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PRESBEIA THEOTOKOU

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Presbeia Theotokou

The Intercessory Role of Mary across Times and Places in Byzantium
(4th–9th Century)

Edited by

LEENA MARI PELTOMAA
ANDREAS KÜLZER
PAULINE ALLEN

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Geleitwort

Presbeia Theotokou, der Titel des vorliegenden Sammelbandes, bewirkt eine spontane gedankliche Verbindung zum Bericht des Evangelisten Johannes (2.1-11) über den „Beginn der Zeichen" Jesu: Im Verlauf des Festmahls bei der Hochzeit zu Kana macht Maria Jesus darauf aufmerksam, dass es keinen Wein mehr gebe; er weist ihre Intervention zunächst mit den Worten zurück: „Was ist (zwischen) mir und dir, Frau? Meine Stunde ist noch nicht gekommen", verwandelt dann aber Wasser in guten Wein. Unter den Deutungsansätzen der Worte und Handlungen anlässlich dieses ersten überlieferten Wunders Jesu Christi bietet sich die Fragestellung der Beziehung zwischen Mutter und Sohn, die Rolle Marias als Fürsprecherin bei Jesus als naheliegend an. Dieser Fragestellung wird in dem vorliegenden Sammelband nachgegangen, der in dreizehn Beiträgen die Rolle der Gottesgebärerin als Vermittlerin der Menschen zu Gott, insbesondere zur zweiten göttlichen Person untersucht.

Zeitlich konzentrieren sich die Beiträge des Bandes auf die frühchristlichen und frühbyzantinischen Jahrhunderte und stellen für diese Zeitspanne den räumlichen Aspekt in den Vordergrund, wobei nicht von Forschungsansätzen wie *sites of memory* oder *sacred spaces* ausgegangen wird, sondern von einem unmittelbaren geographischen Bezug, d. h. die Beiträge tragen der Tatsache Rechnung, dass die byzantinischen Regionen sich in ihrer religiösen und kulturellen Geschichte in Antike und Spätantike, aber auch in der Entwicklung des christlichen Kultes und seines Umganges mit vorchristlichen Traditionen oft deutlich voneinander unterscheiden.

Kein Zweifel besteht aber auch an den Gemeinsamkeiten der Entwicklung im östlichen Christentum bei der bereitwilligen Akzeptanz der Vermittlerrolle der Jungfrau und Mutter zum göttlichen Sohn, die den gläubigen Menschen das Vorbringen ihrer Anliegen bei Gott zu erleichtern vermochte. Dadurch, dass die Rolle der *Theotokos* in den dogmatischen Festlegungen der ökumenischen Konzilen seit dem 5. Jahrhundert ihren Niederschlag fand, konnten sich in den Schriften der Kirchenväter und in der Glaubenspraxis gemeinsame Leitlinien herausbilden, in denen die regionalen dogmatischen und kultischen Entwicklungen ihre Grenzen und Orientierungsmöglichkeiten fanden.

Die Einführung von Leena Mari Peltomaa und Andreas Külzer bietet neben der allgemeinen Einstimmung in die Thematik auch eine wichtige Hilfe und Anleitung bei der Lektüre der einzelnen Beiträge, denn sie vermittelt die Gesamtsicht des Phänomens *Presbeia Theotokou* und erleichtert dadurch das Verständnis für die oft sehr spezialisierten nachfolgenden Texte. Allen Autoren ist dafür zu danken, dass sie – bei unterschiedlichen methodischen Zugängen – zu den einzelnen byzantinischen Kulturlandschaften durchwegs neue und oft überraschende Erkenntnisse veröffentlichen. Der letzte Beitrag verlässt den Rahmen der räumlichen Orientierung aller anderen Untersuchungen, da er thematisch passende byzantinische Bleisiegel behandelt. Indirekt verweist er auf weitere, über die (sinnvolle) Grenzziehung des vorliegenden Bandes hinausgehende, fruchtbare Forschungsansätze zum Thema – nur beispielhaft sei darauf hingewiesen, dass etwa die Untersuchung der byzantinischen Inschriften, insbesondere der griechischen, lateinischen, syrischen und armenischen, wertvolle (und regionenspezifische) Erkenntnisse liefern dürfte.

Das Leitmotiv des vorliegenden Bandes und die Inhalte vieler Beiträge sind im Umfeld der Fächer, die der Erforschung der Kultur des euromediterranen Raumes gewidmet sind, in vieler Hinsicht interdisziplinär. Dies lässt hoffen, dass die Ergebnisse über den Bereich der Byzanzforschung hinaus rezipiert werden und zu weiteren Untersuchungen im Rahmen der Kulturwissenschaften anregen.

Johannes Koder

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Leena Mari Peltomaa
Andreas Külzer

Presbeia Theotokou: An Introduction

The idea behind the collection of essays in this volume is to bring into focus one main aspect of the Marian cult – the invocations of Mary – across the Byzantine Empire, in the period we are used to calling Early Byzantine. The collection will throw light on the regional and local traditions which unfolded within the developing cult in the Christian *Ecumene*, up to about the end of Iconoclasm (843). It is agreed that regional diversity was an inherent element of the cult of Mary; the cult neither developed nor was established at the same time and in the same manner throughout the empire, although doctrinal teaching on the Virgin and the Theotokos had the same biblical and conciliar basis.[1] On these grounds, in this volume fourteen contributors, representing expertise in early Christian, Late-Antique and Byzantine Studies, exemplify the role that Mary came to play in the religious life and culture of various regions, cities and towns: Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople, Syria, Antioch, Armenia, Durrës, Rome, Italy, and North Africa. The sources – objects, texts and documents – are examined from the vantage points of archaeology, art history, papyrology, sigillography, patristics, religious studies and theology.

The traces of Mary's intercessory role in Byzantine history are copious and – as we know – do not disappear at the historical turning-point of 1453; *Deesis* / "Mary interceding together with John the Baptist" is still as recurrent a motif in iconography as the invocation of the Mother of God is incessant in Byzantine / Orthodox liturgy. It is not clear when the Virgin Theotokos occupied the position of the principal intercessor in the orthodox hierarchy of sanctity.[2] In any case, her divine motherhood justified belief in her intercessory capacity, exceeding the powers of the other saints (apostles, martyrs, virgins, etc.).[3] In the controversy over the icons (715–787 and 813–843) Mary's figure became omnipresent and at the end of Iconoclasm she appeared as *the* intercessor of the empire. By then the veneration of Mary had taken the shape of a highly sophisticated cult,[4] recognizable as part of religious and political institutions, material culture and social practices. The formative process had lasted for centuries and to all appearances it is difficult to grasp the full extent of the phenomenon.

In her introduction to the recent volume, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, Averil Cameron speaks about "the sheer capaciousness of the theme of the Theotokos" that yields "the space for so many excellent new studies".[5] Seen from another angle, this capaciousness eventuates in a fragmentary picture of the development of the cult. Mary "can be, and has been, all things to everyone", which is why it is "hard to arrive at convincing general theories", as Cameron says.[6] Nevertheless, by examining various trends – like the tendency towards ap-

[1] Mary as the Virgin (παρθένος) is based on Septuaginta (Isa 7,14) and the Gospels (Mt 1,23 and Lk 1,27). The reading of Isa 7,14 by Christians caused a bitter controversy of long duration with Jews, with ongoing impact on their mutual distrust. Concerning its significance for "Mentalitätsgeschichte in Byzanz", consult A. Külzer, Disputationes graecae contra Iudaeos. Untersuchungen zur byzantinischen antijüdischen Dialogliteratur und ihrem Judenbild. *Byzantinisches Archiv* 18. Stuttgart–Leipzig 1999, esp. 261–262. There is no specific dogma of the Theotokos. The Council of Ephesus (431), while interpreting the second letter of Cyril of Alexandria to Nestorius as orthodox and conforming to the creed of Nicaea (325), agreed with Cyril's arguments for giving Mary the title of Theotokos. Cf. L. M. Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn. *The Medieval Mediterranean* 35. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2001, 57–58.

[2] Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon seem to suggest that it did not happen before Iconoclasm. Cf. Idem, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850: A History. Cambridge u. a. 2011, 32.

[3] E.g., Basil of Seleucia (d. after 458), Hom. 39, PG 85.448B: Εἴδετε πηλίκον δι᾽ αὐτῆς ἐπράχθη μυστήριον, πᾶσαν ὑπερβαῖνον καὶ γλῶτταν καὶ ἔννοιαν. Τίς οὖν οὐκ θαυμάσειε τὴν μεγάλην τῆς Θεοτόκου δύναμιν· καὶ ὅσον ὑπερανέχει τοὺς ὅσους τιμῶμεν ἁγίους; – Know what a great mystery has been worked through her, which surpasses every tongue and mind. Who then could not marvel at the great power of the Theotokos and how much she excels those we greatly honour as saints?

[4] On the usage of the term 'cult', cf. A. Cameron, Introduction, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium. Aldershot u. a. 2005, xxix.

[5] L. Brubaker – M. B. Cunningham (eds.), The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images. *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies* 11. Aldershot u. a. 2011, 3.

[6] Ibid.

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pealing to Mary as intercessor – it is possible to create a more coherent picture of her cult. It has to be stressed, however, that our volume does not aim at synthesizing "the diverse materials into a coherent narrative", which in any case would be also absolutely impossible.[7] Hence, an interpretation of the tendency towards Mary's intercessory capacity that drove and contributed to the establishment of her Byzantine cult will remain a task for further studies. We are happy to be able to present multiple evidence of this important trend from the early Byzantine period.

It must be added that this trend is important not only for the study of Byzantines' religious life. It is crucial also for the study of the early Byzantine society, whose striking feature – in comparison with the world we are living in – was a strict social order, based on law and status consciousness. Under such circumstances the significance of intercession – the action of interceding or pleading on behalf of another or a party in trouble – is unquestionable as a means of settling for problems. Already long before CE, in Mesopotamia, the cradle of western civilization, the practice of interceding with kings and divinities was developed into sophisticated rituals.[8] It seems evident that in the ancient world the quality that primarily was expected from intercessors was social appropriateness. This held for both religious and ethnic communities. Understandably, in order to have at least in theory any possibility of exerting influence, intercessors had to have access to the authority – a deity, ruler or judge. Thus, in view of a successful outcome of the intercessory act, status, social position and proximity to authority qualified certain members of society to be intercessors. Thus the notion of the proper social order must have been implicit in the practice of interceding. This pattern acquired a new feature as Christian "heroes of faith" – apostles, martyrs, ascetics, etc. – were accepted as intercessors without having been qualified by social status. Yet the hierarchical structure of the holy intercessors, who were commemorated in liturgy, betrays the fact that ranking was relevant. Since the significance of social status was never ignored in the Christian Roman Empire, it can be assumed that an implicit preoccupation was always associated also with Mary's place in this hierarchy – even in representations that do not explicitly ask her to intercede. The intercessory acts executed by means of prayer formulae need no interpretation but images are problematic if there are no traditions connecting the pictorial representations with intercessions. As for the extent of latent preoccupation in such representations, it is a figure whose approximation from case to case must be left for experts who are able to plumb their material by means of contextual analysis and comparison, as several papers of this collection show.

The Greek title of the volume, *Presbeia Theotokou*, suggests the doctrinal background that cannot be overlooked when discussing Mary's role as intercessor. The word *Theotokos*, literally "the one who gives birth to God", is charged with christology; it is associated with the Nestorian controversy, the Council of Ephesus of 431, the conciliation of the Cyrillian and the Antiochian parties by the *Formula Unionis* in 433, and the "victory of the Theotokos".[9] Ephesus seemingly represents a turning-point in the public and official veneration of Mary, the triumphal arch of the basilica Santa Maria Maggiore (by its modern name) in Rome being an illustrious piece of evidence for the atmosphere of the time.[10] Much of the volume is devoted to the mariology of miaphysite traditions, although a comparison with the mariological material from Chalcedonian Palestine, Constantinople and Rome, may give the impression that Mary's position as intercessor did not receive as much attention in anti-Chalcedonian churches. Undoubtedly this is a question requiring proper theological consideration, for with regard to Mary's intercessory position no difference can be discerned between the christologies of the opposing parties. In any case, judging from the rhetoric of contemporary homilies and hymnography,[11] the epithet *Theotokos* called forth feelings of awe, demanding correct *ekphrasis*. We "hear" that from the sublime tune in which Byzantine preachers invoked the figure of Mary. Hence it may be concluded that this characteristically Byzantine tone resounded also in private prayers to Mary to intercede with God.

[7] On the unavoidable methodological problematic concerning the study of the cult of Mary as well as the study of pilgrimage, see J. Elsner, Piety and Passion: Contest and Consensus in the Audiences for Early Christian Pilgrimage, in: J. Elsner – I. Rutherford (eds.), Pilgrimage in Graeco Roman & Early Christian Antiquity. Seeing the Gods. Oxford 2005, 411–434, loc.cit. 421.

[8] Vide O. Michel – Th. Klauser, Gebet II (Fürbitte). *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 9 (1976) 1–36, 3–5.

[9] Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary 50–62, 85–101, 113–114.

[10] G. A. Wellen, Theotokos. Eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit. Utrecht–Antwerpen 1960, 93–131, esp. 97.

[11] The Akathistos Hymn is practically the only preserved work of hymnography reflecting the christological issue of the period.

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As for the word *presbeia*,[12] the standard translation in Christian usage of this term is "intercession", which is a special form of prayer. While one speaks in an ordinary petitionary prayer only on behalf of oneself, in an intercessory prayer the needs of others are brought before God. As in a homily of Chrysostom, the word is found innumerable times in homilies and liturgical prayers: " … we ourselves will also be able to enjoy more liberty of speech and be deemed worthy of God's most abundant philanthropy, in this present life as well as on the future day of horror, through the prayers and intercessions (*euchais and presbeiais*) of those acceptable to God …"[13] Here intercessors are called "those acceptable to God". Perhaps Chrysostom had especially martyrs in mind, for in his time religious life was centred on martyrs.[14] The impression that devotion to Mary was "overshadowed by the enthusiastic cult of the martyrs for the first three centuries at any rate", seems to explain the practically non-existent evidence of prayers addressed to Mary from that time.[15] Yet, so far we know too little of the seminal phase of the cult of Mary – especially of its regional conditions and developments – to be able to say whether Mary's intercessory role really was affected by the enthusiasm for martyrs.

Judging from its occurrences in all kinds of sources the word *presbeia* in Byzantine understanding was in the first place associated with embassies and advocacy. From ancient times onwards it is predominantly met with in texts referring to a body of ambassadors sent for negotiations.[16] Accordingly, the Patristic Greek Lexicon informs us that in Christian contexts *presbeia* is used for the work of Christians as God's or Christ's ambassadors and for special commissions performed in the service of the Church. The request or entreaty presented by a *presbeia* was also called *presbeia*. The highly valued status that ancient cultures assigned to the elder or eldest male members of a clan, family and society is revealed by the words "rank" and "dignity", which are rendered as the basic meanings for the patristic notion of *presbeia*.[17] Altogether, it seems that we should be aware that, for Byzantines, the native Greek speakers, the formula "through/by means of the intercessory prayers of …" (*presbeiais* …) implied intercessors' status and, hence, role in society.[18] How these things stood in relation to the role of Mary as intercessor is a question left to be answered by future studies of the cult of Mary.

Although the veneration of Mary within the Church was "universal", her cult evolved in the conditions that a particular place or region offered. Peter Brown, speaking about the making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD, aptly says that, "Each Christian region had a landscape of its own".[19] Without doubt this holds also for the late-antique Eastern Roman Empire. Over the span of the five centuries with which this volume is concerned, the empire turned into a thoroughly Christian society and at the end of Iconoclasm the figure of Mary is found as the intercessor of the entire empire. Why and how this development took place is a question that challenges not only the study of the Byzantine cult of Mary but the study of Byzantine society in general. Our volume will be a contribution to the search for an explanation. The glimpses of different "landscapes" in Byzantine territory show first of all the cultural contexts where Mary's intercessory role manifested itself. The selected regions cover a great part but not all of the territory that was under East Roman or Byzantine rule from the 4th to the 9th century. While places associated with Mary through the Gospels and legendary stories about her and her "relics" developed into Marian pilgrimage centres, vast areas show no particular traces of the cult of Mary,[20] though it is clear that Mary as the mother of Jesus was known to all Christianity.

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[12] See H. G. Liddell – R. Scott, A Greek–English Lexicon, with a revised supplement. Oxford [9]1996, 1461f. s. v. πρεσβεία, ἡ. The basic meaning is *age*, *seniority*, *the state* or *right of the elder*.

[13] Joannes Chrysostomus, Homilia IX in Genesin, *PG* 53, col. 81: (Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ὁ μακάριος προφήτης Δαυΐδ διδάσκει λέγων· *Ἔκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ, καὶ ποίησον ἀγαθόν.* Ἂν οὕτω τὰ καθ΄ ἑαυτοὺς οἰκονομῶμεν, καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἀποχῆς τῶν βρωμάτων καὶ τὴν ἀποχὴν τῆς κακίας ἐπιδειξώμεθα,) **δυνησόμεθα καὶ αὐτοὶ πλείονος ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς παῤῥησίας, καὶ δαψιλεστέρας ἀξιωθῆναι τῆς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας, καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, καὶ ἐν τῇ μελλούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ τῇ φοβερᾷ, εὐχαῖς καὶ πρεσβείαις τῶν εὐαρεστησάντων αὐτῷ**…

[14] V. M. Limberis, Architects of Piety. The Cappadocian Fathers and the Cult of the Martyrs. Oxford 2011.

[15] J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines. London [5]1989, 491.

[16] TLG search on πρεσβεία. See also Liddell – Scott. Today the word appears around the world at the entrances of the Embassies of Greece: ΠΡΕΣΒΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ.

[17] Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon. Oxford [9]1995, 1128 s. v.

[18] Of course, not only the etymology of this Greek word, but the idea itself – that an influential party is sought for to intercede on behalf of someone in trouble – implies a social context, irrespective of the language used.

[19] P. Brown, Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD. Princeton, NJ–Oxford 2012, xxii.

[20] It is quite possible that future studies and reinterpretations can change this view.

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We will begin to consider the evidence of Mary's intercessory role in Palestine where the historical Mary lived. Then we turn to Egypt and from there we go to Constantinople. Syria, including Antioch, Armenia and Dyrrachium in Albania represent the East, while Rome, Italy and North Africa belong to the West. In addition, a paper on seals with non-regional approach is included in the collection.

The crucial problem that long afflicted research on the early cult of Mary can be attributed to the disparagement of ancient apocryphal sources by past generations of scholars.[21] The situation changed with the recognition of the historical value of the textual material that had been useless for theological studies, oriented to the doctrinal teaching of the early church Fathers. In this respect the case of the ancient Dormition apocrypha, preserved in late-antique Palestine, from which Stephen Shoemaker draws his conclusions, is quite illuminating. There is no doubt that the *Transitus Mariae* literature reflects the earliest devotion to Mary and that the Dormition apocrypha, issuing from the oldest traditions, disclose the existence of marian intercession and even a marian cult in the region of Palestine well before the Council of Ephesus.

Shoemaker's study of this extremely problematic material, which – alas! – is practically inaccessible to "those uninitiated", has already resulted in new knowledge of the evolution of these narrative traditions.[22] Now, as we are informed that "it was most likely belief in Mary's intercession that first gave rise to the early Christian accounts of Mary's miraculous departure from this world and her apocalyptic journey into the next",[23] – and not the other way round – of necessity the question of the historicity behind the traditions keeps cropping up. In this regard an observation by Shoemaker is particularly important: some of the very earliest evidence for marian devotion and intercession is found in early Christian communities in late-antique Palestine. It is of course not surprising that in Palestine there were Christian communities, but since the matter concerns the greatest issue of the research on Mary – why her cult ever emerged – the observation is significant. Regarding the "axiom" of the so-called goddess theory,[24] we can take it for granted that – since Christianity grew out from Jewish religion – in Christian thought there was no category "goddess". The absence of female deities or goddesses in Christian religion is often explained in research literature by the church Fathers' patriarchal pattern of thought; although there is no doubt that it was fundamentally an implication of God's command to Israel.[25] Whether Christians in ancient Palestine knew goddesses and their cults is beside the point,[26] because the followers of Jesus Christ were the only group of people who in general may have had any reason to be interested in the mother of their Master. Marian veneration simply could not start outside Christian circles. Clearly, finding in Palestine and Jerusalem a cradle of marian piety requires another explanation than the one offered by the goddess theory. There is still material from this region which has only begun to be explored. The *Jerusalem Georgian Chantbook*, "a tremendous resource",[27] which Shoemaker briefly presents in this chapter, promises to shed new light on the history of marian piety and thus also on Mary's intercessory role in the late-antique Near East.

Rina Avner recalls the fact that Jewish religion and culture knew many intercessors. Her focus is laid on the Kathisma, where – according to the Protoevangelium of James – Mary rested on her way to Bethlehem. In that rural area along the road and near Bethlehem there was also situated the tomb of Rachel, whose veneration as a mother and a successful intercessor had been popular in that area. The author concludes that the cult of the Theotokos at the Kathisma emerged from local veneration of Rachel. In addition her persuasive argument urges a closer examination of the roles of the Old Testament intercessors to find out how much Mary's intercessory role owes to Jewish culture.[28]

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[21] Cf. J. Baun, Tales from another Byzantium. Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha. Cambridge 2007, 3.

[22] S. J. Shoemaker, Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption. Oxford 2002.

[23] Here Shoemaker relies on E. Norelli, Marie des apocryphes: enquête sur la mère de Jésus dans le christianisme antique. *Christianismes antiques*. Geneve 2009, 132–136.

[24] According to this theory, human need for maternal protection was projected onto Mary as the ancient goddesses lost their position with Christianization. On the so-called goddess-theory, consult L. M. Peltomaa, Towards the Origins of the History of the Cult of Mary. *Studia Patristica* 40 (2006) 75–86, esp. 78–80.

[25] Christianity cannot be disconnected from the history of Israel, for the salvation of which God uttered his commandments through Moses, cf. Ex 20,1–3; Dt 5,6–7.

[26] Cf. F. A. Trombley, Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–527, I–II. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1993–1994, esp. I 98ff.

[27] A massive collection of liturgical hymns from the fifth to the seventh centuries.

[28] Consult, e.g., M. Widmer, Moses, God, and the Dynamics of Intercessory Prayer. A Study of Exodus 32–34 and Numbers 13–14. *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* 2. *Reihe* 8. Tübingen 2004.

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"Egypt", as researchers engaged with the early cult of Mary very well know, divides scholarly views about the possible influence of the cult of Isis on that of Mary.[29] In his exhaustive treatise Arne Effenberger discusses the complex problem of this influence. A relatively large part of the chapter is dedicated to the question of interpreting the iconographic type of *Galaktotrophousa*, whose model is found in the "Isis *lactans*". As the *Galaktotrophousa* instances are examined in association with Christian places, e.g., in a monastery's areas for prayer, several aspects can be singled out: eucharistic, eschatological, ecclesiological and soteriological, depending on the close context. The study shows – though unintentionally – that it was not the ancient form/model, but the context that provides keys for understanding the appearances of the *Galaktotrophousa* in Christian environments. Art-historical evidence of Mary's intercessory role before the Council of Ephesus is not found in Egypt. The material, however, indicates that well before Ephesus marian piety outside the church was firmly anchored in the private sphere of the people, i.e., to the social milieu of the middle-class town/city-dwellers.

At the same time as religious art in Egypt leaves us exposed to interpretations, in the field of theology the unambiguous position of Cyril of Alexandria conversely enables us to pinpoint the origins of the idea of Mary's intercessory powers. Fathoming Cyril of Alexandria's incarnational theology, Antonia Atanassova evinces Cyril's substantial contribution to the teaching on Mary's motherhood with the focus on her womb. According to Atanassova, Cyril's explicit emphasis on Mary's mediatory role between God and creation was "a definitive theological novelty". By elucidating the thought in Cyril's voluminous writings, in which he defended the title *Theotokos* against Nestorius' christological reasoning in the controversy leading to Ephesus, Atanassova presents the unique Christian roots of the recognition of Mary's role. In this respect the notion entertained by some scholars that early mariology is "a natural outgrowth of the goddess-cults", does not hold true.[30]

However, the theological aspect of Mary's role is only one side of the coin: the devotional use of the epithet *Theotokos* is the reverse. Theodore de Bruyn reviews the history of this word to illustrate the problematic of examining the cult of Mary in Egyptian Christianity, apparent from the evidence presented here. This chapter on appeals to the intercessions of Mary in Greek liturgical and paraliturgical texts from Egypt focuses on a very specific question: in what form and at what time did appeals to the intercession of Mary in Egypt appear in eucharistic liturgies and individual prayers for healing and protection? A thoroughgoing answer is given, based both on a careful analysis of the Egyptian eucharistic anaphoras, representing recent scholarship, and on the author's own research into Greek amulets. The answer – brilliantly balanced considerations of the lacunose evidence – renders however only a provisional hypothesis, "with several caveats", as the author states.

The most plausible supposition, namely that the developed formulae found in fifth-century amulets reflect a practice that was already achieving liturgical expression in the fourth century, leads to silence. De Bruyn's remark in the beginning of the chapter concerning several elements which become "less certain when they are examined more closely" proves to be true in the end. The famous papyrus P.Ryl. III 470, with the prayer for protection addressed directly to the Theotokos (*Sub tuum praesidium*), is only one example of the typical difficulties involved in the sort of textual and material evidence de Bruyn has been investigating. The possibility exists all the time that previous conceptions of the context are not correct. His conclusion, "recourse to theory is inevitable", needs no further reasoning – the fact is evident from this study. The question about theory poses, however, a difficult problem.

Cyril Mango's assessment that Constantinople became "a terrestrial fief" of the Theotokos during the reign of Justinian (527–565) [31] has incited Leena Mari Peltomaa to pursue the question why it was Mary's patronage that was sought in particular. The attention that Mary received at that time in theology and imperial matters is important in terms of our topic, the intercessory role of Mary, for in the general consciousness it was the most famous instance of miracles assigned to the Virgin in Byzantine history that catapulted Mary into the position of the protectress of the imperial city – the deliverance of Constantinople from the siege of Constantinople by the Avars and

[29] Cf. Peltomaa, Towards the Origins 86.

[30] Cf. Atanassova's paper, ref. to St. Benko, The Virgin Goddess. Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology. *Studies in the History of Religion* 59. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1993.

[31] C. Mango, Constantinople as Theotokoupolis, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Milan 2000, 17–25.

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Persians in 626[32] in the reign of Heraclius (610–641).[33] Three contemporary eyewitness documents, arising from different literary genres,[34] emphasize that God saved the city from barbarian terror by the intercession of the Theotokos, whereby they bear evidence that Constantinopolitans' belief in Mary's intercessory capacity was firmly established in orthodoxy.[35]

However, it appears that to a certain degree current research adheres to the thought that marian piety in Constantinople was not based on the same foundations as those on which these rhetorically skilled churchmen of the highest rank put their emphasis.[36] Of course, the question is not about theological finesses, though it is relevant to notice that doctrinally the records of the siege do not digress from earlier evidence from Constantinople, viz. the Akathistos hymn from the fifth and the hymnography of Romanos from the sixth century. Fundamentally, the question involves the intellectual basis of human existence: why we are here, from where we are coming and where we are going. The majority of Constantinopolitans of the Justinianic period, we may assume, received Christian answers to these questions along with their mothers' milk.[37] Thus they learned that the framework to which meaning of life was related was the message of redemption of the world through Christ – or rather, to put it in the way Byzantines themselves preferred – that meaning of life was related to *oikonomia*, the plan of God. The analysis, which Peltomaa makes on the basis of Romanos' hymnography, indicates that the prerequisite for the idea of Mary's intercessory role was the Byzantine conception of *oikonomia*, in which Mary was given the role of Eve's advocate. The significance of this – thoroughly Christian – idea had fully unfolded in the eschatological atmosphere of the Justinianic period, i.e., long before the siege of 626.

Thus Mary's dominant role as protectress of the imperial city, manifest in the siege sources, was an aspect of her intercessory role which apparently had developed from different vantage points. (This is merely an inference. The topic has not been discussed in research literature.) The richness of ideas connected with Mary's intercessions in the marian corpus from the iconoclast period, which Mary Cunningham presents in this volume, serves as the best evidence that this is the continuous elaboration of an old theme. A certain tendency appears, however, in the eighth–ninth-century marian literature (homiletic, hymnographic, hagiographic), which evokes Cunningham's speculation: "Do we then have two different Virgins, one of whom is important above all for her role in the incarnation of Christ while the other begins to exercise a surprising degree of autonomy and power?"

This is really an important question. E.g., from "autonomy and power" it is often gathered that it is a feature owing more to the ancient goddess tradition in Constantinople than to ingenuous Christian piety and veneration of Mary.[38] What interests Cunningham, instead, is finding out whether Mary's images were "successfully incorporated into a composite whole" – an idea which obviously proposes that Byzantine Christians, in their prayers, addressed to Mary as a "whole" human being with different characteristics. If the distinction we are accustomed to

[32] J. D. Howard-Johnston, The Siege of Constantinople in 626, in: C. Mango – G. Dagron (eds.), Constantinople and its Hinterland. Aldershot 1995, 131–142.

[33] W. E. Kaegi, Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium. Cambridge 2003, 122–141.

[34] A chronicle: L. Dindorfius, Chronicon Paschale, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*. Bonnae 1832, 716–726; trans. in: Michael Whitby – Mary Whitby (eds.), Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD. *Translated Texts for Historians.* Liverpool 1989; a homily attributed to Theodore Syncellus: L. Sternbach, Analecta Avarica. Cracoviae 1900, 298–320; a rhetorical poem of George of Pisidia, in: A. Pertusi, Bellum Avaricum di Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi, vol. 1. Panegirici Epici. *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7. Ettal 1959, 176–224. – Brilliant analyses of these sources are to be found in J. Howard-Johnston, Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century. Oxford 2010, 16ff (George of Pisidia), 45–48 (Chronicon Paschale; Howard-Johnston convincingly attributes it to Patriarch Sergius), 146–147 (Theodore Syncellus).

[35] "Le document le plus complet" (F. Barišić, Le siège de Constantinople par les Avares et les Slaves en 626. *Byzantion* 24 [1954] 371–395, loc. cit. 375) is the long homily of Syncellus, supplying us with a day-by-day account of the siege. Simultaneously it offers a highly sophisticated explanation of the event in the light of Holy Scripture, revealing a divine "logic" behind the human misfortune. Unfortunately, no detailed scholarly analysis of this document is available. In any case, in this text the victorious role of the Virgin is founded on Christian understanding of the incarnation, i.e., divine economy, and the christological dogma of the Theotokos (see L. M. Peltomaa, The Role of the Virgin Mary at the Siege of Constantinople in 626. *Scrinium* 5 [2009] 284–299, esp. 287–290, 294–295).

[36] For example, Bissera Pentcheva, taking at face value the rhetorical models of ancient goddesses for Mary in the battle, appearing in Syncellus and George of Pisidia, but disregarding the explicit Christian contextualization of the siege by the three eyewitnesses, concludes that contemporary perceptions of Mary's role in battle reflect belief in powers which previously were associated with the pagan mother goddesses. See B. V. Pentcheva, Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium. University Park, PA 2006, 64–66.

[37] Infant baptism is a disputed theme of which Wikipedia provides a good overview, see "Baptism". Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon. Oxford ^{9}1995, 284–288 s. v βάπτισμα. However, there can be no doubt that by the reign of Justinian children in Christian families had been raised as Christians for many generations, even since Constantine's conversion.

[38] Recently Pentcheva, Icons and Power.

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make between "popular" texts and those "qualified" for the use in church proves to be false, as Cunningham suggests, the literary figure of Mary may appear more coherent. It is worth noting that Mary in her role of the intercessor who has *parrhesia* with Christ in heaven is strikingly evident in the eighth- and ninth-century literary marian corpus of Constantinopolitan provenance.

The chapter, "Ancient Syriac Sources on Mary's Role as Intercessor", is a broad treatment of a topic that has never before been highlighted in studies on early Christian texts in Syriac. The bulk of the material Cornelia Horn has chosen for investigation is to a great extent problematic with regard to authenticity and dating. This concerns especially the important Syriac text of the *Transitus Mariae* (the Six Books of the *Transitus Mariae*) and liturgical hymnography (the Syriac Theotokia and the supplications ascribed to Rabbula of Edessa). Nevertheless, Horn presents in detail the literary and liturgical contexts in which ancient Christians' belief in Mary's intercessory capacity appeared in the Syriac domain.

Broadly speaking, in the Syriac Christian culture of the ancient Near East the *Transitus Mariae* literature proves to be the most important witness to the early role of Mary as intercessor. Therefore the conspicuous absence of references to Mary's intercessory role both in the marian poetry of Ephraem the Syrian (d. 373) and in the inauthentic hymns – conflated versions of the originals up to the sixth century – seems difficult to explain. Even so, perhaps we should notice that the ideological framework with which Mary's intercessory function comes into sight in the Six Books of the *Transitus Mariae* implies an eschatological perspective, which is found, e.g., in Ephraem's Hymns on Paradise.[39]

Thanks to Horn's careful descriptions of the contents of the chosen texts we are able to see a clear difference between Mary's image as intercessor in the *Transitus Mariae* narratives and in the liturgical texts, where Mary is frequently pictured as intercessor and supplicant. The Dormition tradition renders an image of the real woman Mary, who is there a personality. The liturgical hymnography again, emphasizing her properties, based on well-known biblical and/or doctrinal references used in christological discourse, offers an idealized, to a certain degree incoherent and therefore abstract image of the Virgin. Its "prototype" emerged during the Theotokos controversy and it is the same exalted figure that all christological homilies from the Ephesian period praise. Horn notes: "The 'Greek tsunami' of christological controversy that arrived on Syriac Christian shores in the fifth century played an important role in raising the profile of Mary as intercessor."

Pauline Allen's study, based on the set of 125 homilies of Severus, the patriarch of Antioch (512–518), requires us to correct our notion of Antioch as a mariological "terra dura". Her argument rests on the contextualization of these homilies by reference to the author's hymns, where Mary appears explicitly as the "vehicle of intercession". It is remarkable that Allen questions a whole tradition of patristic scholarship with its emphasis on the "negative" influence of John Chrysostom on Antiochian mariology. The introduction of the great mariological feasts, the Annunciation and Dormition, and the large-scale building programmes in honour of the Theotokos, which took place in the region of Antioch later in the sixth century, are already seen as "prefigured" in Severus' composite picture of the Theotokos. With regard to research on the cult of Mary, a revaluation of all kinds of evidence for the veneration of Mary within Antiochian territory up to this period appears as a *desideratum*.

The reason by which Allen explains Mary's appearance as the "vehicle of intercession" in Severus' hymns is as follows: "The genre of hymnography lent itself more than the homily to an affective and more immediate approach to the Theotokos". Although the observation may refer to Severus alone, it is important in general, because it suggests emotionality, which was the instrument of promoting cult. Here we have to state that emotions is a theme whose investigation in Byzantine studies remains "underdeveloped" – in favour of belief in "facts".[40] However, it is clear that the cult of Mary did not develop in an unemotional soil. We could say that preachers like Severus cultivated that soil but that it was not their creation.[41] As a matter of fact, the veneration of Mary – the prerequisite of a cult – is manifest already in the New Testament.[42] So far we have no methodological tools for

[39] Cf. S. J. Shoemaker, Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption. Oxford 2002, 179–204, esp. 189–191.

[40] See M. Hinterberger, Emotions in Byzantium in: L. James (ed.), A Companion to Byzantium. Chichester 2010, 123–134, esp. 124. Hinterberger provides an illuminating historical perspective to the question of Byzantine emotionality. An insightful reading of texts that evoke emotions, see N. Tsironis, Emotion and the Senses in Marian Homilies of the Middle-Byzantine Period in: L. Brubaker – M. B. Cunningham (eds.), The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images. Aldershot 2011, 179–196.

[41] M. B. Cunningham – P. Allen (eds.), Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics. *A New History of the Sermon* 1. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 1998.

[42] Esp. Lk 1,42–45.

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approaching the question of emotions as the driving force behind the rising cult. Yet it must have been there – something that Byzantines felt and realized.

The last four chapters in this volume represent art-historical studies. The evidence of the intercessory role of Mary comes from the southern Caucasus – Armenia and Georgia, from modern Durrës in Albania, and from Rome, Italy and North Africa, i.e., from the West in contrast to the East, and from a corpus of seals which cannot be located. With this art-historical material we encounter the early Byzantine past that not words but ideas convey in visual form.

The body of unique and impressive cross monuments, the funeral stelae of Armenian local princes or rulers, is scattered across the southern Caucasus. These monuments allow Annegret Plontke-Lüning and Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan to argue that Mary's intercessory role was acknowledged by Armenian aristocratic families in the 6th–8th centuries. Their interpretation of the stelae's message, related to the intercessory function of Mary, relies on the rich corpus of Armenian hymns on the Theotokos, whose terminology reflects unambiguously the christology of the Akathistos.[43] Against this framework, these works put into words the noble lords' tidings on the cross monuments: the hope of defeating their own death by Christ's triumphant symbol. The famous monument of Odzun in northern Armenia shows an artistic programme with biblical scenes of the life of the Virgin. According to the authors, the stele conveys the idea that the founders wanted to secure Mary's support at the *parousia*.

Dyrrachium, a city on the coast of Albania, is known for the mosaics decorating a Christian funeral chapel in the bowels of an ancient Roman amphitheater. The dating of those mosaics is of special interest to researchers on the cult of Mary, because they show a comprehensive artistic programme, two figures of Mary included. We are happy to present in this book the first study to our knowledge of the chapel of Dyrrachium devoted to the significance and meaning of its entire artistic programme. Galina Fingarova's exciting study demonstrates that the mosaic panels are to be dated to the sixth or seventh century. From her analysis it turns out that the ideological aspects – christology, worldview and social order – related to Mary's intercessory function can be found on the walls of this funeral chapel. Here we have a revealing example of early Byzantine ideas concerning the passing from this world to the other.

Whereas the funeral chapel of Dyrrachium is a compact research object, making an integrated interpretation possible, the "corpus" which Henry Maguire investigates is found in most heterogeneous contexts, objects and surfaces in the medieval West, in the regions of Rome, Italy and North Africa. Accordingly, his first concern is: what is an intercessory image and how can it be recognized? It is exciting that Maguire's focus is not on the form of the pictorial types that would clearly imply the idea of intercession. Instead, he examines what is by far the most common iconography in the sixth century, the frontal representations of the Virgin and Child, which are polyvalent in their meanings. According to him, "these images could function as doctrinal statements, demonstrating the humanity of Christ; as amulets, providing protection to patrons, wearers, or viewers; or as an expression of intercession. On some occasions it appears that the work of art could assume more than one of these roles at the same time". Maguire's search for the idea of intercession brings forth two types of images of the Virgin in the early medieval West. The frontal images, "potentially intercessionary", preceded the explicitly intercessionary images, like the type of the orant Virgin, which did not appear in the apses of Roman churches until the middle of the seventh century. Seen from the angle of art-historical morphology and chronology, the evidence is indisputable. However, from an ideological point of view, as the pilgrims' flasks with the orant type predate the large-scale representations, the question of an idea, which may have been in circulation for ages, arises by itself. In the light of Maguire's assertion, "the desire of the viewer preceded the artist's response", this seems logical.

Seals, the research object of Alexandra-Kyriaki Wassiliou-Seibt, differ from the other art- historical material presented here because we do not need to ask whether they express the idea of Mary's intercession or not. Some of the other material, even when it is not manifestly intercessory, could be construed as implying an intercessory role, but a seal, an object of lead with Mary's image, which was once fastened to a document, was unambiguously understood as a warrant of Mary's mediation. This starting-point, however, does not make Byzantine lead seals easier as objects of research. Due to the state of research in this field the problems are not only connected with the systems of classification used in dating but also with the interpretation of databases, for only a portion of the

[43] See p. 2.

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estimated 80,000 lead seals worldwide is published.[44] Here we meet with a surprising statistical fact: patriarchal seals featuring the Theotokos do not really appear until after Iconoclasm, whereas Byzantine imperial seals are found across the empire.

As already indicated above, recently Peter Brown made the important statement that "each Christian Region had a landscape of its own".[45] The contributions contained in this volume clearly demonstrate this statement; they give evidence of it from the different temporal and, perhaps more important, historically conditioned access to Christianity in general, and to the position of Mary within this in particular, in the individual regions of the late Roman and Byzantine Empires. The readers of this volume can test this very well on the basis of the individual contributions which deal with the Near East and Egypt, the Caucasus and the Balkans, the imperial capital Constantinople, as well as Italy and North Africa.

Our volume is to be understood as a contribution to understanding the emerging and slowly developing cult of Mary, of the maturing presentation of the intercessory role of Mary, venerated as the Mother of God; naturally it does not intend to pose all the questions or, what would be even more presumptuous, to offer solutions to all questions. Hence it is understandable that it is not feasible to handle all landscapes and geographical regions of the Byzantine Empire.

For example, Asia Minor, one of the central regions of Byzantium, a core territory in the terminology of Johannes Koder,[46] does not have a contribution of its own in this volume. This was consciously done, for the tremendous peninsula in itself does not present a homogeneous space in which the theological and spiritual development could have been framed uniformly, but as a mirror of the imperial territory it is fragmented into different small landscapes which have completely different characteristics.[47] For example, for a long time Lydia remained entrapped within the world of pagan ideas, while the neighbouring province of Asia to its West had experienced a deeper Christianisation in a much earlier period, possibly because of its clearly higher level of urbanisation in contrast to its Eastern neighbour, which was characterised by its rustic villages.[48]

But even in the province of Asia there is no uniform picture: one need only recall the well-known fact that the bishop John of Ephesus (c. 507–588) undertook many thousands of conversions, as well as founding 24 churches and 4 monasteries in the hinterland of Tralleis (modern Aydın) in the mountain chain of the Messōgis (Aydınlar dağları) alone – which made the obviously Christianised province of Asia a significant missionary territory for the bishop. This happened in the context of the measures taken to Christianise, which between 542 and 567 were implemented in Western Asia Minor and resulted in the conversion of allegedly 80,000 people, the erection of 98

[44] J. Cotsonis, The Contribution of Byzantine lead seals to the study of the cult of the saints (sixth–twelfth century). *Byzantion* 75 (2005) 383–497, esp. 385; on the intercessory role of the Virgin, see pp. 400–404, 489.

[45] P. Brown, Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD. Princeton, NJ–Oxford 2012, xxii (cf. n. 19).

[46] J. Koder, Der Lebensraum der Byzantiner. Historisch-geographischer Abriß ihres mittelalterlichen Staates im östlichen Mittelmeerraum. *Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber Ergänzungsband* 1. Graz–Cologne–Vienna 1984. Nachdruck mit bibliographischen Nachträgen Vienna 2001, 16, 32–36.

[47] See S. Mitchell, Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor. II. The Rise of the Church. Oxford 1993 *passim*; A. von Harnack, Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten. Vierte verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage mit elf Karten. Leipzig 1924 (ND. Wiesbaden 1981), 732–785 „Kleinasien". See also the corresponding chapters in the volumes of *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (*TIB*): F. Hild – M. Restle, Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos) *TIB* 2. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 149. Vienna 1981, 112–123; K. Belke, mit Beiträgen von M. Restle, Galatien und Lykaonien. *TIB* 4. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 172. Vienna 1984, 84–92; F. Hild – H. Hellenkemper, Kilikien und Isaurien. *TIB* 5. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 215. I–II. Vienna 1990, I 85–97; K. Belke – N. Mersich, Phrygien und Pisidien. *TIB* 7. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 211. Vienna 1990; 125–138; H. Hellenkemper – F. Hild, Lykien und Pamphylien. *TIB* 8. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 320. I–III. Vienna 2004, I 139–154; K. Belke, Paphlagonien und Honōrias. *TIB* 9. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften* 249. Vienna 1996, 103–116; K. Belke, Bithynien und Hellēspontos. *TIB* 13. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften*. Vienna (in preparation); A. Külzer, Lydien. *TIB* 14. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften*. Vienna (in preparation); A. Külzer, Asia. *TIB* 17. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl., *Denkschriften*. Vienna (in preparation).

[48] A. Külzer, Aspekte der Christianisierung der frühbyzantinischen Provinz Asia, in: W. Ameling (ed.), Die Christianisierung Kleinasiens in der Spätantike. Beiträge der Internationalen Konferenz Köln, 18.–22. März 2013. Cologne (in press); J. Keil, Asia. *Reallexikon* für *Antike und Christentum* 1 (1950) 740–749, 744; C. Foss, Lydien. *Reallexikon* für *Antike und Christentum* 23 (2010) 739–762; H. Ahrweiler, L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317). *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965) 1–204, 1f.

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churches, 12 monasteries, and the transformation of 7 synagogues into churches.[49] By the beginning of the fifth century at the latest the provincial capital, Ephesus, distinguished by a Marian church and the site of the Third Ecumenical Council (431), so significant for christology (!), bore completely the stamp of the veneration of St John; the veneration of Mary in contrast clearly receded and in the early sources was not thematically considered at all – the letter of the Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) from 19 November 430 convoking the said council gave as the reason for choosing the site of the assembly its position, favourable for transport, and its superlative infrastructure; however, reference to Mary, which in the context of the planned theme of the council would have been expected, is not to be found.[50] A sole text from the council fathers, which mentions John the Theologian and Mary together, cannot be adduced because it lacks a verb.[51] Only from the Middle Byzantine period do some Syrian sources like Moses ben Kepha († 903) or Michael the Syrian († 1199) depict a connection between Ephesus and Mary;[52] the Greek tradition emphasises the presence of the Theotokos in Ephesus really only from the nineteenth century onwards.[53] Theologically significant developments with regard to the intercessory role of the Mother of God cannot be discovered from the extant sources at all; finally indeed it must be asked whether the dedication of the Marian church had already existed before the Council or whether it was chosen subsequently in remembrance of the decision that was taken there. The famous and well-known Marian churches in the province of Asia, such as the Lembiōtissa monastery in the Kemalpaşa dağı, a few kilometres to the southeast of the present village of Işıklar, or the monastery of the God-bearer in the mountains of Galēsion, modern Alaman dağı not far from Ephesus, in any case date from the Middle Byzantine period.[54]

There is also little information about the Mother of God and her intercessory role in the other regions of Asia Minor: Phrygia was essentially bound up with the cult of the martyrs and the angels, especially Archangel Michael in Chonai; in Cilicia St Thecla dominated (especially in Meriamlik near Seleucia), in Pontus Sts Theodore, in Euchaïta as well as in Euchaina.[55] In Bithynia in the mountains of Dindymon (near Cyzicus in the historical landscape of Mysia) during the time of the Emperor Zeno (474/75, 476–491) the temple of Rea, the Mother of the gods, was converted into the church of Mary, the Mother of God,[56] and in the sixth century in Comana the temple of Artemis and the temple of Iphigenia were converted into Christian churches, without there being any talk at all of their patronage.[57] More detailed information on the nascent cult of Mary and if necessary her developing intercessory role was leave for further research. A small step in this direction has been taken by the contributions to

[49] John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints. Syriac text edited and translated by E. W. Brooks. II *PO* 18 (1974) 513–698, 680f. (live 47); Iohannis Ephesini Historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia, interpretatus est E. W. Brooks. *CSCO* 106, *Script. Syr*. 55. Louvain 1936 (ND Louvain 1964) III 36f. (slightly different numbers); V. Schultze, Altchristliche Städte und Landschaften. Bd. II 2 „Kleinasien". Gütersloh 1926, 128–130.

[50] *ACO* I 1,3, 31f.; R. Harreither, Die Synoden von Ephesos. *Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie* (*MiChA)* 8 (2002) 78–94, 83; A. Pülz, Von der Göttin zur Gottesmutter? Artemis und Maria, in: U. Muss (ed.), Die Archäologie der ephesischen Artemis. Gestalt und Ritual eines Heiligtums. Vienna 2008, 67–75, 70f.; Idem, Ephesos als christliches Pilgerzentrum. *MiChA* 16 (2010) 71–102, 73; Idem, Archaeological Evidence of Christian Pilgrimage in Ephesus. *Herom* 1 (2012) 225–260, 226.

[51] *ACO* I 1,2,70; A. Pülz, Ephesos als christliches Pilgerzentrum. *MiChA* 16 (2010) 71–102, 73.

[52] A. Pülz – S. Ladstätter, Meryemana bei Ephesos. Zur archäologischen Untersuchung des Jahres 2003. *Anzeiger der Phil.-Hist. Klasse der ÖAW* 141. Vienna 2006, 71–104, 74f.; A. Pülz, Von der Göttin zur Gottesmutter? Artemis und Maria 71; B. F. Deutsch, Our Lady of Ephesus. Milwaukee 1965, 41–45.

[53] A. Pülz – S. Ladstätter, Meryemana bei Ephesos 71–73; A. Pülz, Archaeological Evidence of Christian Pilgrimage in Ephesus 226.

[54] H. Ahrweiler, L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317). *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965) 92; The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: an eleventh-century pillar saint. Introduction, translation, and notes by R. P. H. Greenfield. *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* 3. Washington, D.C. 2000, 12f. and n. 37, 130f., 152f., 351, 368f., and *passim.* Remember also the church of the Theotokos in Elea, 23 kilometres southwest of Pergamum, where St Peter of Atroa started his clerical career in 786: V. Laurent, La vie merveilleuse de Saint Pierre d'Atroa († 837), éditée, traduite et commentée. *Subsidia Hagiographica* 29. Brussels 1956, 30, 70–73 (cap. 3).

[55] C. Foss, Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002) 129–151; H. Hellenkemper, Frühe christliche Wallfahrtsstätten in Kleinasien, in: Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 22.–28. September 1991 (= *JbAC*, Ergänzungsband 20). Münster 1995, 259–271; B. Kötting, Peregrinatio religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche. Münster 1950, 140–160 (Meriamlik), 160–166 (Euchaïta), 166–171 (Chōnai).

[56] Ioannis Malalae Chronographia, ed. I. Thurn. *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 35. Berlin 2000, 54–55; Ioannis Antiocheni fragmenta ex historia chronica, ed. U. Roberto. Berlin 2005, 62–65, cap. 26.2; Georgius Cedrenus, Ioannes Scylitzae ope, ed. I. Bekker. I. Bonn 1838, 209f. Cf. F. A. Trombley, Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–527, II. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1994, 23–24.

[57] Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia I–II. De bellis libri VIII, ed. J. Haury. Leipzig 1905 (ND. Leipzig 1963) I 17.

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the International Conference „Die Christianisierung Kleinasiens in der Spätantike“, held in March 2013 at the University of Cologne, which are being published soon.[58]

At the time of the Council of Ephesus (431), in the Byzantine capital Constantinople there was still no church dedicated to Mary, and also immediately after the council there was conspicuous hesitation in this regard – it was utterly different in Rome, where as early as the time of Pope Sixtus III (432–440) a splendid Marian building, S. Maria Maggiore, was created. Some years ago Cyril Mango rightly emphasised that only a generation later, in the reigns of the Emperors Leo I (457–474) and Zeno, a change of thinking is discernible in Constantinople, which indicates a not inconsiderable continuation of the theological convictions of Nestorius (428–431) in the thought and actions of the inhabitants.[59] The first church dedicated to the Mother of God which can be proven with certainty is the Theotokou tōn Kyrou (*sic*!), built in the 450s or 460s;[60] scarcely a century later, however, in the reign of the Emperor Justinian I (527–565), the Theotokos had already risen to be patron saint of the imperial capital. There is nothing in Asia Minor that is comparable to this remarkably swift development.

Let this suffice as an introduction. We wish the readers of this volume much enjoyment and a corresponding gain in knowledge from what the following pages have to offer on the emerging intercessory role of Mary.

[58] On the bibliography, see above n. 48.

[59] C. Mango, Constantinople as Theotokoupolis, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Milan 2000, 19, 22.

[60] R. Janin, La Géographie ecclésiastique de l’empire byzantin I: Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique III: Les Églises et les Monastères. Paris ^{2}1969, 193–195 and *passim*.

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Stephen J. Shoemaker

The Ancient Dormition Apocrypha and the Origins of Marian Piety

Early Evidence of Marian Intercession from Late Ancient Palestine

All too often Marian piety is presented as something that suddenly exploded onto the scene in the early fifth century, a phenomenon precipitated largely as a consequence of the controversies over Nestorius with only a rather murky provenance.[1] Yet it seems unmistakably clear that Marian piety antedates the Nestorian controversy, and previous studies have identified important glimmers of devotion to the Virgin from the fourth century in the writings of the Cappadocians, for instance, and the famous *Sub Tuum Praesidium* papyrus, but these traces of Marian cult seem insufficient to explain the tidal wave that was to follow.[2] The *Protevangelium of James* alerts us to a very early theological interest in the Virgin, and while affording no evidence of cult, this apocryphon appears to reflect the rising doctrinal significance of Mary, and perhaps even devotion, already in the second century. Nevertheless it remains rather mysterious how the incipient piety of the *Protevangelium* eventually yielded the elaborate, formal Marian devotion of the fifth century. Clearly something must have happened in between, although exactly what has continued to elude our grasp, and the sources of the first four centuries remain stubbornly laconic when it comes to the Virgin.

Perhaps, however, the problem lies partially with the sources that have thus far been mined. If the early Church Fathers have relatively little to say about Mary and her veneration, it may be that other ancient Christian texts afford glimpses of an emergent Marian piety developing somewhere outside the sphere controlled by the proto-orthodox hierarchy. One of the most obvious places we might look to find such nascent expressions of devotion to the Virgin are the ancient Dormition and Assumption apocrypha. These early Marian apocrypha constitute one of the most valuable, and yet one of the most consistently overlooked, sources for investigating the origins of Marian cult and piety. Indeed, as Enrico Norelli has persuasively argued, it was most likely belief in Mary's intercession that first gave rise to these early Christian accounts of Mary's miraculous departure from this world and her apocalyptic journey into the next.[3] Yet this treasure trove of early Marian devotion has for too long lain on the sidelines of Early Christian Studies, to the effect that our understanding of the beginnings of Marian veneration remains somewhat incomplete. The reasons behind their neglect, while not entirely clear, perhaps have something to do with the sheer complexities of these narrative traditions, which unfortunately can be intimidating to the non-specialist: over thirty different versions survive from before the mid-seventh century in nine ancient languages, and it is not always immediately obvious which of these accounts have priority. Coupled with this complexity has been an almost willful lack of consensus emerging from many studies of these traditions, leaving the uninitiated understandably bewildered as to which early texts should command our attention. Clearly such a highly variegated and

[1] See e.g., Hans von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth in the Theology of the Ancient Church*, trans. Frank Clarke, Studies in Historical Theology, 2 (London: SCM Press, 1964), esp. 7–9; Michael P. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), XII; Richard M. Price, "Marian Piety and the Nestorian Controversy," in *The Church and Mary*, ed. R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History 39 (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 31–8, 31; Richard Price, "Theotokos: The Title and its Significance in Doctrine and Devotion," in *Mary: The Complete Guide*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum, 2007), 56–73; Averil Cameron, "The Early Cult of the Virgin," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Milan: Skira, 2000), 3–15, 5.

[2] See, e.g., Stephen J. Shoemaker, "Marian Liturgies and Devotion in Early Christianity," in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum Press, 2007), 130–45, 130–2; Stephen J. Shoemaker, "The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century: A Fresh Look at Some Old and New Sources," in *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, ed. Chris Maunder (London: Continuum, 2008), 71–87.

[3] Enrico Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes: enquête sur la mère de Jésus dans le christianisme antique*, Christianismes antiques (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2009), 132–6.

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geographically diffuse corpus must have deep roots within the unfolding narrative of early Christian tradition, but which of the various tellings of Mary's Dormition and Assumption issue from the earliest strata and can thus guide us to a better understanding of the emergence of Marian intercession and veneration?

While Martin Jugie's foundational work on the Dormition and Assumption remains indispensable for its comprehensive survey of the Dormition traditions as they were known at the middle of the last century, certain missteps directed by his strong personal belief in the Virgin's immortality unfortunately led him to marginalize and disparage the historical value of the ancient Dormition apocrypha.[4] The early Dormition narratives insist resolutely on Mary's mortality, primarily to guard against Doceticism, but this theological tendency ran counter to Jugie's efforts toward the proclamation of the modern Assumption dogma and thus had to be quarantined. It would be Jugie's successor in this field, Antoine Wenger, who was the first to sketch a map of the early Dormition apocrypha's rugged terrain. Unlike Jugie, Wenger was convinced that these apocrypha possessed significant historical and even theological value, describing them as "streams of murky waters, but they occasionally bear in their muddy waters flecks of gold that will never be tarnished."[5] Moreover, Wenger first reached the fundamental insight that the striking diversity of the early Dormition narratives could not be explained as the evolution of a single, unilinear tradition but rather reflects parallel development from "a great variety of original types."[6] With this pivotal recognition, Wenger set out to chart the history of a particularly early set of traditions, which van Esbroeck would later name the Palm of the Tree of Life texts.

Working with the narratives then available, which included the fifth-century Syriac fragments of the *Obsequies of the Virgin*, Wenger outlined the broad diffusion of these traditions across the Christian world both East and West. Inasmuch as the bulk of his interests lay in the middle Byzantine period, Wenger did not speculate much as to the origins of these traditions; nevertheless, his analysis of the interrelations among several narratives from the fifth and sixth centuries calls attention to the anterior circulation of their traditions about the end of Mary's life, allowing him to predict, correctly it would turn out, the existence of a then unknown earlier source underlying the recensions of these more recent narratives. A more complete version of this earliest narrative has subsequently come to light in the Ethiopic *Liber Requiei Mariae*, a faithful translation of this ancient apocryphon that seems to have been made directly from the original Greek, most likely during the sixth or seventh century.[7] In addition therefore to the many important new texts that Wenger published, the great achievement of his study of the early Dormition narratives was to map the relations among the early narratives from this so-called "Palm of the Tree of Life" family, calling attention to the numerous theological anomalies that survive in later narratives as important signs of this tradition's early origins. Thus, Wenger's work was the first to identify the ancient sources of these Byzantine texts as potentially invaluable witnesses to early Marian piety, an observation that has been largely borne out by subsequent studies and new textual discoveries.

Picking up where Wenger left off, Michel van Esbroeck continued the task of charting a clear path through the thicket of early Dormition narratives. Yet in contrast to Wenger, who never really applied himself to probing the pre-Byzantine history of the early Dormition apocrypha, van Esbroeck spent much of his prolific career pursuing questions related to the origins of the ancient Dormition traditions. While van Esbroeck's near obsession with the issues of the Fourth Council in his numerous studies can often prove to be something of a distraction, this feature should not detract from the broader genius of his many investigations into the early history of the Dormition traditions. In regard to the Palm of the Tree of Life narratives, van Esbroeck's work generally extends and refines Wenger's analysis, particularly in identifying the recently published *Liber Requiei* as a very early witness to the

[4] See Paul E. Duggan, "The Assumption Dogma: Some Reactions and Ecumenical Implications in the Thought of English-Speaking Theologians" (S.T.D. diss., International Marian Research Institute, University of Dayton, 1989), 57–63; see also Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15–17, 103–4.

[5] Antoine Wenger, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle; études et documents*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien, 5 (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1955), 67.

[6] Ibid., 17.

[7] Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 142–67. Indeed, as Tedros Abrahà has recently explained, this early Ethiopic translation is "un magnifico esemplare di un etiopico classico 'primitivo' dal quale, insieme ad opera della medesima specie sarebbe auspicabile ricavare una grammatica del gə'əz arcaico." Tedros Abrahà, «La *Dormitio Mariae* in Etiopia,» in *Il dogma dell'assunzione de Maria: problemi attuali e tentativi de ricomprensione. Atti del XVII Simposio Internazionale Mariologico (Roma, 6–9 ottobre 2009)*, ed. Ermanno M. Toniolo (Rome: Edizioni Marianum, 2010), 167–200, esp. 187. I thank Enrico Norelli for initially drawing my attention to this article and for providing me with a copy.

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traditions of the Palm of the Tree of Life family that dates to the fourth century at the latest and transmits traditions that undoubtedly are considerably older.[8] Equally if not more important, however, are van Esbroeck's efforts to outline the history of the second major literary family, the Bethlehem Dormition traditions, whose narratives are characterized by an excursion from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, where Mary apparently owned a second home. Of these Bethlehem narratives van Esbroeck identifies the "Six Books" Dormition apocryphon as particularly early, and while innumerable copies of this highly popular narrative exist, especially in Arabic and Ethiopic, the most important are several early versions in Syriac manuscripts from the fifth and sixth centuries. The original Greek underlying these early translations almost certainly belongs to the fourth century, as van Esbroeck frequently noted.[9]

Van Esbroeck's extension of Wenger's work thus directs us to two early Marian apocrypha where we might look to find the early shoots Marian piety sprouting up somewhere below the view afforded by the writings of the Church Fathers. Other scholars have similarly identified these two apocrypha as particularly early. For instance, Baldi, Masconi, and Cothenet analyzed the corpus of Dormition narratives using a rather different approach, governed primarily by language tradition rather than literary relations, and yet all agree that the *Obsequies* (i.e., the *Liber Requiei*) and the Six Books apocryphon reflect the earliest traditions, locating their origins in the second or third century.[10] Richard Bauckham too, through study of the heavenly journeys that complete these narratives, dates the Six Books to the fourth century at the latest and identifies several likely signs that the *Liber Requiei*'s apocalyptic conclusion served as a source for the *Apocalypse of Paul*, which was composed at the turn of the fifth century.[11] Numerous others, including Maximilian Bonnet, Jean Rivière, and Jean Gribomont, have concluded that these narratives originate in the fourth century, if not earlier.[12] Likewise, various scholars connected with the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Jerusalem have argued for the antiquity of the *Liber Requiei*, and while they successfully identify a number of very early features in the text, their arguments for a second-century "catholic Ebionite" context unfortunately are much less convincing.[13] Nevertheless, Norelli has recently approached these apocryphal traditions again from the vantage of early "Jewish-Christian" traditions, concluding more persuasively on this basis that these traditions show strong affinities with certain theological currents of the second century.[14]

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[8] Michel van Esbroeck, «Les textes littéraires sur l'assomption avant le Xe siècle,» in *Les actes apocryphes des apôtres*, ed. François Bovon (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1981), 265–85; Michel van Esbroeck, „Bild und Begriff in der Transitus-Literatur, der Palmbaum und der Tempel," in *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter*, ed. Margot Schmidt (Regensburg: Verlag Freidrich Pustet, 1982), 333–51, 341–4, 347; Michel van Esbroeck, "Some Earlier Features in the Life of the Virgin," *Marianum* 63 (2001): 297–308.

[9] van Esbroeck, "Les textes littéraires," 273–6; van Esbroeck, "Bild und Begriff," 340, 344–7; van Esbroeck, "Some Earlier Features," 301–8.

[10] Donato Baldi and Anacleto Mosconi, "L'Assunzione di Maria SS. negli apocrifi," in *Atti del congresso nazionale mariano dei Fratei Minori d'Italia (Roma 29 aprile–3 maggio 1947)*, Studia Mariana 1 (Rome: Commissionis Marialis Franciscanae, 1948), 75–125, esp. 121–5; Édouard Cothenet, «Marie dans les Apocryphes,» in *Maria: études sur la Sainte Vierge*, ed. Hubert Du Manoir de Juaye, 7 vols., vol. 6 (Paris,: Beauchesne, 1952), 71–156, esp. 118–30, 143.

[11] Richard Bauckham, "The Four Apocalypses of the Virgin Mary," in *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 93 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 332–62; see also Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 42–6. This conclusion was recently affirmed by Norelli in Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes*, 115, 134 n. 79. On the date of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, see Pierluigi Piovanelli, «Les Origines de l'*Apocalypse de Paul* reconsidérées,» *Apocrypha* 4 (1993): 37–59.

[12] Maximilian Bonnet, «Die ältesten Schriften von der Himmelfahrt Mariä,» *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Theologie* 23 (1880): 227–47; Jean Rivière, «Le plus vieux 'Transitus' latin et son dérivé grec,» *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 8 (1936): 5–23; Jean Gribomont, «Le plus ancien Transitus Marial et l'encratisme,» *Augustinianum* 23 (1983): 237–47.

[13] Bellarmino Bagatti, «La verginità di Maria negli apocrifi del II-III secolo,» *Marianum* 33 (1971): 281–92; Bellarmino Bagatti, «Ricerche sulle tradizioni della morte della Vergine,» *Sacra Doctrina* 69–70 (1973): 185–214; Bellarmino Bagatti, «La morte della Vergine nel Testo di Leucio,» *Terra Sancta* 50 (1974): 44–48; Bellarmino Bagatti, Michele Piccirillo, and A. Prodomo, *New Discoveries at the Tomb of Virgin Mary in Gethsemane* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Print. Press, 1975), 11–18; Emanuele Testa, «Lo sviluppo della 'Dormitio Mariae' nella letteratura, nella teologìa e nella archeologìa,» *Marianum* 44 (1982): 316–89; Emanuele Testa, «L'origine e lo sviluppo della Dormitio Mariae,» *Augustinianum* 23 (1983): 249–62; L. Cignelli, «Il prototipo giudeo-cristiano degli apocrifi assunzionisti,» in *Studia Hierosolymitana in onore di P. Bellarmino Bagatti*, ed. Bellarmino Bagatti, et al., 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1976), vol. 2, 259–77; Miguel Vallecillo, «El 'Transitus Mariae' según el manuscrito Vaticano G. R. 1982,» *Verdad y vida* 30 (1972): 187–260; Frédéric Manns, «La mort de Marie dans les textes de la Dormition de Marie,» *Augustinianum* 19 (1979): 507–15; Frédéric Manns, *Le récit de la Dormition de Marie (Vatican grec 1982): contribution à l'étude des origines de l'exégèse chrétienne*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior, 33 (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1989).

[14] See Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 205–56. See also Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes*, esp. 129–42; and Enrico Norelli, «La letteratura apocrifa sul Transito di Maria e il problema delle sue origini,» in *Il dogma dell'assunzione de Maria:*

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Indeed, it seems that there is something close to a consensus regarding the general antiquity of these two narratives and their origin sometime by the fourth century at the very latest. Only Jugie and Simon Mimouni present significant exceptions, the former because of his immortalist theological leanings, and latter out of a belief that the Dormition traditions issue from the concerns of the Fourth Council, an assumption that unfortunately is not in evidence.[15] Despite the influence of their views in certain quarters, Jugie's concern to protect the Assumption dogma from Mary's apocryphal decease and Mimouni's partiality toward Chalcedon do not present sufficient grounds for their relatively later datings of these early Dormition narratives, and the evidence to the contrary seems increasingly decisive. Consequently, we may with some degree of confidence look to these two ancient Dormition apocrypha for evidence of early Marian devotion, giving us some impression of what lay behind the explosion of Marian piety let loose by the Third Council. The texts lead us back to early Christian Palestine, where it appears that these traditions of Mary's Dormition had their origins, as evidenced especially by their persistent focus on various locations in Jerusalem (and Bethlehem) associated with the end of Mary's life. Despite the wide range of opinions that have been expressed concerning the early history of the Dormition narratives, there is nonetheless seemingly broad agreement that these traditions first took shape in Palestine, where they developed in close association with the emergent veneration of Mary in the Hagiopolite liturgies and mounting pilgrimage traffic to holy sites associated with her life and death.[16] Thus we find in the ancient Dormition apocrypha some of the very earliest evidence for Marian devotion and intercession, issuing from the Christian communities of late Roman Palestine.

MARIAN INTERCESSION IN THE *LIBER REQUIEI MARIAE* AND THE EARLY PALM NARRATIVES

Of these two early narrative traditions, the *Liber Requiei* shows signs of being the oldest, making this apocryphon, and its early descendents, a logical starting place. As noted already, significant fragments of this Dormition narrative survive in a late fifth-century Syriac manuscript that was translated from a Greek original, leaving little doubt that this apocryphon had been composed by the early fifth century at the very latest.[17] Yet numerous features indicate that the *Liber Requiei*, or the *Obsequies of the Virgin*, as the text is called in Syriac, is even older than this ancient manuscript alone would suggest.[18] For instance, the *Liber Requiei* repeatedly identifies Christ as the earthly manifestation of a "Great Angel" and shows numerous points of contact with "gnostic" traditions, including emphasis on the soteriological importance of esoteric knowledge, reference to numerous gnostic "technical terms," and the presence of a common gnostic cosmological myth, all of which suggest an origin in the third

problemi attuali e tentativi de ricomprensione. Atti del XVII Simposio Internazionale Mariologico (Roma, 6–9 ottobre 2009), ed. Ermanno M. Toniolo (Rome: Edizioni Marianum, 2010), 121–65, esp. 142–63.

[15] On Jugie's immortalism, see Duggan, "Assumption Dogma", 57–63; Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 15–17, 103–4. Regarding Mimouni's hypothesis and the significance of Chalcedon in particular, see ibid., esp 81–98, 142–79, 205–79.

[16] A Jerusalemite origin is of course central to the (rather dubious) hypotheses of Bagatti, Testa, and Manns, concerning the genesis of these traditions among the Jewish-Christians of the Holy Land. There is, however, fairly widespread agreement concerning the emergence of these traditions in Palestine, despite, as noted above, some rather striking differences otherwise concerning the nature of the corpus of early traditions. See, e.g., Baldi and Mosconi, "Atti del congresso nazionale mariano," 114, 125; Cothenet, "Marie dans les Apocryphes," 144–6; Martin Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge, étude historico-doctrinale*, Studi e testi 114 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944), 85–92; van Esbroeck, "Les textes littéraires," 276–85; Simon C. Mimouni, *Dormition et Assomption de Marie: Histoire des traditions anciennes*, Théologie Historique, 98 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995), 371–585; Brian E. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 7; Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, esp. 78–141. See now also esp. Stephen J. Shoemaker, "Epiphanius of Salamis, the Kollyridians, and the Early Dormition Narratives: The Cult of the Virgin in the Later Fourth Century," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008): 369–99, which argues that Epiphanius seems to have been aware of the nascent Dormition traditions (and the Six Books apocryphon in particular) while he was still in Palestine in the mid-fourth century.

[17] See Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 32–46.

[18] William Wright, *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), pp. ٥٥٠-٥٦ (Syr) and 42–51 (Eng); Victor Arras, *De transitu Mariae apocrypha aethiopice* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 342–43, 351–52; 2 vols.; Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1973), vol. 1; trans. in Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, pp. 290–350.

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century, if not even earlier, a point recently affirmed also by Norelli.[19] Other elements appear to confirm this early dating, including the *Liber Requiei*'s often irreverent characterizations of the Holy Family, such as when Joseph complains about having been burdened with a child that is not his own, prompting a revelation of his initial thoughts that he might have impregnated Mary one night while he was drunk.[20] Similarly, Mary, when explaining her fear of death to friends and family, confesses that she had once sinned, suggesting composition sometime before belief in Mary's sinlessness emerged as an important focus of Marian doctrine and devotion: the idea that Mary could have sinned (as separate from the question of her Immaculate Conception in the Western Church) seems to have belonged to the second century, where it is voiced by Irenaeus and Tertullian.[21] Likewise, the debates over asceticism reflected in this apocryphon and its efforts to defend Paul's authority alongside the Twelve also point toward a fairly early origin, as I have recently argued.[22]

The nascent Marian piety reflected in this apocryphon is largely consistent with such an early date. Devotion to the Virgin is only an occasional theme of this ancient Marian biography, revealing a basic form of Marian veneration such as one might expect to find at its earliest stages. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising just how much is absent from this narrative, which seems indicative of its early composition. For instance, the apostles do not afford Mary any special reverence when they first greet her, nor are there any indications of a formal cult of the Virgin. Mary does not work any miracles and expresses doubts and a fear of dying.[23] Yet the *Liber Requiei* unquestionably marks Mary's emergence as a figure of theological significance in her own right and not merely as some Christological annex, in stark contrast to the portrait of Mary that emerges from many studies of the early Fathers.[24] Most clearly in view here is the idea of Marian intercession, in what is perhaps the earliest evidence of such belief. For instance, on the evening before Mary's death, Peter proposes maintaining an all-night vigil, and when the others nominate him to deliver a discourse, he begins by invoking Mary's intercessory powers, exclaiming that "the light of our sister Mary's lamp fills the world and will not be extinguished until the end of days, so that those who have decided to be saved will receive assistance from her. And if they receive the image of light, they will receive her rest and her blessing."[25]

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[19] See Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 205–56. See also Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes*, esp. 129–42; and Norelli, «La letteratura apocrifa,» esp. 142–63. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Norelli disagrees with the identification of a "gnostic" provenance for these traditions and suggests instead the search for an alternative heterodox milieu in which these traditions first took shape, an endeavor that I warmly welcome.

[20] *Liber Requiei* 6 (Victor Arras, *De transitu Mariae apocrypha aethiopice*, 2 vols., CSCO 342–3, 351–2 (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1973), vol. 1, 3–4 (Eth) and 2–3 (Lat)); Michel van Esbroeck, "Apocryphes géorgiens de la Dormition," *Analecta Bollandiana* 92 (1973): 55–75, 69–70 (Geor) and 74 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 293.

[21] *Liber Requiei* 39–41 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 22–5 (Eth) and 15–16 (Lat)); van Esbroeck, "Apocryphes géorgiens," 60–2 (Geor) and 65 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 312–15. Regarding the question of Mary's sinfulness, see Tina Beattie, "Mary in Patristic Theology," in *Mary: The Complete Guide*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum, 2007), 75–105, 99–102.

[22] *Liber Requiei* 85–8 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 50–2 (Eth) and 33–4 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 337–40); William Wright, *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), ١-٢٤ (Syr) and 44–6 (Eng); C. Donahue, *The Testament of Mary: The Gaelic Version of the Dormitio Mariae together with an Irish Latin Version* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1942), 42–5. See now also Stephen J. Shoemaker, "Asceticism in the Early Dormition Narratives," *Studia Patristica* 44 (2010): 509–13.

[23] The only possible exception to this would be the miraculous restoration of Jephonias' severed hands following his botched assault on her funeral bier. After repenting, he is told to embrace Mary's lifeless body and prays over her for three hours in Hebrew, bringing forth testimonies about Mary from the Hebrew Scriptures. Then his arms are healed by invoking the name of Jesus. Strictly speaking, this does not seem to be a miracle worked through the Virgin's agency, but rather through direct appeal to her son. See *Liber Requiei* 76 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 44–5 (Eth) and 29 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 330). Cf. Wenger, *L'Assomption*, 236–9; English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 367–8.

[24] See, e.g., Price, "Theotokos," esp. 60–9, which expresses the fairly traditional position of Patrology that all interest in Mary's person before the sixth century was limited to her Christological significance. von Campenhausen, *Virgin Birth*, e.g., 68–70 presents an earlier exposition of this opinion. While one certainly could get this impression from reading many of the Church Fathers, other early Christian texts, including those under consideration here as well as certain early liturgical documents, contradict this view. See Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 78–132; Shoemaker, "Marian Liturgies and Devotion," esp. 134–42; Shoemaker, "Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century," .

[25] *Liber Requiei* 55 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 33 (Eth) and 22 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 321). Cf. Wenger, *L'Assomption*, 230–1; English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 364; Martin Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines (II)*, PO 19.3 (Paris: Librairie de Paris/Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1926), 390.

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Mary's intercession appears most dramatically, however, near the end of the apocryphon, when, following her resurrection in Paradise, the apostles demand that Christ fulfill an earlier promise to show them the places of torment. This scene, which appears almost identically in the Irish recension of this apocryphon as well as in an early Latin précis, begins as Christ brings his apostles together with Mary and Michael to the place "where the sun sets" and commands the earth to open, revealing the pit of Hell.[26] As the visitors draw near to the pit, the damned spot Michael and beg him to intercede on their behalf. Michael reassures the damned that God's angels are always interceding on behalf of all humanity and all creation. The angels of the waters, the winds, and the clouds intercede, followed by Michael himself, who begs the Lord to give the damned rest from their torments. Christ effectively rebuffs Michael's request, asking him if he could possibly imagine that he loves these lost souls more than the one who gave them life and breath. Then follows a tour of Hell, in which Mary and the apostles witness the various sufferings endured by the damned and learn their specific causes. When Mary and the apostles have finished their sightseeing, the damned plead with Mary for her assistance, crying out, "Mary, we beseech you, Mary, light and the mother of light; Mary, life and mother of the apostles; Mary, golden lamp, you who carries every righteous lamp; Mary, our master and the mother of our Master; Mary, our queen, beseech your son to give us a little rest."[27] Others of the damned look to the apostles, calling out to Peter, Andrew, and John. The apostles, however, scorn their request, rejoining, "Where did you place our doctrine that we taught you?," at which the damned "were very ashamed and could not reply to the apostles."[28] Yet in the end their pleas meet with some success, and Christ grants them three hours of rest every Sunday, "because of the tears of Michael, my holy apostles, and my mother Mary."[29] Then, after closing the pit of Hell, Christ leads his mother and the apostles onward to Paradise, where they are greeted by its blessed inhabitants.

Prior to the *Liber Requiei*'s publication, Cothenet questioned whether Mary's intercession for the damned was a late addition to the Irish and Latin texts, inasmuch as the Syriac *Obsequies* fragments are interrupted just before the tour of Hell begins.[30] Nevertheless, as Mary Clayton now observes, the close parallels of the *Liber Requiei* assure that "Mary's role as intercessor almost certainly goes back to the beginning of the [Dormition] tradition." Norelli likewise concludes that this intercessory excursion belonged to earliest version of this apocryphon, and, as noted above, it seems to have directly influenced a similar episode in the *Apocalypse of Paul*.[31] These conclusions are now confirmed by the existence of an unpublished Syriac manuscript in the British Library, a late fifth-century palimpsest which, although almost completely illegible, relates at one point Mary's intercession for the damned during her visit to Hell with the apostles.[32] It should be noted, however, that in these early traditions Mary's mediation is not portrayed as uniquely powerful but is presented alongside of angelic intercessions and a request (albeit somewhat unsuccessful) for apostolic intervention. Although Michael's pleas are initially rejected, and the apostles fail to offer any intercession, Christ ultimately yields to the collective supplications of Mary, Michael, and the apostles. Yet perhaps this is exactly the setting in which we should expect to find the origins of Marian piety, embedded within the emergent veneration of the saints and angels, of which the cult of the Virgin is ultimately only a particular variant. Despite the spectacular heights to which Marian devotion would eventually rise, the *Liber*

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[26] *Liber Requiei* 90–100 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 53–9 (Eth) and 35–38 (Lat); Wright, *Contributions to Apocryphal Literature*, ܡ-ܐ (Syr) and 47–8 (Eng); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 341–46); Donahue, *Testament of Mary*, 52–5; Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha: Selected Text in Translation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 130; Wenger, *L'Assomption*, 258–9.

[27] *Liber Requiei* 99 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 58 (Eth) and 38 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 345).

[28] *Liber Requiei* 99 (Arras, *De transitu*, vol. 1, 58 (Eth) and 38 (Lat); English trans., Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 345).

[29] The interval is given in the *Liber Requiei* as nine hours by one manuscript and three days by the other. The Latin and Irish both have three hours, which is likely the original reading.

[30] Cothenet, «Marie dans les Apocryphes,» 127.

[31] Mary Clayton, "The Transitus Mariae: The Tradition and Its Origins," *Apocrypha* 10 (1999): 74–98, 93; Norelli, *Marie des apocryphes*, 132–6.

[32] BL Syr. Add. 17,137, f. 9a, second column. On the manuscript's date and condition, see William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838*, 3 vols. (London: British Museum, 1870–2), vol. 1, 369. The upper text is written across the lower in the same direction, greatly impeding reading. The fragment is published in Stephen J. Shoemaker, "New Syriac Dormition Fragments from Palimpsests in the Schøyen Collection and the British Library. Presentation, Edition and Translation". *Le Muséon* 124/3–4 (2011) 259–278.

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Requiei seemingly affords a glimpse of the relative simplicity with which it began, presumably somewhere outside the proto-orthodox stream of ancient Christianity.

THE "SIX BOOKS" NARRATIVES AND THE EARLY BETHLEHEM TRADITIONS

Much more elaborate veneration of the Virgin is witnessed in the oldest Dormition narrative from the Bethlehem traditions, the Six Books apocryphon, which also seems to reflect a more "orthodox" theological milieu than the *Liber Requiei*. The advanced Marian piety of the Six Books apocryphon in comparison with the *Liber Requiei* appears to confirm its relatively more recent origin. At least five different manuscripts from the fifth and sixth centuries preserve a Syriac translation of this apocryphon, and the Greek original(s) lying behind these must be even earlier: the diversity of their accounts already by the end of the fifth century ensures the apocryphon's composition by the early fifth century at the very latest, and a number of features locate the Six Books much more probably in the fourth century. Its rather unusual account of the discovery of the True Cross suggests this period, and Richard Bauckham's analysis of the cosmic tour that completes the Six Books determines that the apocryphon dates "from the fourth century at the latest, but perhaps considerably earlier."[33] Likewise, as I have recently argued, Epiphanius' assault on the so-called "Kollyridians" seems to indicate the circulation of this early Dormition narrative, at least in oral form, already by the middle of the fourth century.[34]

From its very beginning the Six Books apocryphon presents a rather different sensibility about the veneration of Mary from the *Liber Requiei*. Whereas in the *Liber Requiei* evidence of Marian piety occurs only rarely and is more or less confined to seeking Mary's intercessions alongside the prayers of other saints, the Six Books apocryphon is suffused with Marian devotion of nearly every sort, making it an invaluable resource for discovering the roots of the fifth century's Marian revolution. Indeed, the Six Books apocryphon's importance for understanding the beginnings of Marian piety has been recognized from almost the very moment of its publication, as evidenced by Heinrich Ewald's rather chauvinistic evaluation of this early Dormition narrative in his review of William Wright's 1865 edition. Despite Ewald's considerable lack of sympathy for this text and its traditions, his comments rather ironically highlight its significance for understanding the rise of Marian piety.

> *We can certainly affirm that this book has become from the first the firm foundation for all the unhappy adoration of Mary, and for a hundred superstitious things, which have intruded with less and less resistance into the Churches, since the 5th century, and have contributed so much to the degeneration and to the crippling of all better Christianity. The little book is therefore of the greatest importance for the history of every century in the Middle Ages, and yet today we ought to notice far more seriously than we usually do the great amount of what we have to learn from it. The whole cultus of Mary in the Papal Church rests upon this book; we might search in vain for any other foundation to it.*[35]

Unfortunately, this is not even the most colorful passage of Ewald's review, and his anti-Catholicism was considered exceptional even when judged by his contemporaries.[36] Still, despite such prejudices, this great Orientalist

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[33] In regard to the True Cross traditions of the Six Books apocryphon, see Stephen J. Shoemaker, "A Peculiar Version of the *Inventio crucis* in the Early Syriac Dormition Traditions," *Studia Patristica* 41 (2006): 75–81, which now supersedes the rather different opinion concerning this material expressed in Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 56; see also Stephen J. Shoemaker, "Death and the Maiden: The Early History of the Dormition and Assumption Apocrypha," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 50 (2006): 59–97. Richard Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 93 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 346–60, esp. 358–60. See also Michel van Esbroeck, 'Some Earlier Features in the Life of the Virgin', *Marianum* 63 (2001): 297–308, which also argues for a fourth century date.

[34] Shoemaker, "Epiphanius of Salamis,". See also Shoemaker, "Marian Liturgies and Devotion," 132–8; Shoemaker, "Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century," .

[35] Heinrich Ewald, "Review of 'The departure of my lady Mary from this world. Edited from two Syriac MSS. in the British Museum, and translated by W. Wright'," *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 26 (1865): 1018–31, 1022–3; cited in the translation from Agnes Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, Studia Sinaitica 11 (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1902), xvi, where Smith Lewis notes her strong approval of Ewald's assessment. Wright also cites the passage as evidence of the work's historical importance: Wright, *Contributions to Apocryphal Literature*, 9–10.

[36] Thomas Witton Davies, *Heinrich Ewald, Orientalist and Theologian, 1803–1903: A Centenary Appreciation*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903, 22–3. Ewald likewise was not one to mince words: he was twice forced from his position at Göttingen for public remarks against the king and toward the end of his life was jailed for libel against von Bismarck.

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was able, much to his personal chagrin, to recognize the historical significance of this ancient Marian apocryphon for understanding the emergence of her cult.[37]

Somewhat more even-handed are the remarks of Max Bonnet, who shortly thereafter responded to Ewald's review by noting that in fact the opposite of what Ewald has proposed must be the case: before ideas such as are found in this text could have been expressed, "Marian veneration and Marian cult must already have been flourishing."[38] Bonnet therefore concludes that Marian devotion must have begun quite early within the Christian tradition, suggesting that the silence of the Church Fathers from the fourth century and earlier is a sign of its initial emergence somewhere along the margins of "orthodoxy" or in a more "popular" context. Nearly a century later, the *Liber Requiei* seems to have largely confirmed Bonnet's hypothesis, while the more "orthodox" Six Books apocryphon perhaps reflects early movement of Marian devotion into the proto-orthodox stream of ancient Christianity prior to its full embrace by the church hierarchs in the fifth century. In any case, the Six Books reveals a Marian piety already in full bloom by the fourth century, within a milieu that appears to conform with the emergent discourse of orthodoxy.

The Six Books apocryphon repeatedly advances devotion to the Virgin by portraying its characters in the act of venerating Mary, perhaps aiming to encourage similar behaviors among its audience. For instance, when John arrives at Mary's house in Bethlehem, the first thing he does is kiss the Virgin "on her breast and on her knees."[39] Likewise, the other apostles, when they arrive at her dwelling, immediately kiss her breast and her knees.[40] The Roman governor, when he comes to request healing for his son, kneels down and venerates the Virgin Mary, speaking praises in honor of her and her son.[41] The Patriarchs and Prophets, who accompany Christ when he comes to receive his mother's soul, also venerate Mary: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David worship her, as do the Prophets, carrying censers in their hands.[42] Even the heavenly bodies venerate the Virgin in this apocryphon: while she was in Bethlehem, "the sun and moon…came and worshipped before the upper chamber" in which she was dwelling.[43] After her resurrection in the Paradise of Eden, Mary enters the heavenly Jerusalem and again the sun and the moon worship her, as do thunder and lightning, fire and flame, the rain and the dew. The angels as well, including Gabriel and Michael, bow down before her, before Mary herself finally worships God the Father in the heavenly city.[44]

Mary's mediation is also a particularly prominent theme of the Six Books apocryphon. In contrast to the infrequent Marian intercessions of the *Liber Requiei*, the Six Books is replete with occasions where Mary is shown to intercede successfully with her son on behalf of Christian believers. As in the *Liber Requiei*, Mary embarks on a tour of the heavenly realms after her resurrection in Paradise, although in the Six Books she travels alone, without Michael and the apostles, led only by her son. When mother and child eventually arrive before the roaring fires of Gehenna, Mary beholds the damned, who await their eternal torment after the final judgment and cry out to Christ for mercy. Mary hears the cries of the wicked, and being saddened, she pleads with her son, "have mercy on the wicked when you judge them at the day of judgment; for I have heard their voice and am grieved."[45] While no specific reprieve is announced, as in the *Liber Requiei*, the effectiveness of Mary's intercessions is repeatedly acknowledged and demonstrated throughout the narrative. Its clear message is that one cannot hope for a better mediator with the divine judge than his beloved mother.

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[37] Ewald dates the text to the second half of the fourth century at the latest, based on reference to a tradition from the *Testament of Adam* in book three and a reference to convents (ܥܕܬܐ) at the end of book four: Ewald, "Review of 'The departure of my lady Mary'," 1020. Nevertheless, the final Christian redaction of *Testament of Adam* belongs to the third century, although its traditions are considerably earlier: James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), vol. 1, 990. Moreover, the mention of "convents" in Wright's text is entirely absent from the sixth-century Göttingen MS (syr 10, 33a) and the Sinai palimpsest fragments from the later fifth century: Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܨܕ; trans. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 372. The lacunae in the Sinai MS are not sufficient to have included the reading from Wright's text.

[38] Bonnet, "Die ältesten Schriften," 244–5.

[39] William Wright, "The Departure of My Lady Mary from This World," *The Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 6–7 (1865): 417–448 and 108–160, ܢ (Syr) and 136 (Eng).

[40] Ibid., ܢ (Syr) and 138 (Eng).; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ـــ (Syr) and 29 (Eng).

[41] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠ (Syr) and 146 (Eng); cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ـــ (Syr) and 48 (Eng).

[42] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠ (Syr) and 150–1 (Eng); cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ـــ (Syr) and 54–5 (Eng).

[43] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܟ (Syr) and 141 (Eng).

[44] Ibid., ܛ-ܟ (Syr) and 157–8 (Eng).; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ـــ.

[45] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠ (Syr) and 159 (Eng), translation slightly modified.

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In another episode just prior to her death, the apostles ask the Virgin to leave a blessing for the world she is about to depart. She obliges, praying, "May God, who willed of his own will and sent his Son, and he put on a body and dwelt in the place of my members, have mercy upon the people who call upon him."[46] She continues, praying "Our Lord Jesus, do Thou receive the prayers of the people who call upon Thee; and make bad times cease from the earth; and give a crown to old age, and bringing up to youth, and aid the souls that call upon Thee." Christ responds by promising his mother, "Everything thou hast said to me, Mary, will I do to please thee; and I will show mercy to everyone who calls upon thy name."[47] Mary's intercessions are especially linked with the numerous miracles she works in the text, particularly healings. Most of these are gathered together in two large collections, one at the beginning of book three and the other at its end. As the third book opens, Mary and the apostles are still at her home in Bethlehem, where its citizens behold "the stammering, and dumb, and blind, and deaf, and sick, and afflicted, and those who had evil spirits, and everyone who had a pain going to her and being healed," including "women … from the cities and regions and from Rome and Athens, the daughters of kings and procurators and prefects."[48] Several accounts of specific miracles follow: two women possessed by demons and another with strangury are healed when Mary prays over them; a woman with leprosy prostrates herself before Mary, and Mary heals her by making the sign of the cross over some water and sprinkling her with it; a woman blind in one eye is healed when Mary signs the cross over it. Then a throng "without number" travels from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to seek Mary's healing, crying out for her to have mercy on them, and when Mary hears their voice, she prays, "Lord Jesus Christ, hear the voice of the souls that cry to you."[49] As a result of her prayer, "straightway two thousand six hundred souls were healed, men and women and children."

Once Mary returns to Jerusalem with the apostles, the Roman governor organizes a public debate between the Jews and Christians, in which the Christians (unsurprisingly) triumph. Immediately thereafter follows a second anthology of Marian miracles that completes the third book, itself framed by two lengthy miracle stories, beginning with Mary's healing of the Roman governor's son and concluding with the botched Jewish assault on her bier, when Mary dramatically restores the severed arms of her injured attacker. After the Christian victory in the debate, the Roman governor brings his son, who suffers from a stomach disease and strangury, to Mary's house and begs her to heal him. When she prays and stretches out her hands to bless the child, he is instantly healed, and thereupon the governor returns to Rome, where he spreads news of Mary's wonders and miracles among the emperors and the nobility of Rome.[50] Then follows a report sent to the apostles from the disciples of Peter and Paul in Rome, who describe the miracles recounted by the governor there, and rather remarkably, each of these wonders involves an apparition of the Virgin.[51] When sailors in peril at sea cried out for Mary's mercy, "she rose upon them like the sun, and delivered these ships, which were ninety-two in number." One day some robbers attacked a group of men and threatened to kill them, and when they called on Mary for mercy, "she rose upon them like (a flash of) lightning, and rescued these men." A widow whose son had fallen down a well cried out to her, "and my Lady Mary appeared to her, and snatched up the child, and he was not drowned; and she gave him to his mother alive." She also appeared to a man who had been sick for sixteen years: when he brought out a censer and prayed to her, immediately she came to him and healed him. A merchant, who had borrowed a thousand dinars and lost them along the road, prayed to Mary, and she came to him and "took him and made him stand over the purse of dinars." Lastly, two women on their way to Egypt were confronted by a giant snake that was about to devour them, and when they called upon Mary, she "appeared to them and smote the snake on its mouth, and it was split in two." Yet perhaps most extraordinary is the fact that all the while Mary was doing these miracles "at Rome and in all countries," we are told that she remained simultaneously right beside the apostles in Jerusalem. Finally, book three comes to a close as the apostles process to Mary's tomb at "the head of the valley," with Mary lying on her funeral bier still alive.[52] As they exit the city, a Jew named Yūphanyā (Jephonias in Greek) attacks her, and when his hands touch her bier, "the angel of the Lord smote him with a sword of fire and they hung like ropes from the

[46] Ibid., ܠܐ-ܠܚ (Syr) and 151 (Eng).; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܨܓ-ܨܕ (Syr) and 56 (Eng).

[47] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠܛ (Syr) and 152 (Eng).

[48] Ibid., ܟܐ-ܟܒ (Syr) and 141 (Eng).; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܢܐ (Syr) and 33–4 (Eng).

[49] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܟܒ-ܟܓ (Syr) and 142 (Eng); cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܢܛ (Syr) and 35 (Eng).

[50] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠ-ܠܐ (Syr) and 146–7 (Eng); cf. the much longer account in Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܥܘ-ܦܐ (Syr) and 46–9 (Eng).

[51] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠܐ-ܠܓ (Syr) and 147–8 (Eng); cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܦܐ-ܦܕ (Syr) and 49–50 (Eng).

[52] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠܓ-ܠܗ (Syr) and 148–9 (Eng).

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bed." Yūphanyā then begs the apostles to heal him, but they advise him to call upon Mary instead. Once he pleads with Mary for mercy, she instructs Peter to give Yūphanyā his arms. Peter then spits on one of them and says, "In the name of my Lady Mary, the mother of God, cleave to thy place," and his arms are miraculously restored by the prayers of Mary.

Yet petitions to the Virgin alone are not enough, according to this early Marian apocryphon: they must be joined to liturgical commemorations and offerings in Mary's honor. The Six Books narrative repeatedly insists on regular observance of ceremonies in Mary's honor, bearing witness to the existence of a formal cult of the Virgin already by this time. The elaborate invocation that opens book one introduces a liturgical setting from the very start, asking for the Lord's blessing on "our congregation, that exalts the commemoration [ܕܘܟܪܢܐ] of your mother, my Lady Mary, O Lord God."[53] Shortly thereafter, when the monks miraculously receive the Six Books apocryphon from St John at his shrine in Ephesus, he explains to them that he "has sent you this book in order that there may be a commemoration of my Lady Mary three times in the year, because if humankind celebrate her memory, they shall be delivered from wrath."[54]

Likewise, the women who are healed at Bethlehem in book three bring Mary "gifts and offerings" along with their petitions.[55] At the beginning of book four, when Mary leaves her blessing for the world that she is about to depart, her favors are again tightly linked with her commemoration. The apostles ask for her blessing so "that those who make commemorations on her behalf may be delivered from grievous afflictions." She then prays, "make bad times cease from the earth when humankind, O Lord, hold a commemoration to my body and spirit, which have departed the earth; and make death and captivity and the sword and famine and all calamities that befall humankind pass away from the land in which offerings are offered to me." As Mary continues her blessing, a strong connection emerges between her intercessions and agriculture and fertility. No doubt here the Virgin has already begun to fill a role as protectress of the earth and the harvest that she inherited from the various Mediterranean goddesses. Mary prays for her son to "make the pestilence cease from the land in which offerings are made to me; and bless the garland of the year; and let these lands be preserved from locusts, that they may not devour them, and from blight and mildew and hailstones." She remains on this theme, asking, "Let the fields too, from which offerings are offered in honor of me, be blessed and bring forth the seeds which are concealed in the furrows; and let the vines from which wine is pressed in my name, bear good bunches of grapes."[56]

After Mary's son promises to grant her requests, her soul goes forth from her body, which is transferred to the Paradise of Eden. Then the apostles provide specific instructions for celebrating the annual Marian feasts that the Six Books narrative so emphatically enjoins on its audience. In what amounts to a brief liturgical handbook, the Six Books directs that three commemorations of the Virgin should be observed at different times in the year, and with each of these, the agricultural connections remain quite strong. The specific dates vary slightly according to the different early manuscripts, but their approximate times and significance remain constant. The first feast ought to be celebrated on the same day as the Nativity, which is 24 December or 6 January according to different manuscripts, but since that date already held a major feast, Mary's memorial should follow two or three days later. The purpose of this commemoration is "that the seeds of the farmers, which they have borrowed and sown, will be blessed," to which the sixth-century Göttingen manuscript adds, "so that by her offerings and prayers, the locusts that hide in the lands will be killed."[57] The second feast is on 15 May in all the manuscripts, and it is observed "on account of the seeds that were sown, and on account of the flying and creeping locusts, that they might not come forth and destroy the crops, lest there be a famine and the people perish," to which the Göttingen manuscript and the fifth-century palimpsest codex add blessings for "the beard of wheat, so that from them there will be an offering to the Lord and the blessed one." Finally, a feast is appointed for 13 August, "on account of the vines bearing bunches (of grapes), and on account of the trees bearing fruit, that clouds of hail, bearing stones of wrath, might not come, and the trees be broken, and their fruits, and the vines with their clusters."

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[53] Ibid., ܕ (Syr) and 130 (Eng)., trans. slightly modified; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܕ-ܟܗ (Syr) and 14 (Eng).

[54] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܙ-ܚ (Syr) and 132 (Eng), trans. slightly modified; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܒ (Syr) and 18 (Eng).

[55] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܟܐ-ܟܒ (Syr) and 141 (Eng); cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܢܙ (Syr) and 33–4 (Eng).

[56] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠܙ-ܠܛ (Syr) and 151–2 (Eng), trans. slightly modified; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܨܓ-ܨܗ (Syr) and 56–7 (Eng).

[57] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܠܛ-ܡ (Syr) and 152–3 (Eng), trans. slightly modified; MS Göttingen Syr. 10, fol. 30b-31a; cf. Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܨܚ-ܩ (Syr) and 59–61 (Eng).

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Following this calendar the Six Books narrative gives a rather detailed description of the ceremonies to be observed on each of these occasions, which focus on offerings of bread made in the Virgin's name and, in a blatant act of self-promotion, the reading of the Six Books apocryphon.

> *And the apostles also ordered that any offering offered in the name of my Lady Mary should not remain overnight, but that at midnight of the night immediately preceding her commemoration, it should be kneaded and baked; and in the morning let it go up on the altar while the people stand before the altar with psalms of David, and let the New and Old Testaments be read, and the volume of the decease of the blessed one [i.e., the Six Books apocryphon]; and let everyone be before the altar in the church, and let the priests make the offering and set forth the censer of incense and kindle the lights, and let the whole service be concerning these offerings; and when the whole service is finished, let everyone take his offerings to his house. And let the priest speak thus: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we celebrate the commemoration of my Lady Mary." Thus let the priest speak three times; and (simultaneously) with the word of the priest who speaks, the Holy Spirit shall come and bless these offerings; and when everyone takes away his offering, and goes to his house, great help and the blessing of the blessed one shall enter his dwelling and establish it forever.*[58]

A nearly identical version of these ritual instructions appears in the sixth-century Göttingen manuscript, but unfortunately the corresponding section is missing from the three fifth-century palimpsests, all of which are fragmentary.[59] Nonetheless, the fifth-century palimpsest codex published by Smith Lewis preserves not only the liturgical calendar but numerous other references to these commemorations as well.[60] Likewise, the palimpsest folios bound together with the Old Syriac Gospels twice mention the observance of these commemorations, and the palimpsest fragments from Sinai now in the Schøyen Collection preserve the liturgical invocation with which all of the early Syriac manuscripts begin, asking for divine blessings on the congregation as they celebrate Mary's memory and departure from the world.[61] It is clear then that these ritual practices belong to the earliest layer of these apocryphal traditions, and one would presume that these Marian feasts were observed by communities using the Six Books narrative as a liturgical text already by the fourth century. Thus, the Six Books apocryphon appears to bear witness to full-blown Marian cult already by this time, somewhere in Palestine, where this narrative most likely originated. This liturgical handbook comes to a close with a prayer for the months of the year, which underscores the strong connections between Marian veneration and the rhythms of the agricultural seasons. Each of the twelve months is invoked, asking for divine blessings for flowers that may adorn the altar of the Lord, for the grain harvest, for fruits, for the farmers, for the rains and snows, and finally for lambs and sheep.

EPIPHANIUS, THE KOLLYRIDIANS, AND THE SIX BOOKS APOCRYPHON

Not to be overlooked, however, are the arresting similarities between the ritual practices of the Six Books apocryphon and those of the so-called "Kollyridians" as described by Epiphanius of Salamis. According to Epiphanius, this group of early Christians allowed women to serve among the clergy and observed annual commemorations of the Virgin at which bread offerings were made in her honor. "On a certain day of the year," he writes, "they put

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[58] Wright, "Departure of my Lady Mary," ܟ-ܟܗ (Syr) and 153 (Eng), trans. slightly modified.

[59] MS Göttingen Syr. 10, fol. 31: "And the apostles ordered that there will be a commemoration of the blessed one in these three months, so that people will be delivered from hard afflictions and a plague of wrath will not come upon the earth and its inhabitants. And the apostles ordered that offerings that have been made to the blessed one should not remain overnight, but in the evening let flour of the finest wheat flour come to the church and be placed before the altar. And the priests will make the offering and set up censors of incense and light the lights. And the entire evening service [vespers] will concern these offerings. And when the service is finished, let everyone take his offering to his house. Because as soon as the priests pray and say the prayer of my master Mary, the Theotokos, 'Come to us and help the people who call upon you,' and with the priest's word of blessing, my master Mary comes and blesses these offerings. And as soon as everyone takes his offering and goes to his house, great aid and the blessing of my master Mary will enter his dwelling and sustain it forever."

[60] Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ـم-ـد ـي (Syr) and 59–61 (Eng). Note that although this section appears in Smith Lewis' edition and translation, here and elsewhere Smith Lewis has filled in the gaps in the fifth-century manuscript using a codex from the nineteenth century. Although the sections from this modern manuscript are typeset differently in both the Syriac and the translation, it is important to distinguish material from the two manuscripts. Although they are often remarkably close, they are sufficiently different in places that we cannot simply assume, as Smith Lewis appears to, that the modern version can be used to supply the missing sections of the fifth-century manuscript See also the passages from Smith Lewis' edition indicated in the notes above.

[61] Ibid., ܨ.ܕ, ܨ.ܕ; trans. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 372; Schøyen MS 579, fol. 2. The Schøyen fragments are published in Shoemaker, "New Syriac Dormition Fragments".

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forth bread and offer it in the name of Mary, and they all partake of the bread."[62] Epiphanius' ensuing denunciation of the Kollyridians has led many scholars to the conclusion that these Christians were worshipping Mary either as a part of the Godhead or as some sort of "pagan" goddess cloaked in Christian garb. Yet these interpretations of the Kollyridians' actions owe themselves primarily to Epiphanius' overheated rhetoric and should not be taken as accurately reflecting the liturgical intentions of the early Christians whose practices he describes. Indeed, a careful reading of Epiphanius' invective reveals his opposition to the Kollyridian practices within the context of a broader condemnation of the emergent veneration of saints.[63] According to Epiphanius, the Kollyridian "idolatry" was in theory not unique, and any devotees of a particular holy person who dared to cross the threshold of veneration and began to offer some sort of cult to a saint would be guilty of the same blasphemy. Epiphanius makes clear that the role of the saints in the church should be limited to serving as examples of Christian excellence, and they are not to become themselves objects of devotion. His resistance to this form of "idolatry" is paralleled by his early opposition to the use of images in cultic settings, and in this section of the *Panarion* as well as in the fragments from his now lost iconoclastic writings, Epiphanius joins his censure of venerating the angels and apostles to his condemnation of the use of their images.[64]

Yet while Epiphanius may well have regarded the Kollyridians' actions as idolatrous, his diatribe affords no evidence that these early Christians actually understood themselves to be worshipping Mary as a goddess or a part of the divinity. As is so often the case with opposition to the cult of the Virgin (and the saints), critics are quick to impute certain intentions to these practices, such as idolatry, that generally seem to be lacking in the practitioners themselves. Carlos Eire, in his study of the rhetoric of idolatry in Reformation Europe, observes that "one man's devotion was another man's idolatry," and thus the mere accusation from an opponent, such as Epiphanius, does not establish that these Christians were worshipping Mary as a divine goddess, as Epiphanius would apparently have his readers believe.[65] To judge the matter otherwise may ultimately have more to do with the legacy of the Reformation-era debates analyzed by Eire than with the history of late ancient Christianity.

In fact, the Six Books apocryphon appears to provide compelling evidence to the contrary. Here we find a very elaborate devotion to the Virgin, complete with regular bread offerings, articulated, and presumably practiced, within a thoroughly monotheist, Trinitarian context.[66] The Six Books repeatedly makes reference to veneration or worship (ܫܓܕܐ) of the Virgin, yet without ever implying that she is divine or equal to her son. More often than not, Mary's miracles are ascribed to intercessions with her son or to the sign of the cross, and the ontological difference between Mary and her divine son never seems to be blurred. One must of course admit that there are numerous "pagan" parallels to many aspects of the Marian piety expressed in the Six Books and attributed to the Kollyridians, such as the bread offerings or the strong agricultural associations. Yet these alone do not allow the conclusion that in either instance Mary was being worshipped as a divine goddess. Innumerable elements of early Christian faith and piety have precursors in the Greco-Roman religious traditions, particularly as seen in certain liturgical practices and the veneration of saints, and while these relationships are historically illuminating and important, the mere existence of such parallels does not control the interpretation of these phenomena nor allow us to impute polytheist beliefs to their practitioners.[67]

The Six Books thus offers an especially relevant point of comparison to the Kollyridians, inasmuch as some sort of a connection between the Six Books and Epiphanius' invective against the Kollyridians appears likely.

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[62] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.1.7 (Karl Holl and Jürgen Dummer, eds., *Epiphanius*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 25, 31, 37 (Leipzig; Berlin: J. C. Hinrichs; Akademie-Verlag, 1915, 1980, 1985), vol. 3, 476.

[63] See Shoemaker, "Epiphanius of Salamis," 376–83; see also Shoemaker, "Marian Liturgies and Devotion," ; Shoemaker, "Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century," .

[64] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.4.4–5 (Holl and Dummer, eds., *Epiphanius*, vol. 3, 479); Fragments 7–10 (Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1928–32), vol. 3, 358). On Epiphanius' iconoclastic writings, see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 3 vols. (Westminister, Md.: Newman Press, 1950), vol. 3, 390–3; and Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 103–4.

[65] Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4–7.

[66] Indeed, it is somewhat tempting to suppose here that we witness some sort of very early precursor to the Eastern Orthodox service of *artoklasia* ("the breaking of bread) or *litiya*, as it is known in Slavic contexts.

[67] See e.g., Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, The Haskell Lectures on History of Religions, New Series, 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 1–22; Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21–3, 213–21, 229–30.

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While evidence of their relation may not be as direct as some would like, it is perhaps all the more compelling for the manner in which Epiphanius' account seems to obscure its links with traditions of Mary's Dormition.[68] The bread offerings in Mary's honor are of course the most significant point of contact: nowhere else in early Christian literature (to my knowledge) do we find bread offerings to the Virgin in the manner that Epiphanius describes, except in the Six Books apocryphon. The remarkable similarities between the ritual practices of this early Dormition narrative and those of Epiphanius' opponents alone invite some sort of connection between the two. Yet there are a number of more subtle indications that Epiphanius' attack on the Kollyridians reacts to the traditions of the Six Books apocryphon, which he may have known about only at second or even third hand. Epiphanius addresses the Kollyridians twice, first in the *Letter to Arabia* (which appears as book 78 of the *Panarion*) and more extensively in *Panarion* book 79, and both accounts make very clear but unexplained associations between the ritual practices of the Kollyridians and traditions about the Virgin Mary's Dormition. Epiphanius' attacks here on ritual practices almost identical to those enjoined by the Six Books apocryphon against the backdrop of traditions about the end of Mary's life seems to indicate his awareness of these apocryphal traditions. Moreover, inasmuch as Epiphanius composed the *Letter to Arabia* in 370 while still living in his native Palestine, his attacks on the Kollyridians offer important confirmation of their circulation in Palestine already during the middle of the fourth century.

In his first account, from the *Letter to Arabia*, as Epiphanius excoriates the Kollyridian rituals he turns suddenly to the question of the end of Mary's life, professing the strict agnosticism on this subject for which he has become so famous in various modern studies on the Dormition and Assumption. Without making any transition to a new topic, he writes:

> *The holy virgin may have died and been buried – her falling asleep was with honor, her death in purity, her crown in virginity. Or she may have been put to death – as the scripture says, "And a sword shall pierce through her soul" – her fame is among the martyrs and her body, by which light rose in the world, [rests] amid blessings. Or she remained alive, for God is not incapable of doing whatever he wills. No one knows her end.*[69]

Epiphanius then continues his attack on the Kollyridians further, offering no explanation for his introduction of this topic and leaving the unmistakable impression that his discussion of the Dormition has something to do with the Kollyridians. The overall effect is to link his opponents' bread offerings in Mary's honor with the question of how her life ended, a pairing that certainly suggests a connection with the Six Books apocryphon.

A similar association between the Kollyridians' veneration of Mary and the Virgin's Dormition occurs in the penultimate section of the *Panarion*, which is dedicated exclusively to the refutation of this Marian "heresy." After denouncing the Kollyridian practice of allowing female clergy, Epiphanius eventually comes to address their bread offerings to the Virgin, which he attacks by comparing Mary with Elijah, John, and Thecla. In this way he continues his apparent strategy of undermining this veneration of the Virgin through a broader attack against veneration of the saints.[70] The main point here is that just as Elijah, John, and Thecla are not venerated using such blasphemous ritual practices, so there is no basis for the Kollyridian veneration of Mary. Thecla's appearance in this context is to be expected, since she had long served as the primary role model for female virginity, a role that Mary only began to assume at this time.[71] Yet comparisons with a prophet and an apostle are a perhaps little unexpected given the harangue against women's liturgical leadership that precedes this discussion of the bread offerings. Obviously, prophecy and leadership are not the qualities that Epiphanius want to associate with Mary.

Instead, Epiphanius' comparisons with Elijah and John focus squarely on the miraculous manner in which each ended his life. Mary is like Elijah, he explains, in that he was "a virgin from his mother's womb, he remained so perpetually, and was assumed [ἀναλαμβανόμενος] and has not seen death."[72] Although this passage has been frequently overlooked in various studies of the Virgin's Dormition and Assumption, the last two points deserve particular emphasis. In contrast with the guarded agnosticism of the *Letter to Arabia*, which previous scholarship has

[68] See also Shoemaker, "Epiphanius of Salamis," 387–96.

[69] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 78.23.9 (Holl and Dummer, eds., *Epiphanius*, vol. 3, 473; trans. Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 2 vols., Nag Hammadi Studies, 35–36 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987, 1994), vol. 2, 619).

[70] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.5.1–4 (Holl and Dummer, eds., *Epiphanius*, vol. 3, 479–80; trans. Williams, *Panarion*, vol. 2, 624–5, slightly modified).

[71] Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4.

[72] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.5.2 (Holl and Dummer, eds., *Epiphanius*, vol. 3, 479).

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overwhelmingly taken as evidence that Epiphanius knew no tradition of the end of Mary's life, here he rather unambiguously proclaims that Mary, like Elijah, "was assumed and has not seen death." Moreover, he makes this assertion in the context of rebutting the Kollyridian liturgical practices, again suggesting his awareness of a link between these rituals and a tradition about the end of Mary's life. This connection is reinforced by his comparison between Mary and John, when he invokes John's miraculous dormition, arguing that "John is not to be venerated, even if through his own prayer (or rather, by receiving grace from God) he made of his falling asleep [κοίμησιν] an amazing thing."[73] Here Epiphanius refers to the various traditions of John's "metastasis" and the miraculous removal of his body from this world at death that had begun to circulate already in several versions by this time.[74] Thus again without much explanation, Epiphanius returns to the theme of Mary's Dormition in his assault on the Kollyridian ritual practices. His deployment of traditions regarding the miraculous endings of Elijah's and John's lives in the context of attacking the Kollyridian veneration of Mary suggests even more strongly a connection between these bread offerings and a tradition of Mary's Dormition. Indeed, the implied logic of Epiphanius' argument is that his opponents may have appealed to a tradition about Mary's Assumption to defend their veneration of her, although this is far from certain.

In any case, Epiphanius' own rhetoric reveals in both instances a connection between the Kollyridian bread offerings to Mary and a tradition about her miraculous departure from this world. This configuration can only point to the Six Books apocryphon, whose traditions Epiphanius must have known in either written or oral form. The Six Books is the sole source from the ancient church to mandate regular liturgical offerings of bread to the Virgin, which it enjoins within the context of an account of Mary's Dormition, a subject that Epiphanius apparently saw as being closely intertwined with his opponents' bread offerings. Consequently, it would seem that traditions from the Six Books, including their liturgical ceremonies in Mary's honor, must have been in circulation already by the middle of the fourth century, when Epiphanius presumably encountered them in Palestine before writing the *Letter to Arabia.*

CONCLUSIONS

The Dormition apocrypha thus have much to reveal about the rise of Marian piety during the "tunnel period" between the second-century *Protevangelium* and the Nestorian controversy of the early fifth century. The *Liber Requiei* shows Mary's emergence as a figure of religious significance in her own right, and not just as some appendage to discussions of the Incarnation and Nativity, and also reveals the importance of Marian intercession already by the third century it would seem. Moreover, it appears that this special interest in Mary and her intercessory powers first took hold somewhere outside of proto-orthodox Christianity, in a milieu where there was a strong presence of "gnostic" Christian ideas. The actual Marian devotion evidenced by this narrative is rather basic, as perhaps should be expected from such an early text: one finds only scattered references to the efficacy of Mary's intercessions with her son, which are framed within a setting that also includes intercessory prayers from the apostles and angels. The Six Books apocryphon, however, discloses a rather advanced form of Marian piety, in which the focus on Mary's intercessions has been intensified considerably and joined to belief in Mary's power to work wonders and her apparitions. In addition, the Six Books narrative affords what is most likely the earliest witness to actual Marian cult, in the form of three annual liturgical feasts celebrated in her honor with bread offerings on her behalf. Apparently, Epiphanius must have somehow become aware of these ritual practices, inasmuch as he condemns the nearly identical practices of the "Kollyridians" while simultaneously engaging the issue of Mary's departure from this world.

Thus it would seem that Marian piety did not suddenly burst onto the scene in Constantinople during the late 420s through some kind of spontaneous generation, as it sometimes can be made to appear. The early Dormition apocrypha disclose the existence of Marian intercession and even Marian cult well before the Council of Ephesus, as well as alerting us that if we hope to unearth the roots of this phenomenon, we may well have to look outside of the discursive arenas dominated by the bishops and the early Church Fathers. Indeed, not until the early seventh

[73] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 79.5.3 (ibid., vol. 3, 480.).

[74] Jean-Daniel Kaestli, «Le rôle des textes bibliques dans la genèse et le développement des légendes apocryphes. Le cas du sort final de l'apôtre Jean,» *Augustinianum* 23 (1983): 319–36, esp. 329–30. See also Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R McL. Wilson, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Louisville, Ky.: *Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991–2), vol. 2, 161–3, 204–5.*

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century, in the Dormition homily of Theoteknos of Livias and the *Life of Mary of Egypt*, as well as perhaps the Dormition homily attributed to Modestus of Jerusalem, do we find clear evidence otherwise of belief in Mary's intercessory powers in the Palestine region, making these early apocrypha thus all the more important.[75] That Marian piety did not lie dormant in between can now be seen from the *Jerusalem Georgian Chantbook*, a massive collection of the Holy City's liturgical hymns from the fifth through seventh centuries. This tremendous resource has only recently begun to be explored, and yet already its importance for understanding the development of Marian piety in Jerusalem and Palestine is abundantly clear. In addition to its preservation of complete hymn cycles for the various Marian feasts, references to Mary's intercession occur throughout the *Chantbook*, and while this material can be somewhat difficult to date, the bulk of its traditions, including, it would seem, these intercessory pleas, appear to date most likely to the fifth and sixth centuries.[76] Accordingly, further study of these early Jerusalemite hymns has great potential for shedding new light on the history of Marian piety in the late ancient Near East.

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[75] Theoteknos of Livias, *Homily on the Dormition* 17, 36 (Wenger, *L'Assomption*, 280, 290; trans. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 75, 80); *The Life of Mary of Egypt* 23 (PG97:3713; trans. Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), 83); (Ps-)Modestus of Jerusalem, *Homily on the Dormition* 10 (PG 86:3301C, 3305A; trans. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 95, 97). For more on these texts, including their provenance and authorship, see Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 65–9; and Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 13–15.

[76] The text of the *Jerusalem Georgian Chantbook* has been published in El. Metreveli, C. Cankievi, and L. Xevsuriani, *ეძველესი იადგარი (Udzvelesi Iadgari [The Oldest Chantbook])*, Zveli kartuli mcerlobis zeglebi 2 (Tibilisi: Mecniereba, 1980). See now also the translations of specific components, with helpful commentary, in Charles Renoux, *Les hymnes de la résurrection. 1. Hymnographie liturgique géorgienne : textes du Sinaï 18.*, Sources liturgiques 3 (Paris: Cerf, 2000); Hans-Michael Schneider, *Lobpreis im rechten Glauben: die Theologie der Hymnen an den Festen der Menschwerdung der alten Jerusalemer Liturgie im georgischen Udzvelesi Iadgari*, Hereditas. Studien zur alten Kirchengeschichte (Bonn: Borengässer, 2004); and Charles Renoux, *L'hymnaire de Saint-Sabas (Ve–VIIe siècle): le manuscrit géorgien H 2123. I. Du samedi de Lazare à la Pentecôte*, Patrologia Orientalis 50.3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008). Concerning the dating of these hymns, see also Peter Jeffery, "The Sunday Office of Seventh-Century Jerusalem in the Georgian Chantbook (Iadgari): A Preliminary Report," *Studia Liturgica* 21 (1991): 52–75; and Stig Frøyshov, "The Early Development of the Liturgical Eight-Mode System in Jerusalem," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 51 (2007): 139–78. See also Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition*, 120–2, 132–6.

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Rina Avner

Presbeia Theotokou, *Presbeia mētros*: Reconsidering the Origins of the Feast and the Cult of the Theotokos at the Kathisma, on the Road to Bethlehem

This article complements my former article on the cult of Mary at the archaeological site of the Kathisma (commemorating a rock where allegedly the Virgin sat to rest on her journey to Bethlehem, prior to the birth of Jesus). The archaeological remains of the site were excavated by me on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.[1] In the former study I dealt with the influence of the cult to the Theotokos at the Kathisma site on the calendar of Jerusalem, and on the early celebrations for Mary in Jerusalem and elsewhere. I already pointed-out to the similarities between Rachel's death after she gave birth to Benjamin (Gn 35.16–20) and the legend mentioned in the Protoevangelium 17, i.e., the legend that later hallowed the site of the Kathisma. The geographical proximity between the site of the Kathisma and the tomb of Rachel on the road to Bethlehem were also presented and discussed.[2]

In this study I will focus on the exegetical imageries of Rachel in Christian and Jewish exegesis, including the differences between the Christian and the Jewish imagery of Rachel as the weeping mother. I will argue that the origin of the Theotokos cult and her feast in the Kathisma emanated from Rachel's veneration in the rural area near to Bethlehem. I also will suggest in this article that the original date of the Theotokos feast in the Kathisma and its theme corresponded with the celebration of the 15th of Av.[3] This Jewish feast is connected to Rachel in the role of the mother of the nation of Israel, a powerful advocate who successfully intercedes on behalf of her children.

As Averil Cameron observed:

> *One of the problems of understanding the early growth of attention to the Theotokos is the apparent gap between the second-century apocryphal writing as the Protoevangelium of James ... and the beginnings of real attention to the Virgin in our sources from the late fourth century, and particularly the fifth century onward.*[4]

The results of my excavations in the Church of the Kathisma accord with Cameron's conclusion. In spite the fact that the hallowing tradition of the site is found in the Protoevangelium, there is no evidence from neither archaeology nor ancient written texts that the site of the Kathisma existed before the fifth century CE. Therefore, we are compelled to investigate the question of the beginning of the Theotokos cult at the Kathisma in the historical context of the fifth century CE.[5]

The site of the Kathisma was hallowed by the legend transmitted by the *Protoevangelium* (17.2–3), according to which Mary sat to rest on the journey to Bethlehem. The gap in question with regard to the Kathisma Church is the lack of the material evidence that predates the fifth century and the lack of ancient written sources that point to a date for the Kathisma prior to the fifth century. Today, the remains of the Church of the Kathisma are situated in an old olive grove on the road to Bethlehem, about 5 km from the Jaffa Gate in the city walls of Jerusalem. Archaeological excavation conducted in 1992, 1997 and 1999 on the modern highway to Bethlehem, revealed the remains of a large octagonal church (measuring 38 m north–south x 41 m east–west) built around a rock at the

[1] R. Avner, 'The Initial Tradition of the Theotokos at the Kathisma: Earliest Celebrations and the Calendar', in: L. Brubaker and M. B. Cunningham, eds., *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images* (Aldershot, Hampshire 2011), 9–15, bibliography on the archaeological excavations in nn.1, 9, 21, 22, 28.

[2] Avner, 'The Initial', 26–27, with bibliography in the notes.

[3] The case of the development of the Kathisma sites is a test case challenging R. A. Markus, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy?', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2/3 (1994), 257–271.

[4] A. Cameron, 'Introduction – The Mother of God in Byzantium: Relics, Icons, Texts', in: Brubaker and Cunningham, eds., *The Cult*, 3–4.

[5] Although it is possible that after the Arab conquest of Jerusalem in 638 CE the Muslims bridged between the reality of a holy Christian site at the Kathisma and the Qur'ānic narrative related to birth of Jesus by the Muslim ascribing tradition to the Christian site. R. Avner, 'The Kathisma: A Christian and Muslim Pilgrimage Site,' *ARAM* 19 (2007), 541–557, esp. 548–552; Avner, 'The Initial', 17–19.

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center,[6] the alleged place where Mary sat to rest on her journey with Joseph to register for the census (Lk 2.1–6). The date of its construction – the fifth century CE – and the architectural changes inside the building during the sixth century, the modest size of the rock, the remains of an installation for producing holy water, and the poor state of preservation of the walls of the church – all accord with the historical written sources relating to the church and its site. The archaeological finds also includes architectural remains that pre-date the construction of the octagonal church in c. 456 CE.[7] These remains were ascribed to the period of the Armenian Lectionary (i.e., 417–439 CE).[8] The Armenian lectionary, which reflects the liturgy of Jerusalem in the early fifth century mentions the feast of the Theotokos celebrated on August 15th in the Kathisma, which it describes as situated on the road halfway from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

Two homilies for this feast were written during the fifth century in Jerusalem, the earlier one of the two, was composed by Hesychios.[9] It influenced the later one, which was written by Chrysippos of Jerusalem.[10] Both homilies focus on the virtues of and the super-natural nature of the Virgin's maternity and ignore the charming apocryphal stories of the *Protoevangelium* 17 about the events involving Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem.

The Armenian lectionary reveals that by 439 the site of the Kathisma was a known established holy place. In other words, by that time the legend of Mary resting on her journey to Bethlehem was attached to a specific place, where the Armenian lectionary says the feast of the Theotokos was celebrated. Since the homilies for the Theotokos feast by Hesychios and Chrysippos post-date the council at Ephesus and also post-date the establishment of the *locus sanctus* of the Kathisma (i.e. before 440), I find it odd that neither preacher drew from the *Protoevangelium*'s narrative about Mary's repose during the journey to Bethlehem. Perhaps they refrained from doing so because, unlike the local lay community, the official ecclesiastical institution of Jerusalem had doubts about the orthodoxy of the texts in the *Protoevangelium* or the nature of the cult there. This observation fits well with Mary Cunningham's conclusions that before the middle of the sixth century, the Fathers of the Church were reluctant to ascribe too much authority to the *Protoevangelium* and that Romanos the Melodist had been a pioneer in drawing inspiration from the *Protoevangelium.*[11] According to Cunningham, there was no formal expression in theological and liturgical sources before the beginning of the fourth century, but such expression reached a peak as a result of the affirmation of Mary as Theotokos in the creed at the council of Ephesus in 431.[12] Therefore, it seems that perhaps the beginning of the cult of the Theotokos in the Kathisma emerged from popular devotion of the local community in the vicinity of Bethlehem. Unlike many other Christian holy places, there is nothing that indicates that the Kathisma was invented in a dream or in another miraculous way, which were common methods to create and to establish holy places.[13]

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[6] Avner, 'The Initial', 12–15.

[7] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Theodosii,* 236.20–237.2; J. Binns and R. M. Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine,* Cistercian Studies (Kalamazoo MI, 1991), 262–263; L. Di Segni, *Cyril of Scythopolis, The Lives of the Monks of the Judaean Desert. Introduction and Translation* (Jerusalem, 2005), 251–252 n.3 (in Hebrew).

[8] A. Renoux, *Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem* 121, *PO* 36/2 (1971), 181.

[9] Hesychios, Homily V, De S. Maria deipara, in: M. Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem,* vol. 1, Subsidia Hagiographica 59 (Brussels, 1978), 158–169.

[10] Chrysippos, Oratio in sanctam Mariam Deiparam 3, in: M. Jugie, ed., *Homélies Mariales Byzantines, PO* 19 (Paris, 1925; repr. Turnhout, 1990), 340.40–341/10, 35.

[11] M. B. Cunningham, 'The Use of the *Protoevangelium of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God', in: Brubaker and Cunningham, eds., *The Cult*, 165–166 with bibliography in the notes.

[12] Cunningham, 'The Use of the *Protoevangelium*', 164 n. 6, bibliography on the John Rylans Papyrus 470; N. Smelova, 'Melkite Syriac Hymns to the Mother of God (9th–11th centuries): Manuscripts, Language and Imagery', in: Brubaker and Cunningham, eds., *The Cult*, 118 n. 3.

[13] For example, the discovery of the Tomb of Christ, J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta, the Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of her Finding of the True Cross* (Leiden, 1992). Other examples are the prophets' tombs in the territory of Eleutheropolis in Judea: see Z. Rubin, 'The See of Eleutheropolis in the Conflict of Supremacy between the See of Caesareans and the See of Jerusalem in the 4th and the Early 5th Century CE', in: J. Geiger, H. M. Cotton and G. Stiebel, eds., *Israel's Land. Papers Presented to Israel Shatzman on his Jubilee,* (Raanana, 2009), 255–256; D. Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine. Reassessing the 'Lives of the Prophets',* Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 11 (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1995), 1–33.

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The feast of the Theotokos in the Kathimsa has been studied and discussed by many scholars, among them Capelle, Jugie, Raes, Renoux and Aubineau.[14] Two Ph.D. dissertations deal with the question of the origins of the date of the feast on August 15th.[15]

RACHEL IN EARLY CHRISTIAN EXEGESIS

The written historical sources, namely pilgrims' accounts, indicate that the Tomb of Rachel on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem was a pilgrims' station and a place of Christian veneration long before the establishment of the site at the Kathisma.[16] In addition to the account by the Bordeaux Pilgrim, who mentioned the Tomb of Rachel in 333, also Jerome, who lived in Bethlehem in 398 while he wrote his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, insisted that the Tomb of Rachel was located near Bethlehem, i.e., somewhere in the southern part of the territory of the tribe of Benjamin and bordering the territory of the tribe of Judah. Jerome discusses this in his commentary on Matthew 2.16–18 and cites Jeremiah 31.14 as quoted in Matthew 2.18, as follows:

> *Then was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet: 'A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and much wailing, Rachel weeping for her children, and she was unwilling to be consoled, because they are not'* (Matthew 2.18).[17]

Jerome claims that Rama should not be identified as a place near the city of Gabaa in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin, but should be translated as 'on high' in terms of the weeping: 'the voice has gone forth far and wide'.[18]

The quotation of Jeremiah 31.14 in the Gospel of Matthew is the partial citation of a prophecy of consolation that continues in the following verses. Verses 15 and 16 include God's compassionate words to Rachel, comforting her and promising to bring back her exiled children to their land:

> *Thus says the Lord: Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord, And they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the Lord, that your children shall comeback to their own border.*[19]

This poetic, comforting prophecy is read in the synagogue on the 2nd of Tishrei, a week before the Day of Atonement. In the Gospel of Mathew 2.18 the quotation of verse 14 by itself de-contextualizes the content of God's consolation to Rachel. The Gospel indicates that the matriarch wept because she foresaw the death of the Innocent. In so doing, Matthew totally diverted Rachel's image from a powerful mother whose tears and action engender rewards ('for your work shall be rewarded'); Rachel is instead transformed in Matthew into a winning mother, bereft of hope, crying desperately but in vain because she knows that the death of her children is the inevitable outcome of the birth of Jesus. Following the exegesis of Matthew, the interpretation of Rachel weeping for her

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[14] B. Cappelle, 'La fête de la Vierge à Jérusalem au Ve siècle', *Le Muséon* 56 (1943), 19–20; M. Jugie, 'La première fête mariale en orient et en occident: l'Avent primitif', *EO* 22 (1923), 129–152; *idem,* 'La fête de la dormition et l'assomption de la sainte Vierge en orient et en occident', *L'année théologique* 4 (1943), 11–42; *idem, La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge,* ST 114 (Vatican City, 1944); A. Raes, 'Aux origines de la fête de l'Assomption en orient', *Orientalia christiana periodica* 12 (1946), 262–274; A. Renoux, 'Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem (Cod. Jer. Arm. 121)', *Le Muséon* 74 (1961), 361–385; *idem*, *Un manuscrit du lectionnaire arménien de Jérusalem* 121, *PO* 35/1 (1969); *PO* 36/2 (1971); M. Aubineau, ed., *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem,* Subsidia Hagiographica 59 (2 vols, Brussels, 1978), vol. 1.

[15] W. D. Ray, *August 15 and the Development of the Jerusalem Calendar,* Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2000; S. Verhelst, *La liturgie de Jérusalem à l'époque byzantine: genèse et structures de l'année liturgique,* Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999; *idem,* 'Le 15 août et le 9 Ave et le Kathisma', *Questions liturgiques* 82 (2001), 161–191.

[16] Avner, 'The Initial', 25–28, 27; Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerarium,* 12; P. Geyer, ed., *Itinera Hierosolymitana saeculi IIII–VIII,* Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 39 (Vienna, 1989), 25. On the two traditions on the location of the Tomb of Rachel see Ch. Ritter, *Rachels Klage im antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum: eine auslegungsgeschichtliche Studie,* Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentum, 52 (Leiden and Boston, 2007), 29–32, 257–259; F. Strickert, *Rachel Weeping: Jews, Christians, and Muslims at the Fortress Tomb* (Collegeville MN, 2007), 57–83.

[17] Jerome Commentary on Matthew, 1.2.17; T. Scheck, trans., *St. Jerome Commentary on Matthew*, The Fathers of the Church, Th. P. Halton, ed. (Washington D.C., 2008), 66.

[18] Ibid., 1.2.19; Scheck, trans., *St. Jerome*, 67.

[19] New King James Version from https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=NKJV&search=Jeremiah%2031 (accessed on January 9, 2015), is the closest translated text to the Hebrew Masoretic text.

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sons is a prefiguration of the mothers of the massacred Innocents, which evidently appeared in Justin Martyr. The latter wrote in the second century, about the same time as the *Protoevangelium* was circulating.[20]

Jerome further developed the interpretation of Rachel's weeping:

> *'She weeps for her sons and does not receive consolation' may be understood in two ways: either that she considered them to be dead forever, or that she did not console herself about those she knew would live.*[21]

The idea of two peoples, one that was destined to die and the other to live, could connote the vision of the two peoples that Mary saw on the journey to Bethlehem shortly before she asked Joseph to halt for a rest (*Protoevanagelium* 17.1–2).

The issue of Rachel's imagery as a weeping mother in Jewish, apocryphal and Christian exegesis has been studied in depth by Christine Ritter.[22] She also studied the interpretations of the Jacob's wives Rachel and Leah as a pair representing types – Leah representing the active life and Rachel, the contemplative life. Ritter argued that this interpretation was drawn by the Fathers of the church from Philo. The Fathers of the church also employed Rachel as a type of the Church and Leah as the Synagogue[23] (Gn 29.17: 'Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful'.). This verse was reiterated by Justin Martyr:

> *Now, Leah represented your people and the Synagogue, while Rachel was a figure of our Church. And Christ still serves for them and for his servants that are in both… As the eyes of Leah were weak (Gn 29.17) so, too, are the eyes of your souls should exceedingly weak'.*[24]

Ambrose related to the imagery of Rachel as the church in the context of pilgrimage and the location of her tomb on the way to Bethlehem:

> *That Bethlehem is the very same as Ephrata a passage in Genesis makes clear, when it says: 'So Rachel died, and was buried on the way to Ephrata, that is Bethlehem' (Gn 35.19) The tomb of holy Rachel is on the road, for she is a type of the Church so that passers-by may say: 'The blessing of the Lord may be upon you!' (Ps. 128.8) and 'Coming they shall come with rejoicing.' (Ps. 126.6)*[25]

Paulinus of Nola, a friend of Jerome who traveled with him in the Holy Land, conflated the imageries of Rachel as the Church and as the weeping mother. He thus ascribed to her the role of a transitional mother figure linked to the old era of the law from the Old Testament, which ended with the birth of Jesus and the rise of Christianity. In the following exegesis, Paulinus of Nola ascribes to Jacob prophetic ability to foresee the birth of the Gospel that is oblivious of the Old Testament:

> *Jacob, too, honored the church much beloved and eagerly awaited Rachel with a famous tomb and inscription, so that this pious duty might lighten his present sorrow and be a witness to posterity. And yet with prophetic mind he marked that spot with the inscription of his wife's death, foreseeing that at the birth of the Gospel the Law must fall into disuse. By this mystery the wife of the patriarch, who lived in many places as an image of the Church, died there, I think, to symbolize the death of the synagogue, having brought forth in labor the son of grief in that place (Gn 35.16–20)*[26] *where the end of the Law was to be announced in the childbirth of the Virgin. 'For the end of the law is Christ' (Rm 10.4).*[27]

This interpretation also provides a Christian answer to the question of Jacob's choice to bury Rachel on the road to Bethlehem and not in the burial cave of the Jewish patriarchs and matriarchs that Abraham bought at He-

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[20] Ibid., xi–xii; J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993), 49 ascribes most parts of the *Protoevangelium* to the second half of the second century.

[21] Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 1.2.18; Scheck, trans., *St. Jerome*, 66.

[22] Ritter, *Rachels Klage.*

[23] Ritter, *Rachels Klage*, 262–265.

[24] Justin Martyr 134.3,5; St. Justin, *Dialogue with Tryphon*, trans. Th. B. Falls, rev. by Th. Halton, ed. by M. Slusser. (Washington, D.C., 2003), 202.

[25] Ambrose, Letter 45 to Honorantius bishop of Verona, the letter was dated to ca. 387 (M. Melchior Beyenka, *Saint Ambrose, Letters,* The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, L. Schopp, ed. (Washington D.C., 1954), 236, 231.

[26] The exegetical meanings of Benjamin's name in Jewish, Samaritan, apocryphal, and Christian contexts deserve a separate study on which I intend to work.

[27] Paulinus of Nola, Letter 13.4, trans. P. G. Walsh, *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola Translated and Annotated,* in J. Quasten, W. J. Burghardt and T. Comerford Lawler, eds., Ancient Christian Writers. The Works of the Fathers in Translation (New York, NY and Ramsey, NJ, 1966), 121.

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bron (Gn 23.1–20). We will discuss below the exegetical Jewish answer to the same question – the attribution to Jacob of a prophetic mind.

Obviously, the imageries of Rachel discussed above can be compared with some of the early images of the Virgin. For example, both were mothers who foresaw the death of their sons: Rachel according to the interpretation in the Gospel of Matthew, Mary according Origen's interpretation[28] of Simon's allegorical prophecy about the sword that would pierce her soul (Lk 2.34–35).[29] But most important was the role of intercessor, in addition to Mary's role in the Gospel story of the wedding in Cana (Jn 2.12) and the earliest written evidence of the cult of the Theotokos, i.e., the *Sub tuum* papyrus we mentioned above, and Irenaeus of Lyon. In the second century Irenaeus posited Mary as the advocate of Eve.[30] Jewish exegesis attributes the role of intercessor to Rachel, presenting her as the mother of the nation who intervenes on behalf of the Children of Israel and earns the compassion of God, who promises her to save her children.

RACHEL IN JEWISH EXEGESIS

The complete prophecy in Jeremiah 31.14–16 is as follows:

> *Thus said the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded; saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord that thy children shall come again to their border.*

This image of Rachel as a weeping mother who has appealed to God to save her sons and is able to alter God's action in their favor, as expressed in Jeremiah 31.14–16, was elaborated in Jewish exegesis by the fifth century. These elaborations appear mainly in midrashic literature – in *Genesis Rabbah*, and *Lamentations Rabbah*, two texts whose final reductions are dated to the fifth century. Both present Rachel as a potent 'Presbeia Mētēr': a woman who appeals on behalf for herself and is answered, who pleads for her children and whose supplications are fulfilled by God.

Rachel was to become the ultimate intercessor for Israel. A midrash in *Genesis Rabbah* reveals why Jacob buried Rachel on the road to Bethlehem and not in the Cave of the Patriarch in Hebron, the burial place of all the other Jewish matriarchs and patriarchs:[31]

> *Why did Jacob bury Rachel on the way to Ephrat? Jacob foresaw that the exiles would pass by there [en route to Babylonia]. Therefore he buried her there, so that she should seek mercy for them: 'A voice in Ramah ... and there is hope for your future. (Jr 31.14–16).'*

In *Lamentations Rabbah*, Rachel's pleas surpassed those of Abraham, Moses, and Elijah, who tried but failed to intercede for Israel. After God rejected their entreaties, Rachel stood up and spoke:[32]

> *'I paid my sister kindness and I was not jealous of her and I did not allow her to be shamed ... How come then you are jealous of idolatry, which is nothing, and so have sent my children into exile, allowed them to be killed by the sword, permitted the enemy to do whatever they wanted to them?' Forthwith the Mercy of the Holy One, blessed be He, welled up, and he said, 'For Rachel I am going to bring the Israelites back to their land,' That is the line with the verse of the Scripture: 'Thus said the Lord: A cry is heard in Ramah ... and there is hope for your future declares the Lord your children shall return to their country' (Jr 31.14–16).*

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[28] Origen In Mat. Comm. 10.17; E. Klostermann, ed., *Origines, Commentarius in Matthaeum,* vol. 1, *GSC* 40 (Leipzig, 1935), 21–22.

[29] For this parallel I am indebted to Ritter *Rachels Klage,* 269 n. 59; P. Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary in Greek homiletic literature (6th–7th centuries)', in: Brubaker and Cunningham, eds., *The Cult,* 69–88, p. 80 n. 75. In the sixth century, Romanos the Melodist employs connections between Rachel and Mary in his homily on the Innocents 1, 9, 12; J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode, Hymnes,*vol. 2: *Nouveau Testament (IX–XX),* SC 110, (Paris, 1965) 207, 215, 219. In the latter Romanos accuses the Jews of murdering Rachel's sons. Thus the Jews become enemies of Rachel's enemies, perhaps similarly to the Jews' hostile relations to Mary in early homiletic literature relating to the Dormition. See S. J. Shoemaker, 'Let Us Go and Burn Her Body': The Image of the Jews in the Early Dormition Tradition', *Church History* 68/4 (Dec. 1999), 775–823.

[30] Irenaeus of Lyon, *Demonstration on the Apostolic Preaching*, 33.4; A. Rousseau, trans., *Irénée du Lyon, Démonstration de la Predication Apostolique,* SC 406 (Paris, 1995), 130–131; E. LaVerdiere, 'Mary', in E. Ferguson, M. McHugh and F. Norris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity New Edition,* vol. 2 (New York, and London, 1992), 733: 'and Eve in Mary, that a virgin advocate of a virgin.'

[31] *Genesis Rabbah* LXXII.X.1 B–D, in: J. Neusner, *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit. Confronting Creation: How Judaism Reads Genesis: An Anthology of Genesis Rabbah* (Columbia, S.C., 1991), 289.

[32] *Lamentations Rabbah*, Ptihta 24 78LL–79PP, in: J. Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah: an analytic translation. Brown Judaic Studies,* 193 (Atlanta GA, 1989), 79.

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Neusner noted that the theme of God's remembering Rachel was made a subject of divine remembrance.[33] One example of God showing favor appears in a midrashic interpretation of Ps 98.3:[34]

> *He has remembered his mercy and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen salvation of our God (Ps. 98.3) ... But in connection with the children of Rachel it is written 'The sons of Rachel', Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. (Gn 46.19).*

Another example relates to Ps 106.4:[35]

> *'Remember me, O Lord when you favor your people, O think of me at your salvation.' Said R. Eleazar, 'On New Year were Sarah, Rachel and Hannah remembered: 'Then God remembered Rachel' (Gn 30.22).*[36]

From this we learn that in the readings in the synagogue for the New Year, Rachel was made the representative and an archetype of other barren women, namely Sarah and Hannah. Origen followed this list, adding Elizabeth at the end, saying:

> *First of all consider why it is that many holy women in the Scriptures are related to have been barren, as Sarah herself (Gn 11.30), and lo now Rebecca (Gn 25.21). But also Rachel, Israel's beloved, was barren (Gn 30.31). Anna also, the mother of Samuel, is recorded to have been barren (1 S 1.2). But also in the Gospels Elizabeth is related to have been barren (Lk 1.7). But in all these instances this term is used because after sterility they all gave birth to holy persons.*[37]

AUGUST 15TH AND THE 15TH OF AV

As I mentioned above, two dissertations were recently written on the question of the origins of the date 15th of August for the Theotokos feast in the Kathisma. These works were preceded by an article by A. Raes, arguing that the month of August should be equated to the Syrian lunar month of Av and so should be the 15th of August and the 15th of Av. Raes suggested that a pagan feast marking the peak of the vine harvest in the midsummer was celebrated on the 15th of Av, when the moon is full.[38] Walter Dean Ray proposed in 2000 that according to a calculation based on the Book of Jubilees, the 15th of Av marked the date on which Sarah conceived Isaac.[39] Stéphane Verhelst proposed that the 15th of August was fixed in the calendar of the Church of Jerusalem because it corresponded to the commemoration day on the 9th of Av, the day that the Jews fast and mourn in commemoration of the destruction of their temple.[40]

There is no doubt that the calibration between the solar calendars and the Luni-solar Jewish calendar poses many obstacles that are beyond the scope of my research. Therefore, I relay on works by other scholars, especially on Sasha's Stern recent book.[41] Stern, supported by various historical texts and Jewish tomb stones inscriptions from Tzohar (in Trans-Jordan), argues that these calendars co-related to during the period from the fourth to the sixth centuries. The textual evidence Stern presents indicates that the Jewish feast of Passover could only occurred within the Julian month of March. The most convincing evidence brought by Stern is the list of the Jewish Passover for the period between 328 to 343 CE provided by the Council of Sardica (343 CE) and the decree of Justinian containing information on Jews widely observing Passover before the equinox, as they celebrated it in the fourth

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[33] Neusner, *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit*, 269.

[34] *Bereshit Rabbah* LXVIII:II.1.A, G; in: Neusner, *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit*, 269.

[35] *Bereshit Rabbah* LXVIII I.1.B–C; in Neusner *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit* , 268–269

[36] *Gn* 30.22–24: "Then God remembered Rachel and God hearkened to her and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son and said: 'God has taken away my reproach, and she called his name Joseph, saying, 'May the Lord add to me another son'." *Genesis Rabbah* LXIII: I.1.A – II.1.A; in: Neusner, *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit*, 268.

[37] Origen, in Genesis, homily On Rabecca's pregnancy and giving birth 12.1; R. Heine, trans., *Origen Homilies on Genesis and Exodus,* The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, 71 (Washington D.C., 1982), 176.

[38] Raes, 'Aux origines'.

[39] Ray, *August 15.*

[40] Verhelst, *La liturgie*; *idem,* 'Le 15 août et le 9 Ave'.

[41] The literature on the topic is vast, recent works are S. Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar Second Century BCE – Tenth Century CE,* (Oxford, 2001); *idem*, *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, States, and Societies,* (Oxford, 2012); R. T. Beckwith, *Calendar, Chronology and Worship: Studies in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity,* (*Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentum,* 61), (Leiden and Boston, 2005). A review of Stern, *Calendar and Community* in Beckwith, *Calendar,* 7–12.

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century.[42] Therefore, even if the days of the 15th of Av and August 15th did not overlap, the Jewish feasts of the 15th of Av, similar to the Passover, probably occurred on the same solar months. Moreover, the two dates, August 15th and the 15th of Av are significant because both are the middle days in the months. My interest to investigate a link between the 15th of August and 15th of Av begun after I discovered the links between Rachel and Mary in local geographical and cultural setting of the small area along the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. These links include the geographical proximity between the site of the Kathisma and the Tomb of Rachel: the similar narratives that hallowed these sites i.e., the story of Rachel giving birth to Benjamin and its parallel to the events reported in the *Protoevangelium* 17 about Mary's vision of Mary and her rest on the road to Bethlehem; as well as the story in the *Protoevangelium* 18 about Mary giving birth to Jesus outside of Bethlehem. Another significant parallel between Rachel and Mary is the similarity of their imageries especially as mother and intercessor – Rachel as mother of the nation of Israel and Mary as Theotokos.

I found support in the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud, which interprets the Mishnah, tractate Ta'anit 4.8. In these sources the 15th of Av was an important feast in the Jewish calendar; along with the Day of Atonement, both were equally considered as the two happiest days of the year. In particular, the feast of the 15th of Av was originally instituted to commemorate the salvation of the tribe of Benjamin, Rachel's younger son. It actually re-enacted that salvation in the custom of young men and women going into the vineyards and, regardless of tribal affiliation or socioeconomic differences, finding suitable marriage partners.

> *Raban Simeon ben Gamliel said: 'There were no days better for Israelites than the fifteen of Ab and the Day of Atonement ... but what happened on the fifteenth of Ab? – ... Rabbi Joseph said in the name of Rabbi Nahman: It is the day on which the tribe of Benjamin was permitted to re-enter the congregation [of Israel], as it is said, 'Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah saying: There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife' (Jud. 21.1).*[43]

The background of the feast is found in the book of Judges Chapters 19–21 – a horrific assault on the concubine of a man of Levite man, who took shelter and stayed overnight in the city of Geva in the tribe of Benjamin, to the shock of the other tribes of Israel. They all gathered to take revenge, launching a war against the tribe of Benjamin, killing its women, children and elders. They almost completely annihilated the Benjaminites, and to ensure completion of the act, vowed not to intermarry with them. When the Israelites realized that they were about to destroy an entire tribe, they sought a solution to ensure Benjaminite continuity without having to break their vow. First, they discovered that one city (Jabesh Gilead) had not joined them in battle, so they launched a war against that city. Killing all its men, they gave the daughters of Jabesh Gilead in marriage to the men of Benjamin. That move, however, did not suffice, and more brides were needed. The Israelites then agreed to allow the Benjaminites to abduct and marry the girls who went dancing in the vineyards during an ancient feast that traditionally was held in Shiloh (Jud. 21). According to the Talmud, this feast was also celebrated during the Second Temple period in Jerusalem, when unmarried girls all exchanged and wore white dresses, purposefully ignoring restrictions on clothing styles in accordance with their social and economic class. The girls would go to the vineyards and let the young men capture and marry them; no one was to be left without a partner:

> *On these days the Daughters of Jerusalem ... Our Rabbis have taught: The beautiful amongst them called out. Set your eyes on beauty for the quality most to be prized in woman is beauty; those of them who came of noble families called out, Look for [a good] family for woman has been created to bring up a family; the ugly ones amongst them called out, Carry off your purchase in the name of Heaven, only one condition that you adorn us with jewels of gold.*[44]

The custom of going into the vineyards in search of a match was a re-enacting the event that allowed the survivors of the tribe of Benjamin, Rachel's younger son, to perpetuate their tribe.[45] As a consequence of this feast, many weddings followed the 15th of Av; new families were established thus, ensuring the continuation and unifi-

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[42] Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 65–87; *idem*, *Calendars in Antiquity*, 334–333, 382–424.

[43] Ta'anit 4.8 p. 30 b; in: J. Rabbinowitz, trans., and I. Epstein, ed., *Hebrew–English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Seder Mo'ed, Tractates Ta'anit, Megillah, Hagigah* (London, 1984), 30b.

[44] *Ibid.*, 30b–31a.

[45] In two illuminated manuscripts including a homily by Gregory of Nazianzus for Christmas, a typological parallel is drawn in images between the assassination and the almost total annihilation of the tribe of Benjamin and the massacre of the Innocents that occurred in the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin close to Bethlehem in Judea. R. Avner, *A Comparison of the Illustration of the Homily on the Nativity in the Manuscripts Mt. Athos, Esphigmenou Monastery Cod. 14, and Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchate Library, Taphou Cod. 14.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University (Jerusalem, 1978), 27–28.

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cation of the nation of Israel, allowing inter-marriage between members of different tribes and of different social-economic status.

CONCLUSIONS

The cult of the Theotokos at the Kathisma evidently emerged from local veneration of Rachel as a mother and a successful intercessor that had been popular in the rural area north of Bethlehem. This conclusion relies on more than merely the similarities of the narratives (Gn 31.16–20; *Protoevangelium* 17–18) and the imageries of Mary and Rachel as mothers and intercessors. Rachel was presented in both Christian and Jewish exegesis as a weeping mother. However, while in Judaism she is a mighty interceding ancestor to whom God listens, in Christianity she is a helpless mother, bereft of hope, who predicts the death of her sons. The local Christian community, or the official Church of Jerusalem, established the feast of the Theotokos in the Kathisma according to the date of the great Jewish celebration on the 15th of Av, when there was much rejoicing, because for Jews, it commemorated the salvation of the tribe of Benjamin, the sons of Rachel and ensured its continuity. Ta'anit 4.8 indicates that this feast was a popular feast and a happy annual event. The feast may have been accepted by the ecclesiastic establishment of Jerusalem only after the decree of Mary as Theotokos in Ephesus (431 CE). The fact that neither Hesychios nor Chrysippos relates the specific stories mentioned in the *Protoevangelium,* which hallowed the site of the Kathisma seems to indicate a gap between the popular devotion of the mother-intercessor on the road to Bethlehem by the local lay population, who embraced the (oral?) legends of the *Protoevangelium*[46] and probably later, by the official doctors of the Church in Jerusalem.

Pauline Allen pointed out at the difficulty that she met in her studies on the Marian feasts, which were introduced in the sixth and seventh centuries, because they 'were often region-specific'.[47] Furthermore, Allen cites Averil Cameron that: '[a]ny history of the cult of the Virgin would have to allow for multiple developments and a high degree of social and regional variety.'[48] Indeed, the case study of the Kathisma is a specific instance confined to the small area near Jerusalem where Jewish heritage still had an impact on local customs of the local Christian community during the fifth century CE and on the calendar of the early Church of Jerusalem.

[46] Elliott, *The Apocryphal*, 49–50.

[47] Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary', 71.

[48] Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary', 85 and n. 99 citing A. Cameron, 'Introduction', in: M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), xxix.

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Arne Effenberger

Maria als Vermittlerin und Fürbitterin

Zum Marienbild in der spätantiken und frühbyzantinischen Kunst Ägyptens

Das Thema dieses Beitrags* umfaßt zwei Aspekte: einen theologisch-kirchengeschichtlichen und einen archäologisch-kunsthistorischen. In theologischer Hinsicht geht es um die Entwicklung der Marienverehrung und den Anteil, den Ägypten daran hatte.[1] Auf diesem Gebiet bin ich nicht kompetent und werde mich daher mit eigenen Urteilen zurückhalten. Im Bereich der spätantik-frühbyzantinischen Kunst soll die Aufmerksamkeit den in Ägypten entstandenen Marienbildern gelten, wobei ihre jeweiligen Bedeutungen und ihre spezifisch ägyptischen Eigenheiten herauszustellen sind. Mit Blick auf den Typus der Maria Galaktotrophousa ist dem Problem der ikonographischen Abhängigkeit von Darstellungen der stillenden Isis (Isis lactans) erneut nachzugehen.[2] Schließlich bleibt zu prüfen, in welchen Bildern sich die Funktion Marias als Vermittlerin und Fürbitterin nachweisen läßt. Zwar ist die Zahl der aus Ägypten erhaltenen und bekannten, inzwischen aber vergangenen Darstellungen der Gottesmutter aus dem privaten, sepulkralen, kirchlichen und monastischen Bereich eher gering, wobei die Denkmäler – Zufall der archäologischen Überlieferung oder nicht – überwiegend erst seit dem 6. Jahrhundert nachweisbar sind, doch besteht kein Zweifel, daß die Marienverehrung im Nilland weit verbreitet war und seit dem 4. Jahrhundert auch bildlichen Niederschlag gefunden hat. Da die in Alexandria und im ägyptischen Hinterland geschaffenen Mariendarstellungen nicht losgelöst von der Entwicklung des spätantik-frühbyzantinischen Marienbilds in West- und Ostrom entstanden sind,[3] sollen im ersten Teil zunächst einige außerägyptische Bildwerke betrachtet werden. Auf dem Hintergrund der hierbei gewonnenen Erkenntnisse wird sich der zweite Teil den ägyptischen Bildzeugnissen widmen.[4]

In der mariologischen Forschung der vergangenen vier Jahrzehnte nahmen die Entstehung der Marienlehre und die frühe Entwicklung des Marienkults einen zentralen Platz ein.[5] Doch hat Leena Mari Peltomaa darauf hingewiesen, daß eine wissenschaftlich objektive, von religionswissenschaftlichen Ableitungstheorien oder konfessionellen Vorgefaßtheiten unabhängige Erforschung der Marienverehrung besonders für die ersten vier Jahrhunderte noch immer zu den vordringlichen Aufgaben gehört.[6] Dies betrifft – neben der Rolle Marias im Neuen Testament und in den Apokryphen[7] sowie im patristischen Diskurs[8] – vor allem die Klärung zweier Fragen:

* Für mancherlei Hilfe und wichtige Hinweise danke ich Heinzgerd Brakmann (Bonn), Wolfram Brandes (Frankfurt am Main), Beat Brenk (Basel), Johannes G. Deckers (Altenmünster), Cäcilia Fluck (Berlin), Jochem Kahl (Berlin), Johannes Niehoff-Panagiotidis (Berlin), Klaus Ohlhafer (Münster i. Westf.), Rainer Warland (Freiburg i. Br.), Gabriele Winkler (Tübingen). Andreas Külzer und Leena Mari Peltomaa danke ich für die Einladung zur Mitarbeit an diesem Band. Bianca Kühnel gewährte mir Einblick in ihren noch nicht erschienenen Aufsatz (Kühnel, Ascension), wofür ihr ebenfalls gedankt sei.

[1] Grundlegend für Ägypten immer noch Giamberardini, Culto; siehe auch Müller, Theotokos 125–134; Brakmann, Kopten 9–29.

[2] Trotz der verdienstvollen Arbeit von Langener, Isis lactans; ihre Ergebnisse noch einmal zusammenfassend: Langener, Untersuchungen 224–229.

[3] Das Material bei Wellen, Theotokos; Freytag, Theotokosdarstellung; Lechner, Maria.

[4] Es versteht sich von selbst, daß hierfür nur eine Auswahl an Kunstwerken und eine beschränkte Zahl an Abbildungen geboten werden kann. Zahlreiche gute Abbildungen findet man in neueren Werken wie Gabra, Monasteries; Zibawi, Kunst; Gabra – Eaton-Krauss, Treasures. Auch ist es nicht meine Absicht, alle in Ägypten vorkommenden Marientypen und szenischen Darstellungen zu behandeln. Zur Verkündigung siehe Al-Rawi-Kövari, Verkündigungsszene. Meine zeitliche Grenze ist das 8. Jahrhundert, die nur im Falle der Galaktotrophousa überschritten wird.

[5] Söll, Mariologie 41–99; Klauser, Gottesgebärerin 1071–1103; De Fiores, Maria 99–266. Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der deutschsprachigen Mariologie siehe Görg, Mariologie. Siehe auch die neueren Beiträge in folgenden Sammelwerken: Swanson, Church; Boss, Mary; Maunder, Origins; dal Covolo – Serra, Mariologia; Brubaker – Cunningham, Cult. Zum Marienbild in der byzantinischen Kunst ist auf die Aufsätze im Kat. Athen und im Folgeband (Vassilaki, Images) hinzuweisen. Die für mein Thema relevanten Beiträge in den genannten Publikationen werden *suo loco* zitiert.

[6] Peltomaa, Origins 75–86.

[7] Mimouni, Vies 75–115; Förster, Transitus 158–160; Maunder, Mary 11–49; Maunder, New Testament 23–39; Elliott, Mary 57–70.

[8] Beattie, Mary 75–105.

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Lassen sich bereits vor dem Ausbruch der Theotokos-Kontroverse (428–431) bzw. vor dem Konzil von Ephesos (431)[9] Formen einer offiziellen Verehrung Marias nachweisen? Oder war die Marienfrömmigkeit bis dahin lediglich auf den privaten Bereich beschränkt? Im Zentrum der Diskussionen standen insbesondere die Aussagen alexandrinischer Theologen des 3./4. Jahrhunderts wie Origenes († 253/54), Alexandros (312–328) und Athanasios († 373), die im Kontext ihrer christologischen Überlegungen einen entscheidenden Anteil an der Einbürgerung der Bezeichnung Marias als θεοτόκος (Gottesgebärerin) hatten.[10] Allein für die Zeit bis zum Beginn des nestorianischen Streits ließen sich an die 70 Nachweise beibringen, die zeigen, daß der Titel θεοτόκος von Theologen unterschiedlicher Lehransichten benutzt wurde und zunächst nichts anderes gewesen sein soll „que une simple appellation".[11] Hingegen ist für John A. McGuckin die Hervorhebung Marias als θεοτόκος „an ancient Alexandrian *theologoumenon*", wozu er präzisierend ausführt:[12] „The *Theotokos* title is a case in point, of a *theologoumenon* of Egypt which was indeed accepted as a valid universal dogma at the Council of Ephesus – since it moved from being a devotional title of Mary to a summatic expression of Christology".Das Protoevangelium des Iakobos, das nach Ansicht der Forschung im 2. Jahrhundert in Ägypten entstand,[13] muß in weiten Kreisen Alexandrias und des Nillandes ebenso bekannt gewesen sein wie anderswo im römischen Imperium,[14] was auf eine bereits entwickelte Marienfrömmigkeit zumindest unter gebildeten Christen schließen läßt.[15] Die fundamentale Bedeutung dieser Schrift für die Ikonographie der spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst ist hinlänglich bekannt.[16] Problematisch bleibt jedoch die Beurteilung der nur bruchstückhaft überlieferten Anrufung der Theotokos Ὑπὸ τὴν σὴν εὐσπλαγχίαν καταφεύγομεν θεοτόκε *(Sub tuum praesidium)* auf dem griechischen Papyrus Rylands 407, zumal dessen Datierung nach wie vor umstritten ist.[17] Der Text, der in der Sekundärliteratur wahlweise als Gebet, Hymnus, Antiphon oder Troparion bezeichnete wird, soll nach Meinung etlicher Forscher eine in Ägypten seit Längerem praktizierte Verehrung Marias als Gottesgebärerin belegen.[18] Hier wäre allerdings zu fragen, wo die Anrufung Marias als θεοτόκος und Schützerin so früh eine liturgische Einbindung erfahren haben könnte. Wie Hans Förster überzeugend dargelegt hat, kann der Papyrus – in der vorliegenden materiellen Form vermutlich ein „Schutzamulett – aufgrund der Paläographie und der Verwendung von brauner Tinte erst „zwischen dem 6. und dem 7. Jh." entstanden sein, weshalb „eine Datierung in das 3. bzw. 4. Jh. als sehr unwahrscheinlich zu gelten" habe.[19] Nun sagt zwar die Niederschrift eines Textes nichts über dessen Alter

[9] Zum Ereignisverlauf siehe McGuckin, St. Cyril 20–53; Peltomaa, Image 54–114; Constas, Proclus 7–124; Faisse-Coue, Diskussion 570–626.

[10] Die Belegstellen zu den zentralen mariologischen Themen liegen in mehreren Publikationen gesammelt vor, so daß hier auf die wichtigsten verwiesen werden kann: Delius – Rosenbaum, Texte; Alvaros Campos, Corpus; Bianchi, Maria; Gharib, Testi mariani; Cappozzo, Vergine (mir nicht zugänglich). – Speziell zum Theotokostitel: Giamberardini, Titolo 324–363; Söll, Mariologie 41–99; Klauser, Gottesgebärerin 1075–1077; Starowieyski, Titre 236–242; De Fiores, Maria 118–119; Peltomaa, Image 54–62, 135–139; Price, Theotokos I, 55–74; Price, Theotokos II, 89–100. – Eher für ein breiteres Publikum: Gambero, Maria (Gambero, Mary).

[11] Starowieyski, Titre 239.

[12] McGuckin, Paradox 12, mit Anm. 22. – Origenes als frühester Zeuge oder Urheber des Theotokostitels ist allerdings zweifelhaft, siehe Söll, Mariologie 48; Klauser, Gottesgebärerin 1076–1077 (anders noch Klauser, Rom 120); De Fiores, Maria 118, Anm. 77; hingegen bewerten Starowieyski, Titre 236 mit Anm. 4, 240–241 und McGuckin, Early Cult 9–10 und Anm. 22 die Belege als authentisch.

[13] Cullman, Protoevangelium 277–279; Schneider, Kindheitsevangelien 21–34 (Einleitung), 95–145 (griechischer Text und Übersetzung); De Fiores, Maria 104–106; Maunder, Mary 39–40; Elliott, Mary 59–60.

[14] Zur Kenntnis bei den Kirchenvätern (Justin, Klemens, Origenes und Theologen des 4. Jahrhunderts) siehe De Fiores, Maria 104.

[15] Cothenet, Protoévangile 4263–4265; McGuckin, Paradox 9 ("Marian devotion in an extraordinarily developed form"); zur Rezeption in der koptischen und koptisch-arabischen Literatur siehe Horn, Mary 509–538.

[16] Für die Kindheitsgeschichte Marias siehe Lafontaine-Dosogne, Iconographie; Horn, Mary 523–529; Hennessy, Children 179–212.

[17] Manchester, The John Rylands University Library, P. Ryl. III 407. – Hier nur einige Beispiele aus der umfangreichen Sekundärliteratur: Roberts, Catalogue 46–47 (zweite Hälfte 4. Jahrhundert); Stegmüller, Bemerkungen 76–82 (frühestens Anfang des 4. Jahrhunderts); Giamberardini, Titolo 324–363 (3. Jahrhundert); Giamberardini, Culto 69–97 (3. Jahrhundert); Klauser, Gottesgebärerin 1078 (3./4. Jahrhundert); Starowieyski, Titre 237 (vers le milieu du IIIe siècle); Gemmiti, Echi 292–295 (secolo III o IV); Förster, Überlieferung 183–192 (6./7. Jahrhundert); De Fiores, Maria 118 (3. Jahrhundert); McGuckin, Paradox 10 (latter half of the third century); Price, Theotokos I, 56–57 (third-century) und Price, Theotokos II, 89–90 (the style of the lettering … pointed to a date in the third century); Shoemaker, Marian liturgies 130–131 und Shoemaker, Cult 72–73 (latter part of the fourth century).

[18] Stegmüller, Bemerkungen 80: „liturgisches Gebet"; Peretto, Sub tuum praesidium 797: "It was prob[ably]. part of the troparia of the office of Christmas, a feast celebrated with a Marian emphasis in Egypt from the 3rd c. date".

[19] Förster, Überlieferung 186, 192; siehe auch Förster, Fehldatierung 106–109, der hier sogar für eine noch spätere Entstehung des Papyrus (8./9. Jahrhundert) plädiert.

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aus, doch hatte schon Hans Quecke festgestellt:[20]„Ob das »Sub tuum praesidium …« als isolierter Text in der ägyptischen Kirche seit dem 4. Jahrhundert ununterbrochen bekannt war, können wir heute nicht mehr feststellen. Hierüber haben wir keinerlei Zeugnisse. Nachweisbar ist der Text erst wieder in relativ später Zeit, und zwar nur im Rahmen einer ganz bestimmten Gruppe von Vesper-Troparien, die ihre Abhängigkeit vom byzantinischen Horologion nicht verleugnen kann".[21] Und Gabriele Giamberardini urteilte, obgleich er die häufig vertretene Frühdatierung in das 3. Jahrhundert akzeptierte:[22] „Sull'ultima osserviamo che il papiro prova semplicemente l'origine egiziano della preghiera, e nulla più. Nulla sull'inserzione nella liturgia, e nulla sull'uso tradizionale. In seguito i copti, contrariamente ai greci e ai latini, avrebbero potuto dimenticarla". Das einzige sichere Zeugnis für ein Mariengebet, dessen Wortlaut leider nicht mitgeteilt wird, finden wir erst bei Gregorios von Nazianz (um 379).[23] Dies spricht zumindest dafür, „daß die Anrufung Mariens in den Kreisen der frommen Jungfrauen in dieser Zeit schon selbstverständliche Übung war".[24] Spätestens um die Mitte des 4. Jahrhunderts muß die Bezeichnung Marias als θεοτόκος allgemein verbreitet gewesen sein, wie Kaiser Julians pauschaler Vorwurf an die „Galiläer" belegt.[25]

Averil Cameron hat zu Recht gefragt, „what constitutes a »cult«", und verwies auf die große Popularität der bereits im 4. Jahrhundert etablierten Verehrung der hl. Thekla in Seleukia Isauria (Silifke), wobei sie die Ansicht vertrat, daß „traces of real cult of the Virgin before the late fourth century are sparse or non-existent".[26] Obwohl es weder von Maria noch von Thekla leibliche Reliquien gab, erfreute sich der Theklakult besonders unter Frauen großer Popularität,[27] wohingegen über Marias Verehrung keinerlei sichere Berichte vorzuliegen scheinen. Unlängst hat Stephen J. Shoemaker die Mitteilungen des Epiphanios aus Eleutherupolis, des nachmaligen Bischofs von Salamis (366–403), über die „Sekte" der Kollyridianerinnen und deren angebliche Verehrung Marias als Göttin[28] als rhetorische Polemik entlarvt und mit Epiphanios' genereller Ablehnung des in der zweiten Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts aufblühenden Heiligenkults begründet.[29] Gleichwohl dürfte außer Zweifel stehen, daß spätestens zu dieser Zeit eine zunächst im privaten Bereich verankerte Marienverehrung sich längst etabliert hatte.

Marias vermeintliches Grab im Kidrontal am Fuß des Ölbergs war leer,[30] über ihren Tod scheint man nichts gewußt zu haben. Epiphanios ist der erste Autor, der den Marientod thematisierte (um 374/77), doch äußerte er sich hierzu in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit der Häresie der Antidikomarianiten sehr zurückhaltend: Man wisse weder, ob Maria gestorben ist oder nicht, noch, ob sie begraben wurde oder nicht; daher sage er nicht, daß sie unsterblich geblieben sei, noch möchte er entscheiden, ob sie gestorben ist.[31] Gleichwohl räumte er an anderer Stelle ihren Tod und ihr Begräbnis ein, auch die Möglichkeit, Gott könnte sie am Leben erhalten haben, doch wisse über ihr Ende niemand Bescheid.[32] Möglicherweise wollte Epiphanios mit diesen Bemerkungen und seinem vorgeblichen „Nichtwissen" anderslautenden Ansichten über Marias Ende und Verbleib entgegentreten, die es

[20] Quecke, Horologion 17.

[21] Soweit ich sehe, scheint außer Constas, Proclus 245–246, Anm. 1 nur Shoemaker, Marian Liturgies 131, Anm. 7 (Shoemaker, Cult 86, Anm. 9) Försters Arbeit wenigstens als „dissenting opinio" zur Kenntnis genommen zu haben, freilich auf der Ansicht beharrt: " written in the latter part of the fourth century at the latest".

[22] Giamberardini, Culto 91.

[23] *Oratio* 24,11 (PG 35,1181A); Grégoire, Discours (60/61 Mossay).

[24] Stegmüller, Bemerkungen 78; siehe auch Söll, Mariologie 66; Peltomaa, Image 75; Shoemaker, Marian Liturgies 131 (Shoemaker, Cult 73).

[25] Julian, *Contra Galilaeos,* Fragment 65 (161,1–3; 234–236, 273 Masaracchia); vgl. Klauser, Gottesgebärerin 1077; De Fiores, Maria 118–119.

[26] Cameron, Cult 5–6; siehe auch Cameron, Early Cult 3–10. – Eine weitaus differenziertere Ansicht vertreten Shoemaker, Traditions; Shoemaker, Marian Liturgies 130–141 (Shoemaker, Cult 71–83); Shoemaker, Epiphanius 371–401; McGuckin, Early cult 1–7.

[27] Davis, Cult 36–80; Johnson, Thekla *passim*.

[28] Epiphanius, Panarion 79 (475,26–484,21 Holl – Dummer); Williams, Panarion 620–629; siehe dazu Dölger, Marienverehrung 107–142; Benko, Virgin Goddess 170–195; Mimouni, Question 269–287.

[29] Shoemaker, Epiphanius 371–401, hier 375–385 (Shoemaker, Cult 76–83); siehe auch Price, Theotokos II, 102, Anm. 8 zur Historizität der „Sekte".

[30] Bagatti, Discoveries 11–55 *passim,* dazu kritisch Mimouni, Histoire 53–60. – Zur Mariengrabkirche siehe Bieberstein – Bloedhorn, Jerusalem 251–256; Mimouni, Dormition 549–584; Shoemaker, Traditions 98–107.

[31] Epiphanius, Panarion 78,11,2–4 (462,2–11 Holl – Dummer); Williams, Panarion 609. – Siehe dazu Söll, Mariologie 6–70; Förster, Transitus 163–168; Mimouni, Question 310–318; Shoemaker, Epiphanius 389–392.

[32] Epiphanius, Panarion 78,23,9 (474,4–10 Holl – Dummer); Williams, Panarion 619. – Zu diesem „Sinneswandel" des Epiphanios siehe Shoemaker, Epiphanius 392–397.

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demnach schon gegeben haben müßte.[33] Auch kann ihm aufgrund seiner palästinensischen Herkunft die Existenz des Mariengrabs in Jerusalem nicht verborgen geblieben sein, wenngleich unbekannt ist, ob dort bereits im späteren 4. Jahrhundert eine dem Kult an den Märtyrergräbern[34] vergleichbare Marienverehrung praktiziert wurde.[35] Der Archidiakon Theodosios (zwischen 518 und 530) erwähnt im Tal Josaphat (Kidrontal) nur eine Marienkirche, nicht aber ein Grab,[36] wohingegen das Jerusalem-Brevier (um 550) zwar das Grab nennt, aber mit einer anderen Marienkirche vermengt.[37] Der Pilger von Piacenza (um 570) besuchte eine Marienkirche im Tal Josaphat, „die ihr Haus gewesen sein soll, in welchem sie starb", wobei unklar ist, ob er damit auch ihr Grab gemeint hat.[38] Lediglich Adamnanus, der Verfasser der Pilgerreise des Arkulf (um 680), gibt eine genaue Beschreibung der Unterkirche und des leeren Mariengrabs.[39] Sicher ist nur, daß unter Kaiser Maurikios (582–602) eine Kirche über dem Hypogäum errichtet wurde, doch könnte an dieser Stelle bereits ein Vorgängerbau existiert haben.[40]

Die erste Bauphase der von einer Witwe namens Ikelia gestifteten Kathismakirche an dem Ort auf halbem Wege zwischen Jerusalem und Bethlehem, wo Maria von der Eselin absaß, als ihre Wehen begannen,[41] wird um die Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts datiert.[42] Im 6. Jahrhundert wurde der Zentralbau erneuert und zu einem Pilgerzentrum ausgebaut.[43] An diesem Ort muß es schon in der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts ein Heiligtum gegeben haben, denn nach dem Armenischen Lektionar (entstanden zwischen 417 und 439) wurde am 15. August (später 13. August) beim Kathisma ein allein Maria in ihrer Bedeutung als θεοτόκος vorbehaltenes Fest gefeiert.[44] Es ist dies das älteste Marienfest im Heiligen Land. Ansonsten wurde Maria seit dem späteren 4. Jahrhundert in Jerusalem nur in Verbindung mit Christus verehrt.[45]

Für Konstantinopel läßt sich noch vor dem Amtsantritt des Nestorios (10. April 428) ein bereits bestehendes Fest der Verkündigung Marias nachweisen, das am 26. Dezember in der Großen Kirche im Zusammenhang mit der Geburt Christi begangen wurde.[46] Doch erst durch das Konzil von Ephesos wurde Maria in ihrer Rolle als Gottesgebärerin zu einem kanonischen Bestandteil der Christologie,[47] was ihr für künftige Zeiten einen herausragenden Platz im kirchlichen Kult sicherte. Es nimmt daher nicht wunder, wenn im Zuge der seither forcierten Marienverehrung nun plötzlich Gewandreliquien der Theotokos mit reichlich verworrenen Legenden auftauchten und nach Konstantinopel gelangten, wo sie in den beiden wichtigsten Marienheiligtümern – der Blachernen- und

[33] Shoemaker, Traditions 13–14, 25–57, 205–256; ausführlich. Shoemaker, Epiphanius 385–400; anders Mimouni, Histoire 1–74 und Mimouni, Traditions IX–XXXIX (zwischen Mimouni und Shoemaker bestehen grundsätzliche Differenzen in der Beurteilung der frühen Dormitio-Assumptio-Quellen). – Förster, Transitus 214–224, sieht in der postulierten griechischen Vorlage der Erzählung des Wiener Papyrus K 7589 eine möglicherweise in Ägypten in der zweiten Hälfte des 2. oder Anfang des 3. Jahrhunderts entstandene „Marien-Apokalypse" als Vorstufe der späteren Transitus-Mariae-Berichte.

[34] Hierzu grundlegend Brown, Cult 1–49.

[35] Die Pilgerin Egeria (383) berichtet jedoch nichts über eine Marienverehrung in Jerusalem; vgl. Shoemaker, Marian Liturgies 140–141 (Shoemaker, Cult 76).

[36] *Theodosii de situ terrae sanctae* § 10: Donner, Pilgerfahrt 200, zu Theodosios 181–188; Wilkinson, Jerusalem pilgrims 109.

[37] *Breviarius de Hierosolyma* § 7: Donner, Pilgerfahrt 224, zum Jerusalem-Brevier 214–218; Wilkinson, Jerusalem pilgrims 121.

[38] *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium* § 17: Donner, Pilgerfahrt 259; Wilkinson, Jerusalem pilgrims 138.

[39] *Adamnani de locis sanctis libri III*, Buch I,XII,1–5: Donner, Pilgerfahrt 332–333; Wilkinson, Jerusalem pilgrims 177–178.

[40] Nach dem georgischen Kalender (Garitte, Calendrier 302–303) wurde hier am 15. August die Koimesis Marias gefeiert; weitere Heiligengedächtnisse in der Mariengrabkirche des Maurikios: 250 (13. Juni), 278 (14. Juli), 365–366 (23. und 24. Oktober); vgl. Mimouni, Dormition 440–443; Avner, Initial Tradition 20–22.

[41] Protoevangelium des Iakobos 17,3: Cullman, Protoevangelium 287; Schneider, Kindheitsevangelien 124/125–126/127. – Beschreibung des Felsens, an dem Maria angeblich niedersaß, durch den Archidiakon Theodosios (§ 28): Donner, Pilgerfahrt 210–211; Wilkinson, Jerusalem pilgrims 114–115; vgl. Avner, Initial tradition 14–15, 27–28.

[42] Shoemaker, Traditions 78–98; jetzt Avner, Initial Tradition 9–29, hier 12–15, Abb. 1.2.

[43] Avner, Initial Tradition 15–17, 24–29, Abb. 1.3.

[44] Renoux, Codex arménien 51–52, 69, 216–217; vgl. Mimouni, Dormition 382–386, 429–431, 433–438; Avner, Initial Tradition 19–20. – Zu den kirchenpolitischen Hintergründen siehe Sivan, On the Way.

[45] Mimouni, Dormition 371–373; Shoemaker, Traditions 115–141; Avner, Initial Tradition 19–24.

[46] Constas, Proclus 57–59, vgl. 194–195, 245–248; zur Bedeutung des Patriarchen Attikos (406–425) als Promotor der Marienverehrung in Konstantinopel ebenda 25–39. – Zur Datierung der ersten Marienpredigt des Proklos siehe Peltomaa, Marien-Predigt 78–82, hier 82: „wahrscheinlich am Sonntag vor dem Fest der Geburt Christi im Jahr 428".

[47] Antanassova, Mariology 105–120.

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der Chalkopratenkirche – deponiert wurden.[48] Offensichtlich konnte nur durch fiktive Sekundärreliquien der Mangel an „echten“ λείψανα kompensiert werden.[49]

Ein in der Forschung häufig diskutiertes Problem betrifft das Verhältnis zwischen Marienverehrung und Isiskult, das sich – grob vereinfacht – mit einem Apodiktum von Reinhold Merkelbach umreißen läßt:[50] „Eine göttliche Mutter gewährt Trost. Hier lag eine Stärke der Religion um Isis. Die Christen haben im Konzil von Ephesos 431 den Marienkult eingeführt, um diese Lücke zu schließen“. Die von vielen Autoren geteilte Auffassung, wonach zwischen dem Marienkult und der Isisverehrung (wie überhaupt zwischen Maria und antiken Muttergottheiten) gewisse Gemeinsamkeiten bestanden haben, bringt lediglich die eine Position einer seit Langem schwelenden Auseinandersetzung zum Ausdruck.[51] Ebenso umstritten ist die Frage nach der ikonographischen Abhängigkeit der Theotokos Galaktotrophousa vom Bild der Isis lactans.[52] Gegen die Ableitung der Marienverehrung vom Kult paganer Muttergöttinnen hatte von theologischer Seite schon Georg Söll den Grundsatz betont:[53] „»Analogie ist nicht Genealogie«, d. h., die Ähnlichkeit in der Erscheinungsform bedeutet nicht Gleichheit des Ursprungs.“ Noch entschiedener ablehnend urteilte unlängst McGuckin.[54] Die durchaus erkennbaren Assoziationen zwischen dem Marienkult und der Isisreligion seien nur Bestandteile aller archetypischen Formen von Religion wie Mutterschaft und Weiblichkeit, „entirely understood by the Christians from the outset within their own cultural syntax, and used by them for missionary strategic reason“.[55] Sein Fazit lautet:[56] „the Marian cult uses incidental motifs from the iconography of the Isis cult, but the substantial connections are simply not here. The Marian iconography is driven exclusively by biblical symbols, and coloured by Byzantine imperial theory“. Das mag im Kern zwar zutreffen, versagt jedoch im Bereich der künstlerischen Transformations- und Aneignungsprozesse, deren Mechanismen wir zunächst ergründen müssen, wenn es um Ikonographie geht. Die erhaltenen frühen christlichen Denkmäler, die in erster Linie die Religiosität des „Laienvolkes“ widerspiegeln, zwingen jedenfalls zu einer differenzierteren Betrachtungsweise.[57]

Unbestreitbar sind in das „autonome“ Marienbild, wie es vor allem im Typus der thronenden Gottesmutter mit dem Kind auf ihrem Schoß vorliegt, Züge der imperialen Ikonographie eingeflossen. Doch bereits die kaiserlichen Repräsentationsbilder speisten sich aus den Hoheitsformeln des Götterbildes, und beide Komponenten gingen später in die Darstellungen des thronenden Christus mit seinem himmlischen „Hofstaat“ und der thronenden Maria ein.[58] Und ebenso steht außer Zweifel, daß die Evangelien einschließlich der apokryphen die Textgrundlagen z. B. für Darstellungen der Geburt Christi bieten. Wenn aber in einige Geburtsszenen ikonographische Details der Götter- und Heroengeburt (Dionysos, Apollon, Achilleus, Alexander) wie das Bad des Neugeborenen eingeflossen sind,[59] dann zeigt dies nur, wie selbstverständlich die Künstler bei der Ausformung einer christlichen Syntax auf

[48] Siehe dazu Cameron, Virgin's Robe 42–56; Mimouni, Dormition 599–652; Mango, Origins 61–76; Weyl Carr, Threads 61–68; Mango, Theotokoupolis 19–20; Wortley, Marian Relics 171–187; Shoemaker, Cult of Fashion 53–74; Krausmüller, Making 219–245. – Auf die umstrittene Beurteilung der Rolle Pulcherias sowohl als Promotorin der Marienverehrung in Konstantinopel als auch als Gründerin der beiden genannten Marienkirchen gehe ich hier nicht ein.

[49] Zur Entwicklung des Marienkults besonders im 6. Jahrhundert in Konstantinopel siehe Cameron, Theotokos 79–108; Meier, Zeitalter 502–528.

[50] Merkelbach, Isis Regina 317, § 551.

[51] Müller, Isis 34; Müller, Gottesmutter 6; Witt, Isis 272–281; Langener, Isis lactans. – Benko, Virgin Goddess 83–262, sah die Wurzeln der Marienverehrung in einer allgemein verbreiteten "classical Mediterranean devotion to the godesses of fertlility and motherhood" (232).

[52] Siehe hierzu den forschungsgeschichtlichen Überblick bei Langener, Isis lactans 1–6.

[53] Söll, Mariologie 68; ebenso De Fiores, Maria 140–142. – Ablehnend auch Peltomaa, Origins 78–80.

[54] McGuckin, Early Cult 7–14.

[55] McGuckin, Early Cult 11. – Missionarische Strategie sieht McGuckin, Influence 291–299 (vgl. McGuckin, Paradox 22–25) vor allem in den Maßnahmen des Kyrillos von Alexandria gegen den Isiskult von Menouthis und dessen Ablösung durch den Kult der hll. Abbakyros und Ioannes. Zu deren Heiligtum bei Kanopos siehe Takács, Magic 489–507; Montserrat, Pilgrimage 257–279, hier 261–266 (Datum des Kultendes); Watts, Winning 437–464, hier 442 und 456–459 (zur Zerstörung durch pachomianische Mönche 489); Grossmann, Architektur 216–221; Holman, Rich and poor 103–124. – Zu den Hauptquellen (Sophronios, *Laus SS. martyrum Cyri et Ioannis:* PG 87,3, 3387–3422; *Narratio miraculorum SS. Cyri et Ioannis:* PG 87,3, 3423–3676) siehe Gascou, Origines 241–281; Gascou, Miracles; Bringel, Sophrone (Neuedition der *Miracula*).

[56] McGuckin, Early Cult 12.

[57] Zum Methodischen siehe Engemann, Deutung.

[58] Deckers, Göttlicher Kaiser 3–16.

[59] Kötzsche-Breitenbruch, Geburt 189–192, 208. – Siehe das Textilfragment in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. 90.5.11 a–c (5./6. Jahrhundert): Hermann, Bad 61–81; Kat. Athen 273, Nr. 8 (Eunice Dauterman Maguire – Henry Maguire).

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vorgeprägte Muster der paganen Ikonographie im Sinne von allgemeinverständlichen Chiffren zurückgegriffen haben. Die Ausbildung des christlichen Kanons mit feststehenden ikonologischen, das heißt allegorischen, metaphorischen oder symbolischen Konnotationen der Bilder, war ein langer Prozeß. Im Milieu der Künstler und ihrer Auftraggeber bewegen wir uns zunächst auf der Ebene der privaten Frömmigkeit, die von den theologischen Diskussionen der kirchlichen Oberschicht meilenweit entfernt war und ihren eigenen religiösen Auffassungen und Praktiken – nicht selten auch magischen – folgte. Selbst nach der offiziellen Anerkennung des Christentums seit Konstantin und der Entstehung einer kirchlicherseits beauftragten und geleiteten Kunst lebte der private Sektor der Kunstproduktion durch die Jahrhunderte fort, unterwarf sich freilich mehr und mehr den in der offiziellen Ikonographie ausgebildeten Regeln.

Für die spätantike Archäologie stellt sich ohnehin die grundsätzliche Frage, seit wann in der christlichen Kunst Mariendarstellungen auftreten, welchem sozialen Umfeld sie zuzuordnen sind und was sie über eine bereits bestehende Marienverehrung sowie die Art und Weise ihrer bildlichen Umsetzung aussagen. Seit dem 3. Jahrhundert begegnet zunächst in der Katakombenmalerei, später auch auf Sarkophagen, das Bild der Magierhuldigung.[60] Die in künstlerischer Hinsicht eher bescheidenen Darstellungen haben im Matthäusevangelium (2,11) und im Protoevangelium des Iakobos[61] ihre textlichen Grundlagen. Die Bilder bringen zweierlei zur Anschauung: zum einen die Epiphanie Christi in der Gestalt des Kindes, hier ausgedrückt durch die zunächst allein den Magiern vorbehaltene Erkenntnis seiner wahren (göttlichen) Natur, zum anderen die durch Maria ermöglichte Inkarnation des Gott-Logos. Gemäß der in den Katakomben- und Sarkophagbildern obwaltenden soteriologischen Paradigmatik ist es vor allem die Verheißung, daß dieses Kind sein Volk von den Sünden befreien und aus dem Tode erretten werde.[62]

Beat Brenk hat unlängst auf die fundamentale Bedeutung des stadtrömischen Sarkophags der Adelfia (um 340–350) für die Geschichte der Marienverehrung aufmerksam gemacht (**Abb. 1**).[63] In der rechten Hälfte der Deckelstirnwand sind die Ankunft der Magier und die Geburt Christi samt einem Hirten sowie die ein wenig abseits sitzende Maria dargestellt.[64] Die drei Szenen in der linken Hälfte des Deckels interpretierte Brenk als „Annuncation to the Virgin" (**Abb. 2a**), „the Virgin and the women" (**Abb. 2b**) und „the Virgin seated on the throne" (**Abb. 2c**).[65] Daß es sich hierbei um Episoden aus dem Marienleben handelt, die auf apokryphe Anregungen zurückgehen, hatte bereits Anton de Waal erkannt.[66] Die einzelnen Bilder sind demzufolge in narrativer Weise von links nach rechts zu lesen und stellen den ältesten erhaltenen Marienzyklus dar. Der Entwerfer hatte die völlig neue Aufgabe, für drei Ereignisse aus dem Marienleben prägnante Bildformeln zu erfinden.[67] Die Magierhuldigung erscheint hingegen abgesondert von den Marienszenen des Deckels unterhalb der Muschel mit den Porträtbüsten der beiden Sarkophaginhaber und behielt so ihre eigenständige Aussage (**Abb. 1**). Die mehrzonigen stadtrömischen Sarkophage des 4. Jahrhunderts mit ihren komplexen, aus alt- und neutestamentlichen sowie apokryphen Szenen zusam-

[60] Deckers, Huldigung 20–32; Jastrzębowska, Marienleben 9 *passim*; Utro, Iconografia 367–377; Brenk, Apse 61–63. – Einige angebliche frühe „Mariendarstellungen" in der Katakombenmalerei (Utro, Iconografia 356–360) müssen freilich ausscheiden, siehe Parlby, Marian Art 115–122; Parlby, Origins 41–56.

[61] Protoevangelium des Iakobos 21,2, nur hier mit ausdrücklicher Erwähnung Marias: Cullman, Protoevangelium 289; Schneider, Kindheitsevangelien 138/139.

[62] Mt. 1,21; Protoevangelium des Iakobos 11,3: Cullman, Protoevangelium 284; Schneider, Kindheitsevangelien 116/117.

[63] Syrakus, Museo Acheologico Regionale Paolo Orsi: Dresken-Weiland, Repertorium 8–10, Nr. 20, Taf. 9–10 (mit Bibliographie); Brenk, Apse 64–66, Abb. 63, 64, 69–71.

[64] Kötzsche-Breitenbruch, Geburt 198–199, mit weiteren Belegen zu diesem Typus der Geburtsszene mit dabei sitzender und sich gelegentlich abwendender Maria.

[65] Brenk, Apse 65–66, 74, Abb. 69–71. – Jastrzębowska, Marienleben 12–15 *passim*, 116–121, Katalog 176–177 (A.b.5), trennte die zweite und dritte Szene nicht und erkannte hier „Verkündigung" und „Maria unter den frommen Jungfrauen", räumt 14 jedoch ein, daß in der zweiten Szene Maria „zum Tempel geführt wird".

[66] de Waal, Apokryphen 391–393, insbesondere de Waal, Evangelien; Jastrzębowska, Marienleben 117–121. – Skeptisch: Deckers, Musen 217–218, der in den Begleitfiguren „musenartige Gestalten" erkennt: „Ob diese traditionellen Bildmotive hier adaptiert sind, um die Auserwähltheit Marias zu veranschaulichen, oder ob mit ihnen zugleich ein assoziativer Bezug zu Adelfia hergestellt wird, muß offen bleiben".

[67] Brenk, Apse 64–65 wies darauf hin, daß sich für die einzelnen Bilder bzw. Details keine direkten textlichen Quellen finden lassen. Deutlich wird das besonders am Bild der Verkündigung: Maria schöpft hier mit einem Krug Wasser aus einer Quelle, über der ein bärtiges Haupt erscheint. Dieses könnte gemäß Protoevangelium des Iakobos 11,1 (Cullmann, Protoevangelium 284; Schneider, Kindheitsevangelien 114/115) als die „Stimme" gedeutet werden, die zu Maria am Brunnen sprach. – Die Zweifel von McNally, Syncretism 154–157 mit A. 30 und 31 an der Deutung der ersten Szene als Verkündigung scheinen mir unbegründet. Ich sehe hier keine Verbindung zu Moses (Ex. 17, 1–17). Gleichwohl ist ihr zuzustimmen, daß auf der um 400 entstandenen Marienseide in der Abegg-Stiftung (unten 70, Abb. 8) die älteste eindeutige Darstellung der "Virgin at the Spring" überliefert ist.

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mengesetzten Bildprogrammen wurden von Angehörigen einer zum Christentum konvertierten und wirtschaftlich potenten Oberschicht in Auftrag gegeben.[68] Als Zeugnisse der Grabeskunst werfen sie ein deutliches Licht auf die private Frömmigkeit und die Heilserwartungen ihrer Besteller. Die Marienszenen des Adelfiasarkophags weisen jedenfalls darauf hin, in welchem Maße der mariologische Diskurs jetzt auch für theologisch gebildete Laien zunehmend an Bedeutung gewann und nach Verbildlichung drängte. Insofern läßt sich weder beweisen noch widerlegen, daß die Auftraggeber des Adelfiasarkophags in Maria vor allem die θεοτόκος, die Gottesgebärerin im Sinne hatten.[69] Man darf hier unbefangen eine Feststellung von Hilda Graef zitieren:[70] „Weil Christus wahrer Gott und wahrer Mensch war, darum ist Maria Gottesgebärerin. Schon in der ersten Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts sind Christologie und Mariologie eng miteinander verknüpft".

Wie das Beispiel des Adelfiasarkophags zeigt und weitere belegen werden, sind bildliche Darstellungen historische Primärquellen ersten Ranges. Die archäologischen Denkmäler erhellen jene Hälfte der real-existierenden Lebens- und Glaubenswelten, die in den schriftlichen Quellen keinen Niederschlag gefunden haben, zumal sich die frühen Kirchenväter zu Bildinhalten der älteren christlichen Kunst und zu den Praktiken der Künstler eher selten und zumeist ablehnend geäußert haben.[71] Wie verbreitet die private Marienfrömmigkeit im 4. Jahrhundert gewesen sein muß, und zwar im Westen wie im Osten des Reiches, geht aus einem bislang wenig beachteten Zeugnis hervor: Auf einem 1959 in İstanbul gefundenen Bruchstück eines Säulensarkophags aus der Zeit um 400 ist fragmentarisch die Gottesmutter mit dem in ihrem linken Arm liegenden Kind erhalten (**Abb. 3**).[72] Maria sitzt auf einem *faldistorium.* Sie trägt einen Chiton, von dem nur der Saum des Halsausschnitts unbeschädigt geblieben ist, sowie eine Palla, deren Überschlag ihr Haupt bedeckt. Immerhin erkennt man, daß ihr Oberkörper ein wenig zu ihrer linken Seite gewendet und ihr Haupt dem Kind zugeneigt war. Der Kopf des Kindes, dessen vordere Hälfte mit dem Antlitz ursprünglich mittels zweier Dübel angesetzt war,[73] ragt ein stückweit über den Schulterkontur Marias hinaus. Demnach saß das Kind nicht aufgerichtet auf dem linken Knie der Mutter, sondern lag quer über ihrem Schoß. Die ausladende Anordnung des Kindes ist typisch für bestimmte Darstellungstypen der Isis lactans.[74] Hierbei umfaßt die Göttin mit der rechten Hand ihre linke Brust und bietet sie dem Horusknäblein im „Intentionsgestus" an.[75] Das Kind trinkt jedoch nicht, da sein Kopf weit von der Mutterbrust entfernt ist. Wegen der zerstörten Reliefoberfläche kann nur vermutet werden, daß Marias rechte Hand auf dem Oberkörper des Kindes lag (Reste des abgetragenen linken Unterarms?), doch gibt es keinen Anhaltspunkt für eine entblößte linke Brust. Gleichwohl spricht der große Abstand zum Kopf des Kindes gegen aktives Stillen. Ich bin davon überzeugt, daß in der Darstellung eine Vorstufe der Theotokos Galaktotrophousa zu erkennen ist,[76] die das mittlere der fünf Interkolumnien der Sarkophagfront eingenommen hatte.[77] Maria ist zwar ohne Nimbus wiedergegeben, doch kann

[68] Zur Sozialstruktur der stadtrömischen christlichen Besteller zusammenfassend: Dresken-Weiland, Sarkophagbestattungen 199–202.

[69] Von Brenk, Apse 63 allerdings bezweifelt. Mit Blick auf die allgemeine Verbreitung des Theotokostitels (oben 56) und den Vorwurf Julians (oben 57) kann man das kaum ausschließen; siehe auch Mimouni, Aspects 275–293.

[70] Graef, Maria 54.

[71] Die bekannten Beispiele, auf die hier nicht näher eingegangen werden muß, sind Tertullian von Karthago (Verbot jeglicher bildnerischer Betätigung durch Christen; Ablehnung des Schafträgerbildes auf Bechern) und Klemens von Alexandria (Zulassung bestimmter „unverfänglicher" Motive auf Siegelringen von Christen); siehe die immer noch grundlegenden Arbeiten von Koch, Bilderfrage und Elliger, Stellung.

[72] İstanbul, Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Inv. 5639: Deichmann, Sarkophag-Probleme 292–295, Abb. 1; Severin, Plastik 240, Abb. 18; Fıratlı, Sculpture 48, Nr. 84 (Bibliographie), Taf. 31; Koch, Sarkophage 59, 383, 406, Abb. 115; Deckers, Sepulkralplastik 39–40 (stillende Maria); Peschlow, Überlegungen 824, 827, Anm. 21 (Magierhuldigung?). – Höhe noch 47,5 cm, Breite noch 35 cm. Aus diesen Maßen errechnen sich ein mittlerer Säulenabstand von ca. 42 cm und eine Gesamtlänge bei fünf Jochen von ca. 217 cm, was der Regel entspricht. Da der Kopf Marias vor dem Muschelschloß sitzt, war auch auf der fehlenden linken Seite der Abstand zwischen ihrem Körperkontur und der linken Säule etwa so groß wie zwischen Kopf des Kindes und erhaltener Säule.

[73] Diese Technik ist in der Konstantinopeler Skulptur nicht selten anzutreffen, vgl. etwa das Thronrelief und das Petrusrelief in Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Inv. 3/72 und 3234: Kat. Berlin 108–109, Nr. 32 (Hans-Georg Severin) und 112–113, Nr. 34 (Arne Effenberger).

[74] Siehe z. B. die Statuette in München, Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, Inv. ÄS 4201, abgebildet: Kat. Hamm 77, Nr. 8 (Sylvia Schoske); vgl. auch die in manchen Details verfälschte Isis lactans-Statuette in Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Inv. 19/61: Kat. Hamm 76, Nr. 7 (Arne Effenberger).

[75] Langener, Isis lactans *passim* benutzte den Terminus „Intentionsgestus" im Unterschied zu direktem Stillen, siehe die Beispiele unten 82–83.

[76] So auch Pesarino, Contributo 645, Anm. 18, mit Verweis auf ihre ungedruckte Dissertation.

[77] Die Beschreibung bei Fıratlı, Sculpture 48 drückt sich betont unbestimmt aus: „une femme assise dans un fauteuil dont on voit une partie du siège saillante à droite. Elle est vêtue d'un manteau dont un pan est relevé sur la tête. A droite, à la place de son bras, il reste

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das gegen die Deutung nicht geltend gemacht werden, denn auch die Christusfigur auf einem der beiden Scheinsarkophage von Taşkasap – um ein weiteres Konstantinopeler Beispiel etwa derselben Zeitstufe zu nennen – hat keinen Nimbus.[78] Was in den vier übrigen Interkolumnien dargestellt gewesen sein könnte (Engel, Apostel, Heilige?), muß Spekulation bleiben.

Seit Bekanntwerden des Bruchstücks wurde für die Sarkophagforschung immer deutlicher, daß einige der in Ravenna (seit 402 weströmische Kaiserresidenz) erhaltenen christlichen Sarkophage Exportstücke aus Konstantinopel gewesen sein müssen.[79] Auf dem bald nach 400 datierten Pignattasarkophag im Braccioforte zu Ravenna thront auf der Hauptseite Christus zwischen zwei Aposteln in einer durch zwei Palmen angedeuteten paradiesischen Landschaft.[80] Auf der rechten Nebenseite ist – erstmals in der Kunst faßbar – die Verkündigung mit der auf einem Kasten sitzenden und gemäß dem Protoevangelium des Iakobos den Wollfaden spinnenden Maria sowie dem geflügelten Erzengel Gabriel dargestellt (**Abb. 4**).[81] Die linke Seite zeigt die Begegnung zweier männlicher Personen, flankiert von zwei Zypressen.[82] Auf der Rückseite trinken zwei Hirsche an einem Kanthrosbrunnen. Die auf die Menschwerdung des Logos vorausweisende Szene der Verkündigung steht in enger Beziehung zu dem in seiner himmlischen Herrlichkeit gegenwärtigen Christus auf der Front. Den Quellen läßt sich zwar nicht mehr entnehmen, für welche ravennatische Persönlichkeit des 5. Jahrhunderts der Pignattasarkophag bestimmt gewesen sein könnte,[83] doch ist sowohl für diesen als auch für den Konstantinopeler Säulensarkophag (**Abb. 3**) an hochgestellte und theologisch gebildete Auftraggeber zu denken, die auf die Wahl der Bildprogramme Einfluß genommen haben werden.

Alle bisher angeführten Denkmäler entstammen dem sepulkralen Bereich. Ihre Bilder rufen in vielfältiger Weise Ereignisse des Heilsgeschehens auf. Sie argumentieren durch Gleichnisse oder durch Hinweise auf die Menschwerdung Christi, sein irdisches Wirken und sein Erlösungswerk zugunsten der Verstorbenen und waren nicht für ein „kunstsinniges Publikum“ bestimmt. In ein intellektuelles christliches Milieu führen hingegen die 48 Tetrasticha in den *Tituli historiarum* des spanischen Dichters Prudentius.[84] Lange Zeit war umstritten, ob die Epigramme auf einen nur vorgesehenen oder tatsächlich ausgeführten kirchlichen Bilderzyklus der Zeit um 400 zu beziehen sind, doch neigt die Forschung heute dazu, in den *Tituli* ein Lehrgedicht zu sehen, das einem bestimmten literarischen Konzept folgte.[85] Doch unabhängig davon lassen sich zu den meisten Epigrammen bildliche Belege nachweisen, die eine bereits voll ausgeformte, den Hörern oder Lesern wohlvertraute christliche Ikonographie zur Voraussetzung hatten.[86] Im 27. Tetrastichon (Verse 105–108) wird die Magierhuldigung folgendermaßen beschrieben:[87]

Hic pretiosa magi sub virginis ubere Christo
dona ferunt puero myrraeque et turis et auri;
miratur genetrix tot casti ventris honores
seque Deum geniusse, hominem, regem quoque summum.

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une trace elliptique avec deux trous, ce indique que le relief a été réparé dans l'antiquité“. Was anderes als ein Kind sollte die weibliche Gestalt wohl im linken Arm gehalten haben, und was könnte dann anderes als eine Maria dargestellt sein?

[78] İstanbul, Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Inv. 5423: Fıratlı, Sculpture 55–56, Nr. 96 und 97, Taf. 37.

[79] Deichmann, Sarkophag-Probleme 201–307; Koch, Sarkophage 379–443, hier 383–386, 440 geht vom Export fertiger konstantinopolitanischer Sarkophage nach Ravenna aus.

[80] Kollwitz – Herdejürgen, Sarkophage 54–55, Kat. B 1; 106–114, 135–137, 140, Taf. 24, 25, 26,1–3, 27; Dresken, Repertorium 118, Nr. 376, Taf.108,1–4 („Anfang 5. Jahrhundert Ravennatische Werkstatt“); Koch, Sarkophage 382, 414, 440, Abb. 95.

[81] Protoevangelium des Iakobos 11,1–2: Cullmann, Protoevangelium 284; Schneider, Kindheitsevangelien 114/115. – Siehe Proverbio, Figura 69–70, Abb. 26; Arbeiter, Entwicklung 18–19, Abb. 11.

[82] Die Szene der beiden Männer läßt sich nicht deuten. Jastrzębowska, Marienleben 24–26 dachte an die Heimsuchung. Koch, Sarkophage 199: „Ungedeutet (Begegnung von zwei Männern? Christus – Judas?).“

[83] Dresken, Sarkophagbestattungen 151–160.

[84] Pillinger, Tituli.

[85] Gegen den von zahlreichen Forschern vertretenen Bezug auf einen realen kirchlichen Bilderzyklus hat Lehmann, Bilder 99–126 m. E. überzeugende Argumente beigebracht (dort auch die inzwischen angeschwollene Literatur zu beiden Positionen); zum literarhistorischen Konzept der *Tituli historiarum* siehe Kaesser, Text 151–165 und Smolak, Symmikta 169–188. – Zur umstrittenen Frage, ob typologische Bezüge zwischen alt- und neutestamentlichen Themen bestehen, siehe Davis-Weyer, Komposition 19–29; Schrenk, Typus 156–164.

[86] Pillinger, Tituli 15–17 und Kommentare zu den einzelnen Epigrammen. – Engemann, Deutung 23–34 vertritt einen skeptischen Standpunkt hinsichtlich der Verständnisfähigkeit der zeitgenössischen Betrachter in Bezug auf die Bildinhalte der frühchristlichen Kunst. Ich halte das für überspitzt.

[87] Text und Übersetzung nach Pillinger, Tituli 73, Kommentar 73–74.

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(Hier bringen die Magier dem Christusknaben an der Brust der Jungfrau wertvolle Geschenke, und zwar Myrrhe, Weihrauch und Gold; die Mutter staunt über so viele Ehren der Frucht ihres keuschen Leibes und daß sie Gott, den Menschen und auch obersten König geboren hat).

In Szenen der Magierhuldigung sitzt das Kind üblicherweise auf dem Schoß der seitlich oder frontal thronenden Mutter und wird von dieser den Magiern präsentiert (**Abb**. **1**).[88] Zwar läßt sich aus *sub virginis ubere* nicht zwingend ableiten, daß Marias Brust entblößt war und das Kind von ihr gestillt wurde, gleichwohl könnte Prudentius eine Kourotrophos im Sinn gehabt haben und ihm die Vorstellung der Maria Galaktotrophousa vertraut gewesen sein. Dies müßte ebenso für seine Leser oder Hörer angenommen werden. Ohne Zweifel ist Maria für Prudentius die *Dei genetrix,* womit im lateinischen Sprachgebrauch Maria in ihrer Bedeutung als θεοτόκος bezeichnet wird.[89]

Das älteste bekannte Apsismosaik einer thronenden Maria mit dem Kind auf ihrem Schoß befand sich einst in der Kirche Santa Maria Maggiore in Capua Vetere/Kampanien (1743 zerstört).[90] Stifter der Basilika und ihres Mosaiks war Bischof Symmachus (400–430). Sicher ist das Mosaik nicht Zeugnis für einen bereits bestehenden kirchlichen Marienkult, sondern Ausdruck einer seit Langem verbreiteten Marienfrömmigkeit, doch ist es kaum Zufall, wenn Maria nunmehr neben Christus im kirchlichen Raum erscheint und die Marienverehrung sich so allmählich in die Öffentlichkeit verlagerte.[91] Mit Blick auf die ausdrückliche Hervorhebung Marias als *Dei genetrix* im zitierten Epigramm des Prudentius kann wohl kaum infrage gestellt werden, daß in Darstellungen Marias mit dem Kind vor allem die Theotokos gesehen wurde.

In Rom begegnet der erste offizielle Marienzyklus in den Mosaiken des Triumphbogens der von Papst Sixtus III. (432–440) vollendeten und am Sonntag, dem 5. August 434 geweihten Kirche Santa Maria Maggiore.[92] Die ungewöhnliche und einzigartige Ikonographie, insbesondere die Darstellungen der nach Art einer *femina clarissima* in prächtige Gewänder gehüllten Maria und des allein auf einer Thronbank sitzenden Christuskindes sind in der Kunst ohne Nachfolge geblieben.[93] Die Deutung des Gesamtprogramms ist nach wie vor Gegenstand der Diskussion, die vor allem von der Datierung der Mosaiken und von der Beurteilung des Anteils Sixtus' III. an ihrer Planung, Ausführung oder Vollendung abhängt: Einerseits sieht man hier eine gegen die Christologie des Nestorios gerichtete Hervorhebung der Gottheit Christi ohne jeglichen Bezug auf die Theotokoslehre von Ephesos,[94] andererseits eine durch den römischen Bischof inaugurierte und in theologischer Hinsicht höchst eigenwillige Reaktion auf die dogmatischen Festlegungen des Konzils,[95] die sowohl das vollkommene Mensch- und Gottsein Christi als auch die besondere Rolle Marias als Theotokos im Blick hatte.[96] Ob mit der Stiftung der Kirche die Einführung eines regulären Marienkults verbunden war, ist eher auszuschließen,[97] zumal Marienpredigten, vergleichbar den Homilien des Patriarchen Proklos von Konstantinopel (434–446),[98] für diese Zeit in Rom nicht nachweisbar sind und Marienfeste erst seit dem späten 7. Jahrhundert im Rahmen der römischen Stationsgottesdienste begangen wurden.[99]

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[88] Siehe die Bildbeispiele bei Deckers, Huldigung 20–32, Abb. 1, 3b, 8, 17.

[89] Wright, God-Bearer 27.

[90] Ihm, Programme 55–56, 177–178, Kat. XXXIV, Fig. 10; Korol, Apsismosaik 138–143, Abb. 5 (neue Rekonstruktion); Brenk, Apse 75–77, Abb. 81 (nach Korol).

[91] Brenk, Apse 77 spricht hier von "visual worship".

[92] Aus der umfangreichen Literatur zitiere ich außer dem grundlegenden Werk von Brenk, Mosaiken 9–52 an neueren Arbeiten, wo man die weitere Literatur findet, nur: Steigerwald, Aspekte 161–203; Steigerwald, Rolle 137–151; Brenk, Apse 71–74.

[93] Siehe die Analyse von Brenk, Apse 72–74.

[94] Klauser, Rom 126–135; zuletzt Steigerwald, Rolle 148–150. – Die Argumentation von Steigerwald ist reichlich spitzfindig. Zudem findet sich ein in sprachlicher Hinsicht so fataler Satz (147): „Papst Xystus weihte die Basilika der Jungfrau Maria. Doch damit ist Maria für ihn nicht das primäre Objekt der Weihe. Sein Weihgeschenk, das Gotteshaus, soll nicht ihrer Person, sondern ihrer Leibesfrucht, also ihres Kindes, würdig sein". Also ist die Kirche Marias unwürdig?

[95] Brenk, Mosaiken 50–52 (vorsichtig); Brenk, Apse 74: "The mosaics of the triumphal arch of S. Maria Maggiore are the first official ecclesiastical monument which reflects simultaneously official theological debates and popular devotion towards the Virgin". Siehe auch Folgerø, Sistine mosaics.

[96] Eine weitere Interpretation sieht einen primär christologisch-heilsgeschichtlichen Gehalt unter dem Aspekt des sich herausbildenden päpstlichen Primatsanspruchs, so zuletzt Martin, Weg 109–132, 145–171.

[97] Brenk, Apse 74: "Nothing speaks in favour of a cult of the Virgin, although the church was dedicated by Sixtus III to the Virgin"; vgl. 77.

[98] Homilien 1–5: Constas, Proclus 125–272.

[99] So soll Papst Sergius (687–701) die Feste Hypapante (2. Februar), Verkündigung (25. März), Enschlafen (15. August) und Geburt (8. September) eingeführt haben, siehe Klauser, Rom 126; Baldovin, Worship 122, 125, 137, 160, 164 (mit Nachweisen).

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In den kirchlichen Bereich, und zwar in den eher praktischen der Ausstattung, gehört das folgende Denkmal: Auf einem ca. 82 cm hohen, henkellosen Krater aus schwarzem Marmor im Thermenmuseum zu Rom ist auf der einen Seite in Relief der thronende Christus inmitten der zwölf Apostel dargestellt. Die Gegenseite zeigt die in wichtigen Details leider arg beschädigte Gottesmutter mit dem Kind, die ursprünglich von jeweils drei herannahenden Magiern an jeder Seite umgeben wurde (**Abb. 5**).[100] Wie auf dem İstanbuler Sarkophagfragment (**Abb. 3**) und den erwähnten Scheinsarkophagen (oben 63) haben Christus und Maria keinen Nimbus. Maria sitzt frontal auf einem Thron mit hoher Lehne und Fußschemel. Sie trägt einen hochgegürteten Chiton sowie eine Palla, die ihren Schoß und die Knie bzw. die Unterschenkel umhüllt, während der rückwärtige Teil über ihr Haupt gezogen ist. Der nackte Knabe liegt auf seiner rechten Körperseite quer über dem Schoß Marias. Die Hand seines ursprünglich hochgestreckten linken Arms griff vermutlich in den Halsbausch ihres Gewandes. Sein weitgehend beschädigter Kopf befand sich den Spuren zufolge neben der entblößten linken Brust der Mutter *(sub ubere)*, doch läßt sich nicht mehr sagen, ob die Lippen des Kindes die freiliegende Mamilla berührt haben.[101] Maria umfaßt den Leib des Knäbleins mit ihrer Rechten und stützt es mit der Linken unter dem Rücken. Ihre Sitzhaltung ist merkwürdig gebrochen: Der Oberkörper neigt sich vom Betrachter aus nach links, ihr Kopf war anscheinend geradeaus gerichtet, ihre Oberschenkel sind gespreizt, die gespannten, von ihrem linken Knie ausgehenden Falten fallen nach links ab, wohingegen die vordere Kante des Fußschemels nach links oben ansteigt, obwohl das linke Knie Marias höher aufgestellt ist.[102]

Hans-Georg Severin schlug eine Datierung des Kraters in die Zeit des Valens (364–378) sowie eine Entstehung in Konstantinopel vor.[103] Die oströmische Herkunft begründete er überzeugend durch stilistische Vergleiche mit den beiden Fragmenten eines um 390 in Konstantinopel entstandenen Weihwasserbeckens in Berlin[104] und eines weiteren theodosianischen Gefäßbruchstücks in Budapest.[105] Für den Krater in Rom wird zu Recht angenommen, daß er aufgrund seiner Größe und seiner Darstellungen ebenfalls als Weihwasserbehälter diente.[106] Unterhalb der Szenen sind die beiden Zonen des Gefäßkörpers mit Akanthus-Ranken-Blattwerk und einer Ranke verziert. Hier waren ohne Bezugnahme auf die Geometrie des Akanthus-Ranken-Blattwerks vier Blattmasken (nur zwei sind erhalten) angebracht. Sie sind Relikte der Silensköpfe an den Henkelattaschen der häufig mit dionysischen Szenen geschmückten, spätrepublikanisch-frühkaiserzeitlichen Marmorkratere.[107] Demnach müßte sich der Bildhauer an noch vorhandenen Vorbildern orientiert haben und sah keinen Grund, auf das dionysische Motiv zu verzichten. Ohnehin waren Gefäßformen wie Krater und Kantharos längst als symbolische Lebensbrunnen, als Hinweis auf das *refrigerium*, in der christlichen Ikonographie etabliert.[108] Daneben mögen es praktische Gründe gewesen sein, weshalb man für ein Weihwasserbecken die Form des Kraters gewählt hat.

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[100] Rom, Museo Nazionale delle Terme, Inv. 67629: Severin, Plastik 211–252, Abb. 1–6, hier Abb. 5; Severin, Reliefs 33–34 *passim,* Abb. 47; Alborino, Silberkästchen 77–80, Abb. 64; Wessel, Gottesmutter 186, Taf. XLII; Deckers, Huldigung 26, Abb. 10; Freytag, Theotokosdarstellung 300–301 u. ö., Katalog 36, Nr. K 7, Abb. 65; Cutler, Cult 336–337; Dresken-Weiland, Tischplatten 4–5, 36, 176–176; Ihm, Programme 52; Jastrzębowska, Marienleben 21–22, Kat. B.b.2; Langener, Isis lactans 207–234, Abb. 7; Warland, Ambo 376–377, Abb. 7; Knipp, Christus Medicus 127–128; Severin, Frühdatierungen 322–324, Abb. 4–5; Brenk, Apse 78–79, Abb. 82. – Zur Gruppe der Marmorkratere siehe Grassinger, Marmorkratere.

[101] Hingegen meinen Alborino, Silberkästchen 78 und Langener, Isis Lactans 221, daß das Kind trinke, also direktes Stillen dargestellt sei.

[102] Ein ähnliches Kompositionsschema mit breitbeinig auf einem Thron sitzender, das nackte Kind frontal auf ihrem Schoß haltender Maria zwischen zwei Magiern begegnet auf dem um 382 entstandenen Silberreliquiar aus San Nazaro in Mailand, das einen weiteren bildlichen Beleg für die Gottesmutterverehrung im fortgeschrittenen 4. Jahrhundert bietet: Buschhausen, Metallscrinia 223–234, B 11, Taf. 38–42; Alborino, Silberkästchen 162–163 (datiert um 374/386); Noga-Banai, Trophies 34–35 *passim;* 155, Kat. 1, Abb. 29.

[103] Severin, Plastik 226, 240–250; Severin, Frühdatierungen 322, Anm. 40 (vortheodosianisch). – Die Datierungen schwanken jedoch: Dresken-Weiland, Tischplatten 4 mit Anm. 22 (theodosianisch); Warland, Ambo 377 (frühes 6. Jahrhundert); Brenk, Apse 78: "seems to have imported from Constantinople between 380 and 430".

[104] Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, ohne Inv.: Severin, Plastik 219–223, 237, Abb. 7 (Magier), 8, 10 (Jüngling, Apostel); Severin, Reliefs 32 *passim,* Abb. 45–46; Kat. Berlin 105–105, Nr. 30 (Hans-Georg Severin): „Westkleinasiatischer (?) dunkelgrauer Marmor".

[105] Budapest, Ungarisches Nationalmuseum der Bildenden Künste, Skulpturensammlung, Inv. 4840: Severin, Plastik 223–224, 234–237, Abb. 12 („aus grauem Marmor"); Severin, Reliefs 29–46, Abb. 43–44.

[106] Brenk, Weihwasserbecken 76; Brenk, Apse 78.

[107] Grassinger, Marmorkratere 40–43, Abb. 218–227.

[108] Siehe z. B. die Kantharosbrunnen auf der Rückseite des Pignattasarkophags (oben Anm. 80) oder in den Mosaiken des sog. Mausoleums der Galla Placidia in Ravenna: Deichmann, Bauten Abb. 26 und 27. Der Krater im Thermenmuseum hatte keine Wasserzuleitung.

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In der Szene der Magierhuldigung (**Abb. 5**) erkannte Severin die bislang älteste erhaltene Darstellung der Theotokos Galaktotrophousa und widersprach der generellen Herleitung des Bildes der Maria lactans aus Ägypten.[109] Der Gottesmutter des Kraters fehlt jedoch ein charakteristisches Merkmal der Isis lactans- bzw. der Galaktotrophousa-Ikonographie, nämlich das Umfassen und Anbieten der linken Brust mit der rechten Hand (**Abb. 10**),[110] und zwar unabhängig davon, ob der „Intentionsgestus" oder direktes Stillen gemeint ist. Stattdessen umfaßt sie mit beiden Händen den Leib des Kindes. Insofern und mit Blick auf die später zu behandelnden ägyptischen Darstellungen (Teil II) konfrontieren uns der Krater, das Sarkophagfragment in İstanbul (**Abb. 3**) und das 27. Tetrastichon des Prudentius erneut mit der Frage, wo und in welchem sozialen bzw. künstlerischen Milieu das Bild der Theotokos Galaktotrophousa letztlich seinen Ursprung hatte.

Die symmetrisch komponierte Magierhuldigung mit der im Zentrum auf einem Thron sitzenden Maria findet ihre Vorläufer in der kaiserzeitlichen Münzprägung und in der Katakombenmalerei aus konstantinischer Zeit.[111] Das Motiv der sitzenden Fecunditas mit einem Kind auf dem Schoß und zwei oder mehreren Kinder zu beiden Seiten läßt sich bereits auf Münzen seit antoninischer und severischer Zeit nachweisen.[112] Ein 324 in Trier ausgegebener Doppelsolidus Konstantins des Großen zeigt die thronende und nimbierte Augusta Fausta in Vorderansicht, flankiert von zwei stehenden und akklamierenden weiblichen Personifikationen, die als Felicitas und Pietas zu deuten sind (**Abb. 6**).[113] Hier finden wir bereits wesentliche Züge der Maria des Kraters vorgebildet (**Abb. 5**): Der Säugling ist nackt und liegt quer auf Faustas Schoß, sein Kopf befindet sich neben bzw. wenig unterhalb ihrer verhüllten (!) linken Brust *(sub ubere)*. Mit seinem linken Arm greift er nach oben in das Gewand der Mutter. Fausta stützt das Kind mit ihrer Linken unter dem Rücken, ihre Rechte weist in Abwandlung des „Intentionsgestus" auf den Säugling hin.[114] Wie die Münzbeispiele zeigen, bedurfte es keines großen Erfindungsreichtums, um die thronende Maria mit dem auf ihrem Schoß sitzenden oder liegenden Kind zwischen zwei oder mehr Magiern darzustellen.

Somit besitzen wir aus dem letzten Drittel des 4. Jahrhunderts für Konstantinopel gleich zwei Bildzeugnisse der Theotokos im Typus der Fecunditas bzw. der Galaktotrophousa, davon eines aus dem sepulkralen (**Abb. 3**) und eines aus dem kirchlichen Bereich (**Abb. 5**).[115] Dies zeigt, daß Ostrom entgegen der lange Zeit vorherrschenden Meinung einen selbständigen Anteil an der Ausbildung des Typus der Maria lactans hatte.[116] Für das Konstantinopeler Sarkophagfragment konnte trotz des schlechten Erhaltungszustands direktes Stillen ausgeschlossen werden, nicht

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[109] Severin, Plastik 238, vgl. Severin, Skulptur 252, Abb. 289: „Das christliche Bildthema ist jedoch nicht, wie häufig angenommen, typisch ägyptisch bzw. eine koptische Erfindung". – Die Abhängigkeit von Isis lactans-Darstellungen lehnten ebenfalls ab: Klauser, Gottesgebärerin 1099; van Moorsel, Galaktotrophousa 531; Blanc-Ortolan, Virgo Lactans 243–244.

[110] Severin, Plastik 238.

[111] Z. B. Katakombe der hll. Petrus und Marcellinus, „Cubiculum della Madonna con i due Magi": Deckers, Huldigung 26, Abb. 9; Deckers – Seeliger – Mietke, Katakombe 327, Nr. 69, Wand 2, Taf. 49b.

[112] Siehe z. B. Fittschen, Bildnistypen 41, Taf. 3,7 (Fausta minor, 152 n. Chr.), 42, Taf. 5,8 (Fausta minor, 161 n. Chr.), 70-75, Taf. 6, 13 und 14 (Lucilla, 165–170 n. Chr.); Schmidt-Dick, Typenatlas 44–46, Taf. 16.

[113] (1) Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Münzkabinett, ACC. 1873/393: Kat. Trier Nr. I.9.16 (Bernhard Weiser). – (2) Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett, Inv. 35.276: Kat. Trier Nr. II.5.2 (Günter Dembski). Faustas linke Hand liegt auf dem Leib des Kindes, dieses greift zur rechten Schulter der Mutter. – (3) Das Stück in London, British Museum (Deckers, Huldigung 26, Abb. 11), das den Münztypus etwas abwandelt (nur zwei Kranzhalter anstatt der zwei gemeinsam einen Kranz haltenden Putti) ist der Kopf des Kindes näher an die linke Brust herangerückt. – Weitere Münzen zeigen die stehende Fausta mit einem oder zwei Kindern.

[114] Langener, Isis Lactans 219 beschreibt die Darstellungen folgendermaßen: „das nackte Kind in Seitenlage und Linksprofil dirigiert mit ausgestreckter Linker die rechte Brust zu sich hin, wobei Fausta die rechte Hand auf dem Leib des Kindes ruhen läßt." Das ist sicher falsch.

[115] Der Krater besteht aus schwarzem Marmor mit weißer Äderung, die Berliner Fragmente aus einem dunkelgrauen Marmor. Severin, Plastik 251, Anm. 163 hält eine Herkunft des Gesteins aus Bithynien für wahrscheinlich. Bergmann, Chiragan 32, Anm. 169 verweist auf ein „anspruchsloseres Exemplar dieser Gattung mit glattem Oberteil und Zungenmuster im Unterteil", das in Aphrodisias gefunden wurde und aus blauem Marmor besteht. Ich halte es nicht für ausgeschlossen, daß die beiden Weihwassergefäße entweder aus den Werkstätten von Aphrodisias stammen oder von Künstlern aus Aphrodisias in Konstantinopel gefertigt wurden; zur Frage der Herkunft der Chiraganstücke und ihrer Bildhauer siehe Bergmann, Chiragan *passim*.

[116] Ausführlich hat Langener, Isis lactans 207–234 alternativ Rom, Konstantinopel oder Alexandria als mögliche Entstehungsorte des Kraters diskutiert und sich für Rom entschieden. Vor allem hat sie die einzelnen ikonographischen Komponenten der Galaktotrophousa – sitzende oder thronende Kourotrophoi (weibliche Personifikationen oder Göttinnen) über Akanthusranken bzw. Akanthusblattkelch, Stillen oder Darreichen der linken Brust mit der rechten Hand, nackter Knabe, Emporlangen des Kindes in das Gewand der Mutter oder Umfassen des Handgelenks ihres darreichenden rechten Arms – auf kaiserzeitlichen römischen Monumenten zusammengestellt (siehe auch Pesarino, Contributo 643–645). Konstantinopel als Entstehungsort des Kraters schloß sie aus, da es ihrer Meinung nach vor dem 7. Jahrhundert

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aber der Einfluß eines bestimmten ikonographischen Typus der Isis lactans. Auf dem Krater liegt das Kind *sub ubere*, doch fehlt hier die Geste des Anbietens der entblößten Brust. Die Magierhuldigung des Kraters ließe sich gleichwohl als Bildbeleg für den 27. Titulus des Prudentius anführen, d. h., dem Dichter scheint eine derartige Szene vorgeschwebt zu haben. Maria ist sowohl auf dem Krater als auch auf dem Sarkophag die Theotokos, als die man sie zu dieser Zeit in Konstantinopel längst kannte. Dies wird zumindest durch die dritte, wohl 380 in der Anastasiskirche gehaltene theologische Rede des Gregorios von Nazianz bezeugt.[117]

Chorikios von Gaza beschreibt in seinem ersten Enkomion auf Bischof Markianos (vor 536) das Marienbild in der Apsis der Sergioskirche von Gaza mit folgenden Worten:[118] τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἐν μέσῳ δείκνυσυ τὴν μητέρα τὸν υἱὸν ἐνθεμένην τοῖς κόλποις ἄρτι τεχθέντα (in der Mitte zeigt es die Mutter des Erlösers, den neugeborenen Sohn an die Brust gelegt). Will man dieser Deutung von κόλπος folgen, dann wäre eine monumentale Apsisdarstellung der Galaktotrophousa bereits für das zweite Viertel des 6. Jahrhunderts im syro-palästinensischen Raum bezeugt. In derselben Kirche befanden sich innerhalb eines christologischen Gemäldezyklus auch die ersten nachweisbaren monumentalen Darstellungen der Kreuzigung Christi und der Himmelfahrt.[119] Auf die Palästina möglicherweise zukommende Brückenfunktion bei der Vermittlung bestimmter ikonographischer Modelle nach Ägypten ist später zurückzukommen.

II

Es wäre kaum vorstellbar, daß Alexandria und die gräko-ägyptischen Städte des Nillandes von den künstlerischen Entwicklungen in West- und Ostrom unberührt geblieben sein sollten. Freilich läßt sich der Anteil Ägyptens an der Genese des „autonomen" Marienbilds und des Typus der Maria Galaktotrophousa wegen fehlender Denkmäler nicht mehr lückenlos nachzeichnen. Doch gab es in Alexandria zweifellos spätestens im 4. Jahrhundert Mariendarstellungen. Sie begegnen wieder im sepulkralen Bereich und etwa gleichzeitig in der häuslichen Sphäre und lassen unterschiedliche Formen der zunächst noch privaten Marienverehrung erkennen. Das älteste bekannte Beispiel aus spätkonstantinischer Zeit befand sich in der zerstörten „Wescher-Katakombe" von Kôm el-Shoqafa (Karmûz) in Alexandria.[120] In der linken Szene der nur aus einer Aquarellkopie bekannten Wandmalerei einer Exedra waren Christus, Maria mit der Beischrift ἡ ἁγία Μαρία[121] sowie eine Gruppe sitzender männlicher und weiblicher Personen vermutlich in einer Darstellung der Hochzeit zu Kana (Joh. 2,1–12) wiedergegeben. Auch die Hauptszene mit Christus im Zentrum zeigte ein neutestamentliches Ereignis, die Vermehrung der Brote und Fische. Maria ist hier also Teil in einer Folge von Bildern, in denen Christus als Wundertäter erscheint.

Ein herausragendes Beispiel der Grabmalerei ist das (ebenfalls zerstörte) Fresko der Lünette eines Grabbaus in der Nekropole von Antinoë (Sheik Ibada).[122] Im Zentrum der Komposition steht die Verstorbene in reicher Gewandung, durch Beischrift als Theodosia bezeichnet (**Abb. 7**). Sie hat ihre Hände im Typus einer Orans erhoben, an ihrer rechten Seite steht der Hl. Kollouthos, der Wunderheiler und Hauptheilige von Antinoë. Maria mit Beischrift ΟΓΙΑ (sic) ΜΑΡΙΑ, ganz in Purpurgewänder gehüllt und wie Kollouthos nimbiert, nimmt den Platz zur Linken

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im byzantinischen Kulturkreis noch keine Darstellungen der Theotokos Galaktotrophousa gegeben habe, doch ist diese Annahme jetzt hinfällig.

[117] *Oratio* XXXIX,4 (PG 36,80C): Sieben, Reden 177/178. – Siehe auch seinen Brief an Kledonios von Nazianz: *Epistula* 101,5 (PG 37,177C): Delius – Rosenbaum, Texte 25, Nr. 28 (um 383/384); englische Übersetzung: McGuckin, St. Cyrill, Appendix 2, 390–399, hier 391–392. – Zur Marienverehrung in der Anastasiskirche zur Zeit Gregors siehe auch Shoemaker, Marian Liturgies 131–132 (Shoemaker, Cult 73–74).

[118] Laudatio Marciani I § 29: Choricius Gazaeus, Opera (10,9–10 Foerster – Richtsteig). – Thümmel, Sergioskirche 52 übersetzte: „in der Mitte die Mutter des Erlösers, den jüngst geborenen Sohn an die Brust gesetzt". Ihm, Programme 193: „den neugeborenen Sohn im Schoß haltend".

[119] Laudatio Marciani I § 75: Choricius Gazaeus, Opera (21,13–16 Foerster – Richtsteig). – Thümmel, Sergioskirche 60.

[120] de Rossi, Ipogeo 57–61, Taf. 5 (Aquarellkopie). – Zur „Wescher-Katakombe" siehe Grossmann, Architektur 345; Venit, Tombs 183–186, 199 (Bibliographie), Abb. 158–159 (de Rossi, Ipogeo); Pasi, Catacomba 169–187; Zibawi, Kunst 17–18, Abb. 2; Pasi, Affreschi 247, Abb. 7.

[121] Schon Strzygowski (Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 155) hatte darauf hingewiesen, daß ἡ ἁγία Μαρία in ägyptischen Darstellungen der Theotokos stets das bevorzugte *nomen sacrum* ist. Auch die Monogramme in einigen Malereien von Bawit (z. B. Saal 6, unten Anm. 221, hier Abb. 19) sind in ἡ ἁγία Μαρία aufzulösen. Hingegen findet sich niemals der Titel θεοτόκος.

[122] Aquarellkopie in Florenz, Istituto Papirologico G. Vitelli: Salmi, Dipinti 163–169, Taf. H und XXVIII („prima metà del secolo VI"); Rassart-Debergh, Peinture 236–237; Kat. Florenz 29–31, Nr. 1, Abb. (Loretta Del Francia Barocas); Zibawi, Kunst 21–22, Abb. 9; Pasi, Affreschi 253–255, Abb. 11.

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Theodosias ein und hält auf ihrer linken Hand einen stilisierten Kranz mit dem eingeschriebenen Zeichen Christi, dem Kreuz. Zwei Palmen deuten den paradiesischen Ort an, in den Theodosia entrückt und in die Gemeinschaft des Heiligen sowie der Jungfrau Maria versetzt ist. Beide haben hier die Funktion von Geleitern und Fürbittern für die verstorbene Theodosia, was die eher ungewöhnliche Anordnung Marias erklärt. Obwohl das Bild nur in einer Aquarellkopie vorliegt,[123] ist die außerordentliche künstlerische Qualität noch erkennbar. Das Fresko wird nach überwiegender Meinung der Forschung in das frühere 6. Jahrhundert datiert.[124] Auf den ersten Blick scheinen Vergleiche mit stadtrömischen Fresken diesen Zeitansatz zu bestätigen.[125] Hier ist jedoch zu beachten, daß die großformatigen gewirkten Wandbehänge, auf denen zunächst pagane mythologische Szenen und Figuren in „hellenistischer" Manier dargestellt wurden (unten 71, 76), nur auf der Grundlage von im Maßstab 1:1 gemalten Vorlagen angefertigt werden konnten.[126] Es muß also auf dem Gebiet der monumentalen Figurenmalerei eine bis weit in die Kaiserzeit zurückreichende künstlerische Tradition in Ägypten gegeben haben, und zwar in denselben städtischen Zentren, in denen diese Behänge gewirkt wurden. Den Malern dürfte es nicht schwergefallen sein, auch Figurengruppen mit christlichen Themen zu entwerfen. Insofern spräche nichts dagegen, das Theodosiafresko bereits in das 5. Jahrhundert zu datieren.[127] Zwar ist Theodosia nicht annähernd so prächtig gekleidet wie Maria im Triumphbogenmosaik von S. Maria Maggiore, doch findet die Szene von Antinoë dort ihre engsten stilistischen Parallelen.

Schließlich besitzen wir in der sog. Marienseide der Abegg-Stiftung, die Teil einer Tunika war und somit dem säkularen Lebensbereich zuzuweisen ist, einen wohl in Ägypten oder im östlichen Mittelmeerraum in der Zeit um 400 gewebten Zyklus mit Darstellungen aus der Geschichte Marias (**Abb. 8**).[128] Die Fragmente lassen noch vier Register des Musterrapports erkennen. Die Bildfolge ist unvollständig, die ursprüngliche Breite der Stoffbahn läßt sich daher nicht mehr bestimmen. Dargestellt sind (von links nach rechts) Maria im Tempel, Erwählung Josephs, Verkündigung an der Quelle und Geburt Jesu in Bethlehem. Die einzelnen Bilder werden durch kurze griechische Beischriften erklärt. Rechts folgt nach einer größeren Lücke ein tempelartiges Gebäude mit der Beischrift „Synagoge" sowie die Gruppe einer gelagerten Quellnymphe und einer männlichen Figur, die eine Schale (?) hält. Dieses Fragment erwies sich als zum Rückteil der Tunika gehörig, weshalb man auf dem Rücken die umgekehrte Abfolge der seitenverkehrten Szenen und die Spiegelung der Beischriften „in Kauf genommen" haben müßte.[129] Für die inhaltliche Zuordnung dieses Fragments zum Marienzyklus ergeben sich zwar mehrere Varianten, doch führt keine zu einer befriedigenden Lösung.[130] Die Marienszenen basieren überwiegend auf dem apokryphen Protoevangelium des Iakobos,[131] wohingegen die Quellnymphe wieder dem antiken Repertoire entlehnt ist.[132]

Erhaltene Fragmente von großen, reservetechnisch bedruckten Leinenbehängen, die gewöhnlich in das 5. Jahrhundert datiert werden, überliefern neben alttestamentlichen Szenen ebenfalls Bilder aus dem Marienleben wie Verkündigung, Geburt Christi und Anbetung der Magier, die in Registern angeordnet und mit Beischriften versehen

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[123] Einige Originalaufnahmen vor der Zerstörung bei Breccia, Ricerche Abb. 5–9.

[124] Diskussion der Datierungsfrage bei Pasi, Affreschi 253–255.

[125] Siehe das Fresko der Witwe Turtura in der Basilika der hll. Felix und Adauctus in der Commodillakatakombe (um 530): Bisconti, Dekoration 106, Abb. 121 und 145 (6. Jahrhundert); Brenk, Apse 92, Abb. 97.

[126] Allerdings sind Vorlagen im Maßstab 1:1 nur für kleinformatige Wirkereien erhalten, siehe Stauffer, Wirkereien 48–52; Stauffer, Musterblätter.

[127] So auch Russo, Contributo 53–60.

[128] Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, Inv. 3100b: Flury-Lemberg, Textil-Konservierung 367–369, 502, Kat. 94, Abb. 787–792; Kötzsche, Marienseide 183–194, Abb. 1 (Rekonstruktionszeichnung); McNalley, Syncretism 145–164; Schrenk, Textilien 185–189, Nr. 62 („Östlicher Mittelmeerraum oder Ägypten, 2. Hälfte 4. bis Mitte 5. Jahrhundert). – Kötzsche, Marienseide 188 datierte die Marienseide wegen des noch ungeflügelten Engels in der Verkündigungsszene m. E. zutreffend um 400.

[129] Schrenk, Textilien 187–188, mit Abb. der Musterrekonstruktion (meine Abb. 8). – Auf der Abb. bei Rutschkowscaya, Textiles 222, Abb. 168 wurde die Tempelarchitektur weggelassen, wodurch der Gesamteindruck verfälscht ist.

[130] Schrenk, Textilien 189, die eine Deutung als erstes Bad des Kindes ausschließt.

[131] Zu den einzelnen, dem Protoevangelium des Iakobos entlehnten Szenen siehe Kötzsche, Marienseide 186–191. – Die offenen ikonographischen Detailprobleme können hier nicht diskutiert werden; siehe McNally, Syncretism 149–164; Schrenk, Textilien 188–189.

[132] Kötzsche, Marienseide 191 war der Ansicht, daß die Vorlagen für die Marienseide „sicher auf die Monumentalmalerei" zurückgehen, und verwies in diesem Zusammenhang auf die Fresken von Deir Abu Hennis (Rassart-Debergh, Peinture 238–240). Da die beiden Zyklen erst aus dem 6./7. Jahrhundert stammen (Zibawi, Kunst 58–66, Abb. 54–66; Pasi, Affreschi 251–253; van Loon – Delattre, Cycle 119–135), muß man wohl eher davon ausgehen, daß dem Weber auch hier Musterblätter mit entsprechenden biblischen Themen vorgelegen haben.

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sind.[133] Da in derselben Technik gearbeitete Behänge pagane Darstellungen aufweisen,[134] wurden derartige großformatige Exemplare offenkundig für Besteller ungeachtet ihrer Religionszugehörigkeit angefertigt und sekundär zu Bestattungszwecken wiederverwendet. Auch die Marienseide gelangte zusammen mit dem Riggisberger Dionysosbehang aus dem 4. Jahrhundert erst nachträglich in ein Grab.[135] Beide Textilien werden sich demnach schon längere Zeit zuvor in ein und demselben privaten Haushalt befunden haben.[136]

Die im Zusammenhang mit der Marienseide, dem Josephstoff in Sens[137] oder den Seidenfragmenten in Chelles[138] häufig zitierte Passage aus der ersten Homilie des Asterios von Amaseia († vor 431) belegt in der Tat den Kleiderluxus der Reichen, die sich nicht scheuten, selbst Christus und Wunderszenen aus den Neuen Testament auf ihren Gewändern abzubilden und öffentlich zur Schau zu tragen.[139] Doch taten dies ebenso ihre heidnischen Zeitgenossen, was zwei im 4. Jahrhundert entstandene Seidenstoffe in Riggisberg belegen, deren Musterrapporte die immer gleichen Bilder wiederholen.[140] Wie die Verzierungen zahlreicher spätantik-frühbyzantinischer Tuniken aus ägyptischen Grabfunden zeigen, waren im weitesten Sinne „pagane“ Themen ein beliebter Kleiderschmuck, wohingegen biblische eher selten vorkommen.[141] Die Bedeutung paganer und christlicher Darstellungen für die Träger solcher Gewänder scheint mir noch keineswegs geklärt zu sein.[142] Der Musterrapport der Seidengewebe bedingte eine ständige Wiederholung derselben Bild- oder Szenenfolge, was – bezogen auf die Marienseide und die genannten christlichen Beispiele – letztlich zu einer Banalisierung der Bildaussage führen mußte und auf einen eher laxen Umgang mit der biblischen Thematik hinweist. Daß die Träger solcher Gewänder die Hoffnung gehegt hätten, hierdurch “to win God’s favour”,[143] halte ich für wenig überzeugend.

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[133] Illgen, Leinenstoffe 18–22, Nr. 2 (Geburt Christi: London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 721-3-1897); 23–26, Nr. 3 (Verkündigung: London Victoria and Albert Museum, 1103-1900); 49–51, Nr. 9 (Magieranbetung: Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 51.400). – Siehe auch Kat. New York 433–434, Nr. 390: Magieranbetung Cleveland (Lieselotte Kötzsche); 435–336, Nr. 392: Geburt London (Lieselotte Kötzsche); Rutschkowscaya, Tissus 132, Abb.; Rutschkowscaya, Textiles 219–220, Abb. 165 (hier als “Annuncation” bezeichnet); Kat. London 419, Nr. 160, Farbabb.: Geburt London (Liz James).

[134] „Voile d’Antinoé“, Paris, Museé du Louvre, Département des antiquités égyptiennes, Inv. E 11102: Illgen, Leinenstoffe 57–58; Rutschowscaya, Tissus 28–29, mit zwei Abb. (H. noch 130 cm, B. noch 347 cm). – Artemisbehang Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, Inv. 1397: Flury-Lemberg, Textil-Konservierung 358–363, 480, Kat.-Nr. 43, Abb. 764–770; Schrenk, Textilien 83–88, Nr. 19 und weitere Beispiele.

[135] Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, Inv. 3100a: Flury-Lemberg, Textil-Konservierung 364–367, 502, Kat.-Nr. 93, Abb. 772–786; Schrenk, Textilien 26–34, Nr. 1 (H. ca. 210 cm, L. ca. 700 cm).

[136] Die zahlreichen Fragen, die die sich aus der Vergesellschaftung des „heidnischen“ Dionysosbehangs mit der „christlichen“ Marienseide in ein und demselben Grabzusammenhang für das Problem „heidnisch-christlicher Synkretismus in Ägypten“ ergeben, waren Gegenstand des Riggisberger Kolloquiums 1991; siehe Willers, Begegnung 11–19 und weitere Beiträge in: Begegnung von Heidentum und Christentum; zur Frage siehe auch McNally, Syncretism.

[137] Kat. Paris 152, Nr. 101 (Marielle Martiniani-Reber); Kötzsche, Marienseide 191–192, Abb. 2.

[138] Kat. Paris 153, Nr. 102 (Marielle Martiniani-Reber); Kötzsche, Marienseide 191–192, Abb. 3.

[139] Asterius of Amasea, Homilies 1,3–4 (8,17–9,28 Datema). – Siehe dazu Maguire, Garments 220; Maguire, Magic 52, 60–61, 65; McNally, Syncretism 149–150; Speck, Asterios 361–372; Davis, Christology 172–173, 178–181. – Speck, Asterios 361–372, hier 366–372, sah in den mit μὴ γράφε τὸν Χριστὸν beginnenden Ausführungen (9,10 Datema) eine Interpolation der Akten der Konzilien von 754 und 787, und stellte damit das Zeugnis des Asterios in Frage, doch scheint mir das nicht überzeugend.

[140] Nilseide, Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, Inv. 2187: Flury-Lemberg, Textilkonservierung 412–420, 491, Kat.-Nr. 72, Abb. 852–878; Schrenk, Textilien 122–125, Nr. 40 (H. 81,5 cm, B. 111 cm). – Erotentunika, Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, Inv. 3945: Schrenk, Textilien 180–184, Nr. 61 (H. 154,5 cm, B. 100,5 cm).

[141] Beispiele bei Maguire, Garments 219–224, Abb. 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 29, 31, 33–36; Davis, Christology 154–165; Marinis, Wearing mit Taf. 16.

[142] Maguire, Magic 60 sieht in den mit christlichen Bildern verzierten vorikonoklastischen Textilien „several features that the early church fathers had already condemned as characteristic of magical or deviant practices within the Christian community. Their production was unofficial and unsanctioned by the church“ und betont ihren magisch-apotropäischen Charakter, siehe schon Maguire, Garments 218–223. Davis, Fashioning und Davis, Christology 154–180 haben *in extenso* die Ansicht vertreten, daß die Träger von Kleidern mit neutestamentlichen Szenen eine Art Selbstassimilation zur Inkarnation Christi vorgenommen hätten. Sätze wie (177) “Ancient Coptic tunics with scenes from the life of Christ were a form of ‘ritualized dress’ in that they marked the bodies of their wearers differently from bodies dressed in everyday wear. In the end, what was produced was sacralized bodies – bodies that visually identified themselves with the Incarnation of the Word” werfen schon aus methodischen Gründen die Gegenfrage auf: Welche Bedeutung hatten dann die unzähligen paganen oder nilotischen Bilder “ in everyday wear” für deren Träger, wenn man nicht alles unter „Magie“ subsumieren will? Abgesehen davon, daß wir nur wenig darüber wissen, wie der spätantik-frühbyzantinische Kleiderschmuck außerhalb Ägyptens beschaffen war und welche Motive hier vorkamen (mit Ausnahme der durch Asterios bezeugten Bilder), halte ich solche Behauptungen für reine Spekulationen.

[143] Maguire, Garments 220; in dieselbe Richtung geht Marinis, Wearing 105–107.

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Wie verbreitet mit christlichen Darstellungen und erläuternden Beischriften verzierte Stoffe gewesen sein müssen und selbst fromme Wüstenväter ihren Anblick ertragen konnten, geht aus einer um 455 gehaltenen Predigt des Schenute von Atripe hervor:[144] „Hört, nun laßt uns entziffern diese Zeichnungen, die durch uns entstanden sind und die auf Leinengewebe gezeichnet wurden. »Dieses Bild ist dasjenige der Apostel; und dasjenige ist das der Propheten und jenes Gerechten«. Wir kommen zu dem des Erlösers und dem der heiligen Maria, wobei geschrieben steht: »Maria, welche Gott geboren hat«. Ich habe zu den Brüdern, die um mich waren, als wir sie (= die Bilder) entzifferten, gesagt: »Hört, was sagen die magakin (?)[145] und die Sticker und die Buntwirker? Sie sagen: »Maria, die Gott geboren hat«. Gemäß dem Fleisch aber und gemäß seiner Göttlichkeit, ist er es, der sie in dieser Art geschaffen hat". – Daraus kann man immerhin schließen, daß Behänge ähnlich den bedruckten Leinentüchern mit alt- und neutestamentlichen sowie durch Beischriften bezeichneten Darstellungen auch in koptischen Klöstern vorhanden waren. Durch die Anschaulichkeit ihrer Bilder erfüllten sie zumindest den theologisch-didaktischen Zweck, den Schenute in seiner Predigt verfolgte.

Vor allem stellt sich die Frage, seit wann Maria auch in der Kirche von Ägypten offizielle Verehrung fand. Nach Athanasios von Alexandria wurde die unter Bischof Theonas (282–300) im äußersten Westteil der Stadt errichtete Gemeindekirche durch Bischof Alexandros (312–328) erweitert.[146] Athanasios als frühester Gewährsmann für die Existenz der Theonaskirche sagt nichts über ihr Patrozinium aus, doch waren alle frühen Kirchen Alexandrias nur nach ihrem Erbauer (Dionysios, Theonas, Pierios, Serapion, Annianos, Quirinus, Alexandros) oder nach ihrer Lokalität (Mendideion, Baukalis-Boukolon, Kaisareion) benannt.[147] Sophronios von Jerusalem († um 638) zufolge feierten die Alexandriner am 25. Dezember in der Marienkirche des Theonas (ἐν τῇ ἐπωνύμῳ Θεωνᾶ τῆς ἁγίας Παρθένου Μαρίας καὶ Θεομήτορος) den städtischen Hauptgottesdienst.[148] Sophronios ist somit der älteste sichere Zeuge, der das Marienpatrozinium für die Theonaskirche belegt. Erst späte Quellen (Severus von Ashmunein, 10. Jahrhundert;[149] Abū l-Makārim, † nach 1190[150]) behaupten, daß unter Theonas eine Marienkirche errichtet worden sei. Gleichwohl glaubte Giamberardini, das Marienpatrozinium bereits für die Zeit des Theonas annehmen zu dürfen.[151] Wenn das zuträfe, dann wäre nicht Santa Maria Maggiore in Rom (erbaut 430–434) die erste, von einem Bischof errichtete Marienkirche, als die sie allgemein gilt, sondern müßte schon über ein Jahrhundert früher ein Marienheiligtum in Alexandria vorhanden gewesen sein. Das aber würde einen spätestens im dritten Viertel des 3. Jahrhunderts bestehenden kirchlichen Marienkult voraussetzen, wobei (wie im Falle des Gebets *Sub tuum praesidium*) eher zweifelnd zu fragen ist, wie dieser in den praktizierten Gottesdienst eingebunden war. Vermutlich wurden wie in Jerusalem bestimmte Ereignisse aus dem Leben Marias nur im Zusammenhang mit Christusfesten kommemoriert.[152] Von der baulichen Beschaffenheit der angeblich in vorkonstantinischer Zeit entstandenen Kirchen des Dionysios (247–264) und des Theonas können wir ohnehin keine Vorstellung mehr gewinnen. Möglicherweise handelte es sich um Versammlungsräume in der Art der Hauskirche von Dura Europos.[153] Ebenso ist unbekannt, wie diese frühen Kirchen die diokletianische Verfolgungszeit überstanden haben. Der melkitische Patriarch Eutychios von Alexandria (935–940) behauptet in seinem Annalenwerk, daß auch Bischof

[144] Lefort, Catéchèse 41–43 (koptischer Text), 43–45 (französische Übersetzung); siehe dazu Emmel, Shenoute 665–666, 854; Davis, Christology 170–171, 286–289, hier 287–288 (englische Übersetzung). – Die hier gebotene deutsche Übersetzung verdanke ich Cäcilia Fluck.

[145] Davis, Christology 288 übersetzte mit *braiders*.

[146] Athanasius, *Apologia contra Constantium* 15 (118,13–17 Szymusiak). – Zu den alexandrinischen Kirchen des 3.–5. Jahrhunderts siehe Martin, Premiers siècles 213–219; Martin, Athanase 142–153; Martin, Alexandrie 12–17; Gascou, Églises 23–33; Grossmann, Architektur 16 mit Anm. 1; zu den angeblichen Säulen der Theonaskirche 17 mit Anm. 4.

[147] Siehe die Liste bei Epiphanios, Panarion 69,2 und 4 (153,17 und 23–26 Holl – Dummer): Kaisarion, Dionysios, Theonas, Pierios, Serapion, Persaia, Dizya, Mendidios, Annianos, Baukalis „und andere"; Williams, Panarion 326.

[148] Sophronios, *Narratio miraculorum SS. Cyri et Ioannis:* PG 87,3, 3460C; siehe Martin, Premiers siècles 214, Nr. 2; 220, 221; Brakmann, Σύναξις 82–83.

[149] Evetts, History 206.

[150] Abū l-Makārim (213–214 Samuel), mir nicht zugänglich, zitiert nach Grossmann, Architektur 16, Anm. 1: „Nach einer unverdächtigen Notiz bei Abū l-Makārim (…) wurde hier von dem späteren Bischof Theonas (282–300) in der Zeit des Kaisers Aurelian (250–275) die erste selbständige Kirche gegründet".

[151] Diskussion der Quellen bei Giamberardini, Culto 97–105. – In der neueren Literatur wird das Marienpatrozinium unkritisch mit Theonas (Atiya, Theonas 2245; Pellegrino-Roncaglia, Theotokos 2255) oder mit der Erweiterung durch Bischof Alexandros (Kiss, Alexandria 188) verbunden.

[152] Oben Anm. 45.

[153] Zu dieser siehe Kraeling, Christian Building; Hopkins, Discovery 106–117; Brenk, Christianisierung 65–70; Mell, Hauskirche.

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Theophilos (385–412) eine Marienkirche erbaut habe.[154] Selbst wenn diese die erste Gottesmutterkirche in Alexandria gewesen sein sollte, wäre sie dann immer noch das älteste bekannte Marienheiligtum.

Über christliche Darstellungen in den Kirchen von Alexandria und in den Klöstern Ägyptens aus der Zeit zwischen dem 4. und 6. Jahrhundert wissen wir so gut wie nichts. Doch soll es schon um 400 in Alexandria eine wunderwirkende Marienikone gegeben haben, wie aus einer angeblich von Theophilos am Fest der Analepsis Marias (16. Mesore) gehaltenen Homilie hervorgeht.[155] Die Begebenheit, die im Zentrum der Predigt steht, ist in mehrerlei Hinsicht höchst aufschlußreich:[156] Zunächst wird berichtet, daß eine Holztafel mit dem Bild der „Jungfrau" sich im Besitz eines Christen befand, der in einem Speicher wohnte. Der Besitzer des Speichers, ein Hebräer, erhöhte die Miete und warf den Christen mitsamt seinen kleinen Kindern hinaus. In der Eile vergaß der Christ das Gemälde mitzunehmen. Die Arbeiter, die den Speicher reinigen sollten, grüßten das Bild höchst ehrerbietig, umarmten es und küßten die Hände und Füße der Jungfrau. Als der Hebräer von ihnen erfuhr, daß es sich um eine Mariendarstellung handle, wurde er zornig, zerbrach die Tafel und legte die Bruchstücke in einen Korb mit Asche. Der Arbeiter, der die Reste im Fluß entsorgen sollte, wurde unterwegs aufgegriffen und des Mordes beschuldigt, weil aus dem Korb Blut tropfte. Man brachte den Mann zum Bischofspalast, Theophilos und der Klerus erkannten am traurigen Blick der Dargestellten die Jungfrau, trugen die Bruchstücke in die Kirche Christi, wo sich das Volk zum Fest des Entschlafens Marias versammelt hatte, wuschen die Fragmente mit Wasser und wohlriechendem Öl, setzten sie wieder zusammen und befestigten das Bild an der Wand über dem Altar, von wo aus es nun Heilungswunder bewirkte. Es folgt, wie kaum anders zu erwarten, die Bekehrung und Taufe des Hebräers. Sodann findet sich ein bemerkenswerter Satz:[157] Der Prediger weist hier auf das Bild des Kaisers auf der Agora hin, der zwar nur ein sterblicher Mensch sei, jedoch jeden beschütze, der zu seinem Bildnis gehe; erst recht solle man das Bild Marias ehren. Mit dieser Bemerkung wird auf die Asylfunktion des Kaiserbildes hingewiesen[158] und damit indirekt die Verehrung des Marienbildes sanktioniert.[159] Den Speicher ließ der Bischof abreißen und im Kaisareion ein Xenodochion errichten, wo Kranke bei dem Bild der Jungfrau fortan Heilung fanden.

Tito Orlandi zufolge entstand der Text "probably in the first period of the forgeries produced under the Arabs, when (some of) the Copts hoped to convert them to Christianity",[160] also frühestens im fortgeschrittenen 7. Jahrhundert. Dies mag zwar die Erzählung von der Bekehrung des Hebräers erklären, nicht aber unbedingt die Ikonenlegende, es sei denn, die Zerstörung des Bildes ist als gleichnishafte Anspielung auf die Bilderfeindlichkeit der Araber zu verstehen.[161] Auch wenn Theophilos nicht als Verfasser der Predigt infrage kommt, ist die Geschichte doch gut erfunden und setzt historisches Wissen voraus. Der Bischof nennt sich selbst namentlich und erwähnt seinen Neffen Kyrillos als Mitglied des Patriarchalklerus.[162] Kyrillos' kirchliche Karriere begann 403 in Alexandria zunächst als Lektor.[163] Es wird also der Anschein erweckt, als sei nicht nur die Predigt nach 403 und vor 412 gehalten worden, sondern auch die Auffindung der Marienikone und die Bekehrung des Hebräers hätten sich in dieser Zeitspanne ereignet.

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[154] Breydy, Annalenwerk 70,34; Martin, Premiers siècles 224, Nr. 7. – Sicher erst nach 431 erhielt auch die Märtyrerkirche des Bischofs Petros (300–311) das Theotokospatrozinium: Martin, ebenda, 219, Nr. 13 und 224; unter Justinian wurde eine weitere Theotokoskirche beim Angelion errichtet: Martin, ebenda, 224, Nr. 6.

[155] Der Text ist enthalten in: 1.) London, British Library, Or. 6780, Or. 7028 und Washington, Smithsonian Museum, Freer Collection, Ms. Nr. 2, datiert 974 (Merkuriouskloster bei Edfu). – 2.) New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 600, 9. Jahrhundert (Kloster des Erzengels Michael, Hamouli/Fayyum) – 3.) Utrecht, Universitätsbibliothek (Weißes Kloster bei Sohag): Worrell, Manuscripts 249–321 (koptischer Text nach dem Ms. in der Freer Collection), 359–380 (englische Übersetzung); Müller, Predigt 195–199 (Textparaphrase); Orlandi, Omelie 110–120 (italienische Übersetzung). – Siehe dazu Mimouni, Dormition 206–210; Orlandi, Overview 37–38 (MERC.AH) und 39-40 (MICH.AP), 73–74 (Clavis cc0396).

[156] Worrell, Manuscripts 369–375.

[157] Worrell, Manuscripts 375.

[158] Zur Geltung der Asylfunktion des Kaiserbildes siehe noch das Reskript Theodosios I. an den Konstantinopeler Stadtpräfekten Kyros vom 6. Juli 386 (*De his, qui ad statuas confugit*): Cod. Theod. 9.44.1 (518–519 Mommsen); vgl. Gamauf, Untersuchungen 138–139; Derlien, Asyl 278–283; Dreher, Kirchenasyl 165–167.

[159] Kitzinger, Cult of Images 124–125.

[160] Orlandi, Overview 74, siehe auch Orlandi, Omelie 96, 108; Gascou, Églises 32. – Bereits Kitzinger, Cult of Images 99, 101, Anm. 59 hatte die Ähnlichkeit der Geschichte mit der Legende der blutenden Christusikone von Beirut beobachtet.

[161] So Orlandi, Omelie 108.

[162] Worrell, Manuscripts 369.

[163] McGuckin, St. Cyrill 5.

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Gleichwohl darf gefragt werden, ob in dem Bericht über das Bild der „Jungfrau“ nicht doch einen Funken historischer Wahrheit bewahrt sein könnte. Die fingierte Glaubwürdigkeit hing schließlich davon ab, daß eine solche und offenbar als besonders alt geltende Marienikone im Xenodochion von Alexandria wirklich (noch) existierte.[164] Welche ikonographischen Merkmale das Gemälde dazu prädestiniert hatten, für eine Darstellung Marias gehalten zu werden, erfahren wir nicht. Wollte man die Worte des Verfassers, wonach die Arbeiter Hände und Füße der Jungfrau auf dem Bild geküßt haben,[165] auf die Goldwaage legen, müßte es sich um eine ganzfigurige Darstellung gehandelt haben. Insofern spricht nichts gegen den Verdacht, daß hier ein älteres, auf eine Holztafel gemaltes Bildnis einer Frau oder einer Göttin (Isis mit dem Horuskind?) kurzerhand – mit einer entsprechenden Blutlegende und Heilungswundergeschichte versehen – zu einer Marienikone erklärt worden war. Die Geschichte böte so ein Lehrstück, wie ein paganes Tafelbildnis durch die kirchlicherseits betriebene Verchristlichung “for missionary strategic reason” (McGuckin oben 60) genutzt werden konnte. In der Amtszeit des Theophilos wäre eine solche Aktion durchaus denkbar gewesen.

In Ägypten sind Zeugnisse der thronenden Gottesmutter mit dem Kind auf ihrem Schoß bzw. linken Oberschenkel erst aus dem 6. Jahrhundert archäologisch überliefert. Die wichtigsten Beispiele sind das monumentale Marienfresko in Haus D von Kôm el-Dikka in Alexandria (**Abb. 9**)[166] und der Marienbehang in Cleveland.[167] Die wenigen Fragmente der Wandmalerei erlaubten nur eine Rekonstruktion mit einem Erzengel links und einer kleiner gebildeten Figur zwischen Maria und dem Engel, in der wohl der Stifter des Gemäldes zu erkennen ist.[168] Auf dem Marienbehang thront im unteren Feld Maria mit dem Christuskind zwischen einer durch Säulen angedeuteten Architektur, flankiert von den Erzengeln Michael und Gabriel; zwölf Medaillons mit den Brustbildnissen der Apostel sind zuseiten und unterhalb Marias in den mit Blüten-Frucht-Ranken durchwirkten Rahmen eingefügt. Im oberen Abschnitt sitzt der bärtige und segnende Christus auf einem Gemmenthron in einer Aureole, die von zwei Engeln über das gestirnte Firmament zum jenseitigen Himmel empor getragen wird. Dasselbe Motiv begegnet auf den etwa gleichzeitigen palästinensischen Pilgerampullen im Rahmen des Himmelfahrtsbildes (unten 88). Mit der zweizonigen Anordnung von Maria und Christus nimmt der Marienbehang die Kompositionen einiger Bildprogramme in den Gebetsräumen des Apollonklosters von Bawit und des Jeremiasklosters von Saqqara zeitlich um mindesten ein halbes Jahrhundert vorweg (**Abb. 16** und **17**), wenngleich dort sehr viel reicher ausgestattete Darstellungen der Theophanie Christi begegnen (unten 88–91). Die Vorlage des Wirkers dürfte ein gemalter „Karton“ gewesen sein, doch könnte dieser selbst schon auf eine in der ersten Hälfte des 6. Jahrhunderts existierende monumentale Malerei zurückgehen.

Die Wandmalerei von Kôm el-Dikka (**Abb. 9**) ist ein Glücksfall, denn sie belegt für das 6. Jahrhundert definitiv die Existenz von christlichen Verehrungsbildern im häuslichen Bereich, wenngleich es sich hierbei um eine stationäre Ikone handelt. Auch für den Marienbehang muß nicht unbedingt eine kirchliche Verwendung vorausgesetzt werden. Dies wird schon durch Vergleich mit dem Hestiabehang in Washington aus dem 5./6. Jahrhundert nahegelegt, der unzweifelhaft der häuslichen Sphäre angehörte und als pagane „Ikone“ verehrt wurde.[169] Gerade bei der frontal auf einem Thron sitzenden Hestia Polyolbos („reich an Segen“) ist die ikonographische Nähe zur thronenden Maria offenkundig, was nun keineswegs bedeuten muß, daß hierfür eine christliche Thronszene Pate gestanden hatte.[170] Die großformatigen Wandbehänge mit paganen Themen sind gewissermaßen von solchen mit christlichen Darstellungen abgelöst worden. Dafür stehen ebenso der Eliasbehang in Riggisberg (5./6. Jahrhundert)[171]

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[164] Auf den topographischen Widerspruch über den Aufbewahrungsort der Ikone – zuerst über dem Altar der Kirche, dann im Xenodochion – hatte schon Worrell, Manuscripts 371, Anm. 48 und 375, Anm. 56 hingewiesen. Nach der Vita des Ioannes Eleemon § 19 (Festugière, Vie 366, 378) habe erst dieser das Xenodochion im Kaisarion eingerichtet, vgl. Gascou, Églises 32, Anm. 58. Ioannes war von 609 bis 619 Patriarch von Alexandria. Die Ikone könnte sich zuvor also durchaus in der besagten Kirche befunden haben.

[165] Worrell, Manuscripts 370.

[166] Rodziewicz, Habitations 194–208, Abb. 228–230, 232–238 (236 Rekonstruktion); Mathews – Muller, Isis 4, Abb. 1.1. – H. über 120 cm.

[167] The Cleveland Museum of Art, Inv. 67.144: Shepherd, Icon 90–120; Kat. New York 532–533, Nr. 477, Farbtafel XIV (Susan A. Boyd); Rutschowscaya, Tissus 136, Abb., 137 (H. 178 cm, B. 110 cm).

[168] Auf der Rekonstruktion (oben Anm. 166) ist die Figur mit Nimbus ergänzt, doch gibt es dafür keinerlei Anzeichen im erhaltenen Bestand.

[169] Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Collection, BZ 1929.1: Friedländer, Documents 1–26, Frontispiz. – H. noch 114 cm, B. noch 135,5 cm).

[170] Wie Rutschowscaya, Tissus 118, Bildbeischrift, meint.

[171] Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, Inv. 2439. 2638: Flury-Lemberg, Textilkonservierung 396–401, 490, Kat.-Nr. 70, Abb. 817–831; Schrenk, Textilien 47–50, Nr. 7 (H. 309 cm, B. 344 cm).

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oder der Wandbehang in Genf mit Maria Orans zwischen den Erzengeln (8. Jahrhundert?).[172] Für diese und weitere großformatige Behänge mit christlichen Darstellungen kann eine primär kirchliche Zweckbestimmung allenfalls vermutet,[173] jedoch in keinem Falle sicher nachgewiesen werden.[174] Das zweifellos anspruchsvolle theologische Programm des Eliasbehangs[175] ist kein hinreichendes Argument für die Verwendung in einer Kirche.

Die oft beklagte Lücke zwischen den spätesten Darstellungen der Isis lactans – z. B. in Karanis, Haus B 50, Südwand von Raum E, 3./4. Jahrhundert[176] (**Abb. 10**) – und dem ältesten erhaltenen Bild der Galaktotrophousa auf einem Florentiner Papyrusblatt aus der ersten Hälfte des 6. Jahrhunderts (**Abb. 11**), dessen Kontext leider unbekannt ist,[177] läßt sich einstweilen nur durch hypothetische Überlegungen schließen. Damit berühren wir zugleich ein generelles Problem der spätantiken Kunstgeschichte, nämlich die Frage nach der Entstehung des christlichen Bilderkults und der Ikone. Die Forschung geht mehrheitlich davon aus, daß erst im 6. Jahrhundert eine Intensivierung der Bilderverehrung einsetzte.[178] Wie Marguerite Rassart-Debergh[179] und vor allem Thomas F. Mathews dargelegt haben,[180] sind die Parallelen zwischen dem häuslichen Kult ägyptischer Gottheiten und Heroen, deren auf Holzgrund gemalte Bildnisse in schreinartigen Nischen aufgestellt oder – wie die Isis lactans von Karanis (**Abb. 10**) – auf die Wand gemalt waren, und den oben behandelten ägyptischen Beispielen für die Marienverehrung im privaten Bereich unübersehbar (**Abb. 9**).[181] Zwar haben sich Zeugnisse für den paganen häuslichen Bilderkult aus klimatischen Gründen allein in Ägypten erhalten können, doch werden vergleichbare Wand- und Tafelmalereien in den Privathäusern der gesamten spätrömischen Oikume gang und gäbe gewesen sein.[182] In einem Raum von Hanghaus 2 in Ephesos befand sich ein paganes Hausheiligtum, in dem außer einer Wandmalerei (Agathos Daimon in Gestalt einer Schlange) ein Thymiaterionständer und drei als Spolien wiederverwendete Totenmahlreliefs gefunden wurden.[183] Noch ein von Arkadios und Honorius erlassenes Gesetz vom 8. November 392 verbot neben jeglicher Art heidnischer Kultausübung insbesondere brennende Kerzen vor den Laren und wohlrie-

[172] Genf, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Inv. AD 4447: Flury-Lemberg, Textilkonservierung 402–405, 490, Kat.-Nr. 71, Abb. 832–844; Martiniani-Reber, Tissus 68, Nr. 186, Taf. 50–51 (H. 285 cm, B. 455 cm).

[173] In Kirchen aufbewahrte und von Pilgern verehrte Textilikonen sind allerdings durch den Pilger von Piacenza für Memphis (*Antonini Placentini Itinerarium* § 44: Donner, Pilgerfahrt 290–291; Wilkinson, Jerusalem pilgrims 149) und durch Arkulf (*Adamnani de locis sanctis libri III*, I,X,1–2: Donner, Pilgerfahrt 330–331; Wilkinson Jerusalem pilgrims 176) für Jerusalem belegt. – Bei der textilen Christusikone in Memphis könnte es sich um ein männliches Porträt auf einem wiederverwendeten römisch-ägyptischen Grabtuch gehandelt haben, siehe Kessler, Configuring 136.

[174] Entgegen Auth, Intarsia 143–146 zu Abb. 1, ist eine kirchliche Verwendung auch für das vermutlich in Alexandria im 4. Jahrhundert entstandene Glaspaneel mit Darstellung des Thomas neben einem Kreuz (New York, The Corning Museum of Glass, Inv. 86.1.1) nicht zwingend vorauszusetzen.

[175] Schrenk, Typus 132–137.

[176] Boak – Peterson, Karanis 34, Abb. 49; Müller, Isis 32–32, Nr. 14, Abb. 29; Tran Tam Tinh, Isis Lactans 33, 41, 72–73, Kat. A-24, Abb. 48; Mathews – Muller, Isis 5–6, Abb. 1.2.

[177] Florenz, Istituto Papirologico G. Vitelli, PSI XV 1574: Bartoletti, Madonna 29–31, Taf. 10a; Leroy, Manuscrits 45; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 158–159, KN 255a; Kat. Florenz 116, Nr. 130, 5./6. Jahrhundert (Giovanna Menci); Pesarino, Constributo 640–646, Taf. XVI, 1 (erste Hälfte 6. Jahrhundert); Rubin, Mother of God, 64, Abb. 5. – Die wenigen koptischen Buchstaben erlauben keine Bestimmung der ursprünglichen Zugehörigkeit und Funktion des Blattes.

[178] Den eigentlichen Durchbruch zu einem öffentlich sanktionierten christlichen Bilderkult erkennt Meier, Zeitalter 528–569 *passim* m. E. zu Recht in der Zeit Justinians als Reaktion auf die zahlreichen Katastrophen. Eine gegenteilige Auffassung (Bilderkult nicht vor dem 7. Jahrhundert) vertritt Brubaker, Icons; vgl. Brubaker – Haldon, Byzantium 32–68.

[179] Rassart-Debergh, Icône paienne 81–100.

[180] Mathews, Clash 177–190; Mathews, Emperor 163–177; Mathews – Norman Muller, Isis 3–11; Mathews, Early Icons 39–55; siehe auch Sörries, Malibu-Triptychon (abgeschlossen 1997, erschienen 2003; ohne Berücksichtigung der Arbeiten von Rassart-Debergh und Mathews). – Einwände gegen Mathews kamen von Johannes G. Deckers, in: BZ 94 (2001) 736–741, hier 736–738, Sande, Pinakes 81–100 und Niewöhner, Sinnbild 163–165. Im Unterschied zu Mathews vertrat Sande, Pinakes 81–100 (siehe schon Sande, Icon) eine Herleitung der Ikone vom Kaiserbild.

[181] Vielleicht ein wenig zu suggestiv sind die von Mathews, Early Icons 49 aufgezeigten ikonographischen Merkmale, die Isis und Maria verbinden: Der Thron "is a proper attribute of Isis. Isis's name seems to have meant throne, her hieroglyph was a throne, and she was protector of the pharao's throne. Mary's acquisition of this royal furniture can be read as evidence that she was every bit the equal of ancient divine mother whom she had replaced". Mathews geht sogar so weit, die auf das Kind hinweisende Geste des rechten Arms des Hodegetriatypus als ikonographisches Relikt der an die linke Brust geführten rechten Hand der Isis lactans zu interpretieren ("offering her breast to her child").

[182] Quellen für den paganen Bilderkult bei Mathews, Emperor 168–169.

[183] Quatember, Frömmigkeit.

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chende Düfte vor den Penaten sowie Weihrauch und Kränze.[184] Dies spricht dafür, daß in den Wohnhäusern nach wie vor Larenschreine vorhanden und in der üblichen Weise mit figürlichen Darstellungen ausgeschmückt waren.[185] Andererseits belegen die – allerdings spärlichen – Quellen bereits vor dem 4. Jahrhundert die Existenz christlicher Bilder und pagane Formen ihrer privaten Verehrung.[186] Auch Eusebios von Kaisareia berichtet in seiner Kirchengeschichte (um 325 abgeschlossen) von gemalten Darstellungen Christi und der Aposteln, deren Anbetung er als heidnische Gewohnheit verurteilte.[187] Das Fehlen archäologischer Zeugnisse für die private Verehrung christlicher Bilder vor dem 6. Jahrhundert kann also kaum als Beweis für deren Nichtexistenz gelten.

An dieser Stelle ist auch auf die illustrierte alexandrinische Weltchronik im Papyruskodex Goleniščev einzugehen.[188] Hinsichtlich der Mariendarstellung auf Taf. VII verso (**Abb. 12**)[189] hatte schon Josef Strzygowski den „außerordentlichen Wert für die Entwicklung des Marienbildes" betont.[190] Umstritten ist jedoch die Datierung der vorliegenden Fassung der Weltchronik. Otto Kurz plädierte mit paläographischen Argumenten für eine Entstehungszeit um 700.[191] Kurt Aland und Hans-Udo Rosenbaum gaben hingegen – ebenfalls aus paläographischen Gründen – dem 6. Jahrhundert den Vorzug und brachten die Datierungsproblematik auf den Punkt:[192] „Die Kunsthistoriker votieren zumeist für eine Entstehung im V. Jhdt., die Paläographen treten zumeist für ein (100 Jahre) späteres Datum ein (…) Die Diskussion krankt z. T. daran, daß zwischen Entstehungszeit der Chronik und Entstehungszeit der Handschrift nicht immer sauber geschieden wird". Auf Tafel VI verso ist das späteste historische Ereignis der Chronik abgebildet, die Zerstörung des Serapeions von Alexandria (391) durch Bischof Theophilos,[193] womit zunächst nur ein *terminus post quem* für einen möglichen Archetypus der vorliegenden Fassung der Chronik gewonnen ist. Die malerische Qualität aller Fragmente läßt eine Vorlage erahnen, die künstlerisch weitaus höher stand als das erwähnte Florentiner Papyrusblatt aus der ersten Hälfte des 6. Jahrhunderts (**Abb. 11**).[194]

Um den Papyruskodex bzw. seine Vorlage datieren zu können, müssen wir nach ikonographischen Indizien suchen, die sich zeitlich eingrenzen lassen. Die stehende Maria (ohne Nimbus) mit der Beischrift Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ trägt das Christuskind auf ihrem linken Arm, wobei sie ihre Rechte wie die benachbarte weibliche Figur (Elisabeth?) im „halben" Orantengestus erhebt (**Abb. 12**).[195] Derselbe Typus einer reich gekleideten und auf einem *faldistorium* sitzenden Verstorbenen mit ihrem Kind im linken Arm und erhobener Rechter findet sich auf einem ägyptischen Grabrelief des 5. Jahrhunderts,[196] das bereits Strzygowski als ikonographische Parallele angeführt hatte.[197] Die klassische Form der stehenden Gottesmutter mit dem Kind auf dem linken Arm und der auf Christus hinweisenden rechten Hand – später als Hodegetria bezeichnet – begegnet erstmals im syrischen Rabbula-Kodex von 586[198] und wenig später im Apsismosaik der Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti bei Larnaka/Zypern,[199] was nicht ausschließt, daß es ältere „Vorstufen" gegeben haben könnte. Auf Tafel VII recto ist der greise Zacharias mit dem kleinen Ioannes (mit Nimbus) auf dem Arm dargestellt.[200] Der Engel, der den Knaben segnet, ist geflügelt und in

[184] Cod. Theod. 16.10.12 (900 Mommsen).

[185] Zu römischen Lararien siehe das Abbildungsmaterial bei Fröhlich, Lararien und Giacobello, Larari.

[186] Die Quellen bei Kitzinger, Cult of Images 88–95 und Mathews, Emperor 167–168.

[187] Eusebius, Kirchengeschichte VII, 18,4 (672 Winkelmann).

[188] Moskau, Staatliches Museum der bildenden Künste (Puschkin-Museum), Inv. 310 und Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, P. Vindob. K 11630: Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik; Horak, Papyri 97–102, Nr. 19: Ein neues Fragment der alexandrinischen Weltchronik, Taf. 6; 235–237, Nrn. 78–106; Sörries, Buchmalerei 81–86, Taf. 43–46 (ohne Kenntnis der Arbeiten von Kurz [unten Anm. 191] und Horak); Aland – Rosenbaum, Repertorium 1–10. Zuletzt Burgess – Dijkstra, World Chronicle.

[189] Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 79–81 (zum Text); 141, 154, 158–161, Taf. VII verso, Fragmente D und E.

[190] Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 153.

[191] Kurz, Date 17–22.

[192] Aland – Rosenbaum, Repertorium 9, Anm. 2. – Aland – Rosenbaum, Repertorium 1 haben hier die zwischen 392 und dem 8. Jahrhundert schwankenden Datierungsvorschläge zusammengestellt.

[193] Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 122, Taf. VI verso, Fragment B. – Zum Ereignis siehe Thélamon, Païens 255–257, 267–268, 271–272; Baldini, Problemi 97–152; Haas, Alexandria 241–254; Merkelbach, Isis Regina 322–325, 326–327.

[194] Der künstlerische Standard der alexandrinischen Buchmalerei des 5./6. Jahrhunderts ist noch den weniger verkohlten Fragmenten der Cotton-Genesis abzulesen, vgl. Weitzmann – Kessler, Cotton Genesis, Farbtaf. IV–VIII.

[195] Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 158–161 zum Orantengestus.

[196] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 8003: Crum, Catalogue 144, Nr. 8702, Taf. LIV; Gabra – Eaton-Kraus, Treasures 175, 275, Nr. 112, Taf. 112.

[197] Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 158–161, Abb. 15.

[198] Florenz, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Plut. I 56, Blatt 1 verso: Sörries, Buchmalerei 94–100, hier 95, Taf. 51 (mit Bibliographie).

[199] Fischer, Panagia 172-192, Abb. 24, 26-31 (6./7. Jahrhundert).

[200] Bauer – Strzygowski, Weltchronik 140, Taf. VII recto, Fragment D.

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der üblichen Weise mit Chiton und Himation bekleidet. Anders als der ungeflügelte Verkündigungsengel auf der Marienseide in Riggisberg (**Abb. 8**) hält er in der vom Mantel verhüllten Linken einen Zeremonienstab. Dieser Engeltypus begegnet in der spätantiken Kunst zwar gehäuft im 6. Jahrhundert,[201] doch schon der Erzengel Gabriel auf dem Pignattasarkophag (um 400) hielt in derselben Weise einen Stab (**Abb. 4**). Die Illustrationen der erhaltenen Fassung der Weltchronik könnten also durchaus auf eine Vorlage des 5. Jahrhunderts zurückgehen und diese im 6. Jahrhundert (oder, wenn man Kurz folgen will, im 7./8. Jahrhundert) relativ getreu kopiert haben. Für die Marienikonographie bedeutet dies: Darstellungen der stehenden Gottesmutter mit dem Kind auf ihrem linken Arm dürfte es in Ägypten bereits im 5. Jahrhundert gegeben haben.

Unklar ist die ursprüngliche Funktion einiger Reliefs, auf denen regelmäßig die thronende Gottesmutter in zentraler Position erscheint (darunter eines mit einer Galaktotrophousa, unten 83, Nr. 7). Sie werden mehrheitlich dem 6. Jahrhundert angehören und zeichnen sich durch eine ungewöhnliche Ikonographie aus. Auf einem Relief in Kairo sitzt Maria vor einer Säulenarchitektur mit verknoteten Vorhängen in den Interkolumnien.[202] Sie wird flankiert von den Apostelfürsten Petros und Paulos und zwei übergroß dargestellten Erzengeln. Das Christuskind auf ihrem Schoß überreicht Paulos zu seiner Linken eine Schriftrolle, während Maria einen Kranz in den Gewandbausch des Petros zu ihrer Rechten legt. Das zweite Relief in Kairo zeigt dieselbe Komposition, doch hält der rechte Apostel die Rolle bereits in Händen.[203] Es wäre sicher verfehlt, hier von „Reliefikonen" zu sprechen, obgleich wir nicht wissen, wo die Stücke einst angebracht waren. Von besonderem Interesse ist daher ein an der Kathedrale von Adria angebrachtes Relief.[204] Hier erhebt die thronende Gottesmutter beide Hände im Orantengestus. In den Resten der Inschrift ist noch der Name eines Abraham (… και Αβρααμ) zu lesen. Demnach handelt es sich um ein Votivrelief mehrerer Stifterpersonen zum Dank für die erfolgreiche Fürbitte Marias. Auch die vorgenannten, wiewohl inschriftlosen Exemplare werden Votivgaben gewesen sein. Die einzelnen Kompositionselemente aller genannten Stücke gehen auf diverse spätantik-frühbyzantinische Vorlagen zurück und scheinen monumentale Bildprogramme zu imitieren, die stilistische Umsetzung ist zweifellos ägyptisch.[205]

Wohl unter dem Druck anhaltender antiheidnischer Maßnahmen seit dem ausgehenden 4. Jahrhundert machte die Christianisierung der gräko-ägyptischen Stadtbevölkerung des Nillandes zunehmend Fortschritte. Parallel dazu können wir in der gleichzeitigen Grabskulptur eine allmähliche „Verchristlichung" beobachten, die oft genug mit einer geradezu grotesk anmutenden Auswechslung paganer durch christliche Motive unter Beibehaltung der typisch spätantik-ägyptischen Formensprache einherging.[206] An solchen Zwitterbildungen lassen sich die religiöse Ambivalenz der Bewohner in den städtischen Zentren Mittel- und Unterägyptens und ihr zählebiges Beharren an überkommenen paganen Bildmustern aufzeigen.

Dem sepulkralen Bereich gehört auch eine Stele in Berlin an, auf der eine Mutter mit Kind in „versenktem Relief" dargestellt ist (**Abb. 13**). Einer nicht mehr nachprüfbaren Überlieferung zufolge soll das Ritzbild aus Arsinoë (Medinet el-Fayum) stammen und wird ohne die Möglichkeit des sicheren Vergleichs in das 4./5. Jahrhundert datiert.[207] Wie bei zahlreichen spätantik-ägyptischen Grabreliefs bilden zwei Säulen mit profilierten Basen, stilisierten Blattkapitellen und einem Architrav (hier durch eine Ritzlinie angedeutet) den Rahmen und evozieren so die Form einer Kultnische bzw. einer Grabädikula. Auffällig ist die reiche Polychromie.[208] Dunkelbraune, grüne und hellere Streifen deuten die Kanneluren auf den Säulenschäften an. Vor einem grünen Vorhang zwischen den Säulen sitzt auf einem *faldistorium* mit rotem Kissen eine junge Mutter, die im linken Arm ein nacktes Knäblein hält. Wegen der unklaren Ausarbeitung des Kopfes des Kindes kann nicht mit Bestimmtheit gesagt werden, ob es wirklich trinkt oder – wie bei vielen figürlichen Isis lactans-Darstellungen (**Abb. 10** und **11**) – nur in der linken Armbeuge der Mutter

[201] Siehe dazu jetzt Arbeiter, Entwicklung 57–71.

[202] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 7815: Beckwith, Sculpture 26, 54, Abb. 112; Severin, Skulptur 250, Abb. 280a; Zibawi, Kunst 55–56, Abb. 49; Brenk, Apse 95–96, Abb. 101.

[203] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 7814: Beckwith, Sculpture 26, 54, Abb. 111; Zibawi, Kunst 55–56, Abb. 50; Brenk, Apse 96, Abb. 102.

[204] Adria, Kathedrale: Bettini, Rilievo 149–169, Abb. 1; Brenk, Apse 96, Abb. 103.

[205] Schließlich können hier noch ein Relief in einer Kairener Privatsammlung (Müller, Isis 34–35, Nr. 17, Abb. 32), ein weiteres Exemplar aus Luxor (Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 8006) mit reichlich grotesken Zügen erwähnt werden, das bereits dem 7. Jahrhundert angehört: Beckwith, Sculpture 26, 54, Abb. 113); Zibawi, Kunst 54–55, Abb. 51.

[206] Severin, Dekor 63–85; Effenberger, Anmerkungen 37–39; Török, Transfigurations *passim*.

[207] Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Inv. 4726: Wulff, Bildwerke 36, Nr. 79; Kat. Berlin 153–155, Nr. 66 (Arne Effenberger), mit Literatur. – Weitere relevante Literatur in den folgenden Anm.

[208] Die unregelmäßige Umrißform und die relativ gut erhaltene Polychromie sprechen m. E. dafür, daß das Ritzbild in die Nische eines Grabbaus eingelassen und somit geschützt war.

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liegt, während diese mit der rechten Hand ihre linke Brust umfaßt („Intentionsgestus“).[209] Die Mutter ist mit einer langen, ockerfarbenen Tunika bekleidet, die mit rotbraunen, bis zum Gewandsaum herab reichenden Zierstreifen *(clavi)* besetzt ist. Ihr Haupt ist ein wenig zur Seite gewendet und scheint auf den Betrachter gerichtet zu sein. Über das Haar ist ein hellblaues Schleiertuch gelegt. Spuren rotbrauner Farbe erkennt man ebenso im Haar von Mutter und Kind. Links und rechts ihres Kopfes sind zwei große griechische Kreuze in den Bildgrund eingeschnitten.[210]

Noch unlängst konnte man in einem respektablen Ausstellungskatalog unter der Abbildung des Reliefs lesen: “Limestone icon of the Virgin Galaktotrophousa”.[211] Die von Klaus Wessel *in extenso* vorgetragene Auffassung, wonach in dem Ritzbild die älteste Darstellung der Maria lactans erhalten sei,[212] wurde schon vor Langem widerlegt.[213] Die nachgewiesenen Inschriftenreste, die ein ursprünglich paganes, jedoch auf christlichen Grabsteinen ebenfalls verwendetes Formular überliefern, und die keineswegs „imperiale“ Farbikonographie erlauben es, in der Dargestellten lediglich eine Verstorbene und in dem Ritzbild nichts anderes als eine Grabstele zu erkennen.[214] Auch Wessels Versuche, die Stele sowie die Bilder der Maria Galaktotrophousa in den Gebetsräumen der koptischen Klöster von Bawit und Saqqara (**Abb. 14–16**) als Zeugnisse für die dyophysitische Christologie der gräko-ägyptischen Melkiten zu werten, wurden zu Recht zurückgewiesen.[215] Zwar hat Wessel einige seiner Behauptungen später revidiert,[216] hielt aber an seiner Deutung des Reliefs als Maria lactans und an seiner Datierung in die Zeit *nach* dem Konzil von Chalkedon (451) fest.[217]

Doch ungeachtet dessen markiert das Berliner Relief für Ägypten die Nahtstelle, wo das vertraute Bild der stillenden Isis mit dem Horuskind (**Abb. 10**) in einen durch die beiden flankierenden Kreuze als christlich ausgewiesenen Kontext überführt wurde. Freilich, mit Ausnahme des Stillmotivs (selbst wenn hier der „Intentionsgestus“ gemeint sein sollte) als einziges Relikt der Isisikonographie fehlen alle sonstigen Merkmale, die für Isis lactans typisch sind.[218] Gleichwohl kann nicht ausgeschlossen werden, daß der ikonographische Rückgriff die lebenspendende und den Tod überwindende Macht der Göttin Isis ebenso im Sinne hatte wie die durch die beiden Kreuze angedeutete christliche Heilserwartung.[219] Durch die Hinzufügung der Kreuze sollte mit der Wahl des reduzierten Bildes der Isis lactans offensichtlich die für die Verstorbene erhoffte Auferstehung zum Ausdruck gebracht werden. Für das heidnisch-christliche Milieu im Fayum ist die Darstellung nicht nur nicht ungewöhnlich, sondern geradezu bezeichnend.

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[209] Während der linke Arm des Kindes auf dem Schoß der Mutter liegt, ist die Haltung des rechten ebenfalls unklar. Es trifft nicht zu, daß das Kind das Handgelenk der Mutter umgreift, wie Müller, Isis 11 meinte.

[210] Meiner früher vertretenen Ansicht, daß die Kreuze möglicherweise erst nachträglich eingeschnitten worden sein könnten, hat Török, Thirty-four Years 243 zu Recht widersprochen.

[211] Loverdou-Tsigarida, Sculpture 238, Abb. 185. – Im begleitenden Text heißt es dazu: “Two of the earliest depictions of the Virgin and Child in the very rare type of the Galaktotrophousa occur in icons made of limestone”. Das eine sei das Berliner Stück, für das zweite Beispiel wird kein Nachweis angegeben, doch kann man erraten, daß es sich um das unten 83, Nr. 7 erwähnte Votivrelief handelt.

[212] Wessel, Grabstele 149–154; Wessel, Ikonographie 233–239; Wessel, Gottesmutter 185–200, hier 191–200. – Zustimmend: Müller, Isis 34; Müller, Gottesmutter 3. – Wessel hatte allerdings niemals behauptet, daß es sich um eine „Ikone“ handle.

[213] Effenberger, Grabstele 158–168, Abb. 1 und 2; Kat. Hamm 114–115, Kat.-Nr. 61 (Arne Effenberger); zuletzt ausführlich Langener, Isis lactans 148–161, Katalog 147, KN 244, Abb. 6.

[214] Da Wessel meinen vorgenannten Aufsatz nicht kannte, nimmt sich seine Begründung, weshalb die Stele *kein* Grabrelief gewesen sein könne (Wessel, Gottesmutter 188), ziemlich gewunden aus.

[215] van Moorsel, Gottesmutter 281–288. – Im Übrigen ist mit Uthemann, Christusbild 354–357 darauf hinzuweisen, daß sich keinem Christusbild ablesen läßt, welche Christologie ihm zugrundelag. Das gilt ebenso für Darstellungen der Theotokos.

[216] Wessel, Gottesmutter 186–187.

[217] Wessel, Gottesmutter 198–200. – Mit Blick auf den Krater im Thermenmuseum (Abb. 5) schrieb Wessel, Hellenismus 397 (siehe schon Wessel, Gottesmutter 186–187): „Wenn auch meine frühere Annahme, das Motiv der stillenden Gottesmutter sei in Ägypten entstanden, sich nicht mehr aufrechterhalten läßt, so darf doch darauf hingewiesen werden, daß die zartesten und menschlichsten Darstellungen der Galaktotrophousa ägyptisch sind und eindeutig auf die zärtlichen hellenistischen Darstellungen der den Horus-Knaben stillenden Isis zurückzuführen sind“, wobei er sich in Anm. 12 ausdrücklich auf das Berliner Relief und Saqqara, Gebetsraum 1725 (unten 83, Nr 11, Abb. 16) bezog.

[218] Müller, Isis 34. – Török, Transfigurations 272, Abb. 110 (siehe schon Török, Thirty-four Years 243) möchte die Berliner Grabstele “independently from the formal affinities with the image of *Isis lactans* and *Maria lactans*” sehen und verweist auf Votivfigürchen stillender Mütter aus dem sepulkralen Bereich bzw. aus Abu Mena, die für Fruchtbarkeit und Mutterschaft stünden. Das Berliner Ritzbild ist jedoch kein Votiv, sondern eine Grabstele. Zutreffend ist jedoch sein Hinweis, daß sowohl Attribute der Isis (Thron, Gewand, Krone) als auch der Maria (Thron, Nimbus) fehlen. Immerhin sitzt auch die Gottesmutter des İstanbuler Fragments (Abb. 3) auf einen *faldistorium*.

[219] Shepherd Payer, Virgin Enthroned 544: “*any* mother and child could be taken as symbols of rebirth and salvation”.

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In den Gebetsräumen des Apollonklosters von Bawit und des Jeremiasklosters von Saqqara begegnen in den ein- oder zweizonigen Apsiden und Gebetsnischen drei Varianten des „autonomen“ Marienbildes:[220] 1.) Thronende Gottesmutter mit dem auf ihrem linken Oberschenkel sitzenden (**Abb. 17**)[221] bzw. stehenden Christuskind,[222] 2.) thronende Gottesmutter mit dem Brustbild Christi in einem Clipeus vor ihrer Brust[223] oder mit dem stehenden und segnenden Christus in einer Mandorla, die auf dem linken Oberschenkel Marias steht und von ihr mit beiden Händen gehalten wird,[224] und 3.) thronende Gottesmutter als als Galaktotrophousa. Ein weiterer Typus ist die frontal stehende Gottesmutter als Orans mit betend erhobenen Händen (**Abb. 18**), auf die später zurückzukommen ist. Alle diese Darstellungen werden gewöhnlich in das 6. bis 8. Jahrhundert datiert, doch fehlen auch hierfür exakte Kriterien, die eine genauere Zeitbestimmung erlauben.

In den ägyptischen und nubischen Darstellungen der Maria Galaktotrophousa, die uns hier zunächst interessieren, lassen sich drei Varianten des „Stillens“ sicher nachweisen.[225] Lucia Langener unterschied für alle Isis- und Mariendarstellungen ikonographisch zwischen „linksseitig“ und „rechtsseitig“ (scil. das Kind sitzt auf dem linken oder rechten Oberschenkel der Mutter) sowie zwischen „direktem Stillen“ und dem mehrfach erwähnten „Intentionsgestus“,[226] doch gibt es innerhalb dieser Gruppen signifikante Unterschiede:

VARIANTE 1

Linksseitig, „Intentionsgestus“: (1) Papyrusfragment in Florenz, um 500/550 (**Abb. 11**).[227] – (2) Kodex New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 612, Frontispiz fol. 1v, Kloster des Erzengels Michael, Hamuli/Fayum, datiert 892/893.[228] – (3) Kodex New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 574, Frontispiz fol. 1v, Kloster des Erzengels Michael, Hamuli/Fayum, datiert 897/898.[229] – (4) Kodex New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 600, Frontispiz

[220] Für Bawit folge ich der heute üblichen Bezeichnung der von Clédat ausgegraben Räume mit römischen und der von Maspéro erforschten mit arabischen Ziffern. – Grundlegend zur Geschichte des Apollonklosters von Bawit noch immer Krause – Wessel, Bawit 570–575.

[221] Bawit, Saal 6 (Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 1220): Maspéro – Drioton, Fouilles VII, 6, 20–23, Taf. XXI, XXII (Aquarellkopie), XXIII–XLIV (Details); Ihm, Programme 200, Kat. LII c; Iacobini, Visioni 59–60 *passim,* Abb. 31 (meine Abb. 17). – Bawit, Gebetsraum VII: Clédat, Monastère I,1, 38–39, ohne Abb.; Ihm, Programme 200, Kat. LII d. – Bawit, Gebetsraum VIII: Clédat, Monastère I,1, 49–52, ohne Abb.; Ihm, Programme 201, Kat. LII e. – Saqqara, Gebetsraum F: Quibell, Excavations II, 67–68, Taf. LIV–LV; Ihm, Programme 206, Kat. LIII d; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 48–51; Rassart-Debergh, Remarques 213–218, Abb. 2 (Umzeichnung). – Saqqara, Gebetsraum 1719 (Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 7995): Quibell, Excavations IV, 23, 134, Taf. XXIII,2 (Aquarellkopie); Ihm, Programme 207, Kat. LIII g; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 69–71; van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 150–153, Taf. C, XIV–XVII. – Saqqara, Gebetsraum 1724 (Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 8013): Quibell, Excavations IV, 23 (ohne Abb.); Ihm, Programme 207–208, Kat. LIII i; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 73–75. – Saqqara, Gebetsraum 1727: Quibell, Excavations IV, 22, 134, Taf. XXIV; Ihm, Programme 208, Kat. LIII k; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 82–84; van Moorsel – Huijbers 160–164, Taf. XXIII–XXVa.

[222] Bawit, Gebetsraum III: Clédat, Monastère I,1, 23–24, Taf. XX,1 (Aquarellkopie); Ihm, Programme 199, Kat. LII b; Iacobini, Visioni 44–47 *passim*.

[223] Saqqara, Gebetsraum D: Quibell, Excavations II, 67, Taf. LIX; Ihm, Programme 206, Kat. LIII c; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 52–54. – Saqqara, Gebetsraum 1723: Quibell, Excavations IV, 23, 135, Taf. XXV oben; Ihm, Programme 207, Kat. LIII h; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 71–73; van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 153–156, Taf. XVIII–XIXa.

[224] Bawit, Saal XXVIII: Clédat, Monastère I,2, 154–157, Taf. XCV, XCIII (Aquarellkopie); Ihm, Programme 203, Kat. LII j. – Zur möglichen Bedeutung des auf einer Ikone des 6. Jahrhunderts (Temple Gallery London) dargestellten Motivs gemäß Sapientia 7,26 („Denn sie ist ein Abglanz des ewigen Lichts und ein fleckenloser Spiegel des göttlichen Wirkens und ein Bild seiner Güte“) siehe Barker, Wisdom 108, Abb. 6.1.

[225] Mir sind 21 Darstellungen aus Ägypten und Nubien bekannt. Außer den von Langener, Isis lactans katalogisierten Belegen (KN 251–KN 264), von denen KN 259 entfällt, kommen noch hinzu: Wadi Natrun (Nr. 14), Antonioskloster am Roten Meer (Nr. 18) sowie drei Darstellungen in Kôm H von Alt-Dongola (Nr. 19–21). – Nur in den Schriftquellen faßbare Darstellungen der Theotokos Galaktotrophousa: Davis, Christology 193–194.

[226] Langener, Isis lactans 263–276.

[227] Oben Anm. 177.

[228] Leroy, Manuscrits 94–96, Taf. 31; Depuydt, Catalogue 185–187, Nr. 96, Farbtaf. 12; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 159–161, KN 256, Abb. 11; Kat. Hamm 251, Nr. 267, Farbabb. (Lucia Langener); Skalova, Icon 240, Abb. 3b (mit irreführender Bildunterschrift).

[229] Leroy, Manuscrits 96–97, Taf. 34; Depuydt, Catalogue113–121, Nr. 59, Farbtaf. 11; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 161–163, KN 257.

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fol. 1v, Kloster des Erzengels Michael, Hamouli/Fayyum, datiert 905/906.[230] – (5) Kodex London, British Library Or. 6782, Frontispiz fol. 1v, aus Ihrit el-Gharbiya/Fayum, datiert 989/990.[231]

Maria sitzt frontal auf einem Thron (4, 5) oder einer Thronbank (2, 3), und ebenso thront das Kind mit frontal ausgerichtetem Kopf und Oberkörper auf ihrem linken Knie, wobei die Mamilla nur seine Wange berührt. Auf (1) scheint das Kind in der linken Armbeuge zu liegen. Die rechte Hand des Kindes segnet (4, 5), ist ausgestreckt (3) oder umfaßt das Handgelenk des die Brust darreichenden Arms (2); in der Linken hält es stets eine Schriftrolle. In einem Fall (5) ist die Mamilla bis an die Lippen des Kindes herangeführt, was nur beim direkten Stillen begegnet, wo Christus jedoch stets zur Seite gewendet sitzt. Wir haben es hier also mit einer Mischform zu tun, zumal das Kind seitlich sitzt, aber aus dem Bild herausschaut.

VARIANTE 2 (UNSICHER)

Rechtsseitig, „Intentionsgestus“: wohl (6) Saqqara, Jeremiaskloster, Gebetsraum 1807, Wandmalerei.[232]

VARIANTE 3

Linksseitig, direktes Stillen: (7) Votivrelief aus dem Fayyum, 7. Jahrhundert.[233] – (8) Sohag, Der Anba Bischoi (Rotes Kloster), Konche des nördlichen Trikonchos, Wandmalerei, 7./8. Jahrhundert.[234] – (9) Khartum, Wandmalerei, Fragmente, datiert 1005/1039.[235]

Das Kind liegt im linken Arm und auf dem Schoß Marias. Nur auf (8) sind seine ausgestreckten Hände erhalten.

VARIANTE 4

Rechtsseitig, direktes Stillen: (10) Saqqara, Jeremiaskloster, Gebetsraum A, 6./7. Jahrhundert, Wandmalerei (**Abb. 14**).[236] – (11) Saqqara, Jeremiaskloster, Gebetsraum 1725, 6./7. Jahrhundert, Wandmalerei (**Abb. 15**).[237] – (12) Bawit, Apollonkloster, Saal 30, 6./7. Jahrhundert, Wandmalerei (verschollen).[238] – (13) Bawit, Apollonkloster, Gebetsraum XLII, 6./7. Jahrhundert, Wandmalerei (**Abb. 16**).[239] – (14) Wadi Natrun, Der es-Surian, Marienkirche, Wandmalerei an der rechten Säule des *ḫūrus* (χορός), 7.–10. Jahrhundert.[240]

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[230] Leroy, Manuscrits 101–103, Taf. 36; Depuydt, Catalogue 311–314, Nr. 160, Farbtaf. 13; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 165–167, KN 258, Abb. 12; Orlandi, Overview 39 (MICH.AP), 73–74 (Clavis cc0396).

[231] Leroy, Manuscrits 105–107, Taf. 29,1; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 173–175, KN 264, Abb. 13; Kat. Hamm 252, Nr. 270, Farbabb (Vrej Nersessian); Kat. London 457, Nr. 305, Farbabb (Anthony Eastmond). – Zur darin enthaltenen Homilie des Kyrillos von Alexandria siehe Orlandi, Overview 37 (MERC.AD), 66–67 (Clavis cc0109) und unten 85.

[232] Nicht erhalten: Quibell, Excavations IV, 19 (ohne Abb.); Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 35, Abb. 11,1 (Skizze); Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 156–157, KN 254 („rechtsseitig? Intentionsgestus“).

[233] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. „8006“ (olim Ägyptisches Museum, Inv. 8704): Crum, Catalogue 144, Nr. 8704; Tran Tam Tinh, Isis Lactans 45: „problement plus récente“; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 171–173, KN 263; Gabra – Eaton-Krauss, Treasures 111, 273, Nr. 73, Taf. 73. – Falls die Inventarnummer zutrifft, ist 8006 zweimal vorhanden, da auch für das oben Anm. 205 erwähnte Votivrelief aus Luxor angegeben.

[234] Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 163–164, KN 257a; Bolman, Aesthetics, Taf. 1; Bolman, Red Monastery 263, Abb. 3, 5 und 9. – Bolman, Red Monastery 263, 279 datiert die oberste Malschicht der gereinigten Zonen und somit auch die Galaktotrophousa in der Konche “to circa the seventh or eighth century”.

[235] Khartum, Nationalmuseum, Freskenfragment, field-number 34, Faras 1005–1039: Michałowski, Kathedrale 153–154, Taf. 76; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 169–170, KN 261, Abb. 15.

[236] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 8014: Quibell, Excavations II, 63–65, 81–82, Taf. XL–XLIII; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 39–42; van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 129–131, Taf. I–III; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 157–158, KN 255, Abb. 8.

[237] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 7987: Quibell, Excavations IV, 23, 134, Taf. XXII und XXIII (Aquarellkopie); Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 75–77; van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 156–160, Taf. XX–XXII; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 155–156, KN 253, Abb. 9.

[238] Maspéro – Drioton, Fouilles IX, 37–38, Taf. XLII–XLIV; Ihm, Programme 191, 203, Kat. LII k; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 168–169, KN 260, Abb. 10.

[239] Clédat, Recherches 522, Abb. 1 (Clédat – Bénazeth, Monastère 45–47 [Ostwand], Abb. 46, 48–51); Ihm, Programme 101, 191, 200, 203–204, 205, Kat. LII. l, Taf. XXV,2; Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 153–154, KN 251 („rechtsseitig, direktes Stillen?“); Iacobini, Visioni 51–52 *passim,* Abb. 22.

[240] Innemée, Iconographical Programm 145, Abb. 2; Gabra, Monasteries 52, Taf. 3.3 (2. Hälfte 7. Jahrhundert); Bolman, Galaktotrophousa 1182, Abb. 2 (Detail); Skalova, Icon 240, Abb. 4b; Bolman, Enigmatic Galaktotrophousa 13, Farbtaf. 1 (im Gegensatz zur Liste 13, Anm. 3, Nr. 9 “secco” in der Tafelunterschrift “encaustic”). – Zur Kirche siehe Grossmann, Architektur 73 (*ḫūrus*), 501–503.

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Die Gottesmutter sitzt auch hier frontal auf einem Thron (10, 13, 14) oder auf einer Bank (11). Das Kind sitzt nach rechts gewandt auf ihrem rechten Knie, die Mamilla berührt seine Lippen (10, 11, 13, 14). Auf (12) scheint das Kind zu liegen. Maria stützt mit ihrer Rechten seinen Rücken bzw. die Schulter (10, 11) oder hat die Hand unter seinem Gesäß (13, 14). Das Kind umfaßt mit beiden Händen das Handgelenk des darreichenden Arms (10, 11, 13, 14). Bei (14) weist seine Rechte nur zum darreichenden Arm hin. Marias Haupt ist entweder frontal ausgerichtet (10, 14) oder neigt sich dem Kind zu (11, 13). Auf (11) blickt das Kind zur Mutter empor (**Abb. 15**). Im Falle von (13) berührt Maria mit der Linken nicht ihre Brust, sondern weist in der Art der Hodegetria (Dexiokratousa) auf das Kind hin (**Abb. 16**).

Unklar ist der Befund wegen des schlechten Erhaltungszustandes bei folgenden Malereien: (15) Faras, Wandmalerei (Fragment), 11. Jahrhundert.[241] – (16) Faras, Wandmalerei, 11. Jahrhundert.[242] – (17) Esna, Deir Al-Schohada, Nordkirche, Apsis, Wandmalerei, Fragment, um 1170.[243]

Zum Schluß ist noch auf zwei ikonographische Sonderfälle einzugehen. Auf einer wohl im 13. Jahrhundert entstandenen Ikone im Antoniuskloster am Roten Meer (18) ist Maria als Halbfigur im Typus der Dexiokratousa dargestellt.[244] Das Christuskind umfaßt mit seiner rechten Hand Marias linke Brust und trinkt, in seiner linken hält er einen runden Gegenstand, der als Hostie zu deuten ist.[245] Zusammen mit den Tafeln der vier Erzengel ist die Ikone der Gottesmutter in einen Rahmen eingefügt, der den *ḥijāb* der Kapelle der Vier Wesen bekrönt.[246] Ungewöhnlich ist auch die Ikonographie der einen von drei Wandmalereien der Galaktotrophousa in Kôm H von Dongola (19–21). Die thronende Maria des einen Bildes (19) ist hier zugleich spinnend und stillend wiedergegeben.[247]

Wir können also festhalten: Der Typus der Maria Galaktotrophousa begegnet in Ägypten in einem christlich-sepulkralen Kontext erstmals, wenngleich in reduzierter Form, auf dem Berliner Grabrelief und bezieht sich hier auf eine verstorbene Mutter (**Abb. 13**). Voll ausgebildet finden wir ihn auf dem Florentiner Papyrusfragment (oben 82, Nr. 1, **Abb. 11**), dessen höchst unbegabter Zeichner auf ein längst geläufiges Motiv zurückgegriffen haben dürfte.[248] Insofern kann nicht ausgeschlossen werden, daß Ägypten einen selbständigen Anteil an der Ausformung des Bildes der Maria lactans hatte, wenngleich die Belege dafür erst seit dem 6. Jahrhundert nachweisbar sind. Die Frage, wo das Bild der Galaktotrophousa letztlich entstanden ist, erscheint angesichts der bisher behandelten Werke aus Ostrom und Ägypten eher müßig, denn streng typologisch betrachtet ist schon die Ikonographie der hellenistisch-römischen („alexandrinischen") Isis lactans und ihrer Varianten nichts anderes als eine Angleichung des pharaonischen Bildes der stillenden Gottesmutter Isis an die attische Kourotrophos,[249] und ebenso sind die verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen der Maria lactans variable Verbindungen aus Kourotrophos, stillender Isis und kaiserlicher Fecunditas.[250]

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[241] Warschau, Nationalmuseum, Inv. 234.021: Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 170, KN 262 (linksseitig); Kat. Wien 87–89, Nr. 21 (Bożena Mierzejewska).

[242] Khartum, Nationalmuseum, field-number 47: Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 171, KN 262a (linksseitig?).

[243] Leroy, Peintures 6–10, Taf. 26 und 27 (Umzeichnung); Langener, Isis lactans, Katalog 154–155, KN 252 (linksseitig?).

[244] Skalova, Icon 235–264, Abb. 2a.

[245] Skalova, Icon 242 gibt hierfür folgende Beschreibung und Deutung: "Immediately beneath this white breast, Christ's left hand appears as if holding a second breast. Yet, this circular object is painted – like the haloes – with the orpiment. The verses of an early Syrian liturgical hymn come to mind [scil: Oden Salomons 19,1–5, siehe unten 86]: »The Holy Spirit opened her bosom, And mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father …« As this second golden breast is of the size and shape of the Coptic Eucharistic Bread, qurbān, it can be concluded that, while being nourished Himself, the Christ-Child simultaneously offers the nourishment – the true Bread of Life, the sacrament, which comes from Heaven". Von einer „zweiten Brust" kann hier keine Rede sein. Der Verweis auf die 19. Ode Salomons erscheint mir daher ziemlich weithergeholt.

[246] Skalova, Icon, Textabb. 1 (Grundriß der Kirche), Abb. 1 (Gesamtansicht).

[247] Martens-Czarnecka, Wall paintings I, 177 (nur erwähnt); Martens-Czarnecka, Wall paintings II, 275, Taf. LIII (nur eines von drei Exemplaren abgebildet).

[248] Oben Anm. 177.

[249] Hadzisteliou Price, Kourotrophos 34–35, Type III.A.5.c.iv. ("Attic Classical and its adaptions"). Über das Berliner Ritzbild urteilte sie (35, Abb. 26) noch ohne Kenntnis seines eindeutig sepulkralen Charakters: "Whatever the Coptic stele in Berlin represents Mary or not, the iconography of Isis Lactans has entered the Christian art indirectly, by the intermediate popular type of the Attic Suckling Kourotrophos".

[250] Hingegen vertrat Langener, Isis lactans 235–276 nach Durchsicht der theologischen Quellen, in denen Maria als stillende Mutter erwähnt wird, die Ansicht, daß „die Ikonologie der Maria lactans nicht durch schriftliche Belege, sondern direkt durch die ägyptische Ikonographie angeregt" worden sei.

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Langener ist in ihrem Buch der Frage nachgegangen, ob eine inhaltliche Verbindung zwischen den Galaktotrophousa-Darstellungen und den Texten in den obenerwähnten Handschriften besteht.[251] Eine solche findet sich nur in zwei im Kodex London, British Library, Or. 6782 enthaltenen Schriften (oben 82, Nr. 5): in einem Traktat des Epiphanios von Salamis († 403)[252] und vor allem in einer Kyrillos von Alexandria (412–444) zugeschriebenen Marienhomilie.[253] Für die entscheidenden Passagen dieser Predigt gebe ich hier die englische Übersetzung von Ernest A. Wallis Budge wieder:[254] "Thou didst stretch out thy right arm, thou didst take Him and make to lie on thy left arm (…) thou didst seet Him upon they knees. He lifted up His eyes to thy face. He stretched out His hand, He took thy breast, and He drew into His mouth the milk which was sweeter than manna (…) Having drunk from thy spotless breasts, He called the 'My Mother'". Die Predigt gipfelt in dem Satz:[255] "God hath given thee His Gift, which is His Son. Thou didst hunger, and He gave thee milk in thy breasts in the heavens".

Daß Maria im Stillakt dem Kind die ihrer Herkunft nach von Gott stammende Milch spendet und damit zugleich ihren „Hunger" stillt, war also in Ägypten im 5. Jahrhundert längst *communis opinio*. Die Darstellung illustriert zweifellos den Kyrillos-Text, zumal sich dieser geradezu wie eine Beschreibung und Deutung eines imaginierten Galaktotrophousa-Bildes liest. Besonders der Hinweis, wonach das Kind seine Augen zum Antlitz der Mutter emporhebe, findet im Gebetsraum Saqqara 1725 (oben 83, Nr. 13, **Abb. 15**) eine direkte ikonographische Bestätigung. Trotz der zeitlichen Lücke von über 200 Jahren zwischen der Predigt und dem ältesten erhaltenen Bildzeugnis auf dem Florentiner Papyrusfragment (oben 82, Nr. 1, **Abb. 11**) wird hier ein weiteres Mal deutlich, daß bereits vor dem 6. Jahrhundert Darstellungen der Maria Galaktotrophousa in Ägypten existiert haben werden. Der Abschreiber der Predigt und ebenso der Maler der Galaktotrophousa könnten auf einen zwischen 412 und 444 oder wenig später entstandenen, illuminierten Kodex zurückgegriffen haben. Ich halte es durchaus für denkbar, daß auch auf der obenerwähnten Marienikone von Alexandria eine thronende Isis lactans in Ganzfigur dargestellt war und ihre wunderbare „Auffindung" der Auslöser gewesen sein könnte, um den Bildtypus künftig für Maria in Anspruch zu nehmen. Welche Maßnahme wäre wohl geeigneter gewesen, die allgegenwärtige Übermutter des Nillandes ein für alle Mal zu entthronen?

Die ikonographische Abhängigkeit der Maria Galaktotrophousa sowohl vom alexandrinischen Typus der Isis lactans (**Abb. 10**) als auch vom Vorbild der kaiserlichen Fecunditas (**Abb. 6**) stellt uns vor die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Stillakts bzw. der Darreichung der Brust und insbesondere der von Maria gespendeten göttlichen Milch. Mit Blick auf die Predigt des Kyrillos formulierte Langener noch vorsichtig „m. E. eine Anspielung auf die Eucharistie", ohne diesen naheliegenden Zusammenhang weiter zu verfolgen.[256] Aus einer feministisch-theologischen Perspektive hat Gail Paterson Corrington die männlich konnotierten Zeugnisse für den göttlichen Spender der *milk of salvation* in christlichen Quellen untersucht.[257] Besonders ausgeprägt findet sich die "inversion of the metaphor of divine nursing" in der 19. Ode Salomos.[258] Nach der Lehre der frühen Kirche kam die Milch der Erlösung "not from the divine mother, but from the divine father, in the form of the divine son".[259] Die geringe Zahl von Maria lactans-Darstellungen in den ersten Jahrhunderten christlicher Kunst[260] erklärte Corrington u. a. damit, daß die "mataphor of nursing, however, is appropriated to describe the saving activities of the male savior-deity".[261] Doch ist das gewiß zu kurz gegriffen. Denn vor allem die Milch-Blut-Logos-Allegorien im Paidagogos

[251] Langener, Isis lactans 245–251.

[252] Fol. 10a1–28b2: Wallis Budge, Miscellaneous II, 699–716 (englische Übersetzung), fol. 12a1–2 (701) und fol. 26a2–26b1 (714); Müller, Predigt 217–223 (Textparaphrase); Langener, Isis lactans 249–250; Orlandi, Overview 37 (MERC.AD), 61–62 (Clavis cc0144).

[253] Fol. 29a1–36b2: Wallis Budge, Miscellaneous II, 718–724 (englische Übersetzung); Müller, Predigt 193, 204–207 (Textparaphrase); Langener, Isis lactans 249–250; Orlandi, Overview 37 (MERC.AD), 66–67 (Clavis cc0109).

[254] Wallis Budge, Miscellaneous II, 717–718 (fol. 29b1–29b2).

[255] Wallis Budge, Miscellaneous II, 719 (fol. 31a1–2).

[256] Langener, Isis lactans 250.

[257] Corrington, Milk 393–413.

[258] Corrington, Milk 407–410. – Text und deutsche Übersetzung der 19. Ode: Lattke, Oden I, 153–155; kommentierter Text und präzisierte Übersetzung: Lattke, Oden II, 91–112; zur Datierung in das frühe 2. Jahrhundert siehe Lattke, Oden I, 20–35.

[259] Corrington, Milk 413. – Zu den diversen Stellen in den Oden Salomons siehe schon Betz, Eucharistie 17–18, 174–175.

[260] Die Bemerkung zum Berliner Ritzbild 404, Taf. 5 "has no inscription" zeigt, daß die Autorin den Forschungsstand nicht kannte.

[261] Corrington, Milk 412. – Zum Problem androgyner Gottesvorstellungen in christlichen Texten siehe auch Speyer, Gottesbild 151–155; Betz, Eucharistie 13–18; Winkler, Überlegungen 7–29.

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des Klemens von Alexandria,[262] auf die Corrington nur kurz einging,[263] erweisen den Logos als die eigentliche Milch und zugleich Gott als deren Spender, was Johannes Betz schon 1984 in einer grundlegenden Studie herausgearbeitet und als Hinweis auf die Eucharistie mit speziellem Bezug auf die Taufeucharistie interpretiert hatte:[264] Für Klemens ist der Logos „sakramentale Milch (36,1; 42,2; 45,2; 47,2) und die sakramentale Milch ist der Logos (42,1; 43,3; 49,3)".[265] Physiologisch betrachtet ist Milch nur eine andere Form der Grundsubstanz Blut:[266] „der Logos (36,1; 47,2) wie auch das Blut (nach 47,2) werden als Milch allegorisiert, d. i. konkret-symbolisch mit dem anderen Namen ‚Milch' belegt (…) Entscheidend bleibt bei alledem für Klemens, daß die Eucharistie, ob als Blut oder ob als Milch ausgesagt, Vehikel des Logos, ja der Logos selbst ist".[267] Zugleich ist der Logos selbst die Mutter (42,3), aus deren Brüsten „die eucharistische Milch hervor strömt (46,1; 43,3; III 101,3).[268] Darüber hinaus ist die Eucharistie „die Milch des Vaters aus dessen Brust, dem Logos, und sie ist identisch mit Jesu Fleisch und Blut".[269]

Wie aus der auch in Ägypten befolgten Kirchenordnung des Hippolytus von Rom († 235) hervorgeht, war es offenbar seit dem 3. Jahrhundert üblich, den frisch Getauften im Rahmen der anschließenden Eucharistiefeier in zwei gesonderten Kelchen zuerst Wein und dann ein Gemisch aus Milch und Honig zu trinken zu geben.[270] Milch und Honig werden in der patristischen Literatur in einen deutlichen Bezug zur endzeitlich Verheißung gesetzt, wonach Gott sein Volk in ein Land führen werde, das „von Milch und Honig fließt".[271] Die Neugeburt durch die Taufe erhielt hierdurch womöglich schon früh einen eschatologischen und soteriologischen Bezug auf das künftige Dasein nach dem Tode.[272]

Für das Verständnis der ägyptischen Darstellungen der Maria Galaktotrophousa hat unlängst Elizabeth S. Bolman einen plausiblen Vorschlag unterbreitet.[273] Anhand der Milch-Allegorien des Klemens von Alexandria und weiterer Quellen wie der erwähnten Marienpredigt des Kyrillos kam sie zu dem Ergebnis, daß in der Bedeutung der Milch als Hinweis auf den in der Eucharistie aufgenommenen Logos der eigentliche Sinn der Bilder zu suchen sei: "The *galaktotrophousa* functioned principially as a metaphor for the Eucharist".[274] Bezogen auf die genannten Darstellungen schlußfolgerte sie:[275] "the intended message of this iconographic type was one which divested Mary of power, while showing Christ drinking the Logos provided by God". Diese Deutung ist naheliegend, und sie wäre wohl kaum möglich gewesen ohne die von früheren Forschern wie Annewies van de Bunt oder Betz geleisteten Vorarbeiten, auf die Bolman jedoch mit keinem Wort eingeht.[276]

Es fragt sich allerdings, ob damit bereits alles erklärt ist. Denn lediglich an der linken Säule des *ḫūrus* der Marienkirche von Der es-Surian (oben 83, Nr. 14) begegnet eine Maria Galaktotrophousa in unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft zum Ort der Liturgiefeier, weshalb der Bezug von göttlicher Milch und Eucharistie nur hier evident wird. Auch genügt es nicht, die Darstellungen der Galaktotrophousa in Bawit und Saqqara isoliert zu betrachten. Denn zum einen stehen selbst die sehr kleinen Einzelbilder in den Gebetsnischen der Oratorien Saqqara A (oben 83, Nr.

[262] Clementis Alexandrini Paedagogus I,VI,34,3–52,1 (22,33–33,11 Mirkovich – van Winden); BKV Clemens 235–250.

[263] Corrington, Milk 212–213.

[264] Betz, Eucharistie 1–26, 167–185, zu Klemens 10–16 und 175 mit den jeweiligen Belegstellen. – Siehe auch Usener, Milch 183–195; Kretschmar, Taufgottesdient 86–114, hier 109–113; van de Bunt, Milk 27–39. – Jüngere amerikanische Arbeiten (Buell, Making Christians; Engelbrecht, God's Milk) ignorieren Betz.

[265] Betz, Eucharistie 10.

[266] Betz, Eucharistie 11 mit den Belegstellen.

[267] Betz, Eucharistie 11.

[268] Betz, Eucharistie 13, 14.

[269] Betz, Eucharistie 15.

[270] Till – Leipoldt, Kirchenordnung 22/23; Betz, Eucharistie 176–181.

[271] Die Belege bei Betz, Eucharistie 5, Anm. 29.

[272] Betz, Eucharistie 167–181, der jedoch „das Fehlen der eschatologischen Sinndimension der speziellen Taufkelche" bei Hippolytus konstatierte.

[273] Bolman, Galaktotrophousa 1173–1184; Bolman, Enigmatic Galaktotrophousa 13–22; angekündigt: Elizabeth S. Bolman, The Milk of Salvation? Gender, Audience and the Nursing Virgin Mary in the Eastern Mediterranean.

[274] Bolman, Galaktotrophousa 1182.

[275] Bolman, Enigmatic Galaktotrophousa 19.

[276] Auch Buell, Making Christians und Engelbrecht, God's Milk werden nicht zitiert.

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10, **Abb. 14**)[277] und 1725 (oben 83, Nr. 11, **Abb. 15**)[278] in einem bildlichen Kontext. Maria wird hier beide Male von den Erzengeln Michael und Gabriel flankiert. Damit wird in gewohnter Weise der Himmel als der Ort definiert, in dem Maria selbst residiert. Es ist der Ort, wo – um mit Kyrillos zu sprechen – Gott die Milch in Marias Brust gab. In Gebetsraum Saqqara 1725 umgeben Marias Haupt zudem zwei Büsten der Mönchsväter Jeremias und Henoch, während das Zwischenbogenfeld mit den Köpfen von weiblichen Tugenden besetzt ist. Von Gebetsraum Saqqara A hat sich noch ein Teil der übrigen Dekoration erhalten. An der Nordwand waren vier Mönchsväter und jeweils ein Mönch in Proskynese zu Füßen des Apa Apollon und das Apa Onuphrios dargestellt.[279] Dabei handelt es sich um Porträtikonen längst verstorbener Heiliger, die trotz ihrer Gegenwärtigkeit als in die himmlische Sphäre entrückt zu verstehen sind. Onuphrios und Apa Apollon – dieser herausgehoben durch drei große Kreuze neben und über seinem Haupt – sind als Oranten wiedergegeben und vermitteln offenbar als Fürbitter für die Mönche zu ihren Füßen, die hier stellvertretend für die Beter und Benutzer des Oratoriums stehen.[280]

Zum anderen ist die Galaktotrophousa eine von drei Marientypen, die in den zweizonigen Bildprogrammen von Bawit und Saqqara mit der Theophanie in der Apsiskalotte verbunden wurden.[281] Allerdings ist für die Galaktotrophousa nur ein einziges Beispiel einer solchen zweizonigen Komposition erhaltenen (Bawit, Gebetsraum XLII, oben 83, Nr. 13, **Abb. 16**). In Bawit, Gebetsraum XXX (oben 83, Nr. 12) war Maria allein in der Nische dargestellt, doch befanden sich auf den seitlichen Wandflächen aufgereihte koptische Heilige. Ansonsten erscheint Maria in den zweizonigen Theophaniebildern entweder als Thronende inmitten von Aposteln und/oder Mönchsvätern (**Abb. 17**)[282] oder – nur in Bawit – als Orans im Kreise der Apostel und Heiligen (**Abb. 18**).[283] Stets aber bilden Apsiskalotte und Apsisrundung eine bedeutungsmäßige Einheit, trotz der gelegentlichen Trennlinie zwischen den beiden Zonen.[284]

Die Theophanie in der Apsiskalotte (**Abb. 17** und **18**), die in Bawit und Saqqara auch als alleiniges Apsisprogramm begegnet und damit ihre primär eigenständige Bedeutung erkennen läßt, beruht auf unterschiedlichen Anregungen aus den Visionen des Ezechiel (1,4–28), des Isaias (6,1–3; 66,1; 66,15) und der Johannesapokalypse (4,6–8). Typische Bildelemente sind – wiewohl variiert und nicht immer in allen Kompositionen vorhanden – der jugendliche Christus,[285] der in einer Aureole (Mandorla oder Clipeus) auf einem Gemmenthron oder auf einer Thronbank mit Suppedaneum sitzt, die geflügelten Vier Wesen an den Diagonalen der Aureole, die gemäß Johannesapokalypse 4,8 sechs mit Augen übersäte Flügel haben, der Feuerwagen unter der Aureole bzw. unter dem Thron sowie die mit Augen bedeckten Doppelräder des Feuerwagens. Weitere Bildelemente sind ein geschlossenes Buch

[277] Nach van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 129: H. mit Dekoration ca. 90 cm; Br. mit Dekoration ca. 88 cm; Br. Der Nische ca. 50 cm, T. ca. 35–40 cm.

[278] Nach van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 156: H. total ca. 100 cm; H. Nische ca. 70 cm; Br. total ca. 90 cm; Br. Nische ca. 30 cm.

[279] Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 7951: Quibell, Excavations II, 64, 82, Taf. XLIV; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 39–42; van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 131–135, Taf. IV–V; Rassart-Debergh, A propos 187–192; Bolman, Joining the Community 43; Brenk, Apse 86–89, Abb. 95.

[280] Nach Grossman, Architektur 277, 278, gehörte Raum A möglichweise wie die Räume B, D und F zu einem von Nonnen bewohnten Trakt, da in A und F unter den koptischen Heiligen auch Ama Sibylla, die Mitbegründerin des Klosters dargestellt ist; vgl. Rassart-Debergh, Remarques 216–218, Abb. 2 und 3.

[281] Ihm, Programme 95–108, 198–209, Kat. LII a–o und LIII a–o. – Nur zu Bawit siehe Iacobini, Visioni; zu Saqqara van Moorsel – Huijbers, Repertory 125–186; Zusammenstellung und ikonographische Analysen aller Bildprogramme von Saqqara mit ausführlichen Literaturnachweisen auch bei Wietheger, Jeremias-Kloster 46–75.

[282] Bawit, Saal 6 (oben Anm. 221). – Bawit, Gebetsraum III: Ihm, Programme 199–200, Kat. LII b; Iacobini, Visioni 44–47 *passim;* nur aus einer Aquarellkopie bekannt: Clédat, Monastère I,1, Taf. XII,1. – Saqqara, Gebetsräume 1719 (oben Anm. 221), 1723 (oben Anm. 221), 1727 (oben Anm. 221) und 1733: Ihm, Programme 208, Kat. LIII l; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 77–79; 1740: Ihm, Programme 208, Kat. LIII m; Rassart-Debergh, Décoration 82.

[283] Bawit, Gebetsraum XVII: Clédat, Monastère I,2, 75–77, Taf. XL, XLI (Aquarellkopie), XLII–XLIV (Details); Krause – Wessel, Bawit 570 (auf Grund der Inschriften vor 735 ausgemalt); Ihm, Programme 201–202, Kat. LII f, Taf. XXIII,1; Iacobini, Visioni 47–51 *passim,* Abb. 15–19. – Bawit, Gebetsraum XVIII: Clédat, Monastère I,2, 87–88, Taf. LXII; Ihm 99, 202 Kat. LII g. – Bawit, Saal 20 (Kairo, Koptisches Museum, Inv. 1120): Maspéro – Drioton, Fouilles 31–32, Taf. XXXIA, XXXII (Aquarellkopie), XXXIII–XXXIV (Details); Ihm Programme 202, Kat. LII h (meine Abb. 21). – Bawit, Gebetsraum XLVI: Clédat, Recherches 524, Abb. 3; Ihm, Programme 204, Kat. LII n, Taf. XXIV,1; Iacobini, Visioni 57 *passim,* Abb. 27.

[284] Wessel, Himmelfahrt 1234 war allerdings der Ansicht, daß der Streifen die beiden Zonen trenne und keinerlei Beziehungen zwischen den oberen und unteren Darstellungen bestünden. Ebenso betonte Iacobini, Visioni 109 die „indipendenza semantica della parte teofanica". Formal mag das zwar zutreffen, inhaltlich gewiß nicht. Die Trennlinie fehlt in Bawit, Saal 20 (oben Anm. 283, hier Abb. 21) und Bawit, Gebetsraum XLVI (vorige Anm.).

[285] In Bawit, Saal 6 (oben Anm. 221, hier Abb. 19) und Bawit, Saal 20 (oben Anm. 283, hier Abb. 21) ist Christus bärtig.

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in der Hand Christi oder ein geöffneter Kodex mit dem Trishagion (das nach Isaias 6,3 und Johannesapokalypse 4,8 von den Vier Wesen gesungen wird), adorierende, die Mandorla haltende oder Kränze darbringende Engel sowie Medaillons mit Sonne und Mond.[286]

Ikonographisch leitet sich die „Theophanie des Trishagion" vom Himmelfahrtsbild des „östlichen" Typus her.[287] Er begegnet in der zweiten Hälfte des 6. Jahrhunderts in zwei Varianten auf den palästinensischen Pilgerampullen.[288] Sie zeigen im oberen Teil Christus auf einem Thron sitzend in einer von zwei oder vier Engeln empor getragenen bzw. gehaltenen Mandorla (auf dem Marienbehang in Cleveland sind es nur zwei Engel[289]) und genau auf der Bildachse darunter die nimbierte Maria als Orans entweder frontal[290] oder in seitlicher Stellung[291] inmitten der zwölf Apostel, die in einer Reihe ruhig stehen oder gestikulierend hintereinander angeordnet sind. Auf einer ganzseitigen Miniatur im syrischen Rabbula-Kodex von 586 steht Christus in der Mandorla, seine Rechte segnet, die Linke hält eine geöffnete Schriftrolle.[292] Die Aureole wird oben von zwei fliegenden Engeln gehalten bzw. empor getragen. Darunter bringen zwei herbeifliegende Engel in der Art des *aurum coronarium* auf ihren verhüllten Händen Kronen dar. Unter der Mandorla befinden sich die Doppelräder des Feuerwagens, vier mit Augen übersäte Flügel und die Köpfe der Vier Wesen sowie unterhalb des Feuerwagens die Hand („Stimme") Gottes – Elemente, die auf den palästinensischen Pilgerampullen regelmäßig fehlen. Mond und Sonne in den oberen Ecken verleihen dem Ereignis eine kosmische Dimension.

Die palästinensischen Ampullen und die Miniatur im Rabbula-Kodex erweitern die ursprünglich eigenständige Bild der Theophanie um die in der Apostelgeschichte (1,9–13) berichtete Versammlung der Apostel auf dem Ölberg, bei der Maria und Paulus allerdings nicht zugegen waren. Neu sind im Rabbula-Kodex auch die beiden hinzugefügten Engel (in der Apostelgeschichte sind es zwei weißgekleidete Männer), deren einer die Jünger um Paulos mit emporgerecktem Arm auf die Erscheinung am Himmel hinweist, während der andere der von Petros angeführten Gruppe das Geschehen erklärt („Dieser Jesus, der aus eurer Mitte in den Himmel empor gehoben wurde, wird in derselben Weise kommen, wie ihr ihn in den Himmel habt auffahren sehen"). Die Vergegenwärtigung eines fiktiven „historischen" Geschehens verbindet sich mit der visionären Vorwegnahme der Parusie zu einem zeitlos-ewigen Ereignis. Bianca Kühnel hat anhand von Quellen aufgezeigt, daß der Jerusalemer Ölberg als derjenige Ort galt, an dem sich die Himmelfahrt ereignet hatte und die Parusie sich ereignen wird.[293]

Einigen Theophaniedarstellungen von Bawit ist in der unteren Zone die frontal stehende Maria mit erhobenen und ausgebreiteten Händen beigesellt (**Abb. 18**).[294] Die Gottesmutter gehört zwar typologisch zum Himmelfahrtsbild vom östlichen Typus, dennoch ist in den Apsiden von Bawit – mit Ausnahme von Gebetsraum XLVI – keine Himmelfahrt dargestellt.[295] Zum einen fehlen die beiden Deuteengel gemäß Apostelgeschichte 1,11,[296] zum anderen werden die zwölf Apostel in Bawit, Saal 20 (**Abb. 18**)[297] um koptische Heilige und die beiden Erzengel Michael

[286] Zu den einzelnen Bildelementen siehe die ausführliche ikonographische Untersuchung von Iacobini, Visioni 67–211.

[287] Zum „östlichen" Typus des Himmelfahrtsbildes siehe Schrade, Ikonographie 144–152; Wessel, Himmelfahrt 1232–1239 (vorikonoklastisch); Weitzmann, Loca sancta 43–44, Abb. 30: Kühnel, Ascension.

[288] Grabar, Ampoules; Wessel, Himmelfahrt 1232–1233, 1237–1238; Weitzmann, Loca sancta 43–45; Kühnel, Ascension. – Jüngst bekannt gewordene Beispiele mit Himmelfahrtsdarstellung: Kötzsche-Breitenbruch, Pilgerandenken 230–231, Taf. 25a (Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum); Engemann, Pilgerampullen II, 157–158, Nr. 4, Taf. 7d (Cleveland, Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1999,46).

[289] Oben Anm. 167.

[290] Monza Nr. 1, 2, 10,11: Grabar, Ampoules 17, 20, 26–27, Taf. III, V, XVII, XIX–XXI. – Bobbio Nr. 13, 18, 19, 20: Grabar, Ampoules 38, 40, 42, 43–44 (Sonderform mit Ioannes Prodromos und Zacharias), Taf. XLIV, XLVII, L, LIII.

[291] Monza Nr. 14, 16 (mit Umschrift EMMANOYHΛ MEΘ HMωN ω ΘEωC): Grabar, Ampoules 30, 31, Taf. XXVII, XXIX–XX.

[292] Florenz, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Plut. I 56, Blatt 13 verso: Sörries, Buchmalerei 94–100, hier 98, Taf. 57 (mit Bibliographie).

[293] Kühnel, Ascension. – Zur Himmelfahrtkirche (Imbomon) siehe Bieberstein – Bloedhorn, Jerusalem 299–303.

[294] Oben Anm. 283. – In Bawit, Gebetsraum XLV erscheint anstelle Marias der Prophet Ezechiel: Clédat, Recherches 523, Abb. 2 (Clédat – Bénazeth, Monastère 79–86, Abb. 79–83); Ihm, Programme 100, 204, Kat. LII m, Taf. XXIV,2; Iacobini 52–57, 107–119, Abb. 24–26, 42.

[295] Wie noch Ihm, Programme 95–108 meinte; zur grundsätzlichen Kritik siehe Klauser, Rezension 175–176; siehe auch Wessel, Himmelfahrt 1234–1235; Clédat – Bénazeth, Monastère 87–96, Abb. 85–93. – Wessel, Himmelfahrt 1236 ließ nur Bawit, Gebetsraum XLVI (oben Anm. 283) als Himmelfahrtsbild gelten, da Maria hier aufschaut und die Apostel lebhaft bewegt sind.

[296] Worauf Ihm, Programme 99 selbst hinwies. – Sie fehlen auch auf den palästinensischen Pilgerampullen.

[297] Oben Anm. 283.

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und Gabriel erweitert, wobei letztere keine besondere (deutende) Funktion haben.[298] Angesichts der sich vollziehenden Theophanie ist Maria hier ewig-präsente Fürbitterin und Vermittlerin zwischen den mönchischen Betern und dem in seiner vollen Herrlichkeit am Himmel erscheinenden Christus.

Vergleichbare monumentale Darstellungen sind im byzantinischen Raum nicht erhalten.[299] Wir kennen aus der fraglichen Zeit aus dem östlichen Bereich ohnehin nur die Apsismosaiken in der Marienkirche des Sinaiklosters (nach 548)[300] und in der Panagia Angeloktistos in Kiti bei Larnaka/Zypern (6./7. Jahrhundert).[301] Die für Konstantinopel vorauszusetzenden Apsiskompositionen in den zahlreichen justinianischen Kirchenneubauten sind nicht erhalten. In der Forschung wird jedoch überwiegend die Ansicht vertreten, daß die Bilder der palästinensischen Pilgerampullen und ebenso die Himmelfahrtsminiatur im Rabbula-Kodex auf monumentale Bildprogramme an den *loca sancta* zurückgehen, für die nun wiederum Konstantinopler Einfluß angenommen wird.[302] Zudem zeigt das Marienbild in der Apsis der Sergioskirche von Gaza – wenn die oben (69) vorgeschlagene Übersetzung von κόλπος zutreffend ist –, daß der syro-palästinensische Raum auch bei der Vermittlung des Bildes der Maria Galaktotrophousa eine gewisse Rolle gespielt haben dürfte. Insofern könnten für die Darstellungen in Bawit und Saqqara auch außerägyptische (syrische) Einflüsse angenommen werden, wobei unbekannt bleibt, auf welchen Wegen Vorlagen welcher Art nach Ägypten gelangt sind. In der Kombination der Theophanie mit drei Marientypen sowie den beigegebenen koptischen Heiligen ist jedoch zweifellos eine selbständige Weiterentwicklungen vorgegebener Muster zu beobachten.[303]

In allen Darstellungen der thronenden Maria einschließlich der Galaktotrophousa wird primär auf die Inkarnation des Logos (nach monophysitischer Auffassung: des *einen* gott-menschlichen Erlösers) verwiesen. Christa Ihm hatte „alle drei formal zusammenhängenden Programmtypen" nach ihrem gemeinsamen Symbolgehalt und den innerbildlichen Bezügen untersucht.[304] Den Schlüssel zum Verständnis erkannte sie in der Rolle der fürbittenden Maria. Ihre Darstellung im Himmelfahrtsbild der palästinensischen Pilgerampullen wurzle in der Verbindung von Himmelfahrts- (Apostelgeschichte 1,1–14) und Pfingstgeschehenen (Apostelgeschichte 2,1–4), in das Maria als Mitglied der „Ekklesia" einbezogen worden war.[305] Die Zusammenstellung von thronender Maria mit dem Kind und der Theophanie fände ihre Begründung in der Jerusalemer Tradition des Festes der Himmelfahrt, das in der Geburtskirche von Bethlehem gefeiert wurde. Inkarnation und Himmelfahrt Christi wurden hierbei als heilsgeschichtliche Einheit begriffen, weshalb Maria Orans (**Abb. 18**) und die mit dem Kind thronende Gottesmutter (**Abb. 17**) in den zweizonigen Bildprogrammen austauschbar seien.[306] Auch im dritten Typus, der Galaktotrophousa, allein (**Abb. 14** und **15**) oder zwischen Aposteln/Heiligen (**Abb. 16**), sah Ihm gemäß ihrer ekklesiologischen Interpretation aller drei Varianten des Marienbildes „den Descensus und den Ascensus des Gottessohnes" sichtbar verwirklicht.[307] Das mag im Prinzip zwar zutreffen, doch gilt hier wieder die Einschränkung, daß in den Theophaniebildern von Bawit und Saqqara keine Himmelfahrt Christi dargestellt ist, sondern die Vorausweisung auf die Parusie Christi. Zudem dürfte die Galaktotrophusa in Verbindung mit der Theophanie (**Abb. 16**) den Bedeutungsgehalt der „normal" thronenden (**Abb. 17**) und der fürbittenden Maria (**Abb. 18**) noch um einen zusätzlichen, auf die eucharistische Milch der Erlösung hinweisenden Aspekt erweitert haben.

Mit Blick auf die Galaktotrophousa als Sinnbild der Eucharistie und die ekklesiologische Bedeutung Marias kann im Falle der Gebetsräume von Bawit und Saqqara für die Maler und für die sie beauftragenden Klosterinsas-

[298] Es sei aber angemerkt, daß in Bawit, Gebetsraum XVII (oben Anm. 281) – wie im Bild des Rabbula-Kodex – der Theophanie zwei Kränze darbringende Engel beigegeben sind, siehe die Detailabbildung bei Iacobini, Visioni, Abb. 17–18.

[299] Wohl ebenfalls auf palästinensische Anregungen geht das um 500 entstandene Apsismosaik in der Kirche Hosios David in Thessaloniki zurück; dazu zuletzt Semoglu, Mosaique (mit der weiteren Literatur).

[300] Forsyth – Weitzmann, Monastery 11–16, Taf. CIII–CXXVIII; Ihm, Programme 69–70, 195–197, Kat. L; Elsner, Art 99–123.

[301] Oben Anm. 199.

[302] Grabar, Martyrium 161–164, 185–187; Grabar, Ampoules 45–50 (einschränkend); Ihm, Programme 3 mit Anm. 9, 96–97; Weitzmann, Loca sancta 44; Engemann, Pilgerampullen I, 22–25 (diskutiert die unterschiedlichen Meinungen); vorsichtig Kühnel, Ascension.

[303] Iacobini, Visioni 171–211 vermutet den Ursprung der für Bawit und Saqqara typischen Theophaniebilder in einer verlorenen Komposition in Alexandria. Hingegen tritt Kühnel, Ascension für den bestimmenden Einfluß der palästinensischen Ikonographie ein.

[304] Ihm, Programme 102–108.

[305] Ihm, Programme 103–104.

[306] Ihm, Programme 104–107.

[307] Ihm, Programme 107–108. – Es sei angemerkt, daß in Bawit, Gebetsraum XVII (oben Anm. 281) auf der Stirnwand über der Apsis die als ἁγία ἐκκλησία bezeichnete Halbfigur einer reich gekleideten und gekrönten Frau mit Kelch und drei Heilige dargestellt sind, vgl. Ihm, ebd. 201.

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sen (falls Mönche nicht selbst als Maler tätig waren[308]) die Vertrautheit mit den allgemeinen theologischen Grundanschauungen vorausgesetzt werden, etwa in der Art, wie wir sie in der obenerwähnten Marienpredigt des Kyrillos finden.[309] Die Aporie, wonach der Logos die von Gott gespendete Milch ist und andererseits selbst der Milch bedarf, die Gott in Marias Brust gegeben hat, findet im Bild der Maria Galaktotrophusa ihre Auflösung. Für die mönchischen Beter vor den Bildern bedeutet dies: Ihr fortwährendes und notwendiges Verlangen nach der Eucharistie, der göttlichen Milch der Erlösung, wird beim Anblick der Gottesmutter und des Kindes paradigmatisch gestillt. Insofern läßt sich für das Bild der Galaktotrophousa annehmen, daß die ekklesiologische, soteriologische und die eucharistische Sinnebene hier den gleichen Stellenwert innehatten.

Der übergeordnete Kontext all dieser Bilder ist die Funktion der Oratorien im Rahmen des monastischen Gebets.[310] Dabei ist zu unterscheiden zwischen einfachen Gebetsräumen, die wohl nur den Bewohnern der angrenzenden Zellen dienten, und Gemeinschaftsoratorien, die von größeren Betergruppen und vermutlich auch von auswärtigen Besuchern benutzt wurden.[311] Bolman hat einige der weitgehend vollständigen Bildprogramme von Bawit und den Kellia analysiert und exemplarisch die vielfältigen Assoziationen aufgezeigt, die diese Räume zu Orten der spirituellen Nachfolge Christi und der Gemeinschaft mit den dargestellten Heiligen werden lassen.[312] Daseinsauffassung und Selbstbild der ägyptischen Mönchsgemeinschaften waren maßgeblich von eschatologischen Vorstellungen bestimmt.[313] Dies legt es nahe, in den komplexen Bildprogrammen von Bawit uns Saqqara vor allem eine visionäre „Vorwegnahme des Reiches Gottes“ zu erkennen.[314] Wie eine Anleitung zur beständigen kontemplativen Verinnerlichung der Bilder lesen sich die Worte des Apa Evagrios in den *Apophtegmata Patrum,* obgleich sich diese auf das monastische Leben in den Kellia beziehen, deren Bildprogramme einem ganz anderen Konzept folgten:[315] „In der Zelle sitzend nimm deine Gedanken zusammen. Denk an den Todestag! Blicke dann auf die Ertötung des Leibes. Überdenke das Geschick. Nimm Arbeit auf dich. Verachte die Eitelkeit der Welt, damit du allenthalben imstande bist, in dem Vorsatz der Herzensruhe zu verharren und nicht ermattest. Denke an die, die augenblicklich in der Hölle sind (…) Denke endlich auch an die Güter, die den Gerechten aufgespart sind, die Vertrautheit mit Gott dem Vater und Jesus Christus, mit den Engeln und Erzengeln und dem ganzen Volke der Heiligen, das Reich der Himmel, seine Geschenke, seine Freuden und den Genuß daran. Für diese beiden Lose bewahre dir das Gedächtnis“.[316]

Zum Schluß bleibt noch zu prüfen, ob die ekklesiologische, soteriologische und eucharistische Interpretation des Bildes der Galaktotrophousa schon für den Krater im Thermenmuseum (**Abb. 5**) und das Sarkophagfragment in İstanbul (**Abb. 3**) sowie für das 27. Tetrastichon des Prudentius, mithin für die außerägyptischen Zeugnisse aus dem letzten Drittel des 4. Jahrhunderts gelten kann. Hinsichtlich des Kraters stellte Brenk zu Recht fest, daß die Anordnung der beiden Gruppen der Gottesmutter den gleichen Rang und Anspruch auf Verehrung wie Christus zuerkenne.[317] Doch warum wählte man auf dem Krater und dem Sarkophag, wenn auch in Varianten, für die Gottesmutter den Typus der Kourotrophos bzw. der Galaktotrophousa? Die Antwort kann hier nur lauten: weil das Motiv in der kaiserlichen Fecunditas längst vorgebildet war und offenbar prägnanter als das einfache Thronbild den imperialen Anspruch und vor allem die Gottesmutterschaft Marias zum Ausdruck bringen konnte. Hingegen dürfte das Apsisbild in der Sergioskirche von Gaza bereits die Aussage der Galaktotrophousa-Darstellungen von Bawit und Saqqara im Sinne der eucharistischen Bedeutung der „Milch der Erlösung“ antizipiert haben.

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[308] Zu Inschriften mit der Berufsangabe „Maler“ siehe Wietheger, Jeremias-Kloster 282.

[309] Wallis Budge, Miscellaneous II, 719.

[310] Zur Architektur und Ausstattung: Grossmann, Architektur 276–279; zur Diskussion der Frage, ob hier möglicherweise die Eucharistie gefeiert wurde, siehe Brenk, Apse 88–90. Immerhin hatte die Nischen in den Gebetsräumen Saqqara, B 709 (mit Halbfigur Christi) und B 733 (Maiestas) eine eingesetzte Altarplatte. Zu Gebetsraum B 709 bemerkte Grossmann, Architektur 278, daß dieser später zu einer liturgiefähigen Kapelle umgebaut worden sei.

[311] Grossmann, Architektur 279–282; zu den Kellia siehe Descœudres, Mönch 185–205 und Descœudres, Repräsentationshaltung 101–120.

[312] Bolman, Joining the Community 41–56; siehe auch Bolman, Mimesis 65–77; Bolman, Depicting 408–422; Iacobini, Visioni 216–220.

[313] Moschos, Eschatologie.

[314] Zu Bawit siehe Moschos, Eschatologie 84, 227, 277, 354, 365.

[315] Descœudres, Mönch 185–205; Descœudres, Repräsentationshaltung 101–120; Bolman, Depicting 408–433; Brooks Hedstrom, Geography 756–791.

[316] Miller, Weisung 90–91, Nr. 227.

[317] Brenk, Apse 78, dazu ergänzend: “The deeper meaning of this juxtaposition could lie in the doctrine of the unity of the divine and human natures of Christ, but also the Virgin and the newly evolving devotion towards here are at stake”.

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Wie ein der Kaiserin Ailia Eudokia, der Gattin Theodosios II., zugeschriebener Homerocento zeigt, gehörte der an der Brust der Jungfrau, dem sprudelnden Milchquell der Gottesmutter trinkende Menschensohn zu den gängigen literarisch-theologischen Bildern der Inkarnation.[318] Im Falle des kirchlichen Gebrauchsgegenstands wird sich dem zeitgenössischen Betrachter die im Stillmotiv enthaltene eucharistische Bedeutung wohl kaum mitgeteilt haben, wohl aber die Rolle Marias als θεοτόκος. Anders verhält es im Falle des Konstantinopeler Säulensarkophags, denn auf einem Grabdenkmal liegt der paradigmatische Verweis auf die von Maria und den menschgewordenen Gott-Logos in ihren Armen gespendete „Milch der Erlösung" durchaus nahe, auch wenn auf das Stillmotiv verzichtet wurde. Hingegen war für die christologische Kernaussage des 27. Tetrastichon („die Mutter staunt über so viele Ehren der Frucht ihres keuschen Leibes und daß sie Gott, den Menschen und auch obersten König geboren hat") die Vorstellung der Galaktotrophousa eigentlich nicht erforderlich; sie war dem Dichter aber wichtig, weshalb er so prononciert die Lage des Christuskindes *sub virginis ubere* hervorgehoben und Maria ausdrücklich als *Dei genetrix* bezeichnet hat.

Will man ein abschließendes Fazit ziehen, so dürfte anhand der Denkmäler deutlich geworden sein, daß die Marienfrömmigkeit in Ägypten wie auch anderswo im spätantiken Imperium schon lange vor dem Konzil von Ephesos und noch bis weit in das 6. Jahrhundert außerhalb der Kirche, das heißt in den sozialen Milieus der mittelständischen Stadtbewohner – also in der Privatsphäre des „Volkes" – fest verankert war. Wir finden Mariendarstellungen im Grabbereich, auf kirchlichem Gerät und – vor allem in Ägypten – auf Gegenständen des Alltagslebens mit zum Teil eigenständigen bildlichen Lösungen, die aus dem überkommenen ikonographischen Fundus schöpften. Ob bereits die Theonaskirche das Marienpatrozinium besaß, läßt sich aus den Quellen nicht bestätigen. Die Geschichte von der Marienikone in Alexandria könnte den bald nach 400 einsetzenden Übergang zu einer kirchlich sanktionierten Bildverehrung reflektieren. Doch bereits vor diesem Zeitpunkt müssen wir mit der Existenz christlicher Bilder und ihrer Verehrung im privaten häuslichen Bereich rechnen. Die Apsis- und Nischenkompositionen von Bawit und Saqqara belegen eine voll ausgebildete ekklesiologische, soteriologische und für das Galaktotrophousa-Bild zudem eine prononcierte eucharistische Programmatik mit besonderem Bezug auf das monastische Dasein.

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[318] Siehe die in Versen abgefaßte Inhaltsangabe in der Anthologia graeca I, 119 (176–179 Beckby).

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Abb. 2a–c: Adelfiasarkophag, Marienszenen an der linken Deckelstirn (Fotos: Beat Brenk).

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Abb. 3: Sarkophagfragment, Theotokos Galaktotrophousa. Konstantinopel, um 400. İstanbul, Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Inv. 5639 (Foto: Franz Schlechter).

Abb. 4: Pignattasarkophag im Braccioforte von Ravenna, rechte Nebenseite: Verkündigung. Ravenna, um 400 (Foto: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abt. Rom, Inst.Neg. 66.2785).

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Abb. 5: Krater, Theotokos Galaktotrophousa (Ausschnitt). Konstantinopel, um 380–390. Rom, Museo Nazionale delle Terme, Inv. 67629 (Foto: Beat Brenk).

Abb. 6: Doppelsolidus Konstantins I. Kaiserin Fausta als Kourotrophos. Trier, 324. Berlin, Münzkabinett (Foto: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett, Lutz-Jürgen Lübke).

Abb. 7: Aquarellkopie eines Freskos aus der Nekropole von Antinoë (Medinet el-Fayum). Theodosia zwischen dem hl. Kollouthos und Maria. Antinoë, 5. Jahrhundert (nach Mario Salmi, I dipinti paleocristiani di Antinoe, in: Scritti dedicati alla memoria di Ippolito Rosellini nel primo centenario della morte, Florenz 1945, Taf. H).

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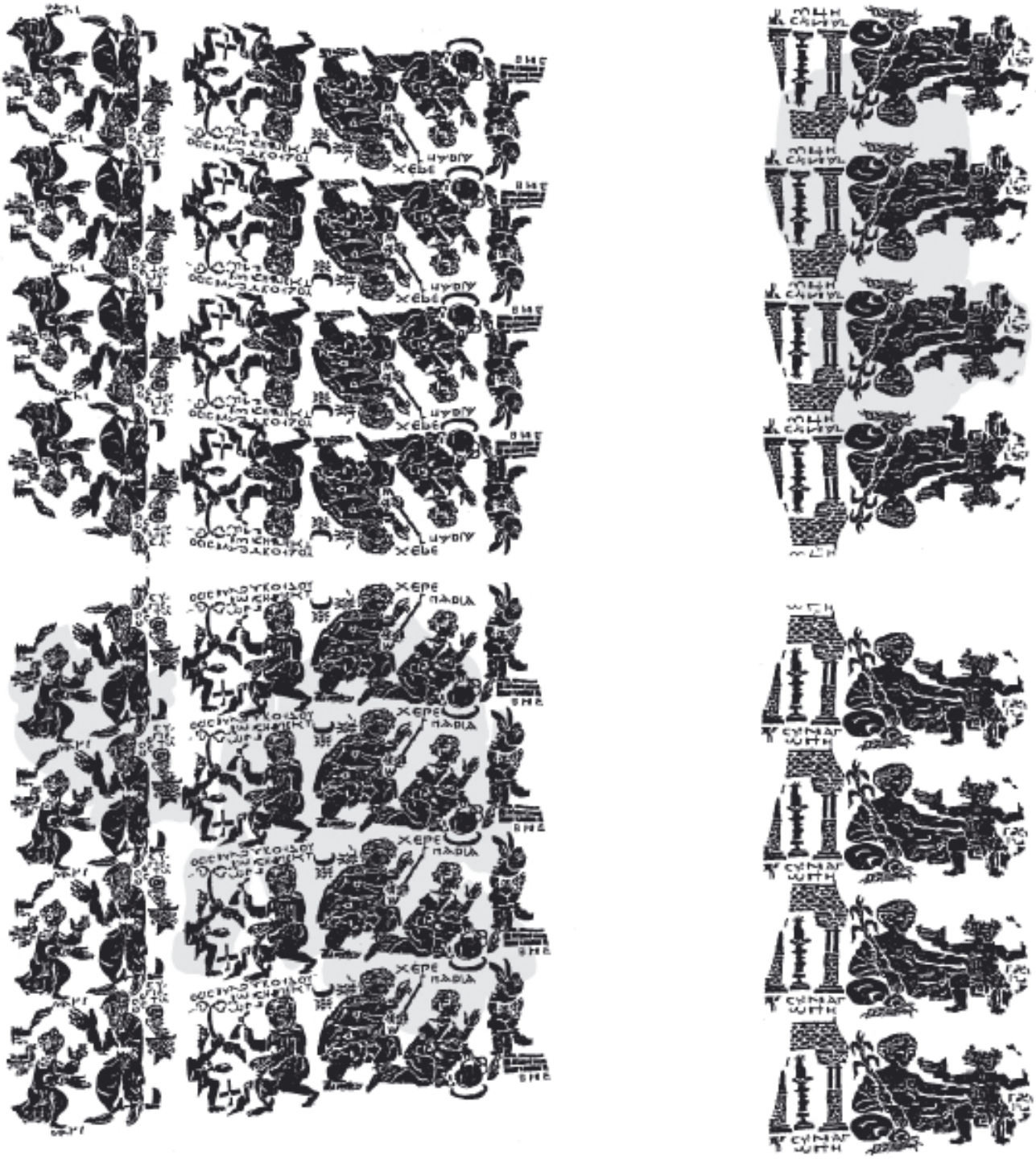

Abb. 8: Marienseide (Teile einer Seidentunika). Ägypten oder östlicher Mittelmeerraum, um 400. Abegg-Stiftung, CH-3132 Riggisberg, Inv. 3100b (Credit line: ©Abegg-Stiftung, CH-3132 Riggisberg; Zeichnung Barbara Matulla).

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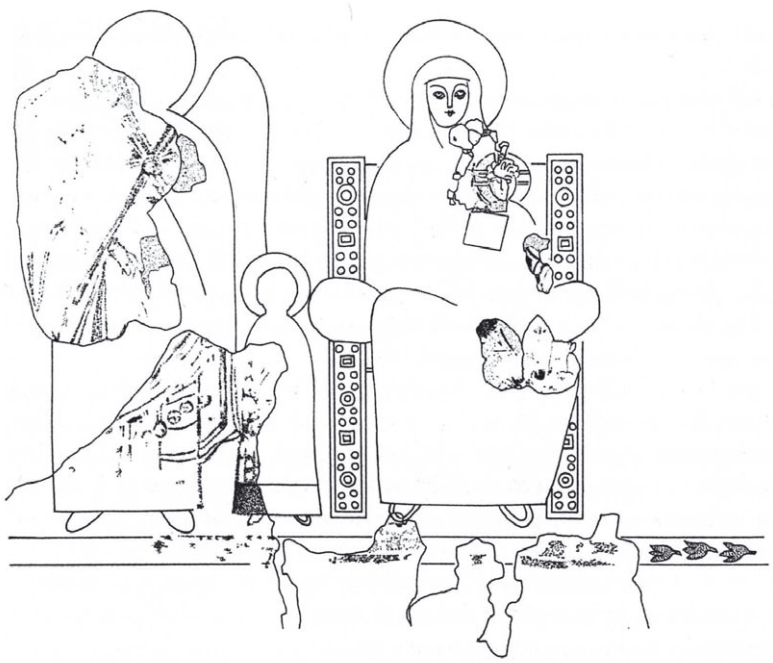

Abb. 9: Kom el-Dikka, Alexandria. Marienfresko im Haus D. 6. Jahrhundert (nach Mieczysław Rodziewicz, Les habitations romaines tardives d'Alexandrie à lumière des fouilles polonaises à Kôm-el Dikka [Alexandrie 3], Warschau 1984, Abb. 236).

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Abb. 11: Maria mit dem Kind. Papyrusfragment. 6. Jahrhundert. Florenz, Istituto Papirologico G. Vitelli, PSI XV 1574 (© Istituto Papirologico „G. Vitelli“ – Università degli Studi di Firenze).

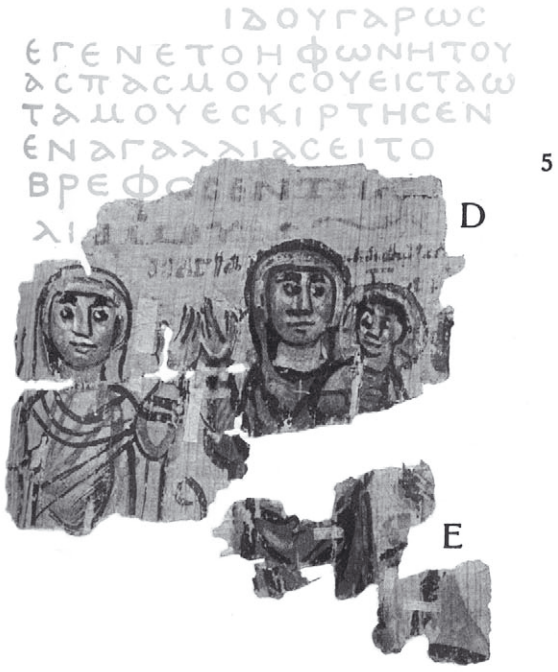

Abb. 12: Mariendarstellung in der Alexandrinischen Weltchronik. Moskau, Staatliches Museum der bildenden Künste (Puschkin-Museum), Inv. 310 (nach Adolf Bauer – Josef Strzygowski (Hgg.), Eine alexandrinische Weltchronik. Text und Miniaturen eines griechischen Papyrus der Sammlung Goleniščev. Denkschriften der Kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philos.-Hist. Klasse 51, Abh. 2, Wien 1906, Taf. VII verso, Fragmente D und E).

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Abb. 13: Grabstele einer Mutter mit Kind. Aus Arsinoë (Medinet el-Fayum). 4./5. Jahrhundert.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Inv. 4726 (Foto: Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

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Abb. 14: Theotokos Galaktotrophousa. Saqqara, Gebetsraum A. 6./7. Jahrhundert (nach James E. Quibell, Excavations at Saqqara 1906–1907, Kairo 1908, Taf. XL).

Abb. 15: Theotokos Galaktotrophousa. Saqqara, Gebetsraum 1725. 6./7. Jahrhundert (nach James E. Quibell, Excavations at Saqqara 1908–1909, 1909–1910, Kairo 1912, Taf. XXII).

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Abb. 16: Theotokos Galaktotrophousa. Bawit, Gebetsraum XLII. 6./7. Jahrhundert
(nach Jean Clédat, Nouvelles recherches à Baouît (Haute Égypte). Campagnes 1904-1904,
in: CRAI, Paris 1904, Abb. 1).

Abb. 17: Zweizonige Apsiskomposition mit Theophanie und thronender Theotokos zwischen Heiligen. Bawit,
Saal 6. 6./7. Jahrhundert (nach Jean Maspéro – Étienne Drioton, Fouilles exécutées à Baouît par Jean Maspéro.
Notes mises en ordre et éditées par Etienne Drioton (MIFAO 59), Kairo 1931, Taf. XXI).

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Abb. 18: Zweizonige Apsiskomposition mit Theophanie und fürbittender Maria zwischen Heiligen. Bawit, Saal 20. 6./7. Jahrhundert
(nach Jean Maspéro – Étienne Drioton, Fouilles exécutées à Baouît par Jean Maspéro.
Notes mises en ordre et éditées par Etienne Drioton (MIFAO 59), Kairo 1931, Taf. XXXVII).

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Antonia Atanassova

The Theme of Marian Mediation in Cyril of Alexandria's Ephesian Writings

The origins of the idea of Mary's intercessory powers are to be sought as early as fifth-century theology, in the context of the Council of Ephesus (429–431), which deposed Nestorius and confirmed Cyril of Alexandria's christology with its usage of the title *Theotokos* as orthodox. Cyril and Nestorius espoused mutually exclusive conceptualizations of the role of Mary in incarnational theology. Nestorius was not prepared to acknowledge the title *Theotokos*, except as an example of misguided and excessive piety; if the usage of the title was inevitable, he suggested, than it was to be done with proper qualifications.[1] Cyril, on the other hand, insisted on the unconditional acceptance of the title *theotokos* and the christological reasoning on which it rested.[2] The Council of Ephesus aimed at confirming one of these two forms of marian theology as orthodox, instead of negotiating a settlement. Any form of negotiation would be unrealistic, partially because of the glaring difference in the theological schema of the two camps, and, partially, because orthodoxy could not be embraced by the church as a matter of compromise.

Regardless whether devotion to Mary predated, contributed to, or determined her conceptualization as *Theotokos*, Mary's depiction as a God-bearer was endorsed at Ephesus (in its Cyrilline version) as an elemental part of the theology of the incarnation. The indispensable role which Mary comes to play in Cyril's incarnational theology is directly related to the facts of her "divine motherhood" as uniting human and divine realms and, consequently, to the transformation of the *Theotokos* into a mediating figure, facilitating the restoration of the covenant between God and humanity. In this connection I propose to read Cyril of Alexandria's contribution to the emergence of the idea of marian intercession as qualified by his understanding of the Virgin Mother as a "ladder to heaven," bringing together God and creation in an unbreakable bond. In other words, I consider Cyril's rudimentary understanding of Mary as a mediating figure to be a crucial element of his incarnational theology and by extension, of his christological agenda.

It would be anachronistic to read into Cyril's reflections on the *Theotokos*' dignity a definitive understanding of the possibilities of casting Mary as an intercessor or a mediator in light of her special relationship with her son. Yet by way of supplementing his insistence on the theological rationale behind the title *Theotokos*, Cyril's works from his Ephesian period (letters, homilies and dogmatic treatises) rely on certain concepts that come to full fruition in the context of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Among those are his depiction of the fiat of Mary's motherhood, her instrumental role in the divine economy, and a special consideration of the life-giving properties of the Virgin's womb. Such theological motifs dominate Cyril's incarnational vision. Mary's mediating role or its subsidiary privilege, the power of intercession, is thus not a mature doctrinal notion for him but a logical corollary of the significance that he ascribes to the Virgin in the context of the incarnation. In Cyril's work this convergence of conceptual fields – divine revelation, incarnation, and marian theology, – is so unambiguous that it can only lead to one conclusion. Notwithstanding the need of extensive and reliable studies of the origins of marian veneration before Ephesus (431), Cyril's reconstruction of marian and incarnational themes has a uniquely Christian background. A careful reading of Cyril challenges what earlier studies have defined as a matter of scholarly consensus, namely that early mariology is "paganism baptized, pure and simple" and a "natural outgrowth of the

[1] For instance, Nestorius insists that if, as a figure of speech, Mary is *Theotokos* (indicating her role in Christ's unity), then she is also *anthropotokos*, or the origin of Christ's humanity. Cf. F. Loofs, Nestoriana. Halle 1905, 303.

[2] Cyril defends this idea in numerous instances throughout the controversy. A good example of his reasoning in regard to the unity between the Logos and Mary's son is found in the following statement: "Since we have elected to think correctly we certainly do not say that God became the Father of the flesh, nor again that the nature of the deity was born through a woman before it and assumed the human condition. No, instead we worship One Lord Jesus Christ, for the Word born of God and the man born completely of the holy virgin come together in unity"; *Letter to the Monks* § 17, cf. J. McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy, its History, Theology, and Texts. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1994, 255.

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goddess-cults in the ancient world."[3] It will be difficult to argue then that "there is a direct line, unbroken and clearly discernible, from the goddess-cults of the ancients to the reverence paid and eventually the cult accorded to the Virgin Mary."[4] While the historical materials addressing the marian question in the period predating Ephesus are very scarce and thus any conclusions on their basis become tentative, I argue that, as illustrated by Cyril, they make sense to a Christian audience, participating in a Christ-commemorating liturgy and working with a Christ-focused theological vocabulary. In this connection it is useful to examine the Christian, rather than the pagan roots of marian recognition, without setting aside or disclaiming any possible influence of pagan religious practices. This is not to say that ancient devotion to Mary emerged in a cultural and intellectual vacuum, but that the context of ecclesiastical discussion on marian theology is the backbone which determines its force and development.

A good example of this Christ-centered approach to marian studies is found in Cyril's five volume work, *Adversus Nestorium*, where Cyril explicitly defended Mary as *Theotokos*. In this text his argument relies on an extensive analysis of the meaning of divine *kenosis* and God's offer of salvation. In building the image of the Virgin as the locus of the interactive exchange between human and divine, Cyril touches upon a number of seminal questions, for example: a) what is the identity of Mary's son – human or divine? b) is Mary the mother of God or of God's anointed? c) how exactly does God become incarnate?[5] d) how does the incarnation compare to and differ from the indwelling of the saints by the Holy Spirit? Repeatedly Cyril links the mariological issues to the precepts of christological thinking. Cyril's work in that regard has a distinct Alexandrian background, as shown by Jacques Liébaert, who claims that Cyril both borrowed from Athanasius and advanced his doctrine in a more coherent form related to the specific definition of the person of Christ.[6] John McGuckin, an author of the most comprehensive treatment of Cyril's christology published in 1996, writes: "[A]fter Cyril, and largely because of him, the Alexandrian schema of the pre-existent Word's *Kenosis* to humanity and his deification of the flesh became the standard canon of christological language for the church universally."[7] This judgment is supported by Norman Russell, who describes Cyril on the dogmatic level as the "greatest patristic exponent of a christology 'from above.'"[8]

Far from adding it as a mere footnote to the major issue of the Nestorian controversy, Cyril looks at the marian question as the impetus for re-examining the relationship between God and creation, and in the process, for a major restructuring of incarnational theology. As Cyril sees it, in Mary's motherhood God revealed himself and "came to what was his own" (Jn 1:10). The womb of Mary served as the domain in which God clothed himself with flesh and entered the realm of history. Incarnation and divine revelation, Cyril asserts, are inseparably linked. In turn, the doctrine of the incarnation leads to a particular understanding of Mary as the mother of God, whose birthgiving provides the indisputable proof of God's salvific appearance among his people.

As a result of the incarnation, Cyril argues, God had bestowed the benefits of his eternal life upon humanity, for in his union with the flesh the Word "has the power to bring all things to life".[9] This awareness of God's good favour and the optimistic implications with which it endows Cyril's anthropology are striking. In the context of incarnational theology, the Mother of God incarnate occupies a special place: "for she gave birth in the flesh to the Word of God made flesh".[10] The incarnation happens for our sake, Cyril argues, citing Nicaea, and it is an act of divine condescension from the one "who came down for our salvation, emptying himself."[11] Assuming the form of a servant and becoming "God revealed for our sake in human form" is the ultimate act of divine freedom:

> *This is how we should think that the Word of God willingly underwent his voluntary self-emptying; and this is how he humbled himself, assuming the form of a slave, even though in his own nature he is free.*[12]

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[3] S. Benko, The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian roots of Mariology. Leiden–New York–Cologne 1993. Benko's study provides an exhaustive list of cross-references between marian practices of devotion, marian imagery and vocabulary in early Christian theology, and the cults of pagan goddesses, as for example, Isis and Cybele.

[4] Benko, Virgin Goddess 4.

[5] Cf. Jn 1:14.

[6] J. Liébaert, La Doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne. Lille 1951, esp. 218, 236–237.

[7] Liébaert, Doctrine christologique 227.

[8] N. Russell, Cyril of Alexandria: Selections. New York 2000, 63.

[9] *Explanation of the Twelve Chapters*, ed. McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 292.

[10] *Explanation of the Twelve Chapters*, ed. McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 283.

[11] *Third Letter to Nestorius*, ed. L. R. Wickham, Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters. Oxford 1983, 17.

[12] *Third Letter to Nestorius*, ed. Wickham, Cyril 255.

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While in human form, the transcendence of the Word remains intrinsic to his divine nature so that even in the flesh the Son remains "ineffably begotten by nature from the Father" and co-eternal with him.[13] In his birth "according to humanity" the Word encounters humanity in its condition of mortality, corruption, and decay, but since the flesh is his own, by transforming it into the divine life, he restores it once again to communion with God and his glory:

> *As Life, he destroyed death, refusing to suffer anything contrary to his own nature; and he did this so that corruption should be weakened in the bodies of all and so that the dominion of death should be destroyed.*[14]

Furthermore the natures, Cyril states, human and divine,

> *combined unto this real union were different, but from the two together is one God the Son, without the diversity of the natures being destroyed by the union. And it is with reference to this notion of a union without confusion that we proclaim the holy Virgin to be the mother of God, because God the Word was made flesh and became man, and by the act of conception united to Himself the temple that He has received from her.*[15]

Cyril affirms that God's visibility in human form and "in the likeness of a servant" is consistent with and supports the notion that "the glory of lordship is inseparable from Him."[16] The fullness of the divine nature suffers no alteration as a result of the union. Rather the flesh or the humanity of the Word is "holy and perfectly pure," Christ is to be contemplated in his "godlike glory" for all eternity, and his birth is a "great and extraordinary miracle."[17] Consequently, "[H]e knew only the good, and was exempt from that depravity which belongs to a human being" and so human nature was transformed by his coming.

The assumption here is that humanity is created to participate in the divine life and this is the original teleological dimension of its existence. The optimism of such anthropology is startling. As Meyendorff observes in regard to this aspect of eastern thought, "[P]articipation in God – as we have shown – is the very nature of man, not its abolition." [18] At the same time, the divine initiative is what enables this process ever to take place. Here Cyril adopts the idea which Athanasius states in his *On the Incarnation*; that human ontological stability depends on its participation in God.[19]

The images which Cyril chooses to illustrate this point are laden with scriptural allusions and structured to illustrate the inseparable nature of the union and the contribution that each makes to the whole. [20] For instance, Cyril speaks of the lily spreading out its perfume, the pearl spreading its brilliance, and the wood being cast into fire as analogies to the composite being of Christ.[21] Cyril's favourite analogy of the union is the relationship between body and soul:

> *The one, unique Christ has no duality even though he is seen as compounded in inseparable unity out of two different elements in the way that a human being, for example, is seen to have no duality but to be one, consisting of the pair of elements, body and soul.*[22]

The consideration he gives these images is instructive. Body and soul are inseparable and perceived as a joint reality, an indivisible wholeness in any individual; similarly the lily cannot exist without exuding fragrance; en-

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[13] *Commentary on Luke*, ed. R. Payne-Smith, A Commentary upon the Gospel according to S. Luke by S. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria. Oxford 1859, 53.

[14] Ibid., 260.

[15] *Commentary on Luke*, ed. Payne-Smith 47.

[16] *Commentary on Luke*, ed. Payne-Smith 52.

[17] *Commentary on Luke*, ed. Payne-Smith 52–53.

[18] J. Meyendorff, Byzantine Theology: Historical trends and doctrinal themes. New York 1974, 153. Also see his discussion on eastern theological anthropology in regard to original sin; ibid. 143–146.

[19] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 11, E. R. Hardy, Christology of the Later Fathers. Philadelphia 1954, 65: "he [God] gives them a share in his own image, our Lord Jesus Christ, and makes them after his own image and after his likeness: so that by such grace perceiving the image, that is, the Word of the Father, they may be able through him to get an idea of the Father, and, knowing their maker, live the happy and truly blessed life"; cf. ibid., 64–65.

[20] Cyril's approach is consistent with his understanding that "the Word of God became an example for us in the days of his flesh, but not nakedly or outside the limits of the self-emptying"; McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 103.

[21] For a detailed discussion of the connotations of these images see R. Siddals, Oneness and Difference in the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria. *Studia Patristica* 18, 1 (1983) 207–211, 209; McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 196–201.

[22] *Third Letter to Nestorius*, ed. Wickham, Cyril 23. See also his usage of this image in his *Explanation of the Twelve Chapters* § 3 and *Letter to the Monks* § 12; in McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 285–286, 251–252.

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flamed, the wood takes in the fire.[23] Cyril's choice of these images suggests that there is an organic unity between two entities in Christ, even as they are not placed on the same ontological level of value, and that this natural, hypostatic, and organic character of the unity is what enables Christ to save and, moreover, defines salvation as the work of God.

For Cyril's soteriology it is essential that Mary mediates this type of christological union. The birth and, later on, the death of the Son of God, are experiences that bring together God and humanity:

> *For he was the Word in his own body born from a woman, and he gave it to death in due season, but he suffered nothing at all in his own nature for as such he is life and life-giver. Nonetheless he made the things of the flesh his own so that the suffering could be said to be his.*[24]

Cyril asserts that these "things" happen to the incarnate Word: before the incarnation they could not be predicated of the divine Logos. Without Mary's consent to the annunciation, the divinization of human nature would not have been possible. It is the reality of the incarnation that has made this interaction of human and divine properties realistic and appropriate to the divine plan of salvation. In the same way in which the christic unity has no parallel in created nature, in the same sense the human experiences of the incarnate Logos are transfigured by his divine identity. Cyril's theory of exchange of properties creates its own epistemology of union according to which the Word is endowed with genuine human experiences, yet the fact of the union restores to them the dimension of re-orienting and undergoing them in the fullness of divine life. Hence humanity is brought back to its original state of participating in God and offering the fullness of creation to the sanctifying love of its creator.

Mary's pregnancy and birthgiving are described as realities that form an inseparable part of the authenticity of her virgin motherhood. In this connection Cyril understands the Nestorian depiction of Christ's birth as 'passing through' from the "Virgin Mother of Christ" (in the context of a relationship of conjunction between God and humanity) to limit God to a circumscribable entity which could be moved in and out of the Virgin's body:

> *What is this 'passed through' if it does not indicate the birth? Or do you say that the Word of God passed through the Virgin on his own without the flesh? Is this not complete nonsense? For it would be necessary to conceive of the divine as endowed with quantity and be capable of movement that transposes it from one place to another.*[25]

The reality of the birth is undisputable, Cyril argues, because it is through Mary's body that God reveals his majesty in a visible and tangible form. This is why, Cyril concludes, the "holy and most pure Virgin" is to be venerated as *Theotokos*, that is to say, a figure mediating between God and humankind by virtue of her 'divine' motherhood.[26]

The most original element of Cyril's depiction of the *Theotokos* as mediating the exchange of human and divine properties is related to the special consideration he gives to the womb of Mary as the sacred space in which God unites himself with human nature. This image is tested and refined in Cyril's homilies on Mary delivered during the Ephesian controversy, especially in his famous *Homily 4*. In *Homily 4*, a well-known even if disputed liturgical text, Cyril highlights the image of Mary as indispensable to the purposes of the divine economy.[27] The Virgin mother is the one, Cyril proclaims emphatically, "through" whom creation has been brought back to heaven and true faith has triumphed. She alone is the mother of God through whom the church is established and Christian rulers receive their powers.[28]

Situating Mary at the intersection of human and divine realms with all of the possible implications that this approach has for later interpretations of her intercessory powers would continue in subsequent development of marian homiletics. Like Cyril, Theodotus of Ancyra and Proclus of Constantinople both adopted mariological

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[23] The idea occurs in the treatise *Ad Reginas* PG 76, 1364, also *Apologia ad Theodosium*, PG 76, 408; cf. McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 197. Nestorius and his teacher Theodore of Mopsuestia make a similar analogy between the christic union and the Exodus image of the burning bush; see Greer, "Image of God," 58. Commenting on their usage of analogies, Greer observes that Nestorius rejects as deficient the analogy between christic union and the body and soul union in a human being. Also cf. R. Greer, Theodore of Mopsuestia: Exegete and Theologian. London 1961, 65.

[24] *Letter to the Monks,* ed. McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria 260.

[25] *Advesus Nestorium*, Russell, Cyril of Alexandria 140.

[26] *Adversus Nestorium*, Russell, Cyril of Alexandria 132; cf. ibid., 135: "the Word came down not into the flesh of any particular person … On the contrary, having made his own the body which was from a woman, and having been born from her according to the flesh, he recapitulated human birth in himself."

[27] PG 77, 992BC

[28] Ibid.

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motifs first proposed by the Alexandrian patriarch and worked on the consolidation of christological and marian themes. For instance, in his *Homily 4*, Proclus addresses the Virgin Mary in a way that affirms her unmediated relation to God while also underlining the divine initiative in their relationship: "He entered into you, for this was pleasing to him, and he came forth from you, for this was his will. And he was before you, as he is before all imagining, being ineffably, immutably, impassibly, invisibly, immediately, and divinely born from God the Father."[29] Proclus' *Homily 26* similarly employs a fusion of christological and mariological motifs in asserting that the one God chooses Mary for his entry into the realm of creatures, while remaining essentially God: "He sanctified the virginal gates, he dwelt without construction in the womb, and the one without beginning was born of a woman remaining what he was and yet becoming a small child."[30]

Similarly, references to Mary's womb as a "container of the uncontainable" abound in another seminal work from the Ephesian period, the *Akathistos* hymn. The *Akathistos* is often ascribed to Romanos the Melodist but recent works by Leena Mari Peltomaa have convincingly argued that "the mariology of the hymn as a whole fits the context of Ephesus."[31] It is the theme of Ephesus – the manner of the incarnation – that leads to a description of Mary as the "womb of the divine Incarnation" in this piece. [32] The introduction or Prooemium I to the *Akathistos* opens with the familiar Ephesian notion of containment in its most paradoxical form – the presence of God "unchanged but whole" in the form of a servant in Mary's womb.[33] In this sense Mary is the "celestial ladder by which God descended" a statement which emphasizes her mediating role. [34] Mary cultivates the cultivator of life and is rightly called *theotokos*.[35] Architectural metaphors and images of Mary as the locus of salvation abound: the Virgin is a "container of the uncontainable God", an "ark gilded by the Spirit," an "immovable tower" of the church, an "impregnable wall," a pillar, a lampstand, an "all holy chariot," a tabernacle, a bridal chamber, a bridge, and a ladder.[36] As Peltomaa points out, these metaphors "describe brilliantly the place of Mary in the economy of salvation" and emphasize her instrumental function in general.[37] Their connotations of enclosure and localization are linked to the evocation of the Virgin's name as a person most apt to give protection, victory, and healing.[38]

To summarize, Cyril's introduction of the theme of Marian mediation, understood as Mary's contribution to the christic union in the reality of the incarnation, is a precursor to later interpretations of the Virgin as mediator and intercessor. The mother of the one Christ occupies a unique place in Cyril's incarnational theology. She is the "celestial ladder by which God descended" from heaven.[39] Her motherhood embodies the immediate life-giving presence of God with the human race and all creation rejoices in her.[40] This explicit emphasis on Mary's middle role between God and creation, the focal point of which is her motherhood (and her womb)[41], is Cyril's contribution to the emerging field of marian theology and a definite theological novelty.

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[29] *Homily Four*, ed. Constas 236–237. See N. Constas, Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the *Theotokos*, and the Loom of the Flesh. *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 32 (1995) 169–194.

[30] Trans. Constas 374–5.

[31] Ibid.

[32] See L. M. Peltomaa. The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2001, 205.

[33] Ed. Peltomaa, 3. Peltomaa considers Prooemium I as the theological argument of the hymn; cf. ibid., 37. The conceptual structure of the Prooemium affirms the themes most pertinent to the context of Ephesus, especially the discussion of Mary as a container of the uncontainable God.

[34] Strophe 3, ed. Peltomaa 206.

[35] Strophe 5, ed. Peltomaa 3; Strophe 23, ed. Peltomaa 19: "as we sing in honour of your giving birth, we all praise you as a living temple, O *Theotokos*." The emphasis on the *Theotokos* is developed in a context which negates a depiction of Mary as a receiver or *theodochos* (which is a Nestorian term) – a direct reflection of the Ephesian theme of the incarnation; cf. Peltomaa 148

[36] Strophe 23, 19, 15, 3

[37] Peltomaa 146.

[38] Cf. esp. Strophe 23, ed. Peltomaa, 19. Here the description of Mary as a tabernacle, tower, and a wall, is followed by a consideration of her role as the one through whom enemies fall and trophies are raised. The strophe ends with a powerful offering of praise: "Hail, healing of my body/ Hail, protection of my soul/ Hail, bride unwedded"; ibid.

[39] *Akathistos*, Strophe 3, ed. Peltomaa 5.

[40] Ibid., cf. *Akathistos*, Strophe 11, ed. Peltomaa 15 where Mary is proclaimed a "minister of holy joy."

[41] Cf. *Second Letter to Nestorius* § 4, trans. Wickham, 7: "he underwent fleshly birth united from the very womb making the birth of his flesh his very own"; also *Third Letter to Nestorius*, § 3, trans. Wickham, 17: "he it is who was incarnate and made man, that is to say, took flesh of the holy Virgin, making it his own from the womb and underwent our human birth and came forth as man from a woman." In this connection Peltomaa argues that the Council of Ephesus (where Cyril's mariology won the upper hand) discussed the physical aspects of the incarnation and thus also focused on the womb of Mary. See Peltomaa 61.

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Theodore de Bruyn

Appeals to the Intercessions of Mary in Greek Liturgical and Paraliturgical Texts from Egypt

Egypt[1] has yielded a rich harvest of textual and material evidence of Christian reflection upon and devotion toward Mary in late antiquity.[2] This bounty is not merely due to an environment conducive to the preservation of materials, important as this has undoubtedly been. There is more going on. But exactly what is going on is harder to determine than at first sight. Several elements of the cult of Mary in Egyptian Christianity become less certain when they are examined more closely. This may be illustrated by considering questions associated with early oblique indications of devotion toward Mary in Egypt, focusing on the epithet *Theotokos*, which inevitably figures in discussions of the origins of the cult of Mary in late antiquity.[3] As is well known, the epithet is indisputably attested by Alexandrian writers in the fourth century, and in fact by writers around the eastern Mediterranean irrespective of doctrinal allegiance.[4] Whereas the epithet apparently required explanation in the third century,[5] fourth-century writers use it incidentally and without comment, suggesting that the term had been accepted into

[1] I gratefully acknowledge support for the research of this paper in the form of a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and release from teaching from the Faculty of Arts in the University of Ottawa. I have benefitted from comments offered at colloquia and conferences where portions of this paper have been read at various stages its development, including the Centre for Early Christian Studies in Australian Catholic University; the North American Patristics Society; and the Fourth Annual Coptic Studies Symposium in Canada; and the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies. I wish to thank Pauline Allen in particular for encouraging me to pursue this inquiry, and Leena Mari Peltomaa for inviting me to contribute a paper to this volume. The responsibility for the paper is, of course, mine.

References to papyrological editions are abbreviated according to J.F. Oates, R.S. Bagnall, S.J. Clackson, A.A. O'Brien, J.D. Sosin, T.G. Wilfong, and K.A. Worp, *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets,* http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html, September, 2008. In addition, the following abbreviations are used: *PGM* = K. Preisendanz, E. Heitsch, and A. Henrichs (eds), *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed., 2 vols (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1974); *Suppl.Mag*. = R.W. Daniel and F. Maltomini (eds.), *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991–1992); *SB* = *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus* Ägypten (1915-); *BL* = *Berichtigungsliste der griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten* (1922-).

[2] While G. Giamberardini, *Il culto mariano in Egitto*, vol. 1 (Pubblicazioni dello Studium biblicum franciscanum analecta 6; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1975) conveniently presents much of the evidence, it must be read critically and supplemented by more recent finds and studies.

[3] To cite only several recent examples: J.M. McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary and Inter-Religious Contexts in the Fifth-Century Church," in C. Maunder (ed.), *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London and New York: Burns and Oates, 2008), 1–22 at 9–10; R.M. Price, "The *Theotokos* and the Council of Ephesus," in Maunder, *Origins of the Cult*, 89–103 at 89–90; M.E. Johnson, "*Sub tuum praesidium*: The *Theotokos* in Christian Life and Worship before Ephesus," in B.D. Spinks (ed.), *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: Trinity, Christology, and Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 243–67. I thank Peter Galadza for bringing this last reference to my attention.

[4] M. Starowieyski, "Le titre θεοτόκος avant le concile d'Ephèse," *Studia Patristica* 19 (1987), 236–42 at 237–39; T. Klauser, "Gottesgebärerin (θεοτόκος)," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 11 (1981), cols 1071–103 at 1074–77. The earliest undisputed instance is in a letter of Alexander of Alexandria, *ep. ad Alex. Const.* 1.12 (PG 18, col. 568C). Peter of Alexandria, *frag*. 7 (PG 18: 517), cited as the first instance by Giamberardini, *Il culto mariano in Egitto*, 1, 111–13, is disputed; cf. M. Geerard, *Clavis patrum graecorum*, 5 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–2003), 1, 206, no. 1640. Patristic texts referring to Mary are conveniently collected in S. Alvarez Campos (ed.), *Corpus Marianum patristicum*, 5 vols (Burgos: Ediciones Aldecoa, 1959).

[5] Socrates, *HE* 7.32 (PG 67, 381B), referring to a discussion, no longer extant, of the epithet by Origen in his commentary on Romans; cf. C. Vagaggini, *Maria nelle opere di Origene* (Orientalia Cristiana Analecta 131; Rome: Pontificium Insitutum orientalium studiorum, 1942), 105–7. G. Giamberardini, "Il 'Sub tuum praesidium' e il titolo 'Theotokos' nella tradizione egiziana," *Marianum* 31 (1969), 324–62 at 351–53 and 360–61, argues that the epithet is derived from Egyptian expressions, preserved in both hieroglyphic and Coptic, for "Mother of God." According to Giamberardini, the traditional Egyptian connotations of this expression, associated with Isis, would have obliged Origen to explain how Mary could properly be considered "God-bearer." The arguments are reproduced in Giamberardini, *Il culto mariano*, 1, 111–22. Starowieyski, "Le titre θεοτόκος," 240–41, accepts this hypothesis, rejecting, as does Klauser, "Gottesgebärerin," 1076–77, that Origen was the author of the title. The remarks of McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary," 9–10, are suggestive. On later usage see D.F. Wright, "From 'God-Bearer' to 'Mother of God' in the Later Fathers," in R.N. Swanson (ed.), *The Church and Mary* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 22–30.

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theological usage by then.[6] The devotional value of the epithet in the third and fourth centuries is less clear, however. Although Cyril of Alexandria comes to its defence for soteriological reasons,[7] he is not particularly concerned with the epithet prior to the controversy with Nestorius.[8] Nor does he appeal to its cultic significance when he takes up its cause,[9] although in his homilies at Ephesus Mary is hailed as the one through whom salvation has come and creation has been restored.[10] It has been suggested that the epithet was first used in hymns.[11] But if this is so, we do not know whether these hymns were addressed to Mary; they are more likely to have been theological or christological in nature.[12] Much has been made of *P.Ryl.* III 470, which preserves an early witness to the antiphon *Sub tuum praesidium*, a prayer for protection addressed directly to the *Theotokos*.[13] But it is less certain now that this papyrus should be assigned to the fourth century,[14] let alone the third century;[15] it probably belongs to the sixth or seventh century,[16] or even later,[17] though scholars of the cult of Mary have been either unaware of, or slow to accept, recent paleographical examinations of the papyrus.[18] The most common name for churches or other sites dedicated to Mary in Egypt is "holy Mary," an expression that appears from the fifth century onward.[19] Considerably fewer sites are dedicated to the *Theotokos*, a name that first appears in the sixth century.[20] In fact,

[6] R.M. Price. "*Theotokos*: The Title and its Significance in Doctrine and Devotion," in S.J. Boss (ed.), *Mary: The Complete Resource* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 56–73 at 56–57; Price, "The *Theotokos*," 90.

[7] B. Studer, "Il concilio di Efeso (431) nella luce della dottrina mariana di Cirillo di Alessandria," in S. Felici (ed.), *La mariologia nella catechesi dei padri (Età postnicena)* (Biblioteca di scienze religiose 95; Rome: LAS, 1991), 49–67; A. Atanassova, "Cyril of Alexandria and His Contribution to Mariology," *Studia Patristica* 42 (2006), 29–44; A. Atanassova, "Did Cyril of Alexandria Invent Mariology?", in Maunder, *Origins of the Cult*, 105–25.

[8] P. Imhof and B. Lorenz, *Maria Theotokos bei Cyrill von Alexandrien. Zur Theotokos-Tradition und ihrer Relevanz* (Munich: Gerhard Kaffke, 1981), 41–44; L.R. Wickham (ed.), *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 11 n. 10; Studer, "Il concilio di Efeso," 54.

[9] Studer, "Il concilio di Efeso," 55.

[10] Atanassova, "Cyril of Alexandria and His Contribution," 40–43; Atanassova, "Did Cyril of Alexandria Invent Mariology?", 114–16.

[11] Price, "The *Theotokos*," 90.

[12] As are two fourth-century hymns referring to Mary: *P.Köln* IV 172 (cf. intro. and l. 1 comm.) and P.Monts. Roca inv. 149b–153 (cf. A. Emmett, "A Fourth Century Hymn to the Virgin Mary? Psalmus Responsorius: P.Barc. 149b-153, in *Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrologists* [Graeco-Roman Memoirs 61; London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1975], 97–102, and "A Fourth-Century Hymn to the Virgin Mary?", in G.H.R. Horsley (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, 2* [Sydney: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1982], 141–46, no. 92).

[13] *P.Ryl.* III 470; P.F. Mercenier, "L'antienne mariale grecque la plus ancienne," *Le Muséon* 52 (1939), 229–33; O. Stegmüller, "*Sub tuum praesidium*: Bemerkungen zur ältesten Überlieferung," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 74 (1952), 76–82; G. Giamberardini, "Il 'Sub tuum praesidium', 324–62; H. Förster, "Zur ältesten Überlieferung der marianischen Antiphon 'Sub tuum praesidium'," *Biblos* 44 (1995): 183–92. For a review of studies that discuss the papyrus see A.M. Triacca, "'Sub tuum praesidium': nella 'lex orandi' un'anticipata presenza della 'lex credendi.' La 'teotocologia' precede la 'mariologia'?", in S. Felici (ed.), *La mariologia nella catechesi dei padri (Età prenicena)* (Biblioteca di scienze religiose 88; Rome: LAS, 1989), 183–205 at 184–90.

[14] As initially proposed by Roberts on terminological grounds (*P.Ryl.* III 470 intro.); cf. also Stegmüller, "*Sub tuum praesidium*," 78 and 82.

[15] As initially proposed by Lobel on paleographical grounds (*P.Ryl.* III 470 intro.); cf. Giamberardini, "Il 'Sub tuum praesidium'," 348–62.

[16] Förster, "Zum ältesten Überlieferung," 183–92.

[17] H. Förster, "Die älteste marianische Antiphon ein Fehldatierung? Überlegungen zum 'ältesten Beleg' des *Sub tuum praesidium*," *Journal of Coptic Studies* 7 (2005), 99–109.

[18] Förster's article of 2005 has, to my knowledge, not been considered in any of the more recent studies of the origins of the cult of Mary. Some studies also do not take his article of 1995 into account, e.g., Johnson, "*Sub tuum praesidium*," 254–55; Price, "The *Theotokos*," 89 n. 4 (corrected in Price, "*Theotokos*: The Title," 56 n. 1, but without substantial discussion). A full consideration of Förster's arguments is beyond the scope of this paper; I hope to discuss them elsewhere. Suffice to say, however, that any argument for a third- or fourth-century date for the antiphon must take as its point of departure the paleographical considerations of Förster (as well as Stegmüller) allowing for a later date for *P.Ryl*. III 470. Lobel's brief paleographical remarks in *P.Ryl*. III 470 intro. cannot remain the principal basis for assigning the papyrus an early date. The issue is now no longer whether a prayer referring to *Theotokos* can be assigned to the third century; Roberts' argument on that point has, obviously, been refuted. The issue is whether an antiphon whose earliest witnesses may be assigned to the sixth or seventh centuries or later originated in the third century. Cf. now also the second witness to the antiphon in K. Treu and J. Diethart (eds.), *Griechische literarische Papyri christlichen Inhaltes II* (Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek Neue Serie XVII; Vienna: Brüder Hollinek, 1993), 56, no. 29.

[19] A. Papaconstantinou, "Les sanctuaires de la Vierge dans l'Égypte byzantine et omeyyade. L'apport des textes documentaires," *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 30 (2000), 81–94 at 92.

[20] Papaconstantinou, "Les sanctuaires de la Vierge," 93.

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the predominance of "holy Mary," a form of regard used for other saints as well,[21] has prompted the suggestion that Mary was revered as one saint among many others in Egypt.[22] Indeed, at Oxyrhynchus in the early sixth century, liturgies were celebrated either more frequently or as frequently at churches dedicated to several other saints than at the church dedicated to Mary.[23]

I do not mean to suggest by this litany that there is no evidence of devotion to Mary in Egypt in the third or fourth centuries. I merely wish to emphasize that closer scrutiny of the evidence may lead one to qualify the inferences one draws from or between early oblique indications of a cult of Mary. This paper on the intercessory function of Mary in Egypt therefore focuses on only a portion of the evidence: (mainly) Greek liturgical and paraliturgical texts from Egypt.[24] I must leave it to others to consider theological treatises, homilies, hymns, iconography, vestments, ecclesiastical and monastic architecture and inscriptions. The main question I pursue is the following: in what form and at what time did appeals to the intercessions of Mary appear in eucharistic liturgies and individual prayers for healing and protection in Egypt?[25] To answer this question I turn to recent scholarship on Egyptian eucharistic anaphoras, and to my own research into Greek amulets from Egypt containing Christian elements.[26] In both cases – the anaphoras and the amulets – we are fortunate to have some important early evidence, thanks, as I have already noted, to the Egyptian environment. But the evidence is fragmentary and sporadic, sometimes difficult to decipher and hard to date, leaving us to propose hypotheses where we might prefer to establish conclusions.

EUCHARISTIC LITURGIES

Since eucharistic liturgies present more or less authorized formulae of invocation used by the church, they are a useful point of departure. However, liturgies are living expressions of local devotion; they vary between regions and develop over time. The study of their development and variations, particularly in the early centuries of Christian worship, is a complex undertaking, as any foray into liturgical scholarship will show.[27] I will focus on early witnesses to the principal eucharistic liturgies in Egypt in late antiquity – the liturgies of St Mark and St Cyril, St. Basil, and St Gregory – and in particular on the commemorations, the section of the anaphora that over time came to include an appeal to the intercessions of Mary or the saints.[28]

We have many early, if fragmentary, witnesses of the anaphora of the liturgy of the patriarchate of Alexandria,[29] which goes by the names of St Mark and St Cyril.[30] (We are less well served with regards to the pre- and post-anaphoral portions of the Alexandrian liturgy, where we must rely on later medieval manuscripts in Greek,

[21] A. Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints en Égypte des Byzantins aux Abbassides. L'apport des inscriptions et des papyrus grecs et coptes* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2001), 240–45.

[22] Papaconstantinou, "Les sanctuaires de la Vierge," 93.

[23] A. Papaconstantinou, "La liturgie stationnale à Oxyrhynchos dans la première moitié du 6e siècle. Réédition et commentaire du *POxy* XI 1357," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 54 (1996), 135–59 at 152–55. See further at p. 12 below.

[24] I discuss texts in Coptic only insofar as they bear directly on the liturgical or paraliturgical texts under consideration.

[25] The bibliography of marian studies is enormous. A few studies have investigated specifically the intercessory function of Mary in the patristic period: G. Bardy, "La doctrine de l'intercession de Marie chez les Pères grecs," *La Vie Spirituelle*, 56 Supplément (1938), 1–37; M. Jourjon, "Aux origines de la prière d'intercession de Marie. Le témoignage des Pères des cinq premier siècles," *Bulletin d'études mariales* 23 (1966), 38–42.

[26] For an overview see T.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, 48 (2001), 163–216.

[27] For an overview see P.F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (2d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[28] Johnson, "*Sub tuum praesidium*," 247–49, which came to my attention after I had substantially completed this section of the paper, covers some of this material, but does not refer to the most recent critical editions.

[29] For an overview of the eucharistic liturgy of Alexandria, see M.E. Johnson, *Liturgy in Early Christian Egypt* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1995), 17–34. For a review of scholarship on all aspects of Alexandrian and Egyptian liturgies, see H. Brakmann, "Zwischen Pharos und Wüste. Die Erforschung der alexandrinisch-ägyptischen Liturgie durch und nach Anton Baumstark," in R.F. Taft and G. Winkler (eds.), *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872–1948)* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 265; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001), 323–76.

[30] The Alexandrian liturgy was used by adherents of Chalcedon under the name of St Mark and by opponents of Chalcedon under the name of St Cyril; see H. Brakmann, "Das Alexandrinische Eucharistiegebet auf Wiener Papyrusfragmenten," *Jahrbuch* für *Antike und Christentum* 39 (1996), 149–64 at 152–53. Today in the Coptic Orthodox church the liturgy is rarely used; see J. Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 5; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 22–23.

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Coptic, and Ethiopic.) One of the earliest witnesses to the Alexandrian anaphora, the Strasbourg papyrus gr. inv. 254,[31] has been assigned to the fifth or even fourth century,[32] but preserves a text that may go back to the late second or early third century.[33] In its commemoration of the dead and the living in the presence of the offering, it refers to the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and to their intercessions.[34] The text is fragmentary at this point, and difficult to reconstruct,[35] but it makes no mention of Mary. In this regard the Strasbourg papyrus resembles the account of the anaphoral intercessions in the late-fourth-century *Mystagogical Catecheses*.[36] There the saints are remembered so that through their prayers and intercessions God may receive the supplications of the faithful,[37] but Mary is not mentioned.[38] (The *Mystagogical Catecheses* distinguishes between remembering the saints and praying for the rest of the dead in the presence of the offering;[39] other fourth-century accounts, such as the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the sermons of John Chrysostom, reflect an older tradition of remembering, or praying for, all the dead, as well as the living, without discrimination in the presence of the offering.[40]) In later manuscripts of the anaphora of St Mark, on the other hand, Mary is singled out for commemoration by the priest,[41] without, however, appealing to her intercessions.[42] The form of this commemoration – referred to as the *Theotokos* ekphonesis because it was chanted aloud by the presiding celebrant – resembles that introduced around 470 by bishop Gennadius into the liturgy at Constantinople immediately before the diptychs of the dead recited by the deacon.[43] This

[31] M. Andrieu and P. Collomp, "Fragments sur papyrus de l'anaphore de saint Marc," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 8 (1928), 489–515; J. Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente aus* Ägypten *und Nubien* (Papyrologica Coloniensia 27; Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999), 22–41.

[32] Andrieu and Collomp, "Fragments," 490–91.

[33] For a review of scholarship see W.D. Roy, "The Strasbourg Papyrus," in P.F. Bradshaw (ed.), *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997), 39–56 at 39–44. For a late-second or early-third century date see G.J. Cuming, "The Anaphora of St. Mark: A Study in Development," *Muséon* 95 (1982), 115–29 at 121–22, reprinted in Bradshaw, *Essays*, 57–72.

[34] τ̣ῶν / ἁγίων σου προφητῶν ἀ[ποσ]τόλω̣ν κ̣[αὶ μ]αρ- / τύρων · τὰς πρ̣ε̣σβείας ἀὐτῶν τ[.] . […]η. The categories of saints named in Eastern anaphoral commemorations are usefully compared at H. Engberding,"Das anaphorische Fürbittgebet der byzantinischen Chrysostomusliturgie (Fortsetzung)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 46 (1962), 33–60 at 34–35.

[35] See Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 40–41, ll. 20–24 comm. Regretably, another early witness to this same text, *P.Lit. Lond.* 232 *recto*, assigned to the sixth or seventh century, breaks off at a point several lines before the Strasbourg papyrus; see now Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 42–50.

[36] The authorship and date of the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, attributed both to Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem from approximately 351 to 387 CE, and to his successor John, have been a subject of ongoing debate. A. Piédagnel, "Introduction" and "Appendice I," in *Cyrille de Jérusalem: Catéchèses mystagogiques* (SC 126 *bis*; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988; repr. 2004), 18–40, 177–87, reviews the discussion up to 1987. A.J. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of the Mystagogic Catecheses* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), concludes after a systematic examination of the evidence that the lectures are the work of Cyril and were delivered toward the end of his episcopate.

[37] *Catech. myst.* 5.9 (SC 126 *bis*: 158): Εἶτα μνημονεύομεν καὶ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, πρῶτον πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὅπως ὁ Θεὸς εὐχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ πρεσβείαις προσδέξηται ἡμῶν τὴν δέησιν.

[38] The formulaic conclusions of fourth-century sermons and treatises also invoke the prayers and intercessions only of the saints; cf., e.g., Evagrius of Pontus, *cap. pract.*, epilogue, l. 7 (SC 171, 712; cf. 713–14); Gregory of Nyssa, *Steph*. 2 (G. Heil, J.P. Cavarnos, and O. Lendle (eds.) *Gregorii Nysseni sermones, Pars II* [Gregorii Nysseni Opera 10.1; Leiden: Brill, 1990], 105); John Chrysostom, *hom. 1 in Gen.* (PG 53: col. 26); John Chrysostom, *In illud: Hoc scitote quod in novissimis diebus* (PG 56, col. 278).

[39] Cf. *Catech. myst.* 5.9 n. 1 (SC 126 *bis* 158–59); R.F. Taft, "Praying to or for the Saints? A Note on the Sanctoral Intercessions/Commemorations in the Anaphora," in M. Schneider and W. Berschin (eds.), *Ab Oriente et Occidente (Mt 8, 11). Kirche aus Ost und West. Gedenkschrift für Wilhelm Nyssen* (St Ottilien: Verlag Erzabtei, 1996), 439–55 at 443, 450–51. I thank Peter Galadza for bringing this reference to my attention.

[40] Taft, "Praying to or for the Saints?", 446–69; cf. G. Winkler, "Die Interzessionen der Chrysostomusanaphora in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung (I. Teil)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 36 (1970), 301–36 at 306–7; H. Engberding, "Das anaphorische Fürbittgebet der byzantinischen Chrysostomusliturgie," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 46 (1961), 20–29 at 26–27.

[41] G.J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St Mark* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 234; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990), 29–31; cf. H. Engberding, "Das anaphorische Fürbittgebet der griechischen Markusliturgie," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 30 (1964): 398–446 at 427–28.

[42] Cuming, *Liturgy*, 114.

[43] The innovation is reported by Theodore Lector, *HE excerptum* 395 (GCS 52, 111) and Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* IV.11 (CSCO 83, 185); cf. J. Declerck, "Le patriarch Gennade de Constantinople (458–471) et un opuscule inédit contre les Nestoriens," *Byzantion* 60 (1990), 130–44 at 141–44. On the original placement and form of the ekphonesis, see R.F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chysostom*, vol. 4. *The Diptychs* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 238; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1991), 100–2, 119–20. Taft accepts at face value Pseudo-Zachariah's explanation for the innovation. See now, however, P. Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–491): de l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2006), 454–55 with 170 n. 375, and

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specific commemoration of Mary was an innovation – previously only categories of saints (patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, etc.) were mentioned – and initially only she was named, without further mention of other individual saints (John the Baptist, etc.).[44]

According to Robert Taft, the *Theotokos* ekphonesis was inserted into the anaphora of St John Chrysostom in imitation of the anaphora of St Basil.[45] The early history and transmission of this anaphora is complex.[46] It exists in two families: a shorter Egyptian form attested in Sahidic (ES-Basil), Bohairic (EB-Basil), Greek (EG-Basil), and Ethiopic (Eth-Basil) versions; and a longer form found in Armenian (Arm-Basil), Syrian (Syr-Basil), and Byzantine (Byz-Basil) versions.[47] The question of the language and provenance of the anaphora at each of the key points in its development – the original form of the anaphora (Ur-Basil), the form from which the Egyptian versions derive (E-Basil), and the form from which the Armenian, Syrian, and Byzantine versions derive (Ω-Basil) – is not settled.[48] Nevertheless, it is generally agreed, with some recent qualifications, that the Egyptian versions originated earlier than and developed independently of the Armenian, Syrian, and Byzantine versions.[49] Some have proposed that the Egyptian form of the anaphora originated in Egypt; others have argued that it originated outside of Egypt, either in Cappadocia or Syria.[50] The current view is that the anaphora came to Egypt from Syria in the sixth or seventh century (at the latest) as non-Chalcedonians looked to Syria for liturgical models after the breach with the Chalcedonian church.[51]

The Sahidic version is shorter than the other Egyptian versions. Like the Bohairic version, it was initially translated from the Greek version. However, because the use of Sahidic in the liturgy was limited to upper Egypt and was eventually abandoned, the Sahidic version did not undergo the sustained development of the Greek and Bohairic versions, which were used throughout Egypt, the one earlier, the other later.[52] The Sahidic version is

G. Greatrex (ed.), *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity* (Translated Texts for Historians 55; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 153 n.117. Blaudeau dates the innovation around 470, near the end of Gennadius' episcopate.

[44] Winkler, "Die Interzessionen der Chrysostomosanaphora (I. Teil)," 309–10.

[45] R.F. Taft, "St. John Chrysostom and the Byzantine Anaphora that Bears His Name," in Bradshaw, *Essays*, 195–226 at 203 n. 19. Earlier versions of this article – R.F. Taft, "The Authenticity of the Chrysostom Anaphora Revisited: Determining the Authorship of Liturgical Texts by Computer," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 56 (1990), 5–51, reprinted in R.F. Taft, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995) – do not treat the intercessions. Taft, "Praying to or for the Saints?", 440, stated that the *Theotokos* ekphonesis was interpolated into both anaphoras under Gennadius.

[46] On the attribution to Basil of Caesarea see now A. Budde, *Die* ägyptische *Basilios-Anaphora. Text – Kommentar – Geschichte* (Jerusalemer Theologisches Forum 7; Münster: Aschendorff, 2004), 568–77.

[47] The point of departure for the analysis of the transmission of St Basil remains H. Engberding, *Das eucharistische Hochgebet der Basileiosliturgie. Textgeschichtliche Untersuchungen und kritische Ausgabe* (Theologie des Christlichen Ostens, Texte und Untersuchungen I; Münster: Aschendorff, 1931), whose findings are summarized and evaluated in G. Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora. Edition der beiden armenischen Redaktionen und der relevanten Fragmente, Übersetzung und Zusammenschau aller Versionen im Licht der orientalischen Überlieferung* (Anaphorae Orientales 2, Anaphorae Armenicae 2; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2005), 9–21. For the Egyptian versions of St Basil, see now Budde, *Die* ägyptische *Basilios-Anaphora*, but cf. the review of G. Winkler, *Oriens Christianus* 89 (2005): 264–75, substantially reproduced in Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora*, 30–37.

[48] Gabrielle Winkler has recently argued that the original form of the anaphora (Ur-Basil) was likely Syrian, and that the form from which the Armenian, Syrian, and Byzantine versions derive (Ω-Basil) was certainly Syrian; see Winkler, "Zur Erforschung orientalischer Anaphoren in liturgievergleichender Sicht II: Das Formelgut der Oratio post Sanctus und Anamnese sowie Interzessionen und die Taufbekenntnisse," in Taft and Winkler, *Comparative Liturgy*, 407–93 at 486–91. She thus breaks with the view of Engberding that Ω-Basil was a revision by Basil of Caesaria of a pre-existing Greek anaphora from Cappadocia (Ur-Basil); see Engberding, *Das eucharistische Hochgebet*, lxxxiv–lxxxvi; Winkler, "Zur Erforschung II," 408–11; Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora*, 16, 20. However, Winkler's arguments have not proven to be conclusive; see A. Budde, "Typisch syrisch? Anmerkungen zur Signifikanz liturgischer Parallelen. Der Ursprung der Basilius-Anaphora in der Diskussion," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 45 (2002), 50–61.

[49] See Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora*, 15, 876–77.

[50] The literature after Engberding's edition is summarized, with some omissions, in Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 20–34; cf. Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora*, 34–37. See now also A. Budde, "Wie findet man 'ägyptisches Heimatgut'? Die ägyptische Ursprung der Basileios-Anaphora in der Diskussion," in Taft and Winkler, *Comparative Liturgy*, 671–88, a reply to T.E. Johnson, "Recovering *ägyptisches Heimatgut*: An Exercise in Liturgical Methodology," *Questions Liturgiques* 76 (1995), 182–98. D.R. Stuckwisch, "The Basilian Anaphoras," in Bradshaw, *Essays*, 109–30 at 114–19, while useful, is incomplete; it does not take into account the critical review by G. Winkler of J.R.K. Fenwick, *The Anaphoras of St Basil and St James: An Investigation into their Common Origin* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 240; Rome: Pontificium Insitutum Orientale, 1992) in *Oriens Christiana* 78 (1994), 269–77.

[51] See H. Brakmann, "Zu den Fragmenten einer griechischen Basileios-Liturgie aus dem koptischen Makarios-Kloster," *Oriens Christianus* 66 (1982), 118–43 at 118–19; Brakmann, "Zwischen Pharos und Wüste," 357–58; Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 578–82.

[52] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 104; cf. Fenwick, *Anaphoras*, 52–53.

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preserved in a number of witnesses which vary one from another,[53] suggesting that they were prepared independently from the Greek in different linguistic contexts.[54] One of the earliest and most complete, MS Lefort copt. s. n., is written in a hand that could be assigned to the eighth or ninth century, but preserves a text dated to the seventh century on internal evidence.[55] In this source Mary alone is named in the commemoration of the dead, in the phraseology of the *Theotokos* ekphonesis: "vouchsafe to remember … all the righteous who are perfected in the faith, especially the ever-virgin, the holy and glorious Mary, the God-bearer." [56] Moreover, it is her prayers alone that are mentioned as benefitting the saints: "and have mercy on us all through her prayers."[57] Two other later witnesses to the Sahidic version of the anaphora similarly remember Mary alone: Cod. Vat. copt. 103,2,[58] a fragment assigned to the eleventh century,[59] and Cairo, Catalogue général 9260 (Coptic Museum 3911),[60] an unnumbered sheet from the Great Euchologion of the White Monastery,[61] a collection of prayers from about the tenth or eleventh century.[62] In the former, the commemoration of Mary breaks off in mid-sentence.[63] In the latter, she alone is named, but the appeal for intercession is in the plural, referring not only to her but to the aforementioned patriarchs, prophets, etc.[64] In naming Mary alone – a feature, as we have seen, of the earliest commemoration of Mary in the anaphora of St John Chrysostom[65] – the Sahidic version of the anaphora differs from all subsequent versions of St Basil, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian. All other versions of the anaphora – EB-Basil, EG-Basil, Eth-Basil, Syr-Basil, Arm-Basil, Byz-Basil – also name John the Baptist, Stephen the first martyr, and other saints, bishops, and monks.[66]

While the Great Euchologion of the White Monastery is a later witness to the Sahidic version of the anaphora of St Basil, it is in fact an early witness to Sahidic versions of many other named anaphoras.[67] The diversity of anaphoras, known and unknown, included in this collection is itself noteworthy.[68] Its texts of the anaphoras of St Cyril, St Severus, and several unknown anaphoras include the commemoration of the saints.[69] Achim Budde has compared the sequence of elements in the *Theotokos* ekphonesis in these Sahidic anaphoras (including the Sahidic versions of the anaphora of St. Basil) with the sequence of elements in later Bohairic and Greek anaphoras.[70] In the Sahidic anaphoras the ekphonesis includes fewer epithets: "God-bearer" (five witnesses), "our Lady" (four witnesses), "ever-virgin" (three witnesses), "most glorious" (three witnesses), "all-holy" (two witnesses). Moreover, their placement varies and their translation is not standard. Thus while the principal epithets applied to Mary

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[53] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 94–104; Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 26–32.

[54] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 104.

[55] J. Doresse and E. Lanne, *Un témoin archaïque de la liturgie copte de S. Basile* (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1960), 3–5 (8th or 9th century); Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 95–96 (9th century).

[56] Doresse and Lanne, *Un témoin archaïque*, 26; Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 180 (v. 145): ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲩⲟ ⲁ.ⲉ ⲧⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲱ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁ[ⲃ] ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲧⲥⲁⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲧⲣⲉϥⲭⲡⲉⲛⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ.

[57] Doresse and Lanne, *Un témoin archaïque*, 26; Budde, *Die* ägyptische *Basilios-Anaphora*, 188 (v. 161): ⲛ̄ⲧⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲧⲏⲣ̄ ⲥⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲛⲉⲥⲧⲱⲃ̄ⲥ̄

[58] H. Quecke, "Ein sahidisches Fragment der Basiliusliturgie (Cod. Vat. copt. 103,2)," in W. Nyssen (ed.), *Simandron. Der Wachklopfer. Gedenkschrift für Klaus Gamber (1919–1989)* (Koinonia-Oriens 30; Cologne: Luther-Verlag, 1989), 137–47.

[59] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 97–98.

[60] H. Munier, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, nos. 9201–9304: manuscrits coptes* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1916), 85–87, no. 9260.

[61] The text is reproduced with French translation in E. Lanne's collection of the scattered sheets of the Great Euchologion, *Le Grand Euchologe de Monastère Blanc* (PO 28.2; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1958), 384–87.

[62] Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 12; Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 98–99.

[63] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 180, apparatus to the Sahidic version at v. 145, siglum γ: ⲥⲟⲩⲟ ⲁ.ⲉ ⲛⲥⲟ[ⲩⲟ] ⲧⲉⲧⲟⲩ[ⲁⲁ]ⲃ ⲉⲧⲙⲉⲥ ⲛ[ⲉⲟ]ⲟⲩ ⲧⲉ [...].

[64] Munier, *Catalogue général*, 86, ll. 8–12, and Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe*, 386, ll. 9–11; cf. Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 180 and 188, apparatus to the Sahidic version at vv. 145 and 161, siglum δ: ⲛⲥⲟⲩⲟ ⲁ.ⲉ [ⲛ]ⲥⲟⲩⲟ ⲧⲉⲧⲥⲁⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲧⲛⲭⲟⲉ̄ⲓⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲛ ⲧⲉⲟⲑⲉ[ⲟ]ⲗⲱⲕⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲙⲁⲣ̄ⲓⲁ ⲧⲉ ⲛⲧⲁⲥⲭⲡⲉⲛⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ̄ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲥⲓⲧⲙ ⲡⲉⲩⲥⲟⲛⲥ ⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲁ ⲛⲁⲛ ⲧⲏⲣⲛ̄.

[65] Cf. n. 44 above.

[66] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 178–89 (vv. 146–60, noting the absence of Sahidic witnesses), 487; cf. Engberding, "Das anaphorische Fürbittgebet der byzantinischen Chrysostomusliturgie (Fortsetzung)," 39; Fenwick, *Anaphoras*, 218–19.

[67] For an overview see Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 19–35.

[68] For an overview see Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 12–19.

[69] Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe*, 292, ll. 7–31 (St Cyril); 300, l. 1–12 (unknown); 320, l. 13–322, l. 5 (St Severus); 340, l. 25–342, l. 14 (unknown).

[70] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 487–90.

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are well-attested, their exact rendering is still flexible as late as the tenth or eleventh century – even, as Budde has remarked, in a single collection of anaphoral prayers from a major liturgical centre in Egypt.[71]

Since Mary is followed by other saints in these commemorations, they conclude with an appeal to the intercessions of all those named, not just of Mary alone. This is true of the anaphora of St Cyril[72] – a departure from the practice of the anaphora of St Mark.[73] It was probably also true of the anaphora of St Gregory. The anaphora of St Gregory in the Euchologion unfortunately does not include the commemoration of the saints.[74] Nor does an earlier sixth-century fragment, P.Vindob. K. 4854.[75] Belonging to the Syrian-Antiochene tradition,[76] this anaphora probably originated in the fifth century,[77] and was introduced into Egypt somewhat later. Like the anaphora of St Basil, it is attested in Sahidic, Bohairic, and Greek versions; the Sahidic version was based on the Greek, the Bohairic derived from the Sahidic.[78] Also like the Bohairic and Greek witnesses of the anaphora of St Basil, the Bohairic and Greek witnesses of the anaphora of St Gregory commemorate a series of saints, beginning with Mary, and appeal to the intercessions of them all.[79]

In short, most of our early witnesses to Egyptian anaphoras derive from a period when Mary was commemorated along with other saints, all of whose intercessions are sought. In the earliest of these witnesses – the text of the anaphora of St Basil found in MS Lefort copt. s. n. – Mary alone is named and her intercessions alone are invoked. This text is assigned on internal evidence to the seventh century, but is based on a prior Greek version that probably arrived in Egypt in the sixth century. The form of the commemoration is that of the *Theotokos* ekphonesis introduced into the diptychs in Constantinople toward the end of the fifth century. We do not know exactly when this commemoration came to be associated with an appeal for intercessions or when it was first employed in Egypt. But if one grants that the conjunction of remembering Mary and appealing to her intercessions was already present in the Greek version of the anaphora of St Basil that lies behind the earliest Egyptian versions, the practice would appear to date from the sixth century.

We must bear in mind, however, that the great anaphoral traditions capture only a portion of the liturgical production of Egypt, which varied by settings (in the community and in monasteries) and by region (in Alexandria and in north and south Egypt).[80] Intercessory litanies could occur in several places in the eucharist, as well as in the monastic cycle of daily prayer.[81] We possess a number of liturgical lists or litanies from Egypt whose affiliation or purpose is not always clear, but which nevertheless expand our sense of the scope of liturgical expression.[82] Several of these refer to Mary. They include an intercessory fragment assigned to the second half of the sixth century that begins by praying for "the graces of the holy virgin mother Mary and the holy disciples and apostles and evangelists";[83] a seventh-century diptych that commemorates "the all-holy and glorious *Theotokos* and ever-virgin Mary";[84] an idiosyncratic eighth-century litany that opens by appealing to "the intercessions and petitions

[71] Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 488–89.

[72] Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologe*, 292, ll. 22–31.

[73] Cf. n. 42 above.

[74] For an overview of Sahidic witnesses to this anaphora, see Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 32–35.

[75] Newly edited with a commentary in Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 36–77.

[76] A. Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des eucharistischen Hochgebets* (Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 65; Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), 168; Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 32.

[77] Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora*, 245–47; Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 33.

[78] See now Henner, *Fragmenta Liturgica Copta*, 71–77.

[79] Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora*, 46, ll. 362–76; E. Hammerschmidt, *Die koptische Gregoriosanaphora. Syrische und griechische Einflüsse auf eine ägyptische Liturgie* (Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten 8; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), 58–61, ll. 298–307.

[80] Cf., e.g., H. Brakmann, "Neue Funde und Forschungen zur Liturgie der Kopten," in M. Rassart-Debergh and J. Ries (eds.), *Actes du IVe Congrès copte*, 2 vols (Publications de l'Institut orientaliste de Louvain 40–41; Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, Institut orientaliste, 1992), 2, 419–35 at 419; H. Brakmann, "Neue Funde und Forschungen zur Liturgie der Kopten (1992–1996)," in S. Emmel, M. Krause, S.G. Richter and S. Schaten (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses*, 2 vols (Sprachen und Kulturen des christlichen Orients 6; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1999), 451–64 at 451–52.

[81] See Taft, *Diptychs*, 23–27, 80.

[82] Taft, *Diptychs*, 79–94.

[83] G. Bastianini and C. Gallazzi, "P.Cair.10395A: Frammento liturgico," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 58 (1985): 99–102 at 101: [τῶ]ν χαρισ[μάτων] / [τ]ῆς ἁγίας μ̣[ητρο-] / π̣αρθένου Μα[ρίας] κτλ. Cf. Taft, *Diptychs*, 81.

[84] W.E. Crum, "A Greek Diptych of the Seventh Century," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 30 (1908) 255–65; *SB* III 6087: τῆς παναγίας ἐνδόξου θεοτόκο[υ καὶ]/ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας. Cf. Taft, *Diptychs*, 83–85.

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of the spotless and undefiled and holy and barren virgin mother Mary, the *Theotokos* and protector of our spirit";[85] and a corrupt eight- or ninth-century Coptic Greek litany.[86] Interestingly, though this small sample is evidently not enough to go by, the later the text, the more developed the series of epithets. None of these texts, however, takes us into the fifth century or earlier. Some amulets, on the other hand, do.

AMULETS

Amulets were widely employed in antiquity to obtain protection from adversity, relief from sickness, or help in daily affairs. As the position of Mary in the devotion and reflection of the church became more prominent and established, one would expect amulets to appeal to her, directly or indirectly, for help. Among the many amulets containing Christian elements that have been found in Egypt,[87] there are three that appeal to Christ through the intercessions of Mary and several others that appeal directly to her.

PGM P5b,[88] found folded and tied with a string in Oxyrhynchus, has been assigned to the fifth century. It appeals to Christ to heal and protect a certain Joannia "through the prayers and intercessions of our Lady the *Theotokos* and the glorious archangels, and the holy and glorious apostle and evangelist and theologian John, and the holy Serenus and the holy Philoxenus and the holy Victor and the holy Justus and all the saints."[89] The presence of several saints in addition to Mary is of interest. In Oxyrhynchus there were churches or martyria dedicated to each of the saints named in the amulet. The sites are mentioned in a liturgical calendar from the town for the period from 21 October 535 to Easter 536,[90] as well as in other fifth- or sixth-century documents.[91] Oxyrhynchus is the only town in Egypt that is certain to have had a church dedicated to John the Evangelist.[92] Local devotion to him would explain why he, rather than John the Baptist, is named after Mary. (John the Baptist usually follows Mary in prayers[93] and anaphoral commemorations.[94]) Justus, Serenus, and Philoxenus were also important local saints;[95] Victor, on the other hand, was honoured throughout Egypt.[96] As we have already noted, Oxyrhynchus also had a church dedicated to Mary.[97] Interestingly, although the amulet refers to her as *Theotokos*, the church was named simply "holy Mary." We are reminded that different types of sources, considered independently, offer only a partial view.

PGM P18,[98] a papyrus assigned to the fifth or sixth century, appeals to Christ to "[h]eal also her who wears this divine amulet of the disease afflicting her, through the prayers and intercession of the ever-virgin mother, the

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[85] *P.Bad*. IV 65.1–5, modified: πρεσβιας (read: πρεσβείαις) κὲ (read: καὶ) ετιας (read: αἰτίαις) τῆς ἀσπίλου καὶ / ἀχράντου καὶ αγου (read: ἁγίας) καὶ ἀπ[[φ]]όρου (read: ἀφόρου ?) παρθ(ενο)- / μνλωτος (read: μήτρος) Μαρία<ς> πρὸς τῆς (read: τοῦ) ἡμῶν <<τῆς / ἡμῶν τῆς>> π<<η>>ν(εύματο)ς θεοδόκου καὶ ἀντιλήμ- / ̣τορος.

[86] *P.Grenf.* II 113.

[87] Unless otherwise indicated, the provenance within Egypt of the items discussed below is not known and their date has been assigned on paleographical grounds.

[88] *P.Oxy.* VIII 1151; *PGM* P5b; D. Hagedorn, "Bemerkungen zu Urkunden," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 145 (2003), 224–27 at 226 (revised reading of lines 38–39).

[89] *P.Oxy.* VIII 1151.38–51, with Hagedorn, "Bemerkungen zu Urkunden," 226: ευχες (read: εὐχαῖς) / κ̣αὶ πρεσβιαις (read: πρεσβείαις) τῆς / δεσποίνης ἡμῶν, τῆς / θεοτόκου καὶ τῶν / ἐνδόξων ἀρχαγγέ- / λων κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἐν- / δόξου ἀποστόλου κ(αὶ) εὐαγγελιστοῦ κ(αὶ) θεο- / λόγου Ἰωάννου κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου Σερήνου κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου Φιλοξένου κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου Βήκτωρος κ(αὶ) τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰούστου κ(αὶ) πάντων [τῶ]ν ἁγίων.

[90] *P.Oxy.* XI 1357; Papconstantinou, "La liturgie stationnale," 135–59.

[91] Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints*, 115–16 (John the Evangelist), 187–88 (Serenus), 203–4 (Philoxenus), 62–68 (Victor).

[92] Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints*, 116.

[93] E.g., *P.Leid.Inst*. 74.3–4 (cf. n. 155 below); *SB* XXII 15209.1–3 (cf. n. 156 below). *PGM* P12.1–4, a prayer of Severus of Antioch against poisonous bites, on the other hand, invokes the name of Mary, John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist; see now C.E. Römer, "Gebet und Bannzauber des Severus von Antiochia gegen den Biss giftiger Tiere, oder: Maltomini hatte recht," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 168 (2009): 209–12, uniting P.Vindob. G 29508 and G 329.

[94] For an overview see Engberding, "Das anaphorische Fürbittgebet der byzantinischen Chrysostomusliturgie (Fortsetzung)," 39; G. Winkler, "Die Interzessionen der Chrysostomusanaphora in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung (II. Teil)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37 (1971), 333–83 at 337–41.

[95] Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints*, 204.

[96] Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints*, 255–56, 262–63.

[97] Papconstantinou, "La liturgie stationnale," 140–41, 146; Papconstantinou, "Les sanctuaires de la Vierge," 84.

[98] G. Vitelli, *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique d'Alexandrie* 23 (1928), 287–302 at 300–1; M. Naldini, "Due papiri cristiani della collezione fiorentina," *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 33 (1961): 216–18; *PGM* P18; P.J. Sijpesteijn, "Ein Vorschlag zu *PGM* II 18,"

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Theotokos, and all ….”[99] The amulet contains another element which both enriches and complicates its interpretation. It begins with a recitation of the Sanctus: “† Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabaoth; full are heaven and earth of […] glory.”[100] Although the lines are difficult to read, they resemble the early form of the Sanctus in both the Egyptian and Syrian-Antiochene traditions.[101] Whereas later versions of the Sanctus in the Egyptian anaphoras of St Mark/St Cyril and St Basil conclude with “of your holy glory”,[102] the earliest form in Egypt – attested by the fourth-century anaphora preserved in P.Monts.Roca inv. 154b-155a[103] and two other witnesses,[104] the mid-fourth-century *Euchologion* attributed to Serapion of Thmuis,[105] and the Dêr-Belizeh papyrus (fifth or sixth century)[106] – concludes simply with “of your glory,” and the earliest form in the Syrian-Antiochene tradition – attested by the anaphora in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (fourth century),[107] the homilies of John Chrysostom (fourth century),[108] and a homily attributed to Asterios Sophistes (fourth century)[109] – concludes with “of his glory.” Unfortunately, the poor quality of the third line of the amulet prevents one from determining which of these early forms – “your glory” or “his glory” – the writer followed.[110] Thus, while both the use of the Sanctus as an invocation and the appeal to “the prayers and intercession of the ever-virgin mother, the *Theotokos*” indicate that the writer of the amulet was familiar with the liturgy of the church, exactly which liturgical tradition – Egyptian or Syrian-Antiochene – is less clear.

Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 52 (1982), 246; F. Maltomini, “Osservazioni al testo di alcuni papiri magici greci. (III.),” *Studi classici e orientali* 32 (1982), 235–41 at 239. Both Sijpesteijn and Maltomini revised the reading of lines 1–3.

[99] *PGM* P18.12–17, with Naldini, “Due papiri cristiani,”, 217: ἵασ̣[α]ι̣ κ(αὶ) τ̣ὴν̣ / φοροῦσαν̣ τοῦτο τὸ θεῖον / φυλακτήριον ἐν τῇ ἐπικειμ(ένῃ) / αὐτῇ νόσῳ, εὐχαῖς κ(αὶ) πρ̣ε̣σ̣βείᾳ̣ / τὴς εαιπ̣αρθενου (read: ἀειπαρθένου) μητ̣[ρός, τ]ῆς / θεοτόκου κ(αὶ) πάσ̣ης [....

[100] Cf. *PGM* P18.1–3, with Sijpestijn, “Ein Vorschlag,” 246, and Maltomini, “Osservazioni,” 239: † ἅ̈γιος ἅ̈γι̣[ος ἅ]γιος κύρι̣ος / Σαβαωθ̣ πλήρ̣[ης ὁ] ο̣ὐ̣ρ̣α̣[νὸς κ]α̣ὶ̣ / ἡ γῆ τ̣ῆς δ̣ό̣ξης [....

[101] See B.D. Spinks, *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 117–119; R.F. Taft, “The Interpolation of the Sanctus into the Anaphora: When and Where? A Review of the Dossier. Part II,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 58 (1992), 83–121 at 84–106.

[102] Cuming, *Liturgy*, 37–39, with 69–74 and 120. Budde, *Die* ägyptische *Basilios-Anaphora*, 146–47 (v. 24), with 263–65. The earliest known attestation of this later form of the Sanctus in Egypt is an inscription of the El-Moallaqa church in Old Cairo, dated 7 May 735; see Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 187–99 (Inscr. Copt. Mus. Cairo inv. 753.2–3); cf. J.L. Fournet, “L’inscription de l’église Al-Mu‘allaqa. Quelques corrections,” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* 93 (1993), 237–44; L.S.B. MacCoull, “Redating the Inscription of El-Moallaqa,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 64 (1986), 230–34, with “Corrigenda,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 71 (1988): 74.

[103] R. Roca-Puig, *Anàfora de Barcelona i altres pregàries: Missa del segle IV* (2d ed; Barcelona: Grafos, 1996), 11; S. Janeras, “Sanctus et Post-Sanctus dans l’anaphore du P.Monts. Roca inv. no 154b-155a,” *Studi sull’Oriente Cristiano* 11 (2007), 9–13; M. Zheltov, “The Anaphora and Thanksgiving Prayer from the Barcelona Papyrus: An Underestimated Testimony to the Anaphoral History in the Fourth Century,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 62 (2008), 467–504 at 471. The text of the second half of the Sanctus is anomalous in this papyrus: πλήρης σου ὁ οὐρανὸς τῆς δόξης σου. Other extant fragments of the anaphora have or suggest the more usual version: πλήρης σου ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ τῆς δόξης σου. Cf. Janeras, “Sanctus et Post-Sanctus,” and Zheltov, “The Anaphora,” 475 (154b.20–21 comm.), 489 n. 73. I was not able to consult the prior publications of Zheltov noted at Janeras, “Sanctus et Post-Sanctus,” 11 n. 10.

[104] P.Vindob. G 41043 *verso*: Treu and Diethart, *Griechische literarische Papyri*, 68–69, no. 36; J. Henner, “Mortem tuam annuntiamus... Anaphorenfragmente der Wiener Papyrussammlung im Kontext der eucharistischen Liturgie der altägyptischen Kirche,” Dipl.-Arb., Vienna, 1993, 69–79 (*non vidi*); Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 156–60. Copt. Lov. 27: Th. Lefort, “Coptica Lovaniensia,” *Le Muséon* 53 (1940), 1–66 at 22–24; S. Janeras, “L’original grec del fragment copte de Lovaina num. 27 en l’Anàfora de Barcelona,” *Miscellània litúrgica catalana* 3 (1984), 13–25.

[105] See now M.E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 249; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 46–47 (Prayer 1). For the date of the collection see 280–81.

[106] See now Hammerstaedt, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente*, 174 (P. Dêr-Belizeh fol. II *recto* 23–24).

[107] *Apost. Const.* 8.12.27 (SC 336, 192).

[108] John Chrysostom*, In illud: Vidi Dominum, hom.* 1.3 (PG 56, 100); cf. F. van de Paverd, *Zur Geschichte der Messliturgie in Antiocheia und Konstantinopel gegen Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts. Analyse der Quellen bei Johannes Chrysostomos* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 187: Rome: Pontificium Institutum orientalium studiorum, 1970), 285–86.

[109] Asterios Sophistes, *hom.* 29.10, in M. Richard (ed.), *Asterii Sophistae Commentariorum in Psalmos quae supersunt accedunt aliquot homiliae anonymae* (Symbolae Osloenses, Fasc. suppl. 16; Oslo: A.W. Brøgger, 1956), 233. The scholarly discussion about the identity of Asterios and whether he is here referring to the Sanctus in the anaphora, reviewed by Taft, “The Interpolation of the Sanctus. Part II,” 96–106, is not crucial to my argument.

[110] Maltomini, “Osservazioni,” 239; Sijpesteijn, “Ein Vorschlag,” 246, supplies σου.

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P.Oxy. LXXV 5024,[111] on the other hand, clearly draws on the liturgical tradition of St Mark. This strip of parchment, assigned to the late sixth or early seventh century, preserves a prayer for salvation ending in a petition for the flooding of the Nile similar to that found in the anaphoral intercessions of St Mark.[112] There are traces of folds, which suggest that the parchment may have been carried as an *aide-mémoire* or an amulet.[113] The prayer concludes with an appeal to the Lord through the intercessions of Mary: "through the intercession of the woman who bore you, we beseech you, Lord, good and abounding in mercy, hear us and have mercy on us."[114]

Finally, *SB* XVIII 13602,[115] a parchment assigned to the seventh century, appeals to Christ to relieve a woman of her afflictions "through the intercessions of your holy martyr George" and "through the intercessions of our Lady, the all-glorious *Theotokos* and ever-virgin Mary."[116] This amulet is instructive because, although it contains a more developed Marian formula, the writing deviates from standard orthography and a few of the epithets – δεσποίνης and θεοτόκου – presented some difficulty to the scribe.[117] The text illustrates how by this relatively late date (the seventh century) the practice of appealing to Mary was, on the one hand, elaborate and formulaic, and, on the other, living and personal.

In addition to these amulets that appeal to Christ through the intercessions of Mary, we have several amulets from the fifth or sixth century that appeal directly to her. Although these amulets do not mention the intercessory function of Mary, they still confirm that she was addressed as a source of help and protection.

Suppl.Mag I 26, a papyrus with traces of folding, assigned to the fifth century, opens with the prayer: " Having received grace from your only-begotten Son, stop the discharge, the pains of the eyes of Phoibammon, son of Athanasios."[118] The prayer is striking in that it explains the source of Mary's power, and does so in unusual terms; "only-begotten Son" is typically used in relation to God the Father. Moreover, the prayer is expressed in choliambic trimeters, an indication of the studied character of the request and of its debt to a literary culture.[119]

Echoes of a wider culture can also be observed in *PGM* P15b.[120] When this papyrus, assigned to the fifth or sixth century, was unfolded, it revealed a few leaves of a plant, identified as trefoil, used for menstrual periods, intermittent fever, and three-day fever.[121] After appealing to archangels for protection against a "headless dog,"[122] the text calls upon Mary to do what she had promised and heal the woman bearing the amulet: "O *Theotokos*,

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[111] *P.Oxy*. LXXV 5024. Although the parchment is published in the Oxyrhynchus series, it and *P.Oxy*. LXXV 5023 may not have been found there; see *P.Oxy.* LXXV, p. 8.

[112] *P.Oxy*. LXXV 5024.14–17 comm.; Cuming, *Liturgy*, 26, 111–13. The petition for the flooding of the Nile in the Egyptian anaphoras of St Basil and St Gregory is worded differently; see Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora*, 170–73, Gerhards, *Die griechische Gregoriosanaphora*, 42. For a detailed survey of feasts or prayers for the flooding of the Nile in eastern liturgies, see K. Treu, "Liturgische Traditionen in Ägypten (zu P.Oxy. 2782)," in P. Nagel (ed.), *Studia Coptica* (Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten 45; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1974), 43–66; cf. H. Engberding, "Der Nil in der liturgischen Frömmigkeit des Christlichen Ostens," *Oriens Christianus* 37 (1953), 56–88.

[113] See *P.Oxy*. LXXV, p. 8. On the difficulties of determining the purpose of items simply on the basis of folding, see de Bruyn and Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies," 172–73.

[114] *P.Oxy*. LXXV.18–23: ταῖς πρεσβείαις / τῆς δεκουσης (read: τεκούσης) <σ>ε / ἱκετεύομέν σε, ἄγα- / θε πολλοιευςπλαγ- (read: πολυεύσπλαγ-) / χνε κ(ύρι)ε· ἐπάκου-/ σον ἡμῶν κ(αὶ) ἐλ(έησον).

[115] W. Brashear, "A Christian Amulet," *Journal of Ancient Civilizations* 3 (1988), 35–45; *SB* XVIII 13602; W. Brashear, *Magica Varia* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1991), 63–70.

[116] Brashear, *Magica Varia*, 64, ll. 8–10, 12–16: διὰ τῳ (read: τῶν) πρεσ- / βιων (read: πρεσβειῶν) τοῦ ἁγίου σου μαρτηρως (read: μάρτυρος) Γεωργίου ... διὰ τῶν πρεσ- / βιων (read: πρεσβειῶν) τῆ\ς ΄ δεȩȩτoυσης μ [[.....]] / τῆς δεσπηνης (read: δεσποίνης)· υμων (read: ἡμῶν) τῆς παν- /νενδοξου (read: πανενδόξου) θεωτωγουκου (read: θεοτόκου) καὶ ἀει- /παρθένου Μαρίας. Regarding δεȩȩτoυσης μ [[.....]] Brashear, 68, comments: "It appears that the writer was attempting to correct something erroneously written into δεσποίνης, gave up, crossed out the rest of the line and recommenced in the following line."

[117] See n. 116.

[118] W. Brashear, "Vier Berliner Zaubertexte," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975) 25–33 at 30–31, ll. 1–6; *SB* XIV 11494; *Suppl.Mag.* I 26; G. Ioannidou (ed.), *Catalogue of Greek and Latin Literary Papyri in Berlin (P. Berol. inv. 21101–21299, 21911)* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1996) 240, no. 206: ᵽ λαβοῦσα χάριν ἐκ τοῦ / μονογενοῦς σου υἱοῦ / στῆσον τὸ ῥεῦμα, τοὺς / πόνους τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν / Φοιβάμμωνος, υἱοῦ Ἀθα- / νασίου.

[119] D. Jordan, "Choliambs for Mary in a Papyrus Phylactery," *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991), 343–46.

[120] J.E. Quibell, "A Greek Christian Invocation," *The Academy* 1128 (1893), 550; *PGM* P15b.

[121] *PGM* P15b intro., citing Dioscorides, *De mat. med.* 3.109.

[122] *PGM* P15a-b intro. takes κυνὸς ἀκεφάλου to refer to ἀκέφαλοι, miaphysites who repudiated Peter Mongus, the miaphysite patriarch of Alexandria, after he accepted emperor Zeno's *Henoticon*; it thus dates the papyrus after 482. M. Meyer and R. Smith (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 48, no. 24, interprets the phrase as referring to a headless power. The latter seems more plausible to me, given the purpose of the amulet.

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incorruptible, undefiled, unstained mother of Christ, remember that you have said these things. Again heal her who wears this."[123] The alpha-privative epithets ascribed to Mary recall the language of hymns and sermons,[124] as does the appellation "mother of Christ."[125] The specific appeal – "remember that you have said these things" – suggests that Mary had been consulted and heard from in an oracle or a dream or some other medium.

Less regular, but for that reason indicative of the position attributed to Mary, is an invocation in *P.Köln* VIII 340. Assigned to the fifth or sixth century, the text on one side of this papyrus consists of a row of seven staurograms, John 1, 1–11, and several invocations. On the other side are two *orantes* and a short, poorly preserved text in a different hand but from the same period.[126] The invocation immediately following the opening verses of the Gospel of John has been reconstructed as follows: "I call upon you, God – and Mary the *Theotokos* – Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that you send your angel to heal the one who wears this adjuration and chase from him all sickness and all infirmity."[127] The appeal to Mary has been interjected;[128] a more regular form of the invocation is attested in another amulet from the sixth or seventh century: "I call upon you, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you send forth your angel on the one who wears this."[129] There are supralinear strokes above "Mary" and "… *tokos*, an extension of the method used to indicate *nomina sacra*.[130] Both the interjection and the supralinear strokes are irregular, but for that reason they attest to Mary's role and importance as a source of help.

Finally, two early witnesses of uncertain or disputed significance should be noted. One is *P.Bon*. I 9,[131] the concluding fragment of a prayer: "[in the most blessed name] of the holy *Theotokos* and ever-virgin Mary and the holy Longinus, the centurion, one holy Father, one holy Son, one Holy Spirit. Amen, amen, amen."[132] It has been suggested that the papyrus was an amulet against diseases of the eye and injuries on account of the mention of Longinus, who was invoked in such circumstances.[133] Only the end of the first word of the fragment has been preserved, suggesting the above reconstruction.[134] Nevertheless, it is sufficient to rule out an appeal to the intercessions of Mary and Longinus. The papyrus was initially assigned to the third or fourth century, an estimate that was subsequently revised to the fourth or fifth century.[135] Is it significant that this, the earliest of the invocations we have discussed thus far, appears to be made in the name of Mary rather than through her intercessions? Possi-

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[123] *PGM* P15b.8–10: θεοτόκε, ἄφθαρτε, ἀμίαντε, ἀμόλυντε μήτηρ / Χριστοῦ, μνήσθητι, ὅτι σὺ ταῦτα εἶπες. σὺ / πάλιν θεράπευσον τὴν φοροῦσαν. ἀμήν.

[124] Cf. Romanus Melodos, *Cant.*57, str. 19.3 (P. Maas and C.A. Trypanis [eds.], *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica: cantica genuina* [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1963], 495): σὲ καθικετεύω ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς μητρός σου, τῆς ἀφθάρτως τεκούσης σε; *Cant.*10, str. 20.4 (SC 110: 70): τὴν μήτραν ἀμίαντον; *Cant.* 11, str. 2.10–11 (SC 110: 90): ἣν ἐβλάστησα ἐκ κόλπων ἀμιάντων; *Cant*. 13, str. 12.3 (SC 110: 146): τὴν ἀμόλυντον παρθένον. Ps.-Proclus, *hom.* 6.17.7, F.J. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople* (Studi e Testi 247; Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1967) 323: τὸν ἄφθαρτον νυμφίον; on its authenticity, see Leroy, *L'homilétique*, 292–94, and M. Aubineau, "Bilan d'une enquête sur les homélies de Proclus de Constantinople," *Revue des Études Grecques* 85 (1972): 572–96 at 589–92. Ps.-Chrysostom, *In annuntiationem beatae virginis* (PG 50, col. 796): νυμφοτόκε ἀμίαντε; cf. Geerard, *Clavis patrum graecorum*, 2, 545, no. 4519. Ps.-Epiphanius, *Homilia in laudes Mariae deiparae* (PG 43, col. 497D13): Ἁγία μήτηρ ἀμόλυντε; cf. Geerard, *Clavis patrum graecorum*, 2, 335, no. 3771. Theodorus Studita, *Homilia in nativitatem Mariae* (PG 96: col. 696A7): Χαῖρε, ἀμόλυντε; cf. Geerard, *Clavis patrum graecorum*, 3, 532, no. 8119. On the application of alpha-privative epithets to Mary see N. Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 66; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), 61 n. 55.

[125] Of thirty-eight instances of μήτηρ Χριστοῦ in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, twenty are in hymns: one in Romanus Melodus, *Cant.*18, str. 18.1 (SC 110, 302) and the remainder in *Analecta Hymnica Graeca*.

[126] See *P.Köln* VIII 340, p. 83, 86, 94–95. In a forthcoming paper my colleague Jitse Dijkstra argues that there are only two figures, a male *orans* and a female *orans*. See the digital image at http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/ifa/NRWakademie/papyrologie/Karte/VIII_340.html (February 2013).

[127] *P.Köln* VIII 340 side *a*, fr. A, 33–46: ... ἐ̣[πικαλοῦ-] / μέ̣ν (read: ἐπικαλοῦμαί; cf. ll. 33–34 comm.) σε, θ[(εό)ν, καὶ τὴν θεο-] / τόκον Μαρία̣, π[(ατέ)ρα] / τ̣ο̣ῦ̣ κ(υρίο)υ {κυ} <καὶ> σωτῆρ[ος] / [ἡ]μῶν Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ, ὅπ̣[ω-] / [ς ε]κ̣σ̣αποστιλης (read: ἐξαποστείλῃς) / τὸν ἄγγελόν̣ σου / ἐπὶ τ̣ο̃ν (read: τῶν) ι̣ματον (read: ἱαμάτων) / {τον} ἐπὶ τὸν φο̣..[ ] / τα τὸν ὁρκισμὸ(ν) / τοῦτο̣ν̣ κ(αὶ) απωδι̣ω̣- /ξης (read: ἀποδιώξῃς) ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πᾶ- / σαν νό[σον κ]α̣ὶ̣ πᾶ[σαν] / μαλα̣[κίαν..].[...

[128] See *P.Köln* VIII 340 side *a*, fr. A, 34–35 comm., 35 comm.

[129] Treu and Diethart, *Griechische literarische Papyri*, 23, no. 10; cf. *P.Köln* VIII 340 side *a*, fr. A, 33–43 comm.

[130] The scribe uses the supralinear stroke somewhat indiscriminately, however; cf. *P.Köln* VIII 340 side *a*, fr. A, 38 comm.

[131] A. Vogliano, "Papiri Bolognesi," *Acme* 1 (1948), 195–231; *P.Bon.* I 9.

[132] *P.Bon.* I 9.1–8:]αρτατον τῆς ἁγίας / θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρ- / [θ]ένου Μαρίας καὶ το(ῦ) / ἁγίου Λογγίνου το(ῦ) / ἑκα[τον]τάρχου εἷς / Πατὴ[ρ] ἅγιος εἷς Υἱὸς / ἅγιος ἓν Πνεῦμ<α> ἅγιον / ἀμὴν ἀμὴν ἀμήν.

[133] *P.Bon.* I 9 intro.

[134] *P.Bon.* I 9.1 note: εἰς τὸ ὄνομα μα- / [κ]άρτατον κτλ.

[135] *P.Bon.* I 9 intro.

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bly, if the assigned date is correct. But a similar formula appears in a liturgical fragment for the Feast of the Assumption assigned much later to the seventh or eighth century.[136] The fragmentary opening of *P.Bon*. I 9 should not be freighted with too much meaning.

More problematic is *PGM* P5a, an amulet against fever prepared for a certain Aria, assigned to the fourth century.[137] At the end of the text one finds several names written around a cross: "Jesus, Father, Son, Mother, Christ / α ω / Holy Spirit / Abrasax." "Jesus" and "Christ" are written in larger characters as *nomina sacra* in the genitive. In the line above and to the right is a gap sufficient for five characters followed by iota and sigma. *PGM* 5a here supplies δύναμις and translates the subsequent lines as "[Power] of Jesus Christ. Father, Son, Mother, Holy Spirit, α ω, Abrasax." In a recent re-edition Megali de Haro Sanchez leaves the text of the gap unresolved, and translates the subsequent lines as "Father of Jesus, Son, Mother of Christ, α ω, Holy Spirit, Abrasax."[138] However, the reading "Power of Jesus Christ" is warranted.[139] One can make out the lower left corner of delta at the beginning of the gap and the upper right tip of mu at the end of the gap; the intervening space is sufficient for five letters. Moreover, the same phrase appears, along with three staurograms each with α ω, in the invocation of another amulet against sickness.[140] The smaller writing of "Father, Son, Mother, Holy Spirit, Abrasax" relative to the *nomina sacra* suggests that they should be read as a group. The centre of the group is the cross with "α ω", which appears to have been written before the words "Father, Son, Mother, Holy Spirit, Abrasax" and encircling points were added.[141] The question is, what are we to make of "Father" and "Mother" on either side of "Son"? It has been suggested that "Mother" refers to the Holy Spirit.[142] But then why is the Holy Spirit named in the next line? One could see here a reference to the triad Father, Mother, and Son that is characteristic of Sethian gnosticism.[143] But the correspondence is not exact, since here "Mother" follows rather than precedes "Son."[144] The lines remain a puzzle. However, they do not present an unambiguous appeal to Mary, the mother of Christ.

To summarize, appeals to Mary and to her intercessions begin to appear in Egyptian amulets in the fifth century, and they use formulaic language associated with liturgical prayers. In amulets that appeal to Mary's intercessions, the earlier the assigned date, the simpler the epithets, though the sample is small. It is not Mary's intercessions alone that are sought; those of other saints are also invoked. Nevertheless, appeals addressed directly to Mary in other amulets indicate her importance and role as a protector, already in the fifth century.

Two chronological aspects of the material should be considered. First, the dates of the above texts have been assigned on paleographical grounds, which is inevitably subjective and imprecise. Still, in the absence of further studies questioning the assigned dates, it is best to accept the current estimates. Second, it is possible that the chronological distribution of the texts reflects not so much increasing appeals to Mary in Egypt as the growing establishment of the church in Egypt. Documentary evidence of the church in Egypt is much scarcer in the fourth century than after the middle of the fifth century.[145] This pattern can also be observed in the corpus of Greek amulets from Egypt containing Christian elements; relatively more of them are assigned to the fifth or sixth centuries.[146] There are, however, a few formularies and amulets assigned to the fourth century that refer to Mary in

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[136] *P.Amh.* I 9(b). Papaconstantinou, *Le culte des saints*, 139, assigns *P.Bon.* I 9 as well as *P.Amh.* I 9(b) to the seventh or eighth century, but does not explain why.

[137] *P.Oxy.* VI 924; *PGM* P5a; M. de Haro Sanchez, "Le vocabulaire de la pathologie et de la thérapeutique dans les papyrus iatromagiques grecs. Fièvres, traumatismes et « épilepsie »," *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 47 (2010), 131–53 at 135–36.

[138] de Haro Sanchez, "Le vocabulaire," 135.

[139] Thus, leaving aside the series of vowels written vertically at the left and right edges of the text, ll. 14–15 read as follows: ḍ[ύνα]μις / Ἰ(ησο)ῦ πατήρ υἱός μήτηρ Χ(ριστο)ῦ.

[140] *Suppl.Mag.* I 22.1. On the invocation of divine power more generally, see A.D. Nock, "Studies in the Graeco-Roman Beliefs of the Empire," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 45 (1925), 84–101 at 85–95.

[141] One of the five points observed by de Haro Sanchez is the lower left corner of delta; in addition, there is a point between the eta and rho of πατήρ and below the alpha of πν(εῦμ)α.

[142] Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, 39.

[143] A. Böhlig, "Triade und Trinität in den Schriften von Nag Hammadi," in B. Layton (ed.), *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, vol. 2, *Sethian Gnosticism* (Studies in the History of Religions 41; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 617–34; J.D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi. Section études 6; Leuven: Peters, 2001), 60–64.

[144] Cf., e.g., *Ap. John* (NH II,1, 9.10–11; BG 2, 19; NH III,1, 13.15–16); *Gos. Eg.* (NH III,2, 47.9; NH IV,2, 50.25–26).

[145] R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 289–93, esp. 293.

[146] See de Bruyn and Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies," 174.

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other (mainly christological) contexts.[147] This suggests that the absence of amulets appealing to Mary in the fourth century is not merely a function of the relative scarcity of documentary and semi-literary evidence of Christianity in Egypt from the fourth century, and that the presence of amulets appealing to Mary in the fifth or sixth centuries reflects a devotional trend. Evidence of appeals to Mary for help begins to appear in Christian literature in the latter half of the fourth century, and is more plentiful and widespread during and after the fifth century.[148] The texts we have considered above do not contradict this wider observation.

CONCLUSIONS

None of the fourth-century witnesses to the anaphora, within Egypt and elsewhere, refer to Mary (or any other saint by name) or appeal to her (or their) intercessions in the commemorations. An explicit commemoration of Mary was introduced into the diptychs at Constantinople toward the end of the fifth century, but it was not associated with an appeal to her intercessions. In all likelihood Egyptian anaphoral commemorations of Mary appealed to her intercessions already in the sixth century, but the earliest evidence we have of such appeals is in a seventh-century Sahidic version of the anaphora of St Basil (MS Lefort Copt s.n.).

However, the earliest appearances of appeals to the intercessions of Mary in the major anaphoral traditions cannot be our only point of reference. Liturgical sources are often conservative; they preserve texts from an earlier period. While they attest to the continued use of older traditions – as H. Brakmann has remarked, liturgies were written down to be used, not to be archived [149] – they do not register concurrent changes or variations in liturgical or devotional practice.

At this point the witness of amulets is particularly precious, above all *PGM* P5b and *Suppl.Mag* I 26, both of which are assigned to the fifth century. *PGM* P5b includes a fully developed formula of appeal to the intercessions of Mary and other saints revered in Oxyrhynchus. It demonstrates that even if in anaphoral commemorations the earliest appeals for intercessions refer only to Mary, appeals to a series of intermediaries beginning with Mary are attested elsewhere already in the fifth century. Moreover, the formula of appeal suggests that by that time the practice was well established and liturgical in nature. *Suppl.Mag* I 26, for its part, shows that people appealed directly to Mary for help in the fifth century. In addition, the stylized form of appeal, as with the formula in *PGM* P5b, suggests that the practice was well established and liturgical in nature.

This leads us to a crux in discussions of the emergence of the cult of Mary. Were these forms of appeal already present in the fourth century or earlier? We can no longer turn to *P.Ryl*. III 470, since recent paleographical examinations now favour a much later date for this papyrus.[150] Nevertheless, on the basis of the amulets alone I would suggest that appeals to the intercessions of Mary were probably already an aspect of Egyptian devotion in the fourth century. It is more plausible to me that the developed formulae found in fifth-century amulets reflect a practice that was already achieving liturgical expression in the fourth century, than that these formulae were introduced in the fifth century and rapidly disseminated thereafter. However, this provisional hypothesis must be accompanied by several caveats. First, as we have already noted, dates assigned on the basis of paleographical assessments are not unassailable. If the amulets in question are reassigned to the sixth century, the hypothesis is weakened. Second, we have amulets assigned to the fourth century that refer to Mary, but none of these appeals to her or to her intercessions.[151] This silence begs explanation.

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[147] W. Brashear and R. Kotansky, "A New Magical Formulary," in P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (eds.), *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 141; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 3–24. S. Eitrem and A. Fridrichsen, "Ein christliches Amulett auf Papyrus," *Forhandlinger i Videnskabsselskabet i Christiania* (1921) 3–22; S. Eitrem, "A New Christian Amulet," *Aegyptus* 3 (1922) 66–67; *P.Osl*. I 5; *SB* VI 6584; *PGM* P3, with R.W. Daniel, "Some ΦΥΛΑΚΤΗΡΙΑ," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 25 (1977) 150–3. C. Wessely, "Neue griechische Zauberpapyri," *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Classe* 42 (1893), 1–96 at 65–7; *PGM* P10.

[148] See now S. Shoemaker, "The Cult of the Virgin in the Fourth Century: A Fresh Look at Some Old and New Sources," in Maunder, *Origins of the Cult*, 71–87; cf. Bardy, "La doctrine de l'intercession," 6–19, and Jourjon, "Aux origines," 43–48.

[149] Brakmann, "Neue Funde," *Actes du IVe Congrès copte*, 422; Brakmann, "Zwischen Pharos und Wüste," 345.

[150] See nn. 16–18 above.

[151] *PGM* P10.43–44 would appear to be an exception, a long spell that in one of its adjurations mentions "the angels who stand in the presence of our Lady." However, the date is disputed – Wessely assigns the hand to the fourth century, but Preisendanz to the sixth – and the allusion to Mary is an editorial reconstruction: τοὺς ἁγίους ἀγγέλ[ους] τοὺς [ἐσ-] /τῶτας ἐνώπιον τῆ[ς δεσποίνης ἡμῶν]. The papyrus has deteriorated since Wessely transcribed it; he read a delta, now missing, at the end of l. 44 (τῆς δ[), which would appear to support the

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In the end, the liturgical and paraliturgical evidence is, in and of itself, not decisive; it is suggestive but lacunose. A wider consideration of textual discourses, social milieux, and geographic locales is called for, as indicated by the papers in this volume. Moreover, in making inferences from textual and material evidence, unevenly distributed as it is, recourse to theory is inevitable.[152] Even so, whatever theory is brought to bear on the evidence, it must account for the absence, thus far, of amulets appealing to Mary prior to the fifth century – an absence that is all the more intriguing inasmuch as amulets were the product of textual traditions, local expertise, and popular demand, all of which are aspects of devotional practice.

EXCURSUS: FORMULAIC INVOCATIONS IN DOCUMENTS

Our sources of evidence for Christian invocations are not limited to liturgies and prayers. Christian invocations also appear in late antique documents. At the end of the sixth century the emperor Maurice required that legal documents begin with a christological invocation. [153] The first instance appears in Egypt in 591. Maurice's successor Phocas replaced the christological invocation with a trinitarian one, but under Heraclius the formula used by Maurice was restored in Lower Egypt and Arcadia, while the trinitarian formula continued to be used in Upper Egypt. In the Arsinoite and the Herakleopolite nomes in Lower Egypt the christological and trinitarian invocations refer also to Mary and sometimes the saints. Christological invocations referring to Mary appear in documents dated to the first decade of the seventh century; trinitarian invocations referring to Mary appear in documents dated to the second half of the seventh century. The references to Mary take several forms, but in each case the wording is relatively consistent, as one might expect with legal formulae imposed by imperial decree. Mary is invoked as "our Lady the *Theotokos*," "our Lady the holy *Theotokos*," or "our Lady the holy *Theotokos* and ever-virgin Mary."

While these invocations attest to the official use of standard epithets to refer to Mary, they do not appeal to her intercessions. There are, however, a few fragmentary sixth- or seventh-century documents that do appeal to Mary's intercessions. They concern, or appear to concern, marital matters. In two fragments one cannot tell whether the formula with which the text begins was an invocation or a prayer.[154] In two other fragments the text appeals explicitly to the prayers of Mary. There are slight variations in the wording. One fragment appeals to "the prayers of the holy *Theotokos* … the Forerunner …;[155] "holy" is added above the line. The other fragment appeals to "the prayers and intercessions of the holy … fair-virgin Mary and the … and John the martyr and the whole …."[156] The epithet "fair-virgin" is unusual. It is otherwise unattested in documentary papyri.[157] It is ascribed to Mary in a

reconstruction. Cf. Wessely, "Neue griechische Zauberpapyri," 65–67 and *PGM* P10. An image of the papyrus can be found at H. Förster, "Alltag und Kirche," in J. Henner, H. Förster and U. Horak (eds.), *Christliches mit Feder und Faden: Christliches in Texten, Textilien und Alltagsgegenständen aus Ägypten. Katalog zur Sonderausstellung im Papyrusmuseum der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek aus Anlaß des 14. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie* (Nilus 3; Vienna: Österreichische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999) 46–47, no. 36.

152 So, e.g., McGuckin, "The Early Cult of Mary," 1–5; Johnson, "*Sub tuum praesidium*," 250–52; cf. L.M. Peltomaa, "Towards the Origins of the History of the Cult of Mary," *Studia Patristica* 40 (2006), 75–86.

153 The following summary relies on R.S. Bagnall and K.A. Worp, "Christian Invocations in the Papyri," *Chronique d'Égypte* 56 (1981), 112–33. See also R.S. Bagnall and K.A. Worp, "Christian Invocations in the Papyri: A Supplement," *Chronique d'Égypte* 56 (1981), 362–65.

154 (1) *CPR* I 30 frg. 1; Grundz.Mitt. 290; *BL* I 117; J.M. Diethart and K.A. Worp, "CPR I 30 Frgm. i wiederentdeckt," *Chronique d'Égypte* 57 (1982), 138–40 at 138–39 (sixth century?). (2) Diethart and Worp, "CPR I 30 Frgm. i wiederentdeckt," 139–40; *SB* XVI 12398 (sixth or seventh century).

155 *P.Leid.Inst*. 74.2–3 (sixth century), with *BL* X 116 (cf. the review of *P.Leid.Inst.* by J. Gascou, *Bibliotheca orientalis* 51 (1994), 333–37 at 336 = 551–55 at 554):] . [. .] . [.] . ι̣κεί̣αν εὐμ[[η]]`έ´ν`ε´ιαν / [π]ρ̣ε̣σ̣β`ε´ίας τῆς `ἁγίας´ θεοτόκου̣ / [καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας καὶ Ἰωάννου το]ῦ̣ προδρόμου [[κα]] / ..μ̣ικὰ The text supplied by the editor in the lacuna is not translated.

156 S. Daris, "*Kalliparthenos* Maria," *Aegyptus* 73 (1993), 33–37 at 36, ll. 1–3; *SB* XXII 15209 (end of sixth century):]ε̣ὐ̣χαῖς καὶ πρεσβ[εί]ας τῆς ἁγ[ίας δεσποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς] / [θεοτόκου καὶ] καλλιπαρθένου Μαρίας καὶ τοῦ [ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ προδρόμου] / [καὶ βαπτιστοῦ] καὶ μάρτυρος Ἰωάννου καὶ παντὸς το̣ῦ̣ [χὀρου τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων .... The text supplied by the editor in the lacunae is not translated.

157 According to a search of the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri, 19 January 2011.

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treatise attributed to Cyril of Alexandria,[158] but the attribution is highly doubtful; the epithet, along with other vocabulary in the treatise, is not found in Cyril's undisputed works.[159]

A few observations are warranted here. First, the practice of appealing to the intercessions of Mary (along with others) in documents was not limited to marital matters, nor to Egypt. A similar appeal to the intercessions of Mary, John the Baptist, and all the saints concludes an account of various trading activities found in Palestine.[160] Second, the appeals are not addressed exclusively to Mary; they continue with appeals to the intercessions of John the Baptist, specific saints, or all the martyrs and saints. The intercessory function of Mary is not unique to her, though she is ranked first and foremost among the company of saints whose intercessions are sought. Third, the sequence of epithets applied to Mary in the marital documents is similar to the sequence of epithets applied to her in other documentary formulae of invocation. Finally, while all these documents shed light on formulaic ways of referring to Mary, they do not help us determine when appeals to Mary's intercession first arose in liturgical and paraliturgical texts in Egypt, since the documentary evidence is relatively late (sixth or seventh century).

[158] *Contra eos qui Theotocon nolunt confiteri* 18 and 26, in E. Schwartz (ed.), *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* 1,1,7 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1929), p. 27, l. 19 (cf. PG 76, 277B): θεοτόκος δὲ πάντως καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ καλλιπάρθενος; p. 30, l. 32 (cf. PG 76, 285C): τοῦτον τὸν ἀληθινὸν υἱὸν δεικνῦσαν ἄνθρωπον εἶναι τὸν ἐκ τῆς καλλιπαρθένου τεχθέντα.

[159] See G.M. de Durand, "Excursus III," in *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Deux dialogues christologiques* (SC 97; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 522–24, *pace* Daris, "*Kalliparthenos* Maria," 37, l. 2 comm.

[160] *P.Ness*. III 89 (late sixth or early seventh century).

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Leena Mari Peltomaa

"Cease your lamentations, I shall become an advocate for you." Mary as Intercessor in Romanos' Hymnography

The first Byzantine author whose literary characterizations make Mary a real personality is the great poet and *kontakion* composer Romanos Melodos from the Justinianic era (518–565).[1] Romanos' hymnography is well-studied,[2] but only some few of the corpus of ca. sixty authentic hymns are dated.[3] Nevertheless, Romanos' works altogether serve as a noteworthy source of assessing *Zeitgeist*, dominant ideology and values in Justinianic society.[4] The feature that brings historical validity in Romanos' poetry is his dramatic technique by use of dialogue.[5] Where "Romanos' gift as a raconteur" invited his audience to enter biblical stories, as Georgia Frank puts it,[6] there the poet's talent allows us to have a look at the world he was observing. To a certain extent, the imaginary additions and modifications that were to enliven and enrich the original stories come to betray some of the conditions of life in sixth-century Byzantine society.

Romanos' portrayal of Mary is unique amongst Patristic authors.[7] It is typical of him that he makes biblical figures active subjects by letting them voice their "own" thoughts. Six dialogues by which the poet gives expression to what he imagines to have been Mary's feelings and thoughts in those situations are found in Romanos' "Marian corpus".[8] Considering the lack of accurate information about the earliest development of the cult, it is of historical importance that this corpus allows for a detailed analysis of Mary's role as intercessor.[9]

There is, for instance, a hymn relating how Mary came to adopt this role.[10] Thus, according to Romanos, on the day of Nativity it happens that Adam and Eve wake up from deathlike sleep. Hearing Mary's praise to the "One whom she bore", they grasp that the redemption from the curse has come.[11] Adam cries: "Look at me at your feet, O Virgin, Mother without blame, and by me the whole human race at your footsteps."[12] Eve also begs the "hope

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[1] On *das justinianische Zeitalter*, Romanos' life and hymnography (*kontakia*), consult J. Koder, Romanos Melodos. Die Hymnen I. *Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur* 62. Stuttgart 2005, 9–48. Justinian I was sole ruler from 527 to 565, but he participated in decision-making during the reign of his uncle, Justin I (518–527). Romanos died probably before 562.

[2] A bibliography up to 2005 is included in the two volumes by J. Koder, Romanos Melodos. Die Hymnen I–II. *Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur* 62 and 64. Stuttgart 2005 and 2006.

[3] See Koder, Romanos Melodos I 34.

[4] E.g., in studies by Paul Magdalino, Misha Meier, Derek Krueger, Leena Mari Peltomaa.

[5] See Koder, Romanos Melodos I 41ff.

[6] G. Frank, Romanos and the Night Vigil in the Sixth Century, in: D. Krueger (ed.), Byzantine Christianity. *A Peoples's History of Christianity* 3. Minneapolis, MN 2006, 59–78, loc. cit. 60.

[7] The same can be said of all the biblical female figures Romanos characterized: the sinful woman, Herodias, the wife of Potiphar, the Samaritan, Sarah, the widow of Elias.

[8] The corpus consists of altogether thirty-seven hymns with references to Mary, included in the fifty-nine hymns that Paul Maas and C.A. Trypanis considered authentic in their Greek edition, Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica genuina. Oxford 1963. This paper follows Cantica genuina. The other editions are: J. Grosdidier de Matons, Romanos le Mélode. Hymnes, 1–66. *Sources Chrétiennes* 99, 110, 114, 128, 283. Paris 1964–1968; M. Carpenter, Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist. I-II. Columbia 1970, 1973; R. Maisano, Romano il Melodo. I–II. Turin 2002 and J. Koder, Romanos Melodos I–II. In Cantica genuina Mary appears as the central figure in eight hymns and in nine hymns, if a stichera praising Mary as the Theotokos is taken into account. This stichera is No. 83 in Sancti Romani Melodi. Cantica dubia by P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis. Berlin 1970 and it is included in Romanos' authentic works by Grosdidier de Matons, Maisano and Koder. The six dialogues appear in: No.1, On the Nativity (Mary and the Magi), No. 2, On the Nativity II (Adam and Eve and the Nativity), No. 7, On the Marriage at Cana, No. 19, On Mary at the Cross, No. 36, On the Annunciation I, No. 37, On the Annunciation II. For the concordance of the numbering between Cantica genuina and the French edition, see Maisano, Romano I 103, or Koder, Romanos I 58–60.

[9] See L. M. Peltomaa, Roles and Functions of Mary in the Hymnography of Romanos Melodos. *Studia Patristica* 44 (2010) 487–498, esp. 496, 498; eadem, Romanos the Melodist and the Intercessory Role of Mary, in: K. Belke, E. Kislinger, A. Külzer and M. A. Stassinopoulou (eds.), Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag. Wien–Cologne–Weimar 2007, 495–502.

[10] Maas/Trypanis No. 2, On the Nativity II (Adam and Eve and the Nativity).

[11] Str. 3–9.

[12] Str. 8.1–2: Ἰδού εἰμι πρὸ ποδῶν σοῦ, παρθένε, μῆτερ ἄμωμε, / καὶ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ πᾶν τὸ γένος τοῖς ἴχνεσί σου πρόσκειται …

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of her spirit", but her entreaty concerns the abolition of the consequences of the Fall.[13] Mary's eyes fill with tears as she understands the straits in which "her parents" are. That is the moment at which Mary takes the initiative in interceding: "Cease your lamentations, I shall become advocate (πρέσβις) for you in the presence of my Son."[14] She even asks them to accept her mediation: "Thus restrain your tears and accept me as your mediator (μεσῖτιν) in the presence of my Son."[15]

Romanos' approach to the theme reflects the great Patristic idea – prevalent already by his time and best known from Irenaeus of Lyons' (d. 204) influential work *Adversus haereses* – that Mary, "the new Eve" by virtue of her obedience, becomes the advocate of Eve.[16] Here, as the Irenaean notion of Mary's meaning in salvation – meanwhile crystallized in Patristic usage into the slogan "through Eve the death, through Mary the life" – is offered by a master of poetics, Mary becomes the tender-hearted mother of Christ who both understands her unique position and uses it for the benefit of "her race".[17] The imaginary situation where Mary finds herself results in her conscious choice, whereby she adopts her role as intercessor and mediator. Of course Mary's willingness was regarded as a fact,[18] but this is the first time in a Byzantine source when the motive is presented from Mary's point of view, viz., that she becomes intercessor at her own (free) discretion. From the Christian saints' cults we know that people were convinced that their saints acted freely and out of love, and this is the point with Mary, too.

On the other hand, Romanos suggests that Mary's intercessory role was considered valid also in an "earthly" context, in terms of right social order. This appears in the hymn on "Mary at the Cross",[19] depicting Mary's struggle, distress and inner development before she accepts her son's voluntary death on the cross. Romanos completes the poem by the following phrase: "You granted (παρέσχες) the honoured Lady the freedom of speech (παρρησίαν) to cry to you, 'My Son and my God'."[20] The fact that *parrhesia* is granted by Christ does not change the matter, for the same model was used in social intercourse as well – freedom of speech was given by an authority or by "*laos*".[21] Put in juridical terms, Romanos observed the norm, according to which Mary obtained her son's sanction for her intercessory role.[22]

Undoubtedly, the way of reasoning by which Mary's intercessory role is justified by Romanos in the scene with Adam and Eve was intended to urge emotional reception.[23] Even a value judgment seasons the poet's characterization of Mary as a tender mother:

The eyes of Mary as she beheld Eve
And she looked on Adam, quickly filled with tears;
However she held them back, and tried earnestly to conquer her nature –
She who had given birth to her Son, Christ, in a manner beyond nature.
But, sympathizing with her parents, her heart was troubled,
For a compassionate mother was fitting for the Merciful One.[24]

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[13] Str. 9.

[14] Str. 10.7–8: Παύσασθε τῶν θρήνων ὑμῶν, καὶ πρέσβις ὑμῖν γίνομαι πρὸς τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ.

[15] Str. 11.7–8: Τὰ δάκρυα οὖν στείλαντες, ἐκδέξασθέ με / μεσῖτιν ὑμῶν γενέσθαι πρὸς τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ.

[16] Adversus Haereses V.19.1: uti virginis Evae virgo Maria fieret advocata (παράκλητος); ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, Contre les hérésies, livre V. *SC* 152. Paris 1982. Cf. Demonstratio Praedicationis Apostolicae (Epideixis) 33; A. Rousseau (ed.), Démonstration de la prédication apostolique. *SC* 406. Paris 1995. The influence of Irenaeus on all Patristic reflection is evident from the universal use of the parallel "Eve-Mary". The juxtaposition of Eve-Mary implies recapitulation, which is an indispensable part of Irenaeus' theory. E. Osborn, Irenaeus of Lyons. Cambridge e. a. 2001. Part III is dedicated to the theme of recapitulation.

[17] See note 24 for the whole passage (str. 10.1–6).

[18] Founded on Mary's consent in Luke 1, 38: Εἶπεν δέ Μαριάμ· ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη κυρίου· γενοιτὸ μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου.

[19] Maas/Trypanis No. 19.

[20] Ibid., str. 17.8–9: σὺ παρέσχες τῇ σεμνῇ / παρρησίαν κράζειν σοι· Ὁ υἱὸς μου καὶ Θεός μου᾽.

[21] Cf. H. G. Liddell – R. Scott, A Greek–English Lexicon, with a revised supplement. Oxford ^{9}1996, 1344 s. v. παρρησία; G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon. Oxford ^{9}1995, 1044f. s. v. παρρησία.

[22] The connection between Christ's salvific work and his mother's role appears in the hymn "On the Nativity" II (Maas/Trypanis No. 2, str. 17.9–11): Παῦσαι, μῆτερ, κλαίουσα ὃ ἀγνοεῖς· / ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ τελεσθῇ, ἀπολοῦνται οὗτοι πάντες / ὑπὲρ ὧν ἱκετεύεις με, ἡ κεχαριτωμένη. – "Cease crying over what you know not, mother; if that [i.e. his sacrifice] is not accomplished, all those for whom you intercede to me will not be saved, [o, Mary] full of grace." (Trans. from N. Tsironis, The Lament of the Virgin Mary from Romanos the Melode to George of Nicomedia. An Aspect of the Development of the Marian Cult. An unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dept. of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, King's College, London, June 1998, 103.)

[23] Cf. D. Krueger, Christian Piety and Practice in the Sixth Century, in: M. Maas (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian. Cambridge e. a. 2005, 291–315, esp. 297–300 (Romanos the Melodist and the Night Vigil).

[24] Maas/Typanis No. 2, str. 10.1–6: Οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ δὲ Μαρίας τὴν Εὔαν θεωρήσαντες / καὶ τὸν Ἀδὰμ κατιδόντες δακρύειν κατηπείγοντο· / ὅμως στέγει καὶ σπουδάζει / νικᾶν τὴν φύσιν ἡ παρὰ τὸν Χριστὸν σχοῦσα υἱόν· / ἀλλὰ τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐταράττετο γονεῦσι συμπάσχουσα

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In no case does Romanos fancy anything that contradicts Patristic teaching. Related even to the authoritative text of the famous Akathistos hymn that provided preachers with the "standards" for the doctrine on Mary as the Virgin Theotokos in Byzantine theology,[25] the portrayal of Mary by Romanos is consistent and doctrinally correct. The Akathistos is a hymn on the incarnation, but it is a composition in praise of Mary. As a matter of fact, being a proclamation of the Ephesian dogma of the Theotokos (431), it is through and through a theological work, in every detail balanced according to the christology represented by Cyril of Alexandria and Proclus of Constantinople.[26] Considering our topic – the intercessory role of Mary – it is striking that the Akathistos lacks Mary's "personality", which again is the essential characteristic of Romanos' Marian image.[27] While Mary in Romanos volunteers to become Eve's advocate, the "Second Eve" of the Akathistos – the dominant theme of the abstract image of Mary in the hymn – links her with the story of the Fall:[28]

Hail, through whom joy shall shine forth;
Hail, through whom the curse shall cease;
Hail, recalling of fallen Adam;
Hail, deliverance of the tears of Eve.[29]

These lines, the very first salutations to Mary, reveal the early Christian pattern of thought typical of the Greek tradition, whereby the incarnation signifies redemption from the Fall and its consequent effects.[30] Accordingly, as the incarnation also is a sign of Christ's Second Coming at the end of time, the last strophe of the Akathistos alludes to the *parousia*. Though indirect, the allusion is unambiguous because Mary's intervention at the Last Judgment is anticipated:

O Mother hymned by all …
accepting this present offering
deliver from every evil and from the punishment to come
all those who cry to you:
Halleluia.[31]

So, this early Byzantine text associates Mary with the Last Judgment – it even salutes Mary as the "conciliation of the Righteous Judge".[32] The causality, which the Christian Byzantines took for granted, viz., that the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time is the consequence of the Fall, explains Mary's appearance as intercessor of "her race" in the end-time visions. The incarnation and the death on the cross were understood to be part of *oikonomia*, the plan of God or divine economy, to redeem man from doom and death and restore him to his original state of glory,[33] and all this is taken for granted in the Akathistos' narrative on the incarnation.[34] Thus, in the light of the Akathistos, considering the development of the cult, the point is that it was the second Eve theme that carried the original notion of Mary as intercessor and not the christological term "Theotokos". On this ground it can

/ τῷ γὰρ ἐλεήμονι μήτηρ *ἔπρεπεν* εὔσπλαγχνος. (My italic, trans. modified from Carpenter.) Liddell – Scott: πρέπει, is fitting, it beseems, suits, becomes.

[25] L. M. Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn. *The Medieval Mediterranean* 35. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2001. There is no doubt that Romanos knew the Akathistos, see Koder, Romanos Melodos II 795–796.

[26] Peltomaa, The Image 85–113.

[27] If the question of different modes of poetical expression is left aside, it can be argued that the impersonal image is indicative of a relatively early stage of the cult. On this development, see I. Kalavrezou, The Maternal Side of the Virgin, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art. Milan 2000, 40–45; eadem, Images of the Mother: When the Virgin Mary Became *Meter Theou*, *DOP* 44 (1990), 165–172, loc. cit. 166; Peltomaa, The Image 73–74.

[28] See Peltomaa, The Image 211–212, 216.

[29] Ak. 1.6–9: Χαῖρε, δι᾽ ἧς ἡ χαρὰ ἐκλάμψει· / χαῖρε, δι᾽ ἧς ἡ ἀρὰ ἐκλείψει· / χαῖρε, τοῦ πεσόντος Ἀδὰμ ἡ ἀνάκλησις· / χαῖρε, τῶν δακρύων τῆς Εὔας ἡ λύτρωσις. Ed. by C. A. Trypanis, Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica, *Wiener Byzantinistische Studien* 5. Vienna 1968, 17–39.

[30] Cf. Peltomaa, The Image 35.

[31] Ak. 24.1–6: Ὦ πανύμνητε μήτηρ … δεξαμένη τὴν νῦν προσφοράν, / ἀπὸ πάσης ῥῦσαι συμφορᾶς ἅπαντας / καὶ τῆς *μελλούσης λύτρωσαι κολάσεως* τοὺς σοὶ βοῶντας· / "Ἀλληλούια." (My italic.)

[32] Ak. 13.14: Χαῖρε, κριτοῦ δικαίου δυσώπησις.

[33] E.g. Romanos, Hymn on the Nativity, Maas/Trypanis No. 2, str. 17.1–4: Ὅλων δὲ τούτων ἐν πείρᾳ βουλήσει μου γενήσομαι, / καὶ πάντων τούτων αἰτία διάθεσις γενήσεται / ἣν ἐκ πάλαι ἕως ἄρτι / πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπεδειξάμην ὡς Θεός, σῶσαι ζητῶν. – Of my own will shall I experience these things [i.e. death on the cross], / and the cause of all these things will be my dispensation / the plan which long ago, from the beginning until now / I have shown for men. As God, I live to save (trans. Carpenter, Kontakia of Romanos I, cf. Koder, Romanos Melodos I No. 6).

[34] Cf. Peltomaa, The Image 212.

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be supposed that Mary was considered to be an advocate/intercessor/mediator as long as the idea of the second Eve existed – probably long before Irenaeus, who elaborated the antithesis Eve-Mary, which Justin Martyr (d. 165) as the first of the church Fathers had introduced.[35]

It must of course be taken into consideration that our reading may have gathered only the learned author's thoughts of Mary's meaning in *oikonomia*, rendering the Patristic reflection about how things actually should be. Moreover, we do not know whether the Dormition tradition had by then already influenced Constantinopolitan piety.[36] However, even though it is impossible to prove, the Akathistos allows the assumption of the character of the early development of the cult that, in social consciousness, Mary's intercessory capacity was related to *oikonomia*, God's plan. In no case can the pertinent rhetoric in the four salutations, referring to kings, priests, church and kingdom, by which Mary's official status as the Theotokos is confirmed,[37] be taken as a proof of the virtual state – scope and character – of the developing cult in the imperial city.[38] Thus, on the basis of this hymn no generalized conclusion can be drawn from Mary's intercessory role. Yet, even though it is impossible to say anything about the average churchgoers' relationship with Mary, we can notice that devotion to Mary seems to have been a trend in the early fifth-century Constantinopolitan circles of female ascetics.[39] Being an expression of ascetical idealism and a product of the value-system of the society,[40] whose female members of its highest aristocracy demonstratively promoted asceticism,[41] the Akathistos manifests the constant awareness of the Last Judgment prescribed for those living in virginity.[42] Hence we can assume that in such an intellectual atmosphere knowledge of Mary's intercessory role was not forgotten.

The Akathistos' structure and themes betray that, as a hymn on the incarnation, it was composed for the feast of the Nativity and not for the feast of the Annunciation as the oldest sources suggest.[43] Liturgical documents from the period from which the hymn derives – to the early fifth century – provide no sorts of evidence that intercessions of Mary had been included in eucharistic liturgies.[44] Gabriele Winkler's supposition that a respectful mention of the Theotokos may have been added rather soon after the christological [i.e. Nestorian] struggles to the anaphoral prayers of intercession, is worthy of reconsidering in the light of a later case.[45] Be that as it may, in the Akathistos

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[35] J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines. London [5]1989, 493; Peltomaa, The Image 128.

[36] S. J. Shoemaker, Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption. Oxford 2002, 281: "[Dormition and Assumption narratives] were clearly influental on the emerging belief in the effectiveness of Marian intercession."

[37] Ak. 23.10–13: χαῖρε, τίμιον διάδημα βασιλέων εὐσεβῶν· χαῖρε, καύχημα σεβάσμιον ἱερέων εὐλαβῶν· χαῖρε, τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὁ ἀσάλευτος πύργος· χαῖρε, τῆς βασιλείας τὸ ἀπόρθητον τεῖχος. – Hail, precious diadem of pious kings; Hail, holy exaltation of devout priests; Hail immovable tower of the Church; Hail, impregnable wall of the kingdom.

[38] There is no doubt about that the "powerful figure" (Limberis) manifests the Ephesian dogma of the Theotokos, related to the doctrine of the incarnation and that the four acclamations (above) refer to the great significance of the orthodox faith for political affairs in the empire. However, reading the Akathistos' last two strophes as evidence of the factual stage of development in the cult of Mary would need much more methodological and historical considerations than Vasiliki Limberis (Identities and Images of the Theotokos in the 'Akathistos Hymn', Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1987, and Divine Heiress. The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople. London–New York 1994) and Bissera Pentcheva (Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium. University Park, Pennsylvania 2006, 15) have presented.

[39] Cf. Peltomaa, The Image 72–73.

[40] Peltomaa, The Image 205.

[41] Cf. K. G. Holum, The Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity. Berkeley–Los Angeles–London 1977, 93.

[42] Life lived according to the Gospels must never forget the fearful and unavoidable court of justice, cf. Basil of Caesarea, Ep. 173, Πρὸς Θεοδώραν κανονικήν, Y. Courtonne (ed.), Saint Basil, Lettres Tome II. Paris 1961, 31–39. Cf. S. Elm, 'Virgins of God'. Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity. Oxford 1994, 145.

[43] R. A. Fletcher, Three Early Byzantine Hymns and Their Place in the Liturgy of the Church of Constantinople, *BZ* 51 (1958) 53–65, esp. 62, cf. Peltomaa, The Image 66–67. Justinian confirmed the feast of the Annunciation around 530–550.

[44] Cf. G. Winkler, Die Intercessionen der Chrysostomusanaphora in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung (I. Teil). *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 36 (1970) 301–336, esp. 309.

[45] R. F. Taft, A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Vol. IV. The Diptychs. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 238. Rome 1991, 100–101: "One of the most important developments in the Constantinopolitan diptychs of the dead during this critical post-Chalcedonian phase of the Monopysite struggle was the interpolation of the Theotokos ekphonesis into the liturgy of Constantinople by Patriarch Gennadius I (458–471), at the command of Emperor Leo I (457–474), an innovation provoked by Patriarch Martyrius (459–470) of Antioch's refusal to grant Mary the Theotokos title."

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we have an early fifth-century liturgical prayer to Mary.[46] First in the annual cycles of christological festivals and later of the festivals of the Akathistos,[47] this very prayer with the focus on *ta eschata* was repeatedly recited:[48]

"Deliver from every evil and from the punishment to come."[49]

A historical tradition connects the Akathistos with seventh-century Constantinople, transmitting the explanation for the hymn's current name as well as the prooemium Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ from time of the siege of the capital by the Avars and Persians in 626.[50] But the hymn's internal aspects connect it with fifth-century Constantinople. Besides, four references to imperial and ecclesiastical power, the hymn's distinctive features – rhetoric, teaching on the Theotokos and the ascetical emphasis – point to Constantinopolitan influence: Proclus, the archbishop of Constantinople (d. 446), a brilliant rhetor and apparently a devotee.[51] Nevertheless, due to the lack of hymnographic literature for comparison,[52] it is not possible to evaluate how typical the eschatological emphasis of the Akathistos was.

A good century later a broader basis for considering the question is found in Romanos' hymnography. The existing analysis, based on the corpus,[53] can be deepened by the analysis to the references to the *presbeia* of Mary that are scattered around his *oeuvre*.[54] As it is impossible to present them in detail here,[55] it may suffice to state that the fear of the last judgment is one of the articulated anxieties, to which Mary's intercessions are hoped to bring relief.[56] Predictably, orthodoxy or religious intolerance prescribed on whose side Mary was thought to act as intercessor in the end:

Drive off from here all who are of ill repute,
The villains who dilute Thy holy wine with water
The ones who always water down Thy dogma
Are condemned to Hell fire:
But deliver us, O Sinless One
From the lamentations of Thy judgment, O Merciful God,
By the prayers of the holy Theotokos and Virgin.[57]

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[46] This is remarkable, since according to Kelly (Early Christian Doctrines 491), "reliable evidence of prayers being addressed to her [Mary], or of her protection and help being sought, is almost (though not entirely) non-existent in the first four centuries."

[47] No example of a festival of the Akathistos before the ninth century has been found, cf. M. D. Spadaro, Sulla liturgia dell' inno 'Akathistos': questiones chronologicae, in: S. Felici (ed.), La mariologia della catechesi dei padri (Età postnicena). Roma 1989, 247–264.

[48] On the meaning of repetition: "The church congregations, which gathered at regular and frequent intervals, presented the most timely and effective possibility for a lasting and stable influence over the masses throughout the Byzantine empire." (J. Koder, Imperial Propaganda in the *Kontakia* of Romanos the Melode. *DOP* 62 (2010) 275–291, loc. cit. 277.)

[49] The eschatological reference is clear, but the other idea in the same context, ἀπὸ πάσης ῥῦσαι συμφορᾶς (here rendered: "deliver from every evil"), is ambiguous. In addition to the obvious thought that Mary is invoked to rescue all those who cry her [i.e. those who defended the Theotokos dogma = orthodoxy] the idea seems to have the connotation that – since heresies were considered to be sin – Mary is begged to protect the orthodox from that kinds of evil – calamities and hardships – which the Nestorian heresy just had made them endure. In view of eschatological future such entreaty is certainly sensible. On the period, see B. Bleckmann, Apokalypse und kosmische Katastrophen: das Bild der theodosianischen Dynastie beim Kirchenhistoriker Philostorg, in: W. Brandes – F. Schmieder (eds.), Endzeiten. Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen. Berlin–New York 2008, 13–40.

[50] L. M. Peltomaa, The Role of the Virgin Mary at the Siege of Constantinople in 626. *Scrinium* 5 (2009) 284–299.

[51] Consult Peltomaa, The Image, 101–113: "Proclus of Constantinople as a Marian Preacher"; N. Constas, Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, texts and translations. *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 66. Leiden– Boston 2003.

[52] J. Grosdidier de Matons, Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance. Paris 1977, 28–32.

[53] Peltomaa, Roles and Functions of Mary; eadem, Intercessory Role, Festschrift Koder.

[54] Maas/Trypanis: No. 3, On the Massacre of the Innocents, Str. 18; No. 4, On the Presentation in the Temple, Str. 18; No. 7, On the Marriage at Cana, Str. 21; No. 8, On the Healing of the Leper, Str. 18; No.11, On the Man Possessed with Devils, Str. 25; No. 32, On the Ascension, Str. 18; No. 34, On the Second Coming, Str. 24; No. 39, On the Healing of the Lame Man by Peter and John, Str. 24; No. 44, On Joseph II, Str. 22; No. 49, On the Prodigal Son, Str. 22; No. 51, On Fasting, Str. 24; No. 52, On Repentance, Pr.; No. 58, On the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia II, Str. 18; No. 59, On All Martyrs, Pr.

[55] That would be a subject on its own right. A succinct exposition is included in Peltomaa, The Intercessory Role, Festschrift Koder 498–501.

[56] Maas/Trypanis No. 34, On the Second Coming, Str. 24.3–10: οὕτως ὡς οἰκτίρμων ἀοράτως ἐμφάνηθι / καὶ ἐμοί, ἀνεξίκακε· / ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἐμὲ κατακείμενον ἐξανάστησον, δέομαι, / ὅτι ἃ λέγω καὶ συμβουλεύω τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐ φυλάττω· /ἀλλά, σὲ καθικετεύω, δὸς καιρόν μοι μετανοίας, / καὶ ταῖς ἱκεσίαις τῆς ἀειπαρθένου καὶ θεοτόκου φεῖσαί μου / καὶ μὴ ἀπορρίψῃς με ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου σου, / κριτὰ δικαιότατε. – Invisible reveal Thyself to me, as Merciful, O Forbearing One, / Raise me up, I pray, as I lie in much sin, / for what I say and advise others I do not keep myself! / But I beseech Thee, grant me time for repentance, / through the intercessions of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos spare me, / and do not tear me from Thy sight, / O most just Judge!

[57] Ibid. Str. 21.2–9: κακοδόξους δὲ πάντας [ἐντ]εῦθεν ἀπέλασον, / οἵτινες ὡς πανοῦργοι μίσγουσί σου [τὸν] οἶνον τὸν πανάγιον ὕδατι· / τὸ δόγμα γὰρ τὸ σὸν ἀεὶ ἐξυ[δαρ]οῦντες, (5) κατάκριτοί εἰσι τῷ πυρὶ τῆς γεέννης· / ἀλλὰ [ῥῦσ]αι ἡμᾶς, ἀναμάρτητε, / τοῦ ὀδυρμοῦ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς [σῆς], ὡς ἐλεήμων Θεός, / ταῖς εὐχαῖς τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ παρθένου.

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The self-evident manner by which Romanos puts the intercessions into different contexts by means of the formulas, like "through/by the intercessions/prayers (πρεσβείαις/ἱκεσίαις/εὐχαῖς) of the Theotokos/Virgin/your Mother", gives to understand that by Romanos' time the practice of invoking Mary to intercede with God had established itself in the Constantinopolitan liturgical rite. In itself this would not be surprising because we know that "the Church's confidence in the prayers and patronage of the saints" had begun to manifest itself already in the third century.[58] However, even though it can be assumed that belief in Mary's intercessory powers grew in the context of the saints' cult, it is evident that it was not the growing general interest in holy people that pushed Mary to the fore, but the Theotokos controversy. That made Mary really famous across the empire. The quintessence of Mary's unique saintly category, simultaneous virginity and divine motherhood, distinguished her from all other saints whom God had appointed "both as an example and as a defence to Christians".[59] The distinction between Mary and other saints can be subtle, but it is there as the hymn "On All Martyrs" shows:

To Thee, O Lord, the Gardener of creation, the civilized world
Offers as the first fruits of nature the God-inspired martyrs.
Through their prayers (ἱκεσίαις) preserve Thy church, Thy empire, in deep peace
By the mediation (διὰ) of the Theotokos,
O, All-Merciful.[60]

This distinction, at first sight insignificant – the martyrs are suppliants,[61] whereas Mary is the agent through whom the peace in the church and the empire is preserved – is important. On the one hand it reveals that the hymn writer is sensitive to Mary's status. On the other hand it reveals that a capacity was associated with her status, the social implications of which unfolded in the period of Justinian. Irrespective of their religious backgrounds or convictions, Justinian's subjects came to feel the impact of the increasing veneration of Mary in the course of his regime. Romanos as the emperor's mouthpiece articulated the imperial interest in the proper way:

Anticipating the despair of Nineveh [i.e. Constantinople],
you did turn aside the doom that had been proclaimed.
And, O Lord, your pity conquered pride.
Even now, have pity on your people and your city.
With mighty hand cast down those opposed to us,
through the intercessions of the Theotokos,
when you have received our repentance. [62]

This hymn ends with the poet's prayer that the merciful God would deliver from the future threads and redeem from judgment those who sing to Him.[63] Paul Magdalino has shown that Romanos' hymnography echoes the eschatological atmosphere that prevailed in the Roman Empire during Justinian's reign.[64] It seems evident that the emperor had internalized the idea that – in Magdalino's words – "the Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Heaven were in the process and on the point of becoming one".[65] There is no place for considering the ideological background here, but Procopius' *De aedificiis* shows that Mary was involved: marian churches were constructed all over Roman territory, down to the furthest border.[66] The hypothesis presents itself that Mary's position as the

[58] Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines 490.

[59] Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines 491.

[60] Maas/Trypanis No. 59, On All Martyrs, Pr. (trans. modified from Carpenter): Ὡς ἀπαρχὰς τῆς φύσεως τῷ φυτουργῷ τῆς κτίσεως / ἡ οἰκουμένη προσφέρει σοι, κύριε, τοὺς θεοφόρους μάρτυρας· / *ταῖς αὐτῶν ἱκεσίαις* ἐν εἰρίνῃ βαθείᾳ / τὴν ἐκκλεσίαν σου, τὴν πολιτείαν σου / *διὰ τῆς θεοτόκου* συντήρισον, / πολυέλεε. (My italic.)

[61] Cf. Liddell – Scott, ἱκεσία, the prayer of a suppliant.

[62] Maas/Trypanis 52, On Repentance, Pr.: Ἀπεγνωσμένην τὴν Νινευὴ προέφθασας, / ἐπηγγελμένην τὴν ἀπειλὴν παρήγαγες / καὶ τὴν ὀργὴν ἐνίκησε τὸ ἔλεός σου, Κύριε· / σπλαγχνίσθητι καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ λαὸν καὶ πόλιν σου, / παλάμῃ κραταιᾷ τοὺς καθ' ἡμῶν κατάβαλε / πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, / προσδεχόμενος ἡμῶν τὴν μετάνοιαν.

[63] Ibid. str. 17.1–5: ῥῦσαι ὡς εὔσπλαγχνος ἐκ τῆς μελλούσης ἀπειλῆς / … λύτρωσαι τῆς κρίσεως.

[64] P. Magdalino, The History of the Future and Its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda, in: R. Beaton – Ch. Roueché (eds.), The Making of Byzantine History. Aldershot, Hampshire 1993, 3–34, esp. 6–7.

[65] Magdalino, The History 11.

[66] Procopius, De aedificiis, H. B. Dewing – G. Downey (eds.), Procopius VII, Buildings. London 1940. The churches were situated: at Blachernae (I 3,2; I 6,3; I 8,20) and Pege, (I 3,6–9) outside the Theodosian wall, and at Heraeum (I 3,10) in Constantinople, in Antioch (II 10,24), Theodosioupolis (III 4,12), Jerusalem (V 6,1–26), Sinai (V 8,4–10), Jericho (V 9,5), Porphyreon (V 9,23), Augila (VI 2,20), Leptis Magna (VI 4,4), Carthage (VI 5,9) and in Septem (VI 7,16).

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foremost of the holy intercessors was built up in Justinian's time, when waiting for the *second parousia* to take place made the emperor nervous.[67] At Christmas in 562, when the second inauguration of Hagia Sophia took place, a *kontakion* writer other than Romanos was commissioned.[68] There is no doubt that he confirmed the course which the emperor pursued: "Make this [= Hagia Sophia] eternal firm / and receive favourably the prayers that we in this church bring to you unceasingly / by the intercessions of the Theotokos."[69]

It is natural that the imperial city, through its political, intellectual, and material resources, gave the impetus to the development of the cult of Mary that met the needs of the whole *oikoumene*. The intercessory role of Mary, as it appears in the Akathistos and Romanos, is inseparable from *oikonomia*, the Byzantine worldview, the foundation of which rested on the Bible and prophecies.[70] The Akathistos and the greatest of Byzantine poets, Romanos *melodós*, convey the imperial and societal ethos of the period and place. Peter Brown has convincingly shown that an "emotional joining point" was necessary for the rise of the cult of the saints, but how it was in the very special case of Mary is not known.[71] Now, in Justinian's time, in the light of Romanos, the emotional pivotal point implying human need for protection was associated with Mary's intercessory capacity. By tracing this clue we can probably gather together some genuine parts for the puzzle of the rise of the cult of Mary.

[67] M. Maier, Das Andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr. *Hypomnemata* 147. Göttingen 2003, 570–641.

[68] C. A. Trypanis, Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica, *Wiener Byzantinistische Studien* 5. Vienna 1968, 141. The hymn's acrostic reads ΤΩΝ ΕΓΚΑΙΝΙΩΝ Ο ΥΜΝΟΣ.

[69] Ibid., No. XII, Anonymous, Pr. 4–6 (transl. Peltomaa): Στερέωσον αὐτὸ εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος / Καὶ πρόσδεξαι ἡμῶν τὰς ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπαύστως προσαγομένας σοι δεήσεις / Πρεσβείαις τῆς θεοτόκου.

[70] Magdalino, The History 30: "Prophecy was not science fiction, but science." We could also say that prophecy was the method by which divine will or design made known itself to the rulers of the empire.

[71] Peter Brown's fundamental study, The Cult of the Saints. The Rise and Function in Latin Christianity (Chicago 1981), provides a brilliant analysis of the close emotional relationship of the ordinary Christians with those individuals whom they regarded as saints. Brown does not discuss Mary's cult, but his work makes it clear that the emergence of the emotional relationship between Mary and her devotees is an issue that urgently needs clarification because the most popular explanation found in research literature is not credible in a Christian context. According to the so-called goddess theory, early Christians projected onto Mary their need for motherly love, because along with Christianity's victory over paganism motherly goddesses had disappeared. This topic will be handled in my forthcoming book.

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Mary B. Cunningham

Mary as Intercessor in Constantinople during the Iconoclast Period: The Textual Evidence

Textual evidence for the Virgin Mary's growing importance as intercessor in Constantinople during the period of Iconoclasm is abundant*, yet still awaits detailed analysis.[1] Hymns, homilies, and hagiography all attest to the development of an intercessory role that goes beyond (or perhaps complements) a christological one.[2] As scholars have demonstrated in recent years, this trend began to be manifested in various literary genres from at least as early as the fourth century.[3] It accelerated in the sixth, culminating in the texts associated with the siege of Constantinople by the Avars, Slavs, and Persians in 626 CE,[4] and developed further in the flowering of marian liturgical celebration in the eighth and ninth centuries. The period of Iconoclasm, which questioned devotion not only to icons, but possibly also to saints and the Theotokos, served to consolidate these cults. The mosaic of the Virgin and child in the apse of St Sophia, which was officially inaugurated on 29 March 867, is a striking reminder of orthodox affirmation of the physical reality of Christ's incarnation and of Mary's place in this event.[5] What is not immediately visible in icons, but appears in many middle Byzantine texts, is Mary's role not just as God-bearer or Mother of God, but also as intercessor who has *parresia* ('freedom of speech') with Christ in heaven.

Before we begin to explore this subject, it is necessary to describe the sources that have been selected for this study, to examine the role of literary genre, and to provide a few definitions. Eighth- and ninth-century texts that deal with the Theotokos include a number of genres, such as sermons, hymns, saints' Lives, and apocalypses. To begin with the liturgical sources, sermons and hymns proliferated in honour of recently instituted marian feasts. Germanos I, who was patriarch of Constantinople between 715 and 730, preached on Mary's Presentation, or Entrance, into the Temple, the Annunciation, and Dormition.[6] He also composed a sermon honouring two relics

* Many of the ideas that are explored in this article will be developed more fully in a forthcoming book on which I am collaborating with Leslie Brubaker. The book will be entitled *The Virgin Mary in the Byzantine World: Images, Texts, Relics, and Ceremony.*

[1] An excellent introduction to Byzantine views of the Virgin Mary in this period can be found in N. Tsironis, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclastic controversy', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin Mary in Byzantine Art* (Milan, 2000), 27–39. I would like to acknowledge here my debt to this article for its suggestions concerning the treatment of the Mother of God in various literary genres.

[2] Richard Price provides a useful discussion of the distinction between christological and devotional reflection on the Virgin Mary in his article, 'Theotokos: the title and its significance in doctrine and devotion', in S. Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London and New York, 2007), 56–73.

[3] For helpful overviews of this material, see especially Averil Cameron, 'The early cult of Virgin', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 3–15; eadem, 'The cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: religious development and myth-making', in R.N. Swanson, ed., *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 39 (Woodbridge, 2004), 1–21; S. Shoemaker, 'Marian liturgies and devotion in early Christianity', in Boss, *Mary: The Complete Resource*, 130–45; idem, 'The cult of the Virgin in the fourth century: a fresh look at some old and new sources', in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London and New York, 2008), 71–87.

[4] Classic studies of this crucial period for the marian cult include N. Baynes, 'The finding of the Virgin's robe', idem, *Byzantine Studies* (London, 1955), 240–7; idem, 'The supernatural defenders of Constantinople', *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949), 165–77; A. Cameron, 'The Theotokos in sixth-century Constantinople: a city finds its symbol', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 29 (1978), 79–108; eadem, 'The Virgin's robe: an episode in the history of early seventh-century Constantinople', *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 42–56. More recent studies include B. Pentcheva, 'The supernatural defender of Constantinople: the Virgin and her icons in the tradition of the Avar siege', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26 (2002), 2–41; eadem, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006).

[5] C. Mango, trans., *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), 279.

[6] It should be noted, however, that questions remain concerning the attribution of the whole of this corpus to Germanos I of Constantinople. See M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven: Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY, 2008), 38–41; N. Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine era', in M. Vassilaki, ed., *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), 92; A. Kazhdan (with L.F. Sherry and C. Angelidi), *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)* (Athens, 1999), 59–64.

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that were kept in the church of the Chalkoprateia, the Virgin's belt and Christ's swaddling clothes.[7] Another preacher, who flourished sometime between 750 and 850, is the lay courtier Kosmas Vestitor.[8] This otherwise obscure figure produced four sermons on the Dormition of the Virgin,[9] as well as one honouring the Virgin's parents, Sts Joachim and Anna.[10] The tradition developed further in the course of the ninth century, with writers including the monk and abbot, Theodore of Stoudios,[11] the patriarchs Tarasios[12] and Photios,[13] George of Nikomedeia,[14] and many others[15] contributing to the growing corpus of texts. Hymnography also flourished during this century, with short hymns such as theotokia and staurotheotokia being produced along with the kanons and kontakia that adorned the marian feasts.[16] Secondly, the intercessory role of the Theotokos was explored in various Lives of saints and collections of miracle stories. Even more importantly, a new genre of hagiography that was concerned with the Virgin Mary herself emerged, flourishing especially in the ninth and tenth centuries. The hagiographical work that can be dated approximately to our period is Epiphanios of Kallistratou's *Life of the Holy Theotokos*;[17] this shares some features, especially in its narrative, with an earlier Life that is attributed to the seventh-century theologian and monk, Maximos the Confessor.[18] Apocalyptic texts, such as the enigmatic *Apocalypse of the Holy Theotokos*,[19] may belong to a long-standing tradition of texts concerning Mary's death and afterlife,[20] but also contain new insights about her willingness to intercede on behalf of faithful Christians. It is clear that by about the middle of the ninth century, Byzantine writers felt free to write about this holy figure not only according to the accepted conventions of liturgical praise, but also with imaginative elaboration of non-biblical and intercessory themes.

Literary genre, which determines the purpose and context of individual texts, must clearly be taken into consideration as we attempt to trace the development of the idea of Mary as intercessor for Byzantine Christians.[21] We might indeed use differences in genre to distinguish a more official view of the Virgin Mary, which is usually expressed in liturgical texts, from a more popular or even 'paracanonical' one that appears especially in apocalyp-

[7] These works are listed in M. Geerard, ed., 2nd ed. J. Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (Turnhout, 2003), vol. 3, 505–7 [hereafter CPG], nos. 8007–15. For full references, see the more detailed discussions below.

[8] A. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle*, Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 5 (Paris, 1955), 153; Kazhdan (with Sherry and Angelidi), *A History of Byzantine Literature*, 94.

[9] CPG 8156–8.

[10] CPG 8135.

[11] Theodore wrote one sermon on the Dormition of the Virgin, ed. PG 99, 720–29; trans. B.E. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY, 1998), 249–57.

[12] One sermon on the Presentation of the Virgin into the temple is attributed to Tarasios, ed. PG 98, 1481–1500.

[13] Photios wrote homilies on the feast of the Annunciation, the Nativity of the Virgin, and on her image in St Sophia. For editions and translations of these texts, see C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA, 1958).

[14] George of Nikomedeia's marian sermons are published in PG 100, 1336–1504.

[15] Other ninth-century Constantinopolitan preachers and hymnographers include the Patriarch Euthymios, Joseph the Hymnographer, and Leo VI ('the Wise'). For overviews of their work on marian themes, see N. Tsironis, *The Lament of the Virgin Mary from Romanos the Melode to George of Nicomedia: An Aspect of the Development of the Marian Cult* (unpubl. PhD thesis, King's College London, 1998), 241–98; T. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), 162–72.

[16] For a general introduction to all of these genres, see E. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1961). Theotokia and staurotheotokia are treated on pp. 242–3.

[17] Ed. A. Dressel, *Epiphanii monachi et presbyteri edita et inedita* (Paris–Leipzig, 1843), 13–44; cf. PG 120, 186–216. The recensions of the text are somewhat different in the two editions.

[18] M. van Esbroeck, ed. and trans., *Maxime le Confesseur. Vie de la Vierge*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 478–9, Scriptores Iberici 21–2 (Leuven, 1986); a new English translation of the text, with revision of van Esbroeck's edition, is provided by Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Maximus the Confessor: The Life of the Virgin, translated with an introduction and notes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[19] Various editions are listed in J. Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium. Celestial Journey and Local Community in the Medieval Greek Apocrypha* (Cambridge, 2007), 425. I am using that by M.R. James, ed., *Apocrypha Anecdota*, Texts and Studies 2.3 (Cambridge, 1893), 109–26. Baun provides a translation of this text in *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 391–400.

[20] S. Shoemaker, 'Early evidence for Marian intercession in Palestine from ancient Dormition apocrypha', paper delivered at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies (Oxford, August 2011); idem, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002), 190–3.

[21] For orientation on Byzantine literary genres, see A. Kazhdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 2, 832; E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon and R. Cormack, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 827–914; P.A. Agapitos, 'Literary criticism', ibid., 77–85; E. Patlagean, 'Discours écrit, discours parlé: Niveaux de culture à Byzance aux VIIIe-XIe siècles', *Annales ESC* 34 (1979), 264–78.

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tic sources, but also sometimes in hagiography.[22] One problem with this approach, however, is that whereas scholars may assign individual texts to particular genres, such as 'homiletics' or 'hagiography', the boundaries between them are porous. Where, for example, do enkomia – which is how festal sermons are frequently described in manuscripts – merge into Lives of the Theotokos? Epiphanios of Kallistratou's *Life of the Holy Theotokos* could also be described as a sermon or enkomion (and appears as such in the Migne edition of the text).[23] The association of particular literary – or liturgical – genres with interest in Mary's intermediary power is also not always consistent. It becomes clear as we study the corpus of festal sermons that some preachers, such as Germanos of Constantinople, embrace this aspect of the Virgin's role more than do others. Hagiographers also offer varied approaches to the subject: whereas Maximos the Confessor devotes considerable space to the topic of intercession, Epiphanios neglects it almost entirely, providing instead what he regards as an accurate historical narrative of Mary's life. It appears therefore that while literary genre and liturgical context are significant, individual authors' approaches to the theme must also be taken into account. Just as important as liturgical context or authorial intention, however, is chronological development. Is it possible to discern increasing emphasis on the intercessory role of the Virgin Mary in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries, leading to the integration of this theme into liturgical as well as hagiographical and apocalyptic texts? This article will attempt to draw some preliminary conclusions concerning the way in which the various strands of marian devotion are handled by individual writers, and according to literary or liturgical genres. More important than 'genre', perhaps, is the reception of texts by Byzantine Christians; this is a subject on which much work remains to be done.[24]

To conclude this introduction, let us turn to definitions. The word that has been chosen as a unifying concept for this volume, *presbeia* ('intercession'),[25] is usually taken to mean Mary's mediation between God, or Christ, and humanity. It should be clear on the basis of all the texts that will be treated in this article that the Virgin does not wield power in her own right, but merely seeks to influence her son, Jesus Christ, to act on behalf of the beneficiary. Individual writers treat such intercession in different ways, however; it is also clear that emphasis on Mary's human sympathy develops slowly, taking shape especially during the period of Iconoclasm. Whereas early sources such as the *Akathistos Hymn* or Theodore Synkellos depict Mary as in invincible defender who offers physical protection to all the inhabitants of Constantinople,[26] liturgical writers from the sixth century onward, beginning with Romanos the Melodist, may also allude to her sympathetic relationship with individual Christians.[27] The epithets that are applied to the Virgin Mary may or may not be related to the understanding of *presbeia* that characterises each of these positions: the title 'Meter Theou' ('Mother of God'), for example, sometimes appears in the first category, but is not always linked with feelings of maternal love or tenderness. It is thus important to be careful when drawing conclusions about changes in spirituality on the basis of the names or images that are applied to the Virgin Mary by individual authors.[28] Finally, it is worth discussing the meaning of *parresia*, that 'freedom of speech' with Christ, which is understood by writers beginning with Romanos to be an essential aspect of Mary's intercessory function. This concept is based both on the fact that Mary, as Christ's mother, enjoys a close personal bond with him and that, after her death and assumption into heaven, she is currently in close physical proximity to him. Most Byzantine writers avoid exploring this idea in a systematic way, but they do assume that

[22] Jane Baun provides a thought-provoking description of these two forms of Marian literature in her recent article, 'Discussing Mary's humanity in medieval Byzantium', in Swanson, *The Church and Mary*, 63–72.

[23] The title reads: Λόγος περὶ τοῦ βίου τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ τῶν τῆς αὐτῆς χρόνων. PG 120, 185–6.

[24] For a broad discussion of this question, see M. Mullett, 'No drama, no poetry, no fiction, no readership, no literature', in L. James, ed., *A Companion to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2010), 227–38.

[25] The word has various meanings in ancient Greek, including 'age', 'seniority', and 'dignity', along with those that relate to intercession, such as 'advocacy'. It is used frequently in connection with the Virgin Mary in medieval Greek texts. See G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), 1128.

[26] L.M. Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 2001), esp. 3, *Prooemium* II.1–7, 19.1, 23.13; CPG 7936; BHG 1061; *De obsidione Constantinopolitana sub Heraclio imperatore*, ed. L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica* (Krakow, 1900), 298–320.

[27] Tsironis traces this development in *The Lament of the Virgin Mary*, 109–18, 214–40; eadem, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclastic controversy', esp. 36.

[28] See, for example, Ioli Kalavrezou's demonstration of growing emphasis on Mary's maternal qualities, first in texts of the eighth and ninth centuries and then in icons. This thesis is ground-breaking, but it does not highlight the fact that, from the seventh century onward, preachers and hymnographers used the epithet 'Mother of God' in much the same way that they did 'God-bearer', as an honorary title, without always endowing it with 'maternal' significance. I. Kalavrezou, 'Images of the Mother: when the Virgin Mary became the *Meter Theou*', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 165–72; eadem, 'The maternal side of the Virgin', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 41–45.

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the Virgin Mary has direct access to God and that he will listen to her. Romanos the Melodist, for example, addresses Christ in his kontakion *On the Second Coming*, in the following words:

> *But I implore you, give me time for repentance,*
> *and, at the intercessions of the Ever-Virgin and Mother of God, spare me*
> *and do not cast me away from your presence, Judge most just.*[29]

Romanos implies here that Mary, in her privileged position in heaven, will exercise her *parresia* before her Son, the Righteous Judge, in order to alleviate the punishment that awaits all sinners.

HOMILETICS AND HYMNOGRAPHY

To begin with texts that were composed for specific liturgical contexts, eighth- and ninth-century marian homilies and hymns deal, in some cases possibly for the first time, with feasts that had been added to the liturgical calendar between about the middle of the sixth century and the beginning of the eighth.[30] These include the feasts of the Virgin Mary's Nativity (8 September), Presentation or Entrance into the Temple (21 November), Annunciation (25 March) and Dormition (15 August). Other commemorations (or minor feast-days) include those of Mary's parents, St Joachim and St Anna (9 September), her Conception (9 December), and the translation of the two most important marian relics, the robe and the belt, to Constantinople (2 July and 31 August, respectively). The feast of Christ's Presentation into the Temple, known in liturgical texts as 'Hypapante' or 'Meeting' (2 February), also offers an opportunity for marian praise in that it celebrates her purification and encounter with Simeon (Luke 2: 25–35).[31] It is important to note that the main emphasis of these liturgical texts is christological: preachers and hymnographers seek to instruct their audiences, by means of biblical exegesis, narrative, and poetic imagery, of the essential role that the Theotokos played in the incarnation of Christ. Her virginity, which was perpetual, revealed the divinity of her son while her human nature provided him with his true physical embodiment as a man. The relationship between homilies and hymns in this period is close, as scholars have convincingly argued, with much cross influence between the two liturgical forms.[32]

Within this large corpus of liturgical material, it is worth noting that individual writers may interpret the concept of *presbeia* in different ways. It is also evident, as Tsironis has convincingly demonstrated, that Mary's role as intercessor shifted gradually from a detached to a more personal, or emotional, form of interaction in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries.[33] In spite of such a development, it is worth remembering that both styles of marian invocation continued to be used throughout our period. Thus the Virgin Mary may be described as defender and protector of all Constantinopolitan Christians *or* as a personal mediator to whom individuals pray for special help. Some writers, such as the patriarch Germanos, elaborate on both aspects of Mary's intercession, while others continue to stress the protective role that had developed especially in connection with the Persian and Avar siege against Constantinople in 626 CE.[34] Finally, it is worth emphasising again that this aspect of marian devotion (whether expressed in an impersonal or personal manner) never supersedes, or dominates, the christological content of marian sermons and hymns. Invocation of the Virgin's intercessory power is seamlessly united with theological

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[29] Trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, *Kontakia on the Life of Christ. St Romanos the Melodist* (San Francisco, 1995), 230; P. Maas and C.A. Trypanis, eds, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Genuina* (Oxford, 1963), 275.

[30] For recent overviews of the introduction of marian feasts into the Constantinopolitan liturgical calendar, see Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 19–28; D. Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary: the cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from late antiquity to the tenth century', in L. Brubaker and M.B. Cunningham, eds, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Aldershot, 2011), 219–21.

[31] For an excellent overview of early homiletic texts associated with this feast, see P. Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary in Greek homiletic literature (6th–7th centuries)', in Brubaker and Cunningham, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, esp. 78–84.

[32] See especially Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy', 91–99; C. Hannick, however, emphasises the differences between the two genres in his article, 'The Theotokos in Byzantine hymnography: typology and allegory', in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, 69–76.

[33] Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy', 92–5.

[34] For historical studies of the siege of 626, see J.D. Howard-Johnson, 'The siege of Constantinople in 626', in C. Mango and G. Dagron, eds, *Constantinople and Its Hinterland* (Aldershot, 1995), 131–41; F. Barisic, 'Le siege de Constantinople par les Avares et les Slaves en 626', *Byzantion* 24 (1954), 371–95; P. Speck, *Zufälliges zum Bellum Avaricum des Georgios Pisides*, Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 24 (Munich, 1980); V. Grumel, 'La défense maritime de Constantinople du côté de la Corne d'Or et le siege des Avares', *Byzantinoslavica* 25 (1964), 217–33. Leena Mari Peltomaa, 'Role of the Virgin Mary at the Siege of Constantinople in 626', Scrinium 5 (2009), 284–299.

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teaching in both homiletics and hymnography. Considering that formal integration of the christological and devotional strands of marian tradition had only recently been initiated, the success with which eighth – and ninth – century liturgical writers achieved this fusion is remarkable.

Germanos of Constantinople dwells frequently on Mary's intercessory role in his festal sermons, referring to both her protective and merciful qualities. To begin with the first of these roles, we may cite a passage from his oration commemorating the Virgin's belt, a relic that was kept in the church of the Chalkoprateia.[35] In this sermon, Germanos emphasises Mary's role as defender and protector of Constantinopolitan Christians:

> *O all-pure, all-good, and most merciful Lady, consolation of Christians, warmest remedy for the afflicted and most ready refuge for those who sin; do not abandon us as orphans, bereft of your succour! For if we should be abandoned by you, where would we now run? What will become of us now, O all-holy Theotokos, the breath and life of Christians ... Shelter us with the wings of your goodness! Watch over us with your intercessions! May you, hope of Christians, who cannot be put to shame, offer us eternal life! ... We, who were driven from God in the multitude of our sins, have sought God through you and we have found [him]. And on finding [him], we have been saved. Therefore your help is powerful with regard to salvation, Theotokos, and it has no need of any other mediator before God.*[36]

This is a collective plea, on behalf of all Christians, which evokes the protective power of the Virgin Mary that was by now universally acknowledged in the capital city. In the context of a sermon that celebrates this important physical link to Mary's ongoing presence and power in Constantinople, it is not surprising that Germanos is so explicit in his prayers for intercession. Later in the same sermon he implies that those who approach the Virgin's holy belt experience feelings of health and happiness:

> *Who, having gazed earnestly and with faith on your honoured belt, Theotokos, is not filled at once with delight? Who, on fervently falling down before it, has left without his petition being granted? Who, on contemplating your token, does not immediately forget every affliction? Words cannot express the nature of joy, well-being, and happiness that have been enjoyed by those [people] who come and stand in your sacred church, in which you have been well-pleased for your honoured belt to be placed ...'*[37]

The sermon that offers the fullest analysis of Mary's intercessory power is that on the feast of the Dormition.[38] The subject matter allows Germanos a chance to meditate on the manner in which the Theotokos now resides in heaven but remains present 'in spirit' among Christians. While suggesting that her body and spirit were separated at the time of her death, Germanos asserts that the former remained uncorrupted: 'it has been changed, in its humanity, to the highest incorruptible life; it is preserved and supremely glorified'.[39] Now the Virgin is God's 'permanent guest' in heaven; in this exalted position she exercises a privileged relationship with Christ, her son:

> *So whatever you desire of him, he gives you with a son's affection; and whatever you ask from him, he brings to fulfillment with a God's power – he who is blessed for all ages!*[40]

The first sermon on the Dormition thus attempts to explain the way in which the Theotokos can act as intercessor in her glorified state after dying and being assumed into heaven. Like other Byzantine liturgical writers who deal with this subject, Germanos is deliberately vague about exactly what has taken place with regard to Mary's resurrection prior to the rest of humanity; nevertheless, he declares faith in her intercessory power both on earth and in heaven. In fact Germanos goes so far as to say, no doubt hyperbolically, that the Theotokos is the *only* redeemer and protector of Christians:

> *No one is filled with the knowledge of God except through you, all-holy One; no one is saved but through you, Mother of God; no one is free of danger but through you, Virgin Mother; no one is redeemed but through you, Mother of God; no one ever receives mercy gratuitously except through you, who have received God.*[41]

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[35] The commemoration of Mary's belt, or girdle, was celebrated in Constantinople on 2 July. Strangely, the homily is rarely – if ever – included in later liturgical collections as a reading for this date. See A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche* (Leipzig, 1936–39), 3 vols, passim.

[36] Germanos of Constantinople, *In s. Mariae zonam*, CPG 8013, PG 98, 377D-80A; trans. (with small adjustments) Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 252–3.

[37] Germanos, *In s. Mariae zonam*, PG 98, 381C; trans. (with small adjustments) Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 254–5.

[38] Germanos, *In Dormitionem* I, CPG 8010, PG 98, 340–57; trans. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 153–68. As Daley notes on p. 167, n.1, this single work is published as two separate sermons in the PG edition.

[39] Germanos, *In Dormitionem* I, PG 98, 345B; Daley, *On the Dormition*, 157.5.

[40] Germanos, *In Dormitionem* I, PG 98, 348C; Daley, *On the Dormition*, 159.6.

[41] Germanos of Constantinople, *In Dormitionem* I, PG 98, 349C; Daley, *On the Dormition*, 160–1.8.

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Another, slightly later Constantinopolitan preacher who nevertheless reveals close ties with Germanos – in the sense that he freely made use of the patriarch's writings – is Kosmas Vestitor.[42] This somewhat obscure writer was, as we saw above, a lay dignitary in the imperial court who was active sometime after about 750 CE.[43] Several sets of sermons are attributed to Kosmas, including one commemorating Joachim and Anna,[44] and four on the feast of the Dormition.[45] The latter reveal Kosmas's adaptation of Germanos's festal sermons, although he also makes use of other homiletic and apocryphal works.[46] A. Wenger has argued that, notwithstanding the plagiaristic tendencies of this lay preacher, he is an important figure in the Byzantine homiletic tradition.[47] Kosmas's sermons were translated into Latin at a fairly early date and, once they began to be disseminated in the West, influenced later writers including James of Voragine, author of the *Golden Legend* (ca. 1230–98).[48]

Kosmas Vestitor alludes to Mary's intercessory function in some passages of his sermons on the Dormition, although he is also interested (like most other preachers of this period) in exploring the apocryphal narrative of Mary's death and assumption into heaven. In the first sermon of the series, Kosmas has Christ say to his mother:

> *I shall establish you as a wall for the whole world, a bridge for the wavering, a citadel for those who need to be saved, a staff for those who are being led by the hand, a respite for sinners, a ladder to deliver men to a secure heaven."*[49]

Elsewhere in this series of sermons, the preacher himself addresses the Virgin Mary with prayerful supplication, expressing his recognition of her universal presence and ability to rescue Christians.[50] Kosmas's festal sermon on Joachim and Anna, however, is reticent on this theme; apart from one passage in which sinners who 'are pitied through the intercessions of the Theotokos' are remembered,[51] the oration focuses for the most part on the qualities of the Virgin's holy parents.

It is worth mentioning here, for the sake of comparison, the more restrained approach that certain preachers, such as Andrew of Crete, adopt with regard to marian intercession.[52] Whereas Andrew's trilogies of festal sermons on the Nativity and Dormition of the Theotokos, along with his oration on the Annunciation,[53] testify to his belief in Mary's important place in God's dispensation, he tends to avoid explicit pleas for mercy or intercession. It is possible that, as some scholars have suggested, some form of reassessment of the marian cult, along with the veneration of saints and icons, was taking place in the eighth and ninth centuries.[54] If so, it is likely that bishops such as Germanos and Andrew would have been aware of this process and of the need to position themselves correctly with regard to marian devotion. Not only the issue of marian intercession, but also the efficacy of the 'contact' relics (that is, her robe and belt) and the authority of apocryphal writings may have featured in this de-

[42] For orientation, see Kazhdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2, 1153; Kazhdan (with Sherry and Angelidi), *A History of Byzantine Literature*, 94.

[43] The most extensive treatment of Kosmas Vestitor's marian homilies so far appears in A. Wenger, 'Les homélies inédites de Cosmas Vestitor sur la Dormition', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 11 (1953), 284–300; idem, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 140–72; 315–33.

[44] CPG 8151; PG 106, 1005–12; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 139–44.

[45] CPG 8155–8; ed. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 315–33. These sermons survive only in an old Latin translation which is preserved in a tenth-century manuscript, Augiensis Reichenau-Karlsruhe LXXX, ff. 49–69.

[46] See the analysis of these borrowings in Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 140–72.

[47] Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 141.

[48] T. Graesse, ed., *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda aurea, vulgo Historia Lombardica dicta* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1846); G. P. Maggioni, ed., *Iacopo da Varazze: Legenda aurea* (Florence, 1998); trans. W.G. Ryan and H. Ripperger, *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine* (New York, 1969).

[49] Kosmas Vestitor, *In dormitionem* I, ed. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 316.7.36–9.

[50] See, for example, *In dormitionem* IV, ed. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la t.s. Vierge*, 333.24–25.21–40.

[51] Kosmas Vestitor, *In Ioachim et Annam parentes deiparae*, PG 106, 1009; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 142.6.

[52] In treating Andrew of Crete here, I am departing from the stated objective of examining only Constantinopolitan preachers and hymnographers. One justification for making this exception in the case of Andrew, apart from the need to demonstrate a quite different, although contemporary, approach to the marian cult from that of Germanos, is that it is possible (although unlikely) that he preached some of his sermons in the capital city. This writer, who originated in Damascus and was educated in Jerusalem, spent some years in Constantinople after 785 before being ordained metropolitan of Crete. See S. Vailhé, 'S. André de Crète', *Échos d'Orient* 5 (1902), 278–87; M.-F. Auzépy, 'La carrière d'André de Crète', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88.1 (1995), 1–12.

[53] CPG 8170–4, 8181–3. Andrew's homilies are published in PG 97, 805–913, 1045–1109 and translated in Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, 71–138, 197–219; Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 103–52.

[54] See, for example, the provocative study of G. Dagron in 'L'ombre d'un doute: l'hagiographie en question, VIe–XIe siècle', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992), 59–68; Kazhdan (with Sherry and Angelidi), *A History of Byzantine Literature*, 147–9.

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bate.[55] If this is the case, Germanos of Constantinople and Andrew of Crete may deliberately have adopted different methods of celebrating the Theotokos in their festal sermons. Whereas, as we saw earlier, Germanos devotes considerable space to Mary's role as intercessor, Andrew tends to avoid this topic, focusing instead on theological teaching. Throughout his trilogy of sermons on the Dormition, for example, he explores the manner in which the Theotokos bridges the divine and created states of existence. Her humanity was witnessed in her own natural conception and birth, as well as in the separation of body and soul that took place (as for all other human beings) after her death. However, an ineffable mystery also occurred when Mary was resurrected and assumed into heaven. Andrew alludes to this mystery with reverent restraint; it is interesting to note that he reveals his awareness of an apocalyptic account (or accounts) in the second sermon on the Dormition, even if he does not cite explore the implications of this source in detail.[56]Andrew does address the theme of Mary's intercession towards the end of his third sermon, asking her to 'be an intercessor with the Lord on behalf of the corporeal reality that we share.'[57]

Such measured and didactic rhetoric is echoed in the festal sermons of ninth-century preachers such as Theodore of Stoudios, and the patriarchs Tarasios and Photios. Theodore, like Andrew of Crete, emphasises both Mary's humanity and exaltation after death in a passage from his sermon on the Dormition:

> *Now the Mother of God shuts her material eyes, and opens her spiritual eyes towards us like great shining stars that will never set, to watch over us and to intercede before the face of God for the world's protection. Now those lips, moved by God's grace to articulate sounds, grow silent, but she opens her [spiritual] mouth to intercede eternally for all of her race. Now she lowers those bodily hands that once bore God, only to raise them, in incorruptible form, in prayer to the Lord on behalf of all creation ... departing from her body, she is with us in spirit; gathered up to heaven, she banishes demons by her intercession with the Lord.*[58]

While individual preachers of the iconoclast period may thus approach the theme of Mary's intercession with varying degrees of intensity, a growing emphasis on Mary's human qualities is discernable in this period. This appears not only in connection with the Virgin's intercessory role, but also in passages dealing with her life or with particular events such as the nativity of Christ or the crucifixion. The willingness of some eighth- and ninth-century preachers to employ apocryphal accounts such as the *Protoevangelium of James* allowed them to develop a more rounded picture of the Virgin Mary.[59] Building on the dramatic treatment of her personal response to Christ's nativity or death on the cross that had been initiated by earlier writers such as Romanos the Melodist[60] and Maximos the Confessor,[61] preachers such as Germanos began to present this holy figure to their audiences as a human, motherly figure who experienced both joy and extreme grief in her relationship with Christ.[62] This tradition received full expression in George of Nikomedeia's remarkable sermon on Mary's lament at the foot of the cross.[63] The suggestion that such developments in marian homiletics reflect iconophile preachers' desire to stress Christ's

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[55] A recent discussion of these issues appears in E. Panou, *The Cult of St Anna in Byzantium* (unpubl. PhD thesis, The University of Birmingham, 2011). I am grateful to the author for showing drafts of this thesis to me.

[56] Andrew of Crete, *In Dormitionem* II, PG 97, 1053A-B; trans. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 121–2: 'If, as the saying goes, "there is no one who will live and not see death," then she whose praises we sing today is clearly both human and more than human, since she kept the same law of nature that we must keep, yet in a way not like us but beyond us, it seems, and beyond the reason for which we are forced to suffer it. This, then, is how I suggest you understand her descent into the underworld; the period of time for which death and bodily decay held power over her – in my judgement, at least – was only as long as was necessary for her to move, at natural speed, through unknown regions and to come to know them first-hand, regions where she had never set foot before and which she was now crossing as in a journey through foreign, uncharted territory.'

[57] 'Μεταναστεύου τῶν ἐν τῇ κτίσει μονῶν· ἐξιλάσκου τὸν Κύριον ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινοῦ πλάσματος.' Andrew of Crete, *In Dormitionem* III, PG 97, 1100C; trans. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 144.

[58] Theodore of Stoudios, *In Dormitionem*, PG 99, 721B; trans. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary*, 250.

[59] For a discussion of this process, especially with regard to preachers such as John of Euboia, Tarasios, and George of Nikomedeia, see Panou, *The Cult of St Anna*, chap. 2; Cunningham, 'The use of the *Protevangelion of James* in eighth-century homilies on the Mother of God', in Brubaker and Cunningham, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*, 163–78.

[60] Romanos the Melodist, *Kontakion on Mary at the Cross*, P. Maas and C.A. Trypanis, eds, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica. Cantica Genuina* (Oxford, 1963), 142–9.

[61] Van Esbroeck, *Maxime le Confesseur. Vie de la Vierge* (see note 17).

[62] See especially the sermon (which may be spurious), *In dominici corporis sepulturam*, CPG 8031, PG 98, 244–90.

[63] George of Nikomedeia, *Oratio in illud: 'Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus ...'*, PG 100, 1457–89. An extensive discussion of the homily appears in Tsironis, *The Lament of the Virgin Mary*, 279–89. Strictly speaking, of course, this work belongs to the post-iconoclast period. George was active as a preacher after ca. 860 when he became metropolitan of Nikomedeia.

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physical incarnation, to the extent that he can be depicted in icons,[64] is entirely convincing – notwithstanding the variations with regard to the Virgin's intercessory role that were noted above. In the course of the eighth and ninth centuries, and in connection with the controversy over images, the Mother of God was increasingly perceived as the physical link that guaranteed Christ's true humanity. As such, she provided access, in both theological and spiritual terms, to the protection and salvation that he grants to Christians.

It is also worth noting, in general terms, that the allusions to the Virgin's intercessory role tend to occur in particular homiletic contexts. Celebration or invocation of her mediation usually appears at the end of sermons, when the preacher calls on his congregation to offer praise, follow better ethical practices, or seek help from the holy subject of his oration. Such use of the epilogue in marian festal sermons may correspond to the way in which theotokia, the short hymns to the Virgin that are added to the end of each canticle in kanons, act as conclusions to groups of stanzas in hymnography. It is likely that both conventions developed in the formative period of Iconoclasm, in connection with the full elaboration of the Byzantine liturgy.

Having mentioned hymnography, it is necessary now to discuss this body of literary evidence in connection with the theme of *presbeia* or intercession. This represents a large, and extremely significant, liturgical genre which should feature prominently in any study of the development of Mary's intercessory role during the formative period of Iconoclasm. Hymnography, as one of the movable elements in the daily as well as festal offices, represents an essential component of liturgical celebration in the Byzantine church. It is in fact probable that the faithful were more influenced on a daily basis by the dogmatic teaching that hymnography delivered than they were by homiletic instruction. Many types of hymns were composed in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries for services throughout the liturgical year, including the recently established marian feasts.[65] Much of this material, which survives largely in service books that have been published on the basis of single – and often late – manuscripts, remains uncertain in its attribution and provenance. While the literary, theological, and exegetical aspects of Byzantine hymnography have received some attention from scholars in recent years, much work remains to be done.[66] There is not space in this article to do more than describe some of the main hymnographic genres that concern the Theotokos and to draw some tentative conclusions concerning their treatment of her intercessory role.[67]

Kanons, whether or not they originated in the early eighth century, certainly began to be composed in profusion from that time onward.[68] This form of hymn, which is sung in the morning office of *orthros*, is made up of nine odes based on the biblical canticles, each of which consists a number of shorter troparia. Many kanons, such as one that Andrew of Crete composed for the Nativity of the Theotokos, address her as intercessor both in the last troparion of each ode and especially in the final, ninth ode, which has the Virgin Mary's *Magnificat* as its inspiration. Andrew writes, for example:

> *You have contained in your womb, O Virgin Mother, one of the Trinity, Christ the King, whose praises all creation sings and before whom the thrones on high tremble. O all-venerated Lady, entreat him for the salvation of our souls.*[69]

Troparia such as this were later detached from their original sources and distributed, along with stichera, throughout liturgical books such as the *Oktoechos*[70] and the *Triodion*,[71] becoming known collectively as theotokia. Such separation of individual hymns from their original liturgical contexts, not to mention from their authors, means that dating and attribution of this enormous body of material is difficult.[72] Perhaps the best way to evaluate Byzantine hymnography is to regard it as a body of evidence that reflects above all the spiritual and devotional

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[64] Tsironis, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclastic controversy', esp. 35–38; eadem, 'From poetry to liturgy', 99.

[65] One of the most useful introductions to this material, which offers a glossary of marian images and epithets, can be found in S. Eustratiades, *Ἡ Θεοτόκος ἐν τῇ ὑμνογραφίᾳ* (Paris and Chennevières-sur-Marne, 1930). See also idem, *Θεοτοκάριον* (Chennevières-sur-Marne, 1931), vol. 1, which presents 106 kanons in the first three modes. Hannick, 'The Theotokos in Byzantine hymnography', 71.

[66] C. Hannick provides a useful introduction to this material, along with an assessment of its relationship to homiletics, in his article, 'The Theotokos in Byzantine hymnography: typology and allegory', in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, 69–76.

[67] As I indicated above (note *), Leslie Brubaker and I will explore this subject in more detail in a forthcoming book.

[68] Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 198–245; J. Szövérffy, *A Guide to Byzantine Hymnography* (Brookline and Leiden, 1978–79), vol. 2.

[69] Andrew of Crete, *Kanon for the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, Ode Nine*, trans. (with adjustments) Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, *The Festal Menaion* (London, 1969), 124.

[70] D. Guillaume, ed. and trans., *Paraclitique ou Grande Octoèque* (Rome, 1977–79), 2 vols.

[71] *Τριῴδιον ἐπινυκτικόν* (Athens, 1983); trans. Mother Mary and Ware, *The Lenten Triodion*.

[72] Hannick, 'The Theotokos in Byzantine hymnography', 69.

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mind of the church rather than the creative work of individual writers. Tsironis has further argued that what we see in hymnography (which incidentally continues to be sung in modern Orthodox liturgical services) represents a distillation of liturgical material that is drawn not only from early hymns, which include Romanos's kontakia, but also from homiletics.[73] Much of the work of compilation, which led to the production of liturgical books including the *Triodion*, the *Menaia*,[74] and the *Sticherokathismatarion* appears to have taken place in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[75] Short hymns commemorating the Mother of God were scattered throughout liturgical services from at least this period onward, reflecting her central position both in the dogmatic teaching and the devotional practice of the Byzantine church.

Emphasis on the Virgin Mary's intercessory role, which may include direct invocation of her protection or aid, features prominently in hymns that may have originated in eighth- or ninth-century Constantinople. As we have seen, it is possible to state in general terms that, as in the case of sermons, christological teaching and devotional content are successfully intertwined in this liturgical material. The Virgin Mary is powerful and receptive to Christian supplication both because she gave birth to God and because, throughout this process, she remained human, providing Christ with his physical nature. Joseph the Hymnographer's kanon for the Saturday of the *Akathistos Hymn* illustrates this successful marriage of christological and devotional themes, as we see in the following stanzas:

> *You have been made our light and confirmation, and so we cry to you, 'Hail, never-setting star that brings into the world the mighty Sun; hail, pure one who opened the gate of Eden that was closed; hail, pillar of fire, leading humankind to the life above.*
>
> *Let us stand reverently in the house of our God, and let us cry aloud: hail, Mistress of the world; hail, Mary, sovereign over all of us; hail, one who is alone among women blameless and fair; hail, vessel that received the inexhaustible myrrh that was emptied out on you.*
>
> *Hail, ever-Virgin, the dove that has conceived the Merciful One; hail, glory of all the saints, crown of the martyrs; hail, divine adornment of all the righteous and salvation of us, the faithful.*[76]

HAGIOGRAPHY AND APOCALYPTIC TEXTS

Let us turn now to the other two literary genres that were mentioned in the introduction, namely, hagiography and apocalyptic texts. Hagiography of the iconoclast period frequently mentions the Virgin Mary, often with reference to her activity as intercessor or protector of Constantinopolitan Christians. As Niki Tsironis has noted, many saints' Lives describe the Mary's role in helping sterile parents to conceive;[77] this is a theme that evokes biblical parallels such as Abraham and Sarah (Gen 17–18), Elkanah and Hannah (Sam [1 Kings]: 1), and others, not to mention the Virgin's own parents, Joachim and Anna.[78] The Theotokos performs many other miracles in the course of these narratives, sometimes in person but occasionally also by means of her icon.[79] In the ninth-century Life of

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[73] Tsironis writes, for example, 'Most of the kontakia and even the theotokia and staurotheotokia found in the *Triodion* and the *Menaia* are anonymous or attributed erroneously, but leaving aside the question of provenance, it is a relatively easy task to identify the images, most of which derive from the hymnography of the iconoclastic and immediate post-iconoclastic period. However, on a few occasions, extracts from a particular hymn or homily are included in the liturgical texts in their original form. This suggests an interesting procedure, a kind of "selection process" taking place within the day-to-day practices of the Church, whereby the most beautiful – that is, the most poetic and emotionally charged – images from hymns and homilies were detached from their original contexts, set to music, and then incorporated in liturgical texts such as the Triodion,' in her article 'From poetry to liturgy', 97.

[74] *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὅλου ἐνιαυτοῦ* (Rome, 1888–1902), 6 vols.; the major feasts are translated in Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, *The Festal Menaion*; English translations of the *Menaia* including every day in the liturgical year are also now obtainable from various Orthodox publishers.

[75] Hannick, 'The Theotokos in Byzantine hymnography', 69; Tsironis, 'From poetry to liturgy', 96–7.

[76] Joseph the Hymnographer, *Kanon on Saturday of the Akathistos Hymn, Ode Nine*; *Triodion Katanyktikon* (Athens, 1983), 331. Trans. (with adjustments) Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, *The Lenten Triodion* (London and Boston, 1978), 443.

[77] Tsironis, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclast controversy', 32. The saints whose births were brought about by such miraculous intervention include Stephen the Younger, Peter of Atroa, and Michael Maleinos.

[78] According to the *Protoevangelium of James*, ed. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1976; repr. Hildesheim, 1987), 1–50; trans. J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, rev. ed., 1993), 57–67.

[79] See, for example, the healing of a soldier in the Life of St Stephen the Younger, when the saint instructs him to pray to icons of Christ and of the Mother of God. M.-F. Auzépy, ed., *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre. Introduction,* Édition *et Traduction*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs, vol. 3 (Aldershot, 1997), 154.1–4.

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St Irene, abbess of the monastery of Chrysobalanton, the saint helped one of the nuns in her care who has become possessed by demons by taking her to the church at Blachernai. After keeping vigil here for many hours and '[wetting] the sacred church-floor with tears', St Irene saw a vision of the Mother of God who, with the help of several saints, effected a cure by eradicating the demons in Cappadocia who were responsible for the illness.[80] Miracles connected with the vigil that was held on Friday nights at the church of Blachernai were of course beginning to be common in this period,[81] with the most complete account of the Virgin's weekly appearance at the shrine appearing in the (probably) tenth-century Life of St Andrew the Fool.[82] According to her hagiographer, the saintly empress Theodora, who suffered through the difficult final days of her husband Theophilos, dreamed that she saw 'the supremely holy Mother of God holding in her arms the infant [Christ] with his cross and a terrifying ring of beautiful angels violently reproaching the emperor… and beating him without cessation because of the holy and venerable icons'. After this vision, Theodora 'kept vigil, dedicating her heart and mind to tearful intercession with the supremely holy Mother of God'.[83] Whereas miracles resulting from the Virgin Mary's intercession thus become increasingly common in ninth-century hagiographical texts, it is important to note that these sources also describe Christ and well-known saints responding to Christians' prayers. The Mother of God is thus acknowledged as an important figure in the celestial hierarchy, but she does not fully supplant other mediators of divine aid.

Epiphanios of Kallistratou's *Life of the Holy Theotokos* belongs to a marian hagiographical tradition which, if van Esbroeck and Shoemaker are correct, began in the middle of the seventh century.[84] Hans-Georg Beck and Alexander Kazhdan accept the authenticity of this work, dating it to the early ninth century;[85] it is possible that the same author, who was a monk in a well-known monastery in Constantinople, also produced a Life and Acts of the apostle Andrew on the basis of an earlier, quite apocryphal, text on the same subject.[86]

Stephen Shoemaker has recently studied Epiphanios's *Life of the Holy Theotokos*, especially on the basis of its connection with the earlier Life that is attributed to Maximos the Confessor (which survives only in Georgian) and the tenth-century ones written by Symeon the Metaphrast and John Geometres.[87] The four texts, while differing in many ways, reveal certain striking resemblances which suggest that their authors were influenced by each others' work and consciously followed a narrative tradition that diverged – at times quite radically – from the biblical or even apocryphal sources. Elements such as the annunciation to Joachim in the temple rather than in the wilderness and, in a similar vein, Mary's vision before the doors of the sanctuary (or 'holy of holies') appear in the hagiographical narratives but not in any homiletic or hymnographic sources of this period. The four Lives of the Virgin Mary (aside from that of Maximos) still await detailed analysis not only from a narrative point of view, but also with regard to their theological, exegetical, and literary content. The late tenth-century Life that is ascribed to John

[80] J.O. Rosenquist, ed. and trans., *The Life of St Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton* (Uppsala, 1986), 52–64. Tsironis notes that this passage also provides an early account of the procession of the icon of the Mother of God from the church of Blachernai to the chapel of the *Hagia Soros*: eadem, 'The Mother of God in the iconoclast controversy', 32.

[81] The first example of such a miracle occurs in the Life of St Stephen the Younger, after his mother attends the all-night vigil on Friday night, praying before the χαρακτήρ ('icon') of the holy Virgin and asking for her intercession. See Auzépy, *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune,* 92.4.

[82] J. Rydén, ed., *The Life of St Andrew the Fool* (Uppsala, 1995), 254.3732–58.

[83] BHG 1731; ed. A. Markopoulos, 'Βίος τῆς αὐτοκρατείρας Θεοδώρας (BHG 17331)', *Symmeikta* 5 (1983), 264; trans. M. Vinson in A.-M. Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington, D.C., 1998), 372.

[84] Ed. A. Dressel, *Epiphanii monachi et presbyteri edita et inedita* (Paris–Leipzig, 1843), 13–44; cf. PG 120, 186–216. The recensions of the text are somewhat different in the two editions. The first example of this genre may be found in Maximos the Confessor's *Life of the Virgin*, whose authenticity is defended by both M. van Esbroeck and S. Shoemaker. See above, note 17.

[85] H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 513; Kazhdan (with Sherry and Angelidi), *A History of Byzantine Literature*, 307 and 396. However, see also J. Dräseke, 'Der Mönch und Presbyter Epiphanios', *BZ* 4 (1895), 350, who identifies two authors for the Lives of the Virgin and of the Apostle Andrew, and E. Kurtz, 'Ein bibliographisches Monitum', *BZ* 6 (1897), who thinks that the Life of the Virgin belongs to the eleventh century.

[86] See above, n. 15.

[87] S. Shoemaker, 'The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus and the early Church according to the earliest Life of the Virgin', *Harvard Theological Review* 98:4 (2005), 441–67. The Metaphrastic Life is published in B. Latysev, *Menologii anonymi byzantini saeculi* X (Petropolis, 1912), vol. 2; that of John Geometres remains unedited, except for its final section which is published in A. Wenger, *L'assomption de la très sainte Vierge dans la tradition Byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle* (Paris, 1955), 364–415. The rest of the text survives in Cod. Vat. Gr. 504, fols. 173v–194v.

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Geometres in fact also awaits publication since the late Michel van Esbroeck's critical edition of the text appears to have been lost.[88]

Epiphanios declares his reasons for composing a Life of the Virgin near the beginning of the text and adheres to this agenda with some consistency. According to this hagiographer, none of the apostles or early Fathers who wrote about Mary provided full accounts of her life from start to finish; further, in addition to the lacunae that exist in their texts with regard to the Theotokos, they sometimes got their facts wrong.[89] Epiphanios's purpose, in simple terms, is to provide a full narrative concerning the life of the Virgin Mary, beginning with her conception from Joachim and Anna and ending with her death and assumption into heaven. He deals, in minute detail, with Mary's genealogy (looking at both her paternal and maternal lines, based on the assumption that Joachim and Anna were her parents) and finishes by carefully calculating that she died at the age of seventy-two.[90] Without going into detailed analysis of this interesting text, it is worth pointing out a few of its more intriguing features. Firstly, although Epiphanios may perhaps not emphasise Mary's importance in relation to Christ's ministry to the same extent that Maximos the Confessor does, he does suggest that she accompanied her son everywhere and guided the spiritual lives of his female followers. Secondly, perhaps inspired by the Gospels' silence on many aspects of the Virgin's life, Epiphanios emphasises the fact that she waited until Christ's ascension and her own 'falling asleep' to reveal the mysteries that had been disclosed to her at the two annunciations that she experienced in the course of her life.[91] And finally, it is worth noting that Epiphanios avoids explicit reference to apocryphal texts such as the *Protoevangelium of James* or the various accounts of the Dormition. He frequently cites the sources that he regards as authoritative, which include not only the Gospels and a few apostolic or Patristic writings, but also ps-Dionysios the Areopagite's *On the Divine Names* and Andrew of Crete's sermons on the Dormition of the Virgin.[92]

To return to the question of Mary's intercessory role, it is noticeable that Epiphanios of Kallistratou's *Life of the Holy Theotokos* concerns itself very little with this question. There is a passage near the end of the narrative in which Epiphanios refers to the many miracles that occurred both during the Virgin's lifetime and after her death, especially at the site of her tomb in Gethsemane.[93] However, her role as intercessor is not his primary concern; Epiphanios instead seeks to break the silence that has traditionally surrounded the Virgin's life and death, and to eradicate errors that have appeared in those narratives that do exist.

Turning to our final category of marian text, that of the apocalypse, it is important to emphasise again the fact that this literary genre may sometimes overlap with – or to put it more accurately, stray into – hagiography or even homiletics. The *Lives* of St Andrew the Fool and St Basil the Younger, for example, contain extensive apocalyptic sections that describe the fate of human beings in heaven and hell.[94] Some texts, however, such as the ninth- or tenth-century *Apocalypse of the Holy Theotokos*[95] or the slightly later *Apocalypse of St Anastasia*,[96] deal specifically with a visionary narrative that is concerned exclusively with holy figures' tours of the afterlife.[97] Such texts, although probably redacted in the middle Byzantine period, are based on long-standing traditions that may go back to the fourth century or even earlier. The Virgin Mary's tour of paradise and hell, for example, appears in some versions of the Dormition narratives, many of which were known in the early Patristic period.

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[88] Shoemaker, 'The Virgin Mary in the ministry of Jesus', 449, n.27. A critical edition is being prepared by Fr. M. Constas.

[89] Epiphanios of Kallistratou, *De Vita b. Virginis*, PG 120, 185B.

[90] Epiphanios of Kallistratou, *De Vita b. Virginis*, PG 120, 216.

[91] Epiphanios of Kallistratou, *De Vita b. Virginis*, PG 120, 197A and 213C.

[92] Epiphanios of Kallistratou, *De Vita b. Virginis*, PG 120, 212–13.

[93] Epiphanios of Kallistratou, *De Vita b. Virginis*, PG 120, 212B.

[94] The former (BHG 115z-117k) is edited by L. Rydén, *The Life of St Andrew the Fool* (Uppsala, 1995), vol. 2: *Text, Translation and Notes*. The latter (BHG 264–264f) appears in three separate manuscript versions which are edited in A.N. Veselovskii, 'Razyskaniia v oblasti russkogo dukhonvnogo stikha', *Sbornik Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka I slovesnosti Imperatoroskoi akademii nauk* 46 (1889–90), supp., 3–89; 53 (1891–92), supp., 3–174; S.G. Vilinskii, *Zhitie sv Vasiliia Novago v russkoi literature* (Odessa, 1911), Part 2; *Acta Sanctorum*, 26 March, 20–32; D.F. Sullivan, A.-M. Talbot, and S. McGrath, eds. and trans., *The Life of Saint Basil the Younger: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Moscow Version* (Cambridge, MA, 2014). See the discussion of these texts in Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 112–20.

[95] Ed. M.R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, Texts and Studies 2.3 (Cambridge, 1893), 115–26. For a full list of editions, see Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium,* 425.

[96] Ed. R. Homburg, *Apocalypsis Anastasiae, ad trium codicum auctoritatem Panormitani Ambrosiani Parisini* (Leipzig, 1903).

[97] Here I am following the dating suggested by Jane Baun in her study of this and other Byzantine apocalypses. See especially Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 16–17. Baun notes that medieval apocalypses, including this one, circulated in a bewildering number of languages and versions. For an attempt to classify and date this material, see R. Bauckham, 'The four apocalypses of the Virgin Mary', in idem, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Leiden and Boston, 1998), 332–62.

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Jane Baun, in her innovative study of a group of medieval apocalypses, has recently emphazised the extent to which such texts reflect their local settings, expressing down-to-earth problems and ethical issues.[98] For our purposes, the chief interest of the *Apocalypse of the Holy Theotokos* is its concern with Mary's interest in redeeming the sinners that she encounters on the course of her journey through Hell. She extends mercy to most of these unfortunate souls (except those who have committed the most terrible crimes), provided that they have faith in the Christian God and have kept his commandments during their lives.[99] The author states that eventually, after not only the 'all-holy' Virgin Mary but also the archangels, angels, apostles, prophets, martyrs, and saints all prayed to God, he consented to allow them rest from their torments during the period of Pentecost.[100] Baun has provided a striking analysis of Mary's role as intercessor in this text.[101] She is an independent matriarch who demands to see the punishments in Hell and acts courageously to reverse them. God the Father, as the righteous Judge whose orders are carried out by his Son, Jesus Christ, reluctantly accedes to her wishes, apparently bowing to the *force majeure* that she, along with all the ranks of angels and saints, comes to represent. This is not a picture of a tender mother prevailing on the affection of her beloved Son or his Father, but rather that of a strong-minded female partner who knows how to get her way! This, along with related texts that began to be compiled a century or two later, represents the culmination of the growing belief in the efficacy of the Mother of God's intercession on behalf of Byzantine Christians. As Baun has suggested, the Apocalypse of the Holy Theotokos verges on heterodoxy in the extent to which it depicts the adversarial freedom with which she approaches the Righteous Judge in what Baun describes as the 'Heavenly Establishment'.[102] The gulf between this audacious text and the more restrained sermons and hymns of approximately the same period seems wide indeed.

CONCLUSIONS

It is time now to draw some conclusions on the basis of the diverse material that has been presented in this chapter. Firstly, it is necessary to reiterate the limits of this brief study, owing both to the large corpus of marian sources that survive from Constantinople in the eighth and ninth centuries and to the need to be concise.[103] The choice of texts from a variety of literary genres, including homiletics, hymnography, hagiography and apocalypses, has offered a chance for comparison on the basis of literary genre. However, it is important to recognize that some genres have not been studied; these include historical sources, such as chronicles, letters, and the Acts of councils. It is likely that if this investigation were expanded to include every available literary source, its conclusions would be even more revealing. Suffice to say that such a study of marian intercession, with focus not only on Constantinople in the eighth and ninth centuries, but throughout the empire (as well as Christian areas under Islamic rule) in the middle and late Byzantine period remains a *desideratum*.

On the basis of the material that has been explored in this chapter, it is possible to draw a few conclusions. It is clear that literary genre plays some part in determining the manner in which the Virgin Mary's intercessory role is invoked in Constantinopolitan texts of the iconoclast period. While acknowledging that the classification of texts into particular genres may be problematic, the variations that appear between, for example, liturgical sermons and apocalypses is striking. In the former, preachers may invoke Mary's protection or intercession, especially in the closing sections of their orations; such passages are, however, carefully interwoven with elucidation and praise of the christological importance of the Theotokos. This is also true of marian hymnography in this period, which reveals close ties with homiletics. Eighth- and ninth-century liturgical writers achieved an extraordinary mixture of theological teaching, intertextual biblical exegesis, encomiastic praise, and penitential supplication in their

[98] Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, esp. 1–6.

[99] James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, 125.28.

[100] James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, 126.29.

[101] Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 267–318, and esp. 278–9.

[102] Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 272.

[103] It should also be noted here that, in response to the editorial directive to focus primarily on Constantinople in the iconoclastic period (ca. 726–843 CE), this chapter has dealt for the most part with texts that were written in the eighth or first half of the ninth century. Some of the most interesting material, such as George of Nikomedeia's marian sermons, will therefore be treated in more detail in Brubaker's and my forthcoming study. The boundaries of this present chapter have also led to the exclusion of important eighth- and ninth-century liturgical writers such as John of Damascus and Kosmas of Maiuma.

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rhetorical works. While individual preachers or hymnographers of this period may blend these components in different ways, as we have seen, their oeuvre as a whole shows a movement towards emotional and prayerful celebration of the Mother of God that is not yet visible in the works of fifth-century preachers such as Proklos of Constantinople.[104] Apocalypses, meanwhile, display less concern with Mary's christological role and more with her personal qualities and intercessory function. The *Apocalypse of the Holy Theotokos* portrays a determined and independent figure who dares to challenge her son, the Righteous Judge, with regard to the fate of dead Christians. Such a view was no doubt inspired by texts on the Dormition, which had circulated for centuries in orthodox circles and had even been accepted as sources for mainstream liturgical writings.[105] Contemporary Lives of saints also reflect this tradition, depicting Mary in the company of other saints, dispensing mercy from her privileged position in heaven.

It is perhaps worth returning to the questions that Jane Baun has posed with regard to the marian cult in the middle Byzantine period.[106] Firstly, we should consider whether, especially in texts such as the *Apocalypse of the Theotokos*, we are witnessing a reconfiguration of the celestial hierarchy, with the Virgin Mary taking on an intercessory role as Christ ceases to function in his biblical one as mediator between divinity and humanity.[107] Secondly, it is worth asking, as Baun does, whether two levels of Christian discourse existed in this period, including the official, safely christological form, which is for the most part adopted by preachers and hymnographers, and a more popular one that is in some ways both subversive and heterodox.[108] Do we then have two different Virgins, one of whom is important above all for her role in the incarnation of Christ while the other begins to exercise a surprising degree of autonomy and power? Is the Byzantine Orthodox tradition in fact disjointed in its portrayal of the Mother of God or were her various images successfully incorporated into a composite whole? One key to solving this problem, apart from continuing work on the editing and attribution of middle Byzantine marian texts, may be to establish more clearly the contexts in which these works continued to be read and how seriously their teaching was assimilated by various audiences. We assume, for example, that sermons continued to be used in liturgical settings while hagiography or apocalypses were read outside church or in private. This is a hypothesis that remains to be tested; it is quite possible, as in the case of the *Protoevangelium of James* and the apocryphal accounts of Mary's Dormition, that it will prove to be false.[109]

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the assimilation by Byzantine audiences or readers is a key factor in relation to the various strands of marian devotion that are woven together in different ways in the various literary genres that we have been examining. While it is possible that such audiences heard and enjoyed everything concerning the Mother of God, from christological praise to narratives that are judged today as 'subversive', and were able in a sophisticated way to contextualise this material, it is also arguable that they did not see variations in Mary's treatment by different authors as scandalous. Apart from hints in eighth- and ninth-century sermons that opposition to the marian cult existed, there is no evidence to suggest that ecclesiastical authorities of the middle Byzantine period attempted to suppress texts such as the *The Apocalypse of the Holy Theotokos*. On the contrary, such 'popular' texts appear to have circulated widely, besides being translated into Slavonic, Georgian, Armenian, and other languages. The literary evidence, along with a growing body of material artifacts such as pectoral crosses and icons,[110] suggests that after the end of Iconoclasm, praise of the Mother of God could take many forms. The

[104] N. Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden and Boston, 2003).

[105] S. Mimouni, *Les traditions anciennes sur la Dormition et l'Assomption de Marie. Études littéraires, historiques et doctrinales* (Leiden and Boston, 2011); S.J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption* (Oxford, 2002).

[106] See especially her article, 'Discussing Mary's humanity in medieval Byzantium', esp. 66–72.

[107] Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 270.

[108] Baun, *Tales From Another Byzantium*, 279–82.

[109] See P. Tóth, 'Way out of the tunnel? Three hundred years of research on the apocrypha: a preliminary approach', in L. Dolezalova and T. Visy, *Retelling the Bible: Literary, Historical and Social Contexts* (Bern, 2011), 45–84, and especially 46, who points out that many such texts were read publicly in Christian liturgical celebrations throughout the Byzantine period. See also the secondary material that he cites in his note 2, including S.C. Mimouni, 'La lecture liturgique et les apocryphes du Nouveau Testament. Le cas de la *Dormitio* grecque du Pseudo-Jean', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 59 (1993), 403–25, and idem, 'Les *Transitus Mariae* sont-ils vraiment des apocryphes?', *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993), 122–8.

[110] See, for example, A. Yeroulanou, 'The Mother of God in jewellery', in Vassilaki, *Mother of God*, 227–35; C. Baltoyanni, 'The Mother of God in portable icons', ibid., 139–53; B. Pitarakis, 'Female piety in context: understanding developments in private devotional practices', in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, 153–66.

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foundations for this intercessory role, as we have seen, can be found in liturgical texts dating from at least as early as the fourth century;[111] however, as we have seen on the basis of a variety of literary sources, the marian cult gained both official and popular affirmation in Constantinople in the course of the iconoclast controversy and especially after the restoration of images in 843.

[111] See above, note 3.

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Cornelia Horn

Ancient Syriac Sources on Mary's Role as Intercessor

INTRODUCTION

Mariology is an aspect of theological inquiry and a subdiscipline of Christian dogma, to the study of which the Syriac tradition is able to make a solid contribution.[1] Ideas and thoughts about Mary and her relevance in the history of Christianity are well represented and beautifully developed in texts written in Syriac, beginning already in ancient Christianity.[2] The fourth- and fifth-century poets Ephraem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh, for example, composed numerous stunning lines of reflective meditations on Mary's role in the life of Christ. Over the course of the twentieth century, a respectable number of scholars with specialist expertise in Syriac studies, including Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, Edmund Beck, and Sebastian Brock, have dedicated remarkable efforts to studying and making available to a modern audience through editions and translations important ancient sources that speak of Jesus' mother in the Syriac language.[3]

Dominant themes in ancient Syriac mariology that have been highlighted in scholarly studies are Mary's motherhood of the Son of God, her virginity, humility, reception of God's mercy, purity, and any traces one might be able to identify of Mary being active in the work of salvation or reconciling human beings with God. The theme mentioned last is related to Mary's role as intercessor. Yet if one defines intercession more narrowly and precisely as the activity of a person who intervenes with God for the needs and concerns of human beings and other creatures primarily through prayer,[4] Mary's role as intercessor as featured in early Christian texts in Syriac is not a topic that has been singled out for much sustained attention. Aspects of the relevance of such a study emerge from the perspective of comparative studies in religion. For one subset of Christian believers in the modern world, especially within the Catholic traditions, Mary's powers and role as intercessor are of pronounced relevance. Perhaps the best-known and most frequently recited prayer to Mary within Catholicism, the "Hail Mary," concludes with the petition that she "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Wherever Christians recite the set of prayers known as the rosary, they repeat that request for intercession more than fifty times.[5] Also at other

[1] For useful introductions to historical and doctrinal dimensions of the study of mariology, see for example Hilda C. Graef, Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics; and London: Sheed and Ward, 1985); Georg Söll, Mariologie, Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte Bd. 3, fascicle 4 (Freiburg: Herder, 1978), 41–99; and Brian K. Reynolds, Porta Paradisi: Marian Doctrine and Devotion, Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods, vol. I: Doctrine and Devotion (Taipei: Fu Jen University Press, 2009).

[2] For helpful introductions to the spirituality and world of thought of early Syriac-speaking Christians through the lens of the works of Ephraem the Syrian see Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*, revised edition, Cistercian Studies Series 124 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1992); and Kees den Biesen, *Simple and Bold: Ephrem's Art of Symbolic Thought*, Gorgias Dissertations 26 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006).

[3] Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, "La mariologia nei padri siriaci," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 1 (1935), 100–113; I. Ortiz de Urbina, "María en la Patrística Siriaca," *Scripta de Maria* 1 (1978), 29–114; Sebastian P. Brock, "Marie dans la tradition syriaque," in *Lettre de Ligugé* 189 (1978), 5–15, which appeared in English as "Mary in Syriac Tradition," in *Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue*, ed. Alberic Stacepoole (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1983), 182–191; and Edmund Beck, "Die Mariologie der echten Schriften Ephräms," *Oriens Christianus* 40 (1956), 22–39. See also Placid J. Podipara, "La mariologia delle chiesa siro-orientale (caldea)," *Studi e Ricerche sull'Oriente Cristiano* 3 (1980), 49–63 (= "The Mariology of the Church of the East," *Christian Century* 2 [1981], 165–182).

[4] For helpful overviews of the place of intercession in the context of mariological thought throughout biblical and later history, see for example E. Sebald, "Fürbitte," in *Marienlexikon herausgegeben im Auftrag des Institutum Marianum Regensburg e.V.*, ed. Remigius Bäumer and Leo Scheffczyk (Erzabtei St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1988), vol. 2, 549–559; and Michael O'Carroll, *Theotokos. A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1983), 186–189 (s.v. "Intercession, Mary's").

[5] The recitation of the Rosary received new impetus when the late Roman Catholic Pope John Paul II added a new set of mysteries, the so-called luminous mysteries, as a fourth option for that prayer. See his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, issued on October 16, 2002. For the text in English, see http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae_en.html [accessed June 18, 2011]. For studies on the origins of the rosary see for example Andreas Heinz, "Der Rosenkranz vor dem Hintergrund seiner Entstehungsgeschichte," in *Edelsteine, Himmelsschnüre. Rosenkränze & Gebetsketten. Katalog*

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instances, at which repetitions of the "Hail Mary" occur, for instance in the Angelus, prayed three times a day, with its three repetitions of a "Hail Mary," those who pray are constantly reminded not only of their sins, but that they are called upon to turn to Mary for intercession. The idea that Mary's intercession should be an integral and relevant component of Christian piety is not foreign to the spirituality of believers who avail themselves of these prayers. Yet throughout the centuries, Christians in the East in various orthodox churches likewise turned some of their attention to the pursuit of a spirituality focused on Mary. Witnesses from the liturgical tradition amply demonstrate this. Many of the *kontakia* of Romanos the Melode, for instance, begin or end with requests to Mary that she might intercede for humankind.[6] For Constantinople, one can identify the period from the late sixth to the early seventh century as a time, when emphasis on Mary as "the most potent intercessor before God" dominated perceptions of her role.[7] During the crisis of 626 CE, the icon of the Virgin was understood to have successfully protected the imperial city against the siege of the forces of the Avars and the Persians. With this event, Mary's rank not only as an effective intercessor but also as the powerful protectress for those who turned to her for help was established.

Given the relatively wide-spread trust Christians place in Mary's intercession, it seems a justifiable enterprise to inquire into some of the roots of such practices, as well as into the details of the extent of that practice within the Christian landscape in areas that thus far have not been explored very well. Therefore this article seeks to explore the role which Mary as intercessor played in the spirituality of ancient Syriac-speaking Christians in ancient times.[8]

ODES OF SOLOMON AND APHRAHAT

One may remark already at the outset, that the earliest stages of the development of mariology in the Syriac tradition are not particularly explicit regarding Mary's role as intercessor. The mariology of the *Odes of Solomon* is interwoven in an almost inextricable manner with pneumatology.[9] Forms of direct or indirect intercession are not to be found. In Aphrahat's twenty-three *Demonstrations* the reader encounters Mary in the roles of being the

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zur 33. Sonderschau des Dommuseums zu Salzburg 9. Mai bis 26. Oktober 2008, ed. Peter Keller and Johannes Neuhardt (Salzburg: Dommuseum, 2008), 21–31; John Desmond Miller, *Beads and Prayers: the Rosary in History and Devotion* (London: Burns & Oates, 2002, c.2001), especially ch. 1; Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: the Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); A. Heinz, "Die Entstehung des Leben-Jesu-Rosenkranzes," in *Der Rosenkranz. Andacht-Geschichte-Kunst*, ed. Urs-Beat Frei und Fredy Bühler, issued in conjunction with an exhibit entitled "Zeitinseln – Ankerperlen: Geschichten um den Rosenkranz" held at the Museum Bruder Klaus Sachseln, May 25–October 26, 2003 (Bern: Benteli; and Sachseln: Museum Bruder Klaus Sachseln, 2003), 23–47; A. Heinz, "Lob der Mysterien Christi. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Leben-Jesu-Rosenkranzes unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner zisterziensischen Wurzeln," in *Liturgie und Dichtung. Ein interdisziplinäres Kompendium. Festschrift für W. Dürig*, ed. H. Becker and R. Kaczynski, 2 vols., Pietas liturgica 1–2 (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1983), vol. I, 609–639; and A. Heinz, "Die Zisterzienser und die Anfänge des Rosenkranzes. Das bisher älteste unveröffentlichte Zeugnis für den Leben-Jesu-Rosenkranz in einem Zisterzienserinnengebetbuch aus St. Thomas an der Kyll (um 1300)," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 33 (1977), 262–309. For a discussion of the rosary as a prayer that centers on Jesus in a manner comparable to the so-called Jesus-prayer of the Christian East, see Andreas Heinz, "Der Rosenkranz – das immerwährende Jesus-Gebet des Westens," in *Auf der Suche nach der Seele Europas. Marienfrömmigkeit in Ost und West*. Studientagung der PRO ORIENTE – Sektion Salzburg aus Anlass ihres 20-jährigen Bestehens 7. und 8. Oktober 2005, ed. Peter Leander Hofrichter (Innsbruck and Vienna: Tyrolia, 2007), 143–156.

[6] See, for example, Romanos, *Hymns* 1.24, 4 (*prooemium*), 6.22, and *On Niniveh* (*prooemium*) (ed. and tr. José Grosdidier de Maton, *Romanos le Mélode. Hymnes. Tome I: Ancient Testament (I–VIII)*, Sources chrétiennes 99 [Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1964], 93, 173, 293, and 411). Further examples could be provided. For recent work on the Mariology of Romanos, consult Leena Mari Peltomaa, "Roles and functions of Mary in the hymnography of Romanos Melodos," *Studia Patristica* 44 (2010), 487–498. Antoine Wenger, "L'intercession de Marie en Orient du VIe au Xe siecle," in *Recherches sur l'Intercession de Marie. Vol. I: Fondements et premiers developpements*, *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Études Mariales* 23 (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1966), 51–75, here 53–55, has considered the evidence from Romanos.

[7] See Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-century Constantinople," *Journal of Theological Studies* 29.1 (1978), 79–108, here 104.

[8] Wenger, "L'intercession de Marie en Orient du VIe au Xe siecle," represents an earlier study of Mary's role as intercessor in the Christian East. The clear focus of that investigation was on the Greek-speaking world.

[9] For considerations of aspects of the mariology of the *Odes of Solomon* see J. M. Bover, "La Mariología en las Odas de Salomón," *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 10 (1931), 349–363; and Cornelia Horn, "The Virgin and the Perfect Virgin: Traces of Early Eastern Christian Mariology in the *Odes of Solomon*," in *Studia Patristica. Vol. XL. Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003. Liturgia et Cultus, Theologia et Philosophica, Critica et Philologica, Nachleben, First Two Centuries*, eds. F. Young, M. Edwards, and P. Parvis (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA.: Peeters, 2006), 413–428.

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mother of Jesus, the Great Prophet, a virgin, a woman of prayer and humility, and, one might argue, a woman who stands in solidarity with other women.[10] The *Demonstrations* do not feature passages that show requests on the part of individuals or groups that address Mary with the intention to elicit from her any help or advocacy with God on behalf of the needs of humankind as a whole, of individuals, or of groups of people. Yet Aphrahat did feature Mary as a woman whose prayer the angel Gabriel carried up to God.[11] As he expanded on his interpretation of Luke 1:30 "You have found grace before God (Syriac)," he explained that Mary found grace with God exclusively through her fasting and her prayers. In the immediate context of his comments on Mary, Aphrahat did not suggest that her prayers carried any connotations of intercession. His inclusion of a reference to fasting however, which went beyond any suggestions for Mary's behaviour found in the text of the New Testament, alerted the reader to a possible connection between Mary and Daniel. Aphrahat had mentioned Daniel just a few lines earlier as a model intercessor, fasting for his people. Commenting on Daniel 9:1–3, he emphasized that Daniel fasted three weeks in order to obtain from God the release of the Israelites from Babylon after seventy years. Quite noticeably, Daniel's fasting was presented as a fasting in support of intercessory prayer. In light of this immediate literary context for the presentation of Mary as a woman of prayer, it is conceivable that a reader of the text would also have understood Mary's activities of fasting and prayer as connectable to intercession, even if the text did not explicitly articulate this idea. In what Aphrahat formulated directly with regard to presenting Mary as a person of prayer, he was interested primarily in offering an example of persistent and dedicated prayer to those in the ascetic life.

EPHRAEM THE SYRIAN: AUTHENTIC AND INAUTHENTIC TRADITIONS

The mariological thought expressed in the works of Ephraem the Syrian has been the subject of considerable scholarly and ecclesiastical interest. In fact, it was one of the points that were highlighted when Pope Benedict XV declared Ephraem a Doctor of the Church in his Encyclical "Principi Apostolorum Petro," promulgated on October 5, 1920.[12] When paragraph 19 spoke of how "'the Lyre of the Holy Spirit' never sounded sweeter than when he was asked to sing the praises of Mary or to celebrate her perfect virginity, her divine maternity, or her full patronage of mercy toward man," a reader might readily expect Mary's intercession to have been a component of that patronage. Yet traces of a role of intercession for Mary are hard to come by in Ephraem the Syrian's authentic works. Any researcher will notice soon that when examining the dimensions of Ephraem's possible interest in the question of Mary's role as intercessor, she or he needs to exercise sufficient care in distinguishing authentic from inauthentic works.[13]

The cycles of hymns and metric prose compositions authentically authored by Ephraem were edited by Edmund Beck in multiple publications in the series Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium in the middle of the twentieth century. Beck also offered a reasonably detailed study of the mariology of these authentic writings.[14] In the works that can firmly be ascribed to Ephraem, one does not find references to a direct role of Mary as intercessor through prayer on behalf of those in need. What one finds in inauthentic works is not straightforward evidence either.

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[10] For a comprehensive study of the mariology of Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* see Cornelia B. Horn, "Frühsyrische Mariologie: Maria und ihre Schwestern im Werk Aphrahats des Persischen Weisen," in *Die Suryoye und ihre Umwelt. Viertes deutsches Syrologen-Symposium in Trier 2004. Festgabe Wolfgang Hage zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Martin Tamcke and Andreas Heinz, Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 36 (Münster, Hamburg, Berlin, Vienna, and London: LIT-Verlag, 2005), 313–332. For earlier discussion, see Ortiz de Urbina, "La mariologia nei padri siriaci," 102–103.

[11] Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 3.14 (ed. and tr. Jean Parisot, *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes [I–XXII]*, Patrologia Syriaca 1 [Paris: Firmin-Didot et Socii, 1894], 129, line 24 to 132, line 4). See also the comments in Horn, "Frühsyrische Mariologie," 321.

[12] For the text of Benedict XV's encyclical in English, see http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xv/ encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_05101920_principi-apostolorum-petro_en.html [accessed June 18, 2011]. Paragraph 19 cites from Ephraem's *Carmina Nisibena* what it considers to be evidence for the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception that had just recently been declared at the First Vatican Council. Thus the encyclical text cited from *Carmina Nisibena* 27:8: "You, O Lord and your Mother … are the only ones who are in all respects perfect beauty; in you, my Lord, there is no stain, nor in your Mother is there any dishonor." For discussion, see Beck, "Die Mariologie der echten Schriften," 25–29 and 39.

[13] See Beck, "Die Mariologie der echten Schriften," 22.

[14] Beck, "Die Mariologie der echten Schriften."

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In Thomas Lamy's edition and translation of hymns and metrical sermons in Syriac, twenty-three hymns and *sogithas* are included that deal with Mary.[15] The authenticity of these hymns as works of Ephraem, which their editor, Lamy, but also Ortiz de Urbina upheld, has been rejected by more recent scholarship. Beck argued against their authenticity in 1956.[16] Sebastian Brock, in his English translation of a small selection of these hymns, also expressed doubts about their authenticity.[17] In his later, complete translation of these *Hymns on Mary* and other Syriac Marian hymns,[18] Brock saw in this poetry a witness to Syriac literature of the fifth and sixth centuries. Although they are not part of the work of Ephraem, they are relevant and valuable as a part of late ancient Christian literature on Mary arising from the realm of speakers of Syriac.

When examining the collection of *Hymns on Mary*, it is possible to discern a few indications in the text that suggest that the poems' original audience believed that Mary could function as one who might assist in establishing contact between her son and the Christian believer. In the concluding stanza of *Hymns on Mary* 7, Mary invites all who discern, who are "advocates of the Spirit," prophets, and "farmers who sowed seed, and slept in hope," that is, the living and the dead, to "rise up and rejoice at the harvest."[19] Although the text does not speak of her as intercessor, it presents her as the one who is instrumental in making Christ present for "the hungry" and "the needy." As her "arms … clasp the wheat-sheaf of life," she is thought of as carrying the one who "provides bread" and "feeds." Yet these hymns leave aside the idea of Mary's mediation or even intercession. The voice of the poet is quite clear that the Christian may turn to God directly in prayer. *Hymns on Mary* 10:22, for instance, states:

"Thanks be to You, O Son of God, who has held me worthy
to sing the tale of your Nativity;
Have pity and forgive my shortcomings;
May I give thanks to You, Lord, and praise You.
For it is out of Your gift that I have sung praise.
On the day of Your Nativity forgive our wrongs,
and may Your compassion bring healing to our disfigured state.
May Your peace, Lord,
Reign over Your people and Your Church.
And to You, Lord, be praise
on this Your feastday, O Child most glorious!"[20]

FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SIXTH CENTURY: BALANCING MARY'S INTERCESSORY ROLE BETWEEN CYRILLONA, BALAI OF QENNESHRIN, AND THE *LIFE OF RABBULA*

Studying Syriac prose and verse compositions dating to the period leading up to the sixth century reveals a slow growth of an interest in Mary's intercession. Such an interest, however, did not dominate the realm of possibilities believers considered as options they had when seeking assistance in approaching God for help. Perhaps the first clear evidence derives from poetry ascribed to author Balai of Qenneshrin.

Cyrillona

Syriac manuscript BM Add. 14,591, dated to the end of the sixth century, contains among other texts a set of six compositions that comprise three metrical homilies (*mimrā*, pl. *mimrē*), two poems (*sogithā*, pl. *sogiāthā*), and

[15] Thomas Josephus Lamy, ed. and tr., *Sancti Ephraem Syri hymni et sermones*, vol. 2 (Mecheleu, 1886), cols. 521–642; and Thomas Josephus Lamy, ed. and tr., *Sancti Ephraem Syri hymni et sermones*, vol. 3 (Mecheleu, 1889), cols. 969–990.

[16] Beck, "Die Mariologie der echten Schriften," 22.

[17] Sebastian Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit. Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem* (2nd enlarged edition), Studies Supplementary to Sobornost No. 4 (San Bernardino, CA: Borgo Press, 1984), 59.

[18] Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light. Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches*, Mōrān 'Ethō 6 (Baker Hill, Kottayam, Kerala: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute [SEERI], 1994), 32–102 and 111–118. This collection of English translations also made accessible helpful versions of sogithas on Mary that were critically edited and translated into German in Edmund Beck, ed. and tr., *Nachträge zu Ephraem Syrus*, CSCO 363–364, Scriptores Syri 159–160 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1975). Also here, Brock relied on manuscript evidence that was not available to Beck for parts of his translation.

[19] Anonymous / Pseudo-Ephraem, *Hymns on Mary* 7:7 (ed. and tr. Lamy, *Hymni et sermones*, vol. 2, 545–546; tr. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit. Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem*, 60–61; see also tr. Brock, *Bride of Light*, 45).

[20] Anonymous / Pseudo-Ephraem, *Hymns on Mary* 10:22 (ed. Lamy, *Hymni et sermones*, vol. 2, 565–566; tr. Brock, *Bride of Light*, 55–56).

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one hymn (*madrāshā*, pl. *madrāshē*).[21] This collection was edited by Gustav Bickell in 1873.[22] The Syriac text in the manuscript itself assigns some of the works explicitly to an author named Cyrillona.[23] At times, scholars identify Cyrillona with Absamya, a nephew of Ephraem the Syrian.[24] On stylistic grounds, the third homily of the collection, which deals with the theme of wheat, is assigned to Cyrillona as well.[25] The works that are ascribed to Cyrillona can only be dated imprecisely to sometime between about the fourth to the sixth century at the latest. Although they do not develop mariological thought at any great length, they allow for insights into how Mary's role as mediator and assistant was perceived.[26] The texts do not feature Mary directly in the role of an intercessor. Instead, she is portrayed as assisting Eve and as functioning as mediator of life by nurturing her infant child with milk.

In the second poem, a text on the conversion of Zachaeus, Cyrillona presented three dimensions of the activities of Eve and Mary.[27] The first dimension to be mentioned here is an antagonistic interaction. Whereas Eve "buried … the leaven of death and sadness" in us, Mary saw it as her role to pull up such death and sadness in order to prevent all that was created from being corrupted. A second aspect of Mary's role in this relationship that one may discuss is that of mediating life and redemption to Eve. Growing old and shrinking, Eve averted her fate and became young again because she had Mary as her child. More specifically, a christological dimension of this second interrelationship was introduced as well, given that the act of birth-giving that took place constituted an experience that was available to Eve as well as to Mary, Eve's daughter, who had a child and whose child bought back the debts of his ancestor. This second level of relationship was made possible by the fact that Mary was able to mediate between Eve and Christ by virtue of being born and giving birth. The third dimension of the relationship between Eve and Mary that emerges from this passage in Cyrillona's work is most directly one of active assistance, albeit not one of intercession. When developing this dimension of the relationship, the author spoke of Eve as a person suffering from disability. Availing himself of the story element known in Syriac tradition that the serpent was punished with the loss of its feet because it had tempted Eve to disobey God's command,[28] Cyrillona presented both the serpent and Eve as physically unable to move, having been rendered disabled. "The serpent which had been mutilated, mutilated Eve." Yet Mary, who was spoken of as being a young girl, was able to carry Eve, who was called the "old one" or "grandmother." The poet formulated directly that "Mary came to be the feet for her mother" (V.3). Through her enabling Eve to walk again, ultimately Mary served with her assistance the goal of allowing Eve to breathe again life.

In other instances in Cyrillona's text, Mary was featured as the one who was able to give or mediate life. In the first of these compositions, a text on the institution of the Eucharist, one reads that in contrast to the cloth in which the people of Israel carried ineffective leaven out of Egypt, Mary's womb represented for the Christian

[21] See William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London: British Museum, 1871), 669–673, here 670–671.

[22] See Gustav Bickell, "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas nebst einigen anderen syrischen Ineditis," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 27 (1873), 566–599; and Gustav Bickell, "Berichtigungen zu Cyrillonas," *ZDMG* 35 (1881), 531–532. An Italian translation was offered in Costantino Vona, *I carmi di Cirillona. Studio introduttivo – tradizione – commento*, Scrinium Patristicum Lateranense 2 (Rome, Paris, Tournai, New York: Desclée, 1963), 65–153. A French translation followed twenty years later. See Dominique Cerbelaud, *L'Agneau Véritable. Hymns Cantiques et Homélies. Introduction, traduction du texte syriaque, notes et index* (Chevetogne: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1984).

[23] See fol. 72r. Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 670.

[24] Cerbelaud, *L'Agneau Véritable*, 8.

[25] Peter Bruns, "Cyrillonas (Qûrillônâ)," in *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings, translated from the German by Matthew O'Connell (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 159. Bruns also suggests that a poem on the Holy Spirit that has been transmitted anonymously could be a work of the same autor. See T. Jansma, "Une homélie anonyme sur l'effusion du Saint-Esprit," *L'Orient Syrien* 10 (1965), 157–178, who did not think he was able to discern the identity of the author of this homily based on the data he had available.

[26] For earlier discussions of the mariology of the compositions ascribed to Cyrillona, see Ortiz de Urbina, "La mariologia nei padri siriaci," 110–111; and Vona, *I carmi di Cirillona*, 46–52.

[27] See Cyrillona, *Poems* V.3 (ed. Bickell, "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas," 592; Cerbelaud, *L'Agneau Véritable*, 89–90) for the text passage that features this relationship.

[28] See for example Ephraem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise* III.15 (ed. and tr. Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen De Paradiso und Contra Julianum*, CSCO 174–175, Scriptores Syri 78–79 [Louvan: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1957], 12 [Syriac] & 11 [German]; tr. Sebastian Brock, *St. Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise* [Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998], 96): "They all blushed at Adam who was suddenly found naked; the serpent had stolen his garments, for which it was deprived of its feet." The last comment in these verses expands upon Genesis 3:14, "on your belly you shall go."

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church the veil in which Christ as warm, active leaven was covered and hidden.[29] Being presented as a young girl, Mary was the one from whose womb the true vine arose (III.14).[30] In yet another passage, that life-giving and life-sustaining function of Mary with which she was endowed through her role as mother to the infant child she nourished with "virginal milk" at her breast, again showed her quite clearly as one who mediated life to the new generation.[31]

In some respects, Cyrillona's verses echoed ideas related to the "wheat metaphors" of the pseudo-Ephraemian material. Underlying that area of thought is the idea of Mary mediating between her son and individual human beings.[32] His verses do not unequivocally state that Mary was seen as an intercessor.

Balai

Syriac liturgical poetry preserves a collection of relatively short poems, composed in the five-syllable metre. Tradition has come to associate that meter with the name of Balai of Qenneshrin, given that this fifth-century Syriac author is understood to have composed all of his poetry in it.[33] In 1902, K. V. Zetterstéen edited two sets of these poems, one numbering 65 and a second one numbering 69, taken mainly from liturgical manuscripts preserved in London, Paris, and Berlin.[34] The manuscript evidence ascribes the set of 65 poems explicitly to Balai. The authorship of the second set of poems is decided through recourse to the metre as criterion. For his edition, Zetterstéen could not avail himself of relevant manuscripts preserved in libraries in Italy, including the Vatican. The ascription of several of the poems oscillates between Balai and Ephraem the Syrian.[35] It cannot be excluded that a few of the poems are neither by Balai nor by Ephraem. Whereas the identification of this poetry remains difficult and awaits a renewed, careful study, ideally in connection with the critical examination of the complete corpus of works attributed to Balai, scholars who have commented on the mariology of the poems edited by Zetterstéen were confident that these works reflect ideas dating to the period of the sixth century or earlier.[36] The importance of the collection has been emphasized in particular by Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, who judged these poems to be the first Syriac witnesses to the invocation of the Mother of God as intercessor.[37]

In the first poem on the Mother of God the poet encouraged the church to rejoice on the day of Mary's commemoration. The text does not permit an identification of the Marian feastday with which this poem was associated. Yet the author proclaimed that through Mary's "prayer there will be mercy upon the world."[38] In another poem, the author addressed a female person who was given the epithet "the honoured one (ܡܝܩܪܬܐ)," to "come and stand up on behalf of our weakness."[39] As a consequence, the poet expected that "in grace we shall come to

[29] Cyrillona, *Poems* I.4 (ed. Bickell, "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas," 570; tr. Cerbelaud, *L'Agneau Véritable*, 39–40).

[30] Cyrillona, *Poems* III.14 (ed. Bickell, "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas," 580–581; tr. Cerbelaud, *L'Agneau Véritable*, 66–67).

[31] Cyrillona, *Poems* VI.7 (ed. Bickell, "Die Gedichte des Cyrillonas," 596; tr. Cerbelaud, *L'Agneau Véritable*, 98–99).

[32] For some reflections on and probing into the question of Mary's role as mediator in ancient Christian literature see Luigi Gambero, "Patristic Intuitions of Mary's Role as Mediatrix and Advocate: The Invocation of the Faithful for Her Help," *Marian Studies* 52 (2001), 78–101; and Virginia M. Kimball, "The Language of Mediation in Eastern Liturgical Prayer: The *Akathistos* and *Small Paraklesis*," *Marian Studies* 52 (2001), 183–218.

[33] For a monograph-length study of Balai and his most substantial work, see Robert R. Phenix, *The Sermons on Joseph of Balai of Qenneshrin. Rhetoric and Interpretation in Fifth-Century Syriac Literature*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 50 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

[34] K. V. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balai's nach den syrischen Handschriften des britischen Museums, der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris und der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902).

[35] The main work Balai wrote is a substantial cycle of poetry dedicated to the interpretation of the figure of the patriarch Joseph, known elsewhere from the account in Genesis 37–50. Often this collection is ascribed to Ephraem the Syrian. For some recent discussion, see Phenix, *The Sermons on Joseph*, 14–31 and 72–112 ; and Martin Tamcke, "Die Hymnen Ephraems des Syrers und ihre Verwendung im christlichen Gottesdienst unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Josephtexte," in *Der Koran und sein religiöses und kulturelles Umfeld*, ed. Tilman Nagel with the assistance of Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquium 72 (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 173–195, here 186–190.

[36] Ortiz de Urbina, "La mariologia nei padri siriaci," 112, fn. 1. A complete edition and translation of Balai's Hymns on the Patriarch Joseph is in preparation.

[37] Ortiz de Urbina, "La mariologia nei padri siriaci," 112.

[38] Balai of Qenneshrin, *Poems* 4 (ed. and tr. K. V. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balai's nach den syrischen Handschriften des britischen Museums, der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris und der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902], ܕ and 14).

[39] Balai of Qenneshrin, *Poems* 15 (ed. and tr. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis*, ܚ and 17).

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life with you (ܚܝܐ, fem. sg.) through your prayers (ܒܨܠܘܬܟ ܚܝܐ)." The subsequent verse turned to the saints, and a later one, to those who had already departed from this life. Although Mary's name is not mentioned in the first verse that referred to the "honoured one," who is identified as female, the poet concluded with praise to God "who chose Mary from among all generations," and then commented on the saints. The epithet that has been given to the female figure as well as the order of appearance of the figures who are addressed make it possible, even likely, that the first verse was understood to be directed at Mary. This poem therefore supports the conclusion that the poet and the congregation for whom he wrote expected to receive life-giving grace through Mary's intercessory prayers.

A further poem, which Zetterstéen printed immediately following the one just discussed, provided a reason for God's willingness to grant what Mary prayed for. There the author confessed to Mary: "Mother of our Lord, truly our hope is in you, because your beautiful Child listens to you with pleasure" (ܐܡ ܡܪܢ ܫܪܪܐ ܒܟ ܣܒܪܢ ܕܫܦܝܪ ܒܪܟ ܝܠܕ ܠܟ ܒܚܕܘܬܐ).[40]

Poem 27 is further petitionary poem on the Mother of God that also is explicitly identified as having originated from the pen of Balai. Two of its strophes are especially clear and to the point in their request to Mary to intercede in prayer on behalf of humankind. The poet praised Mary and gave expression to his hope for her prayerful assistance with the following words:

Peace to you, our refuge.
Peace to you, our glory.
Since in you our race
Has been raised up into heaven.
Make petition to God,
Who was born from you.
That there may dwell in his church
Rest and peace.
Through the power of your prayer,
Mother of the Exalted One,
May he give more rest
To the earth and [its] inhabitants.[41]

Life of Rabbula

As fifth-century Syriac literature began to supply written witness to the articulation of the prayerful assistance the Mother of God provided to Christians, authors of texts also were comfortable depicting the holy man or woman as one who was able to pray to God directly on his or her own behalf. In the *Life of Rabbula*, a hagiographical biography of the fifth-century Bishop Rabbula of Edessa that is preserved in a single Syriac manuscript dated to the sixth century (BM Add 14,652, fols. 83r-125r), the author confidently described Rabbula as a person who "would diligently be laboring in his prayer and would supplicate and call out in power to God to deliver him from all evils."[42] For a period of forty days Rabbula withdrew to a monastery in the desert of Qenneshrin "that there he might supplicate in prayer and call out in power so that his entreaties might be answered."[43] This bishop also took great care to watch over the Christians entrusted to his care. He vigilantly prayed on their behalf, extending his efforts even to "laboring in prayer before God at all time" "in much sorrow on [their] behalf."[44] According to his hagio-biographer, Rabbula strove "to offer to his Lord the acceptable sacrifice of a pure petition (ܕܡܫܟ

[40] Balai of Qenneshrin, *Poems* 16 (ed. and tr. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis*, ٥ and 17).

[41] Balai of Qenneshrin, *Poems* 27 (ed. and tr. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balai's*, ٦٢ and 22).

[42] *Life of Rabbula* 14 (ed. Julian Joseph Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi Edesseni Balaei aliorumque opera selecta e codicibus syriacis manuscriptis in Museo Britannico et Bibliotheca Bodleiana asservatis primus edidit* [Oxford: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1865], 159–209, here 169; ed. and tr. Robert R. Phenix and Cornelia Horn, *Rabbula, Monk and Bishop of Edessa: His Prose and Poetic Works including the Account of his Life*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World [Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature; and Leiden: Brill Publishers, in press]). Overbeck's edition does not number paragraphs. They are supplied here from the edition and translation by Phenix and Horn.

[43] *Life of Rabbula* 33 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 186; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[44] *Life of Rabbula* 24 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 177–178; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

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ܒܥܘܬܐ)."[45] "By the power of his prayer" therefore, those in need received healing.[46] Since Rabbula was thought to be in direct converse with God, "mention of his [intercessory] prayer alone was sufficient (ܨܠܘܬܗ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܣܦܩ ܗܘܐ ܥܡ) even to bring the dispute of a man's house with his neighbor to a peaceful end."[47] The roles of intercessors in prayer were even seen as interchangeable between Rabbula and the Christians of his flock. As they were able to "cleave[] to the wings … of his prayers that [they] be protected," they in turn "prayed for his perfect health so that he would endure in a long life."[48] The biographer promptly compared Rabbula to "a sturdy wall, entirely encircling all his territory," and keeping "those who were within the stronghold of his borders" "secure in peaceful calm."[49] The power of prayer which Rabbula possessed and passed on also manifested itself after his death. The author of his *Life* commented that "even after his departure" the bishop left to the poor and needy "a good inheritance of prayer, and he commended them to the grace of God (ܠܛܝܒܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ), the Mother of all (ܐܡܐ ܕܟܠ), that from her should be distributed every day what was necessary for their needs."[50] Any need a believer may have had to be able to turn to a female-identified source of assistance could be satisfied, in the eyes of the author of this biography, by relying on "the grace of God, the Mother of all."

This hagiographical biography of the sixth century or earlier clearly witnesses to the fact that speakers of Syriac had a well-developed set of ideas regarding the possibilities of prayer of petition and intercession on the part of individuals who were endowed with a special status in the community, here those functioning in the office of the bishop of a local congregation. As bishop, and as ascetically minded leader of the church, Rabbula interceded with God on behalf of himself and his congregants. He also set the proper model beyond his grave. Through his personal example which lasted beyond his death he was depicted as having been able to mediate God's assistance, portrayed as a female person, for those in dire distress. The role of an intercessor was quite fully textured in fifth-century Christian traditions in Syriac. The comparison of Rabbula to a sturdy wall in a text that intended to present "by means of written [words] the icon of the excellent deeds"[51] of that bishop is noteworthy. Later on, in 626 CE, a prominent place would be taken up by the role of the icon of Mary in the defense of the walls of Constantinople. Yet in Syriac texts that are roughly contemporary to the *Life of Rabbula* as well as in that *Life* itself, the respective authors did not choose to develop such an image of the embodiment of powerful protection for Mary.

INTERCEDING IN HEAVEN: JACOB OF SERUGH AND THE SYRIAC *TRANSITUS MARIAE*

The instances in Syriac literature at which the idea of Mary as intercessor is at all developed in the early period centre on the spread of the cult of Mary's death and translation into heaven. This basis for the paradigm of intercession is best explained on the older (though still current) intercession of martyrs who were conveyed directly to be with the godhead after their acts of witnessing.

[45] *Life of Rabbula* 33 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 185; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[46] *Life of Rabbula* 34 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 186; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[47] *Life of Rabbula* 34 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 186; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[48] *Life of Rabbula* 35 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 187; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[49] *Life of Rabbula* 35–36 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 187; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[50] *Life of Rabbula* 49 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 202; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[51] *Life of Rabbula* 1 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi … opera selecta*, 159; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming). For discussion of the rhetoric of this passage, see Robert R. Phenix Jr., "Kunstprosaische Elemente in der *Vita Rabbulae*. Ein Blick auf das Encomium an den Helden," in *Die Suryoye und ihre Umwelt. 4. deutsches Syrologen-Symposium in Trier 2004. Festgabe Wolfgang Hage zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Martin Tamcke and Andreas Heinz, Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 36 (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005), 281–293.

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Jacob of Serugh

Explicit references to Mary's work of direct intercession are found only rarely in texts written in Syriac that are datable beyond any doubt to the period prior to the ninth century. The one context that constitutes the notable exception to this observation is that of material relating to Mary's transition from this life on earth to the next.

Ancient Christian tradition developed a narrative that focused on events taking place during the last few days of Mary's earthly existence and her passage through death into God's kingdom.[52] In at least two texts that deal with this experience in the life of the Mother of God – a *memrā* or verse homily by Jacob of Serugh and the apocryphal story of the *Transitus Mariae* as it is preserved in Syriac in an account consisting of five or six books – explicit comments address her role as that of a woman of prayer, a woman, whose prayer of intercession was thought of as being effective in remedying human needs.

Jacob of Serugh (ca. 450–521),[53] a Syriac author and poet of theological works, included a prayer of intercession at the end of his verse homily *On the Death and Burial of the Virgin Mother of God*. In his concern for obtaining peace, relief from trials, healings, protection, an end to hunger, and liberation from the oppression of evil spirits, the poet addressed the Son of God directly but also asked that Mary's prayers for such requests be heeded. Thus Jacob implored:

> *O Son of God, by her prayers make your peace to dwell*
> *in heaven, in the depths, and among all the counsels of her sons.*
> *Make wars to cease, and remove trials and plagues;*
> *bestow calm and tranquility on seafarers.*
> *Heal the infirm, cure the sick, fill the hungry;*
> *be a Father to orphans whom death has left destitute.*
> *In your piety, drive out devils who harass mankind,*
> *and exalt your Church to the four quarters of the globe,*
> *that it may sing your praise.*
> *Watch over priests and purify ministers;*
> *be a guardian of old age and youth.*
> *O Bridegroom Christ, to you be praise from every mouth,*
> *and on us be mercy at all times. Amen. Amen.*[54]

This passage from a prayer to the Son of God[55] envisions Mary praying alongside the poet. The poet's prayer expects and formulates, whether rhetorically or not, that the primary reason for God granting the requests of the human petitioner is that Mary herself addresses these prayers to God.

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[52] Scholarly attention has repeatedly concentrated on the exploration of this tradition. Main contributions include Simon Claude Mimouni, *Les traditions anciennes sur la Dormition et l'Assomption de Marie: études littéraires, historiques et doctrinales*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 104 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Brian E. Daley, tr. and introduction, *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998); Michel van Esbroeck, *Aux origines de la Dormition de la Vierge*, Collected Studies 472 (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1995); Simon Claude Mimouni, *Dormition et assomption de Marie: histoire des traditions anciennes*, Théologie historique 98 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1995); and Antoine Wenger, *L'assomption de la T. S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle: études et documents*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien 5 (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1955).

[53] For a helpful introduction to Jacob of Serugh, see Christian Lange, "Jakob von Sarug, †521," in *Syrische Kirchenväter*, ed. Wassilios Klein, Urban Taschenbücher 587 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 217–227. Recent work on Jakob has made an effort to contextualize his writings more fully. See for example the contributions collected in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times. Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 8 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010). The systematic investigation of Jacob's theology offered in two volumes by Tanios Bou Mansour (*La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug, Tome I: Création, Anthropologie, Ecclésiologie et Sacrement*, and *Tome II: Christologie, Trinité, Eschatologie, Méthode exégétique et théologique*, Bibliothèque de l'Université Saint-Esprit 16 and 40 [Kaslik: 1993 and 2000]), only occasionally treats aspects of Jacob's mariology in a somewhat sustained manner. See vol. I, pp. 103–105, 109 fn. 220, 223–227, 211, and 250–255. For a monograph-length study of Jacob's mariology, see now James Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh (451–521)*, Mōrān 'Eth'ō 25 (Baker Hill, Kottayam, Kerala: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute [SEERI], 2005).

[54] Jacob of Serugh, *On the Death and Burial of the Virgin Mother of God* (ed. Paul Bedjan, *S. Martyrii, qui et Sahdona quae supersunt omnia* [Paris and Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1902], 709–719, here 719; tr. Mary Hansbury, *On the Mother of God. Jacob of Serug*, with an introduction by Sebastian Brock [Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998], 89–100, here 99–100). See also Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thought*, 343–344.

[55] Puthuparampil, *Mariological Thought*, 343.

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Jacob's expectation that God would hear prayers that reference Mary appears to have been grounded in two lines of reasoning. On the one hand, Mary had been involved in facilitating communication between God and humankind previously, specifically in the incarnation. In his composition *On the Blessed Virgin Mother of God*, Jacob formulated that "The Son is the Word and she is the letter … by which forgiveness was sent forth to the whole world." As a letter carries the words of the communication that are written upon it, in her role as birthgiver to God's son, Mary brought God's forgiveness to humankind. Thus "with her the Father sent us tidings full of good things, and through her forgiveness to all condemned for their bonds of sin." As a result of this mediating communication which Mary worked, Adam was emancipated from his slavery to sin, "heavenly beings" and "those below" were reconciled with one another, "and the sides which had been at enmity were in great peace."[56] Through her role in the incarnation as being the one who came to be the mother of God, Mary facilitated communication between God and humankind, between the world above and the world below, with the result that oppressions ended and peace was restored.

A second line of reasoning that encouraged the poet to envision that Mary's assistance in prayer would be effective was grounded in the expectation that at her death, Mary "the Mother of the King seeks to enter the bridal chamber of light," the heavenly realm, and that she would be able to do so.[57] Jacob's text did not formulate explicitly that Mary was in heaven. Yet the contrast his words evoked between the manifestations of the joy of those in heaven at Mary's departure and the trouble and grief of the disciples left behind who mourned Mary's death spoke to the imminent fulfillment of that expectation of seeing her inside that "bridal chamber of light."[58] Christian tradition had developed early on a theology of martyrdom that saw paradise as the reward martyrs received immediately after their death. Belief in their power of intercession was grounded precisely in that conviction of the martyrs' immediate access to God's presence. A prominent early witness to the belief in the martyr's potent access to heaven is available in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.[59] That such ideas were present also among speakers of Syriac is demonstrated by the fact that Eusebius's *Church History*, which incorporated much of the account of Polycarp's death, was available in Syriac translation already in the fifth century.[60] Native Syriac martyrdom accounts likewise display the same idea.[61]

Jacob of Serugh did not think of Mary as a martyr in his poetry. Yet interest in exploring the details of events pertaining to the end of her life became more prominent in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, especially in Syriac-speaking regions. Along with this was an increasing focus on exploring the possibilities of what it might mean that Mary, residing with God, could be thought of as being able to guarantee that her prayers of intercession were bound to be answered.

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[56] Jacob of Serugh, *On the Virgin Mother of God* (ed. Bedjan, *S. Martyrii, qui et Sahdona quae supersunt omnia*, 614–639, here 636; tr. Hansbury, *On the Mother of God. Jacob of Serug*, 17–42, here 39).

[57] Jacob of Serugh, *On the Death and Burial of the Virgin Mother of God* (ed. Bedjan, *S. Martyrii, qui et Sahdona quae supersunt omnia*, 718; tr. Hansbury, *On the Mother of God. Jacob of Serug*, 98).

[58] Jacob of Serugh, *On the Death and Burial of the Virgin Mother of God* (ed. Bedjan, *S. Martyrii, qui et Sahdona quae supersunt omnia*, 718; tr. Hansbury, *On the Mother of God. Jacob of Serug*, 98–99).

[59] *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17.1 and 19.2 (ed. and tr. Bart Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers I: I Clement, II Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Didache*, Loeb Classical Library 24 [Cambridge, Mass., and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2003], 390–391 and 394–395) speaks of Polycarp having "received the crown of immortality." In addition, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 19.2 (ed. and tr. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers I*, 394–395) expands upon this comment and adds that "now he rejoices together with the apostles and all those who are upright, and he glorifies the Father and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ."

[60] For the fragmentary manuscript evidence, see Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Webers Verlag Dr. jur. Albert Ahn, 1922), 59, who refers to a manuscript kept in Saint Petersburg, dated to 462. Eusebius, *Church History* IV.15.40 (Greek text and tr. Giuseppe del Ton, *Eusebio di Cesarea. Storia Ecclesiastica e I Martiri della Palestina*, Scrinium Patristicum Lateranense 1 [Rome, Paris, Tournai, and New York: Desclée & C.i Editori Pontifici, 1964], 290–291) contains the relevant material from *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 17.1. *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 19.2 is not to be found in the Greek text of the *Church History*. Eusebius's acquaintance with Syriac traditions is discussed in Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 212–234.

[61] The idea that martyrs are able to enter heaven immediately is in evidence in early Syriac documents. See for example the *Martyrdom of Habib, the Deacon* (ed. and tr. W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries, from the Year after Our Lord's Ascension to the Beginning of the Fourth Century* (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1864), ܐ--ܒ, here ܐ [Syriac] & 72–85, here 79 [English]).

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Syriac Transitus Mariae

Perhaps the most important witness in Syriac to the development of Mary's role as intercessor in the sixth century (though perhaps already in the fifth century) is the apocryphal Syriac *Transitus Mariae*, which came to be an integral part of an apocryphal *Life* or *Book of Mary* that developed over the course of several centuries.[62] A sizeable and crucial witness to the early stages of the *Book of Mary* was edited in 1902 on the basis of a palimpsest manuscript.[63]

The main body of material comprising the Syriac texts on the lower level of the palimpsest constitutes an important witness to the development of the composite apocryphal *Book of Mary* in the Syriac tradition.[64] Dating in its origins at least to the late fifth or early sixth centuries, as is evidenced by the manuscript used by Smith Lewis, that *Book of Mary* included the texts of the *Protoevangelium of James*, that is, an apocryphal account of events in Mary's early childhood leading up to and including her conception of and birthgiving to Jesus,[65] and the so-called *Transitus Mariae*, a narrative account of the events of the last days of Mary's life and her departure from this world to the next. Of primary relevance for the present discussion is the text of this second component, the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*. Comments within that text claim that an original, on which the work was based, "was written in Hebrew, and in Greek, and in Latin."[66] Although there is some evidence that points to the early existence of a work on Mary's exit from this world in the Greek language,[67] the Syriac text of the *Transitus Mariae*, which is divided into five or six books and thus at times is identified as the *Six Books Transitus Mariae*, is the earliest substantial form of the work now accessible. Given the sixth-century manuscript evidence for the work, it ought to be regarded as an integral part of Syriac literature of that period.

At the end of the first book of the *Transitus Mariae* the author (or the scribe) expressed the hope that "by the prayers of the mother of God, Mary, and also of all the saints, may God make to pass away from the earth and from this place where this book is, the sword, captivity, famine, pestilence, and all plagues and rods of anger."[68] Here the text articulated the expectation that intercessory prayer of the saints, including that of Mary, could offer relief and protection from various types of evil that might afflict human beings. Such an idea fit well with Jacob of Serugh's presentation of Mary's intercessory capabilities in his *On the Death and Burial of the Virgin Mother of God*. Yet one problem to keep in mind when evaluating the evidence of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* on the basis of Smith Lewis' edition is the fact that the editor employed evidence not only from the ancient, fifth- to sixth-century palimpsest, but also from a more recent Syriac manuscript, datable to the nineteenth century. While the manuscript evidence does not support on its own the antiquity of the comments regarding Mary's intercessory function in this instance, the parallel in ideas to Jacob of Serugh's verses speaks in favor of the fact that the comments in the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* could indeed be reflective of the spirituality of the sixth century. Yet the

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[62] See also Horn, "Syriac and Arabic Perspectives," 273–275.

[63] Agnes Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca. The Protevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae with Texts from the Septuagint, the Corân, the Peshiṭta, and from a Syriac Hymn in a Syro-Arabic Palimpsest of the Fifth and Other Centuries, with an Appendix of Palestinian Syriac Texts from the Taylor-Schechter Collection*, Studia Sinaitica XI (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1902). Agnes Smith Lewis published the Syriac and Arabic texts of a palimpsest manuscript she had acquired in Suez in 1895 (p. ix). On palaeographical grounds, A. Cowley had assisted her in dating the upper writing to the tenth century. The Arabic script of the lower writings were assigned a date of about 750 CE. For the hand in which the Syriac texts were written that constitute most of the text of the lower layer of the palimpsest, the editor proposed a possible date of "the latter half of the 5th century; or at the latest … the beginning of the 6th" (p. x).

[64] For more detailed discussion of this development, see Cornelia B. Horn, "Syriac and Arabic Perspectives on Structural and Motif Parallels regarding Jesus' Childhood in Christian Apocrypha and Early Islamic Literature: The 'Book of Mary,' the *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John*, and the Qur'ān," *Apocrypha* 19 (2008), 267–291, here 270–281; and Cornelia Horn, "From Model Virgin to Maternal Intercessor: Mary, Children, and Family Problems in Late Antique Infancy Gospel Traditions and Their Medieval Trajectories," in *Christian Apocryphal Texts for the New Millennium: Achievements, Prospects, and Challenges. Proceedings of the International Workshop Held in Ottawa, September 30th – October 1st, 2006*, ed. Pierluigi Piovanelli, Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

[65] For separate access to the Greek text of the *Protoevangelium of James*, accompanied by a French translation, one may avail oneself with benefit of Émile de Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques. En appendice: Les versions arméniennes traduites en Latin par Hans Quecke*, Subsidia Hagiographica 33 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1961). An edition of the Greek, which is largely but not exclusively based on de Strycker's edition and which is accompanied by an English translation, is also found in Ronald F. Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas*, The Scholars Bible 2 (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1995), 32–77.

[66] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܒ (Syriac) & 19 (English).

[67] See the evidence of the so-called *Tübingen Theosophy*, discussed in Horn, "Syriac and Arabic Perspectives," 276–278.

[68] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܙ (Syriac) & 19 (English).

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advantage of a confirmation of an idea through a contemporary textual parallel is not available in all other instances in which the text of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* that is found in the palimpsest features *lacunae*. Therefore it is necessary to observe critical vigilance at all times when examining this material.

As one evaluates the evidence for Mary's role as intercessor in the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*, one notices that the text is characterized by a prominent liturgical atmosphere that weaves a path for itself throughout.[69] In its frequent references to persons engaged in prayer Mary is prominent. Yet the text also addresses problems encountered by those who pray as well as a conflict over sacred space. In the second book, for example, the Jews are said to have restricted access to the tomb of Christ and the site of Golgotha in order to make it difficult or impossible for Christians, including Mary, to pray there.[70]

Book two of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* states that Mary "used to go to the tomb of the Christ" daily.[71] She regularly "prayed beside Golgotha and the grave."[72] That behaviour is said to have enraged the leaders of the Jews, primarily the priests who suggested she should be stoned for it.[73] Undaunted, Mary continued to pray and offer "sweet spices and fire" and "myrrh … thrown on the censer." The text offers details of how one Friday

> *while she was praying and had lifted up her eyes and gazed at heaven, suddenly the doors of heaven were opened and a scent of myrrh went up, which the Lady Mary had thrown on the censer, and its odour went about all the regions of heaven. And in that hour came Gabriel the angel to her from heaven, and knelt to worship her; and he said to her: "Hail to you, mother of God! Your prayer has been accepted in heaven before your Son, our Lord Jesus the Christ."*[74]

As the story reports it, Gabriel told Mary, "at the time when you prayed on earth, at once you were answered in heaven; and whatsoever you seek from the Christ, your Son who is in heaven at the right hand of God, you shall have both in earth and in heaven, and your will is done."[75] These words would have suggested to any reader of the text that Mary's prayers, including her prayers on behalf of the interests of others, not only her own, were guaranteed a positive response from heaven. They grounded her power as an intercessor, the only one whose prayers were able to yield immediate responses.

The Syriac *Transitus Mariae* added an intriguing dimension to the question of Mary's role as intercessor insofar as it dealt with the challenges Mary had to confront in order to be able to continue with her prayers at Golgotha and the tomb of her son. The question of who could function as intercessor seemed to have carried interreligious dimensions, here those of the conflict between Jews and Christians. In fact, not long after the reader was informed that the Jews tried to impede Mary from praying at the tomb, the text developed its anti-Jewish argument by suggesting that a competition regarding the effectiveness of prayer may have been playing a role here. The efficacy of the prayer of Mary was set over against the prayer of the Jewish priests. The reliability of the claims of the Jewish priests had been called into question right from the outset of the description of this scene of competition in book two, however. Having recourse to the authority of the Roman governor, the Jewish priests were said to have tried to prevent Mary from praying "at the grave of Gologotha."[76] In addition, in order to prove Mary wrong, the priests relied on the witness of "heaven and earth" that Jesus was not the Messiah but "the son of Joseph the carpenter."[77] As they attempted to remind Mary of "sins which you have committed before God,"[78] it remained unclear to the reader, what kind of sins these were supposed to have been, given that the claim was advanced that Joseph, and not another male, was presumed to have been the father of Jesus. In the polemic between Jews and Christians that is accessible for instance in the writings of Origen of Alexandria or the Talmud, evidence remains from antiquity that in some Jewish circles Mary was accused of having conceived her son from a soldier named

[69] For a discussion of the relevant material see also Stephen Shoemaker, "Apocrypha and Liturgy in the Fourth Century: The Case of the 'Six Books' Dormition Apocryphon," in *Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Function of 'Canonical' and 'Non-canonical' Religious Texts*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Lee Martin McDonald (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 153–163.

[70] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܓ--ܠܕ (Syriac) & 19–20 (English). For a detailed discussion of relations between Jews and Christians as they are relevant to the context of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*, see Stephen J. Shoemaker, "'Let Us Go and Burn Her Body': The Image of the Jews in the Early Dormition Traditions," *Church History* 68.4 (1999), 775–823.

[71] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܕ--ܠܗ (Syriac) & 20 (English).

[72] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܗ (Syriac) & 20 (English).

[73] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܗ and ܢܓ (Syriac) & 20 and 31 (English).

[74] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܗ (Syriac) & 20 (English, translation modified).

[75] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܗ--ܠܘ (Syriac) & 21 (English).

[76] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܚ (Syriac) & 22 (English).

[77] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܚ (Syriac) & 22 (English).

[78] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܚ (Syriac) & 22 (English, translation modified).

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Panthera.[79] Yet the accusation of adultery did not seem to have been operative in the present instance. Underlying the argument which the priests advanced against Mary's chastity in the *Protoevangelium of James* was the assumption that Joseph had received Mary from the hands of the Temple priests as a virgin in order to keep her as a virgin, but then had had relations with her. The accusation raised against Mary in the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* was in line with this argument. The implication of a connection between Mary's sin and Joseph's fatherhood of her child thus connected the two texts of the *Protoevangelium of James* and the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* and, on the literary level, points to the development of the *Book of Mary*, of which these two texts are two constituent parts. The portrayal of Mary as a sinner, however, also served the purposes of attempting to disqualify her prayers of intercession.

Initially in the text of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*, the priests were shown as trying their best to demonstrate that Mary was a sinner who needed to return to proper worship. Instead of her praying at the tomb of Christ, the priests recommended to her to pray in the synagogue and listen to the Torah. Moreover, the priests suggested to Mary that they could intercede for her with God, and they presented themselves as being convinced that God would heed their prayers. With such an anachronism, Christian prayer was set up as standing in competition with nascent rabbinical Jewish liturgical practice. As an added dimension to the polemic of this interaction, the text implied that the priests thought of Mary as being sick and requiring healing. Such healing, the Jewish priests suggested, could be achieved if they were to call into her ears "with a trumpet." Should Mary not accept this offer of effective prayer on the part of the Jewish priests, she was threatened with expulsion from Jerusalem and with a form of confinement to her "house in Bethlehem."[80] In her response, according to the second book of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*, Mary clearly rejected the Jewish priests' demands.[81] Instead, she relocated the site of her prayer activities from Golgotha to her house in Bethlehem. Yet she had no doubt that God would continue to accept her prayers at that new location. Thus, she could inform "all the women of the neighborhood in which she dwelt" that her Master in heaven would continue to "fulfil my wish, whatsoever I seek from Him."[82] For her, the competition between the prayers of the Jewish priests and her own prayer was decided in favour of her own activities. Moreover, as book two highlighted as well, those who sided with Mary, especially a circle of virgins who "were with the Lady Mary night and day" and who "were the daughters of rich men and rulers of Jerusalem,"[83] likewise could obtain, through Mary's prayers, that their own prayers became acceptable to God and thus effective.[84]

Prayer activities, often sponsored by Mary, permeate important sections of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*. A prominent object that emphasized the liturgical dimensions of this apocryphal text is the "censer of incense". It is present in numerous scenes of prayer in the second book. In some cases, the censer accompanied prayer in settings of intensive worship.[85] As Mary and the virgins who accompanied her "to Bethlehem on Thursday"[86] were getting ready to move from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, Mary took a censer from a chest, in which she had kept her garments.[87] Another instance is narrated, that on the following day, Friday, Mary requested to be given "the censers of incense" in order to be properly equipped to pray to Christ in heaven.[88] In a scene that showed the apostle John visiting with Mary before the hour of her death, Mary encouraged John to "set the censer of incense" so that incense could accompany prayer.[89] In response, John functioned as an intercessor on behalf of Mary by praying to Christ that he might heed his mother's prayers.[90] Here, incense arising from the censer provided an appropriate setting for intercessory prayer. In another scene, successful intercessory prayer for a sick child was presented as the logical con-

[79] See Origen of Alexandria, *Against Celsus*, I.28 and 32 (ed. and tr. Marcel Borret, *Contre Celse. Origène*, Sources chrétiennes 213bis [Paris: Cerf, 2005], 150–152 and 162–166; tr. Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953], 27–28 and 31–32). For a discussion of the evidence from the Talmud, see Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 15–24.

[80] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܫ (Syriac) & 22–23 (English).

[81] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܫ--ܠܦ (Syriac) & 23 (English).

[82] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܦ (Syriac) & 23 (English), and see also pages ܟܓ (Syriac) & 25 (English).

[83] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܚ--ܟ (Syriac) & 24 (English).

[84] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܚ (Syriac) & 24 (English).

[85] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܛܒ (Syriac) & 32 (English).

[86] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܒ (Syriac) & 25 (English).

[87] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܚ (Syriac) & 24 (English).

[88] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܒ (Syriac) & 25 (English).

[89] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܗ (Syriac) & 27 (English); see also the passage at pages ܟܐ (Syriac) & 26 (English).

[90] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܗ (Syriac) & 27 (English).

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sequence of depicting Mary in a quasi-liturgical setting, in which she was shown as being equipped with a censer and praying. The Syriac *Transitus Mariae* also included a scene in book three that showed Mary "standing and praying, the censer of incense being placed in her hand,"[91] providing teachings about Christ's birth, childhood, life, and death, and, being prompted by the governor's request for the well-being of his son, eventually praying for the healing of the young boy and receiving a cure for him.[92] The author did not fail to explain that because of her motherhood of Christ, Mary "asked nothing from Christ which He did not give her."[93]

Healings which Mary's prayers worked were of special interest for the author of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae*. Mary's role as intercessor in such settings became most visible when the scenes of restoring people to health involved exorcism. Thus when Malchū, "the daughter of Sabinus, the Procurator," entreated Mary for assistance since she felt she was possessed by two demons, Mary interceded rather forcefully for her, as book three presented it, saying: "In the name of my Master Who is in heaven, I adjure you at this time concerning this soul, that she may be healed."[94] The presentation of Mary praying for a woman who was possessed walked a fine line between showing Mary as able to overcome the power of the demons almost on her own, and still emphasizing that Mary had these powers because she collaborated with her son. The description of the future destiny of the demons after they had left Malchū called to mind passages in the Synoptic Gospels that feature the demons at Gerasa and their fate. In the third book of the *Syriac Transitus Mariae* the demons were said to have drowned in the sea of Kinnereth.[95] In Mark 5:13 (cf. Matt 8:32 and Luke 8:32–33), Jesus had permitted the unclean spirits that possessed a man dwelling near Gerasa to enter into a herd of pigs and drive them into that same lake, in which the pigs drowned. Whether or not the spirits likewise were thought of as having drowned together with the pigs remained undecided in the Gospel passage. When comparing the impact of the word on the demons and unclean spirits in both instances, a reader or listener of both texts could remember Mary's as being more effective and determinative of the demons' fate. A reader of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* would have placed Mary's activities as deeds of power that were at the least comparable to those of her son.

The Syriac *Transitus Mariae* repeatedly displayed people turning to Mary in prayer and asking for her assistance. In a good number of cases, the line between imploring Mary for her intercession with God, who in turn would receive acknowledgement as being the ultimate source of assistance, and, on the other hand, expecting assistance directly from Mary, was blurred. Book three presented many of those who were in need as having prayed directly to Mary, calling out to her by saying: "O Lady Mary, mother of God, have mercy on us,"[96] or "O Lady Mary, mother of God, cure me!"[97] Such prayers for help could at times take the form of an explicit request for intercession. Yūphanyā, for example, a man who tried to attack Mary's litter upon the instigation of a Jewish scribe and who was punished with the temporary loss of his arms, called out to Mary, once he had received his arms back through Mary's command: "I entreat you, mother of God, pray for me,"[98] hoping for her intercession as he was about to preach about Mary among the Jews. The precise age and origins of this story remains unclear, since the palimpsest Smith Lewis edited does not contain this passage. The editor instead supplied the text from the more recent manuscript she used. That same, possibly later layer of the text also featured Mary interceding on behalf of sinners. In such cases, Mary's view was presented as having been directed to Christ's judgement of the world "at the last day." In her intercessory prayer in those contexts Mary attempted to convince Christ to have mercy on the sinners on the basis of her having heard their prayers and being "grieved because of them," as book five formulated it.[99] Shortly thereafter, that later layer of text also repeated at some length the conviction that Mary's intercession was guaranteed to be effective.[100]

In sections of the text that clearly belong to the fifth- or sixth-century stratum of the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* narrative, the reader gains insights into the wider range of approaches ancient Christians thought they could take

[91] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܐ (Syriac) & 46 (English).
[92] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܕ--ܟܗ (Syriac) & 47–48 (English).
[93] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܕ (Syriac) & 48 (English).
[94] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܕ (Syriac) & 34 (English).
[95] Smith Lewish, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܟܕ (Syriac) & 35 (English).
[96] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܚܕ [three instances] and ܓܚ (Syriac) & 49–50 [three instances] and 50 (English).
[97] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܠܚ (Syriac) & 50 (English).
[98] Smith Lewish, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܡܚ (Syriac) & 51 (English, translation modified).
[99] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܡܟܡ (Syriac) & 67 (English).
[100] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܡܟܐ--ܡܠ (Syriac) & 68–69 (English).

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when requesting Mary's intercession and assistance. In addition to simply asking for her prayers, book four developed the perception that Christians could also offer commemorations to her, which meant that feastdays were celebrated in her honour.[101] For specific geographical locations, for instance at the Mount of Olives, the site that eventually featured Mary's tomb, such commemorations were to take place "three times in the year."[102] In a prayer of intercession Mary was said to have offered to God, some details were provided concerning how such commemorations were to happen. Mary's prayers requested that God accept the offerings and prayers, supplications, and tears of all those who assembled in order to commemorate her, present her with offerings, and were "naming the memory of the Lady Mary, the mother of the Messiah."[103] In addition, passages in the text that is contained in the later manuscript also spelled out for the reader that "whoso shall make a commemoration of her shall be excellent in heaven before the face of the Father and whosoever shall make and magnify her commemoration before all mankind, shall be blessed by God."[104] Those who celebrated Mary's memory therefore were promised to have sure access to God's ear.

Jacob of Serugh's brief treatment of the theme of Mary's intercession that was presented above corresponds well with the evidence that can be derived from the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* as a solid witness that in the sixth century, the idea of Mary's intercessory prayer and role as intercessor were well developed in some subsets of the Syriac-speaking realm. In fact, the parallel between Jacob's verses on Mary as intercessor and sections of the text of a longer prayer of intercession Mary offered in the fourth book of the *Syriac Transitus Mariae* is quite striking. Given the prayer's length and detail, its attestation in the early palimpsest, and given its extraordinary relevance to the topic of the present article, it is justified to present this prayer in full here, omitting only the narrator's comments. Mary was imagined to have prayed as follows:

> *May God, Who willed of His own will, and was reconciled in His love, and sent His Son from Heaven, and He dwelt in the palace of my members, have mercy upon the world which calls upon Him … . O Christ, Son of the King of Heaven, Son of God who does not fail, receive the prayers of men, who call [upon] and commemorate the name of Your mother before You, and make tribulations pass away from them; and make bad times cease from the earth … . Lord Jesus the Christ, give a crown to old age, and a bringing up to youth; and help the souls that call upon You; and whosoever makes a commemoration of my spirit and of my body, which have left this world. … I entreat You, Lord [p. 57] Jesus the Christ, that what I have sought, You will do in heaven and on earth. This, Lord, I would persuade You, that wherever men are assembled and are making a commemoration of me, and are presenting me with offerings, and are naming the memory of the Lady Mary, the mother of the Messiah, accept, O Lord, their offerings from them, and accept the prayer which goes up to Your presence. And receive the supplication of men, and the tears which are shed from their eyes; and cause to pass away from the land in which they make my offerings, the sword, and captivity, and famine and pestilence, and grievous calamities; and all the afflictions which befall the children of men, do you cause to cease from people who make offerings before You.*[105]

The concerns of this prayer with the well-being of the whole world, the coming of an end of tribulations and evil times, as well as the request to extend well-being to all stages of human life, the old and the young, stand in parallel to themes one encounters in the verses Jacob of Serugh composed about Mary's role as intercessor as discussed above. Since both texts date to about the same period, namely the late fifth and early sixth centuries, the fact that they overlap in topic in this case constitutes a valuable witness to prayer practices and sentiments among the Christian populace in the Syriac-speaking realm during that time. As in the case of Jacob's metrical homilies, in which occasional comments and circumstantial evidence added up to allow one to discern a fuller picture of the composition of his audience in the region of Serugh, southwest of Edessa,[106] additional themes that characterized Mary's intercessory prayer in the Syriac *Transitus Mariae* in this instance might likewise be evaluated and provide

[101] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܓ--ܗ (Syriac) & 56 (English).

[102] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܘ (Syriac) & 59 (English).

[103] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܡ--ܓ (Syriac) & 57 (English).

[104] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, 105 (Syriac) & 63 (English).

[105] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܡ--ܓ (Syriac) & 56–57 (English).

[106] For a discussion of the audience of Jacob's homilies, see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "To Whom Did Jacob Preach?" in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times. Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 8 (Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2010), 115–131. Some of Jacob's letters reveal that Christians with whom he corresponded were afflicted by the oppressions accompanying persecution and war. See for example Letter 18, addressed to the Himyarites. See Gunnar Olinder, ed., *Jacobi Sarugensis epistulae quotquot supersunt*, CSCO 110, Scriptores Syri 57 (Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1937, reprinted 1952), 87–102. For a recent translation, see Micheline Albert, tr., *Les Lettres de Jacques de Saroug*, Patrimoine Syriaque 3 (Kaslik, Lebanon: Parole de l'Orient, 2004), 129–144.

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some insights regarding the needs, concerns, and identity of early listeners and readers of this apocryphal text. Thus when Mary requested of Christ a few lines later in the same prayer, attested in the palimpsest, to bless "the land in which [Mary's] offerings are made," that the locust not destroy it, that it would not be affected by heat, blight, or hailstones, that the "sick be cured," the afflicted find relief, the hungry be satisfied, the poor "become rich," those tormented by Satan or violence have their "bonds be loosed," and that those who found themselves in distress when travelling on sea "be delivered from destruction,"[107] concerns of a society that is based on agricultural production and familiar with travel and economic activities on sea come to the fore. That the audience was one that depended primarily on the success of agricultural activities is supported by several further references in book four of the text, evidenced in the palimpsest, that speak of the power of Mary's prayer to bless the fruits of the earth[108] and the appropriateness of commemorating her on a given day "on account of the seeds that were sown; and on account of the abundance of the wheat" or "on account of the vines bearing clusters, on account of the trees bearing fruit."[109]

MARY'S ROLE AS INTERCESSOR IN SYRIAC LITURGICAL HYMNOGRAPHY: SYRIAC *THEOTOKIA* AND THE HYMNS ASCRIBED TO RABBULA IN LATER LITURGICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Much material that is relevant for the study of Syriac liturgical hymnography has not yet been edited critically. Any conclusions drawn in the following discussion on the basis of liturgical hymns therefore have to be considered as preliminary statements that are open to revisions in light of the results of future examinations of the manuscript evidence. Yet despite such a *caveat*, one may venture as a working hypothesis for the time being that the ninth century constitutes an important further stage in the development of the approach to Mary's role as intercessor on the part of speakers of Syriac. In its final section, this article considers two bodies of Syriac texts that reveal abundantly that attention to and reliance upon Mary's intercession increased substantially during that latter period, likely in dialogue with the Greek tradition. The sets of texts that come into view are *theotokia* in Syriac and a set of hymns ascribed to Rabbula of Edessa, which, even if they were composed by the bishop originally, in their present form only allow the researcher access to the reception of this material in later liturgical manuscripts.

Syriac *Theotokia*

The tradition of dedicating hymns explicitly to the Theotokos, the Mother of God, can be traced back in the Greek tradition to as early as the fourth century.[110] After the eighth century, these hymns were also translated into Syriac and Arabic, among other languages. The earliest attestation of specimens of Syriac *theotokia* is contained among the Syriac manuscript fragments that were discovered at the Monastery of Saint Catherine's on Sinai in 1975. This material dates to the period between the ninth and eleventh centuries.[111] In the context of a study of biblical citations and allusions as they are revealed in Syriac *theotokia*, Natalia Smelova has made more readily available an English translation of a rather unique, independent, and almost complete collection of Syriac *theotokia*, kept in St Petersburg, at the National Library (MS Syriac, new series, 11).[112] Some of the hymns contained in that manuscript are almost identical with those in the Syriac fragments that came to the fore at St Catherine's monastery.[113] The manuscript has been identified as belonging to the Syriac-speaking Melkite milieu and should be

[107] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܣ (Syriac) & 57 (English).
[108] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܘ (Syriac) & 59 (English).
[109] Smith Lewis, ed. and tr., *Apocrypha Syriaca*, ܕ (Syriac) & 60–61 (English).
[110] Natalia Smelova, "Biblical Allusions and Citations in the Syriac Theotokia according to the MS Syr. New Series 11 of the National Library of Russia, St Petersburg," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas, The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 6 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 369–391, here 369; Anton Baumstark, "Ein frühchristliches Theotokion in mehrsprachiger Überlieferung und verwandte Texte des ambrosianischen Ritus," *Oriens Christianus*, New series 7–8 (1918), 37–61; and D. M. Montagna, "La lode alla Theotokos nei testi greci dei secoli IV–VII," *Marianum* 81 (1962), 453–543.
[111] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 370; Sebastian P. Brock, *Catalogue of Syriac Fragments (New Finds) in the Library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, *Mount Sinai* (Athens: Mount Sinai Foundation, 1995), 66–67 and 268–271.
[112] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 382–391.
[113] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 373.

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dated to the ninth century.[114] Smelova has argued that the manuscript is a product of the scribes at St Catherine's.[115] She also concluded that the hymns that are preserved in MS Sinai Greek 1593, a manuscript that is datable "to the late eighth or early ninth century" and that has its origins in Palestine in the Melkite community, are the most likely archetypes for the collection of Syriac *theotokia* featured in the St. Petersburg MS Syriac New Series 11.[116] The translation activity of *theotokia* into Syriac therefore as it is evidenced in this material goes back to the early ninth century or even before then.[117]

Mary's prayers, supplications, and intercessions are sought with great vigor in the *theotokia* presented in Syriac translation in the St Petersburg manuscript. Early on in the collection in *theotokion* 3, the text compared the "Mother of God and Virgin" as a "spiritual mountain" to Mount Sinai upon which God descended when giving the Law to Moses. Consequently, the author invited Mary to "pray to Him [i.e., God] with us."[118] The request included that Mary "[o]ffer Him supplications for our salvation."[119] That the Virgin "gave birth to the incarnate Word" was one of the reasons that encouraged the poet to ask her to "beseech for us with your supplication and pray for the salvation of our souls."[120] References to Mary's motherhood as the basis for the expectation of successful intercession on her part could also find their expression in the image of Mary who "beheld Him in [her] arms when he was feeding on the milk of [her] breast."[121] Yet one also discovers references to her virginity which could serve as the foundation on which those who requested her intercession built their hope.[122] Mary's humility and her characterization as being "full of grace" (cf. Luke 1:28), "most glorified," "pure one," and "blessed one" functioned as further motifs that grounded the poet's trust in asking for her supplication.[123] Allusions to Mary's state of being "full of goodness," "entirely unblemished," or the "most-holy one" likewise served as a firm basis for the confidence of the ones who approached her in the hope that her prayers would be successful.[124] An argument for the effectiveness of Mary's intercession seemed to have been based on understanding her position and power to be "more glorious than the highest powers" or "exalted."[125] Thus Mary was seen as being endowed with and using "audacity."[126] Other images that presented her as a person, in whose support one could trust, spoke of her as "full of every fairness" or as being the "union of all good things" and "source of blessings."[127] Occasional imagery used for Mary that presented her as the "limit of mysteries, types and symbols of Christ the God"[128] or the "consummation of all mysteries and symbols"[129] and that placed on that foundation the trust that her prayer would be effective, ultimately was resounding theological terminology with which Christian speakers of Syriac would have been intimately familiar. Related language that favored the concept of ܪܙܐ, *raza*, "mystery" or "sign," saturat-

[114] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 372 and 373.
[115] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 370–371.
[116] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 372.
[117] See also Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 373.
[118] *Theotokion* 3 (first mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 383.
[119] *Theotokion* 5 (first mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 383.
[120] *Theotokion* 6 (second mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 383. See also *theotokion* 12 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; *theotokia* 16 and 17 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; *theotokia* 19, 21, and 23 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385–386; *theotokion* 26 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387; *theotokia* 30 and 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388; *theotokion* 37 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389; *theotokia* 39–42 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389–390; and *theotokia* 46, 49, and 51 (eighth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 390–391.
[121] *Theotokion* 20 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386; see also *theotokion* 29 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.
[122] *Theotokion* 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388; see also *theotokion* 35 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388–389; and *theotokion* 41 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389.
[123] *Theotokia* 7 and 8 (second mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 384; see also *theotokion* 26 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387; *theotokia* 27, 30, and 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387–388; *theotokion* 35 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388–389; and *theotokia* 39–41 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389.
[124] *Theotokia* 16 and 17 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; see also *theotokia* 20–21 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386; *theotokion* 35 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388–389; and *theotokion* 41 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389.
[125] *Theotokion* 46 (eighth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 390; see also *theotokion* 30 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388; and *theotokion* 37 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389.
[126] *Theotokion* 44 (eighth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 390.
[127] *Theotokion* 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.
[128] *Theotokion* 25 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.
[129] *Theotokion* 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

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ed the hymnography and poetry of prolific early Syriac authors such as Ephraem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh.[130] Thus even as translation literature, these Syriac *theotokia* gave expression to ideas that were not at all foreign to Syriac-speakers. For the most part, these short hymns featured Mary as the one and only intercessor, on whom people should rely. Yet on occasion they also revealed that others could function as fellow intercessors alongside of her. For example, *theotokion* 37 argued that Christians placed their trust in her successful defense because she was seen as working together "with the choir of the Apostles."[131] The relevance of such an emphasis on apostolic authority also had its bearings on *theotokia* 7 and 35, where requests for her prayer and supplication came at the end of doctrinal teachings that formulated basic points of christology.[132]

Two of the goals one could discern that Mary's supplication was thought to be able to achieve were "to give rest and peace to our souls,"[133] and provide "salvation of the souls of us all."[134] Further goals that were promoted through Mary's intercession were the "pacification of the world by His mercy"[135] and the "redemption of our race."[136] Yet one also expected to be "save[d] and deliver[ed] from all diseases and sufferings,"[137] to be purified from inequities committed in the past and be held back from engaging in ruinous acts in the future,[138] to be freed from all sufferings,[139] and to have God respond to Mary's supplication with "abundant grace [granted] to the world" or "great mercy."[140] As those who asked for Mary's intercession self-identified as sinners, they hoped to gain through her aid the "forgiveness for the great multitude of offences that we have committed."[141] They also expected that her prayer would "deliver and save us from various temptations,"[142] and more generally "deliver [from the curse] the souls of all of us."[143] Even a sense of her being able to "justify us freely" arose from the texts.[144] Those who sought refuge in her prayer expected to experience the workings of "force and might."[145]

Epithets that Mary received and that were pertinent to her role in interceding were those of "intercessor" and "refuge of our souls,"[146] "great bridge leading and transferring from death to life,"[147] and "calm haven, healing and succour."[148]

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[130] On types and symbols in Syriac literature, see the discussions in Brock, *St. Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise*, 41–45; and Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye. The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem*, Cistercian Studies Series 124 (Kalamazoo, Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 41–42, 53–84, and 162–163.

[131] *Theotokion* 37 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389.

[132] *Theotokion* 7 (second mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 384; and *theotokion* 35 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388–389.

[133] *Theotokion* 8 (second mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 384. See also *theotokion* 20 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386; and *theotokion* 35 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388–389.

[134] *Theotokion* 21 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386; see also *theotokion* 6 (second mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 383; *theotokia* 25–26 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387; *theotokion* 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388; *theotokia* 33–34 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388; *theotokia* 38, 39, and 42 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389–390; and *theotokion* 46 (eighth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 390.

[135] *Theotokion* 42 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389–390.

[136] *Theotokion* 51 (eighth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 391.

[137] *Theotokion* 11 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 384; and *theotokion* 27 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.

[138] *Theotokion* 16 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; and *theotokion* 23 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386.

[139] *Theotokion* 19 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385.

[140] *Theotokion* 12 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; *theotokion* 20 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386; *theotokion* 30 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387; and *theotokion* 35 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388–389.

[141] *Theotokion* 30 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

[142] *Theotokion* 41 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389; and *theotokion* 49 (eighth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 390.

[143] *Theotokion* 37 (sixth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389; and *theotokion* 40 (seventh mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 389.

[144] *Theotokion* 24 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.

[145] *Theotokion* 31 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

[146] *Theotokion* 9 (second mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 384.

[147] *Theotokion* 31 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

[148] *Theotokion* 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

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Despite the strong confidence in the power of Mary's intercession, the poet also gave voice to a lingering concern that Mary might reject those who came to her asking for her prayers.[149] Thus the ones desiring Mary's prayers presented themselves as her servants,[150] or as persons affected by a disease.[151] In the end they clearly expected to be saved by "taking refuge [under the cover of /] in [her/your] mercy/prayer."[152] They also readily strove to "pray to [her],"[153] or "offer [their] supplication to [her]."[154]

The Supplications Ascribed to Rabbula of Edessa

A second set of liturgical hymns that offered a similarly rich treatment of the role of Mary as intercessor and of related expectations and ideas Christian believers consists of the collection of *Supplications* (ܬܟܫܦܬܐ, *takšepātā*) attributed to Rabbula of Edessa. These compositions are contained in Syriac manuscripts dating to the eleventh through fifteenth century and constitute a sizeable collection of short liturgical pieces composed as optional hymns for the Midnight Office on Sundays.[155] Elements of the biography of Rabbula that are pertinent to the topic of this article have already been examined above. If the Supplications are indeed his compositions, they date to the fifth century. Yet the final judgment has not yet been settled regarding their authenticity. It is contingent upon further results of scholarly work that have to establish the critical text of the collection of hymns attributed to him and that would also have to develop reliable criteria based on which such a judgement could be reached. Thus far, only a few attempts have been undertaken in that direction.

In 1998, Peter Bruns published an article discussing selected aspects of the theology and motifs of this collection.[156] His examination laid down a foundation that might allow one to discern to what extent main themes one encounters in the Supplications might be congruent or reconcilable with what is known from elsewhere about Rabbula's interests as church leader and theologian. For Bruns, Rabbula's authorship of at least a subset of the Supplications was not to be excluded *a priori*.

A second contribution to the study of the Supplications consists of an English translation of the whole of the collection, based on the text that is available in two preliminary editions of varying size, one published by Julian Joseph Overbeck and one published in the *Breviarium* of the Church of Antioch in Mosul at the end of the nineteenth century.[157] This additional tool may perhaps encourage scholars to embark on the path of producing a critical edition of the text of the Supplications. The translators' study of the hymns led them to conclude with Bruns that a final judgment has to be postponed until detailed critical examination of the texts based on all manuscripts is possible.

Natalia Smelova's study of medieval Syriac liturgical manuscripts suggested a line of development from Melkite *theotokia* to the genre of *takšepātā* as they appeared in the tradition of the Syrian Church.[158] She also noted

[149] *Theotokion* 16 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; and *theotokion* 27 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.

[150] *Theotokia* 16 and 17 (third mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 385; and *theotokion* 27 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.

[151] *Theotokion* 31 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

[152] *Theotokia* 23–24 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 386–387; and *theotokia* 27, 31, and 32 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387–388.

[153] *Theotokion* 24 (fourth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387; and *theotokion* 30 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 388.

[154] *Theotokion* 27 (fifth mode), tr. Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 387.

[155] For an overview of the manuscripts, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 72.

[156] Peter Bruns, "Bischof Rabbulas von Edessa – Dichter und Theologe," in *Symposium Syriacum VII. Uppsala University, Department of Asian and African Languages, 11–14 August, 1996*, ed. René Lavenant, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 195–202.

[157] The Syriac text and English translation is to be found in Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming. Parts or the whole of the Syriac text can also be found in Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 245–248 and 362–378; and *Breviarium juxta ritum ecclesiae antiochenae syrorum*, 3 vols. (Mausilus is this Mosul?: Typus Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1886–1896), vol. 1, 77–124. For an illustration of the often fragmentary nature of the presentation of ancient works contained in such liturgical collections, see for example Sebastian Brock, *Bride of Light. Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches*, Mōrān 'Eth'ō 6 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press and SEERI, 2010), 18–19.

[158] Smelova, "Biblical Allusions," 374. With this observation, she expanded upon the work of H. Husmann, "Die melkitische Liturgie als Quelle der syrischen Qanune iaonaie (Melitene and Edessa)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975), 5–56; H. Husmann, "Syrischer

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that some of the more recent liturgical manuscripts containing the Supplications ascribed them to Rabbula. Yet since her study focused on the Syriac *theotokia*, and not on the Supplications, and since she did not state whether or not she had had the opportunity to examine earlier liturgical manuscripts which Anton Baumstark indicated contain the Supplications,[159] the question of the precise date to which this ascription can be traced in the manuscripts still appears to be open. In addition, the question of Rabbula's linguistic background requires further consideration. All of what remains of his writings or works about him is preserved in Syriac. Yet the *Life of Rabbula* as well as the works of Rabbula himself clearly witness that the bishop was actively translating Greek works into Syriac.[160] Moreover, the biographer commented that Rabbula composed at least forty-six letters in Greek, which the biographer intended to translate into Syriac.[161] Several of the Supplications in the fourth and seventh tone that were published by Overbeck are identified as Greek hymns.[162] What precisely this refers to remains to be discovered. It could be an occasional reference to the memory that at least some of the Syriac Supplications had their roots in Greek texts or traditions. Perhaps it might also reveal a memory that Rabbula composed hymns in Greek and in Syriac, which ultimately were preserved in the Syriac-speaking churches only in Syriac. The fifth- or sixth-century, apocryphal Syriac *Transitus Mariae*, indeed, displays a strong emphasis on Mary's identity as intercessor. Whether or not the collection of the Supplications, or only some of them, might be a roughly contemporary, likely earlier parallel, and whether or not they are indeed Bishop Rabbula's compositions, are questions it seems that simply require further investigation. It is possible though to study the content of the Supplications in some detail.

Given that the very genre of the hymns in question is one of "supplication," it is no surprise that one encounters the theme of intercession quite frequently in these short texts. The Supplications feature this theme in connection with various sets of stakeholders. At times, "apostles, prophets, and martyrs" are addressed. They could be described as those who have been "invited to the chamber of light," an expression that paralleled the idea of the existence of a bridal chamber in the heavenly kingdom. This notion, in turn, was one that was quite familiar to readers of ancient Syriac literature.[163] Since the members of this aggregate of "apostles, prophets, and martyrs" were thought of as having already reached that most desirable, final destination of the Christian faithful, that is, their place in the heavenly kingdom, believers also imagined them as having access to and being in direct communication with God. Thus it was congruent with the logic of these hymns that one could encourage such an illustrious group to "intercede and make supplication on our behalf, so that the souls of us all may be saved from anger."[164] At other times the group of saints made up of prophets, apostles, and martyrs might be asked to "offer intercession for us all" on the basis of their having suffered pains on behalf of God.[165] Motivated by their intercession then, the believers expected that God in turn "might work mercy" on those who through prophets, apostles, and martyrs approached him in their intercession. The effectiveness of their supplication was thought to have been grounded additionally in the fact that God had already crowned them. Furthermore, special days were set aside for their commemoration.[166] Thus, Christians remembering these saints on such days by singing supplicatory hymns

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und Byzantinischer Oktoëchos. Kanones und Qanune," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 44 (1978), 65–73; and A. Cody, "The early history of the octoëchos," in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. Nina G. Garsoïan, Thomas F. Mathews, and Robert W. Thomson (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Center for Byzantine Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 1982), 89–113, here 97–99, who had observed a notable influence of liturgical texts employed in Melkite circles and of Greek hymnography on liturgical traditions in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

159 Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 72.

160 *Life of Rabbula* 19 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 172; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming). Rabbula translated, for instance, Cyril of Alexandria's *De recta fidei ad Theodosium* (CPG 5218). For further discussion, see Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming.

161 *Life of Rabbula* 47 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 200; ed. and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

162 See *Supplications* IV.16–18 and 22 and VII.26–27 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 366–368 and 378; text and tr. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

163 See for example the discussion in Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom, revised edition. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 131–142.

164 (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* IV.2 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 362–363; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

165 (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.3 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 370–371; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

166 (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.12 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 373; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

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to them with the accompanying request for their intercession could trust that they would receive their assistance. When seeking the intercession of the apostles, the author emphasized that they were enabled "to entreat on our behalf the Lord" because God had singled them out and assigned greatness to them already. As a result of the apostles' intercession, the Christian believer could expect to gain stronger faith and "become worthy of the remission of debts."[167] Furthermore, the author included himself among the number of the supplicants. He presented himself as a sinner, yet at the same time also as someone who was willing and able to ask God directly for mercy, hoping to be spared and saved through God's compassion.[168] The biblical images alluded to were those of the publican (Luke 18:10–13) and of the "son who squandered his riches" (Luke 15:11–31). Yet again in other instances, one encountered the group of the Christians as a whole who were reciting the Supplications and joined the saints, consisting of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, in their work of entreating and interceding before God. As much as the poet himself was able to, they likewise, as a group, were in a position to ask God directly for mercy.[169]

At times, the poet grouped Mary together with the saints and expected God to have mercy through their prayers.[170] In fact, in the midst of this bustling activity of supplications and intercessions offered by apostles, prophets, martyrs, the author of the collection, and the Christians as a group, the presentation of Mary as an intercessory figure took up considerable space. The text allows one to discern some of the reasons that, in the poet's mind, enabled Mary to function as an intercessor. When the poet encouraged the "pure and holy virgin" to "make intercession on behalf of us all" in the hope that "the souls of us all may be saved from anger," one of the reasons for Mary's ability to approach God effectively in her intercession had already manifested itself in the incarnation. Although she had conceived God and carried "the living fire in [her] womb of flesh," she was "not consumed by it."[171] One is left to conclude from the juxtaposition of this circumstance with the request for intercession in Supplication IV.9 that at least one aspect of what made her intercession for humankind with God possible was that she was able to enter into God's presence without any hindrance. In her case, the rule that "no one shall see me [God] and live" (Exod 33:20) did not seem to apply. Another set of verses spoke of Mary as being "like that cherubic throne" and "that edenic bridal chamber."[172] Here the poet used imagery for Mary that brought to the fore how one could conceive of her as being like a place that could encompass, and thus be near to, God. Another line of argument this poetry pursued built on the reflection that since "the Only Begotten" "sprang forth from [Mary]," which at least theoretically proposed that she worked on his behalf in the process of giving birth to him, she could "entreat and make supplication" with the goal "that he might work for us compassion."[173] The simple fact that Mary was the Mother of God also sufficed to motivate believers to seek Mary's intercession.[174]

Some of the Supplications commented on the circumstances of particular situations in which Mary's intercession was requested. These included times when "our end has arrived" and "we the earthly ones are perishing."[175] At other occasions those who asked for Mary's intercession felt afflicted by "the rods by which [evil ones] have been plagued from generation to generation" and had seen the "Corruptor" lying in ambush waiting for them, while portents in this world and the world beyond deeply affected the sensitivities of all.[176]

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[167] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* II.1.3 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[168] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* IV.4 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 363; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[169] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.12 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 373; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[170] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* V.5.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[171] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* IV.9 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 364; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[172] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* IV.1 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 362; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming); see also *Supplications* IV.1.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[173] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1–2 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 370; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[174] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VIII.5.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[175] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 370; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

[176] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.11 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 372–373; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming); see also *Supplications* VII.3.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

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Arguments used to persuade Mary to intercede on behalf of human beings and their needs included the point that as "pure mother" she already had become "accustomed to help our poverty."[177] Mary was thought of as being able to intercede on behalf of human beings, because of her caring motherhood for "the one by whom the cherubim are burnt, [and whom she] bore on [her] arms."[178] This idea may be expressed elsewhere as Mary being the one from whom "the Only Begotten One … dawned."[179] Anticipating the threats of harsh treatment at the hour of judgment, the believer availed herself or himself of references to "the love of her who begat you and the prayers of her who bore you" when approaching God with the request to be spared, saved, and receive mercy at that judgment.[180]

The nature of Mary's intercession was envisioned as her "constantly making supplication that we may not completely perish on account of our evil."[181] The believers addressed Mary with the request for her intercession in part because they had observed a custom of her giving "aid to our poverty" especially at the end of life.[182] They trusted that the Virgin's supplication on their behalf was unceasing. One of the goals of their turning to Mary was that they hoped her prayers might move Christ to have compassion for them.[183]

The help believers expected to receive from Mary's intercession was compared to the protection provided by a wall, to a house of refuge, and as a source of hope.[184] Her activity of petitioning her Son on behalf of human beings inspired the poet to feature her as a being with wings, able to cover or protect others "on the day of judgment." The poet also availed himself of the image of Mary's wings as a tool that guided believers to their final destination of being placed in the "bridal chamber."[185] Her entreating and petitioning is geared towards moving her son to "act [with] mercy for us all."[186] Mary's intercession could be sought in the hope of gaining assurance of Christ's "ransom … of us from all debts" and protection "so that we not do anything in which there is injury."[187] A further effect of Mary's intercession, that was expected, was that Christ "be reconciled to us through [her] prayers."[188] Mary's intercession was thought of as being able to "bestow on us peace and tranquility," while at the same time providing liberation from the believers' opponents.[189] The Virgin's intercession could be understood as a powerful tool that rescued believers from the anger or wrath that was thought to be the justified reaction of God over and against their actions.[190]

Occasionally the beneficiaries of Mary's acts of entreating her Son were not only individuals but also creation as a whole, which could receive peace from God that way.[191] Most often, however, the hymns thought primarily of human beings and expressed the expectation that "by her prayers may mercy be upon us all."[192] More specifically, and in a way more to the point, namely that human beings required Mary's intercession because they as sinners were further removed from God, some hymns requested Mary to "beseech your only-begotten son on behalf of the sinners who seek refuge in you."[193]

The believers saw themselves as being in a reciprocal relationship to Mary. On the one hand, they asked her to beseech God on their behalf with the hope of being "delivered from … evil deeds." In return, they eagerly

[177] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 370; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[178] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* I.4.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[179] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1.2 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[180] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* I.4.3 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[181] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 370; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[182] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[183] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.1.1–2 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[184] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VIII.5.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[185] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VI.3.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[186] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* I.4.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[187] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* III.5.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[188] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VI.3.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[189] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VI.3.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[190] See (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* IV.1.1 and VIII.1.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[191] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* II.1.2 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[192] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* II.2.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[193] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VII.11 (ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi ... opera selecta*, 372; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming); see also *Supplications* VII.3.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

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encouraged Mary to "accept … the gifts we offer you."[194] The reciprocal character of the situations into which Mary's intercession was integrated shines forth for instance from a hymn that presented to Mary as the object of the benefits derived from her intercession the ones "who magnify you at all times, birthgiver of God."[195] The hymns clearly sought Mary's intercession for the sake of all those "who rightly praise [her]."[196]

At times, a close connection between the global observance of feastdays dedicated to Mary's commemoration and the effectiveness of her prayers on behalf of humankind transpires in the hymns.[197] In a few instances, one of the Supplications requested Mary's intercession in a context of doctrinal teachings that addressed the essentials of the belief in the Trinity.[198] Ideas pertaining to Mary's intercession as they were conveyed in a hymn with such a thematic focus grounded at least part of the potential for effectiveness of Mary's intercession in the dogmatic purity of the faith of the believer. For those who did not believe wrongly, who did not make mistakes, and thus "[can]not be found guilty" of distorting the truth of the faith, the "Virgin birthgiver of God" interceded with her son in order "that the souls of us all may be saved from wrath."[199]

CONCLUSIONS

Syriac poetry of the fourth to the early sixth centuries offers little positive information concerning the role of Mary as intercessor. It is first with the appearance of the "Book of Mary," and in particular the *Transitus* traditions, that Mary as an intercessor can be attested firmly. The first unequivocal reference to Mary as intercessor occurs in Jacob of Serugh, an author whose language in which he addresses Mary has striking parallels with material in the Transitus tradition.

The presence of Mary as intercessor in the Supplications attributed to Rabbula, as well as in the Syriac *theotokia*, suggests, in form and content, a close dialogue with Greek liturgical piety. Rabbula was an innovator in Edessa, leaving the stamp of a strong Cyrillian christology and its supporting hymnography. Whether Rabbula composed the Supplications or not, the best explanation is that they reflect the influence of currents in theology from Greek-speaking Christianity.

Taking the sources at face value, Marian piety in the literate circles of the Syriac church before the second half of the fifth century (as a conservative estimate) was limited, and did not include a theology of intercession. One *caveat* is that the absence of Mary as intercessor from Syriac literature prior to Jacob of Serugh does not imply that belief in the efficacy of Mary's intercession was marginal. The Supplications ascribed to Rabbula and the *theotokia* would have been recited in monastic liturgies. How plausible is it that working men and women would have heard them? The Transitus tradition may well have inspired the development of the Syriac liturgy for the Dormition of Mary and other Marian feasts, but would the texts have been heard in the churches? It is clear that by the time of Jacob of Serugh, the propaganda in favour of strengthening Marian piety, for whatever reasons, and including her role as intercessor, was in full swing in the Syriac-speaking world. If Mary as intercessor had been an element of popular belief in earliest Syriac Christianity, it would be difficult to explain why Ephraem did not weave this element into his tapestry. It seems that the "Greek tsunami" of christological controversy that arrived on Syriac Christian shores in the fifth century played an important role in raising the profile of Mary as intercessor. One question that requires further examination is whether this was a change from the "top down," or the use of a popular but "progressive" type of piety in the Syriac theatre of the christological controversies.

[194] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* II.3.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[195] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VIII.1.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[196] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* V.4.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[197] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VI.4.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[198] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VIII.1.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).
[199] (Pseudo?)-Rabbula, *Supplications* VIII.1.1 (Mosul edition; text and tr. Horn and Phenix, *Rabbula*, forthcoming).

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Pauline Allen

Antioch-on-the-Orontes and its Territory: A "terra dura" for Mariology?

Evidence of the cult of Mary from the region of Antioch in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries is patchy[1]. What evidence we have has been interpreted by scholars to suggest that this territory was far from fertile where mariology is concerned. The greatest stumbling-block here has been the depictions of Mary in the work of that most influential Antiochene, John Chrysostom. In 1933 Louis Meyer, in an otherwise hagiographical work on the famous preacher, detected "un ton un peu détaché que Chrysostome – comme tous les théologiens d'Antioche – affecte envers la Très sainte Vierge".[2] In 1952 Ignaz Ortiz de Urbina wrote: "Antiochia è stata sempre un terreno abbastanza duro per la teologia mariana".[3] For his part, Giuseppe M. Ellero concluded in his 1964 dissertation that while Antiochene mariology goes back to Origen's view of the less-than-perfect Mary, Chrysostom's view of her failings was much more serious, and he proposed that Chrysostom's mariology was also influenced by a local tradition.[4] Two decades after Ortiz de Urbina, Marek Starowieyski echoed that scholar's negative view of Antiochene mariology in part of his doctoral dissertation (composed in Latin): "[Antiochia] vere erat "terra dura" in theologia Mariana evolvenda".[5] Winfried Stoellger, in his 1973 dissertation, pointed out Chrysostom's representations of Mary's troublesome traits (πάθη, φιλοτιμία, κενοδοξία, and ἀπόνοια) and wrote of his "kaltsinniges Marienbild".[6] More recently Catherine Broc-Schmezer has determined: "l'on ne peut parler chez lui [Chrysostome] de "mariologie" que pour designer une reconstruction faite d'après les indications éparses dans son oeuvre."[7]

At the outset this brief overview of pre-Ephesine scholarship does not look promising for an examination of the intercessory role of Mary, which is the goal of this volume, particularly as Theotokos is a title not used by Chrysostom. Moreover, later fifth-century works from the region of Antioch, dominated as they are by the Nestorian and post-Chalcedonian debates, fail to give us a consistent mariological picture. Mary was certainly discussed by the Antiochene theologians Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius himself, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, but the evidence is disparate, fragmentary, and often polemical. Some fifty years later we are fortunately on firmer ground, thanks to the remarkable set of 125 homilies that survives from Severus, patriarch of Antioch from 512–518; it is on these pieces, and to a lesser extent on his hymns, that I propose to concentrate in this paper.[8]

On Severus himself we now have an exhaustive study by Frédéric Alpi,[9] and we have been well served by studies of the patriarch's christology.[10] At our disposal are also reconstructions of the liturgical year in Antioch,

[1] The writing of this contribution was made possible by Australian Catholic University and the Australian Research Council. The following abbreviations are used: CSCO = Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium; PO = Patrologia Orientalis.

[2] Saint Jean Chrysostome, maître de perfection chrétienne. Paris, 1933.

[3] "La mariologia nella patristica orientale", in P. Sträter (ed.), Mariologia, vol. 1. Rome, 1952, 92.

[4] Maternità e virtù di Maria in S. Giovanni Crisostomo (*Dissertationes ad lauream in Facultate Theologica "Marianum"* 3). Rome, 1964, 46–47, 50.

[5] Maria nova Eva in traditione Alexandrina et Antiochena (saecolo V), *Marianum* 34 (1972) 329–385.

[6] Das Marienbild des Johannes Chrysostomos. Diss. Heidelberg, 1973, 174 and 208 respectively.

[7] Les figures féminines du Nouveau Testament dans l'oeuvre de Jean Chrysostome (*Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité* 185). Turnhout, 2010, 244–245.

[8] The following select references are to studies on Mary in the Byzantine tradition, where Severus must be situated: L.M. Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn (*The Medieval Mediterranean* 35). Leiden, 2001; N. Constas, Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations (*Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 66). Leiden–Boston 2003; Av. Cameron, The Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Religious Developments and Myth-making, in R.N. Swanson (ed.), The Church and Mary (*Studies in Church History* 39). Rochester NY, 2004, 1–21; eadem, Introduction to: Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium, ed. M. Vassilaki. Aldershot–Burlington VT, 2005, xxvii–xxxii (all with lit.).

[9] La Route royale. Sévère d'Antioche et les Églises d'Orient (512–518) (*Bibliothèque archéologique et historique* Tome 188). Vol. 1 Texte, vol. 2 Sources et Documents. Beirut, 2009. See too P. Allen and C.T.R. Hayward, Severus of Antioch (*The Early Church Fathers*). London–New York, 2004, 185–192.

[10] See esp. the foundational work by J. Lebon, Le monophysisme sévèrien. Étude historique, littéraire et théologique sur la résistance monophysite au Concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église Jacobite, Louvain, 1909; revised in idem, La christologie du

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which are necessary for an examination of the homilies,[11] and a treatment of Severus' exegetical method in the same corpus.[12] Some years ago I approached the mariology of Severus's homilies as part of an examination of the state of the homily in the sixth century,[13] but, with the exception of the article by my colleague Youhanna Nessim Youssef on the Coptic tradition,[14] the mariological aspect of Severus' preaching has received little further systematic attention since then. With the allotted space I am unable to consider all references to Mary in these homilies, references such as "born from Mary the virgin," in which these pieces abound.[15] Rather, it will be necessary to concentrate on those homilies which contain a sustained exposition of the place of Mary in the patriarch's thought. This study is prefaced by a *caveat* concerning the texts we have of Severus' homilies, for, with the exception of one homily which survives in Greek and of numerous fragments, we have to rely on Syriac translations.[16]

HOMILY 2

This homily, dated to November/December 512[17] and dealing with the Annunciation, belongs to a long tradition of Greek homilies delivered on this feast.[18] Surviving in several Greek fragments apart from an entire Syriac translation, it betrays an adversarial tone, explained by the fact that it was delivered soon after Severus's consecration, in an environment where non-Chalcedonians were still not in the ascendant.[19] The first ten sections deal with one-nature christology, and only after that do we meet the angel Gabriel, who has realised that his message to Mary has been misunderstood by her. Gabriel had intended to make known to her that his salutation was not simply that, but that it had effected an extraordinary action, namely, the conception of the Word.[20] The connection

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monophysisme syrien, in Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart, vol. 2, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht. Würzburg, 1951, 425–580; R. C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies. Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of* Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug. Oxford, 1976, 9–56; A. Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. 2, From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604). Part Two, The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century. London–Louisville, KY, 1995 [with T. Hainthaler; trans. J. Cawte and P. Allen], 17–173; I.R. Torrance, Christology after Chalcedon. Severus of Antioch & Sergius the Monophysite. Norwich, 1998; 2nd edn, The Correspondence of Severus and Sergius (*Texts from Christian Late Antiquity* 11). Piscataway, NJ, 2011.

[11] See A. Baumstark, Das Kirchenjahr in Antiocheia zwischen 512 und 518, *Römische Quartalschrift* 11 (1897) 31–66; G. J. Cuming, The Liturgy of Antioch in the Time of Severus (513–518), in: Time and Community. In Honor of Thomas Julian Talley, ed. J.N. Alexander. Washington, 1990, 83–103; Alpi, La Route royale, vol. 1, 135–147. W. Mayer and P. Allen, The Churches of Syrian Antioch (300–368 CE) (*Late Antique History and Religion* 5). Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, MA, 2012, include Severus' homilies and hymns in their assessment of the role of churches in Antioch.

[12] R. Roux, L'exégèse biblique dans les Homélies Cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche (*Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 84). Rome, 2002.

[13] P. Allen, Severus of Antioch and the Homily; The End or the Beginning? in: The Sixth Century – End or Beginning?, ed. P. Allen and E. M. Jeffreys (*Byzantina Australiensia* 10). Brisbane, 1996, 165–177. On Severus as a homilist in general see Baumstark, Das Kirchenjahr, (a negative view); A. Olivar, Sever d'Antioquia en la història de la predicació, *Rivista Catalana di Teologia* 5 (1980) 403–442; idem, La Predicación Cristiana Antigua (*Biblioteca Herder. Sección teología y filosofía* 189). Barcelona, 1991, 180–201; P. Allen, A Bishop's Spirituality: The Case of Severus of Antioch, in Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church, vol. 1, ed. P. Allen, R. Canning, and L. Cross. Brisbane, 1998, 169–180.

[14] The Coptic Marian Homilies of Severus of Antioch, *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 43 (2004) 127–140.

[15] See further J. Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale de Sévère d'Antioche, in: De cultu mariano saeculis VI-XI. Acta congressus mariologici-mariani internationalis in Croatia anno 1971 celebrati. Vol. III. De cultu mariano saeculis VI-IX in scriptis summorum pontificium, patrum et theologorum necnon in conciliis particularibus. Rome, 1972, 1–15; H.-J. Höhn, in Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, 2/2, 132–133.

[16] See further C.J.A. Lash, Techniques of a Translator. Worknotes on the Methods of Jacob of Edessa in Translating the Homilies of Severus of Antioch, in: Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen, ed. J. Dümmer, J. Irmscher, and K. Treu **(***Texte und Untersuchungen zur altchristlichen Literatur, Bd. 125).* Berlin, 1981, 365–383.

[17] The dating of the homilies follows that of M. Brière, Les Homélies cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche. Introduction générale à toutes les homélies, PO 29/1, 50–62.

[18] PO 38/2, 270–291. See T. Antonopoulou, The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI (*The Medieval Mediterranean* 14). Leiden, 1997, 166–170 on this tradition. Cf. J.-M. Sauget, Une découverte inespérée: l'homélie 2 de Sévère d'Antioche sur l'Annonciation de la Théotokos,, in: A Tribute to Arthus Vööbus. Studies in Early Christian Literature and Environment, Primarily in the Syrian East, ed. R. H. Fischer. Chicago, 1977, 55–62; E. Lucchesi, Notice touchant l'homélie XIV de Sévère d'Antioche, *Vigiliae Christianae* 33 (1979) 291–293; P. Allen, The Greek Homiletic Tradition of the Feast of the Hypapante: The Place of Sophronios of Jerusalem, in K. Belke, E. Kislinger, A. Külzer, M. A. Stassinopoulou (eds), Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag. Vienna, Cologne, Weimar, 2007, 1–12; Alpi, La route royale, vol. 1, 135–136; P. Allen, Portrayals of Mary in Greek Homiletic Literature (6th–7th centuries), in L. Brubaker and M. B. Cunningham (eds), The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images. Aldershot, 2012, 69–88.

[19] See further Allen and Hayward, Severus of Antioch, 12–13.

[20] PO 38/2, 278, ch. 11.

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between the salutation and the conception is a commonplace in Greek Patristic homiletic literature,[21] and can be found in other homilies of Severus.[22] In chapters 13–14 Severus stresses that Mary's conception and the gestation of her child were natural, but effected without male seed[23] – again a recurring theme in his homilies and other works. Gabriel next gives Mary a pep-talk, telling her not to let her human thoughts get the upper hand as she digests his message. Mary's disbelief is a *topos* in the Patristic exegesis of the Annunciation story, and may derive from an early tradition which was negative to certain aspects of her role in salvation history.[24] According to Severus, the angel's few words contain an ocean of divine thoughts, but still Mary hesitates.[25] Gabriel, in the patriarch's version of events, explains to her that "the Lord who is with" her is the Word of God, one of three hypostases: in Mary, God has become incarnate, without change, and without confusion. This last statement, with its quotation of two of the famous adverbs from the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon, recurs time without count in Severus's works.[26] Gabriel's anachronistic grasp of christological niceties goes further: instead of announcing to Mary: "Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, in him indeed is the Son of God", he omits the punctuation between the two clauses and says: "Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). This he does, according to Severus, in order to deny the Nestorians the opportunity to assert that the Son is associated with the one born of Mary by name and by the Son's power.[27] The homily concludes with general ethical precepts, without reference to Mary as an *exemplum*, and with no intercession to her.

HOMILY 14

Bearing the description: "Preached in memory of the holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary",[28] this homily was delivered in the church of the Theotokos in Antioch on 2 or 3 February 513 on the feast of the Hypapante.[29] Severus opens the homily by urging his congregation to offer praise to all the saints–the prophets, the apostles, and martyrs, then sets himself the task of showing that Mary, the Mother of God, must be honoured as prophet, apostle and martyr, all of which requires a considerable amount of exegetical ingenuity.[30] Mary is a prophet, he says, because of Isaiah 8:3–4, "And I went to the prophet and she conceived and bore a son,"[31] and also because of her own prophecy to Elizabeth in Luke 1:48–50.[32] She is an apostle because she surpasses the apostles, being counted with them from the beginning, as Acts 1:14 testifies. Again, if the words the apostles heard from the Saviour, "Go, teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19), made apostles of them, what nation has the virgin not taught and led to knowledge of God?[33] Mary is also a martyr in many ways: she put up with the rash judgement of Joseph,

[21] See Constas, Proclus of Constantinople, 297–298.

[22] See Homily 23: PO 27/1, 114, 14–25; cf. Homily 115; PO 26/3, 309–310. Cf. Letter 65, PO 14/1, 17. The conception is less instantaneous in Philoxenus, De Trinitate et Incarnatione, ed. A. Vaschalde, CSCO syr.ser. 2, vol. 27. Paris, 1907, 47.

[23] PO 38/2, 278 and 280.

[24] On this negativity see R. B. Eno, Mary and Her Role in Patristic Theology, in: The One Mediator, The Saints, and Mary. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VIII, ed. H.G. Anderson, J. F. Stafford, and J. A. Burgess. Minneapolis, 1992, 161–165. Cf. Severus, Homily 115, PO 26/3, 309–310, on Mary's perplexity in the face of Gabriel's announcement. On negative views of Mary in Severus's elder contemporary, Philoxenus, see A. de Halleux, Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie. Louvain, 1963, 405–406, n. 4.

[25] PO 38/2, 284, ch. 25.

[26] PO 38/2, 286, ch. 29.

[27] PO 38/2, 288, ch. 31.

[28] For the Syriac text and French translation see PO 38/2, 400–15; first ET in Allen and Hayward, Severus of Antioch, 111–118. The homily also survives in an extended Coptic translation, presently being edited by Y. N. Youssef; the Coptic fragment edited by E. Porcher, Un discours sur la sainte vierge par Sévère d'Antioche, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 20 (1917) 416–423, and registered in the Clavis Patrum Graecorum separately as no. 7038, is in fact part of our Homily 14. Several Greek fragments also survive: see Brière et al., PO 38/2, 399, and F. Petit, La chaîne sur l'Exode I. Fragments de Sévère d'Antioche. Texte grec établi et traduit par F. Petit. Glossaire syriaque par L. Van Rompay (*Traditio Exegetica Graeca* 9). Leuven, 1999, no. 568, 40–43. Cf. Alpi, La route royale, vol. 1, 139, 152.

[29] On the church see G. Downey, A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest. Princeton NJ, 1961, 659; more recently W. Mayer and P. Allen, The Churches of Syrian Antioch (300–638 CE). (*Late Antique History and Religion* 5). Leuven, 2012: Part 1, Theotokos, Church of, 107–109.

[30] What follows incorporates part of the argument in my paper, Severus of Antioch and the Homily, 168.

[31] PO 38/2, 400 and 402, ch. 3. The same argument is found in Homily 101, PO 22/2, 266, and Homily 119, PO 26/3, 383–384.

[32] PO 38/2, 404, ch. 7. On the Patristic theme of Mary as prophet see the old but still useful article by A. Grillmeier, Maria Prophetin. Eine Studie zur patristischen Mariologie, *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 2 = Mémorial Gustave Bardy (1956) 295–312 (= *Mit Ihm und in Ihm;* Freiburg, Basel,Vienna, 1975, 198–216). Cardinal Grillmeier was unable to adduce this text because it was unpublished at the time.

[33] PO 38/2, 404, ch. 8.

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then lived on a daily basis with the Jews, and led a life which was very close to death.[34] The homilist sums up this part of his encomium on the Mother of God by saying that patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and doctors of the church honour her.[35] Severus continues by showing how Mary destroyed the Manichees and the followers of Eutyches. In this part of the exposition Moses is said to be the opponent and enemy of the Manichees.

> *For he saw a bush which was on fire and which was not consumed, which was symbolizing figuratively in advance the indivisible union of God the Word with the human creature, a union which was something undertaken for the sake of love of mankind and (was effected) without change. Now the bush is a thorny plant, which shows that he was made a partaker (except in respect of sin; cf. Heb. 4:14) of the nature which is thorny and under sin on account of Adam's transgression of the commandment ...*[36]

The image of the bush, here equated with Mary, is a favourite with Severus and is common in Patristic literature.[37] In Homily 14 Mary is also said to have chased away Apollinaris and to have refused to support the folly of Nestorius. She brought forth Emmanuel, who is without division and without confusion, from two natures – the classic anti-Chalcedonian statement found countless times in Severus' works. In a lyrical passage he sings her praises:

> *In this Mother of God we pride ourselves too, because we have her as the adornment of our race: the spiritual earth, from which the second Adam fashioned himself according to the flesh, the unfashioned and uncreated one; the branch of virginity, from which Christ, the heavenly ladder, was constructed according to the flesh through the Spirit, so that by fixing our foot firmly on it we might be able to climb to heaven; the spiritual mountain of Sinai, which is not smoking but is lit up by the sun of justice, and not bestowing ten commandments only, but the law-giver himself, seen on earth and associating with us human beings, and instructing and catching by persuasion not one people, Israel, but every people and race.*[38]

The image of Mary as the "spiritual mountain" recurs in Severus's works.[39] Returning to the theme of his introduction, the veneration of the saints, in a significant passage the patriarch claims that we honour the virgin because more than all the other saints she is capable of praying for us.[40] The homily concludes with exhortations to avoid fornication, but, despite the pre-eminent place the preacher has given to her, there is no explicit intercession to the chaste Mother of God.

HOMILY 36

This piece was delivered on the feast of the Nativity on 25 December 513. Here the emphasis is on incarnational theology, until the homilist turns his attention to the virgin, explaining that he will offer her a separate treatment, because she could give rise to a number of discourses.[41] In emphasising Mary's true motherhood Severus attacks Eutyches, Apollinaris, and the "Jewish cutting" of Nestorius, before exhorting his listeners to honour the virgin Theotokos and pray to her to intercede for them.[42] In honouring her, he proposes, the women present should avoid ostentation in their dress and give alms to the needy in order to please Mary.[43] The significance of this homily lies in the fact that it is one of only two homilies in which Severus brings Mary's intercession explicitly into play: he urges his congregation to honour her and to pray to her to intercede for them.[44]

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[34] PO 38/2, 404 and 406, ch. 9.

[35] PO 38/2, 406, ch. 10. On Mary receiving honour from prophets, apostles, and martyrs see Severus, Hymn 118; PO 6/1, 157–158.

[36] Trans. in Allen and Hayward, Severus of Antioch, 115. Greek text in Petit, La chaîne, no. 71, 5.

[37] See further below on Homily 67; cf. Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition 2/2, 39 with n. 50, on the fact that the image was used on every side of christological divisions in different periods of the Patristic era. See further Constas, Proclus of Constantinople, 150.

[38] I have translated from the Greek text established by Petit, *La chaîne*, 42. Compare the English translation of the Syriac in Allen and Hayward, Severus of Antioch, 117 (ch. 18).

[39] See Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 8–10.

[40] PO 38/2, 412, ch. 18. Cf. Homily 36 for the theme of Mary's intercession.

[41] PO 36/3, 468.4–6. See the discussion of Mary in this homily in Allen, Severus of Antioch and the Homily, 167–168.

[42] PO 36/3, 468 and 470.

[43] PO 36/3, 470 and 472.

[44] PO 36/3, 470. See the discussion of the end of Homily 14, above.

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HOMILY 63

Delivered on 25 December 514 on the feast of the "Nativity or the Epiphany," this homily also contains a sustained mariological treatment, but only after a long introduction. Mary is first mentioned in the context of the entry of the Word into the world through the divine, royal door of virginity – the image of Mary as the door or gate being a familiar one in Patristic literature, and possibly inspired by Genesis 28:17 or Ezekiel 44:1–2.[45] After explaining Mary's descent from the tribe of Judah, Severus turns to confront the partisans of Eutyches, and in this context Christ is called the second Adam. The patriarch stresses that Mary is virgin before and after the birth, that there was no male seed involved, and no concupiscence – again a recurring theme in Severus.[46] After disposing of the Manichees, albeit without any reference to Mary, he goes onto denounce those who maintain that Christ's birth took place through a passage in an allegorical manner, that he passed through, as it were, a canal, like a flash of lightning.[47] These ideas were anathema to Severus, who says elsewhere:

> *If anyone says that the flesh of the Lord descended from heaven or passed through the Virgin as through a channel, and describes it not rather as from her in accordance with the law of conception, even if formed without man, he is condemned.*[48]

In this homily the patriarch of Antioch is firm in stating that the conception was complete and real, so that the incarnation was genuine and without φαντασία. The next part of the homily is devoted to arguing that, because Adam was deceived not by the serpent but by Eve, God the Word decided to heal her transgression and to raise womankind to greater honour, which was achieved through Mary's mediation.[49] This leads the patriarch to address the women in the congregation, telling them to provide their husbands with good advice which will induce them to gentleness with regard to debtors and the needy, and to renounce expensive clothing and jewellery themselves. The women should concentrate on the Mother of God and the book of holy doctrines, and if they restrain their husbands they will be applauded by the angels, together with the blessed virgin and all the saints.[50] Severus turns next to a popular mariological theme, namely the double descent of Mary, from the kingly line of David on the one hand, and from the priestly line of Levi on the other.[51] Thus the words of Gabriel, "See, your cousin Elizabeth has conceived" (Luke 1:36), are, according to Severus, filled with a mystery worthy of God; because Mary shared in the Holy Spirit she recognised this, and therefore gladly went to visit Elizabeth as soon as she could.[52] The theme of Mary's foreknowledge recurs in the treatment of the marriage at Cana in Homily 119. Despite the high mariology in Homily 63 there is no intercession to the Theotokos.

HOMILY 67

Delivered on 2 February 515, in the newly extended church of the virgin in Antioch,[53] this homily received a sensitive treatment over thirty years ago at the hands of Joseph Lécuyer. At the time of writing, however, Lécuyer did not have at his disposal an edition of the other homily of Severus dedicated to Mary under her titles of Mother of God and ever-virgin, Homily 14.[54] Homily 67 also survives in Greek fragments, two of which have been edited and translated into French by Françoise Petit.[55] Attributed sometimes in the manuscript tradition to Cyril of Alexandria,[56] this homily is first and foremost a classic exposition of the one-nature christology, but at the same

[45] PO 8/2, 296–297. See Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 7–8, Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary, 192–193, and Constas, Proclus of Constantinople, 132 with n. 6, and 156, on the image.

[46] PO 8/2, 297–299.

[47] PO 8/2, 301.

[48] Oratio 1 contra Nephalium, CSCO 120, 6.28–7.17; trans. Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition 2/2, 52. See Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 6 and n. 22, for other instances in Severus.

[49] PO 8/2, 303.

[50] PO 8/2, 306.

[51] PO 8/2, 8–9.

[52] PO 8/2, 310.

[53] Cf. n. 29 above. Severus tells us that it had been extended by porticos (PO 8/2, 366). Homily 83, from 25 December in the same year on the feast of the Nativity/Epiphany, was delivered in the same place, which, we are told in the title, had been extended and restored through the generosity of the orthodox (εὐσεβής) emperor Anastasius, a theme taken up later in the homily (PO 20/2, 399 and 418).

[54] L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 1–15. Cf. Alpi, La route royale, vol. 1, 139, 152.

[55] See La chaîne, no. 764 (pp. 64–67) and no. 767 (pp. 66–69).

[56] See Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 1–2 with n. 5.

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time it contains some striking images of the Mother of God.[57] It was this homily, with its use of the image of the Ark of the Covenant as the incarnation of the Logos from the virgin, which was used against Severus by his opponent, Julian of Halicarnassus, to demonstrate the incorruptibility of Christ.[58] Citing Exodus 3:5: "Do not come near; take your shoes off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground," the preacher tells his congregation that they cannot contemplate anything holier or superior to the Theotokos, for to go near her is to go near holy ground and approach heaven.[59] There follows a passage devoted to the miracle of the incarnation, a process in which the seal of Mary's virginity was not broken. This leads Severus to echo Jacob's words in Genesis 28:17: "How awesome is this place … this is the gate of heaven."[60] The burning bush on the summit of the mountain (Exodus 24:17) is next mentioned, and the mountain gradually becomes the image of the Theotokos, who did not receive God (θεοδόχος) as the God of Sinai, but brought forth God (θεοτόκος),[61] who descended onto the mountain as incarnate without change. She is thus the "spiritual mountain" from which God was born. Severus cannot bear to look at the interior of this mountain – just as he would be fearful of looking at the Holy of Holies, and Mary's role in salvation history lights up his heart.[62] These considerations enable the preacher to make the transition to the theme of the Ark of the Covenant, which is seen as a type of the incarnation: the pure gold applied to the exterior and interior of the Ark is the divinity of Christ, whereas his humanity is represented by the wood of the ark, which is subject to corruption.[63] Once again Severus stresses that the conception of the Word was pure, without male seed, effected by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary.[64] Imagining himself inside the Holy of Holies in the midst of rising incense, in a series of mixed metaphors Severus remarks that the external appearance of the ark, namely Mary, rivals the golden interior, for she is the yeast of the new creation and the root of the true vine, who has intervened to call us from war to peace.[65] The Mother of God is held up for admiration by virgins and married women alike. Once again, despite the high mariology of this piece, the homily ends only with an injunction to give alms, without any intercession to Mary.

HOMILY 77

The transmission of this homily in the original Greek is probably due to its mixed attribution in the manuscripts to Gregory of Nyssa, Hesychius of Jerusalem, and Severus.[66] Its theme is the harmony of the Gospels, and it was delivered between 21 July and 6 September 515. The problem of the different Gospel accounts occupied many writers, preachers, and congregations in the Patristic period,[67] and Severus and his congregations were no exceptions, as Homily 77 and the trilogy devoted to the exegesis of the different genealogies of Jesus, Homilies 94, 95, and 96, testify. In Homily 77, a very long and technical piece, generally inspired by Eusebius of Caessarea's *Quaestiones evangelicae* (CPG 3470),[68] which would have tested the endurance of its listeners, it is a question of the four varying accounts of the resurrection, which Severus treats methodically, one by one.[69] I shall confine

[57] The christological import of the homily was exploited by Christ in Christian Tradition, 2/2, 87–89. Cf. Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 2: "Il s'agit d'un texte central pour connaître la pensée de l'auteur sur la Vierge Marie."

[58] See Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, 2/2, 87–89.

[59] PO 8/2, 349–350.

[60] PO 8/2, 351.

[61] PO 8/2, 355. See Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 10 for a discussion of the assumed pun in the Greek original; Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary, 149 with n. 126, on earlier uses of the two terms.

[62] PO 8/2, 356.

[63] PO 8/2, 357–360. See Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary, 201–202, on the use of the Ark as a marian epithet from the fourth century onwards.

[64] PO 8/2, 357.

[65] PO 8/2, 364–365. On the unsystematic piling up of arguments in Patristic literature to convey a picture of Mary, see A. Smitmans, Das Weinwunder von Kana. Die Auslegung von Jo 2, 1–11 bei den Vätern und heute *(Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese* 6). Tübingen, 1966, 253; cf. Constas, Proclus of Constantinople, 129.

[66] See PO 16/5, 769–785. S. Voicu has identified a Coptic fragment of the homily: Un frammento copto dell'Omelia Cattedrale 77 di Severo di Antiochia, *Augustinianum* 32 (1992) 385–386. For treatments of this homily see Roux, L'exégèse biblique, 80–86; D. Gonnet, LXXVIIe homélie de Sévère d'Antioche: pourquoi est-elle conservée en grec?, Parole de l'Orient, forthcoming.

[67] See Roux, L'exégèse biblique, 79 n. 1, for a select bibliography on the harmony of the Gospels in the Patristic period.

[68] Ed. C. Zamagni, SC 523. Paris 2008. For Severus' inspiration here see Gonnet, LXXVIIe homélie de Sévère d'Antioche, forthcoming.

[69] On Severus's *modus operandi* see Roux, L'exégèse biblique, 82–85.

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myself here to the mentions of the several Marys in these accounts.[70] The "other Mary" in Matthew's account, maintains Severus, is the Theotokos,

> *because she was not removed from the passion, but stood by the cross, as John relates; it was to her that the joyous good news was fitting, because she was the origin [lit. "root"] of the joy, and had deservedly heard (the words), "Hail to you, full of grace" – fulfilling the Lord's command, she certainly announced the news to the disciples .... But Mary Magdalen, who was walking with the Theotokos and who was equally eager to make the announcement, experienced something human (πέπονθέν τι καὶ ἀνθρώπινον).*[71]

Mary Magdalen's human experience was, of course, doubt at what she thought she had seen, and for several pages she and her incredulity are centre-stage in Severus' exposition.[72] What is remarkable about this passage is that, although in John Chrysostom we find the risen Jesus appearing to his mother against the Gospel accounts,[73] she is said elsewhere in the Chrysostomic corpus to have experienced "something human" (ἀνθρώπινόν τι πάσχει).[74] In other words, a little over a century later Severus has upgraded Mary by removing from her this human frailty and applying it to Mary Magdalene instead.

When Severus turns to John's Gospel, it is a question of three Marys, those at the foot of the cross (John 19:25).

> *I mean that we believe that it is Mary, called mother of James and Joseph in the other evangelists, who is the Theotokos, and no other. For just as, because of the divine plan and the concealment of the divine birth and the non-disclosure to the bloodthirsty Jews, it is related that, at the very moment when the virgin was about to be led to the marriage chamber to conceive by the Holy Spirit, Joseph was called the husband of the virgin and the father of Jesus – in the same way the Theotokos was both called and named the mother of Joseph and James, who were the children of Joseph the carpenter, young boys from a previous marriage and from a late wife. This is why the Jews said blasphemously against the Saviour: "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and (aren't) his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude?" (Matthew 13:55)*[75]

According to Severus, it is because John the Evangelist is always mindful of the divinity of Christ that he calls Mary the true mother of Jesus, whereas the other evangelists, with their emphasis on the economy, call her the mother of James and Joseph, who were the older and better known of Joseph's children. In this way, Mary was able to stand unrecognised in the crowd at the foot of the cross; otherwise the Jews would have killed her.[76] The idea of the happily blended family of Jesus seems to go back to Epiphanius of Salamis;[77] in any case, it was a handy way of demonstrating that Mary had no children other than Jesus, thereby making her perpetual virginity a possibility. Also to be noted is that Mary's conception is not as instantaneous here as it is in Homily 2, where she conceives upon hearing Gabriel's message. Significant in Homily 77 is the fact that although Mary is show-cased as being the recipient of a post-resurrection appearance by her son, and her human frailty as portrayed by Chrysostom is transferred to Mary Magdalen, she is still not lofty enough to be hailed as a vehicle of intercession

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[70] The pedigree for including Mary the mother of Jesus in the resurrection scene apparently goes back to Tatian via John Chrysostom, as demonstrated by C. Giannelli, Les témoinages patristiques grecs en faveur d'une apparition du Christ ressuscité à la Vierge Marie, Revue des études byzantines 11 (1953) 106–119; see also Gonnet, LXXVIIe homélie de Sévère d'Antioche, forthcoming. This theme is also found in the homily of John of Thessalonica, Homilia in mulieres unguentiferas (CPG 7922); PG 59, 635–644, and in Maximus the Confessor (?), Life of the Virgin 92; Georgian text ed. by M.-J. van Esbroeck, Maxime le Confesseur. Vie de la Vierge. CSCO 478. Scr. Iber. 21. Leuven, 1986, 118–120; English trans. with notes in S.J. Shoemaker, The Life of the Virgin. Maximus the Confessor. New Haven and London, 2012, 119–120.

[71] PO 16/5, 810.1–4 and 7–9. My translation from the Greek.

[72] Well captured by Gonnet, LXXVIIe homélie de Sévère, forthcoming.

[73] In Matth. hom. 88/89; PG 58, 777. See further Giannelli, Témoignages patristiques, 107–108.

[74] In Matth. hom. 4.4; PG 57, 45.

[75] PO 16/5, 846.6–848.2. My translation from the Greek.

[76] PO 16/5, 848.2–9. Cf. Homily 94; PO 25/1, 69, where Severus claims that if the Jews had known of Mary's virginity and Christ's miraculous birth, they would have killed her. Living with the Jews on a daily basis is said in Homily 14 to make Mary a martyr. See above.

[77] For a discussion of this see Eno, Mary and her Role, 167, who explains that Epiphanius embroidered the story to make Joseph an eighty-year-old widower with six children, four boys and two girls. Cf. Severus, Homily 96, PO 25/1, for the argument that the status of Jesus as "first-born" does not mean that he was the first of several children, because Joseph had children by a previous marriage, and was known as the father of Jesus.

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HOMILY 83

The fourth occasion on which Severus preached on the Nativity or Epiphany was 25 December 515 in Homily 83. This homily, like Homily 67 of the same year, was delivered in the newly-renovated church of the Theotokos in Antioch.[78] It is only after a long introduction dealing with prophecies of the incarnation that we come to a passage which concerns Mary. Here Severus chides "the Jews" (who may well, as in other passages, be Chalcedonians) for saying that the scriptural verse, "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Isaiah 7:14), refers to a young and married woman, and not to a virgin. The preacher counters this with recourse to Deuteronomy 22:27 and Judges 21:11–12.[79] Returning to the prophecies of Isaiah, he cites 7:15 concerning the messiah: "He shall eat curds and honey." But, Severus objects, since a new-born child takes its mother's milk, not curds and honey, we have to understand the prophet's words figuratively, meaning that Mary's milk was viscous and coagulated, because it was not the result of pleasurable intercourse with a man, from which come weakness and dissolution.[80] The homily then deals with aspects of the one-nature christology before returning to the theme of the extension of the church, which was necessitated, says Severus, because of the large number of people who gathered there. He seemed to hear the Theotokos repeating to him the words of Isaiah 49:20: "This place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in".[81] Mary is then held up to the congregation as an object for contemplation: in considering her, men should lead a chaste and honest life; virgins should guard their purity, and married women should devote themselves to their husbands and children.[82] At the end of the homily, the preacher contradicts those who maintain that it is forbidden for women to say the doxology, on the grounds that if women are allowed to sing, then they are allowed to say the doxology. In fact Miriam, the sister of Moses, did just that in Exodus 15:21. In coming to the defence of women, Severus calls on the Mary as a helper (συνήγορος), whose son gave dignity to the female sex, but there is no explicit intercession to her.[83]

HOMILY 94

This homily is the first of a trilogy (94–96) devoted to the exegesis of the genealogies in Matthew and Luke which were delivered between May and September 516, during which period the Olympic games were celebrated in Antioch.[84] I shall take this homily as representative of the trilogy. Like Homily 77 on the harmony of the Gospels, it is a detailed discussion of biblical *minutiae*, for which the homilist excuses himself in the introduction: the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, he says, had been read the previous Sunday, after which he had been approached by two different groups in the congregation. The first complained that the endless procession of names and people they had to listen to in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus was tedious and without profit. The second group, seemingly more intelligent, had precise questions and doubts about what they had heard.[85] Whether indeed a busy patriarch like Severus had time to listen to such reactions to liturgical readings, or whether this is a *captatio benevolentiae* for more tedious exegesis, must remain an open question.[86] In any case, some of the doubts which exercised his congregation concerned the role of Mary in Matthew's genealogy. Firstly it is asked why Joseph is counted in the families of Jesus when Mary was a virgin and the birth was miraculous and occurred without intercourse. Severus retorts that this is a pagan objection, but could equally be entertained by followers of Eutyches, who would deny

[78] See the discussion of Homily 67, above. Cf. Alpi, La route royale, vol. 1, 150 who refers to the church as an oratory or chapel. See further Mayer and Allen, The Churches of Syrian Antioch, 107–109.

[79] PO 20/2, 412–413.

[80] PO 20/2, 414. See Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary, 168, on the representation of the Theotokos in the *Akathistos* hymn, where she is the promised land flowing with milk and honey.

[81] PO 20/2, 418.

[82] PO 20/2, 419.

[83] PO 20/2, 419–420.

[84] On the local Olympic games in Antioch see G. Downey, A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest. Princeton NY, 1961, 649–650; C. Millon and B. Schouler, Les jeux olympiques d'Antioche, *Pallas* 34 (1988) 61–76; Alpi, La Route royale, vol. 1, 180. See Renoux, L'exégèse biblique, 86–96, on the exegesis of these homilies, in which he detects the use of Eusebius and John Chrysostom.

[85] PO 25/1, 51–52.

[86] With reason one would also be sceptical about the patriarch's assertion at the beginning of Homily 95 that his congregation had been on tip-toe and jumping for joy at the exegesis of the genealogies (PO 25/1, 76).

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the human birth, or conversely by the Nestorians, who viewed the birth as completely human.[87] The homilist explains that it was customary in Judaism to include male and female in a genealogy, but to count heads of dynasties from the male side only.[88] Again, one of the more attentive listeners on the previous Sunday supposedly raised the question why Joseph is called "Mary's husband" (Matthew 1:16) and is told to take "Mary, your wife" (Matthew 1:20), because these terms point to a physical union.[89] Severus refutes this on the basis of Deuteronomy 22: 23–24, maintaining that it was customary to call the fiancée "wife" and the fiancé "husband." Part of the rationale of the genealogy, continues the preacher, is to hide Mary's virginity and her conception by the Holy Spirit, because, if this had come to the notice of the Jews, they would have killed her.[90] In a similar way, the Jews sought to kill Lazarus because he was the sign of a miraculous event (John 12:10–11).[91] Here Severus is able to cite his predecessor in the see of Antioch, Ignatius, who wrote: "Mary's virginity was hidden from the prince of the world [sc. the devil], and her giving birth as well, and in the same way the Lord's death too: three brilliant mysteries, which were effected in God's silence."[92] It is then but an easy step, in the context of so many adversaries to the truth on the one hand, and of the local Olympic games on the other, for the homilist to present himself as an athlete contesting for the truth,[93] and subsequently to link all bad influences to attendance at the games, the pleasure park of Daphne, and the theatre.[94] There is no further mention of the Mother of God and no intercession to her.

HOMILY 119

More than any other of his homilies, Severus' Homily 119, delivered on 25 February 518 in the year of his banishment, has been the subject of study, although not predominantly from a mariological perspective.[95] Its theme is the marriage feast at Cana, and it is directed against Romanos, bishop of Rhosos in Cilicia Secunda. This Romanos is a somewhat shadowy figure, but he must have been of encratite persuasion,[96] and from this homily he is known to us as the author of a work called *The Ladder*.[97] The homily is very long, and for this reason Smitmans alleged that it was not delivered live;[98] this, however, is to ignore the date of delivery noted in the manuscripts. The homily falls into four distinct parts: a *prooimion* on the goodness of marriage and the role of Scripture; a commentary on the Gospel in both the literal and figurative senses; a refutation of Romanos and his exegesis of John 2:1–11; Patristic *testimonia* against Romanos's position on sin; and a section of ethical imperatives.[99] The exegesis of the marriage feast at Cana was a Patristic favourite, as illustrated by Smitmans, and in it a special role was assigned to Mary because of Jesus's words to her in John 2:4: "Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." The pre-Ephesine tradition, which, particularly in the East, betrays a sometimes negative view of Mary, took this pericope as a rebuke.[100] Severus, however, like some later Latin writers,[101] accords Mary a very positive role in the narrative, and to do this he has to deal carefully with the texts of Chrysostom and Cyril, whose presentation of Mary in this episode was also negative.[102] To begin with, Severus argues that Mary's state-

[87] PO 25/1, 61–63. In Homily 95, PO 25/1, 76, the objection is said also to be Jewish and heretical.

[88] PO 25/1, 63.

[89] This question is also taken up in Homily 95, PO 25/1, 76.

[90] PO 25/1, 69.

[91] PO 25/1, 70.

[92] PO 25/1, 70–71. From Ignatius, Ad Eph. 19.1 (cf. CPG 1025), ed. P.T. Camelot, Ignace d'Antioche, Polycarpe de Smyrne, Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe (*Sources Chrétiennes* 10). Paris, 1998[4], 74. Cf. Lécuyer, L'homélie cathédrale LXVII, 5 with n. 18.

[93] PO 25/1, 71–73.

[94] PO 25/1 73–74. Cf. Homily 95, PO 25/1, 93–96, where bad influences are linked to visits to Daphne, to demons, and to paganism.

[95] See Smitmans, Das Weinwunder; P. Allen, Severus of Antioch as Pastoral Carer, *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001) 353–368; Roux, L'exégèse biblique, 112–117.

[96] On the identity of Romanos see further S. P. Brock, Some New Letters of the Patriarch Severos, *Studia Patristica* 12 (1975) 17–24 at 23–24; Alpi, La Route royale, vol. 1, 285–286. See too Homily 124, PO 29/1, 223–224. Cf. CPG[3], 7117–7121.

[97] See Roux, L'exégèse biblique, 113–114, on this work.

[98] Das Weinwunder, 200 n.1.

[99] See Roux, L'exégèse biblique, 113.

[100] On this negativity in general see Smitmans, Das Weinwunder, 253–254; Eno, Mary and Her Role, 168, on Chrysostom; P. Allen, Full of Grace or a Credal Commodity? John 2:1–11 and Augustine's View of Mary, in: P. Allen, M. Franzmann, and R. Strelan (eds), "I Sowed Fruits into Hearts" *(*Odes Sol. 17:13). Festschrift for Professor Michael Lattke (*Early Christian Studies* 12). Strathfield, 2007, 1–12.

[101] See Smitmans, Das Weinwunder, 257–259.

[102] See the discussions in Smitmans, Das Weinwunder, 113, and Stoellger, Das Marienbild, 210.

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ment to Jesus: "They have no wine" (John 2:3), was made out of sympathy, and that her son's response was not meant to be a rejection or a mark of disrespect: it was not a reprimand, and Mary did not construe it as such because she knew what was going on.[103] In a similar vein, the homilist presents Mary as knowing in advance that the miracle would happen, since, being filled with the Holy Spirit, she was a prophet.[104] In a passage of figurative exegesis she is presented as seeing that the wine, that is, the teaching of the synagogue of the Jews, was running out, and consequently pushing her son to look after the mystical wine of the mysteries.[105] Further on, Severus defends Mary from Romanos' encratite accusation that she was of loose morals and took part in a feast of corruption at Cana.[106] It may have been the defence of the Theotokos against the extreme criticisms of Romanos which led Severus to what we might call a high mariology in this homily, but, on the other hand, for the patriarch of Antioch elsewhere too Mary tends to be an assured figure, albeit one in a christocentric framework.[107] Even with the high status accorded to her in this homily and the tacit corrections to the negativity in Chrysostom and Cyril, however, there is no statement of Mary's intercessory role.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In summing up this study of the mariology of Severus' homilies, it will be helpful to have an overview of the data found thus far, and to contextualise these by reference to the hymns of Severus himself. First of all, it is clear that the mariology of the homilies has an unmistakable christological underpinning: Mary is the enabling factor of the incarnation of the Word, who became human without change and without confusion; she is a virgin both before and after the birth, and the conception takes place with no male seed and therefore with no concupiscence; it is also mostly portrayed as instantaneous upon the delivery of Gabriel's message. Yet Mary's birth-giving is no φάντασμα, but is real, although the seal of her virginity is not broken. All of these points adduced by Severus argue against the Apollinarian, Eutychian, and Nestorian positions. Consequently, Mary is presented as confounding all heresy.

In terms of her life, Severus stresses Mary's double descent from the line of David and of Aaron, in order to ensure a royal and priestly pedigree for her son.[108] The genealogy in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke conceals her virginity and conception by the Holy Spirit in order to keep her safe from the "bloodthirsty" Jews, who otherwise would have killed her. Her disbelief in the face of Gabriel's message belongs to a negative tradition, possibly best exemplified in Syria by Philoxenus of Mabbog, who believed that Mary only began to believe after Pentecost.[109] Against that, Severus presents us with a Mary who, because of her conception by the Holy Spirit, has a certain foreknowledge of events which leads her to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. As well as being the mother of Jesus, Mary is also the step-mother of the children of the widower, Joseph. At Cana, she again has some foreknowledge and is presented more positively than in John Chrysostom and Cyril.[110] She is present at the cross, but again unrecognisable to the Jews, who otherwise would have killed her. Finally, in the resurrection narrative, she is the "other Mary," more entitled than any other to convey the news of her son's resurrection to the disciples and not suffering the human frailty imputed to her by John Chrysostom.

For Severus, the Theotokos is an *exemplum* of many facets of Christian life: an *exemplum* first of all of purity for both male and female, then conversely an *exemplum* against fornication. She is held up as a model for women who exhibit ostentation in their dress and manners, and is presented as an incentive for almsgiving.

These *exempla* are reinforced by a large number of epithets: burning bush, spiritual mountain, door/gate, Ark of the Covenant, Holy of Holies, prophet, apostle, martyr, spiritual earth, heavenly ladder, branch of divinity, yeast, and root. Sometimes these epithets are heaped up, almost to the point of being confusing, but they occasionally

[103] PO 26/3, 379–380.

[104] PO 26/3, 383–384. On Mary as prophet see the discussion of Homily 14, above. Cf. Smitmans, Das Weinwunder, 259–260.

[105] PO 26/3, 389.

[106] PO 26/3, 390–391.

[107] See further Smitmans, Das Weinwunder, 260, on the christocentricity of Patristic mariology; see Allen, Severus of Antioch and the Homily, 168, on Mary as an assured figure.

[108] This pedigree by double descent was not new and not specifically eastern; see e.g. Augustine, *Sermo* 198, and *De consensu evangelistarum* 4.2.

[109] See de Halleux, Philoxène de Mabbog, 405–406, n. 4.

[110] Contrast Romanos Melodos, Kontakion 18, ed. J. Grosdidier de Matons (*Sources Chrétiennes* 110). Paris, 1965, 295–321, where Mary is presented as knowing much and believing in her son's divinity, but he knows better than his mother.

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enable the patriarch to justify the place of the Theotokos as an intercessor with her son, and as bestowing honour on womankind through her example and mediation.

Some of the epithets which Severus uses of Mary in homilies are found also in his hymns. There too she is the Holy of Holies, the ark, and the spiritual mountain.[111] In one instance she is said to be present with the heavenly beings at the synaxis.[112] But above all in the hymns, she is explicitly the vehicle of intercession: "Her let us all entreat"; "let us pray to supplicate and entreat for us"; "Her as the God-bearer let us beg and entreat to pray for us"; "when we offer up our prayers in faith through thee to the Lord"; "whom [we] beg and pray to keep us in incorruption".[113] Similarly in Romanos Melodos we have images of Mary such as the door and the burning bush,[114] and again she is explicitly the vehicle of intercession.[115] No doubt the genre of hymnography lent itself more than the homily to an affective and more immediate approach to the Theotokos: the hymnographic tradition represented by the *Akathistos* hymn demonstrates that marian epithets were well established in this genre.[116]

It is pertinent here to recall Theodoret's remarks on the proper nomenclature for Mary: theological accuracy demands that she be styled both Theotokos and Anthropotokos out of deference to Christ's two natures. However, concedes the bishop of Cyrrhus, in hymns and panegyrics it is permissible to use solely the title Theotokos.[117]

Elsewhere I have argued for the necessity of studying an author's mariology genre by genre, rather than aggregating a score of mariology across all of that writer's works.[118] If we apply this maxim to Severus' homilies, it is clear that Mary the Theotokos we encounter there, while for the most part an assured figure, is presented as a vehicle of intercession on only two occasions, and she is less immediate than in his hymns where she is entreated to intercede for those singing. Nonetheless, Severus' composite picture of the Theotokos demonstrates that sixth-century Antioch was far from being a mariological "terra dura", for it prefigures the considerable liturgical evolution later in this period, in which the introduction of the two great mariological feasts, the Annunciation and Dormition, played a significant part, and various large-scale building programmes were established in honour of the Theotokos.[119]

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[111] Hymn 119-III-VII, PO 6/1, 158 (Holy of Holies); ibid., 158–159 (ark); Hymn 120-IV-VIII, ibid., 160–161 (spiritual mountain).

[112] Hymn 230–1; PO 7/5, 685–656.

[113] See Hymn 117-I-V, PO 6/1, 156–157; Hymn 118-II-VII, ibid., 157; 121-V-VII, ibid., 162; and Hymn 122-VI-VI, ibid., 162–163. Ed. and trans. E.W. Brooks. Cf. Alpi, La route royale, 117–122 and 230.

[114] Kontakion 10, strophe 9 (*Sources Chrétiennes* 110), 58–61 (door); Kontakion 14, strophe 9, ibid., 184–185 (door); Kontakion 12, prooimion, 118–119 (bush), and often.

[115] See e.g. Kontakion 10, strophe 23 (*Sources Chrétiennes* 110), 74–75; Kontakion 14, strophe 18, ibid., 196–197; Kontakion 18, strophe 21, ibid., 320–321. See further L.M. Peltomaa, Romanos the Melodist and the Intercessory Role of Mary, in Belke, Kislinger, Külzer, and Stassinopoulou (eds), Byzantina Mediterranea, 495–502.

[116] See Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary, passim. Cf. the salutations in the *Akathistos* (trans. Peltomaa): Hail, acceptable incense of intercession! (strophe 5); Hail, unsilenced mouth of the apostles! (strophe 7); Hail, unvanquished courage of the martyrs! (strophe 7); Hail, from whom flow milk and honey! (strophe 11); Hail, gate of salvation! (strophe 19);Hail, greater than the Holy of Holies! (strophe 23); Hail, ark gilded by the Spirit! (strophe 23).

[117] Ep. 151 ad eos qui in Euphratesia et Osrhoena regione, Syria, Phoenicia et Cilicia vitam monasticam degunt (CPG 6276); PG 83, 1416–1433 at 1429CD. Cf. P.B. Clayton, Jun., The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus. Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451) (Oxford 2007) 140–141.

[118] See P. Allen, The International Mariology Project: A Case-Study of Augustine's Letters, *Vigiliae Christianae* 60 (2006) 209–230.

[119] See further Allen, Severus of Antioch and the Homily, 168–170, with lit.

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Annegret Plontke-Lüning
Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan

Die Jungfrau Maria als Fürsprecherin in Literatur und Kunst Armeniens bis zum 8. Jahrhundert

In Memoriam Hermann Goltz und Jean-Michel Thierry

Armenien hat das Christentum lange vor dem Imperium Romanum als Staatsreligion angenommen: Der komplexen Agathangelos-Überlieferung zufolge war die Christianisierung des Werk des Grigor Lusaworič' im Zusammenwirken mit dem König Tirdat[1]. Die ältere Forschung datierte dieses epochemachende Ereignis in das Jahr 301[2]; neuere Forschungen plädieren angesichts der weltpolitischen Situation für das Jahr 314[3]. Als Pufferstaat zwischen den beiden Großmächten Rom bzw. Konstantinopel-Byzanz und Iran sowie als eine Region beiderseitiger strategischer Interessen hatte Armenien politisch und religiös zwischen beiden zu lavieren, wobei die Interessen von Zentralmacht und Fürsten nicht selten konträr waren. Dies führte zur Aufhebung der Aršakidenherrschaft und der Etablierung einer teilweise unter iranischer Statthalterschaft stehenden Adelsherrschaft im Jahre 428[4].

Die Rolle der Heiligen Jungfrau Maria als Fürsprecherin in Armenien im 5. bis 8. Jh. soll hier anhand früher Marienhymnen aus dem *Šaraknoc'*, dem Hymnarium der Armenischen Apostolischen Kirche, sowie der Bilder auf den frühchristlichen Stelen aus Armenien betrachtet werden.

Nach dem Konzil von Ephesos im Jahre 431 war die armenische Kirche durch den 435 verfaßten *Tomus ad Armenios* des Proklos von Konstantinopel über dessen christologische Vorstellungen bestens informiert. Proklos versuchte in dieser Schrift, zwischen der Auffassung Kyrills von Alexandria von der einen gottmenschlichen Natur Christi und der Auffassung des Nestorius von den zwei getrennten Naturen in Christus zu vermitteln, indem er die untrennbare Einheit der Gegensätze und die Unwandelbarkeit der Natur hervorhob und besonderen Wert auf die Inkarnation des Logos legte[5]. Daß diese Christologie mit dem grundlegenden Gedanken der Erlösung durch den inkarnierten Logos auch dem Akathistos-Hymnos zugrunde liegt und damit „prä-chalkedonisch" ist, hat L. Peltomaa gezeigt[6].

Die armenische Kirche hat bekanntlich die Formel des Konzils von Chalkedon 451 von den in Christus unvermischt und ungetrennt existierenden Naturen nicht übernommen, sondern weiterhin in „vorchalkedonischer" Christologie die beiden Naturen Christi in *einer* Seinseinheit verflochten betrachtet. Eine erst 1995 in der Bibliothek des Mechitharisten-Klosters in Wien entdeckte armenische Übersetzung des Akathistos zeigt, daß diese sehr getreue, „graecophile" Arbeit sich vollkommen in die theologische Terminologie des armenischen Hymnariums einfügt[7].

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[1] Im Beitrag wird bei der Transliteration der Eigennamen und der armenisch-sprachigen Terminologie das von der armenologischen Zeitschrift *Révue des Études Arméniennes* (*REArm*) empfohlenen wissenschaftliche Transliterationssystem (Hübschmann – Meillet – Benveniste) verwendet.

[2] Zur Agathangelos-Überlieferung: M. van Esbroeck, Agathangelos. *RAC Suppl*. 1/2 (1985) 239–248.

[3] A. Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien. Die Entwicklung des christlichen Sakralbaus in Lazika, Iberien, Armenien, Albanien und den Grenzregionen vom 4. bis zum 7. Jh. Wien 2007, 117, 143–145.

[4] Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur 117f. m. Lit.

[5] L. M. Peltomaa, The *Tomus ad Armenios de fide* of Proclus of Constantinople and the Christological Emphasis of the Akathistos Hymn. *JÖB* 47 (1997) 25–35, 32f.

[6] Peltomaa, The *Tomus ad Armenios* 32–34.

[7] A. Drost-Abgarjan – H. Goltz, Eine armenische Übersetzung des *Hymnos Akathistos*. Einleitung, Edition, deutsche Übersetzung und armenisch-griechisches Glossar, in: H.-J. Feulner, E. Velkovska, R. F. Taft, (Hgg.): Crossroad of Cultures: Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honor of G. Winkler. Roma 2000, 193–249. Die Übersetzung stammt aus dem Jahr 1789, a. O. 195.

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Die etwa 60 der Gottesmutter gewidmeten Magnificat-Hymnen (5.–15. Jh.)[8] und fünf Kanones des *Šaraknocʻ* (aus dem 11.–14. Jh.)[9] zeigen, daß der bald nach dem Konzil von Ephesos geschaffene Akathistos-Hymnos[10] alsbald bis nach Armenien ausstrahlte[11]. Dies ist vor allem in der Verwendung gemeinsamer poetischer Bilder und Formeln zu beobachten, während sich die Kompositionsprinzipien unterscheiden: polythematisch im Akathistos, monothematisch in den Marienhymnen des Šaraknocʻ[12]. Detaillierte Untersuchungen von Gabriele Winkler zum Wortschatz des Armenischen Hymnariums und der armenischen liturgischen Formulare leisten einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur Betrachtung der Christologie der frühen Schichten des Šaraknocʻ im Kontext der patristischen Literatur zwischen den Konzilien von Ephesos und Chalkedon auch in Armenien, die noch weiterzuführen sind[13].

In der armenischen Hymnologie gilt die Gottesgebärerin Maria, die immer christusbezogen ist, als Voraussetzung und wirksame Komponente des Heilsplans Gottes, ihr Wesen ist bestimmt durch ihre jungfräuliche Mutterschaft. Sie ist zudem die neue Eva, die durch die Geburt Christi den Fluch der Urmutter aufhebt.

So erscheint sie bereits in einer der frühesten Marienhymnen[14] des Armenischen Hymnariums Šaraknocʻ[15]. Auch in der späteren geistlichen Dichtung der Armenier wird sie so bezeichnet. In der dritten Strophe dieser alten Hymne ist die Jungfrau, der „Tempel des Wortes himmlischen Vaters", ausdrücklich als „Fürsprech" (barexōs)[16] bezeichnet:

Oh überwunder Blume, duftend von Eden,
Geruch der Unsterblichkeiten uns Geburten Evas,
von der gespreut ward der Tod über den Erdkreis,
mit Segen wir dich hochrühmen.
Du Löserin der Wehen, Aufheberin des Fluchs,
Aufgang der Sonne des wahren Lichts,
durch das verscheucht ward die vorherige Finsternis,
mit Segen wir dich hochrühmen.
Dich haben wir zum Fürsprech, Jungfrau,
keines Mannes Braut, Mutter makellos Immanuels,
Tempel des Wortes himmlischen Vaters,
mit Segen wir dich hochrühmen[17].

[8] Die traditionellen Verfasserlisten, die sich in einigen Manuskripten und Drucken des *Šaraknocʻ* finden, stellen bestimmte Texte des *Šaraknocʻ* unter die Urheberschaft verschiedener Kirchenväter und Autoren der altarmenischen Literatur. Die Theophanie-Kanones samt der Magnificat/Mecacowscʻē-Reihe zum Auferstehungsfest werden z.B. traditionell einem Autor des 5. Jh., Movsēs Kʻertoł, den man entweder mit Movsēs Xorenacʻi (dessen Wirkungszeit ebenfalls noch nicht endgültig feststeht, s. a. Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur 89f.) oder einem Mesrop-Schüler identifiziert oder einem Grammatiker des 7. Jh. Movsēs Kʼertoł Siwnecʻi , zugeschrieben, während die Šarakane der Fastenzeit vor Ostern (Paschahymnen) laut kirchlicher Tradition aus der Feder des Erfinders des armenischen Alphabeths Mesrop Maštocʻ selbst (ca. 362–440) stammen sollen. Manchmal kommen doppelte oder dreifache Attributionen vor. Möglicherweise stammen aber diese Šarakane an zentralen Positionen des Corpus nicht von individuellen Autoren, sondern sind vielmehr Schichtungen, die im Ergebnis jahrhundertelanger mündlicher Überlieferung entstanden sind und Spuren schriftlicher Redaktionen tragen.

[9] Vgl. Kanon der wunderbaren Geburt der Herrin Jungfrau Mariam von Joachim und Anna (K I) von Yakob Klaecʼi, 13. Jh.; Kanon des Joachim und der Anna, der Gebärer der Hl. Gottesgebärerin (K II) von Vardan Vardapet Arewelcʼi, 13. Jh.; Kanon der Verkündigung der Hl. Gottesgebärerin (K III) von Grigor II. Vkayasēr, 11. Jh. (auch Grigor III. Pahlawuni, 12. Jh., zugeschrieben); drei Kanones der Himmelfahrt der Gottesgebärerin (LXXXIV–LXXXVI) von Nerses Šnorhali, 12. Jh., Kanon der Himmelfahrt der Gottesgebärerin (CXXXIII) von Kirakos Vardapet Erznkacʼi, 13./14. Jh., s. dazu A. Drost-Abgarjan, Der „Duft der Unsterblichkeit": Der Hymnos Akathistos im Spiegel des Armenischen Hymnariums Šaraknocʼ, in: A. Briskina-Müller, A. Drost-Abgarjan, A. Meißner (Hgg.): Logos im Dialogos: Auf der Suche nach der Orthodoxie. Gedenkschrift für Hermann Goltz (1946–2010). Berlin–Münster–Wien–Zürich–London 2011, 19–32.

[10] L. M. Peltomaa, The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn. *The Medieval Mediterranean: Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 440–1453*, 35. Leiden–Boston–Cologne 2001. B. V. Pentcheva, Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium. University Park, PA 2006, 15 bevorzugt die ältere Datierung ins späte 5. – frühe 6. Jh.

[11] A. Drost-Abgarjan, Die Rezeption des Hymnos Akathistos in Armenien: Eine neuentdeckte Übersetzung des Akathistos Hymnos aus dem 12. Jh., in: M. Altripp (Hg.), Byzanz in Europa. Europas östliches Erbe, Akten des Kolloquiums ‚Byzanz in Europa' vom 11. bis 15. Dezember 2007 in Greifswald. *Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization* 2. Turnhout 2011, 422–445.

[12] Drost-Abgarjan, Der „Duft der Unsterblichkeit".

[13] Vgl. G. Winkler, Über die Entwicklungsgeschichte des Armenischen Symbolums, Roma 2000 sowie Das Sanctus, Roma 2002 und Die Basilius-Anaphora, Roma 2005.

[14] *Šarakan hogewor ergocʼ sowrb ew owłłapar ekełecʼwoys Hayastaneaayc'* yōrineal i srbocʼ tʼargmančʼacʼ merocʼ ew i srboy Šnorhalwoyn ew yaylocʼ sowrb harcʼew vardapetacʼ. Sowrb Eĵmiacin 1861 (im folgenden SAR 1861), 58–59, deutsche Übersetzung von A. Drost-Abgarjan und H. Goltz bei: Drost-Abgarjan, Der „Duft der Unsterblichkeit" 19.

[15] Drost-Abgarjan, Der „Duft der Unsterblichkeit".

[16] Terminologie: barexōs: wörtlich „ein gutes Wort sprechende", Fürsprecherin; barexōsowtʼiwn: wörtlich: „Gutwortsprechung", Fürsprache; barexōsem: wörtlich „ein gutes Wort sprechen/einlegen", fürsprechen.

[17] SAR 1861, 58–59. Übersetzung: H. Goltz und A. Drost-Abgarjan.

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Die Gottesmutter wurde also im prä-arabischen Armenien als Fürbitterin bei ihrem Sohn betrachtet. Diese Funktion ist auch den Mariendarstellungen auf Kreuzmonumenten in Armenien immanent.

Zunächst seien diese für Südkaukasien charakteristischen Denkmäler vorgestellt, die nur durch Stilvergleiche und historische Überlegungen datiert werden können, da archäologische Kontexte nicht erhalten sind[18]: Die reliefverzierten Stelen, Basen und Kapitelle gehören zu monumentalen Kreuzdenkmälern, die von Angehörigen der fürstlichen Eliten bei Kirchen, aber auch an herausgehobenen Plätzen wie Hügeln oder am Flußufer aufgestellt werden konnten, wo in ihrer Umgebung Handlungen des christlichen Kultes vollzogen werden konnten. Besonders in Armenien dienten sie auch als Funeraldenkmäler. Als Votiv- und Gedächtnis-Monumente brachten sie die Wünsche ihrer Auftraggeber zum Ausdruck und waren zugleich wichtige Medien fürstlicher Repräsentation. Diese Kreuzdenkmäler bestanden, wie ein Relief an der Ostfassade der Kirche von Tsalka-Edzani in Kvemo Kartli (Georgien) zeigt, aus einer kubischen Basis und einer darauf stehenden Stele, die von einem Kreuz bekrönt war (Abb. 1).

Daß diese Kreuzdenkmäler auf das Monumentalkreuz im Komplex der Jerusalemer Grabeskirche rekurrierten, steht außer Zweifel. Die überwiegende Mehrzahl der Stelen gibt Kreuzdarstellungen: Kreuzmedaillons, die öfters selbst mittels eines Schaftes auf einem Stufenunterbau stehen. Daneben erscheinen häufig florale Ornamente wie Wein- und Blattranken, aber auch einzelne, geometrisierte Pflanzen. Das Kreuz war also das beherrschende Thema der kreuzbekrönten Stelen. Als Siegeszeichen stand es für den Triumph Christi über den Tod und brachte die Hoffnung der Gläubigen auf Erlösung und Auferstehung zum Ausdruck.

Einige Stelen sind mit reliefierten, übereinander angeordneten Bildfeldern mit figürlichen Reliefs versehen. Das Repertoire biblischer Sujets ist ziemlich beschränkt. Aus dem Alten Testament werden Erlösungs- und Rettungsparadigmen – neben Abrahams Opfer und dem Löwenbezwinger Samson die Himmelfahrt des Elias, Daniel in der Löwengrube und der vom Engel entraffte Habakuk – dargestellt[19]. Aus neutestamentlichem Kontext erscheinen – neben Bildern des majestätischen Christus und der Maria mit dem Christusknaben – Verkündigung an Maria, Geburt und Taufe Christi, die Frauen am Grabe, die Himmelfahrt Christi sowie Apostelbilder[20]: Bilder, die das in Christus vollzogene göttliche Heilswerk veranschaulichen. Die konkrete Auswahl der biblischen Szenen scheint ähnlich willkürlich wie in der römisch-frühchristlichen Sarkophagplastik[21]. Daneben erscheinen Bildfelder, welche die Geschichte des lokalen Christentums ins Bild setzen, sowie Darstellungen auftraggebender Fürsten.

Die Struktur der Bildfelder erinnert an spätantike Relieftafeln aus Elfenbein[22]. Daß frühbyzantinische Elfenbeinarbeiten in Armenien verbreitet waren, erhellt aus dem bislang kaum beachteten Traktat gegen die Ikonoklasten des Wrtʿanes Kertʿoł aus dem frühen 7. Jh.[23]. Wrtʿanes verteidigt die kostbaren, auf Pupurpergament geschriebenen, mit Elfenbeintafeln gebundenen Evangelienhandschriften als besonderen Schmuck für das Wort des Herrn. Er erwähnt die Prachtcodices mit Elfenbeineinband als etwas so Selbstverständliches, daß sie zu seiner Zeit verhältnismäßig weitverbreitet gewesen sein müssen. Die heute im Louvre befindliche Elfenbeintafel mit dem unter einem Baldachin thronenden Christus wurde „im Kaukasus gefunden“[24] und ist mit den fünfteiligen Elfenbeintafeln auf dem Einband des Etschmiadziner [Ečmiaciner] Evangeliars direktes Zeugnis für die Verwendung von frühchristlichen Elfenbeinreliefs auch in Südkaukasien.

Die erhaltenen Stelen aus Georgien, die hier nicht im Detail betrachtet werden können, zeigen die Gottesmutter verhältnismäßig selten: Die überwiegende Mehrzahl ist mit Kreuzdarstellungen unterschiedlicher Form deko-

[18] Auf Fragen der Fein-Datierung im 6.–7. Jh. kann hier nicht näher eingegangen werden. Wie kompliziert die Problematik ist, zeigen die Datierungen der Stele von Khandisi ins 6. Jh. und der Stelen von Odzun in die Mitte des 7. Jhs. Diese Denkmäler sind stilistisch sehr ähnlich und deshalb von N. Thierry, Essai de définition d'un atelier de sculpture du haut moyen-âge en Gogarène. *Revue des Études Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes* 1 (1985) 169–194 als Hauptwerke ihrer „Werkstatt der Stele von Khandisi“ bzw. „Gogarene-Werkstatt“ betrachtet worden.

[19] P. Donabédian, Les thèmes bibliques dans la sculpture arménienne préarabe. *REArm* 22 (1990/1991) 253–314, 255–265.

[20] Donabédian, Les thèmes bibliques 265–271.

[21] G. Koch, Frühchristliche Sarkophage. *Handbuch der Archäologie*. München 2000, 202–209, bes. 208.

[22] K. Machabeli, Early Medieval Stelae in Georgia in the context of East Christian Art, in: T. Mgaloblishvili (ed.), Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus. Surrey 1998, 83–96, 89.

[23] Deutsche Übersetzung: A. Drost-Abgarjan, Eine 1300-jährige armenische Quelle gegen die Ikonoklasten: „Über die Bilderbekämpfer“ von Vrt'anes K'ert'oł, in: D. Buzhmanov – E. Grypeou – T. B. Sailors – A. Toepel (Hgg.): Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient. Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zum 65. Geburtstag. Leuven–Paris–Walpole 2011, 399–413, 408; frz. Übersetzung: S. Der Nersessian, Une apologie des images du septième siècle, in: eadem, Études byzantines et arméniennes. II Paris 1973, 379–403, 385.

[24] Paris, Louvre OA 10672, aus der Sammlung Chanenko. W. F. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters. Mainz ^{3}1976, 90 Nr. 133 Taf. 69.

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riert. Von den 93 Denkmälern aus Unteriberien geben sieben ein Bild der Heiligen Maria mit dem Christusknaben, aus Inneriberien sind es zwei von 14, und aus Oberiberien ist keine Stele mit einer Mariendarstellung bekannt. Das Verhältnis in Armenien ist kaum anders[25].

Die Forschung zu den armenischen Stelendenkmälern unterscheidet zwei regionale Gruppen: die Denkmäler der südlichen Gruppe, welche durch eine gedrungene, kürzere Form des Stelenschaftes mit nur zwei übereinander angeordneten Bildfeldern sowie eine stärkere Ausarbeitung des Reliefs im harten Basaltstein charakterisiert ist, stammen vom Südhang des Aragac-Massivs, aus den historischen armenischen Provinzen Ayrarat und Širak[26]. Zur nördlichen Gruppe gehören höhere Stelen mit bis zu sechs übereinander angeordneten Bildfeldern, welche ein flaches, kerbschnittartiges Relief mit streng parallel angeordneten Falten und schematisierten Gesichtern zeigen, das sich im weicheren Tuff exakt arbeiten ließ. Diese Stelendenkmäler, die um die Stele von Khandisi (Xandisi)[27] gruppiert worden sind[28], konzentrieren sich im Gebiet der historischen iberisch-armenischen Grenzregion Gogarene, in der seit der Antike Armenier und Iberer neben- und miteinander siedelten und die Herrschaftsverhältnisse mehrfach wechselten, bis die Gogarene (arm. *Gowgark'*) in der römisch-persischen Teilung Kaukasiens im Jahre 383 n. Chr. politisch-administrativ endgültig an Iberien ging[29]. Die heutigen nordarmenischen Regionen Tašir und Loṙi sowie die georgische Provinz Kvemo Kartli (Unter-Iberien) liegen auf dem Gebiet der historischen Gogarene, die dem Denkmälerbestand zufolge in der südkaukasischen Stelenproduktion qualitativ wie quantitativ führend war. Die mit 93 Stücken größte Gruppe dieser Stelen und Stelenfragmente stammt denn auch aus Kvemo Kartli (Unteriberien), den heutigen südgeorgischen Bezirken Bolnisi und Dmanisi[30].

N. Thierry hat für die Denkmäler dieser „Nord-Gruppe" den Begriff „Werkstatt der Stele von Khandisi" bzw. „Gogarene-Werkstatt" geprägt und nachdrücklich auf Internationalität und Innovationskraft dieser auf hohem Niveau arbeitenden Werkgruppe hingewiesen[31]. P. Donabédian hat hervorgehoben, daß in der Plastik bis zum 7. Jh. eine Unterscheidung zwischen „armenisch" und „georgisch" *assez artificiel* sei[32]. Dies trifft unbedingt zu für die Produkte der „Gogarene-Werkstatt". Die Stelen der armenischen Südgruppe und die aus Oberiberien unterscheiden sich stilistisch jedoch beträchtlich, doch kann darauf hier nicht näher eingegangen werden.

Die „Gogarene-Werkstatt" setzte sowohl Szenen aus der Überlieferung zur Christianisierung Armeniens ins Bild wie auch Szenen aus der iberischen Überlieferung: Ein Bildfeld der Ostseite der südlichen Stele von Odzun [Ōjown]/Armenien zeigt den armenischen König Trdat (gr. Tiridates) mit Eberkopf (Abb. 3), denn Trdat war zur Strafe für seinen Frevel an Gregor, dem späteren Illuminator Armeniens, in einen Eber verwandelt worden. Aus dieser mißlichen Lage befreite ihn Gregor, nachdem Trdat sich dem Christengott zugewandt hatte[33]. Die Arkade des Apsisfensters der Kirche von Tamala in Oberiberien zeigt im Zentrum ein Kreuzmedaillon auf niedrigem Fuß, von dem zu beiden Seiten je ein Kreuz mit Schweif nach oben hin auffliegt (Abb. 2) – eine einmalige bildliche Umsetzung der Überlieferung der Nino-Vita zur Vision eines Lichtkreuzes in Mtskhetha, von dem je ein Stern nach Ost (Bodbe) und West (Tkhoti) ausgeht und so die Grenzen Iberiens markiert[34].

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[25] Für die Stelen aus Armenien waren genauere statistische Betrachtungen nicht möglich, da B. N. Arakeljan, Sjužetnye rel'efy Armenii. Erevan 1949 nicht erreichbar war.

[26] P. Donabédian – J. M. Thierry, Armenische Kunst. Freiburg–Basel–Wien 1988, 81; Donabédian, Les thèmes bibliques.

[27] Siehe unten.

[28] Thierry, Essai de définition.

[29] Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur 125f. Im 9. Jh. wurde die Gogarene schließlich in das Reich der georgischen Bagratiden eingegliedert, und der Name verschwand.

[30] Katalog bei G. Ǯavaxišvili, Adrep'eodaluri xanis k'artuli stelebi (The early feudal georgian stelae, georg. mit russ. u. engl. Res.). Tbilisi 1998. Grundlegende Untersuchungen: N. Čubinašvili, Chandisi. Problema rel'efa na primere odnoj gruppy gruzinskich stel poslednej četverti V veka, VI i pervoj poloviny VII veka. Tbilisi 1972, 104; Machabeli, Early Medieval Stelae; K. Matchabely, Les croix en pierre géorgiennes (georg., russ. u. franz. Res.). Tbilissi 1998. Insgesamt sind aus Georgien 131 Teile von präikonoklastischen Kreuzdenkmälern publiziert. Aus Shida Kartli (Inner-Iberien) stammen 14, aus Zemo Kartli (Ober-Iberien) 24 Stücke.

[31] Thierry, Essai de définition 190–193.

[32] Donabédian, Les thèmes bibliques 254. Der von ihm verwendete Begriff „transkaukasisch" ist aus russischer und westeuropäischer Sicht natürlich richtig, aber für die zeitgenössischen Byzantiner war unsere Region „ciskaukasisch"; insofern möchte Vf. „südkaukasisch" als rein geographischen Begriff bevorzugen.

[33] Agath. Aa 212 üb. R. W. Thomson, Agathangelos: History of the Armenians. Translation and Commentary. Albany 1976, 217.

[34] Bekehrung Georgiens XIII, Kartlis tskhovreba p. 120f., üb. R. W. Thomson, Rewriting Caucasian History: The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicle: The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation. Oxford 1996, 134f.; vgl. dazu Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur 208.

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Die georgischen Stücke seien noch einmal zur Erläuterung der mit den Denkmälern vermittelten Anliegen herangezogen: Einige haben Inschriften, welche die soziale Stellung und die Anliegen ihrer Stifter zum Ausdruck bringen. Die ins 7. Jh. datierte Stele aus Kataula bei Kavtiskhevi (Bezirk Kaspi, Shida Kartli)[35] zeigt auf der einen Seite eine männliche Figur mit zum Gebet vor der Brust erhobenen Händen, gekleidet in einen mit kostbaren Borten besetzten orientalischen Mantel. Die Inschrift zu seiten seines Kopfes und rechts neben seinem Körper lautet: „Heilige Tevdore (Theodor) und Ilarion erbarmt euch des Grigol Hypatos“[36]. Im oberen Bildfeld der gegenüberliegenden Seite ist eine weibliche Figur mit vor dem Körper im Gebetshaltung erhobenen Händen, gekleidet in ein langes Gewand, einen mit kostbaren Borten gesäumten Mantel und Schleier, dargestellt. Die Inschrift zu Seiten der edlen Frau lautet: „Teures Kreuz, erbarme dich der Mariam Mkhevali“[37]. Das Feld darüber gibt eine weitere weibliche Figur, deren Inschrift zu „Kreuz, erbarme dich der [Dina]re mkhevali“ ergänzt werden kann. Die *asomtavruli*-Inschriften bezeichnen ganz offensichtlich die Stifter des Kreuzdenkmals. Grigol (Gregor) trug den byzantinischen Consul-Titel; er war zweifellos der *pater familias* seines Clans und hatte Kontakte nach Konstantinopel. Die Damen des Hauses wurden als *mkhevali*, Dienerin Gottes, dargestellt[38]. Diese Stele, deren oberer Abschluß, Basis und Kapitell verloren sind, brachte also Fürbitten des Clans des Grigol Hypatos zum Ausdruck: Der Herr des Hauses wandte sich an den bewährten Militärheiligen Theodor Tiro für seine militärischen Erfolge. Seine Bitte an den Heiligen Hilarion von Gaza läßt vermuten, daß Grigol Hypatos ein Kloster gestiftet hatte, für das er den Segen des großen Klostergründers erbat. Die Damen wandten sich hingegen an das Kreuz um Fürsprache, eine von ihnen als Antitypos ihrer Namenspatronin, der Heiligen Jungfrau Mariam, die ebenfalls in den Hymnen als „Magd Gottes“ bezeichnet und mit Deesis-Gestus am Kreuz abgebildet wird (s. auch unten).

Die Stele, die von der Kirche des Täufers Johannes im Klosterkomplex von David Gareǰa in Kakheti (Ostiberien) stammt, trägt die Votiv-Inschrift des Marvuvo in *asomtavruli*: „Dieses Kreuz habe ich, Marvuvo, zum Gebet für mich, meine Frau und die Kinder errichtet[39]. Die Inschrift auf der Basis der in die Jahre 616–619 datierten Stele von Tskhisi (Cxisi) in Šida Kartli besagt, daß Kostanti dieses Kreuzdenkmal zum Gebet für sich, seine Gemahlin und Kinder auf dem von ihm erwobenen Gebiet Šahraman zu Ehren des Kreuzes von Mtskheta aufstellte[40].

Die ins 6. Jh. datierte Basis aus Pantiani[41], die auf ihrer Front eine Kreuzerhöhung mit den namentlich benannten Erzengeln *Mikael* und *Gabriel* gibt, trägt auf der Seite rechts des Reliefs die *asomtavruli*-Inschrift „Mit Hilfe der Gottesmutter haben ich, Eremia, und Pahlavrič dieses Kreuz zum Gebet für unsere Seelen und das Leben unserer Kinder errichtet.“ Hier ist also die Gottesmutter unmittelbar als Helferin für die Bitten von Jeremias und seiner Gemahlin Pahlavrič an Christus genannt, wobei das Kreuz als weiterer Mittler fungiert.

Das Stelenmonument von Odzun (Abb. 4) in Nordarmenien, der historischen Gogarene, ist wegen seiner umfangreichen Bildüberlieferung häufig behandelt[42] und als ein Hauptwerk der Gogarene-Werkstatt betrachtet worden[43]. Auf einem sechsstufigen Unterbau erhebt sich eine hohe Doppelarkade, in die zwei hohe Stelen mit je sechs Bildfeldern auf den Außenseiten eingestellt sind. Wie die Stele von Khandisi schließen die Stelen oben mit einer Arkadenarchitektur ab. Die Südstele ist schlechter erhalten, da an ihrem Fuß von Pilgern für wunderwirkend gehaltener Staub abgekratzt wurde[44]. Sie gibt in den erhaltenen Feldern der Westseite Apostelpaare, der Ostseite Darstellungen aus der Frühgeschichte des armenischen Christentums. Der eberköpfige Trdat ist ein Bild zur Vita

[35] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 102–108 Taf. 76–78.

[36] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 104; Machabeli, Early Medieval Stelae 84. Die Heiligen sind in einem der drei Bildfelder mit je zwei nebeneinander stehenden Heiligenfiguren der dritten Stelenseite dargestellt.

[37] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 104.

[38] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 104 vermutet in diesen Frauen Diakonissen, doch kann der Titel auch die besondere Frömmigkeit der adeligen Damen bezeichnen. Dieser Titel ist auch der Themestia, welche das Kreuzerhöhungsrelief über der Tür in den südwestlichen Eckraum der Dshvari(Kreuz)-Kirche Mtskhetha stiftete, beigegeben.

[39] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 11. 90–93, Taf. 63–67.

[40] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 11.

[41] Čubinašvili, Chandisi 53–55 Taf. 11–20; Thierry, Essai de définition 178.

[42] B. Brentjes – S. Mnazakanjan – N. Stepanjan, Kunst des Mittelalters in Armenien. Berlin 1981, 225 Abb. 253–257; Thierry, Essai de définition 180–185; Donabédian, Les thèmes bibliques 257–266; J. M. Thierry – H. Goltz, Armenien im Mittelalter. Darmstadt 2002, 92 Abb. 50.51.

[43] Thierry, Essai de définition 180–185.

[44] Thierry, Essai de définition 180.

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des Hl. Gregor, welche berichtet, daß Tirdat zur Strafe für seinen Frevel an den heiligen Jungfrauen um Hṙipʿsimē und Gayanē in einen Eber verwandelt worden war[45].

In späterer Zeit wurde diese Stele höher geschätzt als die Nordstele, wie die Entnahme des Staubes zeigt. Die Nordstele gibt auf der Ostseite in fünf Feldern Stifterbilder, auf der Westseite unter dem Kapitell mit dem weitgehend verwitterten Abrahamsopfer Bilder der Vita Christi (Abb. 5): Unter dem Kapitell thront Maria mit Christus auf dem linken Schoß, darunter folgen Christi Geburt, Verkündigung und Taufe Christi. Die Bilder sind nicht in „historisch" richtiger Folge angeordnet, sondern Hinweise auf das Heilsgeschehen, dessen sich die Auftraggeber vergewissern wollten. Die Stifter ließen sich auch auf dieser Stele mit Maria darstellen, deren Unterstützung sie sich versichern wollten. Auf der Ostseite blickten sie gewissermaßen der Parusie Christi direkt entgegen.

Das größte Stelendenkmal der Südgruppe[46] in der Nekropole bei der Gottesmutterkirche Tʿalin[47] (Abb. 6) zeigt die Heilige Jungfrau auf der Hauptseite der Basis, auf der rechten Nebenseite ein Blühendes Kreuz, auf der linken ein in Kreuzform angeordnetes Flechtbandornament. Die thronende Maria ist wie auf zahlreichen frühchristlichen Darstellungen flankiert von Engeln. Hier haben sie ihre Flügel so ausgebreitet, wie es für die Cherubim am Gnadenstuhl des israelitischen Heiligtums beschrieben ist[48]. Christus thront auf Marias Schoß links wie auf der Mitteltafel der Buchdeckel des Etschmiadziner Evangeliars[49] und des Evangeliars von St. Lupicin[50]. Im ersten Bildfeld der Stele über Maria ist König Trdat mit Eberkopf dargestellt. Über Trdat steht der Hl. Gregor Illuminator. Die Heilige Jungfrau als Vermittlerin des Wunsches nach Erlösung, wie sie Trdat nach seiner Hinwendung zum Christentum gewährt wurde, erscheint hier als Zentrum des Denkmals.

Die Stele aus Vankʿ Xaraba[51] bei Aštarak zeigt auf allen Seiten figürliche Reliefs (Abb. 7): auf der Hauptseite die unter einem Baldachin[52] thronende Maria mit dem Christusknaben auf der linken Seite des Schoßes, auf der Rückseite den eberköpfigen Trdat mit flehend übereinandergelegten Händen, auf der Seite links der Maria den Hl. Gregor Illuminator mit Labarum neben sich und rechts der Gottesmutter eine männliche Figur in edler iranischer Tracht, die Rechte bittend zur Gottesmutter erhoben. Dies ist zweifellos der Stifter, der seinen Wunsch nach Erlösung, mit dem Trdat-Paradigma für die Betrachter erläutert, der Gottesmutter übermittelt.

Auch ein Stelenkapitell aus Dvin[53] zeigt in einem Medaillon die thronende Maria mit dem Christusknaben auf dem linken Schoß (Abb. 8). Christus hält in der Linken eine Buchrolle und gibt mit der Rechten den Segen. Auf dem Kapitell befand sich die Heilige Jungfrau an der Spitze der Hierarchie des einstigen Denkmals, unmittelbar unter dem Kreuz.

Der ins 6. – 7. Jh. datierte Türsturz[54] der Trikonchos-Kirche in Pemzašen[55], Provinz Ayrarat, zeigt die stehende Maria mit dem Christusknaben im linken Arm[56]. Im oberen Bereich schweben verehrende Engel mit verhüllten Händen. Im unteren Bereich wenden sich zwei Personen in iranischem Gewand, zweifellos Stifter, der Gottesmutter in verehrendem Gestus zu (Abb. 9).

Ein noch in der Nekropole von Tʿalin liegendes Stelenfragment (Abb. 10) zeigt unter einer Erzengel-Darstellung die stehende Maria mit Christus, der mit der Rechten segnet und in der Linken einen Codex hält. Christus sitzt nicht auf dem Arm seiner Mutter: Sie umfaßt den segnenden Christus mit ihren Armen, ohne ihn zu halten.

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[45] Agath. Aa 212 üb. Thomson, Agathangelos 217.

[46] J. Durand – I. Rapti – D. Giovannoni (eds.), Armenia sacra. Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (IVe – XVIIIe siècle). Exhibition catalogue, Muśee du Louvre. Paris 2007, Abb. 6; Donabédian, Les thèmes bibliques 53f.; Brentjes – Mnazakanjan – Stepanjan, Kunst 224f. Abb.67. 68.

[47] Zu der Kirche vgl. Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur, Katalog s.v. Tʿalin, Surb Astuacacin.

[48] Genesis 2, 20.

[49] Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten Nr. 142; Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises. Paris 1992, 76f.; H. u. H. Buschhausen, Codex Etschmiadzin: Kommentar. Graz 2001, 127–142; Durand – Rapti – Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 105–107 Nr. 32.

[50] Paris, Bibliothéque nationale, ms. Lat. 9384. Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten Nr. 145 (ältere Lit.); Buschhausen, Codex Etschmiadzin 128 f.; Durand – Rapti –Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 107 Abb. 1a und b.

[51] Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv. Nr. 830. Durand – Rapti – Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 29 Nr. 2 (mit Bibliographie).

[52] Ähnlich den Baldachinen auf Mitteltafeln fünfteiliger Christus-Maria-Diptychen: Christus aus Murano, Ravenna, Museo Nazionale Inv. 1002, Buschhausen, Codex Etschmiadzin Nr. 2 S. 129; Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten Nr. 125; Gottesmutter in Manchester, The John Rylands University Library, Rylands Ivory Nr. 6. Buschhausen a. O.; Volbach, Elfenbeinarbeiten Nr. 127; Christus in Paris, s.o. Anm. 18.

[53] Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv.Nr. 2604–3. Höhe 0,34m. Durand – Rapti – Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 93 Nr. 21 (mit Bibliographie).

[54] Donabédian – Thierry, Armenische Kunst Abb. 224.

[55] Zur Kirche: Plontke-Lüning, Frühchristliche Architektur 289 und Katalog s.v. Pemzašen III.

[56] Die innige Beziehung zwischen beiden hebt diese Darstellung aus allen ins 6.–7. Jh. datierten südkaukasischen Marienbildern heraus.

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Diese eigentümliche Darstellung Christi ähnelt der des Gottesmutter-Bildes in der syrischen Bibel von Paris[57]. Diese als Einführungsbild in die Sprüche Salomonis verwendete Miniatur zeigt die stehende Gottesmutter, die in einer blauen Mandorla den thronenden Christus hält. Christus ist hier ohne Thron gegeben, was nur bedeuten kann, daß Mariens Schoß als sein Thron gemeint ist[58]. R. Sörries betrachtet diese Darstellung deshalb als die der in Maria inkarnierten kosmischen Weisheit[59]. Mit den Bildern des weisen Salomo und der Ecclesia, die zu seiten der Maria stehen und ihre Attribute als Kirche/(Weisheits)Tempel/Braut des Bräutigams Christus sowie seine Davidische Herkunft aus der Wurzel Jesu betonen, präsentiert Folio 118r somit zusätzlich eine komplexe allegorische Darstellung der Weisheit, die im Christlichen Orient nicht nur auf Christus, Maria und die Menschwerdung des Logos, sondern besonders auf den Hl. Geist oder die Geistesgaben typologisch deutet.

Dem Christusbild in Folio 118r ähnlich ist das des Christus in der ins 7. Jh. datierten Miniatur Folio 229r des armenischen Etschmiadziner Evangeliars, die die Gottesmutter mit dem „thronlos thronenden" Christus in der blauen Mandorla zeigt, verehrt von den Weisen aus dem Morgenland[60]. Hier ist der Aspekt der in Maria inkarnierten unendlichen Weisheit noch deutlicher präsent, da das Christuskind von den orientalischen Weisen verehrt wird. Da beide Darstellungen der Maria als Thron/Stuhl/Sitz der Göttlichen Weisheit (Sedes sapientiae), die in nachikonoklastischer Zeit nicht mehr verwendet wurde, aus dem syro-armenischen Raum stammen, vermutet Sörries eine Entstehung des Typus in dieser Region[61].

Der folgende Magnificat-Hymnus aus der oben erwähnten Marienhymnenreihe zur Auferstehung Christi (aus derselben älteren Schicht) des armenischen Hymnariums *Šaraknoc'*, der eine Konzentration der oben angesprochenen Attributen Mariens aufweist, verdeutlicht parallel dieses Verständnis der Funktion der Gottesmutter auf literarischer Ebene:

Mutter und Jungfrau, Magd des Christos,
die Fürsprech du bist immer der Welt,
dich seligpreisen alle Geschlechter.
Reine Taube
und Braut des Himmels Mariam,
Tempel und Stuhl Gottes des Wortes,
dich seligpreisen alle Geschlechter.
Durch dich gefallenfanden die Geistigen an uns Irdischen,
und durch dich nahten wir uns dem Holz des Lebens
dich seligpreisen alle Geschlechter. (28. Mecac°owsc°e+ [62])

Da Christus auf der Stele in T'alin ohne irdischen Halt gegeben ist, ähnlich den Christusdarstellungen in den beiden erwähnten Miniaturen, möchten wir dieses Marienbild ebenfalls als Thron Gottes, besonders seiner Weisheit, betrachten.

Eine weitere Stele aus T'alin[63] (Abb. 11) kann hier angeschlossen werden. Sie gibt die stehende Maria mit Christus im Brustbild. Es handelt sich jedoch nicht um ein Medaillon oder einen Clipeus, worin Christus dargestellt ist. Vielmehr scheint er aus Marias ihn wie eine Mandorla umfassenden Armen emporzuwachsen. So scheint auch diese Darstellung den „Thron der Weisheit" wiederzugeben. Diese Stele hat ein ausführlicheres Bildprogramm: Maria ist auf der linken Nebenseite wiedergegeben, in dem angearbeiteten „Kapitell" über diesem Bildfeld ist eine hohe schmale Dreiblattblüte, flankiert von Halbpalmetten, dargestellt. Die Hauptseite der Stele zeigt im Bildfeld eine nimbierte Christusbüste und darüber die vom Himmel sich nahende Taube des Hl. Geistes mit Perlenkranz im Schnabel. Der Täufer Johannes steht im Bildfeld der rechten Seite, neben ihm ein großes Stabkreuz. Über Johannes steht im „Kapitell" ein Erzengel, während über dem Bildfeld mit Christus ein Engel mit Kranz vom Himmel herabschwebt. Die Rückseite zeigt unter dem ebenfalls mit Dreiblattblüte zwischen Halbpalmetten dekorierten

[57] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale syr. 341 fol. 118r. R. Sörries (Hg.), Die syrische Bibel von Paris: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, syr. 341: eine frühchristliche Bilderhandschrift aus dem 6. Jahrhundert. Wiesbaden 1991, Abb. 8.

[58] Sörries, Syrische Bibel 35.

[59] Sörries, Syrische Bibel 34f.

[60] Erevan, Matenadaran cod. 2374 fol. 229r. Faksimileausgabe Graz 1999; Thierry – Goltz, Armenien 92f. Abb. 56.

[61] Sörries, Syrische Bibel 36.

[62] Vgl. SAR 1861, 62. Die Unterstreichungen stammen von den Autorinnen.

[63] Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv.-Nr. 1672 a, b. Höhe der Stele: 1,25m. Durand – Rapti –Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 64f. Nr. 14 mit Bibliographie. Die Stelenseite mit Maria ist irrtümlich auch bei Kat. 13 S. 63 oben Mitte abgebildet. Vgl. auch Brentjes – Mnazakanjan – Stepanjan, Kunst Abb. 69 (alte Aufnahme, die Stele noch in der Nekropole zu T'alin zeigend).

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„Kapitell“ ein Labarum, dessen Fläche mit einer gemalten Inschrift versehen gewesen sein mag: die Stele weist Reste von Putz auf, der als Basis für eine Farbfassung gedient haben dürfte. Die figürlichen Reliefs der Basis geben wohl die Stifter der Stele.

Die Stele von Haritschavank [Haṙičavankʻ][64] (Abb. 12) gibt auf der rechten Nebenseite die stehende Heilige Jungfrau, aus deren Obergewand der segnende Christus emporzuwachsen scheint – wiederum eine Darstellung der Maria als Thron der Göttlichen Weisheit. Die Gottesmutter weist mit der rechten Hand verehrend zur Front, auf der der lehrende Christus stehend auf einem Atlanten – eine Personifikation des Kosmos oder die Darstellung des Stammvaters Adam? – abgebildet ist. Auf der linken Nebenseite sind übereinander die Heiligen Gregor und Trdat wiedergegeben, auf der Vorderseite der Basis der in persisches Gewand gekleidete Daniel im Orantengestus. Die ihn flankierenden Löwen sind so dargestellt, daß ihre riesigen Häupter den Daniel Orans flankieren, während ihre Körper auf den Nebenseiten wiedergegeben sind.

Eine Beziehung der Mariendarstellung zu den anderen Bildern der Stele ist nicht gesehen worden[65]. Doch dürfen nicht Daniels bevorstehende Errettung und die im Zusammenwirken von Gregor und Trdat erfolgte Christianisierung als Ergebnis der immerwirkenden Weisheit Gottes betrachtet werden? Zugleich erscheint die Gottesmutter mit der Geste ihrer rechten Hand als Mittlerin zu ihrem Sohn auf der Hauptseite der Stele.

Die Bilder der Heiligen fanden in der frühchristlichen Oikumene mit ihren noch gut funktionierenden Kommunikationsrouten rasche und weite Verbreitung. Für die Herkunft der Bilder in Armenien verfügen wir über ein eigentümliches Zeugnis im Traktat gegen die Bilderfeinde des Wrtʻanes Kertʻoł, der 604–607 *locum tenens* des persarmenischen, also antichalkedonischen Katholikos in Dvin war[66]. Wrtʻanes schreibt, daß die Armenier ihre Bilder aus Byzanz bekommen haben: „Denn in Armenien konnte keiner Bilder malen bis heute, sondern man brachte (sie) von den Griechen *(horomocʻ)* und unsere Ausbildung war von dort, wenn sie nicht verlorengegangen wäre“[67]. Wrtʻanes als Antichalkedonit war alles andere als ein Freund der „Griechen“, d.h. der Byzantiner, obgleich er die Hauptstadt, die griechische Sprache und auch die griechische Ideenwelt gekannt haben muß[68]. Er hatte keinen Grund, dieses Argument zu erfinden.

Der Schluß scheint logisch, daß die wichtigsten Bildvorwürfe für christliche Darstellungen in Armenien in den ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten aus Konstantinopel kamen. Doch ist es auffällig, daß Darstellungen Mariens als Thron der Göttlichen Weisheit im byzantinischen Bereich zumindest bislang unbekannt sind[69]. Vielleicht dürfen wir diese Darstellungen wirklich als spezifische Schöpfung aus dem syrisch-armenisch-kaukasischen Raum betrachten.

In jedem Fall waren die Kreuzdenkmäler mit ihrem Reliefschmuck Monumente der fürstlichen Repräsentation, die in der Zeit der Adelsherrschaft von besonderer Bedeutung war. Seit dem 8.–9. Jh. lassen sich Denkmäler dieser Art nicht mehr belegen. In Armenien beginnt die Errichtung der Khatchkare, der mittelalterlichen Kreuzsteine,

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[64] Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv.-Nr. 1576 a, b. Höhe der Stele 1,2m. Durand – Rapti – Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 62f. Nr. 13 mit Bibliographie.

[65] «un remarquable exemple de juxtaposition sans grande cohérence de thèmes chrétiens», Durand – Rapti – Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 62f.

[66] Drost-Abgarjan, Armenische Quelle gegen die Ikonoklasten; Th. F. Mathews, Vrtʼanēs Kʼertʼoł and the Early theology of images. *REArm* 31 (2008/2009) 101–126; M. van Esbroeck, Der armenische Ikonoklasmus. *Oriens Christianus* 87 (2003) 144–153. A. B. Schmidt, Gab es einen armenischen Ikonoklasmus? Rekonstruktion eines Dokuments der Kaukasisch-Armenischen Theologiegeschichte, in: R. Berndt (Hg.), Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur II. Kultur und Theologie. Mainz 1997, 947–964 verbindet die Streitschrift allerdings mit Yovhanēs Mayragomecʼi († 684) oder einem seiner Nachfolger im späten 7. Jh. Vgl. dazu die kritischen Anmerkungen bei Mathews, a. O. 110.

[67] Übersetzung: Drost-Abgarjan, Armenische Quelle 410. Französische Übersetzung: Der Nersessian, Une apologie des images; alte deutsche Übersetzung: P. P. Samuel, Die Abhandlung ‚Gegen die Bilderstürmer’ von Vrthanes Khertoł. Aus dem Armenischen übersetzt. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 26 (1912) 275–293.

[68] Mathews, Vrtʼanēs Kʼertʼoł 111.

[69] Das Marienbild der Stele von Davati bei Dušeti in Georgien (Šida Kartli) könnte ebenfalls als Darstellung des Throns der göttlichen Weisheit aufgefaßt werden, doch ist dies die einzige Darstellung in Georgien, die so gedeutet werden könnte. (Museum Dušeti. Erhaltene Höhe 0,61m. Gelblicher Kalkstein. G. Abramishvili – Z. Aleksidze, A national motif in the iconographic programme depicted on the Davati Stela. *Le Muséon* 103 (1990) 283–292; K. Mačabeli, Davatis stelis adgili šua saukuneebis kartuli xelobnebis sistemasi (Die Davati-Stele in der mittelalterlichen georgischen Kunst, georg.). sabčota xelovneba 3, 1989; G. Ĵavaxišvili, Adrepʼeodaluri xanis kʼartuli stelebi (The early feudal georgian stelae, georg. mit russ. u. engl. Res.). Tbilisi 1998, 39f. Nr. 103 Taf. 92. 93. Mehrere Mariendarstellungen in Georgien geben hingegen die thronende Gottesmutter mit dem Porträt Christi im Medaillon.

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die grundlegend anders strukturiert sind[70]. In Georgien werden Monumentalkreuze, teils wiederum mit – nun in Metall reliefierten – Bildfeldern, seit dem 9. Jh. als Voraltarkreuze im Kirchenraum aufgestellt. Dies ist auch in Verbindung zu sehen mit den veränderten sozialen Bedingungen in Georgien, wo sich seit dem 9. Jh. die Zentralmacht konsolidierte und die fürstliche Individualrepräsentation zurückzutreten hatte.

Die regionalen Herren des 6.–7./8. Jhs. gaben mit ihren Stelendenkmälern ihren Wünschen und Hoffnungen auf Anteilnahme Gottes zum Ausdruck. Am häufigsten wandten sie sich an das Kreuz, das als Siegeszeichen Christi über den Tod die grundlegende Hoffnung der Gläubigen auf Überwindung des Todes und die eigene Auferstehung zum Ausdruck brachte.

Sie sicherten sich mit ihren bebilderten Denkmälern aber auch die Fürsprache verschiedener Heiliger bei Christus. Die Gottesmutter scheint, soweit wir es anhand der erhaltenen Relief-Denkmäler beurteilen können, als Mittlerin bei ihrem Sohn in dieser Zeit nicht so häufig dargestellt, wie es im hohen Mittelalter, besonders im katholischen Bereich der Fall war.

[70] Aus der umfangreichen Literatur sei hier nur verwiesen auf: Donabédian, in: Durand – Rapti – Giovannoni, Armenia sacra 152–161. 310–315 und die zugehörigen Kataloge S.162–175. 315–322.

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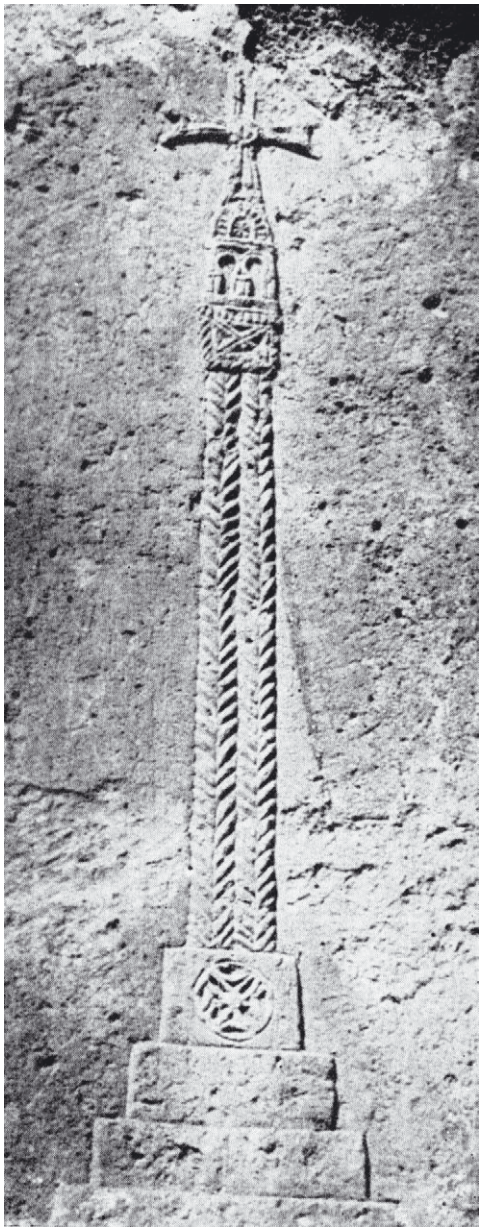

Abb. 1: Edzani, Relief an der Osrfassade der Kirche.

Abb. 4: Odzun, Stelendenkmal von Westen.

Abb. 2: Tamala, Arkade des Ostfensters der Kirche.

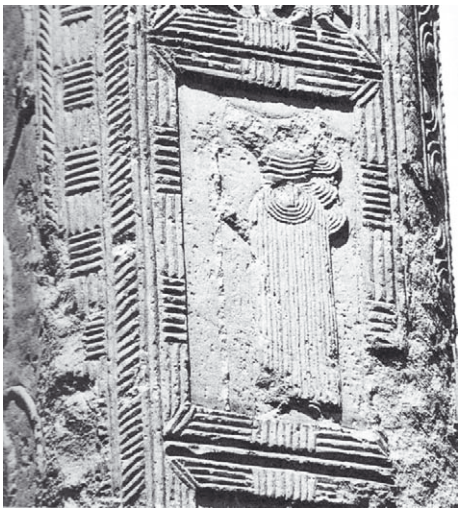

Abb. 3: Odzun, Südstele: Ostseite: Eberköpfiger Trdat.

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Abb. 5: Odzun. Nordstele, Westseite: Maria und Christusszenen.

Abb. 6: T'alin, Kreuzdenkmal in der Nekropole.

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Abb. 7: Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv. Nr. 830. Stele aus Vank Xaraba, Stele v.l.n.r.: Gregor, Maria, Fürst, Trdat.

Abb. 8: Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv. Nr. 2604-3. Kapitell aus Dvin.

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Abb. 9: Pemzašen, Türsturz: Maria, Engel, Stifter.

Abb. 10: T'alin, Stele in der Nekropole.

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Abb. 11: Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv. Nr. 1672 a, b. Stele aus T'alin.

Abb. 12: Erevan, Historisches Museum Inv. Nr. 1576 a, b. Stele aus Haričavank.

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Galina Fingarova

Mary as Intercessor in the Decoration of the Chapel in Durrës, Albania

The initial intention of this chapter was to investigate the intercessory function of Mary, based on material evidence, especially on monumental representations of the Balkan Peninsula excluding Constantinople. Due to the scarcity of preserved material and the profound treatment in the scientific literature of both remaining public monuments from the early Byzantine period with representations of Mary, the Eufrasius basilica at Poreč and the Demetrios basilica at Thessaloniki,[1] I decided to investigate the issue in a case-study on the decoration of the funeral chapel in the Albanian city of Durrës. Although this chapel is the best-known monument on the territory of modern day Albania and has attracted the attention of numerous international scholars,[2] the significance and meaning of its decoration as an entire image program have never been studied. Unlike previous investigations which were concerned with dating the mosaics, the identification of the figures and the determination of the sphere of influence on the different elements, the aim of my research is to analyse the whole program in which the Virgin takes a pride of place. The program visualizes, in my opinion, the worldview of the people who lived in this important centre on the Balkan Peninsula where cultures melted together then just as they do today.

Durrës, known to its Greek founders as Epidamnus and to the Romans as Dyrrachium, lies on the central Albanian coast, opposite the Italian ports of Bari and Brindisi. Its location at the western end of the Via Egnatia which linked Rome to Constantinople guaranteed the flourishing of the city during Roman and Byzantine times. An impressive remnant of the city's vibrant Roman past is its amphitheatre which has been considered "one of the

[1] On the mosaics of Eufrasius basilica see most recently with previous literature: A. Terry/ H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor: The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč*, 2 vols, (University Park, PA, 2007); on the decoration of Demetrios basilica: R. Cormack, 'The Mosaic Decoration of S. Demetrios, Thessaloniki: A Re-examination in the Light of the Drawings of W.S. George', *Annual of the British School of Archaeology at Athens* 64 (1969), 17–52 (repr. in: R. Cormack, *The Byzantine Eye: Studies in Art and Patronage* [London, 1989], I); idem, The Church of Saint Demetrios: The Watercolours and Drawings of W.S. George, *Catalogue of an Exhibition organized by the British Council*, (Thessaloniki, 1985), 45–72, 121–122 (repr. in: Cormack, *The Byzantine Eye*, II); idem, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London, 1985), 50–94; L. Brubaker, 'Elites and Patronage in Early Byzantium: The Evidence from Hagios Demetrios at Thessalonike', in: J. F. Haldon/ L. Conrad (eds.), *Elites Old and New in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*. Papers of the VIth workshop in Late Antiquity and Early Islam (Princeton, 2004), 63–90.

[2] V. Toçi, 'Amfiteatri i Dyrrahit', *Monumentet* 2 (1971), 37–42; N. Thierry, 'Une mosaïque à Dyrrachium', *Cahiers archéologiques* 18 (1968), 227–229 ; idem, 'À propos de la mosaïque murale de Durrës', *Archéologie* 83 (1975), 60–62 ; H. Nallbani, 'Mozaiku i kishës së amfiteatrit në Durrës', *Monumentet* 7/8 (1974), 111–118; idem, 'Dëshmi të hershme të pikturave murale në kapelën bizantine të amfiteatrit antik të Durrësit', Krishterimi ndër Shqiptarë – Simpozium Ndërkombëtar – Tiranë, 16–19 Nëntor 1999 (URL : http://www.kulturserver-hamburg.de/home/shkodra/simpoziumi/simpoziumi_sek6_art11.html [12.10.2011]); A. Ducellier, 'Dernières découvertes sur des sites albanais du Moyen Âge', *Archeologia* 78 (1975), 35–45; J. Castrillo, 'L'énigme de la mosaïque de Durrës', *Archéologie* 79 (1975), 82–83; I. Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 19 (1980), 59–74; J. Reynis-Jandot, 'Mozaiku mural në kapelën e amfiteatrit të Dyrrahut', *Iliria* 1 (1983), 225–232; Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, 84–85; M. Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo o dell'origine Costantinopolitana del tema iconografico di Maria Regina', in: O. Feld/U. Peschlow (eds.), *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst: Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidmet* (Bonn, 1986), 103–112; G. Koch, *Albanien: Kunst und Kultur im Land der Skipetaren. DuMont Kunst-Reiseführer* (Cologne, 1989), 115–117; H. Buschhausen / H. Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', *Steine Sprechen. Zeitschrift der österreichischen Gesellschaft für Denkmal- und Ortsbildpflege*, 120, (Juli 2001), 2–19; V. Pace, 'Mosaici e pittura in Albania (VI–XIV secolo). Stato degli studi e prospettive di ricerca', in: M. Buora/ S. Santoro (eds.), *Progetto Durrës. L'indagine sui beni culturali albanesi dell'Antichità e del Medioevo: Tradizioni di studio a confronto* (Triest, 2003), 93–128; L. Miraj, 'The Chapel in the Amphitheater of Dyrrachium and its Mosaics', in: M. Buora/ S. Santoro (eds.), *Progetto Durrës. L'indagine sui beni culturali albanesi dell'Antichità e del Medioevo: Tradizioni di studio a confronto* (Triest, 2003), 245–290; K. Bowes, 'The Durrës Amphitheatre: Archaeology and Memory', in L. Bejko/ R. Hodges (eds.), *New Directions in Albanian Archaeology. Studies Presented to Muzafer Korkuti* (Tirana 2006), 242–256; K. Bowes/ J. Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater: Decoration and Chronology', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité*, 121.2 (2009), 571–597.

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larger and better preserved amphitheatres of the Roman world"[3]. However, the amphitheatre of Durrës gained fame not because of the value of its Roman substance but thanks to the mosaic decoration of the small Christian chapel which was inserted into the Roman structure after its use as a space of spectacle had come to an end.

The chapel stands built into the amphitheatre's west side aligned with its minor, east-west axis (figs. 1–3). It is an apsed hall narrowing to the east in accordance with the shape of the previous Roman structure and includes the inner-most main gallery and two opposite alcove spaces. For the construction of the chapel the vaults and the eastern wall of the eastern alcove were demolished as well as one of the amphitheatre's main viewing boxes located above, whereas the western alcove was left intact creating above a kind of gallery in the west end of the chapel. The whole structure was covered by a timber roof. Two large, arched openings in the side walls connect the chapel with the adjacent spaces thus emphasizing the close association between them (fig. 2). To the north there is a small circular basin, supposedly a baptismal font, whereas the spaces to the south served for funerary purposes: in the alcove next to the chapel a masonry tomb has been found; the next alcove to the south, which was closed by a wall decorated with cross, has been identified as an ossuary.[4] Additionally, several graves were excavated in the arena and within the amphitheatre's galleries, particularly around the chapel.[5] The decidedly funereal character of the place coincides with the recently proposed function of the western alcove of the chapel as a monumental burial chamber. As there are no reports of graves excavated in the alcove, this hypothesis was based on a photograph taken prior to the removal of the floor which shows a stone wall reaching to the lower border of the mosaics and running around the alcove. This wall probably belonged to a large masonry tomb as it was too narrow to have served as a bench.[6] The arrangement of the space also points to the funereal character of the alcove. As the remaining springers reveal, the alcove was separated from the chapel by a thick arch and thus formed an independent space (figs. 3, 4).

A closer examination of the western alcove and its relation to the remaining structure raises the question of whether the initial use of this alcove as a funerary chamber coincides with the construction of the chapel. This question was posed by Reshat Gega but has been overlooked by other researchers who, despite having different opinions about the dating, all agree that the whole structure belongs to a single construction phase. On the contrary, Gega's observations led him to the conclusion that the funeral chamber predated the construction of the chapel: in its initial phase the interior, including the arch, was entirely painted; the mosaics were executed in a later period. The apse and the side walls of the chapel were built in a second construction phase. During this later phase the upper part of the arch separating the western alcove from the hall was destroyed; the interior of the hall was painted over while the western alcove preserved its previous decoration.[7] I do not want to enter here into the discussion of this hypothesis, which to me seems very plausible, but rather to take note of the fact that, at the time when the mosaics were executed, the western alcove formed an independent space serving as a funeral chamber.

The mosaic panels on the west and south walls of the western alcove do not belong to its initial decoration (fig. 6). They have replaced earlier frescoes which covered the entire chamber as faded traces visible on the ceiling and on the north wall as well as below the mosaics suggest.[8]

[3] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 571; on the amphitheatre pp. 571–576; see further: Toçi, 'Amfiteatri i Dyrrahit'; L. Miraj, 'Amfiteatri i Durrësit', *Iliria*, Nr. 2 (1986), 151–169; Bowes, 'The Durrës Amphitheatre'.

[4] Bowes, 'The Durrës Amphitheatre', 254–255; Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 578–579, 594–597.

[5] Miraj, 'The Chapel in the Amphitheater of Dyrrachium', 252–255; Bowes, 'The Durrës Amphitheatre', 247–248; Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 575–576.

[6] Bowes, 'The Durrës Amphitheater', 252; Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 588, fig. 15.

[7] R. Gega, 'La chapelle de l'amphithéâtre de Durres', in : R. Farioli Campanati (ed.), 1° colloquio dell'Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la Conservatione del Mosaico (AISCOM): Seminario internazionale di studi su: "L'Albania dal tardoantico al medioevo, aspetti e problemi di archeologia e storia dell'arte", Ravenna, 29 aprile – 5 maggio 1993. Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina, 40 (Ravenna, 1993), 527–536.

[8] The existence of frescoes was noted by Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', cit. n. 41; Dh. Dhamo, 'Konsiderata mbi zhvillimin e mozaikut paleokristian në Shqipëri', *Iliria* 16, 1 (1986), 311–315, Pl. III; Gega, 'La chapelle de l'amphithéâtre de Durres', 531, 534–535; H. Nallbani, 'Dëshmi të hershme të pikturave murale në kapelën bizantine të amfiteatrit antik të Durrësit'; Buschhausen / Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', 7; Pace, 'Mosaici e pittura in Albania' 96–97; Bowes, 'The Durrës Amphitheatre', 249, 251; for a more detailed description and analysis: Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 580–584, figs. 7, 8.

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The ceiling paintings show a large medallion surrounding a bust of the bearded Christ with nimbus holding a closed book in his left hand and making a two fingered-speech gesture as a sign of blessing with his right (figs. 5, 11). The bust looks down to the west. Bowes and Mitchell were been able to discern further that the beard of Christ was sharp and pointed and that he was wearing a yellow chlamys and a blue tunic; the medallion was filled with blue and contoured in red.[9]

Outside the medallion only a pair of animal horns is still discernible in the lower south-western corner, according to Bowes and Mitchell against a blue background.[10] Earlier reports inform us that the head of a lion was also recognizable,[11] supposedly in the north-western corner. The preserved remnants of the paintings on the ceiling allows one to conclude that here was represented a heavenly scene emphasizing the glory of Christ flanked by the four apocalyptic living creatures which are usually understood as symbols of the evangelists.

Although the subject of the representations on the ceiling was known largely from earlier reports, only the careful investigation of the wall paintings by Bowes and Mitchell and their team clarified their content to some extent.[12] Thus, they could detect a total of three standing saints accompanied by *tituli* in black letters. On the western end of the north wall a beardless nimbate military saint wearing a girded knee-length tunic and chlamys and holding a spear and shield was represented.[13] At the northern end of the west wall a torso and hand from a frontal figure clothed in a pallium remained. The saint probably stood to the side of a large axial composition that occupied the centre of the west wall. Beneath the Stephanos mosaic panel on the south wall Bowes and Mitchell discerned traces of a painted inscription including the letters CT, which led them to the conclusion that the mosaic replaced a painted image of the same saint.[14]

As has been suggested, the three mosaic panels adorning the south and west walls of the alcove were laid at roughly the same time but in successive stages, beginning with the western panel, followed by the large one on the south wall and concluding with the Stephanos panel on the same wall (fig. 6). Their lower borders do not reach the initial floor of the chamber[15] – a peculiarity which can be explained by the existence of a masonry tomb at the site.

Despite the poor state of preservation the main characteristics of the western panel can clearly be discerned (fig. 7). The axial-symmetrical composition comprises a large-scale central figure flanked by two angels and two female saints of about the same size, as well as by two diminutive donor figures. Although the upper part of the central figure is not preserved, it has been identified as the standing Virgin Mary by the remaining long brownish-purple robe and the (dark) blue maphorion with white borders falling down symmetrically on either side in zigzag folds.[16] At the left side of her head the upper parts of letters which probably indicated the name MAPIA can be seen.

The winged angels on both sides of the Virgin are represented in the typical attire of messengers of God as seen in the better preserved figure to the left of the Virgin. The angel wears a white *chiton* and white *himation*, as well as sandals on his feet and carries a red staff in his left hand. Both outer framing figures are greatly damaged, but their identification can be confirmed thanks to the inscriptions at the left side of their heads. The figure at the north edge is designated as COΦIA (Sophia) whereas her counterpart in the south is called E[IPH]NH (Eirene). It

[9] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 580, fig. 7.

[10] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 580.

[11] Nallbani, 'Dëshmi të hershme të pikturave murale në kapelën bizantine të amfiteatrit antik të Durrësit'; Buschhausen / Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', 7.

[12] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 580–582, like those on the ceiling, the wall paintings were inspected with the help of a hand lens, additionally digital photographs of the extant paintings were manipulated through heightened contrast.

[13] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 581, fig. 8.

[14] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 581–582.

[15] Which was found some 45–50 cm beneath the present floor, Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 579.

[16] Although some scholars have identified the central figure as Christ (cf. J. Reynis-Jandot, 'Mozaiku mural në kapelën e amfiteatrit të Dyrrahut', 226; Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo' 112), the majority has agreed about the female sex of the figure. With few exceptions (cf. A. Ducellier, 'Dernières découvertes sur des sites albanais du Moyen Âge', proposes one of the wives of emperor Leon; Castrillo, 'L'énigme de la mosaïque de Durrës': St Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great) there is also a general consensus that the image represents Mary (cf. Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 63; Buschhausen / Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', 15; Pace, 'Mosaici e pittura in Albania' 98; Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 585).

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seems that they are clad in imperial garments as the remaining part of Sophia's long robe with precious decoration reveals, and both wear tiny imperial red shoes. In addition, the orb in Sophia's left hand and the nimbus around the head of Eirene are still visible. It is also worth noting the different colour backgrounds on which each appears – Eirene's is green while to the left side of Sophia it is blue with white stripes – which probably indicates their attribution to different spheres.

Both small figures flanking the lower part of Mary's body are slightly turned to the centre reaching their covered hands toward the Virgin (fig. 8). Despite the poor state of preservation of the figure on the Virgin's right, it is still possible to discern the man's short beard and broad brownish mantle which leaves his lower legs, clad in black, uncovered. The corresponding female figure appears in a robe and maphorion covering her head similar to that of the Virgin.

The large mosaic panel on the south wall in a shape of irregular trapezoid shows a similar central composition as on the west wall, but with reduced number of figures (Fig. 9). The main figure – meanwhile unambiguously identified as *Maria Regina*[17] – appears in imperial official attire consisting of a tunic, a full-length purple dalmatica, a jewelled loros and tiny red shoes; encircled by a golden nimbus the head is adorned with a high gem- and pearl-studded crown with long *prependoulia*; the insignia in her hands – a cross staff with two cross bars in the right and a crowned orb in the left – further emphasize her majesty.

In contrast to the angels on the west wall, those flanking the Virgin here are clad in court costumes including a tunica, a white, knee-length dalmatica decorated with *segmenta* and fringe, a dark blue chlamys and tight trousers of the same colour. Their blond hair is bound with a white ribbon; in the left hands they hold a staff whereas the right are raised in front of the chest in a gesture of *silentio (silence)*. The inscription over the head of the left angel reads: †K(υρι)E BOHΘHCON TOY ΔOYΛOY COY AΛEΞANΔPOY ("Lord preserve your servant Alexander"). It seems very likely that the diminutive figure to the right of the Virgin is a representation of the named Alexander (fig. 10). His posture and attire are very similar to those of the small male figure on the west panel, but the facial traits of the south figure are here better preserved: like his counterpart on the west panel he has a short beard; his short black hair shows a bald patch or tonsure – a question that still remains dubious.[18] The female figure on the Virgin's left side is lavishly clad. She wears a full-length red robe decorated with *orbiculi* as well as red shoes on her feet. Her ornate high headdress which is reminiscent of the Virgin's crown deserves particular attention.[19] The long, white fringed veil seems not to cover her elaborate headdress but has the appearance of an aureole around her head.[20]

The narrow adjacent mosaic panel contains only one figure which, thanks to the inscription flanking its nimbus († O AΓ[ιο]C CTEΦANOC), can with certainty be identified as the protomartyr Stephanos (fig. 9). The young beardless martyr is depicted frontally wearing a white tunic with red *clavi* as well as a white pallium decorated with crosses, his golden hands raised before his chest in prayer. It is furthermore worth noting remnants of small nails found at around neck level on Stephanos as well as on the two angels of the adjacent panel. According to

[17] Earlier researchers have mistaken the figure for a male (cf. Toçi, 'Amphiteatri I Dyrrahit', 40: identified the figure as emperor Alexander (912–913) based on the inscription above the left angel; Thierry, 'Une mosaïque a Dyrrachium', and idem, 'À propos de la mosaïque murale de Durrës': in connection with the inscription identified it as Christ; Ducellier, 'Dernières découvertes sur des sites albanais du Moyen Âge': instead of Alexander he proposed that it was the portrait of emperor Leon; Castrillo, 'L'énigme de la mosaïque de Durrës': Constantine the Great). Most however, have recognised its female sex, although some have proposed an identification other than Maria Regina (cf. Nallbani, 'Mozaiku i kishës së amfiteatrit në Durrës', 113–114 and idem, 'Dëshmi të hershme të pikturave murale në kapelën bizantine të amfiteatrit antik të Durrësit': has rejected the identification as emperor Alexander, he showed that it was a representation of a woman; C. Bertelli, 'La pittura medievale a Roma e nel Lazio', in: C. Bertelli (ed.), La pittura in Italia: L'Altomedioevo (Milano, 1994), 206–242, cit. n. 36: suggests with caution St Helena; Pace, 'Mosaici e pittura in Albania', 100–108 and Miraj, 'The Chapel in the Amphitheater of Dyrrachium', 272–273: both suggest that the image represents an empress). Arguments which clearly favour the identification as Maria Regina are the flanking angels, the prayer inscribed over the left angel as well as the donors, see: Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 68; Reynis-Jandot, 'Mozaiku mural në kapelën e amfiteatrit të Dyrrahut', 225–232: suggest that the figure represents the Virgin Angeloktistos, a mixture of the Queen of Heaven and an intercessory figure; Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo', 104–105; Buschhausen / Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', 14; Bowes/Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 586.

[18] Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo', cit. n. 34 rejects the possibiltiy that the man is tonsured, the contrary opinion is expressed by Pace, 'Mosaici e pittura in Albania (VI–XIV secolo)', 107, who considers the tonsure as evidence for the influence from the Latin West.

[19] Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo', 106 calls the headdress crown.

[20] As noticed also by Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo', cit. n. 35.

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Bowes and Mitchell, lamps were most probably hung on these nails, which suggests that the images were venerated.[21]

As a result of lengthy discussion since their discovery in the 1960s an assignment of the mosaics to the sixth or seventh century has been widely accepted. This dating is based, on the one hand, on their unambiguous stylistic, compositional and technical similarity to the sixth- or early seventh-century mosaics in the church of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki and, on the other hand, on a comparison with the sixth-century image of *Maria Regina* in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome.[22] Recently the chronology of the Durrës mosaics has been challenged by Bowes and Mitchell, who proposed a dating of the ninth to the eleventh century.[23] Both researchers have based their hypothesis mainly on archaeological evidence as well as on iconographical and stylistic analysis of the paintings predating the mosaics. The archaeological evidence concentrates on ceramic fragments inserted into the chapel's walls which have been dated to the period between the ninth and eleventh centuries. While it is possible that the ceramic fragments were inserted during some reparations, or if Gega is right and the building of the chapel postdated the funeral chamber, then the ceramic fragments can be taken only as an evidence of the dating of the chapel and not of the mosaics.

The main argument, however, supporting the proposed later dating is based on the iconographic motifs of the fresco-decoration which predates the mosaics. Thus, Bowes and Mitchell have equated the image of Christ on the ceiling with the type of the Pantocrator that commonly decorated vaults and apses after the ninth century. They found the closest comparanda for the representation of the "theophanic vision" in the eleventh-century rural churches of St Merkurios and St Michael on Corfu, where the eastern walls show theophanies with the Pantocrator in bust form.[24] As a stylistic comparison to the frescoes in Corfu is impossible due to the faded state of the painting in Durrës, it remains inexplicable why both researchers have overlooked the widespread representations of Christ surrounded by the symbols of the evangelists which are known in early Christian and early medieval church decoration mainly in the West, but also in the eastern part of the Empire.[25] Bowes and Mitchell compare the scanty remains of the military saint in Durrës to an eleventh-century example in the church of St Merkurios on Corfu, emphasizing "the strikingly similar knee-length belted tunic and cloak"[26] – a piece of evidence that, in my opinion, does not suffice to date the paintings in the chamber of Durrës to the period between the ninth and eleventh centuries. Moreover, although rare, warrior saints were also depicted during the early Byzantine period in military costume and with weapons: in addition to the three examples cited by Bowes and Mitchell,[27] one can mention the seal of a certain Theodore from the Zacos collection (no. 1289) on which Theodore Tiron is represented in military

[21] They were "sunk into the plaster while it was still malleable", Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 587–588, fig. 14; for parallels: P. J. Nordhagen, Icons Designed for the Display of Sumptuous Votive Gifts, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 453–460.

[22] Thierry, 'Une mosaïque a Dyrrachium', 229; idem, 'À propos de la mosaïque murale de Durrës', 60–62 ; Castrillo, 'L'énigme de la mosaïque de Durrës', 82–83 (dates to 600–700 or 800–850 but not later) ; Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 68 ; Cormack, Writing in Gold, 84–85; Andaloro, 'I mosaici parientali di Durazzo', 107; Buschhausen / Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', 15; Pace, 'Mosaici e pittura in Albania', 109; Miraj, 'The Chapel in the Amphitheater of Dyrrachium and its Mosaics', 274; J. Osborne, Images of the Mother of God in Early Medieval Rome, in: A. Eastmond/ L. James (eds.), Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium. Studies Presented to Robin Cormack (Aldershot, 2003), 135–156, at 140.

[23] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 582–584, 588–594. A tenth-century date was proposed also by earlier scholars, cf. Toçi, 'Amphiteatri i Dyrrahit', 40; Ducellier, 'Dernières découvertes sur des sites albanais du Moyen Âge', 44. This dating was based on the identification of Alexander mentioned in the inscription on the south panel as emperor Alexander (912–913); Reynis-Jandot, 'Mozaiku mural në kapelën e amfiteatrit të Dyrrahut', 227, dated the mosaics to the eighth century, comparing them to the Roman examples of Maria Regina.

[24] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 583.

[25] For examples from Rome and Ravenna see F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, (Wiesbaden, 1958–1989), Bd. II, Kommentar, 3. Teil, 304–310; for examples from the East see idem, 310–311 and K. Wessel, 'Evangelistensymbole', in: K. Wessel (ed.), Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst 2 (1971), 508–516;. A closer parallel to the subject matter in Durrës is found in the seventh-century paintings in the dome of the church in Drosiani on Naxos, where the bust of Christ in medallion has been represented twice accompanied by the symbols of the evangelists (fig. 12), N. Drandakis, Οι παλαιοχριστιανικές τοιχογραφίες στη Δροσιανή της Νάξου (Athens, 1988), 51–58, Pl. I.

[26] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 582.

[27] Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 582–583.

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dress holding a cross-staff and shield, and the encaustic icon in Sinai depicting both Theodores with a lance and shield.[28]

Thus the main arguments delivered by Bowes and Mitchell but also the additional evidence to which they refer, hardly disprove the sixth- or seventh-century dating for the mosaics, which has been based convincingly on iconographical, stylistic and technical comparison with examples from Thessaloniki and Rome dated to this time.

Let us now sum up and interpret the observations above. The western alcove of the amphitheatre's chapel was a separate, independent space functioning as a private funerary chamber very likely for a rich family. The earlier paintings on the ceiling and the north wall have never been replaced by mosaic panels, and it seems probable that they remained part of the decoration, which together with the mosaic panels on the south and west wall feasibly constituted one coherent program (figs. 5, 6). The image of the Virgin Mary became its central focus as a consequence of replacing the paintings with the mosaic panels. Visualising a perpetual prayer for intercession, the program expresses in a sophisticated manner the hope for salvation of the donors who were buried in the chapel.

As final recipient of the prayer, Christ is depicted on the ceiling residing exactly above the tomb of the donors. Closely connected to the image of Christ were the representations of the four living creatures which originally surrounded the medallion (fig. 11). Due to the poor state of preservation, today it is impossible to comprehend their exact meaning because we cannot discern if they carried books or had a nimbus. According to the biblical texts which refer to the four living creatures (Ezekiel 1:5-14 and Revelation 4:6-8), they stood in immediate proximity to God. During the early Christian period they became symbols first of the Gospels and later of the evangelists. The direct relationship of both the Gospels and the evangelists to Christ closely connected the four living creatures to the natures of Christ and thus they also became symbols of his human and divine natures.[29] The representation on the triumphal arch of San Apollinare in Classe (seventh century) is closely associated with the paintings on the ceiling in the chamber of Durrës. It shows the bust of Christ in a medallion as supreme ruler and judge flanked by the symbols of the evangelists, where they function as types of his human and divine natures and predictors of his second coming.[30] The dogma of Christ's two natures is particularly emphasised in the seventh-century paintings of Drosiani on Naxos, where Christ is represented twice in the dome: in his human and his divine natures and in connection with the symbols of the evangelists (fig. 12).[31]

The panel on the west wall represents a hierarchical composition where the donors, who were probably buried in the chamber, are located on both sides of the Virgin who acts as their protector and intercessor to Christ shown on the ceiling (figs. 7, 8). The Virgin was depicted in the humble, typically Byzantine guise and was likely accompanied by the "old-fashioned"[32] appellation MAPIA or rather AΓIA MAPIA. As the maphorion falls down symmetrically on either side it has been suggested that Mary was depicted without the Christ Child and with her hands raised before her chest in a gesture of prayer.[33] The possibility cannot, however, be excluded that she was holding a medallion with the Christ Child as seen in a miniature in the Syrian Bible (Paris. syr. 341, fol. 118) dated to the seventh or eighth century, where the maphorion is also rendered symmetrically.[34]

Whereas the central part of the representation – the Virgin surrounded by angels – is common in early Christian art, the female figures flanking them who have been identified as personifications of Peace and Wisdom are very unusual (fig. 7).[35] Both Eirene and Sophia have been understood in Christian tradition as hypostases of the incar-

[28] Ch. Walter, *The Warrior Saints in Byzantine Art and Tradition* (Aldershot, 2003), 51, Pl. 23; G. and M. Soteriou, Εικόνες της Μονής Σινά, 1:Εικόνες (Athens, 1956), Pl. 15.

[29] On the four living creatures see: Wessel, 'Evangelistensymbole', 508–516; Deichmann, *Ravenna*, Bd. II, 3. Teil, 299–314.

[30] Deichmann, *Ravenna*, Bd. I, 277; Bd. II, 2. Teil, 279; Bd. II, 3. Teil, 310.

[31] Drandakis, Οι παλαιοχριστιανικές τοιχογραφίες στη Δροσιανή, 51–58

[32] R. Cormack, 'The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics', in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine art* (Milan, 2000), 91–105, esp. 94.

[33] Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 63; Buschhausen / Buschhausen, 'Durazzo und die Anfänge des Christentums in Albanien', 15.

[34] J. Meyendorff, L'iconographie de la Sagesse divine dans la tradition byzantine, *Cahiers archéologiques* 10 (1959), 259–277, Fig. 1.

[35] Some doubts are expressed by Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 585. They point to fragmentary inscriptions to the left of Sophia "which might provide the AΓIOC epithet", and could indicate saints but they nevertheless accept the common opinion.

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nate Logos and are thus connected directly to Christ and indirectly to Mary who gave birth to God.[36] This same idea is visualised in the said miniature in the Syrian Bible (Paris. syr. 341, fol. 118) at the beginning of the Proverbs of Solomon. Here three frontal standing persons are represented, including the Virgin Mary holding an oval shield with the Child in the middle, to the left Solomon and to the right a female personification bearing a cross staff. According to Meyendorff, the flanking figures represent both authors of the Proverbs, Solomon and Wisdom, whereas the emphasized image of the Virgin Mary holding Emmanuel defines the ecclesiastic tradition: Wisdom who had built her house (Prov. 9:1) is one hypostasis of the incarnate Logos.[37] Mary functions here as the temple of Wisdom; she is not herself "wisdom", but the dwelling place of God who took flesh from her.[38]

The miniature is one of the very few early Christian examples where a personification of Sophia is represented;[39] even rarer are the images of Eirene[40] and there is no known parallel of their joint depiction as in Durrës. In my opinion, as their presence on the panel was important for emphasising the role of the Virgin in the incarnation, the artist harked back to the rich examples of pagan art where personifications are widely used.[41]

In contrast to that on the west side the hierarchical composition on the south wall reveals fully imperial associations. Mary is undoubtedly the Queen of Heaven guarded by her attendants, the *silentiarii*, and receiving the honour of the donors who hope for salvation through her intercession (figs. 9–10). The image of Mary is unique due to the fact that she neither makes an intercessory gesture nor holds the Christ Child. Instead she possesses the attributes of her son's imperial dignity: the cross staff as a sign of the triumph of Christ and the crowned globe symbolising his universal power.[42] Nikolajević has pointed to the reliquary in Grado as a parallel emphasizing the identity of the Virgin with her divine son: here the Virgin is seated on a throne with a cross-sceptre in her right hand; whereas the Jesus-child sitting in her womb is represented without a nimbus, Mary has the cross-nimbus usually preserved only for Christ.[43] As on the mosaic panel in this example the Virgin is represented as co-equal with her son by sharing his attributes of power, and in this way she is identified as the material hypostasis of the divine.

In my opinion, both contrasting images of the Virgin – the human woman who gave birth to God and the Queen of Heaven – are best explained as references to the human and divine natures of Christ. Henry Maguire has shown that the main aim of the mid-sixth century mosaic program in the apse of the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč was to accentuate the dogma of Christ's dual nature that was accordingly visualised twice: once on the vertical axis and again on the horizontal.[44] On the vertical axis Christ's divine nature was portrayed on the triumphal arch where he is majestically sitting on a globe surrounded by his apostles; his human nature as the image of the Child sitting

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[36] J. Meyendorff, 'Wisdom-Sophia: Contrasting Approaches to a Complex Theme', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 391–401; D. M. Fiene, 'What is the Appearance of Divine Sophia?', *Slavic Review* 48.3 (1989), 449–476; P. Plank, 'Sophia', Lexikon des Mittelalters VIII, 2051–2052; E. Dinkler, 'Friede: C. Christlich', Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum VIII, 460–492.

[37] Meyendorff, L'iconographie de la Sagesse divine dans la tradition byzantine, 263–264, Fig. 1; D. I. Pallas, 'Ο Χριστός ως η Θεία Σοφία. Η εικονογραφική περιπέτεια μιάς θεολογικής έννοιας', *Deltion tis christianikis archaiologikis eteraias* 15 (1989–90), 119–144, at 129 has interpreted the female figure as an allegory of the church.

[38] cf. Meyendorff, 'Wisdom-Sophia', esp. 391–393; on the contrary, Mary was seen as Wisdom, as suggested by M. Barker, Wisdom Imagery and the Mother of God, in: L. Brubaker/ M. B. Cunningham, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Aldershot, 2011), 91–108.

[39] Further examples: Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 64 refers to a relief in Egypt now in the Museum of Brooklyn; Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', 592 cite sixth- to eighth-century episcopal seals as well as the sixth-century Vienna Dioskurides (Cod. med. gr. 1, fol. 6v); this latter example, also mentioned by Andaloro, 'I mosaici parietali di Durazzo', 112, is irrelevant as the inscription ΣΟΦΙΑ is a later addition.

[40] Dinkler, 'Friede: D. Ikonographisch', 498–502.

[41] L. S. B. MacCoull/ A. Cutler, 'Personifikation', in : ODB III, 1634–1635. W. Pötscher, 'Personifikation', in: Der kleine Pauly, 4, 661–663. Two of the most important churches in Constantinople were dedicated to Sophia and Eirene as God's attributes. Both are also mentioned together by Romanos Melodos, see Kontakion 54, Oikos 20, ed. P. Maas/C.A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica: cantica genuina* (Oxford, 1963) and ed. J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode. Hymnes,* 5 vols. (Paris, 1964–65); tr. in German J. Koder, *Romanos Melodos, Die Hymnen,* 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 2005), vol. 1, no. 23, 281–2. I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewer for that reference.

[42] Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 68.

[43] Nikolajević, 'Images votives de Salone et de Dyrrachium', 68, Fig. 4.

[44] H. Maguire, 'Body, Clothing, Metaphor: The Virgin in Early Byzantine Art', in: L. Brubaker/ M. B. Cunningham, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Aldershot, 2011), 39–51, esp. 39–42.

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on his mother's lap appears in the semi-dome below. On the horizontal axis "the paradox of the two natures of the incarnate Christ" was expressed through the scenes of the Annunciation and Visitation on both ends of the apse wall. According to Maguire "we have here a contrast between two types of conception: first, the spiritual, or miraculous, conception, that is evidenced by the reception of the angel's message in the Annunciation, and second, the physical conception, that is evidenced by the bodies of the two women in the Visitation mosaic".[45]

As references to both natures of Christ the images of the Virgin in Durrës offer a pictorial expression of her power of intercession and justify it in different ways: once as a human woman enabling the incarnation and a second time as a heavenly queen sharing the divine power with her son. Thus, despite the fact that the inscription on the south wall is a direct prayer to Christ and despite the great importance placed upon Stephanos' intercessory role as indicated through his golden hands and his orans-attitude, Mary is given prominence as mediator between God and the donors.

The donors venerating her are very likely the owners of the grave placed in the chamber and it appears that the same pair was represented on both images (figs. 8, 10). In the Theodotus chapel in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome, a rare example of a private family chapel from the eighth century, the donor Theodotus was represented even three times – each time in the same costume but in a different context and with varying intention. The first representation, which Belting calls the official votive image, shows in the centre *Maria Regina* sitting on a throne and holding her Child surrounded by the apostles Peter and Paul and by the saints to whom the chapel was dedicated, Quiricus and Julitta. Theodotus, holding the model of his donation, stands at the right edge of the composition, and as his counterpart on the left appears Pope Zacharias. On the second image, according to Belting the votive image of the family, the Virgin Mary, clad in traditional simple costume and holding the Child in her hands, stands among Theodotus' family. The donor is represented for third time in a personal votive image venerating Quiricus and Julitta.[46]

It is noticeable that whereas, like Theodotus, the male figure in Durrës is portrayed wearing the same clothes on both mosaic panels, the apparel of his female companion differs from image to image. Eye-catching, however, is the similarity of her attire to that of the Virgin: on the western panel both Mary and the female donor wear simple costumes, whereas on the south they are both lavishly dressed (figs. 7–10). It seems to me that this similarity cannot be accidental but rather a sophisticated device associating the female donor with the Virgin. Charles Barber has observed a similar relationship between Mary and the widow Turtura on the fresco in the Catacomb of Commodilla in Rome, dated to around 530. Here the diminutive figure of Turtura is introduced to the enthroned Virgin and Child by the flanking saints Adauctus and Felix. An accompanying inscription written by the son of the widow praises her chaste fidelity to her death husband. This "praise of the chaste mother and also her costume" which, as in Durrës, is similar to that of Mary suggests to Barber "a direct correlation of the Theotokos and Turtura".[47]

The close relation of the female donor to the Virgin in Durrës emphasises the woman's piety and establishes Mary as her heavenly counterpart granting intercession. As funerary chambers belong to the private sphere, this observation supports the assumption that the Virgin "had a special appeal for women … apart from the obvious gender connection, women in traditional societies belonged to the private sphere, from which we have a good deal of evidence of devotion to the Theotokos."[48] However, both images leave no doubt that the male donor also sought Mary's aid in his hope for salvation as he is taking the prominent place on her right. St Stephanos on the south wall acts as an additional advocate for Alexander forwarding his prayer to Christ, which does not diminish the prominent role of the Virgin as intercessor but creates "a hierarchical structure in the process of intercession".[49]

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[45] Maguire, 'Body, Clothing, Metaphor', 42.

[46] H. Belting, 'Eine Privatkapelle im frühmittelalterlichen Rom', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987), 55–69, fig. 1–4; cf. P. Romanelli/ P. J. Nordhagen, *S. Maria Antiqua* (Rome, 1964), 36–38.

[47] Ch. Barber, 'Early Representations of the Mother of God', in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine art* (Milan, 2000), 253–261, esp. 254–255, Pl. 196.

[48] A. Cameron, 'Introduction', in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), xxvii–xxxii, esp. xxix–xxx; similar notion H. Maguire, 'Byzantine Domestic Art as Evidence for the Early Cult of the Virgin', in the same volume, 183–193.

[49] Barber, 'Early Representations of the Mother of God', 253–255 has shown the same not only for the Turtura fresco but also for the late sixth- or early seventh-century icon from Sinai of the Virgin and Child with Archangels and saints and for the now lost sixth-century Maria cycle in the basilica of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki.

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In conclusion, I would like to stress that the decoration program of the private funerary chamber in the amphitheatre of Durrës reveals very important aspects for the understanding of the function of Mary as intercessor during the sixth or seventh centuries in this culturally-blended region of the Balkan peninsula. The sophisticated program which reflects the worldview of the donors buried in the chamber and expresses their hope for salvation clearly emphasizes Mary's role as supreme mediator for humankind, indicating at the same time her closer association with the female donor. Mary's power of intercession has been justified by presenting her twice in two contrasting images as an indication of both natures of Christ and thus closely connecting her to her son, who as final recipient was depicted on the ceiling above the tomb of the donors.

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Fig. 1: Amphitheater of Durrës, view of the chapel from the southeast (Photo: G. Fingarova).

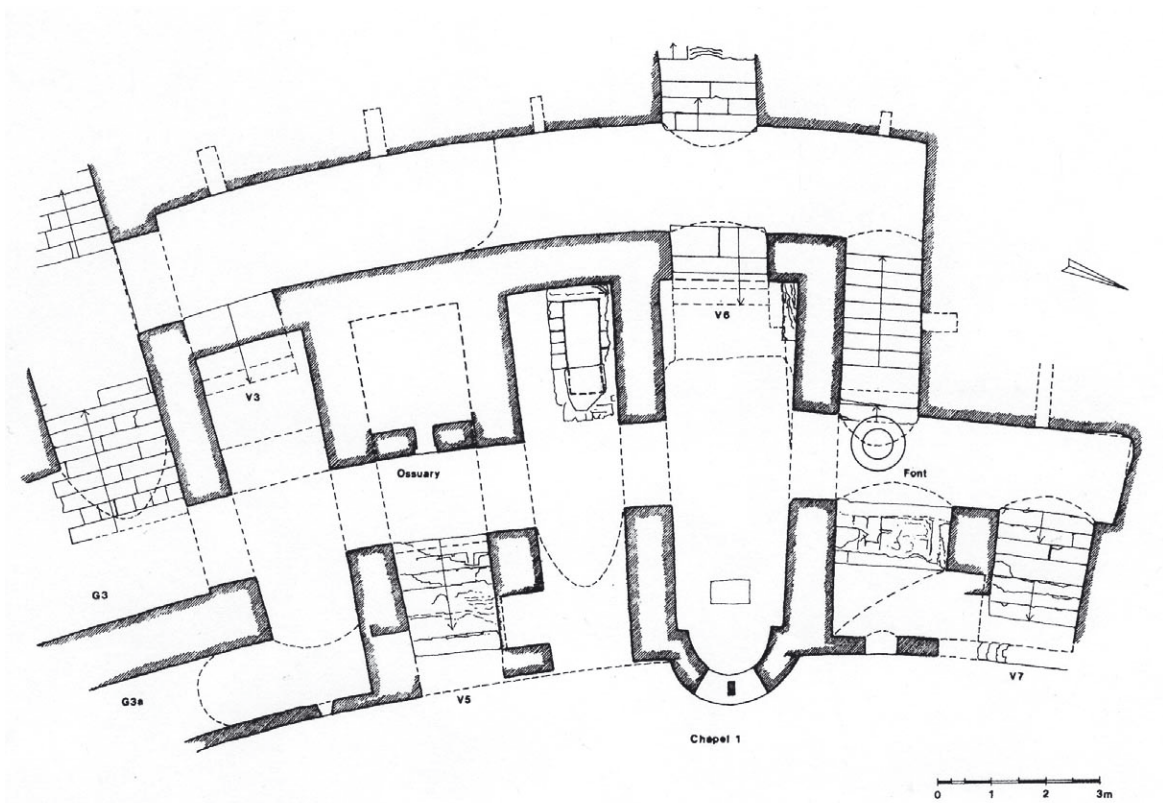

Fig. 2: Chapel complex, plan (D. Andrews, in: Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', Fig. 3).

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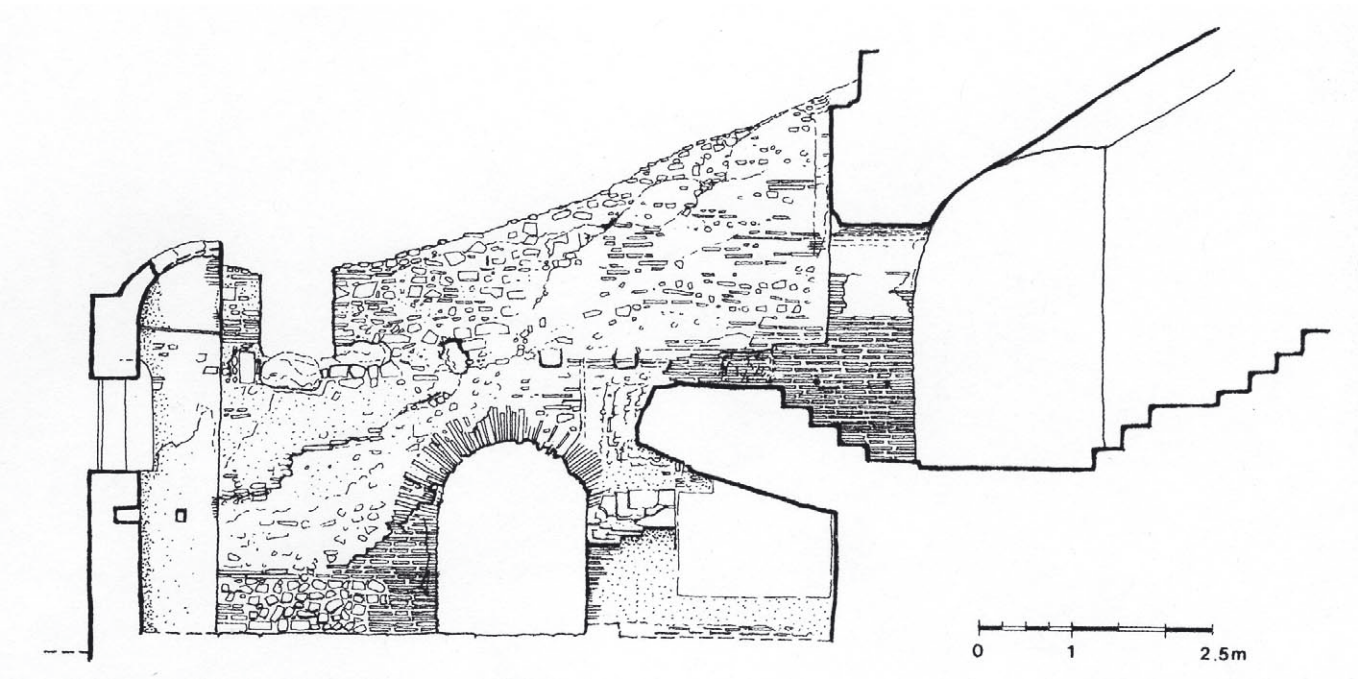

Fig. 3: Chapel, elevation of the south part (D. Andrews, in: Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', Fig. 5).

Fig. 4: Western alcove, view from east (Photo: G. Fingarova).

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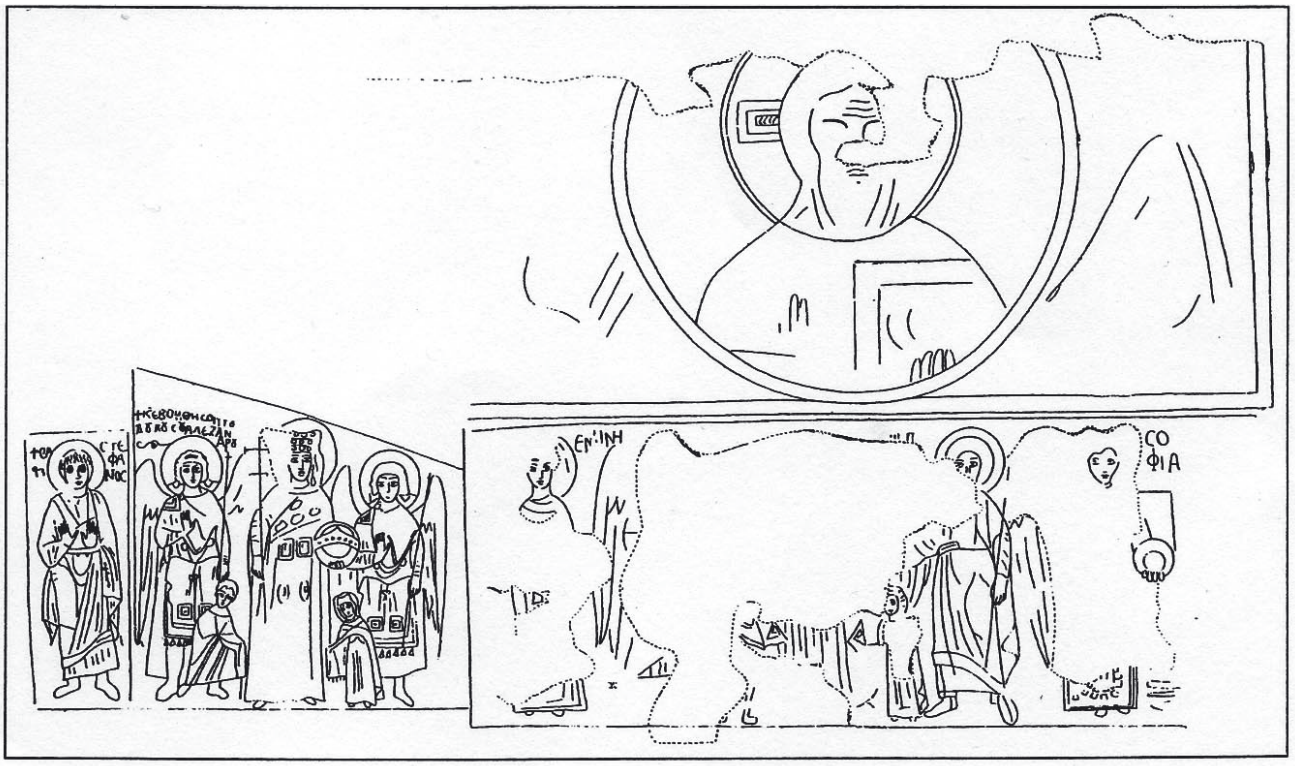

Fig. 5: Western alcove, line drawing of the decoration (Dhamo, 'Konsiderata mbi zhvillimin e mozaikut paleokristian në Shqipëri', Pl. III).

Fig. 6: Western alcove, view from northwest of the south and west walls (Photo: F. Gargova).

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Fig. 7: Western alcove, mosaic panel on the west wall (Photo: F. Gargova).

Fig. 8: Western alcove, mosaic panel on the west wall, detail of donor figures (Photo: G. Fingarova).

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Fig. 9: Western alcove, mosaic panels on the south wall (Photo: G. Fingarova).

Fig. 10: Western alcove, mosaic panels on the south wall, detail of donor figures (Photo: G. Fingarova).

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Fig. 11: Western alcove, painting on the ceiling (Photo with superimposed scaled line drawing of paintings: S. Diehl, P. Haipi, R. Das, in: Bowes/ Mitchell, 'The Main Chapel of the Durres Amphitheater', Fig. 7).

Fig. 12: Naxos, Drosiani, paintings in the dome (Drandakis, Οι παλαιοχριστιανικές τοιχογραφίες στη Δροσιανή, Pl. I).

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Henry Maguire

What is an Intercessory Image of the Virgin? The Evidence from the West

When the editors invited me to participate in this volume, they instructed me to discuss the intercessory function of Mary based on Art Historical evidence from Rome, Italy, and North Africa. This remit immediately raised an interesting and important question, namely: what is an intercessory image, and how can it be recognized? It is possible to argue that the very form of some image types, such as the Virgin depicted in prayer, or communicating with her son, imply the idea of intercession. But what can we say of the frontal representations of the Virgin and Child enthroned, which were by far the most common iconography in the sixth century, when portrayals of the Virgin first became numerous in Christian art? The composition of these frontal images often gives little indication that the Virgin is praying, or that she is engaging with Christ. She is usually shown sitting straight up, holding Christ on her lap, and staring out directly at the viewer. Her infant son, for his part, also sits bolt upright; there is no sign of interaction between the two. To what extent did these images, in which there is no indication of direct engagement between Christ and his mother, imply the idea of intercession?

In the pages that follow, I will first discuss the meanings of the frontal portraits of the Virgin in early medieval art, with an emphasis on western examples. Then I shall turn to the images whose form more explicitly implied intercession. I will conclude with some general observations about the creation of images with an intercessory function.

The existing evidence indicates that in the sixth century frontal portrayals of the enthroned Virgin and Child were polyvalent in their meanings. These images could function as doctrinal statements, demonstrating the humanity of Christ; as amulets, providing protection to patrons, wearers, or viewers; or as expressions of intercession. On some occasions it appears that the work of art could assume more than one of these roles at the same time.

A doctrinal significance for the frontally enthroned Virgin appears most clearly in the case of the splendid mid-sixth-century mosaic that fills the apse of the basilica built by Bishop Eufrasius at Poreč (Parentium) in Istria (fig. 1).[1] Here the enthroned Virgin and Child appear on axis with a portrayal of the mature Christ enthroned on the triumphal arch above, where he is flanked by his apostles.[2] Directly beneath the mosaic of the Virgin, on the central pier separating the windows of the apse, stands an angel holding an orb, which is filled with three concentric rings of differing shades of blue.[3] This association of images can be read as an expression of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Christ appears in his two natures, enthroned in heaven above, and held as an infant in the apse below. As for the globe with its three rings of blue, the sixth-century writer John of Gaza identified this motif as a symbol of the Trinity.[4] The theological concerns of the program are further demonstrated by the selection of St. Euphemia as the leader of the choir of female saints who frame the apse; she appears at the top of the intrados of the vault, on the right side.[5] It was in Euphemia's church that the council of Chalcedon had met in 451, and she subsequently became associated with the defense of the inviolability of its theology.[6]

A juxtaposition similar to that made by the mosaics in the apse of the basilica of Eufrasius can be found on sixth century ivories. For example, the two covers of the Saint-Lupicin Gospels, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, pair the enthroned Christ, depicted as the bearded ancient of Days, with the enthroned Virgin holding

[1] Ann Terry, Henry Maguire, Dynamic Splendor: the Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč, 2 vols., University Park, 2007, pl. 2.

[2] In the original mosaic, before the restorations, the Christ of the triumphal arch may have been bearded; see Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, 54, 137–9.

[3] Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, pls. 116–17.

[4] P. Friedländer, ed., Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius: Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit, Leipzig, 1912, 137–8, lines 41–4; Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, 128.

[5] Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, pl. 85

[6] Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, 133.

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Christ as an infant.[7] Each of these images is surrounded by subsidiary scenes, which emphasize the meaning of the juxtaposition. The Ancient of Days is framed by Christ's miracles, which demonstrate his divine nature, while the Virgin is framed by the episodes that preceded the birth of her son, which show his humanity. The latter include the journey to Bethlehem, where the carver shows Mary to be heavily pregnant.

In other contexts, the frontally enthroned Virgin may have been associated less with theology, and more with notions of amuletic protection. For a possible example of this kind of functioning of the image, we can turn to the ceramic tiles that were produced in North Africa during the sixth century for the decoration of churches and other buildings. These tiles bear a number of motifs, including animals, biblical subjects, and frontal reliefs of the Virgin enthroned with the Christ Child on her lap. Because the tiles were manufactured in molds, the same designs were repeated several times over, not only on different tiles, but also sometimes on the same tile. On an example found at Bou-Ficha in Tunisia, for example, we find identical reliefs of the Virgin placed side by side (fig. 2).[8] This repetition of the image argues that its primary purpose was not for the purpose of devotion, as it would not have been necessary or practical for a worshipper to address prayers to two icons at the same time. On the other hand, the repetition of portraits is a feature associated with semi-magical imagery on clothing. On silk sleeve bands of the seventh or eighth centuries, for example, we find identical images of an anonymous holy warrior holding a cross in one hand and spearing a serpent with the other, each repeated four times. In the case of these textiles, the motif did not convey the idea that the nameless holy personage was interceding with Christ on behalf of the wearer. On the contrary, the image acted as a charm, which had protective powers in its own right. The repetition of the motif served to intensify its protective effect. Together with the four warriors, each sleeve band also portrays four identical eagles with their prey. The repetition of this known apotropaic device enhanced the magic of the holy defenders.[9] A similar amuletic purpose may be attributed to the seventh-century tunics decorated with repeated identical tapestry-woven patches depicting the Adoration of the Magi (fig. 3). Some of these representations are so abbreviated that they are barely more than ciphers that evoke the scene.[10] Again, it is hard to see how they could have been used as a focus for prayer. It is more likely that, like the depictions of the holy warrior on the silks, their function was amuletic. As Gary Vikan has pointed out, the Magi were archetypal travelers.[11] The repetition of their image on one piece of clothing was an assurance of protection for wayfarers. A gold locket in the British Museum bears nielloed scenes of the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi together with the inscription "The secure safety and averting of all the evils."[12] It is possible that a similar possible apotropaic function may have been attributed to the repeated images of the Virgin enthroned at Bou-Ficha.

Although the frontal image of the enthroned Virgin and Child might be given a doctrinal or an amuletic significance, it could also function as a means of intercession. Its intercessory use is sometimes made explicit by an inscription, at other times by the presence of a supplicant in the image. A magnificent gold medallion at Dumbarton Oaks presents the Virgin and Child seated frontally on a lyre-backed throne between two angels and flanked by an inscription reading "Christ, our God, help us!" (fig. 4) The piece can be dated to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.[13] A lower status item of jewelry, a silver arm band now in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum at Toronto, also shows the Virgin with her Child sitting frontally on a lyre-backed throne, but this time she specifically is invoked by the inscription: "Mother of God, help Anna. Grace" (fig. 5). Evidence from the hoard in which it was found indicates that this armband can be dated late in the reign of Justinian.[14]

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[7] Jannic Durand, Ioanna Rapti, and Dorota Giovannoni, ed., Armenia sacra: mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (IVe-XVIIIe siècle) (exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre), Paris, 2007, 106–7, fig. 1.

[8] A. Driss, Treasures of the Bardo Museum, Tunis, 1962, pl. 41.

[9] Henry Maguire, The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium, Princeton, 1996, 124–6, figs. 109–110.

[10] Henry Maguire, "Garments Pleasing to God: the Significance of Domestic Textile Designs in the Early Byzantine Period," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 44, 1990, 215–24, esp. 221, fig. 29.

[11] Gary Vikan, "Pilgrims in Magi's clothing: the Impact of Mimesis on Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art," in Robert Ousterhout, ed., The Blessings of Pilgrimage, Urbana, 1990, 97–107.

[12] O. M. Dalton, Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum, London, 1901, 46–7.

[13] Marvin C. Ross, Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, vol. 2, Jewelry, Enamels, and Art of the Migration Period, Washington, D.C., 2005, 33–5, pl. A.

[14] Gary Vikan, "Two Byzantine Amuletic Armbands and the Group to which they Belong," The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery, 49/50, 1991/2. 33–51, esp. 38, 41, fig. 5d.

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Images of the frontal Virgin accompanied by supplicants are relatively frequent. Examples include a fresco in the Catacomb of Commodilla, in Rome, dated to around 528, which portrays the Virgin and Child enthroned between saints Felix and Adauctus, both of whom were buried in the catacomb (fig. 6).[15] Felix, standing on the left, places his right hand on the shoulder of a woman standing in front of him, in order to present her to the Virgin and the infant Christ. The woman, whose name, Turtura, is given by an inscription painted below, offers two candles to the holy mother and her son, which she proffers on a white cloth. The inscription informs us that Turtura has died at the age of sixty, and is buried in the catacomb. The picture, then, forms a visual prayer of intercession for the dead woman's soul.

A similar intercessory image that is centered on a frontal Virgin and Child could be found in the now lost sixth-century mosaics of the north inner aisle of the church of St. Demetrios at Thessaloniki.[16] This mosaic portrayed the Virgin seated on a lyre-backed throne flanked by two angels. On her right stood St. Theodore, and on her left St. Demetrios, who, with a gesture similar to that made by St. Felix in the Turtura fresco, placed his right hand on the shoulder of a man in order to introduce him to the Virgin.

The painting of Turtura suggests another function for the apse mosaic of the Eufrasiana at Poreč (fig. 1). As we have seen, this composition makes a theological statement about the two natures of Christ. At the same time, however, it functioned as an intercessory image, as is made clear by the group of supplicants on the left of the throne, who include the Bishop Eufrasius, offering a model of the church that he has commissioned, his archdeacon Claudius, holding a book, and a small boy bearing candles who, according to the inscription above his head, is also named Eufrasius. This trio of mortals is introduced to the Virgin and her infant by an angel bearing a golden staff. The angel assumes the same role as the ostiarios, the official who, according to the tenth century compilation of ceremonies of the Byzantine court, introduced foreign ambassadors to the emperor in the throne room of the Magnaura.[17] Thus the mosaic of the frontally enthroned Virgin, in addition to its role as a theological marker, is also a visual expression of intercession on behalf of the two adults and the child.

Although it is slightly later than the chronological scope of this book, it is worthwhile to look at a Roman mosaic whose iconography and function are very similar to those of Poreč, in that they are at the same time a demonstration of doctrine and an expression of intercession. However, in this later mosaic, the intercessory elements are made more explicit. The mosaic in question is in the apse of Santa Maria in Domnica, which dates to the pontificate of Paschal I, between 817 and 824 (fig. 7).[18] As at Poreč, we find Christ seated at the center of the triumphal arch, flanked by the apostles. Below, at the center of the apse and on axis with the representation of the mature Christ above, we find Christ held as an infant by the frontally enthroned Virgin. At the Virgin's feet, on the left side, kneels the pope, who holds her right foot in his hands. Both the Virgin and her Child are staring straight ahead, as in earlier images of this type, but now she gestures with her right hand towards her supplicant in order to acknowledge his veneration. Thus the mosaics at the same time express the dogma of the two natures and the idea of the Virgin's intercession.

The mosaic at Poreč can be related to two mosaics in the eastern empire, which no longer survive, but are known through literary descriptions. The earlier one is the mosaic in the sanctuary of the chapel of the Soros at the Blachernai, which held the relic of the Virgin's robe. According to a sixth-century account of the translation of the Virgin's robe from Palestine to Constantinople, the mosaic portrayed the "Mother of God seated on a throne" flanked by the Emperor Leo I, together with his empress Verina , their daughter Ariadne and their grandson Leo. The text states that the empress was depicted holding the infant Leo, while she "fell before our Lady, the Mother

[15] E. Russo, "L'affresco di Turtura nel cimitero di Commodilla, l'icona di Santa Maria in Trastevere, e le più antiche feste della Madonna a Roma," Bullettino dell' Istituto Storico Italiano per il medio evo, 88, 1979, 35–85, esp. 35–49; C. Barber, "Early Representations of the Mother of God," in M. Vassilaki, ed., Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art (exhibition catalogue, Benaki Museum, Athens, 2000), 253–61, esp. 254–5; Erik Thuno, "The Cult of the Virgin, Icons and Relics in Early Medieval Rome: a Semiotic Approach," Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam perninentia, 17, 2003, 79–98, esp. 87, fig. 7; Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, 141, fig. 293.

[16] Robin Cormack, "The Mosaic Decoration of St. Demetrios, Thessaloniki: a Re-examination in the Light of the Drawings of W. S. George," Annual of the British School at Athens, 64, 1969, 17–52, esp. 26–9, pls. 3, 7; idem, The Church of St. Demetrios: the Watercolours and Drawings of W. S. George, Thessaloniki, 1985, 70, pl. 32; Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, 146, fig. 296.

[17] De cerimoniis, II, 15; J.-P. Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca, vol. 112, col. 1049B-C.

[18] R. Wisskirchen, "Santa Maria in Domnica. Überlegungen zur frühesten apsidalen Darstellung der thronenden Maria in Rom," Aachener Kunstblätter, 61, 1995–7, 381–93.

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of God."[19] The mosaic should date during the lifespan of Leo, which was between 467 and 474. In all likelihood, the image of the Virgin and Child was frontal, as in the mosaics at Poreč and Thessaloniki. The description of the mosaic in the chapel of the Soros, with the empress presenting her infant grandson, and the presence in the same chapel of the Virgin's robe, which was known to have powers of protecting children, make it certain that the purpose of the image was to express the idea of the Virgin's intercession.[20]

The second text is a panegyric by the sixth-century orator Choricius of Gaza, which describes the now lost mosaics in the central apse of the church of St. Sergius in Gaza, built early in the reign of Justinian. According to the orator, the apse displayed "in the center the Mother of the Savior holding on her bosom her new-born son." At the far side of the composition was a portrait of the governor of Palestine, Stephen, who had built the church. Stephen, says Choricius, was "worthy of being included in the register of God's friends … especially because… he has donated the church to his fellow citizens …. He it is who, standing next to the patron of the church [St. Sergius], asks him to accept the gift graciously; the latter consents and looks upon the man with a gentle gaze as he lays his right hand on the man's shoulder, being evidently about to present him to the Virgin and her son, the savior."[21] Here, then, the chain of intercession is spelled out. At the top of the hierarchy is Christ, the savior, who is held by the Virgin, to whom St. Sergius, with the usual gracious gesture of the hand on the shoulder, introduces the governor Stephen. It is possible that Stephen, like Eufrasius at Poreč, held a model of the church that he had funded.

The mosaics at the Blachernai, Gaza, and Poreč suggest that the well-known portrayal of the enthroned Virgin and Child on the north wall of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna may also originally have been an expression of intercession (fig. 8). The present mosaics on the north and south walls of the church incorporate interventions made after the Byzantine conquest of Ravenna from the Ostrogoths. The alterations can be assigned to the period after the appointment of Archbishop Agnellus, in 556. All that remain of the original mosaics, set before the death of Theodoric in 526, are the Virgin and Child at the east end of the north wall, the enthroned Christ in the opposing position on the south wall, the depiction of the port of Classe at the west end of the north wall, and the portrayal of the royal palace at the corresponding end of the south wall.[22] Since there are the remains of figures in front of the walls of Classe and between the columns of the palace, it is possible that the excised mosaics depicted Ostrogothic supplicants before the Virgin and Child, just as the Virgin was approached by supplicants in the mosaic at the Balchernai, which was slightly earlier, or in the apse in Gaza, which was somewhat later. At Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, the surviving figures of the mother and Child both raise their right hands, as if to acknowledge the presence of petitioners approaching from the left. When the Byzantines altered the mosaics, they took out all of the figures that had originally approached Virgin and Christ on the north and south walls, and replaced them with two files of saints, females on the north, and men on the south. At the same time, they gave a political resonance to the content of the mosaics, by placing St. Euphemia at the head of the female martyrs on the north wall, an expression of the triumph of Chalcedonian orthodoxy over the Arian heresy of the Ostrogoths.[23] The alteration of the mosaics at Sant' Apollinare Nuovo shows how the one image type, the frontally enthroned Virgin, could be given different shades of meaning according to the context in which it was placed.

Another intercessory image of the frontal Virgin and Child that may be added here, even if of uncertain date, is the Madonna della Clemenza, a painted panel now in Santa Maria in Trastevere (fig. 9).[24] Its intercessory character is made explicit by the small image of a pope in prayer at the foot of the throne. In addition, the Virgin

[19] Cyril Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453, Toronto, 1986, 35; idem, "The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople," Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Split-Poreč, vol. 2, Vatican and Split, 1998, 61–75, esp. 70–71.

[20] As is evidenced by the story of the Virgin protecting a child with her robe that is told by Gregory of Tours; Gregorii Turonis opera, book I, 9; ed. W. Arndt and B. Krusch, Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum merovingicarum, vol. 1, part 2, Hannover, 1885, 494.

[21] Laudatio Marciani I, 29–31; translation by Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 62 and note 37.

[22] Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, Ravenna, Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes, vol. 1, Geschichte und Monumente, Wiesbaden, 1969, 175–6, figs. 257–260.

[23] Otto G. von Simson, Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna, Princeton, 1987, 86–7; Deichmann, Geschichte und Monumente, 199–200; Terry and Maguire, Dynamic Splendor, 133.

[24] Maria Andaloro, "La datazione della tavola di S. Maria in Trastevere," Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, 19–20, 1972–3, 139–215; Hans Belting, Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art, Chicago, 1994, 126–9, plate 2; Barber, "Early Representations of the Mother of God," 256–60, fig. 201; Gerhard Wolf, "Icons and Sites: Cult Images of the Virgin in Mediaeval Rome," in Maria Vassilaki, ed., Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium, Aldershot,

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originally held a metal cross in her right hand, which had been affixed to the icon as a votive gift.[25] In the present state of this icon, both the Virgin and her son face straight ahead; the body of the Virgin, in particular, is characterized by a statue-like rigidity, which makes no concession to the presence of her son on her lap. Nor do the holy figures make any move to acknowledge the supplicant, who kneels at the foot of the throne, looking up at them.

I will now turn to the portrayals of the Virgin that explicitly conveyed the idea of intercession through their form. With these representations, it was not necessary to have an inscription or a depiction of a supplicant to fix the intercessory meaning of the image; the design of the portrait itself conveyed the message. The image types that expressed the idea of intercession on their own can be divided into two categories, those which depicted an engagement between the mother and her Child, and those which showed the Virgin in prayer.

The famous Madonna in the sacristy of the church of Santa Francesca Romana, which now portrays the Virgin holding Christ on her right arm, expresses the idea of intercession through a subtle exchange of glances involving the viewer, the mother, and her son (fig. 10).[26] The Virgin's eyes, which are enlarged and very prominent, stare out at the viewer, not at her infant. At the same time, she turns her head toward her Child, who responds by raising his eyes up to his mother. Christ looks in the direction of his mother, and not at the viewer. Thus, according to the logic of the gazes, the viewer engages first with the Virgin, and not with her Child. The Virgin, with her turned and tilted head, then engages with Christ.[27] The design of the image itself, therefore, clearly conveys the process of intercession.

Unfortunately, the Madonna in Santa Francesca Romana is undated; it is often assigned to the seventh century, but has been put as early as the second half of the sixth century.[28] An earlier stage of the same iconography can be seen on the ivories that at present form the covers of the Etschmiadzin Gospels in Erevan.[29] The two covers are related to the ivories of the Saint-Lupicin Gospels, and can be dated to the middle or the third quarter of the sixth century. They make a juxtaposition that is similar to the covers in Paris. The front of the book displays the enthroned Virgin and Child surrounded by scenes of Christ's nativity, while the back shows Christ enthroned and framed by portrayals of his miracles. In the carving of the Virgin and Child at the center of the front cover, the mother looks straight outwards, engaging directly with the viewer. The Child, however, does not sit bolt upright in his mother's lap, as in the other images of the enthroned Virgin that have been discussed above, but instead adopts a partly reclining posture, leaning against his mother's left arm, and turning his head to look up at her. Thus there is a clear indication of some communication between mother and Child, which is missing in the other frontal images of the enthroned Virgin.[30] On the other hand, in the ivory the Virgin does not turn or incline her head to acknowledge the direction of her son's gaze, as she clearly does the case of the Madonna in Santa Francesca Romana, but her head is strictly frontal. The carving of the Etschmiadzin Gospels, therefore, seems to be a half-way phase between the full frontality of the earlier images of the enthroned Virgin, and the more fully engaged icons of the type of the Madonna in Santa Francesca Romana.

An image with similar characteristics appears on a gold ring now in Dumbarton Oaks, which was found in a horde that also contained objects datable to the sixth century, including coins of Justinian I (fig. 11).[31] On the bezel of the ring there is an engraving of the Virgin standing and bearing Christ in her left arm. The position of the Virgin's head appears to be frontal, that is, directed at the viewer, but she holds the body of her Child at an

2005, 23–49, esp. 37–9, fig. 3.8; John Osborne, "The Cult of Maria Regina in Early Medieval Rome," Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia, 21, 2008, 95–106, esp. 97.

[25] Per Jonas Nordhagen, "Icons Designed for the Display of Sumptuous Votive Gifts," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 41, 1987 (= William Tronzo and Irving Lavin, ed., Studies on Art and Archaeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on the Seventy-Fifth Birthday), 453–60; Barber, "Early Representations of the Mother of God," 259–60; Per Jonas Nordhagen, "In Praise of Archaeology: Icons before Iconoclasm," Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik, 60, 2010, 101–113, esp. 101.

[26] Pico Cellini, "Una Madonna molto antica," Proporzioni, 3, 1950, 1–6, pls. 1–9; Ernst Kitzinger, "On some Icons of the Seventh Century," in K. Weitzmann et al., ed., Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr., Princeton, 1955, 132–50, fig. 1 (reprinted in E. Kitzinger, The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West: Selected Studies, ed. W. Eugene Kleinbauer, Bloomington, 1976, 233–55); Belting, Likeness and Presence, 124–6, plate 1; Wolf, "Icons and Sites, 27–8, fig. 3.1.

[27] In the original icon, the inclination of the Virgin's head was greater; see Belting, Likeness and Presence, 126.

[28] Kitzinger, "On some Icons of the Seventh Century," 132–46; Belting, Likeness and Presence, 126.

[29] Durand, Rapti, and Giovannoni, ed., Armenia sacra, 105–107, no. 32.

[30] On the covers of the Saint-Lupicin Gospels, the Virgin looks down, but so does the Child, so that there is no communication between them; ibid, 107, fig. 1.

[31] Ross, Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, vol. 2, 138–9, pl. 98 "O".

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angle, as if he were reclining and looking up at his mother, a position that suggests a degree of engagement between them. Thus even if the Madonna in Santa Francesca Romana may be seventh century, as several scholars have proposed, there is evidence that images showing an engagement between the Virgin and her Child existed already in the sixth century, albeit in a less developed form.

To judge from the dated series of Roman mosaics, images that explicitly show the Virigin in prayer appear to have become popular at a later date, during the seventh and eighth centuries. In the apse of the chapel of St. Venantius in the Lateran Baptistry, the Virgin appears in the center of the apse raising both her hands in prayer.[32] She is flanked by saints and, at either end of the composition in the apse, the popes Theodore (642–49), holding a model of the church, and John IV (640–42) with a book. Directly above the Virgin, at the apex of the vault, appears the cloud-wreathed bust of Christ, to whom the Virgin is directing her petitions on behalf of the pontiffs below. A later mosaic of the orant Virgin was set by John VII (705–7) above the altar of his oratory in St. Peter's basilica.[33] The pope was shown in the mosaic standing to the left of the Virgin and presenting to her a model of the chapel. On his death, John was buried in front of the altar, beneath the mosaic. His epitaph explicitly brings out the intercessory character of the chapel and its images:

"Here Pope John set up a tomb for himself, and ordered that he be laid under the feet of the Lady, committing his soul to the protection of the holy mother, the unwedded Virgin and parent, who brought forth God …."[34]

The eighth century also sees the first datable appearance of the orant Virgin on pectoral crosses. One of the earliest examples is a gold cross that was found in a horde discovered at Palermo, which also contained coins dating to the reigns of Tiberius II, Leo III, and Constantine V, indicating that the treasure was not buried before 741.[35]

Another type of praying Virgin that appears on early icons from Italy shows her in a turning posture, in three-quarter view, with both hands outstretched, as if beseeching Christ beside her. A panel painting now in the convent of Santa Maria del Rosario has been dated between the sixth and the eighth century.[36] It depicts the Virgin with her head turned to the left, but staring directly out at the viewer with her eyes. Her raised gold hands are stretched out to her invisible interlocutor on the left, not shown in image, but left to the imagination of the viewer.[37] A similar image of the Virgin interceding with her hands stretched out was depicted in the now lost sixth-century mosaics in the north inner aisle of the basilica of St. Demetrios at Thessaloniki. In this mosaic, the Virgin was shown standing between a woman holding a child in her arms, on her left, and in all likelihood a portrait of Christ in a medallion above her to the right, to whom she addressed her intercessory request.[38]

I return, now, to my initial question: what is an intercessory image and what are the formal characteristics by which it can be recognized? The answer appears to be that there were two types of image of the Virgin in the early medieval west. In one type, the composition of the image itself conveyed the idea of intercession, either through an engagement of the mother with her Child, or through the Virgin's gestures of prayer. These images may legitimately be called "intercessionary". In the other type, the frontal image of the enthroned Virgin and Child,

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[32] Walter Oakeshott, The Mosaics of Rome, Greenwich, 1967, 150–53, figs. 99, 101; Gillian Mackie, Early Christian Chapels in the West: Decoration, Function, and Patronage, Toronto, 2003, 212–30, fig. 107.

[33] William Tronzo, "Setting and Structure in Two Roman Wall Decorations of the Early Middle Ages," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 41, 1987 (= William Tronzo and Irving Lavin, ed., Studies on Art and Archaeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on the Seventy-Fifth Birthday), 477–92, esp. 489–92, figs. 5–6; Thuno, "The Cult of the Virgin, Icons and Relics in Early Medieval Rome," 87, figs. 8–9; Osborne, "The Cult of Maria Regina in Early Medieval Rome," 97; Eileen Rubery, "Pope John VII's Devotion to Mary: Papal Images of Mary from the Fifth to the Early Eighth Centuries," in Chris Maunder, ed., Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary, London, 2008, 155–99, esp.158.

[34] Hic sibi constituit tumulum, iussitque reponi
Presul Iohannes sub pedibus domine,
Committens animam sanctae sub tegmine matris,
Innuba quae peperit virgo parensque Deum ….
Rubery, "Pope John VII's Devotion to Mary," 195–6, note 4.

[35] Brigitte Pitarakis, "Un groupe de croix-reliquaires pectorales en bronze à décor en relief attribuable à Constantinople avec le Crucifié et la Vierge Kyriotissa," Cahiers archéologiques, 46, 1998, 81–102, esp. 101.

[36] Belting, Likeness and Presence, 314–5, pl. 5; Maria Andaloro, "Le icone a Roma in età preiconoclasta," in Roma fra oriente e occidente, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 49, 2002, 719–53, esp. 723–4, fig. 7; Wolf, "Icons and Sites," 39–40, fig. 3.9.

[37] On the practice of rendering the hands of saints in gold, see Nordhagen, "In Praise of Archaeology: Icons before Iconoclasm," 106.

[38] Cormack, "The Mosaic Decoration of St. Demetrios, Thessaloniki," 34; Barber, "Early Representations of the Mother of God," 255, fig. 198.

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there was often no indication of either prayer or engagement between the holy figures. Nevertheless, both image types could be used to convey the concept of intercession, although the frontal type could also assume other roles, such as the demonstration of the two natures, or amuletic protection. The frontal images of the Virgin, therefore, may be called "potentially intercessionary", because they were multivalent, and not necessarily related to intercession in any one context.

The chronology of much of the material that we have examined is uncertain, but, on the evidence of the relatively few datable objects, it appears that in the West the frontal images, which were only potentially intercessory, preceded the explicitly intercessionary images, which either showed an engagement between the Virgin and Child or depicted the Virgin in prayer. The explicitly intercessionary images were created in response to a particular function of the older, less specific images, which were more ambivalent. The more the old frontal images Virgin were called upon to convey the idea of intercession, the more necessary it became to develop new image types that could illustrate this idea more effectively and better correspond with the viewer's needs. Thus, by the early sixth century the frontal type of the Virgin and Child probably served as an expression of intercession in the mosaics at Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, as it certainly did in the slightly later fresco of Turtura in the Catacomb of Commodilla and in the apse mosaic at Poreč, which dates to the middle of the sixth century. The dialogue between mother and son, which had not explicitly been shown in the early images, appeared in the Madonna in Santa Francesca Romana, which may be dated in the second half of the sixth or in the seventh century.[39] The orant Virgin, on the other hand, did not appear in the apses of Roman churches until the middle of the seventh century, although the type had appeared earlier in smaller scale objects elsewhere, such as the pilgrims' flasks from Palestine.[40] The lesson of the western portrayals of Mary, therefore, appears to be that the function of the image preceded the adoption of the corresponding image type – or, in other words, the desire of the viewer preceded the artist's response.

[39] A similar chronology can be found on imperial seals. The frontal image of the Virgin appeared on imperial seals at least as early as the reign of Maurice Tiberios, from 582 to 602 (John Nesbitt, Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art, vol. 6, Washington, D.C., 2009, 16–20, nos. 9.1–9.9) and possibly as early as Tiberius Constantine, from 578–82 (ibid., 16, no. 8.1), Justin II, from 574–8, or even Justinian, from 527 to 65 (ibid., 14, no. 6.1). On the other hand, the Hodegretria type, with the Child reclining, did not appear until the late seventh century, on the seals of Constantine IV (681–5), Philippikos (711–713), and Leo III (717–20) (ibid., 54, no. 24.1, 57, nos. 27.1–2, 58, nos. 28.1–2). See also Werner Seibt, "Die Darstellung der Theotokos auf byzantinischen Bleisiegeln, besonders im 11. Jahrhundert," in Nicolas Oikonomides, ed., Studies in Byzantine Sigillography, Washington, D.C., 1987, 35–56, esp. 36–38, figs. 1–3.

[40] André Grabar, Les ampoules de terre sainte (Monza – Bobbio), Paris, 1958, 43–4, 60–61, pl. 53 (Bobbio, no. 20).

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Fig. 1: Poreč, basilica of Eufrasius, apse mosaics.

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Fig. 2: Tunis, Bardo Museum, ceramic tile from Bou-Ficha. Virgin and Child.

Fig. 3: London, British Museum, tapestry-woven medallion from a tunic. The Adoration of the Magi.

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Fig. 4: Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, gold medallion. Virgin and Child with the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi.

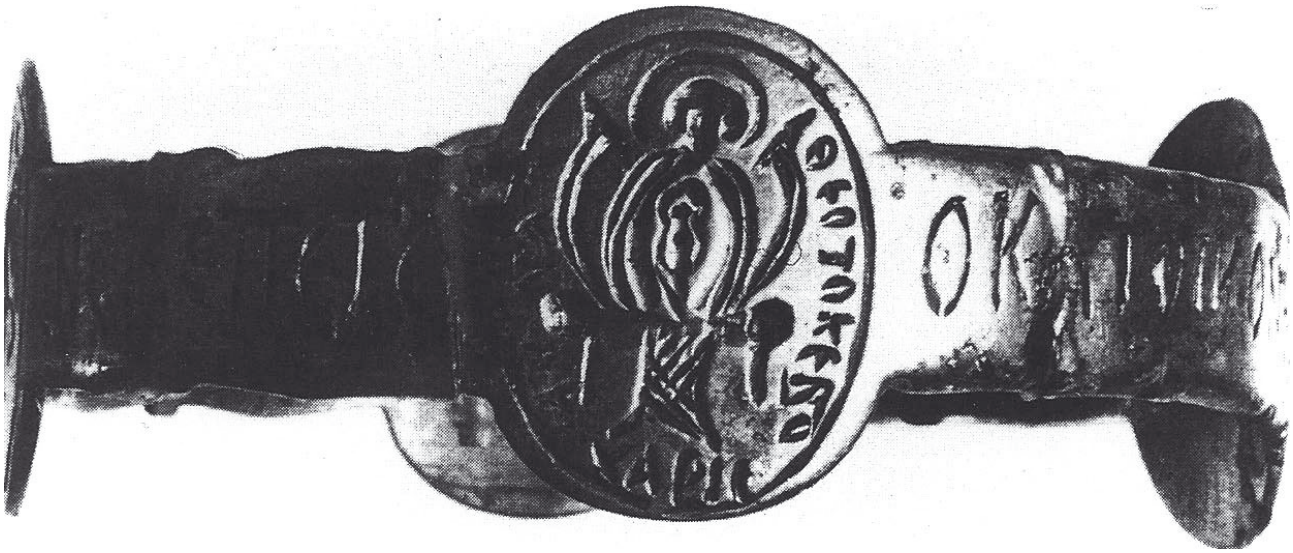

Fig. 5: Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, silver armband. Virgin and Child.

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Fig. 6: Rome, Catacomb of Commodilla, fresco. The Virgin and Child flanked by Turtura and Saints Felix and Adauctus.

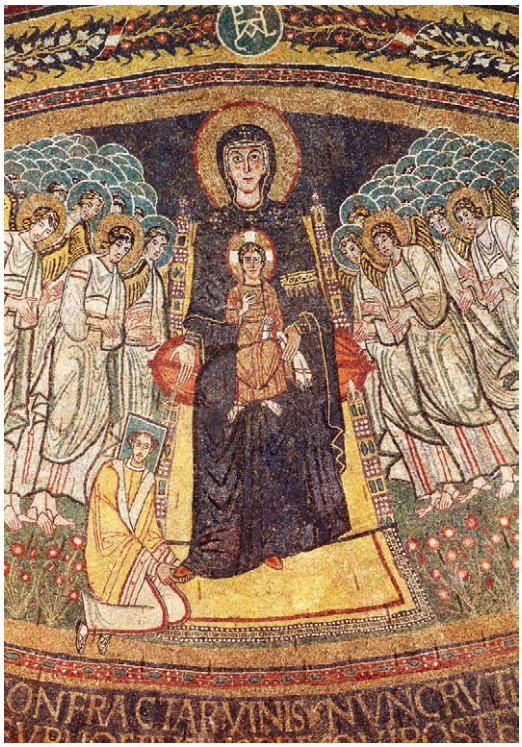

Fig. 7: Rome, Santa Maria in Domnica, apse mosaics.

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Fig. 8: Ravenna, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, mosaics of north wall.

Fig. 9: Rome, Santa Maria in Trastevere, painted panel.
The Virgin and Child with donor.

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Fig. 10: Rome, Santa Francesca Romana, painted panel. The Virgin and Child.

Fig. 11: Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Collection, gold ring. The Virgin and Child.

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Alexandra-Kyriaki Wassiliou-Seibt

Die sigillographische Evidenz der Theotokos und ihre Entwicklung bis zum Ende des Ikonoklasmus

Die Präsenz Mariens auf byzantinischen Siegeln bis zum Ende des Bilderstreits ist einerseits ikonographisch und andererseits in standardisierten Ausdrucksformen und Kompositionen nachweisbar, die in diesem Beitrag erörtert werden. Aus methodologischen Gründen ist eine Gliederung in zwei Hauptkategorien erforderlich: I. Kaisersiegel und II. Siegel aller anderen Personen (Private, kirchliche und staatliche Funktionäre). Auch für diesen Beitrag ist festzuhalten, dass das autonome Bild der Gottesmutter in der Kunst erst nach dem Konzil von Ephesos (431) auftritt, zuvor wurde Maria nur am Rande von christologischen Szenen miteinbezogen[1]. Die Anzahl der erhaltenen Patriarchensiegel von Konstantinopel[2] bis zum Ende des Bilderstreits ist spärlich: es handelt sich um vier Stück insgesamt, die sich weder im Bild noch im Text auf Maria beziehen. Aus diesem Grund werden sie in dieser Untersuchung nicht berücksichtigt.

I. KAISERSIEGEL

Für die Dokumentation und lineare Entwicklung der Theotokos-Darstellung auf byzantinischen Siegeln bis zum Ende des Ikonoklasmus eignen sich am besten die Kaisersiegel. Die Darstellung Mariens beginnt dort im 6. Jh. als primitive Büste mit dem Kinde vor der Brust, die das von Justinian I. „verchristlichte" Standbild der Nike/Victoria[3] ersetzte. Dieser Marientypus wurde zwar auf Kaisersiegeln nicht weitergeführt, fand aber die mit Abstand größte Verbreitung auf „Siegeln aller anderen Personen" in der Zeit vor dem Bilderstreit bzw. in der ikonophilen Reaktion. Während Werner Seibt diese Neuerung kurz vor dem Ende der Regierungszeit Justinos' II. ansetzte

[1] Der früheste Beleg (kurz nach 431) stammt aus Santa Maria Maggiore in Rom und ist uns über eine Inschrift bekannt, aus der zu entnehmen ist, dass (wohl in der Apsis dieser Kirche) Maria thronend mit Christus frontal auf dem Schoß dargestellt war. Dazu s. G. A. Wellen, Theotokos – eine ikonographische Abhandlung über das Gottesmutterbild in frühchristlicher Zeit. Utrecht – Antwerpen 1961, 120f. Vgl. auch Idem, Das Marienbild der frühchristlichen Kunst. *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie (LCI)* 3. Rom–Freiburg–Basel–Wien 1971, 157f. – Zur Präsenz der Theotokos auf Kleinkunstobjekten des Alltagslebens der frühbyzantinischen Zeit s. z. B. H. Maguire, Byzantine domestic art as evidence for the early cult of the Virgin, in: M. Vassilaki (ed.), Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium. Aldershot 2005, 183–194. Vgl. ferner die Beiträge von A. Effenberger und H. Maguire in diesem Buch.

[2] Ermitaž, M–6327: Siegel des Patriarchen Eutychios (552–565, 577–582), auf dem Av. die Büste eines bärtigen Heiligen, vielleicht Ioannes Chrysostomos, ed. V. Laurent, Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin. V. L'église. Paris 1963, Fasz. 1, Nr. 1 (im folgenden Laurent, Corpus V); G. Zacos, Byzantine Lead Seals. II, ed. J. Nesbitt. Bern 1984, Nr. 2 (im folgenden Zacos II); N. Oikonomides, A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals. Washington 1986, Nr. 1 (im folgenden Oikonomides, Dated Seals); DO 47.2.3: Fragmentarisch erhaltenes Siegel des Patriarchen Theodotos (815–821), mit einem Anrufungsmonogramm, wahrscheinlich Laurent VIII (Κύριε βοήθει), ed. zuletzt J. Nesbitt with the assistance of Cécile Morrisson, Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Vol. 6. Emperors, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Addenda. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D. C. 2009 (im folgenden *DOSeals* VI) 110.1 (mit älteren Editionen); DO 58.106.5703: Siegel des Patriarchen Antonios I. (821–837), mit dem Anrufungsmonogramm Laurent VIII auf dem Av., ed. zuletzt *DOSeals* VI 111.1 (mit älteren Editionen); Ermitaž, M–571: Siegel des Patriarchen Ioannes VII. (837–843), mit dem Anrufungsmonogramm Laurent VIII auf dem Av., ed. zuletzt Oikonomides, Dated Seals 49 (mit älteren Editionen). Erst Methodios I. (843–847), der die Verehrung der Ikonen wiederherstellte, ließ auf dem Av. seines Siegels ein Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm (Vorform des Typus Hodegetria) abbilden, welches von der Umschrift Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκε βοήθει umgeben wird. Dazu siehe Oikonomides, Dated Seals 50 (mit älterer Literatur) und zuletzt J. Cotsonis, The Imagery of Patriarch Methodios I's Lead Seals and the New World Order of Ninth-Century Byzantium, in: Legacy of Achievement. Παρακαταθήκη Ἔργου. Metropolitan Methodios of Boston. Festal Volume on the 25th Anniversary of his Consecration to the Episcopate (1982–2007). Boston 2008, 366–387. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen verwenden die Patriarchen von Konstantinopel nach dem Ende des Bilderstreits (bis heute) die Theotokos Hodegetria und die thronende Gottesmutter mit dem Kinde frontal auf dem Schoß für ihre Siegel.

[3] G. Zacos – A. Veglery, Byzantine Lead Seals. I. Basel 1972, 3a und b (nach Nummern zitiert; im folgenden Zacos – Veglery); *DOSeals* VI 4.3ff. – *En passant* möchte ich anführen, dass m. E. wegen der linearen Entwicklung *DOSeals* VI 7.2 doch Justinos I. und nicht Justinos II. zuzuweisen ist. Das heidnische Bildnis der Nike/Victoria (ohne Kreuze) wurde von Justinian I. „verchristlicht" und wohl von Justinos II. durch die Marienbüste ersetzt.

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(† 578)[4] und somit die ursprüngliche Annahme von George Zacos und Alexander Veglery[5] revidierte, die sich noch für Justinian I. entschieden hatten, befürworteten diese zuletzt John Nesbitt und Cécile Morrisson[6], was aber gegen eine lineare Entwicklung spricht, zumal Justinos II. zunächst die „verchristlichte" Nike/Viktoria weiterführte[7]. Von 582 bis 695, also von Maurikios Tiberios bis zum 1. Sturz Justinians II., ziert die Av.-Seite der Kaisersiegel eine Standfigur Mariens mit dem Kind vor der Brust (z. T. in einer Mandorla bzw. einem Clipeus). Dabei sind stilistische Feinheiten und Unterschiede auffallend (z. B. die Form des Clipeus, der Faltenwurf des Maphorions der Theotokos, die Haltung ihrer Hände, Form und Größe der Kreuze, die Maria zu beiden Seiten flankieren)[8]. Als einzige Ausnahme gilt Konstantin IV., der in der Zeit seiner Alleinherrschaft (681–685) den bisherigen Marientypus durch ein Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm (Vorform des Typus Hodegetria; die eigentliche Hodegetria zeigt mit der freien Hand auf das Kind) ersetzte[9], was nach dem Sturz Justinians II. im Jahre 695 Leontios erneut aufgriff[10]. Als Justinian II. im Jahre 705 zur Macht zurückkehrte, führte er m. E. noch kurz einen Siegeltypus mit seinem Bildnis auf dem Rv. und dem gängigen Standbild der Theotokos (Vorform der Hodegetria) auf dem Av.[11] Er wechselte aber noch 705 den Siegeltypus, indem er seinen Sohn Tiberios als Mitkaiser auf der Rv.-Seite darstellte und die Kreuze zu beiden Seiten des gängigen Madonnentypus durch Zypressenbäume mit runden Kreuzschildern auf dem Av. ersetzte (Abb. 1)[12]. Mit Philippikos Bardanes (711–713)[13] kehren die einfachen Kreuze zu beiden Seiten der Gottesmutter wieder zurück, bis Theodosios III. (715–717) je eine Zypresse links und rechts der Theotokos setzte[14]. Noch Leon III. führte in den ersten Jahren seiner Regierung den bisherigen Marientypus[15], zu beiden Seiten von einem Kreuz flankiert, ersetzte ihn aber zunächst durch ein Bildnis Konstantins V.[16], danach durch ein Krückenkreuz auf Stufen mit folgender Umschrift (griechische Legende mit lateinischen Lettern geschrieben): *En onomati tu Patros kai tu Yiu kai tu Agiu Pneumatos*[17]. Das Krückenkreuz auf Kaisersiegeln wurde das Leitmotiv der ikonoklastischen Regenten und fand erneut seine Fortsetzung in der zweiten Phase des Bilderstreites bis zu dessen Ende (843). In der ikonophilen Reaktion findet sich vereinzelt wieder das Standbild der Vorform der Theotokos Hodegetria (Av.), dieses Mal zu beiden Seiten von den Anrufungsmonogrammen Θεοτόκε (links) und βοήθει (rechts) flankiert[18]. Hiermit wird nun in Bild und Wort auf die Theotokos Bezug genommen, eine Form, die nicht nur auf Kaisersiegeln dieser Zeit gut vertreten ist (s. IId). Nach der

[4] W. Seibt, Die Darstellung der Theotokos auf byzantinischen Bleisiegeln, besonders im 11. Jahrhundert, in: N. Oikonomides (ed.), *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* (1) (im folgenden *SBS*). Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D. C. 1987, 36.

[5] Zacos – Veglery 4.

[6] *DOSeals* VI 6.1. Von der Umschrift auf der Rückseite des Siegels ist nur der erste Teil auf der linken Seite erhalten, der bei IVSTI endet. Die Autoren von *DOSeals* a. O. schließen im Kommentar die Hypothese IVSTINUS nicht aus, befürworten aber eher IVSTINIANUS, was der linearen Entwicklung widerspricht.

[7] *DOSeals* VI 7.1 (mit Kommentar); I. B. Sokolova, Pečati vizantijskich imperatorov. St. Petersburg 2007, 15 (nach Nummern zitiert).

[8] Hierzu s. *DOSeals* VI 9.1–22.3 und 25.1–26.1. Aus dem Schema fallen zwei Siegeltypen aus der Regierungszeit von Konstans II., die eine Büste Mariens mit einer Büste Christi (nicht im Medaillon) vor sich haltend aufweisen und in die Zeitspanne 654–659 zu datieren sind. Dazu Zacos – Veglery 18a–19; W. Seibt, Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich. 1. Teil. Kaiserhof. Wien 1977, 75–76 (im folgenden Seibt, Bleisiegel), und W. Seibt – M. L. Zarnitz, Das byzantinische Bleisiegel als Kunstwerk. Wien 1997, 29 (im folgenden Seibt – Zarnitz). – Als Dreiviertelfigur hingegen erscheint der gleiche Madonnentypus auf einem Siegel, das mit Vorbehalt Tiberios Konstantinos (578–582) zugewiesen wurde (s. *DOSeals* VI 8.1).

[9] *DOSeals* VI 24.1; V. Laurent, Les sceaux byzantins du Médaillier Vatican. Vatikan 1962, 7 (nach Nummern zitiert). Vgl. Seibt, Bleisiegel, 77), der diesen Typus erst mit Leontios (695) beginnen ließ – Konstantin IV. stellte auf dem Rv. eines anderen Siegeltypus aus der Zeit seiner Alleinherrschaft ein Krückenkreuz dar. S. dazu *DOSeals* VI 23.1–23.7 (mit älterer Literatur); vgl. Seibt –Zarnitz 1.1.3 (nach Nummern zitiert).

[10] Zacos – Veglery 27; vgl. Seibt, Bleisiegel, 77.

[11] Zacos – Veglery 25 (Justinian II. mit Vorbehalt zugewiesen). Im Kommentar zu *DOSeals* VI 24. 1 wird diese Hypothese bekräftigt. Seibt, Bleisiegel, 77, mit A. 7, weist das Stück erst Leontios zu.

[12] Zacos – Veglery 29. – Zur Zypresse als Symbol des ur- und endzeitlichen Paradieses in der christlichen Kunst J. Flemming-Red, Zypresse. *LCI* 4 (1994) 591–595.

[13] Zacos – Veglery 30a.

[14] Zacos – Veglery 32. – Ähnliches findet sich auch auf Objekten der Kleinkunst, wie z. B. auf einem Ring einer Münchner Privatsammlung. Dazu Ch. Stiegemann (Hg.), Byzanz. Das Licht aus dem Osten. Kult und Alltag im Byzantinischen Reich vom 4. bis 15. Jahrhundert. Paderborn 2001, Nr. 65.

[15] *DOSeals* VI 28.1–28.2 (mit älterer Literatur).

[16] Als Büsten *DOSeals* VI 29.1–29.2 (mit älterer Literatur); als Standfiguren *DOSeals* VI 30.1 (mit älterer Literatur).

[17] *DOSeals* VI 31.1–31.2 (mit älterer Literatur).

[18] *DOSeals* VI 38.1 (Nikephoros I., 802–803?) und 40.1 (Nikephoros I. und Staurakios, 803–811, jeweils mit älterer Literatur).

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Wiederherstellung des Bilderkultes stellten die byzantinischen Kaiser auf dem Av. ihrer Siegel Christus dar (zunächst als Büste, dann thronend und schließlich als Standfigur).

II. SIEGEL ANDERER PERSONEN

Damit sind die Siegel von privaten Personen, kirchlichen und staatlichen Funktionären gemeint. Diese Bleibullen weisen in ihrer einfachen Form nur einen Vornamen auf und als Erweiterung einen Titel bzw. ein Amt oder Kommando. In dieser Kategorie ist die Evidenz der Theotokos aufschlußreicher, weil sie sich in fünf Untergruppen zeigt, die gelegentlich auch gemischt sein können: a) Darstellungen, b) Anrufungen, c) Anrufungsmonogramme, d) Darstellungen mit Anrufungsmonogrammen kombiniert und e) Siegel, wo sich der jeweilige Siegelinhaber als „Diener der Theotokos" (δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου) bezeichnet. Innerhalb dieser Gruppen werden gegebenenfalls auch Sonderformen berücksichtigt. Bei a) und d) handelt es sich um Einzeldarstellungen der Theotokos (mit oder ohne Kind), äußerst selten finden sich mariologische oder christologische Szenen, wie die Verkündigung des Herrn (Χαιρετισμός) oder die Flucht nach Ägypten. Eine besondere Bedeutung für die chronologische Auswertung des Materials kommt den Siegeln aus Karthago zu, weil diese zeitlich engbegrenzt sind (533 – vor ca. 700).

a) Darstellungen

Die frühesten Theotokos-Darstellungen auf Siegeln aller anderen Personen sind ungefähr auf das letzte Drittel des 6. bis ca. 1. Hälfte 7. Jh. (mit wenigen Ausläufern aus der 2. Hälfte des 7. Jh.) einzugrenzen und weisen auf der Rückseite Blockmonogramme auf. Es sind primär frontale Büsten der Gottesmutter mit einer Christusbüste vor sich[19] oder eine Vorform der Theotokos Hodegetria als Büste[20] bzw. Standfigur[21]. Zu beiden Seiten der Darstellung sind Kreuze unterschiedlicher Größe angebracht, selten der Name[22] des Siegelinhabers. Aus dem bisherigen Rahmen fällt ein Stück (2. Hälfte 7. Jh.), auf dem das Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm von der Beischrift τῆς θεοστέπτου δεσποίνης flankiert ist. Auf dem Av. ein Blockmonogramm im Genitiv, was mit Ἰωάννου aufzulösen ist, als Umschrift (am Scheitel beginnend) κουβικουλαρίου. Es handelt sich also um das Siegel eines Ioannes, der κουβικουλάριος der Kaiserin war (Abb. 2)[23]. Letztere war entweder Fausta, die Gattin Konstans II. (642–668), Anastasia, die Gattin Konstantins IV. (668–685) oder Eudokia, die erste Frau Justinians II. Im fortgeschrittenen 7. Jh., wo die Kreuzmonogramme die Blockmonogramme weitgehend verdrängt hatten, bleibt diese Typologie erhalten, es findet sich aber zudem die Gottesmutter als Orantin (ursprüngliche Gebetshaltung der Christen), sowohl als Büste wie auch als Standfigur, vertreten[24], wobei diese Darstellungsart mehrfach im Siegelbestand von Karthago nachweisbar ist, eher als Büste (s. IId). Auf Kaisersiegeln andererseits ist dieser Typus nicht vertreten. Wenige Beispiele aus dem 7. Jh. führen eine thronende[25] Theotokos mit dem Kinde frontal

[19] Zacos – Veglery 1122, 1151, 1161, 1164, 1230, 1232; N. P. Lichačev, Istoričeskoe značenie italo-grečeskoj ikonopisi. Izobraženija Bogomateri v proizvedenijach italo-grečeskich ikonopisev i ich vlijanie na komposicii někotorych proslavlennych russkich ikon. St. Petersburg 1911 (im folgenden Lichačev, Ist. znač.), S. 66; Museum von Karthago (Foto in Wien), ed. K. J. Zografopoulos, Probleme sigillographischer Monogrammforschung, in: *Acta Musei Varnaensis* 7/2 (2008) 78, Abb. 2 (im folgenden Zografopoulos, Monogrammforschung).

[20] Lichačev, Ist. znač., Tafel V 2.

[21] Zacos – Veglery 1188; Lichačev, Ist. znač., Tafel VI 1.

[22] Zacos – Veglery 2942 (Bónou). Ähnliches findet sich auf drei einander sehr ähnlichen Stücken aus Ephesos (Byzantinischer Palast, Grabung vom Jahr 2006 bzw. 2008): Eine primitive Büste des Theotokos, mit dem Christuskind vor sich. Auf der rechten Seite (vom Betrachter aus) in der Form eines Kreuzmonogramms der Name des Siegelinhabers im Genitiv (Φοτινοῦ statt Φωτεινοῦ).

[23] Zacos – Veglery 1161. – Auf einem weiteren zeitgleichen Siegel bezeichnet sich Ioannes ebenfalls als κουβικουλάριος τῆς θεοστέπτου δεσποίνης. Auf dem Av. ein Anrufungsmonogramm vom Typus Laurent I, Θεοτόκε βοήθει (dazu s. u.), ed. Zacos – Veglery 1507. Die Editoren datierten beide Siegel irrtümlich ins frühe 8. Jh. und sahen hinter der θεόστεπτος δέσποινα die Gattin Leons III.

[24] Zografopoulos, Monogrammforschung 79, Nr. 1.1, Abb. 3 und 80, Abb. 7. Weiteres Material im Archiv der ÖAW; Zacos – Veglery 1184, 2944, 2952. – Zu dieser Darstellung der Gottesmutter s. allgemein Wellen, Theotokos 165ff.; cf. Byzanz. Pracht und Alltag. Bonn 2010, 185, Nr. 86 (goldener Armreif, dessen Schließe mit einer Büste Mariens als Orantin dekoriert ist, um 600 datiert. Aufbewahrungsort: British Museum).

[25] Zacos – Veglery 1109 (die Rückenlehne hat einen nach unten gebogenen oberen Rand. Diese Art der Rückenlehne findet sich auch auf einer frühchristlichen Ampulle, die die Anbetung der Hirten und Magier zeigt. Dazu Wellen, Theotokos 72 [Begleittext auf S. 73, Abb. 12b]); 1158 (lyraförmig) und Museum von Karthago (Foto in Wien) (lyraförmig); Zacos – Veglery 1217 (ohne Rückenlehne, links und rechts eine Zypresse) und 1236a (ohne Rückenlehne, zu beiden Seiten je ein Engel).

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auf dem Schoß an, manche haben eine lyraförmige Rückenlehne, in Einzelfällen hat der Thron keine Rückenlehne. Auch dieser Typus ist auf Kaisersiegeln nicht vertreten. *En passant* sei angeführt, dass in der monumentalen Kunst das autonome Bild der frontal thronenden Gottesmutter mit dem Kinde das älteste ist[26]. Vielleicht ist auch erster Typus (Büste der Theotokos mit einer Christusbüste vor sich) nur ein Ausschnitt des Typus der frontal thronenden Gottesmutter mit dem Kind vor sich. Seltener sind auf Siegeln jene Marienbildnisse ohne Kind, die von dem Typus der *imago clipeata*[27] beeinflußt sind. Alle bisherigen Beispiele stammen aus dem 7. Jh.[28]. Ausnahmsweise wird Maria mit dem Christuskind am rechten Arm (Dexiokratusa) dargestellt, bisher zweimal vertreten[29]. Die Typologie und Analogie in der Darstellungsart der Theotokos ist bereits vor dem Beginn des Ikonoklasmus abgeschlossen und bleibt in der ikonophilen Reaktion wie gehabt.

Wenige Exemplare mit Darstellungen der Muttergottes weisen anstelle der Kreuze zu deren beiden Seiten Sterne[30] bzw. Zypressen[31] auf. Gelegentlich wird eine Madonnendarstellung links und rechts von je einem Engel flankiert[32]. In einigen Fällen erscheint links und rechts Mariens der Name des Siegelinhabers aufgeteilt[33]. Eine kompositorische Rarität bilden einzelne Stücke, die auf dem Av. eine der obigen Theotokos-Darstellungen anführen, auf dem Rv. hingegen einen Adler mit ausgebreiteten Flügeln und darüber ein Kreuzmonogramm mit dem Namen des Siegelinhabers[34]. Innerhalb der Heiligendarstellungen sind hingegen die autonomen Marienbildnisse am stärksten vertreten (ca. 2/3). Mariologische Szenen sind selten anzutreffen. Einmal fand sich bisher die Verkündigung des Herrn (Χαιρετισμός) auf dem Av. eines Siegels aus Karthago (späteres 6.–ca. 1. Hälfte 7. Jh.) in der für die frühbyzantinische Kunst allgemein verbreiteten Darstellungsart[35]: Von der rechten Seite nähert sich der Erzengel Gabriel, vermutlich seine Rechte im Allokutionsgestus. Maria (stehend) auf der linken Seite lässt gerade das *velum* in den Korb, der zwischen ihr und dem Gabriel steht, fallen, mit ihrer rechten Hand begrüßt sie den Engel. Dazwischen ein sechsstrahliger Stern (als Symbol für die Gegenwart des hl. Geistes). Auf dem Rv. die Sonderform eines Monogramms (kommt den Blockmonogrammen sehr nahe) mit dem Namen des Siegelinhabers im Genitiv: Ἰωάννου (Abb. 3). Auf zwei ähnlichen Siegeltypen (7. Jh.) steht der Korb auf der linken Seite Mariens[36]. Ein synchrones Stück zeigt wiederum auf dem Av. die Flucht nach Ägypten. Maria sitzt auf dem Esel, das Kind trägt sie im linken Arm, Joseph schreitet voran[37].

b) Anrufungen

Mit wenigen Ausnahmen handelt es sich hier um das Incipit Θεοτόκε βοήθει formelhafter Legenden, die auf beide Seiten der Siegel verteilt sind. Die frühesten Belege stammen wohl ungefähr aus der Mitte des 7. Jh., mehrere aus dem späteren 7. Jh. und zählen zugleich zu den ältesten Belegen für den Gebrauch des Dativs in

[26] Wellen, Theotokos 147ff.; vgl. auch Idem., Das Marienbild der frühchristlichen Kunst. *LCI* 3 (1971) 157–158.

[27] Zum Typus s. Wellen, Theotokos 183ff.

[28] Lichačev, Ist. znač. 46, Abb. 58, 61 und 62 (Vergrößerung des Av.); 45, Abb. 57–59; 47, Abb. 63.

[29] *DOSeals* I 8.1 (ca. 2. Hälfte 7. Jh.), mit lateinischem Text: *D*(*ei*) *gen*(*etrix*), der seine Fortsetzung auf dem Rv. findet: *aiuba Theodoru episc*(*opu*) *Mess*(*anae*). Ein weiteres Beispiel, das ebenfalls eine Vorform der Theotokos Dexiokratusa aufweist bei Zacos – Veglery 2980 (Mitte bis 2. Hälfte 7. Jh.).

[30] Zacos – Veglery 1218; Lichačev, Ist. znač., Tafel. IV 3. Noch seltener findet sich beides kombiniert, wie bei Zacos – Veglery 1196 (links ein Kreuz und rechts ein Stern) oder Lichačev, Ist. znač. 116, Abb. 255–256 (über zwei großen Kreuzen ein Stern).

[31] Zacos – Veglery 1119, 1146, 1150 (Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm); 1109, 1158, 1176, 1217 (thronende Theotokos zwischen Zypressen); 1219 (stehende Orantin zwischen Zypressen).

[32] Zacos – Veglery 1125a, b, 1189 und 2948 (Standbild der Theotokos mit einer Christusbüste vor sich, links und rechts ein Engel); Zacos – Veglery 1136a (thronende Theotokos, zu beiden Seiten ein Engel. Der Thron hat keine Rückenlehne).

[33] Zacos – Veglery 1162, 1178, 1179, 1186.

[34] Zacos – Veglery 1157 (Av.: Büste der Theotokos mit einer Christusbüste vor sich. Rv.: Adler und Kreuzmonogramm Ἰωάννου, 7. Jh.) und 1176 (Av.: thronende Theotokos mit dem Christuskind frontal auf dem Schoß, der Thron hat eine Rückenlehne. Rv.: Adler, mit dem Kreuzmonogramm Λουκᾶ oder Λουκᾷ, 7.– frühes 8. Jh.). In diese Kategorie fällt auch Zacos – Veglery 2979 (Av.: Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm, links das Monogramm Θεοτόκε, rechts das Monogramm βοήθει. Rv.: Adler, als Kreuzmonogramm wohl Ἀβραμίου. Das Stück stammt vor dem Beginn des Ikonoklasmus).

[35] Dazu s. Wellen, Theotokos 40ff.; Vgl. den Artikel von J. H. Emminghaus, Verkündigung an Maria, in *LCI* 4 (1974) 424–437.

[36] Zacos – Veglery 2951a, b. Auf dem Rv. in der Form eines Kreuzmonogramms Παύλου χαρτουλαρίου.

[37] Lichačev, Ist. znač. 142, Abb. 330 und 331 (Vergrößerung des Av.). Auf dem Rv. ein in fragmentarischer Form erhaltenes Kreuzmonogramm mit dem Namen des Siegelinhabers.

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Siegelinschriften, der ab dem 8. Jh. eindeutig den Genitiv ersetzt[38]. Auf das Incipit kann unmittelbar der Namen des Siegelinhabers folgen oder die Floskel τῷ σῷ δούλῳ, seltener τῷ δούλῳ σου[39], darauf der Name des Siegelinhabers. Ausnahmsweise ist das obige Incipit als Umschrift einer Theotokos-Darstellung anzutreffen, wie z. B. auf dem Siegeltypus eines Paulos πατρίκιος (späteres 7. Jh.)[40] oder als Beischrift, wie auf einer anonymen Bulle aus der 2. Hälfte des 7. Jh. (Abb. 4)[41]. Auf einem einzigen Siegeltypus (ca. 710/730) bisher wird Maria mit Παναγία Θεοτόκε angerufen, gefolgt von dem Beinamen Σουβριτῶν (Subrita auf Kreta). Auf dem Rv.: + βοήθει τῷ δούλῳ σου Ταρασίῳ ὑπάτῳ[42]. Der Patriarch Methodios I. (843–847) führte nach der Wiederherstellung der Ikonenverehrung (843) auf seinem Siegel die Anrufung Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκε βοήθει (als Umschrift des Standbildes der Gottesmutter mit dem Kinde am linken Arm/Vorform des Hodegetria-Typus) ein, die noch Basileios I. Skamandrenos (970–974) anführte[43]. Aus vorikonoklastischer Zeit stammen fünf Siegel der Διακονία τῶν Βήρου, die im Kreisring des Av. die Umschrift Ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου anführen. Im Kreis eine Büste der Gottesmutter, die vor sich eine Christusbüste hält[44].

c) Anrufungsmonogramme

Schematisch handelt es sich dabei um Siegel, die auf dem Av. die Anrufung Θεοτόκε βοήθει in der Form eines Monogramms aufweisen, ein Modetrend, der um die Mitte des 7. Jh. einsetzt. Auf dem Rv. die Personalien des Siegelinhabers. In der Regel sind diese Kompositionen kreuzförmig, selten können sie auch als Blockmonogramme[45] oder als sonderförmige Monogramme konstruiert sein[46]. Ausnahmsweise wird Maria als Μῆτερ τοῦ Κυρίου Θεοῦ angerufen[47]. Eine übersichtliche Zusammenstellung dieser Materialgruppe findet sich im Tafelband von Zacos – Veglery[48]. Unter den Anrufungsmonogrammen allgemein bilden diejenigen, die an die Theotokos gerichtet sind, mit Abstand die Mehrheit, gefolgt von jenen, die den Herrn (Κύριε βοήθει) ansprechen. In wenigen Fällen beginnt die Anrufung mit Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ bzw. Χριστέ oder mit Ἁγία Τριὰς ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν u.dgl. Innerhalb der an die Gottesmutter gerichteten Anrufungsmonogramme überwiegen zwei Typen: Der sogenannte Typus Laurent I (Abb. 5): In der Mitte der Buchstabe Θ, am Ende des oberen Kreuzarmes T und O, am Ende des unteren B, am Ende des linken H und E, am Ende des rechten K. Durch den geringfügigen Austausch von K und H an den Enden des horizontalen Balkens, wobei ein spitzes E im K mitgelesen werden konnte, entstand im ausgehenden 7. Jh. der sogenannte Typus Laurent V (Abb. 6), der am meisten in Gebrauch war. Im 8. Jh. ist er fast ausschließlich vertreten. Im 9. Jh. erhielt er von anderen Formen Konkurrenz, wobei besonders Laurent Typus VIII: Κύριε βοήθει in der Zeit des Ikonoklasmus in den Vordergrund tritt. Erst in der ikonophilen Reaktion begegnet man wieder vermehrt den an die Theotokos gerichteten Anrufungsmonogrammen, jedoch in einer differenzierten Form: Substantiv und Verb sind jeweils in einem eigenen Kreuzmonogramm eingebettet und flankieren zu beiden Seiten eine Theotokos-Darstellung (mit einzelnen Ausnahmen ist es die stehende Vorform der Hodegetria): Θεοτόκε (links), βοήθει (rechts) (s. I und IId).

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[38] Zum Wechsel von Genitiv zum Dativ s. Zografopoulos, Monogrammforschung 82, 84.

[39] Vgl. Zografopoulos, Monogrammforschung 84; Zacos – Veglery 791, 797, 798. Ausnahmsweise können dafür lateinische Lettern verwendet werden (s. Zografopoulos, a. O.).

[40] Zacos – Veglery 1187 a, b. Auf dem Av. Standfigur der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm (Vorform des Hodegetria-Typus), die von der Umschrift (am Scheitel beginnend) Θεοτόκε βοήθη (für βοήθει) umgeben ist. Auf dem Rv. in der Form eines Blockmonogramms der Name des Siegelinhabers im Genitiv (Παύλῳ), links und rechts aufgeteilt sein Rang: πατ-ρικ(ίῳ). – Auf dem Siegel eines Theodoros Bischofs von Messana (ca. 2. Hälfte 7. Jh.) findet das seine lateinische Entsprechung. Dazu s. unsere A. 29.

[41] Zacos – Veglery 1223. Av.: Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm (Vorform des Hodegetria-Typus). Als Beischrift: + Θεοτόκε – + βοήθει. Rv.: In der Form eines Kreuzmonogramms Θεοῦ, in den Freiräumen χ-ά-ρ-ις.

[42] Seibt – Zarnitz 3.1.5; R. Feind, Byzantinische Siegelkunde. Eine Einführung in die Sigillographie von Byzanz. Regenstauf 2010 Nr. 21. Zu diesem Buch vgl. die Besprechung von Alexandra-Kyriaki Wassiliou-Seibt, *JÖB* 61 (2011) 253–255.

[43] Cotsonis, Imagery 8, 13–14. Vgl. Oikonomides, Dated Seals 50. – Mit Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκος wird zudem Maria im Kanon des Patriarchen angesprochen, ed. E. Bakos, Μεθοδίου Πατριάρχου Κανὼν Ἱκετήριος εἰς τὴν Ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον. *Επιστημονική Επετηρίς της Θεολογικής Σχολής Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών* 33 (1998) 729–760. Ebenso in seinem Kanon an die Gottesmutter.

[44] *DOSeals* VI 34.1.

[45] Zacos – Veglery 3069. Vgl. auch ebenda, Plate 257, Monogramme XXI, XXII und Plate 259, Monogramm XXIA.

[46] Zacos – Veglery 3047. Vgl. auch ebenda, Plate 257, Monogramm XIX und Plate 259, Monogramm XIXA.

[47] Zacos – Veglery, Plate 259, Monogramme LXXVI und LXXVII.

[48] Zacos – Veglery, Plate 257, Monogramm XVI–Plate 258, Monogramm LXV und Plate 259, Monogramm XIVAff. – Zur Thematik s. auch den Artikel von W. Seibt, Monogramm, in: *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst* 6 (1999) 590–614, hier 594–597.

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In den vier Zwickeln des Kreuzes ergab sich des öfteren viel Freiraum, der zumeist mit der Formel τῷ σῷ δούλῳ (in vier Teile zerlegt) gefüllt wurde (seltener mit der z. B. in der 1. Hälfte des 8. Jh. beliebten Variante τῷ δούλῳ σου). Gelegentlich findet sich in jedem Zwickel ein Kreuz bzw. Stern. Nach dem Ende des Bilderstreits gewinnen die an die Theotokos gerichteten Anrufungsmonogramme wieder an Beliebtheit. Allgemein waren sie bereits im 10. Jh. selten, im 11. Jh. findet man sie kaum mehr.

d) Kombination: Marienbildnis und Anrufungsmonogramme

In diese Gruppe fallen jene Siegel, die auf dem Av. eine Mariendarstellung aufweisen, auf der linken Seite begleitet vom Monogramm (Θεοτόκε) und auf der rechten vom Monogramm βοήθει. Dieser Trend ist charakteristisch in der ikonophilen Reaktion (787–815) und hat seine Pendants auf den Kaisersiegeln der Zeit (s. oben). Die Gottesmutter ist in der Regel als Standfigur mit dem Kinde am linken Arm (Vorform des Typus Hodegetria) (Abb. 7)[49], seltener mit einer Christusbüste vor sich dargestellt[50]. Einzelne Beispiele reichen sogar kurz über das Ende des Bilderstreits hinaus[51]. Der Typus als solcher war aber bereits vor dem Beginn der Ikonoklasmus in Gebrauch[52], manche Vertreter stammen eindeutig aus dem 7. Jahrhundert (frühestens kurz nach der Mitte)[53]. Allgemein ist die Rv.-Seite dieser Siegelgruppe beschriftet.

Auch innerhalb dieser Gruppe gibt es Stücke, die kompositorische Besonderheiten aufweisen, wie folgende Beispiele belegen:

1. Zacos – Veglery 1160 (ca. 2. Hälfte 7. Jh.)

Av.: Stehende Theotokos mit dem Kinde am linken Arm (Vorform der Hodegetria). Links als Monogramm die Verbalform βοήθει, rechts als Kreuzmonogramm der Name des Siegelinhabers im Genitiv: Ἰωάννου. Rv.: Nochmals der Name des Siegelinhabers im Genitiv, diesmal in der Form eines Sondermonogramms, das den Blockmonogrammen sehr nahe kommt.

2. Zacos – Veglery 2980 (ca. späteres 7. – Beginn 8. Jh.)

Av.: Standbild der Theotokos mit dem Kinde am rechten Arm. Zu ihrer rechten Seite das Anrufungsmonogramm vom Typus Laurent I (Θεοτόκε βοήθει), zu ihrer linken Seite die Sonderform eines Monogramms (ähnlich den Blockmonogrammen), das den Namen des Siegelinhabers enthält (vielleicht Δονάτῳ). Unter dem Monogramm ein Stern als Zierelement. Rv.: Als sonderförmiges Monogramm σπαθαρίῳ, in den Freiräumen verteilt S (für καί) τ-ου-ρμ-άρχη. Die früheren Editoren lösten das Monogramm auf dem Av. als Δαμιανῷ auf.

3. Zwei anonyme Siegel im Museum von Karthago (Fotos in Wien) zeigen auf dem Av. eine Büste Mariens in Orantenhaltung, links und rechts ein griechisches Kreuz. Auf dem Rv. findet sich das Anrufungsmonogramm Laurent I (Θεοτόκε βοήθει). Beide Stücke stammen aus der 2. Hälfte des 7. Jh.

e) Δουλος της Θεοτοκου

Als typologische Einheit ist eine Reihe von Siegeln des 7. Jh. zu betrachten, wo sich der Siegelinhaber als „Diener der Gottesmutter“[54] bezeichnet. In der Regel werden auf der einer Seite der Name, gelegentlich auch der Rangtitel bzw. die Funktion angegeben, und auf der anderen δούλου τῆς Θεοτόκου. Auf beiden Seiten des Siegels ist dem Text ein griechisches Kreuz vorangesetzt. Ausnahmsweise steht δοῦλος statt δούλου, also der Nominativ anstelle des Genitivs[55]. Vereinzelt folgt die Angabe δούλου τῆς Θεοτόκου unmittelbar nach dem Namen des Siegelinhabers, danach ein Titel bzw. Amt[56]. Selten findet sich auf dem Av. ein Marienbildnis und auf dem Rv. eine

[49] Zacos – Veglery 1329ff. und 2982–2984; *DOSeals* I 7.1; 9.1; *DOSeals* II 25. 1; II 66.5.

[50] J. Nesbitt – A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt – W. Seibt, Highlights from the Robert Hecht, Jr. Collection of Byzantine Seals. Thessaloniki 2009, 14 (nach Nummern zitiert) Rv: [+] Συμεὼν μητροπολ(ίτῃ) Σελευκίας (8./9. Jh.).

[51] *DOSeals* III 34.2. Vgl. Seibt – Zarnitz 5.2.5.

[52] Zacos – Veglery 1333–1334, 1346, 1332a, 1334a, 1349a; *DOSeals* I 74.2.

[53] Zacos – Veglery 1160 (Sonderform), 1347, 1349.

[54] Zacos – Veglery 789, 816, 825, 833, 837, 838, 863b, 900, 931, 932a,b, 933, 949a, b, 960a, b, 1007, 1012, 1027, 1030, 1041, 1055, 1064, 1069, 1084, 1191, 1192, 2891, 2931.

[55] Zacos – Veglery 816.

[56] Zacos – Veglery 932a, b, c, 933, 1147a.

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Legende mit dem Namen des Siegelinhabers, der sich am Ende als „Diener der Theotokos“ ausgibt[57]. Ausnahmsweise findet man diese Formel als Kreuzmonogramm[58].

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die sigillographische Evidenz Mariens bis zum Ende des Bilderstreits ist in der Ikonographie und in sprachlichen Ausdrucksformen nachvollziehbar. Das autonome Bild der Gottesmutter auf Kaisersiegeln (I) beginnt im 6. Jh. (zunächst als primitive Büste mit dem Kinde vor der Brust) und endet mit der Vorform des Hodegetria-Typus, den noch der ikonoklastische Kaiser Leon III. am Beginn seiner Regierung verwendete. Bei der Wahl bzw. den Änderungen der Gottesmutter-Darstellungen spielten auch aktuelle kulturhistorische Moderichtungen sowie politische Einschnitte eine gewisse Rolle. Kaiser Leontios z. B. signalisierte mit der Vorform des Hodegetria-Typus, dass nach dem Sturz seines Vorgängers Justinian II. (695) eine neue Ära begonnen habe. Nach der Wiederherstellung des Bilderkultes wurde auf Kaisersiegeln wiederum Christus dargestellt, da die Ikonomachie endgültig besiegt worden war.

Aus dem Rahmen der Untersuchung fallen die Patriarchensiegel, da die Theotokos im erhaltenen Siegelbestand der betreffenden Epoche keine Relevanz besaß.

Aufschlussreicher ist die Präsenz Mariens auf den Siegeln anderer Personen, Funktionären des Staates und der Kirche (II). Im Gegensatz zu den Kaisersiegeln finden sich auf ihnen weitere Darstellungsarten (Typen), die zum Großteil aus dem persönlichen Geschmack der Siegelinhaber resultieren: a) Orans, b) thronend mit dem Kinde frontal auf dem Schoß, c) ohne Kind, ähnlich wie eine *imago clipeata*. Typologisch ist die Darstellungsart der Gottesmutter bereits vor dem Beginn des Ikonoklasmus abgeschlossen. Mariologische Szenen bilden eine Rarität. Zudem fand die Theotokos in den Siegeln der Funktionäre ihre Manifestation in standarisierten Ausdrucksformeln: in Anrufungen, Anrufungsmonogrammen und in der Selbstbezeichnung seitens der Siegler als „Diener der Theotokos“ (δοῦλος τῆς Θεοτόκου). Die Anrufungen und die Anrufungsmonogramme, die an die Gottesmutter gerichtet waren, erfuhren während des Bilderstreits erwartungsgemäß eine starke Reduktion, die in der Zeit der ikonophilen Reaktion wieder etwas zurückging. Nach dem Sieg der Orthodoxie (843) gewannen sie erneut an Beliebtheit.

[57] Zacos – Veglery 1191–1192 (Av.: Madonnenbüste mit der Christusbüste vor sich. Rv.: Πέτρου δούλου τῆς Θεοτόκου. Die beiden Stücke sind ähnlich, aber nicht stempelidentisch).

[58] Zacos – Veglery, Plate 257, Monogramme IX und X.

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Abb. 1: Av.-Seite des Siegeltypus Kaisers Justinians II. mit Tiberios (Mitkaiser)
(nach Zacos – Veglery 29; Bleisiegel).

Abb. 2: Bleisiegel des Ioannes κουβικουλάριος τῆς θεοστέπτου δεσποίνης
(nach Zacos – Veglery 1161).

Abb. 3: Av.-Seite (Verkündigung des Herrn/Χαιρετισμός) des Bleisiegels des Ioannes;
Museum von Karthago.

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Abb. 4: Anonymes Bleisiegel (nach Zacos – Veglery 1123).

Abb. 5: Anrufungsmonogramm vom Typus Laurent I
Rv.-Seite eines anonymen Bleisiegels aus Karthago.

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Abb. 6: Anrufungsmonogramm vom Typus Laurent V; Av.-Seite des Bleisiegels des Gregoras πατρίκιος καὶ β. πρωτοσπαθάριος (Sammlung A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt).

Abb. 7: Av.-Seite des Bleisiegels des Sergios μητροπολίτης Καρίας (nach Zacos – Veglery 2982a).

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Presbeia Theotokou: A Bibliography

This bibliography, compiled by Andreas Külzer, serves as a working tool for further studies on the Marian cult and different issues concerning *Presbeia Theotokou*. It is based on the references made in the present volume. Included are primarily books and academic papers, as well as articles and contributions in exhibition catalogs, encyclopedias and dictionaries. Editions and translations of single sources were only included if they contained in their comment sections information essential for the aims of this volume.

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