MELITA THEOLOGICA

Journal of the Faculty of Theology

L-Università ta' Malta

ISSN: 1012-9588

Press: Best Print, Qrendi, Malta

Melita Theologica ***is a peer-reviewed journal of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta. The journal has been published biannually since 1947, initially by the then Royal University Students Theological Association (RUSTA) and, since 1980, as a joint venture between the Theology Students Assocation and the Faculty of Theology. As from 2012 Melita Theologica is being published jointly by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta, the Theology Students Association, and the Foundation for Theological Studies.***

MELITA THEOLOGICA

Volume 69 – Number 2 **2019**

Published jointly by:
The Faculty of Theology, University of Malta;
Theology Students Association;
Foundation for Theological Studies

Editorial Office & *Subscriptions:*
Melita Theologica
Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080
Malta

melitatheologica@um.edu.mt

Contents

Yearly subcription for two issues:
Malta: €12.00
Europe: €25.00
Other Countries: €30.00

MELITA THEOLOGICA
Journal of the Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
69/2 (2019): 127-151

Joseph Carola*

Making Patristics Pertinent: Theological Echoes and Anticipations from John Henry Newman's 1833 Mediterranean Tour

Beyond the bare facts, little is popularly known about John Henry Newman's 1833 Mediterranean tour. While Newman's biographers describe his journey in lively detail,[1] common knowledge is generally limited to three facts. Firstly, beginning in December of 1832, Newman spent seven months travelling across the Mediterranean Sea. Secondly, during the last leg of his journey, he fell gravely ill with typhoid fever in Sicily, and, thirdly, while sailing to Marseilles en route back to England, he composed his famous poem *The Pillar of the Cloud* better known by its opening line "Lead, Kindly Light." The Maltese may themselves be mindful of the unpleasant month that Newman spent in Malta where, at first, he

* Joseph Carola is a member of the United States Central and Southern Province of the Society of Jesus. He teaches patristic theology and Church history at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. His various publications include *Augustine of Hippo: The Role of the Laity in Ecclesial Reconciliation* and three volumes on priestly life and ministry, entitled *Conformed to Christ Crucified*. His present area of research considers the retrieval of the Church Fathers in nineteenth-century Catholic theology.

[1] See Vincent Ferrer Blehl, *Pilgrim Journey: John Henry Newman 1801-1845* (London: Burns & Oates, 2001), 112-128; Louis Boyer, *Newman: Sa vie. Sa spiritualite* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1952), 153-202; Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and His Age* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990), 94-108; Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 54-80; Bertram Newman, *Cardinal Newman: A Biographical and Literary Study* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1925), 30-35; Meriol Trevor, *Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1962,112-143); Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912), 50-55; Dr. Zeno, *John Henry Newman: His Inner Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 60-66.

was quarantined for twelve days in the Lazaretto and then afterwards confined to his hotel room for close to a week on account of a severe cough brought on by the cold night air. Thus, initially quarantined and confined, Newman had only a few days remaining in order to see the sights before he departed for Sicily and the Italian peninsula. In his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, Newman himself dedicates only three pages to those seven months in southern Europe.[2] In those pages, his chief concern is to demonstrate, firstly, what little contact he had with Catholics while abroad and, secondly, how attentively he followed political and ecclesiastical events then unfolding in England. The latter convinced him, that upon his return to England, he had a work to do. In contrast to the *Apologia*, however, Newman's *Letters and Diaries* offer abundant information about his Mediterranean tour.

In letters sent home to family and friends, Newman recounts in great detail not only the sights that he has seen, but also the thoughts that those scenes have provoked. From Rome, in a long letter to his sister Jemima, he explains, "I have been writing a great many letters, as long as this is - which, I think, does me much credit. Each is nearly a sermon in point of matter."[3] These letters have provided his biographers with a wealth of information. Their scholarly interest in Newman's Mediterranean correspondence, however, has been mainly biographical and historical. But Newman's epistolary reflections are also theologically rich. They draw upon his previous research and give glimpses into his future theological development. As we shall see, John Henry Newman's 1833 Mediterranean tour proves to be a voyage of theological echoes and anticipations that make his previous patristic studies particularly pertinent. Journeying with young Newman across the Mediterranean Sea, we ourselves shall undertake a biographical-historical voyage viewed through a theological lens. Our own itinerary will be both thematic and geographic. Along the way, we shall linger at Malta.

Newman's Patristic Scholarship

Before we embark for the Mediterranean, it is necessary to recall Newman's scholarly endeavors before and after his 1833 journey. In March of 1831, Hugh James Rose requested that John Henry Newman contribute a history of the early Church councils for a new library of theological works that he was co-editing along with William Rowe Lyall. Newman's research for that volume soon

---

[2] See John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 150-152.

[3] John Henry Newman , "To Jemima Newman, 20 March 1833," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, eds. Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979), 3:265.

concentrated solely upon the fourth-century Arian crisis. That study instilled in Newman a great appreciation for the Alexandrian Church in general and Athanasius in particular.[4] Newman completed his manuscript in September of 1832, but he did not publish the work until November of the following year. Among other topics treated in *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, Newman highlights the role of the laity in defending the orthodox faith when ecclesiastical rulers betray it. To illustrate his argument, Newman quotes a passage from Hilary of Poitiers: "Sanctiores sunt aures plebis quam corda sacerdotum" (The ears of the people are holier than the hearts of priests.) As we shall see, during the winter of 1833 at both Malta and Sicily, Newman's patristic research for *Arians* finds poignant confirmation in the witness of two Catholic laymen who attest to their faith when, for diverse reasons, the clergy fail to do so. This particular echo is likewise an anticipation. In his 1859 *Rambler* article, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, Newman will apply these same patristic insights to the question of the laity's role in the Catholic Church. Citing Hilary yet once again, he will argue for the *consensus fidelium*'s indispensable role in witnessing to the orthodox faith in a time of crisis when there is a momentary suspension of the *Ecclesia docens*.

As Newman traveled throughout the Mediterranean, news reached him of the newly elected Whig Parliament's machinations against the Church of England.[5] The Whig party agenda did not bode well for the freedom of the English Church.[6] Newman's thoughts immediately turned to the Church Fathers - to Athanasius and Ambrose in particular. For during the Arian crisis both had opposed Arianizing Emperors. Newman likened to Ambrose his friend and colleague, John Keble, whom the government's intervention in ecclesiastical matters had roused to action.[7] Within a week of Newman's return to England in July of 1833, Keble mounted the pulpit in Saint Mary the Virgin, Oxford University's parish church, and preached the Assize Sermon on *The National Apostasy*, protesting against the Whig Parliament's Irish Church Temporalities Bill that had suppressed ten Anglican Sees in Ireland and effectively reduced

---

[4] See Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 145.

[5] See John Henry Newman, *LD* v. III, 224 (To Mrs Newman, 28 Feburary 1833).

[6] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 292-293 (To Walter John Trower, 16 April 1833).

[7] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 264 (To Jemima Newman, 20 March 1833): "We find Keble at length is roused, and (*if* once up) he will prove a second St Ambrose - others too are moving - so that wicked Spoliation Bill is already doing service, no thanks to it."

Anglicanism to a branch of government. Newman insists that Keble's sermon marked the beginning of the Oxford Movement.[8]

In the following months and years, Newman's *Letters on the Church of the Fathers* and his contributions to the *Tracts for the Times* will form part of his efforts at a second Anglican reformation. In the first three of his *Letters on the Church of the Fathers* published in the *British Magazine* in the autumn of 1833 just as *Arians* appeared in the bookshops, Newman recounts Ambrose's heroic, fourth-century opposition to the Arian Boy-Emperor Valentinian II and his formidable mother, the Empress Justina. When the Imperial Court attempted to requisition the Portian Basilica located outside Milan's city walls for Arian worship, Ambrose resisted with all his might. Bereft of governmental backing, the Bishop of Milan turned to the laity for support. Even Augustine's mother, Monica, joined the Catholic resistance then occupying that basilica in order to impede an Arian takeover. In the 1830s, the new imperial foe was an infidel Parliament whose creature the English King had become.[9] Just as the Church Fathers had defended the faith against the Arian imperial party, Newman envisioned the Oxonians defending the Church of England with their own patristic armament. Mindful that king and aristocracy have failed the English Church, Newman insists, in the spirit of Ambrose: "We must *look to the people*."[10] Thus, in both *Arians* and the *Letters on the Church of the Fathers*, Newman identifies the laity's significant role in matters of faith. He applied his patristic studies in a not-so-subtle manner to the contemporary crisis confronting Anglicanism. From 1834 to 1837, Newman appealed to the Ancient Church in his construction of a theological *Via Media* between Roman corruptions and Protestant heresy for the sake of Anglican ecclesiastical reform. His volume *Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism* outlines that initiative. As we shall see, that volume's various principles are, in fact, already discernable in seminal form in Newman's epistolary observations from the Mediterranean. Also, clearly discernable are the seeds of Newman's later work on doctrinal development and the grammar of assent.

---

[8] See Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 152.

[9] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 293 (To Walter John Trower, 16 April 1833).

[10] John Henry Newman, "What does St. Ambrose Say About It?," in *The Church of the Fathers* (Notre Dame: Gracewing, 2002), 340: italics in the original.

Embarkment

On 8 December 1832, along with his sickly friend Richard Hurrell Froude and Froude's father, the Archdeacon Robert Hurrell Froude, a thirty-one-year-old John Henry Newman boarded the *Hermes*, a coal-fueled, steam-powered vessel bound for the Mediterranean. The younger Froude's health had been failing, and a winter excursion in the Mediterranean was thought to be an ideal remedy - Young Froude will, in fact, die from Tuberculosis some three years later -. The Froudes easily managed to convince an exhausted Newman to join them. His manuscript on the fourth-century Arian crisis, completed the previous summer, had costed him dearly, and he was much in need of a break. He had permission from his Bishop to absent himself from his ministerial duties until Easter. But once on board the *Hermes*, Newman wrote to His Lordship in order to request an extension. "For many years I have been in a weak state of health," he explains:

> Brought on, I may say without exaggeration, by a pressure of work in the University, and medical men have told me nothing would avail me but change of air [...] I may attribute much of my present weakness to overwork when I was curate of St Clement's.[11]

Oxford's Anglican Bishop, Robert Bagot, soon afterwards granted Newman's request and freed him until the following September. The young Oxonian's first days on board the *Hermes* proved to be just what the doctor had ordered. "Today has been the most pleasurable day, as far as external causes go, I have ever had, that I can recollect," the thirty-one-year-old writes to his mother after only three days at sea.[12] That same day, steaming past the Iberian peninsula, Newman saw foreign land for the first time in his life. Six days later, on Monday, 17 December, he briefly disembarked at Gibraltar, "the first foreign land I ever set foot on," he exuberantly shares with his sister Harriett.[13] The sight of the sea, upon which he sailed, conjured up thoughts of ancient empires, biblical ordeals and patristic journeys. "Here the Romans engaged the Carthaginians," he muses, "here the Phoenicians traded -here Jonah was in the storm - here St Paul was shipwrecked - here the great Athanasius voyaged to Rome and to Constantinople."[14] The thought of Athanasius immediately brought to Newman's mind the ecclesiastical challenges looming on the English horizon. In verse he asks:

---

[11] Newman, *LD* v. III, 141 (To Richard Bagot, Bishop of Oxford, 16 December 1832).
[12] Newman, *LD* v. III, 129 (To Mrs Newman, 11 December 1832).
[13] Newman, *LD* v. III, 146 (To Harriett Newman, 18 December 1832).
[14] Newman, *LD* v. III, 156 (To Mrs Newman, 19 December 1832).

When shall our northern Church her champion see,
Raised by high heaven's decree,
To shield the ancient faith at his own harm?
Like him who stayed the arm
Of tyrannous power, and learning's sophist tone,
Keen-visioned Seer, alone.[15]

In the fourth stanza of that same poem, Newman lauds Ambrose with equally tremendous overtones:

And Ambrose' pastoral might we celebrate,
Tho' with unequal fate,
When in dark times our champion crossed a king.
—But good in everything
Comes as ill's cure. Dim Future! shall we NEED
A Prophet for truth's creed?16

The Arian crisis had been a Mediterranean crisis. Beginning at Alexandria, it unfolded along its shores. Newman's book-knowledge of that crisis took on flesh as he sailed across the Mediterranean Sea. From its incarnation, he drew courage for the challenges that lay ahead.

Travel

Travel inevitably expands one's horizons and opens one's mind for better or for worse. On board the *Hermes*, Newman initially approached his new experiences with caution, explaining to his sister Harriett, "I no longer wonder at younger persons being carried away with travelling, and corrupted - for certainly the illusions of the world's magic can hardly be fancied while one remains at home."[17] Only the previous May, in the seventh of his *University Sermons*, Newman had commented upon the faith-challenges that await youth when they leave home. "The simple and comparatively retired life which they have hitherto enjoyed is changed for the varied and attractive scenes of mixed society," Newman preaches:

> Its numberless circles and pursuits open upon them, the diversities and contrarieties of opinion and conduct, and of the subjects on which thought and exertion are expended. This is what is called seeing the world. Here, then, all at

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., 146

> once they lose their reckoning, and let slip the lessons which they thought they had so accurately learned.[18]

Young Newman himself had never been tempted by the pleasantries of social life at Oxford. Indeed, the university students' drinking binges had disgusted him. But travel proved to be a different matter. For now he was quite literally "seeing the world." Did he fear that Mediterranean Christianity might challenge his Anglican faith? It seems unlikely at that moment, yet in retrospect it was, no doubt, a legitimate concern. "I think it does require strength of mind," young Newman writes, "to keep the thoughts [where] they should be while the varieties of strange sights, political, moral and physical, are passed before the eyes."[19] Newman initially attempted to maintain a strict mental discipline in this regard. Briefly docked at Algiers, for example, he averted his eyes rather than gaze upon the revolutionary *Tricolour* flying from the mast of a French ship.[20] That flag, whose rejection had partially cost the Bourbon King Charles X his throne only three years before, represented the liberalism that Newman so vehemently opposed. Indeed, Newman "believed that it was unchristian for nations to cast off their governors, and, much more, sovereigns who had the divine right of inheritance."[21] On this account, months later, when passing through Paris on his return to England, he refused on principle to tour the city.[22] Years later, having returned to Rome as a newly converted Catholic, Newman recalls the duty that he felt in 1833 to distance himself from all that he deemed harmful: "It is miserable to travel and to hear bells to which you may not respond, and to see processions and functions from which you feel a duty to turn away. I did so as a duty then."[23] But as Newman's 1833 correspondence reveals, his initial reserve did, in fact, give way to a rather adventuresome openness - at least outside of the Citizen King Louis-Philippe's France. He became so bold that, toward the end of his tour, he bid adieu to his traveling companions and ventured back to Sicily on his own. Confident that his wanderings would not unsettle him (indeed, if anything, they made him long for his quarters at Oriel College),[24] Newman

---

[18] John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*, Sermon 7.4, 3rd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1872), 123-124.

[19] Newman, *LD* v. III, 146 (To Harriett Newman, 18 December 1832).

[20] See Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 151.

[21] Ibid., 148.

[22] See Ibid., 151.

[23] Newman, "To Mrs John Mozley, 19 May 1847," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962): 12: 82.

[24] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 146 (To Harriett Newman, 18 December 1832).

decided to make the most of his travels.[25] For he was convinced that, once back at Oxford, he would never travel abroad again. Little could he have foreseen then that as a Catholic he would visit the Italian peninsula on three more occasions in 1846-47, 1856 and 1879. In 1833, however, after some initial hesitation, he does concede: "At all events it is no bad thing when seeing the world (as I am now) to take a draught at it, and not to sip merely what one likes."[26]

From the Lazaretto in Malta, Newman reflects further on the benefits of travel. "I think travelling a good thing for a secluded man," he writes to Isaac Williams, his curate at St. Mary's in Oxford,

> Not so much as showing him the world, as in realizing to him the limited sphere of his own powers. I do not see that hitherto I have gained one fact or impression about mankind which I had not before - but, tho' I ever have had notions of the extensiveness of the subject-matter which the mind takes cognizance of, and of the little part which the largest individual mind is able to take in of it and (inclusively) the little which myself knew or could do, I think I have much deepened my conviction of the intellectual weakness which attaches to a mere reading man - his inability to grasp and understand and appropriate things which befall him in life - so that he seems powerless as a child while the action of life is passing and repassing, and tossed about and caught and transmitted on all sides of him.[27]

Two key points emerge from these reflections: firstly, the distinction between notional knowledge and experiential or real knowledge, and, secondly, the human mind's limited operative powers. Newman will masterfully elaborate the first point in his epistemological study *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. As Ian Ker rightly observes: "It is noteworthy how [Newman's] later distinction between the "notional" and the "real" was not just formulated for a specific philosophical purpose, but was already early on very much part of his ordinary language and thought."[28] The second point will play a distinct role in Newman's understanding of doctrinal development.

The secluded or mere reading man has a broad notional knowledge of many things, but without experience he fails to grasp, understand and appropriate them adequately. Therein lies his intellectual weakness. The experience of travel, which does entail moments of crisis as anyone who has ever traveled knows all too well, occasions the previously secluded man's deeper understanding of the

---

[25] See ibid., 155.

[26] See ibid., 165.

[27] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 194 (To Isaac Williams, 16 January 1833).

[28] Ker, *John Henry Newman,* 63.

knowledge that he already possesses notionally. Although, quantitively speaking, he gains no new knowledge, he does qualitatively gain greater insight into the world around him. The child, as it were, grows into a man. As Newman travels, he comes to reflect more deeply upon the notional knowledge of the ancient world that he already possesses. In a similar fashion, Newman will later argue that theological controversy provokes a greater comprehension of the deposit of faith that the Church has always possessed in its totality. While doctrinal development produces no new doctrines *in se*, it does result in a certain novelty, that is, in a more expansive, conscious understanding of the deposit of faith. This development marks the transition from a foundational awareness or unreflective knowledge of the faith to a complex or reflective consciousness. In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Newman will employ seven notes in order to determine a genuine doctrinal development. The fifth note is the anticipation of an idea's future. In his description of the fifth note, Newman concludes: "The fact, then, of such early or recurring intimations of tendencies which afterwards are fully realized, is a sort of evidence that those later and more systematic fulfilments are only in accordance with the original idea."[29] Newman's 1833 reflections on the benefit of travel for a mere reading man prove to be themselves an anticipation of the inner dynamic of his own future idea of doctrinal development.

One further observation about travel remains for us to consider. Newman insists that travel took the romance out of foreign places for him. "I have learned thus much by travelling," he tells Thomas Mozley, a former student and Oriel College Fellow, "to think all places about the same, which I had no notion of before - I never could believe that horses, dogs, men and houses were the same in other countries as at home - not that I exactly doubted it, but my imagination could not embrace the notion."[30] Walking about Corfu or Rome, Newman had "the same thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations as at home."[31] His experience of inclement weather and frequent colds in the Mediterranean, for example, led him not only to doubt the health benefits allegedly gained from such travel, but more importantly to conclude "that the ancients went on as we do."[32] Travelling, he acknowledges, "has in a measure destroyed the romance which I threw around everything I had not myself witnessed - yet perhaps it has taken away no

---

[29] John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, part II, chapter V, section V (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 196.

[30] Newman, *LD* v. III, 241 (To Thomas Mozley, 9 March 1833).

[31] Ibid., 242.

[32] Ibid., 241.

pleasure and may be profitable."[33] While notional knowledge may tend toward the romantic, real knowledge proves to be far more sober, but, in the end, no less satisfying. Indeed, it proves to be more pertinent. Newman's journey through that ancient Christian landscape made him aware of its sameness. He realized that "the ancients went on as we do." That notion certainly helped to prepare the way for the future Tractarian's claim that the contemporary Church of England, in turn, should go on as the ancient Christian Church did.

The Church Fathers

John Henry Newman's first encounter with the Church Fathers took place in the autumn of 1816. He was fifteen years old. "I read Joseph Milner's Church History," Newman recounts, "and was nothing short of enamoured of the long extracts from St Augustine and the other Fathers which I found there. I read them as being the religion of the primitive Christians."[34] His love for the Church Fathers did indeed take deep root. But that same autumn, he also "read Newton on the Prophecies, and in consequence became most firmly convinced that the Pope was the Antichrist predicted by Daniel, St. Paul, and St. John."[35] These two works, Newman confesses, planted in him "the seeds of an intellectual inconsistency which disabled [him] for a long course of years."[36] That inconsistency will become most apparent during young Newman's five weeks in Rome.

During the Long Vacation of 1828, Newman, now a Fellow at Oriel College and Vicar at St. Mary the Virgin, undertook a systematic reading of the Church Fathers. He began with Ignatius of Antioch and Justin Martyr and read his way through the pre-Nicene Fathers. The project, however, ended in disappointment. For, despite his valiant efforts to analyze and categorize patristic thought, he gained very little from his reading on account of his faulty methodology. Rather than allowing the Church Fathers to speak to him on their own terms, he wrongly imposed foreign Protestant notions upon them. In 1835, when theologically constructing his *Via Media*, Newman acknowledged his earlier error and described it with an image reminiscent of his recent Mediterranean tour:

> It is so difficult to read without an object I may almost add so unprofitable - but I rather mean this - that nothing at all is done, if a man begins to read the Fathers

---

[33] Ibid., 242.
[34] Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 129.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

> without a previous knowledge of controversies which are built upon them. Till then their writings are blank paper - controversy is like the heat administered to sympathetic ink. Thus, I read Justin very carefully in 1828 - and made most copious notes - but I conceive most of my time was thrown away. I was like a sailor landed at Athens or Grand Cairo, who stares about - does not know what to admire, what to examine - makes random remarks, and forgets all about it when he has gone.[37]

In a January 1839 article on the theology of Ignatius of Antioch for the *British Critic*, Newman employs a similar image to illustrate the need for a proper patristic methodology. "We believe it to be possible, nay and not uncommon," he writes:

> For a student to employ himself laboriously in the Fathers, and yet to attain to as little idea of the rich mines of thought, or the battle-fields which he is passing over, as if he was visiting the coasts of the Mediterranean without a knowledge of history or geology.[38]

Touring the Mediterranean in 1833, Newman certainly had a firm grasp on ancient history, but, as we shall see, he also demonstrated an amateur's interest in geology, a subject that he had, in fact, previously studied with great interest at Oxford.[39]

Greece

The *Hermes* arrived in Malta on Christmas Eve. It remained in port only long enough to take on coal and to allow its passengers to choose rooms in the Lazaretto where they would be quarantined for at least two weeks, if not longer, upon their return from the Greek isles. On Saint Stephen's Day, the steamer set out again to sea on its way to Greece. "Greece has ever made my heart beat," Newman confesses.[40] As a child he had read Homer's *Odyssey*. At the age of ten, he delved into Virgil. Thucydides filled his imagination. These ancient authors' books accompanied Newman on board the *Hermes*, and they guided his travels across the Mediterranean Sea. As the *Hermes* approached the Greek isles, Newman grew ecstatic. He was full of joy, for he was "in the Greek sea, the scene

---

[37] John Henry Newman, "To Robert Isaac Wilberforce, 30 August 1835," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Thomas Gornall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 5:133.

[38] John Henry Newman, "The Theology of the Seven Epistles of St, Ignatius," *Essays Critical and Historical*, 8th edition (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1888), 1:226.

[39] See John Henry Newman, "To Mrs Newman, 4 June 1819," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, 1:65; Newman, *LD* v. I, 109 (To Mrs Newman, 8 June 1821).

[40] Newman, *LD* v. III, 291 (To Walter John Trower, 16 April 1833).

of old Homer's song and of the histories of Thucydides."[41] His childhood visions took shape before his very eyes. "I am Thucydides," he exclaims, "with the gift of second sight."[42] He did wonder, though, why the ancients had not described the magnificent landscape and its geology in greater detail. He simply concluded that they had taken its beauty for granted.[43] But Newman did not. The sight of the Peloponnese inspired Newman's muse and moved him to extol in verse not those ancient pagan authors, but rather the Greek Church Fathers:

> Let the world hymn thy heathen praise
> Fallen Greece! the thought of holier days
> In my sad heart abides—
> For sons of thine in Truth's first hour
> Were tongues and weapons of His power,
> Born of the Spirit's fiery shower,
> Our fathers and our guides.[44]

Throughout his voyage across the Mediterranean, Newman composed over one hundred poems for the *Lyra Apostolica*, the verse section of the *British Magazine*. These poems both document Newman's journey and reveal the state of his heart. Newman often includes them in his correspondence in conscious imitation of the Scottish romantic novelist Sir Walter Scott.[45]

On the isle of Zante just off the Morea, Newman, along with his traveling companions, entered a Greek Orthodox church. Unbeknownst to them at first, the Divine Liturgy was then taking place. Their easy access during the sacred rites offended them. But they remained, nonetheless. "I must say," Newman remarks, "the whole was very like a performance - tho' the Greeks do not (I believe) hold the sacrifice of the mass. - The ceremony in itself was most imposing to a stranger." [46] Prayers offered behind the iconostasis particularly struck him. It was Newman's first direct encounter with Greek Christianity. Later, at Corfu, after seeing the alleged body of St. Spiridion, a Nicene Father, he concluded that superstition abounded. He observed that the Greek clergy on the islands were of the lower rank, "very ignorant, but moral in their lives."[47] They apparently

---

[41] Newman, *LD* v. III, 167 (To Jemima Newman, 29 December 1832).
[42] Newman, *LD* v. III, 177 (To Harriett Newman, 2 January 1833).
[43] See ibid.
[44] Newman, *LD* v. III,170 (To Jemima Newman, 29 December 1832).
[45] Newman, *LD* v. III, 220 (To Jemima Newman, 19 February 1833).
[46] Newman, *LD* v. III, 192 (To Jemima Newman, 15 January 1833).
[47] Newman, *LD* v. III, 181 (To Harriett Newman, 2 January 1833).

interfered little with their flocks who paid for their offerings and received the requested religious rites in return. The people themselves understood little of the ancient Greek language in liturgical use. But they did observe rigid fasts. "I fear outward ceremonies are the substitute for holiness," Newman observes.[48] While in a country church near Corfu, he leafed through two devotional books - one containing a collection of John Damascene's prayers. "There was little objectionable (that I saw) in either, and much that was very good."[49] Newman's immediate encounters with Greek Orthodoxy left him with a favorable impression. In fact, the more that he experienced the Greek and Latin Churches of the Mediterranean, the more he grew in admiration for them.[50] His mostly positive experience of Greek Orthodoxy also led him to reconsider Protestant objections to Roman Catholicism.

While generally favorable toward Greek Christianity, Protestants denounced the Church of Rome as the Antichrist. But Newman himself wonders: "what answer do Protestants make to the *fact* of the Greek Church invoking Saints, over honoring the Virgin, and substituting ceremonies for a reasonable service, which they say are the prophetic marks of the Antichrist?"[51] From what Newman perceived, the difference between Greeks and Romans was only a matter of degree, not kind. In terms of their devotions and practices, the Romans were simply more advanced Greeks. He judged both Rome and Constantinople, moreover, far superior to the Protestant sects that tended toward Unitarianism. Nonetheless, he assures his mother lest she have reason to be concerned: "I do not perceive that my opinion has in any respect changed about them - but it is fearful to have before one's eyes the perversion of all the best, the holiest, the most exalted feelings of human nature."[52] Indeed, while Newman may have favorably assessed Greek Christianity, he continued to judge harshly certain Roman Catholic tenets. The Greek Church's "corruptions," he suggests, "seem in the retrospect light as compared with those of Rome."[53] For Greek "saint worship" results from "the people's corruption of what is good."[54] It is not in itself an *act* of the Greek Church herself even though she does sanction it. But the Roman doctrines of the Mass and purgatory, Newman insists, are not simply

---

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 214 (To Harriett Newman, 16 February 1833).
[51] Newman, *LD* v. III, 205 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).
[52] Ibid., 204.
[53] Newman, *LD* v. III, 265 (To Jemima Newman, 20 March 1833).
[54] Ibid.

perversions of the good. They are, rather, pure inventions. Clearly, Newman had not shaken his earlier convictions. But his epistolary criticisms do reveal with greater intensity his youthful intellectual inconsistency. Contact with southern Europe's unreformed Christianity, the direct descendant of the Church of the Fathers, that Newman so ardently loved, had begun to have an effect.

Malta

On 10 January 1833, after cruising the Greek isles for twelve days, the *Hermes* returned to Malta where it had previously docked from Christmas Eve until the feast of Saint Stephen. As we have already noted, Newman and the Froudes were allowed to disembark only long enough to choose their rooms at the Lazaretto in which they would be quarantined upon their return - "the most absurd of all humbugs," Newman complains.[55] Newman's first impression of the Lazaretto on that Christmas day was bleak. "A miserable prison looking building," he calls it.[56] Yet, by the time he had returned to Malta, he was happy enough to suffer quarantine: "I am not sorry to have a resting time between what we have seen and what we are to see, to say nothing of the comfort of quiet and stillness, after having been at sea for five weeks."[57] Newman's first night in the Lazaretto was, in fact, the first time since he had left England that he slept on dry land.

In retrospect, Newman declares that life in the Lazaretto was actually not all that disagreeable. "[I]t is really a very habitable place," Newman later admits.[58] He and the Froudes had large rooms. Newman himself was able to hire a violin for his own entertainment. He transcribed his verses for the *Lyra Apostolica*, and he began to study Italian with a private tutor. He and the others even had access to a boat for exploring the harbor and the coastline, if they wished. They were simply forbidden to go ashore. Nights at the Lazaretto, however, were not particularly restful, for it seems that the place was haunted. Newman heard odd footsteps in the night, and young Froude dreamed that he saw an evil spirit seated on his bed. Despite his Oxonian skepticism, Newman tells his sister Jemima that the haunting was "a phenomenon worth remembering."[59] Two nights before their release, Newman woke to the sound of a loud ruckus in the younger Froude's room next door to his own. Froude later reported that he himself had heard

---

[55] Newman, *LD* v. III, 189 (To Jemima Newman, 15 January 1833).
[56] Newman, *LD* v. III, 160 (To Mrs Newman, 23 December 1832).
[57] Newman, *LD* v. III, 199 (To John William Bowden, 20 January 1833).
[58] Newman, *LD* v. III, 253 (To Samuel Francis Wood, 17 March 1833).
[59] Newman, *LD* v. III, 191 (To Jemima Newman, 15 January 1833).

nothing. Newman sat up in bed, foolishly exposing himself to the cold night air, and waited to confront the ghostly intruder. When the noise began again, he called out, and suddenly it stopped. But, sadly, in the whole affair, the only thing that Newman caught was a bad cough.

Newman's first impression of Malta betrays his interest in Mediterranean geology. "Malta is a strange place," he writes, "a literal rock of yellowish brown."[60] The Maltese themselves, however, fare much better in his estimation: "All agree they are a very industrious race, being an exception to the general Mediterranean character."[61] Newman also witnessed a clearly defined national spirit among the Maltese who distinguished themselves from both the previous government of the Knights and the present English administration.[62] But his general appraisal was hardly enthusiastic. For, sadly, once released from the Lazaretto, Newman had to remain, at Archdeacon Froude's insistence, more or less confined to his hotel room for almost a week on account of "the most wretched cough that [he] ever recollect[ed] having."[63] In 1880, Cardinal Newman will still painfully recall that Maltese cough![64] In 1833, it led him to conclude that "Malta is a most dangerous place, even for those who have not weak lungs."[65] Richard Hurrell Froude, however, the one among them who had the weak lungs, was, in fact, doing just fine and enjoying dinner out with his father every night![66] "In spite of the hospitality of the people there," Newman judges his stay in Malta to have been "a long and tiresome month."[67] The biographer and the historian will perhaps report little else, but the theologian perceives much more. In fact, three events of theological significance in Newman's development occurred during that otherwise unfortunate sojourn. Firstly, Newman gazed upon an apostolic landscape for the first time in his life. Secondly, as we shall argue, he entered a Roman Catholic church for the first time in his adult life, and, thirdly, he was deeply moved when beholding a Catholic layman at prayer - a scene that he poignantly describes in terms unmistakably reminiscent of his recently

---

[60] Newman, *LD* v. III, 163 (To Harriett Newman, 25 December 1832).

[61] Newman, *LD* v. III, 205 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).

[62] See Newman *LD* v. III, 299 (To H. A. Woodgate, 17 April 1833).

[63] Newman, *LD* v. III, 204 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).

[64] See John Henry Newman, "To Mrs Edward Charlton, 21 January 1880," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman: Supplement*, ed. Francis J. McGarth (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2008), 32:405.

[65] Newman, *LD* v. III, 204 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).

[66] See John Henry Newman, "To E. B. Pusey, 21 August 1838," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Gerard Tracey (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1984), 6:297-298.

[67] Newman, *LD* v. III, 299 (To H. A. Woodgate, 17 April 1833).

completed, but still to be revised and published study of the fourth-century Arian crisis.

Newman had been looking forward to spending Christmas in Malta, and thankfully, with only one exceptionally stormy night, favorable weather expedited the *Hermes*' arrival in port on Christmas Eve. But, when describing Christmas day itself in his diary, Newman simply records that is was "a miserable day."[68] For, other than reserving a room at the Lazaretto, Newman spent that entire day on board the *Hermes* without attending or officiating at any public prayer service.[69] "We are keeping the most wretched Christmas day I can conceive it to be my lot to suffer," he informs Harriett.[70] But despite that day's misery, its momentous nature did not completely escape young Newman. "One of the first sights we came to in Malta was St Paul's bay," he recounts:

> Where tradition goes that the blessed Apostle was wrecked. It is strange to be in a place where an Apostle has been; and it makes it still more afflicting thus to pass the day which especially celebrates the introduction of that glorious gospel which he preached.[71]

It was at Malta that John Henry Newman first stood - or, at least, floated - where an Apostle had once been. His occasionally rough sea-travels also brought home to him the suffering that the Apostle Paul himself had endured: "What a trial his journey to Rome must have been in a miserable vessel - but Scripture speaks so quietly and (so to say) modestly about the trials of the Saints that it requires some experience and care to find them out."[72] In Malta Newman's own journey became apostolic as he followed "almost precisely the track St Paul went from Malta to Rome."[73] In Rome, "the city of the apostles,"[74] Newman repeatedly returns to this apostolic theme in his correspondence. But Malta remains the first place directly associated with an Apostle that Newman came to know. That Christmas, otherwise so unpleasant, incarnated the apostolic age for Newman as never before. As the Word became flesh, the notional became real. The Apostolic Church, that had grounded his faith and all these theological endeavors, came alive.

---

[68] Newman, *LD* v. III, 162 (Tuesday 25 December Christmas Day).
[69] See ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Newman, *LD* v. III, 163 (To Harriett Newman, 25 December 1832).
[72] Newman, *LD* v. III, 193 (To Isaac Williams, 16 January 1833).
[73] Newman, *LD* v. III, 206 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).
[74] Ibid.

Despite the quarantine and his cough, Newman did manage to spend a few days visiting Valletta, a very fine place," he remarks.[75] On Thursday, 24 January 1833, he went to Saint John's Co-Cathedral. In his estimation, it was "most magnificent." [76] Its decoration far exceeded anything that he had ever seen. He was glad, moreover, to have seen it before visiting Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome so that, without making comparisons, he could admire the Maltese Cathedral on its own merits. Newman's visit to Saint John's is significant on two accounts. Firstly, all evidence points to the fact that it was the first time in his adult life that John Henry Newman set foot in a Catholic church. Secondly, the visit conjured up images that will eventually mature into his *Via Media* and ultimately lead him to full communion with the Catholic Church.

As a nine-year-old boy, John Henry had gone with his father to the Warwick Street Chapel in London - a Roman Catholic chapel attached to the Bavarian Embassy. His father had wanted to hear a piece of music. "All that I bore away from it," Newman recalls in the *Apologia*, "was the recollection of a pulpit and a preacher and a boy swinging a censer."[77] Such sights, of course, would have naturally attracted the attention of a young, evangelically minded, Christian boy. Otherwise, young John Henry took away little else from the visit. An often ridiculed émigré priest, who taught French at Newman's school, was the only Catholic of whom young Newman was ever immediately aware.[78] But otherwise, he had no contact with Catholics nor their churches until his 1833 Mediterranean tour. Writing from Greece in January of 1833, Newman does mention two Latin churches at Corfu. But he says nothing about having visited either of them, whereas he does describe in detail his visits to Corfu's Greek churches and the unsatisfactory service that he attended at the English chapel in the British garrison.[79] In Greece, Newman's interests were clearly Greek, not Roman. Given Newman's penchant for describing in notable detail everything that he saw, one can reasonably conclude that the Oriel Fellow's first visit to a Catholic church, as an adult, took place at Malta. Despite his sincere admiration for St. John's Co-Cathedral, Newman concludes that it is "the perversion of all the best"[80] and "a beautiful flower run to seed."[81] In other words, St. John's

---

[75] Newman, *LD* v. III, 253 (To Samuel Francis Wood, 17 March 1833).
[76] Newman, *LD* v. III, 204 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).
[77] Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*,126. See also Newman, *LD* v. I, 7 (Diary for January 1811).
[78] See Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 126.
[79] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 181 (To Harriett Newman, 2 January 1833).
[80] Newman, *LD* v. III, 204 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).
[81] Ibid.

symbolizes those Romanist corruptions that will figure prominently in his *Via Media*. Already, only the month before, Malta's apostolic landscape had moved Newman to admit that "surely there is something very wrong in the actual state of the Church in England - we are neither one thing or the other; neither strong enough to command obedience, nor loose enough to protest in our separate persons."[82] According to Newman, Anglicans wandered aimlessly between Roman authoritarianism and Protestant private judgment. Between these two guardrails - Roman corruptions and Protestant heresies - Tractarian Newman will attempt to pave a patristic path. While he knew Protestantism firsthand in England, he came to know Romanism through personal observation during his Mediterranean tour. His experience of the latter confirmed his prejudices, as it were, but it also silently sowed sympathetic seed deep within his mind and heart - a seed that slowly germinated under the frost of his youthful intellectual inconsistency.

Finally, on that miserable Christmas day of 1832, Newman beheld a Catholic layman at prayer in the quarantine. "This morning we saw a poor fellow in the Lazaretto close to us," Newman recounts:

> Cut off from the ordinances of his Church, saying his prayers towards the house of God which lay in his sight over the water - and it is a confusion of face indeed that the humble Romanist testified to his Savior in a way in which I, a minister, do not - yet I do what I can, and shall try to do more - for I am very spiteful.[83]

The scene clearly brought home to Newman an insight that he had gained in his research for *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, that is, the laity's role in defending the orthodox faith when ecclesiastical rulers betray it.

That Catholic layman's faithful witness particularly shamed Newman, for on that Christmas day neither he nor the Froudes - all three in Anglican Orders - offered any public prayers. "No prayers," Newman sadly records in his diary for Christmas day.[84] In his Christmas day letter to his sister Harriett, Newman confesses: "I do think, that deprived of the comfort and order of an Established Church, it is one's duty, almost as Paul and Silas, to sing praises in prison, so that others may hear."[85] In other words, like the Apostle and his companion in that ancient prison, the Church's ministers should unabashedly witness to Christ even when quarantined. Newman, the Anglican minister, had failed to do that

---

[82] Newman, *LD* v. III, 163 (To Harriett Newman, 25 December 1832).
[83] Ibid.
[84] Newman, *LD* v. III, 162 (Tuesday 25 December Christmas Day).
[85] Newman, *LD* v. III, 162 (To Harriett Newman, 25 December 1832).

very thing. In that apostolic landscape, the Catholic layman's witness in the quarantine made Newman feel his own negligence even more acutely. "But all such cases, as befall one, are cases of degree," Newman argues in self-defense, "and St Paul was absolute and unlimited in his ministerial authority."[86] Nonetheless, as his notional knowledge of the Arian crisis became real in Malta, the experience stung Newman's conscience. In his future work *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Newman will observe: "Did St. Athanasius or St. Ambrose come suddenly to life, it cannot be doubted what communion he would take to be his own."[87] They would recognize in the Communion of Rome the Church of the Fathers. From Malta, on that Christmas day in 1832, Newman implies that, had St. Paul come suddenly to life, it cannot be doubted that he would have recognized himself not in the silent minister who offered no prayers, but rather in the humble Romanist who openly prayed within the confines of that quarantine prison.

Newman left Malta on Thursday, 7 February, on board a Neapolitan steamer bound for Messina. He disembarked early the following morning. At Messina he heard a story that again recalled the laity's faithful witness despite the clergy's moral failure:

> We heard of one man who, while bearing his witness against the profligacy of the priesthood, rigidly attends Mass—and on being asked why, said that the Altar was above the priest, and that God could bless His own ordinance in spite of base instruments.[88]

In sum, both Malta and Messina provided Newman with contemporary examples of ancient insights that he had gained while researching *Arians*. These Mediterranean experiences brought his previous patristic studies into high relief and revealed their pertinence for the nineteenth century - a century that seemed to Newman even more bleak than the fourth. For despite these two notable examples of faithful lay Catholics, Newman was convinced that "the majority of the [Italian] laity who think run into infidelity."[89] Newman blames the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire for having "generated a plague [of infidelity] which is slowly working its way everywhere" since the peace of 1815.[90]

---

[86] Ibid.

[87] John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, part I, chapter II, section III.5 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 97-98.

[88] Newman, *LD* v. III, 225 (To Mrs Newman, 28 February 1833).

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

For the remainder of his life, Newman will fight against this liberal, irreligious and secularizing threat.

Newman's month in Malta may have been personally miserable, but it was, nonetheless, theologically momentous. For it entailed his first direct encounter with an apostolic setting, his first visit as an adult to a Roman Catholic church, and his no longer merely notional recognition of the lay faithful's role in witnessing to the faith when his own clerical example failed. Newman's Maltese sojourn specifically echoes his previous scholarship and anticipates his future patristic insight into the consultation of the laity in matters of doctrine. When Newman left Malta, he reports that he was "in high spirits and good health."[91] It is also worth noting that, before he departed, he managed to ship off to his mother a crate of Maltese oranges.[92] As we have seen, those oranges were not the only fruits that he reaped there.

Naples

After spending five memorable days in Sicily, Newman and the Froudes arrived in Naples on the morning of 14 February 1833. Two days in the Neapolitan capital were sufficient for Newman to form a very unfavorable impression: "We find a population from high to low, as it appears, immersed in the most despicable frivolity and worst profligacy, which is so much connected with religious observance as to give the city the character of a pagan worship."[93] "[R]eligion," he observes further, "is turned into a mere medium of gaiety and worldly festivity, as in the case of the Israelites."[94] Unfortunately, Newman had arrived in the midst of carnival. As for Naples itself, the city was "noisy, crowded and dirty"[95] - "a mere watering place" for animal pleasure. It was, he concluded, "a wretched city."[96] Returning to Naples five weeks later, Newman confesses that he had been too hard on the city at first, and he made an attempt to like it. But, in the end, he remained disappointed: "I have seen it twice, and my first opinion is confirmed."[97] Whether during carnival or not, Naples simply proved to be too much for him.

---

[91] Newman, *LD* v. III, 253 (To Samuel Francis Wood, 17 March 1833).
[92] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 209 (From Mrs Newman, 28 February 1833).
[93] Newman, *LD* v. III, 211 (To Harriett Newman, 16 February 1833).
[94] Newman, *LD* v. III, 216 (To Jemima Newman, 19 February 1833).
[95] Newman, *LD* v. III, 248 (To George Ryder, 14 March 1833).
[96] Newman, *LD* v. III, 258 (To R. F. Wilson, 18 March 1833).
[97] Newman, *LD* v. III, 299 (To H. A Woodgate, 17 April 1833).

Mediterranean popular religiosity appalled young Newman who himself preferred "the quiet and calmness connected with [Anglican] services."[98] Even in Malta he notes "the sight of that most exciting religion which is around me - statues of Madonnas and Saints in the Streets, etc etc. A more poetical but not less jading stimulant than the pouring-forth in a Baptist Chapel."[99] In Naples the display of crucifixes and scenes of purgatory in the streets adversely jarred him.[100] Indeed, such Catholic devotionalism repulsed him. He considered such popular religion "as nearly pagan as you can fancy."[101] But ironically, it will be this same devotionalism that Newman will hold up as a note of the Catholic Church's veracity. Already as a Tractarian, he will argue against Protestants in terms of how an authentic system tends to corrupt. "It is plain," he contends:

> That the religious temper of Protestant times is not like that of the primitive Church, the existing liability in systems to certain degeneracies respectively being a sort of index of the tone and temper of each. As the corruptions, so are the respective originals. If his system never could become superstitious, it is not primitive.[102]

But, even after entering the Catholic Church, Newman could never wholly embrace an overly exuberant Mediterranean devotionalism. He was simply too English for that. Nonetheless, what had initially appalled him in 1833 later serves to confirm his Catholic faith.

Rome

On 2 March 1833, Newman and his traveling companions reached Rome. Echoing his earlier observation made in Malta, he noted how strange it was "to be standing in the city of the apostles, and among the tombs of the martyrs and saints."[103] Yet, the reading of his youth, Milner on the Church Fathers and Newton on the apocalyptic prophecies, continued to leave him deeply conflicted. "Is it possible," he queries, "that so serene and lofty a place is the cage of unclean creatures?"[104] He was still convinced, after all, that Rome was Daniel's

---

[98] Newman, *LD* v. III, 206 (To Mrs Newman, 26 January 1833).
[99] Ibid.
[100] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 294 (To Mrs Newman, 17 April 1833).
[101] Ibid.
[102] John Henry Newman, *The Church of the Fathers*, "Demetrias," ed. Francis McGrath (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2002) 164.
[103] Newman, *LD* v. III, 232 (To Harriett Newman, 4 March 1833).
[104] Ibid., 230.

fourth beast awaiting its final chastisement. The spirit of old Rome - its *genius loci* - had possessed the Christian Church on its seven hills. Only an apocalyptic conflagration could liberate her. Until then the English could hope for no union with her. According to Newman, the Roman Catholic Church perpetuated the ancient pagan Empire's structures in her universal obedience, her Latin language and her political skill. The Papacy's exercise of temporal sovereignty, moreover, made it impossible to distinguish between the sacred and the secular. Truly, Christian Rome left Newman torn. "You are in the place of martyrdom and burial of Apostles and Saints," he reports to a friend at Oriel College:

> You have about you the buildings and sights they saw - and you are in the city to which England owes the blessing of the gospel - But then, on the other hand, the superstitions; - or rather, what is far worse, the solemn reception of them as an essential part of Christianity - and then on the contrary the knowledge that the most famous was built (in part) by the sale of indulgences - Really this is a cruel place.[105]

After one month in Rome, Newman detested the Roman Catholic system no less than before, "tho' I may be able to defend my opinion better and to feel it more vividly," he suggests.[106] Yet, he remained even more thoroughly attached to the *Catholic* system. As we have already noted, Newman argues that travel did not so much expand his knowledge as it deepened his awareness and strengthen his convictions. But the truth of the matter is that during his Mediterranean tour something did begin to change ever so subtly thanks to the people whom he met.

Even though Newman insists in his *Apologia* that he had steered clear of Catholics in 1833,[107] he does acknowledge that he had met the Dean of the Cathedral in Malta, a certain Father Santini in Rome, a priest at Castro-Giovanni in Sicily, and Monsignor Nicholas Wiseman on two occasions at Rome's Venerable English College. (Sixteen years later, it will be Bishop Wiseman who will send Newman back to Rome in order to prepare for the Catholic priesthood.) Newman's *Letters and Diaries* also indicate that he met the English Cardinal Thomas Weld,[108] Angelo Mai of the Vatican Library,[109] and "a number of interesting Irish and English priests"[110] whom he thought to be the "flower" of

---

[105] Newman, *LD* v. III, 241 (To John Frederic Christie, 7 March 1833).
[106] Newman, *LD* v. III, 273 (To Mrs Newman, 5 April 1833).
[107] See Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*,150.
[108] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 247 (To Henry Wilberforce, 9 March 1833).
[109] See Newman, *LD* v. III, 255 (To Samuel Francis Wood, 17 March 1833).
[110] Newman, *LD* v. III, 273 (To Mrs Newman, 5 April 1833).

the Catholic clergy.[111] In fact, he lamented not having more time in order to get to know them better. He had heard rumors hinting at gross immorality among the Italian clergy, but his own immediate experience proved otherwise: "I like the looks of a great many of their priests - there is such simplicity, gentleness, and innocence among the Monks, I quite love them."[112] Newman goes so far to praise their Oxonianism.[113] But he continued to lament the Romanist system that crippled their energies like an iron chain.[114] "Rome is a very difficult place to speak of from the mixture of good and evil in it," Newman concludes:

> The heathen state was accursed as one of the 4 infidel monsters of Daniel's vision - and the Christian system there is deplorably corrupt - yet the dust of the Apostles lies there, and the present clergy are their descendants.[115]

Romanism exhibited a "lamentable mixture of truth with error," Newman observes, "the corruption of the highest and noblest views and principles, far higher than we Protestants have, with malignant poisons."[116] According to Newman, Rome exemplified in an extraordinary manner the parable of the tares and the wheat. "Indeed, the more I have seen of Rome," he writes, "the more wonderful I have thought that parable, as if it had a directly prophetic character which was fulfilled in the Papacy."[117] That lamentable mixture confronted Newman during Pope Gregory XVI's Mass on the feast of the Annunciation celebrated at the Dominican Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. Here was the Pope whose temporal power united him with the Enemy of God. His attendants carried him aloft in procession while others reverenced his foot with a kiss. A young evangelically minded Newman found such homage offered to a minister of Christ to be intolerable. Yet, as Christ's minister, the Pope performed the Church's sacred rites. Those liturgical rites did, in fact, move young Newman. Consequently, the whole experience left him quite torn. He knew naught else to do than to repeat to himself the words of his own verse that Rome had previously inspired: "How shall I name thee, Light of the wide west, or heinous error-seat?"[118] Newman's immediate experience of Rome both confirmed and challenged his previous notional knowledge. Twelve years will pass before he

---

[111] Newman, *LD* v. III, 280 (To Henry Jenkyns, 7 April 1833).
[112] Newman, *LD* v. III, 289 (To Samuel Rickards, 7 April 1833).
[113] Newman, *LD* v. III, 277 (To John Frederic Christie, 6 April 1833).
[114] See ibid.
[115] Newman, *LD* v. III, 287 (To Samuel Rickards, 7 April 1833).
[116] Newman, *LD* v. III, 280 (To Henry Jenkyns, 7 April 1833).
[117] Newman, *LD* v. III, p. 289 (To Samuel Rickards, 14 April 1833).
[118] Newman, *LD* v. III, p. 268 (To Mrs Newman, 25 March 1833).

will enter into full communion with the Church of Rome. But already, in 1833, his correspondence reveals a certain willingness to recognize her inherent good.

Sicily and Beyond

On Tuesday, 9 April 1833, Newman and the Froudes parted ways. Newman suffered deeply the loss of his two traveling companions. For in itself it was an anticipation of the young Froude's death—a "future too painful for me to mention," Newman writes.[119] The Froudes left Rome for Cività Vecchia, the first stop on their return journey to England via France. Newman headed south to Naples with a certain Mr. Barclay - a mere acquaintance whose loquacious manner the bereaving Newman found burdensome.[120] While in Naples, Newman wrote to Samuel Rickards, an Anglican clergyman and former Oriel Fellow, informing him that upon his return to England he intended to re-write nearly one-third of his book on the Arian crisis. "I think this will be a great improvement," he explains, "tho' I rather dread the labour."[121] The Arian crisis' majestic Mediterranean setting had, no doubt, stimulated his further reflections. Clearly, after months of travel across the Mediterranean Sea, young Newman had ceased to be a merely secluded reading man.

On Friday, 19 April, he left the Italian peninsula for Messina. For he was "drawn by an irresistible attraction to the fair levels and richly verdured heights of Sicily."[122] Some twelve days into his second Sicilian excursion, he fell seriously ill with typhoid fever contracted, it seems, in Naples. Almost out of his senses, Newman came close to dying at Castro-Giovanni in central Sicily. While his Italian guide prepared for the worst, Newman himself was convinced that he would survive. "I thought," he explains, "God has work for me."[123] By mid-May, Newman recovered and was eager to return home. But he remained stranded for some weeks in Palermo because the sailboat, on which he had booked passage, had to await favorable winds before it could set sail. Newman bided his time by visiting Palermo's churches where, although ignorant of the Blessed Sacrament, he found peace.[124] By 11 June, he was on the high seas bound for Marseilles. On

---

[119] Ibid.

[120] See Ibid.

[121] Ibid., 273. See also John Henry Newman, "To Thomas Mozley, 5 August 1833," *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, eds. Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980), 6:24; Newman, *LD* v. IV, 26 (To John Frederic Christie, 6 August 1833).

[122] Newman, *LD* v. III, 277 (To John Frederic Christie, 6 April 1833).

[123] Newman, *LD* v. III, 314 (To Frederic Rogers, 5 June 1833).

[124] See Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 152.

the way, the winds failed them once again for a week in the straits of Bonifacio. During that calm at sea, Newman wrote those famous lines, "Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom/ Lead Thou me on!" In 1833 Newman knew that a work ordained by God awaited him, but what that work entailed remained a mystery to him. In hindsight, however, one can easily discern theological anticipations of Newman's future endeavors already present in his 1833 Mediterranean correspondence. For whether it be in the Oxford Movement and his Tractarian efforts, or in the Oratory's foundation and his Catholic labors, Newman sought in all things to make patristics pertinent for the good of the contemporary Church.

Joseph Carola S.J.
Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana
Rome
Italy

carola@unigre.it

MELITA THEOLOGICA
Journal of the Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
69/2 (2019): 153-171

Martin Micallef *

Redemptive Deification in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Cyril of Alexandria: An Examination of Doctrinal Presuppositions

In pre-eighteenth century Europe, the task of interpreting Scripture was considered a theological enterprise, and the certainties of faith were developed in the ecclesial community through the process of this exegetical and theological reflection. The development of a modern critical approach to Scripture in the eighteenth century aimed to break free of the patterns that had shaped Christian Biblical interpretation for centuries. The traditional teaching about verbal inspiration was undermined and Scripture was seen as a fallible human product. The interpretation of Scripture became independent of dogmatics and a breach developed between a purely historical interest and Christian God-talk.

This article aims to probe the problem whether the theologian can legitimately explain Biblical texts in a way which goes beyond historical exegesis, but which seems to be required by the theologian's own dogmatic beliefs. In order to consider this problem, we have chosen a *Commentary on John's Gospel*[1] written by one of the Fathers of the Church: Cyril of Alexandria (c.376-444 CE). We will compare Cyril's understanding of soteriology in this *Commentary* with that of

* Martin Micallef is an academic member of the Department of Sacred Scripture, Hebrew and Greek at the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta, where he lectures mainly on the Gospel of John, New Testament exegesis, and anti-semitism in the New Testament. He is the Chief Editor of the Faculty of Theology's peer-reviewed research journal *Melita Theologica*.

[1] By "John," "the Gospel of John," "John" or "the Fourth Evangelist," and so, we simply mean the Fourth Gospel without making any claim on the authorship of this Gospel.

John in order to see what is the common ground, if there is any, between the two authors in this regard. We will probe what is defensible and what is indefensible in Cyril's efforts to interpret John's Gospel by asking how far do Cyril and John speak the same theological language, and how far do Cyril's Nicene doctrinal presuppositions make him speak a language remote from John and use the text differently from its author's intentions.

We will divide Cyril's arguments into three main sections: (i) the relationship of Cyril's soteriological arguments with his understanding of the obedience of Christ; (ii) the effects that Cyril's notion of soteriology have on those who believe in Christ as the Son of God; (iii) the relationship which Cyril attributes to the coming of the Son of God with his Passion, Death and Resurrection. It may seem paradoxical that we have chosen an ancient commentator representing the Eastern tradition in Biblical interpretation for our investigation. Someone may raise the question: what has Cyril to do with our modern approach to the Gospel? However, the very fact that Cyril is nearer to John in time and culture than we are, may mean that he has something to teach us.

The Obedience of the Second Adam

The Commentary on John's Gospel written by Cyril of Alexandria, considered by many as his greatest exegetical work,[2] manifests the deep theological character of his thought. "For him, theology was the interpretation of Scripture. He did not distinguish between theology and biblical interpretation. For a long time, this made his *Commentary on John* one of the best pieces in Biblical interpretation."[3] The complexity of Cyril's arguments and his ardent intention to defend the Divinity, the Humanity, and the Oneness of the Son were "not a

---

[2] Many scholars hold that this *Commentary* belongs to the period before the Nestorian controversy. G. Jouasarrd in several articles has shown that the *Commentary* was written between 425-428 CE. See G. Jouasarrd, "L'activité littéraire de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428," *Mélanges Podechard* (1945): 159-174; G. Jouasarrd "Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie aux prises avec la 'communication des idiomes' avant 428 anti-ariens," *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962): 112-121. Cyril's *Commentary* is a verse by verse commentary made up of twelve Books, of which Books VII and VIII (Jn 10:18-12:48) are lost. The text of this *Commentary* is found in *PG* 73 and 74, 9-756. In this article, we will use the old English translation by P.E. Pusey, *The Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John by St. Cyril Archbishop of Alexandria,* 2 vols (Oxford: James and Parker, 1874, 1885). We will refer to this edition simply as (P) adding to it the volume and the page number.

[3] Martin Micallef, "Christological Insights in the Commentary of the Gospel of St. John by Cyril of Alexandria," in *In Joyful and Serene Service of his Lord's Word: In Memory of Rev Dr Joseph Calleja,* ed. Anthony Abela, *Melita Theologica, Supplementary Series 5* (2003): 139.

barren intellectual concern."[4] Instead, his ideas as expressed in this *Commentary* are "intimately connected with a concern about soteriology."[5] Following the Patristic tradition, Cyril believed that there was a necessary connection between the nature of Christ's person and the salvation that he brought. The claim about the Son as the bringer of salvation "was the primary and determinative influence upon the development of their (the Fathers') Christologies."[6] If "Soteriology makes Christology necessary, Christology makes Soteriology possible."[7]

Coming from the Alexandrian tradition,[8] Cyril's conception of salvation is broader than the Western emphasis on salvation solely as liberation from sin.[9] For Cyril, salvation primarily meant a "life-giving" or "deification."[10] For this term or idea, Cyril evidently depended on Irenaeus: "God became man that man might become God."[11] Only if the Son is truly God can He deify humankind. Cyril accompanied this soteriological principle with another one taken from Gregory of Nazianzus: "What is not assumed is not healed."[12] This principle is included in Cyril's comment on Jn 12:50: "The Word of God made one with Himself human nature in its entirely, that so he might save the entire man. For that which has not been taken into His Nature, has not been saved."[13]

---

[4] Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 147.

[5] Ibid.

[6] D.F. Winslow, "Soteriology 'Orthodoxy' in the Fathers," *Studia Patristica* 15 (1975): 393.

[7] Leander K. Keck, "Toward the Renewal of New Testament Christology," in *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honor of Marinus de Jonge,* Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 84, ed. Martinus C. de Boer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 324.

[8] For a detailed presentation of the Alexandrian tradition see, Robert Victor Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies: A Study in the Christological Thought of the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch in the Early History of Christian Doctrine* (London: SPCK, 1954); Robert Victor Seller, *The Council of Chalcedon: An Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: SPCK, 1961); Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: A Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 34-85.

[9] On this point see the comments of Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, *Introduction to Eastern Patristic Thought and Orthodox Theology* (Collegeville/MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 61.

[10] See Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 205.

[11] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haeresis,* v.i.

[12] Gregory of Nazianzus, Ep. 101.4-7 in *The Later Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great,* ed. Henry Scowcroft Bettenson (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[13] Jn 12:50 (P. 2:152); see also Jn 4:34 (P.1:226).

These principles reveal that for salvation or deification, Cyril demanded the Incarnation of God. Only if the Son is truly God and truly man, can he deify humankind. For this reason, one can rightly say that Cyril's teaching of deification is inseparable from his Christological arguments. Moreover, it is only in the light of this soteriological concern, that one must understand Cyril's attack against Arianism and his rejection of Apollinarism.

> The Arian Christ, it was argued, was not fully and inherently divine in his own right and not being such could not be the divine savior required by mankind. Similarly, the Apollinarian Christ was not fully human and not being such could not bring salvation effectively to the real point of human need.[14]

Cyril's comment on Jn 16:33 - "I have overcome the world" - is one of his best comments which presents the combination of his Soteriological and Christological concern.

> (Christ) conquered as one of ourselves, and for our sakes. For if He conquered as God, then it profiteth us nothing; but if as man, we are herein conquerors. For he is to us the second Adam, who came from heaven, according to the Scripture.[15]

What is remarkable in this comment is Cyril's use of the Adam typology which is one of the key theological concepts used in his *Commentary on John's Gospel*. In this regard, Wilkens rightly notes:

> I know of no patristic commentator whose entire exegetical enterprise is so controlled by a single biblical image as in Cyril. The biblical image is that of the second Adam or the heavenly Adam drawn from Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15.[16]

Cyril's use of the Adam typology is exhaustive.[17] The purpose of Cyril's use of this typology is threefold: to show that Christ was truly *human* as Adam was; to show that this *man* (Christ) was a *unique man,* for he is a heavenly man (his resurrection from the dead shows that it was God who lives this human life); to present the Son's obedience and its benefits to humanity. The obedience of the Son restores what was lost in the sin of the first Adam. Cyril's *Commentary*

---

[14] Maurice F. Wiles, "Soteriological Arguments in the Fathers," *Studia Patristica* 9 (1963): 321.

[15] Jn 16:33 (P.2:476-477); see also Jn 16:7 (P.2:441).

[16] Robert L. Wilken, "St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Mystery of Christ in the Bible," *Pro Ecclesia* 4 (1995): 470.

[17] See Robert L. Wilken, "Exegesis and History of Theology: Reflection on the Adam-Christ Typology in Cyril of Alexandria," *Church History* 35 (1966): 139-156.

on John's Gospel is very rich on this notion of restoration of God's grace into humanity.[18]

> The Only-Begotten, *being* by Nature God and *in the form of God* the Father, and in equality with Him, *emptied Himself* according to the Scripture, and became Man born of a woman, receiving all the properties of man's nature, sin only excepted, and in an unspeakable way uniting Himself to our nature by His own free will, in order that He might in Himself first, and through Himself, regenerate it into the glory which it had at the beginning; and that He, having proved Himself the second Adam, that is, a heavenly Man, and being found first of all, and the first fruits of those who are built up into newness of life in incorruption ... might henceforth through Himself send good gifts to the whole race. For this cause, though He is Life by Nature, He became as one dead, that having destroyed the power of death in us, He might mould us anew in His own Life.[19]

Cyril's arguments on the renewal which the obedience of the Second Adam brought to humanity is explained in great detail in one of Cyril's famous comments, namely on Jn 1:32 - "John bore witness, 'I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him'." Cyril's comment on this Johannine text brings forward the reasons why the Fourth Evangelist does not simply write that the Spirit "descended" on Jesus, but that the Spirit "remained" on Jesus.[20]

> Since then the first Adam presented not the grace given to him by God, God the Father was minded to send us from heaven the Second Adam ... that as by the *disobedience* of the first Adam, we became subject to Divine wrath, so through the obedience of the second, we might both escape the curse, and its evils might come to nought ... By receiving It (the Spirit) as Man (the Son), he preserved It to our nature and might again in root us the grace which had left us.[21]

In Cyril's words, the obedience of the second Adam is therefore a salvific obedience. The Son "having proved Himself the second Adam, that is, the

---

[18] See D.J. Unger, "Jesus Christ the Secure Foundation according to St. Cyril of Alexandria," *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1974): 404-414.

[19] Jn 17:18-19 (P.2:539); see also Jn 15:7 (P.2:395); Jn 17:4 (P.2:496).

[20] For a discussion on the role of the Holy Spirit in Cyril's *Commentary on John's Gospel*, especially in the episode of Jesus' baptism see, Robert L. Wilken, "The Interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus in the Later Fathers," *Studia Patristica* 11 (1967): 272; John McIntyre, "The Holy Spirit in Greek Patristic Thought," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 7 (1954): 353-375; A. Manzone, *La dottrina dello Spirito Santo nell'IN JOANNEM di San Cirillo d'Alessandria* (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1972), 1-71; G.C. Berthold, "Cyril of Alexandria and the Filoque," *Studia Patristica* 19 (1987): 146; R. Sparato, "La festa dell'Incarnazione: Esegesi di S. Cirillo di Alessandria a Luca 4:16-21," in *Esegesi e Catechesi nei Padri (secc. IV-VII),* ed. S. Felici (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Altoris Latinitatis, LAS, 1993), 75-82.

[21] Jn 1:31 (P.1:142); see also Jn 19:5 (P.2:608); Jn 7:39 (P.1:547).

heavenly Man,"[22] obeys the Father by becoming man, receives the Spirit *as man,* that is, as the second Adam, so that he first sanctifies his own humanity, and as a consequence of this sanctification, the second Adam sanctifies the rest of humanity.

> The Only-Begotten was made therefore Man as we, that in Him first the good things returning and the grace of the Spirit rooted might be preserved securely to our whole nature, the Only Begotten and Word of God the Father lending us the Stability of His Own Nature, because the nature of man had been condemned in Adam as powerless for stability and falling ... into perversion. And then in the turning of the first the loss of good passes through unto the whole nature; in the same way I deem in Him too Who knoweth not turning will the gain of the abundance of the Divine Gifts be preserved to our whole race.[23]

Such comments reveal how the Adam typology provided Cyril a useful tool to explain the Son's obedience as a salvific act. Cyril considered the divinization of humanity as basically the work of the Incarnate Logos and his Spirit and the result of this activity in the rest of humanity. Cyril stands very close to the Fourth Evangelist on this point. At the same time, he parts company from the Fourth Evangelist's thought. Both the Fourth Gospel and Cyril regard the coming of the Son as the means by which believers have life "in Him," nevertheless, the Adam typology is alien to John. Nowhere does John speak of Jesus as "Adam." This is only a Pauline motif found mainly in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15. It is only the use of "life-giving" agent in 1 Cor 15:45 which seems to have a common ground with Jn 5:21.[24] John Ashton has made the point with more force when he contends that:

> Looking back over the long Christian centuries, we may be astonished to see how quickly Paul and John, who surely never met in life, came to be joined together after death in other people's writings. And we may be surprised too at the extent to which this comfortable yoking has dominated Christian theology ever since.[25]

Paul provided Cyril with the key to the interpretation of the Bible. In the words of Wilken: "From Paul, Cyril learned to speak of the second Adam, the heavenly man, a new creation and, most of all, the centrality of the Resurrection in the biblical narrative."[26] For Cyril, it was "essential that the interpretation of

---

[22] Jn 17:18-19 (P.2:539).

[23] Jn 7:39 (P.1:549). See also Jn 1:32-33 (P.1:145).

[24] On this point see the comments of Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St John,* vol. 2 (New York: Crossroads, 1971), 354.

[25] John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 238.

[26] Wilken, "St. Cyril of Alexandria," 477-478.

the Bible be consistent and it can only be consistent if one reads the Bible in the light of its overall *skopos.*"[27] For Cyril, the Son's identity can be known simply by combining together all that the Bible says about him. Thus, we can understand why Cyril articulates the theological themes of the Fourth Gospel with this distinctive method. The Alexandrian Patriarch drags into his arguments other texts from the different books of Scripture, for he regards the Scripture as a continuous narrative about the person of Christ.[28] Yet, Cyril's reading of John with the eyes of Paul is one of Cyril's most notorious weak points.

The Mediation of the Son

Our next task is to examine how Cyril connects the theme of deification with that of mediation. In doing so, we will also probe whether Cyril comes close to John's thought. The dominant conception of deification in Cyril's thought bridges the gap between the human and the divine in the person of the Incarnate Logos. Christ's oneness with humanity and with God are of equal importance for Cyril, in order to show that Christ provides the link between the two. Cyril relates the idea of the Son's *deification* to that of the Son's *mediation* by presenting *deification* as the result of the Son's *mediation.*[29]

> *No one* therefore *will come to the Father,* that is, will appear as a partaker to the Divine nature, save through Christ alone. For if He has not become a Mediator by taking human form, our condition could never have advanced to such a height of blessedness.[30]

> For as He (the Son) is closely related to the Father, and through the sameness of their Nature the Father is closely related to Him; so also, are we to Him and He to us, in so far as He was made Man. And through Him as through a Mediator are we joined with the Father. For Christ is a sort of link *(methorion)* connecting the Supreme Godhead with manhood.[31]

The culmination of this unity with Him as man is that Jesus Christ raises those who believe in him to his status as "children of God." This assimilation

---

[27] Ibid., 477.

[28] For a detailed discussion on this point see, Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 30-45.

[29] See Jacques Liébaert, *La doctrine Christologique de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* (Lille: Facultés catholiques, 1951), 229.

[30] Jn 14:5-6 (P.1:243).

[31] Jn 10:14 (P.2:84).

is not identification. Humanity can never be a Son of God "by nature" as the Incarnate Logos, but only by adoption and "by grace."

> We mount up unto dignity above our nature for Christ's sake, and we too shall be *sons of God,* not like Him in exactitude, but by grace in imitation of Him. For He is Very Son, existing from the Father; we adopted by His Kindness, through grace receiving *I have said, Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High.*[32]

Cyril's arguments on how the Logos fully assumed a human body to work out salvation *in* and *through* that bodily condition are not only presented in those passages in which he refers to the Second Adam, but are also found in those passages in which he speaks of the Eucharist.[33] The Alexandrian Patriarch explains that the Humanity assumed by the Divine Logos is lifted up to an extraordinary glory. It becomes none other than the Humanity of the one who is God. The same thing happens in those who receive the Eucharist. The Eucharist deifies and transforms those who receive it. In a comment made in connection with the life-giving quality of the Eucharist, Cyril develops the following analogy. "Consider that water is cold by nature, but when it is poured into a kettle and brought to the fire, then it all but forgets its own nature, and goes away unto the operation of that which has mastered it."[34]

For Cyril those who are joined with Christ through the Eucharist, are joined with him not simply in a *spiritual way* but in a *physical way* like "melted wax."[35] Cyril points also to those biblical texts which depict Christ performing physical healings and raising people from the dead to clarify the way how the Eucharist deifies those who receive it.

> When he raises the dead, the Saviour is found to have operated, not by word only, or God-befitting commands, but He laid a stress on employing His Holy Flesh as a sort of co-operator unto this, that He might shew that It had the power to give life, and was already made one with him. For it was in truth His Own Body, and not another's. And verily when He was raising the little daughter of the chief of

---

[32] Jn 1:12 (P.1.104-105)

[33] See Henry Chadwick, "Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1951): 145-164; J.L. McInerney, "Soteriological Commonplaces in Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on John*," in *Disciplina Nostra,* ed. D.F. Winslow (Philadelphia: Patristic Foundation, 1979), 179-185.

[34] Jn 6:53 (P.1:419); see also Jn 6:15 (P.2:370).

[35] Jn 15:1 (P.2:370). Cyril's argument about the Eucharist is also extended to his teaching about the Church. The Eucharist not only joins those who receive it with Christ; it also joins together those who receive it, making them one body. See Emile Merch, *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1936), 337-364.

> the Synagogue saying, *Maid arise.* He laid hold of her hand, as it is written, giving life, as God, by His All-Powerful command, and again, giving life through the touch of His Holy Flesh, He shews that there was one kindred operation through both. Yea and when he went into the city called Nain, and one was being carried out dead, *the only son of his mother,* again He *touched the bier,* saying, *Young man, to thee I say, Arise.* And not only to His Own Word gives the power to give life to the dead, but that He might shew that His Own Body was life-giving. He touches the dead, thereby also infusing into those already decayed ... If by the touch alone of His Holy Flesh, He giveth life to that which is decayed, how shall we not profit yet more richly by the life-giving Blessing when we also taste it? For It will surely transform into Its own good, i.e., immortality, those who partake of it.[36]

Cyril's explanations of Christ's mediation seem to be close to what the Fourth Evangelist says in his Gospel. For the Fourth Evangelist and Cyril, Christ's mediation is not *functional* or *ministerial* like that of Moses.[37] Christ mediates life *in* and *through* His own life. In Cyril's thought it is this transforming mediation that gives purpose to the Incarnation.

> Christ ... is seen to be the bond of union between us and God the Father; as Man making us, as it were, His branches, and as God by Nature inherent in His own Father. For no otherwise could that nature which is subject to corruption be uplifted into incorruption, but by the coming down to it That Nature Which is high above all corruption and variableness, lightening the burthen of ever sinking humanity, so that it can attain its own good ... We have, therefore, been made perfect in unity with God the Father, through the mediation of Christ.[38]

This insight is very close to what John says in 1:17 - "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." What is striking here is the Fourth Evangelist's choice of verbs "was given (*edothe*) – came *(egeneto)* which indicate that while the law is something that could be separated from Moses through whom it was given 'grace and truth' which 'came by Jesus Christ' can never be dissociated from Himself."[39] In the words of the Johannine scholar Robert T. Fortna:

---

[36] Jn 6:53 (P.1:418-419).

[37] See B. Forte, "La dimensione Cristologica, Pneumatologica ed Eucharistica della Chiesa nel *Commentario a Giovanni* di S. Cirillo d'Alessandria," *Rivista di Letteratura e di Storia Ecclesiastica* 7 (1975): 97.

[38] Jn 17:22-23 (P.2:554-555).

[39] Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 133.

> John's most characteristic word for salvation ... (is) life, and ultimately it is not a quality, a state, to which Jesus brings men, but Jesus himself. 'I am the resurrection and the life' (11:25; cf 14:6) ... By his coming, as the one sent from the Father, he gives to men the life which he himself is.[40]

For John, God's salvation or (eternal) life is being actualized in the person of Jesus Christ. The coming of the Son supersedes and renders obsolete the places which were attached to God's presence, such as the Temple[41] or the sacred mountain of the Samaritans.[42] God is now met in the person of his Son Jesus Christ as we read in Jn 14:6 - "No one comes to the Father except through me."[43] This is probably also the meaning of Jn 1:51. According to Wayne Meeks,[44] the imagery behind this enigmatic Johannine saying is drawn from Jacob's vision of the ladder.[45] The point which the Fourth Evangelist seems to convey is that the Son of man joins heaven and earth through his own person. The same idea is repeated by C.K. Barrett: "John surely is concerned not only to make a Christological point in a straightforward ontological proposition, but to emphasize movement, traffic ... Jesus as the Son of man becomes the means by which men have communion *with God*."[46]

There seems to be a close relationship between the Fourth Gospel and Cyril on the way they express their respective notion of "life-giving" as both the Fourth Evangelist and Cyril considered salvation or life as the gift which is mediated by the one sent by God in his own being. At the same time, one should also notice the difference between the Fourth Gospel and Cyril's comments. On the one hand, Cyril developed the notion of life-giving in terms of the Trinitarian doctrine. The Son mediates life because he is "homoousios" with the Father in his Divine Nature which is now enfleshed. On the other hand, the Fourth Evangelist also presents the Son as the one who like the Father gives life.[47] The Fourth

---

[40] Robert T. Fortna, "From Christology to Soteriology: A Redaction-Critical Study of Salvation in the Fourth Gospel," *Interpretation* 27 (1973): 40.

[41] See Jn 2:19-22.

[42] See Jn 4:20-24.

[43] W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christian and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 334, proposes that "there is a deliberate presentation of the replacement of 'holy places' by the person of Jesus" in the Fourth Gospel.

[44] Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 44-72.

[45] See Gen 28:12.

[46] C.K. Barrett, "Christocentric or Theocentric?" in *Essays on John,* ed. C.K. Barrett (London: SPCK, 1982), 10-11.

[47] Jn 5:21.

Evangelist, however, does not present this in terms of "natures" and "essences." What he wants to convey is simply that in dealing with the Son, the believers are dealing with the Father. In John's Gospel, therefore "we see Christology in the making, with many tensions unresolved."[48] In the words of Raymond E. Brown: "Although the Johannine description and acceptance of the divinity of Jesus has ontological implications (as Nicaea recognized in confessing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is himself true God), in itself this description remains primarily functional."[49] John seems to have understood what he was doing simply as a way of underlying that the unseen God is met in Jesus. Jesus as the Son is authorized by God to speak his words and to do God's work.[50]

Christ Suffered and Died for us

Cyril's notion of deification as the result of the mediation of the Son through his Incarnation raises an important question. Once the Incarnation has taken place, is not the passion something that might be dispensed with? In John's Gospel the whole of Jesus' ministry is presented as salvation. Jesus' death on a cross forms part of this ministry. It is the ultimate expression of the Son's obedience which he maintained to the end:[51] it is the Father's "command" to the Son to lay down his life;[52] the "cup" he must drink;[53] and the "hour" before which he was distressed.[54] Ultimately, it is the last mode of revelation - "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me."[55] Does Cyril get this insight right or does he consider the obedience of the Son as exclusively related to the Incarnation? In order to answer this question, one must examine how Cyril speaks of the death and resurrection of the Son.

Cyril regularly speaks of the Incarnation and every aspect of it as an act which happened "for us." In his exhaustive catalogue of those things that Christ did

---

[48] William Loader, *Jesus in John's Gospel: Structure and Issues in Johannine Christology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2017), 392.

[49] Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John,* i-xii, Anchor Bible Series, vol. 29 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 408

[50] See for example Jn 5:19-20.25-26; 10:18.32.37-38.

[51] Jn 19:30; Jn 4:34. See also Jn 17:4.

[52] Jn 10:18.

[53] Jn 18:11.

[54] Jn 12:27.

[55] Jn 8:28.

"for us," Cyril includes Christ's death and resurrection.[56] As a matter of fact, Cyril does not treat the death of Jesus as a separate event from the Incarnation. The Incarnation was only the beginning of those things Christ did "for us." For Cyril, Christ's death stands in closest conjunction with the whole movement of the Incarnation and it would be a mistake if one says that Cyril relates salvation exclusively to the Incarnation. Cyril regularly refers to Christ's death as "a saving passion"[57] presenting it mainly as a sacrifice of atonement as evidenced in the following three texts from his *Commentary on John's Gospel*.

The first text is Jn 1:29. In his comment on this Johannine text - "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" - Cyril shows that from the very beginning of his Gospel, John points forward to the salvific meaning of the blood of Christ poured "for us" on the cross. He explained John the Baptist's confession by referring to the imagery of the sacrificial lamb and of the suffering servant of Isa 53:7 - "Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearer is dumb."

> One Lamb *died for all,* saving the whole flock on earth to God the Father, One for all ... For since we were in many sins, and therefore due to death and corruption, the Father hath given the Son a redemption for us, One for all, since all are in Him, and He above all. One died for all, that all should live in Him.[58]

The second text is Jn 6:51 - "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." In his comment on this Johannine text, Cyril scrutinizes the Scriptures for evidence that Jesus' death is a sacrifice of atonement to God's will. Starting from Psalm 40:6-8 which is also quoted in Heb 10:5-10, Cyril writes:

> He says in the Psalms too, offering Himself as a spotless sacrifice to God the Father, *Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a Body preparedst Thou Me. In whole burnt-offering and offerings for sin Thou tookedst no pleasure; then said I, Lo I come (in the chapter of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God, was My choice.* For since *the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer* sufficed not unto the purging away of sin ... Christ himself came in some way to undergo punishment for all.[59]

---

[56] Jn 1:29 (P.1:131-132); Jn 14:3 (P.2:235-236).
[57] Jn 8:20 (P.1:577).
[58] Jn 1:29 (P.1:132).
[59] Jn 6:51 (P.1:409-410).

Cyril then quotes Isa 53:5 and 1 Pt 2:24. "For with *His stripes we were healed* and *His Own Self bare own sins in His Own Body on the tree* and He was crucified for all ... that .. we might live in Him."[60]

The third text is Jn 10:11 - "The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Cyril's comment on this Johannine text reflects his concern that Jesus' sacrificial death has a soteriological significance.

> He (Jesus) explains the proper method of testing a good shepherd, for He teaches that in a struggle for the salvation of the flock such a one ought not to hesitate to give up even life itself freely, a condition which was of course fulfilled by Christ ... when Christ announced as the Good Shepherd over all, in the struggle with the pair of wild and terrible beasts, He laid His life for us. He endured the cross for our sakes ... that He might deliver all men from condemnation of sin.[61]

The three texts we have just presented exhibit Cyril's emphasis that Jesus suffered and died "for us." Cyril repeats this phrase over and over again in these chosen texts to show that Christ did not suffer for his own sake. Like the Incarnation, the passion of Christ was an act for the benefit of humanity. Moreover, these three texts, which are only a sample of what Cyril says in many other passages throughout his *Commentary on John*, reveal how Cyril considered Christ's obedience as a sacrificial offering. Two main points must be noted here.

First, Cyril's reference to Psalm 40 or to Heb 10:5-10 in his comment on Jn 6:51. Cyril's point of focus in reference to this Psalm is the accomplishment of Christ's work through his obedience unto death. Jesus fulfilled and perfectly displayed God's will in the sacrifice of his body on the cross, which is superior to the sacrificial offerings prescribed by the law. Cyril frequently refers to Hebrews, especially when he wants to speak about Christ's sacrificial death. The designation of Christ as "High Priest" is a good example. During the Arian controversy, there was an increased interest in the theme of Christ's priesthood.[62] Cyril adopted this theme in his comment on Jn 17:9-11 to show that Christ's death on the cross was a spotless sacrifice for others.

> Being our truly great and all-holy High Priest, by His own prayers He appeases the anger of His Father, sacrificing Himself for us. For He is the Sacrifice, and is Himself our Priest, Himself our Mediator, Himself a blameless Victim, the true

---

[60] Jn 6:51 (P.1:410).

[61] Jn 10:11 (P.2:76).

[62] See Frances M. Young, "Christological Ideas in Greek Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1969): 150-163; Paul M. Parvis, "The Commentary on Hebrews and the *Contra Theodorum* of Cyril of Alexandria," *Journal of Theological Studies* 26 (1975): 415-419.

> Lamb *which taketh away the sin of the world.* The Mosaic ceremonial was then, as it were, a type and transparent shadowing forth of the mediation of Christ, shown forth in the last times, and the High Priest of the Law indicated in his own person that Priest Who is above the Law. For the things of the Law are shadows of the truth ... But Christ Who manifested Himself in the last times above the types and figures of the Law, at once our High Priest and Mediator, prays for us as Man ... For He, being a holy High Priest, blameless and undefiled, offered Himself not for His own weakness, as was the custom of those to whom was allotted the duty of sacrificing according to the Law, but rather for the salvation of our souls, and that once for all.[63]

At this point, however, one must note that nowhere does John explicitly refer to Jesus as High Priest. In his monograph on the passion of Christ in John's Gospel, Ignace de la Potterie states that "the rich theme of Jesus-High Priest, in the category of the ritual order, which we find in the Epistle to the Hebrews, plays practically no part (in John)."[64] J.P. Heil, however, reaches a different conclusion as he brings evidence from the Fourth Gospel which tends to indicate that this Gospel applies the motif of High Priest to Jesus "in a more subtle and symbolic way as part of the Fourth Gospel's well-established dramatic irony."[65]

The second point one must notice is the fact that the Fourth Gospel does not give the atoning significance of Jesus' death as much weight as Cyril does. There is no doubt that the idea of Jesus' death as atonement is present in John's Gospel. There are various allusions to it in this Gospel. The positioning of Jn 1:29 at the beginning of this Gospel may form an *inclusio* with the various Passover allusions of the passion narrative.[66] The idea of Jesus' death as atonement seems to have also been known to the Fourth Evangelist in a Eucharistic context.[67] Thus,

---

[63] Jn 17:9-11 (P.2:506-507).

[64] Ignace de la Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus according to John, Text and Spirit* (Slough: St Paul Publication, 1989), 114. See also page 126.

[65] J.P. Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995): 730.

[66] See Jn 19:14.29.31. For good comments on these Johannine passion texts see M.J.J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form,* Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 15 (Netherlands: Pharos, 1996), 147-166; Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels,* vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1994); Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John,* xii-xxi, Anchor Bible Series, vol. 29a (Garden City, New York: Doubleday: 1970), 953.

[67] On this point see the works of Martinus C. de Boer, *Johannine Perspectives on the Death of Jesus,* Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 17 (Netherlands: Pharos, 1996), 233-234; M.J.J. Menken, "John 6.51c-58: Eucharist or Christology?," *Biblica* 74 (1993): 8; J.T. Forestell, *The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the Fourth Gospel* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical

Bultmann's remark that "Jesus' death as atonement for sin has no place in John"[68] is too sweeping. Having said so, one must also recognize that the significance of Jesus' death as atonement sacrifice does not play a central part in the Christology of the Fourth Gospel. John does not fully develop this idea: he only adopts it and uses it "incidentally, illustratively and confessionally."[69]

When one compares John's with Cyril's comments on the significance of the atoning death of Jesus, one may therefore conclude that Cyril seems to have given much more weight to the atoning significance of Jesus' death than John did. In spite of this, the Alexandrian Patriarch comes very close to John in his explanation of the Johannine term of "glorification."

The Glorification of Christ

In order to delve into the heart of Cyril's thought, our next task is to examine Cyril's use of the term "glorification" in relation to Jesus' death. The best place to start at is his comment on Jn 13:31-32 - "Now is the Son of man glorified." Many Church Fathers have struggled with this Johannine text as they found it very difficult to interpret because it is a text which seems to lead toward the Arian position. If the Son is God, why does the Fourth Evangelist present *the glory* as if it were something the Son did not possess? Cyril's comment on this text is a plausible answer to this question. He starts his argument by specifying the problem: "We must now inquire what manner of glorification that is to which he now specifically alludes: for some perhaps may say, was He not surely glorified before this, by the mighty wonders which He wrought?"[70] Cyril then enumerates a number of miracles and he states that the term "glorification" does not come to terms with in these miracles. It is here that Cyril spells out the meaning of the term "glorification."

> The perfect consummation of His glory and the fullness of His fame were summed up in the facts of His suffering ... For this reason, then we shall reckon that He was now glorified, although there never was a time when He was not *Lord of Glory ... Now is the Son of Man Glorified,* and by this He is pointing to His suffering as Savior, as being already at the doors.[71]

Institute, 1974); L.P. Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John,* Journal for the Study of New Testament Supplement 145 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1997), especially 179-218.

[68] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* vol. 2 (London: SCM, [7]1993), 53.

[69] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology* (Louisville/Kentucky: John Knox, 1995), 283.

[70] Jn 13:31-32 (P.2:209).

[71] Jn 13:31-32 (P.2:210).

His comment on Jn 12:28 is very close to that of Jn 13:31-32.

> Since this is the cause for which I have come *glorify Thy Son,* that is, prevent me not from encountering death, but grant this favour to Thy Son for the good of all mankind ... For in his wisdom he in these words speaks of being crucified as being *glorified,* and the cross is a glory ... the undergoing this for the benefit of others is a characteristic of excessive compassion and of supreme glory. And the Son became glorious also in another way. For from the fact that He overpowered death, we recognized Him to be Life and Son of the Living God. And the Father is glorified when He is seen to have such a Son begotten of Himself, of the same Nature as Himself ... and when He says: *Glorify Thy Son,* He means this: *Give Thy consent to Me in My willingness to suffer* ... for instead of *suffering* He spoke of *glory*.[72]

These comments clearly show that for Cyril, *the Son's sufferings* are *the Son's glorification.* This intuition indicates that although Cyril may have given too much emphasis to the Son's death as atonement, by presenting the Son's sufferings as his glorification, he came very close to the way John understands the meaning of the Son's death. The Fourth Evangelist couples the crucifixion-resurrection event as the glorification and exaltation of Christ.[73] This notion is expressed in John's use of the verb "to lift up" or "to exalt."[74] In being lifted up on the cross, God's plan of salvation is accomplished, and the Son returned to his Father. The cross and the resurrection of Christ, therefore, are the means by which the Son enters into his previous glory.

Conclusion

It is time to draw together the threads of this study and seek to assess whether our account of Cyril's *Commentary* has thrown light on the possibility of theological interpretation. In describing the Biblical studies prior to the eighteenth century, scholars usually employ the term "pre-critical" which may suggest that the Biblical commentators of that period did not use their critical abilities. It is true that particular historical questions were not asked, but one can scarcely regard writers like Cyril of Alexandria as lacking in critical abilities.

---

[72] Jn 12:28 (P.2:153).

[73] On this point see George R. Beasley-Murray, *John,* Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 211; Brown, *The Gospel according to John,* xiii-xxi, 610; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John,* 2:480; T.D. Brodie, *The Gospel according to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 541.

[74] See Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John.* The Passion Series (Collegeville/MN: Fowler Books, 1991), 34-35.

While in the course of commenting on the Johannine text, Cyril had to wrestle with basic and perplexing questions, the acuteness of observation and attention to details must be quoted as a valuable mark of Cyril's *Commentary on John*.

For Cyril, the Fourth Gospel was the foundation stone of his faith. One may rightly say that in terms of the theological subject-matter, there is an agreement between John and Cyril which is not presupposed in modern biblical scholarship. Cyril was evidently talking about the same God as John, namely, the God of Israel and of the Church. Cyril was also speaking about the same Jesus as John, namely, the man of Nazareth in whom his followers see God's decisive loving intervention; who was crucified and rose again, and who is now glorified. The same can be said with regard to the Spirit, through whom both God and Jesus are defined in relation to believers.

Despite all the limitations, Cyril grasps and articulates in his own generation's language the essence of John's message, namely, that salvation is found in Jesus Christ in whom God is revealed. Cyril's interpretation of John, therefore, provided a contribution to the theological and pastoral needs of his day. It also meets a need which the purely descriptive historical method fails to satisfy,[75] as it speaks of God and so illuminates the believer's relationship with God. Cyril's method is not ours, yet it constantly reminds us that: "There can be no serious use of the Bible for theology unless one has a clear idea of how the interpreter moves from a description of the biblical witness to the object toward which these witnesses point."[76]

The preoccupation with historical description of early Christianity prevents many modern biblical commentators from speaking with the text, about who God is and where salvation is to be found.[77] This is the central content of

---

[75] Walter Wink, *Transformation: Toward a New Paradigm for Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 1, has gone far to assess the historical-critical method as "bankrupt," arguing that this "critical method has reduced the Bible to a dead letter." The 1993 Document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on Biblical Interpretation, though it uses the historical-critical method as a control on the other biblical approaches, accepts a two-fold reaction against this approach. In his evaluation of this document, J. Holman, "A Dutch Catholic Perspective," in *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,* ed. J. L. Houlden (London: SCM, 1995), 131, writes that "the community of the faithful has clearly indicated that it cannot bake bread to feed its soul from the material which historical criticism offers." For more arguments on this point see Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture,* 3.

[76] Brevard S. Childs, "On Reclaiming the Bible for Christian Theology," in *Reclaiming the Bible for the Church,* ed. C.E. Braaten and R.W. Jenson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 14.

[77] William Wrede, for example, saw the main task of New Testament scholarship as a matter of reconstructing and describing the development of early Christian thought as a chapter in the history of religion. He objected to present the New Testament material in terms of doctrinal

Scripture for Christians spelled out in a succession of theological articulations. For Cyril, however, the Church's dogmas "have an intrinsic connection with the 'fuller sense' of the Scripture, being the unfolding of what was already present."[78] On the one hand, it is this comprehensive and richly theological approach which made Cyril's *Commentary on John* valuable for his time. Cyril's aims are still the same as those of the theologian today, but the way the latter achieves these aims is different from Cyril's method. On the other hand, Cyril was more than merely drawing out what was already implicit in John. Cyril's reading of John was rigidly guided by his doctrinal presuppositions.

After the long history of Trinitarian debate, Cyril understandably tends to read the many Johannine statements about the relationship between the Father and the Son as an ontological relationship. He used John as a vehicle to defend the Church's faith and to correct the Arians' interpretation of John which Cyril considered incompatible with the Church's living faith. This is seen especially in those instances when Cyril's reading of John entails no more than the production of proof text to support the Church's existing doctrinal framework.

Yet, one should not consider Cyril's arguments for their own sake or for speculation. For Cyril, John's Gospel is not "merely a handbook of intellectual orthodoxy, but a gospel of salvation."[79] Cyril's Christology is directed towards soteriology as in John. If there is a striking difference between the Fourth Gospel and Cyril with regards to their respective Christologies, this does not seem to be the case in their soteriological arguments. Like John, Cyril wanted to maintain that the activity of God impinges on people's life. But John and Cyril did this by combining two distinct emphases: on the one hand, they place the divine realm clearly within Jesus Christ, and on the other hand, they tell that those who believe can have life "in Him." What unites Cyril to John is therefore a common soteriological aim. Both John and the Alexandrian Patriarch regard the whole movement of Incarnation as the means by which the believer has life "in Him," that is, in the Son. Cyril, however, goes beyond John in offering a theory of how this happens, namely, by deification: God became man so that he might become

---

topics, arguing that this fails to bring out what it really is. His concern was with "what was believed, thought, taught, hoped, required and strive for in the earliest period of Christianity, not what certain writings say about faith, doctrine, hope, etc." William Wrede, "The Task and Methods of 'New Testament Theology'," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology,* ed. Robert Morgan (London: SCM Press, 1973), 69.

[78] E. Schillebeeckx, "Exegesis, Dogmatics and the Development of Dogma," in *Dogmatic vs Biblical Theology,* ed. H. Vorgrimler (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962), 137.

[79] Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 147.

God. John also has the mutual indwelling language, but that theory does not depend on any Greek philosophical conceptuality.

Rev. Dr Martin Micallef
Department of Hebrew, Greek and Sacred Scripture
Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080
Malta

martin.f.micallef@um.edu.mt

MELITA THEOLOGICA
Journal of the Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
69/2 (2019): 173-187

Robert D. Miller*

History, Folklore, and Myth in the Book of Judges

The book of Judges professes to be a history of early Israel. This article unpacks how is Judges *doing* history-writing, which will implicate how historiography was done in the Ancient Near East more broadly as well as *who* is doing the history-writing in the book of Judges. To illustrate, we will look at a section of Judges where the historiographical efforts of Judges are at work.

Herodotus and Thucydides did not invent history writing, but they invented what Peter Machinist calls the "Analytical I," a historian who "distance[s] themselves from certain things and persons around them, about which they are going to speak."[1] Before them, such detachment is absent. Egyptian historians, for example, use the past to speak about the present.[2] "The past is mobilized in…a wide range of contexts and directions."[3] Thus, in the 18th-Dynasty "Neferhotep Stele," history legitimizes a contemporary situation. They attribute causality in history to the gods, as in the 9th century "Annals of Osorkon."[4] Foreigners

* Robert D. Miller II, O.F.S., is Ordinary Professor of Old Testament at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. He is also a Research Associate in the Department of Old Testament Studies at the University of Pretoria.

[1] Peter B. Machinist, "The Voice of the Historian in the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean World," *Interpretation* (2003): 119. The Ancient Near East had other sorts of historians -"No-historians," "Pseudo-I's," and "Autobiographical I's" - and those we should expect in the Old Testament.

[2] As John Baines points out, citing the MK "Instructions of Kagemni," "Prophecy of Neferti," and the Second Intermediate Period "Papyrus Westcar," John Wilson and Erik Hornung were wrong to claim Egypt only thought in the present; John Baines, "Ancient Egyptian Concepts and Uses of the Past," in *Archaeological Objectivity in Interpretation*, vol. 3.A (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 4–5.

[3] Baines, 11, citing Harpers' Songs, P. Harris 1.91-93.

[4] A.22-23.

only appear when their impact on events was decisive. Cycles of dissolution and restoration are *post factum* but not remote.[5] From the New Kingdom on, historians divided the past into distinct periods.[6] Overall, historiography is stylized but not divorced from reality.

In Mesopotamia, from the Sumerian King List and Old Babylonian "Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin" to the late Berossus, history writing was a vehicle for authority, both royal and divine.[7] New narrative styles are pioneered in the 9th-century Assyrian "Annals of Shalmaneser III," still with no narrative plot, but approaching what we think of as narrative historiography. Arrangement is not always chronological order, but sometimes geographical, or to supply literary symmetry. Little source material is used, and the intent is still propagandistic.

By both Egyptian and Mesopotamian comparative standards, what we have in the Old Testament Former Prophets is historiography.[8] How, then, does Israel write history? Judges's "propagandistic" intent is in its master story: via a slow spiral into idolatry, immorality, and violence, Israel - far from conquering Canaan - becomes Canaan.[9] What no one seems to ask is *what* material, exactly,

---

[5] Baines, "Ancient Egyptian Concepts and Uses of the Past," 10.

[6] E.g., "Turin King List."

[7] Machinist, "The Voice of the Historian in the Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean World," 127; Jack M. Sasson, ed., *Judges 1-12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, v. 6D (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2014), 8–9.

[8] Philippe Abadie, *L'histoire d'Israël entre mémoire et relecture*, Lectio divina 229 (Paris: Cerf, 2009), 59, 42–43 but I am wary of drawing more precise connections. Some cite the 12th-century Babylonian "Weidner Chronicle" as a parallel to the so-called Deuteronomistic History, since it presents cycles of good and bad kings to help contemporary rulers avoid the fate of Naram-Sin, whose sins are anachronistic, since Babylon was not built in his lifetime. So, supposedly, 1 Kings 13-14 and 2 Kings 17 are parallel, propagandistic for Josiah as the "Weidner" was for Nebuchadnezzar. But the "Weidner Chronicle's" line of causality reaches back beyond history to the divine realm, while the Deuteronomistic History's reaches back to a moment in history; and unlike Yahweh's Law, Marduk's divine will that is flouted was that he wanted more fish. The Mesha Stela is a much closer parallel to the Bible, not only because of its Deuteronomistic language and theology but also in its geographical, non-chronological arrangement.; Bill T. Arnold, "The Weidner Chronicle and the Idea of History in Israel and Mesopotamia," in *Faith, Tradition, and History*, ed. Alan R. Millard, James K. Hoffmeier, and David W. Baker (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 139, 145.

[9] Millar Burrows, "Ancient Israel," in *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 112; Yairah. Amit, *History and Ideology: Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 36 nn.4, 39–40; Niels Peter Lemche, *The Old Testament between Theology and History: A Critical Survey* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 199; Eliyahu Assis, *Self-Interest or Communal*

is "shap[ed to]...serve the historian's purpose."[10] Moreover, while "ancient historians of Israel assumed and communicated a set of general...principles governing history," such as those of the so-called Deuteronomistic History, both in reporting events and in conveying their meaning,[11] those principles are not simplistic. It is *not* just bad kings who suffer and good ones who prosper: that pattern fails not only for Hezekiah and Josiah, but also for bad kings like Manasseh.

As Millar Burrows wrote a half-century ago, "We have in the Old Testament many ideas of history."[12] Judges has its own - more than one. We must address the "so-called"ness of the Deuteronomistic History. We must ask if Judges is part of a Deuteronomistic History. Long ago, Kuenen, Kittel, and Moore all thought J and E extended into Judges.[13] Karl Budde thought a major break fell between Judges 8 and 9, and Judges 9-1 Kings 2 was the Yahwist. He listed things only found in those chapters and J: washing feet, *yoshev beeretz*, dimming weak eyes, deep sleep, opening mouth, flesh & bone, lying with, spies, etc.[14] Argument over whether the Deuteronomistic History is Exilic, 7th-century, or as many now argue Persian-Period,[15] leaves such observations unaddressed, as well as the absence of the phrase "Torah of Moses" in 1-2 Samuel and the few references to the *Book* of the Law throughout, even in Josiah's reform.[16] Finally, Deuteronomy gives

---

Interest: An Ideology of Leadership in the Gideon, Abimelech, and Jephthah Narratives (Judg. 6-12), Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 106 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 242–243.

[10] Amit, *History and Ideology,* 38.

[11] Ehud Ben Zvi, "Clio Today and Ancient Israelite History," in *'Not Even God Can Alter the Past': Reflections on 16 Years of the European Seminar in Historical Methodology*, European Seminar in Historical Methodology 10 (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 27; Burrows, "Ancient Israel," 111–13.

[12] Burrows, "Ancient Israel," 102; also Kurt Galling, "Biblische Sinndeutung Der Geschichte," *Evangelische Theologie* (1948): 307–319.

[13] Otto Eissfeldt, *Geschichtsschreibung Im Alten Testament* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1948), 41; Robert H O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, VTSup 63 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 348.

[14] *Die Bücher Richter und Samuel, ihre Quellen und ihr Aufbau*, 1900; Cf. Eissfeldt, *Geschichtsschreibung Im Alten Testament*, 43. Even Weinfeld and Soggin thought Judges 1:1-2:5 was JE, and rest Deuteronomistic.

[15] Raymond F. Person, Jr., *The Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles* (Ancient Israel and its Literature 6; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 11; Person, *Deuteronomistic School*, 56-63, 73-81; Walter Dietrich, "Vielfalt und Einheit im Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk," in *Houses Full of All Good Things*, ed. Juha Pakkala and Martti Nissinen (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2008), 182-183.

[16] R. E. Clements, "The Former Prophets and Deuteronomy," in *God's Word for Our World*, ed. J. Harold Ellens, Deborah L. Ellens, Rolf P. Knierim, and Isaac Kalimi, Journal for the Study

great attention to sacrifices, festivals, and priesthood, while the Deuteronomistic History does not.[17] Multiple scholars now question the entire existence of a Deuteronomistic History.[18]

Consider Judges: nowhere else do we have such a positive view of monarchy: "In those days, there was no king in Israel: everyone did what seemed right in their own eyes."[19] Deuteronomistic theology ("Do good, get good; do bad, get bad") appears first in Judges in 1:5-7 in the mouth of a Canaanite, where it is parodied: "As I have done, so God has repaid me," says Adonibezek.[20] In Judges 11, both Jephthah and his daughter believe a caricature of the faith of Deuteronomy 23 (23:21-24).[21] The story implies Samson and his parents do not know Israelite faith, but Samson's theology is Deuteronomistic (e.g., 15:18-19), as is idolatrous Micah's (17:13), as is the brutal Danites'. Judges 2:1 is flatly anti-Deuteronomistic: "I will never break my covenant with you."[22] Judges *does* have a theology, but it is not Deuteronomistic: the Samson story, to which we shall return, shows Israel does not want liberation or salvation, yet according to the author, much as she would like to end it the covenant is unbreakable.[23]

We can therefore suspend discussion of the Deuteronomistic Historian. If one exists, he did not write Judges, or at least not most of it.[24] Judges is not of

---

of the Old Testament Supplement 388 (London: T & T Clark, 2004): 1.90-94; K. L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate?," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32 (2007): 333-334.

[17] Graeme Auld, *Samuel at the Threshold*. Society for Old Testament Study Monographs (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2003), 189-200.

[18] E.g., Gary Knoppers, Graeme Auld; Marc Z. Brettler, "Method in the Application of Biblical Source Material to Historical Writing," in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel*, ed. H. G. M. Williamson, Proceedings of the British Academy 143 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 313.

[19] Martin Noth, "The Background of Judges 17-18," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. Bernhard Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper, 1962).

[20] Alexander Rofè, "Ephraimite versus Deuteronomistic History," in *Storia e Tradizioni di Israele*, ed. D. Garrone and F. Israel (Brescia: Paideia, 1991); Robert D. Miller II, "Deuteronomistic Theology in the Book of Judges?" *Old Testament Essays* 15 (2002): 411–416.

[21] David Janzen, "Why the Deuteronomist Told about the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29 (2005): 340–341.

[22] Lemche, *The Old Testament between Theology and History*, 197.

[23] Burrows, "Ancient Israel," 112; Miller II, "Deuteronomistic Theology in the Book of Judges?"

[24] Amit, *History and Ideolog: Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*, 34 n.1; The issue is not one of genre, as per Anthony J. Frendo, *Pre-Exilic Israel, the Hebrew Bible, and Archaeology: Integrating Text and Artefact*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 549 (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 16, as if "the legends in Judges belong to a different genre from

a piece but has grown by successive expansions to its final, complex form[25] - although it *has* a deliberate and coherent final redaction.[26]

Judges reveals history that is not only that of the time of its writing.[27] I past publications, I attempted a history of the Early Israelite Settlement, treating the biblical accounts as unproven hypotheses,[28] and like Gottwald, Dever, and others, confronting the information in Judges with archaeology of the Early Iron Age, equally interpreted subjectively, and finding "anchor points... broadly congruent."[29] Those correspondences were adjudicated as "probable" or "possible."[30] The rationale for using the book of Judges at all was not to prove agreement between Bible and archaeology,[31] but to enrich the social history of Israel written from the archaeology alone with intellectual and cultural history. Judges's authors could have gained accurate knowledge by their historiographical work (or lucky guesses), without us having to make blanket statements about truth or falsehood of entire narratives.[32]

---

that of the stories in Kings which do betray a sense of history," hardly true of the Elisha stories. See clearer discussion in Abadie, *L' histoire d'Israël entre mémoire et relecture*, 62–63; and Hans M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, Forschungen Zum Alten Testament 61 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 18; as Brettler, "Method in the Application of Biblical Source Material to Historical Writing," 309 writes, "there is no form-critical genre of the historical text in the sense that a particular text is somehow marked as...'I am telling the real truth.'"

[25] Walter Beyerlin, "Gattung Und Herkunft Des Rahmens Im Richterbuch," in *Tradition Und SItuation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 9; O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, 346–347; Andrew D. H. Mayes, "Deuteronomistic Royal Ideology in Judges 17-21," *Biblical Interpretation* 9 (2001): 253.

[26] Lawson G. Stone, "From Tribal Confederation to Monarchic State" (Diss., Yale University, 1988), 113–129; also O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, 365–366.

[27] The best recent exploration of which is Sasson, *Judges 1-12*, 10.

[28] Allan Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 13.

[29] Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 163, 169; William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 101; William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 167–190.

[30] Ernst Axel Knauf, "History in Joshua," in *Israel in Transition. From Late Bronze II to Iron IIa (c. 1250-850 B.C.E.). The Texts*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe, European Seminar in Historical Methodology 7–8 (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 2:130.

[31] As Emanuel Pfoh, "On Finding Myth and History in the Bible," in *Finding Myth and History in the Bible: Scholarship, Scholars and Errors: Essays in Honor Og Giovanni Grabini*, ed. Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò, Chiara Peri, and Jim West (Sheffield: Equinox, 2016), 199 accuses.

[32] Knauf, "History in Joshua," 138; Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible*, 21; O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, 368; Pfoh, "On Finding Myth and History in the Bible," 197,

This essay is not a history of the Early Israelite Settlement now, however. Nor is it a commentary on Judges, which would require asking *why* the final text was written, reconstructing the conditions of *each* layer's creation.[33] Herein, we want to know what Judges is doing when writing about Early Israel: to look at the "surviving structures [and] deduce the processes that produced them."[34] We will focus on what might seem the least historical stories in Judges: Samson's, chosen precisely for this reason; Heffelfinger, Farber, and others have done excellent work showing how history comes out in Judges 9, for instance, but the situation is somewhat simpler there.[35] For Samson, as Albright said of Joseph, "so perfect a story, dating moreover from hoary antiquity, can, strictly speaking, be neither history nor fiction."[36] Albright's words are worth quoting at length:

> *A priori* it is impossible to decide whether a given figure is of historical or mythical origin. A categorical generalization is as rash here as elsewhere in the domain of the humanistic sciences....If heroes are set down as historical we must look for mythical analogies from which they have procured their mythic trappings... Moreover, we must allow for the operation of an unlimited number of disguising modifications and accretions. A historical personage may thus be surrounded in time with a borrowed aureole, containing perhaps even rays characteristic of the most out-and-out gods....We must not be misled, but must examine critically the precipitate left after all suspicious elements have been removed.[37]

---

200 thinks it is impossible to separate the fact from fiction; These kernels of correspondence regularly emerge in "tidbits of information ... often given in ideologically unguarded moments"; John R. Huddlestun, " 'Who is this that rises like the Nile?' Some Egyptian Texts on the Inundation and a Prophetic Trope," in A.H. Bartlett et al. eds., *Fortunate the Eyes that See* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 340; "rejected traditions...alternative sources [that] with time, were marginalized from the dominant description of the history of Israel"; Alexander Rofè, "Clan Sagas As a Source in Settlement Traditions," in "*A Wise and Discerning Mind:" Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long*, ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Culley, Brown Judaic Studies 325 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000), 198–200; In other words, even "a text that is not trying to recount the 'real' past [might] nevertheless" actually do so; Brettler, "Method in the Application of Biblical Source Material to Historical Writing," 308.

[33] Gary Beckman, "The Limits of Credulity," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 125 (2005): 349; Knauf, "History in Joshua," 130.

[34] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, First issued as an Oxford Univ. Press paperback (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 41.

[35] Katie M. Heffelfinger, " 'My Father Is King': Chiefly Politics and the Rise and Fall of Abimelech," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (2009): 277–92; Zev Farber, "Jerubaal, Jacob and the Battle for Shechem," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 13, no. art. 12 (2013).

[36] W. F. Albright, "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, n.d., 111.

[37] Albright, 111.

Without attempting it, Burrows proposed[38] such work on this figure Gunkel called, "The merry butcher, Samuel."[39] Even the Talmud called Samson, "Israel's mightiest and flightiest leader" (*b. Rosh Hashanah* 25b, 26a). Already Ewald said here was a popular hero whose legends had grown by accretion.[40] Jeremias (Alfred) and Kuenen described him as mythology, legend, and history mixed,[41] what Kittel called, "A motley mushroom-growth of legend concerning *ruse* and wrong of every kind."[42] So here, we will see *by what means* Judges writes about Early Israel.

Drawing on insights of the Church Fathers and Yigael Yadin, Othniel Margalith argued in a series of articles from the 1980s that behind Samson was an early form of the Heracles story, brought by Philistines from Greece. This idea has been repeated by Yair Zakovitch and Pnina Galpaz Feller, who waxes eloquently about "Denyen Legends" that exist only in scholarly reconstruction.[43] Azzan Yadin and Robert Gnuse make the same argument but think Heracles was borrowed in the Hellenistic period.[44]

Yet the parallels Margalith and the others read in the text are very general. Samson's hair that may or may not be the source of his power cannot be compared to Heracles, who according to Galpaz Feller "wore the skin of a lion and its mane looked like his hair."[45] The voluntary death of Samson by toppling the pillars of the Temple of Dagon is not the same as Heracles uprooting trees for his own funeral pyre, and so on.[46]

---

[38] Burrows, "Ancient Israel," 102–103.

[39] Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (Chicago: Open Court, 1907), 110.

[40] Heinrich Ewald, *The History of Israel* (London: Longman, 1883), 2:402–403.

[41] Alfred Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of Ancient East* ([Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1911); Abraham Kuenen, *The Religion of Israel* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1874), 1:23.

[42] Rudolf Kittel, *A History of the Hebrews* (London; New York: Williams & Norgate ; G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 2.92.

[43] Pnina Galpaz-Feller, *Samson: The Hero and the Man: The Story of Samson (Judges 13-16)* (Bern: P. Lang, 2006), 278–279; Yair Zakovitch, "The Strange Biography of Samson," *Nordisk Judaistik* 24 (2016): 31; Yigael Yadin, "And Dan, Why Did He Remain in Ships?," *AJBA* 1 (71 1968): 9–23.

[44] Azzan Yadin, "Samson's HÎDÂ," *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 407–426; Robert Gnuse, "Samson and Heracles Revisited," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 32 (2018): 1–19.

[45] Galpaz-Feller, *Samson: The Hero and the Man: The Story of Samson (Judges 13-16)*, 278.

[46] Christophe Lemardelé, "Samson Le Nazir," *Revue de l'histoire Des Religions* 222 (2005): 264; Walter Vogels, *Samson: sexe, violence et religion : Juges 13-16* (Montreal: Novalis, 2006), 31. As Christopher Tolkien writes, "All this has some plausibility, but of course an abundance of contradictory theories of reduplication, blending and so on have been proposed for

Gunkel argued Samuel was a folkloric "Wild Man," and so, recently, have Jichan Kim and Gregory Mobley.[47] After all, he has foliage for hair, eats natural foods, and avoids beer and wine (13:4, 7, 14). Of course he *does not* avoid alcohol, and that trope and his hair are part of the Nazirite motif, not that of a woodwose.[48]

Désirée Mayer raises an old idea of sun-god mythology behind Samson.[49] Shimshon means "Little Shamash," the sun, with the –*on* personal name ending.[50] Beth-Shemesh, the Temple of Shamash, preserved in the Arabic Ain Shams, features prominently in the Samson narratives (Judg 13:2, 25; 14:4; 16:31).[51] If the Timnah that is home to Samson's wife in 14:1 is the same as Timnath-Heres of Judg 2:9, the name means "Portion of the Sun."[52]

The sun-god Shamash in Mesopotamian texts is regularly called a judge - in terms cognate to both *shofet*, which of the Major Judges only Samson, Deborah, and Othniel bear, and *din* (Akk *dayānnu*),[53] the root at least in folk etymology of Dan, Samson's tribe and home (Gen 49:16). Thus, "Judge of heaven and earth... You judge the case of the wronged man and woman...O Shamash, you are the judge...Judge my case, provide my verdict."[54] Such epithets appear in countless incantations, prayers, and hymns, going back to Sumerian Utu counterparts and

---

every [biblical] legend; they can rarely be proved or disproved, and often, as in this case, the possibilities are almost inexhaustible." Christopher Tolkien, trans., *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, Icelandic Texts (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, n.d.), xvii.

[47] Gregory Mobley, *Samson and the Liminal Hero in the Ancient Near East*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 453 (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 217–233; Jichan Kim, *The Structure of the Samson Cycle* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 35–44.

[48] Vogels, *Samson*, 32; Mobley, *Samson and the Liminal Hero in the Ancient Near East*, 21 already acknowledges Samson lacks multiple wildman qualities such as lack of speech.

[49] Already Burney and Kuenen's suggestion; Désirée Mayer, "Samson, Ou l'anamorphose Du Récit," *Sémiotique et Bible* 93 (March 1999); This is not a matter of a myth-ridden ANE giving way no non-mythic, history-based Israel, as per Amit, *History and Ideology : Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*, 34–35; this old nostrum of the Biblical Theology Movement has been long disproven.

[50] Lemardelé, "Samson Le Nazir," 265.

[51] A. Smyth Palmer, *The Samson-Saga and its Place in Comparative Religion* (London: Isaac Pitman, 1913), 23.

[52] Or, if *tmnh* reflects *šmn*$_{4,}$ "Eighth of the Sun," perhaps an eighth of a year; David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 133; Jean Hoftijzer et al., *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, Handbuch Der Orientalistik, 1.21 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1995), 2.1163-64, 1222.

[53] Alan Lenzi, ed., *Reading Akkadian Prayers and Hymns: An Introduction*, Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Near East Monographs 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 206.

[54] Lenzi, 212 lines 20-32, also 382 lines 15-16.

into the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods.[55] Shamash also rejoices in drinking alcohol (*COS* 419).

Fire like the sun features prominently four times in the Samson stories: the foxes, the burning of his wife and father-in-law (15:6-8), his fetters disappearing as flax in fire (15:14), the seven bowstrings broken as thread breaks at contact of flame (16:9) ...even the fire that consumes his parents' offering.[56] Regardless of whether the *šuᶜal* is fox or jackal—in Akkadian *šalibum* / *talabum* is fox; Arabic *taᶜlab* is both, as well as a word for "dry straw," while *aṯla* [لعثأ] means "to burn / flame." Foxes are often associated with fire; Greeks called them *lampouris*, torch-tail (Aeschylus, Theocritus, Lycophron). In Ovid's *Fasti* (4.687-954), the sun god causes foxes (the "red ones") to burn up fields of grain. Shaᶜalebim is a town in Dan, according to Josh 19:42. Delitzsch and Kittel were the first to point out the folk etymology of Delilah from *Layla,* night.[57]

The gateposts Samson inexplicably carries all the way from Philistia to Hebron in Judges 16 may relate to the gateposts of heaven Shamash opens in devotional poetry.[58] That Israelite cosmology had such pillars is clear from 1 Sam 2:8; Ps 104:5; and Job 26:11.[59] In Num 13:22, Hebron is the home of the three giants Sheshay, Ahiman, and Talmai, the subjects as I have argued elsewhere of a free-floating Israelite oral tradition now largely lost to us.[60] Moreover, Sheshay is a variant of Shamash, since a Persian-period bilingual text (*CIS* 2.65) from Babylon matches Aramaic *Ki-shawash* with Akkadian *ki-Shamash*.[61]

The jawbone of an ass is variously a weapon of Shamash, Gilgamesh, Marduk, and Heracles. We have archaeological examples of flints inserted into actual jawbones for use as sickles and images of such on Old Kingdom wall reliefs.

---

[55] Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2005), 728–732, 827; Leonard William King, Oswald Loretz, and Werner R. Mayer, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery: Being 'The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand,'* Alter Orient und Altes Testament 34 (Munster: Ugarit Verlag, 1978), 6; A. Falkenstein and Wolfram Von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*, Bibliothek der alten Welt (Stuttgart: Artemis, 1953), 222.

[56] Palmer, *The Samson-Saga and its Place in Comparative Religion*, 108.

[57] Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis*, Clark's Foreign Theological Library n.s. 36–37 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899), 1.83.

[58] E.g., Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 741; Augustine already linked them to gateposts of dawn in Sermon 364.5.

[59] Vogels, *Samson*, 30.

[60] Robert D. Miller II, *Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel*, Biblical Performance Criticism 4 (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011), 81.

[61] Rofè, "Clan Sagas As a Source in Settlement Traditions," 195.

Perhaps the author of Judges did not understand this and so introduced a random ass head lying around for Samson to pick up. However, it does raise the possibility that Samson also contains something of Gilgamesh, as Morris Jastrow argued long ago.[62] Gilgamesh appears on a 3rd-millennium seal wrestling like Samson in Judg 15:8. Gilgamesh is also called a judge and strangles a lion.[63] Nevertheless, there are far too many opportunities for Gilgamesh to have entered Israelite literary consciousness to lay Samson's origins at Bethel under the Babylonians, as does Philippe Guillaume.[64]

We should also note the elements of folklore Judges has used in the Samson story. By "folklore" is meant international plots known all over the world that are not the products of diffusion,[65] plots known all over the world that are not the products of diffusion. They need not be narrative, as they can jump genres. Vladimir Propp is of great value here, although not if we pretend, as many biblical scholars do, that his thinking stopped with *Morphology of the Folktale* in 1928 (ET 1958). The 1960s culmination of his work was not translated until the 2000s, so his application by Greimas, Dundes, and a host of biblical scholars is constrained.

The late Propp's folktale is a story that is distinct by its poetics (compositional and stylistic structure), its orality, its entertainment purpose, and its unusual but everyday theme: the supernatural drawn into orbit of ordinary life; events far from possible depicted realistically.[66] Among its characteristic elements: the characters are introduced and then, e.g., "Old people are childless; they pray for the birth of a son. The hero is born in some miraculous way."[67] Things happen three times;[68] for Samson, three paramours, three days Philistines can't solve a riddle, three times Delilah pleads, as well as 30 groomsmen, garments, changes

---

[62] Morris. Jastrow, *The Study of Religion* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 264; Morris Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylon and Assyria.* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1898), 561; Lemardelé, "Samson Le Nazir," 266.

[63] Lemardelé, "Samson Le Nazir," 269–170.

[64] Philippe Guillaume, *Waiting for Josiah: The Judges*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 144–197.

[65] James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, New Perspectives on the Past (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1992), 62–71; Frog, "Mythology in Cultural Practice: A Methodological Framework for Historical Analysis," *Retrospective Methods Network Newsletter* 10 (2015): 33–57; Frog, "Revisiting the Historical-Geographic Method(s)," *Retrospective Methods Network Newsletter* 7 (2013).

[66] Vladimir Jakovlevic Propp, *The Russian Folktale*, trans. Sibelan Forrester (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012), 226–229.

[67] Propp, 152.

[68] Ibid., 175, 273; See examples in Tolkien, *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, x.

of garment, and slain men of Ashkelon, 300 foxes, 3000 men of Judah who come to Rock of Etam, and 3000 dead at end in 16:27.[69] Propp's list includes a journey away from home accompanied by prohibitions that get violated;[70] winning the girl, marriage, and then the "onset of complications";[71] "struggle with religious prejudices";[72] "making cruel fun of one's opponents";[73] and "the harshest jests of a joker,"[74] who "brings people to crime and death with his deceptions; he provokes fires and ruin—and all with a belly laugh of schadenfreude."[75] All of this is in Samson. Riddles associated with weddings are very common in folklore.[76] Riddles that are "unfair" because they can only be solved by an eyewitness to a cryptically described occurrence are also common,[77] as are riddles of the "what is sweeter than" variety.[78]

Like Alexander the Great with his medieval Romance cycle and Charlemagne with the *Song of Roland*, Samson has accumulated a plethora of both folklore and mythology. "Whole cycles of romances are bodily taken over and applied to other heroes than those of whom they were originally composed."[79] "Thus one supreme figure drew to itself stories of all sorts...and these stories eventually formed what is known as a cycle of romance. The various cycles which thus grew up have all a great resemblance to one another."[80]

---

[69] Palmer, *Samson-Saga and Its Place in Comparative Religion*, 199.

[70] Ibid., *The Russian Folktale*, 153.

[71] Ibid., 168.

[72] Ibid., 265.

[73] Ibid., 266.

[74] Ibid., 229.

[75] Ibid., 265.

[76] n.a., "Enigmas de Boudaq," *Revue Des Traditions Populairs* 12 (1897): 603; Victor Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes publiés dans l'Europe chrétienne de 1810 a 1885. 5, 5,* (Liege: Vaillant-Carmanne, 1901), 191–193.

[77] Inea. Bushnaq, *Arab Folk-Tales* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1987), 28–30; Raphael. Patai, *Arab Folktales from Palestine and Israel* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1998), 109–115; Hasan M. El-Shamy, *Folktales of Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 76–81.

[78] J. Scelles-Millie, *Contes arabes du Maghreb*, Collection documentaire de Folklore 11 (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1970), 146–151. More exact parallels where the man reveals the secret of the riddle to his lover are known from the Philippines; n.a., 'Juan the Student', *Journal of American Folklore*, n.d., 104–105.

[79] Moses Gaster, "The Legend of Merlin," *FL*, 1905, 409.

[80] H. A. Guerber, *Myths & Legends of the Middle Ages* (London: George G. Harrap & Company, 1909), 369.

Alexander and Charlemagne remain historical figures, nevertheless.[81] There is Early Iron Age in Samson. Shimshon appears as Shmashna on a Rameses II Karnak list as a location south of Dan: Ir Shemesh already in the Late Bronze Age. While we cannot speak of a Philistine Heracles tale borrowed by Israel, the mythological elements of Samson go back to at least the Early Settlement, and the famous lion seal from Iron I Beth Shemesh supports this. Notice "at least"; elements of Samson could be *pre*-Israelite. As Hélène Adeline Guerber wrote about the Duke Aymon traditions in the Matter of France, "These ballads are *at least as old* as the events which they were intended to record."[82] Still, "However old the voice may be that we hear in these lines, they contain a legend, not 'history' as we understand it. But the matter of legend has roots," and those are old.[83]

Mark Leuchter and others agree that placing the tribe of Dan in the South is a relic of extremely ancient tradition. In the old Song of Deborah, Dan has seaports (Judg 5:17).[84] Yet "Dan to Beersheba" is the biblical idiom, and even the Blessing of Moses in Deuteronomy knows Dan to be in the far North. Jacob's Blessing in Genesis 49, however, another archaic poem, puts Dan as "an adder in the path," that is, of an invading army on the coastal highway, not out of the way in Upper Galilee.

Steve Weitzman argues the Samson narrative is an attempt to impose a border between Judah and the Philistines in the Shephelah, not only reflecting the ethnic and cultural ambiguities of the region but also trying to assert control over them.[85] He is correct to an extent, although it represents a hindsight view of the "ethnic" situation. Bruno Clifton, however, has pointed out that the only references to Israel in the Samson cycle are in the editorial frame (13:1; 15:20; 16:31) or in the editorial aside discussed below.[86] While on the one hand, one might conclude this is due to the material being folkloristic, independent of any ethnic specificity, Clifton argues that it exemplifies the local, here Dan-centered,

---

[81] Palmer, *The Samson-Saga and its Place in Comparative Religion*, 29, 231.

[82] Guerber, *Myths & Legends of the Middle Ages*, 199.

[83] Cf. Tolkien, *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, xxv.

[84] Harold A. Kay, "The Song of Deborah (Judges, Ch. 5)" (Diss., St. Andrew's University, 1984), 398–402; Mark Leuchter, "The Cult at Kiriath Yearim," *Vetus Testamentum* 58 (2008): 526–543; Mark W. Bartusch, "Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor" (Sheffield Acad. Press, 2003), 111–112, /z-wcorg/.

[85] Steve Weitzman, "The Samson Story as Border Fiction," *Biblical Interpretation* 10 (1 April 2002): 158–174.

[86] Bruno J. Clifton, *Family and Identity in the Book of Judges* (Diss., Cambridge University, 2018), 89.

nature of these stories he devotes his entire study to, stories which emerge from a time before Israelite national unity was significant.

Nevertheless, within the Samson stories, we also have the most historically accurate statements about Early Iron Age *Israel* in the entire book of Judges.[87] One is a rhetorical question in Judg 15:11 the men of Judah pose to Samson after he had upset the delicate status quo and fragile conditions of Philistine occupation. His actions were sure to bring Philistine reprisals unless Samson surrendered: "Don't you realize that we're [i.e., Judah[88]] under the control of the Philistines?"[89] The editor has understood (correctly) this Judahite statement to apply to the whole of the land of Israel in the simple statement of fact in Judg 14:4, "At that time the Philistines had control of Israel." Philistine control extended over several portions of proto-Israel in the 11th century.

Other historical pieces in Samson are not so easy to place precisely. Two Philistine temples - at Tel Qasile and Tell es-Safi Gath - are apparently supported by only two pillars. Of course, there could be unexcavated examples from other periods, and "the author...takes pleasure in the antiquarian as well as in the more specifically historical. His attempt to describe the temple... illustrates the fascination which the past held...much better than it records [Philistine] customs, and...the author's gothic imagination is excitedly at work."[90] Samson's punishment of binding, blinding, and grinding finds precise

---

[87] Robert D. Miller II, "Early Israel and Its Appearance in Canaan," in *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Richard S. Hess (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

[88] Clifton, "Family and Identity in the Book of Judges," 89 n.101.

[89] Forty-seven Philistine bichrome sherds were found at Iron I Tell en-Nasbeh (J. A. Graham, "New Light on the Fortress; and Iron I at Tell el-Ful," in *The Third Campaign at Tell el-Ful;* AASOR 45 (Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1981), 33). Neutron activation has found that two painted kraters and other body sherds were actually manufactured at Ashdod (Gunneweg, J.; F. Asaro; H. V. Michel; and I. Perlman, "Interregional Contacts between Tell en-Nasbeh and littoral Philistine centers in Canaan during Early Iron Age I," *Archaeometry* 36 (1994): 235). This is clear evidence for trade. Yet, another six painted kraters of similar typology, along with more body sherds, were made locally (Gunneweg et al., 231, 238). Someone was making Philistine pottery in the middle of the highland settlement. Yet, Tell en-Nasbeh Stratum 4 was unfortified and cannot possibly have been a Philistine "garrison" in hostile Israelite territory. Yet, here was locally made Philistine bichrome, along with imported Philistine ware, to which can be added a Philistine piece with an Aegean-inspired swan decoration (W. F. Badè, "Excavation of Tell en-Nasbeh," *BASOR* 26 (1927): 6) and several Phoenician globular jugs (C. Briese, "Früheisenzeitliche Bemalte Phönizische Kannen von Fundplätzen der Levanteküste," *Hamburger Beiträge zur Archaeologie* 12 (1985): 14).

[90] Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, trans. *Eyrbyggja Saga* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 25.

parallels in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts: the threatened fate of King Rusa of Shupria should Esarhaddon capture him (Ash 68.2.18-20), once under Assurbanipal (*KAI* 233.8, an Aramaic letter from a private archive in Assur), and Zedekiah's fate in Jer 52:11, but also in Old Babylonian texts from Ur (UET 5.9.17-22).[91]

This says nothing about a historical personage named Samson, and that is not what this essay claims.[92] Editing what J. R. R. Tolkien wrote about the Lombard King of the Angles, Sceafa: "There are...traditions of a mythical (not the same as eponymous and fictitious) [hero] called [Samson]. He was [a] blending...of the eponymous ancestor...with the more mysterious, far older and more poetical myths...but the legend here catches echoes of heroic traditions of [Early Israel] going back into [the Iron I period]."[93]

Here, too, the book's *theology* or that of its various editors has shaped the Samson cycle,[94] just as the peculiar character of various Alexander legends were adapted to religious needs of the Muslim or Christian writers of the romances.[95] Specifically, Samson is symbolic of Israel: he is consecrated at birth, whores after foreign gods, only calls out in crisis to God, while God remains faithful to his covenant and in control.[96]

Let us drop the entire equation: early=history; late=legend. The Samson Cycle contains elements of mythology and legend that are old, that go back to the Early Israelite Settlement or beyond. The author of these chapters of Judges knows Dan was in the South and the Philistines ruled Israel in the late 11th century, thanks to his own research.[97] His method involves—like the later Alexander Romances, the Song of Roland, and if Jeffrey Tigay is right, Gilgamesh

---

[91] Karel Van der Toorn, "Judges XVI 21 in the Light of the Akkadian Sources," *Vetus Testamentum* 36 (1986): 249–250.

[92] In some Alexander Romances, "every trace of genuine history is effectively obliterated. Even the name of Alexander's mother is changed into Galopatria, i.e. Cleopatra"; Moses Gaster, "An Old Hebrew Romance of Alexander," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1897): 491.

[93] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lost Road and Other Writings: Language and Legend Before 'The Lord of the Rings'*, ed. Christopher Tolkien, The History of Middle-Earth 5 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 94–95.

[94] Emphasis is on the 'Various'; Mayes, 'Deuteronomistic Royal Ideology in Judges 17-21'.

[95] Gaster, "An Old Hebrew Romance of Alexander," 488–489.

[96] Edward Greenstein, *Samson-A Secret Betrayed, A Vow Ignored* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 201–208; Barry G. Webb, "The Book of Judges (NICOT)," 2013; Mark Greene, "Enigma Variations: Aspects of the Samson Story Judges 13-16," *Vox Evangelica* 21 (1991): 79–80.

[97] Ben Zvi, "Clio Today and Ancient Israelite History."

- an interweaving of history, legend, and mythology.[98] There is no reason to think he knew what was which.

Professor Robert D. Miller
School of Theology
The Catholic University of America
Department of Old Testament
University of Pretoria

millerb@cua.edu

[98] Robert Morrissey, *Charlemagne & France: A Thousand Years of Mythology*, Laura Shannon Series in French Medieval Studies (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 14; Haila Manteghi, *Alexander the Great in the Persian Tradition: History, Myth and Legend in Medieval Iran*, 2018; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2002), 15.

MELITA THEOLOGICA
Journal of the Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
69/2 (2019): 189-206

Charlò Camilleri*

"The Soul's Growth is not Like the Body's Growth:" Teresa of Jesus' Fourfold Path for Mystical Transformation[1]

Preamble

The path of interiority in beholding divine revelation is central to mysticism, particularly in theistic traditions. This article tries to present Teresa of Jesus' doctrine on mystical transformation which leads towards ecstatic union. To express this path the Spanish Carmelite mystic makes use of various universal metaphors, symbols and similes. Recent studies have shown that Teresa is an interesting case of a mystic who portrays similarities to, if not influence from, Sufi mysticism. To start with, it is well established that Teresa hails from a *converso* family; moreover, scholars, like Américo Castro, identified both Judaic and Islamic connections[2] in her mysticism due to the insistence on self-consciousness,

* Charlò Camilleri O.Carm. is a lecturer in spiritual theology at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta, member of the Board of Directors and Academic Board of the Carmelite Institute, Malta. He read philosophy, history of art, theology and the CIFS formation studies at the University of Malta and the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome.

[1] This paper was originally presented as a talk at the "Theological Anthropology in Interreligious Perspective" Conference (7-9 March 2018, Tübingen), organised by the Zentrum für Islamische Theologie and the Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen.

[2] Américo Castro, *España en su historia:Cristianos, moros y judios*, Editorial Losada (Buenos Aires: 1948).

On *converso* families see also, Linda Martz, *A Network of Converso Families in Early Modern Toledo: Assimilating a Minority* (USA: University of Michigan Press, [4]2006).

introspection and didactic characteristics of *morisco* religious discourse.[3] Castro argues that until Teresa there was no Spanish Christian literary discourse which displayed these characteristics, apart from the well-known Augustine's *Confessiones*, widely available to Spanish readers, and which affected Teresa in both her introspective mystical experience as well as her confessional and didactic kind of writing. Within this framework López-Baralt goes as far as to show direct influences of Sufism on Teresa's mysticism[4] while Éric Geoffroy is more cautious in his approach. He points out that "the fact that a doctrinal theme has been loved and expressed in a prior religion or mystical system does not automatically mean that a later one has borrowed it: beyond dogmas and human psycho-spirituality, experience is certainly one."[5] This is conceivable, notwithstanding the distinctive characteristics of both Christianity and Islam and their underlying essential difference which shapes both their respective exterior religious practices (exoteric) as well as their inner mystical dimension (esoteric), as elucidated by Macnab. Acknowledging that "Spain was for many centuries a nursery of Sufism"[6] and that Christianity is "pre-eminently the religion of Love,"[7] Macnab

---

[3] For further deepening of the subject see Xavier Casassas Canals, "Devoción y Sufismo en los Manuscritos Aljamiado–Moriscos," in *Historia del Sufismo en Al–Andalus*, 226–228; *Memoria de los moriscos. Escritos y relatos de una diáspora cultural*, Biblioteca Nacional de Espana, 2010; Jason Welle, 'Ṣūfī Adab Trasncending Scruples: The Correspondence of Ibn 'Abbad of Ronda,'" *Islamochristiana* 39 (2013): 111-127; *Finding Europe: Discourses on Margins, Communities, Images ca.13th – ca. 18th Centuries*, eds., Antonio Molho, Diogo Ramado Curto, Niki Coniordos (New York: Berghan Books, 2007).

[4] See Luce López-Baralt, *The Sufi* Trobar clus *and Spanish Mysticism: A Shared Symbolism* (Pakistan, Iqbal Academy, 2000); Luce López-Baralt, *Islam in Spanish Literature: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Andrew Harley (Brill: Leiden, 1992). While the author manages to show striking similarities in the mystical discourses found in Sufi mystics and Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross one cannot categorically conclude that there is direct influence. The images, metaphors and language used in mysticism in of universal nature. Without denying such parallelisms, in the case of Teresa and John, the roots of such imagery and their usage reveal a highly Biblical and Patristic influence. I would rather speak of similarities, convergences, parallelisms and constants.

[5] Éric Geoffroy, *Sufism and Saint Teresa of Avila: Experiences for Our Time*, Teresa of Avila, an itinerary for our search for meaning. When the mystical experience opens the way to inter-religious dialogue, International Forum I.T.OUCH' 10th October 2015, 1-2: www.itouchalameda.com accessed 09.02.18.

[6] Angus Macnab, "Sufism in Muslim Spain," in *Sufism: Love and Wisdom*, ed. Jena-Louis Pichon – Roger Gaetani with a forward by Sayyed Hossein Nasr, Perennial Philosophy Series (Bloomington-Indiana: World Wisdom Inc., 2006), 120. See also, Angus Macnab, *Spain Under the Crescent Moon* (Louisville/KY: Fons Vitae, 1999).

[7] Macnab, *Sufism in Muslim Spain*, 119

concludes that in mysticism "the similarity of the language and conceptions of whoever follows the way of divine Love, whatever the denomination of the lover may be."[8] In the case of mystical Christianity and Sufism, one should consider the singular flourishing of the latter within the Spanish and Andalusian context, and this "to such an extent that it is impossible to avoid the conviction that the voices of the Arab Sufis, or their echoes, should have reached the ears of Juan de la Cruz and Saint Teresa."[9] Raynold Nicholson also points out the possible Christian mystical or Neoplatonic, Gnostic, Hindu and Greek ideas at the origins of Muslim Sufism.[10] Anyhow, it is nonetheless irrelevant for the scope of our study, to delve into the question of who influenced who, and to what extent! Irrespective of possible mutual influences and inspirations, the scope of the present paper is that of presenting the mystical path as explained by Teresa of Avila, focusing on metaphors, symbols and imagery common also to Sufism.

Surely, Teresa dwells in a liminal space between her origins and Spanish identification, and mystical discourse is highly introspective, symbolical and pointing towards self-knowledge. This is especially true in the use of the seven-mansioned castle, or fortress, and the soul's meandering in it towards spiritual ascension.[11] The castle is, however, not the only metaphor she uses in her complex theory of the path towards mystical transforming union. This contribution will try to focus on the doctrine of the soul's progression, from meditation to union, in Teresa's fourfold path for mystical transformation, symbolically expressed as the watering of the soul-garden by four waters, or types of water. Rooted in a specific Christian anthropology in her mystical theory, Teresa shows that while the physical actions described in this process express the inner actions of the heart, nonetheless interior growth is not like physical growth towards spiritual perfection and transformation.

---

[8] Ibid., 120.

[9] Gamal Abdel-Karim, "El Sufismo y el Islam," *Pensamiento* 64/242 (2008): 941.

[10] Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *Sufism. The Mysticism of Islam* (Los Angeles: IndoEuropean Publishing, 2009), 11-25.

[11] Even here scholars like Swietlicki, hurry to decipher kabbalistic influences See C. Swietlicki, *Spanish Christian Cabala: The Works of Luis de León, Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz* (Columbia MO: Missouri Press 1986). Hilary Pearson points out that Swietlicki's arguments are not persuasive, when taking into consideration the cultural context. See Hilary Pearson, *Santa Teresa* la conversa*: Are There Jewish Influences in the Writings of Teresa of Avila?*, Teresa of Avila 1515-2015: Mystical Theology and Spirituality in the Carmelite Tradition (Twickenham, London: St Mary's University), 18-20 June 2015, 1-17, *pro manuscripto*. (on-line) https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/centres/inspire/teresa-of-avila-1515-2015.aspx. Accessed 04/05/18.

A Relational Experience

> As I have already stated – and I do not wish this to be forgotten, in this life we are living the soul does not grow like the body, even though we say it grows, and it truly does. But once a child has become an adult and has developed a strong body, and is already a man, he does not shrink and become small again. But the Beloved does wish this to happen to the soul. The only way I know this is that have seen it myself. This must be the case so as to humble us for our own greater good and to remind us not to become careless in this state of exile. The higher we ascend, the more closely we must pay attention, and the less we must rely on our own self.[12]

So writes Teresa in the *Book of Her Life* into which she proclaims God's mercy towards her: *misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo*. In this autobiography, Teresa shares with us her experience of an encounter with God through Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word (λόγος)[13]In Teresa, this encounter leads to ecstatic mystical transforming union of wills. She "believed that all things, most especially her own self, must be subject to the will of God."[14] Through her interest in the dynamic processes of personal transformation, Teresa presents us with a reflection on "the identity and nature of the human person."[15] The soul, in her mindset and writings, refers to the human person, and in her mystical doctrine, the fruit of her experience, Teresa builds upon a positive premise: the beauty and dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of the Triune God, and the dwelling place of divine presence.[16] Nonetheless, Teresa is also aware of human sinfulness and helplessness.[17]

---

[12] Santa Teresa de Jesus, "Libro de la vida," XV:12, in *Obras completas. Edicion manual*, ed. Efren de la Madre de Dios – Otger Steggink, BAC (Madrid: [9]2003), 91. Translation from the original mine. While all Teresian quotes are taken from this edition, to facilitate reading, references indicate only the Teresian text and not the edition's page numbering.

[13] Corresponding to *'Aql* in Islam, especially in Sufism.

[14] Adrian J. Reimers, *The Soul of the Person: A Contemporary Philosophical Psychology* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 217.

[15] Christina Llanes, *Early Modern Catholicism: Teresa of Avila and Martin Luther: the Role of Action in the Life of a Christian* (03/16/12), online: https://www.academia.edu/2027634/Teresa_of_Avila_and_Martin_Luther_the_Role_of_Action_in_the_Life_of_a_Christian. Accessed on 03/05/18.

[16] This foundational premise is expounded especially in the Interior Castle. See *St. Teresa of Avila: The Interior Castle. Study Edition*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh and Carol Lisi (Washington D.C.: ICS, 2010).

[17] It is difficult to agree however with Antonio-Pérez Romero's conclusion that in Teresa "the human being is characterized as extremely sinful, helpless and miserable before God and His supreme goodness and power" to such an extent that the person is "too weak, too miserable, too wretched to reach God; to do anything to please Him; or to do anything to help themselves

All through her writings Teresa keeps referring to her experience, even in the so called "treatise on the degrees of prayer," where she interrupts the flow of her autobiography, starting from chapter eleven going right through chapter twenty-two. It is in this short treatise that we find her statement: "in this life we are living, the soul does not grow like the body." Here, in chapter fifteen, she reverts back to her experience, assuring readers that "the only way I know this is that I've seen it myself." The short treatise on prayer, an addition to the second redaction of the *Libro de la Vida*, serves a twofold purpose:

1) that of a doctrinal introduction "to the narration of her great mystical graces,"[18] to help the reader understand these graces, and
2) "an orienting introduction for the neophyte mystic who is the first reader" who is none other than the learned Dominican Padre García de Toledo (1515 – 1590).[19] García was experiencing similar mystical experiences to hers, so she imparts experiential guidance to him. Borrowing Mahid Fakhry's threefold identification of varieties in mysticism, the Teresian experience falls into the visionary and unitary varieties.[20]

Taking this into consideration enables us to easily capture the reason for a marked insistence on experience. We will not be mistaken to state that we have a case here of double subversion.[21] Firstly, the book is addressed to a learned theologian, a censor, who nonetheless needs guidance to find his way through

---

concerning spiritual matters and their salvation": Antonio-Pérez Romero, *Subversion and Liberation in the Writings of St. Teresa of Avila* (Cleveland: John Caroll University, 1996), 56.

[18] Tomás Alvarez, *St. Teresa of Avila. 100 Themes on her Life and Work*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, (Washington DC: ICS, 2011), 281-282.

[19] For a short bionote on García de Toledo see "Teresa de Jesus y la Orden de santo Domingo," in *Teresa de la rueca a la pluma* (on-line): /https://delaruecaalapluma.wordpress.com/2016/08/08/. Accessed on February 12, 2018.

[20] "There are in Islamic mysticism (and presumably in other mysticisms as well) three varieties, which differ either in terms of the object they seek or the mode of approximation towards that object. I will call these three varieties the philosophical, the visionary, and the unitary. The Divine (however it may be conceived) is the object of the second and the third variety, but not of the first. The apprehension or vision of this Divine is the purpose of the second, whereas union or identification with the Divine is the goal of the third; hence the two names I have applied to them. A subordinate entity lying halfway between God and man is the object of the first, and theoretical communication or "conjunction" with the object is its goal." Mahid Fakhry, "Three Varieties of Mysticism in Islam," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* no.2 (1971): 193-207.

[21] For an indepth study of subversion in St Teresa of Avila see Peréz-Romero, *Subversion and Liberation in the Writings of St Teresa of Avila*, 195-205. See also, Beverly J. Lanzetta, *Radical Wisdom: A Feminist Mystical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 137-154.

his own experience which he cannot grasp or understand. Secondly, guidance comes not from the legitimate hierarchy, or the learned, but from a woman, and more precisely from an unlearned Carmelite cloistered nun. Teresa was "no learned theologian and her writings show direct simplicity and a down to earth un-pretentious humour."[22]

Padre García and Teresa will eventually establish a deep intimate friendship and it is partly thanks to him that Teresa puts into writing her experience. After meeting her in 1562 at the villa of Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in Toledo, Teresa herself ardently prays to the Lord begging him to allow her to include García in their friendship.[23] Padre Pedro Ibáñez, friend of both Teresa and García, relates a witty anecdote of a conversation between Teresa and the Lord Jesus, elucidating the aforementioned subversion. Ibáñez recalls that once, during her prayer (*oración* = loving conversation), Teresa asked the Lord whether "there other persons, like the literate and the learned, who will do much better than wretched me, if you ask them to do that which you are asking of me?" To this question the Lord, "as if he was deeply hurt in his heart, answered her, "Since the literate and the learned do not even desire, nor are they ready to talk with me, needy and discarded by them, I myself come in search of little women with whom I can rest and speak of my things."[24]

Teresa, García and Ibáñez are included in this intimate circle of friends of Christ. What brings them together, alongside other friends of Teresa, is friendship with Christ experienced in Teresian mysticism as the binding reason (λόγος) between God and humanity as well as between humans themselves. Without making too much of a comparison it is also worth noting here what the Sufi ʿ*Īsawī* mystic Muḥyi ʾd-Dīn ibn ʿArabī, who deeply esteemed Jesus Christ, writes, in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya*, on Jesus in bonding terms:

> The Seal of universal holiness, above which there is no other holy, is Our Lord Jesus (*Sayyidnā ʿĪsā*). We have met several contemplatives of the Heart of Jesus. ...I myself have been united to him several times in my ecstasies, and by his

---

[22] Dierdre Green, "Living Between the Worlds: Bhakti Poetry and the Carmelite Mystics," in *The Yogi and the Mystic: Studies in Indian and Comparative* Mysticism, Durham Indological Series – 1, ed. Karel Werner (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1989), 125.

[23] "Señor, no me habéis de negar esta merced: mirad que es bueno este sujeto para nuestro amigo," *Vida* XXXIV:8.

[24] "Informe del P. Pedro Ibáñez sobre el espiritu de S. Teresa," in *Obras de Santa Teresa*, II: *Relaciones,* Biblioteca Mistica Carmelitana ed. Silverio de Santa Teresa (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 1915), 149-150.

> ministry I returned to God at my conversion. He has given me the name of friend and has prescribed austerity and nakedness of spirit."[25]

In Teresa's particular case, friendship with Christ brings together both the learned and the unlearned to sharing their relational experience with Christ who is the path to divine Wisdom. Though Teresa abundantly sought to learn from profuse reading and from seeking the company and counsel of the learned, it is nonetheless the personal encounter with Christ which enlightens her: "I understood," she says, "that if the Lord did not show me, I was able to learn little from books, because there was nothing I understood until His Majesty gave me understanding through experience."[26] Theory, as "the doctrine of books or of the discourse of learned men or the thought that she herself came up with," confirmed Teresa in her experiential knowledge, namely "to know something for having lived, felt, or gone through it... either empirically with the senses or in one's own life...even the experience of profound friendship or the highest experience of the mystery of God.[27]

Experience for Teresa emerges from the relational dimension of her human life: self-knowledge, family, Church, religious community, friends and society. It is precisely this relational dimension which constitutes the key for understanding Teresa's mysticism. The relational dimension, expressed in her Spousal Mysticism, thrusts the soul into the "demanding: generous, self-spending, and exhausting service. Teresa even uses the word 'laborious'." Bielecki points out that "The proper relationship between these two consequences is clear in the teachings of Jesus. First, he says, "love the Lord your God with all your mind and heart and soul and body". *Espousal*. Second, "love your neighbour as yourself." *Service*.[28]

Hence, in Teresa's doctrine, "human relationships are the guarantee of authenticity in the teaching... They are the measure of one's progress and the true test of the love of God."[29]

---

[25] As quoted in: Macnab, *Sufism in Muslim Spain*, 120. Sufi saints "inherit their sanctity from a particular prophet through the intermediary of the Prophet of Islam": Zachary Markwith, "Jesus and Christic Sanctity in Ibn ʿArabī and Early Islamic Spirituality," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn' Arabi Society* 57 (2015): 89.

[26] *Vida*, XXII:3. Similar expressions are to be found in all of her her writings, like: *Libro de la vida,* IV:10, XIV:8, XVIII:8, XXII:6, XXVI:5, XL: 20; *Camino de Perfeccion*, Prol. 3, XXIII:4, 6, XXVIII:1; *Las Moradas* VI, 9.4.

[27] Alvarez, *St. Teresa of Avila*, 216-217.

[28] Tessa Bielecki, *Holy Daring. Conversations with St Teresa, the Wild Woman of Avila* (Boulder: Albion-Andalus Inc., 2015), 71-72.

[29] Larkin, "Human Relationships in St Teresa of Avila," 135-136.

Unitive Mysticism

Teresa teaches us that the *terminus* of mystical experience is the "complete transformation of the soul in God."[30] It is this transformation which is the source of inner peace and harmony. In the *Libro de la Vida*, Teresa cites Jesus' words "Go in peace" to an anxious Mary of Magdala (the disgraced) or, in Teresa's mind, Mary of Bethany (the friend and disciple), the archetype of transformation:

> Let us, then, pray to Him always to show His mercy upon us, with a submissive spirit, yet trusting in the goodness of God. And now that the soul is permitted to sit at the feet of Christ, let it contrive not to quit its place, but keep it anyhow. Let it follow the example of the Magdalene; and when it shall be strong enough, God will lead it into the wilderness.[31]

To explain herself as best as she could, Teresa deals a lot with mystical transformation through the use of symbols and metaphors. She insists on self-knowledge, not only as the starting point of our spiritual life, but our companion. Well known is the image of the Interior Castle, or the Inner Mansions, equivalent to the *sefirot* in Kabbalah, the *maqâms* in Sufism, the Hindu *koshas*, the *skandhas* in Buddhism and the tantric *chakras.*[32] Another metaphor is that of the earthbound cocooned 'dead' silkworm emerging as a beautiful and lofty butterfly. Common to both these images is the notion of a movement towards our inner dimension, towards the centre, there where I discover myself to be potentially another, there where I discover my real self. Self-knowledge in Teresa however is never solely about absorption. Self-knowledge comes mainly through relationships. Even in its journey towards the centre, the soul discovers herself bride of the Bridegroom, and the ugly silkworm discovers itself to be a beautiful butterfly only after passing, in the prayer of union through the cocoon who is Christ.[33] The support and help of others is also necessary:

> When the warm weather comes, and the mulberry-trees begin to show leaf, this seed starts to take life; until it has this sustenance, on which it feeds, it is as dead. The silkworms feed on the mulberry-leaves until they are fully grown, *when people put down twigs, upon* which, with their tiny mouths, they start spinning silk, making themselves very tight little cocoons, in which they bury themselves.

---

[30] *Vida*, XX:18.

[31] *Vida*, XXII:19.

[32] See Johannes Schiettecatte, *Teresa and the East: The Human Thirsting for the Absolute,* Teresa of Avila, an itinerary for our search for meaning. When the mystical experience opens the way to inter-religious dialogue, International Forum I.T.OUCH' 10th October 2015, 1-11: www.itouchalameda.com. Accessed 09.02.18.

[33] *Las Moradas* V, 2.

> Then, finally, the worm, which was large and ugly, comes right out of the cocoon a beautiful white butterfly.

> When I say He will be our Mansion, and we can construct it for ourselves and hide ourselves in it, I seem to be suggesting that we can subtract from God, or add to Him. But, of course, we cannot possibly do that! We can neither subtract from, and add to, God, but we can subtract from, and add to, ourselves, just as these little silkworms do. And, before we have finished doing all that we can in that respect, *God will take this tiny achievement of ours,* which is nothing at all, unite it with His greatness, and give it such worth that its reward will be the Lord Himself.

Perhaps the relational dimension comes out clearly in the parable used by Teresa to explain transformation in the four ways of gardening (*Vida* 10-22). Teresa describes the process of transformation as the work of love, and effort of love. She does so by comparing the soul to a garden. Alvarez notes that a comparison in the Teresian lexicon is "equivalent to a simile, image, allegory, or symbol. In fact, she will find support initially in an elemental simile; then she will go on enriching it and converting it into a real symbol."[34]

The garden is a major symbol in world religions. Inherited from Persia it is common also to various mystical traditions, like Sufism, wherein it stands as "the earthly reflection of Paradise."[35] Teresa tells us that in tending and watering the garden the soul becomes "servant of love" while ascending to "behold perfect love or charity."[36]

As in the previous metaphors and symbols, the ascetical effort constitutes a journey from our ego towards divine Love which requires the abandonment of our false self through a "progressive interiorization, con-centration and deepening." In this journey "we go beyond ourselves by learning to recognise the divine Presence as within at every level and aspect of our person."[37]

So, in the parable of the four waters, Teresa plays with images of waters flowing into the garden from the outside and waters irrigating the garden from the deep. The garden evokes the Earthly Paradise, Eden, wherein God strolls in the company of Adam, and, similar to what we find in Sufism, water flowing into

---

[34] Alvarez, *St. Teresa of Avila*, 281.

[35] Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth. The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), xv; Shirvani, Hamid. "The Philosophy of Persian Garden Design: The Sufi Tradition," *Landscape Journal* 4, no. 1 (1985): 23-30.

[36] *Vida*, XI:1.

[37] Schiettecatte, *Teresa and the East,* 10-11.

the garden symbolises God's mercy.[38] While Teresa was surely imbibed by the "pervasive Islamic culture in Avila"[39] there is no real evidence that Teresa has in mind the Islamic garden in her garden imagery.

Though the garden is a metaphor of the soul, Teresa tells us that both Christ and the soul are gardeners. A particular characteristic of Teresa's garden is constant dynamism and movement going on into the garden space. This is also the case when it is unkept.

This point is highly significant as it differs from other usages of the garden symbol in other traditions. In Zen Buddhism for example, stillness and empty space are the main characteristics of the garden, conducive to meditation,[40] aiming at enabling the practitioner to have an enlightened experience of the Oneness of the Universe. Here, "the garden is something to be seen, and not a place to exercise or relax in"[41] whereas the Teresian garden is a place of encounter between the bride and the divine Bridegroom, where work and leisure take place. It is significant that Teresa uses *huerto/a* and *vergel* when speaking of the soul in garden terms discarding *jardin* and *pensil* with their underlying meaning of pleasure garden.[42] The underlying biblical paradigm is that of the Song of Songs, wherein the Beloved extols his lover: "you are a garden enclosed, my sister, my lover." Another underlying biblical scene is that of the encounter between the risen Christ and Mary of Magdala on Easter Sunday. In the Teresian garden mystical transformation is clearly the result of an encounter with Christ. It is monotheistically unitive wherein two opposites become one while at the same time keep their distinctiveness.[43]

---

[38] Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth* , 47.

[39] Maryrica Ortiz Lottman, "The Gardens of Teresa of Avila," in *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism,* ed. Hilaire Kallendorf (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010), 328.

[40] Camelia Nakagawara, "The Japanese Garden for the Mind: The 'Bliss' of Paradise Transcended," *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2014): 83-102.

[41] Ueda Atsushi, *Nihonjin to Sumai: The Inner Harmony of the Japanese House* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 161. Similarly, in the Therevada Buddhist texts, the garden is also a place of exercise and work. For an indepth study, see: Millet, Gil Daniel, The Path and the Castle. A Comparative Study of *The Path of Purification of Buddhaghosa and The Interior Castle of Saint Teresa of Ávila: An Analytical Study on their Similarities in the Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Hong Kong SAR: University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, 2019).

[42] Ortiz Lottman, *The Gardens of Teresa of Avila*, 330.

[43] Bernardette Roberts, *Nonduality as a Definition of Christ,* Sand Conference: Science and Nonduality – 22 October 2015, San Jose, California. *Pro manuscripto*.

Creative Mysticism[44]

It is an unkept garden with hardened soil. In *Las Moradas*, she observes, lamenting, as Cousins words it, that "we pay too little attention to our souls" because all our attention "is centred... in these bodies of ours."[45] This is the first obstacle for mystical transformation: a hardened heart. In the autobiography Teresa confesses that in the first years of her religious life, her heart was hardened. She says that she was numb, dead (*Vida* 3:1). Dryness and paralysis took hold of her (*Vida* 4:9). Healing came only through the intercession of St Joseph the contemplative who, I suspect, for Teresa serves a role similar to that of Al-Khidr, in Islam.[46]

She continues to say that the garden, at this stage, was in need of watering in all possible ways: through spring water, rainfall, dewfall and vapor. The four waters irrigating the garden may parallel with "the four intersecting water channels in the Islamic garden."[47] Water indicates liquefaction in the spiritual life. We find this metaphor constantly in mystical writings and in the experience of mystics. Origen the Christian (184-253), for example, speaks of the fall of rational beings from a process of solidification, where one becomes heavier and therefore falls away from God. In eschatology, according to Origen, the children of God will return to the original, lighter, state of a spiritual body.

> I am of the opinion that as the end and the consummation of the saints will be in those worlds that are not seen and eternal, it must be supposed, from a contemplation of that very end, as we have frequently pointed out above, that rational creatures have also had a similar beginning. And if they had a beginning such as the end for which they hope, they were undoubtedly from the beginning in those worlds that are not seen and eternal. And if this is so, then there has been a descent from the higher conditions to the lower, not only on the part of those souls who have by the variety of their own movements deserved it, but also on

---

[44] Ruth Meredith, *Creativity, Spiritual Transformation and the Image of the Butterfly in the Interior Castle of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, *pro manuscripto*.

[45] Lance S. Cousins, "The Stages of Christian Mysticism and Buddhist Purification: Interior Castle of St Teresa of Avila and the Path of Purification of Buddhaghosa," in *The Yogi and the Mystic: Studies in Indian and Comparative* Mysticism, Durham Indological Series – 1, ed. Karel Werner (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1989), 103.

[46] This point deserves a study on its own. Like Al-Khidr in Sufism, St Joseph in Teresa's experience, is God's special servant, a protector, somewhat of a trickster. In the Matthean Infancy narratives, he seems to act wrongly by not following the Law and keep Mary as his bride, but his decision is steeped in wisdom and benevolence. In the Apocrypha, his staff is evergreen and budding. Moreover, for Teresa he is the discreet initiator to the mystical life. Teresa speaks highly of her devotion to Saint Joseph in chapter six of her Life.

[47] Ortiz Lottman, *The Gardens of Teresa of Avila*, 330.

> that of those who, to serve the whole world, were brought down from the higher and invisible conditions to these lower and visible ones, even against their will. Because the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but by the one who subjected it in hope, so that both the sun and the moon and the stars and the angels of God might fulfil an obedient service for the world; and for those souls which, because of their excessive spiritual defects, needed these denser and more solid bodies, and because of those for whom this was necessary, this visible world was founded. From this, therefore, a descent of everyone alike would seem to be indicated by the meaning of the word, that is, of *καταβολή*. The whole creation indeed entertains the hope of freedom, of being set free from the bondage of corruption when the children of God, who either fell away or were scattered abroad, shall be gathered together into one, or when they shall have fulfilled their other duties in this world, which are known to God alone, the Artificer of all things.[48]

Origen observes that even on the natural level "the seminal moisture is changed into solid flesh and bones. All these instances go to prove that bodily substance is capable of change and can pass from a given quality into another."[49] The "spirit is of an opposite nature to this dense and solid body."[50] God is spirit (Jn 4:24), hence our return to God is a return to the original state into which we were created. Similarly, in Teresa's mind *liquid* (water) is the opposite of *solid*, denoting a contrasting state to that of a hardened heart. The water she is pointing to is that of tears. It is the gift of tears (*compunctio cordis*), a sign of repentance (*penthos*), that softens the heart.[51]

While perhaps Teresa is indirectly influenced by Origen, she surely relies on the classical fourteenth century Carmelite manual *Decem libri de Institutione Primorum Monachorum*, on the path of monastic perfection in love. For many centuries the first seven books of this text were mythically considered as the Carmelite *Regula Primitiva*, pre-dating the Albertine text. The *Decem libri* inspired her dream of reforming the Order in her quest to return to the original form of life of the hermits of Mount Carmel. The first step in the way to monastic perfection as found in the *Decem libri* is that of dwelling near the brook of Carith to drink of its torrents. Sitting near the brook of Carith, to embark on the journey towards perfection, is the *monachos*, a weeping solitary, shedding tears of compunction for his sins and the sins of the world.

---

[48] Origen, *On the First Principles*, III/5.4, trans. G.W.Butterworth, with a foreword by C. Cavadini (Notre Dame/IN: Ave Maria Press, 2013), 314-315.

[49] Ibid., IV/4.6, 426.

[50] Ibid., I/1.2, 10.

[51] *Vida* 11:9.

In the journey within both God and the soul labour. The 'four ways of watering the garden' distinguish two divine and two human ways of watering. The two sets correspond to particular states in the life of prayer: ascetical and mystical. In practical terms these two phases and states overlap and should not be strictly categorised and strictly human or strictly divine phases. Here God and the person are harmoniously and 'laboriously' active and passive. The two phases indicate an emphasis on either side.

The following are the four ways of watering the garden:

A: *Human ways of watering (ascetical phase)*

1. Starting to care for a barren garden and with hardened soil to work on (cfr.: Gen. 3: 17-19). At this stage we need to pull up water through meditation and spiritual reading. We gain little produce as we are still in the stage of strengthening the will.
2. God comes to our help, symbolised by the watermill. We get enough water to keep plants alive and relatively moist. At this stage we start growing in quiet prayer and recollection. We also start tasting divine love, which in turn enkindles love in our heart.

B: *Divine ways of watering (mystical phase)*

3. As we progress, the life of grace starts having effect in us. Streams of living water start irrigating our garden. The will and understanding are strengthened and the intellect, together with memory, become active. Teresa compares our will and understanding with Mary of Bethany, focused on Jesus and his words, sitting at his feet. Memory and intellect are symbolised by Martha, Mary's sister, who actively serves Jesus in her own house. Teresa brings together here, in line with the original cohesion in Christian mysticism, action (effort) and contemplation. Martha and Mary are both focused on Jesus, detached from everything else. Teresa holds that at this stage we start moving to integrity from fragmentation (*Vida* 17:4): We in God (Mary) and God in us (Martha). Imagination and memory can distract us from our attention to Jesus, through what we call today in psychology 'destructive thoughts'. The Fathers of the Desert, like Evagrius, called these *logismoi*. We need therefore to undergo a purification of the memory, not to get stuck in the past (negative or positive). Quiet prayer and recollection (*oración* in Teresian terms and understanding), or what we refer to today as Meditation, Mindfulness, Centering prayer, Loving Kindness Meditation, and other, thrusts us into the purification of memory which in turn gifts us with freedom of spirit. Meditation techniques today

are researched in psychotherapeutic contexts.[52] Studies have shown that meditation exercises enhances "unconditional, positive emotional states of kindness and compassion" and may be used "for targeting a variety of different psychological problems that involve interpersonal processes, such as depression, social anxiety, marital conflict, anger, and coping with the strains of long-term caregiving."[53] At this stage we are freer to give ourselves to the consequential demands of our life of prayer in self-oblation as participation in the *kenósis* of Christ.

4. For the final stage of watering Teresa brings forth the image of rainfall. Here God totally takes over to "water" our soul with his loving and merciful grace. We become totally receptive, actively passive, ready and willing to receive God's grace. At this stage Teresa speaks of ecstatic mystical union and the soul's elevation in God (*Vida* 20). Mystical transforming union is not a sentiment. Primarily and exclusively it refers to a union of wills. We are elevated in God like vapour emanating from moist soil. Teresa explains:

   > The Lord gathers up the soul, just (we might say) as the clouds gather up the vapours from the earth, and raises it up till it is right out of itself (I have heard that it is in this way that the clouds or the sun gather up the vapours and the cloud rises to Heaven and takes the soul with it, and begins to reveal to it things concerning the Kingdom that He has prepared for it.[54]

To the water symbol, Teresa adds fire, symbol of anxious love. Both symbols give the notion of lightness. In this context Teresa mentions a nun "full of Divine love" saying that she saw her taking flight from earth to heaven. The same is said of Friar Didachus of St. Mathias, who was enflamed with divine love.

---

[52] R. Walsh and S.L. Shapiro, "The Meeting of Meditative Disciplines and Western Psychology: A Mutually Enriching Dialogue," *American Psychologist,* 61/3 (2006): 227-239.

[53] Stefan G. Hofman, Paul Grossman, Devon E. Hinton, "Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation: Potential for Psychological Interventions," *Clinical Psychology Review* no. 31(2011): 1126-1132.

[54] *Vida*, XX:1-2.

"The soul doesn't grow like the body": Mysticism of Diminishment

In Teresa's human and mystical experience, although the soul's growth follows different dynamics from those at play in physical growth, both are intimately bound together.[55] To those who take Jesus as their friend, Teresa says that he, "sustains their bodily life with greater health and give life to their souls."[56] There are many instances in Teresa's writings where physical health is a sign of spiritual health and where sickness is related to sinfulness and spiritual malaise.

Nonetheless, Teresa also shows us that the soul grows and matures when the body is ailing. She shares with the reader her own experience, saying: "though I bore my sickness with great joy, I none the less desired to be well again. I often reflected that, if I were to grow well and then to incur damnation, it would be better for me to remain as I was."[57] On the contrary, when one is overly (and perhaps obsessively) attached to one's own physical wellbeing, the soul craves for life: "seeing how tied I was to my body, yet how, on the other hand, my spirit craved time for itself, I became so depressed that I started to shed floods of tears and to be in great distress."[58]

A person who is elevated to ecstatic mystical union, who is in the fourth way of watering the garden, through constant rainfall divinely sent "from Heaven to fill and saturate the whole of this garden with an abundance of water," experiences simultaneously growth and expansion in the soul, as well as unharmful physical and mental loss of strength:

> While seeking God in this way, the soul becomes conscious that it is fainting almost completely away, in a kind of swoon with an exceeding great and sweet delight. It gradually ceases to breathe and all its bodily strength begins to fail it: it cannot even move its hands without great pain; its eyes involuntarily close, or, if they remain open, they can hardly see. If a person in this state attempts to read, he is unable to spell out a single letter: it is as much as he can do to recognize one. He sees that letters are there, but, as the understanding gives him no help, he cannot read them even if he so wishes. He can hear, but he cannot understand what he hears. He can apprehend nothing with the senses, which only hinder his soul's joy and thus harm rather than help him. It is futile for him to attempt to speak: his mind cannot manage to form a single word, nor, if it could, would he have the strength to pronounce it. For in this condition all outward strength vanishes,

---

[55] Britta Souvignier, *La dignidad del cuerpo. Salvación y sanación en Teresa de Jesús*, trans. Paloma Sánchez de Munaín (Madrid: EDE, 2008), 341.

[56] *Vida*, XXIII:6.

[57] *Vida*, VI:5.

[58] *Vida*, XL.

> while the strength of the soul increases so that it may the better have fruition of its bliss. The outward joy experienced is great and most clearly recognised.
>
> This prayer, for however long it may last, does no harm; at least, it has never done any to me, nor do I ever remember feeling any ill effects after the Lord has granted me this favour, however unwell I may have been: indeed, I am generally much the better for it. What harm can possibly be done by so great a blessing? The outward effects are so noteworthy that there can be no doubt some great thing has taken place: we experience a loss of strength but the experience is one of such delight that afterwards our strength grows greater.[59]

Again, the relational element is foundational as Teresa develops her thought in the context of seeking God. Moreover, Jesus Christ, through his Sacred Humanity, heals the person in body, mind and spirit. Any talk on the soul's growth and on physical or mental growth in Teresa has to be done in reference to the person of Jesus Christ, fully human, fully divine. The person experiences spiritual growth when freed from the disordered attachment to physicality, while consciously living realistically in practice within down to earth attitude. Discipline and self-restraint in the spirit of a healthy *contemptus mundi*, imitating Christ's lifestyle who dwelt amongst us in his sacred humanity enabling integrative growth. Physicality participates in the *kenósis* of Christ; our inner being, the soul, grows, matures and is elevated to union with God. While the body diminishes, the soul grows and matures. Again, the soul grows through participation in the self-oblation of Christ giving himself for "our sake and salvation." Self-oblation is expressed in making of ourselves a gift for the good of others in the smaller and larger community to whom we are related. Hence the soul grows through a mysticism of diminishment, that is, simultaneously growing as it diminishes. Whereas the body either grows or diminishes.

The soul's growth therefore necessitates a healthy dose of detachment, renunciation and mortification to "embrace the Creator alone," caring nothing for our own pleasure, self-will, in order to surrender completely to God's will in humility out of love. Detachment and mortification, especially from one's own will, is attainable also through an abiding in Jesus' command to love one another as he has loved us. "Growth toward God without an active concern for social justice and the flourishing of each member of the human family is a *non*

---

[59] *Vida*, XVII:10-11.

sequitur in Teresa's holistic theology."[60] God's works are the sign of a healthy authentic spiritual growth of the soul in mystical union (marriage).[61] Ernest Larkin comments that in Teresa's mysticism "the best test for the conformity of wills is the prosaic one of fraternal charity; horizontal relationships are credible indicators of the vertical relationship with God."[62] In this, Teresa proves to be very radical. She insists that "we cannot know whether or not we love God, although there are strong indications for recognizing that we do love Him; but we can know whether we love our neighbor."[63]

Love for neighbour, detachment and humility are the preferred ways taught to us by Christ's example in the mystery of his *kenósis*. It is in this way that virtues are infused in us by God's grace. Thus, the soul, in contrast with the body, grows through diminishment. In this, Teresa is close to Eckhart's mysticism. Similar notions are found also in more recent mystics like Simone Weil.[64] Teresa gives a particular feminine, delicate touch to the understanding of the mystery of the *kenósis* as it unfolds in the gospels. She frequently mentions in some way or another the needy Christ, be it by the well thirsting, or in the Garden of Olives pleading with the disciples to stay with him in his agony. It is Jesus' vulnerability which drew Teresa to a deep reciprocal friendship with Christ who, she says "being alone and afflicted, as a person in need, he had to accept me."[65] Teresa sees Christ as being in continual transformation: Divine becoming human, King (His Majesty) but undergoing suffering and brokenness, etc... These transformations bring transformation in her soul. Cynthia Robinson points out that this conception of the Teresian Christ parallels with the Sufi concept of an ever-changing mental image of God.[66] Befriending Christ in his vulnerability and diminishment Teresa discovers he is a faithful friend in our own vulnerability and fear. In turn, this mutuality opens the soul to a "responsiveness to suffering, like Christ's own."[67] Most important is that "the Beloved does wish this (diminishment) to happen to the soul."

---

[60] Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, "Wise Action in a World of Suffering and Injustice," in *Teresa of Avila: Mystical Theology and Spirituality in the Carmelite Tradition,* eds. Peter Tyler and Edward Howells (New York: Routledge, 2017), 113.

[61] See *Las Moradas* 7: 4,6.

[62] Larkin, "Human Relationships in St Teresa of Avila," 136.

[63] *Las Moradas* 5: 3, 8.

[64] James Kellenberger, *Dying to Self and Detachment* (NewYork: Routledge, 2016), 41-42.

[65] *Vida*, 9:4.

[66] See Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2013).

[67] Ahlgren, "Wise Action in a World of Suffering and Injustice," 114.

Finally, Teresa's understanding of the soul's growth is based on the belief in the dignity of the human person. Frequently Teresa insists that the soul should, on her part, aspire to do everything in her capability to co-operate with God for her own growth to the state of transforming mystical union. With the grace of God, "it is in our hand, if we will."[68]

Rev. Dr Charlò Camilleri, O.Carm.
Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080
Malta

charlo.camilleri@um.edu.mt

[68] *Las Moradas* 5: 3,7. For advocating human dignity and merit, Teresa was accused by a handful of scholars as semi-pelagian. See Boyle, *Divine Domesticity: Augustine of Thagaste to Teresa of Avila,* Studies in the History of Christian Thought - 74 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 227-255; Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, *Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo to Calvin* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 210-212.

MELITA THEOLOGICA
Journal of the Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
69/2 (2019): 207-215

Nicholas Joseph Doublet*

A Historiographical Reading of the Pontificate of Benedict XV (1914-1922) in the Last Decade

Tragic indeed were the times during which Giacomo della Chiesa is called to the Papacy. His pontificate takes its cue from the tragic moment of a Great War that Europe found itself immersed in, and that would, in many ways, change its face. Although one of the shortest pontificates of the twentieth century, the role of the Holy See at this key moment in history is determinative in forming a Church that is ready to courageously take its place in a world in transformation; an age marked by fluidity, a time of crisis that truly ushers in the contemporary age with its totalitarian claims. Benedict XV died an untimely death on the 22nd January 1922. Aided by his closest collaborators, through his efforts for peace, he regained a respectable place for the Holy See on the international scene, now recognized by many as that moral authority it is called to be, in consonance with its vocation.

The aim of this historiographical review continues to be that of bringing together a survey of the way in which different historians have approached the pontificate, life and action, of Benedict XV. Therefore, it remains largely limited to those themes that the authors have presented as being determinative to the Holy See's political, diplomatic and ecclesial action in this period which sees its re-emergence as an international key player from a situation of dire isolation.

* Nicholas Joseph Doublet is a lecturer in Church History at the Faculty of Theology, and also lectures in Palaeography and Diplomatics in the Department of Library information and Archive Sciences, at the University of Malta. He is the director of Diocesan Archives of the Archdiocese of Malta. He obtained a Doctorate in Church History at the Pontifical Gregorian University and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the University of Malta. His main research interest is in Vatican diplomacy in the contemporary period.

Even though the themes remain largely the same, with the passing of time and the greater availability of archival sources, one clearly notices a qualitative leap in their interpretation. Such is the voluminous work by Antonio Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV. La Chiesa, la Grande Guerra, la Pace (1914-1922),*[1] in which, this now established authority[2] in the field attempts a detailed evaluation of this pontificate, an interpretation which is solidly founded on the wealth of documentation available, ranging from the *Diario* of Carlo Monti, the family archives of Della Chiesa, and the documentation available in different Vatican Archives. Such research allows the author to carve out more detailed related accounts which make possible the emergence of a more holistic picture of Benedict XV, where the pronouncements in the public sphere are balanced by the information pertaining to the inner workings of the Curia, on the diplomatic, political and ecclesial level.

As Andrea Riccardi notes, in the preface to this work, Scottà allows the truly "prophetic"[3] dimension of Benedict XV to shine out, especially in that patient realism which allows him never to give up on the cause of peace, in his commitment to a "conciliazione officiosa" with Italy and the manner in which he uses his friendship with Monti to bear fruit in this regard, in his humanitarian work after the war, as well as in his struggle with the victors in promoting justice towards the defeated. These are the "revolutions" of Della Chiesa. In the cataclysm of war, he developed a doctrine of peace and an understanding of charity, to which the Catholic Church continues to return as the basis of her work in this realm. He was the pontiff who, notwithstanding his and Gasparri's belief in the need to save the fragile empires that the war would wipe away, fully understood that the future lay in the hands of independent nations. If he is most

---

[1] Antonio Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV. La Chiesa, la Grande Guerra, la pace (1914-1922)* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2009).

[2] See Antonio Scottà, "Introduzione," in *La Conciliazione Ufficiosa. Diario del barone Carlo Monti "incaricato d'affari" del governo italiano presso la Santa Sede (1914-1922)*, I (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997); Antonio Scottà, *Giacomo della Chiesa arcivescovo di Bologna (1908-1914)* (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2002); Antonio Scottà, *I territori del confine orientale italiano nelle lettere dei vescovi veneti 1918-1922* (Vicenza-Trieste: Lint Editoriale Associati,1994); Antonio Scottà, *I vescovi veneti e la Santa Sede nella guerra 1915-1918* (Roma: 1991); Antonio Scottà, *La Santa Sede, i vescovi veneti e l'autonomia politica dei cattolici 1918-1922* (Vicenza-Trieste: 1994; Antonio Scottà, "Lo stato liberale ed il progetto di infeudazione della Chiesa di Roma. Missione esplorativa fra i metropoliti d'Italia di Mons. Giacomo della Chiesa," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi,* ed., Letterio Mauro (Bologna: Minerva Edizioni, 2008).

[3] See Andrea Riccardi, "Prefazione," in Antonio Scottà, *Papa Benedetto XV: la Chiesa, la Grande Guerra, la pace (1914-1922)* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2009).

famous for denouncing the "inutile strage," so must he also be for his assertion that "le nazioni non muoiono," for history continues to prove him right, over and over again. Beyond the war and its aftermath, Scottà also explores the attempt at resolving the Roman Question, the founding of the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, the relaunching of Catholic action, the concern for Catholic missions, as well as the saints and blessed proclaimed by this pope. His study serves to show the richness of this pontificate, and how much work still needs to be done to go beyond superficial aspects, towards a true appreciation of the legacy of this pontificate.

An established authority in the field, Giovanni Sale, approaches, in an objective manner, delicate themes relative to the period under study, such as the development of the Holy See's position as regards the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, and subsequently its responsibility in front of the rise and affirmation of fascism. The greatest merit of the numerous works, books as well as articles, such as *Popolari e Destra Cattolica al tempo di Benedetto XV (1919-1922),*[4] *Fascismo e Vaticano prima della Conciliazione*[5] and *La Chiesa di Mussolini*[6] lies in the use the author makes of the *Archivio della Civiltà Cattolica* (at the time truly the authoritative mouthpiece through which the Holy See formed and intervened in public opinion), while taking into account other material found in the Vatican archives. The author examines the events in the light of the ecclesiastical culture prevalent at the time. As such, steering away from an easier judgmental attitude, the author tries to interpret the possible positions the Holy See could adopt in front of the Italian political situation of the time, given the prevalent ecclesiology and the responsibility it carried. First considering what role the Holy See did in fact play, the position adopted by Gasparri and Benedict XV in front of the formation of the '*Partito Popolare Italiano,*' these publications consider why it then distances itself from this party, abandoning it to its own fate as an anti-government and a party of the opposition, as well as examining the prudent strategy of Pius XI and Gasparri in front of the affirmation of Mussolini and fascism. With the ascent of Achille Ratti, himself unfavourable to Sturzo's idea

---

[4] See also Giovanni Sale, "I cattolici popolari e l'Avventino," *La Civiltà Cattolica* no.3734 (2006/1): 136-147; Giovanni Sale, "Fine del 'Non expedit' e partecipazione dei cattolici italiani alla vita politica," *La Civiltà Cattolica* no. 3736 (2006/1): 365-373; Giovanni Sale, "La progettata riforma della legislazione ecclesiastica al tempo di Mussolini," *La Civiltà Cattolica* no. 3747-48 (2006/3): 218-231: Giovanni Sale (1958-) is professor of Contemporary Church History at the Pontifical Gregorian University, and a member of the editorial commitee of *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

[5] See Giovanni Sale, *Fascismo e Vaticano prima della Conciliazione: Popolari, Chierici e Camerati*, 2 (Milano-Roma: Jaca Book-La Civiltà Cattolica, 2007).

[6] See Givanni Sale, *La Chiesa di Mussolini: I rapporti tra fascismo e religione* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2011).

of a lay and a-confessional party, autonomous from the Church, coupled with Sturzo's progressive political programme as well as the ousting of the rightist elements in the party, meant that the *Partito Popolare Italiano*'s fate was sealed as the Holy See distanced itself from it, no longer considering it, as defined by Benedict XV, the "partito dei cattolici italiani."[7]

The volume edited by Letterio Mauro, *Benedetto XV: Profeta di pace in un mondo in crisi,*[8] sought to evaluate the various facets of this figure in order to highlight the true concept of peace that Benedict XV promoted. Mauro argues that this was not simply a response to a pressing need to bring the tragedy of the raging war to an end, but one that went well beyond that, born, as it was out of the desire for the promotion of a true culture of peace. Benedict XV understood well that the true causes of the war (the absence of mutual love among peoples, the contempt of authority, the injustices perpetuated by the inequalities between the different social classes, and widespread practical materialism), could only be overcome by a true and lasting peace built on the Christian principle of fraternal charity. It was necessary to return to those principles promoted by Christian wisdom and set as the basis of the civil consortium; essentially a return through the Catholic Church to Christ, the only redeemer of humanity. Set as it is on such a theological premise, the volume sets out to study, through the contributions of various authors, a holistic consideration of this pontiff, including Marco Doldi's study of the Genovese context[9] in which Della Chiesa was born and the ties he maintained with it; Scottà's study of his service at the Secretariat of State[10] and particularly the investigation carried out among the Italian Metropolitan bishops as regards their views as to the resolution of the Roman Question; Venturi, Goriup and Macciantelli's consideration of his years as Archbishop of Bologna,[11]

---

[7] See Pietro Scoppola, "Prefazione," in Sale, *Fascismo e Vaticano prima della Conciliazione:* 2: xxiii; Pietro Scoppola (1926-2007) was an Italian historian, politician, and leading exponent of the Italian Catholic Democratic Movement.

[8] See Mauro Letterio, "Introduzione," *in Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi,* ed., Letterio Mauro (Bologna: Minerva Edizioni, 2008), 11-14; Mauro Letterio is associate professor at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy at the University of Genova.

[9] Marco Doldi, "Figlio di Genova. Gli anni giovanili di Giacomo della Chiesa," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi,* 17-30; Marco Doldi (1965-) lectures in dogmatic and moral theology. He is also member of the International Theological Commission of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith.

[10] Antonio Scottà, "Lo Stato Liberale ed il progetto di infeudazione della chiesa di Roma: Missione esplorativa fra i Metropoliti d'Italia di Mons. Giacomo della Chiesa," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi,* 31-80.

[11] Giampaolo Venturi, *Giacomo della Chiesa a Bologna*, in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi*, 81-104; Lino Goriup-Roberto Macciantelli, "Mons. Giacomo della Chiesa e la

the latter delving particularly in his role in the founding of the Regional Pontifical Seminary. The volume also covers various aspects of his pontificate as for example his ecclesial action with Zanotti's contribution regarding the publication of the *Codex Iuris Canonici.*[12]

Of particular interest is Butturini's essay, *Benedetto XV e la questione missionaria*, in which he examines the various factors that led to the publication of *Maximum Illud*; the European context (the scarcity of human and financial resources as a result of the war) as well as to avoid British machinations to instrumentalise the missions for political reasons turning Cardinal Bourne's Curia into a second *Propaganda,*[13] the extra-European context, namely, Benedict's resoluteness in doing away completely with the *Patronato* to avoid the nationalization of the missions: the only way to save them was to "romanize" them. Finally, the author also considers whether Benedict's mark in the publication of *Maximum Illud* can be ascertained. He concludes that the pope was fully informed as to the political and ecclesiastical situation of the missions, through the close relationship between *Propaganda Fide* and the Secretariat of State, especially after the appointment of Van Rossum as prefect of *Propaganda*. Butturini asserts that the three traits that historiography traditionally applies to this pontiff are present in his determination in publishing it; namely his humanitarian concern - a Church now present on the international plane, no longer through the Roman question, but through its social action in defence of the rights of nations and in actively reducing human suffering, his political ability, as well as his preference favouring the strengthening of the local indigenous churches.[14]

The volume also includes a study of the Armenian question[15] by Zanna, and other issues tied to the Catholic culture, such as Guasco's consideration of whether this pontificate marks the end of the anti-modernist movement,[16]

---

nascita del Pontificio Seminario Regionale Benedetto XV di Bologna," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi* , 105-124.

[12] Andrea Zanotti, "Benedetto XV e il Codex Iuris Canonici," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi*, 167-180; Andrea Zanotti (1957-) is professor of Canon Law at the University of Bologna.

[13] Giuseppe Butturini, "Benedetto XV e la Questione Missionaria," in Letterio Mauro ed., *Benedetto XV. Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi* (Bologna: Minerva Edizioni, 2008), 183-186; Giuseppe Butturini teaches on the History of the Missions at the University of Padova.

[14] Butturini, *Benedetto XV e la Questione Missionaria*, 201-205.

[15] Giorgio Del Zanna, "Benedetto XV e la Questione Armena," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi*, 125-138.

[16] Maurilio Guasco, "Fine dell'Antimodernismo?," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi*, 229-238; Maurilio Guasco (1939-) has lectured on the History of contemporary

and Mauro's presentation of the encyclical on Dante Alighieri.[17] In conclusion, Danilo Veneruso traces the reasons for which the memory of Benedict XV has been voluntarily relegated to oblivion; in life, by those who failed to understand him, and thus sought to block his promotion to the college of cardinals, for they understood well that such a promotion opened up the probability of his election to the papacy, which would in turn bring about a break with the Pian pontificate, and a reaffirmation of the Leonine school promoted by Rampolla's disciples; in death by those who failed to comprehend the prophetic nature of his theological vision and politics of peace.[18]

Fundamental work has been done by Olivier Sibre, in his thesis *Le Saint-Siège et l'Extrême-Orient*,[19] in confronting a wide variety of sources and thus clarifying the Holy See's diplomatic and missionary strategy in China, Korea and Japan, a strategy advanced through the formation of both apostolic delegations as well as a local elite, during a time of great geo-political changes in this area. Interesting to our study is how Benedict XV responded to China's need for international recognition in this period, by seeking the foundation of an apostolic delegation in this country.

Keeping to the diplomatic realm, Americo Miranda in *Santa Sede e Società delle Nazioni. Benedetto XV, Pio XI e il nuovo internazionalismo cattolico*, explores what he calls the "conversione diplomatica"[20] of the Holy See, borne out of the desire for true and lasting peace of which Benedict XV had been the very incarnation during the war; a desire that mandated the Holy See's need to participate actively in true dialogue at an international level. The author highlights what he calls the "vocazione internazionalista"[21] of Benedict XV's pontificate, to whose efforts he traces the very inspiration of an international

---

political thought.

[17] Letterio Mauro, "L'enciclica di Benedetto XV su Dante Alighieri," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi*, 289-314.

Butturini, *Benedetto XV e la Questione Missionaria*, 201-205

[18] See Danilo Veneruso, "La contrastata ascesa di Giacomo della Chiesa verso il pontificato tra oblio di memoria e incomprensione," in Letterio Mauro ed., *Benedetto XV. Profeta di Pace in un mondo in crisi* (Bologna: Minerva Edizioni, 2008), 345-362.

[19] See Olivier Sibre, *Le Saint-Siège et l'Extrême-Orient (Chine, Corée, Japon): De Leon XIII à Pie XII (1880-1952)* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2012); Olivier Sibre is a member of the research institute on 19th century history at the University of Paris I and Paris IV.

[20] Americo Miranda, *Santa Sede e Società delle Nazioni. Benedetto XV, Pio XI e il nuovo internazionalismo cattolico* (Roma: Studium, 2013), 12; Americo Miranda is a Reasearch Fellow at the Tilburg School of Theology and lecturer at the École *européenne* in Luxembourg.

[21] Ibid., 47.

organisation for the promotion of greater cooperation between peoples, ultimately the fruit of a long Catholic tradition, expressed by the magisterium in the concept of the "societas populorum."[22] Miranda explores the differences in intent, between what Catholic internationalism and Benedict XV desired, as he himself explained in *Pacem Dei Munus,*[23] and what in effect were the limited aims of the nascent League of Nations, already weakened by the stepping out of the United States, and the defeat of Wilson.

Even though the Holy See was in effect excluded from the workings of the League of Nations, and as such adopted a cautious attitude towards it, yet Miranda shows that Benedict XV did not in fact distance himself from this international organization, but rather desired its constitution on a different basis, which would make possible the coming together of a true "society or better family of nations."[24] Miranda shows how the interventions of Benedict XV between 1920-21 in effect marked:

> Le prese di posizioni di Benedetto XV negli anni 1920-21 rappresentarono una svolta epocale nell'attegiamento della Santa Sede, non più osservatrice spesso dissenziente, ma partecipe, seppure a distanza, di ogni iniziativa per la pacificazione e la convivenza tra gli Stati.[25]

Benedict XV was conscious of the mediatory role that was opening up for the Holy See, especially in favour of the defeated nations and for a more active presence in humanitarian initiatives. Through an evaluation of papal pronouncements in this period, Miranda allows the realism of both Benedict XV and Gasparri to once again shine out.

Conclusion

This article has sought to shed light on the themes that the historiographical tradition surrounding the figure of Benedict XV has preferred so far. In contrast

---

[22] Ibid., 23-25; 40: "Benedetto era consapevole della continuità tra la propria visione e quella di Wilson" quotied in *La Conciliazione Ufficiosa. Diario del barone Carlo Monti "incaricato d'affari" del governo italiano presso la Santa Sede (1914-1922)*, ed., Antonio Scottà (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 45f.

[23] "Ristabilite così le cose, secondo l'ordine voluto della giustizia e dalla carità, e riconciliati tra di loro le genti, sarebbe veramente desiderabile, o Venerabili Fratelli, che tutti gli Stati, rimossi i vicendevoli sospetti, si riunissero in una sola società o meglio famiglia dei popoli, sia per garantire la propria indipendenza, sia per tutelare l'ordine del civile consorzio." Benedict XV, *Pacem Dei Munus*, no.10.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Miranda, *Santa Sede e Società delle Nazioni*, 90.

with previous pontiffs, especially Pius IX and Pius X, and those who succeeded him like Pius XI and Pius XII, the historical evaluation of Benedict XV has generally remained free from the spirit of controversy and certain polemical readings that still weigh-down the study of these other pontiffs. However, his historical evaluation has suffered from a greater threat, one that is the fruit of a culpable misunderstanding by those who failed to comprehend him and his vision in life, and preferred him to be forgotten in death. Such was the motivated silence that enveloped his memory in the decades following his death, as the world found itself carried once again into the throngs of yet another World War.

Interest in this pontificate has remained, in certain respects, an Italian concern, not only because the language most works published so far have been written in Italian, but also because of their themes. However, the fact that the principal critical biographies dedicated to him have been published in English proves a major exception that cannot be ignored. Other serious works, especially related to Belgium and China, have also been published in French. As regards Italy, beyond studies related to the war, and a certain interest in the Cerretti-Orlando efforts towards the resolution of the Roman Question, interest has also been shown in the emergence of Italian Catholics as players in the political arena of the period.

Thus, in the treatment of Benedict XV's life and action, a certain preference for the diplomatic and political aspects can be clearly ascertained, and again a certain deficit remains in the study of his ecclesial vision and the action motivating it. Studies have remained tied by certain geographical limits, determined largely by European countries and their interests on the continent and beyond. In this regard one must note the interest shown in the United States of America, which in those years entered the world stage as a key player, and, more concretely, the interest shown in ascertaining the points of convergence and divergence between Benedict XV's peace efforts and Wilson's proposals. This interest is also accompanied by a certain opening up to Russia and the study of the Holy See's reaction to the revolution and the rise of Bolshevism. But other parts of the world remain completely neglected. The absence of Latin American countries, and the challenges which the Holy See faced in this region, becomes conspicuous.

In these last four years, the first centenary of the First World War has brought about, as indeed expected, a certain renewed interest in this pontificate especially on themes of war and the peace efforts undertaken by the Holy See, among which the "Peace Note" of August 1917[26] often stands as its defining moment.

---

[26] Benedict XV, *Exhortation to the Leaders of the Belligerent Peoples, Dès le début,* 1 August

Such studies continue to be published demanding a separate historiographical reflection in the near future.

Rev. Dr Nicholas Joseph Doublet,
Faculty of Theoloy
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080
Malta

nicholas.doublet@um.edu.mt

1917. Cfr *AAS* 9 (1917): 417-420. For an English translation see John Eppstein, *The Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nations* (Washington: C.A.I.P., 1935), 215-218. See also, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740. Benedetto XV (1914-1922)*, v. VIII, ed., Ugo Bellocchi (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), 182-184.

which advertising baits the consumer are acceptable. And the relevance of a moral judgement pertains too to the problem of whether consumption should be constantly expanded at the expense of savings.

Closely related to the behaviour of people as consumers, is their attitude toward social organization and social institutions in so far as they are economic citizens. Classical economists believed that the market was a great instrument of social cohesion. Their concept of justice was limited to the act of exchange in a free market. In their view, narrowing the freedom of the market would weaken the automatic power of the market to bring about economic adjustments, and that such a weakening would affect adversely the progress of the nation. Many Marxist theorists, rejecting the social injustice inherent in the classical position, went to the other extreme and believed that true economic development was only attainable through a completely planned economy where the individual was subordinated to the State.

The role of social institutions in economic development raises far more problems than we can tackle here. It seems to me that the ethical norm to be used in determining this role is that social institutions in a developing country should help men as individuals in the first place, and in the second place, as members of society.

This last aspect brings up the crucial problem of social justice in a developing economy. If a development plan is to be morally acceptable, it must be permeated with a spirit of justice. Justice implies balance, a balance between the productive sectors in so far as men are producers, a balance in the sacrifices to be borne by the different groups of the community, a balance in the prospects and opportunities and incentives offered to each individual in the community.

And social justice in developing planning and in the execution of plans for a developing country implies balance in the respective moral responsibilities of the entrepreneur, the consumer and the state; in the relationship between population and the labour force; in the division of labour. It implies that there be Christian attitudes towards work and towards leisure.

It ordains that the costs and the sacrifices of economic development be shared equally by all; and that there exists a right hierarchy of values implicit in the goals of economic development, goals that concern abundance, opportunity, security and freedom in relation to the ultimate goal of happiness in enjoying the good things of life because they are God's things.

For economic development should ultimately help men to reach more smoothly and more cheerfully the riches, the abundance and the freedom of the City of God.

MELITA THEOLOGICA
Journal of the Faculty of Theology
University of Malta
69/2 (2019): 217-222

Salvino Busuttil*

Retrieving the Tradition: Salvino Busuttil, "Morality and Economic Development,"‡

Excerpts from *Melita Theologica* 17/1 (1965): 19-24

When, nearly ten years ago, I first started studying philosophy, I remember asking one of my tutors over lunch what philosophy was actually all about. "Imagine," he said referring to the table in front of him, "that this table had no legs." "I am imagining," I said. "Good. Imagine now that it had no surface and no sides."

I looked hungrily at the dishes on the table - at which point, my professor, rather uncharitably said, "Imagine now that there was nothing on the surface. What remains?"

"Nothing," I replied, eyeing the dishes even more hungrily. "Good," he said. "Now you know what philosophy is all about."

---

* Salvino Busuttil (b. 1936) studied philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, acquiring a licentiate in 1959, and at the Angelicum University in Rome whence he acquired a Doctorate in Philosophy in 1961 with a dissertation entitled *Value in Karl Marx*. In 1963 he earned a Doctorate in Economy from the University of Manchester. After returning to Malta Busuttil was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Economics at the University of Malta in 1964, an office he held up till 1975. Two years later, in 1966, he was chosen as Head of the Faculty of Arts until 1972.

From 1987 till 1996 Busuttil was General Director of the Foundation of International Studies at the University of Malta. Both on a local as well as on an international level he occupied various positions of responsibility related to the economy and the environment, especially with UNESCO.

‡ This paper was read during the academic celebrations in honour of St. Thomas Aquinas, held at the University Theatre on March 8th, 1965.

This somewhat crude introduction to philosophy savoured more of a prolegomenon to the Nihilism of Nietzsche than to the realism of Aquinas. I cannot imagine Aquinas being satisfied merely with the idea of food-dishes on a table. If we are to believe his biographers, the Angelic Doctor was enough of a realist and a gourmet to appreciate that man, although not living by bread alone, also lived by bread.

Aquinas was a realistic philosopher. Now a realistic economist is one who in showing men how to live by bread, keeps in mind that they do not live by bread alone. And it is the purpose of my paper this evening to relate the judgement on moral value to the judgement on economic value with special reference to a developing economy.

In assessing the relationship between ethics and economics, one has, in the first place, to distinguish between the two ends of these respective sciences. Ethics concerns the rightness or wrongness of all human acts in terms of man's nature as a rational being created to God's image and likeness. In so far as economic events are determined by man, then we can pass judgement on them concerning their value as human acts. Economic man is man, and no automaton; economic acts have consequently a moral value.

I stress this principle because it is considered old-fashioned by many economists who forget that antiques have become fashionable and economically valuable because they have an enduring beauty. And I lay special emphasis on it because development economists have the habit of tendering advice which often ignores the fact that man's material welfare is not synonymous with man's happiness.

Not that such economists do not themselves philosophize and pass value judgements. But rather, some of them assume that man is only rational when he is materialistic, and that to look at things spiritually, that is in a way that transcends matter, is irrational - forgetting, of course, that rationality is a faculty of the spirit (unless you have too much of it).

In fact many economic thinkers tend to base their principles on moral foundations. On one side, we have the Marxist school which claims that it is the State that determines the criterion of value, even though, of course, moral value as such has no meaning for a Marxist. On the other side, we have an increasing mass of economic thinkers who believe that it is the individual who establishes the ethical value of human acts. Both these schools of economic thought have many adherents today - the vogue today is to be an existential or agnostic economist, a vogue that in the Marxist case, had its source in Hegel, and in the school of economic individualism, in Adam Smith. It is pertinent to remember that Marx graduated in philosophy (wine-drinker that he was, his thesis was on Epicurus), and that Adam Smith was a professor of logic.

There is a third school of economic thought which is a happy medium between the two to which I have just alluded. It is characteristic of this school to lay stress on man's complex nature as a rational being, and as an individual, bestowed with the dignity of manhood, who is also a social animal; as living in society but transcending it because of the innate glory of his soul.

Aristotle himself, though obscurely because of his pagan background, recognized the cogency of this outlook on man in his economic life. But it was Aquinas, in medieval times, and the great Popes of the last seventy years, from Leo XIII to Paul VI, happily reigning, who have set down clearly and forcefully the relationship between morality and economic growth. And it was perhaps Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* who synthetized the intimate correlation between economic and moral values.

"Though economic science and moral discipline," he writes, "are guided each by its own principles in its own sphere, it is false to say that the two orders are so distinct and alien that the former (that is economics) in no way depends on the latter (that is ethics). The so-called laws of economics derived from the nature of earthly goods and from the qualities of the human body and soul, determine what aims are unattainable and attainable in economic matters, and what means are thereby rendered necessary; while reason itself clearly deduces from the nature of things and from the individual and social character of man, what is the end and object of the whole economic order assigned by God the Creator."

And further on, in the same Encyclical, he reiterates the same teaching that "the economic and social organism will attain its end when it secures for all and each goods [...] sufficient to supply all needs and an honest livelihood, and to uplift men to that higher level of prosperity and culture which, provided it be used with prudence, is [...] of singular help to virtue."

These principles have particular relevance to economic development. When an economist analyses a country or a region or a situation, he often has to determine the relationship between "what is" and "what is to be," and to do so he must pass judgements on "what should be" and "why it should be." The student of economic development has to study the relationships between data and their dependent variables. The former imply facts concerning population, consumption patterns, natural resources, factors of production, monetary and fiscal policies and the nature and extent of competition on the market. The latter, the variables, concern the prices of goods and services, the prices of the factors of production, the allocation of resources to the productive sectors, and the distribution of final products among the producers.

To assess what should be all in all the relationships between the data and the variables which I have just mentioned would call for a comprehensive judgement

which is usually outside the scope of the development economist. In working out a development plan or in building a development theory, the economist normally uses only the more salient data. He analyses those which have immediate pertinence to his theory or to his plan, and excludes the influence of psychological and sociological factors. This may sometimes result in plans and theories which are economically sound but which are socially unacceptable, and the postulates of theories and the assumptions of development plans are often sociological generalizations bereft of objectivity. The classical theorists of economic growth have themselves not been immune from this tendency. The classical case, in the literal sense, is the great Marxian postulate that "in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily flowing from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and -intellectual history of that epoch."

From this crude and unrealistic generalization, Marxism has derived its primary dogma of the decline of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. From it, too, the Marxists have derived their criterion of moral value as being determined by economic events, interpreted by that Norm of Moral Value which is the State. But the difficulties between ethical and economic judgements are not confined to ideologies, but concern the very concept of economic life.

Thus one of the fundamental moral judgements in economic development relates to the distinction between the "economic sphere" and the "milieu" or "the surrounding world."

Classical economists argued that man's economic behaviour was a manifestation of man's rational self-interest. Marx went further to reduce all human acts to forms of economic behaviour. And a more recent development theorist like Schumpeter has held that the criterion of man's economic behaviour is his "conduct directed towards the acquisition of goods." Schumpeter and many contemporary theorists of growth believe that the economist is limited exclusively to economic behaviour, and that moral and sociological considerations are outside the economist's terms of reference.

To avoid a conflict between the two spheres, the economist has to bear in mind that economic development principles are subject in their application to moral law. This criterion must be borne in mind when the development economist is selecting the data for his plans.

One of the most important moral judgements on data that the development economist has to make concerns the population, its tastes, attitudes and dispositions, and its social institutions. The classical theorists, in accepting the Malthusian theory of population, were postulating the concept of an optimum

population. In a developing economy, where present resources are being exhausted, and where new resources are being tapped to derive new production, where new capital is being invested and accumulated, and where social attitudes are changing, there is little reason to believe that the population will remain stationary. Now the classical economists based their concept of an optimum population in a growing economy on three principal assumptions:

- the existence of one single satisfactory index of the relationship between population and national welfare;
- secondly, the principle of the division of labour;
- thirdly, the law of diminishing returns.

These assumptions provide a good example of the issues to be tackled by the development economist in so far as ethics is concerned. The last two assumptions are obviously economic ones and pertain purely to economics. But the first postulate raises an important moral question. Can an optimum relationship between population and national welfare be measured by one criterion? Can one say that decisions affecting national economic policy should be determined solely by per capita real income, by per capita consumption or by per capita real wages? If one were to exclude a moral judgement, and consider man as a purely economic animal, the answer would be yes. But if we regard man as a being endowed with a spiritual dignity, we have to admit that we cannot advocate, such a single criterion, because per capita national income may be rising, while sectors of the population may, due to changes in the economic structure of the country be undergoing hardship.

Because of ethical reasons, neither can one advocate an economic policy which the planners may say "in the long run" will lead to a higher standard of living though it will inflict some hardship in the short run. One cannot condemn a present generation to real hardship so that a future generation may enjoy more of the good things of life; nor can one, for economic reasons, wring injustice on one sector of the population so that another sector can be better off. It is useful to remember the saying of the great economist, Lord Keynes, that "in the long run we are all dead."

Again, one of the major principles of economic analysis enunciates that as income increases, consumption increases, but not proportionately. Here again, it is the task of economic science to determine whether the data concerning the various aggregates of consumption are valid; but it is the task of moral science to determine who is responsible for the changes in the change of taste among consumers. It is the task of ethics to determine whether the targets placed before consumers as an incentive towards economic development are morally right or not. It is part of the science of ethics to ascertain whether the images with