



Review: An Early Witness to Christian Monachism

Reviewed Work(s):

ΛΟΓΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΝ (De Virginitate)

by Eduard Freiherr von der Goltz

Review by: H. Vacher Burch

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Copious indexes to these scholia consisting of lists of passages from the Old and New Testaments and profane Greek literature are added.

The texts edited by Stählin have been carefully collated and revised. They show on every page the philological acumen and scholarly thoroughness which have characterized his former publications. But few passages remain that have baffled all attempts at emendation. These are wisely indicated by a prefixed †, or by asterisks showing the omission of some word or words. The editor enjoyed the literary assistance of such men as Joseph B. Mayor, E. Schwartz, and U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf; but the real work was done by himself—and good work it is. Those who are interested mainly in the linguistic and textual work of the editor will find additional suggestions in the reviews by Koetschau in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1905, No. 20; and by Klostermann in the *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, September, 1905, pp. 673-80. Most welcome to the student of Clement is the rich and carefully selected bibliography scattered throughout the introduction. We hope to see very soon the second and third volumes, completing this most excellent edition.

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AN EARLY WITNESS TO CHRISTIAN MONACHISM

This edition¹ of an interesting treatise is by Lic. Eduard von der Goltz, the fortunate discoverer of the Greek version of "the Prayer of Euthalius," a document that has settled a nice stichometrical question and will influence the whole Eutholian problem. The Benedictine edition (Migne, *Pat. Graec.*, XXVIII, 251-81), its nearest predecessor, was produced in days when of even the largest libraries in Europe there was no exhaustive knowledge; while of the treasures of Athos and the monasteries of the near, but dim, East there were no catalogues like those of Lambros or Sakkelion. The study under review is divided into three parts: (1) "Die Herstellung des Textes;" (2) "Ursprung und Charakter;" (3) "Die Bedeutung des Traktats für unsere Kenntnis der Geschichte des christlichen Lebens."

The notable features of the first division are a contribution to our knowledge of the genealogy of the Athanasian MSS, particularly those containing the *De Virginitate*, and the text edited anew from the manuscripts thus studied. Von der Goltz has carried forward this study from the con-

¹ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΝ (*De Virginitate*). Von Eduard Freiherr von der Goltz. Eine echte Schrift des Athanasius. [= Texte und Untersuchungen, N.F. XIV, 2.] Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905. 143 pages. M. 5.

clusions of Wallis and Loeschke and Lake. He has discovered the best textual representative as yet of *De Virginitate* in the Cloister Library of St. John, upon the island of Patmos. When a scholar attempts definitive study of Athanasian MSS on the same scale as that of Dr. Capo upon those of Isidore of Pelusium, he will do well to keep in mind this introductory study to the latest edition of *De Virginitate*. The text is produced with discrimination, and, so far as this notice is concerned, only in one particular will it be criticised.

The second division is a discussion of the general character of the contents of the treatise and of its literary relationships. Its affinities are, primarily, with the Canons of Hippolytus, the Testament of our Lord, and the Apostolic Constitutions; and, secondarily, with the Egyptian Church Order and the Canons of Basil. These latter relations appear to be indirect and through the first-mentioned group of writings. Von der Goltz arranges these writings in a different order of affinity, placing first the Canons of Hippolytus, the Egyptian Church Order, and the Testament; and then, in the second place, the Apostolic Constitutions, and the Canons of Basil and of Athanasius. A careful comparison might suggest rather the order given above, and that the parallels of the Canons of Hippolytus are even closer with the Testament than with *De Virginitate*. The one apparently direct parallel of the Canons with *De Virginitate*, *πρῶτον πάντων πίστευσον κ. τ. λ.* (see below), is probably a reminiscence of the Mandates of Hermas (I, 1). A further reason for so arranging them will appear later. It is to be noted also that there are some parallels with the *Διδαχὴ* (as pointed out by Dr. Rendel Harris), and seemingly with the Syrian recension of it.

The third division concludes that *De Virginitate* displays a conception of life produced by the fusion of the ideals of the church of the first century and the rules and institutions of early Greek monachism. Indeed, the treatise presents three special features of interest. It is a valuable witness for the practice of virginity in a district yet to be determined; it illustrates early liturgical usage; and its author is still a problem. Its liturgiological value has already been fully recognized by Batiffol, who considers it a witness to the practice of the Syrian church in the fourth century. The value of its picture of the practice of virginity is bound up with the discovery of the author; and this again determines finally the provenance of the writing. Accordingly, the points made by von der Goltz in the section "Die Frage nach dem Verfasser" (pp. 114-22), and in others bearing upon authorship, will be dealt with one by one, though not in the order in which they occur in his book.

The treatise opens with a paragraph of the highest value for determining the authorship. It contains a statement of theological belief; and hence, if there are any expressions characteristic of a particular theological school, light is cast on both author and date. The passage runs as follows:

πρῶτον πάντων πίστευσον εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα πα Ἰτοκράτορα, ὁρατῶν καὶ ἀοράτων ποιητὴν· καὶ εἰς τὸν μονογενῆ αὐτοῦ υἱὸν Ἰησοῦν χριστὸν, τὸν ὄντα ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς, κατὰ πάντα ἰσοδύναμον τῷ πατρί, τὸν πρὸ αἰώνων ὄντα· καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ ἐν πατρὶ καὶ ὑφ' ὃν, παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀποστελλόμενον, καὶ διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ διδόμενον, πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, μία θεοτής, μία δύναμις, ἐν βάπτισμα (chap. 1).

1. No exposition is needed to show that the complexion of the passage is other than Nicene or at any rate Athanasian. But von der Goltz questions the genuineness of the more decisive phrases. He proposes to punctuate the passage differently from preceding editors, and the statements in question are to be considered as interpolated. After *διδόμενον*, and before *πατὴρ* underlined, he places a comma (p. 108), which destroys the grammatical concord. The older editors placed a full-stop after *διδόμενον*. A semicolon is the proper punctuation; and the new sentence fittingly closes the symbol. The MSS lend no support to von der Goltz's criticism. But with the admission of the sentence there enters into the problem an element that is not Athanasian. The doctrinal terminology is certainly Cappadocian, as Batiffol has shown. There are no real parallels in the writings of Athanasius to the distinctive expressions of the symbol.

2. The evidence for a *De Virginitate* written by Athanasius, and supposed evidence to the treatise we are discussing, is as follows (pp. 115-17):

a) Jerome in his *De Viris Illustribus* (c. 87) mentions among the writings of Athanasius a *De Virginitate* which Sophronius translates by *περὶ παρθενίας*.

b) Theodoret, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (II, c. xi) says that Athanasius wrote *καὶ παραμυθητικούς δὲ λόγους ταῖς παρθένους ἐκείναις*.

c) In Photius (Cod. CCXXIX) we have the reference from Ephraim of Antioch (ca. 529-44 A. D.), *Ἀθανάσιος ὁ Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὰς παρθένους ἐπιστολῇ* (Migne, *P. b.*, 103, 996 C), in a list of church fathers who acknowledge *δύο φύσεων ἕνωσιν καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν καὶ πρόσωπον ἕν* (*op. cit.*, 993 D).

d) Another witness is found in Hadrian's epistle *De Imaginibus*, in which he writes: "item ejusdem S. Athanasii de virginitate inter cetera: et in spiritum sanctum qui in patri et filio existens a patre emittitur et per filium datur" (Migne, *P. L.*, 98, c. 2, 1249).

e) An indirect witness (p. 116) may perhaps be seen in the oration

of Gregory of Nazianzus in praise of Athanasius (Orat. XXI), where he tells of the many pastoral interests of the great Alexandrine, *νεανίσκοι καὶ παρθένοι, πρεσβῦται μετὰ νεωτέρων, ἱερεῖς καὶ λαός*; and again, *προσθήσω δὲ καὶ ζύγιον, καὶ παρθένιον, καὶ εἰρηναῖον, καὶ διαλλακτήριον*, etc.

The statement of Jerome renders it probable that Athanasius wrote a *De Virginitate*. The character of that work is probably defined with accuracy by the historian Theodoret, as being an epistle of encouragement written to some virgins in a time of persecution. Indeed, the chapter of his *History* from which the reference is taken gives us the actual historical circumstances. The allusion in Gregory of Nazianzus to Athanasius as a *νυμφαγωγός* for *παρθένοι*, is quite inconclusive. The reference made by Ephraim of Antioch can be used only to support the fact that Athanasius did write an epistle *πρὸς τὰς παρθένους*. In Hadrian's epistle four quotations are made as from writings by Athanasius. The first of them is given above. The others are as follows: "Interrogatio Antiochi ad sanctum Athanasium" (*Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem*, Quaes. 39; Migne, *P. b.*, 28, 622); "Sancti Athanasii de interpretatione psalmorum" (*Expositio Psalmorum*, 72:20; Migne, *P. b.*, 27, 332); "Item ex epistola sancti Athanasii ad Epictetum" (Migne, *P. b.*, 26, 1052). Of these three citations only one, that from the epistle *Ad Epictetum*, comes from the authentic writings of Athanasius. That is sufficient to impugn the worth of this epistle as a witness to the Athanasian authorship of *De Virginitate*. Accordingly, the only conclusions to be drawn from the references to a *De Virginitate* in the name of Athanasius are, that he probably did write an epistle to some virgins, and that the nature of the epistle may be as defined by Theodoret.

3. The argument from terminology, both ascetical and doctrinal, is another factor in the case. An examination of the many descriptive phrases applied either to virgins or to the practice of virginity cannot be entered upon here.² Throughout von der Goltz's book, however, emphasis is laid upon the Egyptian characteristics of both classes of expression. Now, parallel for parallel, these same expressions can be traced in the ascetical writings belonging to the Cappadocia of the fourth century. It is true that von der Goltz (pp. 120, 121) supports their Egyptian character by a *catena* of references to the *Vita Antonii*, *Vita S. Syncreticae*, *Expositio Psalmorum*, Fragment on Matt. 7:6, the *περὶ ὑπομονῆς*, epistle *Ad Amum*, and *De sententia Dionysii*. But of these the second, the third, and the fourth, at least, are not Athanasian.

4. The literary relationships of *De Virginitate* have already been

² I have collected the evidence in another study which may soon appear.

touched upon. Two of the writings in which parallels occur offer further support to the argument that it was produced in a district other than Egypt. First, as regards the Testament of our Lord, there is general agreement among scholars that the redaction was made somewhere in Asia Minor. There seems also some special reason to look to the province of Cilicia as answering most exactly to the geographical data of the book. The parallels between the Testament and our *De Virginitate*, and the fact that the writings were written about the same period, give support to the view that they were produced in the same region—the Testament in Cilicia and *De Virginitate* in the adjacent Cappadocia. Further, von der Goltz (p. 74) produces several parallels between *De Virginitate* and the *Sententiae ad Virgines* of Evagrius Ponticus. That Evagrius had been closely connected with the Cappadocians before he went into the Nitrian desert (385–400 A. D.) we have upon the authority of Palladius (*Hist. Laus.*, c. 186). It was under the influence of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa that he was taught the doctrine embodied in his *Sententiae*, in which there are no characteristics distinctively Egyptian. Hence the parallels with *De Virginitate* give their quota of support to the Cappadocian origin of our *De Virginitate*.

5. The language of the doxologies also point to a district other than Egypt. In it we have four doxologies, occurring respectively in chaps. 12, 13, 14, and 25; the first three as doxologies to prayers, the last closing the treatise. The prayer of chap. 12 with its doxology is found in the Apostolic Constitutions (VII, 49), which is of Syrian origin. The other doxologies, where not based on the Didache, vary in some degree from this one, but their Syrian character is equally demonstrable. They read thus; c. 14, τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, μεθ' οὗ σοι δόξα, τιμὴ, κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν; c. 25, διὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας κ. τ. λ. These doxologies find their parallels in the Apostolic Constitutions, and its basis, the Syrian *Didaskalia*. (Compare the Verona Latin fragments, "a domino et doctore nostro Jesu Christo, cui est gloria in saecula; amen," ed. Halier p. 2.; Apost. Const., I, 1). The forms of all four are not Athanasian. He uses almost invariably a full trinitarian expression; an exception being that which closes the *Vita Antonii*. Further, in three different places they have the phrase found also in Serapion, ἐν ἀγίῳ πνεύματι (Wobbermin, *Texte und Unter.*, N. F., II, 3b, 96 f).

6. In conclusion, attention may be drawn to two lesser features of *De Virginitate*. The first is a piece of poetical description, ποταμοὶ μελίρροτοι καὶ πηγαὶ ἀέναοι (chap. 1). Such a description may have one of two sources

of inspiration—an earlier writer, or the influence of an author's country upon his imagination. In Plato's *Ion* the poets are said to claim to derive their strains ἀπὸ κρηῶν μελιρρύτων ἐκ Μουσῶν κήπων τινῶν καὶ ναπῶν δρεπόμενοι (p. 534, ed. Hermann). It is just possible that the juxtaposition of the two words, a little before Plato uses the phrase ἐκ τῶν ποταμῶν μέλι, may have suggested our author's phrases. If, however, he was influenced rather by the beauties of the country about him, it could not be a country such as Egypt. On the other hand, the phrases would suit a hilly country, abounding in streams and springs, such as Cappadocia.³ In chap. 14 the words of the grace after meals are: ἐλεήμων καὶ οἰκτίρμων ὁ κύριος, τροφήν ἔδωκε τοῖς φοβονμένοις αὐτόν. δόξα πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ καὶ ἀγίῳ πνεύματι. This finds its parallel in the ancient liturgical form preserved in the Apostolic Constitutions, VII. 33, ὁ ἐλεήμων καὶ οἰκτίρμων. Such a relationship suggests *De Virginitate's* knowledge of some Syrian or Palestinian liturgy, which would be natural in a work produced on the borders of Syria or Asia Minor.

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RECENT LITERATURE CONCERNING MEDIAEVAL MONASTICISM

This book¹ is part of the unfinished labors of the late Arthur Giry, the eminent mediaevalist whose death a few years ago was a grievous loss to the cause of historical research. One of Giry's pupils, M. René Poupardin, who already has made a distinguished name for himself as an archivist, has completed the task from the notes of his master, and added an introduction.

There are really three manuscripts here edited: (1) the *Vita Filiberti*—the life of a Merovingian saint of the seventh century, "écrite peu de temps après sa mort, mais dans un style barbare qui choqua même les contemporains;" (2) the *Miracula* of St. Philbert; (3) the *Chronicon Trenorchiensis*, (being the chronicle of the monastery of Tournus, where the saint's bones found final sepulcher), which was written in the eleventh century. The latter texts particularly permit us to follow the wanderings of a group of monks

³ Nonnus' Paraphrase of St. John's Gospel, on 6: 68 (ed. Scheindler p. 75), ἀμφιέπεις γὰρ ζωῆς ἀνάοιο μελιρρύτω χεύματα μύθων, yields an illustration of the sense of μελιρρύτος from a date somewhat later than the *De Virg.* and from an Egyptian writer.

¹ *Monuments de l'histoire des Abbayes de Saint-Philbert (Noirmoutier, Grandlieu, Tournus)*. Publié d'après les notes d'ARTHUR GIRY. Par RENÉ POUPARDIN. Paris: Picard, 1905. lii + 137 pages. Fr. 4.50.