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FOREWORD

This issue of our journal opens with a new column, the Workshop, which we launched earlier, and which presents the research of a faculty member, not necessarily related to the main theme of the journal. This time, Endre Kiss analyses the background to the economic and credit problems of the Cluj Parish between the two world wars.

The main theme of this issue is hagiography, which is an important part of Christian literature and Europe's culture. László Perendy, Korinna Zamfir, Zsuzsa Závoti, Mózes Nóda and Călin Ioan Dușă explore various specific issues and aspects of hagiography and homiletics.

Finally, our guest author Eduard Giurgi presents an in-depth analysis of a specific issue of canon law concerning the *dolus*.

We hope that we have produced an interesting issue for our readers, which demonstrates the interdisciplinary and topical nature of theology, while at the same time highlighting the constant renewal of Christian literature.

Szabolcs András
Executive Editor

IN THE GRIP OF A BANK LOAN THE ROLE OF ÁRON MÁRTON IN THE DUTCH LOAN CASE

KISS ENDRE¹

Abstract. Both the Saint Michael Parish of Cluj-Napoca and the entire Diocese of Alba Iulia have been concerned for times with the issue of the loan taken out from the Netherlands. This issue was interpreted in diverse ways, it was divulged by both the Hungarian and Romanian press, and it also launched a public discussion. Yet, its exact background and focal point were unknown. In this study, I endeavour to present both the background and the protagonists and the final resolution of this delicate issue by exploring the contemporary documents.

Keywords: Dutch loan, József Hirschler, Márton Áron, St. Michael parish, Cluj-Napoca, parish administration, financial management, loan, local church history, financial challenge, austerity, settlement.

In the 20th century the most prestigious and richest parish in the diocese of Alba Iulia was the parish of St. Michael in Cluj-Napoca. Over the centuries, Cluj-Napoca became the cultural and spiritual centre of Transylvania, and at the same time a religious centre. While the historical churches (Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Reformed, Unitarian, Hungarian Lutheran) had dioceses in Cluj-Napoca and their chief pastors presented their affairs, the Roman Catholic Church was represented by the parish priest of St. Michael's Parish, which gave the parish special authority. The moral strength of the parish itself was further enhanced by the advantage of centrality and meeting religious and cultural challenges. From the end of the 19th century, the connecting threads of religious societies and associations, schools and spiritual movements unfolding in the parishes of the diocese ran together in Cluj-Napoca. Thus, in addition to the Roman Catholic bishopric of Alba Iulia, the parish of Cluj-Napoca and its other central institutions – with their advanced media – also breathed vitality into the farthest part of the large-scale diocese.

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The Roman Catholic parish of St. Michael in Cluj-Napoca served as a good example for other parishes with its pastoral work and organized institutional system (folk and women's associations and societies, Caritas and Scout troops, schools, care home, day care home, etc.). Despite its diverse and multi-oriented history, the scientific processing of its activities and institutions still awaits. I can say that the history of the twentieth-century pastoral work of the parish of St. Michael in Cluj-Napoca is an area awaiting huge research.

I served as chaplain pastor in St. Michael's Parish for a few years. I had the opportunity to investigate the rich archives of the parish. Especially in the minutes or reports of the parish board, I received references to several past events at the reference level, but I did not come across a related description. The publications published so far in print cannot be said to be coherent and comprehensive either. I didn't even find an acceptable picture of the famous Dutch loan, with clear statements. From my older priest brethren, who were even closer in time to the past events of the parish, I received only a few references, remarks at the level of mention, but not an exact answer. It is commonly mentioned that the parish of St. Michael in Cluj-Napoca, which had drifted to the brink of bankruptcy due to the famous Dutch loan, was saved from total collapse by Áron Márton.

There are few church history works that have elaborated the loan issue, the "horror" of the parish of Cluj. Árpád Paál, an excellent biographer of the period in his work "*A kisebbségi lét tanulóévei Erdélyben I-II. kt*", praises Márton Áron in a journalistic style, who started repaying interest after a successful negotiation with the Dutch.² László VIRT in his work entitled "*Nyitott szívvel. Márton Áron élete és eszméi*" mentions the settlement of the Dutch loan.³ The contemporary Péter Domokos Pál in his work "*Rendületlenül... Márton Áron Erdély püspöke*" does not even cover for local parish work, though his account of the Dutch loan would have been the most authentic. There is only one book about the parish priest dr. József Hirschler, edited by Péter Sas, which discusses the Dutch loan in a little more detail.⁴ Even after that, the big question raced through me: how could

² ÁRPÁD PAÁL, *A kisebbségi lét tanulóévei Erdélyben II.*, Csíkszereda: Pallas-Akadémia, 2008. 183–184.

³ LÁSZLÓ VIRT, *Nyitott szívvel. Márton Áron erdélyi püspök élete és eszméi*, Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002. 50.

⁴ PÉTER SAS ed., *Egy reneszánsz lelkületű főpap Dr. Hirschler József főesperes-plébános*. Kolozsvár: Verbum, 2010.

a large foreign loan be taken out when the permission of the diocesan authority is necessary?

With the help of the official documents available in the archives, I tried to examine and systematize the starting point, background and the course of the Dutch loan case, the people involved, the solution attempts and finally Áron Márton's orderly work.

In the series *Márton Áron hagyatéka* containing the legacy of Áron Márton, I followed the speeches of the great bishop told in the times of priestship and bishopship. These speeches are usually teaching and comforting, soul-warming and hopeful sermons. They lack the so-called eruption, stronger judgment, and criticism. He did not want to lead his audience on the right Christian path through criticism, he was aware that no one could be criticized to become a better self. In Volume 16 of the Legacy Series, I found a speech in which Márton Áron parishioner speaks in a stronger tone. Obviously, there was a good reason for doing so. And this reason is to be found precisely during the period of settlement of the Dutch loan. He held that speech a year later, as soon as he took over the administration of St. Michael's Parish, on March 14, 1937, to the parish governing body and male members. What made the active pastor give a sermon full of strong statements, suggesting pain and anxiety? In the closing chord of his speech, we find obvious references to the partisanship among the members of the parish, and to the h. disagreements against the parish priest, concerning some malicious attacks. Here is an excerpt from the concluding part of the speech:

“However, precisely because I speak to men when a gathering of men, let me get closer to our lives and briefly refer to one or two symptoms of our lives. ... The spirit of strife seems to be our peculiar sin. It is called our selfishness, the curse of Turan, and it really looks as if we have an inherited tendency. No matter how hard life is, no matter what warns us that we must stick together: the partisanship that has caused so many fatal ruptures throughout our history continues to linger in our ranks. ... We hit a party, form an enemy group (if necessary, we also tease in the church), and if necessary, we do not shy away from vile denunciations. I am not saying that we are no longer sparing the church from our contemporaneous intentions, that we are willing to defile even the holiest place and occasions with our ordinary thinking.”⁵

⁵ Áron MÁRTON, Feketevasárnap. Férfiak áldozása 1937. márc. 14-én, in: *Márton Áron hagyatéka 16. Alkalmi beszédek – 1. ed.* József MARTON, Csíkszereda: Pro-Print, 2018,

With Áron Márton's speech launching a conscience test, he would like to launch the Cluj-Napoca's male audience with a better insight.

*

József Hirschler, a highly knowledgeable and educated man, was a true Renaissance-type priestly dignity, a man of great enterprise. His priestly life and work - from 1901 onwards - were tied to Cluj-Napoca; from 1906 to 1936, he was the parish priest of St. Michael's Parish. He established a well-thought-out and valuable ecclesiastical institutional system, the fruits of which could be enjoyed not only by Cluj-Napoca, but also by the Hungarian community in Transylvania. In particular, the establishment of schools (including primarily the Marianum) played a decisive role in the education and upbringing of the next generation. His aspirations and their operation at the time coincided with the aspirations of the Vatican. School, press, zealous associations, care for churches, etc., which were not lacking in Hirschler's aspirations, were in line with the practice of the universal church. So, there is no way to condemn the aspirations of an ambitious parish priest, even if his works for religious and cultural purposes have been executed in a grandiose form.

The leaders of the parish of St. Michael in Cluj-Napoca were characterized by confidence and hope when the Dutch loan was taken out. Their so-called success was soon taken out to the public. Hungarian and Romanian-language newspapers often reported on a great sensation and a real success story impartially and without knowing the whole truth. The financial hardship that was slowly unfolding within the ward seemed unstoppable. With promises and silence of facts, responsible leaders initially veiled the sad reality, but not for long. The loan, shown in good light, did not yield the announced result. Therefore, a few months after the loan was taken out, it was mentioned as a bad news story across Transylvania not only in church circles, but also in civil society. Those in a hurry to help the parish have already run into individuals, obstacles, and complicated transactions that have taken the sacrificial work of nearly two decades to settle the Dutch loan.

The parish of St. Michael with the most prestigious income (real estate, foundations, and others) in the diocese of biographer also suffered from the change of empire and the world crisis of the late 1920s. The parish was seriously concerned with the maintenance and operation of institutions (schools, care

homes, associations) serving a wide range of cultural and ecclesiastical purposes; its budget was so depleted that heavy debts appeared in the budget in the mid-1920s. On the other hand, József Hirschler, who is prone to construction, moved only on a theoretical level, he was not familiar with the world of money. He relied on his co-workers in this field, trusting 100% of his direct co-workers. His most trustworthy man, who was also elected church pastor, was Ferenc Nemes, armed with monarchical knowledge and practice. Until World War II and even in the transition period after the change of empire, he accumulated success with his businesses. Not weighing the interests brought about by political and social change, he dragged parish Hirschler and the entire parish of St. Michael to take a bold step to the 'benefit / detriment' of the parish.

The start of the Dutch loan can be traced back to February 24, 1926, when the promising offer was first made by the chief caretaker Ferenc Nemes at the regular meeting of the parish church council.⁶ The Dutch creditors not only made an offer to the parish of St. Michael, but also visited all the wealthier parishes in Transylvania and Hungary.⁷ Although dr. József Hirschler was burdened by the taken out of the loan, he completely relied on and fully trusted Ferenc Nemes, the chief caretaker of; whom dr. Hirschler had been entrusting with the administration of financial affairs for years. It was not a new act to the parish council to take out the Dutch loan because the parish of St. Michael, who had large real estate assets, had previously used loans in the past for promising large investments and used them to repay existing institutions and repay debts. Thus, in the time of the parish priest József Hirschler, taking out bank loans was a common practice on the part of the leadership of the parish of St. Michael.⁸ In the current financial situation of the parish, this enterprise also proved to be very promising, because it could free the parish from the sale of another property.

Ferenc Nemes could handle the issue of borrowing and settling the loan approved by the Board of Representatives completely alone, by himself. Apparently, he also involved the parish priest József Hirschler and the people in charge of settling the loan, but he ignored them as well. His personal accounts suggested

⁶ *A kolozsvári római katolikus Egyházközség választmányának jegyzőkönyve 1926. február 24-én [The minutes of the Council of the Roman Catholic parish of Cluj on 24 February 1926]*, in ARCHIVES OF THE ST. MICHAEL PARISH (hereinafter referred to as ASTMP), 6/290.

⁷ *Mailáth levele Hirschler József plébánoshoz 1927. okt. 1-én [Letter of Mailáth to parish priest Hirschler József, 1 Oct 1927]*, in ASTMP, Num. 4193–1927.

⁸ SAS, *Egy reneszánsz lelkületű főpap Dr. Hirschler József főesperes-plébános*, 98.

that the steward works with the greatest devotion and honour for the parish of St. Michael. Ferenc Nemes managed to infiltrate the graces of the parish priest József Hirschler and through him to the trust of Bishop Károly G. Mailáth. In the case of József Hirschler, there was not the slightest suspicion that the great promises of his chief caretaker were just a loss of eyesight, that completely lack reality.⁹

The fog around the contract with Dutch creditors at the National Spaar et Emission Bank in Nijmegen also proves that the main actor, Ferenc Nemes, was aware of the dangerous gamble. When József Hirschler, who is free to visit the bishop, as well as the chief caretaker, forgets the borrowing, they keep silent and obscure the facts; they would like to give the impression that the Status is also a party to the treaty, and so on. It is true that Dutch creditors do not comment on the dilapidated position of their Bank either. It is only important for them that the church buildings in the centre of Cluj-Napoca be bound by an international contract.¹⁰

It should also be added that the county bishop of Mailáth, from whom he was personally and with immediate approval - to the exclusion of the competent experts of the diocesan office - given the green light to borrow, was never a proficient man in material matters.

It was also important for the ward chief to take out the Dutch loan because his own business was also in danger, and he hoped he could use some of the Dutch loan to save his own business. With this, of course, the property situation of St. Michael's parish was shaken and endangered.¹¹

At the beginning of the world crisis, the Dutch loan case soon became a debt-increasing tool for St. Michael's Parish. Due to interest payments, the parish leadership was forced to take out new bank loans. All of this, of course, was done with bishop's approval. József Hirschler took advantage of the situation of the sickly (aggravated from 1931) bishop Mailáth when approving new bank loans. The

⁹ *A kolozsvári római katolikus egyházközség képviselőtestületének jegyzőkönyve 1926. febr. 28-án [Minutes of the Council of the Roman Catholic Parish of Cluj on 28 February 1926, in AStMP, 6/290.*

¹⁰ *Nemes Ferenc főgondnok jelentése [The report of Ferenc Nemes], in ARCHDIOCESAN ARCHIVES OF ALBA IULIA, (hereinafter referred to as AAAI) Num. 307–1926; AAAI, Num. 1797–1927.*

¹¹ *Nemes Ferenc főgondnok kézzel írt levele Mailáth püspökhöz 1927. júl. 29-én [Handwritten letter of Archpriest Ferenc Nemes to Bishop Mailáth on 29 July 1927], in AAAI, Num. 1797–1927.*

leaders of the Episcopal Chancellery, the real experts of the Chancellery and the Status Board, could only observe the cause of the disaster from a distance. They were not commissioned by the most competent body, the bishop.¹²

In front of the parish council on behalf of the Dutch loan, the parish priest József Hirschler announced on the meeting of 22nd of February 1928 the serious mistakes that had been made around the Dutch loan. Two members of the board (Imre Gabányi and János Klumák) found out that the chief caretaker Ferenc Nemes had settled a couple of budget items from the parish debts but used the remaining amount for his own purposes: he tried to save the drugstore „Gergely Ferenc utóda” and settle his own debts.

According to the confession of the electoral clerk (Márton Szilágyi), the chief guardian also falsified the minutes.¹³ He has invested huge sums in the Commercial Bank of Cluj-Napoca, which was on the verge of bankruptcy. He solved all this with the signature of the parish priest, who often did not even know what he was signing, most of the time the custodian signed blank papers with it or used pseudonyms when naming the items. Ferenc Nemes took out loans for himself from the Cluj Savings Bank and Credit Bank in the name of the parish priest.¹⁴

After the embezzlement case was uncovered, the parish leadership sought temporary solutions and austerity measures: the budget was rewritten; in order for the parish to have access to financial resources, officials, staff, and teachers were required to pay a 5% church contribution. Parish priest József Hirschler offered the income of the new villas in the promenade to the parish.

¹² *Kivonat a kolozsvári római katolikus egyházközség képviselőtestülete 1927. május 22-én tartott rendkívüli közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyvéből* [Extract from the minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Parish of Cluj held on 22 May 1927], in AAAI, Num. 1797–1927.

¹³ *A holland kölcsön elszámolásának és felhasználásának megejtésére kiküldött külön bizottság jegyzőkönyve, 1928. február 22-én* [Minutes of the special committee sent to investigate the settlement and use of the Dutch loan, 22 February 1928], in AAAI, Num. 83–1928.

¹⁴ The Commercial Bank of Cluj Napoca was notoriously under suspicion at the time. When a request was made to merge it with the Transsylvania Bank in Cluj Napoca, the Cathedral Chapter, at its meeting of 28 April 1927, firmly refused. They certainly did not want to endanger the Transsylvania Bank, which managed the diocese's foundations, together with the bankrupt Commercial Bank. – ARCHIVE OF THE CHAPTER FROM ALBA IULIA, (hereinafter referred to as ACAI) Num. 39–27.

Of the HUF 600,000 loan taken out, HUF 540,000 remained due to transfer and handling costs, amounting to lei 34,112,252. The loan was used to repay part of the debt of church institutions (eg. Marianum, parish), bought houses and printing houses, lent it to church employees (eg. József Hirschler) and bought shares from banks. A larger amount was set aside by the superintendent for his own business purposes. József Hirschler undertook the amount set aside by Ferenc Nemes and offered a payment of 1,200,000 lei a year for this purpose, until the deficit from the loan was remedied. The other unwarranted investment was in the Providentia printing house. The incompetent management also caused a failure at the Providentia Institute, and the printing house was also forced to borrow. The saddest fact is that the parish also faced settling interest on the Dutch loan when it had no financial means to do so. The committee responsible for the implementation of the Dutch loan, which otherwise met only once in this case, regretted the relentless actions of Chief Guardian Ferenc Nemes. Another difficulty was caused by the “successor of Ferenc Gergely”. The huge debt accumulated was aggravated by the fact that the superintendent took out loans from all kinds and kinds of people who, seeing that their money was lost, also made claims to the parish.¹⁵

Chief custodian Ferenc Nemes resigned from his post in March 1928.¹⁶ The council of the parish, which was financially on the edge of the abyss, silently acknowledged such a step by the superintendent. The parish was in an unfortunate financial situation, so it was forced to take out more bank loans. A loan from the Savings Bank and Credit Bank of Cluj-Napoca and Transsylvania was necessary because if the parish had not repaid the exact interest on the Dutch loan, Holland Bank would have sued the parish, and a total collapse would have been inevitable.

The Bishop’s Commissioner (Kálmán Héjja)¹⁷, sent by the main authority of Alba Iulia, examined the budget, economic activities of the parish of St. Michael for several days, as well as the issue of the Dutch loan itself. He interrogated Chief

¹⁵ *A Kolozsvári Római Katolikus Egyházközség képviselőtestülete közgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve, 1928. március 25. [Minutes of the General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Parish of Cluj, 25 March 1928]*, in AStMP, Num. – 1928.

¹⁶ *Nemes Ferenc főgondnok kézzel írt levele Gabányi Imre ügyvédnek 1928. máj. 26-án. [Handwritten letter of Ferenc Nemes, Chief Curate, to Imre Gabányi, lawyer, 26 May 1928.]*, In AAI, Num. 1797–1928.

¹⁷ Kálmán HÉJJA (1863-1952) Archdeacon of Gyulafehérvár from 1902, auditor, foundation inspector, school inspector, in Sándor FERENCZI, *A gyulafehérvári (erdélyi) főegyházmegye történeti papi névtára*, Budapest-Kolozsvár: Szent István Társulat – Verbum, 2009, 267.

Trustee Ferenc Nemes, who confessed that he owed about 8 million lei from the Dutch loan and also had 16 million lei in private debt. 34,112,252 lei were received from the redemption of the Dutch loan currencies, of which the resulting deficit after the use of the useful items was 20,692,595 lei. Ferenc Nemes explained the deficit with an amount given to 116 creditors. The most bitter loss was caused by the purchase of 7,200,000 lei worth of shares for the parish from the Commercial Bank of Cluj-Napoca, which was on the verge of collapse. The final conclusions of the episcopal commissioner: the parish of Cluj-Napoca owes a Dutch loan of 600,000 Dutch forints, or 39.9 million lei. Of which actual value: 10,602,296 lei. Shortage: lei 29,297,704.¹⁸

As a result of the Bishop's commissioner's investigations, it became clear to the Alba Iulia authority that the material losses of St. Michael's Parish were caused by the embezzlement of Ferenc Nemes, who was known as an economic expert, and it became clear that he could never pay the stolen sums. The "bona fide" parish priest József Hirschler can be blamed for what happened because he did not consider the necessary parish supervision important. The committee responsible for the Dutch loan and the parish council itself are also responsible for what happened because the proper supervision has been postponed. All these circumstances helped chief caretaker Ferenc Nemes to act according to his own head and seriously damage the parish.

After the resignation of chief caretaker Ferenc Nemes, Gyula Jelen took over the position of chief caretaker and the tasks involved.¹⁹ His ideas, based on which he wanted to lead the parish, showed a good direction. He did not consider fair that the burden of the parish was borne by only a few, so he set up an economic committee of specialists. However, he soon had to realize that they could only repay the Dutch loan by taking out new loans.²⁰

¹⁸ Héjja Kálmán *egyházmegyei számvevő kézzel írt jelentése a püspöki hivatalnak az egyházközség anyagi helyzetének vizsgálatáról 1928. ápr. 21-én*, [Handwritten report of Kálmán Héjja, diocesan auditor, to the bishop's office on the examination of the financial situation of the parish on 21 April 1928], in AAI, Num. 1797–1928.

¹⁹ Mailáth püspök leirata az egyházközségnek 1928. dec. 12-én [Epistle of Bishop Mailáth to the parish on 12 Dec. 1928], in ACAI, Num. 5291–1928.

²⁰ See: ACAI, Num. 6/290; Hirschler József *a felterjesztett jegyzőkönyvekhez illesztett rövid levelét 1929. júl. 19-én* [József Hirschler's short letter to the minutes of July 1929. 19 July], in AAI, Num. 284–1929.

The Board of Directors of the Diocesan Council, especially the secular president and senator Elemér Gyárfás, provided better assistance to the leaders of the parish at the special request of the main authority of Alba Iulia. The loan was now settled in two threads: diocesan authority - Gyárfás and parish - Hirschler. The well-intentioned affairs of Elemér Gyárfás were constantly hampered. The distrust of the leaders of the church council in Cluj-Napoca and the special actions of József Hirschler made it difficult to settle the loan case he had started.

There was only one solution left for the administration of the parish of St. Michael: the retirement of József Hirschler and the appointment of a new responsible priest. Senator Elemér Gyárfás played a major role in clarifying the matter. After his intervention, it became increasingly clear to the Alba Iulia chief authority that the current parish leadership was unsuitable for the financial management of the loan settlement. Parish priest József Hirschler was absolutely convinced that the settlement of the loan was proceeding in the greatest order. In his letters, he reassures his bishop more than once that the loan case has been taken over by professionals, it will take place through banks, so no harm to the parish can come from it.

It was inevitable that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Romanian state leadership would not pay attention to the case, which had been going on for too long.²¹ The Holy See, through the Bucharest Nunciature, urged a solution as soon as possible. And the main authority in Alba Iulia left the matter to a comprehensive settlement for too long. Even after the bishop's control, he should have taken stronger action against the administration of József Hirschler.²²

²¹ *A Kultuszminisztérium levele Mailáth püspöknek 1934. szept. 13-án [Letter from the Ministry of Culture to Bishop Mailáth, 13 September 1934]*, in AAI, Num. 126.337–13848; *A Kultuszminisztérium levele Mailáth püspöknek 1934. júl. 9-én [Letter from the Ministry of Culture to Bishop Mailáth, July 1934. 9 July 1934]*, in AAI, Num. 82.991–9185; *A Kultuszminisztérium levele a plébánosnak, „Domnule Preot” címzéssel 1934. júl. 9-én [Letter from the Ministry of Culture to the parish priest, addressed to „Domnule Preot”, July 1934. 9 July 1934]*, in AAI, Num. 82.991–9185.

²² *A bukaresti Apostoli Nunciatura olasz nyelvű levele Mailáth püspöknek Luigi Arrigoni titkár aláírásával 1933. márc. 25-én [Letter in Italian from the Apostolic Nunciature of Bucharest to Bishop Mailáth, signed by Secretary Luigi Arrigoni, 25 March 1933]*, in AAI, Num. 8806–1933; *Az Egyházmegyei Tanács levele Mailáth püspökhöz 1933. ápr. 8-án [Letter of the Diocesan Council to Bishop Mailáth on 8 April 1933]*, in AAI, Num. 830–1933; *A bukaresti Apostoli Nunciatura olasz nyelvű levele Mailáth püspöknek Luigi Arrigoni titkár*

For Elemér Gyárfás, the deplorable situation of the parish was unacceptable. He also stayed connected with Béla Gajdátsy, Office Director, and Dániel Zomora, Deputy Bishop.²³ In the end, his opinion crystallized that only by dismissing the parish priest József Hirschler could the further deterioration of the situation be prevented. Doing so was hampered by the bosom friends lined up behind Hirschler, who encouraged him not to let anything out of his hands or undertake to retire. Yet he was no longer able to see through the material affairs of the parish. The final accounts of 1933 and the budget of 1934, as well as the minutes, studied by Elemér Gyárfás revealed a startling picture. He prepared a report on all this for the diocesan authority.²⁴

For this reason, Bishop Mailáth - now with the advice of his clerks - acted more decisively in 1935, ordering the establishment of the Directorate to manage the property affairs of the parish. The Directorate proved to be an intermediate solution because the specialists who entered it, primarily lawyers, were appointed by the parish priest József Hirschler. The members handled the financial affairs correctly according to the state laws, everything was done properly, but they did not look for the final solution. Rather, their own lawyer's fees, their bank interest, hovered before their eyes, they did not settle the debt-equivalent debt due to the

aláírásával 1933. júl. 27-én [Letter in Italian from the Apostolic Nunciature of Bucharest to Bishop Mailáth, signed by Secretary Luigi Arrigoni, 27 July 1933], in AAAI, Num. 8988–1933; A Főhatóság levele a kolozsvári plébánia hivatalnak 1933. márc. 29-én [Letter of the Bishopry to the parish office of Cluj-Napoca, 29 March 1933], in AAAI, Num. 1051–1933.

²³ *Az Egyházmegyei Tanács levele Mailáth püspökhöz 1933. dec. 4-én [Letter of the Diocesan Council to Bishop Mailáth on 4 Dec. 1933], in AAAI, Num. 3114–1933; Az Egyházmegyei Tanács levele Mailáth püspökhöz 1933. dec. 13-án [Letter of the Diocesan Council to Bishop Mailáth on 13 Dec. 1933], in AAAI, Num. 3186–1933; Az Egyházmegyei Tanács levele Mailáth püspökhöz 1933. nov. 18-án [Letter of the Diocesan Council to Bishop Mailáth, 18 Nov. 1933], in AAAI, Num. 2824–1933.*

²⁴ *Az Apostoli Nunciatura kérésére a Sacra Congregatio Concilii számára megfogalmazott válaszlevél a holland kölcsön-üggyről dátum nélkül [Letter of reply to the Sacra Congregatio Concilii on the Dutch loan case at the request of the Apostolic Nunciature, undated], in AAAI, Num. 1797–1934; Az Egyházmegyei Tanács jelentése a holland kölcsönről 1934. jan. 10-én [Report of the Diocesan Council on the Dutch loan of 10 January 1934], in AAAI, Num. 3292–1934; Egyházmegyei Tanács Igazgatótanács levele Mailáth püspöknek 1934. febr. 15-én [Letter from the Board of Directors of the Diocesan Council to Bishop Mailáth, 15 February 1934], in AAAI, Num. 380–1934.*

Dutch loan, which accumulated a lot. Their case management eventually triggered a measure by the Ministry of Finance, which set up a state lock guard.²⁵ According to the plan, the Directorate is obliged to put order in the financial affairs of the parish, but the parishioners (Romulus Fersigan, Gheorghe Dubleşiu, Virgil Nistor) could not free the parish from their oppressive yoke. At the same time, the internal conflicts of interest within the leading circle of the parish, the tension between Endre László, the bank manager, and the chief guardian Gyula Jelen did not help to resolve the matter. Moreover, the fast-breaking lawyer Jenő Péterffy (son-in-law of Endre László) also sought to ‘cleanse’ the Directory of members who did not meet them and to support the parish priest József Hirschler, in fact, he reinforced his mistake.²⁶

Lock wards sent out by the state have crippled the parish situation for several years. The trustees spent very little of the parish’s income on tax refunds, and even tried to fill their own pockets as soon as possible.²⁷

In this hopeless situation, the diocesan authority had to act. We can witness an interesting coincidence in taking the decisive step. The very seriously ill Bishop Mailáth was finally transported to Budapest, and the leadership of the diocese was taken over by Deputy General Dániel Zomora and the office manager Béla Gajdátsy, who saw the Dutch loan issue most clearly. Hirschler lost his protective support just in his most critical position. Meanwhile, attacks were also made on

²⁵ *A Direktórium tervezete, Hirschler és Gajdátsy kézzel írott megjegyzéseivel 1935. márc. 6-án [Draft of the Board of Directors, with handwritten notes by Hirschler and Gajdátsy, March 1935. 6 March 1935]*, in AAAI, Num. 714–1935; *A kolozsvári Szent Mihály plébánia egyháztanácsának jegyzőkönyve 1935. ápr. 8-án [The minutes of the parish council of St. Michael’s parish in Cluj on 8 April 1935]*, in ACAI, 6/290.

²⁶ *Péterffy Jenő levele a Direktóriumhoz 1935. máj. 21-én [Letter from Jenő Péterffy to the Board of Directors, 21 May 1935]*, in AAAI, Num. 714–1935; *Péterffy Jenő levele a Direktóriumhoz 1935. máj. 30-án [Letter from Jenő Péterffy to the Board of Directors, May 1935. 30 May 1935]*, in AAAI, Num. 714–1935.

²⁷ *Részlet Hirschler „Kamarás Úrnak” (Gajdátsy Béla) címzett, kézzel írt, bizalmas leveléből [Excerpt from Hirschler’s handwritten, confidential letter to „Mr. Kamarás” (Béla Gajdátsy)]*, in AAAI, – 1797; *A kolozsvári egyházközség választmányának jegyzőkönyve 1934. okt. 25-én [The minutes of the parish council of Cluj on 25 October 1934]*, in AAAI, Num. 1418– 1934; *A választmány által kiküldött „kilences bizottság” megbeszélésén készült jegyzőkönyv 1934. szept. 21-én [Minutes of the meeting of the „Committee of Nine” sent by the Electoral Council on 21 September 1934]*, in AAAI, Num. – 1797.

the part of the Romanian government, he was considered a chauvinist person, and the main authority in Alba Iulia was asked to terminate his stay in Cluj.

The Board of Trustees of the Diocesan Council - as the only solution - recommended to the Episcopal High Authority to entrust the complete settlement of material affairs to a church person with the power of administrator oeconomicus. According to their proposal, the settlement of the financial and economic affairs of the parish would fall under the competence and control of the Board of Directors of the Diocesan Council.²⁸ For this task dr. Alajos Boga status school officer would be seen as the most suitable.²⁹ On the other hand, the construction was hindered by the attitude of the parish priest József Hirschler, who did not even mind to stand aside.³⁰

The main authority of Alba Iulia is taking steps at the negotiation level to resolve the material and pastoral issue of the parish of Cluj-Napoca. After Alajos Boga has not undertaken, he is looking for a suitable priestly person who would find a way out in this complicated situation. Three priests were asked: Gáspár Botár, who was a friend of József Hirschler, Ernő Veress and Áron Márton. Divine providence arranged for the choice to fall on Áron Márton, in whom a suitable individual took over the head of the parish of St. Michael.³¹

József Hirschler wanted to remain in the parish position. He knew behind him some members of the Directory, who later caused a lot of inconvenience to Áron Márton parish priest. Until the day of his dismissal as parish priest and archbishop, József Hirschler (15th of March 1936), at the encouragement of his friends, he tried to act in Bucharest. Nerius Valerio Valeri, Archbishop Alexandru Cisar of Bucharest and the authority of Alba Iulia unanimously saw fit to see Hirschler leave the head of the parish and even Cluj.³²

²⁸ *Az Egyházmegyei Tanács levele Mailáth püspöknek 1934. jan. 11-én [Letter of the Diocesan Council to Bishop Mailáth, 11 Jan. 1934]*, in AAAI, Num. 3292–1934.

²⁹ *Zomora Dániel püspökhelyettes levele Gyárfás Elemérhez 1934. febr. 26-án [Letter from Deputy Bishop Dániel Zomora to Elemér Gyárfás, 26 Feb. 1934]*, in AAAI, Num. – 1797.

³⁰ *Hirschler József plébánosnak a nunciushoz intézett memoranduma 1934. febr. 22-én [Memorandum from parish priest József Hirschler to the nuncio on 22 February 1934]*, in AAAI, Num. 184–1934.

³¹ József MARTON, *A Gyulafehérvári Római Katolikus Egyházmegye a 20. században*, Csíkszereda: Pro-Print, 2014, 94.

³² *Alexandru Cisar bukaresti érsek levele a gyulafehérvári főhatósághoz 1938. ápr. 9-én [Letter from Archbishop Alexandru Cisar of Bucharest to the Archbishop of Cluj-Napoca, 9 April*

At its last meeting on 17th of March 1936, the Directorate asked the Alba Iulia High Authority to accept its resignation on 18th of November 1935, because it could still not take responsibility for the events that took place in the life of the parish. Jenő Péterffy, who wrote the minutes, noted that intrigues, accusations, and unfounded news complicate the work of the Directorate. What really happened was that the Directory had fled the sinking ship of the parish. Praising themselves for their ‘sacrificial work,’ they left themselves, relinquishing all responsibility, while reserving to themselves the right to continue to have a say in matters remotely, to accuse others, and even the new parish and his work with their attacks.³³

In such a tangled situation and with more than 90 million lei of debt and custody, Áron Márton took over the leadership of the parish on 23rd of March 1936, as vicarius oeconomus. In doing so, he undertook to settle the case responsibly. On behalf of the high authority, he had to pull the parish back from the brink of bankruptcy in a short time and even settle the affairs of the retired József Hirschler.³⁴

When Áron Márton successfully started settling bank loans and debts, the ‘church-loyal’ wrestlers, József Hirschler’s bosom friends, reappeared.³⁵

The physically and mentally broken abbot-parish priest also assumed malice in the fair and just procedure of the Alba Iulia high authority. His misconception was strongly influenced by bank manager Endre László and his son-in-law Jenő Péterffy.³⁶

Auxiliary Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner worked to get the Hirschler case to a standstill. The state authorities did not tolerate the person of József Hirschler in any office, so Bishop Vorbuchner had to withdraw his new mandate to József Hirschler, the rector of the Institute of Priestly Education. Due to the resentment of the state authorities towards Hirschler’s person, Vorbuchner considered best if the retired

1938], in AAAI, Num. 7957– 1938.

³³ *A Direktórium jegyzőkönyve 1936. márc. 15-én [Minutes of the Board of Directors, March 1936. 15 March 1936]*, in AAAI, Num. 714–1935.

³⁴ Gergely Kovács, *Szentnek lenni nem kevesek előjoga, hanem mindenki hivatása*, in *Keresztény Szó* XXV/4, 2014, 1.

³⁵ *Péterffy Jenő levele Mailáth Gusztáv püspökhöz 1936. máj. 23-án [Letter of Jenő Péterffy to Bishop Gusztáv Mailáth, 23 May 1936]*, in AAAI, Num. 1915–1936.

³⁶ *Zomora Dániel általános helynök levele Hirschler József nyugalmazott plébánosnak 1936. márc. 21-én [Letter from Deputy General Dániel Zomora to retired parish priest József Hirschler, 21 March 1936]*, in ACAI, Num. 962–1936.

parishioner leaves not only Cluj-Napoca but also the country for some time.³⁷ Márton Áron, the parish priest took measures to cover the financial costs of József Hirschler, who was forced to receive medical treatment abroad.³⁸ Auxiliary Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner also had a paternal love for Prelate Hirschler throughout, with only one request - precisely for his sake - not to stay in Cluj-Napoca if possible.³⁹ The priests instigating Hirschler and his 'friends' in Cluj-Napoca further hindered the settlement of his case in a regular channel.⁴⁰ The restlessness and disobedient attitude of the retired parish priest caused many difficulties for the auxiliary bishop and the new leadership of the parish of St. Michael. He seized every opportunity to stay in Cluj-Napoca. His last wrestling also affected his health. Prelate Joseph Hirschler passed away on 17th of November 1936, confirmed by sacraments at the Park Sanatorium in Cluj-Napoca. At his funeral, by order of the chief pastor, Márton Áron parish priest preached.⁴¹

Since 1932, the clean-handed Áron Márton has gained such great prestige before the people of Cluj-Napoca that no one has questioned his authenticity. After liberating the parish from the custody,⁴² he was able to settle the Dutch loan on a

³⁷ *Vorbuchner Adolf püspök levele Hirschler József nyugalmazott plébánosnak 1936. március 22-én* [Letter from Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner to József Hirschler, retired parish priest, 22 March 1936], in ACAI, Num. 2075–1936.

³⁸ *Zomora Dániel püspökhelyettes levele a Szent Mihály plébániának 1936. május 14-én* [Letter of Deputy Bishop Dániel Zomora to the parish of St. Michael, 14 May 1936], in ACAI, Num. 1765–1936.

³⁹ *Vorbuchner Adolf püspök levele Hirschler József nyugalmazott plébánoshoz 1936. szept. 2-án* [Letter from Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner to József Hirschler, retired parish priest, 2 September 1936], in ACAI, Num. 2832–1936; *Márton Áron plébános levele Hirschler József nyugalmazott plébánosnak 1936. szept. 9-én*, in SAS, *Egy reneszánsz lelkületű főpap Dr. Hirschler József főesperes-plébános*, 536–537.

⁴⁰ *Botár Gáspár levele Hirschler Józsefnek 1936. szept. 26-án*, in SAS, *Egy reneszánsz lelkületű főpap Dr. Hirschler József főesperes-plébános*, 546; *László Endre levele Hirschler Józsefnek 1936. október 5-én*, in SAS, *Egy reneszánsz lelkületű főpap Dr. Hirschler József főesperes-plébános*, 549–550.

⁴¹ *Márton Áron h. plébános levele Vorbuchner Adolf segédpüspöknek 1938. márc. 14-én* [Letter of parish priest Áron Márton to auxiliary bishop Adolf Vorbuchner, March 1938. 14 March 1938], in AAI, Num. 783–1938.

⁴² *Gyárfás Elemér szenátor levele Márton Áronhoz 1936. dec. 27-én* [Letter from Senator Elemér Gyárfás to Áron Márton on 27 Dec 1936], in ACAI, Num. – 1927.

larger scale from 1937, even though his opponents moved every stone to prevent his actions.

He tried to face the constant stuttering. Many claimants came forward who demanded an after-commission for some of their service from the past. Members of the former directorate attacked with prosecutorial catches while he had to settle the payment of interest and other debts on the Dutch loan (to the Savings Bank and Credit Bank of Cluj-Napoca and Transsylvania Bank). Those who have seen a good source of money in St. Michael's Parish so far are reluctant to let go of the 'treasure chest.' For him, the most inconvenience was caused by the constantly accusing lawyer Jenő Péterffy. In the story of settling the Dutch loan case, he is the character who accompanied Áron Márton's entire work in Cluj-Napoca as a shadow - with bad intentions.⁴³ He expressed his dislike of the main authority in Alba Iulia and Áron Márton during the time of the parish priest József Hirschler, and even through him: he constantly incited the abbot-parish priest against the main authority, encouraged and influenced him to write a memorandum to the Chaplain. Márton Áron was constantly annoyed by him with provocative letters, as he was completely excluded from settling cases and thus dropped from a serious lawyer's contribution. He addressed indictments to the Alba Iulia authority, demanding that the culprits be put on the verge and punished for mistakes made in the past. He worked at all costs, to overthrow Áron Márton and prevent his election as parish priest.⁴⁴ He charged and demanded a huge sum for his work as a lawyer during Hirschler's time. Finally, he reported Aron Marton to Archbishop Alexandru Cisar of Bucharest and, through his mediation, to Apostolic Nuncio Andrea Cassulo.⁴⁵ Then, in the spring of 1938, Auxiliary Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner was forced to reveal

⁴³ *Traian German kolozsvári ügyvéd levele Vorbuchner Adolf segédpüspökhöz 1936. júl. 13-án* [Letter from Traian German, lawyer from Cluj to Adolf Vorbuchner, auxiliary bishop, July 1936. 13 Jul.] in AAAI, Num. 1418–1936; *Márton Áron h. plébános levele Vorbuchner Adolf segédpüspöknek 1936. júl. 15-én* [Letter of parish priest Áron Márton to auxiliary bishop Adolf Vorbuchner, July 1936. 15.], in AAAI, Num. 11–1936; *Péterffy Jenő ügyvéd levele Vorbuchner Adolf segédpüspöknek 1936. aug. 14-én* [Letter from the lawyer Jenő Péterffy to the auxiliary bishop Adolf Vorbuchner, Aug. 1936. 14 Aug.], in AAAI, Num. – 1936.

⁴⁴ *Péterffy Jenő levele Mailáth Gusztáv püspökhöz 1936. máj. 23-án* [Letter of Jenő Péterffy to Bishop Gusztáv Mailáth, 23 May 1936], in AAAI, Num. 1915–1936.

⁴⁵ *Péterffy Jenő ügyvéd feljelentő levele Alexandru Cisar bukaresti érsekhez 1938. ápr. 2-án* [Letter of denunciation from lawyer Jenő Péterffy to Archbishop Alexandru Cisar of Bucharest, 2 April 1938], in AAAI, Num. 7957–1938.

the case of Cluj-Napoca and the pastoral work of Áron Márton to the nuncio. In retrospect, the malicious action against Áron Márton can be considered caring, because the nuncio received unbiased information from the most authentic person about the future bishop of the diocese.

Márton Áron parish priest was supported in this nerve-grinding work by the specialists of Alba Iulia, from the Status, and a larger percentage of the church council.⁴⁶ Auxiliary Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner, who knew Áron Márton well during his service in Sibiu, stood by and encouraged him in everything, during his visits to the parish, he was pleased to note that both spiritual and material affairs were going well in Cluj-Napoca.⁴⁷ The Board of Directors of the Diocesan Council, including the secular president of Elemér Gyárfás, a senator, who proved to be a useful helper with his qualifications and parliamentary relations, helped him in his work as a defensive wall.⁴⁸ The work of Áron Márton was followed with great attention and assisted by the Episcopal Authority of Alba Iulia (Deputy Bishop Dániel Zomora, Office Director Béla Gajdátsy).⁴⁹ Gyula Jelen, the chief caretaker of the parish, also helped Áron Márton with the greatest goodwill after taking over the parish. Unfortunately, he resigned soon enough.⁵⁰

Áron Márton solved the biggest burden of the parish, the issue of the Dutch loan, by slowly disconnecting everyone from the case at his own risk and negotiating favourable payment terms from Dutch tenants through the background negotiations

⁴⁶ *A kolozsvári Szent Mihály egyházközség választmányának jegyzőkönyve 1937. febr. 25-én* [The minutes of the parish council of St. Michael's parish in Cluj on 25 February 1937], in ACAI, 7/290.

⁴⁷ *Vorbuchner Adolf püspök leirata Márton Áron megbízott plébánoshoz 1936. okt. 17-én* [Transcript of Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner to the acting parish priest Áron Márton, 17 October 1936], in AAI, Num. 3359–1936.

⁴⁸ For more on this topic, see: József MARTON, Gyárfás Elemér kapcsolata Márton Áron püspökkel, in Gyárfás Elemér a „civil püspök”, ed. László HOLLÓ, Budapest–Kolozsvár: Szent István Társulat–Verbum, 2016, 132–147.

⁴⁹ *Márton Áron bizalmas levelei Gajdátsy Béla irodaigazgatóhoz 1937. jan. 19-én és 20-án* [Áron Márton's confidential letters to Béla Gajdátsy, office director, 19 and 20 January 1937], in AAI, Num. 1797–1937.

⁵⁰ *A kolozsvári Szent Mihály egyházközség választmányának jegyzőkönyve 1936. nov. 16-án* [The minutes of the electoral council of the parish of St. Michael in Cluj on 16 November 1936], in ACAI, 7/290.

of lawyer Dezső Schilling.⁵¹ Later, when the case required more discretion, he even turned off Lawyer Schilling and - with the knowledge and consent of Bishop Adolf Vorbuchner - took all responsibility and handled the most delicate cases alone - with the help of lawyer Gábor Tusa.⁵² In a relatively short time, he managed to bring order and remove the incompetent persons who caused the unfortunate situation. In addition to the nerve-wracking financial troubles and unlawful attacks, he did not neglect his pastoral work in the strict sense either. By this time, we can already witness the acceleration of events: the appointment of apostolic governors and bishops, and finally, the consecration of bishops in Cluj.

Áron Márton, as bishop, remained the material administrator of the parish of Cluj-Napoca with the permission of the Holy See. He monitored and supervised the settlement of the debts of the Dutch loan, which was directed to the right channel.⁵³ He strictly required the parish leadership to repay the debt with the utmost precision. The extremely complicated loan business, which lasted for nearly two decades, was completely completed in December 1945.⁵⁴

After all, the Dutch loan to St. Michael's Parish, which caused so much material and moral damage, and its settlement were of great benefit to the diocese of Alba Iulia: it clarified the qualities of Áron Márton in official ecclesiastical circles, all the way to the Vatican.

⁵¹ *Márton Áron és Gyárfás Elemér megállapodást kötnek Schilling Dezső ügyvéddel a Holland-kölcsön rendezése ügyében 1937. máj. 3-án* [Áron Márton and Elemér Gyárfás conclude an agreement with Dezső Schilling lawyer on the settlement of the Holland loan May 1937. 3 May 1937.], in AAI, Num. 1963–1937.

⁵² *Baráth Béla levele Márton Áron püspökhöz 1943. okt. 21-én* [Letter of Béla Baráth to Bishop Áron Márton on 21 October 1943], in ACAI, Num. 995–1943; *Márton Áron levele Baráth Béla kolozsvári plébánosnak 1943. nov. 18-án* [Letter of Áron Márton to Béla Baráth, parish priest of Cluj, 18 Nov 1943], in AAI, Num. 2773–1943.

⁵³ *A kolozsvári Szent Mihály egyházközség választmányának jegyzőkönyve 1939. máj. 9-én* [The minutes of the Council of the parish of St. Michael in Cluj, May 1939. 9th of May, 1939], in ACAI 7/290.

⁵⁴ *A kolozsvári Szent Mihály egyházközség választmánya gyűlésének jegyzőkönyve 1945. dec. 19-én* [Minutes of the meeting of the electoral council of the parish of St. Michael in Cluj on 19 Dec. 1945], in ACAI, Num. 7/290.

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RIDICULING ASTROLOGERS ORIGEN’S SOURCES AND HIS LEGACY

LÁSZLÓ PERENDY¹

Abstract. This article examines the early Christian critique of astrology, focusing on its perceived conflict with the concept of free will. Key figures such as Origen, Tatian, and Bardesanes are highlighted for their contributions to this discourse. Origen’s works, including his homilies and commentaries on the Book of Genesis, notably oppose the deterministic implications of astrology by asserting human free will and divine omnipotence. Tatian’s writings, particularly his “Oratio ad Graecos,” condemn astrology as a demonic invention that undermines Christian doctrines. Bardesanes, who is well-informed in astrology, differentiates between cosmic influences and moral decisions, arguing that ethical behavior is not determined by the stars. The article also explores the theological and philosophical foundations of these arguments, tracing influences from earlier thinkers like Philo of Alexandria and Carneades. Overall, the text provides a comprehensive analysis of how early Christian writers engaged with and refuted astrological beliefs.

Keywords: Origen, Astrology, Free Will, Early Christian Writers, Determinism

Astrology was criticized already by the earliest Christian writers because in some of its tenets they saw the denial of the existence of free will in human beings². The problems concerning astrology appeared obviously in the exegetical works on the *Book of Genesis*, because in the Hexaemeron also the celestial bodies are mentioned among the beings created by God.

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² On the arguments for and against fatalism in Greek antiquity see David AMAND, *Fatalisme et liberté dans l’antiquité grecque*, Louvain, Bibliothèque de l’Université, 1945.

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I. Origen's exegetical works on the Book of Genesis

Origen wrote both a series of homilies and a commentary on the *Book of Genesis*. His *Homiliae in Genesim*, which are fully extant, exerted a considerable influence on later authors of Christian antiquity³. Origen's *Commentary on Genesis* survived only partially in the *Philocalia*⁴. According to an ancient tradition the texts of this anthology were selected by Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus. In Chapter 23 the problems regarding astrology⁵ are discussed in detail. Gen 1,14 says that the duty of the luminous bodies ordered by God is to serve as signs (ἔστωσαν εἰς σημεῖα). Astrologers claimed that by "reading" these "signs," *i.e.*, in their mind by observing and interpreting the constellations of the heavenly bodies, they can predict the fate of every human being.

II. The passages of the *Philocalia* on the impracticability of astrology

Chapter 23 of the *Philocalia* can be divided into five parts. In the introduction Origen gives an overview about the topic, then he presents four problems, in connection with which he explains his own opinion. Concerning the first problem, he asserts that free will *can* be reconciled with God's foreknowledge. As to the second problem, he proves that stars are only the *signs* of the future events and not their causes. Then he claims that for human beings cultivating astrology would mean that they are expected to make calculations which are practically impossible. Finally, he declares that God made it possible only for the angels and Patriarch Jacob to read out the signs from the constellations of the stars. Finishing the discussion of the topic he admits that he cannot answer the question how angels can interpret the constellations of the stars. In short, he treats the following four topics: the problem of fatalism, the theory of astrology, the practice of astrology, and the astrology of the angels.

³ See Adam RASMUSSEN, *Genesis, and Cosmos. Basil and Origen on Genesis 1 and Cosmology* (The Bible in Ancient Christianity, 14), Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2019. Chapter 5 (pages 148-194: „Let them be for signs”: Astrology.) is devoted to the issues concerning astrology.

⁴ See ORIGÈNE, *Philocalie 21-27. Sur le libre arbitre. Introduction, texte, traduction et notes par Éric Junod* (SC, 226), Paris, Cerf, 1976, 36-39.

⁵ About astrology in antiquity and its Christian reception see Giulia SFAMENI GASPARRO, *Astrology*, in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity*, Volume One, A–E, Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP Academic, 2006-2008, 271.

The borderline between what we nowadays mean by astrology and astronomy was not clearcut in antiquity: the interpretation of the constellations of stars was regarded as an objective scientific activity by many. So, astrologers claimed that they were in possession of the necessary skills to interpret the heavenly signs mentioned in Gen 1,14, and they alleged that these σημεῖα do influence the fate of people. Origen completely rejected fatalism, which was mostly accepted by astrologers. He proves that just like prophecies are not the causes of their own fulfilment, the heavenly bodies cannot be the causes forming the fate of human beings, either.

In order to follow Origen's train of thought and see his expertise in astronomy and astrology, the 17th and 18th subdivisions of Chapter 23, which treat of the impracticability of the astrological calculations allegedly carried out by human beings, are worth being quoted in their entirety:

“17. We conceded the point, for it does not interfere with the reasoning, that men can understand the positions of the stars in the heavens (τοὺς οὐρανίους σχηματισμοὺς), the signs, and the things of which they are signs; now let us see if it is true. Well, then, the masters of this art say that anyone who is going to accurately cast a nativity (τὴν γενεθλιαλογίαν ἀκριβῶς καταλαμβάνειν) must know not only in which twelfth part of the Zodiac the star in question is, but also in what part of the twelfth part, and in which of its sixty parts; and the more careful calculators add, in which sixtieth of that sixtieth. And the observer, they say (φασί), ought to do this in the case of each one of the planets, investigating its relation to the fixed stars. He must, moreover, scanning the eastern horizon, observe not only which sign of the Zodiac is there, but also the part of the sign, and the sixtieth part of this part, whether the first or second sixtieth. How, then, since an hour, roughly speaking, is equivalent to half the twelfth part, can anyone ascertain the sixtieth part, unless he has a corresponding scale for the division of the hours? For example, who could know that such an one was born at the fourth hour, plus half an hour, plus a quarter, plus an eighth, plus a sixteenth, plus a thirty-second of an hour? For they say (ὥς φασί) it makes a great difference in the things indicated if there is an error, not of a whole hour, but even of a fraction of an hour. Anyway, in the birth of twins there is frequently only a momentary interval; and yet, according to them, the twins differ widely in their fortunes and performances, because they who were thought to have observed the hour were not quite correct as to the relation of the stars, and the part of the sign on the horizon. For no one can say to the thirtieth of an hour what the

interval between the two births is. But let us allow (ἔστω συγκεχωρημένα αὐτοῖς) that they are able to determine the hour.

18. There is a well-known theorem (Φέρεται δὴ θεώρημα) which proves that the Zodiac, like the planets, moves from west to east at the rate of one part in a hundred years (δι' ἑκατὸν ἐτῶν μοῖραν μίαν), and that this movement in the lapse of so long a time changes the local relation of the signs; so that, on the one hand, there is the invisible sign, and on the other, as it were, the visible figure of it; and events, they say, are discovered not from the figure, but from the invisible sign; though it cannot possibly be apprehended. But let us grant (Ἔστω δὴ καὶ τοῦτο συγκεχωρημένον) that the invisible sign can be apprehended, or admit the possibility of getting at the truth through the visible sign; still even they will admit their inability to preserve in due proportion what they call the 'blending' of the signs (σύγκρασιν παρ' αὐτοῖς καλουμένην) in these positions, for it often happens that the influence of a malignant star which appears is more or less weakened by the aspect of a more benign one; and again, that the weakening of the influence of the malignant star by the aspect of the benign one is hindered, because of some particular position and relation of the other, though it is indicative of evil. And I think that anyone who studies the passages must despair of understanding such matters, inasmuch as the knowledge is not disclosed to men (οὐδαμῶς ἀνθρώποις ἐκκειμένην), but at the most only goes as far as the indication of events. And any one who has had actual experience will know that speakers and writers more frequently fail than succeed in their guesses at the truth. Wherefore Isaiah, believing that these things cannot be discovered by men, says to the daughter of the Chaldeans, who above all others were professors of the art, 'Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, stand up and save thee; let them tell thee what shall come upon thee'. We are thus taught that the most learned in these matters cannot show beforehand what the Lord intends to bring upon every nation"⁶.

From the passages above it seems to be clear that in Origen's mind the most efficacious argument against astrology is that astrologers in fact cannot overcome the practical obstacles when they try to define the exact moment of the birth of a person. The first problem is that although it is not difficult to observe in which

⁶ George LEWIS (tr.), *The Philocalia of Origen. A compilation of selected passages from Origen's works made by St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Basil of Cæsarea*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1911, pp. 190-192. The insertions in Greek are taken from ORIGÈNE, *Philocalie* 21-27, p. 188, p. 190, p. 192, p. 194.

zodiacal sign the star in question was when the child was born, it is necessary to measure not only the degree, but also the minutes of the degree, and even the degree seconds as well, because we know that the lives of twins often take very different turns, even if there is only a few minutes difference between the exact moments of their coming into the world. The famous work of the Stoic writer, Marcus Manilius titled *Astronomica* also confirms that the astrologers were of this opinion⁷.

The celestial phenomenon which causes the second difficulty mentioned by Origen was observed by Hipparchus around 129 BC. He observed that the star named Spica (*Azimech, Alpha Virginis*) in his era was observable in the zodiacal sign of the Virgin, at degree 174. But Hipparchus was in the possession of another observation made around 300 BC by Thimocharis, who was also a renowned astronomer. According to his measurement about 170 years before that of Hipparchus Spica was observable at degree 172. So, it was Hipparchus who first described the phenomenon of the so-called precession, *i.e.*, that the point of equinox is wandering into the Western direction. As our text proves, Origen also knew about this phenomenon, which once again demonstrates that he possessed quite detailed astronomical knowledge.

His third argument against astrology also betrays that he was well-versed in astrology. In the mind of astrologers some stars carried bad omens, and some other ones were the signs of good fortune. However, sometimes the bad signs can hide the good signs or the other way around, which causes unsurmountable difficulties in the interpretation of their constellations. Here Origen uses an astrological term (σύγκρασις), which again proves that he was at home not only in astronomy, but also in astrology.

III. Origen's seemingly permissive attitude to the statements of astrologers

When treating of these issues, at first sight Origen's behaviour seems to be quite permissive because he uses these expressions: ἔστω συγκεχωρημένα αὐτοῖς; Ἐστω δὴ καὶ τοῦτο συγκεχωρημένον. Although he does not make a laughingstock of the so-called science of his opponents openly, through his apparent permissiveness he renders perceptible that the arguments of the astrologers cannot be taken

⁷ MARCUS MANILIUS, *Astronomica* 1 (2,57): *quantaque quam parui facerent discrimina notus*; on Manilius see John ROBERTS (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 447. See also A. RASMUSSEN, 166-167.

seriously when they claim that they are able to overcome the obvious difficulties arising from the practice of their alleged science. When he presents the difficulties one after the other, he always refers to the statements of astrologers themselves (φασι, ὡς φασιν, σύγκρασιν παρ' αὐτοῖς καλουμένην). So, in his attack against astrologers it is not necessary for him to refer to an external authority, because the astrological “professional” literature itself demonstrates that the statements of the alleged experts themselves collapse without any external intervention, and their arguments fall to pieces.

IV. The main source of Origen's arguments: sceptic philosophy

We can find similar arguments already in the writings of the previous critics of astrologers, especially in the work of Sextus Empiricus⁸, titled *Adversus Mathematicos*. This famous sceptic philosopher lived approximately from 160 to 210 AD, so he was an older contemporary of Origen. Unlike Origen, he ridicules the fruitless efforts and alleged science of the Chaldeans with a scathing sneer. He is of the opinion that the life of each person starts with conception. In his mind the exact determination of the moment of conception would be the perfect starting point to cast a good horoscope, but when we are trying to do so, we face insurmountable difficulties, which are mockingly listed in detail by Sextus Empiricus. The determination of the exact moment of birth did not appear impossible for the Chaldeans, as he calls the astrologers. However, immediately the question props up which moment of the process of birth we should regard as relevant to determine exactly the positions of stars. The detailed examination of the various possibilities opens a new eventuality for Sextus Empiricus to have a good laugh at the astrologers. The exact moment of the process of birth is regarded as the most relevant by the astrologers must certainly be reported to the person who is measuring the angles of the positions of the stars and is determining exactly their constellation. So, in his opinion there must be a person present by the side of the woman in labour to hit a gong in the precise moment to let the observing person know that the baby has been brought into the world. But even in this case

⁸ Sextus Empiricus was a doctor of medicine and an outstanding representative of sceptic philosophy. His works, the *Basic Lines of Pyrrhonism* and *Adversus Mathematicos* (*Against the Professors*) are usually regarded as the codification of scepticism. On his life and works see SIMON BLACKBURN, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, 349-350.

the inexactness of the measurement is obvious, says Sextus, because – in order to carry out the exact measurement – the astrologer should take a position on a high hill, so quite far from the person by the side of the mother. But we all know the phenomenon that when we see somebody felling a tree on the top of a hill, we actually hear the sound considerably later than seeing the axe cutting the tree, so even transmitting the information by hitting the gong cannot be exact.

In his mind it causes another problem that the universe is turning round with an unbelievable speed. Another difficulty arises if the child is born in daytime when the constellation of stars cannot be observed. By night, our observations might be more or less exact, unless the sky happens to be cloudy. Still another difficulty is that the borderlines of the zodiacal signs cannot be clearly figured out. He knows also about the phenomenon of the atmosphere that its layers can be of uneven density, so the actual position of the celestial bodies – e.g., that of the Sun – is not exactly the same as its observed position. Listing further difficulties makes it clear that the Chaldeans in fact cannot determine the exact moment of the birth of a particular child, consequently they are unable to foresee what the fate of the child is going to be like⁹.

V. The biblical and theological arguments of Philo and the Christian authors before Origen against astrology

The reliability of the astronomical measurements had already been questioned in the second century BC by Carneades¹⁰, the founder of the so-called New Academy. His most important target was to refute the fatalistic argumentation of his contemporary Stoic philosopher, Chrysippus¹¹. His arguments soon became part and parcel of the debates directed against astrology.

Later also a theological argumentation based on the *Bible* appeared, the most eminent representative of which was Philo of Alexandria. He emphasized that the stars cannot be the primary causes of the events, because – referring to divine

⁹ Robert Gregg BURY (tr.), *Sextus Empiricus with an English translation*, IV. *Against the Professors*, Cambridge/Mass. – London, Harvard University Press – William Heinemann LTD, 1987, 342-361.

¹⁰ On Carneades (c. 214-129 BC), 'the most prominent member of the later Academy after Arcesilaus', see S. BLACKBURN, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 55-56.

¹¹ On Chrysippus (c. 280-207 BC), who was the third leading Stoic after Cleanthes, see *ibid.*, 63.

revelation – the renowned Jewish exegete made it clear that only God can be the primary cause (who is above this world) and not the stars¹².

Christian authors utilized both the philosophical and the theological arguments formulated before the Christian era to attack astrology. According to Éric Junod until the beginning of the third century we can find only summary judgements about astrology. In *Didache* III, genethliology, *i.e.*, the casting of horoscope of a child at his or her birth, is mentioned in connection with prediction and magic, which all lead to idolatry. According to Ignatius of Antioch (*Letter to the Ephesians*, 19,3), the star heralding the birth of Christ signified the end of the rule of fatalism, and that of the forces of ignorance and wickedness.

As to the Greek apologists, Aristides does not treat of astrology in detail, but he rejects of the adoration of stars of the Chaldeans. Justin does not mention anything in connection with astrology, but his disciple, Tatian does ridicule the astrologers. In Junod's mind, however, his argumentation is not clear, but there are three topics which are outlined in his *Oratio ad Graecos*: astrology is a work of the demons, it leads to polytheism, and the death of Christ has liberated us from the yoke of fate.

In Junod's opinion we can find a kind of specified evaluation and disapproval of astrology based on exact knowledge of the astrological technical expressions only at the beginning of the third century. The arguments of the Christian authors betray only from that period on that they are in possession of some reliable knowledge of the astrology, which enables them to argue against the Chaldeans with more confidence. In his work titled *Excerpta ex Theodoto* Clement of Alexandria relates the arguments used by the Valentinian Theodotus, who distinguishes between the expressions ποιειν and σημαίνειν. Theodotus states that the stars themselves do not exercise an influence on anything. They only signal the influence of the ruling powers. Just like the flights of birds do not cause any future events: they are only the signs of them. Like Ignatius, Theodotus also explains that the arrival of Christ has brought about the cessation of the power of fate, but in his mind only for those who have been baptized (*Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 72,1; 74,1-2; 75,1).¹³

The famous Syrian personality, Bardesanes of Edessa¹⁴ (154-222/3) was without doubt proficient in astrology. He was somehow connected to the leading political

¹² ORIGÈNE, *Philocalie* 21-27, 36-39.

¹³ ORIGÈNE, *Philocalie* 21-27, 41-42.

¹⁴ On this famous scholar see this monograph of abiding value: Han J. W. DRIVERS, *Bardaisan of Edessa*, Assen, Van Gorcum, 1966; reprint: Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies (36), Piscataway, NJ., Gorgias Press, 2014.

circles of the kingdom of Osrhoene, also called the kingdom of Edessa. When the Romans occupied Edessa in 214 or 216, he was forced to flee to Armenia, where he lived until his death. His ideas concerning astrology survived only in a work titled *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, written by one of his disciples, a certain Philip.¹⁵ Starting from this it seems that in his opinion it is God the Creator who rules the world, but he has delegated his power to the planets and the constellations of the Zodiac, which can give poverty or power, good or bad fortune to everybody. However, they cannot influence moral decisions. In his mind this is proved by the fact that the customs of various nations are often similar, although they were born not under the same constellations of stars. The interpretation of this phenomenon, called νόμιμα βαρβάρικα, appears already in the sceptic philosophy of Carneades.

In the *Pseudo-Clementina* we can also find similar arguments. The source of this work is obviously *The Book of the Laws of Countries*: a long quotation from it appears in this work attributed to the bishop of Rome, Clement¹⁶.

The Fourth Book of the *Refutatio omnium haeresiorum*, once attributed to Hippolytus of Rome, treats astrology in detail and contains a long quotation from the *Adversus Mathematicos* of Sextus Empiricus. The author gives a list of the gnostic groups which accepted some ideas of the astrologers¹⁷.

VI. A closer look at Tatian's sharp criticism

Tatian (c.120-172) was a representative of the Christian generation before Bardesanes. He was also born in Syria and published a gospel harmony in Syriac with the title *Diatessaron*, which was in liturgical use until the middle of the fifth century. He is known also as a Christian apologist, who wrote his *Oratio ad Graecos* in the 170s. In this work he also rejects fatalism, which he regards irreconcilable with Christianity. He attributes the invention of the chart of the constellations to the demons, whom he identifies with the gods of the Greeks, just like his master, Justin does. He treats questions which have to do with astrology in three chapters (8th, 9th, and 11th) of the *Oratio*. These passages are not so lengthy as the chapters containing Origen's objections, but despite of their terseness they bear evidence

¹⁵ Its bilingual edition: Han J. W. DRIJVERS (ed.), *The Book of the Laws of Countries. Dialogue on Fate of Bardaisan of Edessa*, Assen, Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., 1965.

¹⁶ ORIGÈNE, *Philocalie* 21-27, 42-44.

¹⁷ ORIGÈNE, *Philocalie* 21-27, 45.

to his thorough knowledge of the crucial tenets of astrology, which is especially apparent in his use of the specific terms of astrology.

“8. Men became the subject (ὑπόθεσις) of the demons’ apostasy. For they showed men a chart of the constellations (διάγραμμα ... ἀστροθεσίας ἀναδείξαντες), and like dice-players, they introduced the factor of fate (τὴν εἰμαρμένην εἰσηγήσαντο) – a very unjust one – which brought both judge and prisoner to where they are now. Murderers and their victims, rich and poor, are children of fate, and every nativity (πᾶσά τε γένεσις) gave entertainment as a theatre to the demons, among whom, like ‘the blessed gods’ of Homer, ‘unquenchable laughter arose.’”¹⁸

We can notice some technical terms of astrology already in this chapter. He uses the word ἀστροθεσίας, which is a technical term of astrology, meaning the operation in which the celestial bodies are being put on the horoscope. This term appears already in *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 74,2.

In the next chapter we can find even more special astrological expressions:

“9. Such are those demons who defied fate. Their basic principle was the giving of life. Things that crawl on the earth, things that swim in the waters, and four-footed creatures on the mountains, among whom they lived after the life of heaven was closed to them, to these they paid celestial honors so that they might themselves be thought to dwell in heaven, and might also make rational by arrangements of the stars the irrational ordering of life on earth (ἵνα τε νομισθῶσιν αὐτοὶ διατρίβειν ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλογον ἐπὶ γῆς πολιτείαν εὐλογον διὰ τῆς ἀστροθεσίας ἀποδείξωσιν). So the active and the lazy, the controlled and uncontrolled, the rich man and the beggar, all belong to those who ordained their nativity (τῶν νομοθετησάντων τὴν γένεσιν). For the diagram of the Zodiac circle is a creation of the gods (ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ζῳδιακοῦ κύκλου γραφὴ θεῶν ἐστὶ ποίημα), and when the light of one of them is in the ascendant (τὸ ἐπικρατήσαν), as they term it (ὡς φασιν), it loads the dice against the majority, until the cycle brings the loser on top once more. The seven planets, acting like draught players, amuse them. But we are above fate, and instead of planetary (i.e., erring) (πλανητῶν) demons we have come to know one lord who does not err; we are not led by fate and have rejected its lawgivers”¹⁹.

¹⁸ Molly WHITTAKER (ed.), *Tatian: Oratio ad Graecos and fragments*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982, pp. 14-15. The insertions of the texts in Greek are also taken from this edition.

¹⁹ WHITTAKER, 16-19.

As we can see, Tatian portrays the gods of the Greeks as wicked dice-players. Later he says that the seven planets, whose erratic movements the astrologers try to describe, play at draughts on the diagram of the Zodiac circle, and the gods (*i.e.*, the demons) entertain themselves by watching them. So, like Origen, Tatian also casts doubts on the abilities of astrologers, often making fun of their obviously futile efforts, by which they act in complicity with the demons.

It is Tim Hegedus who calls our attention to the fact that Tatian applies an expression which has also an astrological meaning: τὸ ἐπικρατήσαν. This term means the starting point based on which the calculation of the length of time of one's life is allegedly possible. Like Origen, Tatian also makes the reader aware that he is not giving his own opinion but quotes the statements of the astrologers: ὡς φασιν (as they term it).

For someone who is not an expert on the terminology of astrology the references found in Chapter 11 are even more hidden.

“11. (...) ‘Die to the world’ by rejecting its madness; ‘live to God’ by comprehending him and rejecting the old birth (τὴν παλαιὰν γένεσιν παραιτούμενος). We were not born to die, but die through our own fault. Free will has destroyed us; born free, we have become slaves; we have been put up for sale because of sin. God has done nothing bad, it was we who exhibited wickedness; but we who exhibited it are still capable of rejecting it”²⁰.

The expression παλαιὰ γένεσις has a double meaning here. Referring to the John 3,3.7 it means the natural birth, which can be followed by a kind of “second birth”, the re-birth in Christ. But it can also mean the old doctrine of genethliology. Tatian professes that the old and antiquated concept of astrology should be left behind by Christians for ever.

As obvious from the examples above, with the use of astrological terminology Tatian demonstrates that he himself was an expert on astrology to some extent, but he regards it as pseudo-science. When in Chapter 9 he presents how the astrologers are trying to describe the uncertain orbit of the planets (πλανῆται), which is a good piece of entertainment for the demons, who do not show any sympathy towards the fates of human beings, he seriously questions if astrologers really know their job. In his own way he also ridicules their vain efforts harshly, like Sextus Empiricus

²⁰ WHITTAKER, 22-23.

and Origen do, this way also mocking their faith in unchangeable fate, which both he and Origen regard irreconcilable with Christianity²¹.

In his comprehensive monograph about the relationship of early Christianity and ancient astrology, Tim Hegedus deals also with the other arguments against astrology in antiquity, not only with the one about the impracticability of the astrological measurements. He dedicates a whole chapter to the view that astrology is the result of the machination of the demons, which was – as we have seen – also asserted by Tatian. In the second main part of his monograph, he treats in detail the most important Christian works which contain the Christian reflections about horoscopy. Although he does not devote a separate chapter to Tatian, it is apparent also from his analysis that this author of Syrian origin was thoroughly acquainted with the technical terms which were most cherished by astrologers. As we saw in one case above, some of these technical terms had a primary, plain meaning, which phenomenon makes it even more difficult to notice their hidden meaning, used only by the astrologers. It is true that because of their conciseness Tatian's allusions and his train of thought are difficult to follow indeed, as Éric Junod contends. However, we cannot accept his statement that – as is the case of the Christian authors before Tatian – the Syrian apologist treats the issues concerning astrology only in a superficial way. The texts quoted above testify that he was in the possession of the most important propositions of the astrologers. He is the first Christian author to put into words the essence and the motive of the Christian answer: genethliology, *i.e.*, casting horoscopes is a harmful pseudo-science, which questions the fundamental truths of divine revelation, especially that God created man as a rational being endowed with free will, who is responsible for his deeds. So, decades before the Syrian Bardesanes and the Alexandrian Origen Tatian recognized the dangers which were menacing his contemporary Christians who were enticed by the seemingly scientific statements of the astrologers. He – like his near contemporary Sceptic philosopher, Sextus Empiricus – joined battle against them with the weapons of sarcasm, making fun of their unfounded theses.

²¹ Timothy HEGEDUS, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology* (Patristic Studies, 6), New York, Peter Lang, 2007, 125-126.; see also A. RASMUSSEN, 148-185.

VII. Tatian, Bardesanes, and Origen as Christian representatives of the same philosophical tradition

Given the chronological possibility (Tatian lived between c. 120 and 172, Bardesanes between 154 and 222/3), the geographical proximity (both were Syrians), and the lack of linguistic barriers (both wrote works also in Syriac), the question may arise if we can find traces of influence by Tatian on Bardesanes. As we have read in the passage of Chapter 8 of the *Oratio ad Graecos*, Tatian's most important objection against astrology is that by teaching it to human beings the demons "introduced the factor of fate (τὴν εἰμαρμένην εἰσηγήσαντο)". Eusebius of Caesarea testifies (*Church History*, 4.33.2) that Bardesanes wrote a dialogue with the title Περὶ εἰμαρμένης. So he dedicated a complete work to this topic, which indicates that he was also concerned with this topic. Unfortunately, it seems that we can gather information about his knowledge of astrological measurements only from the work of one of his disciples. *The Book of the Laws of Countries* argues against the Chaldeans with the method mentioned above, *i.e.*, νόμματα βαρβάρικα, which had been applied already by Carneades. Tatian's argument based on the inability of the astrologers to measure the erratic movements of the planets, *i.e.*, the impracticability of astrology comes from the same tradition of sceptic philosophy. I think the least we can say about their possible connections is that both were in possession of some elements of this philosophical tradition, which was articulated against their common concern, the fatalism of Stoic philosophy.

As to the personal connection between Bardaisan and Origen (c.185-c.254), let me quote the opinion of Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, who summarizes the results of her research on this possibility in the following way:

"These affinities between Bardaisan and Origen, who may have known each other—perhaps through Julius Africanus, or through Clement who might have had Bardaisan as a teacher, or through some other channel—have been so far overlooked by scholarship, whereas I think that they are important and are worthy of investigation. This would also explain the reason why, among many sources on Bardaisan, all those which are philo-Origenian (Africanus, Eusebius, Didymus, the early Jerome, etc.) are also those which are best disposed toward Bardaisan"²².

²² Ilaria L.E. RAMELLI, *Bardaisan of Edessa: A Reassessment of the Evidence and a New Interpretation*, Piscataway, NJ, Gorgias Press, 2009, p. 327.

So it seems likely that they Bardaişan and Origen met in person, which means that they also could exchange ideas about the dangers caused by the fashionable pseudo-science of astrologers.

VIII. Making good use of Origen's arguments: Basil and his followers

As to Origen's legacy, his influence on Basil was examined in detail by Adam Rasmussen in a recent article²³. He finds five correspondences between Origen's texts and those of Basil in his sixth hexaemeral homily²⁴. Basil draws on the *Philocalia* text directly four times. In the first instance he takes over Origen's definition of genethliology (the casting of nativities). Rasmussen notes that "[t]he only significant difference is that Basil replaces the technical word 'wandering' (πλανωμένων) with 'moving' (κινουμένων). This change is consistent with his less technical approach, as compared to Origen's, perhaps symptomatic of the difference between a sermon and a commentary"²⁵. The second borrowing concerns the system of genethliology, in which even the briefest intervals cause the greatest differences between the fates of persons. Basil takes over Origen's explanation almost verbatim²⁶. Basil relies also on Origen when he describes the interactions between the planets, using a technical term: aspect (ἐπίβλεψις). In the view of astrologers, they can be beneficent or maleficent, depending on the angles of their positions. Rasmussen notes that "Basil presents the theory as either stupid or blasphemous, whereas Origen uses it as another argument for impracticability"²⁷. Basil ends his diatribe with emphasizing that the fatalistic outlook of astrologers undermines morality because it removes personal responsibility. While in Origen's

²³ Adam Rasmussen, *Basil of Caesarea's Uses of Origen in His Polemic against Astrology*, in *ZAC* 18 (2014), no. 3, 471-485.

²⁴ Its latest text edition, which is based on a substantial number of codices, is the following: Emanuela AMAND DE MENDIETA – Sigrid Y. RUDBERG (eds.), *Basilus von Caesarea, Homilien zum Hexaemeron* (Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte, NF 2), Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1997. The text analysed by Rasmussen can be found in this edition on pages 96-101.

²⁵ A. RASMUSSEN, *Basil of Caesarea's Uses of Origen*, p. 479.

²⁶ A. RASMUSSEN, *Basil of Caesarea's Uses of Origen*, 479-481.

²⁷ A. RASMUSSEN, *Basil of Caesarea's Uses of Origen*, 481-482.

work this is the theme of the entire discourse, in Basil's presentation it is the climax of his rhetoric²⁸.

In the fifth instance when Basil treats of the same problem, he explicitly contradicts Origen, saying that believing that the stars are intelligent living beings is more than madness (μανίας ἐπέκεινα). In the Latin translation of *De principiis* 1,7,3 we read the following:

“Stellae uero cum tanto ordine ac tanta ratione moueantur, ut in nullo prorsus aliquando cursus earum uisus sit impeditus, quomodo non ultra omnem stoliditatem est tantum ordinem tantamque disciplinae ac rationis obseruantiam dicere ab inrationalibus exigere uel expleri?”²⁹

Unfortunately, this passage is not included in the *Philocalia*, so we cannot tell with certainty what was the expression translated by Rufinus as *ultra omnem stoliditatem*. However, Rasmussen makes the guess that it was μανίας ἐπέκεινα. He adds: “even if those were not the exact words, it is probable that Basil deliberately reverses and contradicts Origen's opinion”³⁰.

Rasmussen's observations seem to illustrate perfectly well that Basil did draw on Origen's texts extensively, taking over expressions sometimes freely, sometimes verbatim, and in the last case he even opposes Origen's view on the question if the planets are intelligent living beings or not.

As to Origen's direct or indirect influence on the Latin authors, in our context it is enough to mention the first Latin translation of Basil's homilies by Eustathius³¹ and the *Exameron* of Ambrose. Origen's and Basil's arguments against astrology found their way into the Latin works especially through these works. The bishop of Milan dwells at length on the exegesis of Gen 1,14-16³². He takes over from the previous

²⁸ A. RASMUSSEN, *Basil of Caesarea's Uses of Origen*, 482-483.

²⁹ Henri CROUZEL – Manlio SIMONETTI (eds), *Origène, Traité des Principes*, Tome I (Livres I et II), (SC 252), Paris, Cerf, 1978, pp. 212 and 214.

³⁰ A. RASMUSSEN, *Basil of Caesarea's Uses of Origen*, p. 483.

³¹ Emanuela AMAND DE MENDIETA – Sigrifrid Y. RUDBERG (eds), *Eustathius. Ancienne version latine des neuf homélies sur l'Hexaéméron de Basile de Césarée* (TU, 66), Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1958.

³² Christoph SCHENKEL (ed.), *Sancti Ambrosii opera, Pars prima qua continentur libri Exameron (...)*. (CSEL 32/1), Prague - Vindobonae - Lipsiae, F. Tempsky & G. Freytag, 1896, 110-140. As to Origen's influence on Ambrose see H. SAVON, *Ambroise lecteur d'Origène*,

critics of astrologers also several of their arguments about the impracticability of their so-called scientific measurements. At first, he says he is ready to comply and allow some force to their argument. But then he describes the absurdities to which the statements of the Chaldeans lead as far as the infinite subdivisions of time is concerned. These extremely short periods of time are impossible to measure, although the Chaldeans allege that this would be necessary to tell who is destined to a long life and who is not. The notorious counterargument of Sextus Empiricus conjuring up the scene of the birth of a child appears also here:

“Let them reconstruct the following if they would. Suppose a woman is giving birth to a child. As a matter of course the midwife first observes the child. She looks for his cry as giving evidence of life and notes whether the child is a male or a female. How many moments will you allow for all these acts? Suppose that there is an astrologer near at hand. Can a man be present at a childbirth? While the midwife is giving information and while the Chaldean is listening and setting up the horoscope, the fates of the new-born child have already entered the space of the lot belonging to another person. It follows that while an investigation is being made regarding the fate of one person, the nativity of another is in the process of being established.”³³

Then Ambrose describes in detail how the Chaldeans divide the zodiacal circle, applying the Greek term (μοίραι) for the second phase of subdivision. Finally, he says that what the Chaldeans and their followers believe is utterly ridiculous:

“Wherefore, since it is impossible to take such tenuous moment of time into account and since the slightest variation introduces an enormous error, the whole affair is based on mere phantasy. Its advocates are ignorant of their own destiny. How, then, can they know that of other men? They do not know what is in store for themselves. Can they announce the future of others? It

in Luigi Federico PIZZOLATO – Matteo RIZZI (eds), *Nec timeo mori. Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi ambrosiani nel XVI centenario della morte di sant’Ambrogio* (Studia Patristica Mediolanensia, 21), Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 1998, 221-234 and Andrew H. PIERCE, *Reconsidering Ambrose’s Reception of Basil’s Homiliae in Hexaemeron: The Lasting Legacy of Origen*, in *ZAC* 23 (2019), no.3, 414-444.

³³ John J. SAVAGE (tr.), *Saint Ambrose: Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel* (The Fathers of the Church, 42), Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1961 (reprint: 1977), p. 137.

is ridiculous to believe this, because if they were able to do so, they would inevitably foresee what the future held for themselves”³⁴.

So, with Ambrose the arguments about the impracticability of the allegedly exact measurements of the constellations of the stars found their way into the exegetical tradition of the Latin world.

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³⁴ AMBROSE, *Hexameron*, 138. In Latin: „unde cum impossibile sit tam subtiles minutias temporis comprehendere, exigua autem inmutatio inuehat uniuersitatis errorem, totum negotium plenum est uanitatis. disputatores eorum quae sua sunt nesciunt: et quomodo aliena nouerunt? quid sibi imineat ignorant: possunt aliis quae futura sunt denuntiare? ridiculum est credere, quia, si possent, sibi potius prouiderent.” (Sancti Ambrosii opera, Pars prima, Exameron, p. 122).

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SOME LESSONS FROM THE MEDIEVAL RECEPTION OF THE ACTS OF *THECLA* IN THE LIGHT OF THE LATIN MANUSCRIPTS

KORINNA ZAMFIR¹

Abstract. The large number and wide geographic spread of the Latin manuscripts shows that the *Acts of Thecla* were widely known in the Middle Ages in spite of the negative views of Tertullian, Jerome and the *Decretum Gelasianum*. Included in liturgical books, among martyr passions and lives of saints, the story shaped the faith of monastic, clerical and church communities. This paper explores the extent to which the manuscript tradition preserves or modifies the difficult details of the writing: the encratic teaching of Paul, Thecla's affection for the apostle, and in particular her baptism and teaching. The Latin manuscripts are essentially faithful to the narrative, including potentially difficult issues. However, some manuscripts tend to mitigate details and statements that seem problematic, to align Thecla's deeds with conventional ecclesial teaching and practice.

Keywords: Acts of Paul and Thecla, Latin manuscripts, Western reception, martyr passions, lives of saints, baptism, women teaching.

The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* [APTh] recounts the story of a young elite woman from Iconium who gives up marriage and chooses a life in chastity after hearing the ascetic-encratic teaching of Paul.² Thecla faces martyrdom twice but

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² Richard Adelbert LIPSIVS, Maximilien BONNET, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha 1*, Leipzig: Hermann Mendessohn, 1891 (reprint Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1990), XCIV–CVI, 235–272; Léon VOUAUX, *Les actes de Paul et ses lettres apocryphes*, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1913; Jeremy BARRIER, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla: A Critical Introduction and Commentary* (WUNT 270), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009; Richard A. PERVO, *The Acts of Paul. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Cambridge: James Clarke,

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is miraculously rescued. Her preservation from fire and from the wild beasts illustrates and prefigures the eschatological salvation of the chaste.³ Unlike other martyr virgins, however, Thecla stands out through two unconventional exploits. Following Paul's deferral of her request for baptism, facing martyrdom, Thecla baptises herself to the last day. After her rescue from the teriomachy, Thecla proceeds to teach the word of God.

The reception of the APTh is remarkable, though not uncomplicated. In the Eastern and Oriental Churches Thecla was remarkably popular.⁴ The Greek manuscript tradition designates her as protomartyr and equal of the apostles (*isapostolos*) or even as apostle.⁵ Her story is retold and expanded in the *Life and*

2014; Willy RORDORF, Pierre CHERIX, Rudolphe KASSER, "Actes de Paul", in François BOVON, Pierre GEOLTRAIN, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens 1* (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), Paris: Gallimard, 1997, 1115–1177; J.K. ELLIOTT, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1993. The work may go back to an oral tradition of the late first century: Dennis R. MACDONALD, *The Legend and the Apostle. The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*, Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1983.

³ Korinna ZAMFIR, "Asceticism and Otherworlds in the Acts of Paul and Thecla", in Tobias NICKLAS *et al.*, *Other Worlds and their Relation to this World. Early Jewish and Ancient Christian Traditions* (JSJSup 143), Leiden: Brill, 2010, 281–303

⁴ On the reception of the APTh and the cult of St Thecla in the East: Carl HOLZHEY, *Die Thekla-Akten: ihre Verbreitung und Beurteilung in der Kirche*, München: Lentner, 1905, 54–62; Léonie HAYNE, "Thecla and the Church Fathers", *VigChr* 48 (1994) 209–218; Pauline DE FLERS, *Sainte Thècle, première vierge et martyre. Vie, légende et cultes*, Paris: Cerf, 2019, esp. ch. 5; Stephen DAVIS, *The Cult of Saint Thecla. A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 (focusing on Seleucia and Egypt); Mónica PESTHY, "Thecla Among the Fathers of the Church", in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla*, edited by Jan N. BREMMER, Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996, 164–178 (166–175); Richard A. PERVO, *The Acts of Paul. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014, 46–47; Sever J. VOICU, "Thecla in the Christian East", in *Thecla: Paul's Disciple and Saint in the East and West*, edited by Jeremy W. BARRIER, Jan N. BREMMER, Tobias NICKLAS, Armand PUIG I TÀRRECH (Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha 12), Leuven: Peeters, 2017, 47–68; *Thecla and Medieval Sainthood: the Acts of Paul and Thecla in Eastern and Western Hagiography*, edited by Ghazzal DABIRI, Flavia RUANI, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

⁵ LIPSIUS, BONNET, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha 1*, XCIV–CVI, 235.

Miracles of Saint Thecla, attributed to the 5th century Bishop Basil of Seleucia.⁶ The Western reception of the APTh, however, was more ambivalent, not least because of the notorious position of Tertullian vis-à-vis women teaching and baptising.

In this essay, I tackle a segment of the reception of the APTh in the West, focusing on the Latin translations. I explore the extent to which the manuscript tradition preserves or modifies the difficult details of the writing: the encratic teaching of Paul, Thecla's affection for the apostle, their complicated relationship, the emotional reactions of Thecla, and in particular her baptism and teaching.

Mixed reception in the West

The ambivalent reception of the APTh in the West was largely due to the negative assessment by Tertullian (*Bapt.* 17).⁷ Tertullian does not raise theological objections but takes issue notably with the impact of the writing on ecclesial practice, namely with women claiming the right to teach and baptise, following the example of Thecla, a custom contradicting 1 Cor 14,34-35. To make the point, Tertullian challenges the credibility of the author, the presbyter claiming (to no avail) that he wrote the Acts *amore Pauli*. In the context of this ominous paragraph, Tertullian discusses the right to baptise, an issue that will be relevant for the assessment of the changes operated by some of the Latin manuscripts. Tertullian argues that in principle all Christians are allowed to baptise, but in practice the hierarchical order should be observed. The right to baptise pertains firstly to the bishop. Otherwise, the rite can be performed by the priest and the deacon with the authorisation of the bishop. Laypersons can administer the sacrament only as a last resort (*alioquin etiam laicis ius est*, 17.2). Lay baptism is acceptable only in case of emergency, in life-

⁶ Gilbert DAGRON, Marie DUPRÉ LA TOUR, *Vie et miracles de sainte Thècle: texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Subsidia hagiographica 62), Bruxelles: Société des bollandistes, 1978; Scott F. JOHNSON, *The Life and Miracles of Thekla: A Literary Study*, Cambridge: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2006; Linda Ann HONEY, *Thekla: Text and Context, with a First English Translation of the Miracles* (doctoral dissertation), University of Calgary, 2011; *Life of Thekla* (Ps.-Basil of Seleucia), transl. by Andrew S. JACOBS, [HTTPS://ANDREWJACOBS.ORG/TRANSLATIONS/THECLA.HTML](https://andrewjacobs.org/translations/thecla.html) (02.06.2024).

⁷ Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani *Opera*, Pars I (CSEL 20), ed. August REIFFERSCHIED, Georg WISSOWA, Vienna: Tempsky, 1890, 201–218 (215).

threatening conditions.⁸ Although *laicis* could be understood as gender-inclusive, Tertullian immediately questions the right of women to baptise and vehemently criticises those who invoke the example of Thecla to do that (17.4-5).

As Thecla baptising herself will be one of the sensitive issues in the Latin manuscript tradition, it is worth noting that the Western position regarding women baptising is mostly, though not entirely negative. Canon 41 of the *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua*, wrongly attributed to a purported fourth Synod of Carthage of 398, forbids women to baptise.⁹ Nonetheless, while invoking the prohibition, Thomas Aquinas argues that women are allowed to baptize in a case of urgency,¹⁰ a view also affirmed by the Council of Florence.¹¹

Jerome, following Tertullian,¹² and the sixth century *Decretum Gelasianum*¹³ count the APTh among the apocrypha. However, the stichometric list inserted in the Codex Claromontanus mentions the *Actus Pauli* among canonical Scriptures.¹⁴ This suggests

⁸ [...] *in necessitatibus* [...] *sicubi aut loci aut temporis aut personae condicio compellit: tunc enim constantia succurrentis excipitur cum urguetur circumstantia periclitantis, quoniam reus erit perditii hominis si supersederit praestare quod libere potuit.* *De bapt.* 17.3 (REIFFERSCHIED, WISSOWA, 215).

⁹ *Mulier baptizare non praesumat*, cf. *Concilia Galliae A. 314 – A. 506* (CCSL 148A), edited by C. MUNIER, Turnhout: Brepols, 1963, 173; Lawrence J. JOHNSON, *Worship in the Early Church 3: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009, 190. It is unclear whether the *Statuta* is indeed a collection of North African canons or a work of an author from Southern Gaul. JOHNSON, *Worship* 3, 188. (The collection has been attributed to Caesarius of Arles or Gennadius of Marseilles.) Lay baptism was addressed by the Council of Elvira in the early fourth century without reference to women (DH 120).

¹⁰ *Summa theol.* III, Q. 67 art. 4. The arguments will not be detailed here, but they deserve attention. Thomas considers that the baptism administered by women outside the case of urgency is valid, even though the act is sinful.

¹¹ *In causa autem necessitatis non solum sacerdos vel diaconus, sed etiam laicus vel mulier, immo etiam paganus et haereticus baptizare potest, dummodo formam servet Ecclesiae et facere intendat, quod facit Ecclesia.* (DH 1315, Bull *Exsultate Deo*).

¹² *De vir. illustr.* 7. Hieronymus, *Liber de Viris Illustribus* (TU 14, 1a), ed. Carl Albrecht BERNOULLI, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896, 1–56 (11, the *Periodoi* of Paul and Thecla).

¹³ Ernst VON DOBSCHÜTZ, *Das Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis in kritischem Text* (TU 38.4), Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912, 52.

¹⁴ *Versus Scribaturarum Sanctarum*, in *Codex Claromontanus*, 467v-468v (468v), together with the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas and the Apocalypse of Peter. The list is probably from the 4th century or earlier: Edmon L. GALLAGHER, John D. MEADE, *The*

that in some circles (whether earlier or contemporary with the Claromontanus) the writing had the same status as the now-canonical books of the New Testament.¹⁵ Further, a number of New Testament manuscripts from the 9th to the 13th century supplement two passages of 2 Timothy (3,11; 4,19) with excerpts from the APTh,¹⁶ indicating that it was seen as a source that could shed light on canonical writings.

In spite of Tertullian's disparagement, numerous early Christian and medieval authors praise Thecla as a paragon of virtue, in particular for virgins, and pay tribute to her strength and courage in martyrdom.¹⁷ In Rome, Thecla was venerated as early as the 4th century, as the catacomb bearing her name attests.¹⁸ Her cult

Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, 183–185; Glenn E. SNYDER, *Acts of Paul*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013, 244.

¹⁵ Kelsie G. RODENBIKER argues convincingly that the obeli before the four now non-canonical books as well as before *Ad Petrum prima* and Judith are secondary and challenges the claim that these books would have been regarded as non-canonical status since the inception of the list. The list reflects in fact a larger NT, comparable to that rejected by Eusebius (*h.e.* 3.25.4-5). “The Claromontanus Stichometry and its Canonical Implications”, *JSNT* 44.2 (2021) 240–253.

¹⁶ K (9th c.), 181 (10/11th c.), 460 (13th c.), the Syro-Harklensis (Bruce M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, London – New York: UBS, 1971, 648; 650; PERVO, *Acts*, 48-49)

¹⁷ She is praised as virgin despising martyrdom, for her fortitude and virtue, as a model of holiness: Ambrose, *De virg.* 2.19-21; *Ep.* 37.36; Augustine, *Virg.* 44; Jerome, *Ep.* 22.41; Rufinus, *Apol. in Hyeron.* 2.26; Zenon of Verona, *Tract.* 8.1. *De timore*, PL 11,324-325; Cyprian (of Antioch?), *Or. pro martyribus*; *Or. sub die passionis suae* (PL 4); the spurious *Cena Cypriani*. Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 2,13; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* 4.26.97; 8.1.46; 8.3.34, 8.3.171; 8.4.14. HOLZHEY, *Thekla-Akten*, 65–78; Pauline DE FLERS, *Sainte Thècle, première vierge et martyre. Vie, légende et cultes*, Paris: Cerf, 2019, part I., ch. 5, part II., ch. 3; Chiara O. TOMMASI MORESCHINI, “Thecla in the Latin Sources”, in *Thecla: Paul's Disciple and Saint in the East and West*, edited by Jeremy W. BARRIER, Jan N. BREMMER, Tobias NICKLAS, Armand PUIG I TÀRRECH, Leuven: Peeters, 2017, 69–105; Jeremy W. BARRIER, “A Cainite Invocation of Thecla? The Reception of the *Acts of Paul* in North Africa as Exemplified in Tertullian's *de Baptismo*”, in *Thecla and Medieval Sainthood: the Acts of Paul and Thecla in Eastern and Western Hagiography*, edited by Ghazzal DABIRI, Flavia RUANI, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, 35–60; Klazina STAAT, “Reception and Rejection. Thecla and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* in the Passion of Eugenia and Other Latin Texts”, in the same volume, 256–281.

¹⁸ The early 4th century Roman catacomb of St Thecla (Via Ostiense), not far from the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, is mentioned in the 7th century pilgrim guide, the *Notitia*

flourished in the early Middle Ages, especially in and around Milan, in Lyons / southern Gaul, and later in Tarragona.¹⁹

For centuries, Thecla was evoked and the APTh were handed down in liturgical books. The memorial of Thecla appears in the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, that of Bede and in the liturgical books of several local churches.²⁰ Thecla was initially absent from the liturgical books of the Church of Rome, probably under the influence of Tertullian, Jerome and the Gelasian Decree. Her memorial was included in the first official editions of the Roman liturgical books in the 16th century, following earlier local martyrologies.²¹ The cult of St Thecla became thereby part of the liturgical practice of the universal church. The first official *Rituale Romanum* (1614), approved by Paul V, also refers to Thecla in the Libera-prayers.²² The cult of St Thecla endured in the Western Church up to the 20th century.²³

ecclesiarum urbis Romae; PL 101, 1359–1365 (1363). Recent restoration work on the frescoes has uncovered the oldest extant depiction of Paul. Barbara MAZZEI, “La decorazione del cubicolo degli apostoli”, in EAD. (ed.), *Il cubicolo degli apostoli nelle catacombe romane di Santa Tecla. Cronaca di una scoperta*, Città del Vaticano: Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra, 2010, 33–88. One of the frescoes may depict Thecla. See also Tony BURKE, “Catacomb of Saint Thecla”, NASSCAL (entry: 1 July 2022).

¹⁹ HOLZEY, *Thecla-Akten*, 71, 96–100; FLERS, *Sainte Thècle*, part III., ch. 2.

²⁰ On the late antique and medieval calendars, martyrologies, and the medieval missals and breviaries: HOLZEY, *Thecla-Akten*, 72, 75–76, 86–93; FLERS, *Sainte Thècle*, part II., ch. 3 (Le martyrologe romain). She was commemorated on 23 September. For alternative dates: “Thekla, Follower of the Apostle Paul”, in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity From its Origins to circa AD 700, Across the Entire Christian World*, University of Oxford, <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=S00092> (Marijana VUKOVIC, *Cult of Saints*, E04850: 13 June; E05059: 20 December; E05060: 21 December).

²¹ On martyrologies, missals and breviaries: HOLZEY, *Thecla-Akten*, 89–93.

²² *Rituale Romanum Pauli V. Pont. Max. iussu editum* (Rome, 1614), 89 (*Et sicut beatissimam Theclam virginem & martyrem tuam de tribus atrocissimis tormentis liberasti, sic liberare digneris animam huius serui tui, & tecum facias in bonis congaudere caelestibus*). The reference is also found in the editio typica approved by Leo XIII, published in Regensburg. Thecla continued to be invoked in Libera-prayers up to the 19th century. HOLZEY, *Thecla-Akten*, 78–86.

²³ After Vatican II, St. Thecla was removed from the *Calendarium Romanum* (1969) and the *Martyrologium Romanum* (2001), because of her doubtful historicity. *Calendarium Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum*,

The most important proof for the lasting importance of the writing and of Thecla in the Middle Ages are the numerous Latin manuscripts of the APTh and of the *Life of Thecla*. Later, bilingual, Greek and Latin editions of the APTh and of the *Vita* will be published, but these are outside the scope of this paper.²⁴

The Latin translations of the APTh

The Latin manuscripts typically render the APTh under the heading *Passio Sanctae Teclae (virginis or martyris)*, among martyr acts or in Sanctorals, following the order of the liturgical year. Thecla embodies the martyr virgin. In some manuscripts, the APTh are included in thematic clusters on martyr virgins or female saints. The Latin codices have thus a hagiographic character and serve liturgical purposes. They come

Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1969, 68 (*sancti qui graves historicas difficultates praebent*), 140 (her commemoration is based only on the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*; she was included in the 11th century). The editors also cite serious difficulties about the historicity of St Cecilia, yet they choose to keep her, *popularis devotionis causa* (69). The cult of Thecla is nevertheless preserved in Tarragona (solemnity), in the Mozarabic rite in the Archdiocese of Burgos (memorial), and in the Ambrosian rite in Milan and the diocese of Lugano (memorial). Joachim SCHÄFER, “Thekla von Ikonium”, in ID., *Ökumenisches Heiligenlexikon* (28.08.2022).

²⁴ Ernst Grabe published a bilingual, Greek and Latin edition of the APTh in 1698: *Spicilegium SS. Patrum ut et Hæreticorum Seculi post Christum natum I., II. & III., tomus I*, Oxford: Theatrum Sheldonianum, 1700, 95–119 (“Martyrium sanctae et gloriosae Protomartyris et Apostolato defunctae virginis Theclae”), 120–127 (“Passio S. Theclae Virginis and Martyris”, based on the C. Digbaei 39). Pierre Pantin had already published the Greek-Latin edition of the *Vita ac miraculis* in 1608 in Antwerp: *Basilii Selevciae In Isavria Episcopi De Vita ac Miraculis D. Theclae Virginis Martyris Iconiensis Libri Dvo*, ed. Petrus Pantinus Tiletanus, Antverpiae: Ex officina Plantiniana, 1608 (dedicated to King Philip III of Spain). Vernacular translations of the *Vita* also appeared. Excerpts of the APTh were translated to German and French in the 16th century. The French translation of the *Vita* was published in Paris with the nihil obstat of the Bishop of Clermont and the approval of two theologians: *La vie de sainte Thècle, première martyre de son sexe, disciple de l’apôtre s. Paul*, composée pars. Basile de Séleucie. Traduite en françois par un prestre du clergé (M. de La Chétardie), Paris: Imprimerie de Nicolas Jacquard, 1668. In Italian: Andrea SANTINI, *Vita con alcuni miracoli della gloriosa vergine, e protomartire santa Tecla protettrice del popolo, e titolare della collegiata di Este*, Venezia, 1803.

mostly from the libraries of religious orders, some from the library of a chapter, a seminary, or a church.²⁵

Otto von Gebhart distinguished five text types, which survive completely (A C); almost completely (B) or fragmentarily (D E), in a number of manuscripts of uneven quality.²⁶ Gebhart's extensive systematisation was supplemented by Jean-Daniel Kaestli, based on the manuscript collection of the Bollandists and other sources.²⁷

Gebhardt listed under text type A two 14th-century witnesses (BHLs 8020a in the Bollandist catalogue [*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*): the Cod. Lat. 5306 (A, Bibl. Nat. Paris, the second part of a *Legendary* from France), which places the *Passio S. Teclae* between the life of martyr virgin St Julianna and that of Bishop St Albin, and Cod. 479 (B, municipal library of Toulouse, from the Dominican collection), which has it between the Passion of St Julianna and that of St Perpetua and Felicitas. Kaestli also includes here the 11th-century Dublin 174 (in what follows Du 174, Trinity College, probably from the chancery of the Cathedral of Salisbury),²⁸ based on which he and Gérard Poupon published a new edition of A.²⁹ The manuscript is significantly earlier than those of Gebhardt, but it also deviates quite often from the text of A and B, in circumstances where these follow the Greek text more faithfully.

The best represented text type is Gebhardt's group B, which he divided in three groups. Version Ba (BHLs 8020b, 8020c and 8020d), the most faithful to

²⁵ I indicate the provenance of each manuscript below. On the *vitae*, the martyrs' passions, their circulation between monasteries, and the production of excerpts and summaries: HOLZHEY, *Thecla-Akten*, 75–76.

²⁶ O. von GEBHARDT, *Passio s. Theclae virginis. Die lateinischen Übersetzungen der Acta Pauli et Theclae nebst Fragmenten, Auszügen und Beilagen* (Texte und Untersuchungen 22/2), Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902, vii–x. Lipsius mentioned only the Codex Casinensis 142 (C / c, 11th c.), the Cod. Digbaei 39 (d, 12th c.) and the *Sanctuarium* of Boninus Mombritius (m, 1476, 6 Brussels codices).

²⁷ Jean-Daniel KAESTLI, “Les Actes de Paul et Thècle dans la tradition latine. Recherches sur les manuscrits des diverses formes de la *Passio Theclae* et leur signalement dans la *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina*”, *AnBoll* 135.2 (2017) 265–358.

²⁸ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, vii–x, xxxv–xlv; KAESTLI, “Actes”, 272. Gebhardt preferred A (A) for his edition because although fraught with errors, is less prone to make arbitrary changes.

²⁹ Jean-Daniel KAESTLI and Gérard POUPON, “Les Actes de Paul et Thècle latins. Édition de la version A et de sa réécriture dans le manuscrit de Dublin, Trinity College, 174”, *Apocrypha* 27 (2016) 9–110.

the Greek, is found in several 11th–14th century manuscripts, the vast majority of these martyrs' passion accounts.³⁰ (The version has an important lacuna between

³⁰ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, x–xvi, lvi–lvii; KAESTLI, “Actes”, 273–275. The text type is found in the Cod. Bruxell. II 973 / C (C): (Royal Library of Brussels [KBR], 11th c., from the Abbey of Saint-Ghislain (Hainaut), between the *Passio Anastasiae virginis* and the *Passio S. Eufemiae*); Lambeth Palace Library Ms. 94 / D (D) (14th c.): the *Vita Beatae Teclae uirginis*, completed with the *Miracula*, after the Passion of St Ignatius; Harleianus 4699 / E (E) (Brit. Library, 13th c.): *Vita uel obitus beatae Teclae uirginis* between the *Vita* of St Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and that of St Martialis confessor; Cod. 137 (Bern, municipal library, 12th c.), between the *Passio S. Pelagiae* and the *Hieronymi narratio de natiuitate S. Mariae*; Cod. 197 (3131) (KBR, 1465, from the Abbaye du Rouge-Cloître, Saint-Paul en Soignes), between the passion of St Matthew and that of St Cyprian and St Justina, virgin; Cod. Bruxell. 9810-14 (3229) (KBR, 12/13th c., passion of holy virgins, from the Saint-Laurent Abbey of Liège), between the *Sermo* in the feast of the 11,000 martyr virgins from Cologne, and the *De inuentione capitis S. Ioannis Baptistae*; Cod. Bruxell. 21885 (1277 / 3275, KBR, 1277, copied by a monk from the Saint-Martin Abbey of Tournai), between St Maurice and the martyrs of the Theban Legion, and the Passion of Saints Cosmas and Damian; Cod. 23 (14; Arras, municipal library, 13th c.), between the *Passio S. Matthei* and the *Passio S. Firmini*; Cod. 148 (Clermont-Ferrand, municipal library, 13th c.), between the Passion of St Maurice and the Theban Legion (here *Exsuperius*, Candidus, and Victor) and that of St Cyprian; Cod. 1711 (Bibl. Mazarine, Paris, 11th c., from the Saint-Joseph des Carmes of Paris), between the *Vita* of St Euvrtius, bishop and confessor, and that of St Fursius, bishop; Cod. Lat. 11759 (Bibl. Nat. Paris, 14th c., from the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris): *Conuersio et certamina beatae Theclae uirginis*, between the *Passio* of St Maurice and companions, and that of Sts Andochius, Thyrsus, and Felix [martyrs of Autun]; Cod. Lat. 12612 (Bibl. Nat. Paris, 13th c., from the Abbey of Saint-Pierre de Corbie, later the property of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés), between the *Passio* of St Marcel and that of St Emmeram; Cod. Nouv. acq. lat. 2179 (Bibl. Nat., Paris, 11th c., from the Santo Domingo de Silos monastery (Burgos); the text has features of the text types Ba and Cb): *Actus uel passio S. Theclae, quae passa est in Iconio et in Antiochia sub Sistilio praeside et Alexandro principe*, between the *Passio* of St Thomas and the *Lectio ecclesiastica* on St Stephen martyr; Cod. 1399 (Rouen, municipal library, 12th c., from the Abbaye de Jumièges), between the *Vita* of St Matthew the Evangelist and the that of St Laudius bishop; Cod. Vatic. Regin. 542; Cod. Brux. (Bibl. des Bollandistes, 506, 13th c., from the Abbey Saints-Rictrude-et-Pierre de Marchiennes); Trier 1160 (1410) (Stadtsbibl., 12th c., the property of the Saint-Matthias abbey from Trier); Bern 137 (Burgerbibl., 12th c.); Padua, Bibl. Cap., E.25 (12th c., Legendary of the ordinary time, from the capitular church of Santa Giustina de Monselise); the latter also includes chs. 11–19, closer to version Bc, but is more faithful to the Greek (KAESTLI, “Actes”, 277–281).

chapters 11–19, which limits the assessment of these manuscripts’ faithfulness to the Greek.) Version Bb (BHLs 8020e) is preserved in several 12th–18th cent. manuscripts (some have the lacuna of Ba, in others it is supplemented from C).³¹ An important exemplar of version Bc (BHLs 8020f) is the Sanctuarium of Boninus Mombritius of 1476.³²

³¹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, xvi–xxii, liv–lvi; KAESTLI, “Actes”, 281–285: Brux., Library of the Bollandist Society, Ms. 146 (Brussels, mid-18th c.; from the merger of mss. J (Saint Saviour monastery, Utrecht), and k (St Martin monastery of Tours): *Martyrium S. Theclae uirginis*; and further similar mss. from Utrecht and Tours; it shares with Ba the lacuna between chs. 11–19; Cod. Brux. 7917 (KBR, 14th c.; originally from the library of the St Jerome chapter of Utrecht, signum musei Bollandiani P Ms 17), between the *Passio* of St Hildegard and the *Vita* of St Pelagia; the Cod. Hagae Comitum L 29 (70 E 21) (Hague, Koninklijke Bibl., 1461, originally Weesp 14, the *Martyrologium* of Weesp, later *Liber sororum Sanctae Katarinae Muiden*), *Passio S. Teclae uirginis et martyris*, between the Passion of St Maurice and companions and the *Vita S. Amori confessoris*; Cod. J 3 (Hague, Koninklijke Bibl., 14th c., from the same community): between the Passion of St Maurice and companions and that of Sts Cosmas and Damian; Cod. Harleianus 2801 / F (F) (British Museum, London, 12/13th c.), part of a Passional (from the Premonstratensian Abbey S. Maria et S. Nicolaus Arnstein, Rheinland-Pfalz, 1464): between the *Vita* of St Solemnis [bishop of Chartres] and the *Passio* of St Firmin [bishop of Amiens]; Cod. 525 / G (G) (Leipzig, Universitätsbibl., 1354) – *Liber nonus, de passionibus aliquorum sanctorum*, introduced by the *De sancta Tecla virgine*, followed by the *De sancto Stanislao*; Cod. Brux. 98–100 / H (H) (KBR, 12th c., second part of a Passional, from the abbey of Knechtsteden?), as in F (F) above; Cologne (Hist. Archiv der Stadt Köln, W 164a, 15th c., from the three-volumes Legendary of the Herrenleichenam monastery of the Augustinian canons); Fribourg, Bibl. publique et universitaire, L 743 (Legendary in two parts: J. de Voragine, *Legenda aurea* (13th c.) and *Legenda sanctorum* (14th c., probably of German provenance); Trier, Stadtsbibl., 1372 (previously 1316, 11–12th c., the property of the monastery of St Martin of Tours); Vatic. lat. 8565 (Bibl. Ap. Vaticana [BAV], 11–12th c., property of the Saint-Pierre Abbey of Malmédy (Liège); Ivrea, Bibl. Capitolare, 105 (previously 35, 14th c.); Koblenz, Landeshauptarchiv, Best. 701 Nr. 113a (Gymnasium 5), 14th c., provenance: Kollegiatstift St Martin und Severus, Münstermaifeld (Rheinland-Pfalz).

³² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, xxi–xiii, xlv–liv; KAESTLI, “Actes”, 285–290; Boninus Mombritius, *Sanctuarium seu vitae sanctorum* = BHL 8021, printed by the monks of Solesmes, II (Paris: Fontenmoing, 1910), 309–314 (in the printed edition: pp. 559–564; the Passion of Thecla is preceded by the martyrdom of St Symphorosa and her seven sons, and the story of the Roman virgin martyr St Susanna, and followed by the martyrdom of Sts Trophimus and Eucarpus); KAESTLI, “Actes”, 268. The other ms. is Cod. A. 116 Dresden / L (L) (Sächs. Landesbibl., Staats- und Universitätsbibl., 14th c.), which has the *Passio S. Teclae* between

The manuscripts belonging to version C, which Gebhardt classified in four subgroups, treat the writing rather freely: they often supplement the text and treat the text rather freely. Version Ca (BHLs 8020g and 8020h) is found in several manuscripts from the 11th to the 14th century.³³ Cb (BHLs 8020i, 8020k and Epitome VII / BHLs 8024o) is preserved in 11th to 15th century codices³⁴ according to Kaestli,

that of the Theban martyrs and the *Dedicatio basilicae archangeli Michaelis*. Further mss. include the St (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibl., HB XIV 14, 9th c., from the chapter of Konstanz, later in the possession of the Benedictine Abbey of Weingarten, Wurtemberg); No / Novara (Bibl. Capitolare del Duomo, 026, XXVI, 11th c.): *In natuitate Beate Tecele uirgi(ni)s*; also Bibl. Capit. del Duomo, 027, XXVII, 15th c., and 029, XXIX, 14th c. (copies of the former; they drop the beatitudes).

³³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, xxiii-xxv, lxiv-lxxiii; KAESTLI, "Actes", 291-295: Stuttgart, N (N), Cod. bibl. Fol. 57 (Württembergische Landesbibl., 11/12th c., originally Kloster Zwiefalten (Reutlingen) Nr. 167, vol. I, the second volume of a Passional), between the Passion of St Martina virgin martyr and that of the Holy Forty martyrs; Paris Cod. 5308 / O (O) (Bibl. Nat., 12th c.), between the *Passio* of St Emmeram and of Sts Andochius, Thyrsus, and Felix; Trier Cod. 35 / P (P) (library of the episcopal seminary, 13th c., from the St. Maximin Abbey in Trier, part of the Great Passional of Trier); München Cod. Lat. 701 (Bayerische Staatsbibl.; 14th c., from the Diocese of Augsburg, used by the Teutonic Knights), between the Passion of St Maurice and of Sts Cosmas et Damian; Cod. Vatic. Reg. Lat. 497, 11-12th c., *Passio S Teclae virginis*; Rome, Bibl. Vallicelliana, VII (13-14th c.); Würzburg, Universitätsbibl., Mp Th F 122 (14th c.; from the Cistercian abbey of the Holy Virgin in Ebrach; Legendary, among the lives of holy women: *Passio sancte Tecele uirginis*; Frankfurt (Stadt- u. Universitätsbibl., Barth. 4, 1356, Legendary of the St Barthelemy capitular church.

³⁴ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, xxvi-xxviii; KAESTLI, "Actes", 295-301. Wien, Cod. Lat.339 (Salisb. 11) (Österr. Nationalbibl., 13th c.; mainly legends of female saints; from the chapter of Salzburg); Cividale, Bibl. Capitolare, Cod. XVIII R (R) (Passional, t. XII, on holy women), library of the Seminary, 13th c.), between the Passion of holy virgin martyrs Euphemia, Dorothy, Thecla, and Erasma and that of Justina, Cyprian and Theognitus; Cod. XIII / S (S), same provenance, 1469): *Passio S. Teclae uirginis et mart. Christi* between the Passion of St Maurice and companions and that of Justina, Cyprian and Theognitus, from Santo Domingo de Silos monastery (Burgos); Ar, Vatican, Archivio del Capitolo di S. Pietro, A4 (C), 11th c.: *Nat(ale) sancte Thecle mar(tyris)*; Monte Cassino, 534 (Archivio e Bibl. dell'Abbazia, 11th c.; Bologna, Bibl. Universit., 1473 (from the Basilica Santo Stefano de Bologne, 1180; Gebhardt considers counts it to Cc, below); Vatican, Archivio del Capitolo di San Pietro, mss. A3 (B, 13th c.); A7 (F, 13-14th c.); A8 (G, 15th c.); A9 (H) 1339, Legendary.

is often superior.³⁵ Cc (BHLs 8020l and 8020m) is found in a number of codices from Italy and a few other manuscripts (two of which were used by Lipsius in his edition of the APTh).³⁶ The Cd (BHLs 8020n) deviates repeatedly from the other representatives of C.³⁷

³⁵ KAESTLI, "Actes", 353.

³⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, xxviii-xxxii; KAESTLI, "Actes", 268, 308-318. Lipsius used Cod. Casinensis 142 / T (T)=BHL 8022; Monte Cassino, Archivio e Bibl. dell'Abbazia, 11th c. (c in Lipsius; *Passio S. Teclae uirginis* between that of St Maurice and companions and that of Sts Cosmas and Damian), and the Cod. Bodleianus Digbaei 39 (Oxford, previously *liber beate Marie Abendon*, 12th c., possibly from St Mary's Abbey, Abingdon (published by Grabe in *Spicilegium Sanctorum Patrum*, I, Oxon., 1700, 120-127; ms d in Lipsius). Kaestli assigns it to text type Cd. The *Passio S. Teclae* is followed by that of St Blasius. Further codices: Cod. Vatic. Lat. 6076 / U (U): (1610, originally the property of the female monastery St Cecilia of Trastevere, *Natiuitas S. Teclae uirginis*); Milano Cod. B. 55 inf / V (V) (Bibl. Ambrosiana, 11th c., from the metropolitan chapter); Rome, Cod. I / W (W) (Bibl. Vallicelliana, 11th c., Sant'Eutizio de Norcia Abbey (Umbria)); Cod. 1473, according to Gebhardt (Bologna, Bibl. Universitaria, 1180, the story of Thecla is followed by the Passion of Cosmas and Damian); Rome, Cod. B. I. 4. / 719 (Bibl. Casanatensis, 10/11th c., *Passionale*); Monte Cassino Cod. 147 (Archivio e Bibl. dell'Abbazia, 11th c., as in the Cod. Casin. 142); Cod. Vatic. Lat. 6453 (BAV, 12th c., probably from Pisa); Cod. Vatic. Lat. 6458 (BAV, 16-17th c.); Rome, Cod. Vallicell. IX (11/12th c.); Cod. 3239 (18108) (Brussels, Royal Library, *Passionale*, 12th c.), Oct. 9, between the *Vita S. Remacli episcopi et martyris* and the *Passio S. Theodardi episcopi*; Cod. Lat. 5310 (Bibl. Nat. Paris, 10th c.), between the *Vita* of St Cassian and the *Adsumptio S. Philippi apostoli*; Cod. 856 (Cambrai, municipal library, 13th c., preceded by the *Passion* of St Maurice and companions); Lucca (Bibl. Capitolare Feliniana, *Passionario P+*, 12th c.); Rome, Bibl. Casanatense, 457 (B.I.12), 14th c., lectionary from Benevento; Rome, A 81 (D) (Archivio di S. Giovanni in Laterano, 12th c., Lucca); Rome, Bibl. Vallicelliana, XXV (11-12th c., from the Sant'Eutizio de Norcia Abbey (Umbria); Naples (Bibl. Naz. Vittorio Emanuele II, XV.AA.14, 13th c.); Lucca (Bibl. Capitolare Feliniana, 89, 12th c.); Fi: Paris, Lat. 11753 (Bibl. Nat. France, 12th c., property of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

³⁷ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, XXXII-XXXIV; Kaestli, "Actes", 313-317; Bruxelles, 18108 (3239) / X (X): (KBR, 12th c.; from the Abbey of Saint-Pierre de Lobbes (Thuin, Hainaut); Paris, Lat. 5310 / Y (Y) (Bibl. Nat. France, 10th c.); Z (Z): Oxford, Digbaei 39 (Bodleian Library, 12th c., St Mary's Abbey, Abingdon); Cambrai (Bibl. Mun. 856 (760), 13th c., Saint-Aubert Augustinian abbey, Cambrai); Arras (Bibl. Mun. 23 (14), 13th c.; Mont-Saint-Éloi Abbey); Montpellier (Bibl. univ. de Médecine, 55; 9th c.; from the Saint-Étienne de l'Étrier Abbey in Autun, workshop of Metz or Worms): *De sancto Paulo et de conuersatione uel uita S. Theclae*; Saint-Omer (Bibl. publique, 716, t. VII (13-14th c., Clairmarais Abbey).

It is difficult to single out one group of manuscripts as the most faithful to the Greek, because of the sheer number of Latin manuscripts and the ensuing variety of readings even within a group. While Gebhardt counted Ba and A (esp. A) among the most faithful renderings of the Greek, they too may deviate from the non-standard text of Lipsius and Bonnet (also used by Barrier), all the more as there was no ‘canonical’ Greek text, and rewriting was a common practice. Kaestli and Poupon added Du 174 to Gebhardt’s group A, but it often proposes a different reading compared to A (sometimes closer to B) and it is often lengthy and effusive compared to the concise style of A. It would be a sizable challenge to identify the Greek text behind each of the manuscript types.

In what follows I will look at manuscripts belonging to the text type A, B and C. I will not deal here with fragments and epitomes.

Before comparing the Latin texts to the Greek version(s) a preliminary observation is in order. The large number of Latin codices listed here, produced for liturgical and devotional purposes show that, notwithstanding the criticism of Tertullian and Jerome, the Western Church did not ignore the story of Thecla. Quite the opposite, Saint Thecla, the virgin martyr, was set as an example for the religious, both male and female, for priests and lay believers, all over Western Europe.

The emphases of the Latin manuscripts

In what follows, I will examine the specific emphases of the Latin manuscripts, in particular regarding the portrayal of Thecla and the description of her relationship with Paul, potentially problematic details, like Thecla baptizing herself and teaching, and the encratic features of the writing.

One would expect the translations to modify or eliminate such details. In fact, although the manuscripts showcase a number of differences, some minor, like the spelling of the names of characters or places, others more significant, like the wording of phrases, they usually follow the Greek text and the details of the narrative rather faithfully. That said, some manuscripts do modify a number of important details of the narrative.

The teaching of Paul

(3.5) In Iconium, Paul teaches the word of God about self-restraint (ἐνκράτεια) and resurrection. Mss. A and B of version A are faithful: *uerbum dei [...] de*

abstinentia et de resurrectione,³⁸ just as Ca, Cc, and probably (the lacunary) Cb.³⁹ Conversely, Du 174 (Kaestli and Poupon's additional exemplar of A) reads *de continentia et castitate*, without reference to resurrection.⁴⁰ Ba has only *sermo dei de continentia*, Bc *sermo dei de omni iustitia et de continentia*.⁴¹ Cd also drops the reference to *abstinentia* (reading simply *de uerbo tractare*).⁴²

A preserves the strong wording of the second beatitude (keeping the flesh pure): *castam carnem*. Again Du 174 is closer to B; these manuscripts are less focused on the carnal dimension, referring instead to the body (Du 174: *casta corpora custodirent*; Ba: *corpum suum*) or the person herself (Bc: *qui se in castitate custodiunt*).⁴³ Ca and Cd are similar to A, whereas Cc comes closer to Bc (*castitatem suam*).⁴⁴ It is unclear whether the change from *caro* to *corpus* is deliberate or presupposes a Greek manuscript that had used σῶμα.

These variations suggest that in a number of manuscripts the link between chastity and resurrection tends to be dropped and the strong physical expression of purity tends to be replaced with an emphasis on the person.

(3.7) Thecla hears Paul teaching on chastity (περὶ ἀγνείας λόγον) and receives it with faith and joy. As she cannot see Paul, she longs to hear the word of Christ in person, like other women and virgins do. The theme of *castitas* is preserved in Du 174, as well as Bb, Bc (*de castitate et oratione sermonem*) and C.⁴⁵ A (A B) and Ba drop *castitas*: Paul teaches about the love of Christ and observance [probably of the commandments of God] (*de caritate Christi et obseruatione [praeceptorum dei]*, A)⁴⁶ or about prayer (Ba, *orationis sermonem*). Du 174 finds it important to stress that Thecla's modesty prevented her from attending the gathering.⁴⁷

³⁸ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 12.

³⁹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 13.

⁴⁰ KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 37 (*Qui ubi orationem detulit statim sermonem de continentia et castitate connexuit*).

⁴¹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 12.

⁴² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 13.

⁴³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 12; KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 37.

⁴⁴ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 13.

⁴⁵ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 18–19; KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 40, 43.

⁴⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 18. Only Du 174 has *de castitate sermonem*. KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 43.

⁴⁷ KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 43 (*pudore ac uerecundie uirginali congregatione interesse non poterat*).

(3.17) Paul's speech before Roman governor develops the message of the writing. Paul was sent by the living God, the avenging God (θεὸς ἐκδικήσεων), the jealous God, the self-sufficient (ἀπροσδεής) God, who wants the salvation of humans, to save them from corruption and uncleanness (ἀπὸ τῆς φθορᾶς καὶ τῆς ἀκαθαρσίας), from all pleasure and death (πάσης ἡδονῆς καὶ θανάτου), that they would sin no more. In his mercy, the Son of God desires humans to escape judgement, through faith, godliness, the knowledge of sobriety (σεμνότης) and love of righteousness. Paul's speech establishes a clear connection between corruption and pleasures, between uncleanness and death. Sexuality is the cause of corruption and death. This understanding converges with the summary connecting ἐνκράτεια and resurrection (3.5), with the beatitude promising salvation and eternal reward to virgins (3.6), as well as with Thamyris' charge that the teaching of Paul leads young ones and virgins to renounce marriage (3.11). The teaching of Paul tends therefore towards encratism.

Some Latin translations reflect certain unease with the punishing and somewhat abstract image of God, and, more importantly, with the association of sexual desire with sin and eschatological judgment.

Of all Latin manuscripts, Bb is the most faithful (Ba is lacunary and cannot be assessed). It retains most of God's titles (omitting only an equivalent of the abstract ἀπροσδεής), and keeps the connection between desires, uncleanness, corruption and death (*ut a corruptela et immunditia et ab omni libidine et morte educam eos, ut iam non peccent*).⁴⁸ This connection is also found in Ca and Cc (*ab omni libidine et morte sua, ab omni libidine et a morte*, respectively).⁴⁹

A makes several changes. Modifying the epithets of God, it envisions a righteous, but gentler God. It omits jealousy. God is a God of justice, not of vengeance, of providence, not a self-sufficiency. (It is not clear why the living God becomes a powerful God.) The translation retains the connection between corruption and impurity (*a corruptela et ab immunditiis*) but translates "will" (*ex omni voluntate*) instead of desire.⁵⁰ This may have occurred through the copyist or a predecessor misreading or intentionally changing *voluptate* in a Latin Vorlage. This change removes the problematic link between desire and death. *Voluntas* returns in the

⁴⁸ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 42.

⁴⁹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 43.

⁵⁰ Cod. Paris 5306; GEBHARDT supplies *mala*, reading 'ill will': *ad salutem hominum misit me, ut a corruptela et ab immunditiis homines repellerem et ex omni [mala] uoluntate atque interitu mortis et ex omni tormento liberarem, ita ut non peccent neque uoluntatem [peccandi] desiderent*. *Passio*, 42.

last clause of the sentence: so that they may not sin nor desire the will to sin (*ut non peccent neque uoluntatem [peccandi] desiderent*). Du 174 is rather similar: Paul is called to free humans from corruption and uncleanness, from any will pertaining to the realm of death and from all eternal torments, that they sin no more nor have worldly desires.⁵¹ For some reason, the fear of God is omitted, and the love of truth is replaced by the knowledge of truth.⁵²

According to Bc, God's primary purpose is to save people from the error of idolatry (*ab errore idolatrie et a corruptela*); the manuscript omits thus the connection between desire and death.

It is difficult to know how A and Bc have come to change the purpose of God's salvific will, shifting from rescue from divine to human judgement. Gebhardt renders *ut non sint sub iudicio hominum* ("that they may not fall under the judgment of men"), but in the context of Paul's hearing before the Roman governor *hominem* in A may be more appropriate. This reading suggests that Paul, Thecla and those who follow the ascetic path cannot be judged by a representative of the Roman government. Bc refers explicitly to a human judge (*nec iam sub iudicio sint iudicum terrestrium*).⁵³

Cd abbreviates and paraphrases the passage – God has sent Paul to save humans from corruption and lust, from sinning and from desiring worldly pomp (*ut a corruptibilibus et uoluptatibus abstineant, ita ut non peccent neque pompas saeculares desiderent*).⁵⁴

To sum up, all available versions, with the exception of Bb, weaken or eliminate the encratic character of the passage.

Thecla's relationship with Paul

The Iconium episode has several references to Thecla's attachment to Paul and some emotional reactions, which may seem puzzling if not inappropriate.

(3.7) All versions mention that the words of Paul lead on Thecla to faith. Du 174 is more elaborate.⁵⁵ In addition to faith, A and B add that she is also induced to

⁵¹ KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 55.

⁵² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 42, 44.

⁵³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 42.

⁵⁴ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 43.

⁵⁵ *tenebatur studio fidem in eum quem relinqueret locum in quo crementa fidei et magisteria colligebat*. KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 43.

great affection (*fide et affectu maximo*). To avoid misunderstandings, Bc stresses that her faith in God leads to a great affection for Christ (*fidem iam habens in deo affectu maximo Christi ducebatur*). Thecla longs to be worthy to hear the word of God (A) and the teaching of Paul (B, C) in person.⁵⁶

(3.8–9) Theoclia complains to Thamyris that her daughter has been holding to the beguiling words of the stranger for three days and three nights, and has not left the window, forgetting to eat and drink. Paul teaching the young women and men to fear the only God and to live in purity (ἕνα καὶ μόνον θεὸν φοβεῖσθαι καὶ ζῆν ἁγνῶς). Listening him, Thecla clings to the words of the stranger like a spider in a window, captivated by a new kind of desire and suffering greatly (κρατεῖται ἐπιθυμία καινῇ καὶ πάθει δεινῷ). The language clearly evokes lovesickness. The apostle raises strong emotions (ἐπιθυμία, πάθος δεινός) in her.

A and Ba follow the Greek rather faithfully in 3.8, with some variations. Bb is damaged but the reading seems similar. Bc on the other hand minimises Paul’s mesmerising influence: Theoclia remarks that Thecla was captured by the love of the unknown Christ.

A drops the comparison of Thecla clinging to the window as a spider, as well as her yearning and passion. In Bc Thecla is enchanted by the new doctrine (*nouae doctrinae attonita*), not a new passion stirred by Paul.

(3.18–19) Breaking the norms of social respectability, Thecla visits Paul in prison at night. She listens his teaching about the great works of God (τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ) sitting at his feet, as a disciple. Her faith grows, as the bonds of the apostle. She is obviously moved by fervour and affection.

For some reason, A, Ca, and Cd drop the reference to the faith of Thecla and speak instead of her joy. Bb also omits her kissing the bonds of Paul.⁵⁷ Bc (the Sanctuarium of Boninus Mombritius) emphasises that Thecla listened Paul teach about the wisdom of Christ (*Christi sapientiam docentem*) and that her faith in Christ (*fide Christi*) grew. Thus, her kissing the bonds of the apostle is less an emotional outburst directed to Paul, and more a sign of enthusiasm for Christ.⁵⁸

When Thecla’s whereabouts are discovered, her relatives find her united to Paul by bonds of love (συνδεδεμένην τῇ στοργῇ, 3.19).⁵⁹ Jeremy Barrier remarks

⁵⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 18–19.

⁵⁷ Cod. Paris 5306, GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 46; KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 57–59. Ba is lacunary.

⁵⁸ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 46–47. Cb and Cd also omit the reference to Thecla’s faith growing.

⁵⁹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 48.

with good reason that the APTh are “speaking of chastity in the language of the romance”.⁶⁰ A mentions the bond but does not speak of affection: Thecla sits at Paul’s feet, as if tied to his feet (*quasi colligatam ad pedes eius*). Du 174 mentions her being bound to the apostle but explains that they are bound by the love of the divine knowledge to be acquired (*colliga[ta] ad pedes Pauli uelut quodam uinculo dum percipiende cognitionis diuinae amore constringitur*).⁶¹ Ba conversely is even more explicit: *ianitoris inuenerunt eam quodam affectu eidem copulatam*.⁶² Bb simply notes that she sits at Paul’s feet (*Pauli pedibus assidentem*).⁶³ The other versions omit or soften the emotional attachment to Paul. In Bc she is discovered listening to Paul about the teaching of God (*doctrinam dei a Paulo audientem*). According to Ca and Cd, it is the desire for Christ that binds her to Paul’s feet (*colligatam desiderio Christi*).⁶⁴ This overview shows how most manuscripts minimise the emotional-erotic overtones of the narrative.

(3.20) When Paul is brought before the governor, Thecla remains in the cell, rolling over (κυλίω) the place where the apostle had sat and taught her. A similar emotional scene occurs upon Thecla’s return to Iconium. In the house of Onesiphorus she falls to the ground (πίπτω) on the spot where Paul once sat teaching the word of God and prays in tears on the place where the light has been revealed to her (4.17). This latter scene evokes Acts 22,7,⁶⁵ where Paul recounts his experience of his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. With all their oddity, these scenes speak of the holiness of the place where revelation occurs. The APTh also highlight the authority of Paul as teacher of Thecla. To be sure, the act expresses strong emotions.

A preserves the scene faithfully.⁶⁶ B manuscripts shorten it: Paul and Thecla are brought before the court one after the other, thus Thecla rolling around on the spot where Paul has taught her is omitted.⁶⁷ In C, Thecla remains in prison for some time; it is incomprehensible why she rolls around in that place, since there is no longer any mention of Paul teaching her there.⁶⁸ The omission is difficult to explain.

⁶⁰ Acts, 117.

⁶¹ KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 60–61.

⁶² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 48.

⁶³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 48.

⁶⁴ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 48–49. Cb and Cc are lacunary (*desiderio eius; colligatam desiderio*).

⁶⁵ BARRIER, *Acts*, 184–185.

⁶⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 50; KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 61.

⁶⁷ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 50.

⁶⁸ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 51.

(3.21) Condemned to the stake, Thecla looks for Paul like the lamb in the wilderness searching for her shepherd. Scrutinising the crowd, she sees Christ sitting as Paul. (The identification of the apostle with Christ is a common motif in the apocryphal Acts.⁶⁹) The posture underlines the teaching authority of Paul. Thecla believes that Paul thought she would not persevere. She watches Paul ascending to heaven, a further detail that identifies the apostle with Christ.

A (A) follows the Greek fairly faithfully (*sicut agnus in deserto circumspicit pastorem suum, sic illa Paulum quaerebat... uidit dominum [sedentem] in effigia Pauli*). However, at the end of the scene Paul does not ascend to heaven but looks up to heaven (*ad caelum respiciebat*).⁷⁰ The ascension of Paul may have been considered too dramatic. It was also difficult to harmonise with the next scene, where the apostle prays with Onesiphorus' household in the tomb. Du 174 on the other hand preserves the ascension. Moreover, the Lord explains in a soliloquy that the apostle has ascended to heaven to see him, and he was worthy of that because he endured for his law (*ait dominus: Paulus ad me ingressus ut me uideret; meruit enim quoniam pro mea lege sustinuit. Intendebat autem Tecla uehementius in eum, qui subito in caelum ascendit*).⁷¹

B envisions Paul as teacher: Thecla looks for him as a lamb (Bb: little lamb, *agnicula*) looks for her shepherd and teacher (*pastorem suum et doctorem*). Bc expands Paul's titles further: he is shepherd, teacher of Christ and servant of God (*pastorem Paulum, Christi doctorem et dei famulum*). In Bb (and most likely Bc) Thecla sees the Lord sitting in heaven in the image of Paul (*specie Pauli*). This makes the Paul-Christ identification even more explicit (although it is more difficult to understand how the apostle will ascend to heaven, once he is already there).⁷² The image of Thecla who raises her gaze to heaven as she awaits martyrdom, evokes that of Stephen in Acts 7,55-56. C adds that Thecla later understood what she saw (*intellexit postea quod uiderat*).⁷³

⁶⁹ AT 11, 151–155, AA 32, AJ 87–89, APt 21–22. Daniel MARGUERAT, “The Acts of Paul and the Canonical Acts. A Phenomenon of Rereading”, *Semeia* 80.1 (1997) 169–184 (179–181); ELLIOTT, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 254–255, 316–317, 415, 452, 503–504.

⁷⁰ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 54, 56.

⁷¹ KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 65.

⁷² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 54, 56. The text is lacunary (*Et cum ... in caelum*), but it is fairly similar with Ba (*Et cum eum intenta respiceret, ille recessit in caelum*), therefore it certainly recounted the ascension on Paul. Bc, also lacunary, ends with *recessit ab oculis eius in caelum*. Paul is a διδάσκαλος already in the *Life*, DAGRON, DUPRÉ LA TOUR, *Vie*, 218, 48.

⁷³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 57. Ca has ‘sheep’ instead of ‘lamb’ (*sicut ouis*).

(3.23-24) After her miraculous rescue from the pyre Thecla looks for Paul. The children of Onesiphorus inform her about his moaning for her and his praying and fasting for her over six days. Thecla hears Paul praying for her. She, in turn, gives thanks that she was rescued so that she may see Paul again.

B follows the Greek faithfully: Paul weeps / is concerned for her (*flet ... tui causa*, Ba Bb; *sollicitus ... est tui causa*, Bc). A softens the dramatism of the impact on Paul, omitting his moaning for Thecla.⁷⁴ C, on the contrary, emphasizes Paul's grief.⁷⁵

In Bc Thecla, praying, calls Paul a teacher (*quia [tu] liberasti me et fecisti ut doctorem nominis tui Paulum uiderem*), a common emphasis in B.⁷⁶ In C, Paul's supplication is even more intense (Ca: *ne ignis tangat Theclam, sed transeat eam a nihilque noceat eam*). In Cb, Thecla's prayer is markedly liturgical (*Pater ... terram, qui misisti Iesum Christum filium tuum sanctum, gratias tibi ago, pater benedicte, qui saluasti me*), while in the Cd God sends his angels to save her from the stake.⁷⁷

(4.15–16) After her ventures in Antioch, Thecla longs to see Paul and she sets off for Myra in men's clothing, accompanied by young men and women. The translations preserve the theme of longing for Paul. Cd, on the other hand, explains that Thecla's yearning is due to her desire to learn more from him (*Thecla uero desiderabat uidere Paulum, ut plenius instrueretur ab eo*).⁷⁸ This eliminates any possible misunderstanding regarding the nature of her longing. All manuscripts recount that after Thecla's account of her baptism, Paul takes her into the house, but only A preserves the detail that he takes her by her hand.

⁷⁴ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 62 (A B also drop the reference to the six days); KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 71.

⁷⁵ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 62-63 (Ca, Cb: *semper ingemiscit propter te et orat ad dominum*; Cc *dolet pro te et orat ad dominum et ieiunat iam dies sex*; Cd: *multum enim ingemiscit propter te rogans dominum*).

⁷⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 64. Ba follows the Greek. Bb is fragmentary. Paul's prayer: A: *non tangat Theclam ignis... ancilla tua est*. Ba, Bb: *Theclam ignis non tangat... quia tua est*; Bc: *tua est famula*.

⁷⁷ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 65. See Cb, Cc: *ne tangat ... sed transeat ab ea*; Cd: *ne omnino tangat*.

⁷⁸ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 112–113. Most Latin manuscripts mention a city other than Myra, most commonly the more familiar Smyrna (A Bc, Cb Cd; Ca has Moysa).

Thecla's baptism

Baptism becomes a central topic at the end of the Iconium-episode, reaching the climax when Thecla baptises herself in the theatre in Antioch (4.9).

In Iconium, after her rescue, Thecla offers to follow the apostle. She asks for baptism (the seal of Christ, τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ σφραγίδα) trusting that this will strengthen her amidst the temptations to which Paul fears she may succumb. Paul speaks of shameful (αἰσχρός) times; Thecla's beauty may expose her to another trial or temptation (πειρασμός) and she may fail. Temptation is here clearly sexual, a major issue in a writing that links eschatological salvation to sexual renunciation. Thecla's willingness to cut her hair signals her readiness to give up her feminine beauty, understood as an instrument of temptation.⁷⁹ Paul however postpones fulfilling her request for baptism ("be patient [μακροθύμησον] and you will receive the water", 3.25). The APTh envisage baptism as the pinnacle of an ascetic life, as a reward for those who have proven themselves worthy of it by withstanding temptations. Thecla's renunciation of marriage and her readiness to receive a martyr's death in Iconium do not seem to be sufficient: she will have to endure similar trials in Antioch.

A and Ba accurately represent Thecla's proposal to follow the apostle, Paul's warning, and Thecla's request for baptism.⁸⁰

Bc (the Sanctuarium of Boninus Mombritius) speaks not simply of evil times (A Bb: *tempus turpe*; Ba: *turpe et asperum*), but of hard times of persecution.⁸¹

⁷⁹ E. Margaret HOWE, "Interpretations of Paul in the Acts of Paul and Thecla", in Donald A. HAGNER, Murray J. HARRIS, *Pauline Studies. Essays Presented to Professor F.F. Bruce on his 70th Birthday*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980, 33–49 (41). Anne JENSEN parallels the gesture with the monastic tonsure (*Thekla – die Apostolin. Ein apokrypher Text neu entdeckt*, Freiburg–Basel–Wien: Herder, 1995, 115). The same must have been the understanding of Cc (*Circumtonde me*), GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 67.

⁸⁰ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 66. Compared to the brief proposal in all the manuscripts cited by Gebhardt, Du 174 Thecla's proposal to follow cut her hair and follow Paul, rendered in indirect speech, is long and pretentious (*Cum hac suauitate perfunderetur Tecla potiendae eius gratiae petiit a Paulo si placeret ut tonderet comam capitis sui et ita apostolum sine ulla forma sexus sequeretur in uia quocumque dirigendam apostolus eam estimaret*). KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 73.

⁸¹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 66.

Thecla's martyrdom is thus interpreted in the wider frame of the Roman persecutions against Christians, not primarily as a result of her countercultural rejection of marriage.

Ca Cc have Thecla asking Paul to cut her hair, emphasising the authority of the apostle.⁸²

In A (A B) Paul urges Thecla to persevere, not to be patient (*Sustine, et accipies signum aquae*).⁸³ In Du 174 Thecla not only asks for baptism (*signaculum in Christo*) that will preserve her from temptation but also reassures Paul that his blessing and the grace of the Lord's name is a bulwark of faith. Paul asks her to have patience, and she will receive grace, not the (sign of) water.⁸⁴ Bb and Bc omit the final exhortation of Paul, thus Thecla's request remains unanswered.⁸⁵ This is all the more puzzling as the episode ends with Paul leaving Iconium after baptizing the entire household of Onesiphorus (this makes little sense, since Onesiphorus and his family are pillars of the community). These manuscripts move away from the focus on Thecla's baptism.

Ca Cd preserve the reference to baptism, described as the anointing of God (*dei lotio*, Ca) or the bath of regeneration (*lauacrum regenerationis*). Cc is more evasive: Paul promises her the sign of salvation (*signum salutis*). Cb, on the other hand, promises a solution (*solutio*) to Thecla.⁸⁶

In Antioch Thecla becomes worthy of baptism by preserving her chastity. She rejects Alexander's overtures and stands her ground even when he has her condemned to death (4.1-2). She asks the governor to allow her to keep herself pure and Queen Tryphena assists her in that by taking her into her house (4.2, 6).

The Latin translations preserve the focus on *castitas*.⁸⁷ The topic is even more emphatic in Du 174: disregarding the danger of certain of death, concerned about modesty, and anxiously desiring to keep her virginity, Thecla beseeches the judge to preserve her from Alexander, so that she may be allowed to offer herself with a

⁸² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 67.

⁸³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 69.

⁸⁴ *Nullum uerearis; benedictio tua et dominici nominis gratia plenum fidei munimentum est. Cui Paulus ait: Patientiam habe, et accipies gratiam.* KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 75.

⁸⁵ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 69.

⁸⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 66-69.

⁸⁷ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 74-75, 86-87 (A: *me castam seruauit*; Ba: *me castam inuiolatamque seruauit*; Ca Cd: *mundam me seruauit*).

chaste body. Her death is described in sacrificial terms, as oblation. The governor cannot deny the pious request of the virgin.⁸⁸

In the theatre, seeing her death approaching, Thecla stretches out her arms and prays, realising that the time has come to baptise herself (Νῦν καιρὸς λούσασθαί με, 4.9). Her posture is that of an *orans* (4.9).⁸⁹ Throwing herself into the water, she baptises herself in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to the last day (Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑστέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ βαπτίζομαι).⁹⁰ Emerging from the water, she is covered by a fiery cloud (νεφέλη πυρός) that shields her naked body.

The Latin translations preserve the image of Thecla praying with her arms outstretched to God, standing amidst the wild beasts, in a sign of fortitude. Thecla is a model martyr. In fact, some manuscripts envision Thecla as an *orans* already in the Iconium episode, when she steps on the pyre (3.22): she does not do the sign of the cross but opens her arms in the shape of a cross or in a gesture of prayer.⁹¹ As *orans*, she accepts martyrdom in a gesture of devotion to God.⁹²

⁸⁸ KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 79 (*Tecla tamen, periculi negligens et secunda mortis et sollicita pudoris et conseruande studio uirginitatis adtentata, hoc solum iudicem deprecata est ut donec insubrogeretur ad bestias nullam uim ei Alexander auderet inferre, set casto corpore oblatum munus impleret. Negare non passus est praeses quod pie a uirgine petebatur [...].*)

⁸⁹ BARRIER, *Acts*, 161.

⁹⁰ ὑστέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ refers here to the last day, the day of judgement, not the following day (BARRIER, *Acts*, 162, noting the parallel with 1 Tim 4,1; *pace* DAGRON, DUPRÉ LA TOUR, *Vie*, 251, n. 7).

⁹¹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 58–59 (*extensis manibus similitudinem crucis faciens, Ba*) (*extensis manibus ad deum, Ca*, cf. *Cb* and *Cc*, without *ad deum*, *Cd: expansis manibus orans*).

⁹² In the Iconium-episode, the detail is found in the *Life*: Thecla signs herself with the sign of the cross and extends her arms in the shape of the cross. DAGRON, DUPRÉ LA TOUR, *Vie*, 218–219 (referring to Alfred STUIBER, *Refrigerium interim: die Vorstellungen vom Zwischenzustand und die frühchristliche Grabeskunst* (Theophaneia. Beiträge zur Religions- und Kirchengeschichte des Altertums 11), Bonn: Hanstein, 1957, 188, on the representation of martyrs as *orantes*). On early Christian images of women as *orantes*: Karen Jo TORJESEN, “The Early Christian Orans. An Artistic Representation of Women’s Liturgical Prayer and Prophecy”, in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, edited by Beverly Mayne KIENZLE, Pamela J. WALKER, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998, 42–56. This scene inspired the representations of Thecla notably in the East, e.g. the fresco in the Exodus Chapel of the El Bagawat necropolis (Kharga oasis, Egypt). On the chapels of the necropolis: Matthew MARTIN, “Observations on the Paintings of the Exodus Chapel, Bagawat Necropolis, Kharga Oasis, Egypt”, in *Byzantine Narrative*:

The changes in the Latin translations concern mainly the baptismal formula. While baptism in the name of Christ was consistent with early practice,⁹³ several manuscripts use the consecrated Trinitarian formula (A Bc Ca, the Padua manuscript, probably Cc [*in ... sancti*], Cb and Cd are lacunary). Ba and Bb retain the Christological formula. Ba has the strange *in nomine Christi et in nomine Iesu*. In Bb she strengthens herself with the seal of Christ (*muniens se signaculo Christi*). For some reason, according to most Latin translations Thecla baptises herself to the newest day (or hour), not to the last day (the day of judgement).⁹⁴ This shifts the focus from the end time to a new beginning. Du 174 seems to combine two versions: Thecla's words initially follow the Greek (*in nomine domini Iesu Christi ultima die baptizor*), but subsequently throws herself into the water saying *ecce ego in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*.⁹⁵

In Du 174 and C the baptism scene is more dramatic. Whereas in the Greek text we learn only after the baptism, post factum, that the seals in the pool are life-threatening, according to C, the danger is obvious from the beginning. The crowd and the proconsul try to dissuade her, but Thecla throws herself into the water and baptises herself in spite of the danger. Cd notes that her decision is a sign of trust in God (*uero confisa in domino*).⁹⁶

It is interesting that the Latin translations preserve the interpretation of Thecla's gesture as water baptism, as opposed to the *Life*, which suggests that her decision to throw herself into the pool with deadly, man-eating seals means embracing

Papers in Honour of Roger Scott (Byzantina Australiensia 16), edited by John BURKE *et al.*, Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006, 233–544 (246–247), see also “Exodus Chapel, Bagawat Necropolis”, NASSCAL [02.06.2024]. On the probable background of the representations of Thecla: DAVIS, *Cult*, 150–172. See also the 7th c. ivory from Laodikeia ad Lycum: Celal ŞİMŞEK – Barış YENER, An Ivory Relief of Saint Thecla, *Adalia* 13 (2010) 321–334. In the West it is seen on one of the reliefs in the Chapel of St Thecla in the Tarragona Cathedral, and to a degree on the altar carved by Fr. Joan in the same cathedral (15th c.); Thecla's outstretched arms are held by angels: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CatedralTarragona-PereJoan-StaTecla-8996.jpg>.

⁹³ BARRIER, *Acts*, 161.

⁹⁴ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 94–95; KAESTLI, “Actes”, 280 (A: [*in*] *nouissima hora nec non et die*; Ba: *in nomine Iesu nouissimo die*, cf. Bb; Bc: *hodie*, Ca: *nouissimo die*, Cb: *nouissimi diei*).

⁹⁵ KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 91, 93.

⁹⁶ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 94–95 ; KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 91, 93.

a martyr's death. Fulfilment is reached in death.⁹⁷ The life interprets her act as martyred baptism rather than water baptism.

The Padua manuscript stands out not only through the Trinitarian formula (*In nomine patris et Iesu Christi filii eius et spiritus sancti cedat michi aqua ista pro baptismo*), but especially by attributing baptism in a spiritual sense to Paul, who had already baptized her through his teaching and prayers. The fiery cloud that accompanies her water baptism is only a confirmation of this spiritual baptism by Paul.⁹⁸ This will be formally asserted by Paul when they are reunited.

As a rite of initiation, baptism includes accompanying rites: the baptizand takes off her clothes, baptism is performed by immersion, followed by a confession of faith and finally by the donning of clothes. The question of the governor ("who are you and what is it about you [τίνα τὰ περὶ σέ], that none of the beasts harmed you?", 4.12) expresses his amazement that she remained unharmed. His rhetorical question gives Thecla the opportunity to confess her faith: she is the slave of the living God (θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος δούλη); she believed in the Son, the only way of salvation and the foundation of immortal life (μόνος σωτηρίας ὁδος⁹⁹ καὶ ζωῆς ἀθανάτου ὑπόστασις), a refuge for the storm-stricken, a relief for the oppressed, a shelter for the desperate. [...] The one who does not believe in him will not live

⁹⁷ DAGRON, DUPRÉ LA TOUR, *Vie*, 250–251. «Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου, Κύριε, ὑστέρα ἡμέρα βαπτίζομαι», ἐνήλατο τῷ ὕδατι τούτῳ, τῆς διὰ τοῦ θανάτου λοιπὸν ἐρῶσα τελειώσεως καὶ πρὸς Χριστὸν ἀναλύσεως. [...] κυβιστῆσαι καθ' ὕδατος, οὕτω πρόδηλον τὸν ἀπὸ τῶν φωκῶν ἔχοντος θάνατον, ὃν ἡ μὲν παρθένος ὑπερησμένιζε μόνον ἵνα τύχη τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ τελειώσεως. The translators take τελείωσις for initiation and ἀνάλυσις for deliverance. The latter may also refer to death (as in 2 Tim 4,6).

⁹⁸ *Paule, uir dei excelsi, sicut me sermone tuo ita precibus tuis baptizasti. Nam in aqua sacrarum posita uidi aperto celo lucem mihi descendentem et dixi hoc secundum est baptismum quod Paulus in me non celebrat.* KAESTLI, "Actes", 280. On the divine confirmation of Thecla's self-baptism in the APTh: BARRIER, *Acts*, 164.

⁹⁹ LIPSIUS, *Acta* I, 246 reads ὅρος ('boundary'), with Greek mss. ABC. He is followed by BARRIER, *Acts*, 170–172, who nonetheless translates 'way'. E has ὁδος, cf. VOUAUX, *Actes de Paul*, 218, n. 3; François BOVON, "La vie des Apôtres: traditions bibliques et narrations apocryphes", in *Les Actes apocryphes des Apôtres. Christianisme et monde païen* (Publications de la Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Genève 4), edited by François BOVON, Genève: Labor et Fides, 1981, 141–158 (154, n. 56). PERVO translates 'definition', reading ὅρος (*Acts*, 172). A B have *salutis terminus*, presupposing a Greek text that had ὅρος.

but meet eternal death. Thecla's inviolability stems thus from her being a servant of God and her faith in Christ.

The Latin manuscripts reinterpret the question of the governor. According to A Cb Cc Cd, he asks Thecla what her spells (*carmina*) are, envisioning her as a sorceress.¹⁰⁰ This is even clearer in Cd, where Thecla dismisses the accusation of witchcraft, arguing that she was saved by the Almighty God, not through magical abilities. (*Ego non sum maga, ut uos putatis, sed sum ancilla dei uiui, qui habet potestatem super omnia quae creauit*). God has power over life and death (Ca Cb). In the context of the writing, the assumption makes sense, for in Iconium Paul is charged before the Roman authorities with being a magician (3.15, 20). As his disciple, Thecla may have similar powers. That said, the Greek text does not call Thecla a witch. For medieval readers, such accusation against a young woman would have been very serious.

(4.15) In Myra Thecla finds Paul preaching the word of God. The apostle fears (again) that Thecla may fall to temptation, but she recounts him that she has been baptized: the one who worked with Paul in preaching the gospel also worked with Thecla in her baptism (Ἐλαβον τὸ λουτρὸν [...] - ὁ γὰρ σοὶ συνεργήσας εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κάμοι συνήργησεν εἰς τὸ λούσασθαι).

Thecla's statement is found in A and B, with minor differences (A: *accepi ablutionem*; Ba: *lauacrum accepi*).¹⁰¹ C, on the other hand, tries to avoid affirming that Thecla baptised herself with the assistance of Christ: Christ helped Thecla in need, not in the washing. According to Ca, finding Paul teaching the word of God, Thecla tells him: "receive my speech [...] He who granted you [help?] in the gospel also granted me [help] in need" (*accipe locutionem meam ... Qui enim tibi concessit in euangelio, et mihi concessit in necessitate*).¹⁰² In Cb Cc Cd, Thecla informs Paul that she has received the washing (Cb: *accepi lotionem*; Cc: *accepi*

¹⁰⁰ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 104–107. B asks more subtly about the powers operating on her behalf (Ba: *quae sunt quae circa te aguntur*; Bb: *cuius condicionis euiusque artis vel operis*). See OLD, 304; Peta G. FOWLER, Don P. FOWLER, s.v. *carmen*, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by Simon HORNBLLOWER and Antony SPAWFORTH (online 22.12.2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.1372>.

¹⁰¹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 114, 116 (A: *Qui enim tibi operatus est in euangelio, et mihi operatus est in ablutionem* (B however has *probatio* instead; Bb: *Qui enim operatus est tibi in euangelio, operatus est et mihi in lauacro*; probably also the lacunary Bc); KAESTLI, POUPON, "Actes", 105.

¹⁰² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 114–117.

lauacrum in necessitate; Cd: *accepi lauacrum*), but the emphasis is on necessity. The *mihi concessit in necessitate* refers not only to Christ helping Thecla in a time of need, but surely to the condition of necessity that allowed a woman facing martyrdom to baptise herself. These manuscripts interpret the baptism of Thecla as a baptism of necessity. This is clearest in Cc: *accepi lauacrum in necessitate*. This is noteworthy, given that in spite of the negative opinion of Tertullian (discussed earlier), by the Middle Ages lay baptism, even performed by a woman, was justified in cases of necessity. This insight mitigated the unconventional character of Thecla's undertaking. The translators were essentially suggesting that Thecla baptised herself in danger of death, surrounded by pagans, at a time when neither the apostle nor any other qualified person could do that. The Cd, on the other hand, speaks of Christ's mercy: *Qui enim tibi concessit in euangelio, et mihi ipse misertus est; nam et accepi lauacrum*. Baptism is a sign that God/Christ had mercy on her.¹⁰³

Thecla, the teacher

After her rescue, Thecla remains in the house of Tryphaena for eight days, teaching her the word of God (κατηχήσασα αὐτήν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ). Tryphaena comes to faith together with her servants (4.14). The plural παιδισκῶν can denote both men and women.¹⁰⁴ It does not follow from the text that Thecla taught only the female servants of Tryphaena.

With the exception of Bb, all manuscripts speak of women who believe after hearing the teaching of Thecla (A Ba Bc: *ancillae*, Ca: *mulieres multae et ancillae*, Cb Cc: *multae mulieres et ancillae*, together with their mistress, Cd: *turbae mulierum et uirginum*). According to Bb, after Thecla taught the word of God, several members of Tryphaena's household became Christian (*docens uerbum dei, ita ut plurimi in domo Triphenae fierent Christiani*). The inclusive masculine plural also envisages men among Thecla's disciples.¹⁰⁵ Du 174 on the other hand explicitly includes young men among the members of Tryphaena's household whom Thecla teaches: *docens Trefenam cum omni domo sua et ad timorem dei prouocans, ita ut crederent pueri et puellae plurimae in domino*.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 115, 117.

¹⁰⁴ BARRIER, *Acts*, 176–177.

¹⁰⁵ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 110–113.

¹⁰⁶ KAESTLI, POUPON, “Actes”, 103.

(4.16) Paul listens in amazement as Thecla tells her story. When she announces that she returns to Iconium, the apostle commissions her to go and teach the word of God (Ἦπαγε καὶ δίδασκε τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ).

With one exception (Cc), all the manuscripts mention Paul's commissioning of Thecla to go and teach (*uerbum dei*; Ba, Sanctuarium: *dei sermonem*; Bb: *doce omnes*). Cb adds that she should do it with confidence and without hesitation (*cum fiducia nihil haesitans*). Cd reads: *Vade, filia, cum salute et praedica ibi uerbum dei*.¹⁰⁷ The valedictory formula (A Cd) confirms Paul's authority and eliminates any romantic overtones: the apostle is Thecla's teacher and spiritual father. The Padua manuscript is again interesting, because Paul formally confirms Thecla and her baptism by laying on his hands, thus bringing the sacrament to completion (*Et imponens manum super Teclam consignauit eam et confirmauit baptismum eius. Et confirmans eam domini sacramento fecit eam redire Yconium*).¹⁰⁸ The laying on of hands is explicitly a confirmation of her baptism, needed to avoid any doubts regarding its validity. But this will allow her to teach the word of God.

(4.18) Thecla's successful teaching mission is emphasised in the summary on the last stage of her life in Seleucia: she enlightened many with the word of God (πολλοὺς φωτίσασα τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ). Thecla's teaching is not limited to the household of Tryphena. The inclusive masculine plural indicates that she taught both men and women.

Several Latin manuscripts speak only in general terms of Thecla enlightening many, without mentioning that he did so by the word of God (A: *multos inluminauit*; cf. Ba: *multos in domino confirmans et illuminans*; Cd: *multos inluminauit ibi*).¹⁰⁹ (A and Ba depart here from their generally faithful rendering of the Greek.) Bb emphasises that she went to Seleucia endowed with many gifts of grace and enlightened many by the example of her life (*decorata multiplici gratia domini: uirginitate, martyrio atque sanitarum efficacia. Et cum multos illuminasset conuersationis*¹¹⁰ *suae exemplo*). In this reading, Thecla is first and foremost a role model, an example of chastity, of virginity, of readiness to embrace martyrdom; her spiritual strength and miraculous healings reveal the grace of God.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 116–119. Cc preserves only the sending (*Vade*).

¹⁰⁸ KAESTLI, "Actes", 280.

¹⁰⁹ GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 126–127.

¹¹⁰ S.v. *conuersatio*, OLD, 482.

¹¹¹ See also C. Casinensis 142 / T (T), which mentions teaching nonetheless: KAESTLI, "Actes", 309 (*abiit Seleuciam ibique exemplo conuersationis et uitae atque etiam doctrinae plurimos*

According to Bc (the Sanctuarium), Thecla enlightened many with the teaching of God (*multos in domino illic dei doctrina illuminans*). Somewhat unexpectedly Ca and Cb also follow the Greek: *multos ibi inluminavit uerbo dei*.¹¹² Cc, on the other hand, says nothing about Thecla having enlightened many (with the word of God or otherwise).

Conclusion

The APTh reflect a community in which ascetic women played a more prominent role. Tertullian's dislike for such women who, inspired by the example of Thecla, felt called to the ministry of baptism and teaching, contributed significantly to the ambivalent reception of the writing in the Western Church. The negative view was reinforced when Jerome and the Gelasian Decree counted it among apocryphal writings. Nonetheless, other textual witnesses attest its enduring importance. The large number and wide geographic spread of the Latin manuscripts shows that the story and example of Thecla remained highly popular in the Middle Ages. Included in liturgical books, in the context of martyr passions and lives of saints, the story shaped the faith of monastic, clerical and church communities.¹¹³

The Latin manuscripts are essentially faithful to the narrative, including potentially difficult issues like Paul's encratic teaching, Thecla's attachment to Paul, and especially the decision of a young woman to baptise herself and teach, a teaching ministry confirmed by the apostle himself. However, in some manuscripts there is a tendency to mitigate details and statements that seem problematic, to align Thecla's deeds with conventional ecclesial teaching and practice.

The encratic features are softened by dropping the connection between chastity and resurrection (Du174 Ba Bc Cd; however not A (X) Ca Cc and probably Cb). Chastity remains a major theme, but a number of manuscripts emphasise in addition the love of Christ and the observance of the commandments of God (A Ba), turning Thecla into a more accessible role model.

erudiens post multa certamina ac duplicem uirginitatis et martyrii coronam requieuit in pace).

¹¹² GEBHARDT, *Passio*, 127.

¹¹³ On the edifying role of martyrologies and lives of the saints read during the liturgical year: John J. GALLAGHER, "Liturgy and Learning: The Encyclopaedic Function of the Old English Martyrology", *Religions* 13.236 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13030236>.

Thecla's affection for Paul and her desire to join him are not romantic in nature. She longs to be worthy to hear the word of God; she is seized by the love of Christ and enchanted by the doctrine the apostle preaches (not moved by passion). The proximity of the apostle allows her to grow in faith, divine wisdom, and the love of Christ (Bc Ca Cd). Emotional outbursts like kissing the chains of the apostle are omitted (Bb) or explained by her being moved by the wisdom of Christ and her faith in Christ (Bc). Her being bound to the feet of Paul has to do with the love for divine knowledge (Du174 Bc) and desire for Christ (Ca Cd). Paul is for Thecla the shepherd, the teacher, the servant of God (B), and her spiritual father (A Cd).

Baptism is administered with a Trinitarian formula (A Du174 Bc Ca Padua, probably Cc). According to the more faithful manuscripts, it is clear that Thecla baptises herself (A B). However, C tries to emphasise that we deal with a baptism of necessity (Cc). These changes bring Thecla's action in line with the medieval of teaching and practice of baptism. A manuscript (Padua) may preserve the idea of Thecla baptising herself but suggests that true baptism, even when spiritual in nature, still comes from the apostle, and her water baptism is eventually made complete by his confirmation.

Teaching appears to be the most problematic issue. According to most witnesses, in Antioch Thecla teaches only women. Only Bb and Du 174 allow that she taught men as well. All manuscripts mention Paul's commissioning, authorising Thecla to teach, except for Cc. According to Ba (Padua), on the other hand, the apostle not only sends but also confirms her by laying on of hands. While this is not an act of ordination, it makes Thecla's self-baptism complete and valid, a precondition of her commissioning to teach. Some manuscripts leave out from the concluding summary the reference to Thecla having enlightened many with the word of God (preserved in Bc Ca Cb), and speak only about enlightenment (A Ba), attributed to Thecla's exemplary life (Bb), or omit the subject altogether (Cc). Cc is the most "orthodox" in regard to the ministry of women in the church. The majority of the manuscripts belonging to this group stem from Italy (Rome included). In sum, a significant part of the Latin manuscripts eliminates Thecla's teaching, a core element of the story. The same will go later for the Roman Breviary, which drops all references to Thecla baptising herself and teaching.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Breviarium Romanum ex decreto sacrosancti concilii Tridentini restitutum Pii V. Pont. Max. iussu editum, Roma: Paulus Manutius, 1570, 830.

The dismissal of the suspicion of witchcraft raised with regard to a young woman like Thecla, who, although chaste, abandons certain conventions of female behaviour, reflects a peculiar medieval concern regarding independent women.

With the story of Thecla, the Latin translations have preserved the memory of a strand of early Christianity where women (especially ascetics) played a more significant role in spreading the faith in Christ than later ecclesial opinion would allow. However, in the transmission of the *Passio Theclae*, the ‘taming’ of Thecla begins. She is even more harmless in the post-Tridentine Roman liturgical books. She becomes the martyr virgin introduced to Christianity by Paul, a model of chastity and virtuous life, ready to die for her faith in Christ. There is no mention of her baptising herself or teaching. Moreover, while Thecla’s veneration will continue well into the modern age, after the Second Vatican Council she will be excluded from the record of saints and martyrs of the universal Church. Her dismissal is in way the late victory of Tertullian.

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MENTAL DISORDERS IN ANGLO-SAXON HAGIOGRAPHIES

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Abstract. This article examines the representation of mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon hagiographies, analyzing perceptions, symptoms, cultural contexts, and narrative purposes. Anglo-Saxon views on the mind and soul, influenced by both vernacular and classical traditions, shape understandings of madness. Old English terminology for madness reflects diverse cultural INFLUENCES, ranging from naturalistic-organic to supernatural etiologies. Analysis of the hagiographies show that there was a tendency to depict demon possession as madness, which could partly be attributed to the Anglo-Saxon way of perceiving the soul and mind, partly to the narrative purpose, and partly to the influential sources.

Keywords: madness, mental disorder, Anglo-Saxon, medicine, Old English, demon possession

What is madness? The answer is not straightforward, nor is it easy to define. The concept of madness and mental disorders is constantly changing through space and time: it is shaped by our social norms, by our understanding of how the mind works, by our understanding of what rationality is, to name but a few factors. It differs in today's medical discourse from colloquial conversations of everyday people, it was different 100 years ago, and even more so 1000 years ago; however, the common denominator is the irrational behaviour and the irrational way of thinking of the "madman". The aim of this article is to examine the topic of mental disorders in Anglo-Saxon hagiographies: what was considered mental disorder, what its symptoms were, what its cultural background was and what purpose it fulfilled in hagiographical literature. For this purpose there are a number of concepts that need to be expounded and defined: firstly, the Anglo-Saxon perception of the mind and soul, then the Anglo-Saxon concept of madness along with the influences that shaped the Anglo-Saxon view. Once the conceptual background and

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the definitions are established, I move on to analyze the hagiographies and then I discuss the conclusions. It has to be noted that the aim of this article is neither to search for signs that could be categorized as modern mental disorders, thereby imposing contemporary classifications on medieval circumstances, nor to provide retrospective diagnoses, but rather to search for phenomena what Anglo-Saxons themselves acknowledged as mental disorders. The difference between modern and medieval understanding of madness is so vast and so multi-layered that it is dubious whether forcing modern labels on medieval phenomena is fruitful at all and whether it enables us to understand the past more, or if it only offers us a deluding picture of the past. It also has to be mentioned that different periods in medical history saw different namings for madness-type phenomena: lunacy, mania, mental alienation, mental illness, to name but a few, with varied scholarly, varied colloquial and varied derogatory connotations. Since none of these have any more relevance to Old English vocabulary than the others, there is no “correct” choice of terminology: hence, for the sake of ease, I use the general terms “madness”, “insanity”, and “mental disorder” interchangeably in this article.

The Anglo-Saxon perception of mind and soul is an enormous topic in its own right that could fill volumes, but I confine its discussion only to a brief summary that is required in the context of discussing mental disorders. As it can be observed in Old English sources, two distinct trends can be identified in the Anglo-Saxon view of the mind: one is what Godden calls the “vernacular tradition” and the other is the “classical tradition”.² The vernacular tradition “preserve[d] the ancient distinction of soul and mind, while associating the mind at least as much with passion as with intellect”.³ Whereas the classical tradition appears in texts of authors who drew on late antique writers like Plato or St Augustine, “but developed that tradition in interesting and individual ways”: their main hallmark is that “they show the gradual development of a unitary concept of the inner self, identifying the intellectual mind with the immortal soul and life-spirit”.⁴ The vernacular tradition establishes the dichotomy of *sawol* and *mod*: *sawol* is the spiritual entity that represents humans in the afterlife and is otherwise relatively inactive throughout people’s lives. Whereas *mod* encompasses

² Malcolm R. GODDEN, “Anglo-Saxons on the mind”, in M. LAPIDGE, and H. GNEUSS (EDS), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 271.

³ GODDEN, 271.

⁴ GODDEN, 271.

mind, thought, emotions and passion, as “thought and feeling were conceived of as aspects of the same experience”.⁵ According to the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, *mod* means the following: the inner man, the spiritual as opposed to the bodily part of man; with more special reference to intellectual or mental qualities, mind; with reference to the passions, emotions, etc, soul, heart, spirit, mind, disposition, mood; a special quality of the soul, in a good sense, courage, high spirit; in a bad sense, pride, arrogance.⁶ Instead of residing in the head, the *mod* was localised in the chest, where all sorts of mental and psychological activities took place. Thus, in Old English poetry, both emotional and mental activities are described as “coincid[ing] with cardiocentric swelling, boiling, or seething, but this spatial deformation is attributed variously to the mind, to the mind’s contents or condition, and to the fleshly organs of the chest cavity”.⁷ Conversely, texts of the classical tradition reveal a perception of mind that was thought to be a special part of the soul; namely, the rational part of the soul that raised humans above animals and closer to God. Anglo-Saxon authors like Alcuin followed the footsteps of e.g. Augustine and wrote that “the soul embraces intellect, passion, and desire ... [and] that the principal part of the soul is the mind (*mens*)”.⁸ In his *De Animae Ratione*, he stated that “Triplex est enim animae ut philosophi volunt natura. Est in ea quaedam pars concupiscibilis alia rationabilis tertia irascibilis ... Sed his duobus (id est concupiscentia et ira) ratio quae mentis propria est imperare debet”.⁹ Roughly two centuries later Ælfric expounded his view on the subject in *The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ* in the sermon compilation *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints*.¹⁰ In

⁵ Soon Ai Low, “The Anglo-Saxon Mind: Metaphor and Common Sense Psychology in Old English Literature” (unpublished dissertation), Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998, 34.

⁶ ‘mod’, *Bosworth-Toller*, p. 693.

⁷ Leslie LOCKETT, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011, 63.

⁸ GODDEN, 272.

⁹ ALCUIN, *De Animae Ratione*, in J. J. M. CURRY (ed. and transl.), “Alcuin, De Ratione Anmiae: a Text with Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Translation” (unpublished dissertation), Cornell, 1966, 41–42, 74–75. “The structure of the soul, then, is threefold, as the philosophers maintain. One part of it is appetitive, a second rational, and a third passionate ... But over these two - appetite and passion - reason must reign, being the special characteristic of the mind”.

¹⁰ ÆLFRIC, “The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ”, in W. W. SKEAT (ed. and transl.), *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints’ Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, 3 vols., London: Oxford University Press, 1881, 10–25.

the text, he describes the soul as an intellectual entity: “seo sawul is gesceadwis gast”¹¹ that has three functions which are capable of desire, anger and reason.¹² He explains that the soul is responsible both for life and for the intellectual faculties:

Hyre nama is anima þæt is sawul and seo nama gelympð to hire life. And spiritus gast belimpð to hire ymbwlatunge. Heo is sensus þæt is andgit oððe felnyss þonne heo gefret. Heo is animus þæt is mod þonne heo wat. Heo is mens þæt is mod þonne heo understent. Heo is memoria þæt is gemynd þonne heo gemanð. Heo is ratio þæt is gescead þonne heo toscæt. Heo is uoluntas þæt is wylle þonne heo hwæt wyle. Ac swa þeah ealle þas naman syndon sawul.¹³

Various aspects and functions of the intellect are attributed here to the soul: reasoning, memory, perception to name but a few. The huge innovation in Ælfric’s view was that he replaced the role of *mod* with *sawol*, thus bringing the concept closer to the classical tradition. Thus it can be concluded that the main terms that refer to the entities that drive people’s actions are *mod* and *sawol*. These are responsible for people’s thoughts, emotions, sensations, and desires. If these faculties are functioning irrationally, then the malfunctions can be considered manifestations of madness. According to Soon Ai Low’s extensive study on the Anglo-Saxon mind and soul, further common words expressing different aspects of *mod* and *sawol* are e.g. *andgit*, *gemynd* and *gewitt*, as it is attested in Ælfric’s text above, too.¹⁴ These terms and their derivations need to be located and examined in context in order to identify the terminology of mental disorders and find cases

¹¹ ÆLFRIC, “The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ”, 20–21, “the soul is a rational spirit”.

¹² ÆLFRIC, “The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ”, 16–17, “Uþwytan sæcgað þæt þære sawle gecynd is ðryfeald. An dæl is on hire gewylnigendlic, oðer yrsigendlic, þrydde gesceadwislic”. “Philosophers say that the soul’s nature is threefold: the first part in her is capable of desire, the second of anger, the third of reason”.

¹³ ÆLFRIC, “The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ”, 20–23, “[Soul] is called by various names in books, according to its offices. Its name is Anima, that is, Soul, and the name befitteth its life; and Spiritus, that is Spirit, which appertaineth to its contemplation. It is Sensus, that is, perception or sensation, when it perceiveth. It is Animus, that is, intellect, when it knoweth. It is Mens, that is, mind, when it understandeth. It is Memoria, that is, Memory, when it remembereth: It is Ratio, that is, Reason, when it reasoneth. It is Voluntas, that is Will, when it willeth anything; nevertheless all these names are one soul”.

¹⁴ E.g. S. A. Low, “The Anglo-Saxon Mind: Metaphor and Common Sense Psychology in Old English Literature” (unpublished dissertation), Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998.

of them in Anglo-Saxon sources. I use them as control points when it comes to deciding whether a certain case in a text is madness or not. As for the overview of terminology of madness, I use the *Thesaurus of Old English*.

According to the *Thesaurus of Old English*, expressions denoting madness in Old English is a colourful medley:¹⁵ some of them are indeed derived from the terms above,¹⁶ some of them can be traced back to transmissions and translations,¹⁷ and some of them name supernatural perpetrators that cause mental ailments.¹⁸ The most generic term, however, is *wod*: it is the most frequently occurring word in the Old English corpus describing madness. *Wod* and its lexemes can express irrational aggression and fury,¹⁹ nonsense,²⁰ and even possession.²¹ Apart from *wod*, most of the madness-terms can be divided based on their aetiologies: madness-type conditions are attributed both to naturalistic-organic and to supernatural causes.²² In most of the cases, the organic causes are manifestations of the influence of Graeco-Roman medicine: certain sections of medical texts can be traced back

¹⁵ A Thesaurus of Old English, source: <https://oldenglishtesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/category/?type=search&qsearch=madness&word=madness&page=1#id=4058> 2024. 02. 14.

¹⁶ E.g. *ungewitt, gewitleast, gewitseoc, ungemynd*, etc.

¹⁷ E.g. *bræcseoc, brægeneseoc, monseoc* (probably)

¹⁸ *Ylfig, gydig, deofolseoc, feondseoc*

¹⁹ ÆLFRIC, “Sermo de memoria Sanctorum”, in W. W. SKEAT (ed. and transl.), *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints’ Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, 3 vols., London: Oxford University Press, 1881, 352–353, “He wet nu swiðe and wynð on ða Cristenan”. “Now he rageth furiously, and warreth on Christians”.

²⁰ ÆLFRIC, “Nativitas Domini nostri Iesu Christi”, in W. W. SKEAT (ed. and transl.), *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints’ Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, 3 vols., London, 1881, 12–13, “Ac se man wet þe wyle habban ænig þincg ær anginne”. “But the man is mad who wishes to have anything before a beginning”.

²¹ ÆLFRIC, “Passio S. Bartholomæi Apostoli” in B. THORPE (ed. and transl.), *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, the First Part, Containing the Sermones catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric in the Original Anglo-Saxon, with an English Version*, 2 vols., London: Oxford University Press, 1844, 458–59, “Sum wod mann ðurh deofles gast”. “Some madman ... through the devil’s spirit”.

²² It has been noted that usage of the term “supernatural” is anachronistic in the context of Anglo-Saxon culture as the phenomena we today call supernatural were part of reality for Anglo-Saxons (see e.g. J. NEVILLE, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*). However, as Boyer showed, recognition of supernatural beings and phenomena is intrinsic to the human brain and is thus universal across time and space, even if there

to authors whose works are rooted in Graeco-Roman humorism. E.g. a medical compendium called *Bald's Leechbook* contains the following recipe:

Eac of þæs magan adle cumað monige 7 missenlica adla geborstena wunda 7 hramma 7 fyllewærc 7 fienda adl 7 micla murnunga 7 unrotnessa butan þearfe 7 oman 7 ungemetlica mete socna 7 ungemetlice unlustas 7 cisnessa 7 sara inadle on wifes gecyndon 7 on fotum 7 blædran 7 unmode 7 ungemetwæccum 7 ungewitlico word. Se maga biþ neah þære heortan 7 þære gelodre 7 geadortenge þam brægene of þam cumað þa adla swiþpost of þæs magan intingan, 7 of yflum seawum, wætan atterberendum.²³

Deegan and Doyle found an almost perfect match for this recipe in *Practica Alexandri*: presumably, the fragment is a transmission.²⁴ But whether Anglo-Saxons had the original or even knew about the original is a subject to debate; suffice it to say that traces of humorism occur in their texts. Nonetheless, as Doyle points out, “there seems to be no consistent terminology with which four distinct humours are defined in Old English”, which suggests that the notion of the four humours was not fully embraced by the Anglo-Saxons in its entirety.²⁵ The extent to which

was no distinct name for the category (see P. BOYER, *Religion Explained: the Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*).

²³ *Bald's Leechbook II.i*, in T. O. COCKAYNE, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England: being a Collection of Documents, for the most part never before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country before the Norman Conquest, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages* 35, 3 vols., London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1864, 174–177, “Also from the disease of the maw come many and various diseases of bursten wounds, and cramps, and *fyllewærc* and *fienda adl*, and mickle murmurings and uneasiness without occasion, and erysipelatous eruptions, and immoderate desires for meat, and immense want of appetite, and daintinesses, and sore internal diseases in ... the uterus, and in the feet, and in the bladder, and despondency, and immoderately long wakings, and witless words. The maw is near the heart and the spine, and in communication with the brain, from which the diseases come most violently, from the circumstances of the maw, and from evil juices, humours venom-bearing”.

²⁴ Marilyn DEEGAN, “A Critical Edition of MS. B.L. Royal 12. D. xvii: *Bald's Leechbook*” 2 vols (unpublished dissertation), Manchester: University of Manchester, 1988, 124, and C. DOYLE, “Anglo-Saxon Medicine and Disease: A Semantic Approach” 2 vols (unpublished dissertation), Cambridge, 2017, 174.

²⁵ Conan DOYLE, “Anglo-Saxon Medicine and Disease: A Semantic Approach” 2 vols (unpublished dissertation), Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2017, 194.

Anglo-Saxons understood humorism remains hidden to our eyes; nevertheless, their medical compendia provide instances of humoral aetiology and it could affect their perspective on mental disorders. The example cited above attributes *fyllewærc*, *fienda adl* and various psychical malfunctions to humours that form in the stomach and affect the brain. *Fyllewærc* literally means “falling sickness” and it has been suggested that it is a calque that was based on Isidore of Seville’s description of *epilemsia* in the *Etymologiae*.²⁶ *Fienda adl* means “fiend sickness” and it denotes conditions with possession-like symptoms in medical texts. In fact, the majority of conditions that have madness-like traits are expressed with the term *fienda adl* or *deofol seocnys*, meaning “devil sickness”, and the aetiology of these ailments are indeed demonic. However, in this recipe, the root cause of *fienda adl* is clearly organic as it is brought about by the “evil juices” in the stomach.

One of the most influential texts that shaped Anglo-Saxons’ understanding of madness was the above mentioned *Etymologiae* written by Isidore of Seville. Isidore was also a significant representative of organic-rational medicine. The *Etymologiae* was among the most extensively utilized texts during the Middle Ages throughout Europe and held significant authority. The statements within the *Etymologiae* served as pivotal references across various fields of knowledge. According to Lapidge, the *Etymologiae* formed a fundamental component of the standard Anglo-Saxon library.²⁷ Isidore’s influence extended over vast geographical regions and persisted for many centuries; manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* were reproduced from eighth-century Northumbria to tenth-century Canterbury and eleventh-century Salisbury. Also, Lapidge documents a considerable number of extant manuscripts of English provenance, totaling 19, which contain the *Etymologiae*.²⁸ Additionally, glossaries derived from this work served as the basis for numerous Latin translations across multiple areas of knowledge and thus had a huge impact on Anglo-Saxon culture. In Isidore’s view, *anima* is what makes creatures alive, but it is *mens* that makes humans the image of God and it is responsible for certain cognitive processes: describing the faculties of the soul, he points out “[n]am et memoria mens est, unde et inmemores amentes. Dum ergo vivificat corpus, anima est: dum vult, animus est: dum scit, mens est: dum recolit,

²⁶ See e.g. Alaric HALL, “Elves on the Brain: Chaucer, Old English and Elvish”, in *Anglia: Journal of English Philology* 124, Issue 2 (2006), 225–243

²⁷ Michael LAPIDGE, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 127.

²⁸ LAPIDGE, 311.

memoria est: dum rectum iudicat, ratio est: dum spirat, spiritus est: dum aliquid sentit, sensus est”.²⁹ A somewhat similar description of the *sawol* is reflected in Ælfric’s homily mentioned above. The importance of *mens* in intellectual and emotional health is echoed in Isidore’s use of the word *demens*, a term widely used in the Middle Ages for people with mental disorders: he explains that even if the spirit perishes, the soul can stay long as in people who lose their mind.³⁰ In Book IV of *Etymologiae*, he also identifies five conditions that affect the *mens* and thus can be considered mental disorders: *frenesis*, *lethargia*, *epilemsia* (sic), *mania* and *melancholia*. These five words, especially *frenesis* and *epilemsia* figure prominently in Old English texts, and Isidore’s explanation of *epilemsia* served as a basis for many Old English interpretations of mental disorders, e.g. *fyllewærc* mentioned above, *bræcseoc* which literally means humour-disease and denotes conditions resembling epilepsy, and was used for denoting demon possession as well.

As for the supernatural aetiology of mental disorders, the main perpetrators are usually either demons or *ælf*e. In medical compendia, maladies caused by demons and *ælf*e are often grouped together with conditions that Jolly calls “mind-altering” thus showing that they “indicat[e] a consciousness of a similarity between these ailments”,³¹ and the recipes “form a coherent series of remedies against spiritual, malevolent forces, which, nonetheless, are manifested in physical symptoms and can be cured with natural ingredients properly brought into relation with the spiritual macrocosm”.³² These mind-altering conditions were thought to cause both bodily diseases and behavioural malfunctions as it can be inferred from recipes in medical compendia. One of the recipes in *Bald’s Leechbook* that provides a treatment of demon possessed people offers even a brief explanation of what the condition means: “Wiþ feond seocum men, þonne deofol þone monnan fede oððe hine innan

²⁹ ISIDORE, *Etymologiae* XI.i.12–3, in W. M. LINDSAY (ed.), *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX* 2 vols., Oxford, 1911, “Indeed, memory is mind, whence forgetful people are called mindless. Therefore, it is soul when it enlivens the body, will when it wills, mind when it knows, memory (memoria) when it recollects, reason (ratio) when it judges correctly, spirit when it breathes forth, sense (sensus) when it senses something” (transl. Stephen A. BARNEY et al, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Cambridge: Cambridge, 2006, 231.)

³⁰ ISIDORE, *Differentiarum* II.27, in A. SANZ and A. M. SANZ (eds), *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi: Liber Differentiarum [II]*, Corpus Christianorum CXI, Turnhout, 2006, 59–60.

³¹ Karen Louise JOLLY, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context*, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, 133.

³² JOLLY, 158.

gewealde mid adle”.³³ The description implies that *feond seocnys* not only entails a passive physical malady but that it might involve actions that the patient carries out under the demon’s control. As mentioned above, *mod* was the factor that determined how people behaved, it was will-power; thus demon possession, being a loss over self-control, behaviour and emotions could indeed be interpreted as a disease of the *mod* by the Anglo-Saxons, and as such it was a form of madness. This is exactly what the hagiographies reveal as well. Nevertheless, it should be noted that automatic association of madness with demon possession is problematic. In contemporary society, these were two very distinct categories of ailments, even though their symptoms were confusingly similar. While Church members theoretically had the ability to differentiate between demon possession and mental disorders, the similar mental symptoms often made it challenging for ordinary individuals to discern such differences. There are indications in literary sources that even representatives of the Church faced difficulties in recognizing these distinctions. Instances exist where only a distinguished saint could accurately identify demon possession and address the possessed individuals. The similarity between possession and mental disorders was both striking and deceiving, leading to uncertainty for both the Church and the general population in determining whether a specific case involved possession or a malfunction of the brain. Nevertheless, the Church indeed distinguished between the two conditions and did not dismiss the natural or somatic origins of mental disorders, but in cases with symptoms of madness it consistently had to consider the potentiality of demonic possession. To illustrate, Origen, while interpreting the parable of the lunatic boy in Matthew 17, attributed lunacy to both demonic influence and humorism: he presented a description of the natural-humoral explanation for the condition, aligning with the prevailing medical perspective of his time, which involved the moon and humors affecting the head, and he combined it with the workings of devils. Origen argued that the moon was not created by God to exert malevolent influence. Instead, he asserted that demons observed celestial changes, including those of the moon and other planets, and by using this knowledge to attack individuals in accordance with these phases, they deceived unsuspecting victims into attributing their plight to planetary influences.³⁴ A somewhat similar

³³ *Bald’s Leechbook* I.lxiii, 136–37, “For a fiend sick man, or demoniac, when a devil possesses the man or controls him from within with disease”.

³⁴ Jaques Paule MIGNE (ed), *Origenes*, Patrologiæ Græcæ Tomus XIV, Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1862, 1106–1107.

explanation is provided by the Cambridge commentator on lunacy: “Lunaticus est cuius minuente luna minuat uel mutatur cerebrum et, intrante daemone per narem, dementem facit. Aliter lunatici dicuntur qui incipiente lune uel in medio siue in fine cadunt et prosternuntur”.³⁵ In this explanation, diverse perspectives are seamlessly integrated: the materialistic-organic origin of epilepsy symbolized by the association of the moon and falling down; the materialistic-organic basis for brain malfunctions, once again linked to the moon; and the attribution of mental disorders or dementia to demonic possession. Initially, the waning of the moon is believed to influence the brain. Subsequently, or simultaneously, a demon is thought to enter through the nostrils, inducing dementia in the person. Importantly, the onset of dementia does not strictly follow the changes in the brain prompted by the moon; rather, it is the demon that triggers dementia, with the moon merely altering the brain, rendering it susceptible to demon-induced dementia. This suggests that the moon plays a crucial role in allowing a demon to enter one’s mind. Moreover, the second sentence implies that, in fact, a non-demonic manifestation of lunacy was also acknowledged. The ambiguity of demon possession and madness, or rather the fuzzy line between them, was bequeathed to the Anglo-Saxons and its synthesis with the Anglo-Saxon perception of madness can be observed in the hagiographies as well.

To summarize, we can state that there were both a natural-organic and a supernatural perception of madness in Anglo-Saxon culture that did not exclude each other, and that both types were believed to affect the *mod* and its various aspects. The main representatives of the vocabulary of madness are, on the one hand: *mod*, *andgit*, *gemynd* and *gewitt*, with respect to the locus of madness. *Sawol* could also be one but at the time of the hagiographies that are in the scope of this article, *sawol* only represented the person in the afterlife. On the other hand, the names of the conditions themselves are e.g. *wod*, *fienda adl*, *deofol seocnys*, *bræcseoc*, *frenesis*, *demens*. After outlining the main characteristics and identifying the vocabulary that can serve us as flagpoles, the analysis of the hagiographies can now follow.

³⁵ Bernhard BISCHOFF – Michael LAPIDGE (eds), *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 404–405. “Lunatic [XVII. 14] is someone whose brain diminishes or changes as the moon wanes and, with a demon entering through his nostrils, makes him demented. Otherwise lunatics are said to be those who, with the moon waxing, full or waning, fall down and prostrate themselves”.

The four hagiographies analysed here were written in the eighth century: the lives of Cuthbert and Guthlac. We have two Latin versions of *Life of Cuthbert*, one of them written by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne, the other by Bede. The source of *Life of Cuthbert* was the “floating tradition, ... the saga which grew up around the name of the saint, much of it probably during his lifetime or very soon after his death”.³⁶ It was most plausibly written between 699 and 705; while Bede’s version around 721.³⁷ The Latin *Life of Guthlac* was written between 730 and 740 at the request of King Ælfwald in East Anglia by a certain Felix of whom not much is known.³⁸ According to Colgrave, Felix was familiar with Bede’s and Aldhelm’s writings and “with those lives of saints which had much influence on all writers of saints’ lives of the seventh, eighth and later centuries”.³⁹ The *Life* was translated to Old English by the beginning of the eleventh century and two poems on him were also in existence, but later periods saw even more translations.⁴⁰ In order to identify the chapters relevant to the discussion of madness, expressions mentioned above relating to the mind, soul and insanity need to be located. The Old English *Life of Guthlac* contains *gewit*, *wodnys*, and *gemynd*, hence, chapters involving these expressions are analyzed to see whether they are madness-cases or not. Once the texts are assessed, they can serve as a basis to identify the sections of interest in the Latin texts too.

The two relevant chapters of the Old English *Life of Guthlac* tell stories of demon possessions. Chapter XII explains how Hwætred, a noble afflicted with a demon was cured by Guthlac, while chapter XIII mentions Ecga with the same ailment. Both cases are described with vocabulary relating to madness. An unclean spirit entered Hwætred, hence he lost his mind: “se awyrgeda gast him oneode þæt he of his gewitte wearð”, and his madness was so severe he inflicted self-harm: “hine se awyrgeda feond swa swyþe swencte mid þære wodnysse þæt he hys agenne lichaman mid irene ge eac mid his toþum blodgode

³⁶ Bertram COLGRAVE, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: a Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede’s Prose Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1940) 2007, 11.

³⁷ COLGRAVE, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, 13–16.

³⁸ COLGRAVE, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, 15–19.

³⁹ COLGRAVE, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, 16. These are Sulpicius Severus’ *Vita Martini*, Jerome’s *Vita Pauli*, Athanasius’s *Vita Antonii* and Gregory the Great’s *Life of St Benedict*.

⁴⁰ COLGRAVE, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, 9.

and wundode”.⁴¹ The condition is named by the term *wodnys* and it is also stated that it inflicts the *gewit*. Hwætred’s madness is also referred to as *adl*, sickness: “him næfre syþþan þa hwile þe he leofode seo adl ne eglode”.⁴² The condition is described as involving irrational aggression: “he hine woldon gebindan and don hine gewyldne: he þa genam sum twibil, and mid þan þry men to deaðe ofsloh, and oþre manige mid gesarode” with a certain kind of altered state of consciousness where the subject is almost unconscious in a state similar to slumber “and he þa se ylca man swa he of hefegum slæpe raxende awoce”.⁴³ This semi-unconscious state is only dispelled when Guthlac shatters the demon’s power over Hwætred with the help of prayer, holy water and blowing into his face. Similarly, Ecga in Chapter XIII was also plagued by an unclean spirit and his state was also described by the word *adl* and involved unconsciousness: “he wæs fram þam awyrgeðan gaste unstill; and swa swyþe he hine drehte þæt he his sylfes nænig gemynd ne hæfde”.⁴⁴ As mentioned above, *gemynd* mainly denoted memory, hence the phrase “he his sylfes nænig gemynd ne hæfde” can mean that he did not remember who he was, he had some sort of an amnesiac condition. We can infer from these texts that demons were thought to have the power to cause a state that was considered a sickness and was also referred to as madness, and its symptoms included irrational aggression and a trance-like condition that affected the subject’s intellect and behaviour.

Having identified the chapters of interest in the Old English text, the Latin version can now be analyzed. Chapters in the Latin text that are equivalents to the ones above are XLI and XLII. In Hwætred’s story, similarly to the Old

⁴¹ ANONYMOUS, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac* (transl. Ch. W. GOODWIN), London: William Pickering, 1848, 56–57, “The accursed spirit entered into him, so that he went out of his wits, and the accursed spirit afflicted him so severely with this madness, that he bloodied and wounded his own body as well with iron as with his teeth”.

⁴² ANONYMOUS, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac*, 60–61, “the illness never ailed him afterwards so long as he lived”.

⁴³ ANONYMOUS, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac*, 58–61, “They might bind him and bring him into subjection. Thereupon he took an axe, and with it smote three men to death, and wounded many others with them ... this same man was as though he had awoken from a deep slumber”.

⁴⁴ ANONYMOUS, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St Guthlac*, 60–61, “[he] was disquieted by the accursed spirit. And he plagued him so severely that he had no recollection of himself”.

English text, he is said to have been suddenly attacked by an evil spirit: “subito illum nequam spiritus grassari coepit”.⁴⁵ The symptoms are self-destructive behaviour and extreme strength, as already described in the Old English text:

[i]n tantum autem inmensa dementia vexabatur ita ut membra sua propria ligno, ferro, unguibus dentibusque, prout potuit, laniaret; non solum enim se ipsum crudeli vesania decerpebat, quin etiam omnes, quoscumque tangere potuisset, inprobi oris morsibus lacerabat. Eo autem modo insanire coepit, ut eum prohiberi aut adligari nullius ausibus inpetraretur.⁴⁶

The terms used to describe Hwætred’s condition are *dementia*, *vesania* and *insanire*. Involvement of the mind is not articulated so openly as in the Old English text (“he of his gewitte wearð”), although the terms speak for themselves as they are strongly associated with madness in various glossaries. The frenzied phase of Hwætred’s condition lasted for four years during which his energies were slowly drained, then his parents could manage to transport him to various holy places in the hope of getting him cured. The attempts were of no avail, and in the end it was only Guthlac who could restore Hwætred’s health: Guthlac prayed and fasted for him for three days and on the third day he drove out the demon by washing Hwætred in the holy font and blowing into his face: “tertia vero die, orto sole, sacrati fontis undis abluit, et inflans in faciem eius spiritum salutis, omnem valitudinem maligni spiritus de illo reppulit”.⁴⁷ Blowing is not a common healing method in the Scriptures in the strict sense; the breath has somewhat different purposes. Jesus blew on the disciples once in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit, while the breath of God usually bestows life. Bearing this analogue in mind,

⁴⁵ FELIX, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci Auctore Felice*, in B. COLGRAVE (ed. and transl.), *Felix’s Life of Saint Guthlac: Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, 126.

⁴⁶ FELIX, 126–129. “He was affected with so great a madness that he tore his own limbs, so far as he could, with wood and iron, with his nails and his teeth; and indeed not only did he wound himself with cruel madness, but all whom he could reach he fiercely bit and tore. He began to be so mad that no one could succeed by any efforts in checking him or binding him”.

⁴⁷ FELIX, 130–131. “On the third day at sunrise he washed him in the water of the sacred font and, breathing into his face the breath of healing, he drove away from him all the power of the evil spirit”.

the text gives the impression that Hwætred's condition was not a usual disease: he needed to be reborn with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Old English text describes the moment of his healing as awakening from slumber, but the Latin text emphasizes the distress he suffered and the relief he finally got: "Ipse autem, velut qui de aestuantis gurgitis fluctibus ad portum deducitur, longa suspiria imo de pectore trahens, ad pristinae salutis valitudinem redditum se esse intellexit".⁴⁸ Blowing out the sighs from the depth of his bosom parallel to Guthlac's breath not only symbolizes his relief after his long torment but also that the demon left his body: Guthlac's breath is the Holy Spirit that expelled and replaced the evil spirit in the form of breath in Hwætred's bosom. As the text states, the demon never disturbed Hwætred anymore, so the Holy Spirit took lodging in him and never let in demons anymore.

The Latin version of Ecga's story reveals more about his mental state under the demon's influence than the Old English text: "ita ut quid esset vel quo sederet vel quid parabat facere nesciret. Corporis autem et membrorum vigor inlaesus permansit, facultas vero loquendi, disputandi intelligendique penitus defuit".⁴⁹ The Old English text described an amnesic state; the Latin version indicates that the condition was more serious. He could not speak and he even lost his faculty of understanding, hence it seems that all his mental capacities were paralyzed by the demon. Contrarily to Hwætred, he did not exhibit signs of aggression or supernatural strength, nonetheless, his whole mind was under the influence of the demon, as if it had conquered his whole *mod*. His state is named as *vesania* and *amentia*, both associated with madness in glossaries. Ecga was healed by Guthlac's girdle: "Quadam die propinqui sui formidantes perpetuam vesaniam sibi venturam, ad praefati viri Guthlaci limina duxerunt; confestimque, ut se cingulo eius succinxit, omnem amentiam de se ablatam animumque sibi integre redditum persesit".⁵⁰ Apparently Guthlac's girdle imbibed enough holiness that

⁴⁸ FELIX, 130–131. "And the youth, like one who is brought into port out of the billows and the boiling waves, heaved some deep sighs from the depth of his bosom and realized that he had been restored to his former health".

⁴⁹ FELIX, 132–133. "so that he did not know what he was or where he dwelt or what he was about to do. Although the strength of his body and limbs remained unharmed, yet his powers of speech, discussion, and understanding failed him entirely".

⁵⁰ FELIX, 132–133. "One day his relatives, fearing that perpetual madness would come upon him, took him to the abode of this same Guthlac, and as soon as he bound himself with

it was sufficient to drive away the evil spirit from Ecga. As the demon left, his madness left too and his mind cleared.

Searching for the same vocabulary and context in the Cuthbert texts, we can find two chapters that are of interest: the story of Hildmer's wife and a demoniac boy. Both victims fell prey to demons without any specific reason, they were innocent. In the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert*, Hildmer's wife is described as being vexed by a devil, "[i]lla namque multum uastata et usque ad exitum mortis coangustata, frendens dentibus gemitum lacrimabilem emittebat".⁵¹ In his version, Bede adds to the cries and gnashing teeth "brachia uel caetera sui corporis membra in diuersa raptando".⁵² The description of the symptoms is based on the biblical topos of demon possessions: grinding teeth, groaning, agitated movements. The condition is named as "insania" in both texts, and according to the text, Hildmer did not have any doubt that this madness was in fact demon possession. Instead of doubt, what Hildmer felt was shame: when he sought Cuthbert's help, he was ashamed to tell him that his wife's deathly sickness was caused by a demon as "[n]esciebat etiam nec intellegens, quod talis temptatio frequenter christianis accidere solet".⁵³ In the anonymous text, Hildmer's mourning was twofold: on the one hand, it was the loss of a wife, of a mother; on the other hand, it was her disgraceful physical condition "maxime pro ignominiosa insaniae, in qua horribiliter redactam et inpudenter confractem et saliuam pollutam".⁵⁴ Whereas in Bede's text, Hildmer feared that Cuthbert would think that his wife feigned her faith: "[t]imebat enim ne cum eam demoniosam inueniret, arbitrari inciperet, quia non integra Domino,

the saint's girdle, he felt that all his madness had disappeared and his mind had wholly returned to him".

⁵¹ ANONYMOUS, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, in B. COLGRAVE (ed.), *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, Cambridge, 1940 (2007), 90–91, „She was greatly ravaged and afflicted to the point of death, grinding her teeth and uttering tearful groans”.

⁵² BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, in B. COLGRAVE (ed.), *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, Cambridge, 1940 (2007), 204–205, “flinging her arms and limbs about in agitation”.

⁵³ ANONYMOUS, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 92–93, „...neither knowing nor understanding that such a trial is wont to fall frequently upon Christians”.

⁵⁴ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 204–205, “and more especially because of the disgraceful insane condition in which he knew that she was about to be seen by the man of God, whereby she was horribly degraded and shamelessly destroyed and polluted with spittle”.

sed ficta fide seruisset”.⁵⁵ The dread inspired by the husband can be interpreted in two distinct ways. Firstly, madness and possession may be perceived as retribution for insincere devotion: individuals attempting to deceive both God and society are consequently punished by divine forces. Alternatively, an insincere faith suggests that the individual remains an unbeliever or adheres to pagan beliefs, rendering them more susceptible to demonic influence and therefore “rightfully” targeted by such malevolent forces. To dispel any uncertainties, Bede clarifies that contrary to such beliefs, devout Christians too may undergo demonic assaults: “[n]eque enim tali tormento soli subiciuntur mali, sed occulto Dei iudicio aliquotiens etiam innocentes in hoc saeculo non tantum corpore sed et mente captiuntur a diabolo”.⁵⁶ Both texts describe the moment of healing as waking up from a deep sleep, similarly to the Guthlac texts: “Cuius soluta uinculis mulier, quasi graui experrecta de somno surrexit continuo, ac uiro Dei gratulabunda occurrens, iumentum quo sedebat per frenum tenuit”.⁵⁷ While Guthlac’s breath implicitly symbolized the Holy Spirit, Bede boldly states that it is indeed the presence of the Holy Spirit within Cuthbert that chased away the demon: “fugit repente spiritus nequam, aduentum spiritus sancti, quo plenus erat uir Dei ferre non ualens”.⁵⁸

Lastly, the story of the demoniac boy healed by Cuthbert’s remains also describes the typical symptoms: “a demonio fatigatum uociferantem et lacrimantem, lacerantemque corpus suum”;⁵⁹ furthermore, “insanus ululando, ingemiscendo et frendendo dentibus nimio cunctorum uisus et auditus horrore concuteret”.⁶⁰ Again,

⁵⁵ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 204–205, “For he feared that when Cuthbert found her possessed of a devil, he would begin to think that she had served the Lord with a feigned and not a real faith”.

⁵⁶ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 206–207, “for it is not only the wicked who are subjected to such torments, but sometimes also in this world, be the inscrutable judgement of God, the innocent are taken captive by the devil, not only in body but also in mind”.

⁵⁷ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 206–207, “And the woman, being loosed from the demon’s chains, thereupon rose as if wakened from a deep sleep and, running to greet the man of God, she took the horse on which he was seated”.

⁵⁸ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 206–207, “the evil spirit suddenly fled, not being able to endure the coming of the Holy Spirit which filled the man of God”.

⁵⁹ ANONYMOUS, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 132–133, “[he] was afflicted with a demon, and was shouting and weeping and tearing his body”.

⁶⁰ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 288–289, “the insane boy horrified all who saw and heard him by howling, groaning and gnashing his teeth”.

the texts echo the biblical topoi of demon possessed people: howling, groaning, gnashing of teeth and aggression in the form of self-harm. In Bede's words, the demon tormented the boy so much so "ita ut sensu rationis funditus amisso clamaret, eiularet, et uel sua membra uel quicquid attingere posset, morsibus dilaniare niteretur".⁶¹ Bede uses the word *insanus* describing the boy and he articulates that his demon possession coincides with losing his reason. Despite various attempts at curing the boy, his tormenting demon remained persistent. According to Bede, the holy martyrs whose help was sought did not grant relief in order to show Cuthbert's greatness amongst them: only Cuthbert's aid was fruitful. The demon fled as soon as the boy drank holy water that was sprinkled with earth where water was poured in which Cuthbert's body was washed after his death: in the words of the the anonymous author, "[p]uer uero degustata aqua benedicta, a garrula uoce nocte illa desinit".⁶² The phrase *garrula uoce* (chattering voice) might sound surprising in the context of demon possession, considering the fact that the symptoms imply an aggressive, self-destructive condition with growling and and howling. However, the lemma *garritores* (chatterers) is flanked by various madness-related expressions in various glossaries. For instance, in the Harley Glossary, it is interpreted with *comitiales* (one of the terms Isidore mentions meaning epilepsy), *ylfie* (which can roughly be rendered as "possessed by an *ælf*") and *monapseoce* (which literally means "moon-sick" and is the equivalent of "lunatic").⁶³ According to Hall, this chattering did not merely mean speaking but had a prophetic or divine tone to it, presumably attributed to possession.⁶⁴ Bede narrates the moment as "Statim autem ut attigit aquam, continuit clamorem, clausit os, clausit et oculos qui sanguinei et furibundi patebant, caput et corpus totum reclinauit in requiem".⁶⁵ The boy calmed down, fell asleep and "mane de somno

⁶¹ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 288–289, "that he had completely lost his reason, and cried out, howled and tried to tear in pieces with his teeth both his own limbs and whatever he could reach".

⁶² ANONYMOUS, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 134–135, "As soon as the boy had tasted the holy water, he ceased from his ravings that very night".

⁶³ ROBERT T. OLIPHANT, *The Harley Latin-Old English Glossary*, The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966, 85.

⁶⁴ HALL, "Elves on the brain", 238.

⁶⁵ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 290–290, „But as soon as he touched the water, he restrained his cries, shut his mouth and his eyes which before were wide open, bloodshot and furious, while his head and his whole body sank into repose".

simul et uesania consurgens”.⁶⁶ The condition of demon possession is named again as madness (*uesania*) and it is again associated with sleep, while abatement of the possession is likened to waking from sleep. Bede further emphasizes the delirious state during possession: “qui pridie prae insania mentis nec se ipsum quis esset uel ubi esset poterat agnoscere”,⁶⁷ which suggests an amnesic condition, as well as an almost unconscious state of mind. Apparently the demon takes hold of the mind so much so that the subject’s personality and consciousness is almost completely shut down and is severed from the outside world. This state is a stark contrast to what Bede calls *sanissimus mens*, when the boy, healed, goes around showing his gratitude to the saints. The locus of the determining factor here is clearly designated as the *mens*.

To summarize the phenomenon of mental disorders in hagiographies, it can be stated that conditions referred to as *vesania*, *insania*, *amentia* and *wodnys* are demon possessions. Thus, madness is essentially equal to possession, at least vocabulary-wise. It has been highlighted above that the symptoms were confusingly similar so much so that even members of the Church sometimes could not tell them apart. Both bodily and mental symptoms are described as indicators of madness. The signs of madness induced by demonic forces encompass a wide range, spanning from psychological collapse and aggression to the loss of basic bodily control. These symptoms, as depicted in hagiographies, use archetypal illustrations derived from Scriptural texts. Afflicted individuals frequently demonstrate tendencies towards self-harm and towards assaulting others, often accompanied by incoherent shouting and groaning, and an unnaturally heightened physical strength. Fury emerges as a prominent characteristic of madness, serving as a defining trait with notable physical manifestations such as e.g. aggression, while it also affects the cognitive faculties, leading to impaired reasoning and exaggerated reactions. Furthermore, the bodily manifestations of possession often mirror those of seizures, drawing parallels from Scripture: victims experience groaning, teeth grinding, abnormal motor functions, limb jerking, and excessive salivation. As for the mental signs, the afflicted person exhibits symptoms of altered states of consciousness, amnesia, and a “severed” self: they appear as not being in control of their body and their

⁶⁶ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 290–291, “in the morning awoke from both sleep and madness”.

⁶⁷ BEDE, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, 290–291, “on account of his insanity, he did not know who he was or where he was”.

will, in fact, it seems as if their soul and mind were cut off from the outside world and the demon took control of their personality. Although other Old English sources show that a natural-organic understanding of madness was also present in Anglo-Saxon culture, in the hagiographies demon possession and madness is blurred together. In addition, the Bible, which exerted significant influence on Anglo-Saxon culture, also implies a certain confusing similarity between demon possession and madness: on the one hand, “lunatics” are mentioned as a different category beside demoniacs (e.g. Matt 4,24) and they are referred to by different terminology in Old English translations (*monod-seoc* are lunatics instead of *deofol seoc* who are the demon-possessed); on the other hand, a “lunatic” boy is cured by expelling a demon (Matt 17,15). Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxon perception of *mod* made possession and madness *practically* the same. Practically in the sense that even though a theoretical knowledge was present which acknowledged the difference between madness and possession; nonetheless, the fundamental aetiologies and symptoms were the same: the *mod*, which is the core of one’s personality is malfunctioning; and this malfunctioning is manifested in typical behavioural patterns (e.g. aggression and impaired cognitive faculties). It is always an “unclean spirit” that causes madness: a *spiritus inmundi*, a *nequam spiritus*, an *awyrgeda gast* in Old English versions. The possessed person has various horrible symptoms, physical, mental and behavioural alike, and even gets to the verge of death when the saint saves him or her by putting the demon to flight. The cases are analogous to scriptural instances in many respects: the symptoms, the wording and the purpose of the narrative (i.e. to demonstrate the Christian power over demons) show a strong resemblance to the cases described in the Scriptures. The reason for the possessions is not attributed to God’s punishment or testing: the cases happen casually almost like accidents and the victims are even pictured with a certain degree of sympathy. The demon possessions do not have an articulated reason: madness in the hagiographies is not a punishment or a consequence of any sin. Rather, it is an opportunity to reveal the saints’ greatness, the victory of the Holy Spirit over the unclean spirits, and the power of God over evil.

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A HUNGARIAN FRANCISCAN PREACHING IN ROMANIAN. THE ROMANIAN SERMONS OF OLTÍ ISTVÁN, OFM IN HUNGARIAN TRANSLITERATION

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Abstract. Franciscans carried out an important pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Alba Iulia, which included Romanian-speaking communities. A particular example of this ministry is the decades-long preaching of István Olti, OFM, a Hungarian friar, to Romanian believers, in the first half of the 19th century. This essay discusses his unpublished Romanian sermons given in Grădiştea de Munte, Sibişel, Sebeşel and Rodna Veche, preserved in the Franciscan Archives in Cluj. The sermons, entirely inspired by the Bible, are interesting not only as witnesses of the Franciscan ministry to Romanian-speaking communities, but also as examples of religious texts in Romanian, written with Latin characters, a phonetic transcription using Hungarian letters and digraphs, in a (trans)formative period of the Romanian language, when writing and printing used Cyrillic characters.

Keywords: István Olti, OFM, Franciscans, Transylvania, sermons, mission Romanian writing with Hungarian characters, transliteration.

Franciscans played a major role in the life of the Transylvanian Catholic Church. This was the case particularly during and after the Reformation,² but their role endured well into the 19th century and beyond, even following the restoration of the regular ministry of the secular clergy. The survival of small

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² The importance of the pastoral ministry carried out by the Franciscans increased in response to the prohibitions imposed on the Catholic Church during the Reformation, notably the expulsion of the bishop of Transylvania following the Diet of Sebeş [Szászsebes] in 1556 and of the Jesuits by the Diet of Mediaş [Medgyes] in 1588, as well as the restrictions imposed on Catholic religious practice by the Diets of Turda [Torda], 1566 and Bistriţa [Beszterce], 1610.



communities was largely due to their pastoral ministry. A particular example of this ministry is the decades-long preaching of István Olti, OFM (Antal Olti under his civilian name), a Hungarian friar, to Romanian believers, in the first half of the 19th century, witnessed by his sermons preserved in the Franciscan Archives of Transylvania.³ The sermons were written in a (trans)formative period of the Romanian language, when writing (in particular that of ecclesiastic texts) still largely used Cyrillic characters. The sermons of Olti use the Latin alphabet, combined with the phonetic transcription of the Romanian text with Hungarian characters and digraphs. The sermons were preserved at the monastery in Șumuleu Ciuc [Csíksomlyó], then transferred to the Transylvanian Franciscan Collecting Archives in Cluj [Kolozsvár].⁴

In what follows I briefly outline the biography of István Olti against the background of the history of the Franciscans in Transylvania, to explain some geographic and chronological aspects of the ministry of István Olti, OFM. I subsequently turn to the sermons of Fr. Olti written in Romanian. Finally, I summarise the findings and conclusions.

A Franciscan in Transylvania. A short biography of István Olti, OFM

Friars minor in Transylvania were established as an independent custody named after Saint Stephen, King of Hungary, with the apostolic letter *Salvatoris nostri* of Pope Urban VIII on 3 February 1640.⁵ A major role in the independence

³ I thank archivist dr. Xénia Jonica for bringing this material to my attention. Thanks are also due to archivist Anita Vajda (Archives of the Roman Catholic Status, Cluj), for her help with deciphering the manuscripts.

⁴ In this essay I use both the earlier Hungarian and the contemporary, official Romanian names of the localities.

⁵ On the history of the Transylvanian Franciscans: Fortunát BOROS, “A franciskánusok működése Erdélyben”, in *Az erdélyi katolicizmus múltja és jelene*, Dicsőszentmárton: Erzsébet Könyvnyomda, 1925, 477–497 (480–481). For a recent overview of the settlement and ministry of the Franciscans in Hungary and the provinces in the Middle Ages: Ioana-Terezia POP, “The Expansion of the Order of the Friars Minor in the Kingdom of Hungary in 13th and Early 14th Century Through Sources of the Order”, *Philobiblon* 24.2 (2019) 287–309. On the increase in the importance of the Franciscans following the expulsion of the Jesuits from Transylvania: Tamás KRUPPA, “Franciscans or Jesuits: Attempts to Resurrect Catholicism in Transylvania (1589-1592)”, in *Incorrupta monumenta ecclesiam defendunt. Studi offeriti a mons.*

of the Transylvanian Franciscans was played by Kázmér Domokos. He had been sent to Rome by Stefano da Salina⁶ and had been ordained a priest there.⁷ Kázmér became the first *custos* of the Transylvanian friars.⁸

At the General Chapter of Milan in 1729, the Transylvanian Custody was removed from the jurisdiction of the Salvatorian Province and elevated to the rank of independent province.⁹ The 17th and 18th centuries were a period of peace and creation, in which the monasteries that later played an important role in the life of István Olti were founded or returned to the Franciscans: Mikháza [Călugăreni, founded in 1635], Kolozsvár [Cluj, returned in 1724], Szászváros [Orăștie, repossessed in 1728], Szászsebes [Sebeș, established in 1731], and Szamosújvár

Sergio Pagano, prefetto dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano I/2, edited by Andreas GOTTMANN – Pierantonio PIATTI – Andreas E. REHBERG, Città del Vaticano, 2018, 889–903.

- ⁶ István KEUL notes that Salina was probably of Bosnian origin (Stjepan Tuzlanski), from the town of Tuzla (the Latin *Salinae*); sources render his name as Stefano de Salina, Stephanus de Salinis or Stefano a Salina. *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe: Ethnic Diversity, Denominational Plurality, and Corporative Politics in the Principality of Transylvania (1526–1691)* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 143), Leiden: Brill, 2009, 211, n. 56. In Hungarian works he is mentioned as Szalinai István.
- ⁷ József GYÖRGY, *A ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben*, Cluj–Kolozsvár: Szent Bonaventura Könyvnyomda, 1930, 80; BOROS, “A franciskánusok”, 487; Fortunát BOROS, *Az erdélyi ferencrendiek*, Kolozsvár: Szent Bonaventura Könyvnyomda, 1927, 75.
- ⁸ Kázmér Damokos (Domokos), OFM (1606–1677), collaborator of Stefano da Salina, was the head of the Bosnian Franciscan mission in Transylvania, then guardian of the Transylvanian Franciscan Custody (1654–1662). Appointed titular bishop of Corona by Pope Clement IX, he was ordained in 1668 by Cardinal Giulio Spinola. He functioned as apostolic vicar of the Diocese of Transylvania. He had a significant contribution to the organisation and renewal of the diocese and of the Franciscan order in Transylvania. In 1674 he held a synod in Csíksomlyó (Sumuleu-Ciuc). GALLA Ferenc, *Ferences misszionáriusok Magyarországon: a Királyságban és Erdélyben a 17–18. században* (Collectana Vaticanea Hungariae 2), ed. FAZEKAS István, Budapest – Rome: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem – Gondolat, 2005, 203–208, 211, 227–234, 236–240; JAKUBINYI György, *Katolikus, erdélyi protestáns és izraelita vallási archontológia*, Gyulafehérvár: Gloria, 2004, 28; VICZIÁN János, “Damokos Kázmér”, in DIÓS István, VICZIÁN János (ed.), *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon 2*, Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1993, 515.
- ⁹ GYÖRGY, *A ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben*, 100–101; BOROS, “A franciskánusok”, 491.

[Gherla, founded in 1744]. The Province flourished at the end of the 18th century, with a total of 354 monks in 23 monasteries.

Franciscan priests were actively engaged in preaching and the pastoral care of the inhabitants of the localities neighbouring their monastery. This included the villages with a majority Romanian population, on occasion with some other ethnic groups, in Southern and Northern Transylvania (in today's Alba, Hunedoara, Sibiu and Bistrița-Năsăud county). The Franciscan Chapter committed to the pastoral care of the Romanian communities, appointing Romanian native speakers or friars with a good command of the language, in addition to Hungarian and German-speaking ones.¹⁰ István Olti, OFM was one such priest who has spent several years ministering in Romanian communities.

In what follows I briefly present the biography of István Olti, OFM, to highlight his ministry to Romanian communities. I compiled the biographical data from two sources: the book of József György, *A ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben* [The Life and Work of the Franciscans in Transylvania], published in 1930 in Cluj [Kolozsvár], and the essay of Leonard Pap, OFM, who discovered the sermons of Olti in Șumuleu Ciuc [Csíksomlyó] in July 1988 and drafted a one-page inventory. The latter also includes a short biography with the places of István Olti's ministry. Fr. Pap indicates that he used the manuscript collection *Capitulumok* [Chapters] edited by József György.¹¹

Antal Olti was born in Csíkmadéfalva [Siculeni] on 2 February 1787. He entered the Franciscan Order at the age of twenty and studied at the Franciscan monastery of Csíksomlyó [Șumuleu Ciuc]. He pursued theological studies in Vajdahunyad [Hunedoara], which provided theological formation for Franciscan friars, subsequently in Szászváros [Orăștie], Kolozsvár [Cluj] and Nagyszeben [Sibiu]. He took the habit on 8 September 1807, changing his first name from Antal to István. He was ordained a priest on 19 September 1810.¹² The surviving biographical records do not indicate the place of his investiture nor that of his ordination.

The places of István Olti's pastoral ministry and his tasks can be reconstructed based on data provided by József György and the date of the sermons. Following

¹⁰ BOROS, *Az erdélyi ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben*, 192.

¹¹ The material concerning István Olti can be found in the Transylvanian Franciscan Collecting Archives in Cluj (henceforward TFCAC), under the Provincial's documents / Legacy: 3 / István Olti, box 1. The researched material is in a small unnumbered file.

¹² GYÖRGY, *Az erdélyi ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben*, 533.

his ordination, Olti spent a year in Kolozsvár [Cluj] and one in [Nagyszeben] Sibiu as *pater studens*. For a while, he spent every year in a different monastery. His position in Mikháza [Călugăreni] is unknown. Between 1813 and 1814 he taught in Hátszeg [Hațeg].¹³

In 1814 he was in Szászváros [Orăștie], until 1816, but his position unknown. The sermon in Romanian dated 1816 may be related to his ministry here, because in the second half of the year he was already in Szárhegy [Lăzarea], a Hungarian-speaking village (it is highly unlikely that he would have preached a sermon in Romanian there).

From 1818 István Olti was in Kolozsvár [Cluj]. He was subsequently appointed again for two years to Mikháza [Călugăreni]. In this period he regularly celebrated mass in the family chapel of the castle of Count József Petky in Marosszentgyörgy [Sângeorgiu de Mureș].

Olti returned to Szászváros [Orăștie] in 1820, where he spent three years, up to 1823. From there he visited the small community in Sebeshely [Sebeșel], some 40 km to the East, and Ósebeshely [Sibișel], 11 km South from Szászváros, known for its glass- and metalworks.

Between 1823–1824 he served in Szamosújvár [Gherla]. (The Franciscans were admitted here in 1743, and their church was completed in 1757 with the support of Armenian donors.¹⁴) The friars of this monastery provided pastoral care to the dispersed Catholics of the neighbouring areas. (In 1830 they preached and celebrated the sacraments in more than seventeen places.) While based in Szamosújvár [Gherla], he also ministered to the community in Óradna [Rodna Veche], a mining town, with a mixed – Romanian, Hungarian, German, Roma, Armenian population and some other ethnic groups (Czechs, Slovaks, Polish,

¹³ Fr. Olti started to teach in 1814 in the school built from the donation of Transylvanian Bishop József Mártonffi (14865 Forints [Frt]), next to the episcopal residence. His starting salary was 120 Frt, later raised to 200, and from 1887 to 300 Frt. Initially there was only one classroom. Starting with 1867 the school also used one of the rooms of the episcopal residence for a monthly rent of 5 Frt and taught older children as well. GYÖRGY, *A ferencrendiek élete és működése Erdélyben*, 235.

¹⁴ Bálint Kovács, “A ferencesek és örmények kapcsolatai Erdélyben, a XVIII. században”, in *Nyolcszáz esztendő a ferences rend: Tanulmányok a rend lelkiségéről, történeti hivatásáról és kulturális–művészeti szerepéről*, II., ed. Norbert S. MEDGYESSY, István ÖTVÖS and Sándor ÖZE, Budapest: Írott Szó Alapítvány–Magyar Napló, 2013, 282–291 (284).

Ukrainians).¹⁵ Olti also appears as a resident priest in the Franciscan register of Óradna [Rodna Veche] in 1823.¹⁶

After his ministry in Szamosújvár [Gherla] and Óradna [Rodna Veche], Olti returned to Szászváros [Orăștie] in 1824, where he remained for thirty-two years. During this period he regularly celebrated mass and preached in Sebeshely [Sebeșel].¹⁷ He died here on 12 June 1856.

István Olti's sermons in Romanian

Most of the Romanian sermons can be linked to Olti's ministry in Szászváros [Orăștie], from where he provided for the spiritual needs of the neighbouring communities. From his first term we have a sermon delivered in Grediste [Grădiștea de Munte] (1814), from the second term one given in Ósebeshely [Sibișel] (1821) and one in Sebeshely [Sebeșel] (1823), and from his final period, eleven more homilies delivered in Sebeshely [Sebeșel]. From the period spent in Szamosújvár [Gherla] / Óradna [Rodna Veche] seven sermons have been preserved.¹⁸

The collection also includes a sermon apparently preached in Királybánya [Baia Craiului] in 1802, but since István Olti was ordained a priest only in 1810, his authorship can be excluded. Fr. Leonard Pap, OFM attributes the sermon to Fr Lajos Csoboth.¹⁹ The place and time of the delivery of the sermons written for the feast of St Peter and St Paul and for the 25th Sunday after Pentecost are not indicated (I will not discuss them here).

¹⁵ *History of Mineral Exploration in Hungary Until 1945*, edited by G. CSÍKY and Gy. VITÁLIS, transl. E. Dudich, G. Szurovy, Budapest: Hungarian Geological Institute – Hungarian Geological Society, 1989, 17–18, 22; Mircea MUREȘIANU, “Language and Discourse Geodemographic Influence on the Dialectical Local Vocabulary in the Geographical Space of Rodna, Bistrița-Năsăud County”, *Communication, Context, Interdisciplinarity* 3 (2014) 78–86.

¹⁶ GYÖRGY, *A ferencrendiek élete ée működése Erdélyben*, 426.

¹⁷ TFCAC, Olti István, box 1.

¹⁸ The legacy of István Olti, OFM, is found in the Transylvanian Franciscan Collecting Archives in Cluj. Handwritten sermons, written on separate sheets. The pages are not numbered. With two exceptions, most sermons mention the occasion. (TFCAC, Provincial's Documents: Legacy: 3. Olti István, box 1.)

¹⁹ Comment by Pap Leonárd OFM, TFCAC, Olti István, box 1.

The sermons discussed here were written in Romanian. What makes them special is the fact that they use the Latin alphabet and a Hungarian spelling. Olti employed a phonetic transcription of Romanian words, of special Romanian phonemes, using specific Hungarian characters and digraphs.²⁰ This particularity has to do with the fact that until 1830 Romanian writing and printing, including Bible editions, widely used the Cyrillic, not the Latin alphabet. In the 19th century, Ienăchiță Văcărescu, Toader Școleriu, Ion Budai-Deleanu and Ion Heliade Rădulescu simplified the Cyrillic alphabet, producing a transitional, mixed, Cyrillic and Latin orthography. The Latin alphabet was officially introduced in Transylvania and Bucovina between 1860 and 1862.²¹ This means that Olti's ministry coincided with a formative period of the Romanian language and spelling. His sermons are therefore not only witnesses of the pastoral ministry carried out by Hungarian friars to Romanian communities; they are also interesting as contributions to the production of Romanian writing using Latin characters.

István Olti's command of Romanian is not perfect; he must have learned the language by ear. His style is simple, suited for his audience, which probably consisted of less educated, lower status people. These were workers at the glassworks in Ósebeshely [Sibișel] and the mines in Óradna [Rodna Veche], and their families. The audience was either entirely Romanian (probably the case in Sebeshely [Sebeșel], or ethnically mixed, with Romanian probably being the common language.

Biblical quotations occasionally correspond to the Romanian Bible translation, the Blaj Bible from 1795,²² but most often they differ from it, being probably translations of the author from Hungarian. Olti often quotes the Bible from memory.

²⁰ To make it clearer, the Romanian Blaj Bible was printed with Cyrillic characters. A transcription with Latin characters renders Luke 10,42a as "Mariia partea cea bună și-au ales". Olti renders the verse as: "Mária pártye tsel buna szau alész".

²¹ Flora ȘUTEU, "Introducere în studiul ortografiei românești actuale", in *Sinteze de limba română*, edited by Theodor HRISTEA, București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1981, 86–98. Romanian Bible translations and religious books printed in Transylvania under the Calvinist princes in the 17th century still used the Cyrillic alphabet. KEUL, *Early Modern Religious Communities*, 193–194.

²² The translation by Samuil Micu used on the first Romanian Bible edition, the so-called Bucharest or Șerban Cantacuzino Bible from 1688. On Romanian Bible translations: Eugen MUNTEANU, "A Brief History of the Romanian Biblical Tradition", in *Biblicum Jassyense. Romanian Review for Biblical Philology and Hermeneutics* 3 (2012) 5–55.

Most sermons name the Sundays and feast days for which they were written as well as the biblical pericopes. Otherwise, I have identified the pericopes that were difficult to read in the manuscript using the Hungarian-Latin Missal.²³ The name of the Sundays and feast days follows the liturgical designations of the time.

In what follows I offer a summary of the sermons, followed by some observations.

I will discuss the sermons in chronological order, grouped by the locations of Olti's ministry involving preaching in Romanian, delivered in Grediste [Grădiștea de Munte], Ósebeshely [Sibișel], Sebeshely [Sebeșel] and Óradna [Rodna Veche].

The sermons follow a pattern. The prescript names the Sunday or feast day, the place and year of delivery. The text starts with a bible verse (usually a marked quotation), mostly from the Gospels (but also from other New Testament books). The verse is explained, applied to the occasion, and illuminated with other biblical (New or Old Testament) verses. In some cases, the author also invokes other authorities (Augustine, Gregory the Great). The biblical text is applied to the faithful and used to exhort and admonish.

Grediste [Grădiștea de Munte]

5th Sunday after Pentecost, 1814

The sermon quotes and comments Matt 5,22 (“anyone who is angry with a brother will answer for it before the court”), pleading for the importance of forgiveness. In the introduction, Olti illustrates the impact of anger with a striking example. The wrathful man sits in a wolf-drawn wagon, with a whip in his hand, and an iron hat on his head. Anger strips a man of his inner self, his vision is blurred, he no longer knows right from wrong, he behaves as if he were rabid. Anger is contrasted with neighbourly love: God teaches us to love and forgive one another. The need for forgiveness is underscored with an unmarked reference to St Augustine, who warns believers that a Christian who asks God for forgiveness but refuses to forgive the offender is insolent and shameless. If we forgive those who sin against us, God will also forgive our sins at the judgment. Let us be merciful to those who sin against us, and God will be merciful to us at the last judgment.

²³ The Missal was translated into Hungarian Xavér by Ferenc Szunyogh, OSB. *Magyar-latín misszálé az év minden napjára a római misekönyv szerint*, trans. Xavér Ferenc SZUNYOGH, Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1944. I follow here the second edition of the Missal, published in 1944. For the name of the Sundays and feasts I follow the pre-Vatican II structure of the liturgical year, its order and designations.

Ósebeshely [Sibişel] (1821)

Assumption Day

The sermon develops Luke 10,42, on Mary having chosen the better part, based on the name association. He evokes and compares the end of the earthly journey of Mary with that of Samuel. As Israel wept at the death of the prophet Samuel (an unmarked reference to 1 Sam 25,1), believers weep because their greatest intercessor, Mary, has died. Yet, with a rhetorical question he underscores the difference: “But what am I saying, did she die? She is not dead, but alive, by God.” This great feast invites rejoicing, because Mary has ascended to heaven and heavens have welcomed her. Mary has chosen the better part, and she will never lose it. She embodies before the audience the virtues of purity and humility. This is the better part, which every Christian must choose.

Sebeshely [Sebeşel] (1823)

Pentecost

The homily builds on Acts 1,8 (“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria”). He sets as an example the courage and faith of the apostles who dared to speak of the crucified and risen Jesus. He praises the courage of Peter, who confronts the Jewish authorities (“this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law”, Acts 2,23). This is the kind of courageous witness God expects of Christians. A witness of love, justice, forgiveness, humility, sacrifice. These are the virtues that set Christians apart from the Gentiles, and the Holy Spirit descends to teach us how to practice them.

Rodna Veche [Óradna] (1823–1824)

1823, Second Sunday of Lent

The sermon highlights the conclusion of the pericope of the transfiguration: “Lord, it is good for us to be here” (Matt 17,4). Those who sin every day cannot

reach the bliss of which St Paul wrote: “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2,9). The topic of sin evokes the simile about the sick needing a physician (Matt 9,12-13par.). The healthy person does not need medicine, but a sick person does. Similarly, the soul, the sinner needs the forgiveness of sins. Those who repent wholeheartedly partake in the mercy of God. The good deeds of the sinner are in vain; they are useless for salvation. If a sick man heeds to the advice of the physician, the sinner should also listen to the word of the priest. Repentance is the door to eternal life.

1823, Third Sunday of Advent

Toward the end of Advent, the sermon evokes John the Baptist pointing at Jesus (“John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know’”; John 1,26). John the Baptist, he argues, accused his contemporaries of being blind for not recognising the Messiah. There are many today who do not recognise Jesus and do not want to be saved from their sins. The wickedness of the heart is the source of all sin. He pinpoints ignorance as the reason why many do not recognise Jesus, and do not believe that He is the eternal Son of the Father. However, ignorance is no excuse. Sinners have no part in eternal bliss. The parable of the rich man and of the poor Lazarus warns us that God has to be recognised in this life (Luke 16,29-31).

1824, Second Sunday of Lent

This beautiful, carefully drafted homily builds on the introductory verse of the pericope of the transfiguration (“Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves”; Matt 17,1), focusing on the hope of eternal life. Transfiguration reveals the divine mystery in Jesus. It is a confirmation of the disciples who will face the horror of Jesus’ death on the cross. Referring to Matt 13,43, he shows that the transfiguration of Jesus is also a promise for the future (“the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father”). Again, he invokes the words of St Paul: “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2,9). He adduces several more biblical passages

that point to the beauty of eternal happiness: Matt 6,20 (“store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”), Rev 21,4 (“he will wipe every tear from their eyes”). Believers, persuaded by this vision, should say with Peter: “Lord, it is good for us to be here” (Matt 17,4). The preacher concludes with the confession of Job: “I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19,25).

1824, Fourth Sunday of Lent

The sermon builds on John 6,11: “Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated”. This verse taken from the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves has clear eucharistic overtones. Therefore the preacher turns to the institution and the worship of the Eucharist and to Holy Communion. “He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me” (John 6,57). Those who take Holy Communion unworthily are crucifying Jesus again, sinning against the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor 11,27). The unworthy Christian who takes communion is a murderer. Christians always have the opportunity to be purified in confession. Those who take communion unworthily are under judgment. The strong words are not meant to frighten the hearers, but the preacher does not succeed to encourage them either.

1824, Sixth Sunday after Easter

The homily explains John 16,2 (“They will put you out of the synagogues”). The author blames the Jews for having rejected Jesus and claims that God has punished them for it. Yet, he extends the warning to Christians, who may also expect punishment as sinners. Harsh and frightening warnings are taken from the Book of Isaiah and from Deuteronomy to describe the eternal damnation of the sinners: “their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh” (Isa 66,24); “The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness, and confusion of mind” (Deut 28,28). Sin blinds the person, who can no longer see the consequences of sin. Not only Jews, but also many Christians have been blinded by sin. Believers should pray the Lord to enlighten their eyes and preserve them from blindness.

1824, Quinquagesima Sunday

The sermon for the last Sunday before Lent starts from the dialogue between Jesus and the blind man of Jericho (“What do you want me to do for you? Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”, Luke 18,41). The author explains the importance and meaning of the forty days of fasting. The blind man wants to see, asking Jesus that he may see. Fasting is a commandment of the Church, but it must be taken seriously. It is not just a matter of not eating meat, but of avoiding mortal sins. A series of scriptural arguments on discipleship follow, emphasising that being a disciple of Jesus required taking up the cross (Matt 10,38). “Whoever listens to you listens to me” (Luke 10,16). Therefore, we must ask Jesus for light, as the blind man did, so that we too may see.

1824, Trinity Sunday

The sermon starts from the Great Commission in Matt 28,19 (“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”). It is not an abstract teaching on the Trinitarian doctrine but rather an elaborate teaching on baptism, with the ethical paraenesis ensuing from it. The preacher explains the significance of the feast, – a reminder of the greatest mystery of Christianity: the triune God. The Great Commission links belief in the Holy Trinity to baptism. Scriptures give precious promises related to baptism: we are made friends of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1,4), we may call God Abba, Father (Rom 8,15), and we put on Christ (Rom 13,14). We must therefore die to sin in order to live for God.

*Sebeshely [Sebeşel] (1828–1837)*1828, 19th Sunday after Pentecost

The homily discusses Matt 22,5 (“they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business”). Actualising the parable of the great banquet, he applies the invitation extended by the king to that of God, who calls the faithful to Mass through the ministry of priests. Olti repeats one of his favourite themes: the hardened hearts fail to hear the divine call. As a consequence, sin follows on

sin. Refusal to heed God's call is the beginning of sin. The insight is confirmed by a reference to Deuteronomy: "Beware lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today" (8,11). Those who fail to listen to the word of God cannot expect God to hear their prayer. The preacher pleads with his audience to strive to avoid deliberate sin.

1828, 21st Sunday after Pentecost

The explanation of the parable of the wicked servant (Matt 18,23-35), set in the *ecclesiastical sermon*, focuses again on the theme of forgiveness as reciprocation of divine mercy ("I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me", 18,32). Divine forgiveness is conditional on our willingness to forgive (Matt 5,23-24). The love of God is set as an example for believers. Olti associates the theme of forgiveness with the new commandment of self-sacrificing love, that comes up repeatedly in the Johannine literature ("We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another," 1 John 3,16; "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another", John 13,34). The sermon stands out by the fact that it regularly marks the scriptural quotations used to underscore the message.

1828, All Saints' Day

The main verse is taken from Matt 5,12. "Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven". This is a carefully crafted sermon with many scriptural examples, also quoting St. Bernard and St. Anselm. The author explains why the saints are blessed and rejoice. This does not come from earthly belongings, since Solomon had everything, yet he proclaims, that "all is vanity" (Eccl 1,1). Joy comes from God. Psalm 84,4 teaches "Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise". This bliss is evoked with words of Paul: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2,9) and of Psalm 36 (the fountain of eternal life is in heaven; and in the light of God we find the light of life).

1829, Sexagesima Sunday

“Some fell among thorns” (Luke 8,7). The sermon focuses on the parable of the sower (Luke 8,4-15), adducing further New Testament quotes to explain the failure of some of the seeds to produce a crop, whereas others fall into good ground and bear fruit. He invokes the allegorical interpretation of the parable, read in the light of Matt 13,37 (the sower is Christ), combined with Luke 8,11 (the seed is the word of God). The good soil is the good heart, enriched by the word of God (8,15). Scriptural passages are adduced to further explain how the word of God gives eternal life (John 6,68) and makes the heart rich. Woe to the unfruitful seed – those who come to church just to be seen, not to hear the word of God, and to the rich, “for the root of all evil is the lust for money” (1 Tim 6,10). The preacher asks that the hearts of the hearers be a fertile soil into which the word of God falls. It seems that the good priest became thirsty while writing the sermon, as after the Amen he noted in Romanian, in Hungarian script: “O kupe de vin”, “a cup of wine”.

1829, Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

A meticulously crafted sermon elaborates on Luke 13,14 (“There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day”), to plead for the observance and sanctification of the feasts and Sundays. He invokes scriptural arguments to highlight that God is Lord over all, and Sunday is his day. He combines Deut 5,14 (the seventh day is a day of rest to the Lord your God), with Matt 16,26 (“what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?”), to argue against working on Sunday for earthly gain. Many Christians do not observe the Sunday, begrudging the feast from God, like Judas begrudged the precious oil that Mary used to anoint Jesus’ head (John 12,5). This selfishness keeps many from attending Sunday Mass, spending their time playing cards and going to the pub. He quotes St Gregory the Great, that refraining from work enriches our souls with the fear of God. He calls the faithful to observe the feasts of the Lord.

1830, Good Friday

The sermon explains John 19,17: “carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha”. He

envisions Jesus as the high priest who offers his sacrifice on the cross (an allusion to Hebrews, which Olti assigns to Paul). Jesus sacrificed himself out of love, for us, because of our sins. Blessed is the High Priest (*“Blagoszlovit jeszte Preotul tsel máre”*). Jesus suffered Judas’ betrayal but reproached him for his deed, while calling him a friend. Contemplating the sacrifice of Jesus evokes compassion, but emotions are not sufficient. Sinners should bear in mind the fate that awaits them at the last judgment. The hearts of those who are not moved to mercy by Jesus’ suffering are hardened. But mourning for Jesus is not enough: on the way of the cross he warned the women that they should weep for themselves and for their children (Luke 23,28). The hearts of stone must be transformed,

1831, New Year’s Day

The sermon focuses on baptism, evoking the voice from heaven at Jesus’ baptism “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3,15). In baptism we are children of God (he adds here John 1,12 (“to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God”). The Holy Spirit descends on the baptised and in the power of the Spirit the works of the flesh can be overcome. Repentance, the silence of the Holy Mass, humility help Christians become true children of God.

1832, Third Sunday after Easter

The sermon anticipates the sorrow caused by the departure of Christ, based on John 16,20-22. Olti quotes the first verse (“Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy”). The apostles are sad because of Jesus’ departure, but their sadness turns to joy knowing that he will return. He evokes a number of biblical characters who have shed tears. Peter has wept and so did Mary Magdalene. David has wept for his son Absalom. Jeremiah has wept for Jerusalem. Suffering is part of the Christian life. Jesus warns that whoever wants to follow him must take up the cross. The Bible teaches however that sorrow will come to an end. The Egyptian captivity was followed by deliverance. The time of suffering is short, life is short, but God promises joy that no one can take away.

1832, Fourth Sunday of Advent

This very short, perhaps unfinished homily focuses on the times that preceded the coming of Christ, based on Luke 3,4 (“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight’”, a quote from Isaiah 40,3). Advent reminds believers of the time that anticipated the coming of Christ, and it is also a time of preparation for the second coming of Jesus and for his birth. We must be ready, celebrate nativity with joy and gladness.

1837, New Year’s Day

“God is not of the dead, but of the living, for to him all live” (Lk 20,38). This beautifully crafted sermon with many Bible quotations, illuminates the significance of the first day of the year. This is the feast of the name of Jesus, the eight day of Christmas on which the liturgy also commemorates the circumcision of Jesus. New Year’s Day is also an occasion for thanksgiving. Happy is the one who can be grateful. Anna, the mother of Samuel, gave thanks for the birth of her child, Job accepted both the good and the bad from God’s hand. Believers should enter the new year with the help and blessing of God.

Summary

Franciscan friars in 19th century Transylvania have crossed ethnic boundaries, providing spiritual guidance and support to the various indigenous ethnic groups, as well to newly settled Catholics. This study shows how István Olti, a Hungarian friar born in the Szeklerland, has preached over many years in Romanian communities.

The sermons are based on the biblical pericope of the day. The author explains the teaching of the Gospel, reinforcing the message with other biblical passages from the Old and New Testament, through references to prominent biblical characters. His Old Testament favourites are David and Job, but he also frequently invokes the prophets. The reference to further biblical verses, used to illuminate the main pericope, is mostly natural, like the link of various passages dealing with forgiveness, the love commandment or eschatological judgement. On other occasions, the associations are rather free, as in the Ascension sermon, where Luke 10,42 is applied to the Virgin Mary in virtue of the similarity of names.

Olti probably had access to a Romanian Bible, but he often seems to quote the biblical texts from memory. Further research is needed to identify his sources, possibly Hungarian sermons, which he adapted and translated to Romanian.

The sermons do not offer elaborate theological discussions. They are meant to give advice and admonish, applying the scriptural text to the life of the audience. Believers are repeatedly warned against sinning and called to remember that judgement awaits those who fail to repent. The sermons are not usually inspiring; they may even arouse fear in listeners. But exhortations to love God, to practice neighbourly love and forgiveness are also recurrent. Ultimately, the preacher focuses on eternal salvation, motivated by the vision of everlasting bliss: time and again he evokes 1 Cor 2,9, which seems one of his favourite passages (“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”). Strikingly, the sermons are entirely based on the Bible. Occasional quotes from early Christian or medieval authorities only strengthen the biblical message. Olti does not use edifying, pious stories, but simply exposes the teaching of the Gospel. The message of the homilies is mostly general, with occasional references to the communities they address.

Olti is not exempt from preconceptions and problematic views common in his time. Some sermons voice an anti-Jewish sentiment (the Jews did not accept Jesus and encountered divine punishment). On occasion he also expresses a negative view on women (Eve is responsible for the first act of disobedience).

Beyond the pastoral dimension that overcomes ethnic and linguistic barriers, the sermons are particularly interesting as contributions to the development of Romanian writing with Latin characters. The preacher recurs to a phonetic transcription of the Romanian text with Hungarian characters, in a period when writing and printing extensively used Cyrillic characters.

— 4 —

Medanyia Pe Sfantă Maria Măre) așezată pe înălțare
Sau lăsat în Sebeș-Pellj. 1821.

Măria Partice lăsat buna sau alăstă lăta nap. 10. lădi 212.
 Li si gye imbrăcătare; si gye bulurie pare, se jepte noar. Să gye
 adesti, Dăvare lărmăsi si brădyim; ke gye au plimle Cambrim lăst
 Israelul, pentru Mordya Prototulij Samuil; ke sau luat quella
 omul, Dăronul lor, si Parimgele lor; din tăt māj mōstare, tre trā:
 gye ke plimșeu, si ke anam noj pestelosi; ke apăr. Să māj māj
 tre a mōstare parimjōdare; si mājle murim, se luat gye la noj: Dăre
 se si jeju, ke au mori? se si jeju? se plimșeu, ke ke nje amari?
 Nu au murit se doarme. Doarme pe burtă mātare, tralulă quella
 noj la Peru totu si si atōo purură si jejujepe, ke se se buse
 pentru noj. Dăvare si dăre, si jare li. Dăvare; ke Maria her-
 dăpe dăvare a lăstă vāleap mōstare, sau dăp. La Dumnyedou, se nje
 mōstare Suleșe) tu rugăbanyile tral, se mōstare je. Dăre pemur
 se sepe si dă, la Peruri se mōstare, si se nje si tralbare, apăr
 Maria lăpedenye, gye lume, tu mōstare dăvare se dăre in Peruri, ap-
 țese tu mōstare dăvare, gye mōstare Dăvare mōstare. Tu agyovar
 gye mare dăvare jepte sua gye apăr, mōstare mōstare Maria Dăre
 Peruri se mōstare, in Peruri se mōstare, in Peruri se mōstare je:
 mōstare agyovar dăre pōt si dăre: ke Maria partice lăsat buna sau alăstă
 mōstare a lăstă, dăre mōstare je. Mōstare a lăstă mōstare mōstare
 ke dōgo fātră, din lăstă tral gye mōstare se se mōstare si
 Mājle lăstă, tu Dumnyedou se si. Dăre dăre viātră a lăstă, in lăstă
 mōstare Imperatice se mōstare, māj mōstare gye tăt lăstă mōstare, si gye:
 tăt lăstă mōstare mōstare. Dăre dăre in lăstă Maria se lăstă
 la partice buna sau alăstă, ke mōstare lăstă quella dăvare; a lăstă
 sau alăstă mōstare tu mōstare lăstă nje mōstare, dăvare, tu mōstare
 lăstă dăre; gye se se dăre noj mōstare. Suleșe Am mōstare.

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THE APPEARANCE AND SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN ANTIOCH

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Abstract. This study explores the origins and expansion of Christianity in Antioch, a major metropolis of the Roman Empire known for its cultural and religious diversity. The paper examines the initial introduction of Christianity by Judeo-Christians during the diaspora, highlighting the significant role of key figures such as the Holy Apostles Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. It delves into the establishment of the first Christian community in Antioch, the successful integration of Gentile converts, and the city's role as a pivotal center for the spread of Christianity to the Gentile world. The study also discusses the Council of Jerusalem's decisions on the inclusion of Gentiles and their implications for the Christian mission. Antioch is portrayed as a melting pot where new religious ideas, including Christianity, thrived, contributing to the city's transformation into a hub for the dissemination of the Christian faith.

Keywords: Jesus Christ, Christianity, the Holy Apostle Peter, the Holy Apostle Paul, the Holy Apostle Barnabas, Church, Antioch.

Introduction

Antioch, as a great metropolis of the Roman Empire, boasted in early Christianity a mixture of cultures, ethnic groups, and religious traditions². From a religious point of view, Antioch was a city in which various religious systems competed, trying to preserve, revitalize, or create the identity of its followers. Thus, on the pagan soil of Antioch, Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism took root. In this metropolis, where there were many inhabitants, the dominant religious element was idolatry, with its orgiastic worship of the deities of Phrygia, Egypt, Phoenicia,

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² Nicholas Thomas WRIGHT, *Pavel, Apostolul lui Iisus Mesia-o biografie*, (transl. Ierom. Nectarie Dărăban), Sibiu: Deisis, 2020, 104.

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Syria, Persia, and other countries. The Phoenician goddess Astarte used to even be offered human sacrifices. In addition to human sacrifice, licentiousness and human passions were shrouded in the garment of ritual worship of the gods³.

Thus, due to its confluence with the Greek and Oriental civilizations, the city eventually became home not only to the ancient Hellenistic cults of Zeus, Apollo, and the other gods of the Greek pantheon, but also the Syrian cults of Baal, and of the goddesses, as well as the religions of mysteries with their teaching about salvation, death, regeneration, eternal life. Because it was one of the most important cities⁴ of the Roman Empire, but also one of the largest trade centers in the ancient world, Antioch had people who brought not only goods from all corners of the Empire, but also new religious ideas, as it was the case also with Christian teaching⁵. The great metropolis was a melting pot of every kind of social and cultural group⁶. In this situation, if there was a city that needed to preach the gospel, it was certainly Antioch⁷.

Antiochian Christianity

We have the first information about the appearance of Christianity in Antioch from the Acts of the Apostles. Among the seven deacons whom the Holy Apostles chose and ordained was: “*Nicolaus⁸ of Antioch, a convert to Judaism*” (Acts 6, 5). Christianity was preached in Antioch, at first by the Judeo-Christians in the diaspora, who distinguished themselves as zealous missionaries, preaching the Savior Jesus Christ and the Greeks, thus succeeding in making as many conversions as possible to Christianity: “*This account satisfied them, and they gave glory to God, saying, God has clearly granted to the gentiles too the repentance that leads to life. Those who had scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, but they proclaimed the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, who came from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch*

³ SOTIRIOS, *Pavel, apostolul neamurilor*, (transl. Ilie Stănuș), Galați: Egumenița, 2019, 55.

⁴ Claude TRESMONTANT, *Sfântul Pavel și Taina lui Hristos*, (transl. Rodica Chiriacescu), București: Meteor Press, 2015, 75.

⁵ Adrian PODARU, *Ioan și reformarea Antiochiei: un proiect eşuat*, în: Adrian Muraru (ed) *Ioan Gură de Aur, Omilii la statui I*, Studiu introductiv, Iași: Polirom, 2011, 27 – 28.

⁶ N. T. WRIGHT, 104.

⁷ SOTIRIOS, 55.

⁸ Deacon Nicolaus was ordained to serve the faithful in the Hellenistic community.

where they started preaching also to the Greeks, proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus to them. The Lord helped them, and a great number believed and were converted to the Lord” (Acts 11, 18-21).

Therefore, among the first missionaries who came to Antioch were those who took refuge in Jerusalem⁹ in the year 36, due to the persecution that started there after the death of Archdeacon Stephen¹⁰. These missionaries who settled in Antioch¹¹ preached to the Jews, but also to the Greek-speaking pagans, eager to share the news of the Savior Jesus Christ¹². Thus, for the first time, Christianity set foot in a metropolis of the ancient world, founding a Church in a place that, through its connections with all parts of the world, seemed destined to become one of the centers of irradiation of the new faith¹³.

The Christian mission in Antioch was successful, and so the first community was born very quickly. This is because Christian teaching responded very well to the religious and cultural needs of the time and because ancient religious denominations and ancient philosophies tended to become matters of individual faith as people sought religious answers to their own problems and aspirations. In addition, there was also a practical reason the preaching in Antioch was so successful: being the capital of Syria and ruled by a legate, public order was well established. Thus, the risk of riots against new converts was much lower than in Jerusalem, for example, where persecution had already started. This is because Jerusalem was ruled by the procurator of Judea, who was officially inferior in both rank and power to the Syrian legate¹⁴.

As in the case of the mission in Samaria, the Church in Jerusalem, when it hears about the existence of Christians, sends Barnabas to Antioch¹⁵ to see and strengthen this community: “*The news of them came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas out to Antioch. There he was glad to see for himself*

⁹ Sabin VERZAN, *Sfântul Apostol Pavel*, București: Basilica, 2016, 68.

¹⁰ *Istoria bisericească universală*, Vol. I, De la întemeierea Bisericii până în anul 1054. Manual pentru Facultățile de Teologie din Patriarhia Română, Viorel IONIȚĂ – Daniel BENGĂ – Nicolae CHIFĂR – Adrian GABOR – Ioan-Vasile LEB – Constantin PĂTULEANU (eds), București: Basilica, 2019, 94.

¹¹ SOTIRIOS, 55.

¹² N. T. WRIGHT, 105.

¹³ Maurice GOGUEL, *La Naissance du Christianisme*, Paris, 1944, 207.

¹⁴ A. PODARU, 28.

¹⁵ C. TRESMONTANT, 75.

that God had given grace, and he urged them all to remain faithful to the Lord with heartfelt devotion; for he was a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large number of people were won over to the Lord” (Acts 11, 22-24). For the support of the Antiochian Christians, the Mother Church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas, who was one of the most respectable personalities of the apostolic age¹⁶.

Thus, a Christian community was established in Antioch, consisting of pagans and Jews. Barnabas was sent by the Holy Apostles to organize this community, and also to understand the perspective of the Greek-speaking communities. He was the one who guaranteed for Saul, in Jerusalem before the Holy Apostles, after his conversion on the road to Damascus. Barnabas was a Jew of the tribe of Levi, a native of Cyprus. At first, he was called Joseph, but in Jerusalem, after embracing Christianity, the Holy Apostles gave him the nickname Barnabas, which means the son of encouragement¹⁷, as St. Luke the Evangelist tells us: *“There was a Levite of Cypriot origin called Joseph whom the apostles surnamed Barnabas (which means ,son of encouragement”). He owned a piece of land and he sold it and brought the money and presented it to the apostles”* (Acts 4, 36-37).

When Barnabas arrived in Antioch, he realized that this was a good place for Christianity to enter the broad circles of paganism. That is why he thought that the Saint Paul could help him in his mission,¹⁸ being the most suitable person for this work¹⁹. Barnabas, through his zeal and kindness, succeeded in converting many Jews and Gentiles to Christianity. So, after his success, he went to Tarsus to call Saul²⁰ to help him organize and develop the Christian community in Antioch: *“Barnabas then left for Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch”* (Acts 11, 25). The Holy Apostles Paul and Barnabas were asked by the church leaders in Antioch to work together for future missionary action. Barnabas represented the Tradition of the Holy Apostles, and Paul created a new dynamic within this Tradition²¹. The two collaborated with local leaders for a whole year, teaching and guiding the growing new community²². During this

¹⁶ SOTIRIOS, 55.

¹⁷ N. T. WRIGHT, 101.

¹⁸ Liviu Galacticon MUNTEANU, *Viața Sfântului Apostol Pavel*, Cluj-Napoca: Renașterea, 2004, 34.

¹⁹ N. T. WRIGHT, 108.

²⁰ The future St. Paul, the Apostle.

²¹ SOTIRIOS, 55-56.

²² S. VERZAN, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

period of preaching Christianity, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas, endeavored to shape the new believers and their lives in common, in accordance with the good news of the events about Jesus Christ. Their preaching mission was successful, and the two succeeded in converting many heathens to Christianity, as they shared the view that through the death and resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ, barriers to the inclusion of nations fell²³. „*And it happened that they stayed together in that church a whole year, instructing a large number of people. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called ,Christians”* (Acts 11, 26).

Thus, in Antioch, the name Christian appears for the first time, which will represent not only a new word, but also a new idea. If before, in the Jewish community, Christians were called disciples, believers, brothers, saints, from now on, they will be called by the name of Christ. This will be a proper and specific name to them and will be borne by all who will come into the Church, both from Judaism and from paganism. We notice that in Antioch, the great metropolis, which was the pearl of the Orient, in a pagan environment, Christianity spread in a new environment, and also with a new name²⁴. If Jerusalem were the center of the Christianization of the Jews²⁵, Antioch would become the center of Christianization of the Gentiles. Another important Christian community will be formed in Syria, among the Jews and proselytes of Damascus.

In 44 AD, the Saint Apostle James (also called James the Great), the brother of the Saint Apostle John, became the first martyred apostle. By order of Herod Agrippa (41-44 AD), the grandson of Herod the Great, the Holy Apostle James was killed: “*It was about this time that King Herod started persecuting certain members of the church. He had James the brother of John beheaded*” (Acts 12, 1-2).

The murder of the St. Apostle James was a joy for some Jews, and so Herod Agrippa will arrest and imprison the Holy Apostle Peter: “*And when he saw that this pleased the Jews, he went on to arrest Peter as well. As it was during the days of Unleavened Bread that he had arrested him, he put him in prison, assigning four sections of four soldiers each to guard him, meaning to try him in public after the Passover*” (Acts 12, 3-4). The Holy Apostle Peter was miraculously released from prison by an angel, after which he went to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark.

²³ N. T. WRIGHT, 106.

²⁴ Călin Ioan DUȘE, *Imperiul Roman și creștinismul în timpul Sfântului Clement Romanul*, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020, 226 – 227.

²⁵ SOTIRIOS, 56.

Here were gathered many believers who were praying: *“It was only then that Peter came to himself. And he said, ‘Now I know it is all true. The Lord really did send his angel and save me from Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.’ As soon as he realized this, he went straight to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, where a number of people had assembled and were praying”* (Acts 12, 11-12).

After this episode, in which the Holy Apostle Peter escapes the arrest of Herod Agrippa, he left Jerusalem and went to another place, at the beginning of the year 48²⁶ in Antioch²⁷: *“Peter, meanwhile, was still knocking. When they opened the door, they were amazed to see that it really was Peter himself. He raised his hand for silence and described to them how the Lord had led him out of prison. He added, ‘Tell James and the brothers.’ Then he left and went elsewhere”* (Acts 12, 16-17).

We will also find St. Peter the Apostle among the Christians in Antioch with St. Paul the Apostle. Unfortunately, there was a discussion in Antioch about Christians from the Gentiles and those from the Jews. Thus, there was a wide and strong dispute within the Church.²⁸ There were many Jews who still considered the pagans to have a contagious impurity, which came from the culture of idolatry and immorality²⁹. Thus, Judeo-Christians demanded pagans, to first pass by the Mosaic law, and to observe particularly the circumcision on joining Christianity: *„Then some men came down from Judaea and taught the brothers, ‘Unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses you cannot be saved’”* (Acts 15, 1). In this situation, St. Paul and St. Barnabas strongly defended the teaching that Circumcision could not be obligatory for the reception of pagans into Christianity: *“This led to disagreement, and after Paul and Barnabas had had a long argument with these men it was decided that Paul and Barnabas and others of the church should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the question with the apostles and elders”* (Acts 15, 2).

Unfortunately, no matter how many and strong the arguments of St. Paul and St. Barnabas were, no definitive conclusion could be reached in Antioch concerning the claims of the Judaizers in Jerusalem. Due to the severity of the problem, the church in Antioch decided that the two of them, along with others, should go to Jerusalem³⁰: *“The members of the church saw them off, and as they passed through*

²⁶ N. T. WRIGHT, 164.

²⁷ *Istoria bisericească universală*, 77.

²⁸ S. VERZAN, 118.

²⁹ N. T. WRIGHT, 106.

³⁰ S. VERZAN, 119.

Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the gentiles had been converted, and this news was received with the greatest satisfaction by all the brothers” (Acts 15, 3).

Therefore, to solve this problem, which arose in the early Church, around 50 AD, the Holy Apostles gathered in Jerusalem for a council³¹. It is not the first time that St. Paul and St. Barnabas have come to Jerusalem as envoys of the Church of Antioch. This time, for the first time, they are now coming as envoys to submit to the Mother Church of Jerusalem a matter of Christian doctrine and missionary practice, which arose in the mission of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles and receiving them in the church.

In the apostolic age, this was the first and last case involving a Church, namely that of Jerusalem, in which the Holy Apostles and ordained ministers were active, in order to solve a problem with such an accentuated doctrinal character, like that raised by the delegation of the Church of Antioch, led by St. Paul and St. Barnabas³². *“When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and by the apostles and elders and gave an account of all that God had done through them. But certain members of the Pharisees’ party who had become believers objected, insisting that gentiles should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses. The apostles and elders met to look into the matter, and after a long discussion, Peter stood up and addressed them. ‘My brothers,’ he said, ‘you know perfectly well that in the early days God made his choice among you: the gentiles were to learn the good news from me and so become believers. And God, who can read everyone’s heart, showed his approval of them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to us. God made no distinction between them and us since he purified their hearts by faith. Why do you put God to the test now by imposing on the disciples the very burden that neither our ancestors nor we ourselves were strong enough to support? But we believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus.’ The entire assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul describing all the signs and wonders God had worked through them among the gentiles. When they had finished it was James who spoke. ‘My brothers,’ he said, ‘listen to me. Simeon has described how God first arranged to enlist a people for his name out of the gentiles. This is entirely in harmony with the words of the prophets, since the scriptures say: After that I shall return and rebuild the fallen hut of David;*

³¹ Nicolae CHIFĂR, *Istoria creștinismului*, vol. I, Sibiu: Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” Press, 2007, 31.

³² S. VERZAN, 119-120.

I shall make good the gaps in it and restore it. Then the rest of humanity, and of all the nations once called mine, will look for the Lord, says the Lord who made this known so long ago. My verdict is, then, that instead of making things more difficult for gentiles who turn to God, we should send them a letter telling them merely to abstain from anything polluted by idols, from illicit marriages, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (Acts 15, 4-20). At the end of the debate, the council decided that the Mosaic Law was not mandatory for pagan Christians, but especially to avoid idolatry, fornication, bloodlust, and strangled animals³³. If the council had accepted the obligation to circumcise this decision would have been tantamount to expelling them from the faith and transforming the Church into an annex or branch of the synagogue³⁴.

Therefore, the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem analyzed the conditions for the admission of Gentiles into the Church and wrote the decision which was sent to the Churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia³⁵: *“Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose delegates from among themselves to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas, known as Barnabas, and Silas, both leading men in the brotherhood, and gave them this letter to take with them: The apostles and elders, your brothers, send greetings to the brothers of gentile birth in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. We hear that some people coming from here, but acting without any authority from ourselves, have disturbed you with their demands and have unsettled your minds; and so, we have decided unanimously to elect delegates and to send them to you with our well-beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have committed their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, we are sending you Judas and Silas, who will confirm by word of mouth what we have written. It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves not to impose on you any burden beyond these essentials: you are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from illicit marriages. Avoid these, and you will do what is right. Farewell”* (Acts 15, 22-29).

These decisions of the Council of Jerusalem will constitute a new stage, which will be especially important in terms of promoting the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, but especially in terms of the distribution of missionaries in the pagan world. The results of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles will not be

³³ N. CHIFĂR, 31.

³⁴ S. VERZAN, 123-124.

³⁵ *Istoria bisericească universală*, 78.

long in coming, and the first Christians among the heathen who received the faith were the Greeks³⁶. Thus, the first missionaries to preach the gospel to the Greeks will be the missionaries who left Jerusalem because of the unrest for Stephen: *“This account satisfied them, and they gave glory to God, saying, ‘God has clearly granted to the gentiles too the repentance that leads to life.’ Those who had scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, but they proclaimed the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, who came from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch where they started preaching also to the Greeks, proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus to them. The Lord helped them, and a great number believed and were converted to the Lord”* (Acts 11, 18-21).

Shortly after the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, St. Peter the Apostle came to visit the Christian community in Antioch. He was received by St. Paul and by other Christians. Thus, in order not to deny the attitude he had at the end of the Council of Jerusalem, in the matter of receiving the pagans to Christianity and not to oppose the decisions made, St. Peter behaved according to the customs of the community of Antioch. There was no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in this community, and no one wondered what faith he had before his baptism. Also, the honor given to one was given by the way he understood to live Christianity, and therefore St. Peter did not make a distinction between believers either. He embraced them all with the same brotherly love, entered everyone’s homes, and talked with everyone. He also took part in agape and ate indiscriminately, not fearing that he would defile himself with the food of the heathen and of the Jews. Thus, the Holy Apostle Peter quickly gave up his Jewish customs so as not to differ in any way from others.

Shortly after the arrival of St. Peter the Apostle in Antioch, a number of Judeo-Christians came from Jerusalem, who were very zealous in the practice of Jewish rituals, claiming that they had been sent by St. James³⁷. He may have been one of those, who during the work of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem strongly urged the circumcision and fulfillment of other precepts of the Law to the pagans who entered Christianity. They were also surprised by the judeo-pagan fraternity, which existed within the Christian community in Antioch. Thus, the Judeo-Christians in Jerusalem could not understand how they could mingle with each other at the

³⁶ S. VERZAN, 163.

³⁷ N. T. WRIGHT, 162.

agape, the Jews with the Gentiles, and how they ate from each other food without thinking that it was defiled. Moreover, they were surprised by the attitude of St. Peter, who so quickly acquired the customs of Antioch.

Unfortunately, their reserved and almost hostile attitude towards Christians with pagan background, but also the reprehension of St. Peter and Judeo-Christians has caused unrest in the community of Antioch. Thus, they had no words of friendship or brotherhood with the pagan-Christians, keeping their distance, and with the Judeo-Christians they had harsh words of rebuke, since they left their ancestral customs and they have turned away from the true saving faith. Therefore, they did not sit together at the common table, lest they should be defiled if they mingled with the heathen. St. Peter the Apostle, for fear of being accused when returning to Jerusalem, for being caught up in pagan customs, sat down next to the Judeo-Christians from Jerusalem, as did the Jews from Antioch. Barnabas did the same, separating himself from the Gentile group of Christians. So, they felt abandoned, realizing that they had built a dividing wall between them and their Jewish brothers who had come from Jerusalem.

As a result of this incident, pagan Christians felt despised and humiliated, and only St. Paul the Apostle remained with them. This very delicate situation could become dangerous for the Christian community in Antioch, and therefore St. Paul, outraged by what had happened, had to defend the interests of the Christians of Antioch, but also of the Church. Thus, he arose in the assembly and condemned the attitude of the Holy Apostle Peter³⁸, as he confesses in the Epistle to the Galatians 2, 11-19: *“However, when Cephas came to Antioch, then I did oppose him to his face since he was manifestly in the wrong. Before certain people from James came, he used to eat with gentiles; but as soon as these came, he backed out and kept apart from them, out of fear of the circumcised. And the rest of the Jews put on the same act as he did, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. When I saw, though, that their behavior was not true to the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of all of them, ‘Since you, though you are a Jew, live like the gentiles and not like the Jews, how can you compel the gentiles to live like the Jews?’ We who were born Jews and not gentile sinners have nevertheless learnt that someone is reckoned as upright not by practicing the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ; and we too came to believe in Christ Jesus so as to be reckoned as upright by faith in Christ and not by practicing the Law: since no human being can be found upright by keeping the Law. Now if we*

³⁸ L. G. MUNTEANU, 52-54.

too are found to be sinners on the grounds that we seek our justification in Christ, it would surely follow that Christ was at the service of sin. Out of the question! If I now rebuild everything I once demolished, I prove that I was wrong before. In fact, through the Law I am dead to the Law so that I can be alive to God." Verse 19 is one of the most extraordinary statements ever written by a Jew in the first century AD or perhaps of any century³⁹.

Therefore, when St. Peter, along with Barnabas and the other Judeo-Christians, withdrew from the Gentile Christian community, St. Paul rebuked him in front of the faithful, and he will strongly defend the universality of Christianity⁴⁰.

Christianity in Antioch was also preached by other Apostles. Of prime importance was the visit of St. Peter, after the Council of Jerusalem. He came to Antioch and took part in the life of the Church here for a while, but unfortunately, we do not know how long he stayed⁴¹. It was a symbolic visit designed to strengthen the determination of the Holy Apostles regarding Christians who came from among the heathen. The later tradition made St. Peter the Apostle the founder of the Church of Antioch and the first bishop of this community, which could be explained from the following perspective: when the great ecclesiastical centers claimed that they were founded by the Holy Apostles (Alexandria claimed to be founded by Mark, Rome by Peter and Paul or by Peter alone, Jerusalem of Jacob, the Lord's brother), Antioch could not be inferior, stating that through his visit to Antioch St. Apostle Peter laid the very foundations of the Church there⁴². After the departure of St. Peter, the Apostle from Jerusalem in 44 AD, the trace of the Holy Apostles will be lost in Acts of the Apostles. The history of Christianity will be dominated, more than three decades from now on, by the exceptional personality of the Holy Apostle Paul⁴³.

The preaching of Christianity in Antioch by St. Paul

The one who managed to preach, to interpret, to systematize, but also to apply the Gospel of the Savior Jesus Christ to the social realities of the time was St.

³⁹ N. T. WRIGHT, 171.

⁴⁰ Ioan RĂMUREANU – Milan ȘESAN – Teodor BODOGOAE (eds), *Istoria Bisericească Universală*, vol. I (1-1054), București: IBMBOR, 1987, 62-67.

⁴¹ N. T. WRIGHT, 162.

⁴² A. PODARU, 28.

⁴³ RĂMUREANU – ȘESAN – BODOGOAE (eds), 67.

Paul. He was the most brilliant of the Holy Apostles, the most daring preacher of Christianity among the Gentiles, but also his doctrinaire, being considered after the Savior Jesus Christ the greatest genius of Christianity⁴⁴. We can also see that St. Paul is after the Savior Jesus Christ, the most familiar person in the New Testament, because the Acts of the Apostles, but also his fourteen epistles, speak of him.

He is the first theologian of Christianity, a precious witness, who can give us the most authentic view of the beginning of Christianity⁴⁵. Thus, the first and only time in human history when a man, by his own abilities and powers, but also by the grace of the Savior Jesus Christ, changed himself, but also the whole world, managing to create a new reality to which all mankind has been heading for two thousand years, feeling a deep thirst for God. Also, the culture of the spirituality of the East and the West is based on the Gospel of the Savior Jesus Christ, but also on the preaching of St. Paul⁴⁶. Through his life and activity, he dominated the life of early Christianity for more than three decades, from 36 to 67 AD.

From the Acts of the Apostles, which were written by his disciple St. Luke the Evangelist in Rome at the end of 63 AD⁴⁷, but also from his epistles, we can describe his life and missionary activity. Thus, from the moment of his conversion, the year 36, St. Paul entered the Christian community as a “chosen vessel” beginning his activity as a *called* apostle, preaching the Savior Jesus Christ: “*He began preaching in the synagogues, ‘Jesus is the Son of God.’ All his hearers were amazed, and said, ‘Surely, this is the man who did such damage in Jerusalem to the people who invoke this name, and who came here for the sole purpose of arresting them to have them tried by the chief priests?’ Saul’s power increased steadily, and he was able to throw the Jewish colony at Damascus into complete confusion by the way he demonstrated that Jesus was the Christ. Some time passed, and the Jews worked out a plot to kill him, but news of it reached Saul. They were keeping watch at the gates day and night in order to kill him, but the disciples took him by night and let him down from the wall, lowering him in a basket*” (Acts 9, 20-25).

⁴⁴ Ion CONSTANTINESCU, *Studiul Noului Testament, manual pentru seminariile teologice*, București: IBMBOR, 1981, 204.

⁴⁵ Mauro ORSATI, *Introducere în studiul Noului Testament* (transl. Călin Daniel PAȚULEA – Adriana ZAHARIA), Blaj: Buna Vestire, 2008, 251.

⁴⁶ SOTIRIOS, 47.

⁴⁷ Ioan CONSTANTINESCU, *Studiul Noului Testament, manual pentru seminariile teologice*, București: Credința Noastră, 1992, 130.

Saul's conversion and preaching astonished Christians and shocked the Jews, who wanted to kill him. He left Damascus and retired to Arabia for three years between 36-39 AD, where he meditated on the Bible and prepared for the new mission entrusted to him⁴⁸. St. Paul the Apostle chose Arabia, where he was led by The Lord alone, possibly even on Mount Sinai, the place where the Old Law was revealed, as the Apostle of the Gentiles suggests: "*now Sinai is a mountain in Arabia and represents Jerusalem in its present state, for she is in slavery together with her children*". (Gal. 4, 25). In Arabia, the Holy Apostle Paul was able to thoroughly learn the gospel. In the three years of silence in the wilderness of Arabia, the Holy Apostle Paul will lay the foundations of a brilliant apostolic work, through which he has succeeded in drawing all the nations of the world to Christ⁴⁹.

Therefore, the preparation of the Holy Apostle Paul was also three years, as well as that of the twelve Apostles. The teaching he received was identical with that of the Holy Apostles, as can be seen from his meeting in Jerusalem with Peter, James, and John, who were considered pillars of the Church: "*It was not until fourteen years had gone by that I travelled up to Jerusalem again, with Barnabas, and I took Titus with me too. My journey was inspired by a revelation and there, in a private session with the recognized leaders, I expounded the whole gospel that I preach to the gentiles, to make quite sure that the efforts I was making and had already made should not be fruitless. And when they acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, then James and Cephas and John, who were the ones recognized as pillars, offered their right hands to Barnabas and to me as a sign of partnership: we were to go to the gentiles and they to the circumcised*" (Gal 2, 1-2, 9).

In 39 AD, Saul came to Jerusalem for the first time after his return from Arabia and his second sojourn in Damascus. He wanted to draw close to the Holy Apostles, but everyone feared him because he was a great persecutor of Christianity. "*When he got to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple*" (Acts 9, 26). So, Saul had left Jerusalem as a murder and a persecutor, but now he returns repentant and persecuted. Unfortunately, in Jerusalem the position of the Holy Apostle Paul was difficult, both on the part of his compatriots, who were informed of his apostasy from Judaism, and on the part of Christians, who feared him because he persecuted the Church⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ *Istoria bisericească universală*, 93.

⁴⁹ SOTIRIOS, 39.

⁵⁰ SOTIRIOS, 49-50.

With the help of Barnabas⁵¹, he was introduced to the circle of the Holy Apostles, and told them how his conversion had taken place, but also how he had preached the Savior Jesus Christ in Damascus: *“Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to him and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached fearlessly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 9, 27-28). The fourteen days he spent in Jerusalem were especially important for St. Paul because he learned from St. Peter details about what the Savior Jesus Christ had done and taught. The meeting between the two great leaders of Christianity contributed to the knowledge and thorough connection of St. Paul with the Tradition of the Apostles and with the first Church. Also, during his time in Jerusalem, the Holy Apostle Paul did his apostolic work, speaking to the Jews and to the other nations about the Savior Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, the Jews rebelled against him and wanted to kill him. When the Christians found out about their intentions, they took him safely out of Jerusalem, and St. Paul went to Caesarea in Palestine, and from there he went to his native Tarsus⁵²: *“But after he had spoken to the Hellenists and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers got to know of this, they took him to Caesarea and sent him off from there to Tarsus”* (Acts 9, 29-30).

After his conversion to Christianity, the Jews considered Saul to be a renegade of the Jewish Law. From now on, he will be constantly persecuted and threatened by the Jews with death. As a Jew, Saul wanted all his life to convert them to Christianity and to make them understand that the Savior Jesus Christ is the Messiah of whom their prophets spoke. Unfortunately, he suffered greatly because he was often persecuted by his compatriots, and they did not understand his message. For this reason, his thirty-one years (36-67 AD) mission was among the Gentiles (heathen). This activity of his among the heathen was done at the entrustment and recommendation of the other Holy Apostles. Therefore, the Holy Apostle Paul and his friends will preach the gospel to the Gentiles, while the Holy Apostles James, Peter, and John will collaborate with the Jewish people⁵³.

⁵¹ S. VERZAN, 63-65.

⁵² SOTIRIOS, 50-52.

⁵³ N. T. WRIGHT, 116.

During his missionary work, St. Paul preached the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyria⁵⁴, going only to those places where the Savior Jesus Christ was not known. According to an approximate calculation in his activity of preaching the Gospel, the Holy Apostle Paul would have traveled almost thirty thousand kilometers⁵⁵, an impressive distance, if we consider the means of transportation of two thousand years ago. It should be noted that of all the Holy Apostles, Saul was best prepared to conduct a fruitful mission among the Gentiles. His outstanding qualities recommended him for this difficult mission. Being a Jew by birth and education, having a theological training as a rabbi and the zeal of a Pharisee, Saul was at the same time a Hellenist by culture and a good connoisseur of the Greek language. Let us not forget that he was a Roman citizen, having legal rights, which the other Holy Apostles did not have, and thus his qualities made him a perfect person to be able to conduct, in the best and most efficient conditions, the Christian apostolate.

During his mission, St. Paul the Apostle, first addressed the Jewish communities in the diaspora, the proselytes, after which he addressed those who were part of the Greco-Roman world, especially the big cities, because their population was even more interested in latest ideas. When he considered that he had formed and organized a local Christian community, St. Paul kept them under close supervision through visits and stayed connected with this community through messengers, but also through letters. These epistles include counsel, exhortations, but also clarification of doctrinal or moral issues.

After completing his work of preaching the gospel in Jerusalem, St. Paul began his mission in the heathen world. Although the Acts of the Apostles does not mention this, St. Paul speaks of his mission in Syria and Cilicia: *After that I went to places in Syria and Cilicia* (Gal. 1, 21). Thus, following this mission, which lasted from 40-42 AD, flourishing churches were established in Syria and Cilicia⁵⁶.

St. Paul was called by Barnabas in 42 AD in Antioch where, for a year, they preached and converted many to Christianity: *“Barnabas then left for Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened*

⁵⁴ In ancient times, Illyria was a province located in the west of the Balkan Peninsula, between the Adriatic Sea, the Morava River and Pannonia. The Romans conquered it in 168 BC. The most important cities in the province were Apollonia in Albania and Rihzon (now Risan) in Macedonia.

⁵⁵ M. ORSATI, 256-257.

⁵⁶ S. VERZAN, 67.

that they stayed together in that church a whole year, instructing a large number of people. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called, Christians” (Acts 11, 25-26). So, Paul began his activity in Antioch as an Apostle of the Savior Jesus Christ. Now the most beautiful period of his life has begun. The two Apostles worked for a long time, together with the priests from Antioch to implement a unique plan, part of the divine economy, for the salvation of humankind⁵⁷. Here, in Antioch, the disciples will receive the name of Christians for the first time, and since then this term has become popular throughout the world⁵⁸.

Thus, Antiochian Christianity was strengthened by the preaching of St. Paul and St. Barnabas, followers of the *new sect*. The missionary activity of the Holy Apostle Paul was crowned with success, and his sermon was heard by the broad circles of the pagans, who converted to Christianity. Thus, in Antioch, a growing Christian community was formed, and within it there was full harmony between Jews and Gentiles.

This was the first community in which the teaching of the Savior Jesus Christ succeeded in blurring the distinction between Jews and heathens. It was a marvelous thing for the Jews to be acquainted with the Gentiles, because until then they always tried to avoid any connection with the other nations, not to be defiled, as they became acquainted with them. Antioch became the first place in which a new kind of trans-ethnic community life appeared⁵⁹. And this miracle was done by St. Paul and Barnabas only in one year, because before the great apostle there was no more the Jew and the heathen, but the new man whom the Savior Jesus Christ calls for salvation. Thus, the dominion of the Jewish Law has been abolished, and so one who acknowledges Jesus Christ, receiving his teaching, he is received into his Church through baptism, whether he was Jewish or a Gentile. This is because baptism erases differences, because it gives birth to a new man who does not belong anymore to the past. What the other apostles accomplished among the sons of the same nation, the Holy Apostle Paul succeeded in doing among the sons of different nations, and in the Christian community of Antioch we thus have the image of God's kingdom on earth. Thus, the first universal Church was founded in Antioch⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ SOTIRIOS, 56.

⁵⁸ SOTIRIOS, 57.

⁵⁹ N. T. WRIGHT, 111.

⁶⁰ SOTIRIOS, 57.

The Christian community in Antioch is the beginning of what would become the future Christian communities, which will be born inside paganism. This spirit of Christian unity, which St. Paul succeeded in inspiring in the Christian community of Antioch, attracted many Christians from Jerusalem. They came to see how the Jews could live with the Gentiles, praising the same God, how they could share the same chalice, and how they could eat agape at the same table. Among those who came from Jerusalem was Agabus. He foretold a famine that would come upon Jerusalem, and this prophecy was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius (41-54 AD)⁶¹: *“While they were there some prophets came down to Antioch from Jerusalem, and one of them whose name was Agabus, seized by the Spirit, stood up and predicted that a severe and universal famine was going to happen. This in fact happened while Claudius was emperor. The disciples decided to send relief, each to contribute what he could afford, to the brothers living in Judaea. They did this and delivered their contributions to the elders through the agency of Barnabas and Saul.”* (Acts 11, 27-30).

Unfortunately, we do not have data on the number of Christians in this period, but the community in Antioch must have been strong enough if in 46 or 47⁶² it was able to send financial aid to the Jerusalem community, which was suffering from a famine that had broken out in that area⁶³. So, in the year 43-44, the famine began in Jerusalem, and the Antiochians sent the Holy Apostles Paul and Barnabas with the help they had gathered⁶⁴. This is the first splendid example of Christian love, which binds Christians in two cities, two countries, and two different nations, and Jerusalem and Antioch became sister churches⁶⁵. Thus, Christians in Antioch were the first to become one translocal community with mutual responsibilities⁶⁶. This help of the Antiochians was especially important because the Christians in Jerusalem were suffering from hunger, but also from the bloody persecution that King Herod Agrippa (41-44 AD) unleashed in 44 AD. As a result of this persecution, St. James the Apostle was killed, the pillar of the Church in Jerusalem⁶⁷.

⁶¹ L. G. MUNTEANU, 34–35.

⁶² N. T. WRIGHT, 111.

⁶³ A. PODARU, 28.

⁶⁴ C. TRESMONTANT, 75.

⁶⁵ SOTIRIOS, 57.

⁶⁶ N. T. WRIGHT, 111.

⁶⁷ C. I. Dușe, 235, 242.

The Holy Apostle Paul is coming to Jerusalem on this occasion for the second time as an apostle.⁶⁸ He hoped to meet the other apostles as well, but they left Jerusalem because of Herod Agrippa's persecution. Thus, he met only with the priests who remained among the faithful, to whom he offered material help, but also the apostolic consolation and encouragement. St. Paul and St. Barnabas did not stay long in Jerusalem. During the few days they stayed here, they took refuge in Maria's house, Barnabas' sister. She was a widow and lived with her son Mark, being one of the women who considered herself a disciple of the Lord. In Jerusalem it is possible that St. Paul had the revelation of which he speaks in (2 Cor 12, 2-4): *"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago - still in the body? I do not know, or out of the body? I do not know: God knows - was caught up right into the third heaven. And I know that this man - still in the body? or outside the body? I do not know, God knows-was caught up into Paradise and heard words said that cannot and may not be spoken by any human being."* Through this revelation St. Paul was prepared and strengthened by God for the difficulties he would face in the mission among the heathen. At the end of the meeting with the leaders of Jerusalem, the Holy Apostle Paul urges them to continue⁶⁹ the charitable activity: *"They asked nothing more than that we should remember to help the poor, as indeed I was anxious to do in any case."* (Gal 2, 10).

After fulfilling their charitable mission entrusted to them by the Antioch Christians, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas, returned to Antioch⁷⁰. When they left Jerusalem, at the request of Mark, the son of Mary and the grandson of Barnabas, St. Paul, took John with them to Antioch: *"Barnabas and Saul completed their task at Jerusalem and came back, bringing John Mark with them."* Acts 12, 25. Mark is the young man who mentions in his Gospel that he was following the Savior Jesus Christ when the soldiers arrested him in the Garden of Gethsemane and fled when they wanted to catch him: *"A young man followed with nothing on but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the cloth in their hands and ran away naked"* (Mk. 14, 51-52). So, Mark grew up and lived in an apostolic environment, certainly knowing the Savior Jesus Christ. He was also well acquainted with the teachings and works of the Lord, as is clear from the gospel he carefully wrote, in accordance with the preaching of St. Peter, which he had accompanied for years. It

⁶⁸ S. VERZAN, 69.

⁶⁹ N. T. WRIGHT, 111.

⁷⁰ S. VERZAN, 69.

is no coincidence that the Gospel written by the St. Mark is also called the Gospel of the Gentiles, „because of his connection to Antioch⁷¹.

After arriving in Antioch, the two continued their preaching work. Within the Antioch Church, St. Paul will complete his training as a Christian missionary in terms of missionary practice, pedagogy, and the art of exposing the evangelical truth to the Gentiles⁷². The Holy Apostles Paul and Barnabas determined that Antioch, the great Hellenistic center, should be the starting point for missionary travel⁷³. St. Paul also succeeded in training a number of disciples in Antioch, who gave him great hope that he would be able to continue his missionary work⁷⁴. During his missionary activity in Antioch, St. Paul was helped by Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen: *“In the church at Antioch the following were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul”*. (Acts 13, 1).

Due to missionary activity, the Church in Antioch developed even further in the following years, and the Greek language and culture were the vehicle of international Christianity. Thus, the Holy Spirit counted among the faithful prophets and teachers, who came from different countries, in which the international Greek spirit dominated. Among them are Lucius of Cyrene (North Africa), Simeon called Niger and Manaen, who grew up in the royal palaces with Herod the Tetrarch. Among them was born the desire for the gospel to be preached in their own lands and in other nations. In the spring of 45 AD, the leaders of the Church of Antioch, after fasting and praying, asked God to show them His will regarding the mission to the Gentiles⁷⁵.

Thus, St. Paul was chosen by the Holy Spirit, most likely during the „Breaking of Bread,” along with Barnabas, as a missionary to the pagan world. After this election followed the official consecration of the two: *“One day while they were offering worship to the Lord and keeping a fast, the Holy Spirit said, ‘I want Barnabas and Saul set apart for the work to which I have called them.’ So it was that after fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, these two, sent on their mission by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and from there set sail for Cyprus.”* (Acts 13, 2-4). Therefore, this moment represents the consecration

⁷¹ SOTIRIOS, 59-60.

⁷² S. VERZAN, 70.

⁷³ SOTIRIOS, 54.

⁷⁴ L. G. MUNTEANU, 36-37.

⁷⁵ SOTIRIOS, 60.

of St. Paul as a missionary for the Gentiles and the beginning of the missionary journey⁷⁶. The Church of Antioch became the center of its missionary activity for the pagan world⁷⁷. St. Paul will leave his best collaborators to lead the Christian community in Antioch, collaborators whom he has invested with the gracious power to perform the Holy Sacraments⁷⁸.

Together with Barnabas and John Mark, they set out on their first missionary journey, which took place between 45 and 48 AD (Acts 13, 2-14, 28). This is the beginning of the missionary journeys of St. Paul the Apostle, who, through his work of preaching the gospel in the pagan world, was also called the Apostle to the Gentiles⁷⁹. In his missionary activity, St. Paul addressed, first, the Jewish communities, the proselytes, and then those of the Greco-Roman world. He preferred the larger cities of the Roman Empire, because here the interest in innovative ideas was greater. In his missionary activity, St. Paul was helped by fellow Jews, but also by some of the Gentile converts⁸⁰.

The preaching mission St. Paul took place over a vast area. Thus, after completing the preaching mission, the two will return and visit the cities they passed on arrival, reaching Perga, and from here they headed to the port of Attalia, to embark for Antioch in Syria. Following the sermons, but also the miracles they performed, St. Paul and St. Barnabas succeeded in converting many Jews and Gentiles. They established and organized communities, for which they ordained priests: *“The disciples came crowding round him but, as they did so, he stood up and went back to the town. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. Having preached the good news in that town and made a considerable number of disciples, they went back through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. They put fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith, saying, ‘We must all experience many hardships before we enter the kingdom of God.’ In each of these churches they appointed elders, and with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. They passed through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. Then after proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia and from there*

⁷⁶ S. VERZAN, 70.

⁷⁷ *Istoria bisericească universală*, 94-95.

⁷⁸ L. G. MUNTEANU, 37.

⁷⁹ S. VERZAN, 70.

⁸⁰ *Istoria bisericească universală*, 95.

sailed for Antioch, where they had originally been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed” (Acts 14, 20-26)⁸¹.

After returning from their first missionary journey St. Paul and St. Barnabas presented a report to the community that mandated them in this mission⁸². They described the results of their mission among the Gentiles: “*On their arrival they assembled the church and gave an account of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the gentiles.*” (Acts 14, 27). The two will continue to preach the gospel in the community of Antioch between the years 48-50.

Because of some Judeo-Christians who came from Judaea and learned that the pagans who would convert to Christianity would have to obey the requirements of the Mosaic Law on Circumcision, there was a disturbance in the community of Antioch. To solve this problem, St. Paul and St. Barnabas, together with Titus, went to Jerusalem as delegates of the Church of Antioch.⁸³ This is where the Apostolic Council of 49/50 took place, which decided that the pagans, who would convert to Christianity, would not be obliged to obey the requirements of the Mosaic Law but would have to “*abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from illicit marriages*”. (Acts 15, 29).

The Council of Jerusalem represents for St. Paul the moment of his final and full consecration as a missionary and minister of the Gospel. Thus, his primacy will be recognized in the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles: “*On the contrary, once they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been entrusted to me, just as to Peter the gospel for the circumcised (for he who empowered Peter’s apostolate to the circumcision also empowered mine to the gentiles), and when they acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, then James and Cephas and John, who were the ones recognized as pillars, offered their right hands to Barnabas and to me as a sign of partnership: we were to go to the gentiles and they to the circumcised*”. (Gal 2, 7-9). Therefore, the importance and value of the missionary work of St. Paul and St. Barnabas is emphasized, but also of the path they have opened in the direction of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. The whole Pauline soteriology will be based on the debates and decisions of the Council of Jerusalem. This was also the reason such a theology will enjoy in the apostolic age an exceptional reception and appreciation, and in the future, it will become the basis of any theological development.

⁸¹ C. I. Dușe, 269.

⁸² *Istoria bisericească universală*, 95.

⁸³ RĂMUREANU – ȘESAN – BODOGOAE (eds), 71-75.

The delegates of the Council of Jerusalem, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Judas, after arriving in Antioch, will present the synodal letter to the faithful: *“The party left and went down to Antioch, where they summoned the whole community and delivered the letter. The community read it and were delighted with the encouragement it gave them. Judas and Silas, being themselves prophets, spoke for a long time, encouraging and strengthening the brothers.”* (Acts 15, 30-32). The decisions of the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem in Antioch enjoyed wide and earnest presentations, which certainly met the united support of the joy of the faithful in this Church. St. Paul the Apostle and Barnabas continued to teach and catechize the faithful in Antioch⁸⁴. They were assisted in this mission by other ministers of the Antiochian Church⁸⁵: *“Paul and Barnabas, however, stayed on in Antioch, and there with many others they taught and proclaimed the good news, the word of the Lord”* (Acts 15, 35).

In the summer or fall of 51 A.D., after parting with Barnabas and the community of Antioch⁸⁶, St. Paul the Apostle went on a second missionary journey with Silas. At the end of his missionary journey from Ephesus, St. Paul returned to Antioch, passing through Caesarea in Palestine and Jerusalem⁸⁷. He arrives in Antioch, with his whip scars, and enjoys the warm welcome of his brothers⁸⁸. Here was his place of rest, and where he felt at home amid the community he founded. He stayed here to recover from the hardships of his second missionary journey. During this time, St. Paul enjoyed the prosperity of the Christian community in Antioch. In the spring of 54 AD, he embarks on his third missionary journey⁸⁹ between 54-58 AD. (Acts 18, 23-21:15). He went with his companions from Antioch, the main target being Ephesus⁹⁰, which was the most important city on the coast of Asia Minor.

Conclusions

From all presented above, we can say with full certainty that regarding the missionary activity that St. Paul conducted during his life, it has two important

⁸⁴ SOTIRIOS, 85.

⁸⁵ S. VERZAN, 138-139.

⁸⁶ L. G. MUNTEANU, 56.

⁸⁷ *Istoria bisericească universală*, 96.

⁸⁸ SOTIRIOS, 107.

⁸⁹ L. G. MUNTEANU, 74-75.

⁹⁰ SOTIRIOS, 107.

stages. Thus, the first stage is the one that took place before the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, and the second is the one that follows it.

In the first stage, between 36-50 AD, St. Paul receives, in a supernatural way, the Gospel, after which he becomes known and recognized by the Church in Jerusalem, but also by the Holy Apostles. After that, he will prove his qualities as a great Apostle, in Syria, Cilicia, Antioch, but also during his first missionary journey. In this first stage of his missionary activity, St. Paul collaborated with Barnabas, who was one of the most important missionaries of the Church at that time.

In the second stage, between 50-67 AD, St. Paul was the main preacher of the Gospel to the Gentile peoples, benefiting also from the mandate entrusted to him in this respect by Peter, James, and John, the three pillars of the Church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2, 7-9).

We can also say that the primary history of the Church has two important stages. Thus, in the first stage, the gospel was preached with priority to the Jews, Jerusalem, Palestine, and even the diaspora. In this first stage, the acceptance of the pagans into Christianity is especially exceptional and accidental, and such actions took place under divine inspiration. Also, during this first stage, especially in Jerusalem and to a lesser extent in Antioch, a massive group of missionaries will be trained who, especially after the Apostolic Council, will preach the Gospel and establish Churches within the Roman Empire.

In the second stage of the development of the Church, which follows the Apostolic Synod of Jerusalem, all Christian missionaries, led by St. Paul the Apostle and the other Holy Apostles, will travel throughout the Roman Empire to fulfill the command of the Savior Jesus Christ to carry the Gospel to all the nations under the sun⁹¹.

The activity of the Holy Apostles took place around 70 AD, when all of them ended their lives in martyrdom, except for St. John the Apostle, who will live until 100 AD. Thus, he created a close connection between the apostolic age and that of the Apostolic Fathers⁹².

⁹¹ Pr. dr. Sabin VERZAN, *op. cit.*, p. 117-118.

⁹² Nicolae CHIFĂR, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

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REFLECTION ON THE EXCEPTIONS TO THE GENERAL NORM ON DOLUS IN THE PIO-BENEDICTINE CODE OF CANON LAW

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Abstract. Canon 103, § 2 of the 1917 Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law stated that juridical acts placed out of *dolus* were valid, if the law did not state otherwise. However, there were four instances when the law did state otherwise, namely; in case of canonical election, if the voter was subject to *dolus* in order to vote for a certain person, the vote was invalid (canon 169, § 1); in the case of resignation, the law stated that the resignation was invalid if it was made out of *dolus* (185); in the case of novitiate, the law stated that the novitiate was invalid if the person who entered into religious life would have been induced by *dolus* to do that, or if the Religious Superior would have been induced by *dolus* to receive a candidate into religious life (542, 1°); and in the case of religious profession, the law stated that the religious profession had to be given without *dolus* (572, § 1, 4°) in order to be valid. Yet, the canonical commentators pointed out that there were some requirements in each case for *dolus* to invalidate the juridical act. Thus, in the case of canonical election it must be proved that the voter voted being deceived by either substantial *dolus* or antecedent *dolus*. Merely concomitant *dolus* had no effect on voting. In the case of a resignation from an office again it must be proved that either substantial or antecedent *dolus* was involved. The same thing was true in the case of the admission to the novitiate and in the case of religious profession, i.e. either substantial or antecedent *dolus* must be involved.

Keywords: Dolus, Juridical Act, Valid, Invalid, Canonical election, Resignation, Novitiate, Religious profession, Canon Law, Canonical Commentators.

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Introduction

Canon 103, § 2 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law² states the general norm regarding juridical acts placed out of *dolus*, that is, juridical acts placed out of *dolus* are valid „unless the law states otherwise.”³ Yet, there are certain instances when the law states that a juridical act placed out of *dolus* is invalid. These instances will be treated in this paper.

The aim of this paper is to analyze exceptions to the general rule governing the impact of *dolus* on legal acts, exceptions found in the 1917 Code and analyzed by a variety of commentators.

This analysis will follow a consistent procedure: the presentation of each exception to the general norm with an explanation for that exception based upon canonical commentaries. One point must be kept in mind: for the most part, commentators directed their attention to four exceptions to the norm governing *dolus*, namely, those exceptions found in canons 169, § 1; 185; 542, l°; 572, § 1, 4^o. In the light of this fact, the analysis shall focus upon these four key exceptions and then refer to the exception given scant attention, namely, that found in canon 677. The paper will end with a summary of the issues treated throughout it.

² Henceforth cited as the 1917 Code.

³ 1917 Code, c. 103, § 2: *nisi aliud iure caveatur. Codex Iuris Canonici Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus*, Rome. English translation from *The Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law, in English Translation with Extensive Scholarly Apparatus*, San Francisco 2001. All subsequent English translation of canons from this code will be taken from this source unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ Gérard FRANSEN, *Le dol dans la conclusion des actes juridiques: évolution des doctrines et système du code canonique*, Gembloux 1946, 391-403. Maximilian LEMOSSE, “Dolus (Évolution historique de la théorie du),” In *Dictionnaire de droit canonique contenant tous les termes du droit canonique avec un sommaire de 1 histoire et des institutions et 1 état actuel de la discipline*, ed. R. Naz, 1357-1372. vol. 4, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1949, 1350-1351. Cesare BADIL, “Il dolo nel Codice di Diritto Canonico,” *Il Diritto Ecclesiastico* 40, Florence: Casa Editrice Leo S. Olschki, 1929, 312-314. Mattheus Conte CORONATA, A. *Institutiones Iuris Canonici*. 4 edition, vol. 1, Rome: Marietti, 1950, 183.

The impact of *dolus* on canonical election

Canon 169, § 1, 1^o of the 1917 Code states: „A vote is null unless it was: Free; and therefore, the vote is invalid if the electors, directly or indirectly, were subjected to grave fear or *dolus* in order to vote for a certain person or for several together”⁵.

Before explaining this canon, it is important to describe a canonical election. Ayrinhac provides the following description for a canonical election: „a canonical election, as distinct from other modes of appointment to offices, is the canonical calling of a fit person to a vacant ecclesiastical office or benefice, by the votes of the lawful electors”⁶.

From this description it is clear that canon 169, § 1, 1^o requires freedom for the electors in electing a suitable person to an ecclesiastical office or benefice. This freedom required by the canon can be canceled by the use of *dolus*. Seen from this point of view, Fransen states that the canon offers no difficulty in providing a clear understanding of its meaning⁷. However, Badii says that this canon includes the fundamental distinction between antecedent and concomitant *dolus* and between direct and indirect *dolus*. Also, Badii points out that this canon punishes antecedent *dolus* and not merely concomitant *dolus*⁸.

Furthermore, Badii indicates that there are two requirements for *dolus* to invalidate a vote.

Firstly, it must be proven that the elector, because he or she was deceived by fraudulent means, voted for a certain person or a group of determined persons for whom he or she would not have voted otherwise.

Secondly, it must be proven that the fraudulent means employed either directly or indirectly by the deceiver to deceive the elector succeeded in deceiving the elector to vote for a certain person or for several persons together. In other words, it must be proved that the voting is the outcome of *dolus*⁹. Ayrinhac says that it

⁵ 1917 Code, c. 169, § 1, 1^o: *Suffragium est nullum, nisi furit: si elector metu gravi aut dolo, directe vel indirecte, adactus fuerit ad eligendam certam personam aut plures disiunctive.*

⁶ Henry A. AYRINHAC, *General Legislation in the New Code of Canon Law*, New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1923, 329.

⁷ FRANSEN, 393-394.

⁸ BADI, 312.

⁹ BADI, 312.

must be proven that *dolus* had „a determining effect on the vote, whether this had been intended or not”¹⁰.

Additionally, it is noteworthy to point out that according to canon 169, § 1, 1°, the influence of *dolus* can be either direct or indirect on the vote cast by the voter. *Dolus* influences directly the vote when its purpose, „clearly intimated to the elector, aims precisely at determining his choice”¹¹. On the other hand, *dolus* affects indirectly the vote „when either the precise purpose is absent or it is not clearly intimated to the elector, though the effect is the same as if the influences were direct”¹². Abbo and Hannan give the following example in this regard: „the elector, suffering from the injustice of Luke, hopes to be freed from it by voting for the latter’s friend”¹³. Moreover, there are certain canonical commentators who point out that *dolus* also indirectly influences the vote when it is brought against the relatives of the voter or other members of the voter’s household¹⁴. Unfortunately, they provide no examples in this regard to help us understand better their point.

Finally, Abbo and Hannan point out that a whole canonical election can be invalidated by *dolus* if its influences „were brought to bear on the entire body of electors or a majority of them, or even on only one of them if his vote were needed for the decisive majority attained in the election”¹⁵.

In succinct form, canon 169, § 1, 1° establishes that *dolus* invalidates a vote in as much as *dolus* negatively affects the absolute freedom of the voter in the act of election.

¹⁰ AYRINHAC, 335.

¹¹ John A. ABBO – Jerome D. HANNAN, *The Sacred Canons. A Concise Presentation of the Current Disciplinary Norms of the Church*, vol. 1, Revised Edition, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957, 229.

¹² ABBO – HANNAN, 229.

¹³ ABBO – HANNAN, 229.

¹⁴ Ioannes CHELODI, *Ius canonicum de personis praemissis notionibus de iure publico ecclesiastico de principiis et fontibus iuris canonici*, 3rd ed., Vicenza 1957, 225. See also Udalricus BESTE, *Introductio in Codicem*, 3rd ed., Collegeville MN 1946, 213; Abbo and Hannan, *The Sacred Canons. A Concise Presentation of the Current Disciplinary Norms of the Church*, vol. 1, 229-230.

¹⁵ ABBO – HANNAN, 230. Unfortunately, Abbo and Hannan offer no example for their final remark.

The Impact of Dolus on Resignation

A second instance in which *dolus* invalidates a juridical act is found in the case of resignation by which one loses an ecclesiastical office. According to Abbo and Hannan resignation is „a natural or juridical fact by which the incumbent ceases to hold title to his office with its accompanying rights and obligations”¹⁶. Also, according to Vermeersch and Creusen, „resignation is the free dismissal from an ecclesiastical office”¹⁷. Wernz and Vidal provide an even more complete description for resignation, namely, „Resignation is the free dismissal from his own office or ecclesiastical benefice for a just cause and it is legitimately done with the acceptance of the competent ecclesiastical superior”¹⁸.

The canonical understanding of resignation provides a means to assess canon 185 of the 1917 Code and the impact of *dolus*: „Resignation is invalid by law if it was made out of grave fear unjustly inflicted, [or from] fraud, substantial error, or simony”¹⁹.

According to this canon, if a person resigns from an ecclesiastical office due to *dolus*, the resignation is invalid by the law itself.

Badii states that this canon does not encompass all the cases in which a resignation is achieved through *dolus*. Yet, he points out that this canon encompasses only those cases in which the resignation was done out of antecedent²⁰ *dolus*. He insists that this canon does not include those cases in which resignation was done out of concomitant *dolus*. Moreover, Badii states that *dolus* must be the determining cause of resignation in order to invalidate the resignation, which means that only antecedent *dolus* can be the cause of a resignation. Also, he states that a resignation done out of concomitant²¹

¹⁶ ABBO – HANNAN, 242.

¹⁷ *Renuntiatio est libera dimissio officii ecclesiastici*. In Arthur VERMEERSCH – Joseph CREUSEN, *Epitome Iuris Canonici*, 8th ed., vol. 1, Mechlini – Rome: H. Dessain, 1963, 288.

¹⁸ *Renuntiatio est libera dimissio proprii officii seu beneficii ecclesiastici ex iusta causa et cum acceptatione competentis Superioris ecclesiastici legitime facta*. In Franz X WERNZ – Petri VIDAL, *Ius Canonicum*, vol. 2, Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1927, 389.

¹⁹ 1917 Code, c. 185: *Renuntiatio ex metu gravi, iniuste incusso, dolo aut errore substantiali ve1 simoniace facta, irrita est ipso iure*.

²⁰ Badii calls antecedent *dolus* also substantial *dolus*. See BADII, 312.

²¹ Badii states that concomitant *dolus* is equivalent to incidental *dolus* in this case. See BADII, 312.

dolus does not render the resignation invalid, but, in such a case, an action of reparation of damage can be brought against the perpetrator of concomitant *dolus*²².

Furthermore, Badii states that the fraudulent means used to deceive must succeed in deceiving the person to resign. In other words, *dolus* must be the cause for resignation so that the juridical act of resignation lacks one of its essential elements²³, which renders the resignation invalid. Additionally, Badii points out that the enticements used to convince a person who holds an ecclesiastical office to resign or the mere reticence in presenting the whole truth when the law does not require it and other similar cases cannot be considered acts of *dolus* capable of invalidating the juridical act of resignation²⁴.

However, Fransen does not agree with the explanation provided by Badii for a resignation done out of *dolus*.

Fransen begins his explanation of the canon by admitting he does not agree with Badii that substantial *dolus* is equivalent to antecedent *dolus*. He insists that this is contrary both to the canonical tradition and to the text of the Code. Fransen points out that the canonical tradition has always held that substantial *dolus* produces a substantial error, and an antecedent *dolus* does not always produce a substantial error²⁵. Also, Fransen states that the text itself of canon 185 indicates that a resignation caused by a substantial error is invalid. Therefore, he points out that canon 185 encompasses also all the cases in which resignation was done out of accidental *dolus*.

Fransen bases his explanation in this regard on a parallel between fear and *dolus*, both present in canon 185. He states that the prior law on resignation (that is prior to the 1917 Code), fear did not invalidate the resignation by the law itself. However, the law did not explicitly treat the issue of whether or not *dolus* invalidated resignation. Yet, since the 1917 Code clearly states that a juridical act of resignation placed out of fear is invalid, it can be easily concluded that the law invalidates also juridical act of resignation placed out of accidental *dolus*. Additionally, Fransen points out that his opinion is shared also by other weighty authors²⁶.

²² BADI, 312.

²³ For the essential elements of a juridical act of resignation see cc. 183-191 of the 1917 Code.

²⁴ BADI, 312-213.

²⁵ FRANSEN, 394.

²⁶ FRANSEN, 394-395. See also CORONATA, 183.

Augustine gives some examples in which *dolus* would invalidate the juridical act of resignation: „the promise of a pension or sum of money, or a fraudulent description of conditions which supposedly exist in a parish”²⁷.

In addition, it is important to indicate that Lemosse agrees with Fransen that accidental *dolus* can invalidate resignation. Yet, he states that the only type of accidental *dolus* which invalidates resignation is antecedent *dolus*. According to Lemosse, mere concomitant *dolus* does not invalidate resignation²⁸.

In succinct form, given the above analysis concerning resignation arising from *dolus*, it can be concluded that not only substantial *dolus*, but also accidental *dolus* can invalidate the juridical act of resignation. Yet, accidental *dolus* invalidates resignation only when *dolus* is antecedent and not merely concomitant.

The Impact of Dolus on Novitiate

Novitiate is a third example of a juridical act that may be rendered invalid if done out of *dolus*. First, however, a proper canonical understanding of novitiate is essential.

In his commentary, Raoul Naz states:

If postulancy is a period of trial during which the superiors verify the aptitudes of a candidate for religious life, the novitiate is an intermediary state during which, the aptitudes having been recognized, the same candidate exercises the practices of this life and gets ready to declare (make) his profession²⁹.

Servo Goyeneche states that the aim of the novitiate is a mutual probation and knowledge, i.e. the religious superior examines and probes the candidate to novitiate and the candidate examines and probes the religious life³⁰. Also,

²⁷ Charles A. AUGUSTINE, 157.

²⁸ LEMOSSE, 395.

²⁹ „Si le postulat est une période d’essai pendant laquelle les supérieurs vérifient les aptitudes d’un candidat à la vie religieuse, le noviciat est un état intermédiaire pendant lequel, ses aptitudes ayant été reconnues, le même candidat s’exerce aux pratiques de cette vie et se prépare à émettre sa profession”. In Raoul NAZ, *Traité de droit canonique*, Paris, 1946, 600.

³⁰ Servo GOYENECHÉ, *Iuris canonici summa principia, sen breves codicis iuris canonici commentarii scholis accomodati*, Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1936, 80.

Timotheus Schaefer points out that the novitiate is made in a designated religious house³¹.

Furthermore, canon 542, 1°, [c] refers to admission to the novitiate which is done from *dolus*:

With due regard for the prescriptions of Canons 539-41 and those others [found] in the constitutions of each religious [institute]:

They are invalidly admitted to the novitiate:

Who enter religious [life] induced by force, grave fear, or *dolus*, or whom a Superior receives having been induced in the same manner³².

This canon points out that if entrance into the novitiate is caused by *dolus*, then the entrance is invalid by the law itself.

James Brown describes *dolus* in this canon as „the deception of a candidate or a superior, deliberately and maliciously induced or sustained through the use of apt fraudulent devices, so as to entice the former on the one hand to seek entry into religion, or to dupe the latter on the other to receive him”³³. As is evident, Brown’s description contains the elements of *dolus*. Moreover, Brown explains each of these elements in the particular case of the novitiate. Given that, it is important to present succinctly how he explains each element of *dolus* in the case of the novitiate³⁴.

The first element of *dolus* in this case is constituted by the means employed to deceive either the candidate or the religious superior. The fraudulent means used to deceive, in order to qualify as being able to deceive, must be such as to influence a *vir prudens*. Therefore, Brown states that in analyzing the fraudulent means special attention should be paid to the character of the person using them and the circumstances in which the means are used, in so far as they can render the

³¹ Timotheus SCHAEFER, *De religiosis ad normam codicis iuris canonici*, third edition revised and updated, Rome : Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1940, 461.

³² 1917 Code, c. 542, 1°: *Firmo praescripto can. 539-541, aliisque in propriis cuiusque religionis constitutionibus, Invalide ad novitiatum adhaeserunt; Qui religionem ingrediuntur vi, metu gravi aut dolo inducti, veI quos Superior eodem modo inductus recipit.*

³³ James V. BROWN, *The Invalidating Effects of Force, Fear, and Fraud Upon the Canonical Novitiate: A Historical Conspectus and a Commentary*, Canon Law Studies 311, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1951, 125.

³⁴ Brown, 126-142.

fraudulent means more or less plausible to the candidate or the superior against whom they are employed³⁵, „i.e., whether the mendacious statement which led to error was made in the course of light banter, or in a serious conversation or solemn attestation”³⁶. Also, the personal characteristics of the candidate and the superior should be taken into account because they can influence the final decision. Thus, it is necessary to check „whether the one deceived is young and inexperienced or mature and well versed in affairs; their natural character, whether he or she is naive or adroit; their natural culture, whether they are learned or unread”³⁷, and other factors that can influence the decision of the candidate or of the superior.

The second element of *dolus* according to Brown arises when the fraudulent means employed to deceive constitutes a grave violation of good faith³⁸. Yet, Brown states: „The precise circumstances and conditions under which a ruse must be considered as having exceeded the recognized limits so as to become anti-juridic seem to be one of those factors in fraud which of necessity must be left to the prudent estimation of the one rendering a judgment in this matter”³⁹. Also, Michiels points out that the fraudulent means employed to deceive are anti-juridical because they violate the good faith which must be the foundation upon which all juridical affairs are carried on⁴⁰.

Nevertheless, in Brown’s opinion, good faith requires on the part of the candidate seeking to enter into novitiate to make known to the superior not only those things which according to the universal or particular law would render the novitiate invalid, but also those things which are of grave importance as these assist the superior in determining whether or not the candidate is suitable for religious life⁴¹. On the other hand, good faith requires that the superior make known to the candidate not only those things which are of grave importance in religious life, „but also to refrain from any intrigue which may in any way tend to

³⁵ Brown, 126-127.

³⁶ Brown, 127-128.

³⁷ Brown, 128.

³⁸ Brown, 129-131.

³⁹ Brown, 129.

⁴⁰ Gommarus MICHIELS, *Principia generalia de personis in Ecclesia.* commentarius libri *Il Codicis iuris canonici, canones preliminares 87-106*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer & Cie, 1955, 661.

⁴¹ Brown, 130.

make the individual's choice of the religious state less free or less spontaneous⁴². Brown insists that the consent to enter into novitiate must be free and spontaneous.

The third element of *dolus* in the case of novitiate is malice⁴³. The means used by the deceiver must be „deliberately and maliciously set to work for the precise purpose of creating a deception⁴⁴. According to Brown, the deceiver must have the precise intention to use fraudulent means in order to create an error in the mind of the deceived person. Also, „the intention of the deceiver need not extend to the evil effects, material or spiritual, which may in fact flow from the act which he intends to extort through the erroneous judgment fraudulently induced⁴⁵. Brown provides the following hypothetical example in this regard: parents, deeply religious and wanting to have one of their children in religious life, use a trick to convince one of the children to enter into religious life. The parents tell the child that he has a moral obligation to enter into religious life because he had been dedicated to God as a child⁴⁶. It is obvious that the parents do not want any evil effects that may result from their action „yet the malice needed to qualify their maneuver as fraudulent, and invalidating if it takes effect, is fully realized⁴⁷.

Additionally, Brown states that it is necessary for the deceiver to have knowledge that „the truth or the object of deception is of grave importance to the individual from whom it is to be withheld or to whom it is misrepresented, as well as the means which are utilized to obscure or misrepresent this fact are fraudulent⁴⁸.

The fourth element of *dolus* according to Brown is the deception itself, i.e., the fraudulent means employed to deceive must succeed in creating an error in the mind of the deceived person⁴⁹. The fraudulent means must „succeed in efficaciously interfering with the consent of a candidate or a superior in placing it⁵⁰. Furthermore, Brown states:

But, since the proximate medium through which fraud works upon the will in soliciting consent is the erroneous judgment which is created or sustained

⁴² Brown, 130.

⁴³ Brown, 131-134.

⁴⁴ Brown, 131.

⁴⁵ Brown, 132.

⁴⁶ Brown, 132-133,

⁴⁷ Brown, 133.

⁴⁸ Brown, 133.

⁴⁹ Brown, 134-136.

⁵⁰ Brown, 134.

in the mind of the victim, unless this objective trickery does in reality result in the deception of the candidate or the superior, neither can be said to be induced to perform this act through fraud. For, it is to be remembered that fraud and fraudulent error are identical terms in law when one speaks of this element as a source of defective consent. Hence, the commonly recognized rule — *scienti dolus non fit* — is likewise fully valid with regard to fraud as an invalidating impediment to entry in the canonical novitiate⁵¹.

The fifth element of *dolus* is the causal relationship between the fraudulent means and the act of consent⁵². Brown points out that a causal relationship must exist between „the deceitful artifice which may have been present in the act of entering or admitting a candidate to the novitiate and the causal consent given to this act, so that the latter must be considered to have been placed in fact *ex dolo*”⁵³. In order to highlight the connection between the fraudulent means and the act of consent, Brown provided the following example. If the candidate were asked by the superior in the formal acceptance whether or not he suffers from pulmonary tuberculosis, explicitly telling the candidate that he would not be accepted if he suffers of this illness, and the candidate having this illness lies to the superior using a forged medical certificate, then the act of admission is invalid⁵⁴. Brown states that in such a case the error created in the mind of the superior with regard to the health condition of the candidate is not only unjust, but „is deliberately directed to the procuring of consent to this one act”⁵⁵.

After this presentation of the elements of *dolus*, it is important to determine who can be the perpetrator of *dolus*. The canonical commentators agree that the perpetrator of *dolus* can be either the candidate or the superior or even a third party⁵⁶. Thus, the candidate is the deceiver if, for instance, he “pretended to be

⁵¹ Brown, 134.

⁵² Brown, 136-142.

⁵³ Brown, 136.

⁵⁴ Brown, 137.

⁵⁵ Brown, 137. For more examples about the connection between the fraudulent means and the consent regarding entering into novitiate see Brown, 137-141.

⁵⁶ FRANSEN, 397; AUGUSTINE, 208-209; ABBO – HANNAN, 559; NAZ, 601; LEMOSSE, 1350; Joseph CREUSEN, *Religions Men and Women in the Code*, third English edition, Milwaukee 1940, 134-135; VEMZ – VIDAL, 199-200; BIDAGOR, 65-71; CORONATA, 179; VERMEERSCH – CREUSEN, 544.

intelligent, healthy or rich, whilst in reality he is the opposite⁵⁷. Yet, Augustine points out that „mere lack of riches or brain — unless the candidate were too dull for any occupation — would not be sufficient to make the admission invalid”⁵⁸. In his commentary, Joseph Creusen indicates that admission to the novitiate is also invalid if the candidate has concealed „a family disgrace which would certainly have caused his exclusion”⁵⁹.

The religious superior can also be the perpetrator of *dolus*, for example, „by holding out a good and pleasant position, honors and dignities, or, as the saying is, a good time, or by hiding the truth and the real conditions of the community”⁶⁰. Abbo and Hannan point also out that the admission to novitiate would be invalid if the superior would promise to the candidate „exemptions and privileges incompatible with the rule or the constitutions”⁶¹.

A third party can be involved in perpetrating *dolus* as well. Thus, an example in this regard would be „if parents made their child believe that they had promised to God that he would enter religion when, as a matter of fact, they had made no such promise”⁶². Another example when a third party is involved would be „if someone falsely persuaded another that he had the evident signs of a divine vocation”⁶³.

Finally, it is important to indicate the type of *dolus* that invalidates admission to the novitiate.

Prior to the 1917 Code, canonical commentators shared the opinion that only substantial *dolus* invalidates entrance into the novitiate. According to them accidental *dolus* would not invalidate such admission⁶⁴.

The canonical commentators on the 1917 Code universally agree with the pre- 1917 Code commentators that substantial *dolus* invalidates entrance into the novitiate. Moreover, Wernz and Vidal point out that since substantial *dolus* produces a substantial error in the mind of the deceived person, the admission to novitiate is invalid by natural law itself⁶⁵. Yet, in general, the 1917 commentators

⁵⁷ AUGUSTINE, 209.

⁵⁸ AUGUSTINE, 209.

⁵⁹ CREUSEN, 135.

⁶⁰ AUGUSTINE, 208.

⁶¹ ABBO – HANNAN, 559.

⁶² CREUSEN, 135.

⁶³ CREUSEN, 135.

⁶⁴ BROWN, 148-156.

⁶⁵ WERNZ – VIDAL, 199.

do not agree with the pre-1917 commentators that only substantial *dolus* invalidates the admission to novitiate.

Bidagor is one author that agrees with the pre-1917 commentators. He points out that canon 542, 1° on *dolus* is an expression of the traditional teaching on *dolus* and, consequently, only substantial *dolus* invalidates the admission to the novitiate⁶⁶. He insists that accidental *dolus*, even if it is antecedent, cannot invalidate admission to the novitiate when it is used against the candidate because it disappears during the novitiate. During the novitiate the candidate will find out the truth anyway and, consequently, there is no reason to punish *dolus* in this case. However, Bidagor indicates that if antecedent *dolus* is used against the superior and it can be demonstrated that the superior would not have admitted the candidate unless antecedent *dolus* were used against him, then the admission is invalid. This however is the only exception when antecedent *dolus* invalidates the admission to novitiate⁶⁷.

Fransen does not agree with Bidagor and states that antecedent *dolus* invalidates in both cases; namely, when brought against the candidate or against the superior because the key principle that lies behind the law is that admission to novitiate must be free and spontaneous⁶⁸. Brown agrees with Fransen stating:

If a novice is enticed into the novitiate of a religious institute through a deliberate and gross misrepresentation of the nature of the religious life, or concerning some factor of the religious life as it is lived in the particular institute, even though not substantial, and this factor plays a determining influence upon his will in choosing to enter the novitiate, his novitiate is thereby rendered automatically invalid⁶⁹.

In fact, and in general, the canonical commentators agree with Fransen that whenever antecedent *dolus* is involved the admission to the novitiate is invalid⁷⁰. However, no author argues that concomitant *dolus* can invalidate the admission to the novitiate. It is obvious that concomitant *dolus* does not render the admission to the novitiate invalid.

In short, it can be concluded from what was said so far that not only substantial *dolus*, but also accidental *dolus* can render entrance into the novitiate invalid. Yet,

⁶⁶ See BIDAGOR, 65-71.

⁶⁷ BIDAGOR, 70-72.

⁶⁸ FRANSEN, 397.

⁶⁹ BROWN, 156.

⁷⁰ See for instance AUGUSTINE, 208; NAZ, 601; LEMOSSE, 1350; BROWN, 148-184; BADI, 313; CORONATA, 696.

in the case of accidental *dolus*, the authors universally agree that only antecedent *dolus* can render the admission invalid and not merely concomitant *dolus*. Also, when the judgment is made with regard to the presence of *dolus* in the admission to the novitiate it is essential to check out if all the elements of *dolus* are present.

The Impact of Dolus on Religious Profession

Fintan Geser points out that religious profession „means a public statement by which a person, in virtue of the chosen state of life, declares an intention to strive after perfection”⁷¹. In his book on consecrated life, Creusen describes the religious profession as being simply “the act by which a person embraces the religious state”⁷². Bouscaren, Ellis and Korth, in their commentary on the 1917 Code, give a more complete description of religious profession. They state:

Religious profession is the act by which a person embraces the religious state by taking the three public vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, thus entering upon an agreement made with the institute, which, when accepted by the competent superior, creates a whole series of reciprocal rights and obligations between the institute and the religious⁷³.

Very important in their description is the fact that religious profession is an agreement between the institute and the religious. Badii calls this agreement a contract between them⁷⁴. Moreover, Abbo and Hannan state that the religious profession is „both a quasi-contract between the religious and God, legally recognized by the Church, and a bilateral contract between the religious and the institute”⁷⁵.

Given that religious profession is a contract, it is important to determine what canon 572, § 1, 4° states about the impact of *dolus* on religious life: „For the validity of any religious profession it is required that: The profession be given without force or grave fear or *dolus*”⁷⁶. As can be easily noticed, this canon points out that if the

⁷¹ Fintan GESER, *The Canon Law Governing Communities of sisters*, St. Louis, 1946, 244.

⁷² CREUSEN, 170.

⁷³ BOUSCAREN et al., *Canon Law. A Text and Commentary*, 4th revised ed., Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1939, 278.

⁷⁴ BADI, 313.

⁷⁵ ABBO – HANNAN, 589.

⁷⁶ 1917 Code, c. 572, § 1, 4°: *Ad validitatem cuiusvis religiosae professionis requiritur ut: Professio sine vi aut metu aut dolo emittatur.*

religious profession is done out of *dolus*, the religious profession is invalid. Yet, in the light of canon 572, § 1, 4^o, it is important to find out first of all, what type of *dolus* can invalidate religious profession according to the canonical commentators.

The canonical commentators universally are in agreement that substantial *dolus* invalidates the religious profession⁷⁷. Additionally, Badii points out that whenever substantial *dolus* produces a substantial error with regard to the vows or the contractual obligations, the religious profession is invalid by natural law itself⁷⁸.

Also, it is worthy to indicate that Fransen points out in his commentary that only substantial *dolus* can invalidate religious profession and not merely accidental *dolus*. He bases his argument on the tradition derived from Suarez and which says that only substantial *dolus* which is brought against the superior or the candidate can invalidate religious profession. Accidental *dolus* has no effect on religious profession⁷⁹.

However, with regard to accidental *dolus*, it noteworthy to indicate that there is no consensus between the commentators.

Thus, for instance, Bidagor points out that antecedent *dolus*, which does not have the character of gravity and does not exercise a determinate influence on the mind of the candidate, does not invalidate religious profession⁸⁰. He provides the following example in which antecedent *dolus* is involved: the parents of a candidate convince their son to make religious profession by misleading him to believe that their financial status is not good at all and that they cannot afford to provide the same conditions for their son that he used to have before he entered into religious life⁸¹. Bidagor insists that *dolus* does not invalidate in this case if the parents succeed in convincing their son to make religious profession. According to Bidagor and Fransen *dolus* in this case is not sufficient to render the religious profession invalid⁸². Nevertheless, Bidagor, like other commentators, admits that there may be cases in which antecedent *dolus* invalidates the religious profession⁸³.

⁷⁷ See for instance, FRANSEN, 397-400; BADI, 313; LEMOSSE, 1350; VERNZ – VIDAL, 269; BIDAGOR, 71.

⁷⁸ BADI, 313. See also BIDAGOR, 71.

⁷⁹ FRANSEN, 400-401.

⁸⁰ BIDAGOR, 67. See also FRANSEN, 398.

⁸¹ FRANSEN, 401. See also, BIDAGOR, 67.

⁸² BIDAGOR, 67-71. See also FRANSEN, 401.

⁸³ BIDAGOR, 67. See also VERMEERSCH – CREUSEN, 578; VERNZ – VIDAL, 269; CREUSEN, 173.

On the other hand, Badii states that whenever accidental *dolus* is involved and is the cause of the religious profession, religious profession is invalid. Yet, in such case, it is not the natural law but ecclesiastical law which invalidates the religious profession. Moreover, Badii states that the accidental error either antecedent or concomitant which is not produced by *dolus* does not affect religious profession at all. Such an error cannot invalidate the religious profession⁸⁴.

Furthermore, Eugenius A. Cervia points out that when accidental *dolus* is involved, the religious profession is not invalid, but it can be rescinded according to canon 103, § 2⁸⁵. Yet, Fransen does not agree with Cervia, and he points out that such a position cannot be accepted because it is against the entire canonical tradition. Fransen states that religious profession like marriage exists or does not exist; it cannot be subject to rescission⁸⁶.

With regard to the victim of *dolus*, Creusen points out that *dolus* must be suffered by the candidate to the religious profession⁸⁷. He states: „The Code has not judged it necessary to protect the superior in the same way. As a matter of fact, the superior who has been influenced by violence or fraud will easily have the power later on to dismiss the religious in question”⁸⁸. Yet, there are other authors who state that since religious profession is a contract between two parties, the law is meant to protect both parties and not only the candidate⁸⁹.

Finally, an example of *dolus* which would invalidate the religious profession can be found in Augustine’s commentary. He states: „*Deceit (dolus)* would be present if the one professing subscribed the formula of profession either in a faulty way or with the wrong name”⁹⁰.

In short, from what was said so far it can be concluded that according to the common opinion of the commentators, substantial *dolus* invalidates religious profession. Yet, there is no agreement among the commentators whether accidental *dolus* invalidates the religious profession or not. There are opinions both pros and cons. Also, there is no agreement between the commentators whether *dolus* is to

⁸⁴ BADI, „ 313.

⁸⁵ Eugenius A CERVIA, *De Professione Religiosa*, Bologna: Studium Bononiense, 1938, 96. See also Fransen, *Le dol dans la conclusion des actes juridiques*, 398.

⁸⁶ FRANSEN, 401.

⁸⁷ CREUSEN, 173.

⁸⁸ CREUSEN, 173.

⁸⁹ LEMOSSE, 1351. See also VEMZ – VIDAL, 270; BESTE, 412; FRANSEN , 400-403.

⁹⁰ AUGUSTINE, 256.

be brought against the candidate or against the superior in order to invalidate the religious profession. Again, there are opinions both pros and cons.

Conclusion

This paper dealt with four exceptions to the general norm on *dolus*⁹¹ which are more commonly found in the canonical commentaries; namely, canon 169, § 1, 10 which deals with *dolus* in canonical election; canon 185 that deals with resignation from an office done out of *dolus*; canon 542, 1° [c] that deals with the admission into novitiate which is made due to *dolus*, and canon 572, § 1, 4° that deals with impact of *dolus* on religious profession. In each of these instances the law states that *dolus* invalidates the juridical act. Yet, the commentators point out that there are some requirements in each case for *dolus* in order to invalidate the juridical act. Thus, in the case of canonical election it must be proved that the voter voted being deceived by either substantial *dolus* or antecedent *dolus*. Merely concomitant *dolus* has no effect on voting. In the case of a resignation from an office again it must be proved that either substantial or antecedent *dolus* was involved. The same thing is true in the case of the admission to the novitiate, i.e. either substantial or antecedent *dolus* must be involved. Bidagor is one author who insists that only substantial *dolus* invalidates the admission to novitiate. However, in the case of religious profession it is a bit different. Here there is an author who states that only substantial *dolus* invalidates the religious profession; namely, Fransen. He bases his argumentation on the tradition that preceded the 1917 Code which held that only substantial *dolus* renders the religious profession invalid. On the other hand, there are other authors who point out that accidental *dolus* invalidates as well, but in order to invalidate *dolus* must be antecedent. Also, there are authors who state that only *dolus* which is brought against the candidate invalidates the religious profession and others who insists that *dolus* invalidates in both cases, i.e. when it is brought either against the candidate or the superior.

Looking at each canon and its explanation it can be easily noticed that the law states that *dolus* invalidates in each of these cases because the law is concerned to protect the liberty of the person placing the juridical act. In each case, the juridical act placed out of *dolus* can have grave consequences on the life of the person placing it.

⁹¹ 1917 Code, c. 103, § 2.

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, canon 677, though receiving little if any attention from canonical commentators, does pertain to the matter of this chapter. Canon 677 states: „In admitting candidates the constitutions are observed, with due regard for the prescription of Canon 542”⁹². Consequently, the above analysis concerning the impact of *dolus* on the admission to the novitiate also applies to the admission into societies of men or women living in common without vows.

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⁹² 1917 Code, c. 677: *In admittendis candidatis serventur constitutiones, salvo praescripto can. 542.*

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