Figure 1. Komor. Prague, Archiv Pražského hradu, Metropolitní kapitula u sv. Víta, sign. L 11, fol. 106vb



Figure 2. Komor. Prague, Národní knihovna, sign. X A 4, fol. 106rb



Figure 3. Komor. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, sign. KA 16, fol. 92v



Figure 4. Komor. Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, sign. 794, fol. 128rb

---

## REFERENCES

### Primary sources

- Albert the Great, *De animal*. = Stadler, H. (ed.), 1916–1920. Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus libri XXVI. Nach der Cölnner Urschrift*, I–II. Münster i. W.: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung.
- Arist., *Hist. animal*. = Louis, P. (ed.), 1964–1969. Aristote, *Histoire des animaux (Historia animalium)*, I–III. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Arist., *Part. animal*. = Louis, P. (ed.), 1956. Aristote, *Les parties des animaux (De partibus animalium)*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993 (reprint).
- Aristoteles Latinus, *De animal*. = Vollmann, B. K. (ed.), 1994. Aristoteles Latinus, *De animalibus libri XIX in der Übersetzung des Michael Scotus (Buch I–XIV)*. München: als Manuscript gedruckt mit Unterstützung der Münchner Universität.
- Aristotle, *De animal*. = Oppenraay, A. M. I. (ed.), 1992. Aristotle, *De animalibus. Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation*, III. *Books XV–XIX. Generation of Animals* [= Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 5.3]. Leiden/New York/Köln: E. J. Brill.
- Aristotle, *De animal*. = Oppenraay, A. M. I. (ed.), 1998a. Aristotle, *De animalibus. Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation*, II. *Books XI–XIV. Parts of Animals* [= Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 5.2]. Leiden/Boston/Köln: E. J. Brill.
- Clarens, *Gloss*. = Flajšhans, V. (ed.), 1926. *Klaret a jeho družina. Sv. I. Slovníky veršované*. Prague: Česká akademie věd a umění, 104–202.
- Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen Bloeme* = Gysseling, M. (ed.), 1998. Jacob van Maerlant, *Der naturen Bloeme*. Cd-rom Middelnederlands. Den Haag/Antwerpen: Sdu Uitgevers/Standaard Uitgeverij.
- Iohannes Aquensis, *Voc. Lact.* = Iohannes Aquensis, *Vocabularius dictus Lactifer*. Plzeň: Mikuláš Bakalář Štětina, 1511.
- Paulerinus, *Liber vig. arc.* = Hadravová, A. (ed.), 2008. *Kniha dvacatera umění mistra Pavla Žídka. Část přírodrovědná* [The Book of Twenty Arts by Master Pavel Žídek. The Section on Natural History]. Prague: Academia.
- Plin., *Nat.* = Ian, I., Mayhoff, C. (ed.), 1892–1909. C. Plini Secundi *Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, I–VI. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967–1970 (ed. stereotypa).
- Thomas of Cantimpré, *De nat.* = Boese, H. (ed.), 1973. Thomas Cantimpratensis, *Liber de natura rerum*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. nat.* = Vincentius Bellvacensis, *Speculum quadruplex (Speculum naturale, Speculum doctrinale, Speculum historiale, Speculum morale)*. Dovai: Balthazar Beller, 1624 (reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1964–1965).

### Secondary sources

- Aiken, P., 1947. 'The Animal History of Albertus Magnus and Thomas of Cantimpré'. *Speculum* 22, 205–225.
- André, J., 1967. *Les noms d'oiseaux en latin*. Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck.
- Beavis, I. C., 1988. *Insects and Other Invertebrates in Classical Antiquity*. Exeter: University of Exeter.
- Capponi, F., 1979. *Ornithologia Latina*. Genova: Istituto di filologia classica e medievale.
- Cotte, H.-J., 1944. *Poissons et animaux aquatiques au temps de Pline*. Paris: Louis Jean Imprimeur-Editeur GAP (H.-Alpes).
- Keller, O., 1909–1913. *Die antike Tierwelt*. Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann.
- Kitchell Jr., K. F., 2014. *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Kitchell Jr., K. F., Resnick, I. M. (transl.), 1999. Albertus Magnus, *On Animals. A Medieval Summa Zoologica*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- LB = *Latinitatis mediæ aevi lexicon Bohemorum. Slovník středověké latiny*. Prague: Academia, 1977–.
- Leitner, H., 1972. *Zoologische Terminologie beim älteren Plinius*. Hildesheim: Verlag dr. H. A. Gerstenberg.
- Michálek, E., 1989. *Česká slovní zásoba v Klaretových slovnících* [Czech vocabulary in dictionaries of Claretus]. Prague: Academia.

- van Oppenraay, A. M. I., 1998b. 'Index animalium plantarum nominum propriorum'. In: van Oppenraay 1998a: 441–447. See: Aristotle, *De animal*. (in: 1. Primary sources).
- van Oppenraay, A. M. I., 1999. 'Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation of Aristotle's Books on Animals. Some remarks concerning the relation between the translation and its Arabic and Greek sources'. In: C. Steel, G. Guldenops, P. Beullens (eds.), *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* [= Mediaevalia Lovaniensia Series I, Studia XXVII]. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 31–43.
- van Oppenraay, A. M. I., 2009a. 'The Letter before the Spirit: the Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle'. *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* 51, 263–280.
- van Oppenraay, A. M. I., 2009b. 'An editorial problem concerning the first two books of Aristotle's "Historia animalium" in the translation by Michael Scot'. In: P. De Leemans, C. Steel (eds.), *The Aristoteles Latinus: Past, Present, Future. Handelingen van het Contactforum 29–30 April 2005*. Brussel: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 59–65.
- van Oppenraay, A. M. I., 2012. 'The Critical Edition of Aristotle's "De animalibus" in the Arabic-Latin Translation of Michael Scot. Its Purpose and Its Significance for the History of Science'. In: A. M. I. van Oppenraay (ed.), *The Letter before the Spirit. The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle* [= Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 22]. Leiden/Boston: J. E. Brill, 331–344.
- Rybá, B., 1940. 'Několik nejasných latinsko-českých dvojic jmen ptáků v Klaretově Glosáři' [Several unclear Latin-Czech pairs of names of birds in Claretus' Glossary]. *Listy filologické* 67, 320–335.
- Rybá, B., 1942. 'K nejstarším latinsko-českým slovníkům' [On the oldest Latin-Czech dictionaries]. *Listy filologické* 69, 1–19, 123–127, 233–244.
- de Saint-Denis, E., 1947. *Le vocabulaire des animaux marins en latin classique*. Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck.
- Sanders, W., 1978. 'Albertus Magnus und das Rheinische'. *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 42, 402–454.
- Scanlan, J. J. (transl.), 1987. *Albert the Great, Man and the Beasts. De animalibus (Books 22–26)*. New York: State University of New York.
- Stadler, H., 1920. See: Albert the Great, *De animal*. (in: 1. Primary sources).
- StčS = *Staročeský slovník* [Dictionary of the old Czech language]. Prague: Academia, 1968–.
- Šedinová, H., 2005. 'Mořská monstra v díle Tomáše z Cantimpré a Bartoloměje z Chlumce řečeného Klaret' [Sea monsters in the works of Thomas of Cantimpré and Bartholomew of Chlumec called Claretus]. *Listy filologické* 128, 295–343.
- Šedinová, H., 2008. 'I nomi dei mostri marini nell'enciclopedia "De natura rerum" di Tommaso di Cantimpré (Riepilogo)'. In: Tomáš z Cantimpré, *De monstribus marinis (De natura rerum VI). Mořská monstra (O přírodě VI)*. Ed. and transl. H. Šedinová. Prague: OIKOYHENH, 307–335.
- Šedinová, H., 2012. 'Ze Slovníku středověké latiny: fatator a fetix' [From the Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands: fatator and fetix]. *Listy filologické* 135, 405–413.
- Šedinová, H., 2013a. 'Ze Slovníku středověké latiny: abareno a kiloka' [From the Dictionary of Medieval Latin in Czech Lands: abareno and kiloka]. *Listy filologické* 136, 223–235.
- Šedinová, H., 2013b. 'Per errorem ad novum terminum.' Alcuni termini di animali creati per incomprendizione delle fonti'. *Bulletin du Cange. Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 71, 223–235.
- Šedinová, H., 2015. 'Esca eius erant locustae. The quadruped *locusta* in medieval encyclopaedias and glossaries'. *Listy filologické* 138, 231–268.
- Thompson, D'A. W., 1936. *A Glossary of Greek Birds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press / London: Humphrey Milford.
- Thompson, D'A. W., 1947. *A Glossary of Greek Fishes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press / London: Geoffrey Cumberlege.

---

## **ARISTOTELŮV KAPR JAKO KLARETŮV PTÁK COMOR? PÁTRÁNÍ PO PŮVODU JEDNOHO STŘEDOVĚKÉHO TERMÍNU**

### Shrnutí

Bádání nad recepcí Aristotelových zoologických poznatků ve středověku potvrdilo, že cestou přes arabský a latinský překlad Aristotelových spisů do středověkých encyklopedií došlo k větším či menším změnám v podobě jmen živočichů i v jejich popisech. Význam nových jmen se často nezměnil, jindy však středověcí autoři interpretovali text své předlohy natolik nesprávně, že obdařili původního živočicha nejen novým jménem, ale též novými rysy v jeho vzhledu a chování. Cestou přes arabský a latinský překlad Aristotelova díla zůstalo Aristotelovo původní sdělení o plodnosti kapra zachováno téměř beze změny, v důsledku fonetických odlišností mezi řečtinou, arabštinou a latinou však došlo v příslušné pasáži k deformaci původního řeckého jména κυπρίος na podobu *kokonior* a další podobné varianty. Tomáš z Cantimpré pak při práci s Michaelovým překladem nepochopil, že tento živočich, který klade několikrát do roka vejce, je ryba, zařadil jej pod pozměněným jménem *komor* do knihy o ptácích a lokализoval jej do Arábie. Tomášův termín se posléze objevuje jen v málo odlišné podobě *comor* v pramenech českého středověku.

Hana Šedinová

Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

[sedinova@ics.cas.cz](mailto:sedinova@ics.cas.cz)



**THE END OF SCHOOL YEAR ON THE STAGE  
OF JESUIT SCHOOLS IN THE BOHEMIAN PROVINCE\***

MAGDALÉNA JACKOVÁ

**ABSTRACT**

The study deals with 17th and 18th century Jesuit school dramas from Bohemian lands that were played in Jesuit colleges at the end of the school year. This event was initially connected with awarding the best students and staging one play, performed by selected students from all the classes. By the 1670s, another practice prevailed in Bohemian, Austrian and Hungarian province: thenceforth, each class rehearsed a piece of their own. The main purpose of this article is to compare three tragedies written in the 50s of the 17th century by Arnold Engel (1620–1690) with some plays from the 18th century and to show, if and how the mentioned change is reflected in the structure of the dramas and in their style.

**Keywords:** Jesuit school theatre; Arnoldus Engel; Neo-Latin drama

Unlike other countries, e.g. France or England, until the 18th century the Bohemian lands lacked a professional theatre that was open to the general public and performed regularly in the same place. For almost two hundred years, the most significant operators of theatre were Jesuits, who staged Latin plays with their pupils. Therefore, we can say, that their theatre, even if not really professional, was the only “regular” theatre in Bohemia at the time.

The majority of Jesuit school plays were played at the end of the school year. Initially, this event was connected with awarding the best students and staging one play, performed by selected students from all the classes. By the 1670s, another practice prevailed: thenceforth, each class rehearsed a piece of their own. The main purpose of this article is to compare three tragedies written in the 50s of the 17th century by Arnold Engel with some plays from the 18th century and to show, how this change is reflected in the structure of the plays and in their style.

\* This paper was created with the financial support of the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR), as a part of postdoctoral project no. P406/12/P823. The topic of the article draws from a paper read at the international conference *Theatrum mundi: Latin Drama in Renaissance Europe*, held by the Society of Neo-Latin Studies & Centre for Early Modern Studies on September 12–14, 2013 in Oxford.

## **Prize-giving Ceremonies at Jesuit Colleges**

The mentioned celebration was not originally held at the end of a school year but at its beginning or more precisely beginning of each term. To be even more accurate, it is necessary to state the school year of those days lasted until September. The main holidays at Jesuit grammar schools were not two months long as they are now. In July and August the students still attended school and did not leave for holidays sooner than in autumn. Apart from that their free time was not so long and the length of holidays differed in every class. According to *Ratio studiorum*, the set of rules of Jesuit educational system, older students were supposed to relax for a month while the youngest ones had to be content with one week.<sup>1</sup> The terms when holidays began and students came back to school rather differed at various Jesuit provinces and sometimes even at individual colleges. However, schools in the Bohemian Province closed approximately between 20th and 27th September and the students gradually returned to school from 18th October on. The official opening of a school year was held at the beginning of November.<sup>2</sup> An integral part of the celebration was producing a theatre play, usually written by a professor of rhetoric and performed by selected students from all the classes.

Award and theatre performance connected to the celebration was, however, later postponed to the end of a school year. According to Jan Poplatek this was principally the consequence of Thirty Year's War, which caused the return to school to be more and more fragmented. The celebration therefore lost its original meaning.<sup>3</sup> There were perhaps also other reasons for this change: It was definitely easier to practice the theatre play at the time when all the students were present and did not return from holidays one by one, not to mention the risk of the students forgetting everything they had diligently practiced before their holidays. In any case, from around the middle of 17th century the school year started with festive services, welcoming new students of philosophy and theology, lectures of new professors, feasts for professors etc. Theatre and award ceremony, however, was usually not a part of these celebrations;<sup>4</sup> they took place at the end of the school year.

### **Arnold Engel and His Three Plays for Prize-giving Ceremonies**

There have been three plays verifiably written for celebration on the occasion of the end of a school year preserved in the Bohemian Province. They are tragedies written by Arnold Engel (8. 10. 1620 Utrecht – 26. 4. 1690 Chomutov).<sup>5</sup> Although he was born in

<sup>1</sup> *Ratio atque institutio studiorum* (1635: 20): *Anniversariae vacationes generales classium superiorum breviores non sint uno mense, nec longiores duobus. Rhetorica, nisi mos universitatis altius exigat, mense vacet. Humanitas tribus hebdomadis. Suprema Grammaticae duabus; una tantum reliquae.*

<sup>2</sup> Bobková-Valentová (2006: 184–187).

<sup>3</sup> Poplatek (1957: 37).

<sup>4</sup> For more about the organization of the school year at Jesuit colleges see Bobková-Valentová (2006: 186–187).

<sup>5</sup> For more about this author, see Jacková (2006; 2011b); *Theater in Böhmen* (2013: 6–8 [s.v. Arnoldus Angelus by M. Jacková]). See also Bio-bibliographical Database of Monks and Nuns in the Czech Lands in the Early Modern Period, item: Angel, Arnoldus SJ, 1620/1622–1690, <http://reholnici.hiu.cas.cz/katalog/l.dll?hal~1000099734> [16 September 2015].

the Netherlands, Engel and his family soon moved to Bohemia, where he also entered the Jesuit Order. He spent practically all his life in the Bohemian Province, and, as was usual with the Jesuits, passed through a wide range of places – apart from three Prague colleges he also taught in Jihlava, Český Krumlov, Chomutov, Kladsko, Litoměřice, Olomouc etc.; he was a missionary and preacher, too. Engel had undoubtedly great literary ambitions, beside other works he left behind manuscripts of several plays he wrote for his students. He long endeavoured to obtain permission to publish them but he never succeeded. Nevertheless, the prepared manuscripts, as well as his introduction to a complete publication of plays have been preserved.<sup>6</sup> Our thanks go to Engel for his considerable help when getting to know Jesuit theatre of 17th century. He is the only “Czech” Jesuit of those days by whom we know more than just one drama. There are six plays by Engel that have been completely preserved, and we also know names or synopses of several others. Engel supplied his plays with unusually extensive and accurate notes recording not only scenic changes, pitch of voice of sung roles etc., but also commenting on the contents of the play (e.g. they comment on customs of foreign nations). Music, choir singing and scenic effects play a significant role in all his plays.

Three of those six plays were according to the data preserved on the front page performed “during autumn trial of studies” (*sub autumnale studiorum justitium, ineunte autumnalium feriarum iustitio*).<sup>7</sup> They are *Calliopius martyr* (Chomutov, 1653),<sup>8</sup> *Laurentius Justinianus* (Chomutov, 1654)<sup>9</sup> and *Protasius, rex Arimae* (Český Krumlov, 1655).<sup>10</sup>

The oldest of the plays, *Calliopius Martyr*, represents a typical martyr’s play. It speaks about a young Christian who disdains pagan deity in public and his faith is shaken neither by a promise to marry the daughter of Maxim the emperor nor by cruel torture. Heaven helps him bear the suffering: an angel extinguishes the torch Calliopius is to be burnt with and stops the breaking wheel. Calliopius is finally supported by his mother and dies as a martyr; he follows Christ even in the way he dies: he is crucified on Good Friday (his head down, by which he imitates Saint Peter) and even his mother stands by the crucifix.

In the second play *Laurentius Justinianus* the protagonist first fights against temptations and intrigues of Freedom or rather Self-indulgence (Libertas), Senses (Sensus), Cupid, Venus etc. They attract young Justinianus and his friend Cosmophilus (i.e. the one who loves the world) to join their side. The play is in these parts based on the principle of psychomachy, fight for soul. Since Justinianus prefers a pious life far from mundane futilities, to be more accurate life in his “sacred dwelling” built by Bravery (Fortitudo), Moderation (Temperantia) and other Virtues, but World (Mundus), Mars and Marriage (Hymenaeus) try to penetrate it. They do not succeed, however, and under Justinianus’s influence even Cosmophilus turns to a pious life and accepts name Theophilus (the one who loves God).

<sup>6</sup> Arnoldi Angeli S. J. Mosae-Trajectini Elegiarum libri X – tragoeiae sive dramatum pars I. SK, sign. DE IV 13; Arnoldi Angeli S. J. Tragoediae. NK ČR, sign. XI E 8.

<sup>7</sup> For more about these plays see Jacková (2006).

<sup>8</sup> SK, sign. DE IV 13, f. 73r–106v; NK ČR, sign. XI E VIII.

<sup>9</sup> SK, sign. DE IV 13, f. 171r–234v; NK ČR, sign. XI E VIII.

<sup>10</sup> SK, sign. DE IV 13, f. 3r–72v; NK ČR, sign. XI E VIII. For more about this play, see also Weber (1997).

In the two following acts Justinianus, now under name of Laurentius, is elected the Bishop of Venice. Cupid, Venus, Urban Luxury (Luxus Urbis) and other vices, however, conspire against him, and Venice (Venetia), under their influence, expels Laurentius. Due to this Venice is pursued by different disasters which Laurentius relieves it of by his prayers and dies as a saint man in the last scene.

The third play, *Protasius, Arimae rex*, depicts destiny of Protasius, monarch of a Japanese province of Arima. Protasius ascends the throne after his Christian father dies. However, he does not follow his faith, on the contrary: being induced by his mother he persecutes Christians. The spirit of his father sends rebellion and war on Arima as punishment. When Protasius finds out the reason for this misfortune, he arranges himself, his mother and their courtiers get baptized and turns into an eager Christian. Later, however, his faith simmers down. Vices make use of this situation to expel Virtues from the empire and take up their place. Deceived by clever arguments of the Vices, Protasius follows emperor's orders and, although his belief is still Christian, he expels other Christians from Japan. After some time, however, he loses the emperor's favour, becomes accused of betrayal and is exiled. Nevertheless, this is not the end of his suffering. The emperor sends to him messengers asking him to end his life voluntarily. In the last scenes Protasius repents of his sins, reaches forgiveness, and since committing a suicide is forbidden to him as a Christian, he dies at his own request by hand of his dearest servant.

We can see then the author in his choice of topics did not consider the occasion he was writing his plays for as they are not anyhow connected neither with school life nor with the prize-giving ceremony.<sup>11</sup> It is contrary in prologues and epilogues of the mentioned plays. These passages have, for a change, no relation with the theme of the play, and their purpose is: to remind us how important education is, prepare the situation for the awards ceremony held after the performance, and, last but not least, to properly celebrate the most important guest – patron of the college, who arranged for the celebration and awards financially. Frequent motifs are therefore autumn, harvesting and also the presence of some Ancient gods symbolizing education.

In the prologue of *Calliopius Martyr* first comes Autumn (Autumnus) with his retinue, created by several boys (*ephebi*), Goddesses and nymphs associated with harvest, fertility etc.: Pomona, Mellona, Melissa and Amalthea. They collect fruit and rejoice in a rich crop. Then they call on Apollo, who acts here as a ruler and guardian of studies (*studiorum praeses*), and reminds him the school “autumn” along with the time to harvest fruit has come:

Autumnus: Quid ergo tardas, Phoebe? Festina, tuus  
Etiam in lycaeо celebrat autumnum labor.<sup>12</sup>

It is followed by a welcome the present patron, count Jan Adam Hrzán (1625–1681). A helmet and sieve<sup>13</sup> decorated by feathers – a family coat of arms of the Hrzán family –

<sup>11</sup> We can find a certain relation only in *Laurentius* – protagonist of this play has the same name like the present patron of the college as it will be mentioned later.

<sup>12</sup> “Autumn: Why do you delay, Phoebe? / Hurry up, even your labour at our school celebrates autumn.” F. 77v.

<sup>13</sup> In heraldry a sieve symbolizes diligence, generosity and foresight.

are shown on the stage. In the epilogue these objects are used by Autumn with Pomona and Mellona when they “sieve” through names of students and (by this) choose those who will be awarded.

In the play *Laurentius Justinianus* the person of the patron is included in the plot in a more sophisticated way. That year patron was the general vicar of the Bohemian Province of the Order of Cistercians and the abbot of the monastery in Osek Laurenz Knittel (1611–1691), that is Laurentius Scipio in Latin. Engel uses his name for different puns. The principal “requisite” in the prologue is a laurel tree heavy with fruits. When Pallas, a symbol of wisdom and education, sees it, she calls the Muses, pupils (*alumni*) and Poetry and Grammar (which allegorically represent the classes of the Jesuit school) to pick up the fruits. But the tree is too high, those present try to reach the fruit in vain, the branches dodge them. Not even Euclid, a famous Greek mathematician, knows what to do. Pallas finally has the idea to call Labour (Labor) and Persistence (Constantia) for help. Fortunately, they are just coming bringing along a figure called Genius Praesulis “with a bishop’s crozier” (*cum pedo episcopi, sive scipione*), thanks to which the branches can be bent:

Genius Praesulis: Hoc scipione dabitur ad palmam via.  
Hoc flectet unco brachia et lauri attrahet  
Baccas honoras.<sup>14</sup>

First, however, it is necessary to give space to the Muses. This means to the theatre play itself, whose main hero is a namesake of the abbot. The epilogue starts with an allusion to this name sameness and comparing both Laurences.

Mercurius: [...] Vivit etiamnum sacrum  
In Scipione nomen et virtus, honor  
Et liberale mentis ingenium viget.  
Omnes: Iustinianus vivit in Laurentio,  
In Scipione vivit hoc Laurentius.<sup>15</sup>

After further praise of the abbot comes the moment of the prize award:

Genius Praesulis: Adeste, meritis Scipio inclino comas.  
Capite minerval annum, mentis diu  
Exercitatae pignus, extremum decus.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> “Genius Praesulis: This staff will clear the way for the palm of victory. It will bend the branches and draw closer the honourable fruits of the laurel tree with its hook.” F. 177r.

<sup>15</sup> “Mercurius: [...] the saint name and virtue are still alive in Scipio, he has a noble character of soul in him that is in blossom.

All: Justinian lives in Laurentius / Laurentius lives in this Scipio.” F. 234v.

<sup>16</sup> “Genius Scipionis: Come here, I, Scipio, will deservedly bend branches for you. Take your yearly reward, a proof that you practised your mind for a long time, the greatest honour.” F. 234v.

The abbot bends the tree, in which “grow” the rewards that can be by this way “picked” and distributed easily.<sup>17</sup> At the end Pallas gives a short talk. The laurel tree, which the abbot had bent, is unbent with a hope that it grows up to heaven and a crosier is placed on its top. This part probably came after the award – the text itself does not say it. However, the placement of a scenic note and the change of meter imply it (Pallas uses hexameters instead of the usual iambic senarius).

Although we do not find any connection with autumn and harvest in the prologue and epilogue of the third play *Protasius Arimae rex*, a celebration of patron and education is not missing here either. At the beginning, the goddess Flora sees a rose in the middle of the stage (a generic emblem of Vilém from Rožmberk, a founder of Krumlov College), out of which Pallas, a symbol of Jesuit school in Český Krumlov, is born “under exultation of trumpets” (*inter tubarum plausus*). Flora, Vltava (Moldau) and a group of Naiads extol both the Rose and Pallas but at the same time express their concern about their future. Their fears are dispersed by Favonius, a favourable wind representing the patron on the stage – Urban Weber (1599–1658), abbot of a renowned Benedictine Monastery in Admont (Austria), who came from Český Krumlov. Favonius promises to look after Pallas:

Favonius: Dum spiro, fovebo.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of the prologue Pallas takes synopses out of the helmet and distributes them to the spectators.

### Performances of Individual Classes

Engel’s plays prove that in the 1650s in the Bohemian lands a practise similar to that in other countries still existed; this means that at the end of the school year selected students from all the classes staged a long play written by a teacher of rhetoric. However, at that time, or even before then, the theatre developed in performances of individual classes as well. So called *consuetudines*, collections of rules for running particular communities of order reveal that it was possible, at least in some provinces, to play theatre even in lower classes from the 1630s at the latest. According to the consuetudinary of the Austrian Province from 1631 each of the so called grammar classes (that are four lower classes) was allowed to play a drama about 45 minutes long, written in prose with just a few verses, using modest scenic equipment. The audience was supposed to be created by the best students from other classes.<sup>19</sup> A similar kind of performance is mentioned in the consuetudinary of Franco-Belgian Province from 1640. It says that each of the

<sup>17</sup> *Pedo suo Abbas arborem praemiorum feracem inclinat, unde faute carpuntur et dividuntur emeritis.* F. 234v.

<sup>18</sup> “Favonius: As far as I breathe, I will take care of her.” The note in the text confirms that Urban really participated in financing final celebrations at Český Krumlov college till the end of his life: *Favonius siue Praesulis Admontensis Genius, qui dum vixit, praemia quotannis dedit huic gymnasio.* F. 7r.

<sup>19</sup> *In qualibet classe grammaticae permittitur semel drama aliquod per annum, tribus circiter quadrantibus, stylo libero (paucis tamen versibus intermixto) cum moderato scenico apparatu, invitatis etiam aliarum scholarum primis.* Bobková-Valentová (2011: 236).

grammar classes is to show a dialogue or a thirty-minute long drama without music once a year and invites the pupils of other grammar classes or at least the best of them as spectators.<sup>20</sup>

The oldest evidence that also in the Bohemian Province the grammar classes gave individual performances is the synopsis of play *Liliati Beati Aloysii Gonzagae virginitas*, staged by the highest grammar class at the college of Clementinum in 1656.<sup>21</sup> In 1675 the Jesuit Nicolaus Avancini (1611–1686) made a journey through the Bohemian province and his report indicates that “dramas of the Masters” (*magistrorum drama*), this means teachers of lower classes, were a deep-rooted custom those days and that the idea deviated from the original concept of a short production not even requiring a stage organized for students from other classes – this can be derived from Avancini’s remark these productions should last one hour at most using modest scenic “equipment”, without music and dance.<sup>22</sup>

Despite Avancini’s recommendations, performances of individual classes flourished in the years after his visit.<sup>23</sup> It is proved by preserved plays and regular remarks on performances of particular classes in *Litterae annuae*, annual reports of individual colleges. It is still a question whether and to which extent these performances replaced theatre during ceremonial awarding at the end of the school year. The report of Avancini’s visit states the theatre performances connected with this ceremony were held only in a few places in 1675, and he thinks the reason was either negligence and inattention or reluctance to look for a patron.<sup>24</sup> The preserved material seems to prove his words: there are only several play synopses preserved from the first half of 18th century, staged in autumn, attended by the “whole school”, so it could have been dramas written on this occasion. Ceremonies are mentioned in some reports in *Litterae annuae*. For example in the New Town in Prague this ceremony was definitely held in 1724 and included a theatre performance (*actio*); on this occasion the auditorium was also newly decorated and the theatre obtained new “scenic equipment”.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Et cum semel in anno in singulis classibus grammatica exhibetur dialogus vel drama mediae horae sine musica, nec invitatis externis et in ipsa schola, alii duobus invitatis, si locus ferat, vel saltem decem primis.* Bobková-Valentová (2011: 141).

<sup>21</sup> *Liliata Beati Aloysii Gonzagae virginitas.* NK ČR, sign. 52 B 44, adl. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Monita Nicolai Avancini*, par. 17: *Magistrorum drama, quod singulum semel per annum, tam ex usu et consuetudine, quam ex provincialium ordinatione exhibere debet, horam non excedat; [...] sit cum modico apparatu, nec (etsi a saecularibus haberri possit) excessus admittatur, sit sine musica et sine choreis.* See also Bobková-Valentová (2009).

<sup>23</sup> There was a similar situation in the Austrian Province. Performances of particular classes appear in Konstanz roughly from 1680, in Steyr from 1686, in Linz from 1697, in Krems in 18th century. See Seidenfaden (1963); Fröhler (1955; 1958); Wlczek (1952). Géza Staud also records frequent performances of individual grammar classes in the list of repertoire of the Hungarian Province. See Staud (1984–1994).

<sup>24</sup> *Monita Nicolai Avancini*, par. 17: *Tragoediae aut comoediae, quae ad annuam praemiorum distributionem magna cum laude Societatis et juventutis excitamento fieri solebant, jam vero (exceptis paucis collegiis) sive praefectorum neglectu, sive superiorum dissimulatione, aut, quod verius est, nimia parsimonia et moecenatem querendi taedio a plurimis annis passim non sunt habitae.* See Bobková-Valentová (2009: 421).

<sup>25</sup> *Litterae annuae 1724, f. 257r: Et praecipue sub anni scholastici terminum, quando actio pro praemio Amplissimi Magistratus honori dedicata cum magna ornatissimorum spectatorum satisfactione et ad murmuratione est producta. Distributa sunt in ea septuaginta septem competitoribus elegantia praemia, non modicis collegii sumptibus comparata. Pro eadem etiam auditorium recenti pictura adornatum, ipsum theatrum novo scenico apparatu copiose auctum.*

Although the custom to show one rather longer play performed by students from different classes at the end of a school year probably did not disappear completely, collections of preserved plays from college in the New Town in Prague,<sup>26</sup> Český Krumlov, Uherské Hradiště and Kladsko<sup>27</sup> prove that from the end of the 17th century another way became absolutely predominant in the Bohemian province: each class produced its own play from about the end of Easter holiday to July. In the summer term spectators could thus see up to six shorter plays defined for individual classes instead of one long. Contrary to the rules the theatre production of Jesuit plays was therefore in the Bohemian province much more extensive and involved more pupils from lower classes.

### **Comparison of Engel's Dramas and Plays for Particular Classes**

We can find a range of differences in Engel's texts and plays from the 1st half of the 18th century. Some are probably connected with the given change, that is with the transition from one whole-school performance to performances of individual classes. Engel's plays were destined to be played by a large number of students from different classes – the cast is not stated as a specific class but "academic youth" (*juventus academica*), i.e. students in general. That is why these plays are extensive – the shortest piece, *Calliopius*, has 1736 verses, *Laurentius* and *Protasius* over 3000 – and rich in scenic effects. We are informed of these by notes, which Engel supplied his texts with and which most often concern scene changes and scenic effects the texts abound in. A stage changes into sea, Vulcan's blacksmith's workshop, there are impressive scenes of forecasting and invoking spirits. In one act of *Protasius* they invoke from the Hades apart from Medea, Medusa and similar monsters also Famine with a pot full of mice which it releases so that they could destroy the crop. Plays defined for individual classes are on the contrary much shorter (approximately about 600–700 verses) and considering the minimal number of scenic notes we can say they were more modest and regarding scenic effects more simple.

Like with Engel not even here are the topics anyhow connected with the end of the school year. The difference, however, is that in plays from the 18th century this connection can be found neither in prologues nor in epilogues. These passages no longer speak about harvesting fruits, awarding or patrons, which provides other evidence that in that epoch a theatre performance was not a part of celebration held at the end of a school year.

Prologues, epilogues and choirs (acts dividing individual parts of drama) have in general in the 18th century quite a different role and form than in Engel's times. This fact is probably more connected with the change of style than with the discussed transition from one play to several performances. This change of style would deserve a detailed research, but in this article we will only mention some features. We have already mentioned the function of prologues and epilogues in Engel's plays. What concerns the choirs, they

<sup>26</sup> See Jacková (2011a).

<sup>27</sup> NA ČR, SM, sign. J 20/17/18, box 998, 999, 1000 (Prague-New Town); NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-446, box 175, IIIo-447, box 176, IIIo-448, box 178 (Uherské Hradiště); SOA Třeboň/ČK, fund Velkostatek Český Krumlov, sign. I 3Sa3, 4 (Český Krumlov); Wydział Rękopisów Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, sign. Akc 1949 KN 125, Akc 1949 KN 180, Akc 1949 KN 238 (Kladsko).

can be added also during the act, not only at its end, and the author uses mostly Ancient metres in them and alternates spoken word and singing. Their role is rather different than in later plays: the story in them either continues or stops but we do not find in them any summary of the previous plot or hints for further development. E.g. in one choir in *Protasius* Virtues come to Arima and expel Rebellion and Betrayal etc. The author does not want to tell us by this that in the next part of the play Protasius will become a wise Christian ruler, but he wants to show through allegorical characters what is happening right now. Choirs further illustrate some quality or thesis. E.g. in one choir in *Calliopeus* we can see how useful it is to fast and pray in times of danger and prosecution.<sup>28</sup>

If texts of prologues, epilogues and choirs in plays from 18th century are preserved, they are, except in few cases, sung parts. They can have the form of recitatives and arias, or choirs. The authors no longer use Ancient metres but a verse in rhyme. The task of these parts is to show the story or the main idea of play in an allegorical form and by this express higher or more general meaning of the contents. There is e.g. a play about a prince who was executed since his brother accused him falsely of a betrayal to get to the throne. So, in the prologue, epilogue and choirs appear Innocence, Trick and similar.<sup>29</sup>

Prologues, epilogues and choirs also become a “refuge” for allegorical characters who – again unlike in Engel’s plays – only seldom meddle in the plot. There are plays which on the contrary do not have other than allegorical or at least fictitious and supernatural characters, but it is quite rare to come across plays in which these creatures would co-exist with real characters on the stage.

Preserved plays from the Bohemian province staged at Jesuit schools at the end of a school year are therefore one of the proofs of change which came in the last third of the 17th century at the latest. From Engel’s plays or rather their prologues and epilogues it is evident they were connected with ceremonial awarding best pupils. In later plays we do not find any reference to patrons, awarding students and the like. Texts from the 18th century are also intended for a smaller cast, this means they are shorter and their scenic effects are very modest. Apart from that there is an evident change of style, which, however, does not seem to be connected with the mentioned separation of the theatre performance from the closing celebration and starting the custom to stage one play in every class.

---

## REFERENCES

### Abbreviations of archives

JS = Jesuitica fund

NA ČR = Národní archiv České republiky [Czech National Archives]

NK ČR = Národní knihovna České republiky [Czech National Library]

SK = Knihovna královské kanonie premonstrátů na Strahově [Library of Royal Canonry of Premonstratensians at Strahov]

<sup>28</sup> We can see e.g. Esther and other Jews, who warded off danger by praying and fasting; an angel taking the Apostle Peter out of prison etc.

<sup>29</sup> *Talio in Perseo, Philippus Macedonum regis filio.* NA ČR, SM, sign. J/20/17/18, box 998, f. 41r–62v.

SM = Stará manipulace [Old Manipulation] fund  
SOA Třeboň/ČK = Státní oblastní archiv v Třeboni, pobočka Český Krumlov [State District Archives Třeboň, Branch Český Krumlov]

### Manuscript sources

*Arnoldi Angeli S. J. Mosae-Trajectini Elegiarum libri X – tragoeiae sive dramatum pars I.* SK, sign. DE IV 13.

*Arnoldi Angeli S. J. Tragoediae.* NK ČR, sign. XI E 8.

*Litterae annuae 1724 = Annuae provinciae Bohemiae Societatis Jesu ad annum 1724.* ÖNB, Cod. 11 973.

*Monita Nicolai Avancini = Monita ad Superiores et Ordinationes Reverendi Nicolai Avancini Visitatoris Provinciae Bohemiae Societatis Jesu Anno Domini MDCLXXV.* NA ČR, JS, sign. IIIo-423.

### Printed sources

*Ratio atque institutio studiorum, 1635 = Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Jesu auctoritate septimae congregacionis generalis aucta.* Antverpiae.

### Secondary sources

Bobková-Valentová, K., 2006. *Každodenní život učitele a žáka jezuitského gymnázia* [Everyday Life of a Teacher and a Student at Jesuit Grammar-school]. Prague: Karolinum.

Bobková-Valentová, K., 2009. ‘Raro habeantur comoediae vel tragoeiae’. In: K. Bobková-Valentová, E. Doležalová, E. Chodějovská, Z. Hojda, M. Svatoš (eds.), *Roma – Praga. Praha – Řím. Omaggio a Zdeňka Hledíková*. Prague: Scriptorium, 409–423.

Bobková-Valentová, K. (ed.), 2011. *Consuetudines Assistantiae Germaniae I.* Prague: Historický ústav.

Fröhler, J., 1955. ‘Zur Schauspieltätigkeit der Studenten am Linzer Jesuitengymnasium. Die “Schule der Jesuiten” in Linz’. In: *Jahrbuch der Stadt Linz*, 197–270.

Fröhler, J., 1958. ‘Das Schuldrama der Jesuiten in Steyr’. *Oberösterreichische Heimatblätter* 12, no. 3/4, 81–96.

Jacková, M., 2006. ‘Arnold Engel a jeho tři tragédie pro zakončení školního roku na jezuitských gymnáziích’ [Arnold Engel and his three tragedies for the closing festival of the school year at Jesuit College]. *Divadelní revue* 17, no. 2, 14–20.

Jacková, M., 2011a. *Divadlo jako škola ctnosti a zbožnosti. Jezuitské školské drama v Praze v první polovině 18. století* [Theatre as School of Virtue and Piety. Jesuit School Drama in the First Half of 18th Century]. Prague: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy.

Jacková, M., 2011b. ‘The Mirror of Virtue, the Miracle of Eloquence, the Oracle of Wisdom. Jesuit plays about S. Catherine of Alexandria’. In: *Czech Theatre Review 1989–2009. Selected articles on Czech theatre from the journal Divadelní revue*. Prague: Institut umění – Divadelní ústav, 9–23.

Poplatek, J., 1957. *Studia z dziejów jezuickiego teatru szkolnego w Polsce*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Seidenfaden, I., 1963. *Das Jesuitentheater in Konstanz*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Staud, G., 1984–1994. *A magyarországi jezsuita iskolai színjatekok forrásai 1561–1773. Fontes ludorum scenicorum in Scholis S. J. Hungariae*. Budapest: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárának Kiadása.

*Theater in Böhmen, 2013 = Theater in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts. Ein Lexikon*. Ed. A. Jakubcová, M. J. Pernerstorfer. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften / Prague: Institut umění – Divadelní ústav.

Weber, D., 1997. *Japanische Märtyrer auf der Bühne des Jesuitentheaters*. Vienna: Wiener Katholische Akademie.

Wlczek, H., 1952. *Das Schuldrama der Jesuiten zu Krems (1616–1763)*. Diss. Vienna.

---

## KONEC ŠKOLNÍHO ROKU NA JEVIŠTÍCH JEZUITSKÝCH ŠKOL V ČESKÉ PROVINCII

### Shrnutí

Studie se zabývá bohemickými jezuitskými dramaty ze 17. a 18. století, určenými pro závěr školního roku. Tato událost byla na jezuitských gymnáziích původně spojena se slavností, na níž získávali nejlepší žáci ceny. Součástí této slavnosti byla také inscenace divadelní hry, v níž vystupovali vybraní žáci všech tříd. V poslední třetině 17. století však došlo v české provincii ke změně – stalo se zvykem, že místo jedné rozsáhlé hry vystoupila každá třída s kratším kusem, který napsal její učitel.

Cílem této studie je prozkoumat tři tragédie, které napsal v 50. letech 17. století Arnoldus Engel (1620–1690), porovnat je s vybranými texty z 18. století a ukázat, zda a jak se zmíněná změna v těchto dramatech odraží.

*Magdaléna Jacková  
Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague  
jackova@ucl.cas.cz*



# EXISTIMATIONES LIBRORUM

---



**Renato Oniga, Latin. A Linguistic Introduction.** Edited and translated by Norma Schifano. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, XVIII + 345 p., ISBN 978-0-19-870285-6 (hbk), 978-0-19-870286-3 (pbk)

The publication reviewed is a revised translation of the original Italian edition *Il latino: breve introduzione linguistica* published in 2007. The praise expressed in my review belongs not only to the author himself but also to Norma Schifano, the author of brilliant English translation. The work is a handbook for university students of Latin, applying the synchronic approach; however unlike traditional handbooks this one approaches the interpretation coherently from certain linguistic perspective, specifically that of generative grammar.

Not everyone must necessarily be a fan of generativist approach, and as a matter of fact, R. Oniga is rather an exception in Latin linguistics. Still, perhaps every reader will admire how clear and at the same time (desirably) concise, absolutely coherent and pedagogically flawless the sequence of Oniga's explanations is. The reader gets never lost, the line of reasoning is absolutely understandable, there is nothing missing, and nothing in excess. Everything is absolutely clear. At least the first half of the work can easily be recommended to complete beginners (which is meant to be a compliment).

Traditionally, the book opens with phonology. Apart from Latin alphabet, inventory of phonemes and pronunciation, there is also a short section on prosody and metrics. Certain phonological changes (vowel shortening, vowel weakening, rhotacism), because determined by morphological context (in case of rhotacism, Oniga is talking about "synchronic rhotacism" in inflection of nouns whose stem ends in *-s*), are to be found in Part II. Morphology.

The morphology part of the book begins with three theoretical sections – in general very apposite and thought-provoking: there is general introduction on morphological units, on lexical categories and the section on the above-mentioned phonological changes, opening the list of adjustment rules with the simple and perfectly working "vowel deletion rule". Ensue six sections (i.e. 9–14) with (not only, of course) tables of Latin inflections. Sections 15 and 16 deal with word formation, derivation and composition. For Oniga, word formation is the area of his special research interest and it is a level of grammatical description not usually included in Latin grammar-books of smaller and medium scope.

Perhaps a few comments on Part II of the book:

- Students might need an explanation of a traditional, however completely non-intuitive term "thematic vowel" (or even better, I would recommend to get rid of it entirely).
- Table "The Latin case system" on p. 62 – it might be better to use second declension which has different forms for nominative and vocative.
- Explanation of third declension is accurate, but it seems unnecessarily long to me; I believe that much less examples would suffice for students to be able to decline regular types analogically. What is intricate is the "mixed class"; however the rules to detect a noun as mixed-class are too complex and therefore any attempt to create an exact algorithm to form individual cases hits an insurmountable snag.
- On p. 96, I would disagree with interpreting *iste* as "near to you" (however, this is an issue not specific to this handbook only).

- On p. 110, I definitely would not refer to vowel weakening in case of *monitum*: in this case, *-i-* is simply an epenthetic vowel (or more precisely, in this specific case, it is rather a part of a complex secondary suffix *-itum* transferred analogically from another formation where *-i-* is epenthetic).
- In my opinion, pluperfect need not necessarily be punctual, and future need not necessarily be durative; perfect should probably include examples of resultative usage (p. 113).
- Explanation of deponent verbs (p. 139) is not ideal from my point of view. I believe that it would be more useful for students to swap the perspective: start with intransitive verbs (e.g. *morior*), which corresponds with the original function of the middle, and only then proceed to explaining the semantically shifted transitive verbs (e.g. *horitor*) where the original middle nature is not apparent anymore.
- On p. 140, *revertor* is missing from semi-deponent verbs.

Part III is dedicated to syntax and Oniga applies the method of immediate constituent analysis. This type of analysis is not used in the national education system of the author of this review, and therefore she probably will not be able to recommend this part of the handbook as a basic tool to teach Latin syntax. However, this system is, of course, perfectly functional and is in fact very useful for someone comparing Latin with other languages (as Oniga consistently does, mainly with English and Italian) and thus deriving more general conclusions. Individual graphical representations and descriptions are absolutely clear and convincing. In my opinion, however, here Oniga turns over the existing perspective and the work changes into a textbook of theory (to teach the immediate constituent analysis method) for those who are already rather fluent in Latin, while the approach used in the previous two parts was, quite remarkably, such that the handbook could be used both to teach general linguistic theory and Latin. The method works with analyzing grammatical correctness and with substitution (p. 183), thus it works better to analyze somebody's native language than the language somebody is only learning.

Questions of Latin word order (section 19) are discussed, again, by comparing it with English and Italian. Here, I fail to identify myself with a typical user – for Czech readers, sophisticated rules are more or less redundant as word order in Czech is practically identical with word order in Latin (except for position of a verb at the end).

Sections 20 and 21 deal with case syntax, and once again – they prove Oniga a master of concise and clear explanations. Just a small detail – I would prefer more intuitively understandable terms than “structural accusative” and “inherent accusative” (p. 238).

The sections dealing with subordinate clauses are, compared to traditional textbooks, very brief; however this is because the author strictly applies the perspective of translating from Latin to a modern language, not the other way round (as described in the Introduction section 1.1: “aim of studying Latin must be ‘reading in order to understand’”). With such an aim, there is no need to burden students with too many exceptions and fine nuances. Perhaps, more emphasis could have been laid on semantics of modality.

The book is exceptionally user-friendly: the layout is very pleasant; it is great that vowels are written with diacritics to indicate length; every user will surely appreciate both abundance and selection of examples, and each and every example followed by its translation. Of course, the book offers the “mandatory” index and bibliography; the bibliography is sorted by individual topics, which is very handy for users.

In any case, it is an admirable work and one must congratulate not only Renato Oniga and Norma Schifano, but also Oxford University Press on publishing the text. It is definitely an interesting pendant to accompany *Oxford Latin Syntax* by Harm Pinkster published recently by the same publishing house.

*Lucie Pultrová*

**Jorgos Seferis, Básně.** Translated by Růžena Dostálová, Vojtěch Hladký and Jiří Pelán.  
Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart Publishing House, 2011, 335 p.,  
ISBN 978-80-87378-93-9

Giorgos Seferis' poems in Czech translation

Needles to say, Professor Růžena Dostálová has the lion's share in making Modern Greek literature available, and poetry in particular, to the Czech readers, whom she introduced the greatest 20th century Greek poets: Konstantinos Kavafis, Odysseas Elytis and Giorgos Seferis. A translation of Giannis Ritsos' poems was published in a periodical in 2014.

A translation of the complete poetry of Giorgos Seferis entitled *The Poems (Básně)* was published in late 2011 in the Pavel Mervart Publishing House, which has been recently engaged in the systematic publishing of translations of Modern Greek literature. This time, Professor Růžena Dostálová mediated the work of one of the greatest Modern Greek poets to the Czech readers in cooperation with two other translators: Vojtěch Hladký and Jiří Pelán, who focused primarily on the first and third collection of poetry *Turning-point* and *Mythistorema*. Dostálová translated the second, lesser-known Seferis' collection *The Cisterne* (*Στέρψα* 1932, transl. *Studna*), as well as collections which came out mostly in the 1940s, one in 1955 and the last one published during his life in 1966.

The collection also includes the poem *Over Aspalathus Bushes* (*Επί Ασπαλάθων*, transl. *Po aspalathech*), published posthumously in the journal *Le Monde* in 1971, as well as the Seferis' 1963 Nobel Prize acceptance speech. The translation contains endnotes, which are based on the notes of the editor of Seferis' work G. P. Savvidis, erudite epilogue and a chronological overview of the author's life composed by Professor Růžena Dostálová.

Giorgos Seferis published his first book of poetry in 1931, i.e. at the beginning of the decade critical for Greek literature, as Greek modernists and surrealists started to publish their works and when *dimotiki* was questioned as the only acceptable literary language (*kathareusa* again returns to the literature in the works of surrealists). There are two ways to interpret the title of this book of poetry in the original: as a "stanza" or a "turning point". The former meaning can be related to the fact that at the time of his intense interest in the modernist poetry, Seferis uses bound verse. On the other hand, a "turning point", the meaning which Seferis apparently first and foremost intended as revealed in one of his later notes, stands for a turn from the Greek neosymbolist lyric poetry of the 1920s to modern poetry. In this collection, Seferis expressed the desire of the whole new literary generation for a real change. The Czech translators preferred the latter interpretation, too.

Most of the poems of the first part of this collection consist of 4-syllable stanzas with alternating or enclosed rhyme in different variations. Pelán as an experienced translator succeeds in retaining the formal playfulness and lightness of the poems, in some cases the impression of (apparent) superficiality, all interconnected with delicate irony also in the Czech translation. Seferis' verses are not easy to interpret, for which he was criticized by his first critics; yet, it is the play with forms and language the readers can hold on to when unsure of the meaning. Here and there freer translation subject to this principle is the right choice in this case.

The second part of the collection *Turning-point*, poem *Love Song* (*Ερωτικός λόγος*, transl. *Milostné slovo*), as well as the third Seferis' book of poetry *Mythistorema* were translated by Vojtěch Hladký. In his poems, Seferis returns to "pure poetry" and his poetic idol P. Valéry, while formally being inspired by the Greek literary tradition, too.

A 15-syllable iambic verse in the original text offers numerous reminiscences of the Greek literary tradition: it refers to the Greek folk poetry, works of Cretan Renaissance, Dionysios Solomos, Kostis Palamas, etc. The poem was admired for its innovative use of the traditional greek verse, formal perfection, and melody, which inspire the final positive impression in the readers even at the time when they may feel lost in the difficult-to-interpret text. Unfortunately, this aspect was not transferred to the Czech text. However, it is disputable how it could be actually achieved. Translator Hladký chose free verse translation, which is certainly a regular approach, since Professor Růžena Dostálová approached the translation of Seferis' bound verse in a similar way.

Vojtěch Hladký also translated the poetry collection (or a poem of twenty-four parts) *Mythistorema* (*Μυθιστόρημα*, transl. *Mytická historie*), which first appeared in the original in 1935 and became a critical text in terms of form and content. There is an obvious influence of T. S. Eliot, whose poem *The Waste Land* was translated by Seferis into Greek, not only in the use of ancient myths (*mythical method*), Eliot's personae, change in the author's perspective and chronotope, but also in the formal aspects: dramatic monologue, fragmentariness related to intertextuality. All of this could be hardly fully utilized in bound verse; therefore, *Mythistorema* is the first Seferis' collection in free verse, which later represents the poet's fundamental form of expression, without the author completely abandoning the traditional verse, though.

A challenge for translation is the title, which was chosen by the poet because it expresses the connection between myth and history, i.e. reality. The French translation of the collection was entitled *Légende*; in fact, the term *legend* combines both aspects – the myth and the real (historical) event. The Greek word *μυθιστόρημα* also means *novel*. Even this translation would be acceptable, as the poet's own words in his diaries (*Mέρες, Days*, 7 vols.) reveal that he had this meaning in mind, too. Nevertheless, the option of *mytická historie* (*mythical history*) is, in my opinion, a very good choice, as it allows the Czech readers to link the title to the Seferis' poetics.

With a few exceptions, later poems were translated solely by Růžena Dostálová.

In 1940, Seferis published a collection *Log-Book* (*Ημερολόγιο Καταστρώματος*, transl. *Palubní deník*), later identified with the numeral I, (two other collections having the same title followed) and *Book of Exercises* (*Τετράδιο Γυμνασμάτων*, transl. *Cvičný sešit*). The author himself noted in his diary that he wanted to publish the poems by the spring of that year, as it was not clear what awaited him as a Greek diplomat in wartime.

The best-known poem of this collection is *The King of Asini* (*Ο βασιλιάς της Ασίνης*, transl. *Asinský král*); yet, the poet ponders in his diaries why particularly this poem is the most popular one among readers. The reason is quite obvious, elements of Seferis' poetry, symbols drawing from ancient myths and history, links to the past and the present, images of the typical Greek landscape, as well as characteristic changes in the author's perspective, rich variety of metaphors and similes are all connected in the poem, which is no longer of the hermetic character as many other Seferis' works, and it is easy to interpret and understand.

The first verse of the poem *In the Manner of G. S.* (*Με τον τρόπο του Γ. Σ.*, transl. *Po způsobu G. S.*) is: *Everywhere I go, Greece wounds me* (*Kamkoli jdu, Řecko mě zraňuje*). The verse is usually interpreted as an allusion to the events of August 4, 1936, i.e. the beginning of the rule of the dictator Ioannis Metaxas, and again we can see here how the expression of personal experiences and the reflection of the outside, external (i.e. political) events go hand in hand in Seferis' poems. A number of toponyms and Modern Greek and mythical proper names, intertextual references to ancient works as well as to current events are interwoven in the poem.

While *Log-Book I* is dedicated to the period prior to the war, *Log-Book II* is written during the Second World War, i.e. between 1941 and 1944. The Second World War started for Greece by the invasion of Italian troops in October 1940. In the spring of 1941, Seferis left with the Greek government to Crete and later followed it to the exile, to Egypt, South Africa, Jerusalem and Italy. The poems *Stratis the Sailor among the agapanthi* and *Stratis the Sailor on the Dead Sea* (*Ο Στράτης Θαλασσινός ανάμεσα στους αγάπανθους*, *Ο Στράτης Θαλασσινός στη Νεκρή Θάλασσα*, transl. *Stratis Thalassinos mezi agapanthy* and *Stratis Thalassinos u Mrtvého moře*) present the poet's alter ego Stratis Thalassinos, eternally wandering and longing for the homeland, whether among exotic lilies, the place where there are no asphodels (symbol of Hades, communication with the dead, i.e. the ancestors), or in Jerusalem, the city of refugees, and at the Dead Sea. The name of the poet's alter ego reflects his traveler's destiny and connection with the sea; therefore, it is a pity that the translator did not try to find an appropriate Czech equivalent which would evoke these connotations in Czech readers.

When compared with the poems of *Mythistorema*, the images and figures from ancient mythology in the "log books" recede into background, but the poet intensively returns to them in the collection *The Thrush* (*Κίχλη*, 1947, transl. *Drozd*).

In this collection, Seferis' Elpenor in the poem *Sensual Elpenor* (*Ο ηδονικός Ελπίγωρ*, transl. *Smyslný Elpénor*) is the symbol of an anti-hero, mediocrity, just as this character was frequently used after Seferis by the poets of the first postwar generation, especially by Takis Sinopoulos. They represent people who are victims of their fate, but as the poet himself states in his collection of essays *Essays vol. 2* (*Δοκιμές Β'*, 1940), they may be the bearers of evil due to their indifference. The main part of the poem consists of a dialogue between Elpenor and a woman, who accompanies him and who may be mythical Kirke. It is the Elpenor's poetic love confession interlaced with Kirke's sober answers, leaving him at the end. It is followed by a chant, which is played on the radio; Seferis changes its form here and moves away from free verse to the traditional metrics, i.e. stanzas having eight verses in iambic meter with associated rhyme. This part is supposed to be a kind of the antithesis to Elpenor's ornate rhymes and should remind the readers of a slightly derogatory folk chant partly directly responding to the previous verses. Again, the form plays here an important role; therefore, it is a pity that the translator also in this case chose a free verse translation and thus failed to create an impression of mechanical repetition of the chant on the radio.

Despite a certain resignation to the formal aspect, which reduces the richness of the translations that is characteristic of the poems in the original (e.g. also linking free verse with a 15-syllable iambic verse), it should be stressed that ultimately, the translators fulfilled their difficult task honorably. They managed to mediate poetic work to the Czech

readers which is one of the most difficult ones to interpret in Greek literature and which is very rich in intertextual references, especially to ancient Greek drama and poetry, as well as to more recent literature. A Greek modernist, a Nobel laureate for literature, and a poet who depicted the modern odyssey of the Greek nation, its uneasy pilgrimage through the twentieth century, as well as a difficult confrontation with its glorious past gets onto the shelves of Czech bookstores thanks to the trio of translators headed by Professor Růžena Dostálová coincidentally at the time when the Greek nation is again tested.

*Nicole Votavová Sumelidu*

**ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE  
PHILOLOGICA 2/2016  
GRAECOLATINA PRAGENSIA**

Editors: Dagmar Muchnová, Martin Bažil, Ján Bakytá  
Cover and layout by Katerina Řezáčová  
Published by Charles University in Prague  
Karolinum Press, Ovocný trh 3–5, 116 36 Praha 1  
[www.karolinum.cz](http://www.karolinum.cz)  
Prague 2016  
Typeset by DTP Karolinum Press  
Printed by Karolinum Press  
ISSN 0567-8269 (Print)  
ISSN 2464-6830 (Online)  
MK ČR E 18597

Distributed by Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague,  
nám. Jana Palacha 2, 116 38 Praha 1, Czech Republic  
([books@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:books@ff.cuni.cz))