PER RÖNNEGÅRD

Threads and Images

The Use of Scripture in Apophthegmata Patrum

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The Use of Scripture in Apophthegmata Patrum

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Contents

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations used in this work follow *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies* (ed. Patrick H. Alexander et al.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999). In addition the following abbreviations are used:

AP	*Apophthegmata Patrum*
AP/G	The Greek alphabetical collection of *AP*
AP/GS	The Greek systematic collection of *AP*
AP/N	The Greek anonymous collection of *AP*
OEAE	*The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Ancient Egypt*
supp.Guy	Supplements to the Greek alphabetical collection of *AP*, published by Jean-Claude Guy in *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum* (Brussels: Bollandistes, 1962), 19–36.

BIBLICAL QUOTATIONS

Whenever quotations are made in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* from the OT, they follow Greek translations which are generally very close to the extant copies of the LXX. For that reason all indications of chapters and verses of the OT in this study are given using the numbering of the LXX, and, unless otherwise stated, when I quote a text from the OT it is the LXX which is quoted. When a translation of the LXX is given, it is the translation of Brenton, slightly modernized, except for the apocrypha where it is the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise stated.

When quotations in the collection are compared to the NT, the NT text is taken from NA^{27}. Textual variants indicated in the apparatus of NA^{27} and UBS^{4} are indicated whenever they are relevant as a parallel to the quotation. The English translation of the NT is the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

QUOTATIONS FROM *APOPHTHEGMATA PATRUM*

The sayings of the Greek systematic collection of *Apophthegmata Patrum* are indicated using the chapter number in Roman numerals and the individual saying in Arabic numerals. Portions of sayings are indicated with a second Arabic numeral, indicating the line in the edition by Guy, unless the saying is very short, or the portion is found at the very beginning of the saying.

Chapter One

Introduction

THE DIFFERENT COLLECTIONS of anecdotes about early Christian ascetics called *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*AP*) were undoubtedly one of the most widespread texts in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, both in the East and the West. They were edited and copied during the earliest stages of the monastic movements, and were soon translated and spread widely. They were read, studied, heard and meditated upon in most monasteries. Since they were considered to depict the pioneers of the monastic movements in their own words, they were regarded as an important instrument in the formation of individuals in monastic settings. And since monasteries were vital to the creation of a Christian culture, *AP* played an important role in that process.[1]

The influence exerted by these texts, which was significant from the very beginning as is witnessed by numerous quotations of the sayings in other texts from the same period, can be seen even today in the number of translations into modern languages and in the reprints of those translations. This influence has not been restricted to explicitly stated themes such as virtues and ascetic practices, but also to what was implicitly transmitted, including how one relates to and makes use of Scripture. An understanding of *AP* and of its influence must include an understanding of what is one of its most important features: its use of Scripture.

The use of Scripture in *AP* and in other texts can be seen from the perspective of texture: how biblical threads are woven into the novel

[1] A plate of an eleventh century manuscript of *AP* in the collections of Lund University Library is included at the end of the thesis to add concreteness to the text of *AP* and the reception of it.

text, how the old text and the new influence each other, and the combined effect created by that interplay. In other words how biblical material is appropriated. That is what this study is all about. It will focus on how that process of appropriating the Bible takes place in *AP*.

An essential part of the process of appropriation is the choice of a referent for the biblical material, choosing what the text is actually talking about. We may consider other texts and other readers from the same perspective. Reading the Bible, or any other text, in a meaningful way always involves choosing what the referent of the text is. An exegete who is interested in the historical situation of the Pauline churches will read the Pauline epistles as historical documents, as saying something about those churches. For an exegete who is interested in the historical situation of, say the Matthean communities, much of what is said in the Gospel of Matthew will be taken to refer to the situation of the Matthean community. In that case the Gospel is in a sense read in a less literal way than the epistles in the former case, since the exegete is assuming that the document has an implicit reference which is different from the explicitly stated one.

Whenever religious texts are read as holy Scripture an individual or an interpretive community appropriates the text by assuming that the text has relevance "today", i.e., there is a reference to the present in the text. This was true for Paul, it was true for the desert fathers and mothers, and the wide range of traditions that formed the basis for *AP*, and it is true today. Whether this process is assumed to take place through unconscious creativity, through the workings of the Holy Spirit, or through self-conscious techniques to bring the message in line with one's own interests—or through any combination of these—it is possible and highly interesting to attempt to describe what is happening on a textual level when Scripture is appropriated to bear on the particular questions of an interpretive community.

The major concern of *AP* is not how to interpret the Bible, but how to conduct one's life. That is what any reader will find to be the theme that runs through the sayings, and that is what the anonymous author who added an introduction to the collection tells the reader to focus on. Yet, it is often interesting to study a text from another angle than the obvious and intended one. Studying texts, which as their main subject have virtuous conduct, from the point of view of Scripture use catches the writers off-guard, as it were. We focus our attention on something which is not intended as a focus.

When Scripture was commented on and preached about, the interpretation needed to be explicitly stated, and so it needed to be a

fairly self-conscious form of hermeneutics. In *AP*, with a few exceptions, the focus of attention for the author and the ideal reader does not seem to be the Bible. Yet the Bible is very often integrated in the teachings. This is a different way of treating the Bible than that which sets out from a Bible text, and then tries to give a more or less normative interpretation of it.

The difference can be compared to how a novel is treated by a literary critic, and how that same novel can inspire the thoughts of readers in more subtle ways: that very novel can provide ways of thinking and of writing. To see the impact a novel has had at a certain time and how people related to it, it is not enough to study reviews by literary critics. In a similar way, it is not enough to study Bible commentaries and homilies to discover the impact of Scripture. Through a text like *AP* we can discover some of the ways in which the Bible was treated when it was not the actual focus of attention, as was the case in other genres of Christian literature.

There is a tendency among scholars to treat all intra-biblical uses of Scripture as well as those made during the patristic period as always having an exegetical or dogmatic purpose, regardless of genre.[2] This means that other uses have at times been distorted to fit those subjects, presupposing a much more normative use and interpretation of Scripture than the texts themselves suggest. At other times some texts have simply been neglected when it comes to their use of Scripture, because they are not exegetical or dogmatic in their character. The *AP* is such a text, making frequent use of the Bible, but normally not with an exegetical or dogmatic purpose. So, taking a fresh look at how the Bible is actually used in *AP* may offer new insights into what using the Bible can mean.

Besides the interest we have in *AP* because of its wide reception, and the importance of the Bible in it, there is an additional advantage in using these texts. The form of *AP* lends itself very well to being analysed, since these short anecdotes can easily be reproduced for the readers of

[2] Some of the general works on early Christian interpretation of the Bible are: Henri de LUBAC, *Exégèse médiéval: les quatre sens de l'écriture* (4 vols., Paris: Aubier, 1959–64); Robert M. GRANT, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (2nd edn, London: SCM, 1984); Karlfried FROELICH (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Manlio SIMONETTI, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis* (ET by J. A. Hughes; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994); Alan J. HAUSER and Duane F. WATSON, *A History of Biblical Interpretation. Vol. 1: The Ancient Period*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003); Charles KANNENGIESSER et al., *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (2 vols.; The Bible in Ancient Christianity, 1; Leiden: Brill, 2004).

the study to see for themselves. They are each one individually an independent unit, which, when reproduced in a study such as this, does not require the reader to know the text beforehand, or to find it in a library.

Looking at this specific text is sufficiently interesting in itself. We can see the place of Scripture in it in a more nuanced way, we can perceive how the use of Scripture in these ascetical texts gave new perspectives and new flavour to some biblical material, and we may discover something about the attitude towards Scripture in this reading community. But it is hoped that this study will also have bearing beyond the monastic *apophthegmata.* Besides understanding *AP,* its reading community and its use of Scripture better, exploring its use of Scripture involves inventing some novel methods and new terminology that may prove helpful as heuristic and analytical tools for describing the use of Scripture in other texts as well.

Chapter Two

Text and Method

1. The Text

1.1 Collections and Versions

There is a wide range of collections which all go under the common name of *Apophthegmata Patrum*, in English often called *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. They all contain short sayings and anecdotes allegedly going back to the Christian ascetics inhabiting the Egyptian desert, predominantly in Lower Egypt, in the fourth and fifth centuries. These short stories stand independently from each other, without any attempt to connect them, except for such phrases as "The same Elder also said: …".

There are printed collections of *AP* in the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Sahidic, Bohairic and Ethiopic languages.[1] Scholars generally agree that the latter are all translations of Greek collections, although some suggest that individual sayings may have a Coptic *Vorlage*.

[1] See the overview by Samuel RUBENSON in *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1990), 145–152.

Attempts at locating and dating the Greek collections have suggested compilers working in Gaza at the end of the fifth century.[2]

Limiting ourselves to the Greek collections, there is the alphabetical collection (*AP*/G), arranged alphabetically according to the name of the desert father or mother mentioned in each particular saying, a collection which has been printed on the basis of a single MS;[3] the anonymous collection (*AP*/GN), the sayings which do not state the name of the Elder depicted and which were sometimes attached at the end of *AP*/G, partly printed on the basis of a single MS;[4] and the systematic collection (*AP*/GS), recently printed in a critical edition, on the basis of 11 Greek MSS, the sixth century Latin translation by Pelagius and John and another two Greek MSS for the Prologue.[5] This Greek systematic collection organizes the material thematically under 21 headings.

For the purposes of the present study it is not necessary to consult all the different collections. The interest is in this general tradition, and in discovering ways in which the Bible is used there. Any one of the collections could have been consulted. A choice has been made to use the systematic collection. What speaks in favour of using *AP*/GS is above all the availability and legibility of a modern text-critical edition.

1.2 Genre

The first sentence of the introduction to the entire collection, both the systematic and the alphabetical ones, states that:

> In this book the virtuous asceticism, the admirable way of life and the words of the holy and blessed fathers are recorded to inspire, to instruct, and to be imitated by

[2] See especially Lucien REGNAULT, "Les Apophtegmes des Pères en Palestine aux Ve–VIe siècles", in *Irénikon* 54 (1981): 320–330.

[3] Printed in PG 65, which is basically a reprint of J.-B. Coteliers edition, based on the twelfth century manuscript *Paris grec 1599*, and printed in *Ecclesiae graecae monumenta*, I, Paris, 1677.

[4] The tenth or eleventh century manuscript Coislin 126, edited by François Nau in *ROC* 10, 12–14, 17–18 (1905, 1907–1909, 1912–13).

[5] Edited by Jean-Claude Guy in *Les Apophtegmes des Pères: Collection systématique*, *SC* 387 (I–IX), 474 (X–XVI), 498 (XVII–XXI) (1993, 2003, 2005). The 11 Greek manuscripts range from the ninth to the twelfth centuries.

> those who want to succeed in the heavenly way of living and who wish to journey on the way towards the kingdom of heaven.[6]

Although this introduction is missing in many MSS and is probably a later addition, it does nonetheless say something important about how this text was received and understood. It was seen more as a didactic text and as paraenesis than as a historical document. The heading of the first chapter of the systematic collection speaks in a similar way of how the text was perceived. It reads: "Exhortation (παραίνεσις) of the holy fathers, to progress towards perfection."

Peter Brown has called *Apophthegmata Patrum* "the last and one of the greatest products of the Wisdom Literature of the ancient Near East."[7] That group of literature is an important general background for the understanding of these texts. If, for example, we compare *AP* with the book of Proverbs, the subject matter is on the life of the individual and the intra-family relations (in the case of *AP* relations between the ascetics) and the form is that of unconnected, short passages. They are both books of ethical and religious instruction. The purpose of Proverbs is stated as follows:

> to know wisdom and instruction, and to perceive words of understanding; to receive also hard saying, and to understand true justice, and how to direct judgement; that he might give subtlety to the simple, and to the young man discernment and understanding. (Prov 1:2–4)

This purpose can be compared to the Prologue of *AP* quoted above. The pursuit of virtues had a central position in Near Eastern wisdom, although the concept is far more developed in Greek tradition.[8]

There is a more specific corpus of which *AP* is a part, that of anthologies of *chreiai* and *sententiae*, that were produced during Antiquity and were often used for didactic purposes. The importance of seeing *AP* as a part of that genre has been explored briefly by Kathleen McVey, and

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[6] *AP*/GS, Prologue, 1: Ἐν τῇδε τῇ βίβλῳ ἀναγέγραπται ἐνάρετος ἄσκησις καὶ θαυμαστὴ βίου διαγωγὴ καὶ ῥήσεις ἁγίων καὶ μακαρίων πατέρων πρὸς ζῆλον καὶ παιδείαν καὶ μίμησιν τῶν τὴν οὐράνιον πολιτείαν ἐθελόντων κατορθοῦν καὶ τὴν εἰς βασιλείαν οὐρανῶν βουλομένων ὁδεύειν ὁδόν. The parallel in *AP*/G is found in PG 65:72a. (Translations of the *apophthegmata* are my own, unless otherwise stated.)

[7] Peter BROWN, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 82.

[8] John J. COLLINS, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (The Old Testament Library; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 162.

more recently and more extensively by Lillian Larsen in her dissertation.[9] The *chreia* or *apophthegma*, was defined in schoolbooks of antiquity as

> a concise statement or action which is attributed with aptness to some specified character or to something analogous to a character. Closely related to the *chreia* are maxim and reminiscence. For every concise maxim, if it is attributed to a character, produces a *chreia*.[10]

Larsen makes a comparison between *AP* and the gnomic compilations that were used in Greek and Roman Antiquity for the purpose of practicing grammar and rhetoric, where the overarching aim was to encourage an imitation of the exemplars depicted there, and to allow the student to incorporate those sayings and stories in their own everyday speech and writing. Larsen makes a strong case that *AP* belongs to that genre and was used for the purposes belonging to that genre.

We need, however, to make a distinction between *AP* as a collection, and the individual sayings that it is made up of. Let us look briefly at the genre of *AP* in terms of (1) structure and content, (2) purpose (or 'illocution'), and (3) sociolinguistic setting.[11]

(1) The structure and content of the collection is much the same as that of gnomic compilations such as the works *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* and *Apophthegmata lakonika* attributed to Plutarch.

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[9] Kathleen MCVEY, "The *Chreia* in the Desert: Rhetoric and the Bible in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*", in *The Early Church in Its Context: Essays in Honour of Everett Ferguson* (ed. A. J. Malherbe, F. W. Norris, and J. W. Thompson; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 245–255; Lillian LARSEN, "Ørkenfedrenes Apophthegmata og den klassiske retoriske tradisjon", *Meddelanden från Collegium Patristicum Lundense* 16 (2001): 26–35; "The Apophthegmata Patrum and the Classical Rhetorical Tradition", in *Studia patristica. Vol. 39. Papers presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies.* (ed. F. Young, M. Edwards and P. Parvis; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 409–416; "Pedagogical Parallels: Re-reading the *Apophthegmata Patrum*" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2006). The connection between monastic collections of sayings, and the collections of sayings in non-Christian traditions has been suggested also earlier, e.g., by William R. SCHOEDEL in "Jewish Wisdom and the Christian Ascetic", in *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. R. L. Wilken; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press 1975), 169–197, esp. 196.

[10] Theon, *Progymnasmata*, 96.19–23. Χρεία ἐστὶ σύντομος ἀπόφασις ἢ πρᾶξις μετ᾽ εὐστοχίας ἀναφερομένη εἴς τι ὡρισμένον πρόσωπον ἢ ἀναλογοῦν προσώπῳ, παράκειται δὲ αὐτῇ γνώμη καὶ ἀπομνημόνευμα· πᾶσα γὰρ γνώμη σύντομος εἰς πρόσωπον ἀναφερομένη χρείαν ποιεῖ. ET by Ronald F. HOCK and Edward N. O'NEIL, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric. Volume 1: The Progymnasmata* (Texts and Translations 27; Graeco-Roman Religion Series 9; Atlanta: SBL, 1986), 83. This is the definition of Theon in his schoolbook on preparatory rhetorical exercises. Other schoolbooks defined it in a similar way.

[11] Cf. the brief but clarifying discussion about the concept of genre in Lars HARTMAN, "Survey of the Problem of Apocalyptic Genre", in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 329–341.

Anecdotes about more or less famous persons are piled one on the other, without a narrative that connects them to each other. They may be arranged so as to make it easier for a reader to find a certain anecdote.[12] The separate parts usually involve a memorable saying or action of the person treated, just as the parts of Plutarch's works just mentioned, and like other such short anecdotes featured in the *Lives* by him and many other compilers, and just as we have seen the schoolbooks defined the literary form of the *chreia*. Such a saying or action could stand on its own, it could be the answer to a question or it could be preceded by a short background sketch. Lillian Larsen has shown that all the types of *chreiai* described in the handbooks on rhetorical exercises are represented in *AP*.[13] The collection as we have it does not, however, consist exclusively of *chreiai*. We find other forms as well, such as tales which the schoolbooks would call *diēgēmata*, much like the short stories which the *Lives* of Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius and others are made up of. There are also hymns and various hybrids of genres and forms in *AP*. But the majority of sayings can be classified as *chreiai* and expansions of *chreiai*.

Just like their non-Christian counterparts, the monastic *apophthegmata* consist of material collected from earlier sources, at least in part. Menander of Laodicea, a rhetorician of the fourth century, recommends *bioi* as a good source for finding *chreiai*.[14] In *AP*, we find this paralleled when *chreiai* (and short tales) are picked out from such sources as the *bioi* of amma Syncletica and of Daniel of Scetis.[15] But other sources, including earlier collections, could be used to produce the *chreia* collections of philosophers,[16] and that is the case in *AP* as well. There are *chreiai* (and short stories) in *AP* which also appear in Cassian's *Institutions*, Diadocus of Photike's *Gnostic Chapters*, Hyperechios' *Adhortatio ad Monachos*, Isaiah

[12] *Apophthegmata lakonika,* attributed to Plutarch, is arranged alphabetically according to whom the saying is ascribed to, just like the *AP*/G.

[13] Larsen, "Pedagogical Parallels", 83–95.

[14] Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 8.

[15] The *apophthegmata* on Daniel of Scetis are not included in *AP*/GS. The ones on amma Syncletica taken from *Vita sanctae Syncleticae* are often given in bulks that combine apophthegmata on her that occur dispersed in other versions of *AP*. The excerpts from her *Vita* come in bulks in the following places in *AP*/GS: IV.49–51, VII.22–25, VIII.24–25, X.101–106, XI.72–75, XIV.17–18. The following are single excerpts: II.27, **III.34**, VI.17, XV.66, **XVIII.28**.

We must be aware, however, that sometimes the influence might have gone the other way. Guy suggests in his introduction to *Apophtegmes des Pères*, that the *bios* on John the Short, written by Zachariah, utilizes some of the *apophthegmata* attributed to him. (p.23).

Note that here, and in the rest of this study, numbering in **bold** indicates that the *apophthegma* is analysed in chapter three, where the *apophthegmata* appear in numerical order.

[16] Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 8–9.

of Scetis' *Asceticon*, John Moschos' *The Spiritual Meadow*, Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca*, the anonymous *Historia Monachorum*, the letters of Ammonas, texts by Evagrius (especially the *Praktikos*), by Mark the Hermit, and others. Of those parallels there can be no doubt, according to Guy, that in the case of Evagrius, Cassian, Mark the Hermit, Hyperechios, and Isaiah of Scetis, the sayings in *AP* are extracts from books attributed to those authors, and not the other way round.[17] Furthermore, Samuel Rubenson has shown that some of the sayings attributed to Antony are extracts from the Letters of Antony and from his *Vita*.[18]

(2) Let us go on to the second aspect of genre, that of the purpose of a text. The purpose of *AP* is stated in the introduction quoted at the beginning of this section. The anecdotes are recorded to "inspire, to instruct, and to be imitated". As already said, this introduction may be a later addition, but as such it says something about how the text was perceived and used, and it does appear to fit well the intention of the compiler(s). Those words can be compared to the programmatic statements that appear in different places of Plutarch's *Lives*, of which the most famous is perhaps that of the introduction to the lives of Aemilius Paulus and Timoleon:

> I began the writing of my "Lives" for the sake of others, but I find that I am continuing the work and delighting in it now for my own sake also, using history as a mirror and endeavouring in a manner to fashion and adorn my life in conformity with the virtues therein depicted. For the result is like nothing else than daily living and associating together, when I receive and welcome each subject of my history in turn as my guest, so to speak, and observe carefully "how large he was and of what mien", and select from his career what is most important and most beautiful to know. "And oh! what greater joy than this can you obtain", and more efficacious for moral improvement.[19]

The text-form of the *chreia* which appears abundantly in such texts is often said, in accord with the etymology of the word, to contain something "useful", which corresponds well to such programmatic statements. It is clear to any reader of *AP* that they have been collected for the purpose of being useful to the reader. Larsen has shown more specifically to what degree *AP* has a similar function as that of other

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[17] See Guy's introduction to *Apophtegmes des Pères*, 23. Cf. also my discussion in the analysis of **XI.60**, and the relationship between that saying and a discourse of Dorotheus of Gaza. Chiara Faraggiana di Sarzana, at the University of Bologna, is presently mapping the dependence of the *apophthegmata* on other texts.

[18] Rubenson, *Letters of St. Antony*, 158–162.

[19] Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus* 1.1–4. ET by Bernadotte Perrin. There are similar statements at the beginning of *Life of Pericles*.

chreia collections: that of providing the readers with ideals that help them become apt members of a community – good citizens in the case of non-monastic collections, good members of a monastery in *AP*. As Larsen puts it: "The illustrious exemplars of *Apophthegmata Patrum* are held up for emulation in behaviour that applies oil to the wheels of life in community."[20]

(3) The third aspect of genre, that of socio-linguistic setting, is a complex one. Generally it can be said that *chreiai* and collections of *chreiai* were popular in connection with philosophical schools, and among those wanting to depict philosophers. They found it to be a very effective and memorable way of characterizing their founders and distinguished forerunners.[21] Now, it is not surprising that emerging monasticism, which was described as the new philosophy,[22] preserved memories of their Elders in the form of the *chreiai*, for instruction and meditation. The setting of *AP* appears to be one where the new kind of philosophers were depicted for didactic purposes for later generations. That *AP* may have played a role in the literary formation of monks in the monastic setting has been suggested by Lillian Larsen.

Before leaving the topic of genre, a connection between the genre and the use of Scripture in *AP* needs to be mentioned. Kathleen McVey has suggested that the Bible was used as a resource for extracting sentences that were part of a *chreia* (and sometimes sentences that were not) that could be inserted into a new, monastic *chreia* which then became a part of the collection that we know as *AP*.[23] We will return to that question at the end of chapter four, under heading 3: "The paraphrase or *chreia* proper".

1.3 Historicity

There has been a scholarly debate about how much *AP* can be used as historical evidence for describing different practices, teachings, lives and personalities of the desert fathers and mothers of the fourth and early

[20] Ibid., 183.

[21] Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric 1*, 3–7.

[22] Cf. G[eoffrey] W. H. LAMPE, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), s.v. φιλόσοφος B. See also Theodoret of Cyrus' *A History of the Monks of Syria*; Peter BROWN, "Asceticism: Pagan and Christian", in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 13 (ed. A. Cameron and P. Garnsey; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 601–631.

[23] McVey, "The *Chreia* in the Desert".

fifth centuries. Some claim that this is the most "primitive" and "authentic" evidence we have. However, most scholars admit on the one hand that some of the material may go back to the historical desert fathers and mothers and a relatively faithful oral transmission of their sayings, and on the other hand that some of it may be later constructs whereby the tradition could legitimize its ideals.[24] Since no-one has given criteria for determining convincingly which sayings are more authentic and which are more or less creative constructs, it is reasonable to treat them all simply as early monastic texts which have had a tremendous reception across geographical areas and over the centuries, and in any case that is all that is necessary for the analysis undertaken here. This approach also makes it unnecessary to distinguish between sayings taken from different sources.[25]

1.4 The Bible used in *AP*

Moving on more specifically to the use of Scripture in *AP*, the only monograph published on this subject so far is Douglas Burton-Christie's

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[24] Graham GOULD, for example, who has a high esteem of *AP* as a historical source, ends up saying rather cautiously in *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community*, 25: "But it is not only with the teaching of the *Apophthegmata* as a text with which we are concerned: it is the probability that narratives of the desert fathers' actions and encounters with one another were accurately transmitted by the tradition which serves to confirm the belief that in looking at the *Apophthegmata* we are looking *not only* at the literary expression of an ideal constructed at a later date, but *to an extent at least*, at a treasured record of the reality, in word and deed, of the life of the monastic communities of Scetis and lower Egypt." (Last two emphases added.) In an earlier article he had warned against using a theory, such as that of Guy, that is too simple for the material when trying to establish which sayings are most authentic, "A Note on the *Apophthegmata Patrum*", *JTS* n.s. 37 (1986): 133–138. He does not offer a less "simple" theory for judging the authenticity of sayings, he merely questions the theory of Guy in order to classify some more sayings as possibly authentic. Samuel Rubenson, who represents a much more critical attitude towards the historical reliability of *AP*, is similarly cautious in *Letters of St. Antony*, 152, when it comes to judging the historical reliability of individual sayings: "That the authenticity of one saying, or the spuriousness of another, cannot be safely established by the analysis of the form, or of the historical situation of the saying, is amply demonstrated by the numerous borrowings from other sources which appear in the sayings."

[25] Among the sayings analysed in chapter three the following have their sources indicated in the edition of Guy: **III.34** and **XVIII.28** (*Vita sanctae Syncleticae*), **IV.60** and **XV.68** (Hyperechios' *Adhortatio ad Monachos*), **VII.59** (Diadocus of Photike's *Gnostic Chapters*), **XIII.2** (Cassian's *Institutions*), and **XV.69** (*Vita prima Pachomii*).

The Word in the Desert.[26] In his study, Burton-Christie is more interested in the "spirituality" of the desert fathers and mothers, and the consequences that has for their biblical hermeneutics ("hermeneutics of the desert"), than in the textual interplay between the sayings and the biblical material. He aims to show that the spirituality of the desert was a "biblical" spirituality. It is in some ways a thematic study of their spirituality which treats the sayings as if they were a coherent unit. Burton-Christie suggests that the lifestyle of the desert fathers and mothers is an expression of their search for holiness, which in turn is inspired by the Bible. This lifestyle then becomes a hermeneutical key for them to understand the Bible. He claims to find in *AP* both the lifestyle and the biblical interpretation of the actual historical persons.[27] The problem of whether *AP* is a reliable source to the history of the desert fathers and mothers themselves is not dealt with.

This is very different from the present study which is more concerned with the interaction between the biblical material and each individual saying.

When it comes to deciding which passages are to be determined as scriptural quotations or allusions, Burton-Christie notes that there is a great difference in how many of those have been identified by different translators of the alphabetical collection, Benedicta Ward's English translation counting only 93 and Luciana Mortari's Italian translation counting several hundred.[28] However, he does not try to find a way to delimit the passages that can be said to be actual references to the Bible.

In a text saturated with biblical language it is, of course, impossible to determine the exact number of instances where biblical material is used in some way. But that is no excuse for failing to indicate criteria for determining which passages to consider when analysing the use of Scripture. Otherwise the selection risks becoming not only arbitrary but also obscure to the reader. I will present my criteria under the heading "Method".

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[26] Douglas BURTON-CHRISTIE, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[27] See Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 18–23.

[28] Burton-Christie's claim in *Word in the Desert*, 96, that Mortari cites 832 biblical quotations in her translation, is a mistake which has been reproduced by other scholars. This is in fact a count of the references in the biblical index of Mortari's translation. They include all those references which occur in her lengthy notes, i.e., many times they are references which underlie her comments, not references connected directly with the *apophthegmata*. The correct number of the references cited by Mortari in connection with the actual text of *AP* is 485, mentioned also by herself in the introduction to her translation. Luciana MORTARI, ed., *Vita e detti dei padri del deserto* (3d ed.; Roma: Città Nuova, 1990; repr. 1997), 39.

The history of the collection is so complicated that one would expect the sayings to follow various different textual traditions of the LXX and the NT. That is exactly what we find: different sayings follow different manuscript traditions and versions. Some examples will be seen in the analyses in chapter three.[29] There is however a tendency towards using the Byzantine form of the New Testament. This is also only to be expected, since the Greek *AP* were kept and transmitted over the centuries in settings where that was the predominant textual tradition.

Our understanding of the use of Scripture in *AP* does to some degree depend on whether we imagine the sayings to be produced and written by someone who had access to a physical Bible, or if the sayings were produced by people who quoted Scripture from memory. We cannot easily resolve that question, for several reasons. The sayings probably had very different origins, some being taken from other books, some possibly being produced at a very late stage and some possibly going back to the historical desert fathers and mothers. Added to this, there is the transmission and redaction of the text to be taken into account. And we should not imagine that just because people had access to a Bible, they would necessarily consult the wording in it before quoting it.

2. Method

2.1 Previous Research

2.1.1 Research on Biblical Interpretation in Early Christianity

Two general works on the early Christian use of Scripture are particularly relevant for the present study. First I shall give a short presentation of them, then I shall discuss relevant categories used in those works.

[29] See especially **III.43**, **X.67**, **X.116**, **XIII.2**.

One is a work on how asceticism was promoted through biblical interpretation: *Reading Renunciation. Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity*, by Elizabeth A. Clark.[30] The title signals that the book may be extremely relevant for the present study. However, the asceticism and renunciation explored is exclusively that of *sexual* renunciation, and *AP* is not treated at all. However, the approach of trying to discern "exegetical and rhetorical strategies for ascetic reading" results in categories of which some are of value when trying to describe the use of Scripture in *AP*.

Another work which has bearing on the method employed here, is *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* by Frances M. Young—an important study on how patristic biblical exegesis was influenced by the late ancient educational system and literary culture.[31] Young's general approach of seeing biblical interpretation in the light of the general culture of Late Antiquity, and the categories she has produced to describe that interpretation, will be of importance here.

Elizabeth A. Clark

The section of *Reading Renunciation* which is most relevant for the present study is the chapter on "Exegetical and rhetorical strategies for ascetic reading", where Clark lists eleven "modes of reading" Scripture, often employed by the church fathers to produce ascetic meaning. The following are useful for the present study.

1) Reading texts at face-value.

2) "Close reading" of problematic texts, for example by focusing on details.

3) Intertextual exegesis, by which Clark means the combination of different biblical texts to convey a certain point.

4)"Talking back"—using a biblical passage to argue against another.[32]

Other categories of hers will not be used, either because of the difference between the texts she has studied and *AP*, or because her

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[30] Elizabeth A. CLARK, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[31] Frances M. YOUNG, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[32] Clark refers mostly to the act of answering an argument which is motivated with a biblical passage, by quoting another biblical passage. An exception is when she refers to the practise of answering demons and "thoughts" in general with a biblical passage. Notably, she refers extensively to Evagrius' use of Scripture as a weapon against demons in *Antirrheticus*. These "debate partners" do not always make use of the Bible themselves. I will use the term only for the first type: answering an argument which is motivated with a biblical passage, by quoting another biblical passage.

category does not seem to do justice to the phenomena she describes. They are: "Ascetic translation", "Textual implosion", "Changing context", "Changing the audience", "Changing sex: gender-bending", "The hierarchy of voice", and "The difference in time".[33]

A major difference between Clark's categories and my own is that she focuses on dissecting "the interpretive devices that were employed to create ascetic meaning" (p. 11) in order to support an "axiology of abstinence" (p. 13) in a great number of ascetic texts, while I focus on how the biblical texts interact with the message of the saying in question, whatever that message might be, and in a very limited text corpus.

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[33] "Ascetic translation" is not relevant for our purposes, since it is concerned with shifts of meaning when translating the Bible from Greek to Latin.

"Textual implosion" appears to be the least developed of these categories. Clark uses the term "implosions" in two different ways. One way is to let the term denote any interpretation where "seemingly irrelevant verses" are read as pertaining to sexuality and renunciation (pp. 132–133, 163, 168, 348, 351). This can involve using a biblical principle which is reapplied in a completely different area, or appealing to particular biblical words which are taken metaphorically (p. 348). But the term is also used for a more specific exegetical technique: interpretations which assume that a biblical passage which appears to be irrelevant for discussions on sexual renunciation should be understood as saying something about that subject, when that is the subject of the surrounding texts in the Bible. The passage "implodes" into that surrounding topic (pp. 133, 300, 302). Using the same, rather vague, term for both a general phenomenon of patristic exegesis, and for a specific exegetical technique risks confusing as much as it clarifies.

"Changing context", involving decontextualizing the biblical text and applying it to an ascetical context, is a category which bypasses the fact that the context of all Bible texts is that of a *text*: the Bible. All readings of the Bible as Scripture involve contextualizing the Bible to some degree.

"Changing the audience" in fact consists of two subcategories, although this is never stated explicitly. It includes answering the question who the protagonists in the text were, and asking who the text was intended for. The question of who the speaker in 1 Cor 7:1 is (p. 136), and the phenomenon of suggesting that a biblical passage is intended specifically for monks (p. 138) are two very different issues, not belonging to the same category. Perhaps it is better to see her examples in terms of how the reference of the Bible text is changed.

"Changing sex – gender-bending" is a category which seems to be an anachronistic way of describing uses that could just as well, if not better, be explained by the ancient reader being less inclined to read texts in gender terms than we are. An example of this is Clark's description of Basil of Caesarea's use of the Parable of the Prodigal Son when speaking, in letter 46, of a female virgin who had "fallen". He comments that she, like the prodigal son, should return home, where the father will welcome her, exclaiming, "This was my daughter who was dead and come to life." For Clark, this is an example of "gender-bending" (p. 139).

"The hierarchy of voice", i.e., considering who uttered a verse, how it was said and with what authority could promote a priority of certain texts over others. This does not appear in *AP*.

"The difference in times", whereby the church fathers could explain away Old Testament passages that did not suit their purposes, is not a technique that is used in *AP*.

Clark limits her study to showing the link between scriptural exegesis and the promotion of sexual renunciation. In this regard, her work is very helpful. But when it comes to discerning the different ways in which the biblical material interacts with an ascetical text such as *AP*, her categories do not suffice.

Frances M. Young

Frances Young's *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* provides important keys for the understanding of the use of Scripture in Early Christianity. One of her concerns is to question the traditional division of 'literal', 'typological', and 'allegorical' interpretations of the Bible in early Christianity. Although those terms are more applicable to exegetical techniques than to the actual use of Scripture, they also have bearing on the questions of this study since some exegetical or interpretational activity underlies every use of Scripture, whether consciously or not.

First a few comments on the concept of allegory. The verb ἀλληγορεῖν has ἄλλος and ἀγορεύειν as its components, i.e. to speak otherwise, to say other things. This etymology coincides with a wide definition of the verb, which has often been used throughout history, i.e., to denote when one thing is said and another is signified. This appears to be the way Paul uses the participle of the verb in Gal 4:24.[34]

Such a definition is far too wide to be useful as an analytical tool. [35] On the other hand, we should not apply the developed theories about allegorical interpretation of the Middle Ages on texts which predate those definitions. A useful way to use the term is the way in which David Dawson, together with ancient rhetoricians, defines it: an "extended" metaphor, that is, a metaphor that has been stretched into a narrative.[36] That definition will be used in this study.

In patristic studies of texts from Late Antiquity, the terms literal, allegorical and typological have often been treated in a rather haphazard way. The two latter terms have been used to contrast two methods of conducting figural reading, typology being associated with the Antiochene 'school' of exegetes and allegedly based on an exegesis founded

[34] For the history of the term 'allegory', see Jon Whitman, *Allegory: The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 263–268.

[35] As Young states in *Biblical Exegesis*, 191, "all reading of texts which involves entering the text-world, appropriating the perspective of the text, or reading ourselves into the text, is in some sense allegorical."

[36] David DAWSON, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 6.

on historical concerns, and allegory being connected to the Alexandrian 'school' and based on an exegesis guided by philosophical rather than historical questions.[37] This rather simplified dichotomy has been contested by Frances Young, among others, in a number of articles and books.[38] She has made clear that the two schools of exegesis were both based on the rhetorical practices of the educational system of that time. The difference and the opposition between the two schools should be seen in terms of philosophy: the Alexandrian school was concerned with this peak of the educational system, whereas the Antiochene school was not.

This clarification gives a better understanding of many of the technical terms used by these schools, an understanding which helps us see the debates in the light of that time rather than in anachronistic perspectives based on present concerns. This is quite apparent when it comes to the term 'history'. In an attempt to place a part of patristic exegesis within the field circumscribed by historico-critical exegesis, Antiochene exegetes were, by twentieth-century theologians, supposed to have conducted interpretation based on "historical" concerns, and to have stated this themselves explicitly in the debates with Alexandrians. But if we see how the term *historia* is actually used in these texts, it becomes clear that it is in the sense that the word had in the context of the rhetorical schools, where *to methodikon* and *to historikon* were the two main categories of ancient literary criticism. The first term was concerned with the preliminary linguistic analysis of a text. *To historikon* and *hê historia* of literary criticism was not primarily concerned with what we would call historical questions, but rather with all kinds of knowledge acquired by investigations into the background of the text, explaining stories and unravelling allusions, all sorts of information about the

[37] See G[eoffrey] W. H. LAMPE and K. J. WOOLCOMBE, *Essays in Typology* (Studies in Biblical Theology 22; London: SCM, 1957); R[ichard] P. C. HANSON, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London: SCM, 1959). Much of the work on patristic exegesis that followed was based on these two accounts when it comes to the description of Antiochene and Alexandrian exegesis.

[38] "The Rhetorical Schools and their Influence on Patristic Exegesis", in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (ed. R. Williams; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); "Panegyric and the Bible", in *Studia patristica. Vol. 25.* (ed. E. Livingstone; Leuven: Peeters, 1993); "Allegory and the Ethics of Reading", in *The Open Text: New Directions for Biblical Studies?* (ed. F. Watson; London: SPCK, 1993); "Typology", in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. S. E. Porter, P. Joyce and D. E. Orton; Leiden: Brill, 1994); *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), the latter work being largely a compilation of the former articles.

elements, actions and characters of the text.[39] According to D. A. Russell, ancient literary criticism did not have a real historical focus, in our sense of the word, but in a way, everything was concerned with the notion of *mimesis*.[40] This concept included such imitations as the imitation of a person's way of speaking when telling about that person, the imitation of an earlier work or a generalising or idealising of objects perceived in life. The reader, listener or spectator can thus recognise features common to the depiction and the depicted, i.e., we may learn by imitation and we enjoy recognizing.

As Young points out, much of the misconceptions of Christian exegesis in Late Antiquity has probably been caused by such anachronistic preconceptions as that of the meaning of the term *to historikon*. The sharp distinction between typology and allegory seems to have been motivated by twentieth-century concern with questions of historicity. Young demonstrates other ancient terminology, such as *mimesis*, to be a more nuanced way of describing methods of scriptural interpretation and use in late antiquity, what she calls "reading strategies". These were employed by Antiochenes and Alexandrians alike. The difference lay rather in the way one should understand the "mimetic" relationship of text to reality: Alexandrians could treat details in the biblical stories as individual tokens pointing to spiritual realities, whereas Antiochenes were concerned to preserve the *historia*, the integrity of the story, even as they expanded on its mimetic implications.

Before looking at her categories, it should be mentioned that there is a certain problem with the use of the terminology of "reading strategies", a concept which has developed especially in the educational system (mainly American) during the last decades of the twentieth century. In that context it often denotes conscious methods.[41] Reading strategies constitute a certain approach to the text, a way of extracting meaning by treating the text from a certain perspective. We can, for example, try to describe the reading strategies that Origen speaks of in *De Principiis*

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[39] See Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, esp. p. 87.

[40] See D[onald] A. RUSSELL, *Criticism in Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 1981), esp. pp. 168–171.

[41] The researchers on reading, S. G. Paris et al., contrast reading strategies and unconscious, automatic reading skills. They define reading strategies thus: "actions selected deliberately to achieve particular goals. An emerging skill can become a strategy when it is used intentionally. […] Because they are conscious and deliberate, strategies are open to inspection; they can be evaluated for their utility, effort, and appropriateness privately and publicly." S. G. PARIS, B. H. WASIK and J. C. TURNER, "The Development of Strategic Readers", in *Handbook of Reading Research,* vol. 2 (ed. R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, and P. D. Pearson; New York: 1991), 609–640; quotation from p. 610–611.

when he describes how to interpret the Bible. However, describing a concrete use of Scripture in a text in terms of "reading strategies" is more problematic. It gives the impression of being an attempt at getting behind the reading process of the author of a text. Verbalising the reading strategy of a person is a matter of making conscious the limited nature of a certain understanding of a text, something which can be difficult enough even when one has the privilege of being able to interview the author. A further difficulty is the fact that a person's description or use of a text may not be the same as that person's understanding of a text. For rhetorical or other reasons, authors may choose to limit the scope of the quoted/alluded text more than they have done in the reading-process.

Just as the wide range of semantic potential of a text can be limited and thus actualised by using a certain reading skill or reading strategy, the understanding of a text can be limited by relating it to a certain context. This latter perspective is a more reasonable one when looking at ancient texts, for reasons already mentioned. To me this seems to be the perspective of Young too, and for that reason the term "reading strategies" is somewhat misleading. Whenever applicable, Young's categories will be used in this study, which does not attempt to describe the reading strategies of a certain person or group, but aims at describing how the new context in which the biblical text is placed, limits the semantic potentials of that Bible text and brings certain potentials to the fore.

The "strategies" proposed by Young as keys to exegetical practices, will prove to be helpful when attempting to describe how the biblical text is integrated in the teachings of *AP*. Her classification, with some comments added, is as follows:[42]

> 1) Paraenetic reading: using the Bible to produce texts for moral teaching, whether at face value or symbolically. This contextualization is involved in almost all uses of the Bible in *AP.*
> 2) Oracular exegesis: treating biblical texts as collections of oracles, riddles to be interpreted in order to understand the reference and discover the prophetic prediction. I will sometimes call it a proverb-like use of the Bible.
> 3) Lexical analysis (see above on *to methodikon*).
> 4) Explanatory comment (see above on *to historikon*). This concerns problems in the text (problems of coherence are often concerned

[42] Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 212.

with doctrine according to Young), and details that need to be explained.
5) Deductive expansion: using reason to figure out implications of a text, sometimes by comparing different texts, or through etymology and number symbolism. This was seen as a rationalistic form of exegesis.
6) Mimetic reading, which assumes that there is a correspondence between the text and the reality of the reader, like a replay of a drama

a) for exemplary paraenesis: biblical figures to be imitated for ethical reasons.
b) to provide prophetic "types": e.g., types of Christ in the OT.
c) to see how the text mirrors reality "ikonically": preserving a genuine connection between what the text says and the spiritual meaning discerned through contemplation of the text (mainly Antiochene).
d) to uncover the underlying truth symbolically: the elements of the text are seen as tokens to be understood, without a clear connection between the text as a whole and the figural reference (mainly Alexandrian). This would be employed especially when there appeared to be an impossibility in a text.

The last category, that of symbolic *mimesis*, is very obvious in such allegorical lists as that of the anonymous seventh century Papyrus Michigan Inv. 3718[43] and Ps.-Athanasius' *Quaestiones in scripturam sacram*.

2.1.2 Research on the Use of Scripture in AP

J.-P. Lemaire, in an unpublished licentiate thesis on the Scriptures and abba Poimen, briefly analyses all of the sayings attributed to Poimen in *AP*/G, *AP*/GN, the Ethiopian collection, the Latin systematic collection and the minor Latin collections of Paschasius and of Martinus Dumiensis. After the brief analyses of around 100 sayings, covering 85 pages, he systematizes his findings under the headings "La Bible comme livre", "La Bible comme autorité" and "La Bible comme inspiration". He calls his last part "Conclusion generale: parole humaine et Parole de

[43] ET in Froelich, *Biblical Interpretation*, 79–89.

Dieu", which ends up in the sentence: "[Poemen et Saint Antoine] qui marquent le début et l'apogée de la vie monastique au désert ont été avec les autres Saints Pères les artisans de ' L'Evangile du désert ', Evangile authentique de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ, écouté et vécu par des humbles de coeur."[44] That quotation gives something of the flavour of his work, which is often more edifying than historical or text-oriented. However, many of his analyses are interesting and will be used and referred to whenever relevant. His criteria for selecting the sayings are more distinct than those of Burton-Christie. The analysis has as its subject matter "tous les apophtegmes de Poemen qui citent explicitement la Sainte Ecriture ou s'en inspirent certainement."[45] Often it is obvious when a saying "explicitly quotes" Scriptures, but it is not easy to say "with certainty" which ones are inspired by them, and this is not specified by Lemaire.

Jeremy Driscoll has written an article which partly builds on the work of Lemaire.[46] He does not supply us with categories for determining which texts make use of the Bible, but that is not a problem in his article, since his claim is to supply us with only a few examples to show us some of the exegetical procedures at work in the sayings of Poimen, or "What steps and what 'logic' are operative to permit a given interpretation and application of a scriptural text?" [47] This kind of analysis of the use will be part of the present study. In that sense Driscoll's article partly overlaps this study. His analyses are often profound when it comes to showing the mechanisms at work in interpretations of biblical texts. The material in his brief article is however restricted to only nine sayings of abba Poimen.[48]

Several minor articles on the use and interpretation of Scripture in *AP* have been published, most of them treating the details of the use of Scripture only in passing.[49] One early article has influenced subsequent

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[44] Jean-Philippe LEMAIRE, "L'abbé Poemen et la Sainte Ecriture" (unpublished licentiate thesis, Université de Fribourg, 1971), 113.

[45] Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 7 bis.

[46] Jeremy DRISCOLL, "Exegetical Procedures in the Desert Monk Poemen", in *Mysterium Christi: Symbolgegenwart und theologische Bedeutung* (ed. M. Löhrer and E. Salmann; Studia Anselmiana 116; Rome: Centro Studi S. Anselmo, 1995), 155–178.

[47] Driscoll, "Exegetical Procedures", 157.

[48] Two of the sayings analysed by Driscoll occur in chapter three of the present study: **III.28** (Poimen 50) and **IV.32** (Poimen 16).

[49] Fairy VON LILIENFELD, "Jesus-Logion und Väterspruch: Die synoptische Jesus-Reden in der Auslegung der Agroikoi der ägyptischen Wüste nach den Apophthegmata patrum, " in *Beiträge aus der byzantinistischen Forschung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zum XIII. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongress in Oxford 1966* (Studia Byzantina 2; Halle: Martin-Luther-Univ., 1966), 169–183; Fairy VON LILIENFELD, "Paulus-Zitate und paulinische

studies: Hermann Dörries' "Die Bibel im ältesten Mönchtum".[50] His main concern, however is the relationship between the charismatic teaching of the Elders and the authority of the Bible. That question is not relevant to the present study.

2.2 Purpose and Procedure of the Present Study

2.2.1 Purpose and Analyses

The purpose of the present study is to describe *how the Bible text is contextualized*, i.e., *how the text is integrated with the teachings and ideals expressed in the saying of which it is a part*. This could also be said to be an analysis of how the semantic potential of the Bible text is realized. It will be seen that this is done in a great number of ways.

To uncover the ways in which the Bible is contextualized, a number of questions will be posed in the analyses of sayings: What is the problem dealt with in the saying, what is the thesis, and which are the arguments supporting it? Secondly, those questions that explore the use of the Bible more explicitly: What is the function of the Bible in the saying? Through what techniques and perspectives is the text of the Bible connected to a specific referent? How has the biblical material been altered?

Throughout this study the word 'referent' denotes that which the sayings let the biblical passages refer to, usually practices, values and persons which were a part of the reading community's common experience. Biblical figures represent virtues and vices central to the life

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Gedanken in den Apophthegmata Patrum", in *Studia Evangelica Vol. 5: Papers presented to the Third International Congress on New Testament Studies, held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1965, Part II, The New Testament Message* (ed. F. L. Cross; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 286–295; Louis LELOIR, "La Bible et les Pères du Désert", in *La Bible et Les Pères: Colloque de Strasbourg 1–3 octobre 1969* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), 113–134; Lucien REGNAULT, "The Beatitudes of the Apophthegmata Patrum", *Eastern Churches Review* 6 (1974): 22–43 ; Paul M. BLOWERS, "The Bible and Spiritual Doctrine: Some Controversies within the Early Eastern Christian Ascetic Tradition", in *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity* (ed. P. M. Blowers; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 229–255; Douglas BURTON-CHRISTIE, "Oral Culture, Biblical Interpretation, and Spirituality in Early Christian Monasticism", in *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity* (ed. P. M. Blowers; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 415–440.

[50] Hermann DÖRRIES, "Die Bibel im ältesten Mönchtum," *TLZ* 72 (1947): 215–222.

and teaching of early monasticism, biblical narratives shed light on such questions as the perils of power for a monk, the place of the Eucharist in his life, the balance between his practical work and contemplation, or between fasting and hospitality. Stories and teachings from the Bible are used to say something about the difficulties and joy of approaching God, about fighting distracting thoughts and demons, about how to relate to one's brother or Elder, about the teaching of compunction, solitude or fasting. An exceptional abba is sometimes described using a biblical counterpart. The Bible may also be used to simply point out a geographical position. In short, the Bible is normally used to say something about central aspects of the common experience of early monasticism. Only very rarely is the Bible used to say anything directly about God, in which case it is normally about God's love and God's forgiveness.

Categories that will be used to analyse the techniques of relating the Bible to that monastic context are partly those of Clark and Young mentioned above, but they are complemented by new ones whenever the texts call for new categories.[51]

The interest is not so much on the originality of the use of the Bible in *AP*, or possible influences. Comparative material will only be used in the analyses when the meaning of the saying is very unclear or in some way enigmatic. In those cases, parallels will be searched for mainly in other early monastic texts, especially in the letters of Barsanuphius and John and the writings of Dorotheus of Gaza. Those texts were also composed in the region of Gaza at roughly the same time as the first collections of *AP* were compiled,[52] and parallel uses of Scripture may shed light on obscure uses of biblical material in *AP*.

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[51] The different kinds of terminology connected specifically to theorists of intertextuality will not be employed in this study. One reason is that Julia KRISTEVA, the scholar who coined the term 'intertextuality' and whose work is the basis for much of the theory employing intertextuality which has followed, herself claims that it is at the end of the nineteenth century that "the problem of intertextuality (intertextual dialogue) appears as such." *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Litterature and Art.* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1980), 71. However, the proliferation within modern scholarship of concepts such as "dialogic" and "polyphonic" (Bakhtin), "hypertext and hypotext" (Genette) and the use of the word "text" as the meaning generated by intertextual relationships, has put its marks also on the present study. For an introduction to theorists on intertextuality, see Graham ALLEN, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[52] See p. 96 for references on the time and place of composition of *AP*.

2.2.2 Selection of Sayings

As part of the present study, all of the sayings in *AP*/GS have been searched for biblical quotations, paraphrases, allusions and other biblical uses. The results are printed in an Appendix.[53]

Since the collections are permeated by biblical quotations, allusions and biblical language, the text as a whole can be said to make use of Scripture. A choice has to be made about which individual sayings to study, and such a choice can be made using more or less explicit criteria. In this study the selection of sayings studied is limited to those that use the Bible in a way where it is obvious that it is the Bible as text that is being referred to, not just a general Christian discourse using biblical language and ideas. To distinguish which uses of the Bible should be treated as obvious ones, criteria have to be defined. To make my selection transparent to the reader, I have made a taxonomy to distinguish in what way a Bible text is indicated. These distinctions are the basis for choosing which texts to treat in the analysis.

Before presenting my taxonomy, definitions must be given for what marks a 'quotation' a 'paraphrase', and an 'allusion'.

In his study on Paul's use and understanding of Scripture, Dietrich-Alex Koch gives useful definitions of the categories 'quotation', 'paraphrase', 'allusion', and 'use of biblical language'. A quotation is defined by him thus:

> Ein Zitat stellt die bewusste Übernahme einer fremden schriftlichen (seltener: mündlichen) Formulierung dar, die von einem Verfasser in seiner eigenen Schrift reproduziert wird und als solche erkennbar ist. […] Ein Zitat erfüllt seine Funktion nur, wenn der Verfasser damit rechnen kann, dass der Zitatcharakter des übernommenen Wortlauts dem Leser deutlich ist. Das eindeutigste Mittel zur Kennzeichnung eines Zitats war sowohl in der jüdischen wie in der hellenistischen Literatur die Verwendung klar erkennbarer Einleitungsformulierungen.[54]

He divides this category into two main groups: those with a clear introductory formula, and those without one.

'Paraphrase' is defined as "die freie Wiedergaben eines fremden Textes", used to avoid massive quotations, or to allow the text to be transmitted according to the purpose of the author. He also points out that there are overlaps between this category and the former one, and that a quotation may be inserted in a paraphrase to stress a certain

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[53] Page 225 ff.

[54] Dietrich-Alex KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), 11–12.

point.[55] This category of Koch's covers a gap which is found in the categorizations in the works of some other scholars. Since the category fits many of the uses of Scripture in *AP*, it will be used in the present study.

The term 'allusion' will not be used in the way it is used by many NT scholars, i.e., as "a play upon words, a word-play, a pun", which is an obsolete sense of the word and far too restricted to be a useful term in this study.[56] Instead it will be used in the modern sense of the word, as "a covert, implied or indirect reference; a passing or incidental reference".[57]

The first two categories (quotation and paraphrase) will be treated as a distinct use of the Bible as a written text. All sayings with biblical usage falling within those categories will be treated in this study. In addition, allusions will be treated when they are sufficiently distinct. The presence of an indicator of quotation, paraphrase or allusion, such as "as it is written", or the presence of a proper name or something like it, gives such distinctness to the allusion.

We are now in a position to list the different ways of using biblical texts, in terms of how distinct that usage is:

1. Quotation (see the definition above)
    a) with an indicator of biblical quotation (e.g., "*as it is written* "),
    b) without such an indicator of biblical quotation, but with a high percentage of identical wording which is distinctly biblical, and longer than just a phrase of two or three words,
    c) with an indicator of liturgical quotation which indirectly indicates a biblical quotation (e.g., "*… so that you may be able to say*: 'Forgive us our trespasses …' " [58]).

When a quotation is modified to fit syntactically into the sentence in which it is placed, the sign "M" is used in the appendix. When there is a greater difference between the quotation and the wording of the NT, the sign "D" is used.

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[55] Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 15–17.

[56] Most clearly in Kenneth BERDING, *Polycarp and Paul: An Analysis of their Literary & Theological Relationship in Light of Polycarp's Use of Biblical & Extra-Biblical Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 31–32.

[57] *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2d ed., prepared by J[ohn] A. Simpson and E[va] C. C. Weimer; Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

[58] *AP*/GS XVII.16

2. Paraphrase (see definition above), where a text (a narrative or a statement) is freely retold, not using the biblical wording, but making it clear that it is a specific Bible passage which is indicated,

a) with an indicator of biblical paraphrase (e.g. "… *as was promised through the prophet Isaiah*"[59]),

b) without such an indicator.

A paraphrase may include a biblical quotation, typically in the form of direct speech.[60]

3. Allusion (see definition above) making use of a proper noun, or a distinctly biblical concept, which clearly indicates a biblical event, monologue or dialogue without describing it (e.g., "the words of the tax-collector"[61])

a) with an indicator of biblical allusion (e.g., "*Scripture says*…"[62]),

b) without such an indicator

4. Less clear use of the Bible:

a) Allusion to biblical texts made by choosing words or structures from a specific Bible text which extends to more than a mere concept, without using the types described in 1, 2 or 3.[63]

b) Vague allusions through some biblical concept or metaphor (e.g., the "King's Highway")[64],

- that has to be understood in its biblical sense/ context if the saying is to make sense,

-that does not have to be understood in its biblical context if the saying is to make sense.

c) Other types: biblical ideas, patterns, expressions, concepts which are inspired by the Bible (e.g., "You have heard … but I tell you."[65]).

There are three sayings with indicators of biblical quotation, paraphrase or allusion where I have not been able to find the source in the Bible.[66]

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[59] XVIII.26

[60] E.g. **XI.60**.

[61] X.20.

[62] **I.18**

[63] This can work as a clear reference when in the same saying there is a quotation or clear reference which indicates to the reader that we are dealing with biblical material. This applies especially in those cases where two (or more) Bible texts referred to in the same saying, can somehow be connected to each other because of the subject matter or because they appear very close to each other in the Bible.

[64] VII.5.

[65] IX.22.

[66] (1) IV.102.4 where an Elder declares that the Saviour has said: Γίνεσθε δόκιμοι τραπεζῖται ("Become approved money-changers."). This is a well-attested *agraphon*

The types above are presented in descending order of obviousness, where the first type most clearly and distinctly indicates a specific text in the Bible, and the last type is very unclear in that sense. I would suggest that it is only the first three types that indicate the biblical text in a way which is clear enough to establish it as indicating a specific biblical *text*, as opposed to a use of general Christian or "biblical" ideas, whether we speak of the understanding of a reader, the intention of the author or the nature of the text. Therefore, in my analysis, I will deal only with sayings employing these three types. The other types of uses of biblical material, sometimes called "echoes", will only be treated when they appear in a saying which *also* contains type 1, 2 or 3. The reason for treating those occurrences is that a reader can be expected to be "tuned in" on intertextual relations to the Bible when reading a saying which also includes a more obvious biblical link, at least when the unclear one appears in very close connection to the clear one/s.

In some studies there may be a point in finding as much biblical material as possible. One would then include several very uncertain allusions, echoes and reminiscences. In this study, the taxonomy of indicators is used to make the study more transparent for the reader, ensuring that the reader does not have to depend on the implicit judgment of the author when it comes to the selection of sayings analysed. All sayings that use biblical texts in a way which is clear enough to establish the presence of a planned biblical quotation, paraphrase or allusion will be considered in chapter four. A selection of those sayings

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covered by Alfred RESCH in *Agrapha: Aussercanonische Schriftfragmente. (*TUGAL 2/15.3–4; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906), 112–128, agraphon 87.

(2) XI.51.32–33: After an introductory phrase and two verbatim biblical quotations (καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἀποστόλου … τό τε … καὶ τὸ …) comes what should have been a third biblical quotation: καὶ τὸ «Προσέχε σεαυτῷ ἵνα προσέχῃς Θεῷ.» That exact phrase occurs also in a homily by Basil, *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi*. 8, 37 line 14–15. Similar phrases can be found in Barsanuphius and John, *Questiones et responsiones,* 237.42,46, 269.38 and 512.21. The only places in the Bible I have found that remind of this are Ex 23:21 and possibly Gen 24:6–8.

(3) XI.75.3–4: θάλασσα γὰρ ὁ βίος ἡμῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἱεροψάλτου Δαυὶδ εἴρηται, which could possibly be an allusion to Ps 106:23–30. There is a similar expression in Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in Psalmos,* in a comment on the versions of Theodotion and Symmachus of Ps 95:11: Ἅπας γὰρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὁ βίος, ὁ τὴν θαλαττίαν μιμούμενος ζάλην, (PG 80.1649.20–21). Also in Origen, *Scholia in Matthaeum,* in a comment on Matt 13:47: Θάλασσα [ἐστὶν] ὁ τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίος (PG 17:297).

There is a fourth saying which, however, does not have a clear indicator of reference: XV.11.7 where Jacob is said to have had an angelic face. There is a parallel to this in a Sermon by Ephraem Graecus, *Sermo in pulcherrimum Ioseph*, 299.4–5, where Joseph asks Jacob to come and show him the angelic face (τὸ ἀγγελικὸν πρόσωπον) of his old age.

are analysed in depth in chapter three. It should be stressed that this is not to downplay the importance of less distinct allusions and echoes in the reader's production of meaning. Such allusions and echoes will also be considered, but only when they appear in one of the sayings selected.

3. Summary of Selection and Mode of Procedure

The study is limited to the Greek systematic collection of *AP*. The Appendix included at the end of the study lists all the sayings that have been found to contain quotations, paraphrases, allusions and echoes from the Bible. Of the 1,190 sayings in *AP*/GS, all of the 155 sayings which clearly use the Bible are treated in the following chapters. Of those 155 sayings, 32 are selected as of special interest and analysed in depth in chapter three, as indicated above.

Those 32 sayings have been selected to be representative of the group of 155 sayings which use the Bible in a way which corresponds to the first three categories in my taxonomy of reference. They have been selected from the group of 155 on the following grounds: (1) Together they illustrate the most important varieties of using the Bible. (2) The selection reflects which biblical books are used in the systematic collection as a whole. (3) The number of sayings analysed from each chapter are roughly proportional to the number of sayings that have biblical material in that chapter. (4) They are well established in the text tradition.[67]

Having made the selection in this way, we avoid unnecessary repetition and yet we get a cross-section of sayings, showing all the important ways in which the Bible is used.

After the chapter containing the analyses, there will be a synthesising chapter. The wide range of techniques employed in the 155 sayings will be categorized from two different perspectives: that of how the Bible is

[67] In the selection of chapter three, this has been ensured by choosing only sayings which are attested in at least three of the MSS used for the critical text of Guy. Furthermore, the selected sayings all appear in the oldest MS, Athous Protaton 86 (Y), from the ninth century, except for chapters I–V.4, which are missing in Y. This MS is not only the oldest but also the most complete of the two MSS representing what Guy claims to be the oldest stage of the GS of which we have extant Greek MSS, "l'état b[1]".

integrated and that of what function the Bible has in the saying. Finally we will return to the question of *AP* as a *chreia* collection, and what bearing that has on how we understand the use of Scripture in *AP*.

Chapter Three

Analyses of Sayings

Introduction

In this chapter a number of sayings will be examined to demonstrate the different ways in which the sayings relate biblical texts to the teachings and to the concrete situation of the readers of them.[1] First a small sample of simpler uses of Scripture will be given. Such use will be part of the systematic treatment in chapter four. However, to unravel also more complex uses of Scripture, sayings engaging in several techniques at once or in less straight-forward techniques will be the main object of the present chapter. For each one of those more complex sayings, the analysis will start from the Greek text and a translation and a description of the structure. The layout of the text and the translation indicate the basic structure of the text. Since the structure is often simple, the method of structuring the text in this way is simple. Unless otherwise stated, indentions indicate the different narrative levels (i.e., diegetic levels in the jargon of narratology) and explanations of quoted texts from the Bible. They can also be used to indicate structural parallelisms. After the text and translation the structure is described briefly. Then follows a further description of the biblical material that is being used: what is the

[1] Whenever the "readers" of *AP* are mentioned in this study, this refers to the early readers (and listeners) of *AP*, i.e., readers who were immersed in the vocabulary, discourse and practices of the Christian monastic movement of the sixth and seventh centuries. They can be said to correspond to the implicit readers too, since a knowledge of the vocabulary, discourse and practices is normally taken for granted in the sayings.

context in the Bible, and how does it come out in the saying? After these initial steps, we will be in a better position to describe how the text of the Bible is being appropriated. In the words of Jeremy Driscoll, we will be looking at "what steps and what 'logic' are operative to permit a given interpretation and application of a scriptural text".[2] Each analysis is concluded by a summary of the ways in which the Bible is integrated in the specific saying, and what function the biblical material has in the teaching and the argument of the saying. These techniques and functions will then be discussed in a more systematic manner in chapter four.

Any analysis will create a distance to the text being analysed. I am obviously not saying that the way I describe the use of Scripture is the way the compilers or any Elder of the desert would have described it.

When the saying analysed has parallels in the printed editions of the alphabetical (*AP*/G) or anonymous (*AP*/N) collections, they are given in a footnote at the end of the Greek text. This is to facilitate comparisons with studies done on those collections. The sign "almost equal to" (≈) indicates that the parallel is very similar to the rendering in *AP*/GS, although there are some clear differences. The sign "equal to" (=) indicates that the differences are negligible.

1. Some Simple Uses Of Scripture

Many uses of Scripture in *AP* are of a simple nature and do not require an analysis to be grasped. However, in order not to leave those frequent but uncomplicated uses totally out of the picture, I will quote a few of them.

[2] Driscoll, "Exegetical Procedures", 157.

Saying II.29

Διηγήσατό τις ὅτι τρεῖς φιλόπονοι ἀγαπητοὶ ἐγένοντο μοναχοί. Καὶ ὁ μὲν εἷς ἠρήσατο τοὺς μαχομένους εἰρηνεύειν κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· «Μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί» …[3]

It was told that three beloved *philoponoi*[4] became monks. One chose to make peace between those who fight, according to what was spoken: "*Blessed are the peacemakers*"[5] …

Saying V.20-21

… Στῶμεν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν, καὶ ῥασσέσθω ὁ πονηρός· μὴ δειλιάσῃς καὶ οὐ μή σε βλάψῃ. Ψάλλε ἐν ἰσχύϊ λέγων· «Οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπὶ Κύριον ὡς ὄρος Σιών, οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὁ κατοικῶν Ἰερουσαλήμ.» [6]

... Let us stand upon the rock, and though the Evil One may beat like waves against it, do not fear and do not jump off, but sing with force: '*They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion: he that dwells in Jerusalem shall never be moved*' (Ps 124:1).

Saying XX.15 (a)

Διηγήσατό τις τῶν ἀναχωρητῶν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐν Ῥαιθοῦ· ὅπου τὰ ἑβδομήκοντα στελέχη τῶν φοινίκων ἔνθα παρενέβαλε Μωϋσῆς μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἔλεγεν οὕπως …[7]

One of the anchorites told the following story to the brothers in Raithou, the place where the seventy palm trees were, where Moses stopped with the people when they went out of the land of Egypt …

Saying XXI.65

Ἀδελφός ἠρώτησε γέροντα· Ἕως πότε ἐστὶ τὸ σιωπᾶν; Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν. Ἕως οὗ ἐπερωτήθης· γέγραπται γάρ· «Πρὸ τοῦ ἀκοῦσαί σε μὴ ἀποκρίνου.»[8]

A brother asked an Elder: "For how long should one be quiet?" He said: "Until you are asked. For it is written: '*Do not answer before you listen.*'"[9]

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[3] ≈ N 134.

[4] *Philoponoi* were members of a confraternity, an association of laymen zealously involved in a congregation. See Christopher HAAS, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 238–240.

[5] Matt 5:9.

[6] ≈ N 78–79. The full text of V.20-21 is depicted on the plate at the end of the thesis.

[7] ≈ N 132A.

[8] Only in MS H.

[9] Sir 11:8.

2. Analyses of More Complex Uses of Scripture

Saying I.18: What is a good act?

A *Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησε γέροντα λέγων·*
Ποῖον καλὸν πρᾶγμά ἐστιν, ἵνα ποιήσω καὶ ζήσω ἐν αὐτῷ;
B *Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ γέρων·*
Ὁ Θεὸς οἶδε
τὸ καλόν.
C *Ἀλλ᾽ ἤκουσα*
ὅτι ἠρώτησέ τις τῶν πατέρων τὸν ἀββᾶ Νισθερῶ τὸν μέγαν, τὸν φίλον τοῦ ἀββᾶ Ἀντωνίου, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ·
Ποῖον καλὸν ἔργον ἐστίν, ἵνα ποιήσω;
Καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ·
Οὐκ εἶσι πᾶσαι αἱ ἐργασίαι ἴσαι; Ἡ γραφὴ λέγει ὅτι
«Ἀβραὰμ φιλόξενος ἦν καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἦν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ»,
καὶ Ἠλίας ἠγάπα τὴν ἡσυχίαν καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἦν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ὁ Δαυὶδ ταπεινὸς ἦν καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἦν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ.
Ὃ οὖν θεωρεῖς τὴν ψυχήν σου θέλουσαν κατὰ Θεόν,
τοῦτο ποίησον καὶ τήρει τὴν καρδίαν σου. [10]

A A brother asked an Elder:
"What is a good act, [tell me] so that I will do it and live through it?" [11]
B And the Elder said:
"God knows
what is good. [12]
C But I have heard
that one of the fathers once asked abba Nistheros the Great, friend of abba Antony, and said to him:
'What is a good deed, [tell me] so that I will do it?'
And he said to him:
'Are not all deeds equal? Scripture says that
Abraham was hospitable and God was with him,[13]
Elijah loved silence and God was with him,[14]
and David was humble and God was with him. [15]
Thus, whatever you see your soul desiring in accord with God, do this and keep your heart.' " [16]

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[10] = Nistheros 2.
[11] Cf. Lev 18:5 //.
[12] Cf. Matt 19:16–22.
[13] Cf. Gen 18:1–8.
[14] Cf. 1 Kgs 17:5–6, 19:13.
[15] Cf. 1 Sam 18:23 (ταπεινός), 18:28 (κύριος μετὰ Δαυιδ).
[16] Cf. Prov 4:23.

Structure

The saying begins with a question by a brother (A), including an allusion to a Bible text. The question is then answered in an evasive manner by the Elder (B). After that follows a second answer in the form of the retelling of a saying about Nistheros (C). This includes the same question asked by another brother and an answer by Nistheros, involving several allusions to the Bible to support his answer.

Biblical material

1. The question(s) and the first answer

According to the wording of the questions in the saying, there seems to be an allusion to Lev 18:5 and its parallels:

AP I.18	Lev 18:5
Ποῖον καλὸν πρᾶγμά ἐστιν,	καὶ φυλάξεσθε πάντα τὰ προστάγματά μου καὶ πάντα τὰ κρίματά μου καὶ ποιήσετε αὐτά,
ἵνα ποιήσω καὶ ζήσω ἐν αὐτῷ;	ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς·

The verse in Leviticus is an exhortation to keep God's ordinances and judgements: whoever "does" them "will live through them". This is paralleled in the question of the saying on what a good act is, "so that I may do it and live through it".

When it comes to the structure of the question and the beginning of the answer, the resemblance to Matt 19:16–22 (esp. vv. 16–17) is so striking that it is very plausible to consider that as well as an allusion:

AP I.18	Matt 19:16–17
	Καὶ ἰδοὺ
Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησε γέροντα λέγων·	εἷς προσελθὼν αὐτῷ εἶπεν,
Ποῖον καλὸν πρᾶγμά ἐστιν,	Διδάσκαλε, τί ἀγαθὸν
ἵνα ποιήσω καὶ ζήσω ἐν αὐτῷ;	ποιήσω ἵνα σχῶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον;
Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ γέρων·	ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ,
	Τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ;
Ὁ Θεὸς οἶδε τὸ καλόν.	εἷς ἐστιν ὁ ἀγαθός·
Ἀλλ᾽ ἤκουσα ὅτι	εἰ δὲ θέλεις εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν,
[…] τοῦτο ποίησον καὶ	
τήρει τὴν καρδίαν σου.	τήρησον (MSS: τηρει) τὰς ἐντολάς.

Both stories begin with a question by an anonymous person to the protagonist, asking what good one should do in order to live/have eternal life. In *AP* the protagonist answers that God knows what is good, while in Matthew Jesus answers that "one" (i.e., God) is good. After

having answered in this evasive manner, both the Elder and Jesus go on to answer in a more direct manner, Jesus saying that the questioner should "keep" the commandments, and the Elder saying that the questioner should "keep" his heart.

2. Three exemplars from the Septuagint

The three allusions to exemplary stories from the LXX are of very different kinds. The first one alludes to the story of Abraham receiving the three guests, where he is able to converse with God and receives the promise of a son. Maybe the words 'God appeared to him in …' are echoed in 'and God was with him'.

The second allusion is not as clear. Elijah is said to have loved silence (ἡσυχία). A possible background is 1 Kgs 17,[17] where he lives in isolation for some time. Maybe "God was with him" refers to Elijah receiving food from ravens.

A more likely background is that of the theophany in the "gentle breeze" (1 Kgs 19), which in the LXX is accompanied by the words "and the Lord was there" (κακεῖ κύριος), possibly echoed in "and God was with him". The problem here is that Elijah does not choose isolation in the cave out of love for silence, but out of necessity.[18]

The third allusion is to a verse in 1 Sam, where David says that he is a "humble" man and to a statement a few verses later, where Saul realises that "God is with David".

3. The final allusion to Proverbs

The final words of the saying appear to be an allusion to Proverbs:

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[17] That is the opinion of Mortari in *Vita e detti dei padri del deserto*. Miller indicates 1 Kgs 17:5 and 19:4 (sitting under the broom tree in the desert) as references. Guy, Ward, Beskow and Migne in their editions and translations do not indicate what is being alluded to.

[18] Many patristic writers use Elijah as an examplar, often as an exemplar of a life in solitude. Notably, Athanansius tells that Antony used to say that Eijah should be an exemplar for all those who practice ascetic training, "ready to follow the will of God, and no-one else." (*Vita Antonii* 7). Many others use Elijah as an exemplar for those who flee from men to live in the desert. Palladius contrasts the hospitality of Abraham and the solitude and asceticim of Elijah in *Historia Lausiaca*, chapter 14. For more Greek references, see Gustave Bardy, "Le Souvenier d'Élie chez les pères grecs", *Études carmelitaines* 35 (1956) 131—158. For Syriac references see Michel Hayek, "Élie dans la tradition syriaque", *ibid*. 159—178. For Latin references see Hervé de l'Incarnation, "Élie chez les pères latin", *ibid*. 180—207.

AP I.18	Prov 4:23
τοῦτο ποίησον καὶ	πάσῃ φυλακῇ
τήρει τὴν καρδίαν σου.	τήρει σὴν καρδίαν
	ἐκ γὰρ τούτων ἔξοδοι ζωῆς.

"Keep your heart" is an almost verbatim quotation from Prov 4:23, but it is too short to be called a real quotation, especially since it lacks a quotation formula. The continuation of the verse in Proverbs suits the saying well: "for out of them are the issues of life" fits well an answer to the question on how to receive life.

Analysis

The initial question of the saying becomes a key to the understanding of all the biblical material used in the saying. It provides a specific focus to the allusions which links them together: what is a good act, one that gives life? That very question is probably itself an allusion to Lev 18:5 and parallels. The hermit first avoids answering the question by saying that God knows what is good. But in doing so, another allusion is employed, this time to the rich young man in the Gospels (Matt 19:16–22 and parallels). This double allusion is very natural to make, since Matt 19:16 itself alludes to Lev. As a result, a connection is established both to the Old and to the New Testament. Further, the two hermits take the role that Jesus has in Matt 19. They are the ones to whom the question is posed, and they both use traditional material when answering the question. Jesus points to texts from the Pentateuch, the first hermit points to the story of Nistheros, and Nistheros points to Abraham, Elijah and David. By following the structure of the Gospel story, and putting the hermits in the place of Jesus, part of the authority of Jesus is transposed to them.

Nistheros uses biblical exemplars to show that the good deed can be different for different persons, but he does not rank those deeds.[19] This is done through selection, picking a virtue for each of the three persons, and through a common focus, pointing out what was common for them: God was with them.[20]

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[19] Douglas Burton-Christie makes a point of this, and compares it to John the Persian 4, *Word in the Desert*, 168.

[20] This is similar to the technique often used by Paul, when he brings together various parts of the Scriptures with a similar theme to support his argument, e.g., Rom 4, Rom 11:8–10, Rom 15:9–12. It can also be compared to the rule of *gezera shawah* of the *middôt*, according to which different scriptural passages can be tied together by means of a repetition of a key word or phrase.

He sums up all of this in a maxim which alludes to the Bible. It is a summary of what has been said about the three exemplars, and at the same time an application to the life of the brother/reader.[21] The expression "keep your heart" (Prov 4:23) in the maxim may be understood as a parallel to "live" in the initial question, since the verse in Proverbs continues "since they are the outlets of life" (ἐκ γὰρ τούτων ἔξοδοι ζωῆς).[22]

The maxim may be seen in the light of the wording of the Gospel story as well, where at the end of his first reply, Jesus tells the rich young man to "keep" (τήρησον; MSS: τηρει[24]) the commandments, whereas Nistheros (and/or the other hermit)[25] ends his answer with the advice to the brother to "keep" (τήρει) his heart:

AP I.18	Matt 19:17
τήρει τὴν καρδίαν σου.	τήρησον (MSS: τηρει) τὰς ἐντολάς.

If the final words of the saying are read as such an echo of Matt 19:17, it must be considered a very free way of handling the text of the Gospel. Although the answer of Jesus is echoed in the way the answer of the Elder is formulated by using the imperative τήρει, the content of the Elder's answer is very different. Not only is Jesus replaced by the hermits, but also his reply, "keep the commandments", is modified to "keep your heart". But it is not just any kind of modification, but a biblical one. This indicates, as elsewhere, that the different books of the Bible are treated as being on the same "level" and can engage in intertextual communication. In this way the whole story of the rich young man is transformed.

There is another important difference between the two stories. In the Gospel story, Jesus tells the rich young man *one* thing he needs to do: sell everything he owns and give to the poor. The Elder, on the other hand, suggests that there is *not* one given thing he can tell the questioner to do:

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[21] This technique can be compared to what the rule of Hillel calls *kelal uferat* (the general and the particular), and to a certain use of Scripture by Paul, e.g., in Rom 13:8–10, where after mentioning four of the ten commandments, he goes on to say: "If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself".

[22] For a reader of this saying, Jer 38:33 (MT: Jer 31:33) may also echo in the last lines: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts."

[24] MSS $\mathfrak{P}^{71vid}$, B, D, 565.

[25] It may be noted that it is not clear whether the maxim is part of the second degree narrative, i.e. the saying of Nistheros, or a comment by the hermit of the primary narrative, or both.

he should do that which he wants to do that is in accordance with God's will. The way to receive life is different for different persons.

This change in the message can be understood in at least two ways. The call to sell all possessions and give the proceeds to the poor may already have been followed by the questioner and the reading community. A further step was needed, a step which is different for different persons. Another way to understand this text is to see it as a specific reading of Matthew: the call to the rich young man was a specific call and the call of Jesus to his followers is different for different persons.

To sum up, we can recall the techniques being used at the different levels. The saying is construed on the structure of the story of Matt 19. This story is transformed by letting the Elders take on the role of Jesus, and by letting them give an alternative answer. On the level of contents, the allusion to Lev 18:5 in the form of a question provides the key to the other allusions. That is the case in Matt 19 too, but here the question is answered in another way. It is not "keeping the commandments", and "selling everything and giving it to the poor" which is the way to life, but "to do whatever your soul pleases as long as it is in accordance with God" is the way of "keeping your heart". This last remark echoes the reply of Jesus, the word "keeping" being a catchword which unites the two texts. To justify this answer, exemplars are used. Through a certain selection of texts, the differences and the common focus is established: the exemplars each represent different virtues, but God was with them all. So the situations of the exemplars are generalized into a principle.[26] This principle is directed specifically to the questioner/reader as paraenesis by formulating it in the imperative.

[26] This is one form of what Frances Young calls "deductive expansion", in this case a deduction by comparing texts (*Biblical Exegesis*, 206–207).

Saying I.19: The copper serpent

intro *Ἔλεγεν ἀββᾶ Ποιμὴν περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Νισθερώου ὅτι*
A *ὥσπερ*
τὸν ὄφιν τὸν χαλκοῦν τὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ
εἴ τις ἔβλεπε ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ ἐθεραπεύετο,
οὕτως ἦν
ὁ γέρων·
B *πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν ἔχων*
καὶ σιωπῶν πάντας ἐθεράπευεν.[27]

intro Abba Poimen said about abba Nistheros:
A "Just like
the copper serpent in the desert –
anyone of the people who saw it was cured,[28]
so was
the Elder;
B possessing every virtue
he cured everyone even without speaking."[29]

Structure

This saying is structured as a comparison between the copper serpent and abba Nistheros (A), followed by an explicit statement on where the point of comparison lies (B). So, on a structural level, the Bible is used as one part of an analogy. The indentions are used as a way of indicating the parallels in the analogy here.

Biblical material

The allusion to the biblical image in this analogy is so explicit that we can call it a short paraphrase of the narrative from which the image is taken. The story is taken from Num 21 (alluded to in 2 Kgs 18:4 and Wis 16:5–12). There is also an indirect allusion, since the analogy between the copper serpent in the desert and a holy person is made already in the New Testament in John 3:14, where Jesus is compared to the copper serpent.

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[27] ≈ Nistheros the Cenobite 1.

[28] Cf. Num 21:9 //. Cf. also John 3:14.

[29] I do not take καί of the last line to be copulative but emphatic: "even without speaking". It seems logical to take "possessing all virtues" in an instrumental sense, whereas "being silent" should probably be taken in a concessive sense, since being silent does not normally facilitate healing, at least not in the majority of the healing-stories of the Bible. And in *AP* the way healing takes place is normally an Elder giving "a word" to a person in need.

Analysis

Relating the saying to the passage from Numbers, we can say that the saying uses it as an analogy, and the referent and correspondences are pointed out. If we relate the saying to the Gospel of John, we can say that there is a change of actor: not Jesus, but Nistheros is compared to the copper serpent. We thus have three layers of narrative in the same saying: the narratives of the copper serpent, Jesus, and Nistheros.

First, in Num 21:9 the copper serpent is described in the following way:

> And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a signal[-staff]:
> and it came to pass that whenever a serpent bit a man,
> and he looked on the brazen serpent,
> he lived (ἔζη).

Secondly, Jesus is compared to the copper serpent in John 3:14–17.

> And just as (καθώς) Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness
> so (οὕτως) must the Son of Man be lifted up,
> that whoever believes in him
> may have eternal life (ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον).
> [...]in order that the world might be saved (ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμον) through him.

Finally, Nistheros is compared to the serpent, thus indirectly comparing him to Jesus:

> Abba Poimen said about abba Nistheros:
> "Just as (ὥσπερ) whoever saw the copper serpent in the desert
> was cured (ἐθεραπεύετο),[30]
> so was (οὕτως ἦν) the Elder:
> possessing every virtue
> he cured (ἐθεράπευεν) everyone even without speaking."

In each of these three cases a person or object gives benefits to "whoever" turns toward him/it. The benefit given is something non-material (everyone would "live", "have eternal life" or "be cured"), and the object/person giving the benefit does not hand over the benefit through speaking or through physical contact. The only action involved is the move preceding the situation of healing. In two of the cases that is a movement up on a cross or a staff. In two of the cases the location is in the desert in or in the vicinity of Egypt. Perhaps the two latter depictions

[30] Cf. Num 21:9. Cf. also John 3:14 . (This is not an allusion to John 19:37, as indicated by Burton-Christie. "They will look on the one whom they have pierced." Those words achieve the connection between the story of the Passion and the story of Num 21:9, but there is no connection to this saying since this saying involves no "looking" or "piercing".)

play on the description of how people were bit by serpents, and that this resulted in the illness to be healed; this background may play a symbolic role, the serpent being the symbol for the devil. In other words, the copper serpent saved the people from the evil caused by the bites of serpents, Jesus and Nistheros saved the people from the evil caused by the devil who may be depicted as a serpent. We can also make a point of the fact that Jesus several times is said to have been quiet during the trials preceding the crucifixion,[31] just as the serpent and Nistheros cured without speaking.

If we assume these associations, then we have a case of *mimesis* of an ikonic type,[32] where the original story is treated as a coherent whole even when it is transposed. In fact we can say it is a three-layered *mimesis*, where both the copper serpent and Jesus are "types" for Nistheros. To use a modern illustration, we can imagine an overhead projector. First, we have a sheet of plastic foil with the copper serpent depicted on it. This could illustrate the state of a reader who is acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. When such a reader is confronted with the *mimesis* of John 3:14, it is like a new layer is placed on top of the old one already present there: the image of Jesus is superimposed on the image of the copper serpent. That would be the state of a reader acquainted with the Christian Scriptures. When such a reader is confronted with this saying, it is as if yet a third layer is placed on top of the other two: the image of Nistheros is superimposed on the images of Jesus and the copper serpent, and they are blended together.

There is also a connection to the version of the story in Wis 16.

> They were troubled for a little while as a warning, and received a symbol of deliverance to remind them of your law's command. For the one who turned toward it was saved, not by the thing that was beheld, but by you, the Savior of all. [...] For neither herb nor poultice cured (ἐθεραπεύσεν) them, but it was your word, O Lord, that heals all people (ὁ λόγος ὁ πάντας ἰώμενος). (Wis 16:6, 7, 12. NRSV)[33]

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[31] Matt 26:63 (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐσιώπα); 27:12 (οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο); 27:14 (οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ πρὸς οὐδὲ ἓν ῥῆμα); Luke 23:9 (αὐτὸς δὲ οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ.); John 19:9 (ἀπόκρισιν οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ.)

[32] On this concept, see Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 162, 184–185, and my description of it on p. 24. This seems to be a more precise description than that of Lemaire, in "L'abbé Poemen", 72, who says that Nistheros "respecte les détails du sens littéral de Nb 21,4–9, et leur donne une portée allégorique … ." As long as a dichotomy is maintained between 'typological' and 'allegorical', such descriptions are rather confusing.

[33] εἰς νουθεσίαν δὲ πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐταράχθησαν σύμβολον ἔχοντες σωτηρίας εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἐντολῆς νόμου σου· ὁ γὰρ ἐπιστραφεὶς οὐ διὰ τὸ θεωρούμενον ἐσῴζετο, ἀλλὰ διὰ σὲ τὸν πάντων σωτῆρα. […] καὶ γὰρ οὔτε βοτάνη οὔτε μάλαγμα ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς, ἀλλὰ ὁ σός, κύριε, λόγος ὁ πάντας ἰώμενος.

The verb used for the healing is the same as that used of Nistheros: θεραπεύειν. And there is even an amplification involved in the serpent-Nistheros comparison: Nistheros healed even without speaking, whereas it was the word of the Lord that cured the people through the copper serpent.

Summing up, we can say that, on a superficial level, the point of the saying is that Nistheros was a virtuous man who could cure everyone even without speaking. Having analysed the biblical texts, we can see that on a more profound level the point is that Nistheros was an icon of Christ just as the copper serpent prefigured Christ. The techniques of contextualization are all part of the use of the copper serpent as a comparison, just as it was done in John 3:14. Besides this comparison with a figure of the desert tradition, contextualization is achieved by merging a new actor with the one of John 3:14, i.e., conflating Jesus and Nistheros, or rather, superimposing Nistheros on to the images of the serpent and Jesus, thus tapping authority from both, and making Nistheros an icon of Christ.[34]

Saying I.23: Noah, Job and Daniel

intro *Εἶπε πάλιν·*
A *Ἡ πενία καὶ ἡ θλῖψις καὶ ἡ διάκρισις,*
ταῦτά εἰσι τὰ ἐργαλεῖα τοῦ μονήρους βίου.
B *Γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι·*
C *«Ἐὰν ὦσιν οἱ τρεῖς οὗτοι ἄνδρες*
Νῶε, Ἰὼβ καὶ Δανιήλ».
D *Νῶε πρόσωπόν ἐστι τῆς ἀκτημοσύνης,*
Ἰὼβ δὲ τοῦ πόνου
καὶ Δανιὴλ τῆς διακρίσεως.
E *Ἐὰν οὖν ὦσιν αἱ τρεῖς αὗται πράξεις ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ,*
ὁ Θεὸς οἰκεῖ ἐν αὐτῷ.[35]

[34] Burton-Christie mentions this saying in his treatment of how the elders "were seen to reflect the light of the great biblical exemplars", *Word in the Desert*, 290–291. The other sayings in the alphabetical collection mentioned by him on that theme are Pambo 12 (the shining countenance of abba Pambo was like that of Moses; not in *AP*/GS), Arsenius 42 (his appearance was angelic, like that of Jacob; XV.11 in *AP*/GS), Antony 27 (it was enough for a brother to see abba Antony; XVII.5 in *AP*/GS).

[35] ≈ Poimen 60.

intro He [Poimen] also said:
A "Poverty, affliction and discernment,
these are the instruments for the solitary life.[36]
B For it is written:
C *'If these three men should be [present]:*
Noah, Job and Daniel…'.[37]
D Noah is the personification of dispossession,
Job that of toil
and Daniel that of discernment.
E So if these three practices should be [present] in a person,[38]
God resides in him."

Structure

The structure consists of the following elements: (A) a claim which introduces the theme of poverty, affliction and discernment as the means to the monastic life, (B) an introductory formula which also serves as a ground for the claim (γάρ), (C) a very brief scriptural quotation, (D) an explanation which connects details in the quotation to the claim, and (E) a summary which consists of the interpretation which is a consequence of the preceding quotation with its explanation, and at the same time it is a paraphrase of the initial claim. On this structural level, the quotation functions as a support for an ethical teaching.

Biblical material

The short quotation from Ezekiel is slightly modified, changing "if these three men should be present in the midst of it" to "if these three men should be present" introduced by a quotation formula. Also, the order in which the three exemplars are presented is changed. The context of the quotation is:

> Son of man, if a land shall sin against me by committing a trespass, and I shall stretch out my hand upon it, and break its staff of bread, and send forth famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, and if these three men should be in the midst of it, Noah, and Daniel, and Job, they shall be delivered by their righteousness, says the Lord. (Ezek 14:13–14)[39]

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[36] The alphabetical collection lists four *praxeis*: poverty, affliction, calamity and fasting (πενία, θλίψις, στενοχωρία, νηστεία) (Poimen 60). These two lists of virtues can be compared to 2 Cor 6:4–10, where Paul wants to show that he has commended himself as a servant of God in every way, listing his endurance, affliction (θλίψις), […] calamities (στενοχωρίαι), […] starvation (νηστείαι), […] knowledge (γνῶσις) […] being poor (πτωχός).

[37] Ezek 14:14. The alphabetical collection continues "I live, says the Lord." ("The Lord" replaces "God" in the last line of the alphabetical version.)

[38] Cf. Ezek 14:14: if these three men should be [present] in the midst of it [the land].

[39] Υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου, γῆ ἐὰν ἁμάρτῃ μοι τοῦ παραπεσεῖν παράπτωμα καὶ ἐκτενῶ τὴν χεῖρά μου ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν καὶ συντρίψω αὐτῆς στήριγμα ἄρτου καὶ ἐξαποστελῶ ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν

The reader of the saying is probably expected to know this context, since the short quotation makes no sense on its own.[40]

Analysis

The use of the Bible is here dependent on the figural interpretation of the three persons, where they come to personify three ascetical practices.[41] The underlying presuppositions seem so be:

biblical image	*figural referent*
a land	- a person
Noah, Job, Daniel	- three ascetical practices
the three in the land	- these practices existing in a person

As Origen commented, these three men could not have lived in a land at the same time, since they are not depicted in the Bible as living in a single period of history—Noah belonging to the very beginnings of mankind, Daniel being a late prophet, and Job not being placed in a definite historical setting.[42] Therefore, it is fairly natural to make an exemplary or symbolical interpretation of this passage.[43]

Now that the persons are not only used as examples, we may ask ourselves what the connection is between each of the biblical persons and the practice they are understood to personify. There are two main possibilities: either the connection is derived from etymology by someone with a knowledge of Hebrew, or it is obtained from the biblical story or some tradition connected to it.

In the first instance, that of Noah personifying poverty, it is hardly a case of etymology, Hebr. נוֹחַ meaning "rest". In Gen 6:9 he is described as righteous, perfect and well pleasing to God (δίκαιος, … τέλειος, … τῷ θεῷ εὐηρέστησεν), depicting him as an exemplar, but not connecting him specifically to poverty or dispossession. Possibly the flood could be seen as a symbol of losing all possessions of one's former life.

Job personifying toil and suffering could easily be derived from the biblical narrative. Already in Jas 5:11 he is described as an exemplar of

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λιμὸν καὶ ἐξαρῶ ἐξ αὐτῆς ἄνθρωπον καὶ κτήνη, καὶ ἐὰν ὦσιν οἱ τρεῖς ἄνδρες οὗτοι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς, Νωε καὶ Δανιηλ καὶ Ιωβ, αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ αὐτῶν σωθήσονται, λέγει κύριος. I have simplified the translation of Brenton.

[40] As noted also by Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 21, and repeated by Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 197.

[41] For other lists of ascetical practices or virtues, see Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 217.

[42] Cf. Origen, *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, Homilia 4.4.1–9.

[43] The passage is used for exemplary purposes already in *2 Clem.* 6:8.

patient suffering.[44] The etymology, however, is not clear, nor does there seem to have been an established idea about it in Late Antiquity.

The etymology of the name Daniel is more straight-forward: דין means judge and אל means God. The name is further charged with connotations of wisdom through Ezek 28:3: "Are you wiser (σοφώτερος) than Daniel?" Although in the MT of Ezek 28:3 and 14:14, this is actually not the Daniel of the OT, but the Danel, or *Dani'ilu*, known from Ugaritic myths, in the LXX the name is rendered as Daniel.[45] More relevant for the connection between Daniel and discernment are the stories where Daniel's wisdom is praised: the king calls on him every time he needs advice (Dan 1:20); he proves his ability in the discernment (σύγκρισις) of dreams (Dan 2, Dan 4) and enigmatic writing (Dan 5); and he shows his ability to penetrate obscurities when Susanna is saved by his discernment (Sus 45–63). In Sus 50 the elders say that they want to hear his opinion since, although he was a young man, God has given him the gift belonging to elders (τὸ πρεσβεῖον).

When it comes to parallels to this connection between the three virtues and three persons, a related text can be found in *Sermo de pseudoprophetis* attributed to John Chrysostom.

> We have the prophets as an example of suffering and forbearance, Job as one of endurance, Joseph of wisdom, Daniel of discernment … .[46]

Origen, in a homily on this passage of Ezekiel, considers Noah to be an exemplar in the sense that we should not let our life on earth be corrupted. Daniel he considers an exemplar in that one should not be sullied by the spiritual Nebuchadnezzar's food and drink but chastise oneself with fasts in "this Babylon", because of the knowledge of the truth (διὰ τὴν γνῶσιν τῆς ἀληθείας). Job is an exemplar in the sense

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[44] Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 116 n19, also lists the anonymous sayings N 378 (**XI.125**), N 470 and N 620 as using him as an example of patient suffering. To these we may add VII.19 (Poimen 102).

[45] Epic of Aqhat, where his name is *Dani'ilu*. See *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* compiled by Johannes C. de Moor (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 224–273. Among other descriptions it is said that Dani'ilu "judged the case of the widow, he tried the case of the orphan" (I.V, p. 233). Cf. also John DAY, "The Daniel of Ugarith and Ezekiel and the Hero of the Book of Daniel", *VT* 30 (1980): 174–184. The knowledge of Daniel is depicted in descriptions of him that echo the Ugaritic legend, both in Jub 4:20–25 and in 1 Henoch 6–7. In the Masoretic text of Ezek 14 the *ketib* reads דנאל, and the *qere* דניאל. The LXX has Δανιηλ.

[46] PG 59:568. Ὑπόδειγμα δὲ τῆς κακοπαθείας καὶ μακροθυμίας ἔχετε τοὺς προφήτας, τῆς ὑπομονῆς τὸν Ἰὼβ, τῆς σωφροσύνης τὸν Ἰωσὴφ, τῆς διακρίσεως τὸν Δανιὴλ … .

that he was irreproachable in his living, avoiding everything evil although he suffered all sorts of tests.[47]

Burton-Christie suggests that the changed order of the names (Noah, Job, Daniel instead of Noah, Daniel, Job) is due to the experience of the monks, for whom material poverty was often a source of suffering.[48] To this might be added that not only placing Job after Noah may be an intended modification, but also that Daniel follows after Job. In other sayings, it is suggested that suffering can be necessary for the development of discernment,[49] which makes it logical to place Daniel, the personified virtue of discernment, after Job, the personified virtue of suffering. However, such changes in word order should not be pressed too hard for meaning, since we do not know what textual *Vorlage* the author of the saying had—in fact we do not know if there was one, since the verse may have been quoted from memory. If the verse was quoted from memory, a possible reason for the change of order of the names Job and Daniel could be the order of their books in the LXX.

Burton-Christie also claims that "Poemen's interpretation reveals that for him the most important aspect of the text [of Ezekiel] was the heroic practice of virtue of these saints", as opposed to their prayer, which is the most important aspect in the biblical context.[50] This presupposes that the biblical text and the interpretation of it is in the fore, but this does not seem to be the case. Rather, Poimen uses the biblical text to illustrate and legitimize his point.

The saying can be paraphrased: Poverty, toil and discernment are the means for living the solitary life in a way that makes the monk a dwelling-place for God.

The passage from Ezekiel is contextualized by letting the land symbolize a person living a solitary life and making the three biblical persons exemplary figures and letting them personify three ascetical practices. Possibly this may also be a case of conscious modification of the text, where the order of the names mentioned has been altered to accord with the logical order of the virtues they personify.

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[47] *Selecta in Ezechielem* 14:14 (PG 13:808bc).
[48] Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 197, hinted at by Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 21.
[49] Cf. **XV.69**.
[50] *Ibid*., suggested in a more balanced way by Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 22.

Saying III.28: Abraham's grave

A *Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν λέγων·*
Τί ποιήσω;
B *Λέγει αὐτῷ·*
Ἀβραάμ, ὅτε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, μνημεῖον ἠγόρασεν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ διὰ τοῦ τάφου ἐκληρονόμησε τὴν γῆν.
C *Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἀδελφός·*
Τί ἐστι τάφος;
D *Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ γέρων·*
Τόπος κλαυθμοῦ καὶ πένθους. [51]

A A brother asked him [abba Poimen]:
"What should I do?"
B He answered:
"Abraham, when he went into the land of promise, bought a burial place for himself, and because of the grave he inherited the land." [52]
C The brother said to him:
"What is a 'grave'?"
D And the Elder said:
"Room for weeping and grief/compunction."

Structure

The saying is structured as a dialogue: a question about what to do (A), an answer consisting of a paraphrased biblical story (B), a question about the detail of the story (C), and an answer to that question (D).

Biblical material

The paraphrase of the Bible story is brief. The context in Genesis is that Sarah dies, Abraham comes to lament and mourn her (κόψασθαι Σαρραν καὶ πενθῆσαι), and is then allowed to buy a cave for her burial. The surrounding field is included in the acquisition of the cave. It is the only piece of land which Abraham legally becomes the owner of. Later, Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah are buried there as well.

It should be noted that the term used for Abraham's mourning is the same as that used to denote compunction in the saying (πένθος).[53]

Analysis

The question (A) is quite open, and at the same time personal. It is a phrase frequently repeated in *AP*, sometimes posed in this short form,[54]

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[51] = Poimen 50.

[52] Cf. Gen 23.

[53] For a discussion of the use of the word πένθος to denote a state of compunction, see note 71 of the present chapter.

sometimes extended a little, as in "What should I do to be saved?",[55] but most of the time with a specific indication of what the problem or temptation is.[56] The question itself indicates a contextualized referent for the Bible text: the life of the brother. In this particular case, the biblical text is used as the answer to what the brother ought to do. The answer (B) must be understood as implying that like Abraham, you ought to find a burial place for yourself, and because of the grave you will inherit the land.

The next question is a request for an explanation of what the referent of a detail in the story is: the grave.

The point is that the brother ought to acquire "room" for compunction in order to "inherit the land". That room, or place, may be something very concrete, like the cell of the monk, or it may be something more abstract, such as a state or a possibility.[57]

To "inherit the land" is a common image in Christian literature for entering the kingdom of God and receiving what God has promised. Thus the Bible text is brought in to illustrate a teaching which was commonplace in this tradition: that compunction is the way to receive what God has promised. In a sense, it is an apt illustration, since the connection between "mourning/compunction" and "inheritance" is clear in the text, although, as Lemaire points out, the connection is rather accidental in the original biblical context, and made into a causal connection in the saying through the use of the preposition διά.[58] The

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[54] I.2 (Antony 6), III.27 (Poimen 162), III.44 (N 141) and XV.19 (Zechariah 3). Examples in *AP*/G without a parallel in GS are Basil the Great 1, Poimen 79, Poimen 153 and Sisoes 42.

[55] XIV.3 (Ares 1) and Biare 1.

[56] III.29 (Poimen 119), IV.45 (Sisoes 2), IV.100 (N 431), V.9 (Poimen 62), **V.11** (Poimen 115), V.34 (N 393), V.35 (N 182), V.37 (N 184), VI.15 (Pistamin 1), VII.1 (Antony 1), VII.34 (N 195), VII.41 (N 202), VII.57 (N 215), IX.11, X.40 (Joseph of Panephysis 4), X.54.35 (Poimen 8), X.64 (Poimen 145), X.82 (Poimen 33), X.125 (N 219), X.171 (N 394), XI.44 (John the Short 19), XI.59 (Poimen 65), XI.79 (Matoes 13), XIV.23 (N 291) and XVII.20 (N 347). Those found only in *AP*/G: Cronius 2, Poimen 122, Poimen 123, Poimen 145, Poimen 156, Poimen 179, Poimen 208 (supp.Guy #21), Sisoes 19, Sisoes 38, Sisoes 39, Sisoes 44.

[57] The word could be used metaphorically to denote an occasion or an opportunity; cf. LSJ, s.v. III. This is a common way to use the word in the NT: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room (τόπος) for the wrath of God (Rom 12:19)." "… and do not make room (τόπος) for the devil (Eph 4:27)." "[Esau] found no chance (τόπος) to repent, even though he sought the blessing with tears (Heb 12:17)."

The word could also denote a burial-place (LSJ, s.v. A.5), which means that the last sentence of the saying may have been understood as a pun.

[58] Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 19.

connection is strengthened, as Jeremy Driscoll has observed, by the echo of the second and third beatitude of Matt 5.[59]

Once again it should be pointed out that the *abba* is not saying that this is what the text of the Bible is "really" about; he simply uses the story to illustrate his teaching.[60] In this case, his teaching is a response to the question about what the brother ought to do: he should strive for weeping and compunction, for that is a means of receiving God's promises. It can be understood as both striving for the "state" of compunction, and striving to make the cell of the monk the "place" of compunction. This teaching he transmits using biblical imagery. In Gen 15:18–20, God promised land to the descendants of Abraham, but it is only at the death of Sarah, and the buying of a burial-place, that there is a legal transaction whereby Abraham acquires land. The story in Genesis is a way of saying that Abraham honestly and legally acquired a lot of the promised land for himself and for his descendants. Poimen simply takes at face value the story of Abraham buying the cave and land. He then invites the receiver of his teaching to develop the story allegorically, by giving the interpretative key that the grave should be understood as the place of compunction.[61]

A detail of the text, the grave, is taken as a symbol. This makes Abraham an exemplar, not because he acted in an ethically laudable way, but because compunction, symbolized by the grave, is what allows the reader to "inherit the land". This is what Frances Young calls symbolical *mimesis*, because abba Poimen is not really interested in the integrity of the story, but uses a detail as a "token". In this way the story can be transformed by the reader of the saying to depict something which was seen as very relevant for that reading community.

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[59] Driscoll, "Exegetical Procedures", 168. Matt 5:4–5: "Blessed are those who mourn (οἱ πενθοῦντες), for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth (κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν)."

[60] I disagree with Burton-Christie (*Word in the Desert*, 189), who says that Poimen takes the tears mentioned in Gen 23:2 as a starting point "to engage in a piece of ambitious and inventive interpretation".

[61] Burton-Christie continues by describing it as blending "an allegorical interpretation of Abraham's action of purchasing the tomb […] with a more subtle interpretation based on the significance of Abraham's action in the history of salvation." The categories are not very helpful for describing what actually takes place: the "interpretation" of the action in light of the history of salvation is straight-forward rather than subtle, and Poimen in fact makes no explicit allegorical interpretation but gives a hint to the reader on how to develop an allegorical reading through a figural interpretation of one detail: the grave.

Saying III.34: God is a fire

intro *Εἶπεν ἡ μακαρία Συγκλητική·*
A *Ἀγών ἐστι καὶ κόπος πολὺς τοῖς προσερχομένοις Θεῷ τὰ πρῶτα,*
ἔπειτα δὲ χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητος.
B *Ὥσπερ γὰρ*
οἱ πῦρ ἐξάψαι βουλόμενοι πρῶτον καπνίζονται καὶ δακρύουσιν,
καὶ οὕτως τοῦ ζητουμένου τυγχάνουσιν
C *— καὶ γάρ, φησί, «ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκον ἐστίν» —*
οὕτως
D *δεῖ καὶ ἡμᾶς τὸ θεῖον πῦρ εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἐξάψαι μετὰ δακρύων*
καὶ κόπων. [62]

intro The blessed Syncletica said:
A "In the beginning there is much fight and toil for those who approach
God, but thereafter an indescribable joy.
B For just as
those who want to light a fire first cough and weep,
and then attain what they search for
C — '*For*,' it is said, '*our God is a consuming fire*' — [63]
D in the same manner
we too should light the divine fire in us with tears and toil."

Structure

The indentions are used to indicate both the narrative levels and the structure of the analogy. First the main theme is introduced (A): the process of approaching God implies difficulties in the beginning but gives a result which is all the more positive. This is followed by an analogy: the process of lighting a fire is like the process of approaching God (B-D). The coughing and crying involved in lighting physical fire (B) is compared to the tears and toil involved in lighting "the divine fire within us" (D). The analogy is held together by and motivated by the Bible quotation (C), which points to the fire/God-metaphor. On this structural level, the quotation functions as a support for the analogy.

Biblical material

The verse quoted is Heb 12:29. The καὶ γάρ in C may be understood as a part of that quotation, *and* as an indicator that this is in fact the support and reason for the analogy.

Once this quotation is recognized, a reader may well discover other echoes from Heb. Just a few verses earlier the word χάρα is used when treating the very theme of saying III:34:

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[62] ≈ Syncletica 1
[63] Heb 12:29 (≈ Deut 4:24, 9:3, Isa 33:14).

> πᾶσα δὲ παιδεία πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρὸν οὐ δοκεῖ χαρᾶς εἶναι ἀλλὰ λύπης, ὕστερον δὲ καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν τοῖς δι᾽ αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις ἀποδίδωσιν δικαιοσύνης (Heb 12:11).
>
> Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

This theme is that of the popular *chreia* of Isocrates: "The root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet."

In the previous chapter, the author of Heb speaks of ὁ προσερχόμενος θεῷ ("the one who approaches God") which echoes in III.34, and uses examples from the OT of how women and men who endured in faith when seeking God, often in suffering, were "rewarded" (Heb 11:6).

Another biblical echo can be heard in this text, that of 1 Pet 1:6–8. There the readers are said to "suffer" to test the genuineness of their faith, which is more precious than gold tested "in fire", and they rejoice with "an indescribable joy (χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητος)".

Analysis

The *apophthegma* begins with a short utterance on the difficulties involved in approaching God, and on the rewards of such a project. The utterance is supported with an analogy using the image of lighting a fire. The biblical material is integrated in a manner which is rather unusual in *AP*. Nothing is really said about the biblical text, and it is not used to support the teaching itself. Nor is the image as it is depicted in the Bible ("a *consuming* fire") itself of real interest in the analogy. It is used for the sole purpose of supporting the analogy. The two parts of the analogy are the lighting of a natural fire, and the approach to God, which is described as lighting an inner fire. Nothing is said in the biblical text about lighting an inner fire. The Bible is used to legitimize the analogy by pointing to the fire/God metaphor in Hebr 12:29. This is, however, still on the structural level.

On a semantic level there is more happening. In fact the metaphor is utilized in an allegorizing manner. What is a metaphor in the Bible is developed in the saying in such a way that the metaphor is placed in a new context, and different details are then extracted from the metaphor and related to different parts of the referent. Approaching God is compared to lighting a fire. This is justified by using the Bible as an authority: God is a fire. If God is a fire, then approaching God is like lighting a fire. Once this analogy is established, using the biblical metaphor as a ground, the reasoning is developed using details. If God is

a fire, then lighting this fire is beginning to approach God. The coughing and crying involved in lighting the fire are the tears and the toil of the person approaching God. Just like there is a contrast between the suffering of a person trying to ignite a fire and the joy he experiences when it is lit, so there is a contrast between the hard experiences of igniting the inner, divine fire, and the joy experienced once it is lit. One could imagine this allegorizing of the metaphor developed even further.

The metaphor is used in a similar way by Origen in his commentary on the Gospel of John, which also mentions suffering and distress for the sake of something greater, in relation to Heb 12:29.[64] There, however, another detail in the analogy is tapped of semantic potential, when he comments on what is "consumed" by the fire, *viz.* "[spiritual] wood, grass and straw". There, the focus seems to be on the purging of the fire. For amma Syncletica, the aspect of purging is not completely absent, since there are tears involved in lighting the fire, but the image of the fire is treated in terms of the difference between the hardships of kindling a fire and the joy it gives when it burns.[65]

The other echoes of biblical material do not seem to add to the message of the saying, but underline the message and give the reader a sense that it is firmly established in the Bible.

This is one of very few sayings I have found that shows a large number of the parts of the *ergasia* pattern, i.e., the way of expanding on a short saying which was used as a preparatory exercise for students going to rhetorical schools. In fact it is rather like an *ergasia* on the *chreia* of Isocrates mentioned above, used by Hermogenes as an example. I will

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[64] Cf. Origen, *Commentarii in Ioannem*, 13.138–9. εἰ δὲ <νοητά ἐστι> ξύλα καὶ χόρτος <καὶ> καλάμη, μήποτε τὸ ἀναλωτικὸν τῆς τοιαύτης ὕλης πῦρ ὁ θεός ἐστιν ἡμῶν, πῦρ λεγόμενος εἶναι καταναλίσκον· καὶ πρέπον γε τῷ κυρίῳ ἐστὶν τὸ ἀναλίσκειν τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ ἐξαφανίζειν τὰ χείρονα, οὗ γινομένου ἀλγηδόνας οἶμαι καὶ πόνους γίνεσθαι, οὐκ ἀπό τινος σωματικῆς ἐπαφῆς, περὶ τὰ ἡγεμονικά, ἔνθα συνέστη ἡ τοῦ καταναλίσκεσθαι ἀξία οἰκοδομή. (139.) […] πῦρ τε προσαγορεύεται καταναλίσκον, ἀπὸ τοῦ σωματικοῦ πυρὸς καὶ καταναλωτικοῦ τῆς τοιᾶσδε ὕλης νοούμενος.

ET by Ronald E. Heine: "If, however, [there is spiritual] wood, grass, and straw, perhaps when our God is said to be a consuming fire, it refers to the fire that consumes such matter. It is fitting indeed for the Lord to destroy such things and to obliterate inferior materials. When this happens I think there is suffering and distress, but not from any physical punishment, in the ruling parts of the soul, for it is there that the building worthy of being destroyed exists. (139.) […] Furthermore he is designated a devouring fire, being understood spiritually, from the fire which is literal and is destructive of such material."

[65] Cf. Barsanuphius and John, *Quaestiones et responsiones*, Letter 18, where Barsanuphius reflects on the fact that God is said to be a fire, and he says: "If we feel coldness, let us call on God, and he will come and warm our heart in his perfect love, not only toward him but also toward our neighbour;" and Letter 506: "May the one who said: 'I came to bring fire to the earth' light this fire in your heart and in mine."

return to this saying and the question of the *ergasia*-pattern in relation to *AP* at the end of chapter four.[66]

To sum up, the saying can be paraphrased: Lighting the divine fire within can be compared to lighting a physical fire. There is an initial pain and suffering, but there is a great reward.

On a formal level, the metaphor taken from the Bible is used to support an analogy. When we look at the contents of the saying, we see that the biblical metaphor is used when describing a specific situation (approaching God) which highlights specific semantic potentials. By relating the natural "fire" of the analogy to the "fire" of the metaphor, and relating "the divine fire in us" of the analogy to "God" of the metaphor, the metaphor is developed in an allegorizing manner. Something like two parallel plots are developed, where the details in the plot of lighting a natural fire are matched to details in the plot about lighting the divine fire within. The metaphor creates a biblical link between the two parts of the analogy, and the analogy can be seen as a way of making better sense of the metaphor.

Saying III.43: When God struck Egypt

intro *Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησέ τινα γέροντα λέγων·*
A *Ἀββᾶ, εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα.*
Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων·
B *Ὅτε ὁ Θεὸς ἐπάταξεν Αἴγυπτον,*
οὐκ ἦν οἶκος μὴ ἔχων πένθος.[67]

intro A brother asked an Elder:
A "Abba, give me a word."
The Elder said to him:
B "When God struck Egypt,
there was not a house without grief/compunction."

[66] See section 3: "The Use of Scripture in *AP* in Light of the *Ergasia*", in chapter four.

[67] According to Guy this saying should be compared to X.145, but this is not a very useful comparison. Comparing it to Moses 18 makes much more sense, which should be clear from the following.

The expression "God struck Egypt" occurs a number of times in LXX, denoting the death of all first-borns in Egypt at the start of the exodus event: Exod 12:27, 29; Num 3:13; 8:17; 33:4; Josh 24:5; Jdt 5:12; Ps 77:51; 134:8.

Structure

The structure is simply that of a brother posing a request (A) and the *abba* answering him with an allusion to the Bible (B). So "the word" asked for in the question is provided by a short biblical paraphrase standing on its own.

Biblical material

The short paraphrase contains what is almost a quotation from Ex 12:30. There the situation is described with a different terminology: "… there was not a house in which there was not a dead person."[68] The main difference in the rendering is the change from "dead person" (τεθνηκώς) to "grief" (πένθος).[69] Even without an introductory formula, this paraphrase of the narrative surrounding Ex 12:30 is easily recognized, both thanks to the reference to Egypt, and because the structure of the sentence follows that of the biblical verse fairly closely.

Analysis

On a structural level, the Bible text is the answer to a request.[70]

The word 'death' has been substituted by *penthos*, a word which did not only mean 'grief', but in the language of *AP* and related literature often refers to 'compunction'.[71] This brings the verse into the context of

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[68] Cf. Ex 12.30: … οὐ γὰρ ἦν οἰκία, ἐν ᾗ οὐκ ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ τεθνηκώς.

[69] According to the Göttingen LXX edition of Exodus, there is one text group, *x*, consisting of three MSS, which has πένθος in the place of τεθνηκώς. The MSS are rather late miniscules, ranging form the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. This is probably an example of the influence of *AP* on biblical scribes, an area of research worth exploring.

[70] This request, εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα, is common in *AP*. It occurs in III.4 (Ammonas 1), V.16.15 (N 164), *XIII.7* (Poimen 69), XX.4 (Macarius 2), Theodoros of Pherme 20, *Cronius 1*, Macarius 41, Matoes 11, Matoes 12, Poimen 111, Pambo 14, Sisoes 35, Sisoes 45. Sometimes it is extended to εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα ἵνα σωθῶ: X.47 (Macarius 23), X.169 (N 387), ***XVI.1*** (Antony 19), XX.13.15 (N 132 D), Macarius 25, Macarius 27. Only the three sayings I have indicated with italics give an answer in the form of a Bible text, or in a form where a Bible text is important.

[71] In LXX as well as in the NT, the normal use of the word πένθος is in describing grief at the loss of someone through death, grief in the face of destruction or because of losing one's honour. The only real exception to this is Jas 4:9, where the word is used in connection with repentance: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning (πένθος) and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." (Jas 4:8–10)

We find developed teachings on πένθος in relation to repentance in many of the writers of the early Christian ascetic tradition: Ephraem the Syrian, Evagrius, Cassian, Nilus, abba Isaiah, Antiochus, John Climacus, Isaac of Nineve, Barsanuphius and John. Also some of the major church fathers such as Origen, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of

this reading community's discourse. In many sayings, this kind of short quotation from the Bible would be followed by a question on the meaning of the quotation, or about the reference of one of the details, and then an answer to that question. Since no explanation follows on this biblical paraphrase, the saying is open to many interpretations. The referent is not stated, and this makes the use of Scripture in this saying something of a riddle. One may for example ask what "the house" and "Egypt" refer to.

Another way of interpreting the saying would be to take the substituted word, *penthos*, which has replaced the word for "a dead person", to suggest a hermeneutical key to the whole exodus story. Since this word is charged with meaning in the ascetic reading community, this single word places the story of the exodus within the whole discourse of *penthos*. This would mean that not only is the mourning in the Egyptian homes at the time of the exodus understood as the *penthos* of the monk, but the whole story of the exodus, and many of its details, is transformed to come to bear on the life of the audience. If the mourning in the Egyptian houses is *penthos*, one may ask what Egypt is, what the exodus is, what the desert is, who the wandering people are and so on. Such connotations in relation to this saying may seem far-fetched to a modern reader, but appear less so in light of the numerous sayings that interpret the story of the exodus as the way of the monk.[72]

One possible solution to the riddle, or maybe even the origin of the saying, can be found in the saying Moses 18. There abba Moses says: "When the hand of the Lord killed all the first-born in the land of Egypt, there was no house without a dead person." When asked what it means, he answers: "If they let us see our own sins, we do not see those of our

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Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom wrote and preached about *πένθος*. For references and a developed discussion on this, see Irénée HAUSHERR, *Penthos: La doctrine de componction dans l'Orient Chrétien* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 132; Rome: 1944). In *AP* we find this use of πένθος and πενθεῖν in many sayings, e.g., I.30, I.34, III.1, III.5, III.21, III.24, III.25, III.26, **III.28**, III.33, **III.43**, III.49 (where it is connected to κατανύξις), III.55, IV.88, V.46.34, V.53 (σχόλασον πενθῆσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίαις σου), XI.29 (Αἰτήσωμεν τὸν Θεὸν ἵνα αὐτὸς δώσῃ ἡμῖν πενθεῖν τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἁμαρτίας), XI.65.13,15, XIII.1.23, XV.24.21, XV.119, XVIII.53. The most explicit of these sayings, when it comes to expressing what *penthos* is, is XV.24. It is worth quoting at length: "The one who has obtained humility knows his own faults; and if compunction (πένθος) is joined to humility, and if both remain in him, … . The one who possesses compunction (πένθος) and humility does not care about the blame of humans. For they have become his full armour, they guard him from anger and revenge, and teach him to endure whatever happens to him. For what kind of blame or anger can reach the one who suffers compunction (τῷ πενθοῦντι) by his own faults before God?"

[72] III.45, IV.10, VII.36, X.130, X.145, **XV.68**, Moses 18. The first example is the one that most clearly indicates that the exodus story as a whole could be treated in this way.

neighbour. It is stupid for a person who has his own dead person, to leave that and go away to weep over the dead person of the neighbour. To die to your neighbour means to carry your own sins and not pay attention to everyone else and wonder if this one is good or bad." [73] In *AP*/G Moses 18, the original "no house without a dead person" has been kept. Changing the wording to "no house without grief/ compunction" in III.43 is a very condensed way of making the Bible text refer to crying over one's own sins, since that is the technical meaning the term *penthos* has come to have in *AP*.

What is also striking about this use of the story of the slaying of the Egyptians, is that a central teaching of *AP* and its readers is related not to something that happens to the Hebrew people but to the Egyptians, i.e., the reader is encouraged to identify the monastic context with that of the Egyptian households. The exodus story, and most New Testament and patristic interpretations of it, are composed in a way that encourages the reader to identify with the Hebrews. This is an exception, one which is fairly natural for a tradition rooted in the soil and sand of Egypt.

On a formal level, the function of the Bible in the saying is to be a direct answer to a question, i.e., the utterance of the Elder is basically a paraphrase of Ex 12.

When it comes to the techniques of contextualization used, the biblical passage is modified by substituting "a dead person" with "grief/ compunction (*penthos*)". This substitution is not far-fetched –there is grief

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[73] PG 65:289a–b: … Ὅτε γὰρ ἡ χεὶρ Κυρίου ἀπέκτεινε πᾶν πρωτότοκον ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ, οὐκ ἦν οἶκος οὗ οὐκ ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ τεθνηκώς. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ ἀδελφός· Τίς ἐστιν ὁ λόγος οὗτος; Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων ὅτι, Ἐὰν ἡμᾶς ἐάσωσιν ἰδεῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, οὐ μὴ ἴδωμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ πλησίον. Μωρία γάρ ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ, ἔχοντι τὸν ἑαυτοῦ νεκρὸν, ἀφεῖναι αὐτὸν καὶ ἀπελθεῖν κλαῦσαι τὸν τοῦ πλησίον. Τὸ ἀποθανεῖν δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ πλησίον σου, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ βαστάσαι σου τὰς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ ἀμεριμνεῖν ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου, ὅτι οὗτος καλός ἐστιν, ἢ οὗτος κακός …

Notes on the translation: The somewhat obscure beginning of the answer (Ἐὰν ἡμᾶς ἐάσωσιν ἰδεῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν) may be a copticism. A coptic *Vorlage* would use the 3rd person plural to signify the passive voice: "If we are granted to see our own sins…".

The expression τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ πλησίον σου occurs also in Moses 14, and similar expressions (such as τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου and γενοῦ νεκρὸς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου) are used in many instances in the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John (*Quaestiones et responsiones* 38, 55, 150, 151, 173, 505, 553, 567, et al.). The sense seems to be that of becoming like a dead person when it comes to concern for people's regard, when it comes to one's own concern for other people's sins and when it comes to having it one's own way. Letter 173 has a kind of definition: "To cut off your own will while being among people, this is dying away from them and to be among them as if you were not there."

Note the biblical echo in the second last line; Gal 6:5 reads: "ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει". The burden refers to sins and moral faults here too.

in a house where a member has died—and yet it brings in all the connotations of the ascetical teaching on *penthos*. This brings us to the most important way of contextualizing in this saying: substituting this word without giving an explanation to the quotation creates a kind of riddle, which the readers are invited to solve, presumably using their own knowledge of the tradition and its teachings on *penthos*, and using their own experiences and questions. It would have been a riddle even without the substitution. However, the substitution of this word gives a key to the solution of the riddle, it leads the attention of the readers in a certain direction, which does not solve the riddle but limits the number of solutions. Although Moses 18 may be the origin of this saying, in the version of the systematic collection, it is but one of many possible solutions to the riddle. We may say that this riddle technique is a way of inviting the readers to contextualize the biblical text themselves. The demand "Give me a word", a word which in *AP* is always one that can be applied in the life of the questioner and the reader, is answered by a biblical allusion which invites the questioner and the reader to work out the contextualization on their own. This contextualization involves, as we have seen, identifying not with the protagonists of the exodus story, the Hebrews, but with the Egyptians.

Saying IV.32: Nabozardan

intro *Εἶπεν ἀββᾶ Ποιμήν·*

A *Εἰ μὴ Ναβουζαρδὰν ὁ ἀρχιμάγειρος ἦλθεν,*
οὐκ ἂν ἐνεπρήσθη ὁ ναὸς Κυρίου ἐν πυρί.

B *Τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν·*
εἰ μὴ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις τῆς γαστριμαργίας ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ψυχήν,
οὐκ ἂν ὁ νοῦς κατέπιπτεν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τοῦ ἐχθροῦ.[74]

[74] ≈ Poimen 16.

intro Abba Poimen said:
A "If Nabozardan, the chief cook, had not come,
the temple of the Lord would not have been set on fire.[75]
B This means:
If the laziness of gluttony did not come to the soul,[76]
the mind would not fall in combat against the enemy."

Structure

The saying consists of paraphrase of a biblical story (A), which is followed by an explanation (B). The explanation is structured in much the same way as the paraphrase, but the biblical details have been replaced by those realities which are seen as the relevant referent of the Bible text.

Biblical material

The paraphrased narrative is that of the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian head of guard, Nabozardan, in 2 Kgs 25:8–21, with a parallel in Jer 52:12–26.

The saying is a figural explanation of the story of the conquest of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple by the Babylonian head of guard, Nabozardan in 2 Kgs 25. His title, the ambiguous רַב־טַבָּחִים (in the Masoretic Text, meaning head of guard or chief cook), is translated in the LXX with the equally ambiguous ὁ ἀρχιμάγειρος (normally meaning the chief cook, but could also denote the chief officer at oriental courts).[77] It is

[75] Cf. 2 Kgs 25:8–9 //.

[76] The word ἀνάπαυσις can denote the soul finding 'rest', but also the 'inactivity' of the body, the former being something positive and the latter negative. Since the word is used in the negative meaning here, the translation 'laziness' seems appropriate.

[77] Lemaire states that the LXX has translated רַב־טַבָּחִים as ὁ ἀρχιμάγειρος, "par ignorance de son sens technique", "L'abbé Poemen", 12. Jeremy Driscoll also claims that "the Greek translators have misunderstood the Hebrew expression", "Exegetical Procedures", 162. This does not seem to be the case. The LXX is consistent in giving ὁ ἀρχιμάγειρος as a translation of the titles רַב־טַבָּחִים (2 Kgs 25:8; 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 20; Jer 47:1, 2, 5; 48:10; 52:12, 14, 16, 19, 24, 26, Dan 2:14) and שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים (Gen 37:36; 39:1; 41:10, 12), also when it is clear what the title implies. Only in Gen 40:3–4 has the title שַׂר הַטַּבָּחִים been translated with other words, ὁ ἀρχιδεσμώτης and ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ, possibly to avoid a confusing pun on the title of the cupbearer, ὁ ἀρχιοινοχόος, mentioned in those verses, or because the relations between the persons bearing the different titles is unclear in the Hebrew text here. According to LSJ, the term had a secondary technical meaning in Greek too, and not only in the LXX: a great officer in oriental courts (LSJ, s.v., where examples are taken from Josephus and Plutarch). The ignorance would rather have been on the part of the readers of the LXX.

possible that the technical meaning "chief officer at oriental courts" was less known among some readers of the LXX. In any case, the fact that the title could have connotations to the art of cooking, together with the fact that the title is repeated 6 times in those few verses of 2 Kgs (7 times in the parallel of Jer 52:12–26) made the narrative apt as a figural story about the dangers of gluttony.[78]

In the paraphrase (A), the word for "the temple" is changed from "τὸν οἶκον" of the LXX to "ὁ ναὸς" to facilitate a pun on "νοῦς".[79]

Jeremy Driscoll suggests the importance of the verb καταπίπτειν, which does not occur in the biblical narrative, being used to describe how one "falls" in the battle with the enemy. The verb is often used in Christian literature, and elsewhere, to refer to how the soul "falls".[80]

Analysis

The Bible story is connected to the referent already in the way in which it is paraphrased. The paraphrase not only states that it was the "chief cook" who burnt down the temple, but it is formulated in the form of a conditional clause: "If he had not come, the temple would not have been set on fire." This way of formulating the paraphrase creates a focus on the chief cook and the temple, and is a preparation for the application of the biblical text to the theme. The different parts of the theme in part B mirror the formulation of the paraphrase and its biblical details, and so the message is conveyed; no further explanation is needed.

As we have seen, the personification of Nabozardan involved exploiting the ambiguity of his title. Another key to a figural reading is the pun on the words "temple" (ναός) and "mind" (νοῦς). The pun is facilitated by the biblical background where the human person is treated as a temple of God, which must not be ruined.[81]

As pointed out above, Driscoll has suggested that also the use of the verb καταπίπτειν creates a link between the biblical story and the teaching on vices.[82]

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[78] Nabozardan is treated as a personification of gluttony also in IV.90.

[79] Also pointed out by Lemaire and Driscoll in their analyses of this saying.

[80] Driscoll, "Exegetical Procedures", 163. Driscoll suggests that this is something specific for the tradition of Origen, especially in connection with the "mind" (νοῦς). An initial search on the TLG (11 April 2007) would suggest that it is more commonly connected to the "soul" (ἡ ψυχή), both in the Origen tradition (Evagrius et al.), by other Christian authors, and by non-Christian authors (Philo et al.).

[81] 1 Cor 3:16–17; 1 Cor 6:19–20; 2 Cor 6:16–7:1.

[82] The verb occurs in just one more place in *AP*/GS, *viz*. in V.34 (N 393), where it denotes how a monk "falls" in the passion of fornication.

The main teaching of the saying is that if the vice of gluttony is defeated, the mind (νοῦς) will not "fall". On the surface, however, the biblical text is not used as a proof-text for that message, but appears to be the centre of attention and the starting point for an explanation. The referent of the Bible text is pointed out very explicitly: the biblical paraphrase is followed by the phrase "This is …", and the explicitly stated referent. There is a focus on details: the title of Nabozardan as "the chief cook", and the pun on temple/mind (νοῦς/ ναός), make the biblical text refer to the message.

Saying IV.60: The slandering serpent

intro	*Εἶπε πάλιν·*
A	*Ψιθυρίσας ὁ ὄφις τὴν Εὔαν ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου ἐξέβαλε.*
B	*Τούτου οὖν ὅμοιός ἐστι καὶ ὁ τοῦ πλησίον καταλαλῶν·*
C	*τὴν γὰρ ψυχὴν τοῦ ἀκούοντος ἀπολλύει καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οὐ διασώζει.*[83]
intro	He also said:
A	"By slandering[84] the serpent expelled Eve from Paradise.[85]
B	The one who speaks evil[86] of his neighbour is also like him.
C	For he ruins the soul of the listener and does not save his own."

Structure

The saying begins with a short paraphrase of Gen 3:1–5 (A). This is followed by a claim in the form of an analogy, stating that a slanderer is like the serpent in the garden of Eden (B). The grounds for the claim are

[83] ≈ Hyperechios 5.

[84] The verb ψιθυρίζειν means to whisper. The verb and its derivatives came to be used early also for slandering, cf. LSJ, s.v. ψιθυρίζω 2, and derivatives. Later, in the LXX and NT, this meaning of the word became common (Ps 40:8, Sir 5:14, 21:28, 28:13, *Pss. Sol.* 12:1–4, Rom 1:29, 2 Cor 12:20, and also in Plutarch and later texts). It is used on a few occasions by church fathers to describe the talk of the snake in Paradise: John Chrysostom [Dubia], *In Psalmum 118*: Αὐτὸς γὰρ πρῶτος ψευσάμενος ἐψιθύρισε τῇ Εὔᾳ (PG 55:684d), and *In Zacchaeum publicanum*: σπεῦσον, κατάβηθι πρὸ τοῦ αὐτὸν ψιθυρίζειν τῇ ψυχῇ σου, ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς Εὔας πείσας αὐτὴν γεύσασθαι τῆς γλυκείας ἡδονῆς (PG 61:768c); John of Damascus, *Sacra parallela*: Αἱ γυναῖκες τὰς φλυαρίας ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν παυσάτωσαν, καὶ τοὺς ψιθυρισμοὺς, μνημονεύουσαι πῶς τῇ Εὔᾳ ψιθυρίσας ὁ πονηρὸς, ἐξέβαλε τοῦ παραδείσου (PG 95:1313b). Note how also John of Damascus warns against slandering in connection with this.

[85] Cf. Gen 3:1–5.

[86] The verb καταλαλεῖν in classical texts means to talk or babble loudly, sometimes also to rail at someone, cf. LSJ, s.v. In the LXX and in the NT, καταλαλεῖν could mean to speak evil of or slander on someone (Num 12:8, Ps 100:5, Jas 4:11, 1 Pet 2:12, 3:16), καταλαλιά could mean evil report or slander (Wis 1:11, 1 Pet 2:1) and κατάλαλος could mean slanderous (Rom 9:30). The words were used in this way also in patristic times, of which examples can be found in Lampe s.v.

then stated by spelling out a similarity between the serpent (A) and a slanderer (B).

Biblical material

There is no introductory formula to A, but the short paraphrase is still obvious thanks to the use of proper nouns and almost proper nouns: "Eve", "the serpent" and "Paradise". Although in the LXX the verb is not used in this context, the slandering (ψιθυρίζειν) obviously refers to the snake speaking evil of God.

Analysis

The subject matter of this saying is that of speaking evil. It is expressed using two synonyms: the word ψιθυρίζειν is used for describing the action of the serpent in the biblical narrative (A), the word καταλαλεῖν is used to describe that of a person in the reading community (B). This theme of speaking evil of others is very common in the teaching of the early Christian ascetic traditions.[87]

The argument here is that speaking evil of someone is to behave in the same manner as that of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. This argument is expressed by making an explicit analogy (τούτου οὖν ὅμοιός ἐστι καὶ …) between the snake slandering to Eve (A) and a person speaking evil of a neighbour. This analogy is possibly strengthened through a wordplay on the verb ψιθυρίζειν which can mean both "to whisper" and "to slander".[88] In this way the snake is used as *a cautionary example*; not, however, as an example of how one can be seduced, but an example of how one can seduce others. The example has a strong emotive force, both because the serpent in the narrative personifies evil, and because the mouth of the serpent emits poison.

At the same time as providing an emotive example to the teaching on speaking evil, the allusion opens for a new perspective on the reading of Gen 3. Nothing is really done to change the biblical narrative as such, but

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[87] In *AP*/GS it is treated in I.21, I.31, I.32, *IV.59*, *V.6*, IX.11, IX.12, IX.25, X.12, X.49, *X.128*, *X.159*(=*XXI.64*), *X.165*, XI.48, XI.50, *XXI.2*, *XXI.27*. (Sayings indicated by numbers in italic treat speaking evil as their main theme.) Of sayings in *AP*/G which are not included in GS there are also John the Short 25 and Or 15. If we add the verb συκοφαντεῖν, meaning 'to accuse falsely, slander', we can add the following sayings: XV.39, XVI.29, *XVI.30*, *XIX.13*. The subject is treated extensively in Dorotheus of Gaza's teachings to his disciples, especially in the sixth speech "On not judging your neighbour" (§ 69–78). In the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John it occurs in many letters. The following treat it as their major theme: 296, 297, 559, 560, 561, 608.

[88] The phonetics of the verb is very similar to that of the normal verb for the hissing of a snake: συρίζειν. That would have facilitated a wordplay.

there is an unexpected change of focus where the reader is invited to identify with a different actor than one would expect. Interpreting the story of the Fall would usually involve identifying Adam and Eve with human beings in general and identifying the snake with the devil or with evil forces. Here the surprising thing is that also the behaviour of the snake is treated as referring to human beings. Using the concept of role or character (πρόσωπον) presented in other sayings,[89] we can say that the snake takes on the role of a person (perhaps more specifically a monk) who speaks evil of others. In that sense it involves a change of actor. Taking this as a moral exhortation means identifying with the snake as a cautionary example. To speak evil of someone means behaving like the serpent, which is destructive in two ways: it has negative consequences for the one who listens (just as it did for Eve in the narrative), as well as for oneself (as it did for the serpent in the narrative, who was condemned, among other things, to live in enmity with mankind).

Saying V.11: The lion and the bear

intro *Ἄλλος ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησε τὸν ἀββᾶ Ποιμένα λέγων·*
A *Τί ποιήσω ὅτι πολεμοῦμαι εἰς τὴν πορνείαν καὶ ἁρπάζομαι εἰς τὸν θυμόν;*
Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων·
B1 *Διὰ τοῦτο ὁ Δαυὶδ ἔλεγεν ὅτι·*
«Τὸν μὲν λέοντα ἐπάτασσον, τὴν δὲ ἄρκον ἀπέπνιγον»·
B2 *τουτέστι*
τὸν μὲν θυμὸν ἀπέκοπτον, τὴν δὲ πορνείαν ἐν κόποις ἔθλιβον. [90]

intro Another brother asked abba Poimen:
A "What shall I do, for I am forced into fornication and I am seized into anger."
The Elder said to him:
B1 "Therefore David said:
'*I hit the lion and I strangled the bear*', [91]
B2 which means:
I cut off anger and I brought down fornication with hard labour."

Structure

[89] E.g., **XVIII.34**. See also the discussion of this concept in chapter four.

[90] ≈ Poimen 115.

[91] Cf. 1 Sam 17:34b–35. … ὅταν ἤρχετο ὁ λέων καὶ ἡ ἄρκος καὶ ἐλάμβανεν πρόβατον ἐκ τῆς ἀγέλης, 35 καὶ ἐξεπορευόμην ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπάταξα αὐτὸν καὶ ἐξέσπασα ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἰ ἐπανίστατο ἐπ᾽ ἐμέ, καὶ ἐκράτησα τοῦ φάρυγγος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπάταξα καὶ ἐθανάτωσα αὐτόν· … .

The saying consists of a question (A) and an answer (B). The answer consists of a Bible quotation and a phrase which connects it to the question (B1) and an explanation of the quotation (B2).

Biblical material

The quotation has a wording different from that of LXX, combining words in vv. 34 and 35 of 1 Sam 17. It is introduced by a phrase of quotation. The verb "hit" (πατάσσειν) is changed from the aorist to the imperfect, and "then I caught hold of his throat, and smote him, and slew him" is simplified to "and I strangled the bear". In 1 Sam it is not specified that David treated the lion in one way and the bear in another, but both actions refer to "when a lion came and a she-bear, and took a sheep out of the flock ... ". Here, a correspondence is presupposed between the order in which the two animals are mentioned, and the order in which the two actions are described.

Analysis

In the context of the LXX, the words are spoken by David to convince Saul that he can fight well against Goliath. Although he is just a "young boy" (παιδάριον), he has killed both a lion and a bear when they tried to attack the sheep of his father that he was herding. And he says that: "The Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine."[92]

In the saying the questioner is concerned about being "forced" into fornication and "overcome" by anger. The biblical quotation provides an image for this issue, rather than a solution. However, some parts of the biblical context of the story seem to bear on this new context. If those parts are taken into account, the answer is more relevant. One part is that David was just a "young boy", and was therefore not expected to be able win against a lion, a bear, or Goliath. He did this *despite* the fact that he was just a young boy. The questioner seems to doubt his own capacity to fight against the vices he mentions. The biblical story provides him with an encouraging exemplar in that matter.

The other part of the context which has bearing on the issue, is David's statement that it was "the Lord" who delivered him. The reader of the saying is perhaps expected to remember that part of the story too.

The image provided by the biblical quotation makes the issue of the questioner more dramatic. Speaking about being "overcome" by a vice is

[92] v. 37.

close to personifying vice. Poimen makes the personification even more concrete by comparing the vices to the animals that David fought against. The animals become vivid images for the violence of the attack of the vices, and David's struggle against them becomes a vivid image of the brutality of the response required.[93]

The connection between the animals and these specific vices do not seem to be purely arbitrary. A tradition of seeing the lion as a symbol for violent anger goes back to biblical texts.[94] A connection between on the one hand the bear who has a great deal of flesh, and on the other the "desires of the flesh" is made by Hesychius of Jerusalem.[95]

The point of the saying appears to be that vices can be as violent as brutal animals, and that they need to be fought against equally brutally. The biblical quotation provides a vivid image for this. The vices mentioned in the question, and the fight against them, are pointed out as referents of the Bible text. That laborious fight may not be only a spiritual one. The "labour" (κόποι) may refer also to manual labour, which was sometimes suggested as a remedy against temptations in ascetical literature. Also, if some details of the biblical context not mentioned in the saying are taken into account, the answer becomes more relevant: for example, David was young just as the questioner seems to feel inexperienced and weak in the ascetic practices.

Saying VI.6: Sell the Gospel

intro *Εἶπε γέρων ὅτι*
A *ἐκέκτητό τις τῶν ἀδελφῶν Εὐαγγέλιον μόνον,*
καὶ τοῦτο πωλήσας ἔδωκεν εἰς τροφὴν τοῖς πένησιν
ἄξιον μνήμης ἐπιφθεγξάμενος ῥῆμα·
B *Αὐτὸν γάρ,*
φησί,[96]
τὸν λόγον πεπώληκα τὸν λέγοντά μοι·
«Πώλησόν σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα καὶ δὸς πτωχοῖς.»[97]

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[93] The images are equally vivid in *AP*/G Poimen 178: "When David was fighting with the lion, he seized it by its throat and killed it immediately. So if we seize our own throat and belly, with the help of God, we shall win over the invisible lion" (PG 65:365a).

[94] Num 23:24, Ps 7:3, 10:9, 16:12, 21:14, 56:5, Hos 5:14, 11:10, Am 3:8, Mic 5:7, Joel 1:6, Zeph 3:3, Isa 5:29, 31:4, Jer 4:7, 12:8, 49:19, 50:17, 44, 51:38, Ezek 22:25, 1 Pet 5:8.

[95] Hesychius, *Scholia on the Minor Prophets*, Amos 5:19: καὶ ἐπηνέχθη τὸ τῶν ἡδονῶν τῶν σαρκικῶν ἔκλημα· ἡ γὰρ ἄρκος πολύσαρκος. The same verse of Amos mentions the lion, which Hesychius interprets as violence and greediness (ὠμότης and ἁρπαγή). I am grateful to Mats Eriksson, Uppsala University, for pointing out this parallel and sharing the text from his forthcoming edition of Hesychius.

[96] I have corrected the punctiation of Guy's edition here. The comma should not come between Αὐτόν and γάρ (as in Guy), but between γάρ and φησί.

intro An Elder said:
A "A brother owned nothing but a Gospel.
He sold it, gave [the money] to feeding the poor
and uttered this memorable sentence:
B 'For it is that very word I have sold,'
he said,
'the one that spoke to me:
Sell everything and give to the poor.' " [98]

Structure

First (A) the Elder tells of a brother who owned nothing but a Gospel. This, his only possession, he sells, and donates the money to feeding the poor. Then follows a statement (B) from the same brother, motivating (γάρ) why he has sold the Gospel: it was the Gospel itself that told him to sell it.

Biblical material

There is an explicit verbatim quotation from Matthew, and the phrase "the word which told me: …" is used as an introductory formula. It is taken from the story of the rich young man who asks Jesus what he should do to be saved. That is the story that according to Athanasius was read when Antony entered the church, and which resulted in him giving away all his land to the villagers and all his possessions to the poor.[99]

The quotation functions in a rather complex way. There is no structural marker to indicate that the quotation is used to motivate and support the brother's action, except for the word "to sell" from the brother's description of what he has done which is repeated in the quotation. That is in fact a discrete indication that the biblical text supports the action. Changing the order of the clauses and simplifying a little, we see this more clearly:

> The word spoke to me: "Sell everything and give to the poor".
> I sold that very word.

So on this structural level, the quotation is used to explain and support the brother's action.

Analysis

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[97] = N 392.
[98] Matt 19:21.
[99] *Vita Antonii*, 2.2–5.

Reading the saying backwards, we see that the depiction of what the brother does is simply an implementation of the Bible verse. This is stated explicitly by the brother when he says "For it is that very word I have sold, the one that tells me …". But there appears to be more to it than that. To make the connection between the Bible text and the act it would have been enough for the brother to say: "For Jesus has told me/us to…". Instead, the Elder stresses that something more is implied here, both by saying "that *very* (αὐτόν) word" and by making the connection between the word which has been *sold* and the word which has *said* he should do just that. It is as if there is an enigma to be pondered on.

One way of viewing this is simply to see it as a kind of joke. The very book that is so precious to the brother—he will follow whatever it asks him to do—is the one that commands him to get rid of it. Another way of seeing it is that it indirectly poses and answers a question about priorities: What is most important, the Gospel itself or putting it into practice? In fact these views are two different ways of expressing the same thing: there is a paradox inherent in the fact that the brother sells the very Gospel that tells him to sell all his possessions. By presenting it as a paradox without giving a further comment to it, the reader is invited to reflect on the relation between the brother's reading of the Gospel and his acting on the words of the same book.

The saying can be paraphrased: A brother sold his only possession, a copy of a gospel, (because) that very gospel told him to sell everything and give to the poor. The message is similar in the saying which follows this one in the chapter on dispossession (VI.7). There, the memorable sentence of the Elder is: "The acts are good, but dispossession is superior to all."[100] Also that saying ends with the owner selling his books, giving what they were worth to the poor.

To sum up, we can say that this saying takes the biblical text paraenetically at face-value, and makes it more specified by showing how it is put into practice. This leads to a paradox (and maybe a joke), which the reader is invited to reflect upon. We can also describe it as a motivation from biblical material involving an identification with a biblical person, in that the Elder says that the gospel "spoke to *me*" the words that are directed to the rich young man.

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[100] Καλαὶ μὲν αἱ πράξεις, ἀλλὰ μείζων πάντων ἐστὶν ἡ ἀκτημοσύνη. This echoes 1 Cor 13:13: νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.

Saying VII.47: Lazarus, the poor man

intro *Ἔλεγέ τις τῶν γερόντων περὶ Λαζάρου τοῦ πτωχοῦ ὅτι*
A *οὐχ εὑρίσκεται μίαν ἀρετὴν ποιήσας,*
πλὴν τοῦτο μόνον εὑρίσκομεν εἰς αὐτόν,
ὅτι οὐδέποτε κατὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἐγόγγυσεν
ὡς μὴ ποιοῦντος μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος,
ἀλλὰ μετ᾽ εὐχαριστείας τὸν πόνον αὐτοῦ ἐβάσταζεν·
B *διὰ τοῦτο ὁ Θεὸς προσελάβετο αὐτόν.* [101]

intro One of the Elders said of Lazarus, the poor one: [102]
A "He is not found to have practised any virtue,
only this do we find concerning him:
that he never complained against the Lord
for not showing him mercy,
but carried his suffering with thanksgiving.
B That is why God received him."

Structure

In part A, after a clear allusion to Lazarus, the Elder makes a judgement of what is "found" in Lazarus. In part B he then states that that was the reason why he was received in heaven.

Biblical material

The allusion is obviously to the story in Luke 16:19–31. Verse 20 speaks of "A poor man named Lazarus", and v. 22 tells of how he was taken by the angels to the place beside Abraham. The allusions to those two verses frame the rest of the saying, which does not consist of any further biblical material. However, the verb γογγύζειν (to complain) is used often in the Bible to describe the negative reaction of the Israelites during the exodus.[103]

Analysis

The starting point is the story about Lazarus. And the subject matter seems to be an inferred question: "Why did the Lord receive him?" since that is the question which is answered according to the last line (B). This inferred question is answered in a fairly detailed way, saying that he did not practise any particular virtues, but what was good about him was

[101] ≈ N 376. The first line and a half of section A is missing in the version of the anonymous collection. It also has an extra line before section B: καὶ τὸν πλούσιον οὐ κατέκρινεν.

[102] Cf. Luke 16:19–31.

[103] E.g., Ex 16:7–12; 17:3; Num 11:1; 14:2, 27, 29, 36; 16:41; 17:6, 20; Ps 105:25; Sir 46:7; 1 Cor 10:10.

that he carried his suffering without complaining, even giving thanks in his suffering.

This is a creative form of exegesis, since in Luke there is no mention of his lack of virtues, or whether he had complained to the Lord, or whether he really bore his suffering with a thankful mind. There is a parallel to this in John Chrysostom's first sermon in the collection *De Lazaro* (PG 48:963–1054). There Chrysostom grounds his statement that Lazarus did not complain about his situation or about the lack of providence from God, on the fact that the "parable" tells of Lazarus being led away in triumph by angels: "If he had been a blasphemer, he would not have come to enjoy such honour."[104] In *AP* there is no such explicit explanation. This is however typical of these short sayings, which are at times extremely condensed, in a way which is more apt for memorization than for easy comprehension. We should be aware, also when reading other sayings, that at times there may be more or less exegetical work between the lines in the sayings, whether the compiler has been aware of it or not.

The main message of the saying is that Lazarus carried his suffering without complaining but rather giving thanks. We can assume, from what we have said about the purpose of collecting the sayings,[105] that this is said for the purpose of making him an exemplar for the audience, one of enduring one's suffering. The biblical allusion functions as a starting point for an explanation in making that argument (The Lord received him. Why did he receive him? Because…). At least, that is the function on a structural level. However, one of the ways of contextualizing the Bible is that of a kind of a deductive reasoning,[106] more explicitly spelled out in the sermon of John Chrysostom. The ground for the claim of the saying is that of the Bible text, although that ground is not explicitly stated in that text.

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[104] PG 48:975. Ὁ δὲ πένης ἔῤῥιπτο παρὰ τὸν πυλῶνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὔτ᾽ ἀπεδυσπέτησεν, οὔτ᾽ ἐβλασφήμησεν, οὔτ᾽ ἠγανάκτησεν· οὐκ εἶπε πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, ὦ πολλοὶ λέγουσι· … Ἆρα ταῦτα προνοίας; ἆρα ἐφορᾷ δίκη τις τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πράγματα; Οὐδὲν τούτων οὐκ εἶπεν, οὐκ ἐνενόησε. Πόθεν τοῦτο δῆλον; Ἐξ ὧν ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν οἱ ἄγγελοι δορυφοροῦντες, καὶ εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ ἀποκατέστησαν· οὐκ ἂν δέ, εἰ βλάσφημος ἦν, τοσαύτης ἀπέλαυσε τιμῆς.

[105] The section 1.2: "Genre" in chapter two.

[106] Once again, I use a category of Frances Young ("deductive reasoning") to see what kind of perspective informs the reading of the Bible text. Cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 206–207.

Saying VII.59: Like softened wax

intro *Εἶπε γέρων·*
A *Ὃν τρόπον μὴ θερμανθεὶς ἢ μαλαχθεὶς ὁ κηρὸς*
οὐ δύναται τὴν ἐπιτιθεμένην αὐτῷ σφραγῖδα δέξασθαι,
οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰ μὴ διὰ πόνων καὶ ἀσθενειῶν δοκιμασθῇ,
οὐ δύναται χωρῆσαι τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
B1 *Διὰ τοῦτο*
ὁ μὲν Κύριος λέγει τῷ θεσπεσίῳ Παύλῳ·
«Ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου,
ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται.» [107]
B2 *Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ ἀπόστολος καυχᾶται λέγων·*
«Ἥδιστα οὖν καυχήσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου
ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ.»

intro An Elder said:
A "Just as wax which has not been heated or softened
cannot receive the seal which is applied to it,
so man, unless he is tested through toil and weaknesses,
cannot hold the power of Christ.[108]
B1 That is why
the Lord says to the divine Paul:
'My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness.'[109]
B2 [and why]
the apostle himself boasts by saying:
'So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses,
so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.' " [110]

Structure

The saying begins with a claim which is expressed as an analogy (A). This claim is then used as a key to explain the two biblical sentences (B1, B2).

Biblical material

The two sentences taken from 2 Cor 12:9 both have introductory phrases and they follow the NT verbatim.

Those biblical quotations can make a reader alert to biblical allusions and echoes present also in the first part of the saying.

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[107] In the first biblical sentence ἡ δύναμίς μου, instead of just ἡ δύναμις, is a textual variant attested in some MSS (including ℵ², A, D² and *Byz*) of NT. Most of those MSS also have τελειουται (is made perfect), as this saying has it, instead of τελειται (is accomplished), as the most reliable witnesses have it.

[108] Cf. 2 Cor 1:22 (and Eph 1:13; 4:30; Rev 7:3–4; Ezek 11:19; 36:26).

[109] 2 Cor 12:9a.

[110] 2 Cor 12:9b.

The image of the seal is fairly common in biblical literature. Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30 describe the Holy Spirit with the image of a seal, and Revelations 7:3–4 speaks of the servant of God being marked with a seal.[111] It appears, however, that especially 2 Cor 1:22 has inspired the initial claim of the saying. Here God is described as "putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment." There are many verses in the Bible that make a connection between power (δύναμις) and the Holy Spirit (πνεύμα ἅγιον).[112] And more specifically, patristic authors sometimes equate the power of Christ with the Holy Spirit.[113] Since the power (δύναμις) of Christ is related to his Spirit, there is a parallel not only between the first part of (A) in the saying and the first part of 2 Cor 1:22 ("putting his seal on us"),[114] but also between the second part of (A) and the second part of 2 Cor 1:22 ("and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment").[115]

Analysis

The main message is expressed in the first sentence: the heart of man needs to be softened like wax through toil and weaknesses to be able to hold the seal of the power of Christ. The role of the Bible text in relation to that message is ambivalent, since the conjunction "that is why" (Διὰ τοῦτο) can be understood in two ways: on the one hand the biblical text exemplifies the wisdom of the initial sentence, on the other hand the initial sentence provides an explanation for the biblical texts. From the latter perspective, it could just as well have been expressed by starting with the biblical quotations and then introducing the analogy with another conjunction: "… because just as wax …". It is probably best to accept both these roles, i.e., the claim of the Elder and the claim of the

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[111] For a study on the image of the seal in both non-Christian and Christian literature, see Franz J. DÖLGER, *Sphragis: Eine altchristliche Taufbezeichnung in ihren Beziehungen zur profanen und religiösen Kultur des Altertums* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1911). For a study of the use of the image in patristic literature, see G. W. H. LAMPE, *The Seal of the Spirit. A study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (2d ed.; London: SPCK, 1967).

There may be an echo of Ezek 11:19 and 36:26 which speak of receiving "a new spirit", and of hearts of stone being transformed to hearts of flesh. The transformation from cold, hard wax to heated, soft wax is somewhat similar to the imagery of the heart being transformed from stone to flesh.

[112] E.g. Luke 1:17, 35; 4:14; Acts 1:8; 10:38; Rom 1:4; 15:13; 15:19; 1 Cor 2:14; Gal 3:5; Eph 3:16; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 1:7.

[113] Lampe, s.v. δύναμις B.14.

[114] 2 Cor 1:22a: ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς …

[115] 2 Cor 1:22b: … καὶ δοὺς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

Bible are related to each other without explicitly saying that one is used to explain or exemplify the other.

It is more clarifying to think in terms of referent. The concept of 'weakness' makes the saying coherent. To understand the implications of this fully, we need to consider the background to the word 'weakness' in the desert tradition.

There seems to have been an ideology in the Christian monastic tradition of the Egyptian desert, which saw suffering as something profitable. Often the word 'toil' could be used as a technical or codified way of referring to that ideology of suffering and affliction.[116] Here toil is connected to weakness in the first sentence. In this way 'weakness' is also charged with the connotations of 'toil', which connects the text from 2 Cor 12 to this ideology. The Bible is contextualized, making it refer to the monk's experience of ascetical 'toil' and the humiliating 'weakness' that he could experience in that. The point is similar to that made in **XV.68**, where the humble heart is compared to the rock which was hard but was transformed into a spring of water when Moses struck it. And of course, for the reading community of the developing monastic traditions, the Bible passages which speak of hard hearts which are transformed to hearts of flesh would resonate in the background.

The initial claim is dressed in biblical language, which gives the impression of using Scripture to explain Scripture. However, the analogy of the wax being softened is an innovation, creating intertextual links between the quotations and the passages about the seal. In fact, we can conclude that the whole saying is about these intertextual links: they provide answers that fill gaps in the biblical quotations. Weakness is needed for the power of the Lord to be perfected, because man needs to be softened like wax to be imprinted. And Paul boasts of his weakness for the same reason: the power of Christ dwells in him thanks to his

[116] Cf. **I.23**, where Poimen says that the three instruments for a solitary life are poverty, affliction (θλῖψις), and discernment and then goes on to say that Job is the image of suffering/toil (πόνος), suggesting that the two words are synonymous, that they can be used to describe the kind of experience that Job suffered and that it is something helpful for the recluse. The word κόπος can also be used in this way. There are many saying that use both πόνος and κόπος in this way. To name but a few, cf. *AP*/G Elias 7, where the toil/suffering (κόπος) of the believer is used to describe a monk who is tempted, an affliction which is compared to the crucifixion of Jesus; John the Short 37, where it is said that the monk "is" toil/suffering (κόπος), since he toils/is afflicted in all he does; Theodora 6, which speaks of "asceticism, vigils and toil/suffering (πόνος)", where toil/suffering is related to reclusion; John the Eunuch 1, where doing the work of God in peace is contrasted to doing it laboriously (μετὰ κόπου); Poimen 44 where Poimen says that he has gone to the desert to endure toil/suffering (κόπος), and since there is no more of that where he is staying he must move on.

weakness, just like wax, thanks to its softness, can be imprinted by a seal. In fact, the text of 2 Cor 1:22, which echoes in the initial claim, is also affected by this link. "But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first instalment" is given the following meaning: "… by putting his seal on us, when we have been softened by toil and weakness, and giving us his Spirit in our hearts, as such a seal, which can only be received by a heart which has been softened by toil and weakness."

As we can see, the function of the quotation is not only that of supporting by providing an example for the initial claim, or of being the object of an explanation. It also creates an intertextual link which generates new meaning. And it provides authority to the teaching on weakness in this saying.

To sum up, we can say that the point of the saying is that the power of Christ can only be received by those who have a heart softened by toil and weakness. The functions of the biblical quotations in relation to that point are that of being the object of an explanation, at the same time giving authority to the teaching on toil and weakness and providing an exemplar in the form of Paul. The ways to contextualize the quotations are: relating a central concept in the quotations to a concept which is central in the new context ("weakness" is related to "toil"), and creating novel intertextual links between an image from culture and an image from the Bible, which generate meaning relevant to the new context.

Saying VIII.30: Sowing in the furrow

intro *Εἶπε πάλιν·*
A *Ὁ φανερῶν καὶ δημοσιεύων τὰ καλὰ αὐτοῦ ἔργα*
ὅμοιός ἐστι τῷ σπείροντι ἐπάνω τῆς γῆς,
καὶ ἐλθόντα τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατέφαγεν αὐτά·

B *ὁ δὲ κρύπτων τὴν πολιτείαν*[117] *αὐτοῦ*
ὡς ὁ ἐν αὔλαξι μέσον τῆς γῆς σπείρων,
ὃς καὶ θερίσει πολυπλασίονα.

intro [An Elder] also said:
A "He who shows his good deeds and makes them known[118]
is similar to the one sowing on top of the ground,
and the birds of the sky *came and ate it up*.[119]

B But he who covers his way of life[120]
is as the one sowing in furrows in the earth,
who shall harvest manifold."[121]

Structure

The line breaks and the division into two stanzas indicate two parallel sentences. The saying is structured as two parallel, antithetical sentences with a common pattern: subject–analogy–result. The first one refers to people who want to display their good deeds. These are compared to "the one sowing on top of the earth". The result is that the birds come to eat the seeds. The second sentence refers to those whose good deeds are hidden. These are compared to a sower who sows in a trench in the earth. The result is that they will harvest greatly.

Biblical material

There is no clear difference between the biblical material and the interpretation of it in this saying. There are no formulae of quotation or allusion, there is no statement which the biblical allusions should support, and there is no commentary to the allusions.

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[117] The word πολιτεία should be understood in the technical sense of the ascetic life-style. The word is used in this way throughout *AP,* and in other ascetical litterature. One famous example is the preface of Athanasius' *Vita Antonii.* The word ἐργασία which two MSS have instead in this saying, is also used in this way throughout *AP.*

[118] Cf. Matt 6:1–2, 5.

[119] Cf. Matt 13:3–5.

[120] Cf. Matt 6:4, 6. But also Matt 13:44: Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὑρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψεν (…).

[121] Cf. Matt 13:8 //. Cf. also Matt 6:1–6.

There is a distinct allusion to the parable of the sower in Matt 13:3–9. There is also a less obvious allusion to the saying of Jesus on almsgiving and prayer in Matt 6:1–6. These two texts are modified and combined. Basically, the first part in each sentence is an allusion to Matt 6, while the second and third parts are an allusion to Matt 13.

AP	Matt
(A) Ὁ φανερῶν καὶ δημοσιεύων τὰ καλὰ αὐτοῦ ἔργα	Cf. Matt 6:1a, 2a, 5a: [1]Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; ... [2]So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others ... [5]And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others…
ὅμοιός ἐστι τῷ σπείροντι	13:3b ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων τοῦ σπείρειν.
ἐπάνω τῆς γῆς,	13:4b ἃ μὲν ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, 13:5 ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη
καὶ ἐλθόντα τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατέφαγεν αὐτά·	4c καὶ ἐλθόντα τὰ πετεινὰ κατέφαγεν αὐτά. (Cf. Matt 6:1b, 2b, 5b: … you have no reward from your Father in heaven. … they have received their reward … they have received their reward.)
(B) ὁ δὲ κρύπτων τὴν πολιτείαν αὐτοῦ	Cf. Matt 6:4, 6 [4]ὅπως ᾖ σου ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη **ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ**· καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων **ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ** ἀποδώσει σοι … [6]σὺ δὲ ὅταν προσεύχῃ, εἴσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖόν σου καὶ κλείσας τὴν θύραν σου πρόσευξαι τῷ πατρί σου **τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ**· καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι.
ὡς ὁ ἐν αὐλαξι μέσον τῆς γῆς σπείρων,	13:8 ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν
ὃς καὶ θερίσει πολυπλασίονα.	καὶ ἐδίδου καρπόν, ὃ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὃ δὲ ἑξήκοντα, ὃ δὲ τριάκοντα. (Cf. Matt 6:4, 6: … ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι.)

Two additional echoes may be Matt 13:44 and John 12:24–25.

Analysis

The kernel of the saying can be stated thus: Good deeds that are exhibited vanish, those that are done in secret yield fruit. This is similar to the point of many of the other sayings which the redactors have placed under this chapter heading: "Not acting ostentatiously". Those surrounding sayings and the chapter heading help the reader grasp the point from the very beginning; the ambiguous first sentence is not ambiguous to the reader who knows what the sayings in this chapter are all about.

The subject matter of the saying (acting ostentatiously) is established in the first part of the first sentence, alluding thematically to Matt 6:1, 2, 5. This also provides the new reference of the Parable of the sower alluded to in the analogy. In the analogy the focus is not on what is sown but on who sows and how he does it. While in Matthew the interest is on the seed (at least in the allegorical interpretation of the parable), here the focus is on "the one sowing on the surface of the ground". The different scenarios are taken to refer to the manner in which a person performs good deeds. To sow on top of the ground becomes an image of how one performs the deeds ostentatiously. What is depicted in Matthew as a positive, or at least neutral, sower here becomes a bad sower. In fact, as we shall see, the one sower in Matthew here becomes two different and contrasting sowers.

If the first part of the sentence is seen as an allusion to Matt 6, the last part of the sentence can be seen as further connecting the two allusions, since it can be seen as both an allusion to Matt 13:4b, and a vague echo of the continuation of vv. 1, 2 and 5 of Matt 6—there will be no reward for the ostentatious.

In the analogy of the second sentence (B), the allusion to Matt 6 is clearer through the use of the verb κρύπτειν (to hide). The expression "the good earth" from the parable is changed to "furrows in the earth". This may be motivated from the farmer's experience: the good earth is that which is ploughed. It may also be that the expression is used to create a stronger connection between the image of the parable and the referent that is implied in the saying: what is put in a furrow is then covered and hidden, just as the good deeds should be hidden. Thirdly, it may be motivated by yet another Bible text: the parable of the hidden treasure.[122] There are passages in both *AP* and in the Gospel of Thomas that suggest that this parable was sometimes understood as describing a

[122] Matt 13:44 Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὑρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψεν,

hidden treasure found by a ploughman.[123] If that person hides the treasure again, it is presumably in the furrow he has ploughed. That interpretation creates a link to the present saying which also speaks of something valuable being hidden in a furrow and then yielding a profit. This echo is, however, rather vague and is not necessarily perceived even by a reader well acquainted with the Bible.

A fourth echo could be John 12:24–25: "… unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth (εἰς τὴν γῆν) and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." Once again we have the agricultural analogy of grain being sown into the earth and bearing much fruit. Also, this echo may provide a link between our two main allusions: it contrasts the grain falling into the ground and the one not falling into the ground in terms of winning and losing.

It seems that the parable has been treated without considering the "allegorizing" interpretation which is provided by the Synoptics. Since the parable proper is open to many interpretations, questions about references, such as "Who is the sower?" and "What is the seed?", then become very legitimate. The text of Matt 6 provides answers to those questions. An intertextual relation is established between Matt 6:1–6 and 13:3–9, with the result that the two texts contribute to produce new meaning in each other. This transforms the Parable of the sower and the references of its images: the sower (which has become two contrasting sowers) no longer refer(s) to God or the kingdom of God, but to any individual doing good works; the seeds no longer refer to the word of God, but to the good deeds / one's way of life; the place where it falls no longer refers to the potential for the word of God to become firmly rooted and growing in the life of a person, but to the manner in which the good deeds are performed, as exemplified in Matt 6.

In this way the Parable of the sower is transformed and becomes an exhortation to do one's good works discretely and not for the sake of showing off. This is the message of Matt 6, but by making this intertextual connection, the message is given a greater complexity of imagery, and through that a greater literary and rhetorical force. Matt 13 is given a new reference by connecting it to Matt 6, making the one sower into two contrasting sowers and focusing on their way of sowing, representing two different ways of doing good.

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[123] *AP*/G Cronius 4; *Gos. Thom.* 109: **ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϩⲧⲟⲟⲩⲥ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉϥⲥⲕⲁⲉⲓ ⲁⲃϥϯⲉ ⲁⲡⲉϩⲟ**. ET Thomas O. Lambdin: "And the one who bought it went ploughing and [found] the treasure."

Saying IX.15: Do not judge

intro *Εἶπε γέρων·*
A *Μὴ κρίνῃς τὸν πόρνον κἂν σὺ σώφρων ὑπάρχῃς·*
B *καὶ σὺ γὰρ ὡσαύτως τὸν νόμον παραβαίνεις.*
C1 *Ὁ γὰρ εἰπών·*
«Μὴ πορνεύσῃς»,
C2 *εἶπε καί·*
«Μὴ κρίνῃς».[124]

intro An Elder said:
A "You shall not judge a fornicator, even if you are chaste,
B for [then] you transgress the law just as much.[125]
C1 For he who said:
'You shall not commit fornication,' [126]
C2 also said:
'You shall not judge.' "[127]

Structure

The command in part A is followed by a motivation in B. This motivation is given a biblical ground through two quotations in C. The sense is this: you must not judge a fornicator, since he who gives the reason for such a judgement (i.e., Jesus) also prohibits judging other people.

Biblical material

The two quotations do not appear verbatim in the Bible. The first one is probably meant to quote Matt 5:27 ("You shall not commit adultery."), the second one Matt 7:1 with parallels ("Do not judge" in the singular).

The verb of the first quotation is changed from μοιχεύειν (commit adultery) to πορνεύειν (commit fornication).

The first quotation is stated in the aorist subjunctive, unlike the original, which is in the future tense. In this way, it is harmonized with the second quotation. The second quotation is modified so that it is stated in the singular, like the first quotation.

In Matt 5:27, Jesus is in fact explicitly citing Ex 20:14 ("You have heard that it was said: ..."); his own message is a more radical one. Still, it is treated as a word from Jesus, since it equates "the one who said" that command with the one who gave the following one, i.e., Jesus.

There is an echo of Rom 2, where Paul says that through our judgement on others we judge ourselves. In v. 23 he asks: "You that

[124] ≈ N 11.
[125] Cf. Rom 2:23.
[126] Cf. Matt 5:27, (Οὐ μοιχεύσεις).
[127] Cf. Matt 7:1 //, (Μὴ κρίνητε).

boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law (διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου)?" in language similar to part B of IX.15. Similar phrases occur in vv. 25 and 27.

Analysis

The change of the verb μοιχεύειν for πορνεύειν, which is a more common term in this tradition, is not surprising since what concerned these ascetics more than the sin of breaking a marriage was fornication. The theme of fornication is an important one in these traditions, to the point of being the subject matter of the whole of the fifth chapter in *AP*/GS.[128]

To follow the logic of this saying we need to imagine a person judging another person for fornication on biblical grounds. To combat such judgment the Elder uses another teaching of Jesus, also taken from the Sermon on the Mount. If one judges someone for disobeying the first command, that about fornication, one is in fact oneself disobeying the second command, that about not judging. So what is implied here is an example of what Elizabeth Clark calls using the Bible for "talking back"[129], i.e. using the Bible in polemical combat, a technique used in the traditions of both rabbinic exegesis and of the Gospels.[130] The second quotation is used polemically to correct a judgemental use of the first command. This is a deductive reasoning involving a comparison of texts.[131]

The rhetoric works well. Suggesting that the command from the Sermon on the Mount is used as a ground for a person who judges someone for fornication allows the Elder to combat the argument by using another command from that same Sermon. In this way the importance of not judging, often stressed in *AP* and other Christian ascetic texts from the same time and area, comes to the fore also in this chapter on fornication.[132] After reading this saying, it would be difficult for an individual in the original reading community to utilize any one of those teachings to judge someone.

It is worth noting that the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is referred to as "the law" (ὁ νόμος).

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[128] The verb μοιχεύειν does not occur in the systematic collection, the noun μοιχεία only once. The verb πορνεύειν occurs in 8 instances, the noun πορνεία 71 times, and the noun πορνείον once, according to the index of Guy, *Les Apophtegmes des Pères.*

[129] Clark, *Reading Renunciation,* 128–132.

[130] Cf. Matt 4:1–11.

[131] As described by Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 208 and mentioned above on p. 24.

[132] The whole of chapter IX of *AP*/GS is devoted to the subject, the title being "Ὅτι φυλάσσεσθαι χρὴ τοῦ μηδένα κρίνειν". Similarly, as mentioned earlier, the sixth discourse of Dorotheus of Gaza's *Doctrinae diuersae* is entitled "Περὶ τοῦ μὴ κρίνειν τὸν πλησίον".

Saying X.58: The axe

A *Ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν ἀββᾶ Ἄμμῶ*
περί τινων λογισμῶν ἀκαθάρτων ὧν γεννᾷ ἡ καρδία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
καὶ τῶν ματαίων ἐπιθυμιῶν.
B *Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ἀββᾶ Ποιμήν·*
«Μὴ δοξασθήσεται ἀξίνη ἄνευ τοῦ κόπτοντος ἐν αὐτῇ;»
Καὶ σὺ μὴ δῷς αὐτοῖς χεῖρα μηδὲ ἡδυνθῇς ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀργοῦσιν.[133]

A Abba Ammo asked him [Poimen]
about some impure thoughts which the human heart brings forth,
and about vain desires.
B And abba Poimen said to him:
"*Shall the axe be glorified without the one who hews with it?*[134]
Also you—do not put your hands to them and do not delight in them, and
they will lie idle ."

Structure

The question posed by Ammo (A) is answered by Poimen (B) by first citing a Bible text, and then applying it to Ammo and his question ("Also you …").

Biblical material

The quotation is a verbatim one from Isa 10:15, but without an introductory formula.[135] However, the enigmatic flavour of the sentence would signal to the reader that this is a quotation.

Analysis

In the original context of Isaiah, the axe in this verse refers to the Assyrians and "the one who hews" refers to "the Lord". Here the image, which is a metaphor already in its original setting, is contextualized: the referent of the proverbial-like sentence is explicitly stated,[136] and in this

[133] ≈ Poimen 15.

[134] Isa 10:15 LXX. The translations of Lemaire and Burton-Christie are far from precise here. (Lemaire translates following the MT of Isaiah: "Fanfaronne-t-elle la hache contre celui qui la brandit?" Burton-Christie follows Ward, who has a very free translation: "Is the axe of any use without someone to cut with it?")

[135] Burton-Christie claims that the quotation is "rendered fairly loosely", *Word in the Desert*, 202. This is not true. Just like the version treated here, the version in the alphabetical collection quotes the LXX verbatim, which is recognized also by Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 11. It is the connection to the original context which is rather loose, not the rendering. It is important to notice this: in many sayings, the images and wording can be kept intact, rather like proverbs, although the original context is no longer important.

[136] The proverbial-like nature of the quotation is pointed out also by Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 11.

way the reference of the metaphor is changed. What is implied is that the axe refers to "impure thoughts and vain desires" and the one who hews refers to the one whom the saying is directed to, i.e., "also you". On the narrative level of the saying this "you" refers to Ammo who has posed the question to Poimen. On the pragmatic level of the overarching collection of sayings, this "you" is the person who hears or reads the saying.

The verse is used independently of its original context. The proverbial-like sentence works well in its new setting, and for the one who spots the quotation—which is not so easy in this case—the authority of the Bible is tapped into the words of Poimen.

In the original context the rhetorical question points at the absurdity of the axe being praised and not the one who hews. It could be paraphrased thus: "If you think you are so self-sufficient—you will see that you are as dependent on me as the axe is on the one who hews." In this new context the rhetorical question is more like an objective statement. This could be paraphrased as: "Just as the axe cannot do anything without the one who hews, so the unclean thoughts and vain desires cannot achieve anything if you do not put them into action." In fact this new use of the metaphor could be said to be more vivid. The point, according to Poimen, is not whether the axe will be glorified or not; rather, it is whether one puts the axe to use or not. Just as the axe cannot make itself swing, so impure thoughts and vain desires cannot be put into action without the consent of the person who is tempted by them.

To sum up: The point of the saying is that impure thoughts and vain desires have no power in themselves, as long as the person troubled by them does not actively co-operate with them. The biblical text is used like a proverb to illustrate the point. It is brought to bear on the subject by explicitly stating what the images in the metaphor refer to: the axe is the thoughts and desires, the one hewing is the brother troubled by them.

Saying X.62: Does God forgive?

intro *Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν λέγων·*
A *Ἐὰν προληφθῇ ἄνθρωπος ἔν τινι παραπτώματι*
καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ,
συγχωρεῖ αὐτῷ ὁ Θεός;
Λέγει ὁ γέρων·
B *ἀλλ᾽ ὁ ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ποιεῖν,*
πολλῷ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς τοῦτο ποιήσει.
C *Ἐνετείλατο γὰρ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι*
ἕως ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά ἄφες τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου. [137]

intro A brother asked him [abba Poimen]:
A "If anyone is detected in a transgression[138]
and [then] returns,
does God forgive him?"
The Elder said:
B "Yes indeed: he who has commanded humans to do this,[139]
how much more will he not do so himself!
C For he commanded Peter:
'Forgive your brother as much as seventy-seven times.' "[140]

Structure

The brother's question (A) introduces the theme of forgiveness. The answer is given in the form of a rhetorical question (B) and a paraphrased version of Matt 18:22 (C). Part B refers to the initial question (τοῦτο). Part C is a proof from Scripture (γάρ) for that which has been expressed in part B.

Biblical material

The paraphrase of Matt 18 is marked by γάρ, by the mentioning of Peter and by the first part of the words of Jesus to Peter being a verbatim quotation.

The phrase from Gal 6:1 is a six word verbatim quotation, but there is very little that signals to the reader that it is biblical material. Reading the phrase in its biblical context does not shed any extra light on the saying. I consider it simply as a biblical echo.

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[137] ≈ Poimen 86.

[138] Gal 6:1.

[139] The ἀλλά in part B should probably be taken as strongly affirmative, in a way similar to 2 Cor 7:11, cf. BDAG, s.v. 5. For other examples of ἀλλά being used at the start of affirmative sentences, see LSJ, s.v. II.1.

[140] Matt 18:22.

Analysis

The question introduces the subject which becomes a key for reading the Bible text: will God forgive?[141] Before giving the text, Poimen bridges the gap between the key and the text by indirectly saying that God practises what he teaches. This is a virtue which is often expressed as an ideal for humans in the sayings. Men should not teach what they do not practise themselves.[142] But this appears to be the only saying where this is said of God. What is normally said of men is here applied to God. By first saying, or implying, that God himself practises what he commands others to do, the text is transformed. Abba Poimen invites the reader to read the text of the Bible in a new way. It becomes a reading where what Jesus ("God" according to the saying) says to Peter about forgiveness can be applied to God.[143] The text, which originally referred to how men should forgive, now refers also to how God forgives, through a deductive reasoning, a kind of *qal-wachomer* interpretation. What was originally an ethical teaching now says something about how God acts. This is a very rare instance of a Bible text being used to say something about God, rather than about how humans should act.

Lemaire has pointed out that the choice of text is rather unexpected. A more predictable choice would have been Matt 6:14 ("If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."). However, this response is more memorable.[144] This is a tendency in many of the sayings: rather than choosing a biblical text which would conform best with the message, one is chosen which is more striking, unexpected, or vivid.

The message of the saying can be expressed: since God has commanded humans to forgive abundantly, he will do so himself too. The Bible is used to support that message. This is rather unusual, since the Bible is normally used to support ethical and ascetic teachings.

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[141] The same question is also the starting point in X.176. There a soldier asks an Elder whether God receives penitence (μετάνοια).

[142] See *AP*/GS I.15 (Cassian 5), X.72 (Poimen 25). See also Poimen 117, Poimen 188 (supp.Guy #1), Poimen 197 (supp.Guy #10).

[143] Sometimes in *AP* no distinction is made by the words of Jesus and any divine word in the Bible. Cf. **IX.15**.

[144] Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 31. I quote Lemaire rather than Burton-Christie here, since virtually all of Burton-Christie's reflections on this saying, which appear in *Word in the Desert*, 276, are taken from Lemaire.

Saying X.67: Angry without a cause

intro *Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησε τὸν ἀββᾶ Ποιμένα·*
A *Τί ἐστι*
τὸ ὀργισθῆναι τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ εἰκῇ;
Λέγει ὁ γέρων·
B *Πᾶσαν πλεονεξίαν ἣν ἂν πλεονεκτήσει σε ὁ ἀδελφός σου,*
ἄχρις ἂν ἐξορύξῃ τὸν δεξιόν σου ὀφθαλμόν,
καὶ ὀργισθῇς αὐτῷ,
εἰκῇ ὀργίζῃ αὐτῷ.
C *Ἂν δέ τις θελήσῃ σε χωρῆσαι ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τούτῳ ὀργίσθητι.*[145]

intro A brother asked abba Poimen:
A "What is it
to be *angry with one's brother without a cause*?[146]
The Elder answered:
B "Whenever your brother takes something from you out of greed,
even if he carves out your right eye[147]
and you are angered with him,
you get angry without a cause.
C But whenever someone wants to separate you from God
you should be angered with him."

Structure

A question on Matt 5:22 (A) introduces the answer which focuses on a phrase which specifies the prohibition of that verse ("without a cause", εἰκῇ), and which consists of (B) an example of what that phrase can imply, i.e., what that phrase can refer to, and (C) an inverse example of what the phrase does not refer to, i.e., what is a justified anger, allowed by the Bible text.

Biblical material

I regard this as a quotation, although it does not follow the text of the New Testament exactly, since the reason for the formulation is that it is a part of a question in the saying.[148] The quotation of Matt 5:22 has the question "what is it" as an introductory formula. It follows one of the

[145] ≈ Poimen 118.
[146] Matt 5:22.
[147] Cf. Matt 5:29 and 5:38.
[148] **X.67.1–2**: Τί ἐστι τὸ ὀργισθῆναι τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ εἰκῇ. Cf. the variant in Matt 5:22: ὁ ὀργιζόμενος τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ εἰκῇ, attested across a wide geographical area, cf. the next footnote.

two widely spread variants.[149] The other variant does not contain the word εἰκῆ (without a cause).

The example in part B, of carving out an eye, has links to other parts of Matt 5, as we will see.

Analysis

In the variant of Matt 5:22 quoted here it is not clear what is meant by being angry "without a cause". The brother's question is justified: what can it mean to be angry without a cause, and what is the opposite, i.e. an anger that is reasonable?

The answer is a very severe concretising application of the Bible text. Someone taking something out of greed is not a sufficient reason to get angry. The Elder chooses an example of what it is to get angry without a cause. The example reminds of a verse which follows shortly after the one quoted: Matt 5:29.[150] In the version of the alphabetical collection, this is even more obvious, since it continues "… or cuts off your right hand … ."[151] Those words are cut out of their context.

The example also echoes Matt 5:38: "You have heard that it was said: An eye for an eye … ." That quotation of Ex 21:24 introduces a section in the Sermon on the Mount on letting the evil person take anything from you. The detail of the eye creates a link between the three verses of Matt 5:22, 29 and 38.

It is uncertain whether a reader is supposed to recognize the words as words from the same pericope as the preceding quotation. It is probable that the vicinity between the three texts in Matthew says more about how this interpretation of Matt 5:22 has come about, than about how the text is expected to be received. It is plausible that the interpretation has been created while someone had a Bible in front of him/her, or by someone who heard the chapter in its entirety being read. For the reader of the saying it would have been easier to recognize it as taken from the same pericope as part A, if the sentence in between had not been inserted.

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[149] This is noted also by Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 51. The reading with εἰκῆ is supported, among others, by the MSS ℵ², D, L, W, *Byz*, and by Old Latin, Sahidic, Bohairic, Middle Egyptian, Ethiopean and Syriac versions and attested by many church fathers.

[150] X.67.4: ἄχρις ἂν ἐξορύξῃ τὸν δεξιόν σου ὀφθαλμόν. Cf. Matt 5:29a: εἰ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ὁ δεξιὸς σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔξελε αὐτὸν.

[151] Poimen 118 (PG 65:352d—353a): … καὶ ἐκκόψῃ τὴν δεχιάν σου χεῖρα, … . Cf. Matt 5:30: … καὶ εἰ ἡ δεξιά σου χεὶρ σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔκκοψον αὐτὴν … . This makes the allusion clearer, and Burton-Christie calls it "a startling juxtaposition of biblical texts", *Word in the Desert*, 268.

The saying ends with an example of the opposite, i.e., of what it is to get angry in a justified way. When someone separates an organ from the body in a brutal way, that is not a reason to get angry; but any situation that separates one from God is.

The expression "without a cause" is concretized. The application is very severe, but also sets a limit to the severity. The reader should live according to the Bible text by not getting angry, with one exception: when someone separates you from God, you should get angry. So the saying infers that the biblical text should govern the anger of the reader in a very concrete way. Two texts from Matt 5 are used in the explanation of a third text from the same chapter.

Saying X.99: Mary needs Martha

A *Παρέβαλέ τις ἀδελφὸς τῷ ἀββᾶ Σιλουανῷ εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦ Σινᾶ,*

B *καὶ εἶδε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἐργαζομένους καὶ εἶπε τῷ γέροντι·*
«Μὴ ἐργάζεσθε τὴν βρῶσιν τὴν ἀπολλυμένην·» «Μαρία γὰρ τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα ἐξελέξατο».
Καὶ λέγει ὁ γέρων τῷ μαθητῇ αὐτοῦ Ζαχαρία·
Βάλε τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦτον εἰς κελλίον μηδὲν ἔχοντα.

C *Ὅτε οὖν γέγονεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς ἐννάτης, προσεῖχε τῇ θύρᾳ εἰ ἄρα πέμπουσιν αὐτὸν καλέσαι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν. Ὡς δὲ οὐδεὶς ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ ἀναστὰς ἦλθε πρὸς τὸν γέροντα καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ·*

D *Οὐκ ἔφαγον οἱ ἀδελφοὶ σήμερον, ἀββᾶ;*
Λέγει ὁ γέρων·
Ναί.
Εἶπε δὲ ὁ ἀδελφός·
Καὶ διατί οὐκ ἐκαλέσατέ με;
Λέγει ὁ γέρων·
Σὺ ἄνθρωπος πνευματικὸς εἶ, καὶ οὐ χρείαν ἔχεις τῆς βρώσεως ταύτης. Ἡμεῖς δὲ σαρκικοὶ ὄντες θέλομεν φαγεῖν, διὰ τοῦτο ἐργαζόμεθα. Σὺ δὲ τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα ἐξελέξω ἀναγινώσκων ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ οὐ θέλεις σαρκικὴν τροφὴν φαγεῖν.
Καὶ ὡς ἤκουσε ταῦτα ἔβαλε μετάνοιαν λέγων·
Συγχώρησόν μοι, ἀββᾶ.
Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων·
Πάντως χρείαν ἔχει καὶ ἡ Μαρία τῆς Μάρθας· διὰ γὰρ τῆς Μάρθας καὶ ἡ Μαρία ἐγκωμιάζεται. [152]

[152] ≈ Silvanos 5

A A certain brother visited abba Silvanos on Mount Sinai.

B He saw the brothers working and said to the Elder:

> " '*Do not work for the food that perishes*;'[153] '*For Mary has chosen what is best.*' [154]"

The Elder said to his disciple Zachariah:

> "Put this brother in a cell without anything [with him]."[155]

C When the time had come for the ninth-hour [prayer],[156] he turned his attention to the door wondering whether they would send someone to invite him to eat. But since no one called on him he rose up and went to the Elder and said:

D "Have your brothers not eaten today, abba?"

The Elder said:

> "Yes."

But the brother said:

> "And why have you not invited me."

The Elder said:

> "You are a spiritual man, and you do not need that kind of food. But since we are carnal we want to eat, and so we work. But you have chosen what is best and have read the whole day, and you do not want

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[153] John 6:27.

[154] Luke 10:42.

[155] Most MSS in the apparatus of Guy have this reading, including MS Y which belongs to the early stage b^1. Several MSS belonging to later stages (stage b^2 and b^3 according to Guy) instead of μηδὲν ἔχοντα (meaning that the brother was empty-handed) have the words μηδὲν ἔχων καὶ δὸς αὐτῷ βιβλίον. The participle logically refers to "the cell", although it is incongruent, a fairly common practice in ### ... at this time (See Jannaris, An Historical Greek grammar § 1181b). A similar variant reading with correct grammar is found in AP/G, which has δὸς τῷ ἀδελφῷ βιβλίον, καὶ βάλε αὐτὸν εἰς κελλίον μηδὲν ἔχον ("Give the brother a book, and put him in an empty cell"). These two variants seem to be attempts at harmonizing the sentence with what follows in part D, where abba Silvanos says: "and you have read the whole day." Without this additional information about a book being given to the visitor the natural conclusion to draw would be that since he was not carrying one with him, the book was already in the cell, and that this was so common that it did not even need to be explained. It is possible that later traditions, construing an ideal of a non-bookish culture of the desert, could not imagine the presence of books in cells to be so common in early monastic settings.

[156] ἡ ὥρα τῆς ἐννάτης in part C is a rather enigmatic expression, since there is no agreement of case between ἡ ὥρα and ἡ ἐννάτη. What is most probably meant by ἡ ἐννάτη is ἡ ἐννάτη ὥρα in the technical sense, i.e., "the ninth-hour prayer", cf. Lampe, s.v. 1 and 2. This very abbreviated form of the term, where None is called simply ἡ ἐννάτη, occurs also in XII.6.4. Other relevant parallels are (1) *Sancti Pachomii vita tertia* 105.308.14, τὰς εὐχὰς τῆς ἐννάτης, probably meaning τὰς εὐχὰς τῆς ἐννάτης ὥρας, and (2) Romanos Melodos' *Cantica genuina* 39.4.1, which renders ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην of Acts 3:1 as [Τῇ] ὥρᾳ τῆς προσευχῆς τῆς ἐνάτης.

In early ascetic literature there is a custom of a ninth-hour meal which breaks the daily fast (cf. XVIII.13.37, XX.3.38–41). The meal appears to have been preceded by the chanting of psalms. For examples of this, see Lucien REGNAULT, *La vie quotidienne des Pères du désert en Egypte au IVe siècle,* (Paris: Hachette, 1990), 120–121. So the expression "the time for the ninth-hour [prayer]" tells us both that it was time to sing psalms, and that it was soon time for the daily meal. This explains the expectation of the visiting brother at that time and suggests that this brother who preaches about choosing "what is best" is more occupied with waiting for an invitation to the meal than with the prayers that precede it.

to eat the carnal food."
When he heard this he fell to the ground and said:
"Forgive me, abba."
The Elder said:
"Even Mary really needs Martha, for it is thanks to Martha that Mary is also hailed."

Structure

The saying begins with a short background narrative (A). Then follows a dialogue between the brother and Silvanos (B), which introduces the theme of the saying. The response of Silvanos is non-verbal. After another short narrative section (C) follows the final dialogue (D). The final sentence of Silvanos summarises the whole point of the saying.

Biblical material

There are two quotations at the beginning of the saying. Although they lack an introductory formula, the use of the same wording as the Greek New Testament and, in the second instance, the use of a personal name, still make them very clear quotations. In the second answer in section D, Silvanos alludes to the passages that the brother quoted earlier, speaking of "choosing what is best" and of "nourishment". And in the last sentence of the same section, Silvanos alludes once again to the story of Mary and Martha by using their names.

Analysis

The most remarkable thing about this saying is that the only time the two Bible texts are quoted at any length is when the brother, who is later shown to be wrong, uses it to justify his choice of avoiding labour and even to say that the other brothers should not work. He simply quotes the passages, giving no comment.

Later on Silvanos alludes to the same passages—or, rather, to the brother's quoting them—with not a little irony. In so doing, he introduces the words "spiritual" (πνευματικός) and "fleshly" (σαρκικός) in a manner which is most likely supposed to remind the brother/reader of the Pauline use of the term, thus emphasising the irony. Because Silvanos and his brothers are "of the flesh" they need "fleshly" food, and so they labour, but since the brother has shown himself to be a "spiritual" person who "chooses what is best" instead of labouring, he does not need "fleshly" food. In this way, the brother realizes that his attitude is unreasonable, and he repents.[157]

[157] A similar point is made in X.36 (John the Short 2).

What is the very point of the narrative in the Gospel, is thus what Silvanos argues *against*. He argues, mainly with non-verbal arguments, that this point must be modified. When he says that Mary is praised thanks to Martha, he in fact says that it is thanks to Martha that Mary is praised by Jesus. If this is not an argument against the words of Jesus treated as an isolated logion, at least it is a corrective.[158] He sees the whole narrative, including a critical evaluation of it, as something that can illustrate the necessity of labour, whereas the other brother has only taken the words of Jesus at face value.[159]

In this way the whole narrative of Mary and Martha is transposed by moving the focus away from the words of Jesus, allowing Silvanos to reflect in a critical way on how Mary has come to receive praise from Jesus. This also becomes a way of indirectly saying something about spiritual pride. Abba Silvanos criticizes the brother without explicitly saying that there is something wrong with him.

There are two ways to interpret the final words. Either it means that the brothers who avoid labour to devote themselves to a purely spiritual life need the brothers who labour, or it means that each brother needs to labour in order to live a life of contemplation. The former interpretation is unlikely, since Silvanos, using irony, has already said that anyone who eats needs to labour. Thus Mary and Martha have become metaphors for two different aspects of the life of each brother.

It is a bold use of Scripture, to both use allusions in irony, and to reflect in a critical way on the words of Jesus in such an explicit way. It is the brother using the words of Jesus who turns out to be wrong, whereas Silvanos, who speaks ironically over this use, and then transforms the Gospel-narrative by giving a corrective to that use of the words of Jesus, is depicted as winning the dispute. [160]

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[158] This is recognized also by McVey, "The *Chreia* in the Desert", 253.

[159] On the question of labour in early monasticism, see Hermann DÖRRIES "Mönchtum und Arbeit", in *Wort und Stunde. Erster band. Gesammelte Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 227–301.

[160] Burton-Christie discusses this in terms of "what was at stake in getting the meaning of the text wrong", of the "misinterpretation of the Gospel texts", of how Silvanos "rejects this spiritual interpretation of the text and manages to communicate to the brother in a very practical way what it means to bring this text to life", *Word in the Desert,* 163. I believe this is forcing onto this ancient text a modern view of how biblical interpretation and the "right" interpretation is a major concern. It seems more fair to see that the brother and the Elder both use the Bible to illustrate and support their positions. It is the attitude of the brother and the consequences of this attitude which are criticised, using the very Bible text that the brother had used to support that attitude. It is not a discussion on biblical interpretation, where there is a presumption that there is one interpretation which is "correct".

Saying X.116: The narrow and hard road

A *Ἠρωτήθη γέρων·*
Τί ἐστιν
ἡ στενὴ καὶ τεθλιμμένη ὁδός;
B *Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν·*
Ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ στένη καὶ τεθλιμμένη
αὕτη ἐστίν·
τὸ βιάζεσθαι τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἑαυτῶν
καὶ κόπτειν τὰ θελήματα ἑαυτῶν διὰ τὸν Θεόν,
C *τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τό·*
«Ἰδοὺ ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμέν σοι.» [161]

A An Elder was asked:
"What is [162]
'*the narrow and hard road*'?" [163]
B He answered:
"'*The narrow and hard road*'
is this:
to defeat one's [distracting] thoughts
and to cut off one's own wishes for the sake of God,
C for that is [what is meant by]:
'*Look, we have left everything and followed you.*' " [164]

Structure

The saying consists of (A) a question on Matt 7:14, and (B–C) the two-parted answer of the Elder. In the first part of the answer (B), the demonstrative pronoun refers to "the road" (feminine), i.e., the answer is introduced by "The narrow and hard road is this road … " and consists of two examples. In the second part of the answer (C), another Bible text is utilized as a part of the answer. The demonstrative pronoun in this second part refers to the first part of the answer (neuter), whereas the definite article refers to the quotation of Matt 19:27. The result is that the subordinate clauses in B are explanations to the quotations of the Bible in both A and C.

On this structural level the first bible text is the object of an explanation, whereas the second one is used as a support for that explanation.

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[161] ≈ Ammonas 11.

[162] Note the hebraizing τί which many of the best NT manuscripts have. (Cf. Ps 139:17 in the MT, hm;, where it is used as an exclamation: "how!".) This τί may have contributed to using the text as a question.

[163] Matt 7:14.

[164] Matt 19:27.

Biblical material

The first quotation is introduced by the question "what is … ?" (Τί ἐστιν …). In our modern editions of The Greek New Testament, two metaphors are used in this verse: a narrow gate and a hard road. However there is an unusual reading which leaves out the first metaphor (the gate), and which is testified to by MS 544, some Old Latin translations and some patristic writings. In MS 544, the verse of Matt 7:14 reads: στενη και τεθλιμμενη η οδος. That reading, or a similar one, could be the background to the quotation in our saying: ἡ στενὴ καὶ τεθλιμμένη ὁδός.

The second quotation is a verbatim one.

Analysis

As a response to the question about the first Bible text, the Elder shows the text to refer to the ascetic practice of overcoming those distracting thoughts and expressions of a selfish will, which was a common theme in the early ascetic literature.[165] The second text is brought in to support this teaching, which is also a way of pointing out the referent of a text.[166]

Besides this obvious function of the quotations on a structural level, the combination of the biblical texts has a surprising effect. This can be illustrated by structuring the text from the fact that the subordinate clauses are explanations to *both* quotations:

> "'*The narrow and hard road*' is this (αὕτη ἐστίν):
> to defeat one's [distracting] thoughts
> and to cut off one's own wishes for the sake of God,
> for that is what is meant by (τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τό):
> *Look, we have left everything and followed you*.' "

Matt 19:27 is preceded by the story of the rich young man. Just like the brothers came to abba Ammonas for a word, the rich young man came to ask what he should do to receive eternal life. After Jesus' comment to this event, Peter asks who can be saved. Both these questions are very similar to an oft repeated question in *AP*: "Give me a word, how can I be saved?" Further on in the pericope Peter returns to Jesus' suggestion:

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[165] Burton-Christie (*Word in the Desert*, 220–221) lists some other sayings from the alphabetical collection that use the image of the narrow road and narrow gate to symbolize the "way of renunciation" in different manners: Theodora 2, Poimen 112, John the Short 41 (GS XV.34). To these, we may add XVIII.3 (G Arsenius 33), where the image is that of a narrow gate.

[166] The connection between Matt 19:27 and cutting off one's own wishes is also made in Barsanuphius and John, *Quaestiones et responsiones*, Letter 254 (τὸ κόψαι τὸ ἴδιον θέλημα).

"Look, *we* have left everything and followed you." This theme is repeated yet a third time in v. 29: "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake … ." For a monastic reader of this text it would have been natural to identify with both the question of Peter and the promise of Jesus.

By applying the same interpretation to *both* quotations a close connection is established which gives a new interpretation of Matt 19:17. The result is that that Bible text not only refers to the fact that the reader actually already *has* left family, trade and security behind, but also infers that leaving and following is a *road* which among other things implies continually (grammatical present) overcoming one's distracting thoughts (λογισμοί) and (selfish) will (θελήματα). The saying even states that this is what Matt 19:17 refers to.

Having seen how the quotations are treated, we may ask ourselves whether the rendering of Matt 7:14 is founded on a conscious deletion of the image of the gate. It may be that the text deletes the more static metaphor of something to be passed through once, to emphasize the more dynamic metaphor of the narrow road as something continually to progress along. It is a plausible explanation to the rendering of the biblical text. The other possible explanation is simply that a variant reading has been used which does not include the image of the gate.

To sum up, in this saying the connection between the biblical text and the reality of the readers is created by pointing out a specific reference for the texts. This is also an example of a saying that uses one biblical quotation to explain another. By so doing, the interpretation one wants to communicate is supported. In this case, it has another, less obvious effect as well. By letting the two texts interact in the transmission of the interpretation, the text communicates an idea which is expressed neither in the quotations nor in the interpretation of them, but which takes place in the readers, when they are invited to let the texts interpret each other reciprocally. In this case the idea is this: to leave everything and follow Jesus is not a one-off event (as the context of the rich young man and that of the monastic questioner/reader might suggest), but a road, a road along which one is constantly moving on.

Possibly the saying is an example of the technique of eliminating a word in the middle of the Bible text, for the purpose of integrating it in the teaching.

Saying XI.43: I was in prison

intro *Εἶπε πάλιν ὅτι·*
A *Ἡ φυλακή ἐστι*
τὸ καθίσαι ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ καὶ μνημονεύειν τοῦ Θεοῦ πάντοτε μετὰ νήψεως·
B *τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ·*
C *«Ἐν φυλακῇ ἤμην καὶ ἤλθατε πρός με.»*[167]

intro He [John the Short] also said:
A "Vigilance [φυλακή] is
to sit in the cell and always think of God with wakefulness.
B That is what is meant by:
C *'I was in prison/vigilance [φυλακή] and you visited me.'* "[168]

Structure

The saying consists of a definition of the concept φυλακή (A), a quotation formula (B) which introduces the quotation and at the same time connects the definition to the quotation, and finally the quotation itself (C).

Biblical material

The quotation is rendered verbatim, but utterly out of context. In Matt 25 it is part of the speech about the judgement of the nations. There the text suggests that a suffering person can be identified with Jesus, and that visiting a prisoner in some sense means visiting Jesus. Here, another part of the semantic field of the word φυλακή is activated, that of the subject matter of this saying: vigilance.

Analysis

John the Short gives a key to a specific understanding of the Bible verse in the definition. The key is achieved by first creatively using the ambiguity inherent in a word, so that the reader gets another understanding of the word when the quotation comes, than he would have in a reading of Matthew. The quotation is given verbatim, although the words have a new reference and a new meaning. The word 'φυλακή' in Matthew means 'prison'. Here it has come to mean 'vigilance'. This is the main technique employed.[169] The rest of the techniques follow on this one. The subject of the first clause ("I"), which in Matthew is a prisoner

[167] ≈ John the Short 27.

[168] Matt 25:36. This is obviously the way the quotation is meant to be understood in this saying. It is linguistically a possible translation, but impossible in the context of Matthew.

[169] Mentioned briefly by Dörries, "Die Bibel im ältesten Mönchtum", 260–261.

whom Jesus identifies with, is transformed to refer to a brother in vigilance. The subject of the second clause ("you") which in Matthew is the "righteous ones" who have visited prisoners, probably refers to God who comes to those who are vigilant.[170]

By first giving the definition of a word in a verse in Matthew, and then citing that verse, the verse takes on a completely new significance to illustrate the teaching. A radically new contextualization takes place. What in the discourse on judgment in Matthew was about doing good "to one of the least of these my brothers" has here been made into a reference to the monastic virtue of keeping vigilance in one's cell. The original context in Matthew has been changed to the context of the ascetic.

Saying XI.60: Fear of God is beginning and end

intro *Εἶπε πάλιν ὅτι·*
A *Ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος ἐστίν ὁ φόβος τοῦ Θεοῦ.*
B *Οὕτως γὰρ γέγραπται·*
«Ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος Κυρίου»,
καὶ πάλιν·
C *Ἀβραὰμ ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν τὸ θυσιαστήριον*
εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Κύριος·
«Νῦν οἶδα
ὅτι φοβῇ σὺ τὸν Θεόν.» [171]

intro He [Poimen] also said:
A "The fear of God is the beginning
B and the end/fulfilment.
For so it is written:
'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' [172]
and again,
C when Abraham had finished the altar,[173]
the Lord said to him:
'*Now I know*
that you fear God.' "[174]

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[170] Burton-Christie discusses John's "interpretation of the text", and its "unusual logic", *Word in the Desert*, 204–205. I would say that it is not an interpretation of a text at all, but a free-floating saying of Jesus which is used rather like a proverb.

[171] (≈ N 647, J 678.)

[172] Ps 110:10, Prov 9:10. Prov 1:7 has almost the same sentence, with the variation "fear of God" (although Codex Alexandrinus has "the Lord"). Similar passages also in Job 28:28 and Sir 1:14.

[173] Cf. Gen 22:9.

Structure

The saying consists of a claim (A) which uses as its ground two biblical quotations (B–C). Recurring words and phrases create a unity: "fear of God/the Lord" is used in A, B and C; "beginning" is used in A and B; and forms of the word "end/finish" are used in A and C.

Biblical material

The first verse has a certain biblical flavour to it, but it is not clear that it indicates a specific text in the Bible.[175]

The first use of biblical material is a verbatim quotation from Ps 110 and Prov 9, with an introductory formula.

The second instance also has an introductory formula, followed by a paraphrasing summary of the events leading up to the quoted passage. The content of the paraphrase is that of Gen 22:9, where the LXX uses the verb οἰκοδομεῖν when describing that Abraham built the altar. This verb is changed to τελεῖν (to finish). The use of "when X had finished Y" is a typical formulation of the Gospel of Matthew.[176] The quoted passage from Gen 22:12 is further stressed as a quotation by a new introductory formula. The quotation does not follow exactly the wording of our LXX. In *AP*, γάρ is omitted, ἔγνων becomes οἶδα, and σύ is placed before τὸν θεόν instead of after. These are minor changes.

Once again, we see that the saying presupposes that the audience knows the context of the biblical narrative referred to.

Analysis

The first use of biblical material is quite straight-forward in its interpretation. Fear of God is the way to achieve wisdom.

The interpretation of the second passage is more difficult to discern. Maybe it is a mere play on words, centred on the words τέλος (an end/fulfillment) τελεῖν (finish). However, Lemaire has suggested that there is more to it than that.[177] He has seen a parallel in the fourth

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[174] Gen 22:12.

[175] Cf. Eccl 3:11; Wis 7:18; Rev 21:6; 22:13.

[176] Cf. Matt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1. In the TLG corpus of 19 January 2006, besides the Matthean passages, and in commentaries and catenae on those passages, the exact phrase (ὅτε… ἐτέλεσεν…) occurs only two times: once in Origen's *Homiliae in Job*, and once in *Acts of Thomas*.

[177] Lemaire, "L'Abbé Poemen", 78, where he also suggests the play on words. He writes: "Dans sa 4 Instruction, Dorothée explique en détail comment la crainte d'Abraham est la φόβος τέλειος, car c'est aprés toutes les épreuves de sa vie, dont le sacrifice d'Isaac fut la plus terrible, que le Seigneur dit au Patriarche : 'Maintenant je sais que tu crains Dieu'. Le long développement de Dorothée est précontenu, comme en résumé, dans le

instruction of Dorotheus of Gaza, which expands on the idea of the faith of Abraham being the perfect fear (φόβος τέλειος).[178] Since Dorotheus is more or less contemporary with the redaction of the first major collections of the sayings, and since the redaction is likely to have taken place in Gaza, this parallel seems worthwhile to explore.[179]

It is after Abraham has experienced a life full of many trials that the Lord tells him the words about fearing God. This is for Dorotheus not a fear of chastisement, but a fear grounded in love, the fear of the holy ones, the perfect fear (φόβος τέλειος). In a way Dorotheus' chapter on the fear of God, at least the first five paragraphs, can be said to be a meditation on this saying. It is an expansion of the thought that there are two kinds of fear of God, one for beginners and another for saints. This in turn is based on the ambivalence that seems to prevail in the Bible towards the concept of fear. Dorotheus juxtaposes the "Perfect love drives out fear" of 1 John and the "Fear the Lord all who love him" of Ps 34:9 which, according to Dorotheus has "thousands" of parallels. Dorotheus solves this by assuming the two kinds of fears. The fear that is driven out is the fear of punishment, whereas the perfect fear is that of one who has tasted the sweetness of being with God and who fears losing it. The major example that Dorotheus chooses and expands upon is the very scene that this saying refers to. This is immediately followed by two more "quotations" from Scripture, the ones that also appear in our saying: "The fear of God is the beginning and the end/fulfilment," and "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Then Dorotheus meditates on the relationship between these two fears.

Let us leave the content of the instruction of Dorotheus there, and examine its relationship to saying XI.60. It is obvious that there is a close connection between the the two texts. Not only is the theme the same, but the quotations are identical too, even the sentence that is a composite quotation ("The fear of God is the beginning and the end."). This could be explained in four different ways. (1) Dorotheus has read or heard of this saying and then meditates on it. Questions of chronology are important for determining this, but they are difficult to answer. Dorotheus would probably have written his instructions after he founded his monastery in ca. 540. The saying is not included in the

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ἐτέλεσε : nous reconnaissons une des caractéristique du genre apophtegmatique qui est de suggére, de donner matière à la réflexion …" Lemaire points out this parallel, but does not developed the comparison.

[178] *Doctrinae diuersae,* esp. § 48, 222–226.

[179] For the dating and location of the redaction, see Lucien Regnault, "Les Apophtegmes des Pères en Palestine aux Ve – VIe siècles", 320–330. This saying was included in the Latin systematic collection of Pelagius and John from the mid-sixth century.

alphabetical collection, which could indicate that it is a later addition. On the other hand it is included in all the MSS of AP/GS treated by J.-C. Guy that do not have a lacuna in this section of the sayings, which increases the likelihood that it was included at an early stage. This is confirmed by the fact that Pelagius and John included it in their Latin translation of an early Greek systematic collection. Since their translation is from the middle of the sixth century we can assume that it is possible that this saying predates Dorotheus' instruction. (2) The saying is a condensed version of Dorotheus' instruction. Although Dorotheus' instructions were probably not written as such before 540, it is quite possible that parts of it were used by him and maybe even written down, say, in letters before then. So the person that wrote down the saying may very well have heard or read Dorotheus' views on the two kinds of fear. (3) They are both dependent on a common source. It may be that Dorotheus and the redactors of the saying got the concept of the two fears and the Bible passages from a common source in the ascetic environment of the Gaza region in the first half of the sixth century. (4) This is a common theme in their tradition. This explanation is very similar to the previous one, only that it does not assume the direct dependence on a common source.

Because the two texts seem to have been composed around the same time and probably in the same area, all four explanations are historically possible. There are, however, two considerations which make the first explanation less plausible. First of all, the saying does not make much sense as it stands. It consists of a claim which is then grounded in two Bible quotations. The first one comes across as rather logical, connecting to the first part of the claim ("the beginning"), although it does not seem to add anything to the claim. The second quotation appears to be *very* far-fetched in the absence of the kind of reflection which Dorotheus offers. The only connection to the second part of the claim ("the end") is a verb which has the same root as "the end". When it comes to the content, the connection seems very cryptical. This brings us to the second reason why the first explanation is less likely. The very word which connects the Abraham-story to "the end", i.e., the verb "finished" (ἐτέλεσεν) is not the one used in the LXX. So if one were to try to think of a passage which speaks of "the end" and the fear of God, not even subtle considerations such as the use of τελεῖν would have led to this passage.

Comparing the remaining three possibilities, I think that explanation 2 is the most likely one, since the wording of the initial claim in the saying is exactly the same as that of Dorotheus' instruction, and the quotations and retelling of the Abraham story are also identical.

Whatever the case is, it is clear that a person living in the tradition of the desert could very well have known both versions (that of *AP* and that of Dorotheus) and interpreted the saying through the kind of instruction that Dorotheus gives.

The point of the saying is summarized in the first sentence, the remainder consists of grounds for that claim, indicated by γάρ. This claim about the fear of God could be understood in a very general sense, i.e., that the fear of God is something very essential. Using the text of Dorotheus as a key opens up another possibility, i.e., that the claim is that there are two different kinds of fear: one that belongs to the beginning/the beginners, and the perfect fear that belongs to the state of fulfilment/perfection, as in the case of Abraham. This brings us to the question of the function of the Bible texts in the saying. If the saying is understood in the first sense, then the two quotations are mere play on words, expanding on "beginning" and "end". The second quotation then seems rather far-fetched. If the saying is understood in the more elaborate way the quotations carry a lot more meaning: the first quotation speaks of a preliminary stage, whereas the second quotation depicts a person who has advanced to another kind of fear. The words "beginning" and "finished" still function as a logical link to the initial claim, but this link is not the main point of the saying. The beginning and the end are two distinct stages on the way of the believer, and the two quotations are used to illustrate these two stages. As the instruction of Dorotheus shows, a lot of meaning can be extracted from reflecting on these two illustrations.

Here we have seen a clear example of a very condensed use of biblical passages, presented in an enigmatic manner, and this enigma being deciphered in a text from the same period and location. We may ask ourselves whether the audience of the text was supposed to decipher the text on its own or whether it was expected to know of the authoritative way to decipher it. This question can be posed to several of the other sayings as well.

Saying XI.125: Adam and Job

intro *Εἶπέ τις τῶν πατέρων·*
A1 *Ἐὰν μὴ μισήσῃς πρῶτον οὐ δύνασαι ἀγαπῆσαι,*
ἐὰν μὴ μισήσῃς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖς τὴν δικαιοσύνην,
A2 *καθὼς γέγραπται·*
«Ἔκκλινον ἀπὸ κακοῦ καὶ ποίησον ἀγαθόν.»
B1 *Πλὴν καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ἡ πρόθεσίς ἐστιν ἡ ζητουμένη παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ πανταχοῦ.*
B2 *Ἀδὰμ γὰρ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ὢν παρέβη τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ,*
καὶ Ἰὼβ ἐπὶ τῆς κοπρίας καθήμενος ἐφύλαξεν αὐτήν.
B3 *Πρόθεσιν οὖν ἀγαθὴν ζητεῖ ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἵνα αὐτὸν φοβῆται πάντοτε.* [180]

intro One of the Fathers said:
A1 "If you do not hate first, you cannot love;
if you do not hate the sin, you do not practise justice,
A2 according to what is written:
'*Turn aside from evil and do good.*' [181]
B1 However, what is desired by God in all of these things, everywhere, is the resolve.[182]
B2 For Adam transgressed God's command while he was in Paradise,[183] but Job kept it while sitting on the rubbish-heap.[184]
B3 So God wishes from humans a good resolve, and that they should fear him at all times."

Structure

The saying begins with a statement (A1) which is supported by a biblical quotation (A2). The next statement (B1) is supported by a condense paraphrase about two biblical figures (B2) and repeated after the paraphrase (B3). The transition from part A to part B is marked by the structuring πλήν.

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[180] ≈ N 378.

[181] Ps 33:15 = 36:27.

[182] In the NT πρόθεσις usually denotes the purpose, intention, and will of God. Sometimes it may denote the purpose, intention and will of man, as in Acts 11:23. It is used in this manner in other sayings in *AP*, denoting the resolve of man, also in harsh circumstances, e.g., XIII.15.10. It is used in this sense in other texts in connection with Job. One example is in Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Iob* 38.18–25, …ὁ διάβολος… ἀνατρέψα[ι τὴν] πρόθεσιν τὴν ἀνδρείαν [τοῦ ἁ]γίου Ἰὼβ οὐ δεδύνηται. Another example is in Leontius, *Homiliae in Iob*, homily 4, 230–234: Ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ὁ Ἰὼβ ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὡς ἐν πλούτῳ ἤνθησε καὶ ἐν πενίᾳ στεφανωθήσεται· πενίαν γὰρ ἀνάγκη παιδεύει, πλοῦτον δὲ πρόθεσις στεφανοῖ. Διάβολε, ἤδη προλέγω σοι, ὅτι πᾶσαν μὲν τὴν ὕπαρξιν τοῦ Ἰὼβ θερίσεις, τὴν δὲ ἀνδρείαν αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ ἐκλύσῃς.

[183] Cf. Gen 3.

[184] Cf. Job 2:8.

Biblical material

The first biblical material is a verbatim quotation of Ps 33:15/36:27. The other two are short paraphrases, clearly indicated through the use of biblical proper names. The vocabulary is also the vocabulary of those passages: in Gen 2:16, ἐντέλλεσθαι is used for saying that God "commanded" not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; in Job 2:8 it is said that Job "sat on the rubbish-heap" (... ἐκάθατο ἐπὶ τῆς κοπρίας ...).

In Job 23:11–12, Job speaks of "keeping" (φυλάττειν) God's ways:

> And I will go forth according to his commandments, for I have kept his ways; and I shall not turn aside from his commandments, neither shall I transgress; but I have hid his words in my bosom.[185]

In Job 2:10b there is also a connection to the theme of good and evil, when Job says to his wife:

> If we have received good things of the hand of the Lord, shall we not endure evil things? [186]

Analysis

The saying consists of two parts. The first one has the theme of hating evil and loving what is good. The second one is about having a good resolve wherever one finds oneself. Biblical material is used to support the teaching in both parts, but in different ways. In the first one, the Elder finds support for his teaching in the Psalms. Here a point is made of the order of the words in the psalm: first hate, then love. This is taken as a support for the teaching; it works as a kind of "proof-text".

The second part of the saying makes use of two biblical persons as exemplars, Adam being the negative one and Job the positive.[187] Two aspects of their lives are focussed on and contrasted: how they kept the command of God and where they were when that happened. Nothing new is brought to the characterization of the persons that is not said in the Bible. Comparing the two figures is what is innovative about the saying. Paradise versus a rubbish-heap does indisputably make a very good contrast, both when it comes to the aesthetical circumstances—a luscious garden versus a disgusting rubbish-heap—and the background stories implied: the original and ideal state of man versus an example of

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[185] ἐξελεύσομαι δὲ ἐν ἐντάλμασιν αὐτοῦ· ὁδοὺς γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἐφύλαξα καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκκλίνω. ἀπὸ ἐνταλμάτων αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ μὴ παρέλθω, ἐν δὲ κόλπῳ μου ἔκρυψα ῥήματα αὐτοῦ.

[186] εἰ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἐδεξάμεθα ἐκ χειρὸς κυρίου, τὰ κακὰ οὐχ ὑποίσομεν;

[187] Adam is used as a negative exemplar also in IV.23 (Isodoros the Priest 1), where the "food" is the main problem; Job is used as a positive exemplar in **I.23** and VII.19.

quite extreme human suffering. No matter what circumstances you find yourself in, the saying seems to imply, the important thing is how you strive to handle those circumstances. This is brought to the fore by combining the two stories.

Turning back to the Bible texts, we can note that this point about different circumstances is not highlighted in those biblical texts themselves—certainly not in Genesis. Having heard or read this saying, a reader looking at that biblical text afresh might have pondered for the first time the fact that Adam lived under ideal conditions when he involved himself in the original sin. This ideal condition was the condition which the monastic life strove for, so the story about Paradise was not only a story about the origins of man, but also about the ideal life to strive for.[188] Through this saying, it becomes a story about how man can fall even under those ideal conditions, which are the objects of ascetic practices, if one does not have the right "resolve".

The story of Job was already in the NT used as an example of "endurance".[189] There is much in the way the narrative is presented in the Hebrew Bible, which invites such a thematic interpretation of the story, making the life of Job a pattern for living in endurance. Without explicitly stating that kind of interpretation, the saying not only uses it but also brings even more concretion to it, by comparing it to the pattern of Adam. If the circumstances of Adam are an image of the ideal conditions for humans, the circumstances of Job are the opposite of this, i.e., an image for conditions which make life difficult. The story of Job has become a contrast to that of Adam, in terms of the priority of intention over circumstances. It has become a story in which a reader can inscribe the circumstances which he tends to complain about and which makes his own life difficult, and a story through which he can see those circumstances in a new perspective. Turning away from evil and doing good is not a matter of striving for the ideal conditions of Paradise, but of having the right intention in the circumstances in which one finds oneself.

In the first part of the saying, a Bible text is used to support the teaching. The word-order in the verse of the psalm is relevant for the intended reference.

The second part involves contrasting two Bible stories, whereby certain aspects of those stories are highlighted: the circumstances and the

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[188] Peter BROWN, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 220, 223, 381 ("Paradise was within their grasp. It could be regained in their own desert, in their own time, by mighty monks.").

[189] Jas 5:11.

attitude of the protagonists in those stories. Those aspects are relevant for the message of the saying, and so the highlighting of those aspects brings the paraphrased stories in line with the message: turning away from evil and doing what is good is not so much a matter of achieving the right circumstances as having the right intention whatever the circumstances.

Saying XII.14: Pray for one another

A *Παρέβαλέ τις ἀδελφὸς διορατικῷ γέροντι καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν λέγων·*
Εὔξαι ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, πάτερ, ἀσθενὴς γάρ εἰμι.
Bintr *Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ γέρων εἶπε τῷ ἀδελφῷ ὅτι·*
Τίς ποτε τῶν ἁγίων εἶπεν·
B1 *Ὁ βάλλων εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἔλαιον τοῦ ἀλείψαι ἀσθενοῦντα,*
αὐτὸς πρῶτον μετέχει τῆς τοῦ ἐλαίου πιότητος·
B2 *οὕτως καὶ*
ὁ εὐχόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀδελφοῦ
πρὸ τοῦ ἐκεῖνον ὠφελῆσαι αὐτὸς τῆς ὠφελείας μετέχει
διὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν τῆς ἀγάπης.
B3 *Εὐξώμεθα οὖν ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων, ἄδελφέ μου, ὅπως ἰαθῶμεν.*
Τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος παραινεῖ λέγων·
«Εὔχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων ὅπως ἰαθῆτε.» [190]

A A brother went to a clear-sighted Elder and urged him:
"Pray for me, father, for I am weak."
Bintr And the Elder answered the brother:
"Once one of the saints said:
B1 'He who pours oil into his hand to anoint a sick person,
first enjoys a share in the richness of the oil himself;
B2 in the same way
also he who prays for his brother
enjoys a share in the benefit before his brother does,
because of his choice to love.'
B3 Let us therefore pray for one another, my brother, so that we may be healed.
For the apostle also advises us to do that when he says:
'*Pray for one another so that you may be healed.*' " [191]

Structure

The saying is in the form of a question and answer. The answer begins with an analogy taken from "a saint" (B1–B2), arguing for the mutual benefits for the one praying and the one being prayed for. The saying ends with the Elder giving an exhortation, that both the brother and he

[190] ≈ N 635. According to the French translation of Regnault, the saying N 635 does not quote the Bible, but only states "for God has commanded so through the apostle."

[191] Jas 5:16.

should pray for each other, giving as support a testimony in the form of a biblical quotation.

Biblical material

The quotation is a verbatim one from a part of Jas 5:16, introduced by a quotation formula: "*the apostle also advised us to do that when he said …*" In the immediate context there is mention of the elders in the church community anointing the sick and praying for them.

Analysis

The brother in this saying does not ask the Elder for a "word", he asks him to pray for him. The Elder does not answer with a simple "Yes, I will", but suggests that they should pray for one another. That, including the use of Jas 5:16, is sometimes the answer given in the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John to brothers who ask for their prayers.[192] In this saying there is also a small discourse on the benefits of praying for each other.

The discourse begins with a reference to "a saint" who compared pouring oil on the sick to praying for a brother: just like the oil first gives its richness to the one anointing because it is poured up in the hand of the anointer, so the prayer first gives benefit to the one praying, because the choice to love first affects the one praying. Then comes the admonition, "let us pray for one another", which is supported by an argument from the authority of the Bible: "the apostle also advised us to do that when he said …".

The two arguments, that of the analogy and that of the authority of the Bible, have a couple of points of connection. The first connection is that of the biblical context of the quotation. The anointing of the sick, which is the first part of the analogy, is also mentioned just two verses before, in Jas 5:14: "Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord."

The second connection is the wording of the quotation: "Pray for one another so that you may be healed." This can in fact be interpreted in two distinct ways. It can be translated as simply: "[When you are sick,] pray for one another to be cured", [193] since the plural can refer to those being prayed for, and ὅπως can be used instead of a simple ὅτι or ἵνα

[192] For example *Quaestiones et responsiones* 55, 136, 144, 509, 544.
[193] As in the New Jerusalem Bible.

after the verb εὔχεσθαι, ἐρωτᾶν and δεῖσθαι.[194] But it could also be translated in line with the message of the saying: "pray for one another, *so that* you will *both* be healed", since the plural can refer to the one praying and the one being prayed for, and ὅπως can be used as a final conjunction. The reciprocal "one another/each other" (ἀλλήλων, normally used for symmetrical reciprocities)[195] can also be used in support of that interpretation of the verse.

These connections suggest that the analogy builds on a kind of exegesis of Jas 5:16, an exegesis which relates to the theme of anointing and praying present in the surrounding verses of Jas, and to subtle philological considerations of the verse quoted.

On the surface, the quotation is simply another argument for the message of the saying, which is to pray for one another. When seen in relation to the preceding analogy of the saying, the use of the Bible also suggests an exegesis of the verse, where the biblical context of the verse, and the philological possibilities have been utilized.

Saying XIII.2: The fast is always with me

intro *Εἶπεν ἀββᾶ Κασιανὸς ὅτι·*
Παρεβάλομεν ἀπὸ Παλαιστίνης εἰς Αἴγυπτόν τινι τῶν πατέρων.
Καὶ φιλοξενήσας ἡμᾶς ἠρωτήθη παρ᾽ ἡμῶν·
A′ *Τίνος ἕνεκεν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ὑποδοχῆς τῶν ξένων ἀδελφῶν*
A″ *τὸν κανόνα τῆς νηστείας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ παρελάβομεν οὐ φυλάττετε;*
Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη λέγων·
B″ *Ἡ νηστεία πάντοτε μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐστιν·*
B′ *ὑμᾶς δὲ πάντοτε κατέχειν μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ οὐ δύναμαι·*
C″ *καὶ ἡ μὲν νηστεία εἰ καὶ χρήσιμόν ἐστι πρᾶγμα καὶ ἀναγκαῖον,*
τῆς ἡμετέρας ἐστὶ προαιρέσεως·
C′ *τὴν δὲ τῆς ἀγάπης πλήρωσιν*
ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀπαιτεῖ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ νόμος.
D′ *Ἕνα οὖν ἐξ ὑμῶν δεχόμενος τὸν Χριστὸν ὡς χρεώστης θεραπεύω μετὰ πάσης σπουδῆς.*
D″ *Ἐπὰν δὲ προπέμψω ὑμᾶς,*
τὸν κανόνα τῆς νηστείας δύναμαι ἀνακτήσασθαι.
E′ *«Οὐ δύνανται γὰρ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος νηστεύειν*
ἐφ᾽ ὅσον χρόνον μετ᾽ αὐτῶν ἐστιν ὁ νυμφίος ·
E″ *ὅταν δὲ ἐπαρθῇ ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν, τότε μετ᾽ ἐξουσίας νηστεύσουσιν.»* [196]

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[194] E.g., Matt 9:38, Luke 7:3, 11:37, Acts 23:20, 26:19.

[195] Cf. Bengt HOLMBERG, "Reciprocitetsnyanser i *ἀλλήλων*", *SEÅ* 51–52 (1986–87): 90–99. Holmberg argues that a few instances of ἀλλήλων should be understood as depicting asymmetrical reciprocities, including this verse. The Elder in the saying obviously makes use of the other possibility, that it is a fully symmetrical reciprocity.

[196] ≈ Cassian 1.

intro Abba Cassian said:
From Palestine we went to one of the Fathers in Egypt.
He showed us hospitality and we asked him:
A′ "When you receive foreign brothers,
A″ why do you not observe your rule of fasting as our tradition is in Palestine?"
And he answered:
B″ "The fast is always with me,
B′ but I cannot always have you with me. [197]
C″ Although the fast is a useful and necessary thing,
it is something of our own choosing,
C′ while the accomplishment of love
is something which the law of God demands unconditionally.
D′ When I receive one of you
I serve Christ as I am obliged to do, with all my zeal.
D″ But when I have bid you farewell
I will be able to resume the rule of fasting.
E′ For *the wedding guests cannot fast*
as long as the bridegroom is with them.
E″ *But when he is taken away from them, then they will fast* freely."[198]

Structure

The saying has a very balanced structure, involving an elaborate chiasmus.

After an introduction, the subject matter, which is the relationship between two practices, is presented in the form of a question. The two practices are hospitality (marked here with ′), and fasting (″). The order of the two practices is reversed in the first part of the answer (B), a part which is also an allusion to the Bible. Looking at the answer as a whole (B–E) we see that the order in which each part mentions the two practices forms a well-balanced chiasmus, framed by biblical material: a playful allusion to Matt 26:11 and a modified quotation from Matt 9:15.

Biblical material

The first use of Scripture is an implicit allusion to Matt 26:11. (" You always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.") Since there is no introductory formula the allusion would be difficult to discern, were it not for the fact that the sentence in itself has a very enigmatic flavour to it, and the fact that it interplays with the quotation at the end of the saying.

The quotation from Matt 9:15 at the end also lacks an introductory formula, but it is long enough and distinct enough to be readily discerned. There are small modifications in it, the most important one

[197] Cf. Matt 26:11 //.
[198] Matt 9:15. The text of MSS W et al., slightly modified.

being that it says "the wedding guests cannot *fast*" while NA[27] reads "the wedding guests cannot *mourn*". This variation is widely attested in MSS of the Gospel of Matthew.[199] With this wide attestation, we cannot really call the quotation an adaptation, but rather a faithful quotation of a textual form witnessed by "Western" MSS and old Latin, Syriac and different Egyptian versions.

Analysis

In the first use of biblical material, the logion of Jesus is transformed by changing both the subject and the object. The close resemblance between the wording in Matthew and in this saying is illustrated below:

AP	Matt 26:11
"**I** always have *the fast* with **me**, but **I** cannot always have **you** [the guests]."	"For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me [Jesus]."

The subject is changed from Jesus' disciples to the Elder. The poor are changed to fasting and Jesus is changed to the guests. So the guests in a sense take on the role of Jesus.

This is confirmed by the words "when I receive one of you, I serve Christ" and by the quotation from Matt 9 which is used to justify that the Elder does not fast as long as the guests are there. Also here, the guests take on the role of 'the bridegroom', i.e., Jesus, while the Elder takes on the role of one of the 'wedding guests'.

Thus, what is common to both uses of a Bible text is that they generalise the logion of Jesus and then apply it to a specific question, saying that one should give priority to serving/loving Christ in a unique way when an opportunity is given (in this case in the guests) rather than to a virtue that is always at hand (in this case fasting). Another way of saying this is that the logia are de-contextualized and then re-contextualized in a new way.

The saying also makes use of aesthetical conventions to make this use of Scripture seem natural: the use of an elaborated chiasmus and the *inclusio* formed by the two uses of biblical material add persuasion to the saying.

[199] Some of the more important are D, W, it, sy$^{p.h\ mg}$, sa, mae, bo^{mss}.

Saying XV.68: Imitate the tax-collector

Εἶπε πάλιν·

A *Μίμησαι τὸν τελώνην*
ἵνα μὴ τῷ φαρισαίῳ συγκατακριθῇς,

B *καὶ Μωυσέως τὸ πρᾷον ἐπίλεξαι*
ἵνα τὴν καρδίαν σου
ἀκρότομον οὖσαν εἰς πηγὰς ὑδάτων μεταβάλῃς. [200]

He [abba Hyperechios] also said:

A Imitate the tax-collector
in order not to be condemned with the Pharisee, [201]

B and choose the meekness of Moses[202]
in order that you may change your heart,
which is as flint, [203] into springs of water. [204]

Structure

Besides narrative levels, indentions indicate parallel structures. The saying is structured as two imperative clauses, each motivated by a final clause. In both of the imperative clauses a biblical allusion or a cluster of biblical allusions is introduced which is continued in the final clause.

Biblical material

The first allusion is quite clear, although it lacks an introductory clause, personal names and an extensive narrative. This is thanks to the words 'tax-collector' and 'Pharisee', which function almost as personal names connected to the exemplary story of the tax-collector and the Pharisee.

The second allusion, which in fact is a composite of at least two or three different passages, has the personal name of Moses as a clear indicator of allusion. The first part of the composition alludes to Num 12:3

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[200] ≈ Syncletica 11. The saying is taken from Hyperechios, *Adhortatio ad Monachos*, saying 73–74a. Part A has a parallel in Barsanuphius, *Questiones et responsiones*, Letter 453.

[201] Luke 18:10–14.

[202] Num 12:3. ("Moses was the most πραύς person of all.")

[203] "which is as flint" – the adjective used in Deut 8:15 (ἐκ πέτρας ἀκρότομου πηγὴν ὕδατος) is the same adjective as in this saying, ἀκρότομος being formed from ἄκρον and τέμνω. In LXX, this word is often a translation of חַלָּמִישׁ (flint): Ps 113:8, Deut 8:15, Josh 5:2. In Job 28:9 it is constructed with λίθος as a translation of hewn rock (אֶבֶן־שַׁלְמָה) used in constructing a building. In Job 40:2 it is used to qualify a mountain where such an attribute is lacking in the Masoretic text. The connotations may suggest both "which is as sharp, yet brittle, as flint" (stressing the potential transformation of the heart) and "which is as hard as flint" (stressing the connection to "heart of stone" and the dichotomies tax-collector/Pharisee, Moses' meekness/heart of stone).

[204] Ps 113:8 //. See also John 4:14 (and 7:38). Other possible echoes are Isa 58:11: ἡ ψυχή σου, καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ σου πιανθήσεται, καὶ ἔσῃ ὡς κῆπος μεθύων καὶ ὡς πηγὴ ἧν μὴ ἐξέλιπεν ὕδωρ … , and Ezek 11:19.

which states that Moses was the most gentle (πραύς) person of all. This is as opposed to the heart of the receiver of the saying, said to be as 'as flint', just like the rock from which water streamed. (This may echo the "heart of stone" in Ezekiel 11:19.) The wording of this latter allusion on the rock follows that of Ps 113:8, which in turn alludes to Deut 8:15 and Ex 17:6 and parallels. An echo of John 4:14 (γενήσεται <u>ἐν αὐτῷ</u> πηγὴ ὕδατος) and possibly 7:38 and Isa 58:11, may also be discerned here.

These allusions are presented in a table to facilitate comparison.

Μωυσέως τὸ πρᾶον ἐπίλεξαι,	*Num 12:3* καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος Μωυσῆς πραῦς σφόδρα παρὰ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους			
ἵνα <u>τὴν καρδίαν</u> σου ἀκρότομον οὖσαν εἰς πηγὰς ὑδάτων μεταβάλης	*Ps 113:8*[205] τοῦ στρέψαντος τὴν πέτραν εἰς λίμνας ὑδάτων καὶ τὴν ἀκρότομον εἰς πηγὰς ὑδάτων.	*John 4:14* ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται <u>ἐν αὐτῷ</u> πηγὴ ὕδατος ἁλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.	*John 7:38* ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, ποταμοὶ <u>ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ</u> ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος.	*Ezek 11:19*[206] ἐκσπάσω <u>τὴν καρδίαν</u> τὴν λιθίνην ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτῶν καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καρδίαν σαρκίνην *Isa 58:11* καὶ ἔσῃ ὡς κῆπος μεθύων καὶ ὡς πηγὴ ἧν μὴ ἐξέλιπεν ὕδωρ,

There is also a possible echo of the mention of Pharaoh's heart being "hardened" in Ex 4:21.

Analysis

Two biblical figures are seen as exemplars, and these are applied to the receiver of the saying by referring to them using imperative verb forms.

The first allusion is quite straight-forward, exhorting the receiver to imitate the tax-collector in the narrative, adding the motivation "so as not to be judged with the Pharisee", i.e., a note of warning. It may also be added that this exemplary story is used in several instances in *AP*, often citing or alluding to the words of the tax-collector: "God, be merciful to

[205] ≈ Deut 8:15b: τοῦ ἐξαγαγόντος σοι ἐκ πέτρας ἀκροτόμου πηγὴν ὕδατος.
[206] ≈ Ezek 36:26.

me, a sinner."[207] The second one is more complex. Here the gentleness of Moses is the virtue to strive for, and the motivation for this is that the heart of the receiver, which is as flint, may turn into a spring of water (just as Moses, who was meek, turned the rock that was as flint into a spring of water). Moses is made an exemplar in terms of gentleness, and the rock becomes a metaphor for the heart of the receiver. A link is established between gentleness/softness as a virtue and the rock/heart becoming a spring. Such a link does not exist in the texts alluded to.

Besides the link to the gentleness shown by Moses and to the rock becoming a spring of water, a third set of Bible texts are echoed, namely those that speak of the soul or the inside of a person becoming a spring of water. The most obvious ones are John 4:14, 7:38 and Isa 58:11. Other echoes which can contribute to the coherence of the saying, are those speaking of "a heart of stone" being transformed (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). The echoing of these texts, together with the allusions to Moses, create a web of intertextual relations, which in this anonymous saying give great poetic force to the exhortation to be meek.

These echoes on the transformation of the heart/the inside contribute to the density of this intertextual web, and they are the link between a referent in the narrative about Moses (the rock), and the referent of this saying (the heart). This link makes the correspondences between the transformation of the heart and the transformation of the rock more natural than if the rock in the exodus narrative were taken as a symbol for the heart without such an intertextual link.

The point of the saying can be stated: be humble and meek in order not to be condemned, and to allow your hard inner being to be transformed to life-giving springs. The functions of the biblical allusions in relation to this point are twofold. They are part of the exhortations, and they are used as reasons for the exhortations: in order (ἵνα) not to be condemned, and in order that you may change your heart into a spring of water. The ways to re-contextualize the biblical allusions are also numerous: the tax-collector and Moses are used as exemplars of the virtues treated in the imperative clauses, while the Pharisee is used as a negative exemplar. There is a direct link created between the audience and the narratives of the Bible by integrating the allusions in the imperative clauses themselves. This link is also achieved by warning the audience from being condemned "together with" (συγκατακριθῇς) the

[207] X.20, X.52, Epiphanius 6, Epiphanius 15. This was one of the Bible verses which was central to the development of the Jesus-prayer which became extremely wide-spread in the monastic movements of the Eastern Church. Cf. Columba STEWART *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 100–113.

Pharisee. A more subtle technique is that of indirectly identifying the hearts of the audience with the flint rock of the exodus narrative from which water gushed. This identification creates intertextual links to a host of other texts, some speaking of the transformation of the "heart of stone", others speaking of the inside of the person becoming a spring of water. In the words of Richard Hays writing on Paul's use of Scripture, the saying produces "unexpected correspondences, correspondences that suggest more than they assert."[208] In this particular case, readers may be convinced of the appropriateness of Moses, his meekness and the transformation of the rock being used as an image of how his own heart can be transformed through meekness, and become "springs of water".

Saying XV.69: An unbaked brick

intro *Εἶπεν ἀββᾶ Ὀρσιήσιος·*

A *Πλίνθος ὠμὴ βαλλομένη εἰς θεμέλιον ἐγγὺς ποταμοῦ*
οὐχ ὑπομένει μίαν ἡμέραν,
ὀπτὴ δὲ
ὡς λίθος διαμένει.

B *Οὕτως*
ἄνθρωπος σαρκικὸν φρόνημα ἔχων
καὶ μὴ πυρωθεὶς κατὰ τὸν Ἰωσὴφ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ[209]
λύεται ἐπὶ ἀρχὴν προσελθών.

C *Πολλοὶ γὰρ τῶν τοιούτων οἱ πειρασμοὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰσίν.*

D *Καλὸν δέ τινα τὰ ἴδια μέτρα ἰδόντα*
ἀποφεύγειν τὸ βάρος τῆς ἀρχῆς.
Οἱ δὲ ἑδραῖοι τῇ πίστει
ἀμετακίνητοί εἰσιν.

E *Περὶ αὐτοῦ γὰρ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωσὴφ ἐὰν θέλῃ τις λαλῆσαι,*
λέγει ὅτι
οὐκ ἐπίγειος ἦν.
Πόσα ἐπειράσθη
καὶ ἐν ποίᾳ χώρᾳ ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ἴχνος θεοσεβείας;
Ἀλλ᾽ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ ἦν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξείλετο αὐτὸν ἀπὸ πάσης θλίψεως.
Καὶ νῦν ἐστιν μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

F *Καὶ ἡμεῖς τοίνυν ἐπιγνόντες τὰ ἑαυτῶν μέτρα ἀγωνισώμεθα· μόλις γὰρ οὕτως δυνησόμεθα ἐκφυγεῖν τὴν κρίσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ.* [210]

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[208] Richard HAYS, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 24.

[209] In section B, *AP*/G has "through the fear (τῷ φόβῳ) of God" where *AP*/GS has "through the word (τῷ λόγῳ) of God", although Migne indicates that other MSS of *AP*/G have "word".

[210] ≈ Orsisius 1.

intro Abba Orsiesios said:
A An unbaked brick placed in a house foundation near a river
does not survive a single day,
but a baked one
remains like a stone.
B So
a person who has a carnal mind,
and who has not, like Joseph, been tested by fire through the word of God:
he falls apart when he comes in a position of power.[211]
C For there are many temptations/trials for such persons in the midst of people.
D It is good for the one who realizes his own limits
to flee from the burden of power,
but those who are firm in their faith
are immovable.[212]
E As for the holy Joseph, if someone wants to speak of him,
he must say that
he was not of this world.
How much was he not tested/tempted,
and in a country where there was not at that time a trace of piety?
But his fathers' *God was with him and rescued him from all his afflictions*.[213]
And now he is with his fathers in the kingdom of heaven.
F Let us therefore realize our limits and fight, for in this way we will just barely be able to *escape the judgement of God*.[214]

Structure

The saying begins with a proverbial-like sentence (A) which is applied to a more specific situation (B). A ground for the claim of A–B is given in C. Part D relates parts A–C to two different categories of people. In part E, the example of Joseph, mentioned in part B, is developed. The saying concludes with an exhortation (F).

Biblical material

The first phrase with biblical connotations is not a clear allusion. A "carnal" person can be an echo of Rom 8, but can also be part of a common Christian vocabulary. The second allusion is more clear, since it uses the name of Joseph. If we place the two texts next to each other the similarity of wording is also obvious:

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211 Cf. Ps 104:19, 21. Of course this text in turn alludes to the Joseph-novella in Genesis.
212 Cf. 1 Cor 15:58 (… ἑδραίοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι …).
213 Acts 7:9b–10a. Note that this text is about Joseph also in the context of Acts.
214 Cf. Rom 2:3b.

AP	Ps 104:19,21
μὴ πυρωθεὶς κατὰ τὸν Ἰωσὴφ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ λύεται ἐπὶ ἀρχήν	μέχρι τοῦ ἐλθεῖν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ, τὸ λόγιον κυρίου ἐπύρωσεν [Ἰωσήφ]. … κατέστησεν αὐτόν κύριον τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἄρχοντα πάσης τῆς κτήσεως αὐτοῦ …

The third instance of biblical material seems to be an echo, probably of 1 Cor 15:58, which both speaks of being "steadfast, immovable" and of "always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain."

The quotation from Acts is an exact quotation, the only difference being an inserted "of his fathers".

The final allusion is not very clear. Perhaps it is not an allusion at all, but a clause formed using general Christian vocabulary.

Analysis

What connects the biblical allusions to the theme is the image of the unburnt and the burnt brick by the river, formulated in a proverb-like sentence of part A. In fact, this sentence would have made sense on its own, possibly supplemented by a hint on what the reference of the proverb should be taken as. That kind of saying, with or without the supplement, is common in *AP*. If we ignore the biblical material, parts A and B would in fact B seen as such a proverb-like saying:

> An unbaked brick placed in a house foundation near a river does not survive a single day, but a baked one remains like a stone. So [it is with] a person who has a carnal mind, and who has not been tested by fire: … he falls apart when he comes in a position of power.

Orsiesios is teaching on the subject of power, a subject which is often treated in early Christian ascetical literature. Often in those texts, monks are warned of the perils of power.

We should note that the unbaked brick was not something abnormal in Egypt, but the norm: the common form of brick was that made of mud and straw that was hardened by drying it in the sun. It was in places that would be in contact with water frequently, that one had to make use of the much harder baked brick, which was more time-consuming and laborious to produce, since it had to be burnt in fire.[215] In that sense, a

[215] "The use of baked brick was generally restricted to areas that would be in contact with water frequently", according to Peter LACOVARA, "Brick and Brick Architecture", *OEAE* I:199.

baked brick was a specialized brick which had undergone a special treatment to survive in extreme circumstances.

In Orsiesios' teaching, those people who have not been tested by fire before they assume a powerful position, i.e., most people, are described as unbaked bricks: they cannot survive the perils of power. But those who have been tested are like baked bricks: they remain firm like stone even in temptations that are connected with a position of power. This image works very well without the biblical material.

The biblical material makes the saying more complex, perhaps also more obscure. It is one of those instances that may fit Jean-Claude Guy's classifications of sayings, where he says that those that make use of biblical material are "secondary", less original sayings.[216] Although Guy's classification has been heavily criticized, it may be that this particular saying is a good example of how a simple saying has been expanded on using biblical material. But let us now try to understand the logic of the saying as it stands.

The concepts that bring the otherwise unrelated allusions and thoughts together are that of fire, baking and burning on one hand, and that of power on the other hand. It may seem surprising at first, that Joseph is brought in. However, if we examine the allusion a bit closer, we see that it works fairly well. As an example of how a person is tried through tribulation and is then capable of handling a position of power, the Joseph novella is well suited. What makes the connection between the parable-like sentence and the allusion even stronger is the word πυροῦν, which in the passive voice basically means to be burnt by fire or baked, but which could also take on the more technical meaning of gold being proved or tested by fire.[217] This technical meaning is used metaphorically in the LXX for a person being proved or tested. The metaphor then becomes a common way of using the word in patristic texts, besides the meaning of being inflamed with love, devotion etc.[218]

It is this concept which is used in Ps 104, to describe how Joseph was "proved" (πυροῦν) by the word of God, when he interpreted the dream of the Pharaoh, an interpretation Joseph attributed to God (Ps 104:16). In the context of the Genesis narrative, it is the interpretation of the dream which shows the Pharaoh that Joseph is worthy of power, because he is wise and has the spirit of God (Gen 41:38–40). Used in this manner, the

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[216] Jean-Claude GUY, "Remarque sur le texte des Apophthegmata Patrum", *Recherches de science religieuse* 43 (1955): 252–258.

[217] For πυρόω in the sense "burnt by fire, baked", see LSJ, s.v. I; in the sense "proved or tested by fire", see LSJ, s.v. III.

[218] For πυρόω in these senses see Lampe, s.v.

allusion does not make any real sense in the mouth of Orsiesios. Rather, taking the preceding verses of Ps 104 as the context, we may see the experience of being "sold as a slave" and "humiliated with fetters around his feet" until what he had said happened, as the "testing by fire", not what he actually said. This makes sense in the saying, and it is a fairly sensible way of understanding Ps 104, if one disconnects it from the narrative in Genesis.

The *metaphor* of preparing a brick by transforming it by *physically* burning it, is connected to the idea of an *actual* person being transformed by being tested in fire *metaphorically* speaking. This is achieved by using Joseph as an exemplar. Joseph is suitable for this use for two reasons: the verb πυροῦν is used to describe what he experienced, and the same psalm describes how he suffered before he was appointed to a position of power. In this way, a metaphor links the Bible to the present.

In the following biblical quotation, a further connection is made to Joseph, his trials and the fact that he became powerful. In Acts, Stephen's allusion to the Joseph novella continues where the quotation ends:

> The patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him to Egypt; but God was with him, and rescued him from all his afflictions, and enabled him to win favour and to show wisdom when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over all his household (Acts 7:9–10).

In the context of the saying, it seems that what immediately follows after the quoted words is more relevant than the words that are actually quoted. It ties in very well with the message of the saying: he experienced trials first, and after that he was given wisdom and was appointed to a position a power. This further strengthens the use of Joseph as an exemplar.

Having analysed how the biblical allusion works, we can now return to the fact that the saying would have worked well without the biblical material. Why bring in this material when there is no need for it? By looking at the effect it would have on a reader, we can try to answer the question in two ways. Focusing on the saying itself, the biblical allusions give authority to the teaching and provides the teaching with an example which was well known to the readers. The use of an example (παράδειγμα)) was a very common feature in Greek rhetoric, used to illustrate and give authority to pithy sayings such as the *chreia* (χρεία) and the gnome (γνώμη). It is a way of saying to the readers: Look at the example of Joseph. You all know how much he had to suffer before he became a good ruler. He was truly burned in the fire of imprisonment and humiliation before he was strong enough to handle power. And

since the example is taken from the Bible, it gives authority to the teaching.[219]

Focusing on the Bible text, we can say that this saying gives a specific perspective to the psalm, probably often recited by most of the monks. After having heard this saying, the monk would probably read the verse about Joseph in a new way, a way which was very much related to the teaching of this reading community.

The use of the biblical text provides an illustration and legitimization to the saying, and also effects a new understanding of the biblical texts. Once again, we see that the biblical narratives and words is often the mode of thinking for the creators of these sayings.

Saying XVI.1: We want to hear it from you too

A *Παρέβαλόν ποτε ἀδελφοὶ τῷ ἀββᾷ Ἀντωνίῳ καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ·*
Εἰπὲ ἡμῖν ῥῆμα πῶς σωθῶμεν.
Λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ γέρων·
Ἠκούσατε τὴν Γραφὴν καλῶς ὑμῖν ἔχει.
Οἱ δὲ εἶπαν·
Καὶ παρὰ σοῦ θέλομεν ἀκοῦσαι, πάτερ.
B *Εἶπε δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ γέρων·*
Λέγει τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον·
«Ἐάν τις σὲ ῥαπίσῃ εἰς τὴν δεξίαν σιαγόνα, στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην.»
C *Λέγουσιν αὐτῷ·*
Οὐ δυνάμεθα τοῦτο ποιῆσαι.
Λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ γέρων·
Εἰ οὐ δύνασθε στρέψαι καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, κἂν τὴν μίαν ὑπομείνατε.
Λέγουσιν αὐτῷ·
οὐδὲ τοῦτο δυνάμεθα.
Λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ γέρων·
Εἰ τοῦτο οὐ δύνασθε ποιῆσαι, μὴ δῶτε ἀνθ᾽ ὧν ἐλάβετε.
Οἱ δὲ εἶπαν·
Οὐδὲ τοῦτο δυνάμεθα.
D *Λέγει οὖν ὁ γέρων τῷ μαθητῇ αὐτοῦ·*
Ποίησον τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὀλίγην ἀθήραν· ἀσθενοῦσι γάρ.
Καὶ λέγει·
Εἰ τοῦτο οὐ δύνασθε κἀκεῖνο οὐ θέλετε, τί ὑμῖν ποιήσω; Εὐχῶν χρεία.[220]

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[219] Or, as Burton-Christie puts it more generally, and from his perspective of the desert spirituality: "Looking toward the example of Joseph, Orsisius implied, could help the monk to accept the testing fire as a necessary part of his growth." *Word in the Desert*, 202.

[220] ≈ Antony 19.

A Once, some brothers came to abba Antony and said to him:
"Say a word to us, about how we can be saved."
The Elder said to them:
"You have heard Scripture, and that is sufficient for you."[221]
But they said:
"We want to hear from you too, father."
B The Elder said to them:
"The Gospel says:
'*If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.*' " [222]
C They said to him:
"We cannot do that."
The Elder said to them:
"If you cannot turn the other also, you can at least put up with one."
They said to him:
"We cannot do that either."
The Elder said to them:
"If you cannot to do that, do not give back for what you have suffered."
They said:
"We cannot do that either."
D Then the Elder said to his disciple:
"Make a little gruel for these brothers. Because they are not well."
And he said [to the brothers]:
"If you cannot do this, and you do not want to do that, what shall I do for you? Prayers are needed." [223]

Structure

The questions and the answers are composed in pairs around the biblical quotation (B). Before the quotation the initiative is with the brothers, in their plea to abba Antony (A). After the quotation the initiative is with the Elder, in his challenge to the brothers (C). So the quotation is the turning-point and the centre of the text. The dialogue before the quotation leads up to the Bible text. The dialogue that follows is about the application of that text. The triad in part C is then followed by an almost despondent ending (D): this case is almost hopeless.

Biblical material

The quotation from Matthew is a verbatim one, except for the beginning.[224] The meaning is not altered.

At the beginning of the saying there may be a vague echo of Luke 16:29, where Abraham when asked by the rich man who to send Lazaros

[221] Cf. Luke 16:29.
[222] Matt 5:39.
[223] Cf. Mark 9:29: τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἐξελθεῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ.
[224] Matthew has ὅστις σε ῥαπίζει/ῥαπίσει, and *AP* has ἐάν τις σὲ ῥαπίση.

to warn his brothers, answers: "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them."

At the end of the saying there seems to be an echo of Mark 9:29, where the disciples have asked Jesus why they "were not able" (ἠδυνήθημεν) to drive out a dumb and deaf spirit and he answers them: "This kind can come out only through prayer (ἐν προσευχῇ)."

Possibly, there is also an echo of Matt 19:16–26, where it is Jesus who answers the question on how to be saved, using scriptural quotations, ending up with the statement that for God everything is possible.

Analysis

The Elder's initial statement consists of the quotation of a Bible text. It is both the answer to the brothers' question and the starting point for a discussion on how the text can be applied in the brothers' life.

First abba Antony says that all they need is to hear Scripture. When they say that they want to hear from him, he chooses an ethical teaching from the Gospel of Matthew. Now the initiative in the dialogue becomes that of the Elder. The brothers become the responding part. The words of the *abba* aim at modifying the biblical text in such a way that the brothers can apply it in their lives. Making the text come to expression in their lives is given a higher priority than the literal meaning of the text. The ending (D), however, suggests that there is a limit to how much the command can be accommodated. As a conclusion to the triad on not being able to follow the command, the *abba* says that the brothers are not well, suggesting that because they place themselves below this minimum level, he considers them to be spiritually ailing (since ἀσθενεῖν is often used in this way in *AP*). In the very last line abba Antony may even be suggesting that they are possessed by evil spirits, an echo of Jesus' words to his disciples that some spirits that can only be driven out by prayer.

Many sayings are so brief that they are open to several interpretations. So is this one. Another way of understanding the point of the saying would be that trying to follow the Bible is not enough. Even if the application is kept to a minimum, it results in failure. What is needed is prayer, which can result in transformation. It is only for God that everything is possible. That is how the brothers can be "saved". Although this second interpretation is possible, I find it less convincing, since it is those specific brothers, not mankind, that are said to be "not well".

The function of the Matthean quotation is that of being an answer to the brothers' plea as well as the starting-point of the exhortation of abba Antony. We can see that, in order to contextualize the Matthean command, it is modified in a very free manner. The last words of the saying,

when treated as an echo from Mark, it is a way of dressing Antony's response in the words of Jesus. This is then a novel contextualization, where the scene from Mark, featuring the disciples and Jesus, is mirrored in the scene of the brothers and Antony. The actors are replaced: Antony is rendered with some of the authority of Jesus, and the brothers are related first to the disciples and then to the person possessed by an evil spirit. The message hidden in this echo would then be that Antony's teaching is related to Jesus', and that a brother who cannot follow the command of Jesus, even when it is accommodated to a bare minimum, is to be considered spiritually unwell, and even possessed by an evil spirit.

Saying XVII.31: Acquire the foremost, love

intro	*Εἶπε γέρων·*
A	*Κτησώμεθα τὸ κεφάλαιον τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὴν ἀγάπην.*
B	*Οὐδέν ἐστι νηστεία, οὐδέν ἐστιν ἀγρυπνία οὐδὲ πᾶς πόνος ἀπούσης ἀγάπης·*
C	*γέγραπται γάρ·*
	«Ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.»

intro	An Elder said:
A	"Let us acquire the foremost of all good things, love:
B	fasting is nothing, vigilance is nothing, nor all kinds of suffering, without love.[225]
C	For it is written:
	'God is love.' "[226]

Structure

The first clause of the Elder's teaching (A) is the claim and exhortation of this saying: the foremost of all good things is love, so let us acquire this. The next clause (B) exemplifies this claim and exhortation by comparing love to other ascetic virtues. The final sentence (C) gives the ground for the claim and exhortation, by means of a biblical quotation.

Biblical material

The saying clearly echoes 1 Cor 13:1–3 and 12:31 along with 13:13. The quotation from 1 John 4:16 is a verbatim one, which is introduced by a quotation formula.

[225] Cf. 1 Cor 12:31–13:3,13:13.
[226] 1 John 4:16.

Analysis

The saying is patterned on the passage on the way of love in 1 Cor. Here the exhortation *But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way* has become *Let us acquire the foremost of all good things*; the pattern of 13:1–3, *If I … but do not have love, I am nothing* has become *fasting is nothing, vigilance is nothing, nor all kinds of suffering, without love.* Ascetic ideals has been placed in the praise to love, thus contextualizing the message of the primacy of love. Fasting and vigilance are obviously ascetical practices. The third example is in fact a short-hand reference to all kinds of ascetical practices, since this word, πόνος, and its synonym, κόπος, were used as technical terms for all ascetical practices. Changing the concrete acts to ascetic virtues contextualizes the Bible text and makes its reference very clearly the life of the ascetic.

The second biblical text, in C, is used as a ground for the message of the saying and its biblical *Vorlage*. Here, the message of love's primacy in A–B, unlike in the original context, is given a biblical grounding: love has its primacy because God is love. This "because", or rather, "for it is written", is not a self-evident piece of logic. There is some implicit reasoning going on here. Possibly, it could reflect ideals such as "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16, Lev 11:44–45), and "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36), but it could also be a more philosophical one: The foremost of all good things must be God, and so if God is love, the thing to be acquired must be love.

Saying XVIII.22: As a deer longs for springs

intro	*Εἶπεν ἀββᾶ Ποιμήν·*
A	*Γέγραπται·*
	«Ὃν τρόπον ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ ἔλαφος ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων,
	οὕτως ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ ψυχή μου πρὸς σέ, ὁ Θεός.»
B	*Ἐπειδὴ αἱ ἔλαφοι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ πολλὰ καταπίνουσιν ἑρπετά,*
	καὶ ὡς κατακαίει αὐτὰς ὁ ἰὸς,
C	*εἰς ὄρος ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐπὶ ὕδατα·*
D	*πίνουσι δὲ καὶ καταψύχουνται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰῶν τῶν ἑρπετῶν·*
B′	*οὕτως καὶ οἱ μοναχοὶ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καθεζόμενοι*
	καίονται ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰοῦ τῶν πονηρῶν δαιμόνων
C′	*καὶ ἐπιποθοῦσι τὸ σάββατον καὶ τὴν κυριακὴν ἐλθεῖν*
	ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων,
	τοντέστιν
D′	*ἐπὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ αἷμα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησου Χριστοῦ*
	ἵνα καθαρισθῶσιν ἀπὸ πικρότητος τοῦ πονηροῦ. [227]

[227] ≈ Poimen 30.

intro Abba Poimen said:
A "It is written
'As a deer longs for springs of water,
so my soul longs for you, O God.'
B Since the deer in the desert swallow many reptiles,
and as the poison burns them,
C they long to go to the mountain and to waters.
D They drink and are cooled from the poison of the reptiles.
B′ It is the same for the monks who sit in the desert:
they are burnt by the poison of the evil demons
C′ and long to go on Saturday and Sunday
to the springs of water,
that is to say,
D′ to the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
to be cleansed from all the bitterness of the evil (one)."

Structure

The saying begins with a biblical quotation which is then commented on. The comment is made up of two distinct parts. On a formal level, the first part begins with ἐπειδή, the second one with οὕτως καί. On the level of content, the first part comments on the image part of the comparison: deer and their longing for physical water. The second part is a comment on what is taken to be the referent of the analogy: the soul of the monk who longs for God. The two parts are composed in a parallel way: in B and B′ a reason for the thirst is described; in C and C′ the longing for water is described; in D and D′ the cleansing capacity of the water is described.

Biblical material

The quotation is a verbatim rendering of Ps 41:2, introduced by a phrase of quotation.

Analysis

The whole saying is composed as an analogy, where each part in the image corresponds to the subject-matter. Deer in the desert (αἱ ἔλαφοι ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ) are compared to monks in the desert (οἱ μοναχοὶ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ); the deer being burnt by the poison of the reptiles is compared to the monks being burnt by the poison of the evil demons; the deer longing for the mountain and water is compared to the monks longing for the Eucharist, metaphorically depicted as springs of water; water as a remedy in terms of cooling the poison of the reptiles is compared to the

Eucharist as a remedy in terms of cleaning from the bitterness of the evil (one).[228]

The analogy from the psalm is used as a starting-point for an extended analogy, in much the same way as a metaphor can be extended to become an allegory. Underlying this extended analogy is an unstated contextualization of both the image "deer" and of the subject matter "my soul longs for you": the "deer" are specified as deer living in the desert; the soul is no longer the soul of the psalmist but that of a monk in the desert, and the longing is not directed to God in an abstract way, or to the "the house of God" but more specifically to the Eucharist. Placing the deer in the desert follows fairly easily from the psalm, since one must imagine a waterless landscape if the deer are to long for water. Specifying the deer as deer in the desert facilitates the reference to a monk in the desert. Once that correspondence is established, the analogy can easily be extended.

Through this saying, Psalms 41–42 becomes an image of a monk who has been "afflicted" and who is longing for the *synaxis* in "the house of God", at "the altar of God" to drink of the springs of water of the Eucharist which can cure from the poison of the "enemy".

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[228] According to Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 211 n65, the source of this "animal legend" is probably the *Physiologus*. His reference for this is, "L'abbé Poemen", 13, where Lemaire writes: "Le Physiologus, […], semble être à l'origine de toutes les légendes animales et des interprétations théologiques qu'en donne la tradition patristique: il du avoir une bonne diffusion en Egypte et plus au sud, puisque la version éthiopienne semble être la plus proche de l'original."

In fact, this analogy is not taken from the *Physiologus*, since the *Physiologus* has an utterly christological interpretation: the deer represents Christ, and there is not a multitude of "reptiles" but only a single snake. The *Physiologus* makes the comparison that just like a snake is forced out of crevasses when a deer empties his stomach of water he has drunk from the spring, and is killed by the deer, so Christ empties water and blood over the devil. (*Physiologus* 30, pp. 97–101 in the edition of Sbordone, pp. 100–101 in the edition of Offermanns). The commentary by Burton-Christie in *Word in the Desert*, 201, that this is an "explicitly christological reading of the Psalm", fits the text of the *Physiologus* much better than it fits the saying of abba Poimen.

Saying XVIII.28: Wise as serpents

Εἶπεν ἡ ἁγία Συγκλητική·

A *Γενώμεθα «φρόνιμοι ὡς οἱ ὄφεις καὶ ἀκέραιοι ὡς αἱ περιστεραί»*
B *πανοῦργον κατὰ τῆς παγίδος αὐτοῦ κινοῦντες λογισμόν.*
C *Τὸ μὲν γὰρ γίνεσθαι ὡσεὶ ὄφεις εἴρηται πρὸς*
τὸ μὴ λανθάνειν ἡμᾶς τὰς ὁρμὰς καὶ τέχνας τοῦ διαβόλου·
D *τὸ γὰρ ὅμοιον ἐκ τοῦ ὁμοίου ταχίστην ποιεῖται τὴν διάγνωσιν.*
E *Τὸ δὲ ἀκέραιον τῆς περιστερᾶς δείκνυσι*
τὸ καθαρὸν τῆς πράξεως. [229]

Holy Syncletica said:

A "Let us *become wise as serpents and innocent as doves*,[230]
B mobilizing a cunning thought against his snare.
C For to become like a serpent is to say
that the assaults and the skills of the devil do not escape our notice:
D like quickly discerns like.
E The innocence of the dove represents
purity of action."

Structure

The monologue consists of two biblical similes (A), followed by an initail explanation of the first simile (B), and then two parallell explanations of the two similes (C–D and E). The first explanation begins with a participial phrase (B), probably indicating the means by which one achieves the first exhortation. This is spelled out in a line of argument where the image of the serpent is related to the devil (C) and the reason for becoming "as wise as the serpent/devil" is grounded in a proverb-like sentence (D). The saying ends with an explanation of the second simile (E).

Biblical material

The quotation from Matt 10:16 is not introduced by a quotation phrase, but is almost verbatim (except for the verb which is in the first instead of the second person plural), and characteristic enough to be recognized as a quotation.

Analysis

This is an interpretation of a logion by Jesus where he makes a simile. In that sense the logion is in itself figural already in its original setting, although it cannot be said to be symbolic, as it is in the new setting. In

[229] ≈ Syncletica 18 (where part B is missing).
[230] Matt 10:16

the original context of Matthew, it is said with reference to the attitude the disciples should have when they are sent out to people.

The background of the simile is probably Gen 3:1 where it is said that the serpent was wiser than any other wild animal.[231] But the saying specifies in what way one should be as wise as a serpent and in what way one should be as innocent as a dove. The serpent in this context becomes not only a simile about how wise man ought to be. Probably inspired by the story of the serpent in Gen 3 the serpent also becomes a *symbol* for the devil, which could be formulated: When you are wise as serpents you can see through the devil who is also (like) a serpent. Thus, the object for the "wise" attitude and caution of the disciples is no longer men, but the "assaults and skills of the *devil"*.

To be innocent as doves is taken to refer to the spirit in which one acts. Using other words, we may call this part of the saying an exhortation to avoid mixed motives.

Summing up, it is clear that the subject of the saying is the attitude one should have towards the devil and the attitude one should have in one's acts. The Bible text functions as a starting point for an explanation where that subject is developed.

In the explanation of the biblical text, a contextualization takes place by spelling out the image-parts of the two similes. The first one is treated not only as an image-part of a simile, but also as a symbol. By doing so, the reference of the simile is not really changed, but widened: it is not only about our attitude towards the evils of men, but towards all evil that emanates from the devil. This makes the quotation relevant for more areas in the life of the audience.

The second simile is taken to refer to the attitude one should have in one's acts, which is a way of making the biblical command more specific. A popular word from the ascetic corpus is used: purity.[232]

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[231] Matthew and the *apophthegma* use the same word as LXX: φρόνιμος.

[232] Many sayings speak of a pure heart, a pure mind or a pure conscience. *AP*/GS I.14.5 speaks of purity in acts, ἔργα καθαρά.

Saying XVIII.33: Like a palm tree

intro	*Εἶπε γέρων·*
A	*Γέγραπται·*
	«Δίκαιος ὡς φοίνιξ ἀνθήσει.»
B	*Σημαίνει δὲ ὁ λόγος*
	τὸ ἐκ τῶν ἀγαθῶν πράξεων ὑψηλὸν καὶ ὀρθὸν καὶ γλυκύ.
C1	*Ἔστι δὲ καὶ μία τοῦ φοίνικος ἡ καρδία,*
C2	*καὶ αὐτὴ λευκὴ*
C3	*πᾶσαν ἔχουσα τὴν ἐργασίαν αὐτοῦ.*
Dintr	*Τὸ δὲ ὅμοιον ἐπὶ τοῦ δικαίου ἔστιν εὑρεῖν.*
D1	*Μία γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἁπλῆ ἡ καρδία πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν μόνον ὁρῶσα.*
D2	*ἔστι δὲ καὶ λευκή, τὸν ἐκ τῆς πίστεως φωτισμὸν ἔχουσα,*
D3	*καὶ πᾶσα δὲ ἡ ἐργασία τοῦ δικαίου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν,*
E	*τὸ δὲ ὀξὺ τῶν σκολόπων ἡ πρὸς τὸν διάβολόν ἐστιν ἀντίστασις.* [233]

intro	An Elder said:
A	"It is written:
	'*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree.*'[234]
B	This saying signifies
	the height, rightness and sweetness that comes from good works.
C1	And furthermore, the palm tree has a single heart,
C2	one that is white
C3	and which contains all of its production.
D intr	The same can be found in the righteous person,
D1	for his heart is single and sincere, looking towards God alone;
D2	it is white, having the light which comes from faith;
D3	all the good work of the righteous person is in his heart.
E	The sharpness of the thorns is the protection against the devil."

Structure

The Bible text is introduced at the very beginning of the saying, using a quotation formula. This is followed by a general indication of how the referent of the text is understood: the palm-tree as an image of righteous person as pointing to good works and to the nature of those.

Then in C1–C3, the image is developed, focusing on the heart of palm. Those details are then connected to the referent in D, by relating each detail of the image to the referent, in the same order as in C. Finally, a new detail of the referent is introduced, this time without explicitly stating what is image and what is referent, but blending the two.

Biblical material

The quotation from Ps 91:13 is identical to the source. There are some further echoes of the psalm in this saying. The expression "You, Lord,

[233] ≈ N 362
[234] Ps 91:13.

are most high (ὕψιστος)" occurs in v. 9 of the psalm, and v. 11 has "my horn shall be exalted (ὑψωθήσεται) like the horn of a unicorn" which is echoed in part B of the saying which relates the image to the "height" (ὑψηλόν) of good works. The notion of "height" also echoes the continuation of the cited verse 13: ..."he will increase like a cedar in Lebanon," since the cedars of Lebanon are described as "high" in other passages, e.g. Ps 36:35, Is 2:13.

Analysis

In this saying, the subject is the nature of the acts and the heart of "the righteous", and this is discussed using an analogy. The analogy already present in the psalm—the image of a palm tree flourishing—is made even more concrete by focusing on how the heart of palm flourishes.[236]

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[236] I have found no uses of the term ἡ καρδία τοῦ φοίνικος besides this instance, and in a sermon by Ephraem Graecus (see below). The only reasonable way to understand the term here, is as the "heart of palm", in antiquity normally called ἐγκέφαλος φοίνικος, which is mentioned briefly by María José García Soler in *El arte de comer en la Antigua Grecia* (Madrid 2001). The heart of palm is the bud situated at the top of the tree. Most species of palm trees have only one heart of palm. It is the heart of palm which produces the palm fronds. They are white and surrounded by budding leaves. It is likely that the term "the thorns" (οἱ σκόλοπες) in part E refers to those budding leaves.

Galen mentions ἐγκέφαλος φοίνικος when speaking of food that tastes sweet (De *simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* 4.15, Kühn XI:672.10), and Xenophon describes the surprise of the soldiers at the peculiar taste, when they ate it for the first time (*Anabasis* 2.3.16). The image of the palm of heart is used in a way which resembles this saying, when Ephraem Graecus comments on the same verse in *Sermones paraenetici ad monachos Aegypti*, at the beginning of oration 36, On purity, 169.11–170.2 (ed. Phrantzolas): Παρείκαζε τὴν ἁγνείαν, ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφέ, τῷ φοίνικι. Ὁ γὰρ φοῖνιξ τὴν μὲν καρδίαν λευκὴν ἔχει, πέριξ δὲ σκολόπων γέμει, τοὺς περικυκλοῦντας τὰς λευκάδας αὐτοῦ. Χρὴ οὖν πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους κεκτῆσθαι ἀγάπην ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας. (ET: "Compare purity, dear brother, to a palm tree. For the palm tree has a white heart, and bears thorns around, those that surround its white [shoots]. So, it is necessary to obtain love for all humans, *love that comes from a pure heart* [1 Tim 1:5].").

And there is a sermon for Palm Sunday ascribed to Epiphanius, *Homilia in festo palmarum* where the same verse is commented on, when explaining the palm leaves of the palm Sunday procession: Τί τῶν φοινίκων τὰ βαΐα; αἱ καθαραὶ τῶν δικαίων καρδίαι, αἱ ὡς φοίνικες ἀνθοῦσαι, καὶ ὡς αἱ κέδροι τοῦ Λιβάνου πληθυνόμεναι, αἱ πεφυτευμέναι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ Κυρίου, καὶ ἐξανθοῦσαι, αἱ ἄνω ὀρθῶς πρὸς τὸν ἀληθῆ φοίνικα βλέπουσαι, πάντως δηλοῦσαι καὶ τὴν νίκην τοῦ τυράννου καὶ τοῦ ᾅδου, αὐτοὶ ἐλευθερωθέντες τῆς ἐκείνων τυραννίδος τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ νικητοῦ δυνάμει. (PG 43:505a). ET: What are the palm leaves? The hearts of the righteous, those that *flourish like palm trees, and increase like the cedars of Lebanon, those that have been planted in the house of the Lord, and burst forth*, and see straight upwards to the true palm tree, that are altogether pointing at both the victory over the tyrant and over Hades, they have been liberated from this tyrant through the power of Christ who has won.

To understand this, one must realize what connotations the verb for 'flourish' (ἀνθέω) has. The basic meaning of ἄνθος is anything which rises to the surface, thus including not only flowers but also froth on the sea, scum on wine and thus metaphorically the 'height' of something. The verb can denote not only the surfacing of flowers, but also the surfacing of the beard of a youth.[237] So it is fitting that when focusing on the palm of heart, the verb 'flourish' is connected to the emerging leaves. The corresponding reality in the referent are the good works that emanate from the heart of the righteous.

Superficially, it may seem like this saying is an interpretation of the biblical text, since the starting point is a verse from a psalm. But a saying like this does not have just an informative function, if it has one at all; there is an exhortative intent. The way the analogy is expanded on is what creates this subtle exhortation. The "single and sincere (μία καὶ ἁπλῆ)" heart of the righteous person is compared to the "single (μία) heart" of the palm tree; the heart of the righteous which is "white" because of the light of faith is compared to the whiteness of the heart of the palm; and the good works of the righteous person which are born from the heart are compared to the palm of heart from which all the leaves and then fruits emanate. Finally the image and referent are merged in a sentence which could be paraphrased: the sharpness of what emanates from the heart of the righteous (i.e., the good works) is a protection against the devil's attacks, just like the sharpness of what emanates from the heart of the palm (i.e., the beginnings of the leaves) is a protection against those that would want to devour it.

That last sentence of the saying sticks out from the three balanced pairs of clauses in C1–3 and D1–3. The detail has not been integrated in the saying. If it is supposed to be a climax following the three parallel pairs, it does not work very well. Maybe it is due to an early reader of the text being drawn into the imagery and then adding a new detail.

In this saying the Elder first points out good works as a referent of the text, and then expands on the image to say more things about this subject matter. What is already an image in the Bible is still treated as an image, having approximately the same referent. The novelty of the saying lies in the expansion of the image and the "surplus of meaning" which is extracted from the Bible text as a result. There is a desire to work on the

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Finally, *AP*/G John the Short 10 (PG 65:208a) makes a comparison between an abundant rain on palm trees which makes their buds (λευκάς) grow, and the Holy Spirit descending into human hearts which makes their buds grow in the fear of God.

[237] LSJ s.vv. ἀνθέω, ἄνθος. Cf. also W. Bedell STANFORD, *Greek Metaphor – Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), 111–117.

details of this analogy, whether that is due to a sheer imaginative joy, or to aesthetical ideals.

Saying XVIII.34: The Shunammite woman

intro *Εἶπε γέρων·*
A *Ἡ Σουμανίτης τὸν Ἐλισσαῖον ἐδέξατο παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν σχέσιν μετά τινος τῶν ἀνθρώπων.*
B *Λέγουσι*
τὴν Σουμανίτην πρόσωπον ἔχειν τῆς ψυχῆς,
τὸν δὲ Ἐλισσαῖον πρόσωπον τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος.
C *Ἐν ᾗ ἂν οὖν ὥρᾳ ἀφίσταται ἡ ψυχὴ τῆς βιωτικῆς συγχύσεως καὶ ταραχῆς παραβάλλει αὐτῇ τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ,*
καὶ τότε δυνήσεται τεκεῖν ὑπάρχουσα στεῖρα [Guy: *χήρα*].[238]

intro An Elder said:
A "The Shunammite woman received Elisha because she did not have an attachment to any person.[239]
B It is said that
the Shunammite woman has the role of the soul
and Elisha has the role of the Holy Spirit.
C So, at the moment when the soul withdraws from the confusion and trouble of the matters of this life,the Spirit of God comes to meet it,
and then it will be able to produce although it is sterile."

Structure

The saying begins with a short paraphrase of a biblical passage. Part B indicates which realities the biblical figures represent, i.e., what "πρόσωπα" they have. In part C, this figural reading is spelled out, as the teaching of the ascetic is clothed in the language and the story of that biblical narrative.

Biblical material

Many of the details of the Shunammite woman cannot be found in 2 Kgs 4:8–37, where she is said to have a husband, and she does not want to move, because, as she says, "I dwell in the midst of my people." This

[238] ≈ N 363, Chaine 200. The parallel in Cronius 1 has major differences. There is another version of the saying, with even greater differences: Poimen 205 (supp.Guy #18).

The parallel in *AP*/G, the version in the anonymous collection and its Coptic (S) translation and several MSS of *AP*/GS and its Latin translation, all have "sterile" (στεῖρα / ⲁⲥⲡⲏⲛ / sterilis), not "widow" (χήρα). Although Guy has chosen χήρα in his critical text, I have taken στεῖρα to be the better text for reasons stated in the analysis, the main one being that it is the rendering of the best MS, Parisinus gr. 2474, not referred to by Guy in his edition.

[239] 2 Kgs 4:1–7, 8–37.

does not fit well with what the saying says, that she did not have an attachment to any person and that she was a widow. Those details of the saying fit better with the immediately preceding story in 2 Kgs 4:1–7, about Elisha and the widow's oil.

Analysis

The saying has the theme of non-attachment and of meeting in both the main parts, A and C. In the first part the woman is said to have been able to receive the prophet because she did not have an attachment to anyone. In the last part, the soul is said to be able to receive the Holy Spirit when it is not concerned with the matters of this life. The saying is also about a paradoxical fertility, where this woman is used as an image to show that it is possible to bear fruit although one is sterile, or a widow.

This variation in the manuscripts deserves a comment. As pointed out in the textual remarks, the version using "sterile" is more widespread than "widow". The Shunammite woman was not a widow, but she was sterile. This would make "sterile" more logical. On the other hand, the Shunammite woman is not described in the Bible as being without attachment. On the contrary, she has a husband and is attached to her own people. This description of non-attachment fits better the widow in the preceding story. But there is another problem there: it is she who is received by the prophet there, not the prophet who is received by her.

It seems that there must have been a confusion at some stage. What can be identified with the story of the widow's oil (besides the variant reading of "widow") is non-attachment. What can be identified with the Bible story about the other woman (besides the variant reading "sterile") is the description "Shunammite", the fact that she receives the prophet, and the fact that she bears a child.

In the version of *AP*/G, it could very well be the story of the Shunammite woman which is alluded to, without any confusion with the other story. There, it is not said that she did not have any "attachment" to anyone else, but that the prophet found that she was not occupied with anything else when he came.[240] That seems to be congruent with the Bible story.

If we sum up the arguments, the only detail pointing to the story of the widow's oil is that she did not have an "attachment" to anyone. This could, however, refer to the fact that the Shunammite woman's husband was old, in fact so old that she had given up her hopes of a child. This

[240] ἐν τῷ ἐλθεῖν τὸν Ἐλισσαῖον … εὗρεν αὐτὴν μὴ ἔχουσαν πράγμα μετά τινος.

could possibly have been interpreted in the sense that they no longer had sexual intercourse.

Probably Guy has chosen "widow" (χήρα) for his critical text, because it is attested in what is for him the most important MS for *AP*/GS (Athos Protaton 86), and possibly because it is a *lectio difficilior*. However, "sterile" (στεῖρα) is attested in several good manuscripts, and in the other collections. The most likely development seems to be from the version we now have in *AP*/G, shortened in the versions of *AP*/N and *AP*/GS.[241] in such a way that a reader not sufficiently well versed in the Bible might think it was the story about the widow which was paraphrased. A scribe making that assumption, without realizing that the widow of 4:1–7 was not a Shunammite, could have been tempted to "correct" the word "sterile" to "widow".

Another possibility would be that the mistake was made already at the very earliest stages of the collection, and that this mistake was corrected, except in those MSS that have kept "widow". Although this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely, the manuscript tradition does not speak in favour of it. In what is included in the apparatus of Guy, three out of four MSS belonging to the older stages (b^1 and b^2) support the reading "sterile" and all the MSS belonging to the later stages b^3 and c have "widow". What is of even greater weight is that both the Latin translation of the systematic collection, and the MS that best represents the oldest stage, stage a, of the AP/GS have "sterile".[242]

Let us assume that the story being paraphrased is that of the Shunnamite woman. The scene is transformed once she takes on the role of the soul, and Elisha that of the Holy Spirit. The soul offers hospitality to the Spirit, and the Spirit accepts the hospitality, because the soul is not "attached" to anyone else. The Spirit makes the soul "conceive", although it has been "sterile" until then.

The way contextualization takes place here is that the referent of the Shunammite woman and the prophet Elisha is pointed out, some details in the story are focussed on, and in that way an allegorized understanding of this story is developed. The paraenetic reading is

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[241] For a detailed discussion on such a development, and on its continuation to the variant attested in Poimen 205 (supp.Guy #18), see J.-C. Guy, "Note sur l'évolution du genre apophtegmatique", *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 32 (1956): 63–68.

[242] The spelling in Parisinus gr. 2474, f. 120v, is in fact στήρα, which may have facilitated the variant χήρα. That this MS represents the oldest stage (a) is stated already by Guy in his *Recherches*, 188-190, although it is not utilized in his edition of *AP*/GS. This has also been pointed out by Chiara Farraggiana in "Nota sul rapporto l'Ambr. L 120 Sup. e la più antica tradizione dei detti dei padri del deserto", *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* NS 39 (2002): 55-57. I am grateful to Britt Dahlman for her references and for checking this MS.

developed figurally. It is a reading which is based on the fact that the soul is a feminine noun, so the woman in the story can represent it; and a prophet is always associated with the spirit,[243] which makes also the second representation natural.

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After the analyses of these sayings, it is time to systematize and draw some conclusions. That is the subject of the following chapter.

[243] Note especially 2 Kgs 9, about Elisha receiving a double heritage of the spirit; and Luke 5:18, where Jesus says that "the spirit of the Lord" is over him, just before making a comparison between himself and Elisha as prophets. I have both these references from Lemaire, "L'abbé Poemen", 76.

Chapter Four

Different Ways of Using Scripture in *Apophthegmata Patrum*

Introduction

As shown in the preceding chapter, we cannot speak of a particular method of using Scripture in *Apophthegmata Patrum*. There are a vast number of ways in which Scripture is used and interpreted. Of course, that is precisely what one would expect from a corpus which depicts a great number of individuals who often lived very independently of one another, and from a corpus consisting of material gathered from different written and oral sources which have not been harmonized.

Against that background, it is important to resist the temptation to try to impose on the material a method of how Scripture was treated. What we *can* do in this material, however, is to make a description of the different ways in which Scripture was treated.[1] Through such an analysis, we may discover similarities in how Scripture is used to illustrate or prove a point in different instances, without imposing on the whole corpus an imagined normative system of how the Bible ought to be used.

[1] Lemaire's attempt to systematize the use of Scripture in the sayings attributed to abba Poimen, is dependent on the fact that they are all attributed to one person, and presupposes that those sayings and the biblical usage contained in them all go back to abba Poimen himself and are therefore coherent. Burton-Christie's description of the relationship between the use of Scripture in *AP* and the spirituality of the desert fathers is equally dependant on the historical reliability of *AP*.

Looking back on the analyses made in the previous chapter, it is evident that there are some quite complex uses of Scripture, showing that the use and interpretation of Scripture was not always as unsophisticated as has sometimes been suggested. That is not to say that simple direct uses of Scripture are missing—both simple and complex ones are there. This chapter will span all types, all the 155 that clearly make use of biblical texts will be the object of analysis, and the focus will once more be the question: How is the Bible contextualized?

But first let us make some more general observations concerning which Bible texts are used in *AP*.

Bible passages in AP

Among the indisputable uses of Bible passages in *AP*, a great proportion come from the Psalms and from the Gospel of Matthew. In fact, of the 226 instances where the Bible is used in a clear way (spread over 155 sayings as stated in chapter two), 43 make use of the Psalms and 48 the Gospel of Matthew,[2] although as many as 38 books of the Bible are represented. (There are also three instances of using an *agraphon* or unidentified scriptural material.)[3] In other words, as much as two fifths of the quotations, paraphrases and allusions are taken from just two books in the Bible. This is only a strong affirmation of what could have been expected, since in this tradition the Book of Psalms was used as a prayer-book, and the Gospel of Matthew was considered to be the most original and important gospel in the early church. It may be added that in many ways it is the gospel most fitting for a Christian ascetic tradition, since it contains some of the sayings of Jesus most congruent with such a movement. The importance of these two books as individual books, is enhanced also by the stories where someone owns, memorizes or recites a Gospel or the Book of Psalms.[4]

The proportion between LXX and NT material is fairly even: 116 clear uses of LXX and 110 of NT.

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[2] This includes some instances where there is one or more parallels in other gospels.

[3] See note 66 in chapter two.

[4] **VI.6** (a brother who owned only a gospel, sold it); XV.116 (carried a gospel with him); XV.117 (carried a gospel with him, sold it); XVIII.13 (recite the gospel by heart, and the rest of Scripture); IV.70 (completed the whole psalter); V.53 (meditating on the psalms); VII.34 (recite a small number of psalms); X.110 (recite the twelve psalms); X.150 (recite the twelve psalms); XIV.30 (sung many psalms); XVII.34 (beginning with the psalter…completed the psalms); XX.3 (sung five psalms). Several sayings also speak of "psalmody" (I.35, V.22, X.25, X.102, XI.35, XI.49, XII.6, XVIII.48, XVIII.49).

The books used in five or more instances are Genesis (16 instances), Exodus (6), Psalms (43), Proverbs (6), Job (5), Isaiah (9), Matthew (48), Luke (10), John (7), First Corinthians (13), and Second Corinthians (5).

Some specific parts of individual books are quoted more often than others. From Matthew, the most quoted part is Matt 5–7, i.e., the Sermon on the Mount (about half of the instances); in John, it is chapter 14–15, i.e., the beginning of the farewell-speech of Jesus, (almost half of the instances), in 1 Thessalonians, all the instances are taken from chapter 5, which is full of exhortations.

The pattern which can be discerned is that the parts of the Bible often quoted and alluded to tend to contain many exhortations. This is not surprising, considering the exhortative nature of *AP*.

Among those 226 instances where the Bible is used in a clear way, some Bible passages are represented more than once. Nineteen passages are represented twice[5], and only five are represented three times, namely the following:

Gen 3	The Fall
Ps 72:22	"I was like a beast before you."
Matt 7:1	"Do not judge, so that you may not be judged."
Matt 19:21	"If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven."
Matt 25:31–46	the judgment of the nations

Again we see that there is a great proportion of exhortations in the NT material. And among the material not explicitly exhortative, much of it is taken from an exhortative context. However, what is perhaps most interesting about this list is not what we find in it, but what we do *not* find there. It is noteworthy that only five verses or passages are used three times, and not a single verse is used more than that. That leaves 173 instances out of 226 where a verse or passage is used that does not occur elsewhere in the collection. So, although there is a great concentration of verses taken from the Psalms and from the Gospel of Matthew, the reason for that is not the popularity of some specific verse or verses. It is the two books as such that are used, and in those books the selection is quite wide, although certain parts are favoured.

[5] Gen 2:7; Gen 22:1–12; 2 Kgs 25:8–10; Ps 56:8; Ps 115:7; Wisd 9:5,11; Isa 1:18 ; Matt 5:4; Matt 5:39; Matt 6:12; Matt 11:12; Luke 18:13; Luke 21:34; John 15:13; 1 Cor 10:12; 2 Cor 6:16; 2 Cor 12:7; 1 Thess 5:17 ; 1 Tim 2:4.

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Moving on now to the ways in which the Bible texts are contextualized, those ways will be discussed under three main headings. The section under the first heading focuses on how the referent of the biblical text is pointed out, the section under the second one deals with the function of the Bible text. Finally, the way of using the Bible will be compared to a pattern used as an exercise to prepare for rhetorical training, the *ergasia*-pattern.

1. Ways of Pointing Out the Referent of a Bible Text

In this first section the ways of pointing out a referent are grouped into three main categories. The first and most obvious category consists of the different ways of making a connection between a biblical text and an external referent. The second category is made up of different ways of focusing on details, and even altering a biblical text, resulting in a new contextualization of it. Under the third category are grouped different ways of connecting biblical texts to each other, again ending up in a new contextualization.

1.1 Connecting the biblical text to an external referent

We start with a type of contextualization of Scripture which is used in most sayings, in one form or another—those different ways of making an explicit connection between the biblical text, or a part of it, and the experience of the readers. It is the most overt way of contextualizing or, in other words, of saying that a biblical text concerns a particular aspect of life or thought of the reading community. Typically these types involve a hermeneutical phrase which, in its different forms, is used to make the connection between the Bible text and a referent in an explicit way.

1.1.1 The referent of the Bible text is stated

The simplest way of making a connection between the biblical text and an external referent is by explicitly stating such a referent of the text, or of a detail in the text. We have seen examples of this in some of the analysed sayings. Normally this kind of connection is made by beginning with a quotation or allusion and then pointing out the referent. An example of this is the hermeneutical phrase "This means (τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν)" in **IV.32**, where the vice of gluttony is pointed out as the referent of the "chief cook" Nabozardan, and the temple (ναός) as referring to the mind (νοῦς) :

> Abba Poimen said: If Nabozardan, the chief cook, had not come, the temple of the Lord would not have been set on fire. This means: If the laziness of gluttony did not come to the soul, the mind would not fall in combat against the enemy.

Using such hermeneutical phrases is a very distinct way of stating the referent. Sometimes it is pointed out in more subtle ways, as was seen in **X.58**, where the phrase "also you" (καὶ σύ) connects the Bible texts to the referent chosen by Poimen:

> Abba Ammo asked about some impure thoughts which the heart of man brings forth, and about vain desires. And abba Poimen said to him: '*Shall the axe be glorified without the one who hews with it*? Also you (Καὶ σὺ)—do not put your hands to them and do not delight in them, and they will lie idle.'

What is implied here is that the axe represents impure thoughts and vain desires, and the one who hews represents the will of the questioning brother. In this way, concerns in the life of the reader of *AP* are indicated as a referent of the biblical text.

Yet another example of a referent being pointed out in a more subtle way is **VII.59**, where one of the elders first makes a link between the concepts 'weakness' and 'toil (πόνος)', the second one having very concrete connotations in the tradition of *AP*. As was shown in the analysis of this saying in the previous chapter, the word had become a technical term for ascetic practices. So when later on in the saying the biblical texts are introduced ('*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*,' and '*So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me*.'), the new referent of those verses has already been established.

In **IV.60**, a referent of the Bible text is pointed out by an analogy:

> By slandering the serpent expelled Eve from Paradise. The one who speaks evil of his neighbour is also like him (Τούτου οὖν ὅμοιός ἐστι καὶ ὁ …). For he ruins the soul of the listener and does not save his own.

In this new context, the "serpent" refers to anyone speaking evil of his neighbour, and "Eve" refers to the one hearing him. In this way the whole story of the Fall is transformed to refer to everyday experiences of the reader.

The pointing out of a referent may be in the form of a personification, as in **I.23**.

Often the pointing out of a referent may involve inviting the reader to develop the teaching by re-reading the Bible text allegorically. The pointing out of a referent becomes a key to the allegorical reading.

We can list the hermeneutical phrases that are used in this category. Firstly, those that begin with a quotation and then state the referent:

1. τί ἐστι τό [quotation of/allusion to/detail in Bible text] – [referent][6]
2. τί ἑρμηνεύεται [quotation] – [detail] – ἑρμηνεύεται – [referent][7]
3. γέγραπται· [quotation] – σημαίνει δὲ ὁ λόγος [referent][8]
4. [quotation/allusion/paraphrase] – τοῦτό ἐστιν·[referent][9]
5. [quotation of/detail in Bible text] – τουτέστι [referent][10]
6. [detail in Bible text] – ὅ ἐστι [referent][11]

There are hermeneutical phrases where the referent is first stated and then this is connected to the quotation.

7. [referent] – (τοῦτό) ἐστιν (τό) [allusion/paraphrase][12]

This second type of construction, where the starting point is a referent which is relevant to the reading-community, is less common than the previous group, which starts off from a biblical text, and then points out the referent.

We have seen more subtle ways of pointing out the referent:

8. [question] – [quotation] – καὶ σύ – [referent] [13]
9. [defining a term contextually] – [quotation including that term][14]

And we have seen a referent being pointed out by an analogy:

10. [paraphrase] – Τούτου οὖν ὅμοιός ἐστι καὶ ὁ … [referent][15]

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[6] I.11, **III.28**, **X.67**, XI.65.18–20, XVIII.23, XVIII.30 (τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ γεγραμμένον·).

[7] X.70.

[8] **XVIII.33.**

[9] **IV.32**, **X.116.1–4**, X.146a, XV.55, XVIII.30 (here the hermeneutical phrase precedes the quotation).

[10] **V.11**, X.13, X.145, X.146b.

[11] III.22, X.134, X.151, XIII.7.5–6, XV.84.7–8.

[12] VII.46, X.84, **X.116.3–5**.

[13] **X.58.**

[14] **VII.59.**

[15] **IV.60.**

11. (ὥσπερ) – [paraphrase] – οὕτως (ἐστὶ/ἦν) καί – [referent][16]
12. [referent] – ὡς – [paraphrase][17]

A rather intriguing way of pointing out the referent is hermeneutical phrases containing the word πρόσωπον (character/role).
13. [paraphrase] – biblical person…ἔχει/ἐστι πρόσωπον – [referent (in the genitive)][18]

We will return to such phrases later on, under the heading 2.3 "The Bible as a source of images/Illustrative use" in the section on the function of the Bible.

1.1.2 Argumentative or inferring connection

There are a number of phrases used to make an argumentative or inferring connection between the biblical text and a specific referent. What is common for all these examples is that the Bible text is used as an argument for what is being taught. Normally what is being taught is ethical teaching, usually in the form of an exhortation, sometimes in the form of a simple statement. The most frequently used phrases are those that make use of the conjunction γάρ:

> […] he said that if someone indulges in wine-drinking, he cannot escape the plots of the [distracting] thoughts, for (καὶ γάρ) forced by his daughters, Lot got drunk on wine, and because of his drunkenness, the devil easily prepared him for a lawless act.[19]

We can list the phrases common for this category, beginning with those involving the conjunction γάρ:
1. [teaching] – γάρ – quotation/paraphrase [20]
2. [teaching] – (οὕτως) γέγραπται γάρ (ὅτι)· – [quotation] [21]
3. [teaching] – εἶπε/φησὶ/λέγει γάρ (ἡ Γραφή/ὁ Κύριος/ ὁ Θεός/ὁ ἀπόστολος) (ὅτι)· – [quotation] [22]

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[16] **I.19,** V.37, **XVIII.22.** (In fact, this is a quotation of a biblical analogy, followed by an elaboration of that analogy, where the referent is then stated.)

[17] XIX.15.

[18] **I.23, XVIII.34.**

[19] IV.23.7–11: ἔλεγεν ὅτι ἐάν τις δῷ ἑαυτὸν εἰς οἰνοποσίαν, οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγῃ τὴν τῶν λογισμῶν ἐπιβουλήν. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Λὼτ ἀναγκασθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν θυγατέρων ἐμεθύσθη ἀπὸ οἴνου, καὶ διὰ τῆς μέθης εὐχερῶς ὁ διάβολος εἰς ἄνομον πρᾶξιν αὐτὸν παρεσκεύασεν.

[20] IV.23.7–11, V.4.60–69, V.52.15–16 (incl. a question), VII.52, VIII.6 (…καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος), X.51.8–11 (εἰ … οὐδὲ ἡμεῖς), XI.47, XI.112, **XI.125.4–7, XIII.2**, XIV.19, XV.41, XVII.1, XVIII.26.90–93 (about God), XVIII.46.58–64 (about God).

[21] I.16, **I.23**, I.32, X.15, X.46, X.152, **XI.60**, XI.65 (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ), XIII.71–4, XV.73, XVI.16, **XVII.31,** XVIII.44, XXI.65.

[22] IV.51, V.51, VII.23.28–29, VIII.17, X.95, X.103.1–3, XI.50, XI.75, XI.95, XII.25.18–20.

4. [teaching] – ὁ γὰρ εἰπών – [quotation] εἶπε καί – [quotation] [23]
5. [teaching] – τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος παραινεῖ λέγων – [quotation] [24]
6. [teaching] – αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ πρώτη ἐντολὴ τοῦ Σωτῆρος λέγοντος· – quotation [25]
7. [teaching] – τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τό· … [quotation] [26]
8. [teaching] – ἐνετείλατο γὰρ τῷ Πέτρῳ … [quotation] [27]
9. [teaching] – Εἰ γὰρ τῷ ἀποστόλῳ – [allusion] – πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἡμῖν …[28]

Sometimes the conjunction διό or the fuller form διὰ τοῦτο is used to connect referent and biblical text in an argumentative way:

10. [teaching] – διὸ/διὰ τοῦτο (καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος/ Κύριος/ Δανὶδ) ἔλεγεν /εἶπεν/ λέγει τῷ …· – [quotation] [29]
11. [paraphrase] – διὰ τοῦτο/ διό – [teaching][30]

Some sayings connect to the Bible as to an argument, first stating an exhortation or a teaching (which may be in the form of a brother giving exhortation to himself), then connecting it to a quotation using καθώς as a subordinating conjunction and a verb to describe what is "written" or "said":

12. [teaching] – καθὼς γέγραπται/ καθὼς ἐν τῷ προφήτῃ λέγει· – [quotation][31]

There are a few examples using οὖν or ἐπειδή to connect the Bible text to a statement:

13. γέγραπται – [quotation] – οὖν/ἐπειδή – [teaching] [32]
14. [paraphrase] – οὖν – [teaching] [33]

There are examples of κατά being used:

15. [teaching] – κατὰ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου … λέγοντος ὅτι· – [quotation][34]

In the following example an Elder uses a phrase reminiscent of Jesus' phrase in John 12:49:

16. [teaching] – οὐκ ἐξ ἐμαυτοῦ δὲ ταῦτα εἶπον, ἀλλὰ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀπόστολός ἐστιν ὁ ταῦτα λέγων· – [quotation][35]

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[23] **IX.15**.

[24] **XII.14 (**related to type 1.1.1).

[25] XV.36.

[26] **X.116.2–5** (combined with another quotation), **XI.43** (related to type 1.1.1).

[27] **X.62** (about God's forgiveness, i.e., not an ethical exhortation).

[28] XV.115.

[29] V.1, **V.11, VII.59.**

[30] XI.113, XII.23.

[31] II.34.1–5, **XI.125.1–4**, XII.25.11–15, XVII.19.1–4 (here the exhortation is the Bible text itself, and then this is expanded on).

[32] **I.18.7–11**, X.86, **XVIII.22.**

[33] XI.44, **XI.125.5–9,** XII.25.18.–22.

[34] XII.51.25–28.

[35] II.15.

The argument may be more subtle, where an argumentative phrase or word, such as γάρ, is only inferred. Other phrases are used to suggest this, such as: "If a man remembers what is written, … , he would … " ; "The one who flees from tribulations flees from eternal life. Who gave Stephen … ?"

17. [teaching] – [connected through an inferred argument] – [quotation/paraphrase/allusion] [36]

Sometimes the teaching consists simply of what is contained in the Bible text, so that quotation and referent merge. There may be an introductory formula, such as "it is good to do what is written", (V.2) or it may be followed by a phrase such as "as the apostle says" (XII.10). Distinctly biblical phrases may be woven into the teaching, where a simpler phrase could be used. An example is III.55: "Laughter expels the beatitude of compunction (πένθος)." Employing the beatitude instead of merely the concept of compunction adds connotations of the consolation promised in the beatitude.

18. (introductory formula) – [teaching *in the form of* a quotation or paraphrase][37]

We should also mention a way of using Scripture that formally looks as if the connection to the referent is made in an argumentative or inferring way, but which is in fact a rather superfluous, parenthetical connection. An example is V.54, where a holy man called Pachon tells the narrator that he once went to a cave inhabited by hyenas to be eaten. He continues:

> When night fell, according to Scripture, "*the sun knows its going down; you make darkness, and it is night; in it all the wild beasts of the forest roam around, and young lions roar for prey, and seek meat for themselves from God* (Ps 103:19b–21)", so the beasts came out at that time, both the male and the female, and smelled at me and licked me from my feet to my head.

Although the hermeneutical phrase κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον is used, the Bible is not used as an argument, but rather as an ornament.

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[36] IV.36, XVI.18.

[37] III.55, V.2, XI.51.28–33, V.20–21.7, VII.23.23–25, X.51.15–19, X.20, X.45, X.89, X.103, XII.4 (προσεύχου, καθὼς γέγραπται), XII.10 (followed by καθώς εἶπεν ὁ ἀπόστολος), XVII.2.3–4, XVII.13.

1.1.3 The Bible is connected to an action, treating it as motivation

Another rather straightforward way of connecting the biblical text to an external referent is to describe a text being applied in action. In II.29 a brother chooses to make peace among those fighting, according to the macarism on the peacemakers.

> Someone told that three beloved *philoponoi* became monks. The first one chose to make peace among those who fight, according to what is written: *Blessed are the peacemakers* … .[38]

In two versions of another saying a brother sells his copy of a gospel, the very gospel which commands him (τὸν λέγοντά μοι…): "Sell everything you own";[39] another one is told to sell everything he owns "according to the commandment of the Lord (κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Κυρίου)", and so he does;[40] abba Daniel defeats the demons by turning the other cheek "according to the commandment (κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν)".[41] In these sayings, an Elder or a brother is presented as an exemplar for the reader, an exemplar belonging to the same tradition and living according to some of the same practices and ideals. This exemplar is depicted as embodying a commandment from the Bible, thus bringing the biblical text very concretely into the context of the reader.

This can be formulated in a negative way as well. In XII.27.1–5 a brother asks why he neglects his own soul when he goes off to work. The answer is, "Because you do not want to fulfil what is written. For it says: 'I bless the Lord …'."

We can list the hermeneutical phrases used for making this way of referential connection:

With κατά:

1. [conflated commandment/action+quotation] – κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν (τοῦ Κυρίου/ Θεοῦ) [42]
2. [action/commandment] – κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον/τὸ ἅγιον Εὐαγγέλιον – [quotation] [43]

With other hermeneutical phrases:

3. [action] – αὐτον γὰρ τὸν λόγον πεπώληκα τὸν λέγοντά μοι· -[quotation] [44]
4. [action] – ἰδοὺ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ … – [quotation] [45]

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[38] Διηγήσατό τις ὅτι τρεῖς φιλόπονοι ἀγαπητοὶ ἐγένοντο μοναχοί. Καὶ ὁ μὲν εἷς ἠρήσατο τοὺς μαχομένους εἰρηνεύειν κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· «Μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί»… .

[39] **VI.6**, XV.117.

[40] XIV.32.

[41] XV.15.

[42] XIV.32.4–6, XV.15.15–16.

[43] II.29.2–3, XIII.1.16–21.

[44] **VI.6**.

[45] V.31.

5. [action] – καθὼς καὶ ὁ ψαλμῳδὸς λέγει – [quotation][46]
6. [action or lack of action] – … πληρῶσαι τὸ γεγραμμένον … Λέγει γάρ – [quotation] [47]
7. [action] – γέγραπται – [quotation][48]
8. τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν φωνὴν ἀγνοοῦντες – [action = allusion][49]
9. γνοὺς ὅτι ἐντολὴν Θεοῦ θέλει πληρῶσαι βουλόμενος – [action][50]

With no hermeneutical phrase: no formal connection is made between the action and the biblical text, the readers are supposed to make the connection for themselves:
10. [action] – λέγω ὑμῖν – [paraphrase][51]
11. [action] – βούλομαι εἰπεῖν τῷ Θεῷ – [quotation][52]
12. [action] – [quotation by the one acting][53]

1.1.4 Questions and answers about Scripture

There are questions and answers on how "legal" teachings from the Bible should be understood, i.e., a parallel to Jewish *halākâ*. We have an example of this in **X.67**:

> A brother asked abba Poimen: "What is [the meaning of] (τί ἐστι τό) *to be angry with a brother without a cause*?" The Elder answered: "Every time your brother mistreats you, even if he carves out your right eye and you get angry with him, you get angry without a cause. But if someone wants to separate you from God you should get angry at him.

Here, the commandment of Jesus is made very concrete. Poimen states what situation in the life of the reader should be treated as a cause for anger, and which ones should not. In this particular case, the interpretation is very harsh: even being mistreated to the point of being deprived of an eye is not a just cause for anger.

In **XVI.1**, we see the opposite happen, at least on the surface of the story. Some brothers ask about how the saying of Jesus can be applied: *If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also* (Matt 5:39), and the Elder modifies it gradually, to adapt it to the ability of the brothers.[54]

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[46] XV.46.16–21.
[47] XII.27.1–5.
[48] V.42.
[49] XV.111.
[50] XVII.15.7–9.
[51] VII.36.
[52] XV.132.
[53] XVI.8.
[54] Other examples of questions and answers are I.11, **III.28**, X.27, **X.116**, XV.84, and XVIII.23.

1.1.5 Exemplary connection—imitation/identification of biblical exemplars
Another way of making the referential connection we have seen is to invite the reader to imitate or identify with persons or events in the Bible text. Sometimes the connection between the reader and the exemplar is created with a verb of perception, e.g., "have you seen", or some other verb about marvelling or thinking about the exemplar. There are also sayings where such a verb is not used.

This use can be exemplified by two sayings employing "the tears of Mary", as exemplary. In III.50 an elder tells a brother that they should cry over their faults and impurities. Then, Mary Magdalene is introduced:

> Have you seen Mary, how the Lord called on her when she had bent into the tomb and cried (John 20:11–16)? So it will be for the soul too.[55]

In III.31, while being visited by a brother, an Elder is in a state of ecstasy. Afterwards the brother asks

> "Where was your thought, abba?" The Elder answered: "Where holy Mary was when she cried by the cross of the Saviour (John 19:25)—and I would also have liked to cry always." [56]

Here it is unclear which Mary is being referred to, but the attribute "holy" (*ἁγία*) probably indicates that it is Mary the mother of Jesus.[57]

Joseph the patriarch is used as an exemplary figure, depicting him as standing firm in trials and temptations. Also here, we have sayings using verbs of perception, and other ways of making the connection. In VII.19 the theme is introduced with a question about the difficulty of experiencing suffering. To this the Elder answers by connecting two exemplars to the theme:

> "Do we not look with wonder at Joseph, how he suffered temptations, (…) We also see Job, who did not cease to cling to God …"[58]

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[55] Εἶδες τὴν Μαρίαν ὅτε ἔκυψεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ ἔκλαιεν, πῶς ἐφώνει αὐτὴν ὁ Κύριος; Οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἡ ψυχή.

[56] Ποῦ ἦν ὁ λογισμός σου, ἀββᾶ; Ὁ δὲ γέρων εἶπεν· Ὅπου ἦν ἡ ἁγία Μαρία καὶ ἔκλαιεν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Σωτῆρος· καὶ ἐγὼ ἤθελον πάντοτε κλαίειν.

[57] In the version of *AP*/G, Poimen 144 (PG 65:357 b–c), she is specified more clearly as holy Mary, the God-bearer, ἡ ἁγία Μαρία ἡ Θεοτόκος.

[58] Οὐ θαυμάζομεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ. (…) πῶς ὑπέμεινε τὸν πειρασμόν, (…) Ὁρῶμεν δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἰὼβ ὅτι οὐκ ἐνδέδωκεν κατέχων τὸν Θεόν (…).

In V.52, an Elder reassures a brother who has been tempted to fornication, that it was difficult for Joseph as well, by a question appealing to how the brother perceives that experience: "Do you think it was an easy matter for Joseph?"[59]

In **XV.69**, Joseph again appears as an exemplar of standing firm in temptations. Abba Orsinios speaks about being purified "like Joseph (κατὰ τὸν Ἰωσήφ)". Towards the end of the saying, after having expanded on the exemplar, he makes a connection to the reading-community, by using the phrase "also we (καὶ ἡμεῖς)".

Characters from the Bible are used to personify the soul, or to personify virtues, in a way which makes them exemplars. Two examples will illustrate this. First **XVIII.34**:

> … It is said that the Shunammite woman has the role of the soul (πρόσωπον ἔχειν τῆς ψυχῆς) and Elisha has the role of the Holy Spirit. … [60]

There is something similar involved in another saying of *AP*/GS, **I.23**, although here the roles played by the biblical figures are those of personified virtues:

> … For it is written: *'If these three men existed: Noah, Job and Daniel …'* Noah is the personification of dispossession (πρόσωπόν ἐστι τῆς ἀκτημοσύνης), Job that of toil and Daniel that of discernment. … [61]

Biblical figures can be used as negative exemplars. In IV.23 Adam and Lot are used in this way. Adam is introduced as a negative exemplar of the dangers of food, Lot of the dangers of wine.

In V.37, the Israelites are used as a negative exemplar, without explicitly naming them. Having introduced the prescribed behaviour on how to relate to demons, the paraphrase of Num 25:1–9 is introduced, again using a verb of perception: "Do you see what the Midianites did?"[62] inferring that the Israelites of the story are negative exemplars when it comes to consenting to demons.

In **IV.60** the snake in the garden of Eden is used as a negative exemplar. Here the serpent is introduced in a paraphrase and then

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[59] Τί γάρ, νομίζεις περὶ τοῦ μακαρίου Ἰωσὴφ ἁπλῶς εἶναι τὸ πρᾶγμα;

[60] A similar personification of the soul can be found in *AP*/G Poimen 71. These sayings will be discussed again under the heading "Different Roles of the Bible Text in Individual Sayings". Note also that personification of the soul is also involved in the saying about Mary, III.50, mentioned above.

[62] Εἶδες τί ἐποίησαν οἱ Μαδιναῖοι;

connected to the members of the reading-community with the phrase "is also like him".[63]

We must also mention another way of rendering biblical figures as exemplars to be imitated. One can simply use a verb that denotes exemplary imitation, and make an exhortation out of it. This is what happens in **XV.68**:

> … Imitate (Μίμησαι) the tax-collector in order not to be condemned with the Pharisee, and choose (ἐπίλεξαι) the meekness of Moses in order that you may change your heart, which is as flint, into springs of water.

In XVIII.46.104–106, the reader meets an exhortation to imitate Christ, because there will be:

> … a great recompense for you if you imitate (μιμησαμένῳ) your Master, who, without abandoning heaven, spent time on earth for the salvation of humans.[64]

In all of the above examples the biblical stories are treated as providing the reader with ethical exemplars. That is how the link between the Bible text and the matter treated is established: the biblical figures are said to exemplify what is being taught to the reader.

In most of these sayings, that involves a use of a hermeneutical phrase. To get an overview of these examples, and others, we can categorize the phrases which are connected to them.

1. [referent] – Ὁρῶμεν/Μνημονεύετε – [paraphrase] [65]
2. [referent] – Εἶδες – [paraphrase] (- οὕτως ἔσται καὶ …) [66]
3. [ὁ λογισμός μου] ὅπου ἦν ἡ ἁγία Μαρία – [paraphrase] – καὶ ἐγώ – [referent] [67]
4. [referent] – Οὐ θαυμάζομεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ – [paraphrase] [68]
5. [referent] – Τί γάρ, νομίζεις περὶ τοῦ μακαρίου Ἰωσήφ – [paraphrase] [69]
6. [referent] – κατὰ τὸ Ἰωσήφ – [paraphrase] – Καὶ ἡμεῖς …[70]
7. [referent] – γάρ – [paraphrase] [71]
8. [paraphrase] –ὅμοιός ἐστι/γέγονας – [referent] [72]

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[63] τούτου οὖν ὅμοιός ἐστι…

[64] καὶ σοὶ δὲ πολὺς ὁ μισθὸς μιμησαμένῳ τὸν οἰκεῖον δεσπότην οὐρανοὺς μὲν οὐ καταλείψαντα τὰς δὲ ἐπὶ γῆς διατριβὰς ποιησάμενον διὰ τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίαν. Cf. Phil 2:5–11, where the same theme of the *kenosis* of Christ is used as an image to imitate.

[65] I.22, VII.19.1–2, 6–8, XI.33, XV.75.

[66] III.50 (… οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ἡ ψυχή.), V.37 (… οὕτως ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν λογισμῶν.).

[67] III.31.

[68] VII.19.1–6

[69] V.52.

[70] **XV.69**. Here, the paraphrase and inferred referent are intermingled in the saying.

[71] IV.23.7–11.

[72] **IV.60**, VII.23.20–22 (where the referent comes first, although it is in the form of a quotation, and then the allusion to Paul follows).

9. [quotation] – οὕτως ὀφείλει εἶναι ὁ μοναχός[73]
10. [verb of imitation] – [name of biblical person/paraphrase] [74]

In XV.115, the reader's suffering is compared to Paul's when he was "harassed by a messenger of Satan". The connection is made by the phrases Εἰ γὰρ τῷ ἀποστόλῳ … πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἡμῖν … .

1.1.6 Liturgical connections

The connection between the Bible and the daily life of the reader is sometimes made by referring to biblical texts used in liturgical settings. An allusion to the common or private prayer is normally also an allusion to a biblical text, since the common *synaxis*, the daily offices and the personal meditation mentioned in *AP* are made up of words from Scripture, especially the Book of Psalms.[75] The text of the Bible is material which prayer and liturgy is made of.

There are sayings which make it clear that what is formulated in prayer should also be practised in life. A quite explicit example is XV.120, where an Elder confides to a brother that he is not well. For thirty years he has remembered the wrongdoings he has suffered but prayed: "Forgive us as we have forgiven (Matt 6:12)," he has always been concerned about eating but prayed: "I have forgotten to eat my bread (Ps 101:5)," he has had evil thoughts in his heart but prayed: "The meditation of my heart shall be continually pleasing before you (Ps 18:15)," and the examples continue. The brother tries to comfort the Elder, saying he thinks David was only speaking of himself. To that, the Elder answers: "Believe me, child, truly, if we do not keep what we sing before God, we are going to destruction."[76]

This idea is often assumed in other sayings. An exhortation to pray with the words of a biblical text becomes an indirect way both of exhorting someone to live in a certain way or to have a certain attitude, and of supporting the exhortation with the Bible text. An example of this is V.20-21, where an Elder exhorts the brother to stand on "the rock", and

[73] X.97. (The exemplars are demons!)

[74] XI.33.3–5, XI.33.5–9, **XV.68**, XVIII.46.

[75] For references, see Regnault, *Vie quotidienne des Pères*, 115–121, Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 117–129, Stig R. FRØYSHOV, "Bønnens praksis i den egyptiske ørkenmonastisismen – en innledende studie", *NTT* 106 (2005): 147–169. Due to the close connection between the Bible and liturgy, a reference to the Bible may have been perceived as a liturgical reference.

[76] Πίστευσόν μοι, τέκνον, φύσει ἐὰν μὴ φυλάξωμεν ἅπερ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ψάλλομεν εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγομεν (XV.121.30–32).

although the Evil One beats like waves against it, he should not fear. He ends with this exhortation to sing the Psalm:

> Sing with force: "*They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion: he that dwells in Jerusalem shall never be moved* (Ps 124:1)."[77]

The ways of integrating the text in the Bible into *AP* through a liturgical connection can be grouped into three types.
1. There is an exhortation to pray, and the teaching is the content of that prayer. The exhortation is normally made using the imperative of a verb denoting to "sing", "say" or "pray".[78]
2. An inconsistency between life and prayer is pointed out, or there is an exhortation to make life congruent with prayer.[79]
3. The Bible text may be a part of a narration where someone is depicted as praying with the words of the Bible.[80]

1.1.7 Other ways of connecting the Bible text to an external referent

Prophetic connection Just as in the NT, Scripture is sometimes treated as prophecy which has been fulfilled in the present, or will be fulfilled in the near future. In XVIII.18.9–11, abba Moses senses that barbarians will invade Scetis, but he will not flee. His brothers ask him if he will not flee. He answers:

> I have waited for this day for so many years, that the word of my master Christ would be fulfilled, he who says: "*All who take the sword will perish by the sword* (Matt 26:52)." [81]

The background for this is that Moses was said to have been a robber before he became a monk.[82]

The two constructions used in connection with the fulfilment of prophecy are:

1. [referent] – ἵνα πληρωθῇ ὁ λόγος τοῦ … [quotation] [83]

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[77] Ψάλλε ἐν ἰσχύϊ λέγων· «Οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπὶ Κύριον ὡς ὄρος Σιών, οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὁ κατοικῶν Ἰερουσαλήμ.»

[78] V.20–21.9–11, VII.23.15–17, XI.116, XII.28.

[79] II.35.32–34, XV.120, XVII.16.

[80] V.46, XII.10.14–17, XVIII.26.56–63, 65–66, 78–80.

[81] … Ἐγὼ τοσαῦτα ἔτη προσδοκῶ τὴν ἡμέραν ταύτην ἵνα πληρωθῇ ὁ λόγος τοῦ δεπότου μου Χριστοῦ τοῦ λέγοντος· «Πάντες οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀπολοῦνται.» …

[82] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, chapter 19.

[83] XVIII.18.9-11.

2. [referent] – ἵνα καὶ ἐν ἡμῖν πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθέν· [quotation] [84]

The first one is the type of construction we find in the Gospel of Matthew, for example in Matt 1:22:

> All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: …[85]

The second example is similar to what we find in Rom 8:4:

> … so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.[86]

Support of an analogy There are also sayings where the Bible is used to support why a certain image is used in an analogy.

> **III.34** Blessed Syncletica said: "In the beginning there is much fight and toil for those who approach God, but thereafter an indescribable joy. For just as those who want to light a fire first cough and weep, and then attain what they search for ('*For,*' it is said, '*our God is a consuming fire*'), in the same manner we too should light the divine fire within us under tears and toil."

Other sayings can compare an image in the Bible to a specific referent, for example "your heart which is as flint". Such comparisons can create a novel web of meanings, stretching over several different Bible texts.[87]

Riddles A technique which has already been mentioned, and which cannot really be treated as an independent category, is the technique of creating riddles of biblical texts. An enigmatic Bible text may stand on its own, with just an explanation of a detail, the reader being left to work out the rest of its meaning for oneself. The *apophthegma* III.23 is an example of this. This riddle technique can involve a paradox or joke as in **VI.6** and **XI.60**. The effect of this technique is that the reader is invited to work out the riddle and in this way create the connection between the biblical text and the referent; it is a way to "tease" and provoke the reader into discovering new meaning.

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[84] XVIII.42.23–27.

[85] ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος … . Similarly in Matt 2:15,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4.

[86] ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα.

[87] **VII.59, XV.68**.

Implicit allegory This technique has been mentioned briefly. This is also a way of provoking the reader to discover new meaning. It involves pointing out a referent of a text which leads to an implicit allegory, as in **XVIII.34**.

Answering demons, logismoi, "illness of the soul", or other adversaries. Sometimes the Bible is used in combating demons, *logismoi*, and other enemies of the monks. Examples of this are VII.23, VII.44, IX.6, XV.90, XV.136.

1.2 Adaptations and focalizations of the Bible text itself

1.2.1 Focusing a detail

Contextualization can be achieved by focusing on a detail in the biblical text. In **III.43,** when a brother asks for a word, the Elder tells him: "When God struck Egypt, there was not a house without grief/compunction (πένθος)." In referring to the exodus story in this manner, the Elder focuses all attention on the grief of the households that lost a child. By focusing on this detail, the story becomes a story about *penthos*, grief, which had taken on the meaning of compunction, which is a subject often discussed in *AP*.

Another example, already mentioned under 1.1.1 "The referent of the Bible text is stated", is **IV.32**, where the title of Nabozardan as chief cook (in LXX), is focussed on as an image of gluttony. In the same saying there is a similar focus on another word, in the pun on ναός (temple) and νοῦς (mind). [88]

Many of these sayings can be seen as suggestions to the reader on how to develop the biblical text as an allegory.

[88] The same detail is focussed in IV.90. Other sayings that focus on details of biblical stories in a similar way are **III.28**, **XI.60** (a pun on τέλος/τελεῖν), **XI.125** (a point is made of the word-order), **XII.14** (focus on reciprocity, "pray for *each other*"), **XVIII.34**.

1.2.2 Changing the narrative frame

The narrative frame of a biblical story can be changed to establish a referent of Scripture relevant to the reading community.

In XI.1 abba Antony speaks of those monks who have fallen into sin and almost given up all hope, because they have set their confidence in their own works. He suggests that this is because they have

> … neglected the commandment of him who says "*ask your father, and he shall relate to you, your elders, and they shall tell you* (Deut 32:7)."[89]

The original setting for this "commandment" is a song of Moses, where he tells the people to look back on the saving acts of God. Presumably the "father" referred to is in that setting the biological fathers of those listening. In this new setting, "father" refers to the spiritual fathers of those receiving the text, and "the elders (οἱ πρεσβύτεροι)" refers either to presbyters or to those desert fathers and mothers that have lived earlier.[90]

1.2.3 Changing or (re-)defining a word or phrase

Another way of adapting a text in the Bible is to change or redefine a word in it, as in **XI.43**:

> Abba John said: "Vigilance (φυλακή) is to sit in the cell and always think of God with wakefulness. That is what is meant by: *'I was in prison/vigilance (*φυλακή*) and you visited me.* (Matt 25:36)' "

Here, the same word can have two very different meanings, in this case vigilance/prison (φυλακή). That the word used in the quotation should be taken in the sense of 'vigilance' is made clear by first simply giving a definition of what φυλακή is. A text which has little relevance in the desert, i.e., about the virtue of visiting prisoners, takes on a new contextualized meaning, i.e., about the virtue of being vigilant.

A word is changed in **III.43**, where a brother asks for a word: "When God struck Egypt, there was not a house without grief/compunction (πένθος)." Here the original wording in Ex 12:30 is: there was not a house in which there was not one dead (τεθνηκώς). So this change fits

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[89] … παραλογισαμένους τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ εἰπόντος· «Ἐπερώτησον τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ σοι, τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους σου καὶ ἐροῦσίν σοι.»

[90] Other sayings that change the narrative frame are **XI.43**, **XIII.2**, XIV.28, **XVIII.28.**

the original context well, and at the same time it is an adaptation which connects well with the ascetical practice of compunction.

In **VII.59** the word "weakness" (ἀσθένεια) in the Bible is related to the concept of πόνος, which had a specific meaning in the discourse of early monastic texts.

In **XVII.31 (B)**, we saw how the virtues in the Bible text were changed to ascetic virtues.

In **XVIII.22** the deer of the biblical text were specified as deer in the desert, which facilitated a contextualization.

1.2.4 Treating a detail as a metaphor

Sometimes a detail in the text is related to the context of the reading-community by treating the detail as a metaphor. In **III.28**, which was treated under the previous heading too, the detail treated as a symbol is "the grave":

> A brother asked him [abba Poimen]: "What should I do?" He answered: "Abraham, when he went into the promised land, bought a burial-place for himself, and because of the grave he inherited the land." The brother said: "What is a 'grave'?" The Elder answered: "Room for weeping and grief/ compunction."

The grave is taken as a token or symbol, which does not really respect the integrity of the biblical story. Abraham is taken as an exemplar, not because he acted in an ethically laudable way, but because compunction, symbolized by the grave which Abraham bought, is what allows the reader to "inherit the land".[91]

1.2.5 Treating an analogy as a symbol

Sometimes a biblical analogy is treated as a symbol, which transforms the whole text. An example is **XVIII.28**. Probably inspired by the story of the serpent in Gen 3 the serpent is no longer treated as an image of how wise one should be, but also becomes a *symbol* for the devil, which could be formulated: When you are wise as serpents you can see through the devil who is also (like) a serpent. This fits the desert context better than the biblical context. Treating the serpent as a symbol for the devil shifts the focus of this dominical saying from what attitude disciples should have when meeting people on their journey, to the common monastic

[91] Other examples of treating a detail as a metaphor are found in **IV.32**, IV.90, **V.11**, V.37, X.134, X.145, X.146, X.151, XI.65 (according to MSS M and S), XV.55, **XVIII.34**.

topic of how the desert ascetics should survive "the assaults of the devil".

1.2.6 Expanding on a metaphor

A biblical metaphor can be expanded on to extract new meaning and make new connections to referents.

> **XVIII.33** An Elder said: "It is written: '*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree.*' [Ps 91:13] This saying signifies the height, rightness and sweetness that comes from good works. And furthermore, the palm tree has a single heart, one that is white and which contains all of its production. The same can be found in the righteous person, for his heart …"

Here, there is a fairly simple metaphor about the righteous flourishing like a palm tree. The referent is stated plainly ("This saying signifies …"), and in addition to this, the saying expands on the metaphor. The pivot-point of the expansion is the word "like" (ὡς): if the righteous shall flower "like" a palm-tree, what does that similarity consist of? The expansion is signalled by the phrases: "This saying signifies (σημαίνει) … and also … ."

III.34 can also be said to be an expansion on the metaphor of God the consuming fire. What happens fundamentally in this saying is that a biblical metaphor is used to support an analogy. In the process, the metaphor is developed: from the fire to more details like the process of lighting it, the smoke involved, the coughing and crying, and finally the satisfaction of the result.

A third example is X.13, where the biblical metaphor of man being a tree is expanded on, developing on details such as fruit and foliage.[92]

1.2.7 Merging new actors with those of the Bible

Often in *AP*, new actors are superimposed on and merge with the actors of the biblical text. This is often done when using the pattern of a Bible text for telling about the desert fathers and mothers. It is that particular form of *mimesis* where a well-known story provides a pattern for how to tell a new story, thus creating a subtle link between the characters in the old story and those in the new. In **I.19**, the story of Moses lifting the copper serpent is used as an image, just as in John 3:14. While John

[92] Another example is **XVIII.22**.

superimposes the image of Christ on the image of Moses in that story, in *AP* Nistheros is superimposed on the image of Moses *and* Christ, since the mimetic relation between Moses and Christ is well-known already. What happens in this use of Scripture is that a three-layered *mimesis* is established. [93]

This same technique of merging an *AP* character with a biblical one through the use of literary *mimesis* occurs in **I.18**. The story is structured on the one of Jesus and the rich young man. The plot is similar to that of the gospel story, but the part of Jesus is here played by an anonymous Elder and abba Antony, again depicting them as a kind of image of Jesus.

A simpler form of such merging of actors is when the action or character of an Elder is compared to a biblical person, as in XIX.5.[94]

1.3 Connecting Biblical Texts to Each Other

The third and last category describing how the contextualization of the Bible takes place, is the one that involves two or more biblical texts that are joined to amplify a point or produce new meaning. It is what Elizabeth Clark calls "Intertextual exegesis".

1.3.1 Connecting texts around a common theme

Sometimes the common theme is not evident in the biblical texts themselves, but is more or less created when they are brought together with other texts. This is the case with **I.18**. Here, the common theme created when connecting texts about Abraham, Elijah and David, is that a biblical figure acts, and "God is with him". This theme is somewhat construed. In the example of Abraham, Gen 18 says that "God appeared to him by the oak of Mambre"; in the description of Elijah, the gentle breeze is accompanied by the words "and the Lord was there" in 1 Kgs

[93] For a more thorough description of this technique, see the analysis of this saying.

[94] Other examples are XII.7 and XV.11, where an Elder is depicted using a description taken from the Bible.

19; in 1 Sam, David is said to be ”humble” and Saul realises that ”God is with David”. [95]

Another example of combining texts around a (supposedly) common theme is IV.90, where the story about Nabozardan is combined with Luke 21:34.[96] This results in strengthening the role of Nabozardan as a personification of gluttony, and thus an important concept in that reading-community as the referent of that character.

Another example is **XI.125**, where two texts, one about Adam and one about Job, are combined around a common theme, creating new meaning.

> …*”Turn aside from evil and do good.”* However, what is desired by God in all of these things, wherever [you are], is the resolve. For Adam transgressed God’s command while he was in Paradise, but Job kept it while sitting on the rubbish-heap. So God wishes from humans a good resolve, and that they should fear him at all times.

In this way, both texts come to bear on the topic: turning away from evil and doing good is not a matter of striving for the ideal conditions of Paradise, but of having the right resolve in the circumstances in which one is placed.

The first part of **XV.68** is a combination of two Bible texts around the same theme:

> … Imitate the tax-collector in order not to be condemned with the Pharisee, and choose the meekness of Moses […]

There are so many examples of this that it can easily be said to be the most common way of combining biblical texts. Some are quite simple, in the sense that the added Bible texts add no new meaning to the saying, they merely add volume.[97] Others are more sophisticated in combining texts in a more surprising way.[98]

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[95] In this saying all of the quoted and alluded biblical passages relate to a common focus: the question about “the good deed”.

[96] “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life.”

[97] V.1,VII.44, XI.50, XV.132, XVIII.26.

[98] V.4, VII.19, VII.23, VII.46, XI.33, XI.51, XI.113, XII.25, XV.120, XVI.8.

1.3.2 An image connects otherwise unrelated thoughts and allusions
Sometimes a non-biblical image is introduced to connect otherwise unrelated thoughts and biblical texts. One example is **XV.69** where the image of an unbaked brick and a baked one connects thoughts about the perils of power to biblical images of being tested and to texts about Joseph.

A similar case of an image connecting thoughts and biblical passages is **VII.59** where the image of a seal being applied to melted wax connects ideas about ascetic labour and suffering to 2 Cor 1:22 and 2 Cor 12:9.

1.3.3 Texts that mutually interpret each other/combine to give new meaning
Sometimes there is no explanation or image that connects unrelated Bible passages. The readers are left on their own to work out the links.

> **VIII.30** [An Elder] also said: "He who shows his good deeds and makes them known is similar to the one sowing on top of the ground, *and the birds* of the sky *came and ate it up*. But he who covers his way of life is as the one sowing in furrows in the earth, who shall harvest manifold."

Here we come to one of the more complex forms of treating Scripture in *AP*. On the one hand, the saying would make sense, even if the intertextual relations to the Gospel of Matthew were not noticed. On the other hand, anyone acquainted with that Gospel, easily notices those relations. But what does one make of them? Two texts that apparently have no connection to each other are intertwined. As was seen in the analysis, this mixing creates new meaning in both texts, providing new perspectives on the interpretation, and providing new answers to questions suggested by the texts. One of the results of this is to make the parable of the sower refer to the virtue of not acting ostentatiously, which is the stated subject of chapter eight in *AP*/GS.

Another example of this way of treating texts is **X.116**:

> An Elder was asked: "What is '*the narrow and hard road*'?" He answered: "'*The narrow and hard road*' is this: to defeat one's [distracting] thoughts and to cut off one's own wishes for the sake of God, for that is what is meant by: '*We have left everything and followed you*.' "

As was shown in the analysis the reader is invited to let these two Bible texts interpret each other reciprocally.

Yet another example is **XV.68**:

> He [abba Hyperechios] also said: Imitate the tax-collector in order not to be condemned with the Pharisee, and choose the meekness of Moses in order that you may change your heart, which is as flint, into springs of water.

The first part of the saying was treated above, since it combines two texts about the theme of humility. As the saying develops, the text on the meekness of Moses is combined with the story of the spring of water gushing from the rock when Moses hit it with the rod. That story now refers to meekness: the rock is an image of a hard heart, Moses striking it is an image of meekness breaking the hard heart, and the spring of water connects to that same image used in Ezekiel and in John.[99]

1.3.4 Texts in dialogue

Texts can be combined in such a way as to create a dialogue between them, often in a manner that Elizabeth Clark calls "talking back". A Bible text which can be understood in a certain way is modified by "talking back" to it using another biblical text. An example is **IX.15**:

> One of the Elders said: You shall not judge a fornicator, even if you are chaste, for [then] you transgress the law just as much. For he who said: "You shall not commit fornication," also said: "You shall not judge."

A text which could be used to judge a brother is countered with a text on not judging.

A rather humorous example is **X.99**. The story about Jesus, Martha and Mary is referred to by one speaker as a reason for not spending time on manual labour, and then another speaker uses that very story to "talk back", using irony. Finally a supposedly balanced use of the text is settled on. All along this dialogue, the referent of the text as something relevant to the reading-community is established.

An example which involves a different kind of dialogue between two biblical texts is **XVII.31**. There the quotation "God is love" (1 John 4:16) is used to explain why no virtue is worth anything without love (cf. 1 Cor 13).

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[99] Other examples of using biblical texts which combine to give new meaning are X.103, **XI.60,** XVIII.4.

1.4 Summary

An attempt has been made to describe different ways in which the Bible text is connected to the message of the saying, i.e., how a certain concept, person, practice or concern is pointed out as a referent of the biblical text. These are the techniques (whether used consciously or not) of integrating the Bible into the novel text. The techniques were grouped under three main headings: (1) Connecting the biblical text to an external referent. (2) Adaptations and focalizations of the Bible text itself. (3) Connecting biblical texts to each other.

Under the first heading (1) were mentioned ways of appropriating the Bible text by stating its referent, connecting it to the referent in argumentative or inferring ways, connecting it to an action which is motivated by it, connecting it to a context through questions and answers, and finally ways of connecting it through expressions that constitute the link in terms of imitation or identification. Besides those almost "standard" ways of appropriating Scripture, some less common were mentioned: connecting it in a prophetic way to a referent, using the Bible to support the use of an analogy, provoking the reader to work out the connection between the Bible and a referent through a riddle or an implicit allegory, and finally, connecting the Bible to a specific referent by letting the protagonist combat an adversary using words from the Bible.

Under the second heading (2) were mentioned ways of focusing on a detail, changing the narrative frame, changing or (re-)defining a word or phrase, treating a detail as a metaphor, treating an analogy as a symbol, expanding on a metaphor, and finally, merging new actors with those of the Bible.

Under the third heading (3) were mentioned ways of connecting texts around a common theme, letting an image connect otherwise unrelated texts, letting texts mutually interpret each other or combine to give new meaning, and, finally, placing texts in dialogue with each other.

Going through *AP* in this manner has shown that there are many ways of making a connection between the Bible text and a referent. Some of those ways involve the use of a hermeneutical phrase, some involve changing the text, some involve expanding on the text, some involve a literal reading, some a figural reading, and some involve connecting different texts of the Bible in such a way that a connection to a referent is established. Focusing on these ways of making the biblical material bear on questions which are relevant for the reader gives us a more nuanced picture of the way the Bible is used, than if we were to describe it in the

terms of literal, allegorical and typological readings. These types and categories better match the complexity of the wide range of ways in which the Bible is adapted, contextualized, and integrated in the sayings.

2. The Different Roles of the Bible Text in Individual Sayings

We have now categorized the different ways in which a biblical text is connected to a referent in the different *apophthegmata*. Some of those ways are directly related to a certain function in the saying. For example, often when the referent of the Bible text is explicitly stated (see above, 1.1.1.), the Bible text is the very focus of the saying, at least on a formal level, and that text is used as a starting point for an explanation; this could be called an "exegesis". Also the category "Questions and answers about Scripture" has many examples of "exegesis". Where the referent is pointed out by using the Bible to support an argument, that is at the same time the function of the Bible in that saying, what may be called a "proof-text". Prophetic connections are also related to proof-texts.

As we will see, the Bible can have a function which is not related to just one of the categories of how the referent of the Bible is pointed out. These functions, which cut across all categories of reference, will be treated last: the "illustrative" and the "mimetic" function.

Speaking very generally, one may make a major distinction, between cases where the Bible is a starting-point for an explanation, and cases where the biblical text has another role, whether it is a legitimizing, aesthetical or some other role. Sometimes this distinction is referred to as *Schriftauslegung* and *Schriftanwendung*. The first type will be described initially. The second kind will then be explored, treating each role separately.

It must be made clear that these two categories do not mutually exclude each other. The distinction is made for analytical purposes, and can only be done so on a superficial level. An explanatory treatment of a

Bible text can often have paraenetic consequences, and there is an explanatory element in all paraenetical uses of the Bible.[100]

2.1 The Bible as something to be explained/ "Exegesis"

In some sayings in *AP* the biblical text seems to be the subject matter and the starting point for the saying, at least on a structural level. However, the treatment of the Bible text is often only taken as a pretext for giving ethical teachings. The explanations may be of a very simple nature, or they may be more advanced.

A very common form of saying in *AP* is one where a brother asks a question to one of the Elders and receives an answer. Examples of this were given under the heading "Questions and answers about Scripture". The questions can vary greatly, but usually they are questions on ethics.[101] As we have seen, sometimes the subject matter is a problematic text in the Bible, usually with a connection to how one should behave. This is the case in the following example, which is fairly straightforward.

> **X.67** A brother asked abba Poimen: "What is it to be *angry with a brother without a cause*?" The Elder answered: "Whenever your brother takes something from you out of greed, even if he carves out your eye and you are angered with him, you get angry without a cause. But whenever someone wants to separate you from God you should be angered with him."

Here a question about a Bible verse is the starting point for an explanation by Poimen. Since the application in one's own life seems to be what one is normally interested in when dealing with the Bible in *AP*, the question is not surprising. It is not clear what is meant by "without a cause", and so one may wonder when it is justifiable to get angry. The answer is very radical, but it does not involve any sophisticated exegesis. The only sign of someone having worked exegetically with the text is that the answer is formulated using some of the expressions found in the near context of the verse in Matthew. This is more obvious in the variant

[100] *Contra* Dörries, "Die Bibel im ältesten Mönchtum".

[101] An exception is X.27, a question about Job 15:15 and the purity of heaven. Abba Zenon admonishes the brothers not to ask about such things.

found in the alphabetical collection, as has been discussed in the analysis.

There are sayings explaining biblical texts where the question is not posed by a brother. Sometimes there is an introductory or closing formula to the explanation in the form of "This means …" or "… and that is what is meant by …". These may be fairly simple explanations or more complex ones. Mostly, we have seen them in section 1.1: "Stating the referent". An example was seen in **IV.32** where the paraphrase about Nabozardan being responsible for setting the temple on fire is followed by a figural explanation introduced by "This means …".[102] A figural explanation is given also to Ex 2:12 in saying X.145:

> An Elder said about Moses: "When he struck the Egyptian he looked round this way and that, and did not see anyone. That means (τουτέστι) [he looked for] the thoughts (τοῖς λογισμοῖς), and he saw that he did not do anything evil, but acted for the sake of God, and he hit the Egyptian."

2.2 The Bible as support for ethical or other teaching/ "Proof texts"

Often the ethical teaching (or other kinds of teaching for that matter) is supported by using a Bible text. When this is done in an explicit manner, the function of the biblical text can be said to be that of a *proof text*. There is a use of Scripture which is related to this, namely the *illustrative* function. A distinction between these two texts will be made under the subheading *Illustrative*. In many sayings the use of Scripture functions as a mixture of these two. This is not surprising since an illustration in classical rhetoric could be used for persuasive purposes.

The most obvious examples of using the Bible as proof texts are found under the heading 1.1.2: "Argumentative or inferring connections".

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[102] Other instances of explanations being given of biblical texts are I.11, **III.28**, **V.11**, **VII.47**, X.13, X.84, **X.116**, X.134, X.146, **XI.43**, **XVIII.22**, XVIII.23, **XVIII.28**, XVIII.30, **XVIII.33**. In many of these, the Bible text, or a paraphrase of it, functions as a *chreia*. (On this concept, see the last section of this chapter.) Sometimes a phrase such as "that is why the Lord said…", the difference between this use and that of "proof-text" is blurred. (**VII.59**). A great proportion of these sayings are found in chapters X and XVIII on "Discernment" (Περὶ διακρίσεως) and "The Clear-sighted" (Περὶ διορατικῶν).

The function of supporting a teaching can work in a very simple, straight-forward way. Some simple examples not requiring any commentary follow.

> I.16 … and to force oneself to be patient, good, brotherly, wise and self-controlled (for it is written: "*The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who use force, and those who use force are taking it by storm* [Matt 11:12]"),[103] and to look with one's eyes at what is right …[104]

> XV.36 Abba John of Thebes said: "Above everything else, the monk needs to practise humility. For that is the first commandment of the Saviour, he who said: "*Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Matt 5:3)."[105]

A slightly more complex example is IV.88:

> An Elder said: "Without toil, no one can acquire a virtue, and even if one were to acquire it, it does not remain with him. For it was to those who mourn and hunger that he promised the kingdom of heaven." [106]

How the allusion to two of the beatitudes works as a support for this teaching on acquiring virtues is not totally self-evident. Certainly, "sorrow" and "hunger" should here be understood in relation to lacking virtues. The connection becomes more evident if one infers the words from Matthew missing in the allusion: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for *righteousness*." Mourning and hungering could also be interpreted as standing for compunction and fasting.

Other examples of using the Bible as proof-text, are those found under the heading 1.3.4: "Texts in dialogue". Sayings **IX.15** and **X.99** have been analysed, the latter involving some humorous and ironic uses of Scripture when the story about Mary and Martha is used by both parties to support their positions.

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[103] My translation, since the context here makes the NRSV translation less suitable. See also VII.52.14,45–47 for a similar use of this text, and I.6.5f, II.21, XXI.19 for echoes of it. The verb βιάζω is often used as a specific term for opposing temptations or for opposing ones own will, usually constructed as βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτόν (IV.40.20f, IV.71.3, IV.72.10, VII.48.5f, **X.116.3**, XI.41.23, XIV.22.11f, XV.26.10, XV.60.9f, XV.118.2f, XXI.38, XXI.51).

[104] … καὶ τὸ βιάζεσθαι ἑαυτὸν εἶναι μακρόθυμον, χρηστόν, φιλάδελφον, σώφρονα, ἐγκρατῆ—γέγραπται γάρ· «Βιαστῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ βιασταὶ ἁρπάζουσιν αὐτήν»· —καὶ τὰ ὀρθὰ βλέπειν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, … .

[105] Εἶπεν ὁ ἀββᾶ Ἰωάννης τῆς Θηβαΐος· Ὀφείλει ὁ μοναχὸς πρὸ πάντων τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην κατορθῶσαι. Αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ πρώτη ἐντολὴ τοῦ Σωτῆρος λέγοντος· «Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.»

[106] Εἶπε γέρων· Χωρὶς κόπου οὐδεὶς κτᾶται ἀρετήν· εἰ δὲ καὶ κτήσηται, οὐ παραμένει αὐτῷ. Τοῖς γὰρ πενθοῦσιν καὶ πεινῶσιν ἐπηγγείλατο τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. Cf. Matt 5:4–6.

The role of the Bible is the same, although in a more implicit way, also in examples found under the heading 1.1.3: "The Bible is connected to an action". Here the Bible is the authority that shows a decision or attitude to be the right one.

Also in sayings under the heading 1.1.6: "Liturgical connections" the Bible may function as a support for a teaching, especially in those where the conjunction γάρ occurs in the connection.

I have found very few instances where the biblical material is used to support a teaching other than an ethical one. This is one on the the forgiveness of God:

> **X.62** A brother asked him [abba Poimen]: "*If anyone is detected in a transgression* and [then] returns, does God forgive him?" The Elder said: "But he who has commanded men to do this, how much more will he not do so himself! For he commanded Peter: 'Forgive you brother *as much as seventy-seven times*.' "

Here the presumption is that for God as well (just as for the desert fathers and mothers), teaching and acting must be in harmony. In this way the ethical teaching of Jesus can be used to predict how God will act.

2.3 The Bible as a source of images/ "Illustrative use"

There is a function we can denote as "illustrative". The basic form of such use is that of an analogy. In some of the examples we have treated, the Bible is used as a source of images to illustrate the teachings. Obviously, it is a very special source of images, since the Bible has such authority and since this is the common literature which everyone is expected to know. Still, it is clear that the biblical material is often more of a source of images than a text to be provided with the right interpretation.

This is worth dwelling on. During the first centuries of the church, the Bible was used as a point of departure for commentaries and homilies, as a source of forming liturgy and as providing proof-texts in apologetics, dogmatic conflicts, theological treatises and paraenesis. Much research on the use of Scripture, also in *AP*, has focussed on those uses. However, I would posit that the Bible was often used simply to illustrate, in much the same manner in which images from the realm of nature and other

easily recognized images were used to illustrate a point by analogy. To show this I will take some analogies in *AP* that use images from nature and from human artefacts. In mapping some ways in which these are construed, I have chosen the sayings which use two images taken from nature (trees and fire/smoke) and one image from the sphere of human artefacts (the axe). I will classify them on formal grounds and quote at least one of them as an example. Then I will give an example from *AP*, of the Bible being used in a similar way, i.e., using similar syntactical patterns.

The examples I give here serve two purposes: both to describe the affinity between these two types of illustrations and to exemplify the illustrative use of Scripture in *AP*.

a) The image/ Bible text is preceded by ὥσπερ, and the object of reference preceded by οὕτως:

> Image:
> Just as (ὥσπερ) smoke drives the bees away and then the sweetness of their work is removed,
> so (οὕτως) bodily ease drives fear of God away from the soul and ruins all its good activity. [107]
>
> Bible text:
> "… Just as (ὥσπερ) whoever saw the copper serpent in the desert was cured,
> so was (οὕτως ἦν) the Elder: possessing every virtue he cured everyone even without speaking." [108]

b) The image/ Bible text and the object of reference are connected by οὕτως:

> Image:
> … If the tree is not shaken by the wind, it does not grow, nor take root,
> in the same way (οὕτως καί) the monk does not become steadfast if he is not tempted and stands firm. [109]
>
> Whoever hammers a lump of iron, first considers in his mind what he will make of it, a scythe, a sword or an axe.

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[107] IV.39: Ὥσπερ ὁ καπνὸς ἐκδιώκει τὰς μελίσσας, καὶ τότε αἴρεται τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν ἡ γλυκύτης, οὕτως καὶ ἡ σωματικὴ ἀνάπαυσις ἐκδιώκει τὸν φόβον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ἀπόλλυσιν αὐτῆς πᾶσαν ἐργασίαν ἀγαθήν. The same pattern in **III.34**, (VII.43,), VIII.24, X.121, and in *AP*/G Esaias 1.

[108] **I.19**. Same pattern in IV.53.

[109] X.185: … Εἰ μὴ σαλευθῇ τὸ δένδρον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου, οὔτε αὔξει οὔτε δίδωσι ῥιζαν· οὕτως καὶ ὁ μοναχὸς εἰ μὴ πειρασθῇ καὶ ὑπομείνῃ οὐ γίνεται ἀνδρεῖος.

In the same way also we (οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς) ought to consider what kind of virtue we want to forge … .[110]

Bible text:
… [Abba Sisoë] said· "The monk in his thoughts ought to be below the idols." … I said to him: "What does it mean to be below the idols." Then the Elder said to me: "It is written of the idols: *'They have a mouth but will not speak, they have eyes but will not see, they have ears but will not hear* (Ps 134:16–17), '
so also the monk ought to be (οὕτως ὀφείλει εἶναι). …[111]

c) The expression Ὅμοιός εἰμι connects the object of reference and the image/ Bible text (sometimes followed by οὕτως καί or γάρ preceding the object of reference and an explanation):

Image:
I am like (Ὅμοιός εἰμι …) a man sitting under a great tree, who sees wild beasts and snakes coming against him, and when he cannot withstand them, he runs to climb the tree and is saved.
It is just the same with me (οὕτως κἀγώ,): I sit in my cell and I see the evil thoughts upon me, and when I do not have the strength against them, I flee to God by praying, and I am saved from the enemy. [112]

Bible text:
By slandering the serpent expelled Eve from Paradise. [Cf. Gen 3:1–5.]
So is also (Τοῦτο οὖν ὅμοιός ἐστι καί) the one who slanders on his neighbour.
For (γάρ) he ruins the soul of the listener and does not save his own. [113]

d) The image is given. Then the referent is connected to the details of the image by a form of εἶναι , or εἶναι being implied:

Image:

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[110] XI.3: … Ὁ τύπτων τὸ μαζὶν τοῦ σιδήρου πρῶτον σκοπεῖ τῷ λογισμῷ τί μέλλει ποιεῖν, δρέπανον ἢ μάχαιραν ἢ πέλυκα. Οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν λογίζεσθαι ποῖαν ἀρετὴν μετερχόμεθα … . The same pattern in XI.47 and *AP*/G Macarius 12.

[111] X.97: … [ἀββᾶ Σισόη] εἶπεν ὅτι ὀφείλει ὁ μοναχὸς εἶναι τῷ λογισμῷ ὑποκάτω τῶν εἰδώλων. … λέγω αὐτῷ· Τί ἐστι τὸ ὑποκάτω τῶν εἰδώλων εἶναι; Τότε λέγει μοι ὁ γέρων· Γέγραπται περὶ τῶν εἰδώλων ὅτι· «Στόμα ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐ λαλήσουσιν, ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχουσιν καὶ οὐκ ὄψονται, ὦτα ἔχουσι καὶ οὐκ ἀκουσονται·» οὕτως ὄφείλει εἶναι ὁ μοναχός. …

[112] XI.40: … Ὅμοιός εἰμι ἀνθρώπῳ καθημένῳ ὑποκάτω δένδρου μεγάλου καὶ θεωροῦντι θηρία καὶ ἑρπετὰ ἐρχόμενα πρὸς αὐτόν· καὶ ὅταν μὴ δυνηθῇ κατ᾽ αὐτῶν στῆναι τρέχει εἰς τὸ δένδρον ἄνω καὶ σώζεται. Οὕτως κἀγώ· καθέζομαι ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ μου καὶ θεωρῶ τοὺς πονηροὺς λογισμοὺς ἐπάνω μου καὶ ὅταν μὴ ἰσχύσω πρὸς αὐτούς, καταφεύγω πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν διὰ τῆς προσευχῆς καὶ σώζομαι ἐκ τοῦ ἐχθροῦ.

[113] **IV.60**. The same pattern in **VIII.30a**, X.84.

Abba Poimen also said: "One man carries an axe and works the whole day without finding out how to lay down the tree, while another one has the experience of felling , and with a few blows he brings down the tree"
He said that the axe is (Ἔλεγε δὲ τὴν ἀξίνην εἶναι) discernment. (Cf Isa 10.15)[114]

… "The trees of Lebanon said: 'How great and high we are. Could a small iron object cut us down?' But men came, took a tree and then they made a handle for the axe and cut them down."
He said that the trees [are] the souls, the axe [is] the demons and the handle [is] the wills … .[115]

Bible text:
He also said about the word written in the Psalms: "*'I will put his hand in the sea and his right hand in rivers,'* that is about (τουτέστι περί) the Saviour.
His left hand on the sea, that is (τουτέστι) the world
and *'his right [one] in the rivers'* these are (οὗτοί εἰσιν) the Apostles who irrigate the world with faith.[116]

e) The object of reference and the image/ Bible text are connected by ὡς:

Image:
… Acquire for yourself rather the fire, which is (ὅ ἐστιν) the fear of God. And
every time a thought comes near to you,
like (ὡς) a reed
it will be burnt up by the fire. …[117]

Bible text:
But he who lets his conduct be hidden
is like (ὡς) the one who sowed in furrows in the earth;
he will harvest manifold."[118]

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[114] X.88: Εἶπε πάλιν ἀββᾶ Ποιμὴν ὅτι· Ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος βαστάζων ἀξίνην καὶ ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν κοπιᾷ καὶ οὐχ εὑρίσκει καταβαλεῖν τὸ δένδρον, καὶ ἔστιν ἄλλος ἔμπειρος τοῦ κόπτειν καὶ ἀπὸ ὀλίγων πληγῶν καταφέρει τὸ δένδρον. Ἔλεγε δὲ τὴν ἀξίνην εἶναι τὴν διάκρισιν.

[115] X.131: … Τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου εἶπαν· Πῶς μεγάλα καὶ ὑψαλὰ ἐσμέν, καὶ τὸ μικρὸν σίδηρον κόπτει ἡμᾶς. Οἱ δὲ ἐλθόντες καὶ λαβόντες ἑαυτοῖς ξύλον ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοὺς λαβὴν τὴν ἀξίνην καὶ ἔκοψαν αὐτά. Τὰ ξύλα εἶπεν τὰς ψυχάς, τὴν δὲ ἀξίνην τοὺς δαίμονας, τὴν δὲ λαβὴν τὰ θελήματα… .

[116] X.146: Ἔλεγε πάλιν περὶ τοῦ ῥητοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ Ψαλμῷ γεγραμμένου· «Θήσομαι ἐν θαλάσσῃ χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν ποταμοῖς δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ» τουτέστι περὶ τοῦ Σωτῆρος· ἡ ἀριστερὰ αὐτοῦ ἡ ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τουτέστιν ὁ κόσμος, τὸ δὲ «ἐν ποταμοῖς δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ», οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀπόστολοι ποτίζοντες τὸν κόσμον διὰ τῆς πίστεως. Similar pattern in I.11, **I.23**, **III.28**, III.45, **IV.32**, **V.11**, VII.46, **X.116** (Here the image is implied in the short quotation). X.134 (dative), X.145, **XI.43**, XV.34.

[117] XI.117: … ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον κτῆσαι τὸ πῦρ ὅ ἐστιν ὁ φόβος τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ ἡνίκα ἔρχεταί σοι λογισμὸς ἐγγίσαι, ὡς καλάμη ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς κατακαίεται. …

[118] **VIII.30b.**

f) The object of reference appears without an indicator followed by an image/ Bible text introduced by γάρ:

> Image:
> … "The body seeks health to turn away from God.
> For (γάρ) if a tree is watered daily, when will its roots dry out so that it does not bear fruit?"[119]
>
> Bible text:
> … And he answered: "The fast is always with me, but you I cannot always have with me … When I receive one of you I serve Christ as I am obliged to do, with all my zeal. But when I bid you farewell I will be able to resume the rule of fasting.
> For (γάρ) *the sons of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them. But when he leaves them, then they will fast* freely."[120]

g) The image is preceded by ὅν τρόπον γάρ, the object of reference by οὕτως καί:

> Image:
> "For just as (ὅν τρόπον γάρ) trees cannot bear fruit if they have not received the winter storms and showers,
> so also with us (οὕτως καὶ ἡμῖν) … .[121]

h) The image is introduced by ἔοικεν:

> Image:
> [On familiarity:] "It is like (Ἔοικεν) a strong burning wind: every time it appears everybody flees away before it, and it destroys the fruit of the trees."[122]

We have seen that in six of the eight different ways in which analogies are constructed using the image of fire/smoke, tree or axe, there are parallels where the Bible is used in a similar way, using the same syntactical pattern. This suggests that in *AP* one way of relating to the Bible is similar to that of relating to an image in an analogy, i.e., for the sake of simply illustrating a point. At the same time, authoritative charge is tapped from Scripture into the text of *AP*, sometimes giving it the air of novel holy script, especially where the seams between text and

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[119] III.9: … Ζητεῖ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα τὴν ὑγείαν ἵνα ἐκνεύσῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Δένδρον γὰρ ποτιζόμενον καθημέραν, πότε ξηραίνεται αὐτοῦ ἡ ῥίζα εἰς τὸ μὴ καρποφορῆσαι;

[120] **XIII.2.**

[121] Theodora 2 (PG 65:201b): Ὃν τρόπον γὰρ τὰ δένδρα, ἐὰν μὴ λάβωσι χειμῶνας καὶ ὑετοὺς, καρποφορεῖν οὐ δύναται· οὕτως καὶ ἡμῖν … .

[122] X.11.8–10. Ἔοικεν καύσωνι μεγάλῳ ὅς ὅταν γένηται πάντες φεύγουσιν ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν δένδρων τὸν καρπὸν διαφθείρει. Similar pattern in X.13 "Man is like (ἔοικεν) a tree, bodily asceticism is the foliage, interior vigilance the fruit. According to that which is written. "Every tree that …".

commentary are blurred. My point is, however, that we need to recognize that what we find here is not a logic of cause and effect ("Scripture says that …, which has the consequence that … .") Instead it is often a logic of patterns, where a pattern from Scripture is linked to a pattern in the life or thought of the reading community. There is no reason why a tree used as an image for an experience in a certain context, cannot be used as an image for other experiences. The same goes for Scripture in many of the sayings. This keeps open the possibility of a wide range of interpretations existing side by side.

The striking similarity between how an analogy is constructed using a biblical text and how one is constructed using an image from nature can only be shown in those sayings where a referent of the Bible text is explicitly stated. A similar attitude to Scripture may be present in sayings where the referent is established in more indirect ways. In the following, examples from those other categories will be used. The patterns taken from the Bible are patterns to be "seen", just as patterns and images taken from nature. This goes especially for biblical exemplars to be imitated. One should "see" these biblical figures and envisage the images and identify oneself or different aspects of life with the figures, the scenes and the images. Sometimes, it is as if the reader should relate to the text of the Bible as to a scene or story, where the characters are like actors that can take on different roles. Thus, the same biblical story can take on a new meaning if one supposes that the characters in it take on different roles.

As stated earlier I have, with David Dawson, defined allegory as a metaphor stretched out into a narrative.[123] What is striking with *AP* is that we never find a fully developed allegory in that sense. Rather, what we find is just hints at how the readers should develop an allegorical reading themselves. A knowledge of the Bible is presupposed, which means that biblical stories do not need to be reiterated. Instead, a key is given, which transforms the whole story. Such a key can be to suggest that a character can represent the soul, or a certain virtue. The readers are then left to transform the rest of the story themselves.

The most explicit example is a saying from the alphabetical collection,[124] not included in the systematic collection, where Poimen says:

> Because of the following we stand in so many trials: We do not observe Matt 15:22–28). Also, we do not see Abigail, that she said to David: *"Upon me be the*

[123] See p. 20.

[124] Poimen 71 (PG 65:340b).

> *wrongdoing,"* and he heard her and loved her (1 Sam 25) …our names and status as Scripture tells [us to do]. We do not see the Canaanite woman accepting her name: the Saviour gave her peace (

In this particular instance the dramatizing aspect of receiving a text is explicitly developed, as the biblical figures each "take on" a different "role (πρόσωπον) " in the last lines of the same saying:

> … Abigail takes on the role (λαμβάνει τὸν πρόσωπον) of the soul. David takes on the role of the divinity. So even if the soul accuses itself in front of the Lord, the Lord loves her.

For a reader who knows that story, it is possible to envisage the plot and details in a completely transformed way.

Another biblical text is contextualized in a very similar way in a saying from *AP*/GS, **XVIII.34**:

> The Elder said: The Shunammite woman received Elisha because she did not have an attachment to any person. It is said that the Shunammite woman has the role of the (πρόσωπον ἔχειν τῆς …) soul and Elisha has the role of the Holy Spirit. So, at the moment when the soul withdraws from the confusion and trouble of the matters of this life, the Spirit of God comes to meet it, and then it will be able to produce although it has been sterile.

This way of using the verbs λαμβάνειν and ἔχειν in connection with πρόσωπον is not common in ancient texts.[125] In the New Testament, the expression λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον is a Septuagintism, meaning "to show partiality to a person".[126] This is how the expression is normally used in early patristic writings. One exception is Origen, who sometimes uses it

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[125] The use of λαμβάνειν and ἔχειν in connection with πρόσωπον is not attested in LSJ. However, we find s.v. πρόσωπον III: mask, part, character, and s.v. IV.1: ποιεῖν or πληροῦν τὸ πρόσωπον τινός in the sense of representing a person. In Lampe s.v λαμβάνω 4., there is an example of the expression as it is used in the LXX and the NT (see below). In Lampe, s.v. πρόσωπον V.C. we find examples of the meaning "guise, role" when used in connection with ἀναλαμβάνειν. The semantic field in such constructions covers that of representation, whether that is in the form of theatre, literature, or in legal or economic settings. In Lampe s.v. πρόσωπον V.F. the construction with λαμβάνειν actually occurs once, in a reference to an epistle by Nilos. Lampe translates it as "illustration, figure, type". For a discussion on πρόσωπον with reference to theatre, and its counterpart i Christian exegesis, see Marie-Joseph RONDEAU *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier (IIIe–Ve siècles)*, 2 (Orientalia christiana analecta 220; Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1985), 44–51.

[126] Luke 20:21, Gal 2:6. Cf. Lev 19:5, Deut 16:19, 1 Esdr 4:39, Ps 81:2, Job 42:8, Sir 35:13, Mal 1:8, Lam 4:16.

in a way which is similar to the one we are presently discussing.[127] In a letter in the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John, the expression is used when describing liturgy: the deacon takes on the role of the Seraphims.[128] Other parallels to our texts are found in the *Physiologus*, originally probably composed in Egypt, possibly in Alexandria, in the second or third century.[129]

There is something similar involved in another saying of *AP*/GS, **I.23**, although here the role played by the biblical figures are those of personified virtues:

> He [Poimen] also said: "Poverty, affliction and discernment, these are the instruments for the solitary life. For it is written: *'If these three men should be [present]: Noah, Job and Daniel …'*. Noah is the personification of (πρόσωπόν ἐστι τῆς …) dispossession, Job that of toil and Daniel that of discernment. So if these three practices should be [present] in a person, God resides in him."

This visualising and dramatising tendency in relating to the biblical material needs to be kept in mind when treating all of these texts. And possibly, it may be easier for a modern mind to understand some of the techniques of appropriation if one sees *AP* relating to the biblical

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[127] In *Homiliae in Iob* (PG 17:101): Καὶ ἔχει γε ὁ ἐχθρὸς οὗτος πολλὰ προσωπεῖα, καὶ καθ᾽ ἑκάστην κακίαν πρόσωπον λαμβάνει ἀρετῆς; and in *Selecta in Ezechielem* (PG 13:808): *Καὶ ἐὰν ὦσιν οἱ τρεῖς ἄνδρες οὗτοι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς, Νῶε, Ἰὼβ, Δανιήλ.* Πρόσωπά ἐστι τῶν ἁγίων τούτων λαμβανόμενα, πᾶς ὃς ἐὰν μὴ φθείρῃ τὸν βίον ἑαυτοῦ ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐ ποιούμενος ὅλος τῇ σαρκὶ διὰ τοῦ ποιεῖν αὐτὸν τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός, ὥστε χρηματίσαι αὐτὸν ὅλον σάρκα, ἀλλὰ φαινόμενος ὡς φωστὴρ ἐν κόσμῳ, ἐπέχων λόγον ζωῆς ἐν μέσῳ γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης, ὥστε χρηματίσαι πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν Θεὸν … .

[128] Λαμβάνει δὲ καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον τῶν Σεραφὶμ … (Barsanuphius and John *Questiones et responsiones*, 241.14–15).

[129] *Physiologus*. Edited by Franciscus Sbordone (Rome: Dante Alighieri-Albrighi, Segati, 1936). Redactio prima 7.28.3 (Ὁ οὖν φοῖνιξ πρόσωπον λαμβάνει τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν); 13.52.3–53.3 (Οὕτω καὶ πᾶς ἀνὴρ δίψυχος … οἱ τοιοῦτοι οὖν σειρήνων καὶ ἱπποκενταύρων πρόσωπον λαμβάνουσι); 25.88.3–4 (Ἔοικεν οὖν ὁ κροκόδειλος τῷ διαβόλῳ, ἡ δὲ ἔνυδρος εἰς τὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν πρόσωπον λαμβάνεται); 45.139.10–11 (καὶ ὁ πίθηκος δὲ τοῦ αὐτοῦ διαβόλου πρόσωπον λαμβάνει); 48.143.8 (ὁ Ἀμὼς πρόσωπον [M: τύπον] Χριστοῦ λαμβάνει.); 48.145.6–7 (οἱ οὖν ἔριφοι πρόσωπον λαμβάνουσι τῆς μετανοίας [not included in all MSS]). Chapter 48 is missing in the oldest MS.

I have compared Sbordone's edition with Offermann's (*Der Physiologus nach den Handschriften G und M* [Meisenheim: Anton Hain, 1966]), since Sbordone did not have access to what may be the best and oldest MS (Pierpont Morgan MS 397). I have indicated only major differences. For judgements about the different MSS see B. E. Perry's review of Sbordone's edition, *AJP* 58 (1937): 492–493 and Alan SCOTT, "The Date of the Physiologus", *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998): 430–441. See Scott's article for a discussion of the date and location for the composing of the *Physiologus*.

material as images and scenes to be "seen" rather than texts to be "understood".

Wherever biblical stories are used to provide exemplary illustrations to the moral teaching of a saying, the role of the Bible is that of illustrating the teaching. Such sayings are listed under 1.1.5: "Exemplary connection". [131]

2.4 The Bible as Classic to be imitated/ "Mimetic use"

In ancient rhetoric and literature a basic concept was that of imitation or *mimesis*. This meant—among other things—that it was considered praiseworthy to imitate earlier classics when composing speeches and literature. This could be a matter of choosing vocabulary. It could also involve patterning one's own text on the model of a classic. It is this form of imitation that will be considered here: using the Bible to achieve literary *mimesis*.

Patterning one's own text on a classic model could involve taking the structure of a well-known text, and filling it with new content. We have an example of this in **I.18**:

> A Brother asked one of the Elders: "What is a good act, [tell me] so that I will do it and live through it?" And the Elder said "God knows what is good. But I have heard it being said that one of the fathers once asked abba Nistheros the Great, friend of abba Anthony: What is a good deed, [tell me] so that I will do it?' And he answered: "Are not all deeds equal? Scripture says that Abraham was hospitable and God was with him, Elijah loved silence and God was with him, and David was humble and God was with him. Thus, what you see that your soul wants in accordance with God, do this and keep your heart.' "

As was seen in the analysis of this saying in chapter two, it is patterned on Matt 19, about the rich young man. The same pattern is used in XII.9. In **I.19**, there is a comparison between Nistheros and the copper serpent which is modelled on the comparison between Jesus and that same serpent.[132]

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[131] Other sayings that use the Bible to provide images are **V.11** (image of fight against beasts makes the theme of the fight against temptations more vivid), **XV.68** (your heart which is as flint), **XVI.1**, **XVIII.22**, **XVIII.33**.

[132] Other examples of this role of the Bible are found under the heading 1.2.7: "Merging new actors with those of the Bible".

The mimetic function is also present when using biblical language. Sometimes biblical phrases seem to have no other function in the text than decorating it. Of course, it is not mere decoration, but another way of tapping scriptural authority, and creating a text which has the flavour of Holy Script—comparable to Septuagintisms in the New Testament. Since these instances are only vague echoes of Scripture, they have not been treated in the analyses. *AP* is full of these types of echoes; here I will cite only a few.

> II.8 … How much worse for you who [hear] these reeds rustling in the wind. [133]
>
> II.10 … no, I have come to see a prophet.[134] …
>
> III.9 He also said: "Another time when I went to him again I found him very ill, and when he saw the sadness in my heart he said to me: 'When I toilfully approach death with such an illness, I can remember that bitter moment. [135] For health in this body of death [136] is of no use. For the body searches for health to avoid God. Yes, a tree daily watered, when will its root dry out so that it no longer bears fruit?' "

2.5 Other Roles of the Bible

Several of the techniques listed in 1.1.6 "Other ways of connecting the Bible text to an external referent" can also be seen from the perspective of what role the biblical text has in those sayings. We then get a set of roles which are less common than the ones listed above. They are:

The Bible as prophecy. [137]
The Bible as support of an analogy. [138]
The Bible used for answering demons, logismoi or other adversaries.[139]

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[133] (≈ Ars 25) Echo of "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?" (Matt 11:7 //)

[134] (≈ Ars 28) Echo of "What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes … ."(Matt 11:9 //).

[135] Cf. III.8.

[136] Cf. Rom 7:24.

[137] XVIII.18b, XVIII.42.23–27.

[138] **III.34**, **XV.68**.

[139] VII.23, VII.44, IX.6, XV.90, XV.136.

2.6 Summary

The Bible has very different roles in different sayings. It can be the very starting point of an explanation, usually either in the form of that divine *logos* of an Elder, which is the kernel of the saying, or in the form of a question to an Elder, often a form of "exegesis". It can be introduced as a support for teachings, normally ethical, i.e., a form of "proof-text". The Bible can also be placed as an image in the saying, i.e., an "illustrative" use. Fourthly, the Bible may hover more in the background as a text which is in some way imitated in the *apophthegma*, i.e., a literary "mimetic" function. Besides these common roles, the Bible can also be used as prophecy as support of an analogy and for answering demons, *logismoi* or other adversaries.

The way we describe the use of biblical material should take that into account. Judging an illustrative use of Scripture in the same way as we judge an exegetical use of Scripture would not do justice to our material.

We have seen that in some sayings the biblical material has a very clear illustrative role, in the sense that certain phrases are used to indicate that we are dealing with an analogy, or something similar. When we compared those sayings to ones that do not have such phrases, we see that often the Bible has an illustrative role even when those indicators are lacking.

After having categorized the material from the two perspectives of contextualizing techniques and of function, the time has come to return to the perspectives of Kathleen McVey and Lillian Larsen: that of *chreia* collections and of school exercises.

3. The Use of Scripture in AP in Light of the Ergasia Pattern

As has already been mentioned[140] Lillian Larsen has described *AP* in terms of a collection of *chreiai*. Not only that, she has argued for a connection between *AP* and the elementary rhetorical exercise on the *chreia* called *ergasia*. I will now draw on those insights and compare some of the ways of using the Bible in *AP* to the different parts of the *ergasia*. First I will give a short background.

In the educational system of the time, there was an exercise which was used to practise the different ways of extending a *chreia*: the *ergasia* pattern. It was seen as a preliminary exercise to bridge the gap between the simple exercises at the secondary level of education offered by the teacher of grammar and literature (the γραμματικός), and the more advanced requirements of the tertiary level offered by the teacher of rhetorics (the σοφιστής).[141] The exercise of *ergasia* was a formalized way of practicing different ways of expanding on a *chreia*.

The *chreia* and the *ergasia* pattern are treated in depth in Hock and O'Neil's two volumes of *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*. They present the ancient textbooks with rhetorical exercises written by a number of authors. It is shown that from the time of the late fourth century Antiochean, Aphthonius, the parts of the exercise *ergasia* are fairly stable:

1. Praise (ἔπαινος or ἐγκόμιον)
2. The *chreia* itself (χρεία), or a paraphrase of it
3. A cause (αἰτία) why the claim is true
4. Expansion through the contrary position (ἐνάντιον)
5. Expansion through a comparison (παραβολή)
6. Expansion through an example (παράδειγμα)
7. Expansion through a judgement by an authority, also called a testimony of the elders (κρίσις or μαρτύρια παλαιῶν)
8. Exhortation (παράκλησις) also called a short epilogue (ἐπιλόγος βραχύς), saying why it is necessary to heed the one who has spoken or acted.[142]

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[140] See the section on "Genre" in chapter two.

[141] Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric. Volume 2: Classroom Exercises* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 2; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 51–53, 81–83.

[142] Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 176.

The exercise was meant to be just that—an exercise, not a blueprint to be copied when composing. The slavish adherence to the pattern was meant to be a preliminary exercise. Gradually the patterns of expansion were supposed to be internalized, so that the pattern itself would not be visible in compositions.

Even if the monastic *apophthegmata* are not the product of students practicing such exercises, they may still be strongly influenced by them, since they were a very important part of the education system of the time. The fact that *AP* resembles the genre of *chreia* collections makes the likelihood of such an influence even stronger. That is, the way the *chreiai* of *AP* are treated often corresponds to the way *chreiai* are treated in an *ergasia*. So far the insight of Larsen.

We have seen a number of different functions that the Bible has in *AP*. Now the purpose is to see how much resemblance there is between the different elements of the *ergasia* pattern on the *chreia* and the different ways in which the Bible is used in *AP.*

3.1 The paraphrase or *chreia* proper (χρεία)

We will turn first to the *chreia* itself, as it is described in the preliminary rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*), and compare it to places in *AP* where the Bible is used as a statement in a *chreia*.

Theon writes that a *chreia* is

> a concise statement or action which is attributed with aptness to some specified character or to something analogous to a character. Closely related to the *chreia* are maxim and reminiscence. For every concise maxim, if it is attributed to a character, produces a *chreia*.[143]

Of course, many of the monastic *apophthegmata* are just that. For now, the focus will be that this "statement" of an Elder may include a quotation, allusion or a paraphrase from the Bible. It is this use of the Bible in a *chreia* proper in the sayings which is the subject of McVey's short but suggestive article.[144]

A large number of examples of this could be mentioned. One will suffice for now, that of **III.43**, mentioned already a couple of times:

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[143] See note 10 in chapter two.

[144] McVey, "The Chreia in the Desert".

> A brother asked an Elder: "Abba, give me a word (ῥῆμα)." The Elder said to him: "When God struck Egypt, there was not a house without grief/compunction."

This is certainly a saying steeped in the form of a *chreia*. We should note that Theon and others state that there are two kinds of sayings-*chreiai*: the simple statement and the response, the latter involving a question and an answer.[145] Here it is interesting to note that the common formula "give me a word" in fact amounts to "give me a sentence of wisdom", which comes in the form of a paraphrased biblical text.[146] Other examples of this use of the Bible are found under the heading 1.1.1: "The referent of the Bible text is stated".[147] Under that same heading are found examples also of another way of including the Bible in the *chreia* itself, i.e., by letting the Bible form the question which triggers the answer of the Elder.[148] Such examples are also found under the headings 1.1.4: "Questions and answers", and under 2.1: "The Bible as something to be explained/ Exegesis".[149]

Another case of a paraphrase of the Bible being used as the sentence of the *chreia* itself is *AP*/G Poimen 195:

> He [abba Poimen] also said: "If Moses had not led the sheep to Midian, he would not have seen what was on the bush."[151]

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[145] Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 84.

[146] There is a great number of *apophthegmata* that use the word λόγος in this rather technical sense. If we restrict our selection to the first four chapters of *AP*/GS, the following are the best examples: I.8, I.15, I.31, II.6, II.11, II.19, III.20, III.36, IV.1, IV.93. The following use the word ῥῆμα instead: III.4 and **III.43** (quoted above). The following speak of a sentence from the Bible in that same technical sense: I.11, II.4, IV.36. In the prologue λόγος is used in Pr.4.7 and Pr.6.2, ῥῆμα in Pr.3.7.

[147] For example **IV.32**, **IV.60**, **V.11**, **VII.59**a (biblical allusions), **X.58**, X.84, X.145, X.146A, **XVIII.22**, **XVIII.33**, **XVIII.34**.

[148] According to Hermogenes a *chreia* sometimes consists of a question and an answer (*Progymnasmata* 7.7–9).

[149] **X.116**.

[151] Greek text in supp.Guy #8. Εἶπε πάλιν· εἰ μὴ Μωσῆς τὰ πρόβατα ἤγαγεν εἰς Μάνδρα, οὐκ ἂν εἶδεν τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ βάτου. Normally the greek word μάνδρα would mean a sheep fold, in patristic texts sometimes a monastery. Since Μάνδρα is written with a capital letter and is not declined (the neuter *μάνδρον does not exist in lexica) indicating that it was treated as a foreign proper name, it is probably simply a mistake in the manuscript for the Μαδιαμ of Ex 3. Also in the last words of the saying there seems to be a problem in the manuscript, since ἡ βάτος should be in the feminine. This could possibly be due to influence from the phrase in Mark 12:26. If we were to read this as it stands, an interpretation could be "he would not have seen what is mentioned in the passage about the bush", which seems very awkward.

This is also the only clear example I have found of a saying in the form of a *chreia* which is expanded in an *ergasia*-like manner in another saying. We see it expanded in Cronius 4: [152]

> Abba Cronius said: "If Moses had not led the sheep to the foot of Mount Sinai, he would not have seen the fire in the bush." The brother asked the Elder: "What does the bush represent?" He said to him: "The bush represents bodily action. For it is written: *The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field*." (Matt 13:44) The brother said to the Elder: "So without bodily toil, humans cannot advance towards anything valuable?" The Elder said to him: "To begin with, it is written: '… *looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfector of our faith, who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross* … (Heb 12:2a),' and David also said: '*I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids* … (Ps 131:4),' and so on."

We may compare this to an *ergasia*, as Hermogenes exemplifies it:[153]

1. Praise	*Isocrates was wise*
2. The *chreia*	*He said: "The root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet."*
3. The cause	*For the greatest things are wont to succeed through toil, and when successful bring pleasure.*

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[152] PG 65:248c–249a: Εἶπεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Κρόνιος, ὅτι Εἰ μὴ ἤγαγε Μωϋσῆς τὰ πρόβατα ὑπὸ τὸ ὄρος Σινᾶ, οὐκ ἂν ἔβλεπε τὸ πῦρ ἐν τῇ βάτῳ. Ἠρώτησεν ὁ ἀδελφὸς τὸν γέροντα· Εἰς τί λαμβάνεται ἡ βάτος; Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, ὅτι Ἡ βάτος λαμβάνεται εἰς τὴν σωματικὴν πρᾶξιν. Γέγραπται γάρ, ὅτι *Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν ἀγρῷ*. Λέγει ὁ ἀδελφὸς τῷ γέροντι· Οὐκοῦν ἐκτὸς καμάτου σωματικοῦ οὐ προκόπτει ἄνθρωπος εἴς τινα τιμήν; Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων· Τέως γέγραπται· *Ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς ὑπέμεινε σταυρόν*. Καὶ πάλιν Δαβὶδ λέγει· *Εἰ δώσω ὕπνον τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μου, καὶ τοῖς βλεφάροις μου νυσταγμόν*· καὶ τὰ ἑξῆς.

[153] Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata* 7.10–8.13. Ἀλλὰ νῦν ἐπὶ τὸ συνέχον χωρῶμεν, τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν ἡ ἐργασία. ἐργασία τοίνυν οὕτως ἔστω. πρῶτον ἐγκώμιον διὰ βραχέων τοῦ εἰπόντος ἢ πράξαντος, εἶτα αὐτῆς τῆς χρείας παράφρασις, εἶτα ἡ αἰτία, οἷον «Ἰσοκράτης ἔφησε τῆς παιδείας τὴν μὲν ῥίζαν εἶναι πικρὰν τὸν δὲ καρπὸν γλυκύν». ἔπαινος «Ἰσοκράτης σοφὸς ἦν», καὶ πλατυνεῖς ἠρέμα τὸ χωρίον. εἶθ᾽ ἡ χρεία «εἶπε τόδε», καὶ οὐ θήσεις αὐτὴν ψιλὴν ἀλλὰ πλατύνων τὴν ἑρμηνείαν. εἶτα ἡ αἰτία «τὰ γὰρ μέγιστα τῶν πραγμάτων ἐκ πόνων φιλεῖ κατορθοῦσθαι, κατορθωθέντα δὲ τὴν ἡδονὴν φέρει». εἶτα κατὰ τὸ ἐναντίον «τὰ μὲν γὰρ τυχόντα τῶν πραγμάτων οὐ δεῖται πόνων καὶ τὸ τέλος ἀηδέστατον ἔχει, τὰ σπουδαῖα δὲ τοὐναντίον». εἶτα ἐκ παραβολῆς «ὥσπερ γὰρ τοὺς γεωργοὺς δεῖ πονήσαντας περὶ τὴν γῆν κομίζεσθαι τοὺς καρπούς, οὕτω καὶ περὶ τοὺς λόγους». εἶτα ἐκ παραδείγματος «Δημοσθένης καθείρξας ἑαυτὸν ἐν οἰκήματι καὶ πολλὰ μοχθήσας ὕστερον ἐκομίζετο τοὺς καρπούς, στεφάνους καὶ ἀναρρήσεις». ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐκ κρίσεως ἐπιχειρῆσαι, οἷον «Ἡσίοδος μὲν γὰρ ἔφη τῆς δ᾽ ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν, ἄλλος δὲ ποιητής φησι τῶν πόνων πωλοῦσιν ἡμῖν πάντα τἀγάθ᾽ οἱ θεοί.» ἐν δὲ τῷ τέλει παράκλησιν προσθήσεις, ὅτι χρὴ πείθεσθαι τῷ εἰρηκότι ἢ πεποιηκότι.

ET extracted from George A. KENNEDY, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 10; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 77.

4. By contrast	*For ordinary things need no toil, and in the end give no pleasure; but things of importance have the opposite outcome.*
5. From comparison	*For just as farmers need to work the soil in order to reap fruit, so also with speeches.*
6. From example	*Demosthenes, by shutting himself up at home and working hard, later reaped the fruit in the form of crowns and testimonials.*
7. From authority	*Hesiod said: "The gods put sweat before virtue," and another poet says: "The gods sell all good things to us for toils." (Epikarmos)*
8. An exhortation	

If we analyse Cronius 4 as an expanded version, an *ergasia*, of Poimen 195, we get the following structure:

2. The *chreia* itself, which is already in the form of a paraphrased Bible text:
   Abba Cronius said: "If Moses had not led the sheep to the foot of Mount Sinai, he would not have seen the fire in the bush (Ex 3)*."*
5. Expansion through a comparison, employing a biblical parable.[154]
   The brother asked the Elder: "What does the bush represent?" He said to him: "The bush represents bodily action. For it is written: The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field (Matt 13:44)*."*
4. Expansion through the contrary
   The brother said to the Elder: "So without bodily toil, humans cannot advance towards anything valuable?"
6./7.[155] Expansion through an example/ a testimony taken from the Bible
   The Elder said to him: "To begin with, it is written: 'looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfector of our faith, who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross …(Heb 12:2),*' and David also said: 'I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids …* (Ps 131:4)*' and so on."*

In Cronius 4, a paraphrase from Scripture is used not only at the place of a *chreia* itself (χρεία). Quotations and paraphrases from the Bible are used in the place of a comparison (παραβολή), exemplar (παράδειγμα) and authority of the elders (κρίσις). It is those very places where one could expect to find a precursor text inserted in an *ergasia*. We continue now looking at those different parts of the *ergasia*. The point is not to show that the sayings are the products of students who were practising

[154] In this particular case, there is a parable, or at least a figural reading, involved in the interpretation of the *chreia* itself. To the explanation of this is added a biblical parable that could have been explained further. Instead, the reader is expected to understand the connection between the parable and the theme and to find an explanation her/himself. Since the theme of the *ergasia* is bodily toil, we may assume that the fact that the person in the parable needs to dig or plough to find the treasure is the point (and also hide it and dig it up a second time, once the field has been bought). That is expressed as a part of the parable in logion 109 of the *Gospel of Thomas*, mentioned in note 123 of chapter three.

[155] In point 6/7 the exemplars (Jesus and David) are merged with the *krisis* (since it is a quotation from Scripture).

this rhetorical exercise. But there can be no doubt that the pattern had a profound influence, directly or indirectly on how people wrote, especially when it comes to a collection of anecdotes about renowned women and men, where most anecdotes contain some form of *chreia*. The point now is to see in a more detailed way to what extent the use of Scripture in *AP* is reminiscent of that form, continuing with the other points of the *ergasia*, such as a comparison (παραβολή), exemplar (παράδειγμα) and the authority of the elders (κρίσις), where a precursor text could be used.

3.2 Authority of the elders (κρίσις)

If one were to use a biblical quotation in such an exercise the most obvious place, besides the *chreia* itself, would be the authority of the elders, the *krisis* which in Hermogenes' example of an *ergasia* runs:

> Hesiod said: "The gods put sweat before virtue," and another poet says: "The gods sell all good things to us for toils." [156]

Its counterpart in Cronius 4 is:

> "To begin with, it is written: '*looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfector of our faith, who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross … ,*' and David also said: '*I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids … ,*' and so on."

We have many more examples of this in *AP*. In the first section of this chapter, dealing with ways of pointing out the reference, such examples are mentioned under the heading 1.1.2: "Argumentative or inferring connection". A saying which was mentioned in the next section, on the function of the Bible, under the heading 2.2: "The Bible as support for ethical or other teaching" was XV.36:

> Abba John of Thebes said: "Above everything else, the monk needs to practise humility. For that is the first commandment of the Saviour, he who said: "*Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"(Matt 5:3)

Such is the barest form of a proof from authority connected to a *chreia*.

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[156] Ἡσίοδος μὲν γὰρ ἔφη … ἄλλος δὲ ποιητής φησι … .

More examples of the Bible being used in this way are found above in the sections already mentioned: 1.1.2 "Argumentative or inferring connection" and 2.2 "The Bible as support for ethical or other teaching/Proof-texts".

Just as in the *ergasia*, the most preferred place in the monastic *apophthegmata* to put the reference to the authority of the elders is at the *end* of an argument.

3.3 Example (παράδειγμα)

Examples of well known predecessors who could aptly exemplify the teaching of the *chreia* could be taken from a literary or oral tradition. In *AP*, this is often taken from the Bible.

In Hermogenes' *ergasia*, the example, or *paradeigma*, runs:

> Demosthenes, by shutting himself up at home and working hard, later reaped the fruit in the form of crowns and testimonials.

In the example of Cronius 4 the exemplars (Jesus and David) are merged with the authority of the elders since it is a quotation from Scripture:

> The Elder said to him: "To begin with, it is written: '*looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfector of our faith, who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross … ,'* and David also said: '*I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids … ,'* and so on."

We have seen several instances, especially under the heading 1.1.5: "Exemplary connection", where the exemplary figures from the Bible are introduced by such phrases as :

> Have you seen Mary, how … ?[157]
> Do we not look with wonder at Joseph how … ? We also see Job, who … .[158]

Some of the ways of relating to an exemplar listed earlier in this chapter, in the section 1.1.5 "Exemplary connection":

1. [referent] – Ὁρῶμεν – paraphrase[159]

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[157] III.50; Εἶδες τὴν Μαρίαν ὅτε ... ;

[158] VII.19 Οὐ θαυμάζομεν τὸν Ἰωσὴφ … πῶς … ; Ὁρῶμεν δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἰὼβ ὅτι … .

[159] I.22, VII.19.1–2,6–8, XV.75.

2. [referent] – Εἶδες – paraphrase (- οὕτως ἔσται καὶ …) [160]
3. [referent] – Οὐ θαυμάζομεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ – paraphrase[161]
4. [referent] – Τί γάρ, νομίζεις περὶ τοῦ μακαρίου Ἰωσήφ – paraphrase[162]

Similar phrases are in fact often used in connection with the exemplars in the samples from school books. Aphthonius' *paradeigma* begins: "*Look*, I ask you, at the life of Demosthenes …". His teacher, Libanius has a similar phrase: "One can, however, also *look* to earlier times of the demigods and take examples from them… ."[163] Another author, referred to by Hock and O'Neil as ps.-Nicolaus, writes in a way clearly influenced by Aphthonius. He uses similar terms in the *paradeigma*-part of the elaboration:

> "*Consider* if you will, the city of the Athenians ... ."[164]
> "*See* Ninos … ."[165]
> "*See*, if you will, each city … ."[166]
> "*Observe*, if you will … ."[167]

In the example above, the verb of perception is included neatly in the first quotation itself, in the form of a participle.

Not all instances where AP uses biblical exemplars utilize such verbs of seeing or perception, but the ones that are there are so striking, that it seems likely that they, and others, have been influenced by this part of the *ergasia* pattern.

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[160] III.50, V.37.

[161] VII.19.1–6.

[162] V.52.

[163] Ἔχοι δ᾽ ἄν τις καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄνω χρόνους τῶν ἡμιθέων *ὁρῶν* ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν κομίσαι τὰ παραδείγματα … . *Chreia* elaboration I . Greek text in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 150, based on the edition of Foerster. ET by Hock and O'Neil.

[164] Τὴν Ἀθηναίων *σκόπει* μοι πόλιν … . Greek text in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 214, based on the edition of Walz.

[165] *Ὅρα* τὴν Νῖνον, … . Greek text in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 222, based on Walz.

[166] Ἑκατέραν *ὅρα* μοι πόλιν … . Greek text in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 226, based on Walz.

[167] *Θέα* μοι … . Greek text in Hock and O'Neil, *The Chreia 1*, 232, based on Walz.

3.4 Comparison (παραβολή)

The comparison, *parabolē*, was an important part of the exercise, since the comparison was a common way of arguing for one´s cause in ancient rhetorics. The comparisons in Hermogenes and Cronius 4 run:

> Hermogenes: For just as farmers need to work the soil in order to reap fruit, so also with speeches.
>
> Cronius 4: The brother questioned the Elder: "What does the bush represent?" He said to him: "The bush represents bodily action. For it is written: *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field*."

Hermogenes uses the phrase "ὥσπερ γὰρ … οὕτω καὶ …", and Aphthonius uses "ὥσπερ γὰρ … τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον …" for the comparison part.

In the section earlier in the present chapter, 2.3: "The Bible as a source of images", there are many examples of the Bible being used in a comparison.

*

Another *ergasia*-like *apophthegma*, that of **III.34**, can serve as a final illustration. It is obviously not a strict application of the *ergasia*: it only contains four of the elements of an *ergasia*, the *chreia* proper is unclear since it is not clear where the quotation of amma Syncletica ends, and the comparison is split up by a reference to an authority, so that the second part of the comparison also becomes the exhortation. Still, the order of the elements, the way they are formulated and the way the theme is treated, makes it likely that this *apophthegma* has been formed in a milieu where the tradition of rhetorical school exercises exerted some influence.

	Hermogenes	*AP*/GS *III.34*
Praise *ἔπαινος*	Isocrates was wise.	
Chreia *χρεία*	He said: "The root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet."	The blessed Syncletica said: "In the beginning there is much fight and toil for those who approach God, but thereafter an indescribable joy."
Cause *αἰτία*	For the greatest things are wont to succeed through toil, and when successful bring pleasure.	
Contrast *ἐνάντιον*	For ordinary things need no toil, and in the end give no pleasure; but things of importance have the opposite outcome.	
Comparison *παραβολή*	For just as (Ὥσπερ γάρ) farmers need to work the soil in order to reap fruit, so also (οὕτω καί) with speeches.	For just as (Ὥσπερ γάρ) those who want to light a fire first cough and weep, and then attain what they search for
Example *παράδειγμα*	Demosthenes, by shutting himself up at home and working hard, later reaped the fruit in the form of crowns and testimonials.	
Authority κρίσις	Hesiod said: *"The gods put sweat before virtue,"* and another poet says: "*The gods sell all good things to us for toils*." (Epikarmos)	—"*For*," it is said, "*our God is a consuming fire*" (Heb 12:29)—
Exhortation *παράκλησις*		in the same manner we too should (οὕτως δεῖ καὶ ἡμᾶς) light the divine fire within us under tears and toil."

3.5 Summary

A comparison between the use of Scripture in *AP* and the elaborations on *chreiai* described in the handbooks on *progymnasmata* suggests that often the use of Scripture fits the patterns described in the handbooks very well. We have seen what Kathleen McVey has already shown, that sometimes the Bible is used as the *logos* of the *chreia* itself, i.e., the Bible is uttered as the kernel saying which the questioner wants to hear. The request for a saving word may be answered in the form of a biblical quotation, allusion or paraphrase, or the biblical material may be placed in the mouth of the questioner.

The Bible can also be used as an "authority of the elders" (κρίσις). This is a common way to use the Bible, as a "proof-text". The way of connecting the Bible to the subject matter of the saying in those places is through argumentative phrases and words, such as a simple γάρ. Just as in the *ergasia*, the most preferred place to put the reference to the authority of the elders is at the *end* of an argument.

An example (παράδειγμα) can be taken from the Bible. Just as in many examples of how to do an *ergasia*, such examples, which are used to exemplify the teaching in *AP* are often introduced by a verb of perception (ὁρῶμεν, εἶδες, θαυμάζομεν, νομίζεις or something similar).

Finally, biblical material can be used to make a comparison (παραβολή) for the sake of illustrating the message of the saying.

This strengthens the suggestion by Larsen and others, that there was a close connection between the ancient school traditions and *AP* (and other early monastic literature). Any future analysis of the *apophthegmata* and their use of Scripture ought to take that into account.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

IN THE PRECEDING PAGES THE USE of Scripture in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* has been analysed. The aim has been to see the techniques of appropriation employed in those sayings. I will present my conclusions beginning with a discussion on the use of Scripture in *Apophthegmata Patrum,* and then presenting some thoughts that may be relevant when describing the use of Scripture in other texts.

To read a text in a meaningful way, the range of possible referents of the text for the reader needs to be limited. A text with a great number of possible referents is not interesting in itself, at least not in the didactic context of the *apophthegmata*. It is the concrete referents that make the text meaningful. The main purpose of the analyses has been to see how a Bible text is appropriated in the teaching of the *apophthegmata* by relating the biblical material to a certain referent.

In the first part of chapter four, I described different ways in which the biblical text can be connected to the message of the saying, i.e., how a certain concept, person, practice or concern is pointed out as a referent of the biblical text. These are the different "techniques" in which the biblical material is woven into the novel text. These ways of using the Bible relate to the question of *how* the Bible is used. We may call them techniques of contextualizing the Bible, as long as we remember that they were not necessarily consciously used techniques. I group the techniques of contextualizing into three main categories: (1) connecting the biblical text to an external referent, (2) adaptations and focalizations of the Bible text itself, (3) connecting biblical texts to each other.

In the next part of chapter four I described the role of the Bible in different *apophthegmata*. To use the imagery of texture again, we can call this the function the biblical threads have in the new text. These roles relate to the question of *why* the Bible is used. Biblical material can be the very starting point of an explanation, a form of "exegesis"; it can be introduced as a support for teachings, a form of "proof-text"; it can also be placed as an image in the saying, i.e. an "illustrative" use; finally the Bible may hover more in the background as a text which is in some way imitated in the *apophthegma*, where the biblical material has a literary "mimetic" function of being something to be imitated. In most of these ways of using Scripture there is a tendency to use the Bible as a common book of images. These connections and correspondences between a Bible text and something relevant to the context of the reading community hint at something to be "seen", rather than "understood". Of course these biblical images are not images like any other; they carry with them the authority of Scripture which is tapped into the monastic text.

All of this tells us some interesting things about the use of Scripture in *Apophthegmata Patrum*. The Bible obviously has a very prominent place in the collection. The use of biblical material gives authority to the teachings of the Elders. But it is equally clear that the Bible has the role of being a pedagogical aid by providing illustrations to what is being taught. Just as images from nature can be used to tease the imagination of the reader in order to facilitate the reception of a teaching, so an image from Scripture can be used. And the biblical images are often treated with the same creativity and imagination as the images from nature. Many of the sayings using biblical material would be much duller and less persuasive without such illustrations. A close reading has shown that under a surface that is simple in its form, although sometimes puzzling in its content, there is a level of intertextual relations which is fascinating in its imaginative creativity. This is all the more striking since these texts have often been depicted as simple and "unsophisticated".[1]

So, in *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the Bible is often treated more as a pedagogical aid than as a text to be interpreted, and that in a very creative manner. The use of the Bible gave authority, life and force to its teachings. The Bible shaped the thought, the pedagogy and the form of these sayings. Not only vivid biblical images, but also the whole biblical context to which the quotations, paraphrases and allusions point

[1] For example *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 88.

contribute to making the *Apophthegmata Patrum* what it is: "one of the greatest products of the Wisdom Literature of the Ancient Near East."[2]

The use of biblical stories and images was a mode of thinking. It was also a way of forming the thought and imagination of others. A comment by the French historian of ancient philosophy, Pierre Hadot, on how we should understand ancient authors in general, and those belonging to different philosophical schools in particular, is relevant here. He writes:

> For the ancient author's art consists in his skilfully using, in order to arrive at his goals, all of the constraints that weigh upon him as well as the models furnished by the tradition. Most of the time, furthermore, he uses not only ideas, images, and patterns of argument in this way but also texts or at least pre-existing formulae. From plagiarism pure and simple to quotation or paraphrase, this practice includes—and this is the most characteristic example—the literal use of formulae or words employed by the earlier tradition to which the author often gives a new meaning adapted to what he wants to say […] What matters first of all is the prestige of the ancient and traditional formula, and not the exact meaning and purpose when they are integrated into a literary whole. This sometimes brilliant reuse of fabricated elements gives an impression of "bricolage" […] Thought evolves by incorporating prefabricated and pre-existing elements, which are given new meaning as they become integrated into a rational system.[3]

But the relationship is a reciprocal one, i.e. not only did the incorporation of those biblical texts contribute to the authority and aesthetical force of the *apophthegmata*, but the new text into which they were incorporated also contributed to new perspectives on the biblical texts. New links to the reader's context could be perceived, new details could be seen and new connections between different texts of the Bible could be discovered. The interpretive influence between the teachings of the *apophthegmata* and the biblical material incorporated into them worked both ways.

The reading of these texts has also shown that they often leave interpretative gaps in the treatment of biblical material, in a way that invites the reader to fill in those gaps. It is as if the reader is expected to co-operate with the texts by engaging in the biblical material in ways which are only hinted at in the *apophthegmata.*

These observations give us hints about the attitude towards Scripture that formed these texts and which was transmitted to the readers of them. The biblical books are greatly venerated, it is clear that they are holy, but more as voices and images than as static texts. Their usefulness

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[2] Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity*, 82.

[3] Pierre HADOT, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*: *Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, (ed. Arnold I. Davidson; trans. Michael Chase; Oxford: Blackwell 1995), 64–65.

seems to lie more in providing material for interpreting one's own situation than in being an informative manual to be followed. To use a phrase of Frances Young, the texts are "authoritative, yet far from binding".[4] Some ethical demands from the Bible are taken at face value, but more often than not, the text of the Bible provides a way of thinking new thoughts, of making new associations and of giving creative illustrations to what is being taught and lived.

What we have seen in the preceding chapters also has bearing on how we may understand the character of the text of *Apophthegmata Patrum* as a whole. I discussed some the relationship between the role of the Bible in each *apophthegma* and the different ways a *chreia* could be developed in basic rhetorical exercises of Late Antiquity. We saw that often the Bible is used in a way which concurs well with the *ergasia* pattern. This strengthens the suggestion by other studies during the last couple of decades that these were collections created within and for a monastic milieu for didactic purposes, and that they were somehow steeped in the conventions of other texts that were used in rhetorical and philosophical schools for didactic purposes.

Leaving the questions pertaining to *Apophthegmata Patrum* behind, it is hoped that the approach of focusing on the techniques of appropriation may contribute to finding supplementary perspectives when studying the use of Scripture in other texts as well, and that the types and categories listed in chapter four may be of use in such studies.

Generally, the answers we get from texts are determined by the questions we put to them. If, when studying the use of Scripture, we only ask questions about how biblical texts are interpreted, that is the sort of answers we will get. That may be quite relevant when studying a Bible commentary, but it is insufficient when studying a text like *AP*. This study has focused on two other questions, *viz*. the question of what we have called the techniques of contextualization and the question of the role of the Bible. Discovering how important the Bible can be as a source of images, it becomes even clearer that for many texts, the focus on the interpretation of the Bible is not enough to elucidate and grasp the use of Scripture. When an author uses the image of a fire in a text to illustrate something, we may try to discern how the author understands "fire". Although it may be a relevant question, if we were to stop there, we would not understand much about the way the author uses the

[4] Young, "Panegyric and the Bible", 208.

image, and the interplay between the image and the text of the author. So also with the use of Scripture. We need to supplement the exegetical perspective with other perspectives, in order to see how and why Scripture is used. We need to look also at the nature of the relationship between the biblical material and the novel text into which it is placed. The two texts often contribute to the interpretation of each other, sometimes in unexpected ways which only become apparent when we focus on their interplay, as we did in the analyses. One way of doing so is to be attentive to what role the biblical text has in the text. It may often, as in *Apophthegmata Patrum*, be that of providing pedagogical and creative illustrations to the message of the novel text. Another perspective is to see how the text of the Bible is contextualized in its new setting, how it is like threads of a different colour which are woven into the threads of the new text. Only when we pay attention to how the threads of the two texts interact can we see how deeper significance is found both in the novel text by the use of Scripture, and in Scripture by its appropriation into a new context.

Appendix

List of Biblical Quotations, Paraphrases and Allusions in *AP*/GS

The number of the chapter and saying is indicated in the first two columns. The column to the right of the Bible references refers to my taxonomy of reference explained on pp. 26 ff. References to the Bible which rate 1–3 in the taxonomy are indicated with **bold**. Below is a summary of the most important symbols.

1 = biblical quotation
2 = biblical paraphrase
3 = obvious allusion to Bible
4 = less obvious allusion
4 + = almost ranked as 1, 2, or 3
a = with indicator of quotation, paraphrase or allusion
b = without an indicator
c = liturgical indicator
D = differences in relation to LXX or NT
M = minor modifications
n.i.= not identified
// = and parallel passage(s)

I.	*2*	2 Cor 1:9	4
		Sir 32:19	4
		Prov 18:21; 27:20	4
	5	Matt 12:46–50 //	4
	7	Rom12:17	4
		Phil 3:13	4
	8	Rom 6:6	4 +
	10	Jas 4:4	4 +
	11	**Matt 6:9 //**	1a
	13	Rom 12:17	4 +
		2 Thess 3.12	4 +
		2 Cor 11:27	4 +
	15	Eph 4:3	4
	16	**Matt 11:12**	1a
	17	Jas 1:25; 2:12	4
		Matt 22:14	4
	18	Matt 19:16–22	4
		Lev 18:5 //	4
		Gen 18:1–8	3a
		1 Kgs 17:5–6, 19:13	3a
		1 Sam 18:23, 28	3a
		Prov 4:23	4
		Jer 38:33	4
	19	**Num 21:9 //**	2a
		John 3:14	4
	22	**Dan 6:5–6(–13)**	2b

	23	**Ezek 14:14**	1a D
	31	Matt 22:39–40 //	4
	32	**Ps 96:10**	1a
II.	*8*	Matt 11:7	4
	10	Matt 11:9	4
	15	John 12:49	4
		1 John 2:15	1a
	19	John 14:26	4
	21	Ex 14	4
	23	Eph 6:16	4
	29	**Matt 5:9**	1a
	34	**Matt 6:24**	1a
	35	Eph 6:16 (= Ps 91:5)	4
		Matt 11:30	4
		Matt 25:1–13	4
		Ps 56:8	1c
III.	*1*	1 John 2:15	4
		Rom 6:11	4
		1 Cor 4:11	4
	4	2 Cor 5:10	4
	5	Mark 9:48	4
		Matt 8:12	4
	9	Rom 7:24	4
	11	1 John 1:6	4
		1 Cor 11:29	4
	17	Matt 6:22 //	4
	22	**Matt 6:3**	1b M
	25	Col 3:5/Eph 2:3	4
	26	Gen 2:15	4
	28	**Gen 23**	2b
	31	**John 19:25**	2b
	34	Heb 11:6	4
		Heb 12:11	4
		Heb 12:29 // 1 Pet 1:6–8	1a
	35	Ps 56:4	4
	38	Phil 2:12	4
	43	**Ex 12:30**	2b
	45	Hebr 11:9–16, 26–27	4 +
	50	**John 20:11–16**	2b
	55	**Matt 5:4**	3b
IV.	*9*	Ezek 3.3,	4
	10	Ex 16:3 (Isa 65:4)	4
	15	Eph 4.26	4
	23	**Gen 3**,	2b
		1 Pet 5:8	1b
		Gen 19:30–38	2b
	32	**2 Kgs 25:8–9 //**	2b
	36	**Matt 12:37**	1a
	51	**Prov 27:7**	1a
	53	Sir 13:19	4+
	54	Jer 5:8	4+
	60	**Gen 3:1–5**	2b
	61	Ps 57:5,7; Ezek 19:2–9	4
	63	Matt 26:39 //	4
	88	Matt 5:4–6	4 +
	90	**2 Kgs 25:8–10**	2b
		Luke 21:34	1a
	102	agraphon	1a
V.	*1*	**Eph 5:18**;	1a
		Luke 21:34	1a
	2	Matt 5:28,	4
		Prov 4:23	1a
	3	Matt 5:28	4
	4	**Prov 24:11**	1a
		Matt 12:20	1a D
		Job 5:18	1b
		1 Sam 2:7b,6	1b
		Isa 50:4	1b D
	6	John 6:60	4
		1 Cor 6:18b	4
	11	**1 Sam 17:34b–35**	1a D
	12	Matt 6:24	4
	18	Luke 11:9	4
		1 Cor 9:25–27	4
	20-	**1 John 3:3**	1b M
	21	**Ps 124:1**	1c
	22	Luke 6:48–49	4
	31	**John 15:13**	1b D
	32	Matt 12:26	4 +
	37	**Num 25:1–9**	2b
		Matt 15:22	4
	39	Ps 101:6b	4 +
		Ps 76:4	4 +
	42	**1 Pet 3:9**	1a
	45	Ps 54:23a	4 +
	46	Matt 28:1	4
		1 Tim 2:4	1b D
	51	**Eph 5:3**	1a D
	52	**Gen 39:7–12**	3b
	54	**Ps 103:19–21**	1a
VI.	*1*	Acts 5:1–11	4
	4	John 14:31b	4 +
	6	**Matt 19:21**	1a

	7	1 Cor 13:13	4
		Matt 19:21	4 +
	12	Matt 6:33 //	4
	13	Matt 6:24 //	4
	14	Acts 5:1–11	4
	17	1 Cor 7:28	4
	18	Matt 6:19–20	4 +
	19	John 6:15	4 +
	26	Ps 54:23	4 +
	27	Matt 3:17 //	4
VII.	*5*	Num 20:17	4 +
	13	Job 34:21	4 +
		Ps 32:13–15	4 +
		Rom 8:28	4
	15	Mark 1:26	4
		Acts 8:7	4
	17	Matt 16:16	4
	19	**Gen 37–50**	2b
		Job	2b
	23	**Ps 117:18**	1a
		2 Cor 12:7	1b D
		Ps 65:12–13	1a D
		Ps 68:30	1a D
		Ps 4:1	1a
	24	2 Cor 3:18	4b
	31	Ps 54:23	4
	36	**Deut 34:1–4**	2b
	40	**Luke 7:35**	4
	44	**Ps 126:1,**	1b
		Syr 17:32,	3b
		Jas4:6=1Pet5:5 =Prov 3:34	1b
	46	**Dan 3**	3b
		Ex 33:9	3b
	47	**Luke 16:19–31**	3b
	52	**Matt 11:12**	1b M
	53	Ps 9:11	4
	59	2 Cor 1:22	4 +
		Eph 1:13; 4:30	4
		Rev 7:3–4	4
		Ezek 11:19; 36:26	4
		2 Cor 12:9	1a
VIII.	*2*	Matt 23:27	4
	6	**Matt 6:2**	1a D
	17	**Luke 6:26**	1a M
	20	John 8:54	4
	24	Ps 67:3	4
	25	1 Cor 15:36–50	4
	30	**Matt 13:3–9**	3b
		Matt 6:1–6	4 +
		Matt 13:44	4
		John 12:24–25	4
IX.	*6*	**Matt 7:1,**	1a
		Matt 4:1–4	4
		Ex 13:21 +	4
	9	Matt 6:12	4
	13	Matt 7:3	4
	14	Phil 4:3+	4 +
	15	**Matt 5:27**	1a D
		Matt 7:1	1a D
		Rom 2:23	4
	22	**Prov 25:7b**	1a
X.	*6*	Mark 9:49–50 //	4
	7	Matt 11:25	4
	13	**Matt 3:10 //**	1a
	15	**Ps 57:2**	1a
	20	**Luke 18:13**	3b
	21	Luke 4:30	4
	26	1 Cor 4:5	4 +
	27	**Job 15:15**	1a M
	30	Jas 1:26	4 +
	45	**Isa 58:5**	1a D
	46	**1 Cor 5:12–13**	1a
	51	**Gen 18:21**	2b
		Matt 7:3	3b
	52	Luke 18:10–14	4
	54	John19:9	4
		John 3:12	4
		Ps 80:11	4 +
	58	**Isa 10:15**	1b
	61	Num 20:17	4
	62	Gal 6:1	4 +
		Matt 18:22	2a
	63	Ps 7:17	4
	67	**Matt 5:22,**	1a M
		Matt 5:29, 38	4
	70	**2 Tim 2:20–21**	1a M
	71	Jas 1:12	4
	77	Rom 12:21	4
	78	Rom 12:17	4
	82	Matt 6:26; 19:21	4 +
		1 Cor 7:25,32	4 +
	84	**Dan 3:7**	2b
	86	**Prov 18:13**	1a
	89	Jer 1:18	4
		Ps 17:30–31	1b

	94	John 19:9	4
		John 8:6	4
	95	**Luke 10:19**	1a
	97	**Ps 134: 16–17**	1a
	99	**John 6:27**	1b
		Luke 10:42	1b
	102	2 Cor 7:10	4
	103	**Eph 4:26**	1a M
		Matt 6:34	1b
	110	2 Cor 2:15	4
	116	**Matt 7:14**	1a D
		Matt 19:27	1a
	131	Jdg 9:5, Isa 14:8	4
	134	**Matt 27:57–60**	2b
	145	**Ex 2:12**	2b
	146	**Ps 88:26**	1a
	151	**Lev 11:3–4**	2a
	152	**Ps 73:16**	1a
		1 Pet 4:11	4
	153	Rom 14:21 (MSS)	4
	157	Eph 4:22–24 //	4
	166	Rom 7:22–23	4
	176	Jona 4:10–11	4
		Matt 6:28–30	4
	188	Rom 2:13/ Jas 1:22	4
	194	Matt 12:46 //	4
XI.	*1*	**Deut 32:7**	1a
	3	Phil 2:16	4
	4	Rom 7:22–24	4
	12	Heb 4:12/Luke 2:35	4
	24	Jas 1:26	4 +
	31	Matt 6:24 //	4
	33	**1 Sam 16:23**	2b
		2 Kgs 3:9–24	2b
	43	**Matt 25:36**	1a
	44	**Josh 14:7–11**	1a D
	47	**Eccl 3:1**	1b M
	48	Matt 12:36	4
	50	Matt 5:44–46	4 +
		Ps 46:8	4 +
		Matt 5:42	4 +
		Matt 7:21	1a M
		1 Cor 6:9–10	1a D
		1 Thess 5:22, Col 1:10	3a
		1 Tim 3:1–3, Tit 3:2	4
	51	Ps 115:3,	4
		Rom 5:12,	4
		John 14:23,	1a
		2 Cor 6:16b	1a
		1 Thess 5:17	1a
		Acts 2:25 (Ps 15:8)	1a
		agraphon	1a
	60	**Ps 110:10/Prov 9:10**	1a
		Gen 22:9–12	2a/1a
	61	1 Thess 5:17	4
	62	Isa 66:22	4
	65	**Ex 21:2–6**	1a D
	71	Num 20:17 //	4
	75	**1 Cor 10:12**	1a M
		n.i.	2a
		Mal 3:20	4
	78	Matt 12:44	4
		Matt 25:1–13	4
		Philem 3:13 //	4
	87	Ps 46:8	4
	95	**Zack 1:3**	1a D
	103	Rom 7:22–24	4
	112	**2 Cor 6:16**	1b +
	113	**Luke 23:40–43**	2b
		Acts 1:17	4 +
		Matt 27:3–10 //	2b
	116	Ps 122:2	4 +
		Wisd 9:5,11/John 21:17	4 +
		Ps 72:22	4 +
		Ps 115:7	1a
		Ps 6:5	4
	117	2 Kgs 18:19ff; 19:18	4
	125	**Ps 33:15 //**	1a
		Gen 3	2b
		Job 2:8	2b
		Job 23:11–12	4
		Job 2:10b	4
	126	Matt 7:14	4 +
XII.	*4*	**Phil 2:12**	1a D
		1 Pet 5:8	1a D
	6	1 Thess 5:7	4
	7	**Matt 3:16 //**	3b
	10	**1 Thess 5:7**	1a M
		Ps 50:1	1c
		1 Thess 5:7	1a M
	11	Luke 11:1	4
		Matt 6:7	4 +
	12	Matt 19:21	4
	14	**Jas 5:16**	1a
	17	Ex 9:23	4
	20	1 Thess 5:17	4

	21	1 Thess 5:17	4
	23	**Isa 14:12–15**	3b
	25	**Isa 66:2**	1a
		1 Cor 14:4–5	1a M
	27	**Ps 33:2**	1a
	28	Ps 122:2	4 +
		Wisd 9:5,11/John 21:17	4 +
		Ps 72:22	1c D
		Ps 115:7	1a
XIII.	*1*	John 13:12	4
		Matt 22:21 //	1a
	2	Matt 26:11 //	4 +
		Matt 9:15	1b M
	6	Matt 25:14–30	4
	7	**Prov 15:27**	1a
	18	1 Cor 6:17	4
XIV.	*1*	Luke 10:19	4
	3	Matt 11:30	4
		Matt 23:4	4
	6	Eph 6:13–17	4
	7	Gal 5:14	4 +
	15	Gen 22	4
	18	1 Cor 13:5	4
	19	**Phil 2:8**	1b D
	26	Rom 8:17	4
	28	**Gen 22:1–14**	3b
		Dan 3:50	4 +
	32	**Matt 19:21**	1a M
XV.	*10a*	**Gen 8:9–17**	3b
	10b	John 7:30, 8:20	4
		John 16:4	4
		2 Cor 5:10	4
		John 12:27	4
	11	n.i.	3b
		2 Tim 4:7	4
		Acts 11:24	1b
	15	**Matt 5:39**	3a
	18	Luke 24:32	4
	21	John 12:42–43	4
	22	Jas 1:26	4 +
	23	1Cor 12:31–13:7	4 +
	29	Matt 13:3–9 //	4 +
	33	Ex 13:21 +	4
	34	Matt 7:13,	4
		Heb 12:22	4
	36	**Matt 5:3**	1a
	41	**Isa 6:5**	2b
	46	**Ps 72:22b–23a**	1a M
	52	Ps 68:3, 15	4
	55	**Ex 20:24**	3a
	62	2 Cor 12:2	4
	63	Rev 12:12	4
	67	Gen 2:9	4
	68	**Luke 18:10–14**	3b
		Num 12:3	3b
		Ps 113: 8 //	3b
		Ezek 11:19, 36:26	4
		John 4:14, 7:38	4
		Isa 58:11	4
	69	Rom 8:5–7	4
		Ps 104:19,21	3b
		1 Cor 15:58	4
		Acts 7:9b–10a	1b D
		Rom 2:3b	4
	70	Luke 15:11–32	4 +
	71	Matt 5:39	4
	72	Luke 17:10	4
	73	**1 Cor 10:12**	1a
		Col 4:6	1a
	75	**Josh 5:14**	2b
	80	Ps 130:1–2	4
	84	**Matt 25:31–46**	3a
	90	**Matt 24:23**	1a
	96	Ps 54:23	4 +
	104	Matt 5:39	4
	111	**Matt 19:12**	3a
		Acts 15:8	4
	115	**2 Cor 12:7**	3b
	117	Matt 25:31–46	4
		Matt 19:21	1a
	118	Ps 9:35	4 +
		Luke 5:32	4 +
	119	**Matt 5:4**	1a
	120	**Ps 58:6**	1c
		Ps 144:20	1c M
		Ps 118:21	1c
		Ps 5:7	1c
		Matt 6:12	1c M
		Ps 101:5	1c
		Ps 118:62	1c
		Ps 6:7	1c
		Ps 41:4	1c
		Ps 18:15	1c
		Ps 108:24	1c
		Ps 24:18	1c
		Ps 56:8	1c

	122	1 Cor 2:11	4 +
	123	Matt 6:12	4
	132	**Matt 7:1**	1a
		Matt 6:14	1a
	136	**Matt 25:41**	1a
		Rom 12:2,	4 +
		Heb 13:21	4
XVI.	*1*	Luke 16:29	4
		Matt 5:39	1a
		Mark 9:29	4
		Matt 19:16–26	4
	3	**Job 40:5**	1a
	8	**1 Tim 6:7**	1b
		Job 1:21	1b D
	9	Ps 76:5	4 +
	14	Matt 8:22	4
	16	**Isa 9:15**	1a D
	18	**Acts 7:54–60**	3b
	25	Matt 5:39	4
XVII.	*1*	**1 John 4:18**	1b D
	2	**1 Cor 8:12–13**	3b
	4	Ex 13:21	4
	8	Eph 4:26	4
	13	**John 15:13**	1b D
	15	**1 Cor 9:19**	3b
		Matt 12:32	4
	16	**Matt 6:12**	1c
	19	**Matt 5:41**	1a
	31	1 Cor 12:31–13:3, 13:13	4 +
		1 John 4:16	1a
	34	1 Pet 4:2	4
XVIII.	*3*	Matt 7:14	4
		Phil 2:16	4
	4	**Gen 2:7; Gen 1:26–27**	1a D
		Matt 26:26 //	1a
		Tob 3:16	4
		Luke 24:31	4
	5	Melkisedek	
	6	Ezek 31:3–6; Dan 4:10–12	4
		Ezek 17:8	4
		Dan 4:10–11	4
		Hos 10:1; Sir 24:17	4
		Matt 13:32 //; Dan 4:12	4
	7	Rev 5:2–9	4
	8	1 Kgs 19:5–8	4
	10	Ps 138:9	4 +
	13	John 12:13	4
	14	1 Thess 5:17	4
	16	Luke 21:20	4 +
		Matt 24:33	4
		Luke 21:21	4
	17	2 Kgs 6:16	4
	18	**Matt 26:52**	1a
	22	**Ps 41:2**	1a
	23	**Rom 12:17**	1a M
	24	**1 Cor 3:18**	1a
	26	**Ps 45:9a**	1b D
		1 Tim 2:4	1b
		Ps 94:6a	1b
		Isa 1:16–19	1c D
		1 Tim 1:15	1b D
		Ps 103:24	1c
		Isa 1:18	2a
		Ezek 33:11	1a D
	27	2 Cor 12:4	4
	28	**Matt 10:16**	1b M
	30	**Am 1:9**	1a D
	33	**Ps 91:13**	1a
		Ps 91:9,11	4
	34	**2 Kgs 4:1–7, 8–37**	2b
	42	Phil 2:12	4
		Ps 140:2	4
		1 Cor 10: 31	1a
	44	1 Cor 12:26	4
		Rom 12:5	1a
		Acts 4:32	1a
	46	**John 3:16**	1a M
		Rom 5:6–10	3b
	48	**1 Cor 5:7b**	1a D
		Gen 2:7	2a
		Gen 3:19	4
	50	Acts 7:55	4
XIX.	*3*	Josh 10:12–13	4
	4	Matt 17:18	4 +
	5	**Josh 10:12–13**	3b
	6	John 4:50	4
		Luke 8:47	4
	7	Matt 17:18	4 +
	9	Matt 8:28–29 //	4
		Matt 17:18	4
	12	Matt 9:8	4
	14	Luke 9:42	4
	15	Luke 10:19 //	4
		Gen 1:28	3b

	17	Matt 5:14, 8:4 //	4
		Matt 17:9	4
	18	Gen 32:26	4
	21	John 2:7	4 +
XX.	*6*	Matt 6:6	4
	7	Matt 17:2 //	4 +
		Matt 17:6 //	4
		Acts 9:15	4
		John 19:30	4
		Matt 28:3	4
	11	Matt 26:40–46	4
	15	**Ex 15:27**	2b
XXI.	*65*	**Sir 11:8**	1a D

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Index of Ancient Sources

*The use of biblical material is indicated with a reference to AP/GS. Sayings indicated with **bold** numbers are analysed in chapter three, where they appear in numerical order. The sign "//" indicates that there is one or more parallel passages.*

LXX

NT

Agrapha

Other Ancient Texts

Page numbers in the right column refer to the present study.

Index of names and subjects

Plate

Lund University Library,
Medeltidshandskrift 54, fol. 5, *verso*.

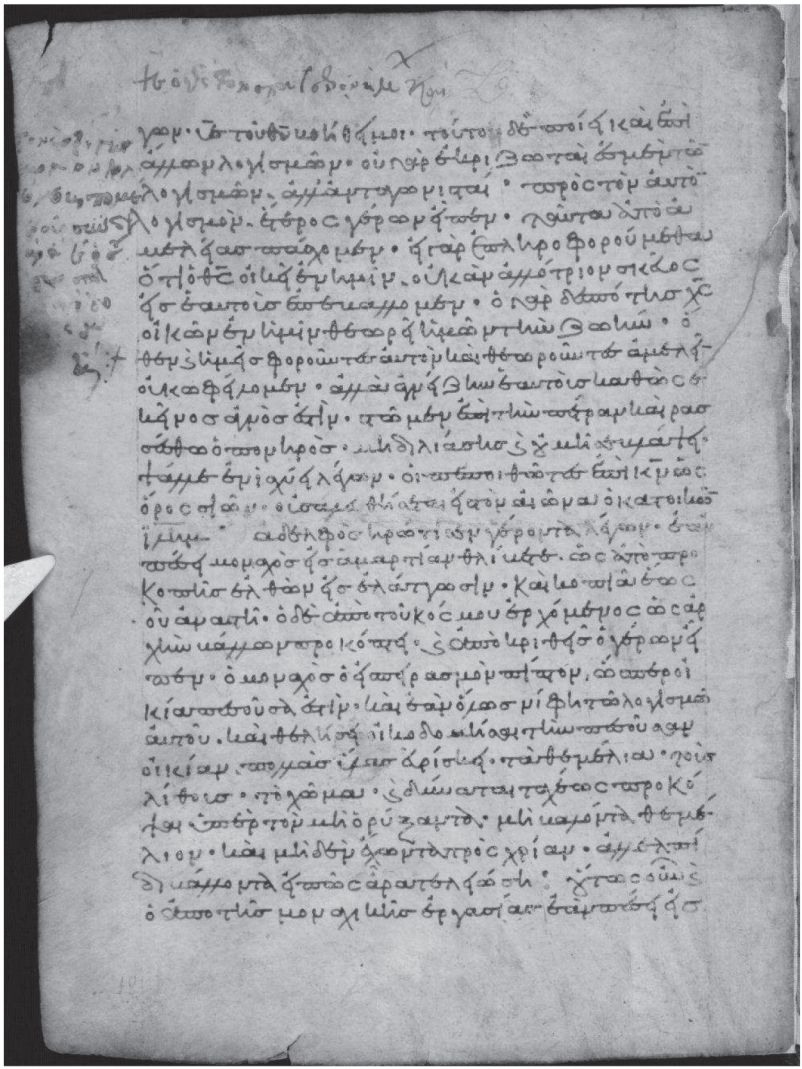
The manuscript consists of seven parchment fragments of the Greek systematic collection of *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Adolf Deissmann bought the manuscript in Athens in 1906 and donated it to Lund University in 1920. Dated to the eleventh century it is the oldest Greek manuscript in the collection of the Lund University Library. [1]

Photographs of the whole manuscript are available on St. Laurentius digital manuscript library (http://laurentius.lub.lu.se).

For a fuller description, see Stig Y. Rudberg, "Les manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque universitaire de Lund", *Eranos* 67 (1969): 54–61, and Th. Hermann, "Einige bemerkenswerte Fragmente zu den griechischen Apophthegmata Patrum", *Zeitschrift für die neutestamenliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* (1924): 102–109.

[1] I am grateful to Tommy Wasserman for drawing my attention to this manuscript.

PLATE



Lund University Library, St. Laurentius digital manuscript library

Medeltidshandskrift 54
actual size 17.5 x 12.5 cm
fol. 5^{v}
AP/GS V.19.6—22.12

Transcription of Medeltidshandskrift 54,
fol. 5, *verso*, lines 3–15: *AP*/GS, V.20-21[1]

προς τον αυτο¯
λογισμον, ετερος γερων ειπεν· ταυτα απο α
μελειας πασχομεν· ει γαρ επληροφορουμεθα
οτι ο θ¯ς¯ οικει εν ημιν, ουκ αν αλλοτριον σκευος
εις εαυτους επεβαλλομεν· ο γαρ δεσποτης χ¯ς¯
οικων εν ημιν θεωρει ημων την ζωην· ο
θεν και ημεις φορουντες αυτον και θεωρουντες ἀμελει¯
ουκ ωφειλομεν· αλλα αγνειζην εαυτους καθως ε
κεινος αγνος εστιν· στωμεν επι την πετραν, και ρασ
σεσθω ο πονηρος· μη διλιασης και ου μη σε βλαψει·
ψαλλε εν ισχυει λεγων· οι πεποιθωτες επι κ¯ς¯ ως
ορος σιων· ου σαλευθησεται εις τον αιωνα ο κατοικων
ιλ¯ημ·

[1] The edition of J.-C. Guy reads:

Πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν
λογισμὸν ἕτερος γέρων εἶπεν· Ταῦτα ἀπὸ ἀ
μελείας πάσχομεν. Εἰ γὰρ ἐπληροφορούμεθα
ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς οἰκεῖ ἐν ἡμῖν, οὐκ ἂν ἀλλότριον σκεῦος
εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἐπεβάλομεν. Ὁ γὰρ Δεσπότης Χριστὸς
οἰκῶν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ συνὼν ἡμῖν θεωρεῖ ἡμῶν τὴν ζωήν. Ὅ
θεν καὶ ἡμεῖς φοροῦντες αὐτὸν καὶ θεωροῦντες ἀμελεῖν
οὐκ ὀφείλομεν, ἀλλὰ ἁγνίζειν ἑαυτοὺς καθὼς ἐ
κεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστιν. Στῶμεν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν, καὶ ῥασ
σέσθω ὁ πονηρός· μὴ δειλιάσῃς καὶ οὐ μή σε βλάψῃ.
Ψάλλε ἐν ἰσχύϊ λέγων· «Οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπὶ Κύριον ὡς
ὄρος Σιών, οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ὁ κατοικῶν
Ἰερουσαλήμ.»

Line 8 of this page of Medeltidshandskrift 54 (line 6 of this saying) omits και συνων ημιν after οικων εν ημιν just like MS H does. (Translation on next page, with the omitted text in double square brackets.)

V.20-21

About the same thought, another elder said: "We suffer these things because of our negligence, for if we were convinced that God dwells in us, then we would not let any foreign thing come upon us. For Christ the Lord, who dwells in us [[and is together with us]], sees our life. Therefore, we who bear him and see him, ought not to be careless but *purify* ourselves, *just as he is pure* (1 Joh 3:3). Let us stand on the rock. The Evil One may beat like waves against it. Do not fear and do not jump off, but sing with force: '*They that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion: he that dwells in Jerusalem shall never be moved*' (Ps 124:1)."

Threads and Images
The Use of Scripture in Apophthegmata Patrum
by Per Rönnegård

Whenever religious texts are read as holy Scripture, an individual or an interpretive community appropriates the text by assuming that the text has relevance "today"—that is, there is a reference to the present in the text. By pointing out such a referent, the texts are contextualized. This study analyzes this process as it is expressed in *Apophthegmata Patrum* (The Sayings of the Desert Fathers).

The prominent historian Peter Brown has called the collection "the last and one of the greatest products of the Wisdom Literature of the ancient Near East." It has had a tremendous influence on Christian monasticism in the East as well as the West, and the different collections are widely read today. This publication is the first major text-centered study of the use of Scripture in *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Thirty-two sayings are analyzed in detail. The analyses, together with examples taken from the whole range of sayings of the Greek systematic collection of *Apophthegmata Patrum*, form the basis of systematization. One set of categories is developed in terms of how the threads of biblical material are woven into the new text of *Apophthegmata Patrum* to bear on questions relevant to its first readers. Another set of categories is developed in terms of the role biblical texts have in individual sayings, and it becomes evident to what extent the Bible functions pedagogically as a source of images to illustrate the teachings of the Fathers and Mothers of the desert.

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